

DEDICATED TO THE PRESERVATION OF THE CALIFORNIA NATIVE FLORA

BRISTLECONE • CHAPTER

CNPS



Volume 13 No. 6 November 1994

Annual Chapter Potluck and Meeting:

Wednesday November 30, at 6:30 pm at the Methodist Church in Big Pine. Please bring your favorite dish, service and slides to share.

NEXT CHAPTER BOARD MEETING:

Tuesday November 22, at 7:00 pm at Doris Fredendall's residence in Big Pine. All chairpersons are welcome and encouraged to attend.

PRESIDENTS MESSAGE

With the approach of the holiday season it is time for reflection and thanksgiving. With the holiday optimism, we cheer and give thanks for the two major achievements of a persistent, conservation-minded public and able congressional leaders; the passage of the Desert Bill and the Mono Lake decision.

As the late Wallace Stegner states in his book Sound of Mountain Water..."Angry as one may be at what heedless men have done and still do to a noble habitat, one cannot be pessimistic about the west. This is the native home of hope".

From Aldo Leopold's The Ecological Conscience...the practice of conservation must spring from a conviction of what is ethically and aesthetically right, as well as what is economically expedient. A thing is right only when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the community, and the community includes the soil, waters, fauna, and flora, as well as the people".

As the year and my term of office come to a close, many thanks for your invaluable assistance and support. Happy Holidays!

.....Betty Gilchrist, President



Field Trip Reports

Sweetwater Mountains

It had been 19 years since we first botanized the Sweetwater Range with Mary and Paul DeDecker. Mary had an unsubstantiated report of bristlecone pines growing there so we decided to look for ourselves. Neither family had been there before; little was known about the flora of the area, which is all the justification Mary needed to make the trip.

On July 12, 1975 we jeeped to the old mining camp of Belfort, an abandoned mining camp of the 1880's. As we crested the rise that delineates Boulder Flat we were amazed to see two well preserved log cabins that had stood the ravages of the harsh winters here at 10,200 feet where snow piles to a depth of at least 12 feet. We made camp a couple of hundred yards west of the cabins in a grove of whitebark and lodgepole pines. It wasn't long before Mary was emptying their ice chest so she could stuff it full of the many flowering plants that were in bloom. Our plan was to scale Wheeler Peak (11,664) and there LeRoy and Mark, our younger son, would leave us and climb Mt. Paterson (11,673) and spend their time scouting for the elusive bristlecone pine - none of which were ever found.

Our August 12-14, 1994 trip started with just as much anticipation as our 1975 trip. Mary had prepared a 4-page plant list that included 104 species from 23 families. We met at the city park in Bridgeport with Mary and Betty Gilchrist to again retrace our journey to the Sweetwater range.

You can only imagine our delight as we eased over the crest to Belmont and saw the log cabins still standing! They had aged a little-we had too. As soon as we made camp, we closely inspected the cabins comparing each side with the pictures of yore. One small whitebark pine that was only knee high in 1975 was now a little over 6 feet tall. The larger cabin had lost a few planks from its

roof, there were a few more wrinkles of age and like us, it still had many years to go before falling to the ground to be recycled. Nearby a few lovely white blooms of the white *Lupinus andersonii* were still open. We noted an abundance of these mature plants along the jeep trail the next day.

We arrived at our old camp site, pitched our tent, and took a stroll up to Boulder Flat. When we returned to camp, Mary and Betty set before us hors d'oeuvres that matched the splendid chilled white wine that had survived the bumpy ride. We reminisced about our first excursion to this magnificent spot as the sun dipped below the nearby ridge. The first star soon came out and we quickly identified it as Jupiter.

The next morning, a short jeep ride to the west took us to a spring that is the jump-off point for Wheeler Peak. Even at this altitude, August is late in the season for most subalpine flowering plants, but we were rewarded with a few late bloomers. The ride back to camp was slow as Mary popped in and out of the pickup snatching the late bloomers that had avoided her during past sojourns.

The next morning, as the sun crept over the eastern horizon, we were abruptly awakened by the unmistakable clatter of rain drops on the tent. It appeared as if we were in a cave; the rain cloud was anchored to the western mountain crest and the sun was shining directly into our haven. To the west was a magnificent rainbow that had one end fused to the entrance of a mine shaft that had fed some miner's dream; and the other end vanished into the timbered slope southwest of camp. In moments the rainbow faded and we reveled in the cleansed air that is only found high in the mountains after a brief storm.

After the rain dissipated each of us explored our favorite haunts. Leroy hiked to the mine tunnel that had been the dream of riches for many miner in the 1880's and Jean ventured to one of the cabins we had photographed

19 years ago. The mine was found with a collapsed shaft and the old cabin had not fared as well as the two near our camp. Adjacent to the cabin however is a spring that spews crystal clear water which quenches the thirst of the surrounding plants. We admired the fine whitebark pine forest throughout the Belmont-Boulder Flat area.

Back at camp we reluctantly loaded our gear. With each pickup in low gear we slowly crept toward civilization. The trip out took longer than expected. Mary kept exclaiming "Stop Here!"; The door would fly open and she would examine another plant to add to her extensive plant list.

Interesting plants, weathered ruins and smiles were found in the Sweetwater Mountains. It was indeed a great trip and soon we will share these experiences with slides and stories.

.....LeRoy and Jean Johnson

Fruiting Shrubs of Big Pine Canyon

Our September tenth field trip began with a relaxed air as our leader, Doris Fredendall, showed us the difference in the leaf shape between the Fremont Cottonwood and the Black Cottonwood. Our group consisted of faithful members, Gordon and June Nelson, and "new-comers" from Lone Pine, Doris and Peter. They brought Doris' uncle "Tommy" and her aunt Hazel who were visiting from Placerville and rounded out the group to eight enthusiastic plant seekers.

Though many plants were brown and dried out for the season, gusts of wind carried the fragrance of mugwort, *Artemisia ludoviciana*, and the last of the pennyroyal, *Monardella odoratissima*. Several of us nibbled on the bright red-orange rosehips (*Rosa woodsii*) as we puffed up the hill from the parking lot and up to the old road. We also tasted the dark-blue clusters of elderberries, (*Sambucus mexicana*), while we decided only to admire the white, oblong fruit of the snowberry (*Symphoricarpos oreophilus*) and the strange,

purple fruit of the false Solomon's seal (*Smilacina stellata*), a little lily. The bitter cherry (*Prunus emarginata*) was also in fruit though Doris had to search to find a berry up to her expectation of "translucence".

I especially enjoyed seeing the mountain maples (*Acer glabrum* var. *diffusum*), because of the diminutive nature of their leaves and their whitish twigs. Others seemed to ooh and aah over the few late-bloomers; streambank Arnica (*Arnica amplexicaulis*), meadow Arnica (*Arnica chamissonis* ssp. *foliosa*), sticky aster (*Machaeranthera canescens*) on the dry trailside, and two Senecio, *Senecio canus* and *Senecio spartioides*. After we saw the pink bloom of the milk aster (*Stephanomeria spinosa*), Doris showed us the cottony substance which grows around its stem beneath the earth. This "Wool Cache Plant" was used by the Native Americans of this region to stanch wounds.

Probably the most exciting part of trip was helping the group cross the stream over a narrow plank. You would have had to be there to appreciate the teamwork and bravery of all involved!

All-in-all, Doris our local exotic plant-eradicator, proved herself to be a great teacher as well. At the end of the trip, one person was heard to exclaim, "I learned more about plants in two hours than I've learned in a lifetime"!

.....Victoria Hamilton

Rock Creek

On a beautiful October morning fourteen of us joined trip leader Scott Hetzler to Rock Creek. We were also pleased to have with us four school-aged participants.

Stopping in the lower canyon, we delighted in the golden leaves of aspen, birch, and willow. Above us on the talus slopes. backlit mountain mahogany sparkled with sunlight on its small, feathery, spirally twisted fruits.

Leaving our cars just above Rock Creek Lake, we hiked on the Hilton Lakes trail along the moraine on the north side of the canyon. Because of the recent snow, we saw little fall color, but with Doris Fredendall's and Scott's help we identified nearly 40 plants from their autumn foliage and fruit. We saw just one flower in bloom, a single yellow blossom of *Ericameria suffruticosa*.

After eating lunch on a sunny slope, we dispersed, some to go home, others to sketch, botanize, or throw snowballs, and a hearty few to hike on to Hilton Lakes.

.....Mary Allen

Owens Valley Checkerbloom Planting at CNPS President's Home

On October tenth, six energetic CNPS members planted Owens Valley Checkerbloom seedlings that had been propagated from seed collected at CNPS Bristlecone Chapter President Betty Gilchrist's property. The seed that Betty lovingly collected in June of 1993 was germinated by Horticulturalist Jim Roberts from Sierra Gardens Nursery and Bishop High school student, Brian Lawrence.

The seed germination and seedling propagation of *Sidalcea covillei* is part of an on-going cooperative project between the California Department of Fish and Game and the Bishop BLM to document techniques for successful propagation and potential reintroduction of this State Endangered species.

The seedlings which germinated from seed in March of 1994 had average root lengths of over 30cm (12") at the time of the October planting. A total of 68 plants were planted on Betty's property adjacent to the natural population of *Sidalcea covillei*, in an open alkali meadow community consisting of alkali sacaton (*Sporobolus airoides*), Great Basin wild rye (*Leymus cinereus*) and scattered yerba mansa (*Anemopsis californica*). Groups of 4 plants were planted in 0.50m(1.5') X

0.25m(1') deep holes, generously watered and tagged for future monitoring.

To this date the transplanted checkerbloom appear vigorous. Each plant has plenty of green leaf crown which will allow for continued photosynthesis and hence further root growth before dormancy sets in. Betty has generously offered to water the transplants and "watch over them" until they hopefully reappear with vibrant pink blooms this spring. A special thanks to all who helped with this planting; Mary Allen, Doris Fredendall, Betty and Ray Sisson, and Warren Morefield.

.....Anne Halford

Conservation Corner

At this writing the President has signed the Desert Protection Act, S-21. At long last; how many years, 8 and a half or so, since we were favoring the original Cranston Bill, S-2601.

And now with sixty or so amendments, each one taking a little bite here and a little bite there, and a big Pac-man bite out of the East Mojave National Scenic Preserve (not a Park, not even a Monument) it is still a better bill than none.

We have 6.6 million acres or so of new wilderness areas, including a portion of the southern Inyo Mountains; a 1.5 million acre addition to Death Valley National Monument, now a Park; a substantial addition to Joshua Tree National Monument, now a Park; and an enlarged Red Rock Canyon State Park. So the hard work of many paid off.

We are sorry that Senator Feinstein couldn't have saved more of what was in the bill when she took over its promotion, but that is what results in compromise. You yield on some points to get a lot of what you're after. Anyway, thanks to all who helped with letters, phone calls, hearings, visits to

Washington, etc. And let's not forget the Mono Lake victory. After 15 plus years of struggle. Thank you David Gaines for starting it all!

Do events happen in threes? Maybe the Owens Valley is next.

.....Vince Yoder

1995 Bristlecone Chapter Officer Nominees

The nominating committee consisting of Betty Gilchrist, Mary DeDecker, Doris Fredendall and Anne Halford presented the following nominees for 1995 at the September 28 Chapter Meeting:

President:	Scott Hetzler
Vice President:	Sally Manning
Secretary:	Karen Ferell
Treasurer:	Mary Allen

Upcoming Events

The Jepson Herbarium
Weekend Workshops

January 14 & 15, 1995: *Arctostaphylos*
(Manzanitas) Ericaceae

Tom Parker
San Francisco State University
Michael Vasey
San Francisco State University

February 18 & 19, 1995: Ferns and Fern
Allies

Alan Smith
University of California, Berkeley

Workshops are limited to 20 participants and enrollment is on a first-come, first-serve basis. Current Friends of The Jepson Herbarium will be given priority.

Cost per workshop: \$145.00

For further information, contact Susan D'Alcamo at the Jepson Herbarium, UC Berkeley, CA 94720; (510) 643-7008.

Next Bristlecone Chapter Newsletter
Deadline: January 23, 1995



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 the understanding of California's native flora and to preserve this rich resource for future generations. Varied interests are represented.

Name _____ P.O. Box or Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip Code _____ Phone _____

I wish to be affiliated with the Bristlecone Chapter _____ Other _____

Membership Category

<input type="checkbox"/> Student/Retired/Limited Income	\$18.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual or Library	\$25.00
<input type="checkbox"/> International	\$35.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Family or Group	\$35.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Supporting	\$50.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Plant Lover	\$100.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Patron	\$250.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Life	\$500.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor	\$500.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Corporate	\$1,000.00

Please make check payable to: The California Native Plant Society. **Mail to:** Bristlecone Chapter, CNPS. HCR 67 Box 35, Independence, CA 93526.

Gift Contribution: Where most needed _____ Conservation _____

THE BRISTLECONE CHAPTER 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.

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