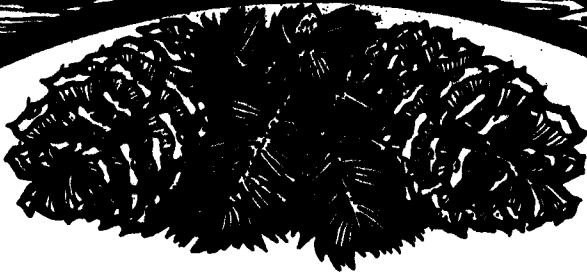




NEXT MEETING

The next meeting will be September 27. Save the date and watch for information in the news media.



BRISTLECONE CHAPTER FIELD TRIPS

BRISTLECONE CHAPTER FIELD TRIPS

August 19. **THE INYO MOUNTAIN CREST.** Leaders: Paul and Mary DeDecker. A 4-wheel drive trip, overnight. Meet at the corner of Highway 395 and Citrus (Mazourka) Road at the south edge of Independence. at 9:am. Vehicles must be 4-wheel-drive, in good condition, with high clearance and good tires. Drivers must be experienced in 4-wheel-driving. Dry camping overnight. No open fires. Take plenty of water. Daytime temperature may be warm but down sleeping bags will be appropriate. Please contact leaders (878-2389 or P.O. Box 506, Independence, 93526) to reserve a place on the trip.

September 16. **MONO LAKE.** Dr. David Groeneveld, who has studied the linkage between plant growth and hydrology on the Mono Lake shore for the past 4 years on behalf of the Great Basin Air Pollution Control District.

The diversion of water from the Mono Basin has caused the gradual decline of water levels in Mono Lake which have uncovered a large area of lakebed. Because the exposed lakebed may give rise to clouds of dust, a series of studies has been performed to identify the how and why for plant growth which may hold the beach material in place. The exposed lakebed is an extremely harsh substrate for plants and their establishment is determined largely by the quality and quantity of spring waters from the surrounding areas to the shore.

On the field trip we will make four stops along a water quality/quantity gradient. These locations will have very different patterns of plant establishment. We will look at some of the data for spring water chemistry and discuss how the hydrology and geology of the basin has controlled the presence and chemistry of water, which in turn is controlling plant establishment. We will also visit a series of vigorous methane springs which surface through the beach.

Meeting place: Mono County Park on northeast shore. If you are driving on Highway 395, the park will be a well marked turn to the right about 6 miles north of Lee Vining.

Time: Meet at 9:00 am at the Mono County Park. The field trip should last about 5 or 6 hours.

Bring: 4-wheel-drive vehicle, water, lunch, comfortable walking shoes (Ones that you would not mind getting wet), windbreaker, hat and sunscreen. The weather in the Mono Basin is highly variable so bring clothes appropriate for both warm and cool conditions.

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

ALABAMA HILLS, May 20.

What a treat--to be priveleged to visit Betty Gilchrist's acreage in the Alabama Hills. What makes it so special is that about three-fourths of the eight plus acres has been left in its natural state, essentially a now dry alkaline meadow with a line of springs and seeps midway.

Evidence of the meadow habitat is: lots of Saltgrass (*Distichlis spicata*), some arrowscale (*Atriplex phyllostegia*), Parry Saltbush (*Atriplex parryi*), Scouring Rush (*Equisetum laevigatum*), Alkali Sacaton (*Sporobolus airoides*), and the rare and endangered Alkali Mallow (*Sidalcea covillei*), along with its associate in Owens Valley, Alkali Mariposa (*Calochortus excavatus*) along the spring line. Actually, the *Sidalcea* was the most abundant, and in full bloom. In addition there was a scattering of Owens Valley Milk-vetch (*Astragalus lentiginosus* var. *albifolius*) of restricted occurrence, and the common Freckled Milk-vetch or Paper-pod (*Astragalus lentiginosus* var. *fremontii*). Lots of Wild Rose (*Rosa woodsii*) and willows, too. A few plants of Tall Yellow Primrose (*Oenothera hookeri* ssp. *angustifolia*) and Long-leaved Paintbrush (*Castilleja linariaefolia*) rounded out the show.

After ooh-ing and aah-ing for an hour or so we all drifted back to Betty's yard and patio for a shady and relaxing lunchtime with some of her yummy cookies.

Then off to the afternoon drive through Tuttle Creek and other select rocky areas to see Large White Evening Primrose (*Oenothera caespitosa* ssp. *marginata*), Desert Orchid (*Epipactus gigantea*), and Coville Lip Fern (*Cheilanthes covillei*). Finally the group was led over a mile-long stroll in a mixed scrub area typical of that to be found in the normal xeric, sandy, gravelly flat in the Alabamas.

All in all a rewarding trip was enjoyed by all in widely varying desert habitats.

. Vince Yoder

LITTLE BLACK ROCK SPRINGS, ETC., July 15.

The July 15 field trip was more a requiem than the usual floristic treat. Nevertheless, in spite of the heat, it attracted a dedicated group. The first section, led by Mary DeDecker, was to Little Black Rock Springs, a former gem of Owens Valley. It is far different now from the lovely sight that it was in the early 1970's when the springs were still flowing. At that time the clear, open ponds reflected the sky, the bordering saltgrass meadow was an attractive foreground, while Yerba Mansa kept its proper place on the outer borders. An unusually robust form of Inter-mountain birds-beak (*Cordylanthus ramosus*) adorned the lava rocks with fine, feathery foliage. Stalks of Tall Thelypodium (*Thelypodium integrifolium* ssp. *complanatum*), up to 8 feet tall, were impressive accents to the scene. Several plant communities blended there, and some mountain plants, unusual on the valley floor, thrived in pockets in the lava. The generous spring flow tumbling from the black rock is long gone, but a very small flow gurgles from a rocky bank below. When environmentalists bitterly protested the drying of the springs, the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power furnished a substitute diversion from Division Creek, a procedure so erratic in the beginning that the ponds were frequently found to be parched, dry surfaces. The pure spring water and the water from Division Creek proved to be very different. The ponds are now completely choked with cattails and rushes. That part of the saltgrass meadow bordering the ponds is now Wiregrass (*Juncus balticus*), intruded by Yerba Mansa (*anemopsis californica*). The stately Thelypodium was represented by a single weak specimen hardly 18 inches high. no trace of the once dominant *Cordylanthus* could be found. The willows were doing well though, and the large owls were still around, watching us from safe vantage points. Bright yellow blooms of the common *Mimulus* showed up along the stream, but the lovely Scarlet *Mimulus* (*Mimulus cardinalis*) gave up long ago. It cannot tolerate so much disturbance.

Four sharp-eyed grade school boys, who had joined the trip, enthusiastically practiced using hand lens. They found an interesting assortment of insects when we ran out of flowers. And they were always the first ones to see the owls.

The sad story of Little Black Rock began after the second aqueduct. When extreme groundwater pumping began to reduce the flow in Black Rock Spring nearby to the south, the Department of Fish and Game expressed concern. So the DWP gave them permission to drill a new well just north of the Black Rock rearing ponds. This was to satisfy needed water for the trout rearing facility located there. That well's pumping immediately dried up Little Black Rock Springs. Since it was not needed for fish, only a few people expressed concern. When embarrassing questions are raised now, the DWP finds it easy to blame the Dept. of Fish and Game.

From Black Rock the group caravanned to the DeDecker home in Independence to enjoy lunch on a shady lawn.

Thence the group travelled east on the Citrus (Kearsarge) Road to the earthquake fault overlooking Billy Lake. We descended

through the dust to the site, where Leah Kirk told of her concern over the so-called maintenance project there. Her report is as follows:

Billy Lake is part of the Inyo County/City of Los Angeles cooperative Lower Owens River project which is to restore water to the lower Owens River. The Los Angeles DWP is currently completing a dike there to raise the eastern shore of the lake. Billy Lake has been a lovely scenic spot, actually only a good sized pond, nestled against the earthquake fault. It was open water until dried by water-gathering activities. Then it became filled with cattails and rushes.

To accomplish the dike, the DWP bulldozed approximately three acres of vegetation adjacent to the lower end of the lake, to excavate fill material for the dike. The result: A new road was built along the north and east sides of the lake (You can fish from your car window.), drying of a once moist area east of the lake, several acres damaged by heavy equipment, and a larger, deeper Billy Lake.

Under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) the DWP would be required to evaluate the environmental impacts of its work at Billy Lake and consider other, possibly less drastic options. It would have to develop a responsible plan for mitigating impacts. Inyo County and the public would have the opportunity to review and comment on the project plan.

However, the DWP defined its work there as "maintenance of an existing facility", exempting it from CEQA's requirements. This has not been challenged by any official entity. The DWP consistently uses this CEQA exemption to plan its projects for its own convenience, allowing it to ignore environmental impacts.

Little Black Rock Springs and the project at Billy Lake are vivid examples of the continuing degradation of Owens Valley. Theoretically, we are protected by CEQA, but it takes public officials and agencies who are willing to challenge such illegal activities. In the meantime, those of us who object to the gradual loss of "special places" are frowned on as nit-pickers. The list of losses grows steadily longer. Some are due to indifferent or insensitive land management, while others are from using heavy equipment which actually should not be necessary. There are always excuses, after the damage is done. One wonders if any lovely scene in the valley will survive such insensitive, arrogant management. The present attitude seems to be that the individual sites are not important enough to make an issue of it. But they do add up--the list is growing--and each time leaves fewer left for the people of Owens Valley and their visitors.

The Los Angeles Times, dated July 26, runs an editorial which faces the issue well. It begins, Los Angeles must stop treating the Owens Valley and Mono Lake Basin as remote colonies that are good for just one thing, exporting their water. The city Department of Water and Power has an opportunity this week to recognize its

responsibility to the environment of Inyo and Mono counties, and not just the city's right to divert the water, which is under serious legal dispute." It ends. "Unless the board, council or mayor forces the department to change course, it will divert all the water it can until one of two things happens: The courts make it stop or it is too late to prevent further environmental harm. Or both."

After all, when the water division netted \$34 million last year, we in Inyo County cannot understand why they feel compelled to squeeze every drop out of the valley.

. Mary DeDecker



Native flowers at Betty Gilchrist's

NEW MEMBERS

The following new members are heartily welcomed:

- Richard Buckberg, Sausalito
- Dr. William Grishaw, Yuba City
- Enid Larson, Big Pine
- Joann Lijek, Bishop
- Mr. & Mrs. Robert C. Meade, Ridgecrest
- Leigh & Steve Parmeter, Bishop
- Edwin B. Boyce, Ridgecrest
- Carla Scheidlinger, Bishop
- Katie & Dave Wash, Ridgecrest

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CONSERVATION CORNER

Wouldn't it be nice to move (escape) into the country and be free of all the turmoil found in the metropolitan areas? Or so it might seem. But when one is even remotely sensitive to Environmental matters it's likely that the reverse will be the case. The big cities tend to isolate us from the devastation going on in the country, but when we're in "the country" we're surrounded not by what could be but what is: indifference to the environment: the attitude is that the land must be used in some

productive or commercial way (idleness is wasteful); exploitation for personal gain (the "mining" attitude--cut out and get out, overuse of topsoil, overgrazing, destructive fishing and whaling practices, aquifer mining, questionable damming of rivers with consequent upstream destruction of good farmland and riparian areas, etc.); outright hostility to "wildness" (kill coyotes, snakes, hawks and owls and then "have to" poison rats and mice since natural control is gone--kill mountain lions for whatever reasons--clear residential acreage of all native vegetation and then replant with "tame" vegetation); burn out riparian areas; ad nauseum.

Of course we do need to raise food, cut trees, mine, and protect ourselves (no rattlers, coyotes, mountain lions, bear, etc. in our residential areas) but we are also beginning to realize worldwide that mankind is going beyond common sense into mindless overkill.

Our little microcosm here in the Eastern Sierra is not isolated from these problems as we all well know. In this space I plan to elaborate later on these issues insofar as the related to our common interest in "--the preservation of the California native flora".

. Vince Yoder

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MISCELLANEOUS

The Bristlecone Chapter presented a copy each of the CNPS Inventory of Rare and Endangered Vascular Plants of California to the Inyo and Mono counties Boards of Supervisors, along with a "pep talk" on the need to be aware of R/E species and the responsibility for protecting them. Mono County responded by ordering additional copies to be distributed to each of its library branches. Inyo County responded well, but did not order more copies.

WATER: Negotiations have continued on the Inyo County/Los Angeles Water Agreement. According to one negotiator, many improvements have been made for better environmental protection. "The vegetation types will not be allowed to change, groundwater mining is not to be allowed, we've reinforced the requirements to protect the environment. The Hillside Decree has been affirmed, and we've added protection of rare and endangered species." It all sounds good, but the true test will depend on how strong Inyo County is in insisting that its provisions be followed after the agreement is adopted, if indeed it is. The proposal is to be released at the supervisors' meeting next Tuesday, August 1. Copies will be available there. It appears that this is a take it or leave it situation. The alternative would be to go to court, which is not the ideal way to resolve problems. If only we could trust Los Angeles. Our negotiators are to be commended for gaining as much as they have over stiff resistance. We know it was not easy.

SYMPOSIUM:

Registration forms are out for the White Mountain Research Station's SYMPOSIUM III, "Natural History of the White Inyo Range. The Dates are to be September 21-24, 1989. The program promises to be as outstanding as usual. Local scientists and/or environmentalists will not want to miss it. Inquiries should be made to the White Mountain Research Station, 6713 Geology Building, University of California, Los Angeles, CA 90024-1567, or to the White Mountain Research Station at 3000 East Line Street (619) 873-4344.

Editor's Notes:

I regret to say that Mark Bagley's President's Message did not arrive for this issue, nor did his report on the CNPS Executive Board meeting in Lone Pine in June. I can only say that the Bristlecone Chapter was proud to host the Executive Board. It was a first time east of the Sierra. Our regret was that it was one of the poorest floral years in history. Nevertheless, we did manage two short field trips, one in the Alabama Hills and one in the Sierra west of Independence. Those who attended seemed to feel that they were worthwhile. We hope there will be another time, and that it will be under more favorable conditions.

NEWSLETTER HELPERS.

Once more I want to express appreciation to the dependable women who help fold the newsletter each time and prepare it for mailing. They are KC Wiley and Evelyn Mae Nikolaus, with occasional help from others. It takes busy people to do a job! Also, I deeply appreciate those who write up the field trips and other events. Last, but not least, is our local printer, Jack Pound, who is accomodating far beyond the call of duty. We are lucky to have him in Independence.

Computer problems have forced us to do all of this issue on the typewriter.

NEXT DEADLINE for the September newsletter is September 10.

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	
_____ Individual or Library	18	
_____ Student or Retired	12	
_____ Retired Couple	15	

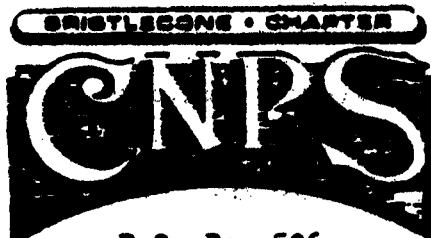
Please make check payable to:
California Native Plant Society

Mail to: Bristlecone Chapter, CNPS
P.O. Box 506
Independence, CA 93526

GIFT contribution: Where most
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Editor: Mary DeDecker.

California Native Plant Society



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