

NEW MEXICO'S VOICE FOR NATIVE PLANTS



NEWSLETTER

of the
NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY
OF NEW MEXICO

OCTOBER, NOVEMBER, DECEMBER 2023

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got pollen?

While the temperatures might not yet hint of winter to come, the days are shorter and it's time for insects and others to gather their harvests for cooler days ahead.
An *Agapostemon* green sweat bee in a globe mallow flower (*Sphaeralcea* sp.).

Image: Kevin Floyd, El Paso Chapter

The Newsletter of the Native Plant Society of New Mexico

October–December 2023, Vol. 48 No. 4. This newsletter is published quarterly by the Native Plant Society of New Mexico (PO Box 35388, Albuquerque, NM 87176) and is free to members. The NPSNM, a nonprofit organization, is composed of native plant enthusiasts and advocates, from home gardeners to resource managers and botanists, 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. Articles and high-resolution artwork supporting NPSNM's mission are welcomed and can be sent to the editor, Margaret Ménache, [newsletter \[at\] npsnm.org](mailto:newsletter[at]npsnm.org).

The next submission deadline is November 25, 2023.

Mission The Native Plant Society of New Mexico (NPSNM) is a non-profit organization that strives to educate the public about native plants by promoting knowledge of plant identification, ecology, and uses; fostering plant conservation and the preservation of natural habitats; supporting botanical research; and encouraging the appropriate use of native plants to conserve water, land, and wildlife.

Inside This Issue

- 3 From the Presidents
- 5 CCF Grant Aids in Tamarisk Removal
- 6 Conservation Corner
- 7 Conservation News from the Las Cruces Chapter
- 8 Chapter Activities and Events
- 10 Recognizing Members
- 11 Carter Conservation Fund Donors
- 12 Vicky Ramakka: The Pearl Plot and...
- 12 ... A Remembrance

We Want to Hear from You!

Do you have an idea for an article for our newsletter?
Do you have information about an event or activity that would be of interest to our membership?
Have you read a compelling book, an educational article?
Have you visited a thought-provoking website?
Have you been on an exciting hike?
Do you have photographs, drawings, paintings of favorite or unusual plants?
Share your thoughts, ideas, writings, and illustrations with us.

Email us at: [newsletter \[at\] npsnm.org](mailto:newsletter[at]npsnm.org)

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, to conserve water, and as a part of the regional ecosystem in support of native pollinators and other fauna. Members benefit from chapter presentations, field trips, plant and seed exchanges/sales, discounts on publications, a statewide conference, and a network of knowledgeable plant enthusiasts.



Joining is easy! Scan this QR code to be directed to our website or go there the old-fashioned way from your browser: www.npsnm.org. You may also snail mail your contact information, local chapter preference (if any), and dues to our main address (NPSNM, PO Box 35388, Albuquerque NM 87176). Yearly dues [\$30 regular individual, \$45 household, \$60 friend of the Society, and \$20 for youth (through 26 years) or PK-12 teacher] and donations are tax deductible. Higher supporting levels can be found on our website. ❖

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From the Presidents

by Wendy and Don Graves



Greetings members of the Native Plant Society of New Mexico! We hope that all of you have received a bit of rain and have managed to stay cool during this very hot and dry summer. As we write, the Gila Chapter Native Plant Sale has just happened and our cautions about planting anything in such heat and dryness are still on the tips of our tongues. We hope all are managing to pull their plants through this.

This letter has a theme, beyond our attempt to visit all chapters, so see if you can detect it as you read. We are On the Road Again.



First stop: Taos Chapter

We visited the Taos chapter in early July, taking in a presentation by Dr. Andreas Wion on July 5th, a chapter meet and greet on the 7th, and a field trip on the 8th. This was our first visit to the Taos area and we were amazed to experience very green and lush foliage everywhere!

Dr. Wion gave a fascinating presentation on mast seeding in piñon pines titled, “Everything you wanted to know about the Piñon but never thought to ask.” Dr. Wion discussed mast seeding: the production of seeds in vastly different numbers from one year to the next and its effects on other species in the ecosystem. You can listen to his presentation on the Taos Chapter's Youtube channel (link available on their NPSNM website page).

The next day we were able to see member Paul Cross' wholesale growing operation. Here is a native plant grower who would like to transition to growing all natives! Paul has a great passion for growing native plants combined with all the infrastructure and know-how to do it; but building a supply chain includes having retailers who see the importance and value of native plants and want to sell them, as well as customers who want to buy them. Seeing how all of the pieces can work together is an important part of encouraging the growing, selling, buying, and planting of native plants.

The meet and greet was held at the Taos chapter greenhouse in Rio Fernando Park, a green space owned by the Taos Land Trust, which has received multiple Carter Conservation Fund (CCF) grants in years past [read more in NPSNM newsletter Jan 2021 p.12, p. 13]. The greenhouse is a wonderful facility and is well used by the Taos chapter for growing native plants for their native plant sales, to plant in the lovely native garden they have just outside of the greenhouse, and for the nearby native plant pollinator garden. It was very rewarding for us to meet so many members and to learn what's on their minds. This meet and greet served another important purpose — an opportunity for all the people who joined the NPSNM during the Covid years to meet each other and our members who have been in the NPSNM much longer. Many of you may not know that the NPSNM has grown to more than 800 members, a conservative estimate, with much of that growth



Members relaxing at the Taos Chapter meet and greet: a chance for new members and old to get to know one another.
Image: Mary Adams

occurring over the last few years, so meeting and greeting has the very important function of welcoming our new members!

The field trip was a wonderful three-mile round trip wildflower excursion up the Agua Sarca Trail, not far from the Taos Ski Valley. The field trip was led by Taos Chapter President Mary Adams, a skilled observer and well-versed on the native vegetation of the area. The moderate climb up the valley led to a wonderful series of alpine meadows. Highlights of the trip included Fernleaf Lousewort (*Pedicularis procera*), two species of native flax (*Linum* spp.), Mountain Figwort (*Scrophularia montana*) and many other sub-alpine and alpine plants too numerous to mention.

Next stop: Santa Fe Chapter

We just wrapped up a visit to the Santa Fe Chapter and were very impressed with all of the buzz around native plants in this capital city. We spent three days exploring the Santa Fe Botanical Garden, the Institute for Applied Ecology, the NMSU Extension Office, and the Railyard Park Conservancy. Each of these visits involved meeting with people who are doing interesting and important projects with native plants and restoration. On our final evening in Santa Fe we had a surprise visit with the NPSNM Teacher of the Year, Claire Noonan, for work accomplished in 2022 [Jul 2023, p. 16].

At the spacious Santa Fe Botanical Garden, a botanical garden that emphasizes native plants and uses organic methods, we met with Linda Churchill, Christina Salvador, and Sylvan Kaufman to learn about the development of the garden and some past projects they have completed with the help of CCF grants awarded in 2020 and earlier. We viewed Christina Selby's exhibit, “Piñon Country: Illuminating the Interdependence of Life in the Iconic Woodlands

Continued page 4

Presidents' Letter, *Continued from page 3*

of the West," which was funded, in part, by a CCF grant this year. The installation, in the Botanical Garden's Piñon-Juniper Woodland, will be on view until November 26th. The exhibit is both beautiful and impactful and the garden is a magnificent space that emphasizes native plants and landscapes with a dedicated staff and volunteers!

During our visit to the Southwest Office of the Institute for Applied Ecology (IAE), we reconnected with Director Melanie Gisler and learned about a few of the many projects at IAE. The Santa Fe IAE has experienced meteoric growth in the years since its inception in 2015. The personnel here have applied for, and received, multiple CCF grants in the past. In fact, Melanie Gisler was awarded the Jack and Martha Carter Plant Conservation Award for her work at the IAE at the 2019 NPSNM Annual Conference in Santa Fe [Oct 2019, p. 5]. The IAE's popular ecoregional curriculum for grades 9-12 titled "From Ponderosa to Prickly Pear" is just one example of the projects Melanie has helped develop.

The NMSU Extension Office in Santa Fe is surrounded on three sides by lovely native plant gardens and a meadow. Some of this space was planted as a part of the Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation's Santa Fe Pollinator Trail Habitat Kits program. The large native plant meadow at the NMSU Extension office was established by the Santa Fe Extension Master Gardeners, utilizing a 2021 CCF grant [Jan 2022, p. 12]. We met there with Pamela Wolfe to see the meadow and learn more about the SnapPP Certification developed and offered by the Santa Fe Master Gardeners. We believe this native plant certification to be rare, or even unique, in the Master Gardeners Program and we have promised to explore with Pam the possibility of inviting other Master Gardener programs around the state and beyond to include a similar native plant certification, which is long overdue!



Izzy Barr (right) shows Don Graves (left) the variety of wildflowers that can be found at the Railyard Park in Santa Fe. Image: Wendy Graves

Still in Santa Fe, Izzy Barr and the Railyard Park Conservancy were awarded a CCF grant this year to develop and distribute a "Wildflowers of the Railyard Park" booklet, highlighting the native wildflowers that can be seen at the Railyard Park. This lovely booklet was illustrated by artist Lynn Grimes and contains beauti-

ful watercolor paintings of the most abundant native wildflowers in the Park. The booklet is designed to stimulate interest and to offer information in a friendly, informal tone to visitors at the Park. The Railyard Park has restored native grasses and forbs on a few acres directly adjacent to the main gathering area near the community room. They are also working on transitioning some of the areas that have been gardened more formally in the past to native plants and have received CCF grants in the past as well as this year.



From left to right: Claire's daughter, Kate Muir; Wendy Graves; Claire Noonan, the NPSNM 2023 Teacher of the Year; and Don Graves sit together for a photograph during a quiet moment at the Santa Fe gathering after hours at the Plants of the Southwest Nursery.

The last evening we were in Santa Fe, the chapter held their Summer Gathering after-hours at the Plants of the Southwest (PSW) nursery in a space graciously offered by NPSNM member and PSW proprietor, Gail Haggard. This was an excellent opportunity for us to meet several Santa Fe Chapter members. What a welcoming group!

We also met Claire Noonan, the 2023 NPSNM Teacher of the Year, a Carter Fund award. Claire Noonan was awarded this honor for multiple projects impacting over 200 students each year, working with native plants, passive water harvesting, and more. Her work with high school students impressed the NPSNM Board! The Santa Fe chapter is pleased to have her as an active member, and she earned a loud round of applause and woo-hoo's when she mentioned having students who need volunteer hours and projects!

And Next Up: Albuquerque Chapter

Look out, Albuquerque Chapter, we hope to visit with you before the end of our first year as Co-Presidents! After that, we plan to start the visits all over again to learn of new projects, initiatives and, hopefully, to participate in some more chapter field trips!

What We Are Learning

First of all, we are learning what we need to do to make the most of these chapter visits. We are also using the visits to learn some organizational history through visiting as many Carter Grant and Award recipients, past and present, as possible, as well as learning

more about other native plant related projects around the state. We more fully understand that our job as co-presidents includes being ambassadors for the NPSNM and its seven chapters, in addition to being encouraging voices for the chapters and individual members who are all doing such wonderful, creative work to further our shared goals. Along those lines, we should all feel immensely pleased with, and proud of, the health of the Native Plant Society of New Mexico and the fine people who keep it humming!

Each of the six chapters that we have visited (El Paso, Otero, Las Cruces, Gila, Taos and Santa Fe) have visibly large communities of people dedicated to the health and well-being of native plants and the wildlife they support. We recommend a visit to all of these places for anyone interested in seeing creative and impactful projects, diverse programs and super field trips. We believe we may have only scratched the surface of what can be learned, native-plant wise, from visits to these chapters.

Jack and Martha Carter Conservation Fund

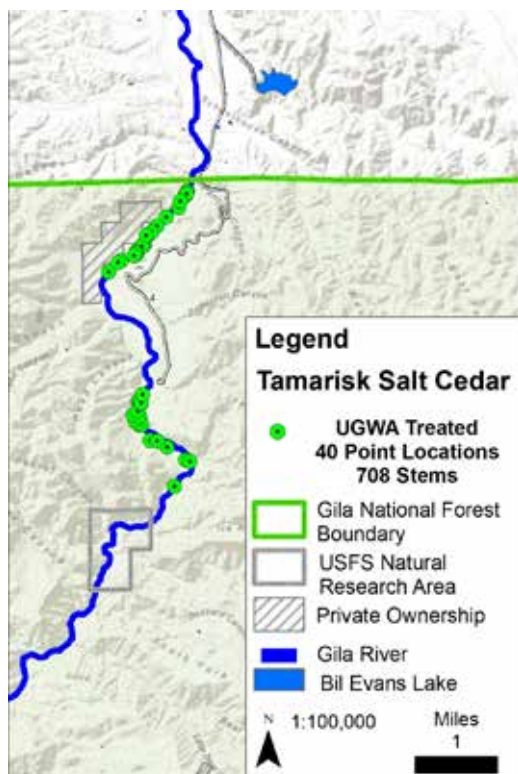
The fund was established with a gift from Jack and Martha Carter. Jack passed away back in 2020; Martha has just recently celebrated her 90th birthday. Jack and Martha wanted this fund to support “conservation, restoration, research and educational grants and donations to individuals and organizations in support of NPSNM goals.” In 2023, over \$22,000 was awarded to a variety of worthy projects.

One of the primary jobs of the NPSNM Board is to review applications and to make Carter Conservation Fund awards. The grant applications are due at the end of December, as are nominations for Teacher of the Year awards, along with Year End Reports for the previous year’s grant recipients. The Board meets in January, discusses the applications and nominations, and comes to agreement on funding of grants and awards. In addition, the Fund gives gifts of \$600 to five regional herbaria every year: University of Texas, El Paso; Dale A. Zimmerman Herbarium, Western New Mexico University, Silver City [Apr 2019, p. 12]; New Mexico State University, Las Cruces [Oct 2021, p. 10]; University of New Mexico, Albuquerque; and San Juan College, Farmington.

From making it possible for graduate students to travel to their field work, to establishing demonstration gardens and funding larger restorations, the CCF grants are making a big difference. Please consider making a gift to the Carter Fund: <https://www.npsnm.org/conservation/carter-conservation-fund/> or scan in the QR code on page 15. Our annual acknowledgment to those who have contributed to the Fund over the past year is on page 11. Your support allows us to continue to fund projects such as the ones touched on in our letter as well as highlighted in articles in this newsletter throughout the year. Thank you!

It is also the perfect time to direct anyone you know with a native plant-related project to consider applying for a CCF grant (<https://www.npsnm.org/nps-sponsored-grants-donations/>). We also welcome worthy teacher nominations (<https://www.npsnm.org/science-teacher-award/>).

We look forward to continuing to work with you all in your support for, research about, educational efforts for, and just plain old love for native plants! ❖



CCF Grant Aids in Tamarisk Removal

by Donna Stevens, Gila Chapter

It's dirty work, but somebody's gotta do it. Combine a willingness to work hard with a love of the Gila River, and you've defined the tamarisk treatment crew of the Upper Gila Watershed Alliance (UGWA).

Getting rid of tamarisk (*Tamarix* spp., aka salt cedar) is no easy task. Given the right conditions, this tenacious, invasive species can outcompete native riparian trees and shrubs such as willows and cottonwoods. Because the Gila River's flow regime is still relatively intact in southwest New Mexico, tamarisks have yet to gain a critical foothold along its banks, as they have along the Gila River in Arizona. But as UGWA has learned, tamarisk eradication is a multi-year endeavor, not a one-and-done deal.

UGWA and its experienced, dedicated crew have worked on Gila River tamarisk eradication for eight years. Beginning in 2016, we removed tamarisk along 40+ miles along the Gila River in the Gila Wilderness Area, and revisited those tamarisk stands in 2017 to cut and treat resprouts and new seedlings. In 2018, our crew worked in the headwaters, removing tamarisk along the Gila's Middle Fork, and, fortunately, finding none along the West Fork.

Continued page 15

Conservation Corner

~~~~~  
 by *Sylvan Kaufman*,  
*NPSNM Conservation Committee Chair*

### Please be in Touch!

I joined the New Mexico Native Plant Society in 2008, the first year I lived in New Mexico, and now that I've been living here full time for a few years, I am honored to serve as the Conservation Committee Chair. I want to thank Rachel Jankowitz for all of her work as the past Chair since 2014 and I am very grateful that she will continue to serve on the Conservation Committee as the representative from the Taos Chapter. Currently, our other representatives include Kevin Floyd (El Paso), Rose Lion and Laurel Berry (Otero), Renee Galeano-Popp (Santa Fe), Ken Steigman (Las Cruces), and Philip Hastings (Gila). The committee welcomes representatives from other chapters; most work is done via email with occasional online or in-person meetings as needed.

The Committee is working on a new mission statement and updated web pages, but our main focus, as always, is to promote science-based conservation and keep you and the general public informed about issues affecting New Mexico's native plants. You can reach me at conservation [at] npsnm.org. Please be in touch about any conservation issues in your area that we can help with, that you can inform us about, or that you'd like to know more about!

### BLM Conservation and Landscape Health Rule

Rachel worked with the Arizona and Colorado Native Plant Societies to write a letter of support and comment on the proposed Bureau of Land Management's Conservation and Landscape Health Rule (<https://www.blm.gov/public-lands-rule>). The regulations would allow for Conservation Leases that could compensate for habitat loss and restore degraded areas but, as currently written, would make it difficult for non-profit organizations to participate in smaller acreage projects given the cost requirements of the leases. BLM writes, "The proposed Public Lands Rule would establish a framework to ensure healthy landscapes, abundant wildlife habitat, clean water and balanced decision-making on our nation's public lands. The proposal would uphold the Bureau of Land

Management's (BLM) multiple use and sustained yield mission, ensuring the health, diversity, and productivity of public lands for the use and enjoyment of present and future generations. By putting conservation on an equal footing with other uses, the proposal would help guide responsible development while safeguarding important places for the millions of people who visit public lands every year to hike, hunt, camp, fish, and more."

### Introducing *Oreocarya worthingtonii*



*Oreocarya worthingtonii* is a newly described *Oreocarya* species.

Image: Harpo Faust

Bob Sivinski's paper describing a new species of *Oreocarya* endemic to the Brokeoff Mountains was published in the July issue of the *Journal of the Botanical Research Institute of Texas*. He named it *Oreocarya worthingtonii* after New Mexico botanist Richard Worthington, who also found a few populations of the plant. Dr. Worthington is curator of the herbarium at the University of Texas El Paso.

Bob found the new species while searching for new populations of an endemic shrub, *Dermatophyllum gadalupense*. *Oreocarya worthingtonii* grows on limestone ridges and canyons, often in pockets of fine soil with traces of gypsum. This species is similar in appearance to *O. oblata*, but with more slender stems, smaller sepals and a smaller corolla, as well as differences in the nutlets. You can read the details at <https://journals.brit.org/jbrit/article/view/1286/1314>. The most significant conservation threats are disturbances caused by cattle grazing and the threat of development of oil and gas wells and their infrastructure, but most of the populations found so far are in remote, difficult to access areas.

### Permit Requirements Finalized for NM Rare Plant Takings

Regulations regarding rare plants and permits have been clarified and updated by the New Mexico Energy, Minerals and Natural Resources Department, <https://www.emnrd.nm.gov/sfd/rare-plants/request-a-collection-permit/>. EMNRD now defines take as, "Take' means to remove, harm, kill, destroy, possess, transport, export, sell, or offer for sale any of the plants, or parts thereof, listed in 19.21.2.9 NMAC, from the places in the state of New Mexico where they naturally grow including federally owned land, private

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land, state owned land, or land owned by political subdivisions of the state.” There are some exceptions to the rule, including uses by tribal members for religious purposes. The web site guides users in determining whether they need a permit or not for particular activities.

### Introducing Maria Mullins, BLM State Botanist/ Ecologist

Maria Mullins recently joined the New Mexico Bureau of Land Management as the Botany Program Lead out of Santa Fe. Maria gained botany and natural resources experience throughout diverse ecosystems in the Northern Rockies and Pacific Northwest prior to moving to New Mexico in 2019. She graduated with a BS in Resource Conservation and a BA in Spanish from the University of Montana (2010) and an MSc. in Ecology from the University of Colorado, Colorado Springs (2019). Maria leads the BLM NM Plant Conservation and Restoration Program (PCRP), including native plant materials development, pollinator habitat restoration, and managing and monitoring New Mexico's numerous and diverse rare plants. The PCRP program works with partners to provide best available science and tools to land managers in support of native plant conservation and restoration. ❖



*In some Native languages the term for plants translates to "those who take care of us."*

Robin Wall Kimmerer

## Conservation News from the Las Cruces Chapter

The Las Cruces Chapter (NPSNM-LC) has been and continues to be an active participant in the Bureau of Land Management - Las Cruces District's (BLM-LC) process to draft a new Resource Management Plan (RMP) for the Organ Mountains – Desert Peak National Monument (OMDPNM). The BLM announced the beginning of a scoping period from June 22 through August 1 during which documents were shared with the public online (<https://eplanning.blm.gov/eplanning-ui/project/92170/510>). A number of in-person and online meetings were held during this period. The slide presentations and background materials are available on the BLM eplanning website.

A BLM news release from June 22 states in part: "During the scoping period, we are especially interested in receiving feedback on the public's vision for the monument and the issues and concerns regarding the monument's current conditions and future proposed resource management. The BLM is also interested in comments on the preliminary management criteria and possible alternatives."

Through emails and social media announcements, the NPSNM-LC Chapter informed members and others about the upcoming BLM review and our intention to be active participants in the process. Members from our Chapter attended an in-person meeting on July 12 where we noted that NPSNM-LC was considered as a stakeholder in the process.

Subsequently, a committee from NPSNM-LC wrote and submitted two responses to the BLM, the first to the July 12 presentation and the second to a socioeconomic workshop. We addressed the importance of conservation, restoration and scientific management priorities with an emphasis on targeted data collection, native plant monitoring, restoration, as well as exclusions and restricted consumptive uses, especially where ecosystem conditions have been degraded. We quoted BLM's data from the scoping documents as well as from published scientific studies to underscore a history of damage caused by poor grazing practices in the

*Continued page 15*

### Plant Natives, Reduce Pesticides, and Transform Your Community!

**BEE CITY USA**  
AN INITIATIVE OF THE XERCES SOCIETY

The Carroll Petrie Foundation announces a new grant program for municipalities, counties, colleges, and universities located in New Mexico interested in becoming Bee City USA or Bee Campus USA affiliates.

For more information on the grant opportunity visit: [carrollpetrie.org](http://carrollpetrie.org)  
To learn about Bee City and Bee Campus USA visit: [beecityusa.org](http://beecityusa.org)

*The Carroll Petrie Foundation is a private family foundation based in Santa Fe, New Mexico. Alongside its partners, the Foundation invests in the care and protection of animals and the natural world.*

## Chapter Activities & Events

**For further information** on upcoming events, email or call the contact person listed, or visit the chapter's web page at [www.npsnm.org](http://www.npsnm.org). Click on Chapters to select the chapter. **Hikers** should always bring plenty of water, hat, sun protection, lunch and/or snacks, field guides. Wear sturdy shoes, suitable for rough, uneven ground. **Check with your chapter for any fees or restrictions they or the event venues might require. Please check with the hosting chapter to be sure you know the current status of any event listed here.** ❖

**Albuquerque** Monthly meetings are normally the first Wednesday of the month at 7:00 pm at the New Mexico Museum of Natural History and Science, 1801 Mountain Rd NW. For more information contact Sara Keeney at [skeaney \[at\] swcp.com](mailto:skeaney@swcp.com), 505-379-3392, or check the Albuquerque Chapter page on [npsnm.org](http://npsnm.org).

**Oct 4** Meeting. "Rare thistles of southwestern NM." John Gorey was working on invasive plant surveys in the Gila Wilderness in 2021 when he found a Graham's thistle (*Cirsium grahamii*), not seen in twenty years. He will present his findings from subsequent plant surveys as well as a recent, exciting rare-plant expedition in the high elevation Mogollon Mountains in 2023.

**Oct 21** Join us at Valle de Oro National Wildlife Reserve for Backyard Refuge Day.

*Continued page 14*

**El Paso** The El Paso Chapter is combining meetings with the El Paso Cactus and Rock Club starting in November. The meetings will be the first Saturday of the month at 10:00 am, and will take place at the Garden Center at Memorial Park (3105 Grant Ave, El Paso, TX 79930). All events are free unless a fee is specified. Nonmembers welcome. Info: Kevin Floyd, 915-747-6665; [kwfloyd \[at\] utep.edu](mailto:kwfloyd@utep.edu); <https://www.facebook.com/Native-Plant-Society-of-New-Mexico-El-Paso-Chapter-191913520833180>

**Oct 7** Fall FloraFest Native Plant Sale. 9:00 am–3:00 pm at UTEP. Fall is a great time to plant in the low desert, as cooler temperatures mean less stress for new plants. The native plant sale includes both native and desert-adapted non-native plants that are selected to do well in El Paso. Sale proceeds support the operations of the Chihuahuan Desert Gardens. Join us in the patio between the Centennial Museum and the Undergraduate Learning Center. Learn more at [florafest.org](http://florafest.org).

**Nov 4** Meeting. "If you plant it, they will come: meet the bees in your neighborhood and their favorite native plants!" Oliver Neria, a PhD student at UTEP researching the visual ecology, floral preferences, and behavior of native bees in the Chihuahuan Desert, will present a brief overview of the native bees of El Paso and their life histories, floral preferences, and nesting behaviors, as well as strategies that thoughtful gardeners can use to create useful bee habitat. How much will the bees love you? **See Cover Photograph!**

**Dec 2** Meeting. "In honor of Cactus Appreciation Month." There will be three presentations with Steven Brack, recently profiled in the *Cactus and Succulent Journal* for his critical work in seed collection and propagation techniques, Martine Kristen and Julia Etter of the Autonomous Mexican National University, and Kevin Floyd of the University of Texas at El Paso. There should be cacti and succulents for sale, and cactus experts to answer questions.

**Gila (Silver City)** Monthly evening programs will resume in October on third Fridays at 7:00 pm. Programs will be hybrid – in-person and via Zoom. For the venue for live meetings check our website at [www.gilanps.org/events/programs](http://www.gilanps.org/events/programs). Those who would rather join in online may request a Zoom link from GNPS at [gilanative \[at\] gmail.com](mailto:gilanative[at]gmail.com). (Gila Chapter members will automatically receive a Zoom link by email). All are welcome. Field trips will be planned as opportunities arise – check the website at <https://gilanps.org/events/field-trips/>

**Oct 20** Meeting. Mallory Davies, a doctoral student at Colorado State University, has been studying the lesser long-nosed bats and their food source, agave flowers. Three species of long-nosed bats migrate through the Gila region and depend on agave nectar during migration, pollinating the plants in the process. The Gila Chapter has been working with Bat Conservation International to plant more Parry's and Palmer's agaves. Mallory's talk gives us a chance to learn more about this animal/plant synergy.

**Nov 17** Meeting. John Gorey will speak about his research into a new thistle in the high Mogollon Mountains. While surveying for invasive plants in 2022, John came across a strange thistle above 10,000' in the Mogollon Mountains. New Mexico plant experts told John that it could be a species new to science or at least not known from this area. With Carter Conservation Foundation grants in 2022 and 2023 and supplemental funding from the Gila Chapter he was able to search the high mountains in July and August to find out more about the thistle and its habitat and unlock some of its secrets. He also planned to look for more locations of the rare Graham's Thistle. [See *NPSNM newsletter Jan 2023*, p. 5] Join us to hear about his findings.

**Dec 10** Holiday Party Potluck from noon to 3:00 pm. Gila Chapter members and friends will celebrate the holidays together with a potluck at the Women's Club at 411 Silver Heights Blvd, just off Route 180.

*Continued page 14*

**Las Cruces** Our hybrid meetings are held on the NMSU campus in the Biology Annex, Herbarium Building, 3080 Williams Avenue, Room 101 on the second Wednesday of each month at 7:00 pm. Zoom link available from LC [\[at\] npsnm.org](mailto:npsnm.org). Check the NPSNM website, the LC Chapter's Facebook page, and recent email for updates, changes, additional news and other events and activities of interest.

The Las Cruces Chapter is pleased to offer two \$500 grants, one to an undergraduate, and one to a graduate, student at NMSU whose projects or research are highly related to the organization's mission. Please contact the Scholarship Committee Chair, Joan Woodward ([jhirschman \[at\] cpp.edu](mailto:jhirschman[at]cpp.edu)), for application process details before the Oct 15, 2023 deadline.

**Oct 11** Meeting. TBD

**Oct 16** Field Trip. TBD

**Nov 8** Meeting. Alicia Marmolejo, the recipient of the our 2022 student grant, will present her preliminary report on a non-invasive New Mexico native plant that has become uncontrollably invasive in Israel. Her research will add to our knowledge of how introduced species become invasive. We

*Continued page 14*



**Otero** For workshop and field trip details, contact Elva Osterreich, echoofthedesert [at] gmail.com, 575-443-4408, or Jennifer Gruger, jengruger [at] gmail.com, 505-710-2924. Contact Jen if you'd like to be on a list to receive information regularly. More information will be available by the beginning of each month.

**Oct 21** Propagation workshop. Learn how to propagate plants. Time and location to be determined. Updates to follow.

**Nov 11** Field Trip. White Sands National Park. Guest speaker TBD. Fee free day and Veteran's Day at the Park. Meet at White Sands Visitor Center at 9:00 am. This will be a great opportunity for our chapter to visit the sands during a popular park day.



It's always the right time to visit White Sands National Park. Chapter VP Russell Davis was there scoping it out on 29 August according to the chapter's FB page. Image: @salim3D for Visit Alamogordo, downloaded from Otero Chapter FB page.

*Continued page 13*

**Santa Fe** In-person meetings are on the second Tuesday of the month from September through May at 6:30 pm at Christ Church, 1701 Arroyo Chamiso. For more information, check the NPSNM website. Meetings and talks are free and open to all.

**Oct 10** Meeting. "New invasive plants in the Southwest and science updates on common invaders" by Sylvan Kaufman. The third edition of "Invasive Plants: Guide to Identification and the Impacts and Control of Common North American Species" by Sylvan and her father Wallace Kaufman has been published by Stackpole Books! Books will be available for sale and signing.

**Nov 7** Meeting. "Forecasting piñon masting in New Mexico" by Andreas Wion. Andreas will be talking about his local research on masting in the piñon pine, and about his program of "ecological forecasting" of mast years in New Mexico. Dr. Andreas Wion is a research ecologist with the U.S. Geological Survey at the New Mexico Landscapes Field Station, based in Santa Fe.



Members enjoy a leisurely hike in the Santa Fe Ski Basin.

Image: Sylvan Kaufman.

This summer we had several terrific field trips to Arroyo Hondo Open Space to look at cacti, Kate Whelan's farm north of Santa Fe, the penstemon gardens at the Los Alamos Nature Center, and an informal field trip at the Ski Basin. Plants of the Southwest hosted a lovely summer social for the chapter, mentioned by co-presidents Don and Wendy, in their letter in this issue of the NPSNM newsletter. We were delighted to host them on their tour of the chapters of the NPSNM. And we were pleased to offer a field trip led by Bob Sivinski in mid-September to explore the plants of the Leonora Curtin Wetland Preserve.

**Taos** Videos of past meetings are at <https://tinyurl.com/TaosNPSvideos>. For updates, check the Taos page on the NPSNM website, our Facebook page, the Taos News Calendar, email TaosNPS [at] gmail.com, or contact Mary Adams, president, at mary\_adams\_co [at] msn.com. Meetings will be held on the FIRST Wednesday of the month in the Kit Carson Electric Cooperative Boardroom, 118 Cruz Alta Road at 6:00 pm.

*We look forward to welcoming all members of the NPSNM next year as we host the 2024 state conference in Taos!*

**Oct 6** Meeting. Harpo Faust, Collections Manager at the UNM Herbarium, will be talking about and showing us ferns in New Mexico.

**Nov 5** Meeting. Charles Curtain, author of "Science of Open Spaces," will give us his "Reflections on the Hermit's Peak - Calf Canyon Fire, A Year Later."

Our native plant season is winding down after four successful hikes, three field trips (a 4<sup>th</sup> still to come) and three plant sales. We sold natives from our greenhouse on July 19, then invited Charybda Farm, a wholesale greenhouse that is converting from horticultural plants to natives, along with Nan Fischer, gardening author, to join us at two more sales on July 26 and August 26. There are few resources for native plants in Taos, so we are collaborating with others plus growing in our greenhouse to meet an increasing demand to grow native.

Marty Purdy, Assistant State Botanist, and Ashley Taylor, Invasive Plant Coordinator, Department of Natural Resources, surveyed our greenhouse and demonstration garden in June and then visited the site of our SMU thistle remediation project, to discuss how we are planning to restore the 30-acre site to native grassland.

NPSNM presidents, Wendy and Don Graves, joined us for a new member meet-and-greet, in early July, as well as joining us at the July meeting and hike to Agua Sarca.

UNM-Taos, Klauer campus, received certification as a "Bee Campus", an initiative of the Xerces Society, and asked Taos NPS to help them plan and support a native plant garden. For more information on Bee Campus USA or Bee City USA search: [beecityusa.org](http://beecityusa.org) or see their ad on p. 7.

There have been two more meetings since the last newsletter. Dr. Andreas Wion, research ecologist with the USGS in Santa

*Continued page 14*

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## Recognizing Members

The NPSNM would like to thank all members who have made monetary contributions above their regular dues. This list, which covers August 16, 2022 through August 15, 2023, includes those who sent in extra contributions with their memberships. It doesn't recognize the other financial contributions people make throughout the year or the contributions of cooperation and energy from the wonderful members of this volunteer organization. The NPSNM thanks all of you for your support, whatever form it takes.

### Life Membership (\$1000)

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**When you renew your membership this year, consider renewing at the next level.**  
Check with the IRS or your tax preparer for details on charitable donation deduction guidelines.

## Carter Conservation Fund Donors

The NPSNM would like to thank all who have contributed to the Jack & Martha Carter Conservation Fund from August 16, 2022 through August 15, 2023. This fund was created to assist the NPSNM in maintaining a balanced budget while continuing to increase the funds available for conservation research and educational grants to individuals and organizations. It is a long-term endowment fund and your contributions enable the NPSNM to expand its support of programs, research, and education for those involved in the study of native plants. Every dollar we receive is important and we deeply appreciate your support. Information on how to make a donation may be found on p. 15, including a QR code for quick access to our online donation page.

### Jack & Martha Carter Conservation Fund

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### Interested in Applying for a Grant?

Applicants may send in their proposals any time of the year until December 31. Guidelines for applying and an application form may be found on the website. It is important for applicants to follow these guidelines so the proposals are consistent for the review process. The proposals are studied by the statewide members of the NPSNM Board and voted on at the winter Board Meeting, usually at the end of January.

The Carter Conservation Fund awards for grants are sent in February, while gifts in support of the regional herbaria are sent later in spring or early summer. The Carter Fund also finances an award to a Conservation Champion, chosen by the chapter hosting the statewide annual conference and presented to the individual at the conference banquet.

The money available for grants each year comes from donations during the previous twelve months and from any earnings on our investments. The Board has typically awarded grants to ten or more projects per year, with grants limited to \$1500 each. However, they have recently opted for higher awards in support of strong proposals with a greater impact for conservation, even if that necessitates fewer grants in a given year.

The NPSNM Policies in Effect document lays down criteria for awarding the grants, management of the fund, and establishes responsibilities for the awardees. The bylaws of the organization and the policies in effect are available for viewing by anyone on our website under Chapters/Statewide Organization. ❖

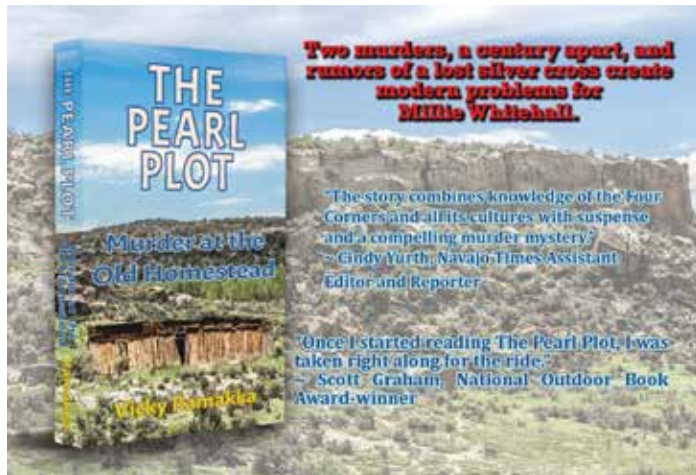
## Vicky Ramakka: The Pearl Plot and...

by Kathleen Hall & Margaret Ménache,  
Albuquerque Chapter

*The Pearl Plot: Murder at the Old Homestead*

Vicky Ramakka

Artemesia Publishing, New Mexico, 2023



336 pages

Vicky Ramakka's resolute yet affable botanist heroine Millie Whitehall (*The Cactus Plot*, reviewed Oct 2019, p. 14) is back in New Mexico with a second puzzle to solve. Millie was introduced to us as she arrived to take a temporary position at a BLM field station. The Southwest and its plants and people enchanted her, and she determined to return. Now she's hired in a permanent position at the same BLM office, where she's getting acquainted with another new hire, an archaeologist. Their first project, a survey of an old homestead, is barely underway when the two unexpectedly find themselves buried in layers of mystery and intrigue. There's a body, a missing relic, unusual artifacts, strange visitors, and perhaps a ghost to disrupt the serenity of the remote desert canyon. And, of course, there is no cell phone service.

In her first foray into the Four Corners, the heroine makes her way alone, meeting interesting characters and discovering herself as a young adult in the world. In this second volume, Millie begins to see herself as part of the communities that sustain those who share the landscape. Millie has found her home.

The supportive environment of the BLM office is home base. The office is populated with characters who try their best to protect the "magnet for trouble" as she carries on her work. Her friendship with the new archaeologist is strengthened by the peculiar events and their shared curiosity. Descendants of early settlers who maintain their connection to the land become her friends, sharing a fiesta with the traditional food that is uniquely Hispanic New Mexican, and sharing a solemn, rainy day on a porch in a quiet corner of rural New Mexico. Her Navajo friend takes her to

a powwow where she renews acquaintances and lets the beat of the dance drums pulse through her being.

As in *The Cactus Plot*, there is a plant community that engages Millie's botanical expertise and becomes a participant in the mysteries that demand resolution. Even the sandstone cliff with its petroglyphs is a kind of community that expresses itself to those who pay attention. It, too, plays a part in the drama. These communities work in concert to embrace and support Millie and carry the plot to its final act.

## ... A Remembrance

Vicky Ramakka's two novels may be enough to satisfy Millie's need to find her own life as an adult, but we will not be privy to her further adventures as a newly minted New Mexican. Following a very brief bout with a very aggressive cancer, we were saddened to learn of Vicky's death on July 22nd, only a week after the release of *The Pearl Plot*.

Although Vicky might have been a quiet voice in the NPSNM, she had an outsized voice in her educational efforts through an academic career and wide-ranging publications. She was a member of San Juan Writers, Women Writing the West, New Mexico Press Women and Southwest Writers; she won numerous awards from these and other groups. In a memorial piece from the Southwest Writers, her writing was described as ranging from originating and implementing programs for adult learners, to academic publications, to the plethora of reports that go with being an academic administrator. "After retirement, she turned to writing creatively."

*The Cactus Plot* provided extensive information on the need for protection of an endangered cactus in the face of competing land uses, to say nothing of very lucrative poaching activities. While the endangered cactus was not named explicitly in the novel, it was very closely modeled on the *Pediocactus knowltonii*, about which she wrote in the July 2023 issue of this newsletter (p. 13). The concerns about native plant poaching might be well-understood by native plant advocates around the world, but her engaging novel made that information accessible and real to members of the public who don't have the same background.

With her gentle humor, Vicky had written on her website: "In addition to tapping words into a computer, I wander around outside, photographing the flora and fauna that reside in my 'back yard' which I consider any place within a mile walk." While this is, no doubt, true, her photographic expertise was also much greater than those words suggest. In January 2021, she and her husband, Jim Ramakka, had an article on Night Photography in Joshua Tree National Park published in the *Cactus and Succulent Journal*.

Vicky's unexpected passing leaves the rest of Millie's story untold, as well as whatever additional literary efforts Vicky was planning to work on. While we regret what cannot be, we are grateful that she gave us this much. She shared in her writing some of the places that felt like home, inviting us to see them through her curious mind and generous spirit. ❖

Chapter Activities, Continued from page 9

### More from Otero


**Dec9** Field Trip and Chapter Retreat. Bosque del Apache National Wildlife Refuge. Meet at the "Y" in Tularosa (old gas station at the intersection of US 54 and US 70) at 8:00 am for carpooling. This date is the last day of the Festival of the Cranes hosted by the Friends of the Bosque del Apache, so there should be lots of activity in the refuge. We will visit the Desert Arboretum at the Visitor's Center. During the trip, we will set aside time for a strategic planning meeting to reflect on past endeavors and to look towards the future.



Above: Our members weren't deterred by the summer heat and, in June, went on a hike in the Upper Karr Recreational Area. Image: Russell Davis.



Left: Otero and Las Cruces chapter members joined forces for an enjoyable learning experience at the NMSU Herbarium. Image: Russell Davis.



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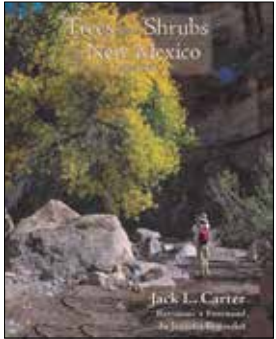
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## Chapter Activities, Continued from page 8

**M**ore from Albuquerque

**Nov 1 Meeting.** "Investing in New Mexico Plants: Building a seed bank at the ABQ BioPark." Clay Meredith, Species Survival Officer for Plants at the New Mexico BioPark will describe the BioPark's work to collect and study seeds from under-conserved rare plants. The talk will cover the basics of seed banking, the process of building the facility, recent efforts to collect, and the BioPark's plans to experimentally propagate species from around the state.

**Dec 2 Annual Holiday Meeting and Potluck Lunch.** Chapter communications will provide further details.

**M**ore from Gila

The Gila Chapter had a busy summer. We sold books and organized children's activities at our booth at the Mimbres Hummingbird Festival on July 29-30. We invited the community to the Silva Creek Botanical Garden to learn about the Garden Master Plan on August 5. We had a successful native plant sale on August 12. And we assisted with another agave planting on August 29-31.

**M**ore from Taos

Fe, gave a talk in July titled: "Why Does Masting Matter? It's a Matter of a Piñon." We had more engagement and questions on this talk than ever before.

Dr. Owen Burney, Director of the John T. Harrington Forestry Research Center in Mora, gave an excellent talk in August titled: "After the Fire, Challenges to the Reforestation Pipeline." Again, we had so many people wanting more from Owen that we'll definitely try and get him back for another activity. Both presentations can be viewed on our YouTube channel listed above.



This summer Taos members have enjoyed a number of field trips and hikes in addition to some interesting and informative presentations.  
Image: Mary Adams.

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**M**ore from Las Cruces

will also present two 2023 student grants to the NMSU students who are the winners of the grant awards this year.

**Nov 11 Field Trip.** TBD

**December** No Meeting or Field Trip.

Members of the Las Cruces and Otero Chapters beat the heat on Saturday, July 22, by touring the NMSU Herbarium, the oldest and historically richest of New Mexico's five herbaria, founded in 1890 by Professor Elmer Ottis Wooton. Curators (and NPSNM members) Sara Fuentes Soriano and Zach Rogers talked briefly about the history of the herbarium that led to its current housing in a former aircraft mechanics workshop near the campus's former airfield. Students, faculty, and visitors can visit the herbarium by appointment on weekdays during normal



Las Cruces and Otero members learn "fun facts" about the NMSU Herbarium, the oldest in the state.  
Image: Lyn Hoffmann.

business hours. The tour included lots of fun facts and answers to questions from the attendees. After discussing several displays of unusual plant specimens, members were shown through an area with rows of olive-green metal-herbarium cases containing over 103,000 dried plant specimens. The curators have recently completed the important work to make these available through the Southwest Environmental Information Network (SEINet) online database.

After the tour, many stayed to attend a plant identification workshop held nearby. Cuttings from various plants found on the NMSU Campus were used for identification practice with a recently updated dichotomous key for the Las Cruces Campus. Members found the workshop helpful with many useful tips for how to efficiently and successfully use a plant key.

We have also been active in an effort to work with the BLM as it works through how to manage the newly created Organ Mountains National Park. **Read more about our efforts on p. 7.** We encourage all NPSNM members to join with us in this effort.

**Conservation News from Las Cruces, Continued from page 6**

Southwest, and locally, as well as potential harm along trails and sensitive areas from increased recreational use. We also recommended that ecological economists should assess ecosystem services such as biodiversity, clean air, and water quality in addition to the current focus on recreation and grazing. Our Chapter Board sent the response from the public meeting on July 12 to Chapter members so that they could review and use it as they felt appropriate in their individual comments to the BLM during the scoping period.

The BLM will release a draft RMP in the Fall and invite additional public comments at that time. We will participate with a review of that document and send additional comments. To request copies of our written responses to the BLM thus far, please send an email to the Chapter's Board at lc [at] npsnm.org. ❖

**Removing Tamarisk, Continued from page 6**

In 2019 we took a break as the Gila National Forest completed its survey for occupied habitat for the endangered narrow-headed garter snake. Because they didn't find any of these imperiled reptiles along the Gila River, we were able to resume tamarisk treatment in 2020 in the Gila River Bird Area and a few miles downstream, all within the Gila National Forest.

With the support of three separate grants and an anonymous major donor, we expanded our tamarisk work in 2021. In the Gila Wilderness, we treated tamarisk on the East Fork of the Gila River and along 40 miles of the mainstem river. With the generous support of the Native Plant Society of New Mexico, we worked in the Gila River Bird Area and four miles downstream to the Bear Canyon confluence. In this non-wilderness reach, we cut and carefully treated with herbicide 194 stems in the floodplains on both sides of the river in 2021.


Although the Forest Service had done some tamarisk treatment in the Gila River Bird Area, our 2022 survey work found several stands on the floodplain that had been overlooked. Work was delayed early that year until after our contractor received his herbicide applicator's license, a Forest Service prerequisite for tamarisk eradication, and again later in the year because the Gila River was too high to safely cross. Work on the 2022 NPSNM grant was completed in July 2023 when UGWA's contractor cut and treated 708 tamarisk stems in the Gila River Bird Area and immediately downstream.

We are very grateful for the ongoing support of the Native Plant Society of New Mexico, which has awarded grants for this important work in 2017, 2018, 2019, 2021, and 2022. Together, we are protecting the beautiful flora of New Mexico. ❖

**Contribute to the Jack & Martha Carter Conservation Fund**

The generous financial support from so many NPSNM members and friends of the flora of New Mexico makes it possible for the Board to approve funding for workshops throughout the state, basic research on a variety of critical plant taxa, continued support for the state's major herbaria, and for the development and support of more early education programs from K–12 in New Mexico schools.

Contributing is easy! Scan this QR code to be directed to our website or go there the old-fashioned way from your browser: [www.npsnm.org](http://www.npsnm.org). You may also snail mail your contact information with a check payable to NPSNM—Carter Conservation Fund to our main address (NPSNM, PO Box 35388, Albuquerque NM 87176).



*Every contributed dollar is being used to protect the flora of New Mexico well into the future.*

~Jack & Martha Carter

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NPSNM encourages members to consider including NPSNM in their wills.

**For further information,  
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Above: Otero members spent time outdoors photographing native plants. (Image: Russell Davis.) That is, when they weren't joining forces with fellow Las Cruces members to learn more at the NMSU Herbarium. (Below. Image: Lyn Hoffmann.)



Above: The Taos Chapter hosted THREE native plant sales this summer! The Gila and El Paso Chapters both also mentioned plant sales in their Activities information. Read more beginning on p. 8. Image: Mary Adams.



Below: You'll definitely want to read the co-presidents' letter (p. 3) to learn with them as they travel the state, visiting all seven chapters in turn. Here, Don oversees some weeding at the Santa Fe Botanical Garden. Image: Wendy Graves.



The summer might have been hot but NPSNM Chapters have kept busy. Read about their wide-ranging activities throughout this issue. In addition to learning about and working with native plants, many of our members show their support through their membership levels (p. 10) and donations to the Carter Conservation Fund (p. 11). As always, we thank you for that support. Wondering about tamarisk on the Gila River? A CCF grant has it covered. Read more on p. 5.