SYLLABUS · SUMMER 2027 · HIGHLANDS BIOLOGICAL STATION

# Grasses

*of the Southern Appalachians*

| WHEN | WHERE | INSTRUCTOR |
|---|---|---|
| August 9–13, 2027<br>Monday to Friday | Highlands Biological Station<br>Highlands, North Carolina | Paul M. McKenzie, Ph.D.<br>Retired U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Endangered Species Biologist (28 years) |

## About the *course*

The purpose of this class is for participants to know the differences between grasses, sedges and rushes; obtain a thorough knowledge of the grass flower and variations among different grass Tribes in the SE Appalachians; have extensive practice using dichotomous keys in lab; and examine and identify grasses observed in the field using principles and concepts learned in class.

Following this class, participants will be able to key out species using keys that cover grasses found in their respective home states or region.

## How the class *works*

- The instructor will present class material using PowerPoint slide format. Participants will receive a copy of the PowerPoint presentation at the beginning of class.
- Participants in lab will work as a 2-person team. Individuals who have previously used dichotomous keys will be teamed up with someone with limited keying experience.
- The instructor will provide dried, pressed specimens for use in class and lab.
- Participants are encouraged to bring dried or fresh grass specimens from their home base to class for identification and use.
- Participants who take the class for 2 hours of college credit will be required to take an open-book test at the end of the class.

### PREREQUISITES

None are required, but participants who have experience using dichotomous keys in a plant identification class will be able to grasp the material sooner than those who don't.

## What to *bring*

1. A 10×–16× hand lens.
2. A copy of Agnes Chase's *First Book of Grasses*; this can be purchased for $19.95 from Amazon.

HIGHLY RECOMMENDED

*Plant Identification Terminology: An Illustrated Glossary* by James G. Harris and Melinda Woolf Harris (2001), Second Edition. Because dichotomous keys will often use terms related to various plant structures or texture that some students are unfamiliar with, a good illustrated glossary that both defines and illustrates terms is highly recommended for any plant identification course. I have yet to find one better than this one, and at $22.95 for a paperback copy from Amazon, it is a steal.

## About your *instructor*

EXPERIENCE AND MAJOR ACCOMPLISHMENTS

- Has taught grass identification for 36 years
- Described a grass new to science: *Aristida correlliae* McKenzie, Urbatsch & Proctor
- Discovered a grass in SW Puerto Rico believed to be extinct: *Aristida chaseae*
- Discovered grasses new to Puerto Rico, North America, Louisiana, and Missouri
- Has had 20 publications on grasses published in peer-reviewed literature

HOBBIES AND INTERESTS

Bird, butterfly, and sedge identification and photography; morel and deer hunting; trout fishing; puns.