

**NEXT MEETING**

December 3, 6:30 p.m., in the social hall of the Big Pine Methodist Church at the corner of Crocker and School streets, Big Pine. It will be a joint meeting with the Audubon Chapter and will begin with a pot-luck dinner. The speaker is to be George Monesko, President of the Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee. Don't miss it!

**PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:**

From the wonderful flower display in the Independence burn area to the Rare and Endangered Plant Symposium this has been a fascinating year. It took all of you to make this possible. I hope you give Doris, your new president, the backing and confidence you have given me.

. . . . . Ann Yoder

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Election of officers will take place at the December 3 meeting. Nominations are as follows:

- President . . . . . Doris Fredendall
- Vice-president. . . . . Mark Bagley
- Secretary . . . . . Evelyn-Mae Nikolaus
- Treasurer . . . . . Vincent Yoder

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**WINTER EAST OF THE SIERRA**

The native plants are dormant or waiting in seed form for another season, and chapter members are thinking of family gatherings and holiday festivities. The field trip schedule will begin again in early spring. Until then we can enjoy looking back on the fine trips we have enjoyed this year. The fellowship and the sharing of learning experiences have left warm glows of satisfaction, and the pleasure of sharing the beauty of our very special mountain-desert country has furnished us with vivid pictures for our memory banks. Reports of our last trips may help carry us through the winter.



HORSESHOE MEADOWS FIELD TRIP - September 20, 1986.

On a crisp fall Saturday morning an enthusiastic group of CNPS and Audubon members and guests car-pooled to the campground on Cottonwood Creek below Horse-shoe Meadow. With Mark Bagley as our capable leader we walked upstream noting the last of the late summer grasses and blooms. There were the gentians, *Gentiana holopetala* and *G. newberryi*, yarrow, *Achillea lanulosa*, yampah, *Perider-idea parishii*, ranger's buttons, *Sphenosciadium capitellatum*, *Arnica* and several species of *Potentilla*. Even a tiny *Mimulus* remained to offer an unexpected bit of color at this high elevation, 9500 to 10,500 feet, where frosts had already occurred. Icicles hung on brush overhanging shaded banks of the stream.

Climbing from mixed coniferous forest to subalpine, Mark made us aware of changing plant life at different elevations. He helped us identify indicator plants as we hiked up the ridge. We learned the distinguishing characteristics of whitebark and foxtail, the predominant pines on this open forest habitat of the Kern Plateau.

Velvety gray leaves with a few fading flowers of *Hulsea vestita* still dotted the sandy soil at the edge of the meadow sloping down to the meandering stream. We watched a pair of mountain bluebirds hovering in a most interesting fashion over the sagebrush as we ate lunch. Our flagging energy restored, we crossed the meadow and began the ascent to Mulkey Pass. Spectacular views of Mt. Langley, Trail Peak, and the Cottonwood Lakes Basin are visible from this vantage point.

Resting and reviewing the subalpine plant life at the top of Mulkey Pass, we enjoyed breath-taking views southward of Olancha Peak and the Kern River drain- age. Suddenly a man on horseback appeared on the trail, followed by his two friendly dogs. He was obviously at home in the saddle and in these mountains. He stopped to chat with us. We learned that he was a descendant of early pioneer cattlemen of the Eastern Sierra. He was Roy Hunter, one of the cowboys of the book, *COWBOYS OF THE HIGH SIERRA*, by Peter Perkins. Asking many questions, we learned a great deal about the history and geography of this interesting area. Although ranchers and naturalists both love and respect this country, their goals and objectives for its management may vary widely. Perhaps some day both groups may combine their talents and energy to protect this beautiful, fragile desert- mountain environment.

Reluctantly, we left this fascinating high country and returned to the Alabama Hills for a delicious potluck dinner and review of the day's events. Thank you, Mark, for a rewarding field trip.

. . . . . Betty Gilchrist

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We extend a warm welcome to Harold L. Dittmer of Los Angeles, formerly a subscriber to our Bristlecone Newsletter, now a new member.

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NOTICE TO PARTICIPANTS IN THE POTLUCK DINNER ON DECEMBER 3: Bristlecone Chapter members are to bring a main dish or salad. Bring your own plate, silver and cup.

NEGOTIATIONS ON A LONG-TERM INYO COUNTY/LOS ANGELES  
WATER AGREEMENT DRAW NEAR  
by Greg James

Surprising as it may seem, less than a year remains before Inyo County and Los Angeles must begin negotiations on a long-term agreement concerning water issues in the Owens Valley. Clearly, it is not too early for the public and all concerned groups to begin serious consideration of the merits of such an agreement as well as its nature and content.

Under the current Inyo/Los Angeles stipulation and Court order, an EIR must be submitted to the Third District Court of Appeal by February 28, 1989 - the date that the present agreement terminates. If an EIR is not submitted by that date, the Court will order Los Angeles to reduce its pumping from the Owens Valley to a maximum average rate of 89 c.f.s. per year until such time as the Court finds that a legally adequate EIR has been written. This reduced pumping rate would be less than one-third of Los Angeles' existing pumping capacity from the valley.

The EIR to be submitted will either be a cooperative effort by the County and the City on a joint long-term groundwater management plan for the Owens Valley, or in the event that the County and the City cannot reach agreement on a joint plan, the City alone will prepare an EIR on its groundwater pumping activities. Whether it is an EIR on a joint plan or it is an effort only by Los Angeles, the EIR, at a minimum, must comply with all applicable laws and it must conform to all standards which have been set by the Court for an EIR on increased groundwater pumping operations resulting from the operation of the second aqueduct to Los Angeles.

Although over two years remain before an EIR is to be submitted, a schedule for negotiations and preparation on an EIR has been adopted by the Inyo/Los Angeles Standing Committee, the policy making group under the current agreement. The schedule calls for negotiations on a long-term agreement to commence not later than October, 1987 - less than a year from now. To allow sufficient time prior to February 28, 1989 for the drafting and public review of an EIR, a tentative decision on whether or not there will be a long-term agreement must be made by April, 1988. After that, an EIR, whether on a long-term plan or on Los Angeles' increased pumping activities, will be prepared, circulated, revised and submitted to the Court.

Mindful of the fact that discussions on a long-term agreement will begin in less than a year, the County's Water Commission and Board of Supervisors have begun discussing the County's goals and objectives in such an agreement. Additionally, the Inyo/Los Angeles Technical Group recently began conducting a comprehensive well field management study that will link information gained from the ongoing groundwater and vegetation studies. The results of this important study, together with information from the salt cedar control study, revegetation study, water recharge study and other Inyo/Los Angeles cooperative studies, hopefully will provide all concerned with a better understanding of the effects of groundwater pumping on

the environment and will become the basis of discussions on a water management plan.

During the coming year, the challenge confronting all concerned with the future of the Owens Valley is to evaluate the information gained from the studies, the results of the current agreement and other important factors and to decide what should be included in a long-term agreement, and if a tentative agreement is developed through the negotiation process, whether it is in the valley's best interest to enter into such an agreement. Past experience teaches that reaching a consensus on these questions will not be easy, if indeed consensus is even possible. Thus, all concerned are urged to stay well-informed and to discuss the issues with others, including public officials. In this regard, please feel free to contact the staff of the County Water Department with any questions or with requests for other information or assistance. Without question, the decisions that must be made in the near future concerning the long-term agreement will be among the most important ever made in Inyo County.

Greg James is an attorney and serves as the Director of the Inyo County Water Department. The Water Department coordinates Inyo County's water related activities. James serves as a member of both the Inyo/Los Angeles Standing Committee and the Technical Group.

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#### ANNOUNCEMENTS

##### PLANT IDENTIFICATION CLASS.

This coming spring Mark Bagley, our Bristlecone Field Trip Chariman, will be giving a class on plant identification, classification, and distribution. The course will focus on plants of the Owens Valley region, including the eastern Sierra and the Inyo-White Range.

Mark is a consulting botanist and has taught botany classes at U.C. Santa Barbara and the Ridgecrest Sierra Sands Adult School. He is eager to talk to people who express an interest and will plan the class to accomodate the needs of the group.

Plans are now being formulated for the location and scheduling of the course. Input from those interested would be helpful. Call Mark at 873-5326 or write to Box 1431, Bishop, CA 93514.

##### FISH AND GAME PHOTO AWARDS.

The California Fish and Game Commission is calling for entries in a photography contest. Only photos of live species and their natural environment will be accepted. Black and white and color prints only. For more information: Fish and Game Commission, 1416 Ninth Street, Box 944209, Sacramento, 94244-2090. The deadline for entries is December 31. THERE IS A CATEGORY FOR NATIVE PLANTS.

## **CNPS Rare and Endangered Plant Conference Report**

The CNPS sponsored conference on Rare and Endangered plant conservation and management, held in Sacramento on Nov. 5-8, was an outstanding success. Over 700 people participated in the conference, including botanists, wildlife biologists, educators, conservationists, representatives of many environmental groups, and resource management personnel from the US Fish and Wildlife Service, US Forest Service, National Park Service, Bureau of Land Management, Calif. Dept. of Fish and Game and various other state and local government agencies.

Over 170 talks were given in four days, necessitating several rooms with simultaneous presentations. The talks were varied and wide-ranging. Topics included legal aspects of endangered plant conservation, public agency conservation strategies, ecology and population dynamics, species recovery and revegetation, impacts of exotic species, and survey, mitigation and monitoring techniques. CNPS is planning to publish the conference proceedings, hopefully available by next spring or early summer.

Dr. Paul Ehrlich, professor at Stanford and author of "The Population Bomb" and many other books and articles, gave the keynote address. His talk, titled "Extinction: What's Happening and What You Can Do", reviewed the causes of the worldwide decline in species and population diversity. Many of these causes have a local effect, but he pointed out that air pollution and tropical forest destruction have the possibility of leading to worldwide temperature changes and a global alteration of weather patterns. Throughout geological time the world has experienced large climatic changes, but the ability of the world's flora and fauna to adapt to such changes and to migrate to new areas may be seriously hampered if we allow the current habitat destruction and decline in genetic diversity to continue unabated. Nuclear war would have the ultimate effect on the world's weather and the global decline in species diversity. The nuclear winter scenario is well accepted in the scientific community and, says Dr. Ehrlich, the arguments about it now concern whether the high temperatures in Kansas City will drop to  $-30^{\circ}\text{C}$  or only to  $0^{\circ}\text{C}$ . He reminded us, especially the scientists, that conservation is more than a technical biological issue, it is a political action, one that biologists need to become more involved in.

One easy and concrete way in which everyone can help make a political statement and impact is by using the tax check-off for rare and endangered species on their California state income tax return. It was mentioned in one presentation that the 1986-87 budget for the Calif. Dept. of Fish and Game Endangered Plant Program was \$355,700. This represents a minuscule 0.3% of the Department's entire budget. Of that small budget, over half came from tax check-off monies. The potential is there to greatly increase this amount.

A well-attended Friday evening banquet was made particularly enjoyable by Dr. G. Ledyard Stebbins, the featured speaker. He jovially related many experiences from throughout his long and distinguished career in plant genetics and in rare plant hunting. One anecdote followed another and his fun in telling stories was shared by our delight in listening.

There were too many good papers presented at the conference to report on them all here. Several speakers pointed out the need for more information and understanding of our flora, the fact that new species are still being discovered, and the lack of basic distribution, abundance and status data on many of our rare species. It was evident from the almost total lack of papers dealing with plants from California's desert regions that there is much work to be done in our own Bristlecone Chapter area. And, there is much that we at the local level can do as individuals, or as a group, to contribute to the conservation of California's magnificent diversity of plant life.

We must express our thanks, especially to Jim Nelson as principal conference coordinator and to all the others who worked so hard and well to produce an excellent conference. We look forward to a followup session, hopefully within the next 4 or 5 years.

..... Mark Bagley and Vince Yoder

## 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. The Society, working through its local chapters, seeks to increase understanding of California's native flora and to preserve this rich resource for future generations. Varied interests are represented.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ P.O. or Street \_\_\_\_\_

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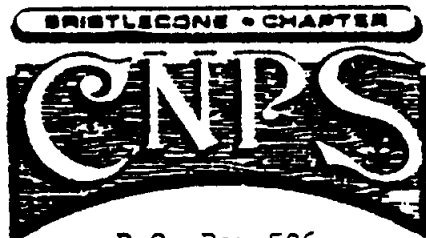
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Mail to: Bristlecone Chapter, CNPS  
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