

GILA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

A CHAPTER OF THE NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY OF NEW MEXICO



B U L L E T I N

JULY, AUGUST, SEPTEMBER 2014

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.

Friday, September 19th at 7:00 pm, room 219 of Harlan Hall, WNMU, A.T. Cole will present "Human-Caused Climate Change and Habitat Shallowing as an Adaption Tool."

It is long-passed time we recognize that terms like *extended drought and fire season* are no longer relevant and unwittingly play into the hands of the flat-earth-science-denier fellowship. Droughts end and seasons change. Climate change is making the arid Southwest "hotter and drier" than anywhere else in the continental U.S. "When compared to the 20th century average, the West has experienced an increase in average temperature (cont.)

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during the last five years that is 70% greater than the world as a whole." The "new normal" can be referred to as *permanent warming and year-round fires*.

Now the question is "How to Adapt?" Landscape restoration is a key part of the solution. The mantra of the "Three R's" is now five: "Recycle, refuse, reuse, reclaim and restore." Restoration is something anyone can do anywhere, regardless of land size or ownership. This talk will offer ideas on just how.

After 33 years in Casa Grande, Arizona, A.T. & Cinda Cole retired to the Pitchfork Ranch, an hour south of Silver City ten years ago. They are restoring the nine mile reach of the Burro Cienaga that runs through the ranch, repairing the grasslands, improving wildlife habitat and introducing endangered animals and plants.

FIELD TRIPS

Field trip participants should meet by 8:00 am in the south parking lot of the Western New Mexico University Fine Arts Center Theatre to arrange for carpooling. Those attending must sign a release-of-liability form and will receive a list of native plants likely to be seen in the hiking area

Field trip participants should bring water, lunch, a hat and sunscreen. Also, please wear good hiking shoes. For more information, call Deming Gustafson at 388-5192 or email him at demgus@msn.com.

On Sunday, July 20, the Gila Native Plant Society will sponsor a field trip to Railroad Canyon, near Emory Pass, to see how plant life is coming back after the "big" fire." We hope to find the little, rare *Scrophularia macrantha* (New Mexico Figwort) seen in past years.

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On Sunday, August 17, we will head for Sheep Corral to look for *Solanum jamesii* (Wild Potato) among plenty of other plants that like a cool, northern drainage.

On Sunday, September 21, the hike will be in Pancho Canyon above the Gila River Bird Area. *Trichostema arizonicum* (Arizona Bluecurls) and *Anisacanthus thurberi* (Desert Honeysuckle) are favored in this area.

R E P O R T S

On April 18, 2014, Dr. Jack Carter laid out his assessment of Human Population Past, Present and Future.

He started with a quotation from Malthus (1798). That great early scientist stated that the "actual population (of the Earth) is kept equal by the means of subsistence and by misery and vice". It actually hasn't worked out that way because by the end of the current century that population is expected to level at 10 billion. It is scary, but true scientifically, that there is an increase of the Earth's population of one million people every 4.5 days. Each of those days causes the future of humans to seem ever more in doubt.

Jack then outlined the individual specific problems for this country, as he saw them. They are continued wars, unemployment, worsening education systems, climate change, expanding crime, (cont.)

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poverty and hunger and mass extinctions (remembering Rwanda). Dr. Carter's way of presenting the overall complex of problems is a big circle including the interrelating issues of ecosystems, religions, human health, climate, education, population, immigration and economy. All of these issues must be considered and weighed in any viable solution to the overall problem.

He then recommended three authors that would help us understand the larger picture. They are: Tim Flannery, William de Buys and Alan Weisman.

On Sunday, April 20th (Easter), ten of us began searching for evidence of new growth and flowering at the McMillan Campground and on the trail above it.

We were not disappointed! I counted over 30 species in these stages in less than a mile. It somewhat supported the hypothesis that the "coolness" of the late winter and spring had supported rather lush growth, a considerable difference from the harsher, very dry conditions of the late Spring and early Summer.

I will not overwhelm you with an entire list, but here are some of the more outstanding finds. Among the most prolific (almost never leaving our view) were *Packera neomexicana* (New Mexico Ragwort) and *Maianthemum racemosum* (or possibly *stellatum*) (False Solomon's Seal). Then, we must pay special attention to a rare, spectacular species (which some of us had seen in times past at this location), *Crataegus wootoniana* (Wooton's Hawthorn).

There were also some species that are "regulars" that must be noted because they grab you attention. Among those are *Thermopsis rhombifolia* (The Golden Pea), *Viola canadensis* (Canada Violet) and the *Lonicera arizonica* (Arizona Honeysuckle). Then there were a couple of standouts which really grabbed our attention!! One was the *Valeriana arizonica* (Arizona Valerian). The other was the spectacular *Clematis columbiana* (Columbian Virgin's Bower), an intriguing vine that we don't see often and almost never in our gardens.

5.

On Sunday, May 18th twelve of us arrived at the Royal John Mine Road at the "Mimbres Bridge" not far from the Mimbres Hot Springs.

There was WATER! at this location! It was a somewhat unusual environment than we are used to at this time of the year. In this running water we found *Veronica anagallis aquatica* (Water Speedwell), *Potamogeton foliosus* (Leafy Pondweed), *Juncus bufonius* (Toad Rush) and *Polypogon viridis* (Water Polypogon).

Then there were the shore plants (near the water). How about *Fallopia baldschuanica* (Chinese Fleece Vine), *Sonchus asper* (Sow Thistle) and finally *Dimorphocarpa wislizenia* (Spectacle Pod).

Very near this stream we came upon some absolutely gigantic cottonwood trees. I, for one, want to return to this place as soon as possible!!

On Sunday, June 15th ten of us went to Little Cherry Creek Road area because most of the other desirable places in the area may have had unknown fire damage from the Signal Peak fire.

You are almost always guaranteed to find lots of interesting species at this location because there is usually lots of water nearby. That was not the case this time because of the long-term drought. But, we did scare up some interesting species.

You will always find quite a few Narrow Leaf Cottonwoods (*Populus angustifolia*), some *Penstemon barbatus* (Scarlet Penstemon), masses of *Toxicodendron rydbergii* (Poison Ivy) and quite a few *Prunus virginiana* (Choke Cherry). There are a few *Alnus oblongifolia* (Arizona Alder) and a few *Ceanothus fendleri* (Buckbrush). But, it is only during a narrow season that you will encounter the unusual *Apocynum androsaemifolium*, the Spreading Dogbane. It is quite a show!