

Meeting Minutes
New Mexico Herpetological Society
August 6, 2009

President Scott Bulgrin opened the meeting. Jean Burt read the minutes from the May 2009 meeting.

Garth Graves gave the treasurer's report. The final balance as of 8/6/09 is \$850.84.

Old Business

Scott reported that the Memorial Day weekend field trip to Nara Visa was successful with a couple of quite memorable events and characters. Members who conducted field surveys around the Nara Visa area spotted 120 critters comprising 25 species. Charlie Painter of NM Game and Fish has been contacted regarding range records resulting from this field trip. There will be a writeup in Herp Review regarding the records.

Scott questioned the enforcement of pet ordinances, mentioning a recent article and picture in the ABQ Journal of an American Alligator that had been confiscated. The article stated that if charges were dropped, the owner would pick up the alligator from Animal Humane. Later, Scott noticed a classified ad selling an American Alligator. Coincidence? Maybe, but Scott stated that enforcement could be as increased by looking through the classifieds.

Scott reported on our continuing field surveys in the Sandia Pueblo Bosque area each Tuesday and Saturday. Three people (1 adult, 2 children) who spoke to NMHS members at the Rio Grande Nature Center BioBlitz have joined us on the surveys recently.

As part of another project, NMHS will be surveying a 100-acre plot in the Sandia Pueblo Bosque, just north of our current survey area. This will consist of transect surveys, recording herps observed.

NMHS Educational Presentations and other Activities:

June 5 – Scott Bulgrin presented herp information at the ABQ Public Library, Los Griegos Branch to 50 attendees. Librarian passed Scott's name on to other libraries.

June 6 – Ted and Sue Brown presented herp information to visitors at Villanueva State Park. They have been providing educational information at Villanueva twice a year for 10-12 years.

June 16 – Scott attended Santa Ana Earth Day providing a reptile/amphibian exhibit. Approximately 100 people came by the NMHS exhibit. Brian Wimberly of Santa Ana staff brought in a Western Coach Whip which Scott included in the educational display for that day.

June 28 – Annual NMHS Pot Luck at Jaci Fischer's house attended by 23 people. Ted Brown presented slides of the Nara Visa trip followed by an entertaining presentation by Logan Bulgrin. Pat Maher and his daughter Lilly then shared slides of Pat's field trip in the Chiricahuas. Thanks again to Jaci and Fred for being gracious hosts for our annual event.

August 5 – Scott presented Herps of New Mexico information at the Juan Tabo library to 81 people. The librarian will pass Scott's name on to other libraries as well.

Upcoming Events:

August 9 – Ted and Sue will present herp information at a church in Santa Fe.

August 22 – Navajo Lake State Park, Ted and Sue

September 5 – Labor Day field trip – Ojito Wilderness Day Trip (more below)

September 6 – Ted and Sue Brown will again present herp information to visitors at Villanueva State Park

Evelyn Candelaria distributed an article on House Bill HR 669 titled, “Burmese Pythons and Media Hype! HR 669 Alive and Dangerous.” The article states that committee members and speakers indicate strong support for the concept of preventing the import of invasive species. Only two participants spoke against the bill. Those who support the legislation are staging a media blitz to gain support from the general public. For example they are “using the frightening image of the Burmese Python slithering through the Everglades” and publicizing the dangers posed by other “monstrous reptiles”. Evelyn asks us all to keep informed and contact our Congressional representatives about the problems with HR 669.

Jaci reminded members that it is time to begin making plans for the holiday party. Ted stated that he is waiting to hear back from potential speakers that he has contacted. Jaci will visit restaurants suggested for the party to look at group room availability and size, food selection and prices, etc.

Jean asked whether the effort to look into “incorporation” was finally dropped, or if members were still interested in pursuing the issue. There was an incident last year and activities involving non-members that could result in potential accidents or injury to non-NMHS members. Is there still a need to be concerned with individual liability? Jean printed information from LegalZoom.com on non-profit corporations and 501(c)(3) tax exemptions; however, Tom Eichhorst reminded us that we do not want to pursue the non-profit status – he has had experience in attempting this with another club. Ted and Sue were quoted a \$1,000 fee by an attorney for the completion and filing of needed paperwork. Jean offered to return to LegalZoom.com and print information on partnerships and corporations for the next meeting. Lynn Schuler suggested that someone call Sandy Jackson of the Rio Grande Turtle and Tortoise club to ask about their club’s status and how they handled the paperwork. Nobody volunteered to make the call.

New Business

Scott reported that there are now pictures on the NMHS web site with a plan to begin posting classified ads this month. If anyone wants to make improvements to the web site, please let Scott know; their help is greatly appreciated. However, NMHS members present agreed that we will not give up web master control of the web site. This control is currently in the hands of active members and our current web master (mistress?), Rebecca Bulgrin (with her father’s assistance) continues to do a great job.

Scott is interested in reptile and amphibian drawings created by children. He would like to include this artwork on future NMHS display posters. Members are asked to encourage young artists to contribute their artwork for our educational exhibits.

Labor Day Field Trip – Due to the success of last year’s day trip to the Ojito Wilderness (and the short driving distance), this year we will continue our herp observations in the area. This year, we will go further into the wilderness area, towards Cabezon Peak. Members voted on the best day of the Labor Day weekend for the field trip; interested members selected Saturday, September 5. We will meet at the same turnoff as last year. Bill Gorum (who is very familiar with the area) will provide more details on directions at the September 3 meeting. Additional logistics will be discussed at that time.

Dave Burt relayed information about Ralph Charlton, the new curator of invertebrates at the ABQ Biopark. Dave and Jean recently met him (through Dave Karmann) at the ABQ BioPark. In their conversation they learned that Ralph is very interested in dragonflies, tarantulas, reptiles, and bugs. When Dave and Jean told Ralph about the Sandia Bosque surveys he expressed great interest in participating (particularly to survey dragonflies). We hope to welcome him as a new member of NMHS and perhaps have him along on our surveys and field trips to identify dragonflies and unusual bugs.

Members took a snack break before viewing a video on the Bitter Lake National Wildlife Refuge “Oasis in the Desert”. The video was provided by Garth Graves. Following the video, the meeting was adjourned.

Submitted by Jean Burt, Secretary NMHS