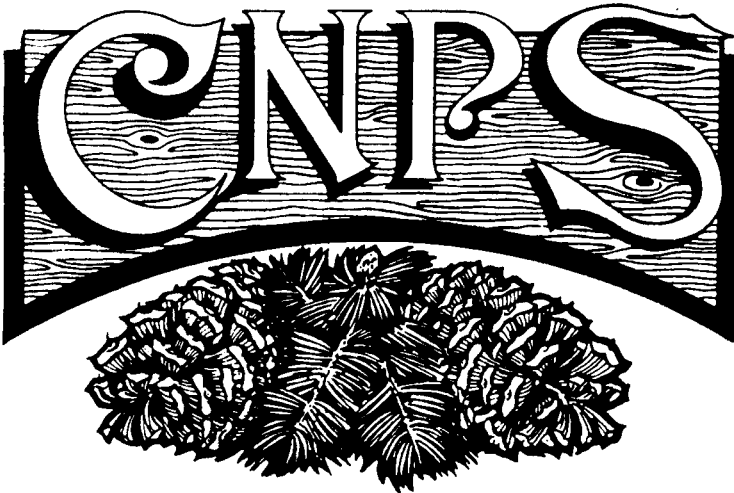


DEDICATED TO THE PRESERVATION OF THE CALIFORNIA NATIVE FLORA

BRISTLECONE • CHAPTER



NEWSLETTER

Vol. 7, No. 5

September 1988

NEXT MEETING

Sept. 28, 7:30 p.m. at Chicago Title, 230 West Line, Bishop (formerly Safeco Title). George Nash, Deputy Director, and Jack Edell, Environmental Chief, both of CalTrans will speak on Vegetation Control Along Roadways, the Spray Program, and Attention to Rare and Endangered Plants. The 5 year Construction Program will be discussed.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

It thrills me when I see, from one of our members, a "letter to the Editor" of our local paper stating the views of our Chapter on environmental issues. It lets all the valley know where we stand on water, air and/or land use. Perhaps, sometime, I will feel that I can adequately write such a letter. In the meantime I encourage you who have strong convictions on the issues supported by our organization to make them public under our name.

I had occasion recently to search past Bristlecone newsletters for needed information. I couldn't get through an issue without reading it from cover to cover, forgetting all about my need. Such a wealth of material is in that five year supply of papers! There are articles on the water issue, forest management, the desert plan, legislation, dedications, and field trips. There are quotes and articles by botanists, past and present, zoologists, and politicians. And the lists include endangered plants, rare plants, exotics, additions to the White Mountain Flora, and the plants encountered on each field trip. When you need reading material I highly recommend starting with Volume 1, Number 1, and reading through our chapter newsletters.

. Doris Fredendall

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WE EXTEND A WARM WELCOME TO THE FOLLOWING NEW MEMBERS:

- Harold Bennett, 619 West Felspar, Ridgecrest, CA 93555
- Craig Carr, 84587 Searles Street, Trona, CA 93562
- Leah and Andrew Kirk. P.O. Box 163, Independence, CA 93526

LAST CHANCE FOR A 1988 FIELD TRIP

OCTOBER 22. LAST CHANCE RANGE, EUREKA VALLEY. Leader: Doris Fredendall. Hike up one of the canyons of the Last Chance Range, on the west side off of the road to Eureka Sand Dunes. Moderate hike of a few miles up rocky old mining road. Bring water, lunch, sturdy shoes, etc. Meet at 9:00 am, in Big Pine at the Triangle Campground, junction of U.S. 395 and Hwy 168. This is our last trip for the season. Thank you to all those who helped to organize and lead the wonderful trips that we have had this year. We'll be looking forward to more exciting trips next spring.

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

JULY 9: SARDINE CANYON

Due to an impassable and overgrown trail to Little Onion Valley, the field trip instead followed an old mining road up Sardine Canyon. Vince Yoder led this trip up the dry and hot road through sagebrush scrub, pinyon woodland, manzanita, and finally to the edge of the jeffery pine-white fir forest. There we overlooked the green beauty of Little Onion Valley and her cascades. Though there was not a profusion of blooming plants on the walk, there was a sizable variety to identify and to become reacquainted with.

One highlight of the trip was having Durham Giuliani, local entomologist and naturalist, accompany us. This led us to more often realize the importance of insects to the flora and also to pay greater attention to the relationship between all living things. As we turned around to head back down hill, we bade Durham farewell as he loped up the canyon, through the brush, toward the cascades in quest of the illusive salamander! The other highlight was, of course, Doris Fredendall's new black wide-brimmed hat and her elegant appearance. This was even more valued since Doris shot ahead and was seldom seen by any but the fastest and most adventurous!

Many thanks to Vince who led us on our journey, providing us with an excellent species list, an informative commentary, and a rare amiable spirit.

— Victoria Hamilton & Mark Bagley

AUGUST 13-14: ROCK CREEK BASIN

A small group of us, led by Mark Bagley and including botanist Dave Magney from the Channel Islands CNPS Chapter and his two young daughters, met at Tom's Place on one of those perfect Sierra summer days to botanize Rock Creek Basin. On our way to the trail-head at Mosquito Flat, we stopped at two seep areas and got to see a nice cross-section of moist area plants, including the striking grass-of-parnassus, *Parnassia palustris* var. *californica*. We took our time going up the trail as there was so much to see — arctic hairgrass, *Deschampsia caespitosa*, elephant heads, *Pedicularis groenlandica*, little elephant heads, *P. attollens*, and many other species. Doris summed up our awe when her reply to what she was seeing up ahead was "just" another field of gentians, *Gentiana holopetala*. We saw blue everywhere it was damp.

Lunch was called for overlooking Marsh Lake. While Mark and Dave were doing the difficult job of keying a lupine, *Lupinus culbertsonii*, I joined Doris on the rocks where we found a miniature alpine world. Among the many low plants we found the delicately colored alpine paintbrush, *Castilleja nana*, and the cushion-like *Phlox caespitosa* ssp. *pulvinata*. After lunch we walked by Heart Lake and on to Box Lake. In one place there were three of the Heath Family side-by-side, mountain heather, bog kalmia and Labrador tea (*Phyllodoce breweri*, *Kalmia polifolia* var. *microphylla*, and *Ledum glandulosum* var. *californicum*).

The next morning a smaller group of us met at East Fork. We botanized our way down Rock Creek Canyon, paying particular attention to the changes in the types of plant communities along the stream — from lodgepole pine and aspen, to jeffery pine and black cottonwood, to ponderosa pine and Fremont cottonwood. We ended the trip just below Paradise where the last of the ponderosa pine occurs. We so enjoyed the company, we had lunch together before Dave and his girls undertook their long drive home. I am looking forward to more field trips and a lot more learning.

— Diane Payne

Nominations for officers for the coming year are as follows: The election will take place at the November meeting.

- President..... Mark Bagley
- Vice-president..... Vincent Yoder
- Secretary..... Bette Sisson
- Treasurer..... Diane Payne

NOTES FROM OUR PRESIDENT

It is a pleasure (and easy) to entertain a visitor from the State organization. When Elizabeth McClintock, Escaped Exotics Inventory Chairman, stayed with us for four days, her schedule featured a day at the 10,000 to 11,000 foot level of the White Mountains, accompanied by Mary DeDecker (as well as a visit to Mary's herbarium); an after-supper walk past the falls of Big Pine Creek at 8000 feet; a drive to Joshua Flats on the north road to Death Valley; and a leisurely walk with Bristlecone Chapter members along a riparian area of Onion Valley at 9100 feet. The last event ended in an oak and pine woodland where a pot-luck supper, served at Bessie Poole's lovely cabin was enjoyed on tables set near the stream of Independence Creek. Later, Elizabeth wrote, "I saw more plants than I can remember so was glad to receive from Vince Yoder a copy of those we saw in Onion Valley--a very impressive list."

We suggest for a good winter walk a trip up Chidago Canyon to see the earthquake damage to the canyon walls. The big white scars on the



brown polish and the large blocks of fallen rock with sparkling white, broken sides are evidence of the power of the quake. The site is north of Bishop on the Volcanic Tableland, which is a surface of Bishop tuff.

Fish Slough

It seems little less than a miracle, at a time when we are losing most of our springs and sloughs to satisfy water export, that Fish Slough is to be protected. It is being recognized as the natural gem that it is. The Bureau of Land Management (BLM) designated it as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) in 1982; thus preserving the only remaining natural springs on the floor of Owens Valley. It supports a large diversity of plant and animal life.

It was probably the Owens pupfish which first called attention to the value of Fish Slough. The once abundant species was almost extinct when a few of them were found floundering in the mud of the slough. Their rescue preserved a species! Its habitats throughout the valley had been destroyed by persistent wetland drainage for agriculture and export, and by the introduction of predatory fish. Pupfish ponds are now maintained at the slough while other rare and sensitive species are being protected. The plant assemblages which thrive there are unique in this drying land.

Few other populations of hot spring fimbristylis, *Fimbristylis spadicea*, have survived development since the early explorers. It is an attractive member of the Sedge Family. Great Basin centaurlum, *Centaureum namophilum* var. *nevadensis* was found to differ from *C. exaltatum* by C. Rose Broome, who described it in 1981. It is widespread in Nevada and has come over the state line into Inyo and Mono counties, where it thrives on the borders of alkali wetlands. Fish Slough is its most northerly occurrence known in California. An abundant population of King ivesia, *Ivesia kingii* occurs at Fish Slough, but it is little known elsewhere. High groundwater bordering the slough provides the perfect habitat for it. The first population of Silverleaf milk vetch,, *Astragalus argophyllus*, a Great Basin species, discovered in California was found at at Fish Slough in 1974. It somewhat resembles a Pursh milk vetch but its pods are longer and not as white-woolly.

Alkali cord grass, *Spartina gracilis*, is a handsome grass which thrives in alkaline places, especially at warm springs. Like *Fimbristylis* it

has been destroyed at many of its former habitats. It is always surprising to find a mariposa growing on white alkali surfaces, but the alkali mariposa, *Calochortus excavatus*, thrives there. Its flowers are white, very similar to those of *C. bruneaunis*. Fish Slough has its very own milk vetch, *Astragalus lentiginosus* var. *piscinensis*, first discovered in 1974. It is similar to the rare variety *sesquimetralis* whose only site in California is at Big Sand Springs in the upper Death Valley drainage. Both varieties have sparsely leaved stems spreading a long distance from the center, perhaps due to groundwater near the surface. In their isolation it is possible that they are relic plants from the Pleistocene Epoch. Would you expect to find an orchid growing on white alkali? Western ladies' tresses, *Spirranthes porrifolia*, is not plentiful and it blooms late enough (July) that it is seldom noticed, but it is exciting to find it there. Another beautiful species on the moist alkali borders is the alkali shooting star, *Dodecatheon pulchellum*. The plant list for the slough is a long one, which indicates a meeting place of the Great Basin influence and the high desert, just slightly above the Mojave. It is a great place to botanize.

Native fish known to be there are the Owens Pupfish and The Owens tui chub. The Owens speckled dace and the Owens sucker should be there but they have not been seen for many years. The slough's rich plant assemblages can be expected to support an unusually varied fauna. Perhaps the greatest danger today is the possible introduction of non-native species of either flora or fauna.

The good news is that federal, state, and local agencies cooperatively manage the ACEC under a plan completed in 1985. These agencies include the Bureau of Land Management, the City of Los Angeles' Department of Water and Power, the California Department of Fish and Game, the University of California and the United States Fish and Wildlife Service. An informative brochure now under preparation by the Bureau of Land Management will be a tantalizing guide to this very special natural area. You are urged to show appreciation for the cooperative effort toward sensitive management, to value the place as a learning experience, to love it with due restraint, and to support its protection in every way possible. (Map, page 6)

.....Mary DeDecker

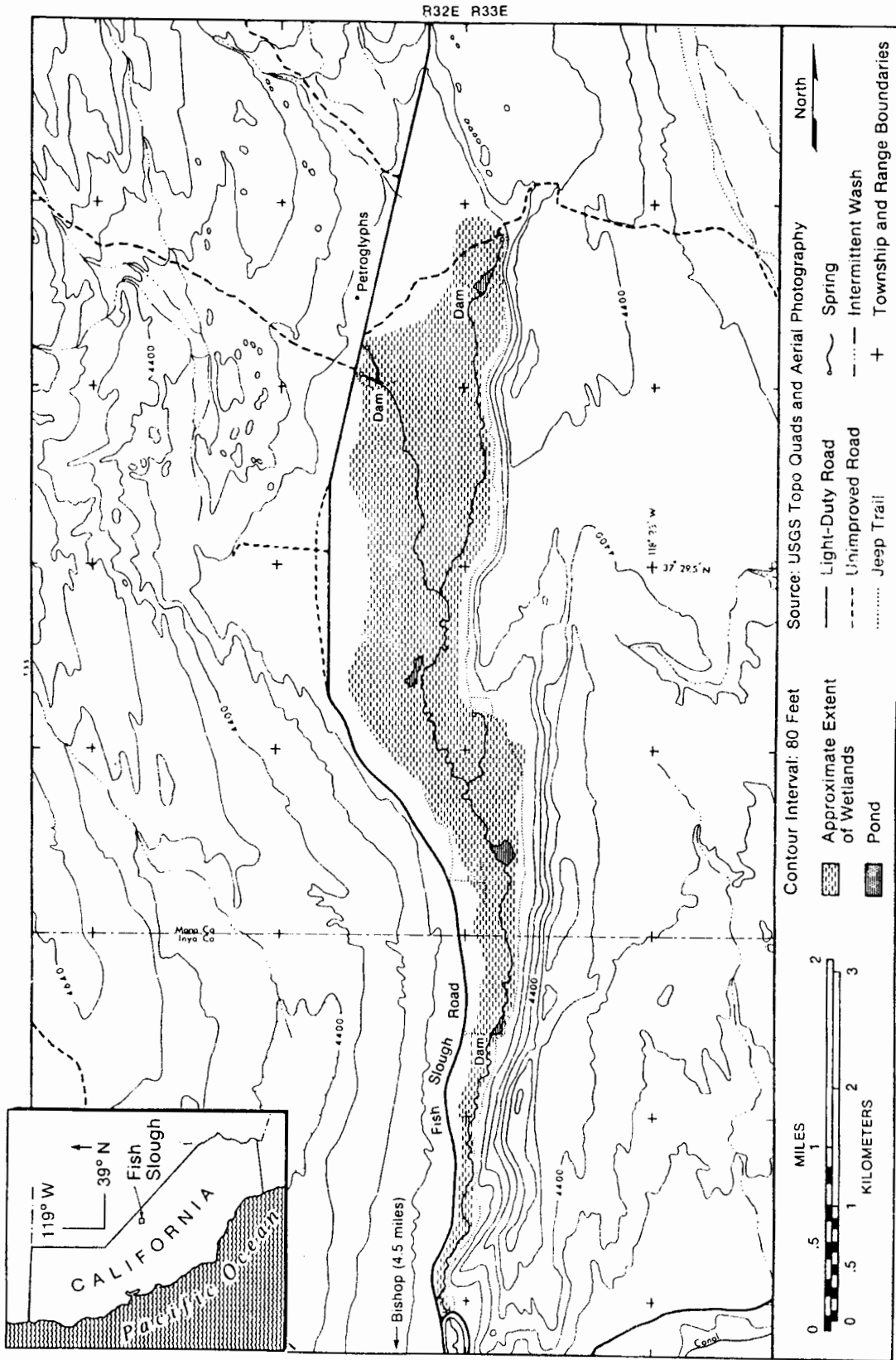


Figure 1. Fish Slough, Inyo and Mono Counties, California

Cadillac Desert

The American West and Its Disappearing Water
by **Mark Reisner**

Contents

- Introduction: **A Semidesert with a Desert Heart**
- Chapter One: **A Country of Illusion**
Early history of the American West.
- Chapter Two: **The Red Queen**
Water for Los Angeles.
- Chapter three: **First Causes**
Dam after dam, after dam.
- Chapter Four: **An American Nile (I)**
The Colorado River.
- Chapter Five: **The Go-Go Years**
The Big Dams and Power Plants.
- Chapter Six: **Rivals in Crime**
The Corps of Engineers and Bureau of Reclamation.
- Chapter Seven: **Dominy**
His War against Conservationists.
- Chapter Eight: **An American Nile (II)**
More on the Colorado River.
- Chapter Nine: **The Peanut Farmer and the Pork Barrel**
The Telleco Dam Battle.
- Chapter Ten: **Chinatown**
Water to Southern California.
- Chapter Eleven: **Those Who refuse to Learn**
The Teton disaster.
- Chapter Twelve: **Things Fall Apart.**
The inevitable results.
- Epilogue: **A Civilization, if You Can Keep It**
A summary.

The above book is highly recommended as required reading for every resident of the western states. The Washington post says "Reisner captures western water history in cinemascope and technicolor. *Cadillac Desert* is timely and of national importance. ... hurry up and read this book."

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 _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

Membership Category:

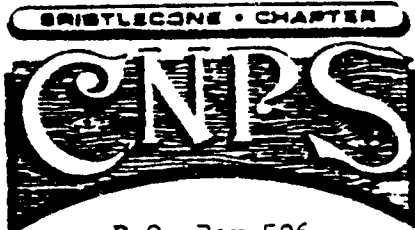
_____ Life, Couple	\$500	I wish to be affiliated with the
_____ Life, Individual	450	Bristlecone Chapter _____
_____ Supporting	50	Other _____
_____ Household	30	
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_____ Retired Couple	15	

GIFT contribution: Where most
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Mail to: Bristlecone Chapter, CNPS
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