

**Native Plant Society of Texas
Big Bend Chapter
September 2008 Newsletter**

September 27 - Diamond Y Preserve

Nature Conservancy biologist and Program Manager for West Texas John Karges will lead an interpreted hike to Diamond Y Springs Preserve. Located about a dozen miles north of Ft. Stockton on Hwy 18, the Preserve protects one of the largest and last remaining cienega systems in West Texas. This preserve provides critically important habitat for two species of rare desert fishes listed as federally endangered species (the Leon Springs pupfish, *Cyprinodon bovinus*) and the Pecos Gambusia, (*Gambusia nobilis*), the federally threatened, rare, salt-tolerant Pecos (or puzzle) sunflower, four other globally rare plants and a suite of rare aquatic invertebrates.

All of these creatures depend upon the maintenance and perpetuation of the surface springs, their outflow marshes and watercourses or subirrigated moist soils for survival.

We'll carpool, leaving Alpine at 8 a.m., returning mid-afternoon. BYO sack lunch, water, hats, cameras, etc. Sunflowers will be in bloom!

Invasive Species Workshop Aug. 23 -

The Texas Master Naturalists are hosting a workshop sponsored by the Texas Forest Service on identifying and eradicating invasive species. The event is from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. this Saturday at the Sul Ross Turner Range Animal Science Center in Alpine on Hwy. 90 east.

The workshop's intent is to foster "citizen scientists" - concerned citizens who are alert to the presence of invasive species wherever they go - at home, on hikes, etc. and enable them to report the species and location to TPWD as part of a state-wide study.

After an explanation of the program, participants will go out onto the grounds around the Range Animal Science Center or up on Hancock Hill to search for and identify invasive plants. Then they'll return to the lab where the plant ID's will be entered into the state data base. Both novice and expert plant persons are needed for the training and to participate in the study.

Bring a digital camera, hat, water, sunscreen, etc. and lunch.

For details and reservations, contact David Disselhorst at 432.294.2607

2009 Program Planning -

Planning for 2009 programming will be coming up in September. To submit suggestions or become part of the planning group, contact chapter president Polly Melton at 432.364.2577 or melton@bigbend.net

Border Issues -

From the National Parks Conservation Magazine via former member Mike Mecke:

Pushing Boundaries

Across the Rio Grande from Big Bend National Park, Mexico is taking a vastly different approach to land conservation—and we might just learn something from it. By Amy Leinbach Marquis

Big Bend National Park is the pure definition of unexpected. As you drive south from Marathon, Texas, the Chihuahuan Desert suddenly swells into a cluster of giant peaks ahead in the distance. Twenty minutes later you're climbing into the Chisos Mountains, where woodlands sway with Emory oaks, weeping junipers, and pinyon pines. Mountain lions reveal themselves on a surprisingly regular basis. At dusk, tarantulas tiptoe across the asphalt in clusters of furry brown legs and eyes that reflect car headlights. Scorpions glow green under pocket-sized black lights that you can purchase from a nearby rafting outfitter.

But at the base of Casa Grande Peak, mystery falls away to a familiar scene: A lodge. A restaurant. A parking lot. A trailhead. Rangers in full-brimmed hats. It's all part of a tidy little package we know as America's national park experience.

But gaze across the river into Mexico, where the landscape mirrors—if not outshines—the Chisos Mountains, and you're witnessing the result of a dramatically different conservation model. Here, land is owned by those who live on it: wealthy ranchers, poor villagers, and Cemex—international cement company with a conscience. Although these areas are protected by the federal government, Mexicans have never relied solely on state and federal conservation initiatives to protect the land...continued at this link: <http://www.npca.org/magazine/2008/summer/pushing-boundaries.html>

2008 NPSOT Symposium -

This year it's the Big Thicket. The symposium is in Beaumont, Oct 16-19, and while it's a l-o-n-g way away, if you're in the area or interested in the incredible diversity and ecological importance of the Big Thicket and want to see it close up, this is your moment.

See www.npsot.org for more details.

2009 Water Conservation and Xeriscape Expo -

If you're thinking of a New Mexico trip, you might want to wait until Feb. 28-Mar. 1 to visit this comprehensive event in Albuquerque.

The Expo features more than 250 exhibitors including nurseries, irrigation companies, water harvesting and rain barrels, landscape architects and designers, vintage gardening equipment, books on all aspects of gardening and xeriscaping, yard art, water features, native plants, trees and shrubs, local food ... GASP!

Mark your calendars, and for more information go to: <http://www.xeriscapenm.com/>
The Expo is part of the Xeriscape Council of New Mexico's annual conference Feb. 26 and 27.

The Expo is free; there is a fee for the conference, which is always excellent (and not as far away as Beaumont!)

Sound off -

While NPSOT is not a political organization, we are a conservation group, and you may want to be able to sound off about the recent decision by the Department of the Interior to rearrange the EPA's system of environmental protection. If so, here are some helpful links:

Defenders of Wildlife: <http://www.defenders.org/index.php>

National Wildlife Federation: <http://www.nwf.org/>

Environmental Defense Fund: <http://www.edf.org/home.cfm>

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