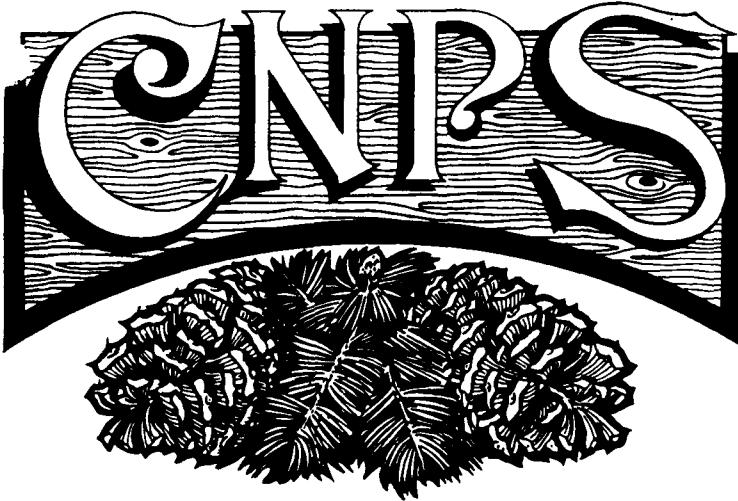


BRISTLEcone • CHAPTER



NEWSLETTER

Vol. 2, No. 4

August 1983

The next meeting will be September 28 at 7:30 p.m. The place and any other information will be in the local newspapers.

President's message:

Recently I was among several citizens who attended a Board of Supervisor's regular Tuesday morning meeting in which they intended to appoint a new committee to negotiate with the City of Los Angeles. This supposedly was regarding a water management plan, but no objectives were ever given. A generous amount of confusion ensued, but the final result proved to be temporarily acceptable to those of us concerned about southern Owens Valley water matters. We believe it is of considerable importance for those of us who are worried about our best interests in conservation and water management to be present in person at such meetings. Not only should we speak up for our concerns, but we should also be a witness to the board's actions. Simply being present may produce positive forces toward better government for Inyo County. Attendance shows we care. See you there.

---Vince Yoder

COMING FIELD TRIP

Mike Prather, Field Trip Chairman, has arranged a Mono County field trip for the week end of September 16-17. The group will meet at the Mono Lake Committee's headquarters in Lee Vining at 10:00 a.m. Saturday. From there it will be conducted on an informative 3-hour tour of Mono Lake. Take water, a sack lunch, and binoculars. The remainder of the day will be spent in Lee Vining Canyon and the Tioga Pass area. A campout will be planned for those who wish to stay overnight. Sunday plans will remain flexible, depending upon the wishes of those present. This is an opportunity to end the season with an enjoyable get-together. Guests are welcome. Mike will be the trip leader. Any inquiries should be directed to him at P. O. Box 406, Lone Pine 93545. Phone (619) 876-5807.

NITROPHILA MOHAVENSIS

Late June did not seem the time to explore the alkali flats of Carson Slough east of Death Valley Junction, but the Yoders (Ann and Vince) and the DeDeckers (Mary and Paul) responded to a call asking for a check on the distribution of Nitrophila mohavensis. Actually, it turned out to be a very pleasant two days in a too little known world. We became well acquainted with both species of Nitrophila, the common N. occidentalis and the rare little N. mohavensis. The latter's occasional populations, located where the drainage pattern provides just the right amount of moisture in the heavy clay soil, are all within a two-mile segment of the

slough. That is all that is known in this world! To our horror, we found mining claims staked out in the lower portion of the slough. Upon inquiry we learned that the miners plan on pumping large volumes of water to supply the operation. Although the claims were located below the Nitrophila populations, any significant pumping could wipe out the species.

The site is between Death Valley Junction on Highway 127 and the Nevada line near Ash Meadows. It is transected about midway by the Ash Meadows Road. The Carson Slough is extensive, running about 15 miles, north to south, crossing the state line on the way. Various channels feed into it. The elevation in the Nitrophila area is approximately 2050 feet. A plant list for that portion follows:

ASTERACEAE (Sunflower Family)

Aster intricatus. Broom aster.

Chrysothamnus albidus. White-flowered rabbitbrush.

Cirsium mohavense. Mojave thistle.

Iva acerosa. Copperweed.

Machaeranthera arida. Arid aster.

BORAGINACEAE (Borage Family)

Heliotropium curassavicum ssp. oculatum. Heliotrope, Chinese pusley.

CAPPARIDACEAE (Caper Family)

Cleomella brevipes. Pigmy cleomella.

Cleomella obtusifolia. Common stinkweed.

CHENOPIDIACEAE (Goosefoot or Saltbush Family)

Atriplex confertifolia. Shadscale.

Atriplex parryi. Parry saltbush.

Atriplex phyllostegia. Arrowscale.

Nitrophila mohavensis. Amargosa nitrophila.

Nitrophila occidentalis. Alkali pink.

Suaeda occidentalis. Western inkweed.

Suaeda torreyana. Inkweed.

FABACEAE (Pea Family)

Prosopis glanduosa var. torreyana. Honey mesquite.

POACEAE (Grass Family)

Distichlis spicata. Saltgrass.

RESEDACEAE (Mignonette Family)

Oligomeris linifolia. Oligomeris.

A DEDICATION AT 12,500 FEET

An outstanding affair, largely ignored by the local press, was the dedication honoring Dr. Nello Pace, founder of the White Mountain Research program. Anyone who has handled such responsibility can appreciate the magnitude of providing delicious meals, transporting guests on a 2-hour drive up mountain roads, some requiring 4-wheel drive, and putting on the beautiful reception which climaxed the affair. It must have set an altitude record for such an elegant display. The dress was casual, however, mostly sweaters or parkas over jeans, and boots or Adidas. When it rained for the dedication, the ceremony was moved indoors and the necessary adjustments made without a problem. Among those who drove up for the dedication, the Bristlecone Chapter was well represented.

Since the event was of considerable interest to the scientific community, your editor asked Dave Trydahl, Resident Manager of the White Mountain Research Station facilities, to provide material for a news item. His letter gives background information as well as an account of the dedication, all of such interest that the entire letter is included herein.

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TELEPHONE: 714-873-4344

 WHITE MOUNTAIN RESEARCH STATION
 3000 EAST LINE STREET
 BISHOP, CALIFORNIA 93514

Dear Mary,

In the fall of 1982, Dr. Clarence A. Hall, Jr., Director of White Mountain Research Station, and Dean of Physical Science at UCLA, proposed the idea that WMRS dedicate the main lab building at Mount Barcroft Facility to Dr. Nello Pace, Chairman Emeritus of the Physiology Department at UC Berkeley, and founder of the White Mountain Research Station. Dr. Pace founded the station in 1950 and was Director of the station until 1978.

Dr. Pace originally had planned to do his work at the rock hut on Mt. Whitney but was directed by the Sierra Club into the White mountains. The Navy Department of Research had already established a research station at Crooked Creek and Dr. Pace was able to work out a cooperative use program with the Navy that lasted until 1973 when the Navy signed all property over to the University. The original station at Crooked Creek was added to over the years with construction of facilities at Barcroft, White Mountain Summit and the Bishop Laboratory. During the years of Dr Pace's Directorship research emphasis was in the areas of Physiology and Endocrinology.

In 1978, the Station Directorship moved to Dr. Welsh of UC Berkely Astronomy and studies began to place a ten meter dish telescope on Mount Barcroft. This project never materialized and in 1980 Dr Hall became Director.

Dr. Hall wished to establish a University wide, multi-discipline research center that also opened its doors to educational projects. His goal has now been partially attained. The Station is now an independant unit, non-assigned to any Department in the University System but rather a Department unto itself. It is the only such independant entity in the University System. This independance has allowed the Station to upgrade facilities and direct useage into areas that best serve the University of California and the residents of the Owens Valley. Our future educational programs at the Station will be geared toward the Natural History of the Valley with instructors drawn from the Intelligensia of the Valley as well as the University System.

Now, back to the Nello Pace Dedication.

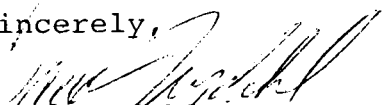
Dr. Hall proposed we invite former associates and employees of Dr. Pace, past researchers, present researchers, friends of the station and local residents that may be interessted in visiting the facilities. Dr. Hall drafted the invitations and initiated the format of the program. Details of menus, transportation and housing were handled by the Staff at Bishop. Administrative Assistant, Gail Stange, handled lodging and registration. Tom Davies, caretaker of the Bishop Facility, assisted by Barbara Garcia, established the menu and prepared the food for breakfast and dinner at Bishop. Pat Trydahl, assisted by Glenna Knopfle, Donna Young and Vicky Bennet, planned and executed the lunch and reception at the Barcroft Facility. Other staff members, Don Buser, Dan Cutshall, Dale Sandell, Casey Wack and Jan Hart assisted with transportation, and Facility preparation. This was truly a team effort by the very professional and exceptional group of individuals that form the White Mountain Research Station Staff. In addition to the staff, assistance was given by Dennis Oribus, Gene Murphy and Ray Schaaf of the Forest Service and Don Taylor and John Stange of Bishop High School. These men provided us with vehicles and drove guests to the Barcroft Facility. Dr. Michael Dillon from Northern Inyo Hospital was in attendance to aid in any medical emergency. Among the many notable guests in attendance on Saturday and Sunday were Dr. Nello Pace and family, Dr. Charles J. Hitch, Dr. D.B. Dill, Dr. D. Bailey, Dr. F. Duane Blume, and Dr. David Cudaback. On Sunday, the Official Party was joinee by many local guests at the Barcroft Facility where lunch was served, a dedication ceremony held with a reception following.

Dr. Hall presided over the ceremony honoring Dr. Pace and presented him with a scrapbook filled with momentos and anecdotes provided by former associates. A new sign in front of the Lab was also unveiled. Present researchers were in attendance and provided poster displays of their work and answered questions about their projects.

This was a very successful and important occasion for the the Station in that we were able to honor a very deserving person and also were able to bring together many former associates of the station giving them an opportunity to meet once again and also to make new acquaintances. It also gave Dr. Hall, myself and the rest of the Staff an opportunity to show the improvements made to the Station and display the variety of research and educational useage the Station now has.

Thank you for your interest in the Station. We all look forward to anyfuture classes you wish to have at the Station and to assisting you in any way we might.

Sincerely,


Dave Trydahl
Resident Manager, WMRS

THE WILDFLOWERS

A scouting trip in mid-July with a trio from the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden found the White Mountains in full bloom. Some slopes were red with Indian paintbrush, others blue with lupines. Each stop revealed something new. Many genera were represented by several species each. Lupinus argenteus var. tenellus was so abundant that it could not be ignored, while Lupinus caespitosus, hidden in its tuft of leaves, required some searching. Minute Gymnosteris parvula was abundant at a springy swale on the slope of Campito Mountain. The Clokey daisy (Erigeron clokeyi) was frequent and the perennial Linanthus nuttallii was common along the roadway. A 4-wheel drive trip down Wyman Canyon produced, besides about 30 stream crossings, such good things as those listed below:

- Acer glabrum var. diffusum. Mountain maple.
- Eriogonum rupinum. Limberpine buckwheat.
- Halimolobos diffusa var. jaegeri. Rock mustard.
- Petrophytum caespitosum. Rock spiraea.
- Philadelphus stramineus. Littleleaf mock-orange.
- Physocarpus alternans ssp. panamintensis. Panamint ninebark.
- Potentilla saxosa. Rock potentilla.
- Trifolium dedeckerae. DeDecker clover.

The alpine blooms continue upward as the season progresses. The higher elevations are at their peak now, so those who appreciate cushion plants will find them at their best. It is an opportunity to note the difference between the flora of the dolomite slopes and that of sandstone. The line between them may be quite well defined. Here, too, is evidence of the Rocky Mountain influence. Nearly half as many of the White Mountains' alpine species are present in the Rocky Mountains as are found in the Sierra Nevada.

AN SOS FROM OWENS VALLEY

We have just received some disturbing news. Benett Kessler and Marilyn Fisher, the excellent team of reporters for the Eastern Sierra News Service, are being fired by Station KESR. (This southern Inyo station has its headquarters in Lone Pine but the tower is in Independence.) Their 30-day notice will terminate September 15. This comes at a turning point in Owens Valley when the withholding of critical news could mean disaster. Secret negotiations are going on between Inyo County and the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power. It involves the water management plan resulting from a groundwater ordinance adopted by Inyo County, this mandated by a 75% vote of the people. The matter is complex and the pressures are intense. Too much of it will remain under cover unless someone has the courage to get it to the people. It is well known that Benett Kessler is the only one who would do this. Her penetrating reporting has broken the news barrier in Inyo County, and she is still the one person who has the courage to say it like it is.

Benett's extraordinary contribution toward the protection of natural resources was recognized in 1982 when she was one of ten national recipients of the Gulf Oil Conservation Awards in the Citizen Category. (This was formerly the American Motors Awards program.) Following is the text of the presentation:

"Ms. Kessler is a dedicated newswoman in eastern California whose diligent coverage of the Owens Valley revealed unwarranted exploitation by the Department of Water and Power of the City of Los Angeles. Her fearless reporting on the issue on radio and for the Eastern Sierra News Service has led to public participation in deciding the use of valuable water resources. Despite intimidation tactics that cost her a job at one radio station. Ms. Kessler continues to keep the public informed about the environment in the Owens Valley."

It was Station KINC which fired Benett without notice. Although it was indignantly denied, there was evidence that the Department of Water and Power (DWP) found it easy to convince the owner that it was unwise to retain a newscaster who offended the DWP. (The station's lease was on DWP land.) Within a few months, the station failed, financially, and it became Station KNYO. A new era dawned. That station was sensitive to the local communities and respected the people's right to know.

Now the station has been sold again, this time to John Levin, and is now known as KESR, the Highway Station. Mr. Levin frankly states, "We are not interested in public service. We are interested in making money." Whether he, too, is being intimidated, or is simply not interested in the welfare of Owens Valley, we do not know. Either way, the throttling of vital local news at such a critical time is a serious blow. The public must convince the station owner that this move is a mistake. Although they may not care about the people, they do depend on advertising and the listening public to succeed financially. The local people want more than just news releases and reports of club doings. The fate of Owens Valley hangs in the balance.

We urge letters or phone calls to John Levin, Radio KESR, P. O. Box RADIO, Lone Pine, CA. 93545. Phone (619) 876-5557.

GOOD NEWS

The Eureka Dunes have been designated as a National Natural Landmark by interior Secretary James Watt. The announcement states:

"The Department of the interior's Bureau of Land Management closed the area to off-road vehicles in 1976. Non-vehicular recreation is permitted if compatible with the primary goal of preserving the natural features. The site is within the 5,120 acre Eureka Valley Dunes Area of Critical Environmental Concern designated as a part of the California Desert Conservation area."

This is the culmination of a prolonged effort to have the dunes closed to ORV activity, and to insist that they be protected after the paper closure. It is evidence that the intelligent input of citizens can make a difference. A good management plan is now under way.

The dunes are located in Eureka Valley, just over the Last Chance Mountains from the northwest corner of Death Valley National Monument. The northern portion is a sand mountain almost 700 feet high. The lesser dunes to the south contain examples of both modified barchans and star dunes. The hydrology of the massive dune, an aquifer above ground, accounts for the exceedingly rich biological area on the perimeter of the dune system. California's two federally listed plant species, Swallenia alexandrae (Eureka dune grass) and Oenothera avita ssp. eurekaensis (Eureka primrose) are endemic to the dunes in Eureka Valley.

MORE GOOD NEWS

A compromise in the effort to make Mono Lake a National Monument resulted in a Mono Basin National Forest Scenic Area. The change was made to satisfy the politically powerful objections of Los Angeles who seemed to fear National Park administration. It deletes the water use study, and adds language clarifying that water rights are not affected.

The 67,000-acre National Scenic Area will still protect the esthetic and ecological values of Mono Lake's islands, shores, most of Mono Craters and part of the Sierran escarpment from geothermal development, timber harvesting, expanded mining operations and other forms of industrial intrusion. It will prohibit their sale to Los Angeles, repealing a 1936 "special interest" law. It will authorize construction of a visitor center and the development of campgrounds, trails and interpretive facilities. It will introduce hundreds of thousands of visitors to Mono's natural beauty, winning the lake new friends and supporters.

* * * * *

NEW MEMBERS

Frank Ewers
Harvard Forest
Petersham, MA 01366

W. K. Glikbarg
P. O. Box 48289
Los Angeles, CA 90048

Richard Grant
639 La Loma Road
Pasadena, CA 91105

Kim Hansen
P. O. Box 8695
Mammoth Lakes, CA 93548

Jan Nachlinger
1015 Washington St.
Reno, NV 89503

Robert Neuhaus
1914 Lyon St. #A
San Francisco, CA 94115

Each of you is warmly welcomed. May you enjoy your membership!

BLM MEETING

The BLM California Desert District Advisory Council is to meet in Lone Pine August 25-27. The agenda has not yet been received but it is expected that most items of interest to the public will be on Thursday and Saturday. Some amendments will be considered, and the Inyo Mountains will be discussed Thursday afternoon. Watch local newspapers for the place and schedule.

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We welcome the new subscribers, people who live outside the Chapter area, and we are grateful for the generous contributions received.

A few subscriptions are becoming due. The expiration date is shown on the address labels of non-member subscribers. Please note your date and keep your subscription in good standing. Thank you.

* * * * *

Deadline for material for the next issue is October 1. Send to P. O. Box 506, Independence, CA. 93526. Subscription rate \$5.00 per year for non-members.

