Annual Meeting Plans at Carson Springs

Whenever possible snatch an opportunity to spend some time, once a year at least, in the Appalachian Mountains. Their beauty and botanical treasures are unsurpassed.

This year’s TNPS annual meeting, September 14-16, is just such an opportunity and will provide experiences and fellowship on the trails and in evening programs.

Members will gather at Carson Springs Baptist Conference Center near Newport, beginning with a reception and supper on September 14. If you have not done so already, please return your registration form that can be found on page 3—along with your payment, of course. The deadline is August 31.

Field trip plans are still being made. Two guest speakers, however, have already accepted invitations—James Donaldson of East Tennessee State University and Roan Mountain fame and David Haskell of the University of the South and newly published author of The Forest Unseen.

Supper the first evening will be followed by Donaldson’s program, which will at least touch on his program to restore the grassy balds of the Roan Highlands.

This is year five of the Baa-tany Goat Project, James Donaldson’s special volunteer venture to restore the grassy bald corridors in the Roan Highlands using goats as an experimental management tool. He will have just returned from herding the goats off the balds September 12. His presentation will be

Continuing a Vital Partnership in Plant Protection

In June the TNPS board approved a $500 donation to the Tennessee Exotic Pest Plant Council (TN-EPPC).

Most TNPS members are already familiar with TN-EPPC (pronounced “Ten-epp-see”). In the past we have held joint meetings, and we share members. The current council president is Andrea Bishop, a botanist with the state Natural Heritage Program, who has been active in TNPS for many years.

The mission of TN-EPPC is to raise public awareness of the introduction and spread of invasive exotic plants into Tennessee natural areas and to facilitate action in a variety of ways to control and prevent further invasive plant introductions.

Don’t Miss the Annual Meeting Sept. 14-16
TNPS Newsletter

Vol. 36, No. 3

This newsletter is a publication of the Tennessee Native Plant Society and is published four times a year, generally in February, June, August, and November.

The Tennessee Native Plant Society (TNPS) was founded in 1978. Its purposes are to assist in the exchange of information and encourage fellowship among Tennessee’s botanists, both amateur and professional; to promote public education about Tennessee flora and wild plants in general; to provide, through publication of a newsletter or journal, a formal means of documenting information on Tennessee flora and of informing the public about wild plants; and to promote the protection and enhancement of Tennessee’s wild plant communities.

Dues for each calendar year are:
Regular: $20
Student: Complimentary
Institution: $50
Life: $250

Dues may be sent to:
Tennessee Native Plant Society
P.O. Box 159274
Nashville, TN 37215

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Please send comments or material for the newsletter to TNPS Newsletter, P.O. Box 856, Sewanee, TN 37375 or lathamdavis@bellsouth.net

TNPS Website:
www.tnps.org/

A Letter from the President

The annual meeting at Carson Springs is fast approaching. If you haven’t already sent your registration, I hope you will as soon as you get this newsletter. I know I’m looking forward to a weekend of cool mountain nights after the inferno this summer has been! We have a fantastic agenda planned, with Jamey Donaldson scheduled to speak Friday night about the botany and ecology of Roan Mountain. Many of you are familiar with Jamey and his work with the Ba-tany Project at Roan Mountain. Then Saturday night will feature David Haskell, author of The Forest Unseen, who will talk about the themes of the interconnectedness of nature and how we should include ourselves in the world around us. He will also have copies of his book for sale, so if you haven’t already gotten it, be sure to bring your check book and purchase one. Of course, our field trip Saturday will be another in a long line of exciting annual meeting excursions. We will visit the mountains at a time we don’t usually, so there surely will be some surprises to discover.

TNPS is now on Facebook! A very special thanks go to Joanna Brichetto and Lorie Emens for designing and setting up our page. This will give TNPS another outlet to educate and interact with the public and allow more immediacy in relaying info to members. It is also more flexible than our website in handling photos from our field trips as well as plant photos. They will be linked to each other, but the website will become more static, with the basic information listed. The wonderful thing about the Facebook page is that all of you can contribute to it and make it a great portal for us and the public. Check it out at http://www.facebook.com/TennesseeNativePlantSociety.

Hope to see you on the trail at Carson Springs!

Bart

Pest Plant Council Serves Vital Purpose

TN-EPPC, founded in 1994, has developed a number of initiatives: programs for early detection and response, a watch list of potential invasives, education programs, certification programs, and lobbying efforts. The council also encourages the use of native plants in the landscape.

A message on the organization’s website says: “While much remains to be done, the Tennessee Exotic Pest Plant Council fills an important role addressing a critical issue that no other organization in the state recognizes as its mission.”

The website address is wwww.tneppc.org.
2012 TNPS Annual Meeting
September 14–16, 2012

Please complete and return by August 31

Registration fee per person $15.00 @ $15.00 __________
Room: Single per night $63.00 __________
Double per person, per night $31.50 __________

Those sharing a room should register together. Two checks may be sent.

Friday Supper _______ @ $7.75 __________
Saturday Breakfast _______ @ $7.75 __________
Lunch _______ @ $7.75 __________
Saturday Supper _______ @ $7.75 __________
Sunday Breakfast _______ @ $7.75 __________

TOTAL __________

Registrant #1 Information:
Name ________________________________
Address ________________________________
Telephone ________________________________
Email ________________________________
Special Needs ________________________________

Registrant #2 Information (if sharing a room):
Name ________________________________
Address ________________________________
Telephone ________________________________
Email ________________________________
Special Needs ________________________________

Mail check(s) payable to TNPS to:
Lorie Emens
557 N. Mendenhall Rd. #6
Memphis, TN 38117

Protecting Native Plant Habitat with Easements

The Land Trust for Tennessee works with private landowners throughout Tennessee to protect their working, historic, and family lands. Landowners can protect their property with conservation easements. Under the perpetual agreement, conservation values, such as prime agricultural soils, uniqueness of hydrology, and plant and wildlife habitat, are identified. Native plants are integral to the lands that The Land Trust protects. Many landowners not only inventory the plants on their property, but many continue to hunt for heirloom seeds and re-plant native species that may be rare or endangered in the community.

Several landowners not only choose to expand their selection of native plants, but they occasionally hold wildflower hikes to showcase Tennessee’s native habitat. The Land Trust works with landowners to hold hikes that will engage the public in education and identification of local habitat. These hikes promote wellness through hiking and act as an educational forum for native plant enthusiasts. In the spring of 2012, The Land Trust held an edible wildflower hike on my protected farm property in Sumner County. Edible hikes allow individuals to get close and personal not just by touch and sight, but also by taste.

To date, The Land Trust for Tennessee has protected over 70,000 acres in Tennessee. If you would like to receive more information on protecting your land or about The Land Trust for Tennessee, please call 615-244-5263 or email landowner@landtrusttn.org.

Michelle Haynes
Facing the Peril to Native Landscapes
Appreciating Both the Activist and Botanist within Us

As wildflower enthusiasts we get our joy from discovering and observing the details of plant structures and habitats.

Yet no matter how much we focus on the joy, we are being nagged by three broad problems that affect the survival of all native plants and their communities. First is habitat destruction; second, the invasion of exotic species; and, third, global warming.

All three are distinct concerns, but they are also interrelated. For instance, an indigenous plant community can be wiped out by an apartment development but can also be smothered by bush honeysuckle or multiflora rose. Changing seasons can degrade plant communities and encourage exotics.

Of our three overriding problems, perhaps none is more ominous than global warming. We can set aside patches of land and parks to protect native habitat that we patrol for those exotic invaders, but what about the impact of a changing climate — when zone five for gardeners becomes zone six or seven?

There are levels of complexity in each of these problems, especially climate change, and we have difficulty determining the seriousness of the problem. Rather than reading the science, most people seem to listen only to radio and television “pundits.” Others may ask, “Won’t native flora just adapt?” The debate, though hardly a real debate, is frustrating if not infuriating. As we listen, we become aware of how many people are poorly educated and ill informed about the natural world.

All of us have been observing milder winters and early springs — two to four weeks earlier in blooming patterns this year. How closely is this corresponding to scientific models and predictions? We look at what is happening in our gardens and along the trails, and we wonder.

I’ve been fortunate to hear two public lectures by a scientist for the National Center for Atmospheric Research in Boulder, Colorado. His name is Michael T. Coffey. Not once in his lectures did he mention “global warming” — not wanting, I’m sure, to become a target — but his presentations were filled with data about the build up of carbon dioxide and other chemicals in the atmosphere, which corresponds to the rise, at an accelerated rate, of global temperatures.

To add emphasis to this point, July 2012 marked the hottest month on record for the contiguous U.S., according to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

Yet, the issue of climate change is not just changing temperatures. As scientists have warned us — even twenty or thirty years ago — some areas of the world will become drier, some areas wetter. Extremes will become more normal. How well can native flora be expected to adapt to these sudden, radical changes?

A report by researchers at the University of California at Santa Barbara’s National Center for Ecological Analysis, explained in an article published in the journal Science that while some plants are blooming sooner due to early spring temperatures, other plants are delaying the process.

“The plants in question (490 species on two continents) require vernalization, a chilling requirement — that is, many of these plants require a temperature drop in fall and winter as a cue to become dormant until spring flowering season arrives.”

We may then wonder what becomes of the pollinators; what happens to their life cycles, and what is the future impact on the plants they pollinate?

We are also aware of how milder winters allow insect pests to spread more quickly with sometimes devastating effects on flora of all types.

An article published in the on-line journal Science Daily cites research done by scientists at Northern Arizona University who studied native species at various elevations for over ten years. (They cautioned against short term studies.) They found that “long-term warming resulted in loss of native species and encroachment of species typical of warmer environments.”

These findings may not surprise you. But the next question is, “What can we do to slow, halt, or reverse these trends?” I am the kind of optimist who believes that if a nation, a civilization, or a generation is motivated to solve a problem, they can solve that problem, they can put Humpty Dumpty together again. Unfortunately, as science suffers the slings and arrows of skeptics, we continue to struggle with the age-old moral problems of greed, pride, and arrogance.

As the meantime, our mistakes, moral or mechanical, have global implication.

I am inspired by those of us who take personal action to reduce their “carbon footprint” and by those who take the spade to invasive exotics. In my own garden, I practice what Sara Stein advocated in her book, Noah’s Garden: Restoring the Ecology of Our Own Back Yards.

However, when I feel particularly helpless, observing my rhododendrons decline in the dry heat and my bog
ferns wilt, I assume another identity. The true naturalist, I was once told, is the person whose joy is found in observing nature—not trying to save the baby bird from the rat snake or trying to save the rat snake from the hawk, but by finding in nature a wisdom greater than ourselves and moving closer to that wisdom.

Latham Davis

You may find interesting a piece in the August 3 online issue of the Washington Post by James E. Hansen, director of the NASA Goddard Institute for Space Studies and one of the leading advocates for action on global warming. See http://www.washingtonpost.com

David Haskell, who will be a guest speaker at the TNPS annual meeting September 15, makes this observation about the impact of climate change and the interrelatedness of species:

One ecological problem underway in the northern hemisphere is that as plants shift their springtime emergence earlier, some animals are not adapting to the changed conditions. Some birds, for example, have not shifted their migration earlier, so that when they arrive on their breeding grounds, the peak of herbivorous insect abundance (e.g., caterpillars) has passed. This causes the birds to be less successful at breeding. There is evidence in Europe that the more severe this disconnect, the more severe the population decline in the bird species in question.

Shifting Perspectives in Conservation


The jacket blurb of Rambunctious Garden says: “A paradigm shift is roiling the environmental world. For decades people have unquestioningly accepted the idea that our goal is to preserve nature in its pristine, pre-human state.”

Early in her book, Marris, says it’s already too late to save even our wilderness areas from exotic species and altered climate, and she uses examples from around the world where conservationists are attempting unsuccessfully to preserve pristine areas.

One reviewer calls Rambunctious Garden “the most important conservation biology book thus far in the 21st century” for its perspective and its views on a wide range of scientific ideas.

The reviewer goes on: “My only misgiving is that...two classic conservation goals may appear to be cast aside in the early chapters: the goals of wilderness protection and prevention of species extinctions. But read on. In the last third of the book, where Marris brings the new pathways into a landscape view of the paradigm shift overall, those two classic goals are seen to maintain a vital presence in the new patchier quilt of conservation biology.”

Rambunctious Garden may make you feel uncomfortable, but it will also open new windows into ecology and wildlife conservation.
April came in March this year and May in April. So it wasn’t a big surprise that the majority of spring wildflowers we had planned to see when this hike was originally scheduled were mostly gone. But we found plenty of plants to keep us entertained and later flowers we would not have seen otherwise.

Our group met at the Market in the middle of Rock Island. At the risk of leaving someone out I will attempt to list the attendees. They were Todd Crabtree, Susan Brown (new member), Michael Doochin & wife, Louise Gregory, Darel & Gail Hess, Glenda Hood, Margaret Hubbuch, Sherry Horn, Jane Norris, and Allen & Susan Sweetser.

We caravanned to the parking area in White County overlooking the Twin Falls. We hiked the Downstream Trail which follows the Caney Fork River through the gorge. The trail ends in a loop just beyond the famous Blue Hole fishing spot. We returned by the same trail.

Many of the usual spring flowers were still hanging on, but well past prime. We found wild ginger (Asarum canadense), Jack-in-the-pulpit (Arisaema triphyllum), cross vine (Bignonia capreolata), squaw root (Conopolis americana), poor Robin’s plantain (Erigeron pulchellum), fire pink (Silene virginica), prairie trillium (Trillium recurvatum), purple phacelia (Phacelia bipinnatifida), smooth phlox (Phlox glaberrima), and mountain stonecrop (Sedum ternatum).

A highlight of the trip was finding several yellowwood trees (Cladrastis kentukea) in flower hanging over the river bank. Also along the river was a lone fringe tree (Chionanthus virginicus) in flower. On a side trail to a small scenic waterfall we found bishop’s cap (Mitella diphylla) and dwarf crested iris (Iris cristata).

Lunch at the Rock Island Market was welcome. The menu included great pork barbeque, walnut fudge pie, and homemade banana pudding. Make sure you don’t miss this treat on our return to Rock Island September 22.

After lunch we enjoyed a short loop trail at the Badger Flat picnic area. Large flowered trillium (Trillium grandiflorum), Canada violet (Viola canadensis), green violet (Hybanthus concolor), and dwarf ginseng (Panax trifolius) were found on this loop. Also observed were the shrub leatherwood (Dirca palustris) past flowering and umbrella magnolia (Magnolia tripetala) with its huge white flowers.

We then drove back to the White County side of the river and hiked part of the upstream trail. There along the bluff line we found wild columbine (Aquilegia canadensis), lesser calamint (Calamintha nepeta), roundleaf catchfly (Silene rotundifolia), and huge clusters of southern maidenhair fern (Adiantum capillus-veneris) hanging down from the springy limestone seeps of the high bluffs beside the trail. Join us in September as the adventure continues.

Dennis Horn

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Forney Ridge Trail to Andrews Bald
June 30, 2012

Well, we managed to schedule the trip for the record breaking hottest day in East Tennessee—105°F in Knoxville. But at the top of the Great Smoky Mountains (GSMNP), it was definitely cooler. Fortunately for us, most of our trip was in the forest and shaded.

Maybe everyone was looking for a cool place, because we had folks from Memphis, Savannah, Parsons, Knoxville, Sevierville, Gatlinburg, and Asheville, North Carolina. Our long distance award goes to Harlan from Boston, Massachusetts.

The trail out to Andrews Bald starts near one of the highest points in the GSMNP, Clingman’s Dome—6643 ft. Forney Ridge trail descends from about 6300 ft along the

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On the Forney Ridge Trail, from left, front, are Bettina, Allen, Mary, and Jenny, and back, Julianna, Louise, Harlan, Brenda, Robbie, and Susan.
ridge to Andrews Bald—5900 ft. This is an area of the GSMNP that encompasses the Spruce-Fir Forest along with other high elevation plants. We were lucky to see some Smoky Mountain endemics in flower—Rugel’s ragwort (Rugelia nudicaulis) and Clingman’s hedericentle (Stachys clinghamii).

Due to the amount of rainfall at the summit of the GSMNP—85 inches—the trail out to the bald had other flowering plants. Thyme-leaved bluet, mountain bluet (Houstonia serpyllifolia) followed us the whole way. We saw southern mountain cranberry (Vaccinium erythrocarpum), small-fringed purple orich (Plantanthera psylodes), bee balm (Monarda didyma), rattlesnake plantain (Goodyera pubescens). This is definitely Allen’s trail, because there were several plants of carrion flower (Smilax herbacea) in flower. 

Along the trail, there were several plants that had flowered already or not yet in flower. Mountain blackberry (Rubus canadensis) and blueberries (Vaccinium sp.) were not ready to share their fruit. Skunk goldenrod’s (Solidago glomerata) fragrance traveled with us. We also saw mountain wood fern (Dryopteris campyloptera), lady fern (Athyrium felix-femina var. asplenoides) and shining club moss (Huperzia lucidula).

When we got to the bald, a few flame azalea (Rhododendron calidulaceum) were still in flower. Catawba rhododendron was already past. Andrews Bald is one of two balds being maintained by GSMNP to encourage native azaleas and grasses. We ate lunch in the shade on the trail at the entrance of the bald. Folks explored the bald and took pictures at their leisure. Thanks to all the intrepid folks who braved the heat to enjoy a delightful trail. A special thanks to Louise and Julianna for sharing their homemade granola bars!

Susan Sweetser

(Reader’s Note: Louise and Julianna, please share your recipe on our new bacebook page)

Restored Prairie Barrens, The Farm, Summertown
August 4, 2012

A
good mix of TNPS members, Farm residents, and Swan Conservation Trust contributors met at the Farm welcome center on a beautiful early August morning. Cynthia Rohrbach from The Farm and Swan Trust gave us a brief history of the Swan Trust and some information about the different lands they protect. She once again thanked TNPS for our monetary support last year and related how much it meant to them.

We made our way to the barrens where we were met with a patch of spiked blazingstar (Liatris spicata). The dominant plant, however, was ashy sunflower (Helianthus mollis) just coming into bloom. Cynthia pointed out how many of the buds were turning brown and wilting. On closer examination it appeared as if something was making a small snip into the side of the flower stem. But the culprit still remains a mystery. Around some clumps of prairie willow (Salix humulis) were Maryland meadow-beauty (Rhoxia mariana), narrow-leaf mountain mint (Pycnanthemum tenuifolium), spotted St. Johnswort (Hypericum punctatum), hairy small-leaf tick trefoil (Desmodium ciliare), and round-leaf thoroughwort (Eupatorium rotundifolium).

Our second stop farther down the prairie produced a few more species including rattlesnake master (Eryngium yuccifolium), wild quinine (Parthenium integrifolium), and a little goldenrod (Solidago ulmifolia). Toward the end of the prairie, trees such as post oak (Quercus stellata) and blackjack oak (Quercus marilandica) began to encroach. This extra shade brought in several new plants, first and foremost, nice stands of hairy sunflower (Helianthus hirsutus) in fresh bloom. Another beauty that commanded a lot of attention was pigweons (Clitoria mariana), a vining pea with its large lavender flowers. Other notable species seen here were Loomis’s mountain mint (Pycnanthemum loomisii), pearl twist (Spiranthes tuberosus), white thoroughwort (Eupatorium album), pencil flower (Stylosanthes biflora), and, though not in bloom, Eggert’s sunflower (Helianthus eggertii).

A final stop beneath a Southern red oak (Quercus falcata) presented a study of semi-parasitism. Fern-leaf falsefoxglove (Asclepia pectinata) attaches to the roots of oaks and draws much of its nourishment from them, even though it has normal green foliage. It is also marked by its stickiness. And just next door was our second Hypericum, pine weed (Hypericum gentianoides).

The trip was finished with an enjoyable lunch filled with great conversation and quite a few laughs. We had to skedaddle to beat a storm that was approaching. Otherwise, we may have had a two-hour lunch!

Bart Jones
Annual Meeting Fast Approaching
—continued

geared toward the botanical history of Roan Mountain, the ecology of the balds, and the ongoing Baa-tany Goat Project.

Jamey is a self-described “hermit botanist goatherd.” He has been actively engaged as a botanist since 1992, specializing in rare plant surveys and monitoring. His interests include plant communities and limited ecological restoration. Jamey also serves as an adjunct curator at the East Tennessee State University John C. Warden Herbarium.

David Haskell, who will provide the Saturday evening program, is a professor of biology at Sewanee and was named the Carnegie-CASE professor of the year in Tennessee in 2009. Along with his scholarly research, he has published essays and poetry. He and his wife, Sarah, also run a homestead, raising goats and selling milk.

*Jamey Donaldson visits with two goat herd guard dogs on Roan Mountain where Donaldson volunteers as shepherd in the Grassy Bald Baa-tany Project.*

Check Your Dues Date?

Check your mailing label—the year through which you have paid dues is printed at the top. If the date’s 2011 or 2010, please send a check promptly to Darel Hess, our treasurer. TNPS, P.O. Box 159274, Nashville, TN 37215.