

2017

REPORT OF THE LAS CRUCES CHAPTER OF NPSNM

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Events

(#attendees in brackets)

January

Meeting: Wed. Jan. 11, 7:00 p.m. Lisa Mandelkern will present "Organ Mountains - Desert Peaks National Monument A photographic Journey in Southern New Mexico" [41]

Field Trip: Sat. January 14: Leasburg Dam State Park. Meet at 9 a.m. at Fairacres Post Office, to carpool.[18]

February

Meeting:

Wed. Feb. 8, 7:00 p.m. Neeshia Macanowicz will present "Ongoing Research at the Jornada: Insight into New Mexico's Grassland Ecosystems." [12]

Field Trip:

Sat. Feb. 11, 9:00 a.m. North Sierra Vista Trail: Meet at east end of the Rio Grande Bank parking lot at the corner of University and Telshor to carpool. [16]

March

Meeting:

Wed. March 8, 7:00 p.m. Patrick Alexander will present "Botany from a Boeing." [12]

Field Trip: Peña Blanca: Springtime at the south end of the Organ Mountains. Meet at Bank of the Rio Grande, corner of University and Telshor, at 9 a.m. to carpool. [8]

April

Meeting:

Wed. April 12, 7:00 p.m.

Lance Smith: Plants (and birds) of Peru: Iquitos, Machupicchu, and Lake Titicaca [29]

Field Trip: Sat. April 14, 8:00 a.m. Tortugas Mountain: We will likely see lots of cacti blooming, and other wildflowers.

Meet at east end of the Rio Grande Bank parking lot at the corner of University and Telshor. [12]

May

Meeting:

Wed. May 10, 7:00 p.m. Kirsten Romig & Connie Maxwell will present "Ongoing Research at the Jornada (Part 2): from seed banks to historical quadrant data." [20]

Field Trip:

Sat. May 13, 8:00 a.m. We will go either to Aguirre Springs, or to Mesilla Bosque State Park, depending on conditions. [10]

Meet at east end of K-Mart parking lot.

June

Meeting:

Wed. June 14, 7:00 p.m. Sara Fuentes Soriano, Curator of the NMSU Herbarium, will present "A look at the natural history of the Spectacle-pod and other uncommon related mustards in the Southwest." [24]

Field Trip: Sat. June 17, 8:00 a.m. *none scheduled:* It's usually miserably hot – but that could change! Check at NPSNM.org for update.

July

Meeting: Wed. July 12, 7:00 p.m. Steve Cary will share results of recent field investigations in NM and elsewhere. Southern New Mexico is turning out to have some important monarch sites, and there are opportunities for our members to get more involved in the work with milkweeds and monarchs in southern New Mexico. [25]

Field Trip: Sat. July 15, 8:00 a.m. Carr Canyon, in the Sacramento Mts. Meet at east end of K-Mart parking lot. *All-day trip.*[8]

August

Meeting: Wed., Aug. 9: Vic Crane will instruct us on the process of building a hoop-house to grow plants in, including lessons learned. [15]

Field Trip: Sat., Aug. 12, 8:00 a.m. Come on a hike in the Black Range/Gila, perhaps to the Kneeling Nun Overlook, or other area, dependent on weather/possible fire danger. Meet at east end of K-Mart parking lot. Bad weather [3]

September

[Annual Conference in Taos, Sept.14-17: note changes in our monthly schedule below:]

Meeting:

Wed. Sept. 20, 7:00 p.m. Nicole Pietrasiak will give a talk on desert soils and the interactions between components of desert soils and the native plants of our Chihuahuan Desert. [17]

Field Trip: Sat. Sept. 23, 8:00 a.m. We will head to Red House Mountain, near Hatch. Meet at east end of K-Mart parking lot. [We instead joined a BLM-led trip to East portion of Baylor Pass trail. [6-7 NPS members]

October

Meeting:

Wed. October 11, 7:00 p.m. Ashley Bennett will speak on New Mexico native plants and pollinators in landscaping. [26]

Sat. October 14, 12 :00 p.m. Annual Potluck lunch at La Cueva. Bring a salad, side dish, main dish, or dessert. [9]

November

Wed. Nov. 8, 7:00 p.m. **Planning Meeting for 2018:** in the Conference Room of the Social Center at the University Terrace Good Samaritan Village. We will have our annual planning meeting and officers election. Members, please join us to elect officers and help select speakers and field trips for 2018. [17-- probably the best attendance we have had at our planning in many years!]

Field Trip:

Sat. Nov. 17, 9:00 a.m. Baylor Pass, at west end of trail. Meet at former K-mart parking lot.[11]

Special Projects, Support to local environmental organizations and to NMSU

A-Spear Ranch

LC Chapter was asked to help develop a list of native plant species for a private preserve, near Williamsburg. The contact person is J.R. Absher, On May 6, some in the LC Chapter were able to visit the ranch, where we met Gene and Betty Jercinovic, who had come over from Deming. The riparian preserve was established by a group of retired journalists who recognized its conservation value, and pooled their money, leasing the land above the site of permanent running water. The area is known to attract bears and other wildlife. Huge trees in and near the canyon included cottonwood, olive, and walnut trees. Many wildflowers and shrubs were identified. We will look into future opportunities for other groups to visit the Ranch. Visits are generally restricted to eight or fewer people to reduce human impact on the preserve. A plant list was created, including 86 riparian and upland species. We sent a copy to J.R. Absher, who was very grateful for our assistance.

The Organ Mountain Desert Peaks was one of 27 National Monuments being considered for elimination or significant reduction in size. We encouraged our members to submit their public comments on the website of the Department of Interior, as we are financial supporters of the Monument. In addition, we have committed to refurbishing the native garden in front of the Visitors Center, as well as updating their plant lists.

Another project we took on was making plant lists for the Mesilla Bosque State Park and the nearby privately owned La Mancha Wetlands. We want to thank Dr. David Lee Anderson for all his diligent work on these and other projects.

In regards to the Mesilla Valley Bosque State Park: This park was recently in danger of being closed and turned over to Game and Fish, ostensibly because it was not making enough money. We went to meetings and submitted comments in favor of keeping it as a state park. Luckily, a local state Senator will fight for the park since the money for establishing the park had come from the Legislature in the first place. Because we are stakeholders / donors, we have attended two public meetings, and we will be watching this situation carefully.

A few of us participated in The Jornada Field Botany field trips, led by Kirsten Romig: bi-monthly Tuesday field trips, Jan.-Nov., on the 2nd Tuesday of every other month. We appreciate the Jornada's willingness to reach out to the community, and we most appreciate Kirsten's help with our botanizing: great teacher!

The STEM conference we tabled at was interesting, and we talked to some very interested people who were vendors, and made a couple of good Teacher contacts, but it was a loss financially and a disappointment in terms of teacher access/interest.

It was a strange set-up, such that some teachers probably never even saw us. We were able to give away our brochures, some Carter books, but could not give them all away. We also got several people interested in downloading "From Ponderosa to Prickly Pear."

NMSU Herbarium now has three regular volunteers from our chapter: Julie Groth Sorenson, John Freyermuth, and Carolyn Gressitt. Our daughters Chandra & Meg Freyermuth helped move the Rangeland Science Herbarium (NMCR) to the main herbarium (NMC). We hope to get more volunteers from our chapter.

Carolyn Gressitt