

## **2020 Annual Report – Albuquerque Chapter Native Plant Society of New Mexico**

### **OFFICERS**

President: Diane Stevenson  
Vice President: Tom Stewart  
Secretary: Dara Saville  
Treasurer: Pam McBride  
Program Coordinator: Jim McGrath  
Field Trip Coordinator: Carol Conoboy  
State Board Representative: Judith Phillips  
Newsletter Editor: Diane Stevenson  
Conservation Committee: Sue Small, Coordinator  
Membership Coordinator: Ann-Marie Yaroslaski  
Publicity Coordinator: Irene Wanner

### **Core Group (essential volunteers, invited to board meetings)**

Communications: Gary Hoe/Diane Stevenson  
Refreshments Coordinator: Gary Hoe  
Hospitality: vacant  
Invasive Weeds Representative: Don Heinz  
Book Sales: Lee Regan  
Community Outreach: vacant

### **PROGRAMS**

In-Person Meeting attendance varied between 40 and 100; Zoom meeting attendance varied between 30 & 50, averaging about 40.

#### **January 8. Meeting. “Design for Wildlife: How to Create Your Backyard Refuge.”**

How do you design spaces that are appealing to both wildlife and the people who live there? Landscape Designer and writer Judith Phillips described the basic steps in creating habitat either from a blank slate/no landscape or within existing gardens. Rainwater harvesting, layering plants for diversity: choosing the right plants for the site and combining them into attractive habitat hot spots, and managing the space through the seasons was discussed.

**February 5. Meeting: "Our Yards as Mini Refuges."** Wildlife Biologist, Ariel Elliott, Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge (NWR) biologist, provided an overview of the importance of National Wildlife Refuges in creating and conserving habitat for our native and local animals and plants through highlighting what is happening at Valle de Oro NWR. She discussed the benefits and challenges of how we can make our yards into important stopover habitats or “mini refuges” for our wild neighbors.

**March 4. Meeting: “Little Water Canyon – A Natural Area in the Zuni Mountains of New Mexico.”** Botanist/Naturalist Jim McGrath described the geologic, faunal and floral features of this unique canyon. Little Water Canyon contains an active spring at the upper end that creates a stream for about a mile. The stream is contained in a deep and narrow canyon which contains a Colorado blue spruce – red osier dogwood plant association with near record size Colorado blue spruce trees. Jim also discussed the threats to the integrity of the canyon and the need to establish a Natural Areas program

in New Mexico designed to highlight, provide access to and information about unique and special places like Little Water Canyon.

**April Meeting:** Cancelled by Natural History Museum due to pandemic restrictions by New Mexico Governor

**May 6. Online Meeting: “The Use of Soil Seed Banks in Ecological Restoration.”** Akasha Faist, Assistant Professor of Rangeland Ecology in the Animal and Range Sciences Department at New Mexico State University, presented. Her research lab examined a variety of different restoration actions focused on identifying and overcoming barriers to restoration success. Dr. Faist discussed the exology of soil seed banks and illustrated how they may be effectively used in ecological restoration efforts.

**June 3. Online Meeting: “Forest Changes in Northern New Mexico: Past, Present, & Climate-Driven Future.”** Environmental activist Mike Richie presented an overview of 15 areas in the San Juan Basin Badlands, including basin geology, paleontology, ecology, conservation and recreational topics. Also discussed was the ‘San Juan Basin Sustainable Tourism Development Plan,’ including the badlands, Chaco Canyon and the US Highway 550 corridor. Responsible tourism enables us to preserve our state’s rich and diverse natural heritage and cultures while enhancing an important contribution to our sustainable economic base.

**July 1. Online Meeting: “Insects in Decline: Why It Matters and What We Must Do About It.”** Insect conservationist Anna Walker, Species Survival Officer for Invertebrate Pollinators at the Albuquerque BioPark, discussed evidence that insect populations are declining and demonstrated why it matters. She also discussed the plight of insects around the globe, emphasizing pollinators, and showed how our lives would be diminished without these tiny creatures sustaining and enriching our lives. Anna also highlighted the Albuquerque BioPark’s partnership with the IUCN (International Union for the Conservation of Nature) to mitigate these declines.

**August 5. Online Meeting: “The Tijeras Creek Remediation Project.”** Soilutions, Inc. consultant Jim Brooks discussed problems associated with Tijeras Creek and strategies to improve conditions in the watershed to avoid future devastating floods.

**September 2. Online Meeting. “Bernalillo County Vegetation Management without Glyphosate (RoundUp).”** Sites Southwest LLC consultant George Radnovich discussed weed control strategies on Bernalillo County lands, especially the use of native plants.

**October 7. Online Meeting: “Ancient and Traditional Lifeways.”** Archaeologist and Cultural Specialist Mary (Motah) Weahkee demonstrates how Native Americans of past centuries created clothing with plant fibers from plants including native yucca.

**November 4. Online Meeting: “The New Mexico Rare Plant Conservation Strategy.”** State botanist Daniela Roth presented an overview of the Strategy focused on 235 rare and endangered plant species in New Mexico. The goal is to protect and conserve these species and their habitats through collaborative partnerships between stakeholders and interested parties. The Strategy includes the designation of 133 Important Plant Areas in New Mexico.

**December 2. Officer elections and Online Meeting.** Elections of Chapter Officers. Spring slide show of Florida Mountains and Rockhound State Park vegetation and habitat by George Miller and an autumn slide show of the native plant habitat in the proposed dolomite strip mine area by Pam McBride.

**FIELD TRIP – Due to the Pandemic, only one field trip was held in 2020.**

**March 20-22. Overnight Field Trip.** Rockhound State Park and Little Florida Mountains. Leader George Miller. We found fields and hills covered with Mexican poppies, early blooming cacti, and other ephemeral wildflowers and shrubs unique to these southern New Mexico mountains.

**Summer and Fall On-Your-Own Plant Walks** were offered as an alternative to chapter-sponsored field trips. Several of our active members created native plant lists to download and print for independent outdoor excursions posted on our website.

Albuquerque Area Plant Lists were added through summer and early fall:

<https://www.npsnm.org/about/chapters/albuquerque/>

**PUBLIC OUTREACH AND EDUCATIONAL (1 event due to the Pandemic)**

**BACKYARD REFUGE DESIGN WORKSHOP; A Comprehensive Workshop for Attracting Birds, Bees, and Butterflies to Your Yard**

**February 15, 2020.** 8:15 am to 2:00 pm

Optional **HOME LANDSCAPE DESIGN LAB.** 2:15 pm to 5:00 pm

This workshop hosting 100 participants and the design lab hosting 30 of those participants was another overwhelming success as both an educational program to increase interest in creating front- and back-yard habitats using native plants, increase public awareness of the Native Plant Society and its mission to protect and promote native plant habitat conservation. The workshop was created in part to support the new Friends of Valle de Oro National Wildlife Refuge's ABQ Backyard Refuge Program.