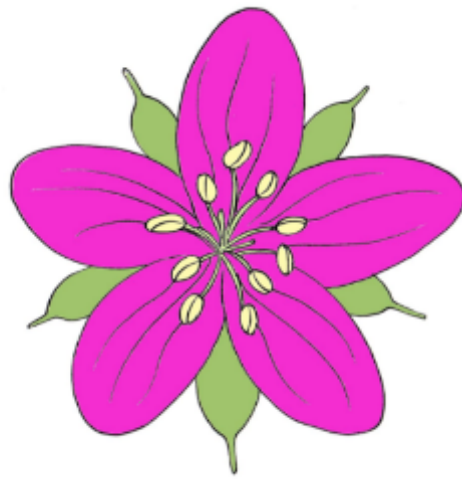




GILA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

October 1, 2026

Vol 16 No 4

Margaret Madsen, Editor

Bulletin 2026: Quarter 4

This quarterly Bulletin of the Gila Native Plant Society of Silver City, New Mexico provides the latest communications between the society and the members. It is also available on the GNPS website <http://www.gilanps.org>.

President's Message

FIELD DAYS



Monsoon precipitation is spotty, as we know, with some areas being favored and others not. This summer, I hit the jackpot. As I write this in the waning days of September, my home has received thirteen inches of rain since June 1.

Every summer, just to amuse myself, I identify a “flower



of the year” at my home. This honor goes to a plant that flourishes due to the timing and amount of rain. This year, the award (“May I have the envelope, please?”) goes to a group of plants, the native grasses, rather than a single species. I’ll be the first to admit that my grass ID skills are sorely lacking (shout-out here to local botanist Jim McGrath, who loves to key out challenging monocots such as grasses and sedges, and to tease me that I only

know the flower “pretties.”)

Sharing in the award this year are the common grama grasses, sideoats (*Bouteloua curtipendula*) and blue (*B. gracilis*), and the grasses with conspicuous flowers that catch the light, cane bluestem (*Bothriochloa barbinodis*) and little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*). There’s the elegant, slender plains bristlegrass (*Setaria leucopila*), and longleaf squirreltail (*Elymus elymoides*), whose seedheads amass in great piles. And there are my personal favorites, the riparian deergrass (*Muhlenbergia rigens*) and the tall, reddish bullgrass (*M. emersleyi*). All these grasses, and many more, are quite literally having a field day.

Countless times in my summer wanderings, I’ve been stopped dead in my tracks, astonished anew by the beauty of our native flora. I’m betting that you share that feeling. I’d love to hear from you, plant enthusiasts, about *your* flower of the year.

-- Donna Stevens

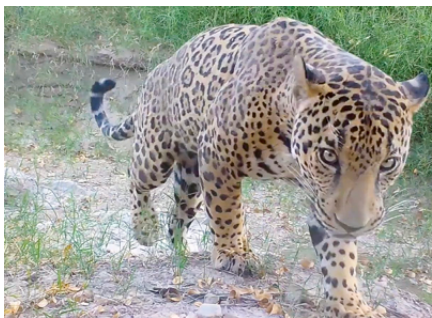
email: gnpspresident@gmail.com

PROGRAMS and ACTIVITIES For This Quarter

PROGRAMS:

Program meetings begin at 7:00 pm, are open to the public, and will be hybrid online/in-person when possible. Attend live in Room 111 of WNMU’s Harlan Hall. We’ll automatically email a Zoom link to Gila Chapter members, and others can request it from gilanative@gmail.com. Volunteer signups are always appreciated for refreshments, so contact us if you are willing!

Friday October 16, Peter Winsor of Cuenca Los Ojos will describe restoring and rewilding efforts of a great North American landscape.



[Cuenca Los Ojos](#) is both a conservation organization and a large nature reserve in the Sky Islands region of northern Mexico. The end goal of Cuenca's restoration and rewilding efforts is to have functional ecosystems where bison shape the grasslands, beavers restore streams and wetlands, pronghorn race across open plains, wolves reclaim their ecological role, and jaguars once again roam a connected borderlands landscape. A

future where healthy watersheds, thriving wildlife, and resilient human communities flourish together across one of North America's most extraordinary ecosystems. This presentation will address how long-term restoration efforts are being transformed into active rewilding, and what that means to the US-Mexico borderlands, including the Gila region.

Peter Winsor is the Conservation Director for Cuenca Los Ojos. He is a distinguished oceanographer and climate scientist with over 30 years of experience in research and conservation. Born in Sweden, he developed a passion for nature and outdoor adventures from an early age. He obtained his PhD in Sweden, then moved to the US in 2002. Peter taught at the Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution and the University of Alaska Fairbanks, served as the Director of the World Wildlife Fund's Global Arctic Program, and owned a wilderness guiding company. He has published over 50 journal articles and book chapters, served on several prominent advisory boards, and was involved in UN climate negotiations with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC). In his spare time, he enjoys exploring wild places through such activities as caving, climbing, canyoneering, backcountry skiing, hiking, packrafting, and fly fishing. Peter now resides in Silver City with his wife Steffanie.

Photo credit: Cuencas Los Ojos

Friday November 20, Tricia Hurley of Lone Mountain Natives nursery will share expertise in landscaping with native plants.

Here's some of what she'll cover:

- Seasonal strategies for establishing (and maintaining) plants. Sure, fall/winter is the best time to plant, but that doesn't always work since you may be away, the plants you want are sold out, etc. Learn tactics for being more opportunistic!
- How landform, elevation, soil type, and microhabitat influence what thrives here. Whether you're planting in a grassland, pinyon-juniper woodland, full sun at low or vs. high elevation, or somewhere else, she'll arm you with knowledge to make good choices.
- Ideas on how to successfully navigate a changing climate.
- Bring your questions! Those who have conversed with Tricia at our native plant sale or the Farmer's Market know she's a great one to ask.

Tricia Hurley is a familiar face at the Silver City Farmers Market, where she has been growing, selling, and learning about native plants for twenty years. She moved to the southwest in 1990 to pursue a career in wildlife biology. She has worked with Hawkwatch International, the Forest Service in California and New Mexico, and the Arizona Game and Fish Department. In 2001, Tricia, her husband Mark Cantrell, and young family moved to Silver City, where they could survive on Mark's teacher salary. Their daughter was born shortly after. Together they started [Lone Mountain Natives](#) nursery in 2006. Tricia was also one of the founding members and employees of the Gila Conservation Education Center, which was a nonprofit housed in the Gila National Forest office.



Photo credit: Lone Mountain Natives

ACTIVITIES:

Saturdays at 9 am until October 31 - Docent led tours of the Silva Creek Botanical Garden

FALL IN THE SILVA CREEK BOTANICAL GARDEN

The garden has been glorying in all the rain. Come see it anew on one of our new docent-led tours, every Saturday morning at 9:00 through October 31. You'll be glad you did.

The participants at the Native Plant Society of New Mexico's annual conference in September visited the garden for workshops and tours and crossed the bridge from the reception held at the Waterworks. One conference workshop made lasting changes. Mike Kintgen, the Curator of Alpine Collections at the Denver Botanical Garden, led a 2-day workshop to build a crevice garden.

Crevice gardens use rocks to create spaces where deep roots can retain water. Our rocks were buried up to 2/3 of their length. Between the rocks, because drainage is so important, Kintgen used a 50:50 soil/sand mix. Like the craftsmanship of Silver City's rock walls, the placing of the rocks is an art. The crevice garden technique was pioneered in the Czech Republic to mimic natural stratified cliff faces and alpine rock outcrops.

We have just a few plants in the crevice garden thus far, but there will be plenty more soon. Come check it out!

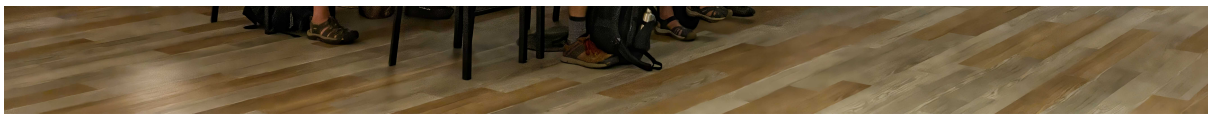
-- Marty Eberhardt, Silva Creek Botanical Garden Committee

NPSNM State Conference Update



"Roots of Resilience: Native Plants in the Next Fifty Years"
September 10-13, 2026

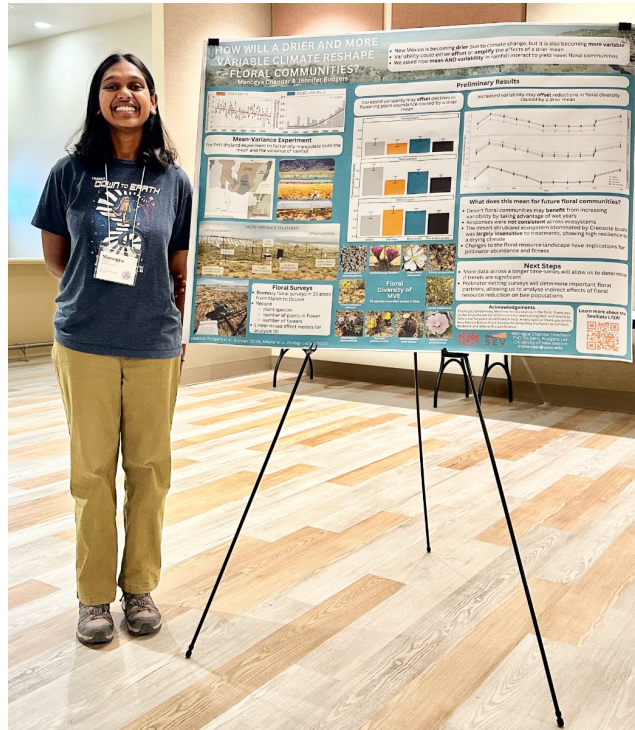
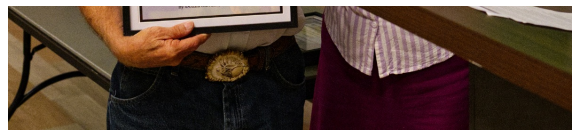
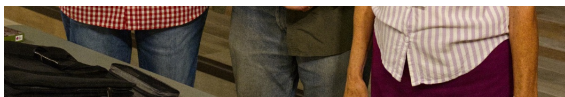




From the opening blessing given by Joe Saenz of the Chiricahua Apache, the poems and insight of the first official speaker, author Phil Connors, to the final hopeful (and caterpillar filled) keynote address by Doug Tallamy, the attendees of the conference were engaged and learning. Everything from lichen to plant dyes, old trees and bees were covered in the over 30 workshops and field trips. Social events included a meet-and-greet at the Murray Hotel, a mingling tour of the Waterworks, and a banquet at the conference center. More than 80 volunteers made the conference a success. The silent auction netted almost \$6000. Over 200 people participated in the workshops, field trips, and social events of the conference including from fellow chapters of the Native Plant Society across the state. Those from the Santa Fe Chapter were taking notes for next year's conference which they will host.

Chapter President Donna Stevens presented several notable awards. First, the Carter Conservation Champion Award to co-recipients Bill Norris and Russ Kleinman. The Gila Native Plant Society Award for Outstanding Service recognized Elroy Limmer for his extensive and much appreciated service in the botanical garden and throughout chapter activities. Five students presented their research in poster format; Manogya Chandar of Rutgers Lab University of New Mexico received an award for \$50 for her excellent work.





Roadless Forests Need YOU!

Twenty-five years ago, the Forest Service established the Roadless Area Conservation Rule, which prohibited road building and logging in 45 million acres of national forests across the country. This immensely popular rule also protected these areas from threats such as mining and oil and gas drilling.

Now, the Trump administration is attempting to rescind this rule, and open currently roadless areas to logging, mining, and drilling. In New Mexico, 1.6 million acres would be devastated, including 730,000 acres in the Gila National Forest.

Native plants need your help TODAY. The comment period is open only until Tuesday October 6, so there's no time to delay.

Submit your comments in one of three ways:

- To learn more about roadless areas and submit comments, visit roadless.org.
- You can submit comments directly to Regulations.gov, at www.regulations.gov/comment/Fs-2025-0001-223869
- Learn more and submit a comment here: <https://westernwatersheds.org/talking-points-roadless-rule/>

Here are some talking points you can use when writing comments.

Substantive comments.

Comments such as “Keep roadless areas intact” don’t do much good. On the other hand, the Forest Service is obligated to respond to “substantive comments” that raise legitimate concerns about the impacts of the proposed action. For example, a comment such as, “Eliminating roadless areas will cause a decline in native plant diversity and place rare plants at risk of extinction” is one that the Forest Service must respond to.

Invasive Plant Species

- Invasive plants do not provide the food that wildlife need for survival.
- Because invasive plants lack the predators and diseases that kept them in check where they originated, they often can outcompete native plants.
- Invasive species arrive in areas primarily through roads: seeds in tire treads or on boot soles.
- Roads facilitate the establishment of invasive plants by creating soil disturbance, the perfect opening for weeds.
- Studies show that most non-native plant species are found along road edges. The farther an area is from a road, the fewer invasive species there are.

Imperiled Plant Species

- Because they are difficult to access, roadless areas protect imperiled plant species.
- While the Gila National Forest has no plants that are federally listed as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act, it does have 21 plant Species of Conservation Concern.
- These rare plants will become much more vulnerable if roads are built into plant habitats that are currently roadless.
- The Gila National Forest has 10 areas that have been designated by the state as Important Plant Areas where rare plants are known to occur. Some of these areas are currently roadless.
- Native plant diversity and populations increase the farther an area is from a road.

Logging Large and Old Growth Trees

- Logging does much more than just remove trees. It also destroys understory vegetation that wildlife need for food, cover, and nesting sites.

- Logging cuts down the biggest, oldest trees, the very ones that are most resilient to wildfire.
 - It takes hundreds of years to replace old growth trees and for ecosystems to recover after clearcutting.
 - Older, larger trees absorb and store more carbon than younger, smaller trees, which is an important consideration as we try to minimize the impacts of climate change.
 - Non-native species invasions are a consequence of building roads needed for logging.
-

Our mailing address is:

PO Box 457
Silver City, NM 88062

The Gila Native Plant Society is committed

- To promoting education, research, and appreciation of the native flora of the Southwest
- To encouraging the preservation of rare and endangered plant species
- To supporting the use of suitable native plants in landscaping.

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