



**GILA
NATIVE
PLANT
SOCIETY**

B U L L E T I N

JULY, AUGUST, SEPTEMBER 2015

Editor: Charles Holmes

PROGRAMS

All programs are free and open to the public. Meetings are usually the third Friday of the month at 7:00 pm at WNMU's Harlan Hall, with refreshments following the program.

Activity updates and further details will be posted on our website www.gilanps.org. You will also receive an email reminder before the date of each program.

On Friday, September 18th in Harlan Hall on the Western New Mexico U. campus, Matt Schultz, Forest Planner, and Mitchel White, Forest Ecologist, will give a talk on the planning process for the future of the Gila National Forest.

The Gila National Forest is in the early stages of revising its existing forest plan from 1986 that will describe the strategic direction for management of forest resources for the next 15 years. Plan revision involves three distinct phases: 1) assessment of the ecological, social and economic conditions and trends, 2) development of a revised plan, and 3) monitoring and implementation of the final approved plan. The Gila National Forest announced the beginning of the Assessment Phase in May 2015, and expects to make the draft assessment report available in Spring 2016. The trends and conditions identified in the assessment will help in identifying the current plan's need for change, and aid in the development of plan components. Once finalized, all subsequent proposals, projects and activities must be consistent with the approved forest plan. The Gila National Forest is currently inviting the public to engage in a collaborative process to identify relevant information and local knowledge to be considered for the assessment. The presentation will feature discussions on how the forest, woodland and grassland ecosystems will be assessed. A variety of communication methods will be available to provide input, collaborate and stay informed about the status of the status of the process.

FIELD TRIPS

The Gila Native Plant Society will continue our new season of native plant field trips in some of the best areas in our region for discovering native plants. The public is invited to join these events free of charge. Participants should meet at 8:00 am in the south parking lot of the WNMU Fine Arts Theatre to arrange for carpooling. Those attending must sign a release-of-liability form and will receive a list of native plants in the hike area.

Participants are asked to bring water, a lunch, a hat and sunscreen. They should also wear good hiking footwear. For more information on the field trips, call Kevin Keith, our new field trip leader, at 575 535-4064.

3.

On Sunday, July 19th, the Gila Native Plant Society will conduct a field trip to the riparian area at the Gila River Middle Box.

On Sunday, August 16th, the Gila Native Plant Society will sponsor a field trip to Lower Gallinas Canyon (FS Trail 795) in the Black Range.

The hike area is montane coniferous forest and riparian.

On Sunday, September 20th, the Gila Native Plant Society will sponsor a field trip to Sacaton Creek in the Mogollon Mountains.

This hike area is mixed conifer and riparian.

R E P O R T S

On April 17th Dr. Bill Norris, faculty member in the Natural Sciences Department of WNMU, and Tim Geddes, a citizen scientist working for years with the City of Rocks State Park, presented an assessment of their activities to inventory, describe and assess the native plants found within the official one-mile boundary of the City of Rocks.

They reported that so far they have discovered 274 plant species, most of which are native. Bill reported that 106 of these native species are unique. Only twenty of the *taxa* were non-native.

Then they displayed an extensive series of great photos of many of the more important species. This was a terrific treat for the audience. (Continued)

4.

Bill then described this state-protected preserve as a vitally important area that was preserving the native vegetation of a desert grassland that has survived for over 400 years.

This effort will soon increase because the state park is in the process of expanding its boundaries to something like five square miles, mostly to the north.

On Sunday, April 19th, a fair-sized group of us “hit the trail” for the Big Juniper Tree near Ft. Bayard, Trails 55 and 55A.

The three most notable plants encountered along the two-mile hike (one way) were *Pinus cembroides* (Mexican Pinon) which is, in this location, at the northern extent of its range; *Conopholis alpinus* var. *mexicana* (Ground Cone), which is parasitic on the roots of *Quercus gambelii*. We also found a sizeable and nearly pure stand of *Acer negundo* (Box Elder) along Cameron Creek. And, of course, we gawked at the really big Alligator Juniper, which we admired while eating snacks in the shade of *Quercus gambelii*.

On Sunday, May 17th, a group of us descended into the fascinating area of Meadow Creek (near Signal Peak).

Thirty-four new entries were added to the already extensive plant list: eight monocots, five graminoids and four forbs, including the *Corallorhiza wisteriana* (Spring Coralroot Orchid). We also added seventeen eudicots (a large population of *Crataegus wootoniana* (Wooton’s Hawthorn) which was in bloom. Nine mosses were identified (thanks to Russ Kleinman) and, for the first time, they were added to the plant list.

5.

On Sunday, June 21st, dense riparian vegetation provided luxuriant shade for our mid-summer excursion along Cherry Creek.

About a dozen new species were added to the existing list including *Lactuca graminifolia* (Arizona Lettuce), the delicate and easily overlooked *Androsace occidentalis* (Western Rock Jasmine) and three shade-lovers on north-facing rock outcrops – *Heuchera novomexicana* (New Mexico Alumroot), *Valeriana arizonica* (Arizona Valerian) and *Sedum cockerellii* (Cockerell's Stonecrop).

