

NEXT CHAPTER MEETING

*Annual Bristlecone Chapter Potluck and  
Slideshow*

The November meeting will be Tuesday, November 17<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m. at the Big Pine Methodist Church on School Street. The potluck set up will begin at 6:00 and dinner will be at 6:30 sharp. Please bring your dining utensiles, favorite slides and stories to our annual gathering.

NEXT CHAPTER BOARD MEETING

Tuesday, November 10<sup>th</sup> at 7:00 p.m. at the White Mtn. Research Station. All chapter members and other interested individuals are welcome and encouraged to attend.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

After hosting our chapter board meetings for more years than anyone can remember, Doris Fredendall has stepped down as our hostess. Doris always provided wonderful goodies after our meetings which made all those gatherings extra special. So **Thank You** Doris for putting up with us for all those years! At least for the time being, the chapter board meetings will be at my house. I can't promise treats as good as Doris provided, but I sure would be happy if people continued the tradition by bringing a treat or two. By the way, EVERYONE is invited to attend our board meetings at any time. You don't have to be chairperson to come to our meetings and you don't even have to be a member. Do you ever wonder what kind of wild party's we have at our board meetings? Come to one and find out.

More not so good news. Mark Bagley has stepped down as our field trip chairperson. Mark has done a great job twisting peoples' arms to lead field trips. Why this year, he sprained my arm twice. These great field trips don't just fall out of the sky. If you like to go on field trips then we have to have a field trip chairperson. Is there anyone out there willing to fill this essential position?

And what about our slate of officers to serve next year? Why, it looks like the same people that have been doing it for the last 3-5 years. Not that these people aren't doing a good job, but it would be great to diversify a bit! Please think about volunteering for our chapter positions - it's rewarding and makes a world of difference in how effective we are in helping to preserve our outstanding native flora.

.....Scott Hetzler

## Bristlecone Chapter Election

At our November 17<sup>th</sup> meeting we will have our annual election of officers for 1999.

The candidates are:

Scott Hetzler - President  
 Steve Ingram - Vice President  
 Karen Ingram-Ferrell - Secretary  
 Mary Allen - Treasurer

## Upcoming Meeting

Our January meeting will be one week earlier than usual, on Wednesday, January 20 at 7 p.m., at the White Mountain Research Station in Bishop. The speaker will be Bob Brister, Outreach Coordinator for the Sierra Nevada Forest Protection Campaign. The slide presentation is entitled "Sierra Forest Protection," and was developed by the Sierra Nevada Forest Protection Campaign, a coalition of conservation organizations and individuals who are fighting for protection of ancient forests and wild rivers in the Sierra. Bob's program will address conservation issues in the remaining Sierran forests, riparian and roadless areas.

## **CHAPTER HIGHLIGHTS**

### Mary Dedecker Publishes New Book

Mary DeDecker recently published another great book! The new publication is titled: Death Valley to Yosemite - Frontier Mining and Ghost Towns. It is published by Spotted Dog Press and is available at Spell Binder Books and at the Interagency Visitor Center in Lone Pine.

## Special Thanks to Larry Blakely

Bristlecone Chapter and Audobon member Larry Blakely has dedicated numerous hours to digitally scanning Mary DeDecker's floristic data base cards. He has finished close to half of the project and is now on the Asteraceae Family. We thank you Larry for taking the lead on this essential project!

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## **FIELD TRIP REPORTS**

### *Aspen Color and Carvings - Oct. 3rd*

For those who live in the Eastern Sierra, we drive by aspen groves all the time, hurrying to our destinations. In the fall we marvel at the colors and sometimes walk among the trees to get the good tidings. But there is a fascinating record of history carved on the smooth white bark of these trees. French and Spanish Basques, brought over from the Pyrenees by American sheepmen, spent time in the groves adjacent to meadows where their sheep grazed. They left simple inscriptions such as their name, the date or dates they were there, and perhaps a small phrase, poem or illustration. Carvings by shepherders from local families and from South America and Mexico can also be seen. The dates of the aspen art range from 1873 to the present.

The CNPS field trip on October 3rd, led by Richard Potashin, visited the isolated and beautiful McLaughlin Springs grove, east of the Bald Mountain Lookout and east of Highway 395. This grove has numerous carvings, including records of the Spanish Civil War period and many extensive illustrations. In the afternoon Richard led us to a stock tank located in the Little Sand Flat area. The seemingly blank tank was covered with lead pencil art depicting French Basques faces, trees, animals, birds, signatures, dates, and political slogans. It

was amazing that the lead markings were still on the metal tank. Unfortunately, the life of the carvings is relatively short and these types of tanks are being hauled to other locations. While walking across the open pumice flat to the tank, we were delighted to see the rare Mono Lake lupine (*Lupinus duranii*) and Mono milk-vetch (*Astragalus monoensis* var. *monensis*) braving the strong west winds. These species are endemic only to pumice flats from western Long Valley to Mono Basin. Look for another pilgrimage to see the groves next fall.

. . . . . Kathy Duvall

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## CONSERVATION

On October 5<sup>th</sup> 1998 Dr. Steve Scott from the Owens Valley Radio Observatory (OVRO) submitted a proposal to move radio telescopes from the Owens Valley floor up to a small basin OVRO has named "Upper Harkless Flat." The basin lies about 1500' above and due south of Harkless Flat (and just north of Papoose Flat) in the Inyo Mountains. While we respect very much the important research Dr. Scott and his colleagues are doing, we are concerned about impacts to native plants such a project would bring about.

The proposed site is noteworthy for several reasons. The most striking is the undisturbed nature of its vegetation - neither grazing impacts nor weeds are evident. Cryptogamic soil crusts are generally intact and some of the juniper trees rival in size the largest recorded individuals. Limestone knolls at the edges of the flat are home to several CNPS-listed rare plant species. The views of the Owens Valley and Sierra Nevada are spectacular and there are numerous archeological sites in the general area.

In OVRO's proposal, 52 stations (each station being a 20' x 20' concrete pad) would be constructed to provide sites for multiple configurations of 18 radio telescopes. A diesel generator would be brought in and buildings and parking lots constructed. A 16' wide road would be graded up a steep slope to connect the site to existing roads in Harkless Flat.

According to Dr. Scott, OVRO was steered to this site over two other potential sites (Badger Flat in the Inyo Mtns. and Sage Hen Flat in the White Mtns.) in informal conversations with staff of the Inyo National Forest (INF), which manages the area. INF staff informed OVRO that construction of the observatory at the two alternative potential sites may conflict with management guidelines for areas near or adjacent to the alternative potential sites.

The fact that both alternative sites already have grazing impacts, better road access, and lower probability of rare plant occurrences, has apparently not been considered. Dr. Scott and his colleagues are thus in the unfortunate position of proposing to develop a virtually pristine area which contains numerous rare plants in order to spare other sites which have already been impacted by a variety of human activities. We very much hope they will consider our objections and abandon efforts to move their telescopes to Upper Harkless Flat.

Dr. Scott said that OVRO plans to apply for a special use permit from INF in about two months. It will then prepare an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). Public comments will be solicited as part of the EIS process. After consideration of the completed EIS, INF will decide whether to issue the special use permit.

Although the Bristlecone Chapter of CNPS is not opposed in principle to establishing an observatory at a high elevation site, we feel

that the environmental integrity of Upper Harkless Flat should not be sacrificed for this proposed project. We would be glad to work with OVRO to identify other potential sites in the area at which construction would not have unacceptable impacts. Members who are interested in this issue should contact Sally Manning, Richard Potashin, Steve Ingram or Daniel Pritchett for more information.

.....Sally Manning

Fish and Wildlife Service Lists Five Desert  
Astragalus Species as Threatened and  
Endangered

The long awaited listings of rare desert Astragalus species by the Fish and Wildlife Service were published in The Federal Register Vol. 63, No. 193 on Tuesday, October 6 1998. The endangered listings include; *Astragalus jagerianus* (Lane Mountain milk-vetch), *Astragalus lentiginosus* var. *coachellae* (Coachella milk-vetch), and *Astragalus tricarinatus* (triple-ribbed milk-vetch). The threatened listings include *Astragalus magdalenae* var. *peirsonii* (Peirson's milk-vetch) and our endemic Fish Slough milk-vetch (*Astragalus lentiginosus* var. *piscinensis*).

Pine Creek Development Proposal Still  
Moving Forward

Pacific Development Corporation from Costa Mesa is still advancing plans to build their Pine Creek Communities Development Project. This is a huge housing tract of 362 houses, ranches and commercial development on 260 acres east and northeast of present Rovana north of Bishop. The housing tract would be in the middle of a riparian area which is home to threatened bird species and would also affect critical winter range of the Round Valley mule deer herd. Many people feel the project is too

big and that this type of housing needs to be located near present urban areas and not in rural open space. Now, the Department of Fish and Game can purchase the property or create a Conservation Easement. But before Fish and Game can approach Pacific Development with the purchase ideas, the majority of the Inyo County Supervisors need to have no opposition to the plan. It is in the Board of Supervisor's hands.

Please contact our Inyo County Supervisors and ask them to support (or at least not oppose) the Department of Fish and Game's purchase or Conservation Easement plan for the Rovana property. Please call or write:

Linda Arcularius, Rt. 2 Box 24A,  
Bishop 93514 (760) 387-2692

Julie Bear, 336 1<sup>st</sup> Street, Bishop  
93514, (760) 873-6852

Robert Michener, 3117 S.  
Tumbleweed, Bishop 93514 (760)  
872-0917

Carroll Hambleton, P.O. Box 189,  
Big Pine 93513 (760) 938-3021

Michael Dorame, Rt. 2 Box 159,  
Lone Pine 93545 (760) 876-5900

.....Kathy Duvall - Legislation

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**Native Plant Notes**

*Our Best Supporting Buckwheat*

While California buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*) may never be cast as a big star in any native plant movies, it definitely deserves credit for its interesting and reliable performance in the garden. Many varieties of the adaptable California buckwheat range throughout northern Mexico and the southern half of California

and into the Great Basin.

Different varieties grow along the coast, through the coast ranges and up into the desert mountains, reaching into the lower slopes of the eastside of the Sierra Nevada. *Eriogonum fasciculatum* v. *polifolium* is a common shrub on the eastside, growing in large populations on the lower slopes of the Sierra foothills, almost down to the valley floor.

California buckwheat is extremely heat tolerant and adapted to the whims of our climate. One of its best qualities is that bugs and bees and butterflies find it delicious. It is fascinating to see how the air around this buckwheat is alive with buzzing and fluttering when the pale pink blooms appear. It is well known as a good honey plant. To us humans who don't look to the California buckwheat for a meal, it is actually at its showiest in the late summer and fall when the flowers dry to a bright rust color. Cut stems of the flowers then look great in dried flower arrangements.

California buckwheat forms nice mounds reaching several feet high by three feet wide when mature. With good winter moisture, a seedling will grow quickly and will flower the first summer in the ground. Propagation by seed is easy with no pre-treatment required. Give this plant full sun, good drainage, watering to get it started and then plenty of benign and appreciative neglect.

As Doris Fredendall once said, "What else do plants have to do but grow?"

.....Karen Ingram-Ferrell

### 1998 Plant Sale Report

The second annual plant sale, held in early September, was a great success thanks to lots of volunteers and to the wonderful plants we had to offer. It was an exciting

sale with a group of friendly but anxious customers waiting for the opening whistle signaling the start of the sale. Plants flew into boxes at a frantic pace and before we could exhale, most plants were gone and so were all the customers.

It was really enjoyable to have a large and enthusiastic group of volunteers to help with the sale and propagation of the plants. I'd like to thank them all for their support: Mary Allen, Annette Busby, Mary DeDecker, Kathy Duvall, Marilyn and Jack Ferrell, Scott Hetzler, Anne and Kirk Halford, Steve Ingram, Sally Manning, Craig Olafson, Diane Payne, Richard Potashin, Daniel Pritchett, Sacha Stuart, and Sherryl Taylor. Thanks also to Jack and Marilyn Ferrell for hosting the post-sale party!

Seeds are already collected and partly cleaned for next year's sale so look for more fun volunteer opportunities!

.....Karen Ferrell-Ingram

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### **An Oasis of Natural Beauty**

Quickly moving traffic blurred past a small group of people working in the rocky, sandy Mojave Desert soils beside a Kern County highway. Merrilee Ray, member of the Oasis Garden Club of Indian Wells Valley, gestured to a recently re-planted barrel cactus (*Echinocactus polycephalus*). "These cactus are so heavy to move that we dug them up and put them on a "mover's blanket", she explained. "It took seven people to haul each one back to the truck".

The specimen was one of more than 40 barrel cactus and several hundred beavertail cactus (*Opuntia basilaris*) salvaged from a California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) road widening project, then replanted on the site of another state

highway project.

The innovative rescue-and-revegetation project brought together members of the Oasis Garden Club, the California Native Plant Society, and Caltrans.

The planting project evolved from the coincidental convergence of similar objectives and dedicated volunteers.

Caltrans biologist Tom Dayak had earlier surveyed a desert saltbush and shadscale scrub community at Caltrans' Alabama Gates Four Lane project. The project, north of Lone Pine involved construction of two new southbound highway lanes. Dayak was aware that the cactus occurred on the site. The species, not afforded any legal protection were doomed to destruction unless a suitable habitat could be found, and a group of volunteers could undertake the formidable task of replanting them.

Enter Dayak. "I called the Bristlecone Chapter and asked them to publish a note in their newsletter stating that these plants were available".

Merrilee Ray responded to the notice. "Tom voiced concern about the beautiful specimens of barrel cactus and asked if CNPS members or other interested parties would be interested in assisting with the salvage of these cactus".

According to Merrilee, the catalyst that enabled the project to take root was an unexpected gift made possible by California's 21<sup>st</sup> District Congressman, Bill Thomas. "Congressman Thomas was aware of several of the Garden Club's conservation projects and he wanted to help". "He asked that \$1,000 be donated to the Oasis Garden Club for its continuing work".

Even with the successful replanting of

hundreds of cactus, the project is still far from complete. New plantings from a diverse palette of native species will be added to the site to help restore the unique and fragile desert community.

Rather than use non-native, horticultural species the club elected to plant regional natives only. "They (non-native ornamentals) wouldn't last ten minutes in this desert", Wanda exclaimed. "Species adapted to survive during long periods of drought and temperature extremes are required". "I think too, that people don't realized that our desert plants are very beautiful and are equal or even prettier than the ornamentals".

Satisfaction with the effort is intrinsic and intangible for the volunteers who's endless hours of labor are not tallied. "Seeing them grow and bloom, and to survive is satisfying in itself", Wanda noted. "In the desert any plant that will grow and survive is a joy to see", Merrilee added.

For many travelers, a drive through the great expanses of California's desert regions may be an uplifting experience in appreciation of the diversity and natural beauty of these unique environs. Only a few will notice the tiny Oasis at Brady's Interchange, or perhaps the few gardeners on the roadside working to make the journey even more pleasing.

.....G.W. Hartwell - Caltrans Office of State  
Landscape Architecture

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**Book Review**  
Chris Campbell

*Revealing the Bristlecone*

On dry, windswept mountaintops of the Great Basin in the Western U.S. grow the oldest living trees. Despite extreme conditions and scant soil and moisture, the bristlecone pine can survive, grow and endure for more than 5,000 years.

Since the story of human knowledge is short when compared to the history of these long-lived trees, scientists, ecologists, artists, and writers have looked to these trees to understand our own natural and cultural history. In *A Garden of Bristlecones: Tales of Change in the Great Basin*, author Michael P. Cohen presents professional and popular conceptions of the bristlecones as a set of narratives. In this transdisciplinary volume, Cohen includes both cultural analysis and a substantial amount of basic information on bristlecone natural history and ecology.

Examining this oldest of living things from historical, archaeological, dendrochronological, linguistic, and aesthetic view points, Cohen traces the development of the bristlecone as a cultural icon while providing an effective Great Basin setting for its appreciation.

*A Garden of Bristlecones* is as much a human history of the bristlecones as it is a study of the tree itself and provides much information about the scientists who have studied these trees; their personalities, their motives, their funding sources, and their ideas. The controversy surrounding the cutting down of the oldest known bristlecone is explored in detail posing questions and answers about the cultural significance and political consequences of that act and of the bristlecones in general. Cohen uses the bristlecone pine as a case study of modern human interaction with nature.

*A Garden of Bristlecones: Tales of Change in the Great Basin* (ISBN 0-87417-269-9) is the first volume in the Environmental Arts

and Humanities Series. It is available in paperback for \$34.95. Production of this book has been funded, in part, by a grant from the Nevada State Council on the Arts.

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### **New Members**

The Bristlecone Chapter Warmly Welcomes  
the Following New Members

Barbara Bently  
Salt Lake City, UT

Darryl Kuhns  
Reno, NV

**Next Newsletter Deadline. December 31st**

### **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	\$20.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual or Library	\$35.00
<input type="checkbox"/> International	\$35.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Family or Group	\$45.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Supporting	\$75.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Plant Lover	\$100.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Patron	\$250.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor	\$500.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Life	\$1,000.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Corporate	\$1,000.00

Please make check payable to: The California Native Plant Society. **Mail to:** Bristlecone Chapter, CNPS. P.O. Box Drawer 989, Lone Pine, 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. Please send newsletter articles not memberships to newsletter editor Anne Halford at 312 Shepard Lane, Bishop, CA 93515 - Or email to: [ahalford@ca.blm.gov](mailto:ahalford@ca.blm.gov)

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