

**Valentine Reserve
Mammoth Elementary
Cerro Coso Community College
The California Native Plant Society**

Native Plant Project Puts in 300 Seedlings
by Leslie Dawson

It's planting time again for Mammoth fourth grade students participating in the Native Plant Project co-sponsored by the University of California's Valentine Reserve and The California Native Plant Society, Bristlecone Chapter. In cooperation with Cerro Coso Community College, the fourth grade classes planted over 300 seedlings at the Mammoth Lakes community college campus. Four species of plants were used in the landscape project including wild rye, bitterbrush, Jeffrey Pine trees and sulfur buckwheat.

This is the fourth year the Native Plant Project has been putting in small gardens around the Mammoth schools. "Our first year of planting we had little plant success, but learned some valuable lessons," said Sherry Taylor, Native Plant Project Coordinator. We planted the steep slope between the elementary school and the new football field. This was not a good location because of constant foot traffic through the area and lack of water. "Our second year," Taylor continued, "We planted the island between the bike path and Meridian Blvd. in front of the Middle School." Robin Davis, the school custodian was extremely helpful, hauling away weeds, especially Russian Thistle and watering the seedlings regularly. The plants have been growing for a year now, and although still small, are well established. This year and last, the students planted their seedlings in front of the Cerro Coso Community College Building. About 100 students from three classes plus 30 parent volunteers worked for four hours to get the seedlings in the earth. Each of the bitterbrush seedlings were surrounded by a small biodegradable fence to prevent the Mule Deer from browsing them. The college is already watering this area where it has planted wildflowers and Jeffrey Pine. The seedlings will need to be watered for their first year, and then should be well enough established that they will grow without additional water.

Many thanks to all of the volunteers and donors who make this project possible. Thanks also to the wonderful fourth grade teachers Mrs. Janis Richardson, Mrs. Michelle Quirsfeld and Miss Shelly Mayfield who have beautifully integrated the Native Plant Project into their botany science unit. The project couldn't take place without generous funding from Mammoth Mountain Ski Area and a grant from the California Native Plant Society for materials. Thanks especially to Deanna Campbell and Cerro Coso Community College for giving us the opportunity to landscape their campus.