A few selections from the many excellent NPSNM photo contest submissions (clockwise from top left):

- John Whitman: *Rudbeckia laciniata*;
- Lee Regan: *Mirabilis longiflora*;
- Meg Freyermuth: *Ferocactus wislizeni*;
- Patrick O’Brien: pronghorn antelope.

You can submit your photo to the contest until September 30—there’s still time!

See “Outreach Update” on page 8 for more details.
From the President

by Tom Stewart

The subject is money. Relax, it’s not about yours but about the grants we award from the Jack and Martha Carter Conservation Fund. Thanks to generous donations by many in recent years and some sound investments, the Fund has lately allowed us to support many worthwhile efforts that are compatible with our mission, just on the basis of yearly revenues. The principal sum is left untouched.

One important thing the Native Plant Society of New Mexico board does yearly is sort through proposals and choose appropriate projects to assist with amounts of up to $1,500 each. A report from grantees after the year of funding helps us learn how to evaluate the most promising kinds of applications ahead of time. They must fit into our mission goals of conservation and restoration of natural habitats, botanical research, and educating the public (especially the youth) about native plants, their value, and their appropriate uses.

Here are a few of the projects we have supported in just the last two years:

- The removal of tamarisk trees from the Gila River within the wilderness area
- Non-chemical eradication of exotic ravenna grass from an area of the Rio Grand Bosque
- Habitat restoration at the New Mexico Wildlife Center using volunteers from Master Gardeners
- Giving hands-on, multi-skilled experience to elementary school children as they learn about the yucca and its life cycle
- Analyzing a backlog of herbarium specimens from New Mexico, with one result being the discovery of a species not previously reported from our state
- Training and employing Pueblo youth in the recognition, collection, and processing of native plant seeds, contributing to the National Seed Strategy
- Repeating a 1970s field study of bees pollinating wild sunflowers in order to document changes in bee species composition in the same areas over time
- A floral study of the Sabinoso Wilderness in northern New Mexico, developing baseline data in an area that was only recently opened to the public
- A study of how grassland restoration practices affect desert soils
- The first printing of the NM native plant curriculum, From Ponderosa to Pricklypear (Institute for Applied Ecology [IAE]), supplied to interested high school science teachers at no charge
- Equally important is an annual contribution to the five college and university herbaria in our area, those often under-appreciated storehouses of historic and contemporary botanical specimens of incalculable value to education, training, identification, and research.

Must applicants be renowned institutions or PhDs? Our grants have gone to community groups, small schools, independent botanists, managers of preserves, professors, grad students, and a few larger organizations like IAE. Requests ranged from $284 to $1,500, and a reasonable, line-item budget is required with the application. In this age of multi-billion-dollar grants for subatomic particle gear, these amounts may seem puny. But they have been all it took to bring a lot of great ideas into reality.

We need you to spread the word about our little-known grants. We need good-quality proposals before the end of December. Please help by directing potential grant requesters to our website to find more information under Funding & Grants/NPS Sponsored Grants and Donations. And yes, please donate if you wish. With support from kind people like you, our grant amounts can increase in the future.
Conservation Corner

by Rachel Jankowitz, NPSNM Conservation Committee Chair

Protect the Act That Protects Species
(Adapted with permission from the Albuquerque Wildlife Federation August 2018 newsletter)

One of the most noble and forward-looking laws ever enacted was the Endangered Species Act of 1973. This law expanded our circle of interest beyond humankind, and expressed our commitment to ensuring the survival of other species for their own sake, regardless of their benefit to us.

Sadly, this law has been under attack from almost the moment it was implemented, and today, the Endangered Species Act is in greater jeopardy than ever before.

Fearing that they may lose one or both chambers of Congress in the midterm election, Republicans are pushing more than two dozen bills and rules designed to gut the EPA. For example, Congressional Republicans added riders to a defense funding bill prohibiting the greater prairie chicken and sage grouse from being listed as endangered for the next decade, opening their habitats to unlimited oil and gas development even if it drives these birds to extinction. Another bill would delist the gray wolf.

Worse than these legislative efforts, which are unlikely to pass the Senate, are the actions being taken by the Interior and Commerce Departments, which unveiled proposals July 25 for changing how the ESA is enforced. The new rules would make it harder to add new species to the list and easier to remove them; would strip protections for species listed as “threatened” rather than “endangered”; and would for the first time require an analysis of economic costs and benefits to determine whether a species is worth saving.

So what can we do?

National conservation organizations have organized calls to action where you can contact your Congresspeople and federal agencies. You can submit an official comment opposing the administrative rules weakening the ESA at https://www.fws.gov/news/ShowNews.cfm?ref=u.s.-fish-and-wildlife-service-and-noaa-fisheries-seek-public-input-on-&_ID=36286.

But just as important as communicating with lawmakers are the conversations that you have with your friends, families, colleagues, and neighbors. The ESA passed in the first place because Americans actively, vocally cared. If voters once again make it clear that protecting species and their habitats is a priority, the politicians will follow.

Forty-five years ago we took collective action to bring species back from the brink of extinction—we can and must do so again today.

Gila Diversion Scoping

NPSNM, in consultation with the Gila chapter, submitted comments to the Bureau of Reclamation and NM Interstate Stream Commission, in response to a Federal Register Notice of Intent to prepare an Environmental Impact Statement for construction of the NM Unit of the Central Arizona Project.

The NM Unit is the infrastructure that would divert, store, and convey water from the Gila River to downstream consumptive users. The Gila, the last free-flowing river in the Southwest, originates in a Wilderness area. The river’s high water quality and lush riparian habitat support a diversity of wildlife, including a number of listed Threatened and Endangered fish and wildlife species. It is hard to see how the severe impacts posed by this massive project to the ecosystem’s hydrology, vegetation, and wildlife could be mitigated.

The 2014 Nature Conservancy document “Gila River Flow Needs Assessment” states that "flow variability is the defining feature of the Gila River in the Cliff-Gila Valley—creating a multi-aged riparian forest, floodplain wetlands and an array of aquatic habitats that support rich bird diversity, provide habitat for numerous mammals, and support one of the few intact assemblages of native fish that still persists in the lower Colorado River Basin.” Therefore, in addition to direct loss of riparian and wetland habitat under the proposed construction footprint, the NPSNM and Gila chapter urged the BOR and ISC to quantitatively analyze within the draft EIS the following potential impacts of hydrologic alteration:

- The potential that the disruption of high water flood events can alter seeding processes and in turn alter forest composition by causing decrease in cottonwood/willow establishment, and declines in overall canopy cover, age-class diversity, and individual tree vigor.
- The potential that the diversion of small to moderate flows will result in smaller and shorter period floodplain inundations thus negatively affecting riparian tree species recruitment by reducing recruitment events and post-germination survival; riparian vegetative diversity in the Cliff-Gila Valley, by disrupting the interactions between surface water and groundwater; and the health and vigor of sycamore trees by decreasing water availability.
- The potential loss in acreage and quality of wetlands

Continued page 5
The Newsletter of the Native Plant Society of New Mexico

October–December 2018. Vol. 43 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 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 December 1, 2018. Articles and high-resolution artwork supporting the NPSNM’s mission are welcomed and can be sent to the editor, Sarah Johnson, PO Box 53, Cliff, NM 88028.

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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.
Conservation Corner (continued from p. 3)

from reduction of flow, that may also cause reduction in cover of obligate wetland species, such as cattails (Typha latifolia) and spikerush (Eleocharis spp.), which may then be replaced by grasses and other non-wetland species that can tolerate drier conditions; and loss of unique channel wetlands created by scouring during large floods. Channel wetlands occur in small discrete bands in off-stream secondary channels or in other depressions where the water table is very high and silt and sand have been deposited over time.

- The potential loss of floral biodiversity caused by concrete dam and water conveyance structures that alter the existing earthen ditches that currently provide habitat for a mixed and diverse native plant community of deciduous over-story trees and understory shrubs.
- The potential increase in exotic and invasive species colonization caused by the drying of riparian soils and resulting in replacement of obligate wetland species with drought-resistant exotic grasses and sweetclover; and a competitive recruitment edge for more drought-tolerant tree species such as the non-native and invasive Russian olive and saltcedar.
- Potential for a cascading series of impacts on overall plant growth if stress due to water limitation occurs.

The Proposed Action description in the Draft EIS must include a detailed water budget and a thorough cost-benefit analysis. We strongly urged the BOR and ISC to develop one or more additional Action Alternatives, which would use the federal funds available through the Arizona Water Settlements Act to benefit downstream users through water conservation and other potential actions short of diverting the Gila River. NPSNM will keep our membership apprised of future developments related to this project.

Native or Not: Hops

The question came up in conversation on a recent field trip, whether hops are native to New Mexico. Hops as a species, Humulus lupulus (family Cannabaceae), have a broad north-temperate distribution in West Asia, Europe and North America. And yes, one of the North American subspecies, H. l. neomexicana, is native to our state. However, various old-world and eastern varieties have been planted around homesteads for centuries and may be mistaken for or hybridize with H. l. neomexicana.

Hops are added during the brewing process to stabilize and flavor beer and to add bitterness. Most of the hops used for brewing are European cultivars, often available in the form of pellets or extract, but some New Mexico breweries are working with the native subspecies.

H. lupulus is a perennial herbaceous vine, dying back to the corm (rootstock) every winter. It is not to be confused with the native hop-tree, Ptelea trifoliata, a member of the Rutaceae family. Ptelea is a small tree or shrub, whose fruits slightly resemble those of Humulus, and have a similar bracing citrusy odor. Hop-tree fruits were historically used as a hop substitute in home brewing. Ptelea is an important larval host for the giant swallowtail butterfly.

Hop vines derived from plants of the New Mexico subspecies are grown at the Cotyledon Farm, in Llano San Juan. Photo: Paige Grant

Left: Leaves and fruit of Ptelea trifoliata. Above: Larvae of the Giant Swallowtail mimic bird droppings.
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 www.npsnm.org; 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 sturdy shoes, suitable for rough, uneven ground.

**Albuquerque**

All scheduled monthly meetings are normally the first Wednesday of the month at 7 p.m. in the NM Museum of Natural History, 1801 Mountain Rd. NW. For more info on programs contact Jim McGrath at sedges [at] swcp.com or George Miller at goxfordm1844 [at] yahoo.com. For field trips, contact Carol Conoboy, carolconoboy [at] gmail.com, 505/897-3530. For meeting places indicated A through H see website.

*Oct 3* Meeting. Hummingbirds: Past, Present and Future. Dr. Christopher Witt, UNM Associate Professor of Biology and Director and Curator of Birds at the Museum of Southwestern Biology at UNM.

*Oct 20* Grass Field Trip. Jim McGrath, leader. Designed to help members learn to recognize common grasses in the Albuquerque foothills and the bosque. Meet 9 a.m. at G, return at noon.

*Nov 7* Meeting. Frere Arsène Brouard: New Mexico’s Forgotten Botanist. David Johnson, Professor Emeritus, College of Santa Fe.

*Dec 2* Annual holiday potluck and officers election. 11 a.m.–2 p.m., Pam McBride’s house, 5409 9th St. NW. Pam will provide vegetarian posole.

**El Paso**

El Paso Chapter meetings are at St. Alban’s Episcopal Church, 1810 Elm Street (Elm at Wheeling, off Piedras). Programs are second Thursdays at 7 p.m. (coffee social at 6:30) unless otherwise noted. All events free unless a fee is specified. Nonmembers always welcome. Info: Jim Hastings, 915/240-7414, jimhastings [at] elp.rr.com.

*Oct 11* Meeting. “Young man, if I could remember the names of all these particles, I would have been a botanist!” (A Quick Look into the Life of a Working Botanist). Kelly Allred, PhD, retired professor of botany, New Mexico State University.


*Dec 12* Annual holiday potluck dinner.

**Gila (Silver City)**

All programs are free and open to the public. Meetings are third Fridays at 7 p.m. at WNMU’s Harlan Hall, Rm. 219, with refreshments following the program.


*Dec 16* Field trip. Christmas Party. The Commons (also known as the Volunteer Center). Noon–3 p.m. Potluck (pork roast, iced tea, and hot water provided). Bring your own plates, glasses, and utensils.

**Las Cruces**

Meetings are fourth Wednesdays (unless otherwise noted) at 7 p.m. in the conference room of the Social Center at the University Terrace Good Samaritan Village, 3011 Buena Vista Circle, Las Cruces. Field trips are usually 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. Contact: Carolyn Gressitt, 575/523-8413.


Sep 29  Field Trip. Red House Mountain. Meet 8 a.m. at old K-Mart parking lot, east end.


Otero (Alamogordo)
For field trip information, contact Elva Osterreich, Boehofthedesert [at] gmail.com, 575/443-4408; or Jennifer Gruger, jengruger [at] gmail.com, 505/710-2924. More info will be available by the beginning of each month.

Oct 6  Field trip. Aguirre Springs. Meet 8 a.m. at Old Walmart, corner Hwy 54/70.

Nov 2  Field trip. White Sands Missile Range Herbarium tour. Dave Anderson, leader. Meet 8 a.m. at Old Walmart, corner Hwy 54/70. Date subject to change.

Nov 10  Annual Chapter Meeting and potluck at Leanne Robert’s home; Contact Elva or Jennifer for location info.

Santa Fe
Meetings are third Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m. at Christ Lutheran Church, 1701 Arroyo Chamiso (in the triangle of Old Pecos Trail, St Michael’s Dr., and Arroyo Chamiso; across street from fire station). For more information, contact Tom Antonio, 505/690-5105. Meetings and talks are free and open to all.

Oct 17  Meeting. Light, Cameras, Actions: Using Color, Imagery, and Observational Phenology Data in Aridlands. Alesia Hallmark, PhD student, University of New Mexico.

Nov 14  (Note date.) Meeting. New Mexico Bats and Their Bacteria: Landscape Complexity and Plant Diversity as Drivers. Ara Winter, PhD, UNM biologist post-doctoral researcher.

Dec 9  Annual holiday potluck. Location TBA.

Taos
Meetings are third Wednesdays (except Nov. through Feb.) at 6 p.m. in boardroom, Kit Carson Electric Cooperative, 118 Cruz Alta Rd. Free and open to the public. Check NPSSNM website or Facebook for updates, or contact TaosNPS [at] gmail.com, or phone Jan Martenson at 575/751-0511.


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New Mexico Close-Up: Beware Hooded Monks

by George Oxford Miller, Albuquerque chapter

Spikes of unusual, showy flowers decorate erect, leafy stems of monkshood, Aconitum columbianum, a one-to-six-foot-tall plant that favors shady, moist habitats. Look for this distinctive member of the buttercup family (Ranunculaceae) in mountain meadows and along stream banks, seeps, and moist slopes in coniferous forests above 6,000 feet.

Note the high, arching hood formed by the upper petal-like sepal, and the large palmate leaves with deeply cut, toothed lobes. The showy hood contains two small, spurred petals with the nectaries; two rounded side sepals cup the numerous stamens and pistils; and two narrow sepals droop below to complete the intricate flower design.

A stroll along a mountain path can be a trip through a thousand years of ethnobotanical history and eons of flower-insect co-adaptation. Monkshood, and its Aconitum relatives worldwide, were a favorite poison and medicine long before medieval monks added hoods to their wardrobe. The tuberous roots, leaves, and flowers all contain deadly diterpene toxins, a fast-acting alkaloid that affects the heart and nervous system. In America, various tribes traditionally used the species as a poison and for witchcraft. Western doctors prescribed it medicinally until the 1940s.

And that strange crescent hood that gives the plant its name? Instead of pointing backward like the spur in the closely related larkspurs (Delphinium), the upper sepal arches upward to create the hood. It protects the enclosed nectar buffet that attracts bumblebee pollinators. To reach the nectaries, the bee must squeeze between the side sepals, crawling over the pollen-laden stamens. Wa-la, fertilization accomplished. But what’s the purpose of the flower’s deadly poison? To protect against witches? ❖

Outreach Update

by Sara Digby, NPSNM Outreach Coordinator

Hello, NPSNM folks! What a time for wildflowers! I hope all of you are enjoying the sea of color that New Mexico is experiencing right now. I know that arriving back from the conference I was astounded at all the Verbesina encelioides I saw while crossing through Santa Fe.

What a conference this year! A big thank you to the Gila Chapter for putting on such a well-rounded, info-packed conference that touched on so many aspects of native plants. If you got any fun pictures you would like to share with everyone, please send them to sara@appliedeco.org and we can get them online.

We also filled all but one spot for our student scholarships, and the students did an amazing job speaking to the work that they have been doing on native plants. It’s great to see the next generation continue to spread awareness and provide a voice for native plants.

The photo contest is in full swing, and we have been receiving some great submissions! If you are interested in participating, there is still time, as the contest runs until September 30. Visit https://www.npsnm.org/summer-photo-contest/ for more information and to submit.

We are also working to complete our native plant coloring book. We have had some wonderful submissions from artists all over New Mexico, from Taos down to Las Cruces. The coloring book will be completed in time for the holidays, so if you have a family member or friend who might be interested, this could be a great holiday gift! Proceeds from the book sales go toward maintaining our scholarship program for students and interns to attend the annual conference free of charge. Additionally, the first 10 families to sign up for a membership with NPSNM will receive a complimentary coloring book.

We are also working to partner with local restaurants to feature a native plant kids’ menu, with fun little games, plant images to color, and more. We are looking for folks to help assist with this process, so if you would be interested in being a liaison from the NPSNM to a restaurant, or know of restaurants you think would be interested in participating in this project, please email sara@appliedeco.org.

Lastly, I will be visiting certain chapters through the end of the year to provide a workshop called “Herbal Allies from a Bioregional Perspective.” This class will explore many of the common and not-so-common plants (both native and non-native) that are bioregionally available throughout the state, from the high mountains to the low desert. We will look at how these plants can be incorporated into our daily

Continued next page
Outreach Update (continued)
lives through food and medicine, touching on some specific herbs that can generally be used for common ailments, as we make our own herbal remedy together. If you are interested in attending a workshop in your area, contact your local chapter representative for more information—or to request that your chapter host the workshop.

Happy wildflower hunting, folks.

By Jack L. Carter, Martha A. Carter, Donna J. Stevens, and Jennifer M. Bousselot.

Review by Tom Stewart, NPSNM President

True confession: an earlier edition of this regional guide has been an asset of mine for years. To my delight, unlike remakes of many movies and favorite old songs, the third edition of this work has proven to be even more valuable and enjoyable than the last.

This identification guide was and is still unique in its broad, regional scope. Look elsewhere for a key to all the wildflowers of your local mountains. Likewise, it is not an encyclopedia of everything in the West. It is very light on technical terms, yet it is not a “Wildflowers for Dummies” kind of thing. What we have is an aptly titled, skillful exposition of many of the native trees, shrubs, vines, succulents, and herbaceous (flowering, not woody, not grass) species one is likely to encounter when exploring our areas from West Texas to Bryce Canyon, from Tucson to Tucumcari.

Nothing is lost from the earlier versions. The coverage emphasizes common plants, but is colored with a few scarcer ones of special interest, things like tronadora and fairy duster. The well-edited writing wastes no words, yet is anything but dry. The plant profiles go far beyond mere descriptions—champion tree records, traditional uses, and tales of territorial botanists are among the enhancements. However, the layout clearly segregates areas of differing interest, allowing one to jump straight to the physical and geographic facts if desired. Each of the woody plants, vines, and succulents (cacti, agaves and their allies), is illustrated with high-quality photographs and accurate sketches.

So what’s new? This version presents itself with a dramatic cover close-up of apache plume like you have never seen it before! But I mostly appreciate the expansion and improvement of the section covering herbaceous plants. It is not only populated with many more species (now 64) and larger, beautiful photos, but more area than before is given to each and even the typeface is larger. The formatting is now like that of the first few sections, spacious and inviting. Scientific names have been updated, although expert opinions on such things sometimes differ.

Call me a bio-nerd, but I found the book to be as much of a page turner as any John Grisham novel. I hope that many newcomers to the Southwest and to the study of native plants will benefit from this resource. And more seasoned enthusiasts might want to donate their older copies to relatives and libraries, and with this new edition enjoy a fresh look both at their old green “friends” and others they hope to meet in the field. I know I will be placing this reference in my glove compartment when visiting an unfamiliar part of the Southwest or needing one last reminder of how to tell a western serviceberry from a Utah serviceberry.

NPSNM News Nuggets

Grant Deadline Approaching
The Native Plant Society of New Mexico awards grants and makes donations to individuals and organizations that further the mission of the Society. Grants and donations are limited to a maximum of $1,500. Applications for grants and donations are due December 31, 2018.

Complete grant guidelines and applications are available at www.npsnm.org/funding-opportunities/.

Changes Coming in 2019 for Distribution of the Newsletter
Since the quarterly newsletters are now more colorful, and the click rate by members receiving only a link to the online version is below expectations, starting in 2019 all members will receive the printed newsletter by default. We found that no trees or dollars were being saved when electronic viewing was the default, since demand from the chapters and individuals for hard copies increased. Members may still opt to receive only a link by email, and all newsletters will be posted on the website.
Contributions to the Jack & Martha Carter Conservation Fund

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

Use the form provided below, or contribute through PayPal on the website, www.npsnm.org. Every contributed dollar is being used to protect the flora of New Mexico well into the future.

~Jack & Martha Carter

**Jack & Martha Carter Conservation Fund Donation Form**

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For further information, call Tom Stewart.

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**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. The Society has also produced a New Mexico wildflower poster by artist Niki Threlkeld and a cactus poster designed by Lisa Mandelkern. These can be ordered from our poster chair—check out [http://www.npsnm.org/posters/](http://www.npsnm.org/posters/)

- **Wildflower poster:** 22"x34", $8 (nonmembers, $10)
- **Cactus poster:** 18"x24", $5 (nonmembers, $8)

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**NPSNM Membership Application**

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  - [ ] Santa Fe
  - [ ] Gila (Silver City)
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  - [ ] I am interested in forming a new chapter in:

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New Mexico Close-Up

Monkshood, *Aconitum columbianum*. Take time to smell, but don’t taste, the flowers!

Photos: George Oxford Miller

See article on page 8!