

New Plant Discovered in Guadalupe NP

Discovery of a new species, *Viola guadalupensis*, in Guadalupe Mountains NP, was announced at a press conference held the first morning (November 12) of the George Wright Society conference in El Paso, TX. Brent Wauer, a park ranger at Guadalupe Mountains, stumbled upon a small population (about 35) of these yellow violets growing on a limestone cliff in a remote canyon while he was exploring on his day off.

This was March 22, 1987. After an exhaustive study and chromosome check, Dr. Michael Powell, a botanist at Sul Ross State University in Alpine, TX, concluded more than 3 years later that this was indeed a new *Viola*. Only two other violet species, both blue-flowered, are known from the park. Wauer speculates that *V. guadalupensis* might be a relict species from wetter times in the past 8-10,000 years.

At the press conference, Regional Director John Cook unveiled a painting of *Viola guadalupensis* by Santa Fe artist Steven Boone. A color poster of this painting is available from the Carlsbad Caverns-Guadalupe Mountains Association at Carlsbad. Cook commended on the value of national parks for sheltering diversity of plant and animal life, including rare forms such as this new violet. He said it would be an immediate candidate for endangered species status.

(picture in next issue)