Southern Plains Network
Inventory & Monitoring Program

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior

Natural Resource Stewardship and Science

PRAIRIE ZEPHYR

Newsletter of the Southern Plains Network

September 2021

More Changes on the Wind

The last issue of *Prairie Zephyr* was sent out by former Southern Plains Inventory and Monitoring Network (SOPN) Program Manager Rob Bennetts at the end of 2017, prior to his assignment to the Washington Support Office (WASO) and his ultimate retirement in 2019. Since then, SOPN has been in a bit of a holding pattern awaiting the opportunity to hire a permanent program manager to fill Rob's shoes. The network has seen at least two different acting program managers in the interim (Dana Witwicki in 2020 and myself in 2019, 2020 and 2021), and all the while Andy Hubbard, the Sonoran Desert Network (SODN) Program Manager, has provided leadership through the Southwest Network Collaboration (SWNC, consisting of SOPN, SODN, and CHDN, the Chihuahuan Desert Network) and handled SOPN's budget and agreements.

The biggest news for SOPN is the fact that interviews for a new program manager recently were conducted and we anticipate the position being filled later this fall. The program manager will be duty stationed at the new SOPN office being established at Pecos National Historical Park (NHP).

Another major change on the wind is the coming retirement of Tomye Folts-Zettner, the long-time SOPN vegetation ecologist. Tomye is the lead author and has run operations of the grassland monitoring protocol at SOPN, along with the exotic invasive plant monitoring protocol. She has worked in all the parks, serving as a resource for vegetation plans, botanical expertise, along with serving in disaster coordination after Hurricane Harvey. She has supervised field crews, and been a mentor and friend to all.


Evan Gwilliam

The zephyr of change is chasing me too—after 14 years with SODN and SWNC, I have accepted a position as the Supervisory Resource Management Specialist for the NPS units on the island of St. Croix in the U.S. Virgin Islands: Christiansted National Historic Site (NHS), Buck Island Reef National Monument (NM), and Salt River Bay National Historical Park NHP and Ecological Preserve. I started my career in coastal parks and have been longing for the ocean ever since. The important work that I have been part of across the SWNC parks, but especially at SOPN, and more importantly, all the friendships that I have made make me feel like the luckiest guy on the planet! If you are ever in St. Croix, be sure to look me up!

Tomye, myself, the SOPN Board of Directors, SOPN staff and park staff, in addition to our SWNC partners, are working to make sure that all the upcoming changes go smoothly. Finally, as fall 2021 approaches, SOPN can say, once again, that changes are on the wind! See you on the Prairie!

-Evan Gwilliam, Acting SOPN Program Manager

Southwest Network Collaboration News

The Southwest Network Collaboration held a virtual (Teams) meeting on August 12–13 to review monitoring protocols and develop the workplan for the upcoming year. The SWNC is a joint effort between the Southern Plains, Chihuahuan Desert, and the Sonoran Desert networks. The networks share several monitoring protocols and utilize common databases, streamlining data collection and reporting tasks, thereby improving effectiveness and efficiency across the three networks.

SODN Program Manager Andy Hubbard coordinated and facilitated the meeting. Andy has been serving as Acting CHDN Program Manager and overseeing budget and agreements for all three networks since Rob Bennetts left SOPN at the end of 2017 and CHDN Program Manager Marcia Wilson retired at the end of 2018.

As the networks continue to experience funding challenges, the SWNC will continue to share science staff between all three networks, and program managers will take on more science roles.

Emphasis areas for FY22 include the preparation of synthesis and trend reports and the initiation of scientific reviews of monitoring programs, which is a nationwide effort by NPS inventory and monitoring networks.

Jason Mateljak

Jason Mateljak, who will start in October as the new CHDN Program Manager, was introduced to staff during the meeting. Jason is currently the Chief of Resource Management at Lassen Volcanic National Park. Previously he has worked at the Southeast Arizona Group, Lava Beds National Monument, Timpanogos Cave National Monument, and Great Basin National Park. Jason will relocate to Las Cruces and work from the CHDN offices on the campus of New Mexico State University.

Secretary of Interior Deb Haaland Visits Pecos National Historical Park

Interior Secretary Deb Haaland visited Pecos National Historical Park on Friday, July 2, 2021 for a three-hour visit. She toured the Ancestral Sites trail where the park's historic preservation crew asked her to join them in laying an adobe brick into the wall of original fabric that her ancestors put into place around 1717. Haaland also toured the Visitor Center, the newly rehabilitated Kozlowski's Trading Post, and met with members of the Rocky Mountain Youth Corps Crew #10.

Haaland was accompanied by U.S. Congresswoman Teresa Leger Fernandez (NM-3), Pueblo of Jemez Governors Michael Toledo Jr. and Kurt Mora, and USGS Research Wildlife Biologist Dr. Ernest Valdez. During her visit, Haaland received a special blessing in a kiva by the Jemez Governors.

In a video released on Twitter after her visit, Haaland said, "I am so grateful to be at Pecos Pueblo, the location of my grandfather's ancestral homeland. And I'm so grateful for the National Park Service staff who puts love and care into this place every single day, who rebuild the walls of the Church and the Convento, and who tackle the invasive species here. Very grateful that we have tremendous caretakers and stewards of this beautiful land right here."

Recent SOPN Publications

NPS Geodiversity Atlas Pages for SOPN Parks

Content for the online NPS Geodiversity Atlas was recently developed for all SOPN parks by SOPN writer/editor Allyson Mathis. The Geodiversity Atlas provides information on geoheritage and geodiversity resources and values to support science-based management and education. Geodiversity refers to the full variety of natural geologic (rocks, minerals, sediments, fossils, landforms, and physical processes) and soil resources and processes that occur in a park. The Geologic Resources Division (GRD) works with national and international geoconservation communities to ensure that NPS abiotic resources are managed using the highest standards and best practices available.

Information sources for the SOPN pages included Geologic Resource Inventory (GRI) reports when available, the SOPN Paleontological Resource Inventory report, and other publications.

Notable geologic resources in SOPN parks include:

» Capulin Volcano NM contains one of the largest and most perfectly-formed cinder cones in North America.

» Flint, which was highly prized by American Indians for thousands of years for use in stone tools, occurs as lenses or nodules in the Alibates Dolomite in Alibates Flint Quarries NM.

» Historic freshwater and mineral springs preserved in Chickasaw National Recreation Area (NRA).

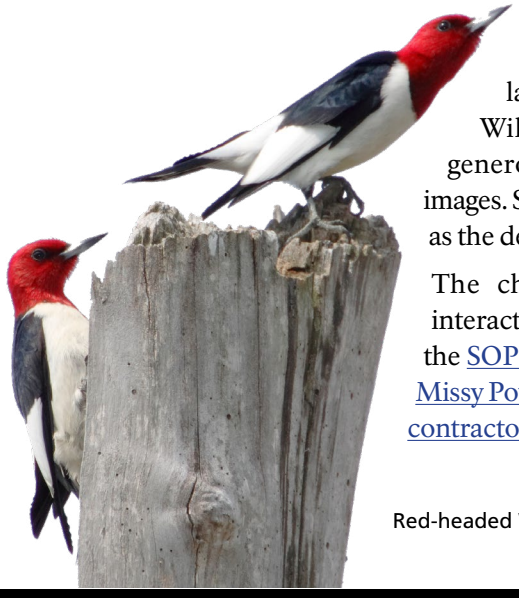
The SOPN Geodiversity Atlas pages were completed via collaboration between SOPN and the GRD.

Boulders of the white Alibates Dolomite cascading down hillslopes made up of Permian redbeds are one of the characteristic features of the scenery of Lake Meredith NRA and Alibates Flint Quarries NM

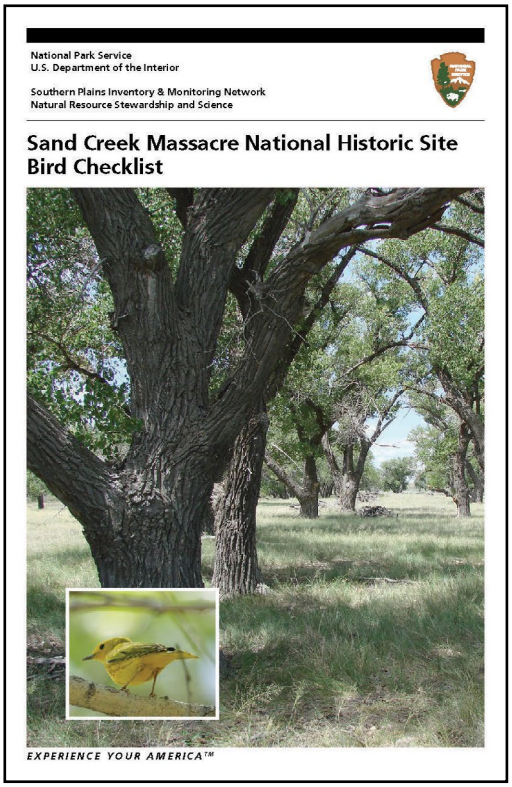
Bird Checklists for SOPN Parks

Working in collaboration with park staff and CHDN biologist Missy Powell, SOPN has produced illustrated interactive bird checklists for almost all parks in the Southern Plains. The checklists provide baseline information about bird species, as well as park-specific content that is of interest to both serious and casual birders. The data source is NPSpecies, SOPN landbird surveys, and expert reviews. Wildlife photographer Robert Shantz generously provided permission to use his images. SOPN writer/editor Allyson Mathis served as the designer and lead author for the checklists.

The checklists are available as accessible, interactive (Section 508-compatible) PDFs from the SOPN website. To learn more, please contact Missy Powell at 575-646-5481 or melissa_powell@contractor.nps.gov.



Red-headed Woodpeckers (NPS photo)



Invasive Plant Monitoring

Invasive plants were identified as one of the highest priority monitoring needs of SOPN parks. The network has been monitoring the occurrence of invasive plants along high priority vectors (roads, trails, and park boundaries) in SOPN since 2010.

SOPN has adopted a new approach for recording invasive plant data. The new reporting method leverages the NPS GIS portal to display invasive plant data in interactive map formats, coupled with streamlined reports. The network is now gathering more detailed information on the location of invasive plants by mapping points and polygons, along with cover classes for each occurrence.

Data is uploaded onto a dashboard that is used to quickly share geospatial information in the context of other park resources so that parks and the Invasive Plant Management Team can access for weed control efforts. Monitoring data will be available to the parks much more quickly (i.e., in days, not months) to the parks.

All three SWNC networks are now gathering and reporting invasives data this way, which is based on the invasives protocol used by the Northern Colorado Plateau Network (NCPN). The network will replace the existing protocol with a Protocol Implementation Plan for the NCPN one. The data dashboard is being developed and managed by SWNC data manager Henry Whitenack, assisted by SOPN Scientist in Park Adam Sigwing.

The invasives crew consists of lead Merran Owen and Adam Sigwing. Data is collected on tablets using ArcGIS collectors. SOPN monitors invasive species in each network park each year, using a rotating panel design.

A Persistent Problem: Johnsongrass

Johnsongrass (*Sorghum halepense*) is a highly invasive species that is very disruptive to natural ecosystems. It has been documented in all SOPN parks.

Johnsongrass was introduced from the Mediterranean region in the early 1800s for forage, but quickly became invasive. In fact, the species became the target of the first federal grant for weed control in 1900. Johnsongrass is also considered to be one of the ten most invasive plants worldwide.

Johnsongrass reproduces both by seed and from rhizomatous roots, is allelopathic, and grows well in disturbed sites. A single plant can produce as many as 80,000 seeds each year that remain viable for several years. The species also has the capacity to colonize large areas. Once established, Johnsongrass persists in the landscape despite eradication efforts.

The species is also difficult to control or eradicate as it can resprout from roots and rhizomatous root fragments and is well adapted to fire. Control efforts generally need to include a variety of techniques, appropriately timed and applied repeatedly. For example, multiple herbicide treatments over several years may be required to control infestations. Manual treatments may not be effective because of Johnsongrass' ability to resprout.

Grasslands & Fire Effects Monitoring News

The SOPN grassland and fire effects monitoring crew is currently near the end of their field season monitoring plots in network parks. The SOPN grasslands monitoring protocol was published in 2017. The monitoring work itself is a collaborative effort between SOPN and the Southern Plains Fire Group.

Grasslands monitoring plots are permanent 30-meter transects where frequency data are collected via point-line sampling, along with 10 random assessment plots to assess biodiversity within a 1-meter diameter.

The grasslands protocol needs a revision to reflect the change to random assessment plots versus plots along the transect as described in the protocol. The random plots capture more biodiversity than plots along the permanent transects.

SWNC quantitative biologist Cheryl McIntrye will prepare trend analysis reports for SOPN parks. It is anticipated that the first of these reports will be published in FY22. Allyson Arulanantham leads the 2021 crew of Andrew Hopkins and Alex Montalvo. This year the invasives and grasslands crews are traveling together, and the invasives crew (Merran Owen and Adam Sigwing) assists with grassland plots once they have finished with the invasives transects.

Riparian Vegetation Monitoring At Pecos NHP 2021

by Sarah Studd

As part of the SWNC stream monitoring protocol, riparian vegetation along the Pecos River was sampled at Pecos NHP in 2021 for the third time (previously sampled in 2011 and 2016). Data collection was a team effort—we had talented vegetation monitoring crews from CHDN and SODN, plus SOPN hydrologist David Pittinger, SODN Student Conservation Association (SCA) stream monitoring intern Michelle Szeto, and Pecos NHP biologist Eric Lassance and biotech Kevin Lash. Across the stream index segment (the Glorietta Creek-Pecos River confluence downstream to the park boundary), 63 sample locations were visited over a 5-day period from June 10–15.

The team typically split into two crews and worked on either side of the river measuring mature tree density and size, riparian community structure, obligate tree and shrub recruitment, and the diversity and abundance of riverside herbaceous communities. Some of the river areas were very thick with willow (*Salix* spp.) which is always fun to crawl through! Luckily this season we had zero snake encounters.

Plant identification in riparian areas requires a different set of knowledge from the flora occurring in the drier uplands and grasslands the team usually encounters. These botanists were challenged by the flora but rose to the occasion! It's difficult to sample at the exact right time to capture the entire flora at its peak phenology (when a plant is at the growth stage when it is easiest to identify), but we had very few unknown species from this visit. Two charming species we observed in flower were the white checkerbloom (*Sidalcea candida*) (top right) and the showy milkweed (*Asclepias speciosa*) (bottom right).

Staff will return in five years to resample these same sites. Within the next year, SWNC ecologists will prepare and analyze the first three periods of data to look at how these plant communities have responded to climate conditions and natural disturbances (e.g., high stream flow events). Data will also show which tree species are regenerating successfully and whether any non-native species are increasing or decreasing.

Collaborative Vegetation Management Case Study

The National Park Service (NPS) Collaboration Network, a group of dedicated employees who recognize the value of collaboration, completed a case study on the collaborative approach to vegetation management adopted by three SOPN parks: Bent's Old Fort National Historic Site (NHS), Sand Creek Massacre NHS, and Washita Battlefield NHS. This and future case studies describe internal NPS collaborations and present lessons learned to promote the use of collaboration in parks and programs so that the NPS can embrace the collective power of its workforce.

The three SOPN parks are small cultural or historical sites where vegetation is an important part of the overall cultural story and that face complex natural resource issues such as the need to maintain or even restore healthy communities of native vegetation. Prior to the start of the collaborative efforts, the parks and the support programs were often at cross purposes, and frequently did not communicate or coordinate well with one another.

Therefore, each park formed a collaborative team consisting of park staff and staff from SOPN, the Southern Plains Fire Group, and the Invasive Plant Management Team.

The heart of this collaboration are vegetation management plans for each park that incorporates input from all collaborative partners and a process wherein the group develops annual workplans that utilizes adaptive management. The process includes a project cycle that consists of planning, approval of a work plan, treatments and the collection of treatment and monitoring data, data management, and reporting with input from all partners.

The case study and accompanying oral history are available on IRMA. For more information about the Collaboration Network, please visit the Collaborative Leadership pages on the NPS Common Learning Portal or contact Terri Hogan, NPS Invasive Plant Program Manager.

"People should take the time to collaborate. It may take significant effort on your part, but it creates a narrative where we all fit, for each of our roles in resource management. It benefits the resource in the end. Just come to the table willing to listen. And assume that you might learn something from somebody else, and know that people may know things that you don't."

Richard Gatewood, Fire ecologist

"We keep being told work smarter, not harder. Or that we can't do more with less, so we have to do less. I think the collaboration allows us to actually do a little bit more with less because we're working more efficiently."

Cynthia Wiley,
(formerly at) Bent's Old Fort & Sand Creek Massacre NHS

Lessons Learned

- Make sure that all partners have the opportunity to fully participate. Mutual respect and accountability are critical.
- Effective communication is essential when collaborating. Meet in person whenever you can. Face-to-face meetings build trust, foster relationships, facilitate brain-storming, and on-site meetings provide opportunities to look at conditions on the ground.
- Develop parameters of what you hope to accomplish by collaborating. The process of collaboration may lead to unanticipated opportunities and outcomes.
- Collaboration requires significant effort and presents new challenges. In the long run, collaboration can yield more efficient, more effective, and more strategic stewardship of park resources, and can be a critical tool in meeting the NPS mission.
- Collaboration requires a shift in thinking and planning away from a programmatic focus and towards an interdisciplinary approach requiring coordination and cooperation with a variety of programs and specialties.

Field Safety

Safety is a critical part of the job of every member of the SOPN field crew. Some of the hazards the grassland and fire effects and the invasives monitoring crews encounter include weather conditions such as heat and thunderstorms, rattlesnakes, barbed wire fences, and prairie dog holes. Crews are outfitted with safety equipment such as snake guards and leather gloves, but it also takes vigilance and leadership to ensure that monitoring work is completed safely.

Crew Lead Allyson Arulanantham

Grasslands and Fire Effects crew lead Allyson Arulanantham explained, "Safety is a big part of what I do. It is my responsibility to make sure that the crew is aware of all the hazards. I check the weather multiple times a day and plan our work around weather. If it is going to be a stormy afternoon, we will work on plots close to the truck after lunch so that we can get out of the field if we need to."

Prairie rattlesnake

Tours start with tailgate safety sessions where the all hazards are identified and discussed. The crew also has plans in case someone gets hurt, even having a map of the nearest hospital with them in the field since cell phone service is not available in many areas where they work. Safety is one of the reasons crews stay in constant communication with park staff while they are in a park.

Summarizing the importance of field safety, Allyson said, "Everyone is looking out for themselves and for each other. The work we do is really important, but the most important thing is that we go home at the end of the day safely."

Jonathin Horsley Joins New Mexico State Parks

Former invasive plant monitoring crew lead for CHDN and SOPN Jonathin Horsley is now the park manager at Pancho Villa State Park in Columbus, New Mexico. Johnny had led invasives monitoring for SOPN since 2009. Pancho Villa State Park preserves historic structures associated with the Pancho Villa Raid in 1916.

Jeremiah Bonilla Joins Lake Meredith NRA

In fall 2020, longtime SOPN and Southern Plains Fire Group grasslands and fire effects monitoring lead Jeremiah Bonilla accepted a biotech position with Lake Meredith NRA. Jeremiah had been crew lead since 2014, and previously had served as a member of crew.

Introducing the 2021 SOPN Field Crews

Grasslands & Fire Effects Crew Lead Allyson Arulanantham

Allyson joined SOPN and Southern Plains Fire Group in June 2021 as the lead for the grasslands and fire effects monitoring protocol.

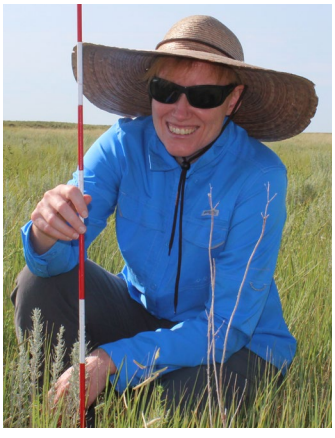
Her responsibilities as crew lead include coordinating and leading the trips to monitoring grassland and fire effect plots in all SOPN parks. As part of her duties, she communicates with the park, ensures that the crew has all the equipment they need and accomplishes all the tasks for each plot. Allyson is also responsible for data management, and identifying unknown plants.

Allyson said about her experiences in the Southern Plains so far, "My favorite thing is the diversity of ecosystems that we work in. It is fascinating that these parks are close to each other, and yet the ecosystems and plant communities are so different. I feel lucky to visit and study them."

Allyson previously worked at Great Smoky Mountains National Park, and is originally from Reno, Nevada. She has a Bachelor of Science degree from Ohio State University with a major in zoology and a minor in forestry, fisheries and wildlife.

Invasives Crew Lead Merran Owen

Merran Owen is the invasive plants monitoring crew lead in a cooperative position with the Tucson Audubon Society. She actually began her position in 2019, but spent last year developing field guide materials for the crew since the 2020 field season was abandoned because of the Covid-19 pandemic.



Invasives monitoring uses a rapid assessment approach wherein crew members walk roads, trails, and segments of a park boundary that are vectors for the invasion of exotic plants, and identify and record the invasive species that they observe. Some invasive species are difficult to identify and they may encounter unexpected species at any time. Once the invasives crew is finished monitoring, they assist the grasslands crew.

Merran recently earned her MS degree in Ecology from Utah State University, working on a restoration project in the Great Basin. She has a background in plant identification and has also worked at Mesa Verde National Park. She also previously served on the SOPN grasslands crew for the 2015 and 2016 seasons.

Merran really enjoys the grasslands in SOPN parks. She said, "They are so beautiful. So lush and green. I really love the diversity, especially in the Oklahoma and Texas parks. I grew up out West and I'd never been around so many species of deciduous trees or seen legumes as tall as myself."

Andrew Hopkins

Andrew Hopkins is a biological science technician and member of the SOPN field crew. Andrew is originally from Wisconsin, and is an avid hiker, camper, boater, fisher, and cow milker.

Since joining SOPN, Andrew has appreciated the opportunity to hone his skills as a biologist. He especially appreciates that his office is more than 500 miles wide with varying terrain and coworkers that he wouldn't trade for the world.

Alex Montalvo

Alex Montalvo is a biological science technician and a member of the SOPN grasslands and fire effects monitoring crew. He is enjoying the opportunity to visit SOPN parks, develop his skills for identifying plants, and working outside.

Alex is from New York and a recent graduate of Stony Brook University. Alex completed a Study Abroad program in Madagascar and took part in independent research on lemurs.

Staff Updates

(continued from previous page)

Scientist in Park Adam Sigwing

Adam Sigwing is SOPN's first Scientist in Park. Adam is currently a member of the invasives field crew. After the field season, he will work with SWNC data management staff to develop the invasives monitoring dashboard that provides data on the occurrence of exotic species to parks.

Adam is from Halstead, Kansas. He attended Bethel College in North Newton, Kansas, where he earned a BA in biology. He has also worked at the Kauffman Museum, also in North Newton, where working on a restored prairie ignited his passion for working outdoors and desire to learn more about the natural world.

The Scientist in Park program provides aspiring professionals with a unique opportunity to work on important real-world projects while building professional experience and a life-long connection to America's national parks.

The 2021 SOPN Grassland Band (aka, the invasives and grasslands field crews). Clockwise from upper left: Andrew Hopkins, Adam Sigwing, Alex Montalvo, Allyson Arulanantham, and Merran Owen

Staff Updates

SOPN Biologist Tomye Folts-Zettner

Tomye Folts-Zettner is planning to retire by the end of 2021. Tomye has been with SOPN since the network was beginning to select vital signs. Her first SOPN position was through the Student Temporary Employment Program (STEP) in 2004 while she was working on her Master of Science degree in Natural Resource Management from Texas A&M University. She later accepted the SOPN biologist position and was responsible for standing up the invasives and grasslands monitoring programs.

Reflecting on her experiences in SOPN, Tomye said, "I've really enjoyed being able to visit all of the different parks in the Southern Plains and to interact with great staff and grassland resources throughout the network. I gained a deep appreciation for the Southern Great Plains and it's changed me. Now I want to see the sky and not be crowded in by trees." A native of Texas, Tomye plans to continue living in Marble Falls, Texas.

SOPN Hydro Tech David Pittenger

David Pittenger is the hydrologist for Valles Caldera National Preserve, and will work for SOPN approximately one quarter time, assisting with groundwater and riparian area monitoring. David began work at Valles Caldera and SOPN at the end of 2020.

David has a Bachelor of Science in Geology and GIS from Northern Arizona University, and has worked extensively for the NPS, US Geological Survey, and the Bureau of Reclamation across multiple disciplines for the last 17 years, specializing in water quality and water quantity across the American West.

David will be working with SWNC and SOPN staff to develop SOPN streams and groundwater monitoring protocols, conduct fieldwork in selected SOPN parks, and with the SWNC team on data management, development of analytical methods, and automating reporting.

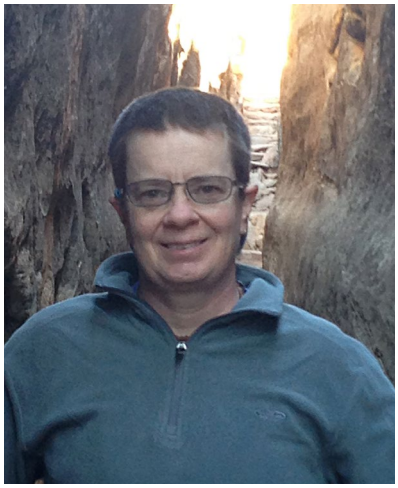
SOPN Data Manager Heidi Sosinski

Heidi Sosinski has served as the SOPN data manager since summer 2003 and is based out of Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park (NHP). Her role is to manage anything involving data collected in support of the network's monitoring protocols. This includes designing and maintaining protocol databases and applications, creating maps, and managing spatial data. Additionally, she manages SOPN IT and device needs. This is key during the field season as the field crews collect data digitally on ruggedized laptops and tablets. This year, she is supporting the invasives field crew with the rollout of a new app using Android tablets. Heidi also formats and publishes final reports created from our monitoring efforts.

She also plays an active role in the SWNC data management team. Her participation in SWNC has directly benefited SOPN by her use of apps codeveloped by the SWNC to improve the apps used by the SOPN field crews.

SOPN Writer/Editor Allyson Mathis

Allyson Mathis, a Research Associate with the Northern Rockies Conservation Cooperative, has served as SOPN's writer/editor since 2016. Allyson also works as a writer/editor for the Chihuahuan Desert Network.



Allyson has more than 25 years experience in science communication, specializing in natural resource topics. Her academic background is in geology. Allyson assists network staff with resource briefs, Natural Resource Reports, and other publications.

Allyson has previous experience in a SOPN park. In the late 1990s, she worked as the Interpretive Park Ranger at Capulin Volcano NM. Allyson now lives in Moab, Utah.

SOPN Parks

Alibates Flint Quarries National Monument
Bent's Old Fort National Historic Site
Capulin Volcano National Monument
Chickasaw National Recreation Area
Fort Larned National Historic Site
Fort Union National Monument
Lake Meredith National Recreation Area
Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park
Pecos National Historical Park
Sand Creek Massacre National Historic Site
Washita Battlefield National Historic Site

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New SOPN Office to be Located at Pecos NHP

The Southern Plains I&M Network, in conjunction with the SWNC, the SOPN Board of Directors, and park staff are establishing an office at Pecos NHP. This new office will be the seat of the new SOPN Program Manager, who will be entering duty in fall 2021, as well as providing space for a technician or intern. The Pecos SOPN office will serve as a base of operations on the western side of the network, complementing staff based at Lyndon Johnson NHP and Lake Meredith NRA.

The new office will be located in the Forked Lightning Ranch house, where Pecos' Resource Management staff are also based. The Forked Lightning Ranch has a long and colorful history, including as the home of rancher "Buddy" Fogelson and his wife actress Greer Garson. Garson was a major star during the World War II era and won an Academy Award in 1942 for her title role in *Mrs. Miniver*. During the heyday of the silver screen, they frequently held parties at the ranch for their famous Hollywood friends.

Greer Garson

In 1991, the ranch property was donated to the National Park Service to become part of Pecos NHP.