

Approved Meeting Minutes    Volume 51    Number 3

New Mexico Herpetological Society (NMHS)

March 6, 2014

American International Rattlesnake Museum

President Scott Bulgrin opened the meeting at 7:10 pm attended by 19 adults, 2 teens and 1 toddler herper. He welcomed all present and asked herpetologist Jerry Tuttle of NMHS to introduce the evening's program and presenters:

"Children's Attitude Change with Presence of Snakes in Education Programs," was a research project conducted by Geneva Gurule and Olivia Herrera during December 2013 and January 2014. Seniors at Bosque School in northwest Albuquerque, Geneva and Olivia's study involved 5th and 6th graders at Bosque School and Albuquerque's Manzano Day School.

Geneva and Olivia's narration and projected slides made clear the findings of their project.

Their Objective was to determine whether attitudes of 5th and 6th grade students toward snakes change as a result of education in a classroom presentation.

Their Methods involved students in 4 classes who participated in a presentation that did not include a live snake and students in 5 classes who participated in a similar presentation that did include a live snake.

Their Results indicated that classroom presentations that included live snakes brought a more significant positive view change in students toward snakes.

Their Conclusion is that a student's willingness to touch and hold a live snake increases after an educational presentation and to a greater degree when a live snake is included and offered for a student to approach and make contact with.

Olivia observed instances in which a snake mellowed with a student with a certain personality and, at the time, encouraged the connection, the interspecific bonding, by counselling "That snake does super well with you."

Jerry Tuttle gave freely of his acumen, sense of humor and herp collection to serve as Snake Wrangler in classrooms involved in the study. Scott Bulgrin and Tom Eichhorst encouraged the student scientists to take on the project.

Accompanying Olivia and Geneva this evening was Dan Shaw, Co-Director of Bosque School's Bosque Ecological Monitoring Program. In 2010, Dan was awarded the New Mexico Chapter of the Wildlife

Society's Wildlife Professional of the Year. Each year, Dan takes a handful of Bosque School wildlife students to present original research on a variety of wildlife and watershed topics to the New Mexico & Arizona Wildlife Society/American Fisheries Society joint conference in Pinetop, Arizona. Olivia and Geneva attended in 2013. Dan reported that BEMP involves 5,000 to 7,000 students across New Mexico each year. He said that his approach to teaching is to present challenging projects to students then turn 'em loose and get out of their way. For instance, two BEMP students are into a survey of basking turtles, 60 native species versus 40 exotic, and will begin trapping this spring.

Cardiologist Michael Gurule was a guest in our audience and he praised the work of the Olivia and Geneva.

Break

Old Business

Our meeting resumed at 8:20 with the reading of the Minutes from February 6, 2014. Our Secretary uttered two Freudian slips in pronouncing first names to the meager amusement of the gathering which now was depopulated by two adults and two teens. Our President S. Bulgrin accepted the Minutes, commented that they were replete with detail and offered them for approval as read. The motion carried. Treasurer L. Peirce reported a bank balance of \$2450.54 and a deposit of dues of \$60.00.

Scott said that he had talked to Dave Burt who said that he and Jean will be coming to meetings. Scott brought up the need for NMHS to draft and approve a policy statement regarding the display by NMHS of native venomous reptiles in public. Our host Bob Myers of the Rattlesnake Museum offered to help in composing the document. Scott brought up the topic of which sterilizing agent to use in quarantine cleaning to which Bob replied that the solution is to sterilize using dilute Clorox. Scott reminded us that we need a Vice-President. Cosmos noted that former Treasurer Garth Graves should be rested up and available for the position since he has been out of office for more than two full months now.

Upcoming Events and New Business

Scott announced that Bosque School has invited NMHS to display herps at the Open House Congress on campus April 24-25th, Tom Eichhorst and Jerry Tuttle will display herps at Las Golondrinas near Santa Fe on April 24, and Scott will put on a program at Esther Bone Library in Rio Rancho on June 28th. Ted Brown said that he will contact the Ranger at Dog Canyon State Park near Alamogordo and let him know that NMHS will not be coming down there this month. Scott asked for suggestions for destinations for the NMHS Memorial Day Field Trip coming up in May - Friday the 23 through Monday the 26. It was brought up that: Blue Water State Park will be crowded; Mount Taylor? Datil-Quemado-Sawtooth Mountains have no drinking water; Carlsbad? Bob Ashley has invited us to Rodeo; Ojito has no drinking water; and Jemez? Red Rock?

Scott told us that through his Office in Sandia Pueblo, which is located between Albuquerque and Bernalillo, he is requesting of the Governors permission to again monitor herps on 4 existing survey areas on the Pueblo's bajada during the months May - October. Scott also called for volunteers who

will be paid to monitor 132 pitfall traps over three consecutive days sometime in June, July or August in the Sandia Pueblo bosque.

Josh Emms announced that he will present to scout troops in Albuquerque on March 18 at the LDS church on Montano Road, NW and on March 25 at the LDS church on Haines Road, NE. Ted Brown assured us that he and Sue will put on a program on June 28 at Villanueva State Park southeast of Santa Fe. Jerry Tuttle reported that he presented to five different classes at different times on March 5 at the Bernalillo Mid School.

Scott asked our guests to introduce themselves. Isaac Alfonso told us that his wife had given him a carpet python which he intends to breed and he asked for help in designing a suitable enclosure for the purpose. An experienced herper came back with, "Ya, you'll do that and the next year you'll have more pythons than you can give away." Alfonso showed no ill effects from that discouragement. Rather, he waxed on about an 8' Red-tail and Diamond Jungle Carpets. Joyce Murdock of Placitas and retiree from the state environment department said that she is being recognized as a snake expert within her community.

Jerry Tuttle then added that our New Mexico Department of Game and Fish has a program for herpetologists similar to the program for falconers which allows a teacher or wildlife educator a way of possessing a species under permit: Taking of Wildlife for Scientific and Educational Purposes (TWSEP). A herper apprentices under a state recognized "Qualified Expert" in the proper care of a species. Leticia Mee is the Department's Permits Officer.

[www.wildlife.state.nm.us/apps\\_permit/documents/NMDGFPermit...](http://www.wildlife.state.nm.us/apps_permit/documents/NMDGFPermit...)

Scott reported a news item about an Appalachian preacher whose compulsive handling of venomous snakes led to his death by envenomation and who is survived by three such compulsive preachers who remain active in such behavior due to their uncritical r-brain reading of Scripture.

Scott reported that the Hog Island Boa got sold. So did the Vision Cage. The Leopard Tortoises went to a Texas Collector. And Scott has 10 gallons to 55 gallons terrariums for sale.

#### Newer Business

An energetic voice in the gathering announced that April 3 is the date of our next meeting and another birthday bash for septuagenarian Ted Brown who since 1963 has faithfully served as NMHS president, vP, secretary, editor so many times he can't count reliably and is sorry he can't be more definite than that. Well, so much for that 8th decade....

The meeting adjourned around 9:25pm.

Submitted by Cosmos, Secretary NMHS