



The Bear Claw



The Sandia Mountain Natural History Center Newsletter

March 2008

Flowers are in Bloom at the SMNHC

Here comes spring! The pretty little purple lousewort is beginning to bloom. Its crinkled, purplish, fern-like leaves were uncurling a week or so before spring break and now this morning, on this last day of March, they are beginning to bloom. The flowers are a purplish-pink and white elongated tube that resembles a snapdragon.

Scopulariaceae, is the family in which both lousewort and snapdrag-

ons belong.

It grows between 6000 feet and 9000 feet elevation. Another lousewort, Fern-leaf Lousewort, grows above 8,500 feet.

If you are hiking in the Sandias, keep your eyes open for these pretty little flowers!

FUN FACT: ONE RAGWEED PLANT CAN RELEASE AS MANY AS ONE BILLION GRAINS OF POLLEN!

March Offered Perfect Weather for First Saturday

March 1 marked the beginning of our First Saturdays here at the SMNHC. The skies were blue, and the sun was shining. It was a beautiful day to be outdoors and in the mountains.

Fifty-two people took advantage of what the day had to offer.

A.J. Lapre provided an education session on Leave No Trace Land Ethics, and the day offered perfect hiking

weather.

With trees and wildflowers preparing to bloom, our First Saturdays are sure to offer sights and activities for all!

**NUMBER OF PEOPLE SERVED AT SMNHC:
SINCE JULY 1ST: 9334
THIS MONTH: 1151**

In the spotlight...



Photo courtesy of Larry Littlefield, SMNHC volunteer

Dwarf Lousewort *Pedicularis Centranthora*

The name "lousewort" comes from an old belief that eating the plant caused lice infestations in livestock. Some parts of lousewort have been used as a sedative for children and as a tranquilizer for adults. Others can be used for cuts and abrasions due to their mild astringent and antiseptic properties.

An interesting fact about lousewort is that it is hemiparasitic; meaning that even though it makes its own food through photosynthesis, it still attaches itself to the roots of surrounding plants taking some of its nutrition from them. By doing this, lousewort takes on some of the properties of the plants to which it attaches itself. Herbalists should take care that the host plants are not poisonous.

Upcoming Events at SMNHC:

May 3, 9:00-3:00

Spend the day in the mountains hiking our trails, visiting two hands on exhibit rooms, and observing birds and animals from our wildlife observation deck. May will offer an hour-long *Birds of the Sandias* education session at 10:00 AM.

June 7, 9:00-3:00

Spend the day in the mountains hiking our trails, visiting two hands on exhibit rooms, and observing birds and animals from our wildlife observation deck. June will offer an hour-long *Geocache/GPS Basics* education session at 10:00 AM.

July 5, 9:00-3:00

Spend the day in the mountains hiking our trails, visiting two hands on exhibit rooms, and observing birds and animals from our wildlife observation deck. July will offer an hour-long *Plant Identification* education session at 10:00 AM.

For more information on our upcoming programs call us at (505) 281-5259 or visit our website:

www.nmnaturalhistory.org/SMNHC

The Sandia Mountain Natural History Center (SMNHC) is a natural history and environmental education facility located on the east side of the Sandia Mountains in Cedar Crest, New Mexico. The SMNHC is owned by Albuquerque Public Schools and operated by the New Mexico Museum of Natural History and Science.

Sandia Mountain Natural History Center, C/O NMMNHS, 1801 Mountain Road NW, Albuquerque, NM 87104

Phone: (505) 281-5259 Fax: (505) 286-5433

For more information about the Center, visit our website at: www.nmnaturalhistory.org/SMNHC

Project WILD Workshop: Literacy and Outdoor Classrooms

Educators stand quietly talking and drinking coffee in the crisp clean air of the Sandias. Looking for new ways to engage their students, 17 educators gathered at the SMNHC for a Project WILD workshop on February 16th. The workshop, taught by Kevin Holiday of the NM Department of Game and Fish, focused on using the schoolyard to teach science, language arts, art, and other subjects. Many of Project WILD's excellent, national award-winning ecology activities were also modeled. One of the early contributors to the Project WILD curriculum, Dan Shaw, of the Bosque

Ecosystem Monitoring Project, talked about wildlife monitoring and the Bosque. Susie Davis of the SMNHC hosted the program.

Participants went home with a variety of materials including local wildlife posters, four different activity guides, correlations to the national science standards, and a multitude of handouts on teaching, ecology, and the outdoors! Educators went home more prepared to use the outdoors as an effective teaching tool.

If you missed this one keep your eye out for next year's Project WILD!

Activity of the month:

Where Does Your Lunch Come From?

Overview: Students trace the resources that go into making their lunch items and act out a poem about the process.

Time: 1 hour, 20 minutes

Procedure: Discuss natural resources (including renewable and non-renewable). Spread out the contents of a bag lunch and discuss each part's transformation from raw materials to lunch item. Divide the class into groups. Each group presents a poem (from the activity) as a skit: for example, "Doing the Can-can" is about the life of a pop can.

Closure: Discuss the effect of these items on the environment, limited resources, and how to help (including recycling, re-using, and technological innovations).

Note: In a similar Project WILD activity students research the path of a lunch item back to the natural resources it came from ("What did your lunch cost wildlife?").

The complete activity can be found in the Ecosystems Explorations Curriculum on our website.



Teacher
resource spot-
light...

Ecology Field Program

Are your students feeling spring fever? Re-engage them in the learning process using wildlife! Everyone loves the mountains; kids are fascinated by seeing a squirrel eat a mushroom or catching a glimpse of a bird!

Bring your class to the Sandia Mountain Natural History Center. Standards-linked, multi-disciplinary, and interactive, our program encourages critical thinking and literacy skills. It involves the whole body in learning and includes a two-hour guided hike, picnic lunch, and ecology activity. Throughout the day fifth graders learn ecological concepts through tangible hands-on activities.

There is still some room in our schedule! Give us a call! Tell your friends! 281-5259, susan.davis@state.nm.us.

Conservation corner:

Elmer's glue bottles and glue sticks can be recycled this year. Just clean, box and label as directed and take them to any Wal-Mart between April 22nd and the end of the school year! For instructions and additional information visit <http://www.elmersgluecrew.com>. Prizes and curriculum available!

Ecology teaching tip:

Crushed, blunt, multi-colored glass can be used for landscaping—The median on Eubank (near I-40) is an example of this attractive way to conserve natural resources! ☺