

#### NEXT CHAPTER MEETING

Our September meeting will be in Lone Pine at the Lone Pine High School Library (1 block east of Hwy 395 on Muir St.) on Wednesday, September 29, at 7:00 p.m. Art Cowley, Program Coordinator for the California Register of Big Trees, will give his program, "Update on the Biggest Trees in California." Mr. Cowley has visited and photographed 130 of the 180 California "champion" trees, and is working on adding more. He will focus his slide presentation on the biggest native trees in our state, and will discuss the value of big trees.

The November meeting will be our Annual Potluck and Slide Show on November 17 at the Methodist Church in Big Pine. The potluck set-up will begin at 6:00 with dinner at 6:30 sharp. Please bring your favorite slides and stories from the past year to share.

#### NEXT CHAPTER BOARD MEETING

Tuesday, September 21, at 7:00 p.m. at the White Mountain Research Station. All chapter members and other interested individuals are welcome and encouraged to attend. Members, please bring a treat to share.

#### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

This past summer seems to have been pretty good for wildflowers in the Sierra Nevada and White Mountains. It sure doesn't hurt to get some summer rain in the high country. In July I got a chance to hike up to White Mountain Peak. The flowers were really good starting from 10,000 on up to 14,000 feet. By the way, I want to correct something I read in the Book Reviews section of the July, 1999 Fremontia. White Mountain Peak is not white and is not made up of Dolomite. I have been up to the peak and the rocks are brown. I checked Dr. Clem Nelson's "Geologic Map of the Central White-Inyo Range" and the peak is mapped as Metavolcanic rocks. Some of the range looks white and there is dolomite found in the White Mountains but not on White Mt. Peak.

Our chapter's fall plant sale is coming up soon. Karen gave me a copy of the list of plants we will be selling and after I looked it over my mouth was watering. You should try and make it out to our plant sale preview on September 8th. Getting a chance to look over the plants before the sale will help you decide what to go after the day of the sale. From past experience I know that some plants sell out really fast. Don't worry though, this year we are hiring extra security guards to help control the huge crowds that will be storming the plant sales tables. See you there!

.....Scott Hetzler

## NATIVE PLANT SALE PREVIEW 1999

Some of the incredible diversity of our region's plant life will be featured at this year's native plant sale. Seed collecting expeditions were made to the Alabama Hills, the Inyo Mountains, the high Sierra, the White Mountains and places in between. Many good things came from those trips including scarlet milk-vetch (*Astragalus coccineus*), apricot globe-mallow (*Sphaeralcea ambigua*), desert mountain penstemon (*Penstemon fruticiformis*), Lobb's buckwheat (*Eriogonum lobbii*), purple sage (*Salvia dorrii*), and fernbush (*Chamaebatiaria millefolium*), along with 40 other species. This year's plant sale will feature a special selection of rock garden plants for those gardeners who crave the exquisite and beautiful in miniature.

To showcase the wide variety of plants offered at the sale, the Bristlecone Chapter is holding a plant sale preview. There will be a slide show illustrating the plants that will be sold and information given on their growing requirements. A free plant raffle and refreshments will cap off the evening. The preview will be held on Wednesday, September 8 at 7:00 p.m. at the White Mountain Research Station in Bishop.

The plant sale will be held on Saturday, September 11 from 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. at the Tri-County Fairgrounds in Bishop.

For more information or to request a species list, please call Karen Ferrell-Ingram at 387-2913 or e-mail to [ingram@telis.org](mailto:ingram@telis.org)

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## LOCAL CONSERVATION ISSUES

### A Modest Proposal or INYO MOUNTAINS LETTERS NEEDED!

In previous issues we have written about a proposal by astronomers from the Owens Valley Radio Observatory (OVRO) to build a new radio observatory at a site they have named "Upper Harkless Flat" in the Inyo Mountains just north of Papoose Flat. Members of Eastern Sierra Audubon Society, the Bristlecone Chapter of CNPS, Friends of the Inyo, The Range of Light Group of the Sierra Club, and the California Wilderness Coalition and others have all repeatedly told OVRO this is not an appropriate site and urged them to look elsewhere.

OVRO, unfortunately, has decided to ignore our views. In a meeting held with Inyo National Forest (INF) Supervisor Jeff Bailey on June 29, OVRO revealed that it intends to pursue the project. It plans to make a public announcement in October and submit an application for a Special Use Permit around November 1. It expects to start construction in January, 2001. Be prepared for a media blitz!

In the meeting of June 29, OVRO attempted to justify the project by stating that the new observatory would provide "opportunities" (i.e. jobs) for research scientists and "hands-on educational experience" for graduate students. OVRO thus seems to believe INF is obligated to provide work for astronomers and experience for graduate students at the expense of wilderness, biodiversity, and rational land use planning.

More interesting is the revelation (in the meeting of June 29) that OVRO has already submitted a proposal to the National Science Foundation. The proposal has passed the first round of screening and OVRO expects it to be funded. Not content with merely attempting to degrade public land for its project, OVRO is thus also attempting to get

the public to foot part of the bill. We would like to suggest a new term for this process: "Welfare Astronomy"!

There is an obvious and simple solution to this controversy. Just as the US government pays subsidies to farmers to not grow excess crops, why not let the NSF fund OVRO to NOT build an observatory?! This way the astronomers will still have their funding (as will the local economy) and the Inyo Mountains will be spared.

Unfortunately, it is unlikely this modest proposal will be enacted. We feel no choice, therefore, but to try to motivate you, our readers, to WRITE LETTERS TO JEFF BAILEY! OVRO has to get a Special Use Permit from INF before it can build the observatory. If you do not believe INF should sacrifice wilderness and biodiversity to support welfare astronomy, please let INF Supervisor Jeff Bailey know. Remind him that his responsibility is to manage public land resources rationally. Allowing astronomers to further their careers by fragmenting wilderness and impacting biodiversity is not rational land management.

NOTE: The final decision will probably be determined by the extent to which OVRO can generate pressure on Jeff Bailey from politicians in Washington DC. That is why it is important to send copies of any letters to Supervisor Bailey to our representatives listed below. OVRO has undoubtedly already been lobbying them and it is time they heard our points of view.

Addresses:  
 Jeff Bailey, Supervisor  
 Inyo National Forest  
 873 North Main Street  
 Bishop, CA 93514

Senator Barbara Boxer  
 1700 Montgomery Street  
 Suite 240  
 San Francisco, CA 94111  
 (415) 403-0100  
 senator@boxer.senate.gov

Senator Dianne Feinstein  
 331 Hart Senate Office Building  
 Constitution Ave. and 2nd St. NE  
 Washington D.C. 20510-0504  
 (202) 224-3841  
 senator@feinstein.senate.gov

Representative Jerry Lewis  
 1150 Brookside Ave  
 Suite J-5  
 Redlands, CA 92373  
 (800) 233-1700

For more information about the project and CNPS's position please contact:  
 Karen Farrell-Ingram: (760) 387-2913  
 Daniel Pritchett: (760) 873-8943

.....Daniel Pritchett

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### **CNPS Bristlecone Chapter 1999 Fall Trip Schedule**

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.

**September 11, Saturday. Native Plant Sale.** From 9:00 to 11:00 a.m. at the Tri-County Fairgrounds in Bishop.

**October 9, Saturday. Shadow Lake for fall colors, Sierra Nevada. Leaders: Kathy Duvall and Cathy Rose.** Meet at the Mammoth Lakes Forest Service Ranger Station at 8:30 a.m. for carpooling down to Agnew Meadows (8335'). A 3-mile hike (6 miles round-trip) to beautiful Shadow Lake (8750') set below the Ritter Range, with aspen along the way. A stiff climb from the San Joaquin River up to the lake but otherwise a moderate hike. Bring Weedon's Sierra Nevada Flora. Call Cathy at 935-4329 for more information.

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### FIELD TRIP REPORTS

#### *Last Chance Mountains and Dedeckera Canyon - May 22-23*

The destination of the May 22-23 field trip led by Steve Ingram, Karen Ferrell-Ingram and Derham Giuliani was a limestone canyon in the Last Chance Mountains about 10 miles due north of Eureka Dunes where Derham had located a new population of July gold (*Dedeckera eurekaensis*). The purpose of the trip was to monitor this new population and to help Derham identify other plants growing in this canyon which are hosts for the insects he studies.

We were welcomed to the Last Chance Mountains by hues of yellow and orange - Apricot globe-mallow (*Sphaeralcea ambigua*), Brittlebush (*Encelia actoni*) and Shockley's goldenhead (*Acamptopappus shockleyi*) - evidence of spring rains. We left the Death Valley road at the mountain crest and followed old mining roads north and east to the canyon. Descending into the canyon on foot, we found many limestone

endemics including budding July gold (*Dedeckera eurekaensis*), the naked-stemmed daisy (*Enceliopsis nudicaulis*) and the Rock evening primrose (*Camissonia walkeri* ssp. *tortilis*). Derham removed insects from an antifreeze trap, carefully storing them away for later study. As conversation drifted toward caterpillars, butterflies, nectar, and pollination, our attentions were drawn to the flowers' visitors as well as the blooms.

For closer looks at the rock midget (*Mimulus rupicola*) we scrambled up a steep slope, arriving on a ridge where we ate lunch looking east to a panoramic view and building thunderheads. From the ridge we tried to estimate the number of *Dedeckera eurekaensis* on the facing slope - 500 to 1,000? The approaching thunderstorm didn't keep us from hiking to the sites of two listed plants, the showy limestone beardtongue (*Penstemon calcareus*) and the chocolate-scented Gilman's wild buckwheat (*Eriogonum gilmanii*.)

Those of us camping found tent sites in a nearby canyon among mining relics and near an open mine shaft. After exploring the mine to the extent of our courage and common sense, we filled up on our suppers and good conversation around the campfire.

A trip to Dedeckera Canyon the next morning - with its multitude of blooming limestone endemics - was a bonus to an already bloom-filled trip.

.....Sherryl Taylor

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#### *Calico Hills and Silver Peak Range June 23<sup>rd</sup>*

We were eleven people including trip leader Scott Hetzler, in four sturdy vehicles who entered Fish Lake Valley from the north, passing antelope. At the edge of a large

playa, grasses and other salt-tolerant species demanded a look. Near the road bloomed a showy pink *Camissonia* and California chicory (*Rafinesquia californica*).

Wild horses watched from afar as we motored up into the Calico Hills. Much *Gilia* and many low clumps of *Langloisia* lined the road. Several stops were made; easy to spot were *Psoralea*, *Opuntia echinocarpa*, and apricot globe mallow (*Sphaeralcea ambigua*). On one special hillside bushy *Hecastocleis shockleyi* grew on both sides of the road. Their tiny flowers invited us up close.

After lunch in the welcome shade of a large cave our caravan ascended a long, surprisingly verdant slope into the Silver Peak range. Our leader had perfectly timed the best bloom. For miles we were rewarded with “forests” of tall blooming *Penstemon floridus* var. *floridus* and roadside prickly poppy (*Argemone munita*). Once atop the crest, removing our eyes from the chemical lake of the big heapleach gold mine proved difficult. But there the *Penstemon speciosus* diverted us.

The final stop was a hot tub and a soak under the vast sky-dome. One wrinkled habitu , emerging from a nearby RV, remarkably resembled another desert denizen we observed earlier - a horned lizard!

.....Larry Nahm

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### *Middle Gaylor Lake and Above - August 7<sup>th</sup>*

Six strong hikers joined leaders Kathy Duvall and Cathy Rose for a hike from Tioga Pass to Middle Gaylor Lake, above the Granite lake cirque and around for a spectacular loop through subalpine and alpine country.

On the trail to Gaylor Lake there was a goodly array of Composites, including wandering daisy (*Erigeron peregrinus*), prostrate patches of silver mat (*Raillardella argentea*), tall creek groundsel (*Senecio triangularis*), clumps of goldenrod (*Solidago multiradiata*), and the short alpine form of the highly variable white yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*). The rock slide near the lake was alive with marmots and pikas, and Belding ground squirrels called from the meadow edges. Mary Allen, who listened carefully to the explanation of the formation of pocket gopher cores in the meadow leading to Granite Lake, aptly described them as “the tailings of pocket gophers”.

The views of Mt. Dana, Dana Plateau, the Cathedral Range, and even Mt. Lyell were superb all the way, and it was not difficult to climb up to the high granite slopes above the cirque where there were alpine species such as the curious white (*Castilleja nana*) with its black stigmas, *Penstemon davidsonii* just past bloom, *Luzula divaricata* in the shade of a boulder, rock fringe (*Epilobium obcordatum*) pouring over the granite in pink masses, patches of yellow-green *Podistera nevadensis*, and three plants named originally by Linnaeus: alpine sorrel (*Oxyria digyna*) with its tasty round leaves, shrubby cinquefoil (*Potentilla fruticosa*) wind-pruned to a few inches high, and tiny circumpolar *Sibbaldia procumbens*. In a snow stream the discovery of the day, *Claytonia nevadensis*, bloomed in ice water among pebbles.

The descent to Middle Gaylor was steep and bouldery. Masses of tiny *Saxifraga bryophora* bloomed in patches of sand, and the graceful sedges *Carex congdonii* and *Carex spectabilis* waved in the breeze. Jack Crowther found peak saxifrage (*Saxifraga nidifica*) nestled under a rock growing with American parsley fern (*Cryptogramma*

*acrostichoides*) and fragile fern (*Cystopteris fragilis*). From high up a mass of blue could be seen below; it turned out to be an incredible profusion of *Lupinus covillei*, a tall fuzzy lupine covered with flowers.

Although the hike turned out to be fairly strenuous, the superb scenery, and variety of animal and plant life made it a worthwhile effort.

.....Cathy Rose

### WHO'S IN A NAME?

Desert calico, *Loeseliastrum matthewsii* (A. Gray) S. Timbrook (Polemoniaceae)

The exquisite desert calico, which charms all who drop to knees and forearms for a closer look, is found blooming up and down the Owens Valley in May and June. Its range extends across the deserts to the south and east, and into Nevada. It was among a collection of Owens Valley plants made by Washington Matthews in 1876 and/or 1877, which he sent to Asa Gray at the Harvard Herbarium. Gray honored Matthews by naming two of the previously undescribed plants for him: the desert calico and the bushy bedstraw (*Galium matthewsii* A. Gray).

Matthews (1843-1905) was born in Ireland but was raised in Iowa, his family having moved to this country when he was a child. Following in his father's footsteps, he became a medical doctor, and upon receiving his degree in 1864, took up service in the US Army. After the Civil War he stayed on as a US Army surgeon, and was posted to several camps and forts around the West, from the plains of the upper Missouri River, to California, Nevada, and New Mexico. Many Army doctors who

were sent

West, like Matthews, pursued scientific interests in their spare time. Collecting plants was one of Matthews' interests, but his chief interest was Native American ethnography. His extensive studies of Hidatsa and Navajo cultures brought him international recognition. Present-day Navajos, in search of knowledge of their heritage, consult not only tribal elders but also Matthews' sensitive works, such as *Navaho Legends* published in 1897. Charles Darwin consulted Matthews while gathering information on various cultures for his work *The Expression of the Emotions in Man and Animals*, and referred to his input at several places in the finished work.

Matthews was ordered to Camp Independence in April of 1876 to replace the then current Camp's doctor, who was about to depart for another post. In early May he paid a visit to the offices of the *Inyo Independent*, which reported in its May 13 issue: "We were this week favored with a call from Dr. Washington Matthews, Post Surgeon of Camp Independence. He manifests considerable interest in regard to Inyo in general, particularly her geology, natural curiosities and the evidences of former races visible upon the pictured rocks near Fish Slough to the northward and among the hills of Cerro Gordo on the south." Perhaps by the time of Matthews' visit to the offices of the *Independent* he had already discovered the desert calico in bloom.

Over the ensuing months, the *Independent* reported instances of his treating civilians, including the vaccination of hundreds of Owens Valley Native Americans against smallpox. He was also reported to have come in second in a Christmas Day archery contest held near the courthouse, which drew most everyone in town. In July of

1877, at the time of the closure of Camp Independence, Matthews left the Owens Valley to assume the surgeon's position at another Western fort. In September of 1880 he was assigned to Fort Wingate, N.M., where he began learning about the Navajo peoples and their culture. He also collected plants in New Mexico; a new species in his 1882 collection was named for him, *Astragalus matthewsii* S. Wats. (Serenio Watson was an assistant to Asa Gray). He was not quite 50 when he suffered a stroke, which ended his military career but not his Navajo studies. His book, *The Night Chant: A Navaho Ceremony*, considered "probably the best tribal study ever published", appeared in 1902, not long before his death.

(More details, including pictures and references, may be found on my website: [lnr.dragonfire.net/NATRIST/](http://lnr.dragonfire.net/NATRIST/))

.....Larry Blakely

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### **Tibetan Ethnobotanist Shares Knowledge with Local Chapter**

In mid-August several Bristlecone chapter members were fortunate enough to take a hike with Dr. Lobsang Dhondup from Tibet and Linda Smith from the Medicinal Plant Project of the University of California, Santa Barbara. Dr. Dhondup is a medical doctor in exile from his native land of Tibet and currently studying English in Los Angeles while offering consultations in traditional Tibetan medicine.

Dr. Dhondup was very interested in learning about the flora of the high Sierra because his medical practice in Tibet was based on the medicinal qualities of the plants of Himalayas. We hiked together up to Ruby Lake in the Little Lakes Basin where Dr. Dhondup was excited to find many plants that were related to the plants he used in

Tibet. While he found our mountains to be rather low in elevation he was able to relate many medicinal uses to the plants that we found along our trail. Some genera and families he was familiar with from the Himalaya were *Epilobium*, *Fagarea*, *Circium*, *Apiaceae* and *Rosaceae*. He recommended *Senecio* for healing cuts, *Gentianopsis* for internal organ ailments, and *Potentilla* for colds. Of course, many factors are considered before a prescription is given, but it was intriguing to look at our familiar native plants in a new light - as a pharmacy.

At the end of the day we were left thinking about a paradox. The world is truly a small place when distant countries and mountain ranges share similar floras. And yet, the arbitrary political boundaries created by humans, and violently enforced as in Tibet, cause such alienation. Dr. Dhondup was forced by the Chinese to flee Tibet in 1990, hiking 7 days through the Himalaya to reach Nepal. He is not able to return to Tibet, though his family remains there.

We were very grateful to have beautiful and health-enhancing wildflowers to look at after hearing Dr. Dhondup's sad story.

.....Karen Ferrell-Ingram

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### **NEW MEMBERS**

**The Bristlecone Chapter warmly welcomes the following new members**

**James Paulus, Bishop  
Chris Mattingly, Ridgecrest  
Willard Norberg, San Francisco**

**Next Newsletter Deadline: October 25<sup>th</sup>.**





## 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"/> Life	\$1,000.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor	\$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 93514 - or email to: [ahalford@ca.blm.gov](mailto:ahalford@ca.blm.gov)

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