

NEXT CHAPTER MEETING

Wednesday, March 18, 7:00 p.m. at the White Mountain Research Station on 3000 E. Line Street, Bishop. Rosemary Donlon, past president and current member of the Monterey Bay Chapter, will present a slide program on the life and writings of renowned California Horticulturist, Lester Rowntree. Lester Rowntree, who died at age 100 in 1979, wrote several books and more than a hundred articles on California plants and seeds. She settled in California in 1929, but traveled extensively, and became an expert on the California flora. Rosemary has compiled an extensive bibliography of Lester's articles. and has put together a popular program that she has presented at many CNPS chapter meetings.

NEXT CHAPTER BOARD MEETING

Tuesday, March 17th at 7:00 p.m. at Doris Fredendall's residence in Big Pine. All chairpersons are welcome and encouraged to attend

Upcoming Chapter Meeting Presentations

Special April Meeting on Wednesday, April 8, at 7:00 p.m. The Eastern Sierra Audubon Society and the Bristlecone Chapter of CNPS will jointly present a special program by Dr. Constance Millar, entitled "1000 Years of Vegetation History in the Glass Creek Watershed: Climate Change, Volcanic Eruptions, and Fire," at the Eastern Sierra Audubon Society meeting at White Mountain Research Station in Bishop at 7 p.m.. Wednesday. April 8.

Dr. Millar and associates are using tree rings, analysis of old wood, pollen, fire scars, volcanism, and shifts in global climate to interpret forest and meadow change over the last 1 000 years in the Glass Creek watershed. They are also looking at the plant conditions before and after livestock grazing and discuss the "ecosystem management" concept that is currently in vogue with federal land managers.

Dr. Millar is a research geneticist and conservation biologist with the U.S. Forest Service, Pacific Southwest Research Station, Institute of Forest Genetics, in California. She has worked on projects in the Eastern Sierra for the last 10 years and was assistant team-leader and scientist for the Sierra Nevada Ecosystem Project.

May Meeting: Wednesday May 27, 7p.m., . Methodist Church in Independence. John Karlick, from the Kern County Agricultural Extension Service, will talk about "Principles of Xeriscape Landscaping." John has done a case study on typical mesic landscape plantings and "xeriscapes" for arid climates, and will discuss the principles and advantages of xeriscaping in our Eastern Sierra climate.

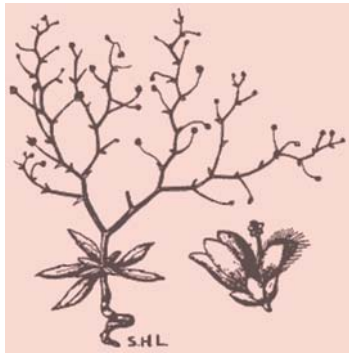
PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Well, it looks like this month I have great news. The news is that we have been getting lots of rain! And the rain has made Death Valley an even more magical place to visit. The flowers should persist through April at least at the higher elevations, but don't wait too long.

Although we don't have any trips scheduled for early March there is a great schedule line up for the rest of the year! Thanks to all of you who are willing to lead field trips this season. Since there are several members who can no longer lead trips for our chapter, it's important that we all chip in to carry on our efforts - field trips being the best part!

I would also like to let everyone know I am looking for people to fill two vacancies that we have as chairpersons. One is for Hospitality and the individual would be responsible for setting up refreshments at our general meetings. The other chair is for our Special Funding Committee. Our chapter is currently working with the Inyo National Forest on putting up two interpretive signs at the Sierra View overlook and I am looking for someone to commit to getting this project completed. Please give me a call if you can help out. Thanks.

.....Scott Hetzler



CNPS Bristlecone Chapter 1998 Field Trip Schedule

It looks as if El Nino is going to bring us one of the finest years for desert wildflower displays. And, if the snow doesn't pile up too deep and stay too long, also a fine year for flowers in our high mountains. Please join us as we venture forth to appreciate this bounty.

For all field trips, be sure to bring plenty of water, lunch, good walking shoes or boots, and appropriate clothing for hot sun or inclement weather. Also useful would be a hand lens, binoculars, camera, floras, and plant lists. Trips will leave at the time announced, so please arrive at the meeting sites a few minutes early. Unless indicated, the average car should do fine. Car-pooling is encouraged. Everyone is welcome, but please no pets. If you need more information contact Field Trip Chairperson Mark Bagley at 760-873-5326 or e-mail: markbagley @ qnet.com.

March 21, Saturday. Short Canyon, East Slope of the Southern Sierra. Leader: Mark Bagley. Meet at 9:30 am along the frontage road in front of Brady's Mobil Station, just northwest of the intersection of Hwy. 395 and Hwy. 14, a few miles north of Inyokern. Hike up this very diverse canyon, from creosote bush scrub to oak-pine woodland. Easy trail walking, some moderate steepness.

March 25, Wednesday .Cross-Country Ski Trip, Upper Rock Creek Canyon. Leader: Scott Hetzler. Meet at 9:00 am at the Sno-Park up canyon from Tom's Place. Weather permitting, this will be a moderate ski trek to see Sierra junipers, pines, aspens, and willows in their winter wonderfulness. For more info call Scott at 873-8392.

April 4-5, Sat.-Sun. Panamint Valley and the West Slope of the Panamint Mountains. Leaders: Mark Bagley and Kathy Duvall. Combined trip with the Eastern Sierra Audubon Society. Meet at 9:30 am at Panamint Springs, on

Hwy .190 in the northwest end of Panamint Valley. We'll primarily visit spring areas and canyons; lots of birds, wildflowers, and the

endemic Panamint daisy. Fairly easy hiking, but probably some off-trail and some moderately steep sections. High clearance vehicles only. Primitive camping, so bring all your own water and everything else. For those who prefer, campgrounds are available at Panamint Springs and Wildrose Canyon, motels in Panamint Springs, Trona and Ridgecrest (about 1/2 to 1 hour away). Contact Kathy at 760-387-2626 for more info.

April 11, Saturday. Eureka Dunes, Rare Plant Mapping. Leader: Arnie Peterson, Botany Staff Death Valley National Park. Meet at 9:00 am in the northwest parking lot at Eureka Dunes. Or, to carpool, meet at 8:00 am at the Glacier View Campground, at the junction of Hwy. 395 and 168, just north of Big Pine. Two listed endangered plants (*Oenothera californica* ssp. *eurekensis* and *Swallenia alexandrae*) and one proposed threatened species (*Astragalus lentiginosus* var. *micans*) are endemic to Eureka Valley. There should be good wildflower displays, but our focus will be to help the Park map locations of these rare plants on the dunes. In the future, this information can help determine changes in distribution and population size. We will work in teams using topo maps, aerial photos and GPS to mark the sites. Everyone is welcome; people with good "plant-eyes" are needed in addition to those with skills in mapping and GPS. For more info contact Amie at 760-786-3233 or e-mail: amie-peterson@nps.gov.

April 25-26, Sat.-Sun. Lane Mountain Milk- Vetch and Other Plan~ of the West-Central Mojave Desert. Leader: Mark Bagley. Meet at 10:30 am at Kramer Junction, Hwy. 395 and 58, in the parking area by the Shell Station and Astro Burger on Hwy. 395, just north and west of the railroad crossing (about 2 hours south of Lone Pine). We'll visit desert saltbush scrub, creosote bush scrub and Joshua tree woodland communities between Kramer Junction and the Paradise Range, north of Barstow. In addition to great displays of wildflowers this year, we should find several rare plants including Lane Mtn. milk-vetch (*Astragalus jaegerianus*), a federally proposed endangered species desert, cymopterus (*Cymopterus deserticola*), Barstow woolly sunflower (*Eriophyllum mohavense*), and Mojave spineflower (*Chorizanthe spinosa*). We will spend some time surveying one or two known sites of Lane Mtn. milk-vetch and looking for additional sites. High clearance vehicles only. Primitive camping, so bring all your own water. For those who prefer, motels are available not far away at Barstow.

May 2, Saturday. French Springs to Forgotten Pass, Inyo Mountains. Leader: Anne Halford. Meet at 8:00 am at the Lone Pine Station Road (at the north end of Lone Pine). This will be a strenuous 6-8 mile round trip hike up a botanically diverse canyon that leads to the bristlecones and the stupendous views of Forgotten Pass. We will carpool since parking is very limited at the trailhead. High-clearance 4-wheel drives required. Bring Plenty of water and sun protection !

May 15-17, Fri. night-Sun. Sierra Spring Sojourn. For more details see the Upcoming Events section of this newsletter .

May 30, Saturday. Owens Valley Alkali Meadows. Leader: Sally Manning. Meet at 9:00 am at the Glacier View Campground, at the junction of Hwy .395 and 168, just north of Big Pine. Alkali meadows are fairly diverse plant communities and relatively uncommon habitats in the desert. The Owens Valley has a high proportion of alkali meadows compared to many other desert areas. Some of the unique plant species inhabiting these meadows should be in full bloom. We will visit several different meadows in the northern Owens Valley. A high clearance vehicle is recommended. Easy walking.

June 13, Saturday. Lower Rock Creek Gorge Area. Leaders: Steve Ingram and Karen Ferrell. Meet at 9:00 am at the Paradise Restaurant. Easy walking, about a half day trip, bring lunch. More details in May newsletter .

July. ??? In our May newsletter look for a mid-week trip to the Sierra led by Scott Hetzler. Is there anyone else out there who will lead a trip for us this month?

August 15-16, Sat.-Sun. Baboon Lakes, Sierra Nevada. Leader: Anne Halford. This will be an overnight trip to these alpine lakes above

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South Lake. The hiking will be moderate to . strenuous and will traverse through wonderful flower-laden granite benches. The overnight group size is limited so please contact me as soon as possible if you are interested in participating (873-6714). More details will appear in upcoming newsletters.

September 12, Saturday. Indigenous Utility Plants of the Owens Valley .Leader: Richard Stewart. Meet at 9:00 am at Mendenhall Park, Big Pine. A look at the plants that have provided food, medicine, fiber and other uses for the indigenous peoples of the Owens Valley .Trip will focus on the Big Pine area, mostly near the river. Easy walking. For more information call Richard at 760-938-2684 or e-mail: Richard-Stewart@eee.org.

October 10, Saturday. Aspen Color and Carvings. Leader: Richard Potashin. Look for details in the May or July newsletter .

Rare Plants of the West-Central Mojave Desert Lane Mountain Milk-vetch

The flora of the west-central Mojave Desert is not as diverse nor does it contain as many rare species as are found in the Inyo-Death Valley region to the north. But this area does contain a number of interesting and little known rare species, several of which we will see on our April 25-26 field trip (see trip schedule in this issue for details).

The most highly restricted plant in the west-central Mojave is the Lane Mtn. milk-vetch (*Astragalus jaegerianus*). Rupert Barneby places this species in its own section of the genus, indicating that it is very distinct and different from other species of *Astragalus*. It is a slender herbaceous perennial, 1-2 feet tall, with weak sparsely leafy stems that are almost always growing up through and entangled in low shrubs. Flowers are fairly inconspicuous, a dull yellowish-white or lavender-rose, and usually appear April and May. Pods are pendulous, stipitate, laterally compressed, narrow and straight, bilocular, and leathery or stiffly papery when mature.

This species was first collected by Edmund C. Jaeger in 1939 and described by Phil Munz in 1941. No records of this species exist from 1941 until 1985 when a population on Fort Irwin was reported by Mark Bagley, Mary DeDecker, and John Chesnut. In 1989 and 1992, a few additional sites for this species were discovered. The entire known range of Lane Mtn. milk-vetch occurs between Barstow and Goldstone in an area no more than 13 miles in

diameter. It appears to be confined to a particular whitish granite substrate in creosote bush scrub with a few widely scattered Joshua trees.

Fewer than 150 plants of Lane Mtn. milk-vetch have ever been reported. The largest population is on the Army's Fort Irwin nation tank training center, in an area thus far not used for training. Most of the rest of the plants occur on BLM land within one of the proposed alternative sites for Fort Irwin expansion. If the Army expands into this area it would no doubt cause increased use in the area where Lane Mtn. milk-vetch occurs on base and new uses in the expansion area. This species occurs on low hills and rises on the upper and middle bajada slopes, just the kind of terrain that tank maneuvers would use. Tank training is notoriously tough on desert plants. Without strong protections, Army use in these areas is a significant potential threat to the survival of this rare milk-vetch.

Lane Mtn. milk-vetch is a federally proposed endangered species. It is part of the listing package for seven desert milk-vetch taxa that the US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) released for public comment in May of 1992. Included in that listing package are our Fish Slough milk-vetch (*A. lentiginosus* var. *piscinensis*) and shining milk-vetch (*A. lentiginosus* var. *micans*) from Eureka Dunes. That listing was put on hold for several years and FWS reopened the public comment period in Sept. 1996. Now, more than 16 months after the close of that second comment period there is no word on the listing. More than 5 1/2 years since they were first proposed for listing, these plants should be listed. Please write to FWS and let them know you are concerned about these species, that they should not be sitting on this proposal, and that these plants should be listed.

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Write to: Field Supervisor, USFWS Ventura . Field Office, 2493 Portola Rd., Suite B, Ventura, CA 93003. And send a copy of your letter to Dave Tibor, CNPS Rare Plant Program Botanist, 1722 J St., Suite 17, Sacramento, CA 95814.

Mark Bagley

Upcoming Events

Sierra Spring Sojourn - May 15-17th

The Bristlecone Chapter is sponsoring its third annual Sierra Spring Sojourn -a wonderful weekend of desert plant enjoyment. This will be a flower filled weekend of field trips, slide programs and camaraderie in our extraordinary eastern Sierra region. Meals, dorms and camping facilities will be provided.

We anticipate a great wildflower display this year thanks to El Nino driven rains and are offering several field trips for your choice on both Saturday and Sunday. Trws will cover the diversity of our area: The Eureka Valley sand dunes, A Sierra foothill meadow, foothills of the Inyo Mountains, other special sites in the Owens Valley, and a popular botanical sketching trip with Richard Potashin.

To register or for more information please send a self-addressed envelope to:

Kathy Duvall

155 Oceanview Ave. Bishop, CA 93514 Email: kduvall@telis.org

Or call Kathy at (760-387-2626) or Evelyn Mae Nikolaus at 760-878-2149 or email: evieindyca@juno.com

The Jepson Herbarium Weekend Workshops on Botanical Subjects

Class VIII -Seaweeds March 27-29, 1998

Paul Silva, Dick Mae, Max Chacana

Class IX -Serpentine Plant Ecology April 18 & 19, 1998 Scott Martens

Class x -Delphinium April 25 & 26 Mike Warnock



Class XI -Ecological Habitat Restoration May 1-3

Pam Muick

The classes are limited to 20 participants and enrollment is on a first-come, first-served basis, So register early! For Further information, please call Susan D' Alcamo at the Jepson Herbarium, (510) 643-7008.

Native Plant Notes

Native Plant Notes is a column for sharing techniques about how to grow our native plants All contributions are welcome so let your ideas germinate.

Desert peach (*Prunus andersonii*) creates one of the showiest displays of spring blooms in the eastern Sierra. Enjoy the masses of pink flowers with special interest this spring knowing that one day you could grow it in your own garden. Desert peach is a low maintenance, easy growing native that thrives in the heat, cold and aridity (usually) of our climate.

Desert peach occurs mostly on the dry granitic slopes of the eastern Sierra and as Mary DeDecker noted in her profile of it several years ago, it isn't really found in the desert. An interesting feature of Desert peach is that it can grow into large, long-lived clones, but individual stems live only 6-10 years. In the wild single clones have been found covering several acres! Don't worry, though, basic garden maintenance will keep this enthusiastic shrub under control.

The silvery-mauve bare branches of Desert peach are a beautiful winter feature providing structural interest to the dormant garden. Its branches, reaching three feet or so, are spine-tipped and usually leaf out when the plant comes into bloom in April or May. Flowering is an explosion of fragrant rose-pink blooms that cover the plant. Bees and other insects buzz the blooms in search of nectar, pollinating it in return for food. The fruits, while not edible to humans, are colorful and showy when ripe, and easy to harvest for another crop of desert peach seedlings.

Desert peach is simple to propagate by seed. Harvest the seed when the fleshy covering is easy to peel away from the pit. Store clean and dry pits at room temperature for a month or so to completely dry then store in the refrigerator . Around March or so, soak the pits in water for several days (change the water every 12 hours) until they crack open. Put seeds back in the refrigerator in a plastic bag with some moist vermiculite. In approximately six weeks the seeds will begin to germinate. Before the delicate white root gets too long, either plant the seed directly into the garden (this works very well) or into a deep pot to plant next fall. Give Desert peach full sun in the garden and well-draining, sandy soil. Once established it should need no supplemental watering. Desert peach is a perfect plant for filling in non-irrigated spaces and for providing cover for birds, nectar for insects, and many pleasures to the gardener in every season.

..... Karen Ferrell-Ingram

May 9, Saturday. Potting party. Meet at 10 a.m. at the propagation center at White Mountain Research Station in Bishop. Seeds for the second annual Bristlecone chapter plant sale are germinating and it is almost time for volunteers to gather and get their hands dirty! We need you! ! Green thumb skills are not required, just interest and a bit of dedication. Volunteers will be amply rewarded! Bring gloves and lunch. Please call Karen at 387-2913 for more information.



Conservation

A recent (2/12/98) article in the Inyo Register was given the inflammatory headline "DFG: Wild turkeys no threat to Owens Valley." Since the text of the article pointed out that no decisions regarding introductions will be made for at

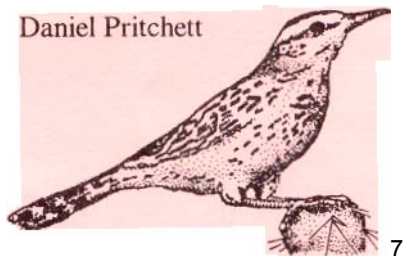
least four years (after a three year study of turkey impacts and one year of analysis of results), we assume the headline was simply an attempt by DFG to manipulate public opinion. and an attempt by the Inyo Register to induce controversy to sell more newspapers.

What is particularly disturbing is that the three- year study mentioned in the article was designed with assistance from state CNPS leadership! Over the strenuous objection of the Bristlecone Chapter, the CNPS Senior Land Management Analyst in Sacramento arranged for CNPS to offer "helpful comments" and "scientific advice" to DFG in writing its proposal to get funding for this misguided "research." Since results will undoubtedly be used as the basis for CEQA documents to attempt to justify further turkey introductions, we are appalled that the state leadership has allowed CNPS to be in any way involved.

Debate over the Senior Land Management Analyst's actions in this case did have one positive result: a policy opposing the introduction of exotic species is being drafted for discussion at the next state board meeting. We hope it will pass.

In another issue regarding exotic species, Inyo County Supervisor Michael Dorame was quoted in the Inyo Register (2/21/98) as questioning Death Valley National Park's efforts at removal of feral burros. Any members who wish to educate Mr. Dorame on the impacts of burros on native vegetation are encouraged to do so.

..... Daniel Pritchett



Death Valley Fower Update

Some say this is the best flower display in the Valley since 1972- all I can say is that I've been there three times since February and just can't get enough of this floristic grandeur! The alluvial fans are awash in friezes of brilliant yellow desert gold (*Geraea canescens*) and desert sun-cups (*Camissonia brevipes*) that once seen, continue to resonate in your dreams at night.

As one travels up the canyons and south towards Bad Water other treasures appear such as goblet-sized desert fivespot (*Eremalche rotundifolia*), many kinds of phacelia in colors ranging from royal purple to fuchsia, belly flowers in white

and lavender and sprawling sprays of purple sand verbena (*Abronia villosa*). Here is a brief list of some of the blooming species I've noted for those of you who still might think it's too early for flowers.

Asteraceae -Sunflower Family *Amphipappus fremontii* ssp. *fremontii* -Fremont.s chaff-bush

Atrichoseris platyphylla -gravel ghost (parachute plant)

Encelia actoni -Acton.s brittlebush *Encelia farinosa* var. *farinosa* –brittlebush

Bebbia juncea var. *aspera*

Geraea canescens -desert gold

Monoptilon belliodes -desert star

Palafoxia arida -Spanish needles

Perityle emoryi -Emory.s rock daisy

Peucephyllum schottii -Schott.s pygmy-cedar

Psathyrotes ramosissima -turtleback

Senecio mohavensis -Mojave groundsel

Viguiera reticulata -Death Valley goldeneye

Boraginaceae -Borage Family *Cryptantha angustifolia*

Cryptantha utahensis -fragrant cryptantha

Cryptantha racemosa -bushy cryptantha

Tiquilia nuttallii -Nuttall' s tiquilia

Fabaceae -Pea Family

Senna armata -desert cassia

Dalea mollis -slender silk dalea

Hydrophyllaceae -Waterleaf Family

Nama demissum -purple mat

Phacelia calthifolia -calthaleaf phacelia

Phacelia crenulata var. *crenulata* -notchleaf phacelia

Phacelia pedicellata -spectar phacelia (very stinky, but beautiful plant)

Phacelia fremontii -Fremont phacelia

Phacelia vallis-mortae -Death Valley phacelia

Malvaceae -Mallow Family

Eremalche rotundifolia -desert five-spot

Nyctaginaceae -Four-o'clock Family

Anulocaulis annulatus -Death Valley sticky ring

Abronia villosa var. *villosa* -desert sand verbena

Onagraceae -Evening Primrose Family

Camissonia brevipes ssp. *brevipes* -desert primrose

Camissonia boothii ssp. *desertorum* -desert shredding primrose

Camissonia claviformis ssp. *aurantiaca* -brown- eyed primrose

Papaveraceae -Poppy Family

Eschscholzia minutiflora -little gold poppy

Plantaginaceae -Plantain Family

Plantago insularis var. *ovata*- woolly plantain

Polemoniaceae -Phlox Family

Cilia latiflora ssp. *latiflora* -broad-flowered gilia

Langloisia setosissima -bristly langloisia

Polygonaceae -Buckwheat Family

Corisanthe brevicomu var. *brevicomu*- brittle spineflower

Chorisanthe rigida -rigid spineflower

Eriogonum brachypodum -Tecopa skeleton buckwheat

Eriogonum inflatum var. *deflatum* -deflated desert trumpet

Eriogonum inflatum var. *inflatum* -desert trumpet

Eriogonum trichopes -yellow trumpet

Scrophulariaceae -Figwort Family

Mimulus bigelovii var. *bigelovii* -Bigelow's monkeyflower

Mohavea breviflora -short-flowered mohavea

Solanaceae -Nightshade Family

Nicotiana attenuata -coyote tobacco

Physalis crassifolia var. *crassifolia* -thickleaf ground-cherry

Zygophyllaceae -Caltrop Family

Larrea tridentata -creosote bush

..... Anne Halford

Next Newsletter Deadline: April 28th

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THE CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY -Membership Application