MISSISSIPPI NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

MAY 1980 No. 1

During the recent annual meeting of the Mississippi Academy of Science, a small group of members happened to discuss the feasibility of forming an organization to unite what was thought to be a large number of botanically inclined people in our state. The idea was certainly not new. Many people have expressed a desire to form such an organization. The uniqueness of this particular meeting was that positive action finally occured. On April 15, sixteen people attended an organizational meeting at the Mississippi Museum of Natural Science. Temporary officers were appointed, the purpose of the organization was discussed, and a constitutional committee was formed to write the by-laws of the newly created Mississippi Native Plant Society.

Because of the extensive and diverse nature of the flora of Mississippi, the MNPS hopes to attract a broad membership with varying interests and backgrounds. While avid wildflower enthusiasts are expected to be among the first to find enjoyment in the society, an equal number of people with interest in the trees, shrubs, aquatic plants, grasses, mosses, and mushrooms will find rapport with likeminded members. Identification and recognition of our native species are certainly major activities of many members, yet there also exists a fascination with medicinal properties, herbal folklore, edibility, life histories, and plant ecology. The domain of interests in the society may be large, but one common and intangible aesthetic element exists among all members. It may come from the refreshing experience of being outdoors, a walk through a weedy field or an old growth forest, the excitement of encountering an unknown plant among a throng of old famaliar ones, or the fragile beauty of a rare orchid. Perhaps most of all it is that silent awareness and deepening appreciation felt from our attempt to understand the elements of such incredible botanical diversity in this region.

MEETING AND FIELD TRIP

The Mississippi Native Plant Society will hold its first meeting and field trip on the Mississippi Gulf Coast Saturday, May 24. Several knowledgeable botanists will lead the outing to some characteristic plant communities in the coastal pine meadows. This area, which may vary from 5 to 15 mile inland, has the most distinctive flora of any region in the state. Wildflowers should be common in the pitcher plant bogs, beach dunes, and the almost treeless savannahs that will be visited. With a little luck, a few rare species may be found (including a bog orchid). The group will leave from the parking lot of the dormitory at the Gulf Coast Research Laboratory in Ocean Springs Saturday morning at 10. After the outing, Dr. Robert Stewart from Delta State University will make a very appropriate and interesting presentation on the fire ecology of these coastal plant communities.

The society has reserved space for approximately 30 people at the Gulf Coast Research Lab dorm. If you or your family would like a room, please complete the attached form and return to Will McDearman (address below) as soon as possible. Each dormitory suite consists of four rooms sharing common bath facilities. Two single beds are in each room and you must supply your own linen. Pillows are provided. For those that may arrive Friday night, the name and room number of a

member who will have your dey will be posted on the office door which is on the ground floor directly behind the staircase.

NEWSLETTER

The newsletter will be issued on a quarterly basis. The editor solicits your commentsand contributions. Let us hear of the botanizing in your area. In addition to society news, notes, and member contributions, the newsletter will contain educational and entertaing articles on the various aspects of our native flora. The society hopes to expand the newsletter to include a bulletin that will contain more extensive subject matter and photographs (somewhere in the future).

PASS THE WORD

The cover page of the newsletter is a "flyer" that can be posted to advertise our society to prospective members. If you know of an appropriate place, please post it or at least pass the entire newletter on to an interested friend. The illustration of the sunflower was done by Linda Green at the Mississippi Museum of Natural Science.

TEMPORARY OFFICERS

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DORM RESERVATIONS

Name(include names of all in party)

Address
Phone
Number of nights

Please make checks payable to the Gulf Coast Research Laboratory