

DEDICATED TO THE PRESERVATION OF THE CALIFORNIA NATIVE FLORA

BRISTLECONE • CHAPTER

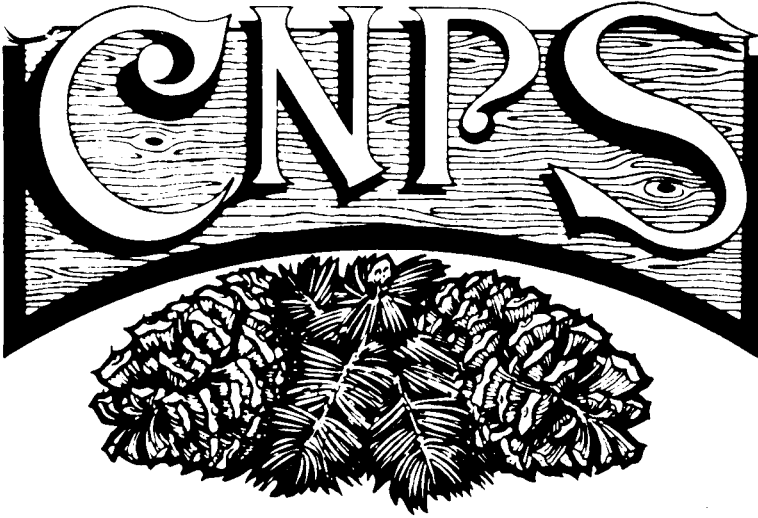
NEWSLETTER

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July 1993

NEXT BOARD MEETING

Tuesday, July 20; 7:30 at Doris Fredendall's residence in Big Pine. We encourage all officers to attend.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

What a wild and memorable initiation for a new chapter president's first state board meeting! Rain, snow, sleet, thunder, and lightning occurred intermittently during the night of June 4, in Giant Forest, Sequoia National Park and continued most of the next day causing road closures, power outages and traffic delays. However, memories will long remain of the beauty of awakening to the silently falling snow that covered those magnificent and majestic sequoias, and also of the ability of the capable Executive Council to stay on track and on schedule to accomplish the business at hand in spite of the vicissitudes of man and nature. Special thanks to Cathy Cort and the Alta Peak Chapter for keeping us warm, dry and well-fed in spite of frequent changes in plans and locations.

The State bulletin will give the important details of the meeting. As Ray Butler, VP for Conservation said, "the strength of CNPS lies with each of its chapters and we will each need to get behind the PCL Initiative and the Park and Wildlife Bond Act, both of which will support our state and national Parks". Circulation of petitions is strongly encouraged to place CALPAW on the ballot in June 1994.

It is a privilege and a pleasure to be a part of such an effective conservation organization.

.....Betty Gilchrist



SPRING FIELD TRIP REPORTS

Alabama Hills, May 8th. Leader: Vince Yoder

It was a bright and blustery spring morning when we met and made our way to Betty Gilchrist's home in the Alabama Hills. Once there, we began to explore the alkali meadow that surrounds her house. The meadow features a seep and contains a healthy diversity of plants native to the Owens Valley. Because of the precipitation this past winter, there were annuals as well as perennials blooming in the meadow. We saw gillias, *Menzelia nitans*, *Astragalus lentiginosus* var. *albifolius* in flower, rabbitbrush, shadscale, and native grasses. Two wonderful Owens Valley endemics were also flowering: the state-listed rare species, *Sidalcea covillei* (Owens Valley checkerbloom) and the federal candidate, *Calochortus excavatus* (Inyo County star tulip). These two species often occur together and are only found in Owens Valley meadows that have not been excessively disturbed. Further exploration revealed additional shrubs and grasses common to our area, such as *Tetradymia glabrata*, *T. axillaris*, *Atriplex parryi* and *Grayia spinosa*.

Following lunch on the back patio, we had to resist the temptation to crawl into the shaded hammock; instead we took off for a walk. We were happy to see that the wind had subsided as we parked near Indian Springs and began botanizing our way along a trail. We puzzled over a yellow phacelia which will require further scrutiny, we examined gillias, namas, lupines and cryptanthas, and we looked at the beautiful tiny flowers of *Nemacladus rubescens*. We saw *Allium atrorubens* var. *cristatum* and *Zygadenus venenosus* var. *venenosus*. Numerous flowers of *Calochortus excavatus* were observed, and we wondered about their apparent bluish tinge this year. Hiking down towards Diaz Creek, we found flowers on a newly discovered population of *Sidalcea covillei*. We climbed a sandy slope studded with *Chaenactis xantiana* back to Betty's house, where we concluded a very pleasant visit in these stunningly picturesque hills near Lone Pine.

.....Sally Manning

Eureka Valley and DeDeckera Canyon, May 22nd and 23rd. Leaders: Mary DeDecker and Clem Nelson

For many years, the Marin Chapter planned to go to DeDeckera Canyon with Mary DeDecker, but the trip was delayed for various reasons including several years of drought. This year, a year of abundant rain, the trip finally happened and for those who could make the long trip down to the Eureka Valley from Marin it was a weekend of serendipity. We met Mary, Clem Nelson and forty others from all over the state in Big Pine on Highway 395 and headed east across the Owens River and Inyo Mountains down into Eureka Valley. Along the way we looked at the geology of the

mountains and stopped to look at spectacular floral displays in the Canyon and Lonetta wash. We saw *Encelia actoni* with its single flowers per branch, *Symphoricarpos longiflorus*, *Psorothamnus arborescens* var. *minutifolius* in full flower, *Grayia spinosa* and *Menadora spinescens*, particular treats for us northerners.

The sight of the trapped dunes against the colorful, layered walls of the Last Chance Mountains at the south end of the Eureka Valley is a sight long to be remembered. The long drive down the waterless valley doesn't prepare you for the close-up beauty of the 664 foot sand mountain covering approximately nine square miles. The mystery was the source of the sand which does not match any rock substrate in the valley today. Clem Nelson, the field trip's co-leader, told us that it came from Fish Lake Valley, a valley to the north of Eureka Valley. Every view of the varied aspects of the dunes seemed more breathtaking than the previous one - coming down the valley, returning from DeDeckera Canyon, from the campground at sunset and then at sunrise. We explored the dunes both at sunset and at sunrise to find the rare dune endemics: Eureka dunegrass (*Swallenia alexandrae*), a monotypic genus discovered by Annie Alexander in 1949; the beautiful Eureka primrose (*Oenothera avita* ssp. *eurekensis*) backlit against the sunset or sunrise; and the Eureka milk-vetch (*Astragalus lentiginosus* var. *micans*) with its handsome inflated pods. Four other plants were notable in the lower portions of the dunes where there is more available water and these were especially lovely in the early morning or late afternoon light: Indian rice grass (*Oryzopsis hymenoides*) ubiquitous in the valley area; the lovely and colorful apricot mallow (*Spharalcea ambigua*); dotted dalea (*Psorothamnus polydenius*) with its striking gland dotted stems and purple flowers; and the abundant string plant (*Tiquilia plicata*). There were many who climbed up into the dunes to have the thrill of running down them and hearing the low singing sound of the sand.

On Saturday afternoon, Mary graciously took an extra trip to DeDeckera Canyon for those who had limited time Sunday. We all saw *DeDeckera eurekensis* in bloom and had ample photo opportunities with Mary pointing, standing, kneeling and smiling alongside this beautiful and unusual plant. Someone surely has the perfect photo! We had the perfect guided tour and saw a long list of plants. Some of the highlights for me were the brilliant *Castilleja chromosa*, *Penstemon fruticiformis*, pink *Gilia latifolia*, thistleleaf ground cherry (*Physalis crassifolia*), wishbone bush (*Mirabilis bigelovii*), the rockwort (*Scopulophila rixfordii*), a calcareous substrate indicator plant, marvelous vegetable velcro (*Eucinide urens*) and Utah buddleja (*Buddleja utahensis*). We lingered in the shade of the canyon walls trying to figure out a strange mass high up on the wall that may have been constructed by packrats or bats - will we ever know? That the canyon has not become a straight shot road through to Saline Valley is a result of Mary's grit and her tales were both inspirational and humorous.

Clem Nelson, a retired professor emeritus of geology, also enlightened us with information on geologic features, including Devil's Gate, the colorful strata of the Last Chance Mountains, the land slide en route to DeDeckera Canyon, and the Bonanza King formation of the Canyon itself.

Our trip to Eureka Dunes and DeDeckera Canyon couldn't have been better with perfect weather, perfect guides and everything in bloom. The company of the assembled Mary DeDecker fans and a new silver moon over the desert surely made it a weekend to remember. The Marin Chapter sends its hearty thanks!.Phyllis Faber

Fish Slough to Red Rock Canyon, May 29th. Leaders: Anne and Kirk Halford

Field trip participants, meeting beyond the Y on Highway 6, jockeyed for space among parked vehicles of tourists hurrying for a sidewalk spot to watch Bishop's annual Mule Days parade. Members and friends of CNPS and the Audubon Society quickly left this congestion behind to raise dust plumes towards Fish Slough.

The side-road chosen for our first stop took us west through an open, mixed desert scrub community where many low blooming plants of yellow-eyes (*Lupinus flavoculatus*) made a brave show. The churned soil, a result of sheep bedding and trailing had left few annuals and the indigo bush (*Psoralea arborescens* var. *minutifolius*) and inkweed (*Suaeda moquinii*), showed signs of heavy browsing. The varied atriplex species and smooth horsebrush (*Tetradymia glabrata*) which was in full bloom, were less decimated.

Climbing up a slight rise above the road, were many ancient "house rings", low circles of stones in varied stages of collapse. Before white settlement, the Owens Valley Paiute Indians occupied the Fish Slough area, living in rock and brush shelters on the tablelands, gathering fish, fowl, grains and bulbs in the moist valley below. The wetlands and a portion of the surrounding tablelands which comprise 36,000 acres are designated as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) which is cooperatively managed by the Bureau of Land Management, California Fish and Game and Los Angeles Department of Water and Power.

From this significant archaeological site, we moved across the valley towards the slough where we found wetland indicator plants such as bulrush (*Scirpus americanus*), phragmites (*Phragmites australis*), cattail (*Typha latifolia*), blue-eyed grass (*Sisyrinchium halophilum*) and the sweet smelling and medicinal perennial, yerba mansa (*Anemopsis californica*). We entered a Los Angeles Department of Water and Power 80 acre enclosure which was constructed to protect two Federal Candidate species, the Fish Slough milk-vetch (*Astragalus lentiginosus* var. *piscinensis*) and the Inyo County star tulip (*Calochortus excavatus*) from grazing impacts. The Fish Slough milk-vetch occurs nowhere else in the Owens Valley or in the world. It is found in the mounds and flats of adjacent alkali meadows in association with other alkali tolerant species such as: King's ivesia (*Ivesia kingii* var. *kingii*), alkali saxaton (*Sporobolus airoides*) a delicate and feathery grass, salt grass (*Distichlis spicata*), a grass used for cordage and foot deodorant by the Paiute, and the somewhat rare, white-flowered rabbitbrush (*Chrysothamnus albidus*).

Back in our vehicles, we moved north across the tablelands where venus blazing star (*Menzelia nitens*) made low drifts of color in the dryness. A stop was made at the jumbled rocks of the Chidago Canyon group of petroglyphs, now fenced

due to frequent vandalism. One huge rock has been called "Newspaper rock" and depicts a wealth of unusual and varied petroglyphs. Several robust plants of yellow saucers (*Malacothrix sochoides*) were inside the fence, but exotics, russian thistle (*Salsola australis*) and sand-butt (*Ambrosia acanthicarpa*) were numerous throughout the parking area and along the fence due to continued sheep and cattle trailing throughout the area. A portion of this exotic invasion has recently been removed by Department of Forestry crews during a cooperative Department of Fish and Game and BLM Fish Slough exotic plant removal project.

Lunch was eaten against, or on the broken boulders of the Red Rock Canyon Petroglyph site. Many figures were pecked into the flat expanses of rock. Before us, across the valley, rose the flanks of the White Mountains. After lunch we followed a road that turns westerly, rising up to approach the mouth of a striking portion of Red Rock Canyon. Our caravan parked and we walked into this narrow, twisted, gouged and hollowed serpentine of nature's whimsy. Mostly in tones of red or pink, the rocks shelter plants in pockets or strips of soil: granite gilia (*Leptodactylon pungens*), wishbone bush (*Mirabilis bigelovii*), apricot mallow (*Spharalcea ambigua*), and robust, old bushes of desert bitterbrush (*Purshia glandulosa*). A dry look-alike for desert plume (*Stanleya pinnata*) proved to be *Thelypodium lacinatum*. And there were still many untrammelled annuals; Phacelia, Cryptantha, poppy and tidy-tips.

The canyon was a fitting finale to a varied ethnobotanical and archaeological field trip held in perfect weather.

.....Doris Fredendall

Hot Creek, June 12th. Leader: Jo Anne Dolan

On June 12th, Jo Anne Dolan, a U.S. Forest Service Naturalist, led a field trip to Hot Creek. About 30 people gathered for the morning hike. Jo Anne led us along the volcanic bluffs above the creek and then down to the hydrothermal zone at the water's edge. She pointed out that Hot Creek was located in the huge depression of the Long Valley Caldera, which formed during an enormous pyroclastic eruption of ash 700 thousand years ago. Volcanic activity has continued intermittently on a smaller scale up to the present and, hot springs, earthquake swarms, and doming of the resurgent dome within the caldera show that the magma is even now not far below the surface.

As we walked at a leisurely pace, we touched, smelled, and tasted, as well as carefully looked at, the leaves of various plants. Jo Anne had interesting comments on the adaptations of plants to the temperature extremes and sparse water of the high desert, on the importance of plants such as bitterbrush to wildlife, on the uses of plants by American Indians, on the problems caused by non-native grasses such as cheat grass, and on the descriptive meanings of Latin plant names. The field trip was truly a celebration of native plants.

.....Mary Allen

UPCOMING BRISTLECONE CHAPTER SUMMER FIELD TRIPS

JULY 24: VALENTINE CAMP, BELOW MAMMOTH LAKES BASIN. Leader: Mark Bagely.

As of 7-11-93 there were still spaces available for this trip to the University of California's Valentine Reserve. Contact field trip coordinator, Anne Halford at 387-2781 for reservations. Meet at 9:30 am in the parking lot of the Forest Service Mammoth Ranger District. Easy walking.

AUGUST 14: BODIE HILLS. Leader: Tim Messick.

Join botanist Tim Messick for a look at the unique flora of this area notched between the Sierra Nevada and the Great Basin Ranges to the east of Bridgeport, CA. Tim is well versed in the flora of the Bodie Hills and will have much to share regarding his previous thesis work in this area. Meet at 9:30 in front of the Bridgeport Court House. Easy to moderate walking.

AUGUST 21: WHITE MOUNTAINS. Leader: Jim Morefield.

Combine exploration and research by assisting Jim in a survey for the Inyo prickly milkvetch (*Astragalus kentrophyta* var. *elatus*). This *Astragalus* is locally abundant in the Inyo Mountains, but is restricted to disjunct populations in the White Mountains. Participation in the survey however isn't necessary to join the trip. This trip will also likely be joined by Northern Nevada Native Plant Society members. Interest to make this an overnight has been expressed, but members from both chapters will be on their own to make camping location and other logistical arrangements.

FIELD TRIP POLICIES

Generally, day trips last most of the day. On all trips bring a lunch and plenty of water. Although we are often near vehicles at lunch, always be prepared to carry your supplies on a hike. Other essentials to bring for all trips include; a hat, sunglasses, sunscreen, and sturdy walking shoes and don't forget your hand lens and field guides.

Family, friends, and visitors are all welcome!, but **please, no pets**. Unless indicated, the average car should be fine on our trips. All vehicles however should be reliable, have good tires and full gas tanks. Trips will **LEAVE** at the time announced, so please arrive a few minutes early. Car pooling is encouraged. Please contact Anne Halford, field trip coordinator at (619) 387-2781 for more information.

BRISTLECONE CHAPTER HIGHLIGHTS

The Fascinating Buckwheats

Those of you who would like to know them better are invited to attend a series of buckwheat classes conducted by Mary DeDecker this summer.

Because few week ends are clear, classes will meet weekly on Monday mornings. Most buckwheats bloom later than the spring flowers. There will be six or more sessions, depending on how long the buckwheats are in bloom. Classes will meet from 9:00 am to 12:00 noon. The fee is a \$5.00 donation to the Bristlecone Chapter. Please register by calling or writing Mary DeDecker before each Monday's meeting date (619) 878-2389 POB 506, Independence, CA 93526. Meeting locations may vary.

The class is for beginners. No experience is necessary. It will focus on the buckwheat genus, *Eriogonum*, but other interesting members of the family, such as *Oxytheca*, *Chorizanthe*, and *DeDeckera* may be included. Sites throughout the Owens Valley may be visited.

A New Species Range Extension For The Bristlecone Chapter

Hunter Mountain has given us an interesting range extension in the showy Lotus, *Lotus argyraeus* var. *notidius*. It was collected by Mary DeDecker on June 9, 1990 as her No. 6230. Since it did not seem to fit anything in the Munz Flora she sent it to Richard Spellenberg at Las Cruces New Mexico who was working on a revision of the genus. It was determined by Rafael Corral but he left the project and it was forgotten. Only recently was it rediscovered and noted as a range extension northward from the Providence Mountains.

This Providence Mountain Lotus is a beautiful plant which occurs in a granite area on the east side of Hunter Mountain. The location is in the vicinity of a spring at the head of the Cottonwood Canyon trail in Death Valley National Monument.

New Bristlecone Chapter Historian

Mary Allen has graciously offered her time and interest in acting as our new chapter historian. Please send Mary any photographs or other noteworthy things from field trips or other chapter events so the recordation of these events may be preserved. Mary's address is: POB 1585 Bishop, CA 92514 (619) 872-3438. On behalf of the Bristlecone Chapter Officers - Welcome!

NEW MEMBERS

A warm welcome to the following new members in our chapter

Dori Cann
Big Pine, CA

Robert A. Hudson
Independence, CA

Clem A. Nelson
Bishop, CA

Oasis Garden Club of Indian Wells Valley
Ridgecrest, CA

Kathleen Sullivan and Rick Leslie
Sherman Oaks, CA

Bryce and Wilma Wheeler
Mammoth Lakes, CA



***Prunus andersonii* (Desert Peach) Collection and Propagation**

This is an in house peek at the collection and production of *Prunus andersonii*, the beautiful desert peach. Seed was collected in the Sierra's at the 8,000 ft level from July through August of 1992. The seed was ripe enough when collected to separate from the pulp readily and was stored once dried in sealed plastic bags at room temperature until time for germination.

At germination all seed was leached with running water for 24 hours on 3-16-93 prior to planting. After leaching, the seed was then planted in tree seed tubes and placed in an unheated house for germination. After 8 weeks approximately 25% of the seed had germinated. On 5-20-93 six cuttings were taken from the largest seedlings. All cuttings were stuck in a soilless mix and placed under mist to keep a film of water on the foliage during rooting. The mist cycle used was 7 seconds every 5 minutes running from 7:00 am to 8:00 pm. "Dip and Grow" rooting hormone was used in groups of two at ratios of 1:5, 1:10 and 1:20.

After 9 days on 5-29-93 all cuttings were pulled up for inspection. Heavy callusing was observed with roots forming on all cuttings. All cuttings were again pulled for inspection 12 days after sticking on 6-1-93. Heavy rooting was found on all cuttings except on ones with the 1:20 solution. These two cuttings still showed marginal rooting with heavy callusing. On 6-8-93 all cuttings were removed from mist. All cuttings that received the 1:20 solution of "Dip and Grow" still appear to be the weakest but have not yet failed. All other cuttings show new growth and appear to be doing well. It appears that the best rooting was with the 1:5 and 1:0 solutions. It now seems that any trouble with previous attempts may have been caused by hardened plants growing under drought conditions.

.....Jim Roberts

Note: Jim Roberts is a horticulturalist and part owner of Sierra Gardens Nursery in Bishop. Jim has an avid interest in native plant propagation and has been working hard to stockpile native seed from various shrub and grass species native to the Owens Valley and surrounding areas. If you would like to set up a time to see some of these techniques in action contact Jim at: (619) 873-3459



THE 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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Membership Category:

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____ Individual or Library \$25
____ International \$35
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____ Supporting \$50
____ Plant Lover \$100
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GIFT contribution: Where most needed ____ . Conservation ____ .

THE BRISTLECONE NEWSLETTER comes out bimonthly. It is mailed free to members of the Bristlecone Chapter, CNPS. The subscription is \$5.00 per year for others. Editor: Anne Halford

California Native Plant Society



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