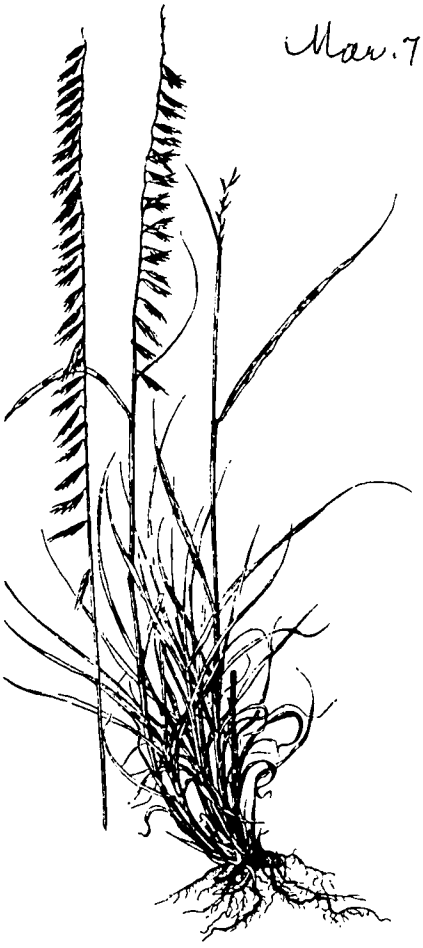


Mar. 77

THE NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY OF NEW MEXICO

Melissa Savage, editor 983-1113, Santa Fe

Many thanks to Larry Watson of Western Evergreen Nursery in Golden Colorado for his thorough and apt lecture and slides on native trees, shrubs, and forbs suitable for landscaping in our area. We are really delighted to find a source for these plants at Western Evergreen, particularly plants of such fine quality. People who wish to purchase plants from his nursery may contact Gail Haggard, who is putting in an order for the Native Plant Society's First Annual Plant Sale in late May, or myself, Melissa Savage. Gail has also provided a list of the plants Larry spoke of for anyone who wishes a copy; please ask.

Next month's program is a charming one. On Saturday April 23rd, at 7:30 pm, Dr. Thomas Todsen from Las Cruces will speak on

Native Orchids of New Mexico

This will be a joint meeting of NPS and the Santa Fe-Los Alamos Orchid Club. We haven't yet located a large enough room (60+ people), but we will call the week before the meeting to remind everyone and will have the information then. Which reminds me, we are in the process of weeding our mailing list, and calling lists, and several people did not get called before the last meeting--and my apologies--we hope it will be corrected from now on.

We'd like to all to who don't already know, to learn of the N.M. Wildflower Association, based in Albuquerque--much like our own group. They publish a newsletter, have field trips, and monthly meetings with speakers. 1977 field trips planned for Sandias, Pine Flats, Old Cienega, Silver City, Las Vegas, Wheeler, Sierra Blanca, SF Ski Basin--in search of wildflowers in bloom. You can contact the "benevolent dictator" of this group Judy Nickell, 3817 Calle Del Monte NE, Albuquerque 87110.

PROGRESS ON ENDANGERED SPECIES

This is brief review of what the State is doing about the Endangered Species Act; we'll have a sketch of Federal actions later:

March 2

State of New Mexico Efforts in Behalf of Endangered and Threatened Plants

At the present time no formal State effort in behalf of endangered and threatened plants in New Mexico exists. An informal arrangement does exist, in that the Governor has directed the Department of Game and Fish to act as his and the State's liaison with the Federal Government on matters pertaining to such plants. To date, this liaison has functioned mainly in commenting on proposed New Mexico candidates for endangered and threatened listing; in one case a candidate, the lousewort Scrophularia coccinea, was suggested by the Department as a candidate for listing. Part of the reason that no formal State program exists in behalf of endangered and threatened plants is that no specific jurisdiction exists among State agencies for these entities and their conservation. The only law that explicitely deals with an array of native plants is the one that protects certain groups, e.g. certain orchids, cacti, and other horticulturally desirable species, from being exploited on State land. The Federal government requires much more specific authority than this to consider a State eligible for a cooperative agreement, which in essence is a document of recognition of a State's being qualified to manage endangered and threatened species. At the present time, I know of no definite plans to develop a State program that would qualify New Mexico for a cooperative agreement for endangered and threatened plants. This does not mean that no efforts will exist at the State level in the behalf of such plants, for the Department of Game and Fish will continue to function on an informal basis in this area. It is anticipated that this effort will improve significantly when the New Mexico Heritage Program--under the leadership of Bill Isaacs --becomes part of the Department on July 1, 1977. In the meantime, efforts are needed to obtain a formal State program, including legislative authority and funding.

--John Hubbard

New Mexico State Heritage Program

The New Mexico State Heritage Program is a program designed and supported by the Nature Conservancy. This organization is a national, private group dedicated to the protection of natural diversity. Many thousands of acres of land have been set aside to protect unusual organisms or ecologically unique areas. The underlying principle of the Nature Conservancy is to attempt to protect the rarest elements of natural diversity so that they are not lost for all time. Two examples of Nature Conservancy activities in N.M. are acquisition of the Sevilleta Land Grant, some 270,000 acres of land, in the La Joya State Game Refuge. Another is the purchase of the Little Chama Ranch in northern New Mexico by Nature Conservancy, which was turned over to the N.M. Game and Fish Department to manage as a wildlife area.

The Heritage Program is involved with the development of an inventory of the natural diversity of New Mexico with special emphasis on the rare, endangered, or threatened species of organisms that occur here. This inventory is developed from many sources including studies by

the faculty and students of our various state universities, as well as other institutions throughout the U.S. Also, many individuals and environmental groups have contributed much information to our data base. This information is then transcribed onto computer cards and stored such that it can be recalled, depending upon the type of information required by the user. For example, one could ask for all information concerning the occurence of endangered plants or animals that are to be found in our New Mexico State Parks. The user would be provided with a computer printout with all known occurences of anything from titmice to turtles that have been found in State Parks. This information is of obvious value to planners and resource managers throughout the State.

The New Mexico State Heritage Program has been in existence for slightly more than one year. A report summarizing its work has just been completed and given to the State Planning Office which is the administrative arm of state government to which the Heritage Program is attached. This program is thus a cooperative effort between state government and the Nature Conservancy, a private organization. As of July 1, 1977 the Nature Conservancy Heritage Program is being transferred ti the State Game and Fish Department where it will become an integral part of the planning effort of Game and Fish to deal with the natural diversity of New Mexico.

Anyone who is interested in our program is encouraged to come to 1117 Jefferson St., Suite C, Santa Fe, so that he or she can see what we are doing on a firsthand basis.

--Bill Isaacs

NATIVES FLOURISH ON TEXAS BYWAYS

In the 1930's Gibb Gilchrist, the state highway engineer of Texas directed his engineers and maintenance crews to collect seeds of native trees, shrubs and wildflowers to use along roadsides.

The Texas Highway Department over the years from this initial leadership has become the largest "landscape gardener" anywhere. It cultivates 800,000 acres of roadsides with natives -- 71,000 miles of Texas highway, more beautiful for the driver and safer because the driver is led to be more aware of his surroundings.

Working with native plants, not introduced plants, makes very good sense, for it is impossible to foresee the consequences of introducing plants. Parts of the South are being overrun by the kudzu vine which was introduced with an entirely worthwhile aim--erosion control.

The Texas Highway Department is its own harvester of wildlife seed. Highway crews fo not mow until wildflowers have bloomed and the seeds have matured. Then the "flower hay" is mowed, part is left where it stood, part taken to new locations, sometimes top soil is moved as well to the new location. And topsoil is always saved before construction and earth moving projects begin. After they are

completed and the pavement is down, the topsoil, rich in humus and seeds, is brought back. A 3-to-1 slope is generally adopted for highway cuts and fills; this reduces wash off of seed and topsoil, and mowing is still possible.

The following things have been achieved by the Texas wildflower program, 1)beauty, spring, summer, fall, 2) erosion control, 3) studies of ecology of individual plants, e.g. Lupinus spp.are planted with their bacterial inoculates so they can carry on nitrogen fixation 4) and what amounts to wildflower sancturaries. Some flowers seen along the highway have entirely disappeared from ranches and farms (in the early days of the program ranchers and farmers were asked for seed, now it would have to be the other way around).

The Texas Highway Dept. encourages moves in a direction such as theirs by giving lists of native wildflower seed suppliers, by publication of colorful flowerguides for amateurs, and first and foremost by thier example--the beautiful roadsides.

There have also been impressive national efforts, legislative and by private organizations, to encourage highway attractiveness: the 1965 Highway Beautification Act, the national Keep America Beautiful organizations, the Lady Byrd Johnson Award for Highway Beautification, and the Federal Highway Administration annual award for achievement, and the 1973 Federal Highway administration "Operation Wildflower."

New Mexico has not been blind to all this. Men like Dick Brammer of the NM Highway Deaprtment have seen to it that native plants have been used, e.g. Fourwing Saltbush in some harsh areas. And our highway department revegetated with native grasses; native wildflowers might be used if there were a supplier.

We should learn about what is going on in the state to see if we might be of some use. I hope Dick Brammer will see to it that we become better informed; and Mrs. Parker Kolloch of Albuquerque chairman of the Bicentennial Beautification Committee, as well as 17 years chairman of the Civic Beautification Committee of greater Albuquerque Chamber of Commerce, has promised to let us know all about the efforts of the groups she has worked with.

--Gail Haggard

Have a lovely March, everybody; see you at the end of April. Those who want to join, please send $5.00 dues ($8.00 family) to Claudia Hubbard, 2079 Camino Lado, Santa Fe. (send slip below)

1977 MEMBERSHIP DUES ARE DUE!!!

Name:_____

Street:_____

City:_____Phone:_____

Check enclosed for:_____(Those who paid late in 76 needn't repay)

If you have special interests or would like to lead a field trip, let us know.