

Native Plant Society of Texas
Big Bend Chapter
May 2008 Newsletter

All Aboard for Red Rock Ranch -

May 3, 9 a.m. we carpool from One Way in Alpine, picking up folks from Marfa and Fort Davis in Marfa at the Town and Country at 9:30 a.m.

We should arrive in Van Horn at the bank parking lot around 10:30. Our host, Darice McVey, suggests long pants in addition to the usual hats, sturdy shoes, water, snacks and a sack lunch. Cameras are a must. We'll have lunch on the porch of the old homestead. And be home around 4.

This is a driving tour with stops to get out, so if you're not a hiker, think about coming, but we will make stops to take photos, etc. so you should be able to walk short distances.

There is a max. of 25 and the trip is filling fast, so call Alice now to assure yourself a spot - 837.1117.

We will run a calendar item in the papers this week. Deadline for sign up is noon May 2 or earlier if we run out of space.

June 7 - Glass Mountains Ranch -

Hiram and Liz Sibley's wonderful limestone ranch offers hikes with fossils underfoot, a different "look" from the usual Tri-counties landscape and a visit to their mountain-top ranch house with its 360 degree views of the surrounding countryside where we'll eat lunch.

Patty Manning will lead the botanical part of the hike, and Hiram will fill in with stories of the ranch, his childhood on it and other historic and anecdotal info.

Meet at 9 a.m. at the Hwy 67/90 Triangle outside Alpine to follow Hiram to the ranch. BYO lunch, water, cameras, too and plant books, etc. We'll be home by 2 p.m.

There will be a sign up sheet at One Way starting May 19.

No meetings July and August -

Summertime and the living is easy, so we'll be taking two months off to do rain dances and tend the garden. See you in September!

Wildscapes in Unexpected Places -

While we're thinking of places to showcase native plants and create wildscapes for birds and bees, cemeteries are often overlooked. What a great idea to make these memorial places living memorials full of nature and beauty!

Here's an excerpt from a National Wildlife Federation article and a link to read the rest. Any thoughts about beautifying one or more of the Tri-county cemeteries?

Peaceful Islands of Biodiversity

IN THE SHADOW of Mt. Tamalpais, more than 150 graves lie scattered across a windswept hillside in Marin County, California. Though the hill makes up a large portion of a 32-acre cemetery called Fernwood, most people walking along the wooded ridge above it may not realize that bodies are interred there. None of the burial sites are identified by headstones or monuments. Some are distinguished simply by clumps of native flowers or small trees; others are marked so subtly with flat stones that they can be located only by using the facility's Global Positioning System (GPS) coordinates.

(Creating wildscapes) includes restoring the area's native vegetation to the grounds, which are located directly adjacent to the 75,000-acre Golden Gate National Recreation Area.

"As we've removed exotic trees and other invasive plants and replaced them with native species, we've seen an increase in wildlife on our property, including bobcats and raptors," says Fernwood Funeral Director Kathy Curry. As she speaks, a Cooper's hawk circles overhead while its mate perches in a nearby tree. Fernwood is one of several graveyards across the country designated as a *Certified Wildlife Habitat*™ by NWF because of their natural features that provide food, water, shelter and nesting places for wild creatures. In some cases, such habitats are vital links to the nation's ecological past.

For the complete story, click on this link:

<http://www.nwf.org/nationalwildlife/article.cfm?issueID=121&articleID=1583> Author/ Editorial NWF Director Mark Wexler visited Fernwood Cemetery last summer. To learn more about NWF's Certified Wildlife Habitat program, visit www.nwf.org/backyard.

More on the Border Wall and its ecological consequences -

Rio Grande Guardian - Texas Border Coalition's testimony on the border wall plan April 26, 2008

Texas Border Coalition Chairman Chad Foster will address the House Interior Subcommittees on National Parks, Forests and Public Lands and Fisheries, Wildlife and Oceans, when the panel holds a field hearing at the University of Texas at Brownsville on Monday, April 28.

The Subcommittee is chaired by U.S. Rep. Raul Grijalva, D-Ariz. The Texas Border Coalition is an advocacy group representing cities, counties and economic development entities from El Paso to Brownsville.

Chairman Grijalva, Chairwoman Bordallo and subcommittee members, I am Chad Foster, mayor of Eagle Pass, Texas and Chairman of the Texas Border Coalition. I am speaking today on behalf of 2.1 million Americans in 14 border counties of the 1,250-mile Texas-Mexico border. Ours is a region of contrasts, exhibiting differences and similarities of language, culture, tradition, and economy. The multi-national, multi-cultural nature of our communities on both sides of the international boundary gives our region a distinct sense of place. (Continue the story by clicking the link)

http://www.riograndeguardian.com/columns3_story.asp?story_no=4

Thanks to former member Mike Mecke for forwarding these two items

Newsletter contributions -

Thanks to those who already have and encouragement to those who might like to submit articles and information for the newsletter. Please send items to me at bigbendwoman@sbcglobal.net.