

# Albuquerque Chapter, NPSNM

First Quarterly Newsletter

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Contacts: Pam McBride (343-9472), Frances Robertson (828-4775), co-presidents; Jim McGrath, Vice-president and program chair (286-8745); Don Heinze, field trip coordinator (565-1441)

## New Directions for 2009

### Education Outreach, Field Trips, and Forums

As many of you know, after much discussion along with the lack of volunteers for chair of the Science Fair committee, the Board decided to discontinue supporting Science Fair awards. Another big change is the decision to no longer hold plant sales. This was based on several factors. One was that profits had steadily declined over the years. Another was that when we first started to have plant sales, there were few if any nurseries that sold native plants. Now, I can count six that specialize in native plants and at least seven others that carry a good selection of native plants. The third reason is that we were paying dues to the Garden Center just so we could continue to have our plant sales there along with 25% of our profits. We moved our meetings to the Natural History Museum to save money, have a centralized location, easily accessible by freeway, and in hopes of attracting new members who support and frequent the museum.

A large part of the plant sale was educating the community on native plant use in landscaping, so we have decided to focus on that part of the Native Plant Society of NM's stated purpose to "educate New Mexicans on native plant identification, ecology, and uses".

We started in September by working with the Rio Rancho High School's Landscape and Design Class. Beth Herschman (past president of our chapter) presented a talk that a team of NPS members put together about native plant ecosystems. The class then took a field trip to the Museum of Natural History to tour the gardens there that display typical native plants found in various biotic communities of NM. The gardens

are maintained by Gary Runyan, an employee of the museum and enthusiastic member of the Albuquerque chapter of NPS. Gary led the tours and volunteers from the NPS and the Rio Rancho school assisted. We hope to continue to work with Rio Rancho High School and other schools in the future.

## Forums

Forums are another idea that most of you got an e-mail about from Jim McGrath, our vice-president and program co-coordinator. The idea behind these is to have first a type of panel discussion for a half an hour and the second half hour would be a question and answer period. We are having an environmental forum on June 3<sup>rd</sup> and a photo forum (see calendar for details) on October 7. The forums will be in lieu of our regular monthly meetings, same time, same place.

## Field Trips, Field Forums, and Invasive Plant Control Project

Now that we finally have a field trip co-coordinator (Don Heinze), we have decided to increase the number and type of field trips that we will offer in 2009. Not only will we have field trips on weekend days, but we will offer "field forums" on Fridays. These will be to local areas and the primary focus will be to learn the plants on a particular trail, to identify them as a group, create a plant list, and to visit the same trail several times a year. People who wish to lead a trip do not have to be professional or amateur botanists, they just need to have some familiarity with the trail and a curiosity about the plants and a willingness to share.

We are also planning a joint weekend field trip with the Santa Fe chapter to White Sands Missile Range in early May.

We started a project to try to eradicate *Ailanthus* or tree of heaven from the lower Bear Canyon Trail area last year. We have decided to intensify these efforts beginning in March with a total of six planned work days for the year.

## Newsletters

As for the newsletters themselves, there are quite a lot of folks that can't get to meetings or field trips, but would like to know what we're up to, so we're hoping to produce four newsletters a year.

We also hope to inspire folks to come to meetings and join us on other activities. We hope to have short synopses of the monthly meetings, field trips, and other news to impart. Another reason is to stay connected in the summer months when we don't have our monthly meetings. So, if there's someone out there who would like to volunteer to be the newsletter editor, that would be great.

Please let Jim, Frances, or Pam know you're interested.