New Mexico's Voice for Native Plants

NEWSLETTER

of the

Native Plant Society of New Mexico

July, August, September 2009 Vol. XXXIV No. 3

Signed, Sealed, and Delivered . . .

NOW, THEREFORE, I, Bill Richardson, Governor of the State of New Mexico, do hereby proclaim August 15, 2009 as:

"Native Plant Day"

throughout the State of New Mexico to showcase the natural heritage of plants that the State provides for its residents and visitors . . .

See page 3

Early registration for the Annual Meeting in Taos has been extended to July 15!

Inside this Issue

2 From the President ❖ **2** NPSNM Workshop Report: Becoming Rain Keepers ❖ **3** Official Proclamation: Native Plant Day ❖ **4** Second Annual Native Grasses Workshop ❖ **5** Conservation Corner ❖ **6** Jack & Martha Carter Conservation Fund ❖ **7** Field Trips and Taxonomic Revisions ❖ **8–9** Chapter Activities & Events ❖ **10** Vascular Plants of the Gila National Forest: Introducing gilaflora.com ❖ **10** Salvage Zone Update ❖ **11** See You in Taos! ❖ **12–14** New and Recent Books [*Common Southwestern Native Plants* by Jack Carter et al.; *High and Dry: Gardening with Cold-Hardy Dryland Plants* by Robert Nold; *Great Basin Wildflowers* by Laird R. Blackwell] ❖ **14** Who's Who at NPSNM ❖ **15** Membership ❖ **15** Volunteer Opportunity ❖ **16** Native Grasses Workshop Registration

From the President

by Tom Antonio

As we enter this summer I want to remind you of two very special events happening in August. The first is the 2009 Annual Meeting of the Native Plant Society of New Mexico, August 6–9 in Taos. Titled "From Mountain Peaks to River Valleys," this meeting looks excellent, and if you have never attended an annual meeting you have been missing a unique opportunity to meet some of New Mexico's finest. This will be my seventh, and I have learned so much from each one. From book sales to silent auctions, workshops and lectures—to say nothing about the field trips—annual meetings are great.

Fascinating lectures, workshops, and keynote addresses notwithstanding, in my mind the field trips are the best part of these meetings. Local experts take you to special places you would never go to, to see plants you would never see. *(Detailed schedule and a registration form were in the last newsletter and can be found on the NPSNM website.)* I look forward to seeing many of you in Taos, and I extend the board's thanks to the Taos chapter for putting together a wonderful program.

One week after the annual meeting, on August 15, we celebrate Native Plant Day. House Joint Memorial 61 was signed by Governor Richardson *(see facing page)*. On behalf of the Native Plant Society of New Mexico, I would like to extend our thanks to Representative Jeannette O. Wallace and Senator Dede Feldman for sponsoring this memorial. I encourage each chapter around the state to celebrate this day with a special local event for the appreciation of native plants and to educate the public on the importance and desirability of utilizing native plants for landscaping and conserving and protecting the New Mexico flora. ❖

NPSNM Workshop Report: Becoming Rain Keepers

by Jack Carter

On May 15, twenty-eight participants joined to hear three distinguished speakers. First on the agenda, Jim Brooks, of Soilutions, devoted considerable time to discussing microclimates. Within the lawn and garden, these can be created with carefully spaced plantings of trees and shrubs, pruning, and by managing water and—equally important—wind. With PowerPoint enhancements, Jim shared his explorations of composting, berms, and strawbale "vertical mulching." He made the audience aware of the wealth of vitamins, minerals, and energy that pass through our everyday lives in the form of garbage. Before these waste products become garbage, they could much more usefully be turned into compost—a vitally important amendment for topsoil.

Microclimates were a theme as well for Judith Phillips, of native plant nursery Bernardo Beach. She told the audience that, where water is scarce, "the marriage of beautiful, functional garden architecture and plants that are well suited to the spaces they occupy make a garden both a pleasure to be in and a sustainable ecosystem." She demonstrated that microclimates, which direct water to plants, can be created through architectural elements—including walls and fences, paths and patios, and shade-creating arbors. Trees form the foundation for other plantings, with the use of deciduous and evergreen shrubs, herbaceous ground cover, wildflowers, and garden perennials. Stressing the advantages of planting regionally native plants, she explained how they can save time, money, and water, and provided specific information on where, when, and how deeply to water. And she offered a sampling of common shade trees, smaller flowering trees, large evergreen shrubs, and a variety of specific habitats that occur in most New Mexico lawns.

Richard Jennings, of Earthwrights Designs, dealt with some of the more nitty-gritty aspects of technology, particularly cisterns and septic systems. He provided specific information on planning both the rainwater system and the appropriate septic system for an individual piece of land. This latter topic was one on which he had much to offer, as he described some of the common problems associated with gray-water systems, problems caused by basic misunderstandings of soil type. In fact, he cautioned against using aerobic gray-water systems for plantings. Richard comes to water management with multi-faceted expertise in technology, chemistry, and biology.

These three sessions took the morning. After lunch, participants split into groups to separately visit three Albuquerque homes that used various forms of water conservation and water management to beautifully exemplify the concepts taught in the morning. Sally and Wes Brittenham, Virginia and Howard Stephens, Mark and Karen Rohde, and the Rohdes' landscape architect Richard Borkovetz were gracious hosts, opening up their gardens to the groups and presenting short, informative talks. Thank you!

In all, this was a terrific event, with excellent lecturers and highly engaged participants. Extremely well planned and executed, this was a model for local chapters to follow. ❖

STATE OF NEW MEXICO **EXECUTIVE OFFICE** SANTA FE, NEW MEXICO

Proclamation

WHEREAS, *The State of New Mexico contains a greater number of plant habitats than nearly any other state in the United States, from Chihuahuan Desert to Alpine Tundra; and*

WHEREAS, *New Mexico also supports a larger number of native plant species than nearl any other state in the United States; and*

WHEREAS*, Some of these species are found nowhere else on Earth; and*

WHEREAS*, These native plants support a great variety of birds and animals, both native and domestic; and*

WHEREAS, *The modern way of life inadvertently destroys natural habitats and introduces noxious weeds, which in turn replace native forage, which is the State's natural heritage; and*

WHEREAS, *In every season, New Mexicans enjoy the beauty and variety of these native plants in the State's forests, grasslands and deserts, including the Official State Flower, the Yucca; the State Tree, the Piñon; the State Grass, Blue Grama; and the colorful displays of native wild flowers; and*

WHEREAS, *There is increasing concern that many of these native plants may be destroyed or eradicated because they are not well-known;*

NOW, THEREFORE *I, Bill Richardson, Governor of the State of New Mexico, do hereby proclaim August 15, 2009 as:*

"Native Plant Day"

throughout the State of New Mexico to showcase the natural heritage of plants that the State provides for its residents and visitors.

Attest:

Mary Herrera
Secretary of State

Done at the Executive Office this 3rd day of June, 2009.

Witness my hand and the Great Seal of the Great State of New Mexico

Bill Richardson
Governor

2nd Annual Native Grasses Workshop

Grasses with a Hand Lens

July 17–18, 2009

in Las Cruces on the NMSU Campus (339 Knox Hall)
from 1 p.m. Friday until about 6 p.m. Saturday

Last summer when the NPSNM offered a workshop on grasses, it filled—with a waiting list—almost immediately. Last year we studied northern New Mexico grasses in Los Alamos. Many requests for a repeat performance have led to this workshop for 2009, this time to be held in the southern part of the state and taught by The Grass Expert Himself, Dr. Kelly Allred. Register no later than July 10, by sending in the registration form on the back page of the newsletter. Registration forms can also be found online, at http://npsnm.unm.edu.

Course Outline: The emphasis will be on teaching beginners the basics of grass identification using just a hand lens, but experienced botanists will enjoy learning how to key grasses and seeing lots of different species. **Friday:** Meet and greet at 1 pm; review basic grass architecture and how to recognize different grasses, including vegetative structures, reproductive structures, inflorescences, and the major themes in grass variation; short field trip around campus to practice what we've learned; how to use the key to identify grasses; perhaps an enrichment activity in the evening, such as a talk on grasslands or further practice with the keys. **Saturday:** All-day field trip across the Tularosa Basin to the Sacramento Mts., to see grasses of the Chihuahuan Desert, juniper woodlands, coniferous forest, and subalpine mountain peaks. There will no long hikes or difficult climbs; we will drive to different locations and scout around the area, with some short walks. Dr. Allred will provide the following: room to meet in, microscopes and dissection equipment for the indoor portion, vans and drivers for transportation on the field trip, workbook and other materials for the course, corny jokes, and an exciting day out-of-doors. Participants will need to purchase the textbook: copies of the *Field Guide to the Grasses of New Mexico* will be available for purchase ($21.95, check or cash). Participants should also bring a hand lens (10X is good), sack lunch for the Saturday field trip, and smiles on their faces and songs in their hearts!

Register soon—enrollment limited to 20!

Registration deadline: July 10—Registration information and form on back page

Conservation Corner—*Jim Nellessen, NPSNM Conservation Committee Chair*

Conserving the Process—Lessons in Plant Ecology

We as plant lovers often focus our attention on individual species, learning to identify and recognize them by their name(s) and characteristic features. But all of these individual species assemble themselves into a wide variety of plant communities or associations. Learning where in the environment to find a particular species does become a part of our recognition of the species. This is the stuff of plant ecology. Each species has its own set of environmental tolerances and preferences and the species sort themselves out within various habitats based on those tolerances and preferences. These abiotic (or nonliving) aspects of the environment are diverse and may consist of moisture availability, soil texture, soil nutrient and mineral content, daily amount of sunlight, daily and annual changes in temperature, and average wind intensity, to name just a few. Then the biotic (or living) components of the ecosystem add another layer of factors in the sorting out of plant communities. These factors can be competition with other plant species, effects from herbivores (whether they be mammals or insects), effects from disease-causing organisms, and, of course, effects of human activities.

This is all basic ecology, but things we may not always be thinking about while we admire the beauty of an individual wildflower. Various habitats are more or less diverse in quantities of plant species, based on the abiotic and biotic factors and the carrying capacity of the environment. Carrying capacity means that a particular area can only sustain a certain number of species and/or a certain amount of biomass (i.e., a limited quantity of plant material). Limitations of moisture, nutrients, and space are classic examples. In restoring "damaged" ecosystems or habitats, it helps to have a baseline natural habitat with which to compare.

Plant species are sometimes grouped into categories that best describe their behavior in the environment. For example, ruderals are generally early successional species that colonize recently disturbed ground (e.g., tumbleweed, *Salsola tragus*, and hiddenflower, *Cryptantha crassisepala*). Frequently, but not always, these species are annuals. Then there are competitors, species that compete well for certain resources and can outlive many other species (e.g., creosote bush, *Larrea divericata*, and blue grama, *Bouteloua gracilis*). Often these are long-lived dominant members of plant communities. Finally, there are the stress tolerators, species that have developed tolerances for one or more "stressful" abiotic factors in the environment (e.g., greasewood, *Sarcobatus vermiculatus*, and iodine bush, *Allenrolfea occidentalis*, are species extra tolerant of saline soils). These are species that could potentially grow in a wider range of sites than they are actually found in, but tend to be less competitive in "normal" sites and hence get pushed to the sidelines in sites not tolerated by most other species. These three categories are not set in stone, and a species may have characteristics of more than one category. Nonnative species could fall into any of these three categories as well and although we often think of nonnatives as ruderals, capable of moving easily into disturbed settings, I would categorize species such as salt cedar (*Tamarix* spp.) and Canada thistle (*Cirsium canadense*) as competitors.

As we attempt to protect and conserve individual plant species or particular plant communities, we need to keep in mind all of these larger ecological factors that are constantly molding and transforming ecosystems. In other words, we want to also conserve the processes. In relatively undisturbed natural habitats this may mean leaving things as they are, keeping to a minimum our manipulations (take only photos and leave nothing behind). In places already substantially altered by human activities (and/or the complete takeover of nonnatives), this can mean initially making major manipulations to restore an area to natural conditions, but it can also mean not overmanipulating a site. Overmanipulation could set a site onto some other undesired trajectory. This is where the concept of relay floristics comes into play. The species that are initiated onto a site, whether one is talking about natural plant succession, or manipulated succession via human influence, play a significant role in the species that follow. Just as in a relay race the baton is passed from runner to runner, an initial suite of species is succeeded by a second suite of species, and so forth as succession proceeds. We must also keep in mind that nature is going to take her own course and may not follow the path that we envision for her. After all, we humans are also a part of the system; though we might tend to think otherwise, we do not stand outside of it. We are fully embedded in the system.

This is why sometimes our conservation and restoration efforts seek to maintain a plant community based on a historical point in time. This point in time could be 1000 or more years ago, it could be the 1600s, the 1700s, the 1800s, or even the early 1900s. As time moves forward, the perspective of individual researchers and restorationists will change. Unfortunately, nature and time are not static, but in a constant state of flux (sometimes slow in our eyes). Plant communities, ecosystems, and time *will move forward*.

These have been more ramblings of a plant ecologist. ❖

Jack & Martha Carter Conservation Fund

by Jack and Martha Carter

As noted in the last newsletter, at the January meeting the Board of Directors approved $7,500 in grant moneys: $5,000 for six project proposals and $2,500 for the state herbaria. For many years the Board has been making every effort to strengthen funding activities, despite the difficulties of doing so. Recognizing our personal enthusiasm for funding conservation research and education throughout New Mexico, the Board named this fund in our honor, and we consider this a tremendous compliment.

We are pleased to report that approximately 65 families, individuals, state chapters, and other organizations have contributed $10,355 to this fund. Contributions have ranged from $10 to $1,300, and for each donation we are thankful. We would so like to see the number of individuals and families double or triple in the next few years. As we often tell friends who contribute, every single dollar grows at the same rate and consequently every single dollar counts.

We all understand that since this is an endowment fund it is still relatively small. Furthermore, with the stock market at its lowest point in more than 50 years, donations have been parked in a savings account until the market starts to turn around and they can be invested. As such, the income has yet to have an impact on the Fund. Of even greater importance, by contributing to this fund we are setting aside funds that will protect New Mexico's flora well into the future. Future generations will realize the value of today's investments as they sit in the shade of the trees we plant.

There are many ways we can all make planet Earth a better and safer place to live in, for us and for future generations. Our suggestions to the NPSNM membership and to all potential members of the NPSNM are, first, to plant a native tree during this growing season, and second, to make a contribution to the Jack and Martha Carter Conservation Fund. ❖

Field Trips and Taxonomic Revisions

by James W. Tuomey, **Taos Chapter**

"The beginning of wisdom is to call things by their right names," or so the Chinese say. That may be true, but on an NPS field trip last fall, the many announcements of botanical name changes proved to be more hurdles to learning than "the beginning of wisdom."

On this field trip no plant list was provided, and the many references to botanical name changes elicited grumbles from some field trip participants as they searched their field guides trying to connect the new name to the correct plant. Others openly voiced frustration over the seemingly haphazard way they were hearing about these changes. Then as the group was viewing a specimen of *Phacelia coerulea,* Blue scorpionweed, another taxonomic change was announced: "*Phacelia* is no longer in Hydrophyllaceae." One participant shot back, "How or where does one learn of plant or family name changes?" The question was not answered.

Clearly the group wanted the focus to be on the plants they were seeing, not on name changes. Perhaps as a kind of self-defense, many resorted to the use of common names. Not only didn't this field trip provide the beginning of wisdom for these native plant folks, but it seemed to cause them to willfully disregard all the reasons, found in any good field guide, why common names are problematic. The way name changes were brought to the group's attention had a negative impact and served only as a disconnect from the NPSNM mission "to educate New Mexicans on native plant identification."

That field trip was troubling, and the unanswered question from that frustrated participant seemed to deserve an answer. I assumed there must be a better way to learn about these name changes. Surely an Internet search would bring up sites that would provide an answer, and possibly a list of recent taxonomic revisions. This proved to be both a naïve assumption and wishful thinking.

Fortunately, several experts I consulted offered insights that were helpful, but their responses clearly showed that the simple solution I sought does not exist. Bob Sivinski (New Mexico EMNRD Botanist) explained, "Unfortunately, there is no central location for taxonomic revisions. Just takes continuous monitoring of the literature." Kelly Allred (NMSU Professor and Botanist) described what continuous monitoring entails: "Finding out about and keeping up with those names is not easy. One must keep abreast of the current scientific literature, and the 'announcements' will be found there, scattered throughout numerous sources. So I regularly go to the library and scan through the various journals, magazines, and books that deal with this stuff." Gene Jercinovic (author of *Wildflowers of the Manzanos*) added, "I subscribe to six botanical journals to try to keep abreast of taxonomic changes, but this means a lot of reading and some expense."

This raises another question. How does the information in the journals get communicated to the rank and file membership of the NPS? Neither the NPS newsletter nor the NPS website provides announcements of taxonomic changes. Gene Jercinovic concluded, "I guess there is no really simple solution other than to hear about these things on field trips." This, however, does not mean that field trips have to be daunting; they can and they should facilitate learning, but that requires substantial effort and work on the part of field trip leaders.

Well prepared, well researched, and well structured field trips can be the best way, if not the only way, for many NPS members to learn about taxonomic changes as well as learn about the plants they are seeing. Field trips can serve as a pipeline for botanical information from the botanists to NPS members. Another field trip last fall demonstrated how well this can be done.

On this NPS field trip the leaders provided not only a list of the plants that might be seen, but considerable other information, including taxonomic revisions. As part of their extensive pre-trip research, the leaders consulted several botanists for taxonomic updates. One feature of the plant list sparked immediate interest—the column labeled *Synonyms*. Some participants immediately focused on one entry in that column, Hydrophyllaceae, the family at the root of much frustration on the other field trip, and then they saw that the plant list placed *Phacelia coerulea* in Boraginaceae. No scramble to jot down the name change, no grumble, no common names, no disconnect, but instead a discussion of a taxonomic revision of a plant that remained the focus of attention. This addition of just a limited synonymy to the plant list prevented frustration and facilitated learning. Finally, here was something of an answer for that questioning participant overwhelmed by name changes. One can learn at least some taxonomic revisions on field trips where the leaders have prepared plant lists that include a synonymy.

Obviously these field trip leaders realized that "the beginning of wisdom" required more than just calling things by their right names. Their efforts seemed guided more by ornithologist Elliott Coues' observation:

"The increase in knowledge is one thing, and its diffusion is another; but the latter is the real measure of the usefulness of the former." ❖

Chapter Activities & Events

For further information on the following events, notify the contact person listed, or visit the chapter's Web page: first go to http://npsnm.unm.edu; click on Local Chapters; then select the chapter. **Hikers** should always bring plenty of water, hat, sun protection, lunch and/or snacks, field guides, and wear good shoes.

Albuquerque

Monthly meetings are first Wednesdays at 7 p.m. in the NM Museum of Natural History, 1801 Mountain Rd. NW. For more info contact Pam McBride, 343-9472, ebotpam@msn.com; Frances Robertson, 828-4775, frobertson45@comcast.net; or Jim McGrath, 286-8745, sedges@swcp.com. For meeting places, indicated [A] through [H], see website. For field trip info, contact Don Heinze, 565-1441, donald_heinze@yahoo.com.

July No monthly meeting.

Jul 3 Field Forum. Albuquerque Volcanoes. Gary Runyan (205-9953)/George Miller, Leader. 9:00 a.m. [B]

Jul 10-12 Overnight Rare Plant Field Trip. Cloudcroft/Ruidoso Area. Jim McGrath, Leader. Participants must sign up for this trip by contacting Jim McGrath (505-286-8745 or sedges@swcp.com) by 6/30 to arrange carpooling and a rendezvous place and time in the Cloudcroft area. Prior to the trip we will schedule a UNM herbarium visit to examine rare plant species that we expect to see on the trip.

Jul 24 Field Forum. Tecolote Peak. Jeanette Buffet, Leader. 9:00 a.m. [A]

Jul 25 Field Trip. San Gregorio Lake East Of Cuba. Leader, Bill Dodson. [D] to leave by 9:00 A.M.

August No monthly meeting.

Aug 16 Field Forum. Bear Canyon. Frances Robertson, Leader. 9:00 a.m. [C]

Aug 21 Field Forum. Las Huertas Creek. PamMcBride, Leader. 9:00 a.m. [D]

Aug 28 Field Forum. Tecolote Peak. Jeanette Buffet, Leader. 9:00 a.m. [A]

Sep 2 Meeting. Plant Conservation in New Mexico: What Does it Mean? Jim Nellesen, Conservation chair for the NPSNM and biological consultant.

Sep 4 Field Forum. Albuquerque Volcanoes. Gary Runyan (205-9953)/George Miller, Leaders. 9:00 a.m. [B]

Sep 5 Invasive Plant Control Project. Frances Robertson and Nancy Hudson, Leaders. 8:00 a.m. [F]

Sep 12 Field Trip. San Franciso Riverside Drain Just North Of Sevilleta Wildlife Refuge. Jim McGrath, Leader. 9:00 a.m. [G] We will explore wetlands and alkaline riparian communities in the floodplain of the Rio Grande. Bring lunch.

Sep 18 Field Forum. Tecolote Peak. Jeanette Buffet, Leader. 9:00 a.m. [A]

Sep 27 Field Forum. Placitas Open Space. Lolly Jones, Leader. Meet 9:15 a.m at [E]. Carpoolers meet 8:30 at [D].

El Paso

All programs are second Thursdays at 7 p.m. at El Paso Garden Center, 3105 Grant St. All society events are free unless otherwise noted. Nonmembers are always welcome. Info: 240-7414, 833-7637, 383-3006.

Jul 9 Program. Backyard Wildlife Habitats. The Wildscape program is a habitat restoration and conservation plan for rural and urban areas. Scott Cutler, Curator of Collections and Exhibits at UT–EP's Centennial Museum.

Aug 13 Program. Native Tree Identification. Dr. Rolston St. Hilaire, author and professor in the Dept. of Plant and Environmental Sciences at NMSU.

Sep 10 Program. Risks and Benefits of Medicinal Plant Use. Dr. Armando Gonzalez S., Herbal Research Coordinator for UT–EP and UT–Austin Cooperative Pharmacy Program, and instructor in Complementary and Alternative Medicines at the College of Health Sciences.

Sep 25–27 Native Plant Fall Garden Tour and Plant Sale. Native plants used in these gardens will be sold concurrently with the tour. Gardens are on E and W sides of El Paso.

Gila (Silver City)

All programs and hikes are free and open to the public. Meetings are third Fridays at 7 p.m. at WNMU's Harlan Hall. Hikers meet at 8 a.m. in south parking lot of WNMU Fine Arts Theatre the morning of the hike to arrange carpooling. Participants must sign a release-of-liability form at that time, and will receive a list of native plants in the hiking area. For more info, call Deming Gustafson, 575/388-5192. Destinations may be changed due to weather. Activity updates posted on www.gilanps.org.

Jul 11 Garden Walk. Three local gardens specializing in native plants. Meet at 9 am in the south parking lot of the Performing Arts Theater on the WNMU campus.

Jul 19 Hike—easy. North side of Signal Peak.

Aug 16 Hike—moderate. Spring Canyon in the Florida Mtns south of Deming.

Aug 26, Sep 2, Sep 9 Fern Workshop. Russ Kleinman, Bill Norris, & Richard Felger. Short presentations followed by local field trips. Biology lab at Harlan Hall, WNMU campus,

6 p.m. To enroll, contact Keller Suberkropp at 575/313-1518, or keller65@signalpeak.net. Nominal enrollment fee.

Sep 18 Program. Land Reclamation Project at Axel Canyon Ranch in the Burros. George Farmer. Refreshments follow the meeting.

Sep 20 Hike—moderate. Sheep Corral, deep-woods riparian area.

Las Cruces

Meetings and programs are Wednesdays at 7 p.m. in the conference room of the Social Center at the University Terrace Good SamaritanVillage, 3011 Buena Vida Circle, Las Cruces. (On the right, while traveling east on BuenaVida from Telshor.) Field trips are Saturdays; most last into the afternoon. Participants must sign a release-of-liability form. Children must be accompanied by their parents. Programs and field trips are free; nonmembers always welcome. Contacts: Ray Bowers, 575/541-1877; Carolyn Gressitt, 575/523-8413; Al Krueger, 575/532-1036.

Jul 8 Talk. June-Flowering Plants of the San Juan National Forest, Colorado, from Durango to the Alpine Tundra. Ray Bowers.

Jul 11 Walk. June wildflowers in the Sacramento Mtns. Ray Bowers, leader. Meet at east parking lot of K-Mart on Hwy 70.

August No chapter meeting.

Aug 15 Walk. Peña Blanca area. John Freyermuth and Carolyn Gressitt, leaders. Meet at east end of the Rio Grande Bank parking lot at the corner of University and Telshor, 8:00 a.m.

Sep 9 Talk. Different vegetation types of the White Sands Missile Range. David Anderson, WSMR Range Manager.

Sep 12 Walk. White Sands Missile Range. Dave Anderson, leader. Meet K-Mart east parking lot on Hwy 70, 8:00 a.m.

Otero (Alamogordo)

For field trip information, contact Eric Metzler, metzlere@msu.edu, 575/443-6250; or William Herndon, laluzlobo@gmail.com, 575/437-2555. More info available by the beginning of each month.

Jul 18 Field trip. Three Rivers. Meet at the "Y" in Tularosa at 8:00 a.m.

Aug 12–15 Otero County Fair. Anyone willing to help please contact Helgi Osterreich, 575/585-3315, hkasak@netmdc.com.

Aug 22 Walk. Across road from "steep hill" off Hwy 82. The old road goes above the tunnel. *Caution:* Must walk/cross Hwy 82 and go through a barbed-wire fence; otherwise a decent trail. Meet at SW corner of Hwy 82 and Florida at 8:00 a.m.

Sep 12 Field trip. Aguirre Springs, Organ Mtns. Meet at Old WalMart parking lot, jctn Hwys 54 and 70 at 8:00 a.m.

San Juan (Farmington)

Meetings are third Thursdays at 7 p.m. at San Juan Community College. For more info, contact Les Lundquist at 505/334-8634 or Dalunk54@yahoo.com.

Santa Fe

Meetings are third Wednesdays at 7 p.m. at College of Santa Fe, 1600 St. Michael's Dr., Luke Hall, Room 303. For more information, contact Tom Antonio, tom@thomasantonio.org, 505/690-5105; or Carol Johnson, gcjohnson@comcast.net, 505/466-1303.

Jul 18 Summer Wildflower Walk. La Barbaria Canyon (off Old Santa Fe Trail). Meet 9:00 a.m. and carpool from the K-Mart store on St. Michael's Dr. For more info, call Tom Antonio.

Taos

Meetings are second Wednesdays at 7 p.m. at the San Geronimo Lodge. For more information on field trips and other activities, contact David Witt, 575/758-0619, or davidwitt@cybermesa.com. Check Web link for this chapter to get updates. Chapter members will get e-mail or USPS mail notification.

Jul 8 Talk. Vertical Gardening with Edible Landscapes. Christie Brown, landscaper in restorative farming and ornamental gardening.

Jul 11 Walk—easy. Santa Barbara Canyon. Meet at San Francisco de Asis N. Plaza 8:00 a.m.

Jul 28 Walk—easy. Aqua Piedra meadow and spruce forest. Meet at San Francisco de Asis N. Plaza 8:00 a.m.

Aug 6–9 Annual NPSNM meeting, "Mountain Peaks to River Valleys." For details, see April–June 2009 newsletter or visit http://npsnm.unm.edu/meetings.html.

Sep 9 Talk. Integrated Pest Management. Tessa Grasswitz, PhD.

Vascular Plants of the Gila National Forest: Introducing "gilaflora.com"

by Russ Kleinman

Native Plant enthusiasts who visit the Gila National Forest in southwest New Mexico can research the flora in this area by visiting "gilaflora.com." This website, affiliated with the Dale A. Zimmerman Herbarium and the Western New Mexico University Department of Natural Sciences, displays photographs and information on about 900 of the estimated 1500 plant taxa found in the Gila. The site is easy to navigate and is arranged by family, scientific name, and common name. There are several useful features, including keys for the most common fern genera found in the Gila, a large file on eponyms, and an easy-to-use navigation bar on the opening page. Give "gilaflora.com" a try! ❖

Opening page of www.gilaflora.com

Salvage Zone Update

by Renée West

Every day I commute 30 miles to work in a spectacular national park. But right now more than half that trip is a major construction zone. You may remember that U.S. Highway 62/180 between Carlsbad and Texas is being turned from a two-lane into a four-lane highway. While that doesn't sound like much habitat loss, it adds up to lots of acres. And lots of bulldozed trees, shrubs, and forbs.

I take great comfort in the fact that our Society salvaged thousands of plants before the bulldozers moved in. Again, I say thank you to the members and chapters who drove so many miles and worked so hard on the salvage. And to Jim Nellessen and Sandra Lynn for organizing the effort. ❖

A sign proclaims that one portion of the highway construction will be going on for many more months.

Bulldozers scrape land for two new lanes on Highway 62/180 near Carlsbad Caverns National Park.

See You in Taos!

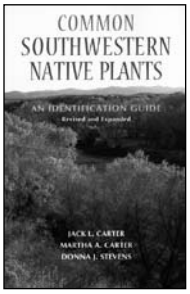
It's not too late to register for the Annual Meeting August 6–9 in Taos. All details and registration information and form are in the last newsletter and on the NPSNM website.

And don't forget about the silent auction! Auction items are not expected to be expensive and can include anything from discarded books to bric-a-brac—anything you have that you are ready to discard. Bring your donation items and leave them at the registration desk. If you have any questions about the appropriateness of an item, please e-mail Judy Lister, glister@newmex.com. ❖

New and Recent Books

***Common Southwestern Native Plants: An Identification Guide* (revised and expanded)**
By Jack Carter, Martha Carter, and Donna Stevens
Mimbres Publishing, Silver City, NM. 258 pages.

Review by Bob Sivinski



When the first edition of this popular book sold out, Jack and Martha Carter took the opportunity to revise and expand their second edition, which is now available. What a nice improvement—especially in the layout and design. Now the information, illustrations, and photos for each species are all on the same page. Colored blocks of print also draw the reader's eyes to interesting highlights about medicinal or other ethnobotanical uses, landscaping potential, habitats, national and state champion trees, quotes from novelists, and historical notes on early botanists—such as an introduction to the original drawing of saguaro cactus from Emory's report of his 1846 military expedition from Santa Fe to California. Many of these were either missing from the first edition or buried in a solid introductory paragraph.

This is still an identification guide with amateur-friendly technical descriptions, but the revised edition visually separates the technical from the purely informational parts and says, "Look! This is also interesting." That approach gets people hooked on native plants. Many improvements have also been made in the quality of the photographs. Owners of the first edition will want to get the second edition just for the more numerous and better photos.

The first edition of *Common Southwestern Native Plants* lacked many common southwestern plants—especially in Arizona. The second, expanded edition starts to correct this by adding more than twenty new species, including saguaro cactus and palo verde trees of the Sonoran Desert. Most of this book is devoted to woody plants, which are the dominant and obvious species in most of our southwestern landscapes and ecosystems. All the woody plants are illustrated with line drawings by three talented artists—Beth Dennis, Marjorie Leggitt, and William Underwood. Not all common woody plants are included, but the authors do a good job of indicating other related species that may also be common in the region, which extends from Trans-Pecos Texas to the Colorado River of eastern California, and north to southern Colorado and southeastern Utah. Photos and brief descriptions of some common (and uncommon) herbaceous plants occupy fourteen pages of the book, but these are not the main focus of this field guide.

The authors have selected an appropriate mix of species for this second edition. I think anyone could stop on any roadside in the Southwest and use this book to quickly identify at least three or a half dozen common plants in the immediate area. This opens a window to the natural world and invites amateur naturalists to discover and enjoy their surroundings. The 6x9-inch size makes this book easy to carry. It should be in the car glove box of everyone who wants to learn the common plants of this region. ❖

High and Dry: Gardening with Cold-Hardy Dryland Plants
By Robert Nold
Timber Press. 420 pages.

Review by Irene Wanner

"It is hard for people to accept the idea that a garden does not have to be watered," writes Lakewood, Colorado, horticulturalist Robert Nold in his beautiful, informative new book. His challenging premise depends on selecting dryland, cold-hardy plants adapted to our demanding Southwest environment rather than settling for traditionally popular but alien species common to English country gardens or most other American regions. Among many great reasons to choose native plants instead of what's usually sold at hardware stores and conventional nurseries is that, once established, local species set us free from watering and managing drainage, spraying pests and applying fertilizer.

Eliminating such endlessly repetitive chores offers savings of time, money, energy, and precious resources, and is especially rewarding since we live in what Nold long complained is "the most awful gardening climate on the planet." It's arid if not flooding, freezing in winter, scorching in summer, has high-intensity ultraviolet light, low humidity, poor soil, howling wind. You name it, we gardeners struggle with it.

So why not landscape with proven experts? Flora that evolved here already know and can show us exactly what they need to flourish; all we have to do is consult the world's best teacher—nature itself—study its lessons, then add guidance and encouragement from Nold, whose 45 years' experience with drought-tolerant plants provides invaluable insights.

Book Review: *High and Dry* *(continued)*

Be warned, though. His approach is an extreme make over. "I would argue that successful dryland gardening requires a rejection of much of the accepted wisdom of traditional horticulture," he explains, adding the necessity for "a whole new catalog of plants, a new gardening technique, and a wholesale acceptance, without reservation, of the realities of the climates of the West."

His opening chapter introduces the dryland climate and specific gardening methods tailored to its high altitude and low rainfall. He confesses personal failures and successes in a charming yet authoritative text that prompts us to appreciate the diversity and often-overlooked beauty of local and regional perennials and annuals, grasses, bulbs, rock garden plants, cacti, yuccas, shrubs, and trees. Throughout, photographs, drawings, and commentary are attractive and instructive.

Growing plants that thrive nearby, Nold demonstrates, is a smart choice. It simplifies outdoor work and provides a surprising array of colors and textures. Another, less visible reason to embrace this advice is that insects and animals who coevolved with these natives and depend on them often cannot eat or reproduce in nonnatives.

"Growing drought-tolerant plants is the easiest kind of gardening there is," Nold maintains with his typical good humor. Although making the switch takes commitment, "Nothing else even approaches dryland gardening when it comes to the amount of work that does not have to be done; take away initial planting and what do you have? Lying in a hammock on a summer's day, watching the clouds pass by. . . ."

During the past 30 years or so, a slow shift toward adopting regional garden styles and native plants has been gathering attention and acceptance. This wonderful book provides both a practical briefing about and comprehensive lists of native plants. With such help, we can leave behind lawns, hardware store and big-box annuals, as well as exotic bushes and trees.

In his introduction to Nold's book, Panayoti Kelaidis, Curator of Plant Collections at the Denver Botanic Gardens, writes that he doubts "there is anywhere on the globe where urban and suburban gardens are so utterly different from the natural environment they replace." Whether restoring a garden bit by bit or starting from scratch, we can gain much from this new book, which encourages us to honor and respect—not to mention delight in—the Southwest's less wasteful, more eco-harmonious plants. ❖

Great Basin Wildflowers: A Guide to Common Wildflowers of the High Deserts of Nevada, Utah, and Oregon
By Laird R. Blackwell
Falcon. 288 pages.

Review by Chick Keller

Falcon continues to put out good flower identification and appreciation books under the series name *FalconGuide.* You may have seen several of particular interest to our area: *Northern Chihuahuan Desert Wildflowers* by Steve West, *Sonoran Desert Wildflowers* by Rich Spellenberg, and *Southern Rocky Mountain Wildflowers* by Leigh Robertson. They are good companions for these areas if one is interested in easy identification of the most common flora. Although each has this or that mistake—in the Chihuahuan Desert book, for example, spreading fleabane and white-eye goldenweed seem to be photos of the same species—they are by and large excellent books and delightful just to look at.

Recently another *FalconGuide* has come out. Laird Blackwell's *Great Basin Wildflowers* is a welcome addition to this series. The Great Basin is not in our area, but many of us drive through it on our way to other places. Its flora is larger and more diverse than one might suspect given the sometimes harsh environment. Much of it, of course, occurs in the higher mountains (Wheeler Peak in Great Basin National Park is over 13,000 feet high).

This guide is organized by flower color, which has the disadvantage that it spreads out species of the same genus. As a partial remedy for this, the introductory section gives the major families and the pages (in whatever color) on which their species can be found. There are also diagrams of pertinent plant structure—inflorescence, leaf shape, etc.

Unfortunately, however, the photos in this book are not up to the standards of the others in the series. It is difficult, if not impossible, to identify many of the plants from them. Photos to be used for identification need to be much more carefully made than many of those in this book. Indeed, in some it is hard to tell what the flower looks like at all. In others, one must search for the flower of interest among the others in the photo. The author does use the admirable device of insetting detailed photos with the main one, but usually these are so small as to be of little help. Most often it is the backgrounds that make the flower too hard to see in any detail. The photo of green bog orchid is so well matched to its background that I couldn't even tell it was an orchid. Heart-leaf twist flower has the same problem, and I couldn't even find the thyme-leaf speedwell in its photo. I could con-

Continued page 14

Book Review: *Great Basin Wildflowers* *(continued from p. 13)*

tinue to list others with this problem, but suffice it to say that the photos at best are a mixed bag—some quite nice, some of little use. Identifying flowers from photographs is notoriously hard, and the photographer must understand this and make every effort to show the important parts of the plant. In addition to background problems there is the common one that, if you show the plant in its entirety, the details of the flower are missed, and if you show the details, the general appearance of the plant is missed. Thus, consistently excellent photos, such as those in the other three guides, are not accidents but results of painstaking work. In *Great Basin Wildflowers,* often the photos look like something casually taken that didn't turn out but were used anyway.

To the book's credit, the descriptions are very well done and often come to the rescue, but even here there are problems. (The description of *Erigeron compositus* says it can't be confused, but omits to say it's the only one with palmate leaves, which does indeed set it apart.)

For those of you who have occasion to travel through the Great Basin, this book, despite its photographic flaws, is probably the best general one for identifying the more common flora found along the way. However, if you stop at a national park or interpretive center it would be good to obtain whatever plant identification publications are offered there. ❖

Native Plant Society of New Mexico

Board of Directors

President **Tom Antonio** tom@thomasantonio.org 505/690-5105
Vice-President **Renée West** keywestern@hotmail.com 575/885-3636
Recording Secretary **Pam McBride** ebotpam@msn.com 505/343-9472
Membership Secretary **Lolly Jones** ljones20@comcast.net 505/771-8020
Treasurer **Steve Robertson** bsrob4@msn.com 575/751-9592

At-Large Directors

Albuquerque **Frances Robertson** frobertson45@comcast.net 505/828-4775
El Paso **Jack Makepeace** jmakepeace@elp.rr.com 915/585-2149
Gila **Charles Holmes** iskander321@hotmail.com 575/388-1371
Las Cruces **Alan Krueger** abkrueg@earthlink.net 575/532-1036
Otero **Hildy Reiser** hildyranger@msn.com 575/439-5196
San Juan **Les Lundquist** Dalunk54@yahoo.com 505/326-7194
Santa Fe **Carol Johnson** gcjohnson@comcast.net 505/466-1303
Taos **Judy Lister** glister@newmex.com 575/776-1183

Chapter Presidents

Albuquerque **Pam McBride** ebotpam@msn.com 505/343-9472
El Paso **Cheryl Garing** cherylgaring@yahoo.com
Gila **Elroy Limmer** elroy.limmer@gmail.com 575/538-5513
Las Cruces **Ray Bowers** rsbowers2000@gmail.com 575/541-1877
Otero **Helgi Osterreich** hkasak@netmdc.com 575/585-3315
San Juan **Les Lundquist** Dalunk54@yahoo.com 505/326-7194
Santa Fe **Tom Antonio** tom@thomasantonio.org 505/690-5105
Taos **Kathryn Peel** HRXpert@msn.com 575/758-2576

Committee Chairs

Book Sales **Lisa Johnston** nps_nmbooks@hotmail.com 575/748-1046
Conservation **Jim Nellessen** jpnellessen@peoplepc.com 505/867-7905
Finance **Wynn Anderson** wanderson@utep.edu 915/433-6072
NMDOT **Lori Walton** Lori.Walton@state.nm.us
Poster Sales **Gary Runyan** gary.runyan@state.nm.us 505/205-9953
Website Editor **Jane Mygatt** jmygatt@unm.edu

Administrative Coordinator **Sandra Lynn**
sandra.d.lynn@gmail.com cell 505/366-4458 home 505/256-2594;
1814 Hermosa Dr. NE, Albuquerque, NM 87110-4924
Newsletter Editor **Sarah Johnson** sarita505@yahoo.com
Newsletter Proofreaders **Sandra Lynn and Renée West**
Newsletter Mailing **Carolyn Gressitt**

Membership in the NPSNM is open to anyone supporting our goals of promoting a greater appreciation of native plants and their environment and the preservation of endangered species. We encourage the use of suitable native plants in landscaping to preserve our state's unique character and as a water conservation measure. Members benefit from chapter meetings, field trips, publications, plant and seed exchanges, and educational forums. Members also qualify for membership in New Mexico Educators Federal Credit Union (see description in article below). A wide selection of books dealing with plants, landscaping, and other environmental issues are available at discount prices. The Society has also produced two New Mexico wildflower posters by artist Niki Threlkeld and a cactus poster designed by Lisa Mandelkern. These can be ordered from our poster chair or book sales representative.

This Newsletter is published quarterly by the Native Plant Society of New Mexico, a nonprofit organization, and is free to members. The NPSNM is composed of professional and amateur botanists and others with an interest in the flora of New Mexico. Original articles from the newsletter may be reprinted if attributed to the author and to this newsletter. Views expressed are the opinions of the individual authors and not necessarily those of NPSNM.

Next Deadline is September 1, 2009!

Articles and high-resolution artwork are enthusiastically welcomed and can be submitted to the editor, Sarah Johnson, at ***sarita505@yahoo.com.***

Volunteer Opportunity

Are you interested in learning more about plant, especially native plant, businesses? Would you like to develop some experience that could help you find a job with a publication in the future—or perhaps you would like to make use of experience you already have? If so, the NPSNM needs a volunteer in advertising sales for the newsletter. Your job would be limited in scope—dealing only with ads—and thus in your time commitment. Our editor, Sarah Johnson, needs an assistant to keep track of advertising for the newsletter. If interested, please get in touch with Sarah at sarita505@yahoo.com.

NPSNM Membership Application

Name(s) _____

Address _____

City _____ **State** _____ **Zip** _____

Telephone _____

E-Mail/Fax _____

I (we) wish to affiliate with the checked chapter: (Please check only one)

- ❑ Albuquerque
- ❑ El Paso, TX
- ❑ Gila (Silver City)
- ❑ Las Cruces
- ❑ No affiliation
- ❑ Otero (Alamogordo)
- ❑ San Juan (Farmington)
- ❑ Santa Fe
- ❑ Taos
- ❑ *I am interested in forming a new chapter in* _____

Annual Dues:

Individual	$ 25
Family	30
Friend of the Society	50
Sponsor	100
Patron	250
Life Member	1,000
Limited Income, Students, and Seniors (65+)	15

Total: $ _____

Make your check payable to

NPSNM

and send to

Membership Secretary
P.O. Box 35388, Albuquerque NM 87176

2nd Annual Native Grasses Workshop

WORKSHOP FEES *NPSNM members:* $50
Nonmembers: $75 (includes a one-year individual membership in the NPSNM)

Send a check or money order made out to NPSNM
with the form below to: Administrative Coordinator, NPSNM
1814 Hermosa Dr. NE, Albuquerque, NM 87110-4924

If you must cancel, all but $5 of your fee will be refunded if notice of your cancellation is received by July 3. Workshop information will be e-mailed if possible, so please include an e-mail address. If you have questions or requests, call 505-256-2594 or e-mail sandra.d.lynn@gmail.com.

Workshop Registration

Name _____

Address _____ **City** _____ **State** _____ **Zip** _____

(Area Code) Telephone _____ **E-Mail** _____

Registration deadline: July 10

Native Plant Society of New Mexico
734 North Reymond St.
Las Cruces, NM 88005

Non-profit
Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit #946
Las Cruces, NM

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED