



NEXT MEETING

Wednesday, March 27, in Independence, at the home of Evelyn Mae and Al Nikolaus, 315 South Clay. Turn east at Chevron Station (Payne St.); drive 2 blocks to T intersection at Clay St.; turn right; house with lots of trees. Time is 6:30 for pot luck. Bring salad, dessert, or a hot dish. Table service will be furnished.

Business meeting at 7:30. David Groeneveld, Inyo County Water Dept., has new data on the vegetation study that he wishes to share with us at program time.

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President's message:

In the last three springs it has disturbed me that small plants are trampled underfoot as we all gather around for identification in the field. With our first trip only days away, our field trip chairman suggests *that we*

take notice of the "Policy to reduce the impact on native plants" in this issue of the newsletter. Tecopa will provide our first chance this year to "get a star" for consideration of all growing things, even the tiniest.

WE have strongly urged that a Tamarix eradication program be given high priority among mitigation measures called for in the Inyo-Los Angeles water agreement. Not only is that aggressive plant using valuable water on the valley floor, but it is invading precious springs in the Inyo-White Range. Please give some thought, before the coming meeting, as to what we can do to help wipe out salt cedar. (See TAMARISK by William M. Neill, FREMONTIA Vol. 1.2, No. 4. January 1985)

Doris Fredendall

DESERT BLOOMS:

The abundance of rain throughout the fall set the stage for an outstanding flower show on the desert. The moisture needed to produce good annuals has failed to come, however, as of this date. Those which bloom early may still do well, but there is some apprehension about the rest. We can only hope that rain will come. Plants at the higher elevations, having had some precipitation, will do better.

The earliest blooms are beginning to show up. Betty Gilchrist reports *Castilleja* from the Alabama Hills. Vince Yoder has found *Lepidium flavum*, *Astragalus coccineus*, and *Grayia spinosa* as early as mid-February in protected places. *Geraea canescens* and *Camissonia claviformis* ssp. *funerea* are showing up in Death Valley. Excitement is mounting!

UPDATE ON OWENS VALLEY WATER:

The Inyo County Water Commission has held a series of public meetings in Owens Valley communities to receive input on "enhancement/mitigation" measures. The Inyo-Los Angeles water agreement calls for mitigation, intended to reduce the impact of groundwater pumping, but the original list of proposals has not gone over well. Los Angeles insists on using the term, enhancement, but the people of Owens Valley have made it clear that they want meaningful mitigation.

For the first time in the entire water agreement procedure, there is an atmosphere which encourages teamwork between the people of Owens Valley and the officials which represent them. The Water Commission is seeking input from local citizens. Those who understand the land and actually know something about the effects of water application or withdrawal have been encouraged to offer suggestions. This has encouraged analytical thinking by all. Best of all, it gives some hope for reasonable management. It is unfortunate that this mature attitude did not prevail during the process of arriving at an agreement. All that was done in secret sessions, and no report was made to the people until the agreement was unveiled. Valuable expertise was excluded. Had there been open discussions then in an atmosphere of mutual confidence, Owens Valley would have fared much better. As it is, constraints imposed by a questionable agreement will hamper the best of efforts.

People at the public meetings insisted on true mitigation--no substituting enhancement oh recreation projects. There was strong support for making the towns green again, for restoring water to lower Owens River, eradication of salt cedar, and better water management. The people do not want projects designed for "show pieces along the highway", including alfalfa fields. Restoration of native pastures is considered better use of the water. Too many of the original proposals called for additional pumping, hardly the way to mitigate the effects of pumping.

The Water Commissioners are supporting recommendations made by the people. By the time these get through the required procedures, however, there may be little left. The measures must be approved by the Technical Committee and the Advisory Committee, both composed of representatives of Inyo and the Los Angeles DWP. Los Angeles still insists that these be closed meetings. The measures must also win approval of the Inyo County Supervisors and the Los Angeles Water Commissioners. Los Angeles has considerable veto power, which they never hesitate to use. It is most unlikely, judging from past performances, that they will approve any meaningful mitigation.

On a related matter, the sites where serious air pollution from blowing dust occurs must be addressed. These are on Los Angeles owned land devoid of vegetation. That city is required, under provisions of SB 270, to correct the dust problems. These have caused multi-vehicle pileups on the highways and highway closures for hours at a time. But Los Angeles is using the usual stalling technique. They refuse to take action to correct the problems until they complete a 3-year study to determine what they are. They hope that Inyo County, in its concern, will address those sites in their mitigation proposals, using Inyo's share of water of course.

So in spite of the "historical agreement", it appears that Inyo still will have to fight for every drop of water used in Owens Valley, while Los Angeles manages to export enough for relatively luxurious use.

TOLLHOUSE SPRING:

From pioneer days, Tollhouse Spring on the Westgard Pass road has served as an oasis for desert travelers. The water from the spring on the hillside has been piped to flow into a concrete trough beside the road. Perhaps it takes a long day out on the hot, dry desert to make one fully appreciate that refreshing stop, but the majority of travelers have stopped there through the years. Even though one may no longer need to water the horses or fill the radiator, it still calls for a stop. Who would pass up the opportunity to hold one's hands under the flow?

The place reeks with history. Its first official function was to serve as a toll station, and that gave it its commonly used name. The road was an important route between Owens Valley and the mining towns in Nevada. Later, in 1913, A.L. Westgaard of the Automobile Association designated that route for a trans-continental highway. Since it was a major route into California, a quarantine station was established where the tollhouse had been. Jim Wilder of Independence, who was one of the station masters, enjoyed spending the summers there.

In later years, after the station ceased operation, the garden died of neglect and the cabin was burned by campers. A surviving grape vine was watered for a time by those who cared. Eventually a handsome historical monument was erected at the site by E Clampus Vitus, but the plaque was stolen by vandals. (A new plaque is now situated at the junction of Highway 395 and the Westgard road, Highway 168.) All this was sad enough, but the spring and water flowing at the trough remained. Then, much to our dismay, it was shut off. It has been on and off for some time, long enough that the black poplars below the trough have died for lack of water. No one seemed to know who was responsible. The story was that the water was unsafe to drink. Some claimed that it contained arsenic. One wonders if this came from Judge Bill Greene's delight in telling tourists that as he downed a generous cupful. It may be that the water, in its unprotected state, has become polluted. Of course the easy way to avoid responsibility was to "shut it off". But that solution has deprived the traveling public, both residents and tourists, of a refreshing stop on a desert road. Green spots and watering places are all too scarce. There is something about flowing water that lifts the spirit, and to splash one's hands in its coolness is a special treat. It is truly depressing to find the trough dry and the trees dying. The spring area feeds a lovely little streamlet edged with orchids, rushes and sedges, all this. bordered with wildflowers. It is a fine place for birding. A little attention would truly pay off here.

So the Bristlecone Chapter decided to see what it could do. We found that site **is** on Forest Service land but is managed by CalTrans. When we contacted that office we received the usual courteous consideration. They had been concerned over the public health threat and the cost of maintaining the spring and pipeline. When we expressed an interest in keeping it up as a public service and offered to give assistance, they readily reconsidered. Now it is a matter of determining just what is involved and arriving at an agreement. This CalTrans office has always shown admirable sensitivity and it has been most cooperative with C.N.P.S. We salute them!

Pre-Publication Announcement: A FLORA OF SAN DIEGO COUNTY
By R. Mitchel Beauchamp

Publication date: 15 July 1985

This publication is an annotated distributional listing of native and adventive exotic plant species known to occur in San Diego County, California. Each taxon will be given with known collection sites, the elevational range within San Diego County, associated plant community and region, published chromosome count, as well as synonymy as it relates to San Diego County collections of that taxon. Diagnostic keys will aid in determination of species but no species descriptions will be included, except for those taxa described since 1974.

An introductory chapter will address vegetation and floristic associations within San Diego County, as well as the history of botanical collecting in that region. A vegetation map of San Diego County, prepared by Thomas A. Oberbauer, will be included as part of the publication.

The book is expected to involve over 250 pages. Over 2000 plant taxa occur within San Diego County.

Pre-publication purchases are needed to support publication costs. Purchases are to be made by check made out to R. Mitchel Beauchamp. Pre-publication cost per copy is \$18. Send orders to: Pacific Southwest Biological Services, Post Office Box 985, National City, CA 92050.

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POLICIES TO REDUCE THE IMPACT ON NATIVE PLANTS: FIELD TRIPS.

1. Remind all field trip participants of the Society's basic purpose of preservation of our native flora in its habitat.
2. Discourage the disturbance of native plant life and encourage other methods of learning, e.g. photography, drawings, and descriptive notations.
3. Be familiar with regulations. Collecting plants without a specific permit is prohibited in national and state parks or along the highway.
4. The leader should take responsibility for the taking of specimens. Only reasonably abundant plants should be considered for study specimens. Group identification of one specimen should be encouraged.
5. Do not collect underground structures such as bulbs, corms, tubers and rhizomes for eating or casual examination.
6. In the field, alert members to the deleterious effects of the trampling of many feet. Fragile environments should be visited with caution. Better one person advance into a fragile area to identify a plant than the whole group.

CALTRANS SLOPE REVEGETATION PROJECT:--

Some of us had noticed plantings on a highway slope north of Bishop. In order to find out more about this, we asked CalTrans to explain what they were up to. So Tom Dayak of the Environmental Section in the Bishop office came to our January 30 meeting to give a slide show and discussion about the project.

Bare highway slopes are unsightly, are often an erosion problem, and sometimes become a source of blowing dust. Plant cover mitigates these conditions. Most slopes revegetate naturally, but this may take many years in some locations.

In an effort to speed up the process, CalTrans has embarked on an experimental planting project. Many species of Great Basin plant seeds were tested for germination and survival potential in a Round Valley Conservation Camp lath house. Those plants which did well and which are native to this area were finally selected to be transplanted to bare cut slopes. Three sites were used, one at the June Lake intersection, one on Sherwin grade near the sand storage shed, and one at the intersection to Round Valley, all on U. S. 395. The planting was done in the fall of '83 and spring of '84. Fourwing saltbush, big sagebrush, rabbitbrush, Nevada ephedra, and bitterbrush were used. A high success rate appears to have been achieved due to the following procedures: (1) Plants were enclosed in hardware cloth to prevent rodent damage; (2) holes were dug and filled with a blend of soil and planting mixture; and (3) a watering program was instituted to assure adequate moisture.

An ongoing record of the sites will be continued for several years for evaluation of health, vigor, and survival. If this project is successful, we may see more raw slopes being planted with California's native plants following any new highway construction.

CalTrans is to be commended for this approach. Too often exotics are used which either do not survive, need a lot of care, or become too invasive. The use of plants native to the area eliminates these problems. The California Native Plant Society encourages the use of appropriate native species.

Vince Yoder

STATE OF THE SIERRA SYMPOSIUM 1985

July 21--27

1985 will witness the beginning of a monumental, annual symposia series devoted to discussing one of this planet's most precious natural sanctuaries: the Sierra Nevada. The purpose of the symposium is twofold: 1. To allow for a direct addressing of some of the most pressing environmental problems and issues confronting the Sierra Nevada. 2. To allow key organizations and experts devoted to wise stewardship of the Sierra Nevada an opportunity for better coordinating their strategies.

The setting for SSS'85 will be the Golden Trout Camp Educational Facility located at an elevation of 10,000 feet, inside breathtaking Golden Trout Wilderness, twenty miles west of Lone Pine. The wilderness locale of Golden Trout Camp has been chosen to enhance participants' awareness of and respect for the Sierra Nevada

environment while providing a relaxed and undistracting retreat for the symposium. Accomodations include tent cabin sleeping quarters for participants, a log cabin dining hall and conference room, three full-course meals daily, and showers.

The State of the Sierra 1985 Symposium is intended to allow participants a chance to interact with the Sierran environment directly while simultaneously conducting intense discussions and planning on how to better protect the Sierra Nevada.

Symposium topics shall include a number of fixed themes plus any number of undetermined issues brought into the conference by attendees. All attendees are expected to present at least two papers copy-ready for fall publication in the State of the Sierra 1985 Proceedings volume. Papers should be between 800-3000 words in length (3-12 pages), and at least one of these should address a topic chosen from our list.

Ideally, SSS'85 would have the financial means to cover the full costs for all participants. Unfortunately, this has not yet been realized. Expenditures for organization, printing, and insurance have already exhausted funds immediately available such that we are forced to request that participants cover the costs for their own food and lodging during the week (\$135). Grant funding is currently being sought from several sources. If approved, all participants' fees will be reduced or waived accordingly. Registration is due March 31.

PLEASE ADDRESS ALL CORRESPONDENCE TO DOUGLAS BRADLEY, P.O. Box 1212, Goleta, CA 93116. Local inquiries may be made to Mike Prather 876-5807, or Mary DeDecker 878-2389.

ANNOUNCING:

On the other side of Owens Valley, the White Mountain Research Station will be conducting a WHITE-INYO AND HIGH ALTITUDE RESEARCH SYMPOSIUM on August 23-25. Speakers will address subjects in the Physical Sciences (Astronomy, Archaeology, Climatology/Meteorology, Geology, and Geomorphology), Biological Sciences (Botany, Entomology, Herpetology, Ichthyology, Mammalogy, Ornithology), and Physiology. Most of the program will be at the East Line Street facilities at Bishop, but there will be a field trip to the Barcroft Facilities in the White Mountains on Saturday. There will be more about this in a future issue.

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SUMMER FIELD CLASS

The BRISTLECONE CHAPTER will offer another field class this year, taught by Mary DeDecker. It will be a study of the genus Astragalus, plus any Lupinus which we happen to find. The dates will be May 25-26 and August 3-4, these determined by blooming time for a majority of species in the area. Enrollees will be sent more information later. The May dates happen to be on the Mule Days weekend in Bishop, which will mean extra traffic and a great demand on motel rooms, so plan to camp or make motel reservations early. Sorry we could not avoid that. See form on page 7.

CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY - Membership Application

The California Native Plant Society is an organization of lay persons and professionals united by an interest in the plants of California. It is open to all. Its principal aims are to preserve the native flora and to add to the knowledge of its members and the public.

Name _____ P.O. or Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

Membership Category:

Life, Couple	\$500
Life, Single	450
Supporting	50
Couples/Group	30
Organization	18
Individual	18
Student	12
Retired, Single	12
Retired, Couple	15

I wish to be alliliated with the following Chapter:

Bristlecone _____
Other _____

Please mail application and check for dues to:

Membership Chairman
California Native Plant Society
909 12th Street, Suite 116
Sacramento, CA 95814

Note that dues have gone up. Members who renew by April 1, 1985, may have another year at the previous rate. Prior to April 1, mail to the old address at 2380 Ellsworth St., Suite D, Berkeley, CA 94704.

The BRISTLECONE' NEWSLETTER comes out bimonthly. It is mailed free to members of the Bristlecone Chapter, CNPS. For non-members the subscription is \$5.00 per year. Editor: Mary DeDecker.

