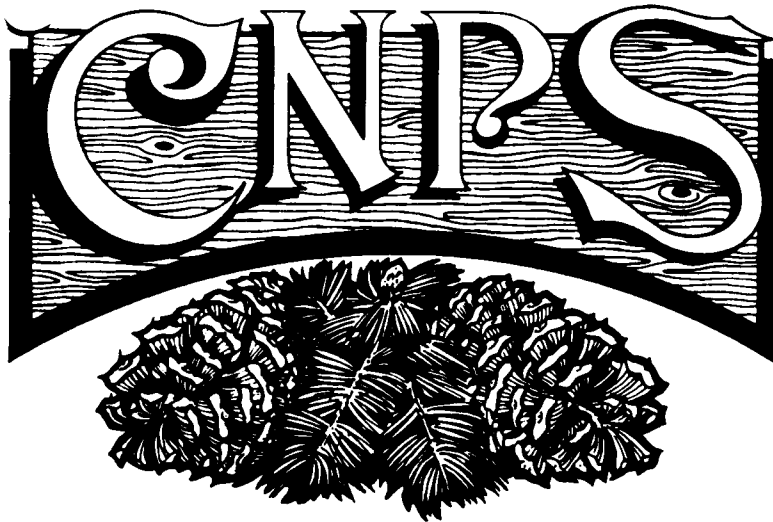


DEDICATED TO THE PRESERVATION OF THE CALIFORNIA NATIVE FLORA

BRISTLECONE • CHAPTER



NEWSLETTER

Vol. 11, No. 5

September 1992

NEXT MEETING

September 30, 7:30 p.m., at the Sierra Baptist Church, 346 North Edwards, Independence. Terry Hicks, of the U.S. Forest Service will speak on the plant survey in the White Mountains.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

Hats off to the great group of people who were the members and guests of the Bristlecone Chapter on a recent field trip to the White Mountains. Two cars had problems. Everyone present was more than willing to do whatever was necessary to ensure that all present had a good time. Some trip members had brought tools and a tow rope, others lent a shoulder to push, some made room in their vehicles for unexpected luggage and passengers, and others waited patiently for all of this work to be done.

This spirit of cooperation more often manifests itself as the experienced members with scientific names on the tips of their tongues spell them out and patiently wait while they are laborously written down. The professionals among us often share their data in publications as well as in the field.

In these times of electioneering backbiting, gang violence, and widespread political unrest, this mutual aid attitude is most refreshing. Keep it up! Thanks to all.

. Evelyn Mae Nikolaus

* * * * *

**PROPOSED SLATE OF OFFICERS
for 1993**

President	Betty Gilchrist
Vice-President	Carla Scheidlinger
Secretary	Sally Manning
Treasurer	Scott Hetzler



FIELD TRIP REPORTS

JUNE 27, Little Onion Valley, west of Independence.

The day dawned warm and clear as some seventeen multigenerational members and visitors met in Independence for the short drive to the locked gate guarding the Rex Montis Mine road. This was about 3/4 of the way to Onion Valley and the Kearsarge Pass trailhead.

arriving at the start of our walk, Vince Yoder, our leader and a past president of the Bristlecone Chapter, passed out a four-page checklist of the native species that we could expect to find.

We meandered slowly along the well graded road identifying plants. Among those we saw were mountain maple, *Acer glabrum* var. *diffusum*; sticky aster, *Machaeranthera canescens*; gray horsebrush; *Tetradymia canescens*; chocolate drops, *Caulanthus pilosus*; baby's breath, *Arenaria macradenia* ssp. *ferrisae*; mountain pink, *Silene bernardinia* ssp. *maguirei*; wild morning-glory, *Calystegia longipes*; spurred lupine, *Lupinus arbustus* ssp. *calcaratus*; Kerr lupine, *Lupinus magnificus* var. *glarecola*; caterpillar phacelia, *Phacelia cicutaria* var. *hispida*; sego lily, *Calochortus bruneaunis*; flower baskets, *Mentzelia congesta*; summer snow, *Gayophytum diffusum* ssp. *parviflorum*; nodding melica, *Melica stricta*, buckskin keckiella, *Keckiella rothrockii* and bridges penstemon, *Penstemon rostriflora*.

At noon, some 3/4 of the way to Little Onion Valley, we stopped for lunch beneath a single, huge Jeffrey pine. During our shared bag lunch we coaxed tales of Owens Valley's yesteryears from Mary DeDecker.

On and up that dirt road we arrived shortly at the Rex Montis Mine equipment yard. The mine is very high on Kearsarge Peak (12,584 ft.). We entered Little Onion Valley in the early afternoon. Here we crossed the South Fork of swiftly moving Oak Creek on a sturdy hiker's bridge. What charming, verdant, mini-valley this is! Seemingly untouched by man, it features many species of native flora, waterfalls, a hanging valley, and steep-sided, rocky cliffs. It proved to be a veritable cornucopia of native plants. We were busy hunting, exploring and listening to Vince while identifying and making notes on our prepared list. Among the best were the abundant bracken fern, *Pteridium aquilinum* var. *pubescens*; Bigelow sneezeweed, *Helenium bigelovii*; elderberry, *Sambucus mexicana*; swamp onion, *Allium vavilovii*; Star-flower, *Smilacina stellata*, monkshood, *Aconitum columbianum*, red columbine, *Aquilegia formosa*, and last but not the least noticed, Stinging nettle, *Urtica dioica* ssp. *holosericea*.

With reluctance, we tore ourselves away from this pristine, glen-like valley as time was running out for those of us who had later Saturday commitments. We pledged that we would return to this lovely spot, individually and/or as a group.

..... Myron Alexander.

July 11, 1992. Birch Creek, west of Bishop.

On an unusually cool day for July, Scott Hetzler led our group up to Birch Creek. This particular Birch Creek used to flow through the Buttermilks, but has been dry due to hydropower operations for many years. As with most of California this year, plants had flowered early in the upper buttermilks "where the desert meets the Sierra Nevada", but we still managed to find plenty of flowers.

The trip began above Grouse Mountain in a stretch of creek that may someday be rewatered. We descended into the dry boulders of the bed and observed the dead water birches, *Betula occidentalis*, from which the creek no doubt derived its name. Large, old Jeffrey pines loomed overhead. White mariposa lilies, *Calochortus bruneaunis*, poked up through the bushes here and there. We saw blooms of *Potentilla glandulosa*, *P. gracilis*, *Collomia linearis*, *Castilleja chromosa*, *C. linarifolia* and *Smilacina stellata*.

Doris spotted a *Penstemon heterodoxus*.

Next we climbed the opposite bank of the dry creek, entering the sagebrush scrub above. On the way we saw the prickly *Leptodactylon pungens*, aromatic *Monardella linoidea* ssp. *linoidea* and the delicate flowers of *Arenaria macradenia* ssp. *ferrisae*. Piñon pines promised a good crop this year. Mohave prickly pear cacti were blooming too.

We made our way through the scrub, then descended once again to a part of the creek that did have water. Seepage from the creek walls began a slow flow at this point, and with the presence of water, the density and composition of the vegetation changed dramatically. Finding a path through the willows and birches, we emerged into a small meadow with tall grasses and sedges intermingled with lupines, monkey flowers and *Polemonium caeruleum*.

Heading back in a big circle to the vehicles, we watched the clouds move in as we enjoyed a pleasantly cool lunch in a very picturesque country.

.....Sally Manning

August 15, Treasure Lakes, Bishop Creek drainage.

Twentyone gathered at South Lake parking lot, including one visitor from Germany. It was a cloudless morning, although thunder clouds developed after lunch.

Even though it is another drought year we saw many species: *Carex disperma*, *Carex exserta*, *Chrysopsis breweri*, *Ledum glandulosum* var. *californicum*, *Linanthus nuttallii*, *Lupinus pratensis*, *Mitella breweri*, *Poa nervosa*, *Pyrola minor*, *Salix drummondiana*, *Salix orestera*, *Senecio canus*, *Senecio intergerimus* var. *exaltatus*, *Senecio pauciflorus*, *Senecio triangularis*, and *Solidago multiradiata*. Two of the favorites were *Penstemon newberryi* and *Cassiope mertensiana*.

At Treasure Lakes we enjoyed lunch and some of Betty's great cookies. A special pat on the back to a Ridgecrest woman who carried her ice chest all the way to and from Treasure Lakes

Eight of us took our time returning to the cars. We had many flower stops, and were treated with an especially robust *Platanthera dilatata* var. *leucostachys*, Boreal bog orchid.

..... Pat Crowther



August 15, Arrowhead and Heart Lakes, Mammoth Lakes Basin.

Ann Howald led this jaunt that started at 10:00 a.m. I was a little late but arrived in time to join the *Eriogonum nudum* gawking.

Did you know that some subalpine meadows were once lakes before they were filled with silt? Also, there were volcanic eruptions dated by Ann's coworker at Mammoth Mountain to be as recent as 600 to 1000 years ago. The deposited pumice burned all the vegetation

so that what we saw at the Lakes Basin grew recently. The pumice does not hold enough water for many plants.

Did you know that *Cinquefoil* has a French pronunciation? It also has five leaves. *Tridentata* means three teeth. Heart Lake meant a 500 foot gain in elevation. So it was onward to 9600 feet to look at Duck Pass, Mammoth Crest, Red Cones, Minarets, Ritter, Banner, Mammoth Mountain and the Lakes Basin. From there we discussed the difference between *Pinus monticola*, western white pine, and *Pinus contorta* var. *murrayana*, lodgepole. It takes two years for a female cone to mature. We also saw a *Tsuga mertensiana*, mountain hemlock.

We were greeted by pica, marmot, "yellow butt" or yellow-rumped warbler, junco, hummingbird, chickadee, golden mantled ground squirrel and Clark's nutcracker. A nearby doe manifested patience while nursing her fawn--quite a show. I also enjoyed the patient teachers who enjoyed teaching.

Blooms were provided by *Angelica lineariloba*, Sierra soda straw, *Pteryxia petraea*, rock pteryxia *Sphenocidium capitellatum*, ranger's buttons, *Cirsium andersonii*, Anderson thistle. *Aquilegia pubescens*, alpine columbine, *Monardella odoratissima*, mountain pennyroyal, and *Orthocarpus copelandii* var. *cryptanthus*, hidden flower owl's clover. Because the flora on Red Mountain is so diverse we deemed it "enriched". It was a good trip, enriched with knowledge from many fields.

..... Steve Meisel

FIELD TRIPS

The September 19 field trip in Owens Valley, to be led by Carla Scheidlinger, has been cancelled. There will be no field trip in September.

The October 10 field trip to the June Lake Loop, led by Mark Bagley, will be the final trip for the year. Meet at 9:30 a.m. at June Lake Junction, the east end of the June Lake Loop. Easy walking and driving at elevations of 7500 to 8000 feet. Take lunch and water. We will be near the cars for lunch.

For more information call Mark Bagley, Field Trip Chairman, at (619) 873-5326.

The October trip will end the season for 1992. It has been another year with many fine trips. I would like to thank all of the trip leaders for sharing their time and knowledge. Thanks also to those who wrote up the trip accounts for the newsletter.

Mark Bagley
Field Trip Chairman

NEW MEMBER

We announce, only one new member this time, Anne Halford of Bishop. Anne is the new BLM botanist for the Bishop Area office the first one assigned to this area, so we are especially happy to welcome her.

August 22, 1992. White Mountains. Trip Leader: Jim Morefield

Our caravan embarked on the serpentine White Mountain Road early Saturday morning. We decided to drive directly towards Barcroft and spend the entire day roaming around the alpine tundra and limestone barrens. We arrived at 11,600 ft. and quickly rummaged about trying to find warm clothing. The granitic slopes were gentle where we walked and were covered with bands of tawny "June grass" (*Koeleria cristata*) and purple "squirreltail grass" (*Sitanion hystrix*). In between the grasses were the white funnel shaped flowers of the Newberry gentian (*Gentiana newberryi*) and in the more open rocky areas, the diminutive "alpine Androsace" (*Androsace septentrionalis* ssp. *subumbellata*).

The rolling Dolomite barrens were our second stop and these were terraced with colorful mounds of the "raspberry buckwheat" (*Eriogonum gracilipes*). Much to our delight we also found the beautiful "ground daisies" (*Townsendia condensata* and *Townsendia leptotes*), in full creamy-pink bloom. All of us kneeling around a square meter of ground were able to find fifteen different plants and an equal number of vibrant colors. We explored further and dropped off a few undulating knolls to find slabs of dolomite interspersed by the "limestone aster" (*Happlopappus acaulis*) and purple "cut-leaf daisy" (*Erigeron clokeyi*).

Our intrepid leader then joined us together for a venture down a steep and very rocky road rimmed by gnarled "bristlecone" (*Pinus longeava*) towards Cottonwood Canyon where we would camp. Upon arrival, we each sought out our abodes among the granite fins and windswept pines. Evening brought cold, 21° temperatures, star traced skies and a cozy fire with guitar serenades by Jim, Doug and Kirk. In the morning Jim took us down to the gravelly drainages that bisected the meadows below camp to find the rare White Mountain "Horkelia" (*Horkelia hispidula*). As the moister gradient increased towards the meadow we also found the soft, linear and entire leaved "silver sage" (*Artemisia cana*) and within the meadow itself, there were small islands of "miniature gentian" (*Gentianella amarella*) and "meadow monkey flower" (*Mimulus primuloides*), arnica (*Arnica parryi*) and pussy-toes" (*Antennaria micropylla*).

Our last botanical foray was spent exploring the granite fins south of camp where a minute "rock fern" (*Woodsia oregana*), the endemic "White Mountain Heckelia" (*Heckelia brevicula*) and pungently sweet "mountain tansy" (*Sphaeromeria cana*) were found. Unbeknown to us however was another journey that we were about to embark upon. The steep road and loose stone was chaos for a Van and good sported couple from Ridgecrest. With each hill approach, the van slipped and stalled further into a back road quandary. Finally after much pushing, mumbling and plotting, we decided that the tow rope Kirk had brought be quickly attached to haul the van, and at this point, a not so happy couple to safety. With fingers crossed, we wound our way up the precipitous road. Soon we could see the cheery mounds of raspberry buckwheat terraced along the dolomite barrens and knew we were nearing the top. With smiles, hugs and cameras mounted, we formed a ring with the heroic tow rope and thanked the White Mountains for their forgiving spirit. It had indeed been a unique trip with ample floristic enlightenment from Jim and a happy-ending dose of adventure.

CONSERVATION CORNER

Six miles of Route 168 east of Big Pine are much better looking after our cleanup efforts under the Caltrans Adopt-a-Highway program. Doris Fredendall and David and Carla Scheidlinger have concentrated on 168 while a larger group took on 136 south of Lone Pine.

Since this kind of intensive pickup of bottles, cans and trash had not been done previously, the first pass resulted in a lot of trash which was not usable. But the second pass three months later produced mostly salvable litter. Bottles and aluminum cans are the money-makers.

Down on 136 Evelyn-Mae Nikolaus, Betty and Ray Sisson, Betty Gilchrist, Alexander Saxton, and Ann and Vince Yoder turned out for that effort thanks for all the dedication, you good people.

It looks like the public will have some input through the county regarding the proposed extraction of cinders and gravel from the red Cinder Cone on the east side of highway 395 between Coso and Little Lake. Planning Director Roger DeHart says that "any proposal to mine Red Hill Cinder Cone would require environmental analysis/documentation and hearings before any final decision is made." Good! Let's keep our eyes on this one and be prepared to participate.

..... Vince Yoder

THE SANTA ROSA MOUNTAIN NATIONAL SCENIC AREA

This is a belated report on a remarkable achievement. The Santa Rosa Mountain National scenic Area is a shining example of what can be achieved by wise leadership combined with cooperative effort. It is located on the east face of the Santa Rosa and San Jacinto mountains facing Coachella Valley. The object was to create a plan with consistent objectives which would avoid piecemeal decisions and prevent significant impacts to the scenic and environmental values of that mountain front. The first step was to draw up objectives. These were supported by the California Desert District of Bureau of Land Management, the San Bernardino National Forest, City of Palm Desert, City of Palm Springs, Coachella Valley Archeological Society, Coachella Valley Association of Governments, Friends of the Indian Canyons, General Patton Museum, Parks, Open Space, and Trails Board of Directors, Riverside County Board of Supervisors, and San Geronimo Chapter of Sierra Club. Russell Kaldenberg, Area Manager of BLM's Palm Spring - South Coast Area, deserves major credit for bringing the different entities together on the plan. It is impressive evidence that environmental and scenic values may be considered economically sound when all factors are put on the table.

Dedication of the Scenic Area on May 5, 1990, was the culmination of months of effort. Appreciation of the achievement was well expressed by Katherine Siva Saubel, a Cahuilla elder, in the following statement:

"I am glad that this land has been saved this way. Because of this, the Creator will look on us favorably from now to the future and those that come after will see this area where once our ancestors went around, hunted and gathered: that is why this is good."

..... Mary DeDecker

We are delighted to have a new neighbor, a new Native Plant Chapter with whom we should have much in common. See the following page for information.

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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.

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