

2020

REPORT OF THE LAS CRUCES CHAPTER OF NPSNM

Contacts:

President	Carolyn Gressitt	575-523-8413
Vice-President	Katie McLane	575-639-3814
Membership	John Freyermuth	575-523-8413
Treasurer	Vic Crane	575-635-3735
Chapter Rep	Joan Woodward	575-527-4640
Conservation Rep	Marcia Corl	907-744-0014

A. EVENTS

(# Attendees in brackets)

January

Meeting: Wed. Jan. 15, 7:00 p.m. at the NMSU Herbarium. Lisa Mandelkern presented “Organ Mountain Desert Peaks National Monument, Southern New Mexico’s outdoor jewel.” [50]

Field Trip: Sun. Jan. 19, 9:00 a.m. Dripping Springs Visitor Center to La Cueva, Organ Mountains. [11]

February

Meeting: Wed. Feb. 12, 7:00 p.m. at the NMSU Herbarium. Dr. Akasha Faist presented “Rangeland Restoration Ecology: Working to Overcome Barriers to Success in the Chihuahuan Desert.” [20]

Field Trip: Sun. Feb. 16, 9:00 a.m. River Crossing to South Slot Canyon, Robledo Mountains. [30]

March

Meeting: Wed. March 11, 7:00 p.m. at the NMSU Herbarium. Dr. Richard Spellenberg presented “Knowing daisies, sunflowers, asters, and their kin in New Mexico.” [22]

Field Trip: Sun. March 15, 9:00 a.m. Sierra Vista Trail from Soledad Canyon Road. [15]

April

Presentation on Zoom: Wed. Apr. 15, 7:00 p.m. Rachel Gioannini presented “Designing a Botanic Garden for Research and Aesthetics. How does one design a garden that serves two masters, Science and Art?”

May

Presentation on Zoom: Wed. May 13, 7:00 p.m. Trystan Harpold presented “Natives vs. Exotics: Reducing Non-native Plant Species in Urban Landscapes in Southern New Mexico.”

June

Presentation on Zoom: Wed. June 10, 7:00 p.m. Kirsten Romig presented "Dormancy: an avoidance strategy with impacts on plant community dynamics."

Six webinars on Zoom: NMSU and the Xerces Society presented “Supporting Pollinators, Beneficial Insects” on Tuesdays at 3:00 p.m. beginning June 23, 2020, and continuing each Tuesday thru July 28.

July

Presentation on Zoom: Wed. July 8, 7:00 p.m. Jim Von Loh presented "Milkweed Restaurant: Between Nine and Noon along the Río Grande."

August

Presentation on Zoom: Wed. Aug. 12, 7:00 p.m. Vic Crane presented “Gardening Project at the Dripping Springs Visitors Center, Organ Mountains Desert Peaks National Monument.”

Field Trip: Sun, Aug. 23, 9:00 a.m., led by Jim Von Loh at La Llorona Park, to view Milkweed Restaurant sites along the banks of el Río. [12]

October

Presentation on Zoom: Wed. Oct. 14, 7:00 p.m. Zachary Rogers of the NMSU Herbarium presented “New Guinea: The Island with the Richest Flora in the World.”

November

Presentation on Zoom: Wed. Nov. 18, 7:00 p.m. Rachel Gioannini presented “Hydroponics for the Home Gardener.”

Annual Totals of Events Attendees

A total of 68 attendees went on four NPSNM Las Cruces field trips in 2020. Total attendance for the three in-person monthly presentations in January, February, and March was 92.

B. Special Events & Projects of Support to the Community

Herbarium Volunteers: January through March.

NPSNM/Las Cruces volunteers at the NMSU Herbarium included Cheryl Beymer, Vic Crane, Julie Groth-Sorensen, John Freyermuth, and Carolyn Gressitt.

Dripping Springs Garden Committee: Year-round and ongoing.

Vic Crane (chair). Jo Sauve, Jim Von Loh, Gordon Berman, Earlene Brookshear, Carolyn Gressitt, John Freyermuth, Elena Espinosa, Eileen Davis, Leslie Bezner, Julie Groth-Sorensen, Eileen Roberts, Lorry Hoksch, Deb McKeown, Marcia Corl, Craig Severy, Richard Myers, Carol Laskin, Helen Zagona, Les Finley, and Susan Lerch. The committee was active through much of 2020 under restricted conditions of social distancing. It was ably chaired and coordinated by Vic Crane, who provided many extra hours of personal involvement. A special thanks is due to Daniella Barraza of the BLM for her hands-on help, and also for her help in getting volunteers to water plants during dry spells. Thanks also to Friends of the Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks for obtaining funding for signage in the garden and along trails. And thanks to Christian Velarde of KRWG TV for renewing the interview and documentary regarding the project.

Organ Mountains-Desert Peaks National Monument Volunteers and

Others: In addition to the Garden Committee, several Las Cruces Chapter members serve as volunteers at the National Monument in various tasks such as trail maintenance, graffiti removal, and trail walking. These include Cheryl Beymer, Meg Freyermuth, Craig Severy, and David Patterson. In addition, David Patterson helps at the Southwest Environmental Center's La Mancha Wetland, and Elena Espinosa does highway trash removal along State Highway 28 in Mesilla, NM.

On-going: The Las Cruces Chapter combined efforts with the Mesilla Valley Audubon Society and the Southwest Environmental Center in order to halt the habitat-destroying River Run event planned for October of 2020. The chapter alerted the Doña Ana County Sheriff's Office and the International Boundary and Water Commission of the proposed rally, which was to consist of trucks, jeeps, and off-road vehicles trespassing in a seven-mile drive in the partially dry river bed of the Río Grande.