

**Native Plant Society of Texas
Big Bend Chapter
August 2007 Newsletter**

August Meeting -

August 24, Friday from 5-7 p.m. is the next NPSOT meeting - this time at One Way in Alpine. NPSOT will provide the wine, napkins, plates, etc. *Please bring finger foods to share.*

Alice will have a new shipment of fall plants from Mountain States - and she is ordering various kinds of salvia. Those who attended the April 2006 program on Salvias will have gotten a copy of Beth Francell's excellent brochure on Salvias of the Trans Pecos. We will republish that for this meeting - it includes color photos and info about each salvia. It cost us \$3.00 to print last year, and that's what we sold it for last time. 2007 costs should be about the same.

Also, please use this as a time to bring seeds to swap - it would be good to label your container of seeds with whose they are and where they were harvested. We'll have small envelopes for your use. Seeds, yes, and cuttings, too - if you've got'em, bring'em.

And there is still time to call Alice - 837-1117 - to ask her to special order your plants and trees for fall.

Please call Alice to reserve a space so we have enough drinks, etc. Reservation *deadline is Aug. 23 at 3 p.m.*

Sunshine House Gardens -

Polly Melton, Beth Francell, Martha Latta, Victoria Bannister and Dallas Baxter are working with Lue Hirsch, director on the Sunshine House in Alpine to refurbish the long-neglected gardens and grounds around the Sunshine House building at 205 E. Sul Ross.

Polly, Beth and Martha have designed new gardens and hardscape and gathering places. Aug. 4 is the first of several work days, and we have enough folks signed up for the tasks at hand. But never fear, there is more work and there will be more workdays. Stay tuned!

By Sept. 15, the day of the Sunshine House 30th Anniversary celebration, we should have the existing grounds in tip-top shape, the designs posted and the donation jar prominently displayed so that we find funds to implement the "new look."

The Sunshine House is a gathering place for many area seniors. Offering social activities, they also cook the weekday Meals on Wheels and offer a reasonably priced weekday lunch to the public as well. Lue's excellent leadership should usher in a new day for the organization, and we are happy to be part of it - and thanks to Victoria for seeing the need and creating another opportunity for NPSOT to shine.

Bits and Pieces -

Thanks to Mike Mecke, Fort Stockton member and program presenter extraordinaire, for sending the following items:

* From Jason Spangler <jason_spangler@texasprairie.org> who heads up the Texas Prairie Association - On July 31, the News Hour on PBS covered the drastic declines in our grassland birds (including meadowlarks) and the need for native prairie conservation and restoration in a segment titled "Vanishing Birds" on Tuesday, July 31st.

The story mentions black clay prairie, prairie restoration by land trusts and volunteers, native seed availability, little bluestem and other native plants, and the need for resources to accomplish prairie conservation and restoration to keep grassland birds from becoming endangered.

Listen to the story online at the News Hour web page:

http://www-tc.pbs.org/newshour/rss/media/2007/07/31/20070731_birds28.mp3

http://media.pbs.org/ramgen/newshour/expansion/2007/07/31/20070731_birds28.rm?altplay=20070731_birds28.rm

* Earth Kind, an environmental stewardship program at A&M, publishes an e-newsletter in Cooperation with the Texas A&M Horticultural Gardens and the Texas Water Resource Institute. <http://aggiehorticulture.tamu.edu/earthkind/EKSubscribe.html> is the subscription link.

* From an interview with Robert Cook, the outgoing head of Texas Parks & Wildlife discussing the three biggest problems facing TP&W: **1)** First, continued fragmentation or the breakup of privately owned land into smaller and smaller tracts, and the separation of those tracts by roads, urban areas, lakes, etc., has a very negative impact on the state's fish and wildlife resources and there is nothing that TPWD can do about it. Texas has less and less quality habitat to work with everyday. **2)** Second, funding for state parks will continue to be a problem for the agency. These sites will not pay for themselves. **3)** Third, as the human population of our state increases and as our state becomes more urbanized and more developed, a smaller and smaller percentage of the citizens of Texas, our voters, will really know about or care about the fish, wildlife, parks, outdoors, and natural habitats. *They just don't know that wildlife and wild lands are important and that they have to be provided for, managed, and protected ... or you will not have them. People today think that their food comes from the grocery store. They think that wildlife lives in the zoo. They think fresh water comes out of the faucet.*

Ed note: How can we help change this picture?

Programs - 2007 -

Mark these dates for the remainder of the year:

- September 15 - Buzzing Around - Sul Ross Entomologist Kendall Craig hosts a program in Beth Francell's Fort Davis garden on the pollinators of the high country desert.
- October 20 - Patty Manning on native ornamental grasses (see the article on prairie above). We'll meet at the Baxter Gallery in Marathon and then visit the fabulous Eve's Garden Bed and Breakfast for lunch (\$15 includes lunch, beverages and gratuities).
- Nov. 9 and 10 - Overnight in the Solitario - With guides from TP&W, this visit to a special part of Big Bend Ranch State Park will be limited to members. \$100 per person covers lodging, meals, guide service and park admission. We'll take reservations in September.

Programs - 2008 -

Thanks to everyone for your response and suggestions for next year's programs. You're invited to be part of the decisions: the Program Committee will meet in late August at the Front St. Books Annex. Please contact Dallas Baxter if you'd like to attend. This is a good way to become more involved with NPSOT without a 24/7 commitment - please join us!