



NEW MEXICO'S VOICE FOR NATIVE PLANTS
NEWSLETTER
OF THE
NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY OF NEW MEXICO

JULY, AUGUST, SEPTEMBER 2026

VOL. LI NO. III



This sotol (*Dasylirion wheeleri*) is recovering from a March 2026 controlled burn in the Organ Mountains Desert Peaks National Monument. The Las Cruces chapter went to see how the flora (and fauna) are doing. As for this sotol, Gordon Berman wrote: "charred at the stem, singed on the leaves, this sotol is in an indeterminate stage of recovery, but fresh green leaves are encouraging." See more images on p. 22.

Image: Gordon Berman

The Newsletter of the Native Plant Society of New Mexico

July–September 2026, Vol. 51 No. 3. 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 native plant enthusiasts and advocates, from home gardeners to resource managers and botanists, who have 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. Articles and high-resolution artwork supporting NPSNM's mission are welcomed and can be sent to the editor, Margaret Ménache, *newsletter [at] npsnm.org*.

The next submission deadline is August 25, 2026.

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.

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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, to conserve water, and as a part of the regional ecosystem in support of native pollinators and other fauna. Members benefit from chapter presentations, field trips, plant and seed exchanges/sales, discounts on publications, a statewide conference, and a network of knowledgeable plant enthusiasts.



Joining is easy! Scan this QR code to be directed to our website or go there the old-fashioned way from your browser: www.npsnm.org. You may also snail mail your contact information, local chapter preference (if any), and dues to our main address (NPSNM, PO Box 35388, Albuquerque NM 87176). Yearly dues [\$30 regular individual, \$45 household, \$60 friend of the Society, and \$20 for youth (through 26 years) or PK-12 teacher] and donations are tax deductible. Higher supporting levels can be found on our website. ♦

Don't Miss a Newsletter Issue or an Important Society Email!

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From the President: Resilience in Trying Times

Margie Gibson

We are celebrating the resilience of native plants at our state conference, as well as the NPSNM 50th anniversary. In these trying times, it's hard to be someone who cares about human and ecological communities. We need resilience for people and ecosystems alike.

Personal Resilience

Resilience in the face of global realities such as climate change and biodiversity loss means recognizing the scale of these challenges without being paralyzed by them. Maintaining personal resilience acknowledges our worries and ecological losses—our eco-grief or eco-anxiety. It is less about “staying positive” and more about staying engaged without burning out.

It's easy to feel overwhelmed and forget that consistent contact with nature lowers stress and improves our mood. It helps to turn off the news and listen to what the birds are broadcasting. Or relax on a walk through our piñon-juniper woodland, or find joy in the smell of the desert after a rain. Or plant a native plant!

The scale of global problems is daunting. Working at a smaller scale is uplifting because you can see you are making a difference. Even small acts, such as adding native plants to your yard, participating in a restoration effort, or joining a community science project, shift you from observer to participant and produce visible changes. Resilience is rarely individual. Shared concern becomes more bearable—and more effective—when it's social. Connect with others in your local NPSNM chapter and help us promote, protect, and restore native plants.

Cultivating Hope

Healthy ecosystems are resilient because they are diverse, interconnected, redundant, adaptive, and locally rooted. If enough people planted native plants in yards, school grounds, balconies, parks, farms, medians, and more, those spaces could become interconnected habitats. Small patches of habitat become powerful when connected across neighborhoods and regions.

This is what our conference banquet speaker, Doug Tallamy, is all about. He is an entomologist, ecologist, author, and professor who has become widely influential for promoting the idea that ordinary residential landscapes can help reverse biodiversity collapse. His core insight is that native insects, birds, and other wildlife evolved alongside native plants—something we, as plant society people, know and appreciate! He co-founded Homegrown National Park, a grassroots conservation initiative, with Michelle Alfandari. This work helps turn ecological anxiety into practical action.

You can see how this effort is working on the [Homegrown National Park website's](https://homegrownnationalpark.org/) Biodiversity Map and join this community. In 2019, my husband and I moved from our rural home (an island of habitat in a sea of overgrazing) in Sierra County to Silver City. Our house came with an adjacent lot. It had some native trees but mostly nonnative plants. I began converting it to native plants, an effort that has strengthened my resilience. It's still a work in progress, but it's now habitat, with more birds, insects, and lizards; and small mammals than when I started – and it's on The Map. Join the effort if you haven't already.

True resilience is both practical and hopeful. Our ecosystem anxiety feels lighter—and our efforts to protect biodiversity gain strength—when we are together. I hope to see you at the state conference! . ❖

Link

Homegrown National Park: <https://homegrownnationalpark.org/>

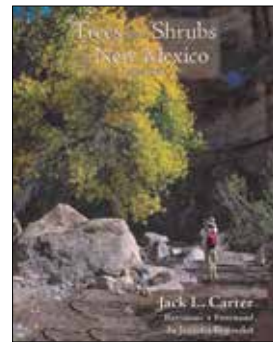


New 2020 Edition

Trees and Shrubs of New Mexico

by Jack L. Carter

Fully updated nomenclature



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The Gila Native Plant Society is committed to promoting the education, research, and appreciation of the native flora of the southwest; encouraging the preservation of rare and endangered plant species; and supporting the use of suitable native plants in landscaping.

Conservation Corner

*Sylvan Kaufman and Margaret Ménache,
NPSNM Conservation Committee Co-Chairs*

It is always the right time to think about conservation and what you can do to protect our native plants. As part of the Conservation Committee, our seven chapters work locally and across the state to identify issues where the NPSNM can be a voice for native plants.

In the previous newsletter, we wrote that one of our goals was to write “talking points” that you or your chapter can use to advocate for different plant conservation issues. Our first talking points are up on the NPSNM website. Focused on April’s Native Plant Month, these are broad points on what a native plant is, what conservation means, and how to use native plants in gardening. We encourage individuals and chapters to write letters to the editor of your local newspaper, write social media posts, or to use other outlets to encourage public appreciation and conservation of native plants. You don’t have to wait for April!

Conservation work also involves tangible projects. NPSNM members have stepped up in droves (okay, in heart-warming numbers) to participate in the [NM Rare Plant Watch](#) and in the [Bumblebee Atlas](#) project. And, each one of our seven chapters is engaged in local conservation work. It is good to hold these positive efforts in mind during trying times.

It certainly can feel like an onslaught of attacks on hard-won protections for land and plants. But, Tom Stewart, in perusing earlier NPSNM newsletters, came across an article (reprinted here) that suggests that the struggles of competing interests is simply part of caring about the land and how it is used. More than ever, it is quiet persistence and a willingness to speak out for the environment that is needed.

BLM and Grazing Regulations

The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is currently proposing changes to the grazing regulations. We are working on talking points for any who might want to raise awareness in their communities. Check the website for updates. There is a deadline for public comments to the BLM (13 July) but it’s always the right time to talk about the deep connections between plants and grazing animals. One point that has come up repeatedly is the reminder that a lease is an agreement between two parties and can be changed or cancelled: it is not a right, as is often claimed.

The Roadless Rule, Again

In mid-June, Republican lawmakers attached a provision to repeal the Roadless Rule to the Wildfire Prevention Act. In a [commentary by Sen. Martin Heinrich](#), he stated:

“When the rule was first crafted, the Forest Service held more than 600 public meetings, including one I attended. Over 1.6 million comments poured in – more than 95% in favor. You could poll Americans on apple pie and not get that kind of consensus.

That support hasn’t changed. When the Trump Administration proposed repealing the rule in fall 2025, 625,000 people commented,

with 99% opposed. Americans have been clear. Repeatedly. Across party lines.”

It sounds like it’s time to step up again. While we have not identified specific native plants at risk at the moment, the possibility of habitat degradation is significant.

Panel Discussion on Fireproofing Your Landscape

Sylvan participated on a panel discussion for the Western Working Group of Partners in Flight on “Bird Friendly and Fire Safe,” adding a perspective about native plant landscapes and recent personal experience with modifying landscaping around her home to make it more firewise. One takeaway lesson from the panel was the importance of considering fire risk at the landscape level and considering finer-scale models in determining a neighborhood’s risk. For example, widely spaced pinon-juniper forest has a lower fire risk around a neighborhood than closely spaced forests. Partners in Flight and other groups have been thinking about how to present safe alternatives to potential mandates to eliminate a lot of landscaping around homes that provide wildlife habitat as well as shade. ❖

Links

NM Rare Plants Watch: <https://nmrareplants.unm.edu/nmrareplantwatch>

Bumblebee Atlas: <https://www.bumblebeeatlas.org/>

Heinrich comments: <https://www.outdoornews.com/2026/06/12/commentary-the-roadless-rule-is-under-attack/>

New Mexico BLM Wilderness

Eleanor Wootten

Tom Stewart remembers the NPSNM newsletters from earlier years and thought we should, too. With all our newsletters digitized and available online, he searched them for something that would be timely today. The following article is reprinted from the NPSNM Newsletter, Sept/October issue, 1992 (Vol. 17, No. 5. p. 3).

Recently I attended a meeting called by Larry Woodard, State Director of the NM BLM, for the supposed purpose of letting those interested know the status of the BLM Wilderness Bill. The meeting was attended by about 35 people; “environmentalists”, hunters, and ranchers. At first I was angered by the comments. In fact, it was tempting !o lower myself to the level of name calling that was going on, but it would have not been productive or helpful to any cause. Upon reflection of the meeting and after listening to the ranchers and hunters point of view I decided the problem, as I see it, is that every group [a]ffected by the BLM Wilderness Bill is afraid. The ranchers are afraid of not being able to use the land quite the same as they have for the past several decades. Since the ranchers use the land as part of their livelihood their fears are understandable. The Wilderness Bill would only mean a change in

part of their working operations, not on the availability of the land for grazing. The Wilderness Bill also would mean a change for the hunters. This land would still be available to them for hunting, but less easily accessible by automobile. Yes, it would cause more effort to be put forth by anyone wanting to use the BLM land with wilderness designation.

As a wilderness supporter, I am afraid too. Afraid of not having enough untrampled places left in this country for the future—for my children and grandchildren. Tired of this same argument say you. Well, let's think of wilderness as a savings account. Anybody worth their salt has put away for a "rainy day". Wilderness areas should be one of our country's savings accounts for many millions of people in the future. How much is enough you ask? I say, there can not be too much, given how little is left.

As a wilderness supporter I don't like making others with differing opinions mad and I most certainly don't like being the target for verbal abuse, but I do believe the wilderness cause is one to help mankind's future. I am sorry that it offends some, but I believe it to be a proper and necessary "use" of our land. ❖



During the 2016 Las Cruces conference, Jim McGrath, George Miller and Charles Keller, all champions of wilderness protection, documented native plants.

Image: Tom Stewart

Meet One of Your Board Members

Jackye Meinecke



Vanilla or butterscotch? Sylvan does a smell test on a ponderosa pine.

Image: Jake Barnes

Cool, calm, and collected might be your first impression of Sylvan Kaufman, NPSNM state board vice president, Conservation Committee co-chair, and president of the Santa Fe Chapter. After working with her, you might add thoughtful, perceptive, and well-spoken.

She has always been a hard-working and serious conservation spokesperson. An ecologist by training, she belonged to the Native Plant Society in Maryland, before moving to New Mexico. "Joining the NPSNM seemed sort of a natural fit for me to learn more about native plants," she said. "I'm very familiar with native plants on the east coast. In New Mexico, it was totally different."

She soon discovered the Leonora Curtin Wetland Preserve, where she volunteers, primarily tracking plant phenology for Nature's Notebook, a community science project. The nature preserve, at El Rancho de Las Golondrinas in La Cienega, is a rarity in New Mexico. She also volunteers at the Santa Fe Botanical Garden, where she works on updating the plant database for the Garden. Despite the many differences in the plant populations between New Mexico and Maryland, Sylvan has discovered some overlap of plants that occupy wetland areas in Maryland and New Mexico. For example, *Verbena hastata* (blue vervain) thrives in both states.

Prior to moving to Santa Fe, Sylvan worked at Adkins Arboretum in Ridgely, Maryland, which had several rare species. She took an opportunity to engage in advocacy for those native plants. Now, she advocates for New Mexico's native plants as the Conservation Committee co-chair. She collaborates with many other conservation groups to protect native plants and habitats throughout the state. She also engages with chapter committee members, board members, and other organizations with a similar mission.

Sylvan headed to Vassar College right out of high school with the intent to become a veterinarian. She majored in biology as an undergraduate. However, her professors were ecologists. She worked as an undergraduate intern in a research program studying insect galls on willow for two summers. She discovered she preferred the field of ecology, as it crosses a variety of disciplines, including biology. "I worked on invasive plant research for my Ph.D. at Rutgers University," she added.

After a stint in academe, she took a position at the native plant-focused Adkins Arboretum in Maryland, where she was the land manager and curator of the plant collections. She also led adult education programs and oversaw the native plant nursery. "I got to do everything — like with any small nonprofit," she recalled.

Today, she and her husband, who is a hiker, reside in Santa Fe and share their home with a tabby cat. Santa Fe places her between family on the east coast and her father in Oregon, which leads to regular travel. She notes when she does travel, she likes to visit botanical gardens. As she discovered when she settled in Santa Fe, the NPSNM fits her interests and what she likes to do. Her roles in NPSNM allow her to promote native plant conservation and native plant use in landscapes—causes that have personal meaning for her. ❖

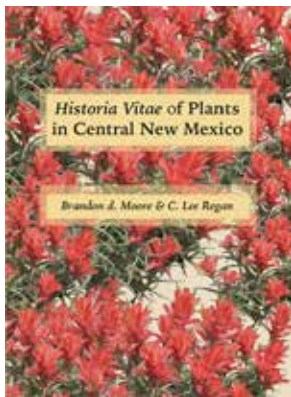
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Book Review: Historia Vitae

Tom Stewart

I am well stocked with gardening manuals, wildflower guides and a couple of more technical works. Nevertheless, it has been my privilege to preview *Historia Vitae*, a brand new book by two Native Plant Society members, Brandon Moore and Lee Regan. I find it to be a singular blend of botany and history, regional interest, and excellent photos.

This is not just another “plant book.” Its title means both life history and life stories. It is “intended for anyone who is enthusiastic about plants and people, as well as plant biology.” I am in that number and the book worked for me as intended. Its core is a review of the distinguished families of New Mexico. No, not the descendants of conquistadors in this case; it is a showcase of sixty-seven major families of the plants that evolved here, what distinguishes them, and intriguing stories of how they and their genera were named.

The substantial introduction should not be skipped as it opens up the world of biological classification, classic and modern; the taxonomic tree; and the fantastic diversity of plants, New Mexican plants in particular. The introduction is meaty yet easy on the jargon to better serve as a primer for budding botanists and as a refresher for many more of us. And it reminds us that, since ancient times, human curiosity about plants and their diversification has led to colossal impacts on our culture from agriculture to medicine and genetics.

After the introduction, readers can proceed to choose the families they want to learn more about. Most of the family descriptions include surprising facts and stories that keep one engaged with the book, looking for more. What did diversification in the pine family, Pinaceae, have to do with the Boston Tea Party? And who could have guessed that our “monument plant,” *Frasera speciosa*, was named for a man who was commissioned to collect plants of the New World for Catherine the Great of Russia?

For each plant family, there are descriptions and photos of representative species. Some readers may be disappointed not to find favorite plants of their area, since the examples are all found in the (very large) middle region of our state and do not include any that are exclusive to other areas. I did not find much mention of the habitats for many selections. Of course, no book can do everything for everyone. *Historia Vitae* does lots of things that you will not find in any other single place. The book comes across as a labor of love, and the extensive list of references attests to the depth of research involved. The species and landscape illustrations are beautiful, and the cover art, created by Brandon Moore’s daughter, Narca, from Lee Regan’s photo of *Castilleja integra*, is a knockout.

Not planned for digital downloading at this point, *Historia Vitae* is being published by ECO Publishing of Rodeo, NM, better known for its reptile and amphibian books. I look forward to it being on display and for sale at the 50th anniversary Native Plant Society of New Mexico conference in Silver City this September. ❖

Carol Johnson

Thomas Antonio



It is with great sadness that we report the passing of a faithful and dedicated member of the Santa Fe chapter, Carol Johnson. She served for years as vice-president of our Chapter, then as chapter representative to the State and, finally, as chair of the Publicity and Marketing Committee. For years Carol worked with the Governor’s office in obtaining a Proclamation for “Native Plant Day” for the Society. She even helped us obtain our current meeting room at Christ Lutheran Church, where she

and her husband Gary were members. She was always willing to help, whether staffing tables at the annual Santa Fe Garden Fair or helping out with many other outreach efforts. She was one of the kindest, most cheerful people I came to know in Santa Fe and she will be missed greatly. ❖



The Yerba Mansa Project: A Decade of Service to Native Plants

Dara Saville



The first yerba mansa planted by Yerba Mansa Project volunteers bloomed in 2016. Image: Dara Saville.

Anemopsis californica (yerba mansa), once known as *Houttuynia californica*, is a legendary medicinal plant that forms spreading stands in wetlands and riparian habitats in the arid American Southwest and Mexico. Its uniqueness is readily noticed by its gleaming white flowers composed of bracts that reflect the ever-changing layers of muted light characteristic of the desert landscape. Furthermore, it is one of only six plants in the global Saururaceae family and singular in the genus *Anemopsis*. Considered to be a paleo-herb, yerba mansa is ancient and believed to be close to the origins of monocotyledons (Carlquist et al. 1995). Its floral anatomy, morphology, growth, and development have been discussed by Quibell (1941) and Tucker (1985). In the Southwest yerba mansa is considered by many to be an essential apothecary remedy, a panacea, and a universally important herb of elevated stature (George 1877, Webster 1909, Munk 1913, Curtin 1965, Timbrook 1987, and others).

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- Text excerpted from: Saville, D. 2020. *Anemopsis californica* (yerba mansa) monograph. *Journal of the American Herbalists Guild* 18(1):33-42. Read the article at: https://www.researchgate.net/publication/363594742_Anemopsis_californica_monograph

With support from the NPSNM's Jack and Martha Carter Conservation Fund, the Yerba Mansa Project has surpassed a decade of service to native plants. When I first conceived of the Yerba Mansa Project, I dreamed of creating something that would bring people together while recognizing and supporting the work that native plants do every day to build the foundations of ecosystems, create the foods and medicines at the heart of our culture, and nourish all living things in body~mind~spirit. What I failed to see as part of this vision was the extensive network of engagement it would attract. As the years have gone by, I now see how important this vision of healthy native plant communities is to so many people for so many reasons. It is the plants that bring us joy, shape our identities, and sustain us. It is the plants that bring us together.

The primary mission of the Yerba Mansa Project is to bring people into relationship with our native plants in the Bosque. When people are able to see and appreciate native plants, they care for them and the places they grow. To do this, we have developed several essential programs designed to engage wide swaths of the public including all ages. Perhaps our most widely known events are the twice annual Bosque Restoration Field Days that occur each May and September in partnership with City of Albuquerque Open Space. These events, which include ravena grass removal and reseeding and replanting native plants, are open to everyone. They also provide rare opportunities for small children to volunteer on behalf of native plants. With support from the Native Plant Society's Carter Fund, we are able to purchase native plants for families with children to plant during these events. This not only increases native plant density and diversity in the Bosque and improves habitat quality, but it also creates a meaningful connection for these children. I have often heard from parents that after participating in our Field Days, the children want to return to check on the plants. Invested in caring for plants, children develop the



Yerba Mansa Project Bosque Restoration Field Day volunteers planting native plants in the Bosque. Image: Yerba Mansa Project



Community volunteers gathering for the Yerba Mansa Project's 10th Anniversary Bosque Restoration Field Day.

Image: Yerba Mansa Project

memory and meaning that our native plants are important and they help their parents to experience that, too.

Also supported by the Carter Fund, the Yerba Mansa Project's flagship youth education program brings underserved school classrooms into the Bosque each spring and fall. Remarkably, many of our program's first through twelfth grade participants report having never been to the Bosque before. Our one-of-a-kind program offers bus transportation and field-based experiences with knowledgeable educators providing plant identification and ethnobotany walks, botanical drawing, art and ecology projects, and nature-based games for different age groups. All participating classrooms also contribute to our iNaturalist Plants of the Middle Rio Grande Bosque Field Guide, which is fact-checked and edited by our professional staff with support from the Native Plant Society's Albuquerque Chapter. This field guide, a work in progress, is an opportunity for youth to publish their writing and botanical drawings in a format that is freely accessible by the community for self-directed learning about native plants.

With NPSNM and other partners on our side, the Yerba Mansa Project is changing the way people relate to native plants and their essential habitats. We provide opportunities for youth and adults to become stewards of native plants and the land, strengthening plant communities and building environmental resiliency. We offer free classes and events that highlight the important contributions of native plants to our ecosystems, our cultural heritage, and our everyday lives. After ten years, we are just getting started. There is much more we can do together. I hope you will join us at one of our community co-sponsored public talks or plant walks or our next Bosque Restoration Field Day. Or perhaps we'll see your kids on one of our school field trips. If you'd like to get involved, follow the Yerba Mansa Project on social media or visit our website. There you'll find out about upcoming events and how to become a monthly supporter, a one-time donor, or a business sponsor. You can also [contact us](#) to join our volunteer staff that works year-round to make all of it happen. ❖

Links:

YerbaMansaProject.org

Elementary school students engage in observation and botanical drawing during a Yerba Mansa Project field trip,

Image: Yerba Mansa Project



Native Plant Society of New Mexico

2026 Annual Conference and Golden Jubilee Celebration

Roots of Resilience: Native Plants
in the Next Fifty Years



Gila National Forest from Highway 152. Image: David Phillips.



Thursday, September 10 to
Sunday, September 13

Grant County Conference Center
Silver City, NM

Welcome to the Gila!

Program Guide

Please pull out this section to use during the conference, or download it to your phone. The conference website is here:

<https://www.npsnm.org/npsnm-state-conference-2026/> or scan the code.

Biographies for speakers, workshop leaders, and field trip leaders are posted on the conference website. The site also includes more detailed descriptions of workshops and field trips, accommodations, and more.



Registration is open on the conference website. Early-bird pricing ends July 31.

Register early so your chosen activity isn't filled up.

If you experience problems, please contact Lindsey at: [npsnmmembership \[at\] gmail.com](mailto:npsnmmembership@gmail.com).

The registration fee includes:

Thursday: Welcome Meet-and-Greet for those 21+ with appetizers, beer, and wine.

Friday: Morning presentations, snacks at the break, lunch, one afternoon workshop or field trip, and a reception at the Waterworks, adjacent to the Silva Creek Botanical Garden, with appetizers and a cash bar.

Saturday: One morning workshop or field trip, buffet lunch, afternoon presentations, snack, evening presentation by Doug Tallamy.

Sunday: Bonus guided field trips for those who want to enjoy the Gila for a little longer.



Optional add-ons:

- The Saturday banquet is an additional charge.
- A special NPSNM baseball cap featuring Wheel Milkweed, *Asclepias uncialis*, is available. On the back, it reads Native Plant Society of New Mexico.

Not included in the registration:

- Breakfasts. Some hotels offer one, but check the times. Restaurant options are limited.
- Plastic water bottles. Please bring a reusable water bottle.
- Dinners on Thursday and Friday, snacks for hikes or during workshops.
- Fees for some workshops and field trips where specified.
- A printed program guide. Bring this one with you!

Conference location: All conference activities and events are at the Grant County Veterans Memorial Business and Conference Center, 3031 US Hwy. 180 East, unless otherwise noted in the program. Pets are not allowed there or in any of the activities (except service animals).

Accommodations are listed on the conference website. Three hotels are offering special rates. We recommend making your reservations soon.

You will need your conference name tag to enter all events.



Thursday, September 10

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| 3:00-5:00 pm | NPSNM Board meeting |
| 5:00-7:00 pm | Early conference check-in and Meet-and-Greet at the Murray Hotel
Ballroom, 200 W. Broadway. Appetizers, beer, and wine. Must be 21+ to attend. |

Dinner on your own – see restaurant suggestions on the conference webpage.

Friday, September 11

Silent auction, poster session, merchandise sales, and educational displays begin.

- | | |
|----------------|---|
| 8:00 am-noon | Check-in, Grant County Conference Center |
| 8:30-8:45 am | Welcome and opening ceremony, Donna Stevens, Gila Chapter President, and the Chiricahua Apache Nation |
| 8:45-9:45 am | Keynote Presentation: “Thinking Inside the Box: Using Haiku to see the World New,” Philip Connors |
| 9:45-10:45 am | “Native Crop Tool Kit: Supporting Resilient Farming Practices, Pollinator Conservation, and Watershed Health,” Melanie Gisler |
| 10:45-11:15 am | Break |
| 11:15 am-noon | “Hotter Droughts Increase Forest Drought Stress and Tree Mortality: From New Mexico to Planet Earth,” Dr. Craig Allen and Victor Lucero |
| Noon-1:30 pm | Box lunch |
| 1:30-5:00 pm | Field Trips and Workshops (see below) |
| 5:00-7:00 pm | Reception at the historic Silver City Waterworks, 1721 Little Walnut Road. Parking is limited. Some may be available at the school next door, or try the Silva Creek Botanical Garden on Virginia and State Streets. Then walk through the garden and cross the bridge to the Waterworks. |

Dinner on your own – see restaurant suggestions on the conference webpage.

Saturday, September 12

Silent auction, poster session, merchandise sales, and educational displays continue.

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| 7:30 am-noon | Field trips meet in the Conference Center parking lot unless otherwise noted. |
| 9:00 am-noon | Conference Center opens, on-site Workshops begin. |
| Noon-1:15 pm | Buffet Lunch |
| 1:15-1:20 pm | Welcome and Housekeeping |
| 1:20-2:10 pm | “Pollination, Fermentation, and Distillation: The Biocultural Coevolution of Mezcal, Bats, and Humans,” Carlos Martinez del Rio |
| 2:10-3:00 pm | “Stewardship in Action: Connecting People, Data and Rare Plants Across New Mexico,” Erica Rowe and Katie Kline |



3:00-3:30 pm	Break. Last chance for silent auction, poster session, merchandise sales, and educational displays
3:30-4:20 pm	"Why the Native Plant Society of New Mexico Should Support Foraging and Medicinal Plant Harvest," Kelly Kindscher
4:20-4:25 pm	Announcement of poster awards
4:25-4:30 pm	Announcement of next year's conference and closing remarks
4:30-5:30 pm	Pick-up of silent auction purchases
6:00-7:00 pm	Banquet dinner and cash bar for registered attendees at the conference center
7:00-7:15 pm	Break and transition to the Large Event Room
7:15-7:30 pm	Presentation of the Jack and Martha Carter Conservation Champion Award
7:30-8:30 pm	Banquet Presentation: "Keeping our Common Birds Common (And our Common Plants Common)," Doug Tallamy
8:30 pm	Closing remarks and conference conclusion, Donna Stevens, GNPS President

Sunday, September 13

*Bonus Field Trips. Start times and locations will be in your registration packet.
The Conference Center will not be open.*

Workshops and Field Trips



Along the Continental Divide Trail.
Image: Margie Gibson.

Please read this:

Silver City is at 6,000 feet, yet temperatures can stay warm in September. **Stay hydrated;** higher altitude and temperature increase the risk of dehydration. **Bring water for all excursions.** Please bring a reusable water bottle: the conference center has a filling station. No single-use disposable water bottles will be provided. You will need appropriate shoes or boots for walking and hiking. Bring a hat, sunscreen, snacks, and, where needed, hiking poles. For some field trips, you might want binoculars or a hand lens.

Pets are not allowed (except service animals).

Directions and meet-up locations will be in your registration packet if they differ from the conference center or its parking lot. Fees for field trips or workshops will be paid on-site (cash or check only).

Friday Afternoon Workshops

Two-day Workshops

W 1 Creating Crevice Gardens. On Friday, Mike Kintgen, Curator of Alpine Collections at the Denver Botanic Gardens, will introduce participants to crevice gardening and showcase numerous examples of the technique. The group will then spend the rest of Friday afternoon and Saturday morning at the Silva Creek Botanical Garden, planning and creating a crevice garden. Limit 13.

W 2 Dyeing with Native Plants. Learn about the history and techniques used to produce colorful dyes from common native plants and use traditional methods to create dyes that will then be used to dye silk and wool. Continues on Saturday. Fee \$40 for supplies. Limit: 12.



One-day Workshop

W 3 Cyanotype Printing with Native Plants. Discover the art of cyanotype, a photographic process developed in 1842, and print on watercolor paper using pressed plant specimens. Materials fee \$20. Limit: 15.

Friday Afternoon Field Trips

F 1 Dah guh teh, Ha honda Nde benah. Chiricahua Apache Lifeways: A View of a Sacred Land.

Join us for a 3-hour horseback ride along the Gila National Forest Dragonfly loop trails with open discussions on plants and a reliance on a balanced Earth. Also offered on Saturday. Fee: \$100.00 Limit: 4.



Datura wrightii in the Silva Creek Botanical Garden.
Image: Elroy Limmer.

F 2 The Silva Creek Botanical Garden. Easy, wheelchair-accessible. See our beautiful garden, featuring over a hundred plant species native to the region. The tour will discuss the planning process, implementation, and future activities. Limit 12.

F 3 Home Garden Tour. Easy. Visit a quarter acre of Gila/Mimbres native and edible plants in the gardens of a 1906 historic home in downtown Silver City. Limit: 15.

F 4 Silver City Flora Project Tour. Easy. Explore the “wilds” of Silver City with members of the Silver City Flora Project, focusing on taking notes on the plants observed, which will be used for the project’s plant inventory. Limit: 16.

F 5 Regenerative Landscaping with Rainwater Harvesting Tour. Easy. By car, learn about rainwater-harvesting landscapes. This tour features aesthetically crafted rainwater-harvesting earthworks, cistern storage systems, and graywater systems. Limit: 18.

F 6 New Earth Project/Pilot: Climate Change Mitigation Through Food Waste Reduction. Easy. Tour the New Earth Project, which focuses on carbon sequestration, food security, replacing fertilizers and pesticides, soil health, reducing food waste, and lowering landfill methane emissions. Limit: 16.

F 7 Plants of Saddle Rock Canyon. Easy/Moderate. The canyon features rugged rock walls and great vegetation. Expect to see a variety of trees and, farther upstream, the success of the riparian restoration project, with native trees and shrubs making a glorious comeback. Limit: 12.

F 8 Botany for Beginners. Easy/Moderate. Designed for people who are beginning to learn about plants in New Mexico. We will visit Cherry Creek and learn about common trees and shrubs, the basics of plant families, and tips for plant identification. Limit: 12.

F 9 Dead Man’s Canyon Botanical Sauntering Adventure. Easy/Moderate. A casual hike along a forested ravine in the Burro Mountains offers access to a particularly lush, diverse mosaic of grasses, forbs, ferns, cacti, and shrubs. Limit: 12.



Gambel Oak, *Quercus gambelii*.
Image: Margie Gibson.



American Bumble Bee.
Image: Elroy Limmer.

F 10 Bumble Bee Atlas Field Training. Easy/Moderate. Learn how to catch, photograph, and release bumble bees as part of a community science initiative to discover more about them. Limit: 15.

F 11 Hiking San Vicente Creek Trail and Open Space. Easy/Moderate. This urban hike explores a microcosm of what makes the desert Southwest unique, traversing two important plant community types: Cottonwood Bosque Forest and Chihuahuan Desert Grassland. Limit: 20.



F 12 The Flora of Signal Peak. Moderate. This field trip will explore a magnificent display of native plants, color, pollinators, and birds, and offer exceptional views near the top of Signal Peak. En route to the top, we will travel through a landscape dramatically altered by fire. Limit 12.

F 13 Iron Bridge Conservation Area. Moderate. This area is part of The Nature Conservancy's Gila River Preserve, offering the opportunity to hike around the complex floodplain and explore secondary channels. Limit: 15.

F 14 Forest Drought Stress and Tree Mortality. Moderate. Discover the stages of drought impact by visiting conifer sites in the Gila National Forest. Learn about forest insect and disease management and how to identify stress-related issues. Limit: 15.



Image: Elroy Limmer.

Saturday Morning Workshops

Continuation of W 1 Crevice Garden and W 2 Dyeing with Native Plants Workshops.

W 4 Printing Botanicals in the Dirty Pot. Have fun creating beautiful botanical prints from plants gathered in your backyard ecosystems using the Dirty Pot Method, the Blanket Method, and the Botanical Dye Pot. Materials fee: \$20 Limit: 12.

W 5 Rooted in Place: Poetry as a Path to Resilience. Turn observations and descriptions of plants and/or animals into poems that express overcoming hardship or finding hope in difficult times. Limit: 15.

W 6 Plant Ornament Felting. Learn basic needle felting techniques. Wool roving and needles will be provided. Each participant will make at least one plant-themed felted ornament. Materials fee: \$15 Limit: 8.



Katydid Nymph.
Image: Elroy Limmer.

W 7 Expressionism Versus Documentation: Macrophotography in the Silva Creek Botanical Garden. An introduction to macrophotography, focusing on composition, technique, and other photography elements, with an emphasis on photographing plants and insects in the botanical garden. Limit: 10.

W 8 Mounting Herbarium Specimens. Learn how to mount a plant specimen and mount one of your own for inclusion in the Teaching Collection at the Dale A. Zimmerman Herbarium. Limit 12.

W 9 Disseminating Seeds throughout Southwest New Mexico. A presentation covering the history and organization of the Southwest New Mexico Seed Library, seed cleaning and packaging, harvesting times, and how to start and maintain a seed library. Limit: 15.



Saturday Morning Field Trips

F 15 Dah guh teh, Ha honda Nde benah. Chiricahua Apache Lifeways: A View of a Sacred Land. Horseback ride. See Friday description. Fee: \$100.00 Limit: 4.

F 16 Native Medicinal Plants of the Silva Creek Botanical Garden. Easy. Tour the botanical garden's medicinal plant section to learn about traditional and modern uses of medicinal plants and how to prepare and grow them. Limit: 12.



The mural at the Silver City Museum.
Image: Margie Gibson.

F 17 Youth Mural Program: A Walking Tour of Silver City Murals. Easy. Discover our wonderful downtown murals and learn the stories behind each, including who created them, their significance, their community impact, and some fun anecdotes. Limit: 12.

F 18 Mosses and Liverworts at Little Cherry Creek. Easy. Visit this heavily wooded, seasonal riparian area in the Pinos Altos Range, which is rich in both vascular plants and bryophytes. Limit: 10.

F 19 The Fabulous Flora of City of Rocks State Park. Easy/Moderate. Learn about the park's flora and notable geologic features, a prime example of the Chihuahuan Desert in southwestern New Mexico. Limit: 25.

F 20 Birding and Botanizing the Gila. Easy/Moderate. Good for both birds and plants; some birds include Painted Redstart, Bridled Titmouse, Steller's Jay, and possibly the Olive Warbler and the Band-tailed Pigeon. Limit: 12.

F 21 The Plants at Lake Roberts in the Gila National Forest. Moderate. Explore several habitats at Lake Roberts, including the riparian zone, lake edge, and rocky cliffs, with a chance of seeing showy wildflowers. Limit: 15.

F 22 Hugging the Fort Bayard Big Tree. Moderate. Hike to a special gem, the over 800-year-old Big Tree, an alligator juniper measuring 18 feet in circumference, 6 feet in diameter, and 60 feet tall. Limit: 14.



Sphinx Moths on Basketflower, *Plectocephalus rothrockii*, at Lake Roberts. Image: Elroy Limmer.



Reakirt's Blue.
Image: David Phillips

F 23 Butterflies of the Gila. Moderate. Ramble through Saddle Rock Canyon in search of butterflies, including Sulfurs, Swallowtails, Hairstreaks, and Blues – possibly 20 or more species. Limit: 15.

F 24 Boy Scout Road to Meadow Creek. Moderate. From tall Ponderosa Pines to sun-drenched riparian meadows, this hike showcases displays of native flowering plants and grasses. Limit: 12.

Sunday Bonus Field Trips

Off Highway 180 East, about 4 miles from Silver City

F 25 Dragonfly Trail Petroglyph Hike. Easy/Moderate. This hike through piñon-juniper grassland and a riparian area features petroglyphs, including a dragonfly. It is convenient for those heading south or through the Black Range. Limit: 12.



Granite Gap. Image: Margie Gibson.

Off Interstate 10 and Highway 80, Southwest of Silver City, approximately an hour's drive (one-way)

F 26 Exploring Granite Gap. Easy/Moderate. This area in the Peloncillo Mountains features stunning rock formations and a diverse array of flora. The range serves as an important migration corridor for wildlife and a safe haven for plant species from the surrounding desert. Limit: 12.

Off Highway 152, Northeast of Silver City

F 27 Black Range Crest Trail. Moderate/Difficult. This hike offers stunning views of the Black Range, amazing geological features, and a wide variety of native plants. Limit: 12.

Off Highway 15, North of Silver City, about a three-hour round-trip drive

F 28 Gila Cliff Dwellings Exploration. Moderate. An in-depth exploration of the canyon's riparian corridor, cliffside habitats, and cultural landscape, with frequent stops to discuss native plant communities, wildlife relationships, geology, and active land stewardship. Limit: 15.

F 29 Plant Biogeography of the Gila River Headwaters. Moderate. This trip will go into the heart of the Gila Wilderness along the river and highlight the river's resilience through fires and floods. We will identify native trees and shrubs. September is an ideal time for wildflowers here. Limit: 12.



Trail at Gila Cliff Dwellings. Image: David Phillips.



The Mogollons in winter. Image: David Phillips.

Off Highway 180, Northwest of Silver City, about 3 ½ hours round-trip

F 30 Visit The Mogollons. Moderate/Difficult. The hike begins at the Willow Creek trailhead, leading into a high-elevation spruce and fir meadow and serving as a gateway to the Gila Wilderness. September is perhaps the best time of year to see its floral beauty. Limit: 12.

Concern for Birds is Concern for Native Plants

Carol Beidleman



The pinyon pine, *Pinus edulis*, has given its name to the Pinyon Jay. These species have a mutual dependence, with the tree providing seeds as food, while the bird (inadvertently) plants some of the seeds, ensuring the survival of the tree.

Image: Sally King, National Park Service

On March 8 this year, the Santa Fe Chapter of the NPSNM hosted a panel discussion on "Landscaping in New Mexico, 50 Years of Change." During the Q&A period, a number of questions came up about landscaping in an increasingly warming, and ever more fire-prone, environment. I see a place for a collaboration among native plant and wildlife advocates in understanding the potential negative impacts of [Firewise USA](#)® and other fuel mitigation prescriptions on our native plants and on the birds and other wildlife (including other pollinators and insects) these plants support. Together, I hope we can work to adjust aspects of home protection from fire without negative impacts on native plants and the habitat they provide.

One of my favorite photos of my father, Dr. Richard Beidleman, biology professor emeritus at Colorado College and colleague of Dr. Jack Carter, was of him sitting at our dining room table, hand lens to eye, scrutinizing some plant part. I didn't take it personally that he and my stepmother, Linda, were so consumed with their botanical efforts there was little time for chitchat; it was just part of life with field biologists.

While, as a seasonal then permanent interpretive ranger, I had given my share of programs to park visitors on the area's native plants, I struggled with taxonomic keys, finding it daunting to discern whether the lower sepal formed a lip or the ovary was inferior. Instead, I found my niche, passion, and career focus in the world of birds—those creatures that depend on vegetation for nesting, resting, roosting, and foraging, but don't require taxonomic keys to tell what's what. Had I realized that birds may give you only a second or two for identification before flying off, I would have stuck with plants.

Of course, the disciplines of ornithology and botany are tied at the hip. Native vegetation is basic to avian conservation planning, which is organized by Bird Conservation Regions, ecologically distinct regions with similar bird communities, habitats, and

resource management issues. This planning is essential for prioritizing and facilitating conservation actions and partnerships.

For New Mexico, the regions include the Southern Rocky Mountains, Shortgrass Prairie, Sierra Madre Occidental, and Chihuahuan Desert. Across these regions, there are twenty designated habitat types, including grasslands, shrublands, woodlands, forests, and wetlands—and their sub-groups.

Thanks to its size, habitat diversity, and geographic location, New Mexico supports 557 species of birds, exceeded only by California, Texas, and Arizona. Each of our habitats, with their respective native plants, is associated with a suite of bird species. You may hear ornithologists speak of "indicator" species, which are characteristic of the habitat; "obligate" species, which are solely dependent on that habitat to survive; and "priority" species, which have the highest vulnerability assessment scores. This scoring system was developed by Partners in Flight, a landbird conservation initiative created in 1990 whose mission is keeping common birds common, helping species at risk, and voluntary partnerships for birds, habitats, and people.

We're fortunate that birds, as a group, have been better monitored than most other taxa, which allows us to determine more accurately what is happening with populations—providing information on species distribution, abundance trends, migration timing, and breeding success ... and thereby revealing both our conservation successes and failures.

We know that birds are essential to ecosystems, providing critical ecological services like pollination, insect control, seed dispersal, small mammal control, and acting as Nature's garbage disposal. They also provide artistic inspiration, aesthetic appreciation, and economic benefits. But their role as indicators of environmental health, the "canary in the coal mine," is what we need to pay most attention to. As Roger Tory Peterson said of birds, "If they are in trouble, we know we'll soon be in trouble." And, sadly, they are in trouble.

In 2019, [Rosenberg et al.](#) documented the cumulative loss of nearly three billion birds since 1970 across most North American biomes, signaling a pervasive and ongoing avifaunal crisis. The 2025 U.S. [State of the Birds report](#) showed widespread population declines, with the greatest declines in arid-land and grassland birds. More recently, [Le-roy et al.](#) determined that declines are greatest in areas with high and increasing temperatures and are accelerating with agricultural intensity.

Among the priority birds on our New Mexico species conservation list, those with the greatest range-wide population declines, are ones associated with aridlands (Bendire's Thrasher), grasslands (Lesser Prairie-Chicken, Scaled Quail), ponderosa pine (Grace's Warbler), and pinyon-juniper woodland (Pinyon Jay, Juniper Titmouse, Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay, Virginia's Warbler). More bird species of high conservation concern are dependent upon pinyon-juniper woodlands than any other habitat type ([New Mexico Avian Conservation Partners 2016](#)).

The Pinyon Jay is an obligate and key-stone species; it has a mutualistic relationship with pinyon (piñon in New Mexico) pine. We wouldn't have these valuable trees without this jay harvesting, transporting, and caching the seeds in adjacent juniper savanna and other habitats. This bird species has experienced an 84% population decline since the 1960s. In 2023, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service determined that it may be warranted to list it as threatened and endangered under the Endangered Species Act. Research that formed the basis of the petition identified fire mitigation treatments (cutting and thinning), invasive species, and climate change as the main threats.

The Juniper Titmouse, a juniper obligate, is also a declining species. The dense cover and cavities of juniper are important for nesting birds, its dead branches provide perches, and its low boughs provide safe haven from predators and harsh winter conditions. Juniper berries are an important source of carbohydrates and fat, eaten by American Robin, Western and Mountain Bluebird, Sage

Thrasher, Cedar Waxwing, Townsend's Solitaire, Woodhouse's Scrub-Jay, and Northern Flicker, as well as mammals.

The Scaled Quail, which uses juniper savanna and grasslands with shrubs (like four-wing saltbush, cholla, yucca, and broom snakeweed), has experienced a 67% range-wide decline due to brush clearing, loss of herbaceous understory, lack of adequate cover, and severe drought.

The reasons for bird population declines include widely documented threats, such as habitat loss and fragmentation, outdoor cats, collisions, chemicals, invasive weeds, changing climate, night lighting, and plastic pollution. But there is a new and pressing threat to birds which few are recognizing as such: the increasing push for fuel mitigation to reduce wildfire risk to people and property. This is obviously a delicate issue, borne of fear of loss and fanned by media reports which are seldom nuanced by local causation or conditions.

As a member of a national [Partners in Flight](#) "Bird Friendly Fire Safe" Subcommittee, we recognize the importance of fire as a natural disturbance process and its role in maintaining ecosystems and shaping biological diversity, acknowledge the risk to bird habitats of decades of fire exclusion, and support the restoration of habitats and natural fire regimes where possible. We also acknowledge the increasing threat of large scale, severe wildfires and the need for private landowners to protect their property from catastrophic wildfire.

Management actions for fuel mitigation have long been occurring on agency land, including intensive thinning, cutting, chaining, masticating, and burning. Recent scientific research is revealing the negative impacts such actions are having on avian abundance in pinyon-juniper woodlands ([Zhao et al. 2026](#), with local co-author Margaret Darr, Defenders of Wildlife).

Private lands, which represent about 60% of land ownership in the United States, are critical to bird conservation, both for year-round species and those whose full annual cycle crosses borders. But current and planned actions on private lands to reduce wildfire risks, through promoted national programs like Firewise USA® and [Commu-](#)



A juniper savanna outside of Santa Fe, NM provides a rich habitat for multiple species of birds and other wildlife.
Image: Carol Beidleman

[nity Wildfire Protection Plans](#), are often “one size fits all” and not applicable to local habitats and conditions: they do not consider the adverse impacts on native vegetation and wildlife. As a result, efforts to enhance private lands for the conservation of birds and other wildlife, like National Wildlife Federation’s program to certify backyard wildlife habitat, are coming into conflict with efforts to protect private lands from wildfire. Insurance companies, often based out of state, are getting into the act, using “fire risk” levels, which may not be locally accurate, to cancel policies or increase rates.

Examples of recommended fuel mitigation actions on private lands include mowing, limbing, poodling, clearing of live grasses, forbs, shrubs, trees, and removal of dead standing and downed trees, despite the perpetuation here of highly flammable wooden “coyote” fencing for privacy and screening.

Properties in my area outside of Santa Fe are dominated by native blue grama. Considered a “fire wise” grass by federal and state foresters, the compact arrangement of stems in the tufts of bunchgrasses makes it difficult to ignite and plants are usually discontinuous with bare soil in between. Blue grama is considered the most valuable forage grass in the state, year round, not just for livestock but also for wildlife. The seeds are eaten by Scaled Quail and songbirds as well as small mammals, and it’s a pollinator plant, providing food for caterpillars.

Concerns about wildfire are leading some residents to mow natural vegetation, but in our arid environment mowing has many negative consequences. Mowing desiccates the soil and removes native grasses and forbs which help control erosion. Eliminating native ground cover offers a foothold for invasive weeds, which flourish in disturbed areas and will outcompete native plants. Mowing also destroys the delicate cryptobiotic soil crust and causes soil compaction, which inhibits regrowth of native vegetation. Bare soil and sparse vegetation conditions are attractive to burrowing rodents which, although native, are not usually a welcome presence. And mowing is not an effective weed management strategy.

Both junipers and pinyon pines are often subjected to limbing up or to “poodling,” which removes cover for wildlife, dries out the trees and soil beneath, and harms the essential mycorrhizal communities. Once limbed up, Russian thistle and other weeds can accumulate underneath the trees, propagating their seeds and creating a fire hazard. Thinning out branches reduces the viability of bird nests, exposing eggs and young to higher temperatures, increasing vulnerability to predation, and causing mortality.

Dead standing pinyons (and ponderosas) are important as bird habitat for cavity nesting, roosting, perching, preening, storing food, and probing bark for insects. Fallen dead pinyons nourish the soil and create a microclimate of protection as nursery trees for pinyon seeds to germinate and replace the parent tree, ensuring future viability of our climate-stressed pinyon-juniper woodlands. Scientists have called out the mistaken assumption that dead pinyon trees constitute a serious fire hazard ([Binsky](#)



Chamisa (*Ericameria nauseosa*), also known as rubber rabbitbrush, is a versatile native plant that checks off many boxes in terms of value in the landscape. Not as well known, it is also considered to be a “fire wise” plant. Image: Carol Beidleman

[2004](#)), and there is limited evidence that woody fuel reduction in this habitat reduces fire risk ([Redmond et al. 2023](#)). Some pinyon-juniper woodlands have been “stable for hundreds of years without fire, other than isolated lightning ignitions that burn only single trees or small patches and produce no significant changes in stand structure.” ([Romme et al. 2008](#)).

Our native woody shrubs, which are extremely drought tolerant and play a vital ecological role, are often targeted for removal as a fire hazard, including rubber rabbitbrush, or chamisa. This important pollinator and insectary shrub, to the contrary, is considered “fire wise” by New Mexico State University and State Forestry. Its profuse late season golden-yellow flowers attract flies, wasps, bees, butterflies (including Monarchs), and birds. Insects overwinter in, and lay their eggs on, the stems and in the soil below. Larvae feed on the plant. Bushtits and warblers glean the foliage for insects, wintering sparrows eat the seeds, and other birds and small mammals seek the dense cover. This shrub also traps and retains moisture and stabilizes the soil.

Given all these contradictory messages and drivers, Partners in Flight recognizes the need for providing science to agencies and communities to ensure that fire mitigation efforts are not negatively impacting bird populations, and the need for developing

guidance for private landowners to conserve birds and their habitat while protecting property in the face of wildfire risk.

While my career may have been focused on public natural landscapes and their importance to birds, I have a more expanded perspective now, appreciating the critical role of private lands in sustaining bird populations. It is my hope that native plant and bird professionals can collaborate to protect our habitats for all wildlife taxa which depend on them. ❖

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Contribute to the Jack & Martha Carter Conservation Fund

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

Contributing is easy! Scan this QR code to be directed to our website or go there the old-fashioned way from your browser: www.npsnm.org. You may also snail mail your contact information with a check payable to NPSNM—Carter Conservation Fund to our main address (NPSNM, PO Box 35388, Albuquerque NM 87176).

Every contributed dollar is being used to protect the flora of New Mexico well into the future.

~Jack & Martha Carter



Chapter Activities & Events

For further information on upcoming events, email or call the contact person listed, or visit the chapter's webpage at www.npsnm.org. Click on "Chapters" to select the chapter. Hikers should always bring plenty of water, hat, sun protection, lunch and/or snacks, field guides. Wear sturdy shoes, suitable for rough, uneven ground. Check with your chapter for any fees or restrictions they or the event venues might require. Please check with the hosting chapter to be sure you know the current status of any event listed here. ❖

Albuquerque Monthly meetings are normally the first Wednesday of the month at 7:00 pm at the UNM Continuing Education Building, 1634 University Blvd NE. For more information contact our program coordinator, Tom Stewart at tomstewart@swcp.com. For more information on field trips, or to volunteer as a leader or co-leader, contact our field trip coordinator, Lee Regan at lnbregan2@gmail.com. You must register at least 24 hours before the start with the field trip leader. Please let us know if you need to cancel.

Jul 1 Meeting. "Neighborhood Invasion, the Good Kind." Terry Dettweiler, an artist and long-time home owner, loved walking her neighborhood, but noticed it had lost the flowers and fascinating pollinators that once flourished. She will talk about how a brainstorm snowballed into a citywide campaign, "Pollinators in Every Neighborhood," refreshing one neighborhood after another with a dose of nature's magic. She will also recommend plants to please pollinators around the seasons.

Aug 5 NO meeting. This is our summer break.

Sep 2 Meeting. Cameron Weber of Rio Grande Return will give an update about restoration progress at the Candelaria Nature Preserve and will share more about the work of her organization.



Image: Lee Regan

George Miller Fund Update

Lee Regan

In 2025, the Albuquerque Chapter established a fund for educational grants to honor our late friend and colleague, George Oxford Miller. The purpose of these grants is to support individuals who lead or participate in an educational project related to NM wildflowers, native plant conservation, education, or gardening. These interests reflect the lifework of George Miller as an author, photographer, and website developer.

Requests for applications for grants were sent to numerous organizations in the Albuquerque area, seeking projects that would increase community awareness or educate students or others about plant-related topics.

The initial series of grant awards included the following:

- an APS elementary school teacher to support extending the school's pollinator garden and starting an herb garden;
- an alternative "forest school" in the mountains east of Albuquerque, where students five-to-ten years old and their families participated together in planting tree seedlings;
- a 7th-grade Albuquerque science teacher who leads students to participate in outdoor education activities at Cottonwood Gulch Expeditions near Bluewater Lake in the Zuni Mountains;
- a requested donation to the Yerba Mansa Project, in support of their community education, outreach and restoration activities.

Funding for these grants came initially from sales of George Miller's books, which were donated by his widow. Additional funding has been provided by donations from our chapter members. We are continuing these grants in 2026.

El Paso The El Paso Chapter holds combined meetings with the El Paso Cactus and Rock Club. The meetings are the first Saturday of the month at 10:00 am and take place at the Garden Center at Memorial Park (3105 Grant Ave, El Paso, TX 79930). All events are free unless a fee is specified. Nonmembers welcome. Info: Kevin Floyd, 915-747-6665; kwfloyd@utep.edu; <https://www.facebook.com/Native-Plant-Society-of-New-Mexico-El-Paso-Chapter-19191352083180>

Jul 11 Potluck and Cactus Raffle. Bring a dish or snack to share and leave with at least one new cactus! All members of either the Native Plant Society or the Cactus and Rock Club in good standing will receive raffle tickets and get to select a small cactus when their number is called. Note this is the second Saturday because July 4th occurs on the first Saturday.

Aug 1 Meeting. Carried Away: The Remarkable World of Fruit and Seed Dispersal. Michael Eason will explore the fascinating world of fruit and seed dispersal, examining the remarkable adaptations plants use to move across landscapes and colonize new habitats. From wind-blown samaras and water-dispersed river species to fruits carried by birds, mammals, and even extinct Ice Age megafauna, the presentation will highlight the ecological relationships that shape plant distribution and biodiversity. Attendees will gain a deeper understanding of how dispersal strategies influence evolution, habitat connectivity, and conservation across Texas and beyond. Michael Eason is Vice President of Conservation & Collections at the San Antonio Botanical Garden, where he oversees seed banking, tissue culture, and native plant propagation with a focus on the flora of Texas, the Southwest US, and northern Mexico.

Sep 5 Meeting. Geologic History of El Paso Recorded in Rocks and Minerals. The geologic history of El Paso is recorded in rocks and minerals that are exposed in the Franklin Mountains. This presentation will focus on how to identify different local rock types and 'read' their clues about past environments. Dr. Jason Ricketts is an associate professor in the Department of Earth, Environmental and Resource Sciences at UTEP. As a geologist, he focuses on brittle tectonics of Earth's crust. He is interested in studying how mountains form, the history of faults, and investigating rocks in the field that record Earth history. Much of his research lies within New Mexico and western Texas, including El Paso.



Chairs for garden viewing away tour attendees during the May garden tour.

Image: Kevin Floyd

Las Cruces Our hybrid meetings are held on the NMSU campus in the Biology Annex, Herbarium Building, 3080 Williams Avenue, Room 101 on the second Wednesday of each month at 7:00 pm. Zoom link available from LC [at] npsnm.org. Check the NPSNM website, the LC Chapter's Facebook page, and recent email for updates, changes, additional news and other events and activities of interest.

In **April**, the Las Cruces Chapter revisited Spring Canyon, a perennial surface water feature uncommon in our area. For decades, public land leases allowed cattle to overgraze at the Spring which stripped away all vegetation, cesspooled the adjoining ground, and cut short the downhill flow. Several years ago, our chapter and other local groups committed to remediate the Spring. Bringing public attention to this issue persuaded the State Land Office and BLM to revoke the grazing lease and have the cattle removed. "No Trespassing, Permit Required" signs were posted to restrict unauthorized off-road vehicles.

Collaborating with Friends of Organ Mountains Desert Peaks National Monument (OMDPNM) in **March**, we picked up a truckload of trash: inconsiderately strewn bullet casings, cans, bottles, garbage. In **April**, we returned with the Friends and El Paso based Celebration of Our Mountains for expert introductions to the geological, botanical, historical, and cultural richness of Spring Canyon and surroundings.



To protect the Cox Visitor Center and nearby structures within the OMDPNM, the BLM has conducted five controlled burns over the past nine years along a wide, flat area adjacent to the Dripping Springs Trail. Curious about the continuing impact on native plants, especially after the most recent burn on 3/12/26, the chapter took a look in late April. Left: Dozens of *Cirsium neomexicanum*, New Mexico thistle, with extensive, deep root systems were unaffected, perhaps even benefitted by the burn. Below: Mule deer rested beneath the canopied shade of an alligator juniper tree, *Juniperus deppeana*. Perhaps the low growing tinder generated too little sustained heat to damage the tree. Below left: Damage to Parry's agave, *Agave neomexicana*, was limited to the blade tips. (Images: Gordon Berman)



Our chapter held its annual potluck picnic in **early May**. The BLM kindly allotted us time and space in Ice Canyon. Later in **May**, several Chapter members enrolled in the Bumblebee Atlas Training Program which the Xerces Society recently introduced to New Mexico, the 21st participating state.



At our **May** monthly meeting, Dr. Stephanie Bestelmeyer, Executive Director of the non-profit Asombro Institute for Science Education, highlighted her organization's decades long commitment teaching natural sciences to nearly 20,000 New Mexican students each year. Stephanie and her dedicated colleagues bring joy, expertise, and enthusiasm to their mission, tailoring programs for grades one through middle school. A good start for Gen Green.

Dr. Paul Hyder, ecologist/science educator/exuberant wildlife guy will present at our **June** monthly meeting, I think about pollinator friendly gardens. Whatever topic he chooses will be a treat. We hope to hold our field trip at a higher elevation, either in the Sacramentos or the Black Range.

Dr Ashley Rohde, NMSU Biology Professor and happy Las Cruces resident these past three years, will present at our **July** meeting about the Bumblebee Atlas Program and her post-doctoral research. As in June, we hope to field trip in the Sacramentos or the Black Range.

Otero Most events are free, and everyone, including non-members, is welcome to attend. For more event and/or chapter information, and to contact us, please visit our chapter section of the NPSNM website.



Chapter members ensured we had a successful plant sale. Image: Elva Österreich

The Otero Chapter put on a successful plant sale on **April 11**. Our new supplier, Sunland Nursery out of Las Cruces, provided a nice variety of native plants. After sale of the plants, along with some books, the chapter brought in enough money to cover our grant to the New Mexico State University herbarium. The chapter also participated in the Alamogordo Earth Day celebration on **April 18** with an information booth including book sales, leftover plant sales, and lots of information sharing.

We look forward to the next quarter-year of adventure and learning beginning in **July**.



Rain is always welcome in NM, even during a plant sale. Image: Elva Österreich

Gila (Silver City) Upcoming evening programs will be hybrid whenever possible. To attend in person, come to Room 111 in Harlan Hall on the WNMU campus at 7:00 pm. Gila Chapter members will receive an email with the Zoom link; all others are welcome and can request a link from gilanative [at] gmail.com. Check the website for the latest field trip information: <https://gilanps.org/events/field-trips/>

Sep 10-13 Hosts of the NPSNM Annual Conference and Golden Jubilee, we have a great meeting planned. Read the program beginning on pg. 9 and come join us!

Taos Videos of past meetings are at <https://tinyurl.com/TaosNPSvideos>. For updates, check the Taos chapter page on the NPSNM website, our Facebook page, the Taos News Calendar, or email TaosNPS [at] gmail.com. Meetings are held on the FIRST Wednesday of the month in the Kit Carson Electric Cooperative Boardroom, 118 Cruz Alta Road from 6:00 to 7:30 pm. Chapter activities go on hiatus during the winter, other than the greenhouse, which operates year-round. All meetings are free and open to the public.

The chapter's first meeting of the year was held on **March 4**. Gwendolyn Pieper and Leo Levy, co-executive directors of the non-profit River & Birds, described the organization's programs, which teach Taos youth about environmental stewardship. On **April 1**, Paul Bryan Jones, certified arborist, discussed the importance of tree care in our high desert plateau. On **May 6**, Darien Fernandez, executive director, and Avery Blair, working lands manager, for the Taos Land Trust, discussed the history, mission, and future plans for the organization. On **June 3**, chapter member Paul Cross discussed native plants that were propagated and planted in 2025 at several sites in Taos County. Species were selected for pollinator support, and seeds were collected from their natural habitat to create a diverse genetic pool.



Business was brisk at the spring native plant sale. Image: Bob Pokorney

The chapter held their Spring Native Plant Sale on **May 9**. All proceeds from the plant sales go towards chapter operational expenses and greenhouse supplies, maintenance, and improvements.

Upcoming speakers include:

Jul 1 Henk van der Werff, PhD, will present the genus *Astragalus* (common names include milkvetches and locoweeds). Dr. van der Werff became interested in the genus while collecting plants in the Taos area.

Aug 12 Jack Dash, Gardens and Facilities Manager at Tohono Chul Gardens, Tucson, AZ, will present important concepts for arid-land gardeners, while highlighting wildflowers, grasses, vines, cacti, and trees. Please note that this meeting will not occur on the first Wednesday of the month, but on the second Wednesday in August.

Santa Fe In-person meetings are on the second Tuesday of the month from September through May at 6:30 pm at Christ Lutheran Church, 1701 Arroyo Chamiso. Speakers are announced via the Santa Fe listserve. To sign up to receive emails, email santafe [at] npsnm.org. We will post speakers on the NPSNM website when we have advance information. Meetings and talks are free and open to all.

Special Event! August 11, 5:30–7:30 pm. The Santa Fe chapter and the Santa Fe Botanical Garden are co-hosting Jack Dash, author of *The Southwest Native Plant Primer*. Contact santafe [at] npsnm.org for an NPSNM member discount code. Registration is through the Botanical Garden website.

April 14: Simon Doneski, Graduate Researcher University of New Mexico, presented at the monthly meeting “Native Flora, Native Fauna: Using Host Plant Data to Guide Conservation Decisions,” focusing on new host plant research reshaping the approach for butterfly conservation in New Mexico and beyond.

May 12: At the last monthly meeting until September, Melissa Houser, Stewardship Director, Santa Fe Conservation Trust (SFCT), presented Caring for Dovetail, the Santa Fe Conservation Trust's 300-acre property in the Galisteo Basin, and we held an informal plant giveaway and book sale.

May 16: The Santa Fe River hike, led by Arle Kruckeberg and Barbara Fix, was attended by about twenty-five participants. Other field trips are planned throughout the summer.



Sylvan Kaufman and Darlene Endy staff the NPSNM information table at Earth Day at the Railyard. Image: Barbara Fix

We have engaged in a number of community outreach events this spring with a lot of seed ball making and providing information about native plants:

- **April 25:** The Railyard Earth Day event
- **May 2:** Love Your Watershed Day at DeVargas Park
- **May 9:** The Santa Fe Extension Master Gardener Fair
- **June 13:** The Santa Fe Children's Museum and we facilitated a plant ID walk in Los Alamos.

- **June 9 or 18:** In support of Santa Fe Partners in Education, we facilitated seed ball making and provided an educational session on native plants for Santa Fe public school summer school students.



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