

DEDICATED TO THE PRESERVATION OF THE CALIFORNIA NATIVE FLORA

Volume 19 No. 6 November 1999

NEXT CHAPTER MEETING

The November meeting will be our Annual Potluck and slide show on November 17 at the Methodist Church on School Street 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.

The January meeting will feature Dana York, new botanist for Death Valley National Park. The meeting will be held on Wednesday, January 26, at 7:00 p.m. at the White Mountain Research Station on East Line Street in Bishop.

NEXT CHAPTER BOARD MEETING

Tuesday, November 9, 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

Starting next year our chapter will have a new membership chairperson. We will also be changing our membership mailing address to a Bishop Post Office box (see details on page 2). K. C. Wylie has been maintaining the membership list and helping with the newsletter mailing for as long as anyone can remember. From all of us in the chapter, **thank you K.C.** for your many years of help keeping our chapter membership up to date. Kathy Duvall will be taking over as new membership chair starting in January. Unfortunately she will also be stepping down as legislation chair so that position is up for grabs again! Last but not least, we still are looking for someone to serve as hospitality chair. I have been serving as the unofficial hospitality person for awhile now and would greatly appreciate someone stepping up and taking this position over. Thanks - Yours truly,

.....Scott Hetzler, a.k.a. El Presidente

Bristlecone Chapter Updates

Change in Chapter Membership Address

Since our membership will now be handled by Kathy Duvall, all membership and newsletter subscription correspondence will be handled from Bishop. Please make note of the following address change and send Bristlecone Chapter memberships and newsletter subscriptions to:

**Bristlecone Chapter, CNPS P.O. Box 364,
Bishop, CA 93515-0364.**

Newsletter articles still need to be sent to newsletter editor, Anne Halford at 312 Shepard Lane, Bishop, CA 93514 or preferably email, at ahalford@ca.blm.gov

UPCOMING EVENTS

The Jepson Herbarium Public Programs
1999-2000 - A Series of Workshops on
Botanical and Ecological Subjects

Below is a list of the Weekend Workshops,
Basic Botany Classes, & Special Series Courses
we are offering this season.

November 1999

Edible & Medicinal Mushrooms: Cultures and
Techniques
November 13 - 14
Location: UC Berkeley

January 2000

Arctostaphylos
January 21 - 23
Location: UC Hastings Reserve, Carmel Valley

March 2000

Microbiotic Soil Crusts & Lichens of the Eastern
Mojave Desert
March 10 - 12
Location: Desert Studies Center, Mojave Desert

Basics of Botanical Illustration
March 18 - 19 and/or
March 25 - 26
Location: UC Berkeley

April 2000

The Jepson Manual: How to Use the Keys
April 1 - 2
Location: UC Berkeley

Vegetation and Flora of San Luis Obispo
County
April 7- 9
Location: Rancho el Chorro, San Luis Obispo
County

Basic Botany II. Fifty Plant Families in the Field
April 8 - 9 and
April 15 - 16
Location: UC Berkeley

Wildflower Photography: an Introduction to
Field Techniques
April 14 - 16
Location: Bodega Marine Laboratory

Flora of Santa Rosa Island
April 20 - 23
Location: Santa Rosa Island

Poaceae
April 29 - 30
Location: UC Berkeley

The Jepson Desert Manual: A Preview
April 28 - 30
Location: Sweeney Granite Mountains Desert
Research Center

Facilities Use Fee: In addition to the course fee,
there will be a separate fee for facilities use for
those workshops that are held off the UCB
campus. The use fee will include room and
board where applicable and will be billed
approximately 60 days prior to the
course. For more information please call Staci
Markos or Betsy Ringrose at (510) 643-7008 or
e-mail smarkos@socrates.berkeley.edu

CONSERVATION

Upper Harkless Observatory Update

In the last issue of this newsletter we wrote that astronomers at the Owens Valley Radio Observatory [OVRO] planned to publicly announce in September or October their proposal to build a new observatory in the Inyo Mountains. This statement was based on a schedule OVRO gave the Inyo National Forest in June, 1999. On Friday morning, September 17, Dr. Steve Scott called and said that OVRO had fallen behind schedule by at least 2 months. When asked what the new announcement date would be, Dr. Scott would not be specific. We assume the announcement will come sometime in December or January.

In the last issue we also mentioned a proposal made by OVRO to the National Science Foundation (NSF) to seek financial support for the project. Because the NSF gives out public money, we felt it only fair that we be given information about how many of our tax dollars were being sought and how, exactly, they would be used. We asked the Principal Investigator, Dr. Anneila Sargent for this information but she declined to provide it. In August, Vice President Steve Ingram then signed a letter (along with representatives of the Eastern Sierra Audubon Society, Friends of Inyo, and the California Wilderness Coalition) to the NSF explaining our views on this project. The NSF has not seen fit to reply to our letter. The NSF had not, however, seen fit to fund Dr. Sargent's proposal as of 10/24/99. NSF funding decisions can be viewed at the NSF website at <http://www.nsf.gov>. Query the awards database for grants to the Principal Investigator "Sargent" from California Institute of Technology to see if/when this proposal gets funded.

Rumor has it that OVRO expects to be turned down by the Inyo National Forest and is putting its hopes on its connections in Washington, D.C. This is a very real danger. It is thus essential that we educate our representatives about this issue and make them aware of our views as soon

as possible.

Addresses:

Mr. 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

Inyo-LA Water Agreement News

After attending the Technical Group meeting of September 16, 1999, and the Standing Committee Meeting of October 1, 1999, we decided in consultation with other Bristlecone Chapter board members that the Bristlecone Chapter should publicly advocate positions with regard to some of the outstanding issues before the Standing Committee. Specifically, LADWP is proposing two policies which, if adopted by the Standing Committee, would tend to weaken the protection for Owens Valley vegetation provided in the Water Agreement. A third

LADWP proposal would relegate eradication of saltcedar to a lower priority in the project to re-water the Lower Owens River. Inyo County representatives on the Standing Committee are opposing these misguided proposals but need public support.

To communicate our support we met twice with Supervisor Julie Bear (currently one of Inyo's representatives on the Standing Committee) to explain CNPS's positions. We hope to have our positions sent to Inyo County Supervisors and Water Commissioners and published in the Inyo Register by the time this newsletter is mailed.

Although we are pleased that Inyo County's representatives to the Standing Committee seem to understand the threat posed by DWP's proposed policies, we were very disappointed that they agreed with DWP to have a secret meeting to attempt resolve the disagreements prior to the next Standing Committee Meeting in December. There is nothing in the substance of the issues under discussion that warrants secrecy. While there is no language in the Water Agreement which prohibits such secret meetings, we believe the issues under discussion are important for the long term health of Owens Valley vegetation and should be given the widest possible exposure. Needlessly conducting important business in secret increases public cynicism about the entire Water Agreement and we hope our representatives will not agree to such meetings in the future.

.....Daniel Pritchett

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

Shadow Lake - October 9

On a golden October day we joined Cathy Rose and Kathy Duvall for a fall colors hike from Agnew Meadows to Shadow Lake. The quaking aspen (*Populus tremuloides*), black cottonwood (*Populus trichocarpa*), and willow (*Salix* spp.) were indeed beautiful along the San Joaquin River.

Conifers were a special feature of this hike. We saw seven of them: lodgepole pine (*Pinus contorta* var. *murrayana*), Jeffrey pine (*P. jeffreyi*), western white pine (*Pinus albicaulis*), red fir (*Abies magnifica*), mountain hemlock (*Tsuga mertensiana*), and western juniper (*Juniperus occidentalis*). Cathy rose pointed out to us four shrubs that are often found together in the dry chaparral: greenleaf manzanita (*Arctostaphylos patula*), chinquapin (*Chrysolepis sempervirens*), huckleberry oak (*Quercus vaccinifolia*), and snowbush (*Ceanothus cordulatus*). Although late in the season, we spotted three flowers in bloom: Anderson's thistle (*Cirsium andersonii*), California fuchsia (*Epilobium canum*), and a buckwheat (*Eriogonum wrightii*).

Our peaceful lunch stop was lovely Shadow Lake with views of the Ritter Range.

.....Mary Allen

Minaret Summit - August 28th

Nineteen folks from all parts of the east side showed up on the hike along the San Joaquin Ridge from Minaret Summit. The walk began at 9,200 feet and reached approximately 9,700 feet elevation, approximately two miles along the ridge.

In the early part of the hike, we enjoyed numerous, scattered conifers, including white bark pine (*Pinus albicaulis*), western white pine

(*Pinus monticola*), red fir (*Abies magnifica*), lodgepole (*Pinus contorta* var. *murrayana*), and mountain hemlock (*Tsuga mertensiana*). The conifers small size and occasionally twisted growth told of significant exposure on the ridge to fierce Sierra winds. The understory and adjacent clearings were graced with various buckwheats, including *Eriogonum incanum* and nude buckwheat (*Eriogonum nudum* var. *nudum*). Wire lettuce (*Stephanomeria tenuifolia*) bloomed nicely along much of the first section of the hike (the lower elevation). Parry's rabbitbrush (*Chrysothamnus parryi*) dotted the sunnier slopes.

The group spent some time debating whether the plants adjacent to the trail in various parts and in various stages of bloom were members of the hemlock family or not. To the relief of those who had tasted the leaves, it was determined to be Brewer's angelica (*Angelica breweri*). Other "parsleys" along the way included rangers buttons (*Sphenosciadium capitellatum*) and western sweet-cicely (*Osmorhiza occidentalis*).

As the group proceeded up to the lunch spot, the plants changed due to elevation and exposure. Trees in this area were scarce on the windy ridge crest. Sulfur buckwheat (*Eriogonum umbellatum*) and prickly phlox (*Leptodactylon pungens*) grew among the rocks. A magnificent mimulus display painted a portion of the ridge in magenta. The group debated the species. The last experts I spoke to believed that, despite all the keying work that had gone into identifying the mimulus as rare siting of a mimulus that grows elsewhere it was simply the Skunky monkey-flower (*Mimulus mephiticus*). Just smell it, they said.

There were many more species seen, but these were the highlights. Another special treat was the Coopers hawk that soared over the ridge as we ate our lunch and the crystal clear view of the Minaret range. The omnipresent winds on the San Joaquin Ridge sent us all back at about 2 p.m.

.....Heidi Hopkins

WHO'S IN A NAME?

Austin's Beardtongue
Penstemon floridus var. *austinii* (Eastw.) N.
Holmgren (Scrophulariaceae)

Few Eastern Sierra plant groups can match the Penstemons in their many species of striking beauty. Some of their names evoke their charms (e.g., *P. floridus*, *P. spectabilis*); some, providing grist for this miller, honor botanists (*P. floridus* var. *austinii*, *P. newberryi*, etc.); others are a tad mysterious (*P. confusus*, *P. heterodoxus*).

The subject of this essay not only combines the first two of these properties but there is also a bit of mystery surrounding the person named in the honorific. We know his name and dates - Stafford Wallace Austin, b. 1861, d. 1931 - and that he was the husband of one of the most famous former residents of the Owens Valley. Yet, while considerable information is readily available about Mary Austin, it's hard to get details about Wallace (as Mary called him).

He grew up in Hawaii but his education was completed in California, culminating with a degree from UC Berkeley. Mary, a native of Illinois, was tutoring children on a ranch near Bakersfield when, in 1891, she met Wallace, resident then of a neighboring ranch. They entered into a hasty marriage, and in 1892 moved to Lone Pine. Wallace, an engineer, had plans to develop irrigation projects for local settlers, but, unfortunately, the plans did not meet with success. He evidently became attached to the area and stayed on, though it was 6 years before he obtained work commensurate with his education, that in the form of Inyo Co. Superintendent of Schools. Later he became Register in the Desert Land Office in Independence. In 1905 the Austins did battle against the City of Los Angeles when the city's water plans became evident to them, Wallace being in a position to see what was going on.

Mary, who roamed far and wide, later chastised Wallace for clinging to Inyo County, rather than joining her after she had begun to make a living at writing. She had few words of praise for him. An author of a recent article characterizes their marriage as a "nightmare"; "While she was turbulent, egocentric, and abrasive, he was mild, often insensitive to his wife's needs, and inept." Mary claimed that it was she who got Wallace into botany, but she was not complimentary as to the result: "he was never able to carry [botany] to more than a collector's accent, the mere naming and classifying of kinds and orders, avoiding [my] concern with adaptations and local variations." Mary further tells us that Wallace was an avid outdoorsman, continually dragging her off on hiking and camping adventures in the Eastern Sierra which taxed her physical abilities. Mary left him permanently in 1906, and divorced him in 1914; neither remarried. Yet Wallace remained friendly towards Mary through the rest of his life, writing and sending her gifts, and leaving her an insurance policy on his death.

It was on a July 4 outing in 1899, along Oak Creek, that Wallace collected specimens of the plant now known as Austin's Beardtongue. Alice Eastwood (the Eastw. in the full name), curator at the Herbarium of the California Academy of Sciences (CAS) in San Francisco, named Wallace's plant *Penstemon austinii* in 1905. The plant was later (1979) deemed by N. Holmgren to be a variety of *P. floridus*.

Mary, "a woman of genius", may well have had the deeper botanical insight, but perhaps Wallace was the more botanically driven. He appears to have collected a large number of plants. His latest specimen in the University and Jepson Herbaria (U-JH) (among 65 S. W. Austin specimens listed upon querying the CalFlora databases) bears his collection number 8200. Further research would be needed to confirm that he collected over 8000 specimens; possibly, some were at the CAS, and were lost when the CAS building was destroyed in the 1906 earthquake. His U-JH specimens cover the

period February, 1899 through July, 1906. Except for one from over the crest in Fresno Co., they are all from Inyo Co.

P. floridus var. *austinii* is the only plant named for Wallace. Several other California plants contain austin in the honorific, but they are named in honor of Rebecca Austin (1832-1919) who collected extensively in Northern California. In plants named for her, the honorific is in the female form: austiniae. As far as CalFlora records go, none of "her" 8 plants occur in Inyo Co., and "his" does not occur outside of Inyo Co.

In 1909 Wallace was appointed Receiver for a troubled minerals company engaged in borax recovery on Searles Lake. His work there, carried out under trying circumstances and lasting through 1917, was hugely successful. He subsequently became Los Angeles Manager for the company which owned the operations at Searles Lake. Those operations, under different owners, continue to this day. The value of the mineral reserves in Searles Lake, first carefully explored after Wallace arrived on the scene, is currently estimated at 250 billion dollars. Today in Trona one will find Austin Street, and lingering fond memories of Austin Hall, the social, cultural, and commercial center of town life for 50 years.

I haven't run across any evidence that Wallace engaged in plant collection after leaving the Owens Valley. He kept yearly diaries during his years in Trona, which chronicled his management, but not personal, activities. A perusal of his diaries makes it appear likely that he was just too busy - doing things like thwarting claim jumpers, acquiring land, traveling to San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Washington, D.C. to attend to legal matters, all the while micromanaging affairs at Trona - to do much botanizing. Yet, during wet years especially, he must have cast a wistful eye on spring blossoms in the desert and foothills around Searles Lake.

..... Larry Blakely

Please see more details, pictures, and references that are found on my website:

<nr.dragonfire.net/NATR HIST/>; the website version will also be updated if additional information turns up.

LEGISLATION

There are many Assembly Bills and Senate Bills in the California Legislature according to Vern Goehring, CNPS Legislative Advocate. These topics range from oak woodlands, to a recovery strategy for non-listed plant species, to parks, water and coastal protection bonds. Please contact me and I will be glad to forward a copy of this information to you. (760) 387-2626 or kduvall@telis.org

CNPS Senior Land Management Analyst Emily e has written a letter to president Clinton concerning the influx of Anti-Environmental Riders being attached to unrelated legislation. You can contact her at emilyr@earthlink.net or Defenders of Wildlife <http://www.defenders.org/pr62499c.html> for a complete list or riders and more information.

.....Kathy Duvall

Old Tree Books

If you, like I, enjoyed the new book *Conifers of California* by Lanner (see the review by Steve Ingram in V. 19 No. 4), you might also enjoy some of the older books on western trees. There are two which I especially treasure, and which are readily available on the used book market. One is the classic *Forest Trees of the Pacific Slope* by Sudworth (original 1908; Dover reprint 1967). I got a copy of the original, around 1953, when it was still available from the Government Printing Office. I found a copy of the reprint at EastSide Books for \$2.00 a year or so ago, and, if they don't have one now, many can be found at www.bookfinder.com. The other is *A Natural History of Western Trees* by Donald Culross Peattie (original 1950). Many copies of this book are also available at the BookFinder website, for as little as \$12.00. Both of these books, but especially Peattie, are full of natural history lore, and are just plain fun to read.

.....Larry Blakely

NEW MEMBERS

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

Angelica Jayco

Bishop

**Hal Klieforth
Reno**

**Don Sada
Bishop**

Next Newsletter Deadline: December 29th.

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 membership checks payable to: The California Native Plant Society. **Mail to:** Bristlecone Chapter, CNPS. P.O. Box 364, Bishop, CA 93515-0364.

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 non-members and can be obtained by sending newsletter subscriptions to CNPS. P.O. Box 364, Bishop, CA 93515-0364. Send newsletter articles not memberships to Newsletter Editor Anne Halford at 312 Shepard Lane, Bishop, CA 93514 - or email to: ahalford@ca.blm.gov

California Native Plant Society
Bristlecone Chapter
P.O. Box Drawer 989
Lone Pine, CA
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