

DEDICATED TO THE PRESERVATION OF THE CALIFORNIA NATIVE FLORA

Volume 20 No. 2 March 2000

NEXT CHAPTER MEETING

Our March meeting will be at the Big Pine Methodist Church at 7:00 pm, Wednesday, March 29. Irene Yamashita from the Inyo County Water Department will give a presentation entitled "Native Plant Revegetation as Mitigation in the 1991 Los Angeles/Inyo EIR."

Our Biannual Summer Banquet will be at Whiskey Creek on Thursday evening, June 22. The speaker will be Glenn Keator, with a slide program entitled "Promising Eastside Native Plants for Natural Gardens." He will concentrate on plants from Eastern California's dry habitats, such as sagebrush scrub, pinyon juniper woodland, and Jeffrey pine forest. Dr. Keator, who has a Ph.D. in Botany from U.C. Berkeley, gives lectures and conducts field trips throughout the state. He is the author of Complete Garden Guide to Native Perennials of California and Complete Garden Guide to Native Shrubs of California, among many other publications. Save the date. Banquet details will be forthcoming.

NEXT CHAPTER BOARD MEETING

Tuesday, March 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.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

While you weren't looking your chapter board found something else worthwhile to fund. At our last chapter board meeting we voted to help with funding to equip the new Education Center at the Valentine Reserve. The center will be used by Mono and Inyo County school kids in grades K-12. The University of California's Natural Reserve System is very active in helping students with outdoor science education. We believe that CNPS shares with the University the idea of helping our Children learn more about plants and our states' flora. I hope in the future that our chapter can visit the Valentine Reserve and see first hand what we and the students can learn there.

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

BRISTLECONE CHAPTER HIGHLIGHTS

The CNPS website (www.cnps.org) has a Photo Gallery with some good photo essays, including some on the genus *Calochortus*, butterfly plants, and one by local photographer and botanist Stephen Ingram on Buckwheats of the Eastern Sierra.

UPCOMING EVENTS

The Mono Lake Committee is offering another selection of excellent natural history courses including these botanically orientated selections. For more information about these courses and registration please contact the Mono Lake Committee at (760) 647 6595.

- Pigments, Perfumes, and Poisons: An introduction to plant chemistry, June 23-25, \$110 per person, \$95 for Mono Lake Committee members. Taught by Glenn Keator
- Mono Basin Wildflowers, July 22-23, \$95 per person, \$80 for Mono Lake Committee members. Taught by Mark Bagley.

Discovery, Communication, and Conservation of Plant Biodiversity in California June 16 - 18, 2000

In honor of the 50th anniversary of the Jepson Herbarium we are sponsoring a symposium: Discovery, Communication, and Conservation of Plant Biodiversity in California. We have invited a broad spectrum of experts to discuss the needs and means to refine and expand our knowledge of plant diversity, and to communicate information about the California flora among biological consultants, government agency planners, conservation biologists, academic researchers, private land owners, and the general public. Topics will include the roles of field exploration and systematics for discovery of new biodiversity, the synthesis and distribution of floristic information, and

identification of current challenges in conservation of the California flora. Nationwide integration of biologists, their ideas and research is of immediate importance in our current environment of changing landscapes and increasing urban development and resource use.

Please join us for this gala weekend celebration June 16 - 18, 2000. The weekend program will include an open house at the herbarium, scientific symposium, 50th Anniversary banquet and botanical field trips.

Presentors Include:

Bruce G. Baldwin, UC Berkeley; Theodore M. Barkley, Botanical Research Institute of Texas; Richard Beidleman, UC Berkeley; Ken Berg, United States Fish & Wildlife Service; Roy Buck, EcoSystems West Consulting Group; David Charlet, Community College of Southern Nevada in Las Vegas; Ann Dennis, CalFlora Project; Steve Edwards, Tilden Regional Park; Barbara Ertter, UC Berkeley; Phyllis M. Faber, UC Press; Ronald L. Hartman, University of Wyoming; Christopher Meacham, UC Berkeley; Jodi McGraw, UC Berkeley; Brent D. Mishler, UC Berkeley; Richard L. Moe, UC Berkeley; Sandra Morey, California Department of Fish and Game; Pamela C. Muick, Solano Farmlands & Open Space Foundation; Robert Ornduff, UC Berkeley; Bruce Pavlik, Mills College; J. Mark Porter, Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden, Emily Brin Roberson, California Native Plant Society; James R. Shevock, National Park Service, Pacific West Region; Scott Sundberg, Oregon State University; John W. Taylor, UC Berkeley

For more information contact Betsy Ringrose or Staci Markos at the Jepson Herbarium (510) 643-7008, email ringrose@uclink4.berkeley.edu or smarkos@socrates.berkeley.edu

CNPS Bristlecone Chapter 2000 Field Trip Schedule

After an extremely dry fall and early winter we are finally getting some precipitation. Hooray! The Sierra from about Mammoth northward is doing well with snowpack about normal, but like last year there is a sharp decline southward with the Mount Whitney area still about half of normal. The Owens Valley and desert areas are still way below normal, but at least there has been something and the possibility for more in the next few weeks. We'll have to wait and see what the desert wildflowers do. Please join us.

FIELD TRIP POLICIES

Generally, day trips last most of the day while the overnight trips conclude early Sunday afternoon. 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 are a hand lens, floras, and insect repellent on the Sierra trips. Often we are near the vehicles at lunch, but be prepared to carry your lunch on a hike. Trips 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. For more information contact Field Trip Chairperson Mark Bagley at 760-873-5326 or e-mail: markbagley@qnet.com.

March 25, Saturday. Work party for plant sale propagation. Leader: Karen Ferrell-Ingram. Meet at 10:00 am at the propagation center at the White Mountain Research Station on East Line St. in Bishop. We will be mixing propagation media, preparing flats, and sowing some seeds. Your help will be much appreciated at this early stage of the growing season. Bring gloves, water, and lunch. Call Karen, 387-2913, with questions or if the weather looks threatening.

April 15, Saturday. Willow identification and riparian ecology, Owens Valley. Leader: Jerry Zatorski. Meet at 8:00 am at the Little Black Rock Springs rest stop on Hwy. 395, 16 miles south of Big Pine. We'll explore some riparian systems in the Black Rock and Big Pine areas where we will indulge in willow taxonomy and discuss the ecology and significance of riparian systems. Be prepared for a full day of spring time plant identification and experience the waking of the valley from winter's slumber.

April 29, Saturday. Rose Valley/Coso Mountains. Leader: Mark Bagley. Meet at 9:30 am at the Coso Junction rest stop on Hwy. 395 in Rose Valley, between Dunsmuir and Little Lake. We will explore the west side of the Coso Mountains and adjacent portions of Rose Valley. Easy walking. Dirt roads, high clearance vehicles best, but most cars should be OK.

May 20, Saturday. White Mountains and Bristlecone Pine Forest. Leader: Mark Bagley. Joint field trip with the Dorothy King Young Chapter. Meet at 8:00 am at the Glacier View Campground, junction of Hwy. 395 and 168, just north of Big Pine. Our trip will take us from the Owens Valley floor, near 4000', into the White Mountains up to the subalpine zone, at 10,000', where we'll see the ancient bristlecone pines. Wildflowers will be in bloom at the lower elevations.

May 21, Sunday. Lower Rock Creek Gorge. Leader: Karen Ferrell-Ingram. Joint field trip with the Dorothy King Young Chapter. Meet at 9:00 am at the Paradise Restaurant, north of Bishop on Old Highway 395/Lower Rock Creek Road, and shuttle up to the trailhead with a stop to look over the edge of the gorge. We will hike back down to Paradise, following Lower Rock Creek as it cascades down the gorge below awesome geological formations and through a riparian woodland of western water birch, willows, and one of the few Eastern Sierra stands of Ponderosa pine. This scenic downhill walk provides fascinating views of geologic history, beautiful flowers and good

birdwatching opportunities. It is an easy to moderate walk of about 5 miles, descending from approximately 6200' to 5100', on a fairly rocky, uneven trail. Call Karen at 760-387-2913 with questions.

May 27, Saturday. Owens Lake wetland communities. Leader: Jim Paulus, Great Basin Air Pollution Control Board Botanist. Meet at 10:00 am at the Inter-agency Visitors Center at the junction of Hwy. 395 and 136, just south of Lone Pine. We will caravan to near the sites we'll visit, but will not be able to drive right up to them. Ordinary passenger vehicles should be fine. We will take about three short hikes to view various expressions of Transmontane Alkaline Meadow and Cottonwood-Willow Riparian Forest, both communities of concern in the Owens Valley. We'll learn about how the Lower Owens River Project and Owens Lake dust mitigations should enhance these communities at Owens Lake. The tour should return to the Visitors Center about 4:00 or 4:30 pm.

May 28, Sunday. Swall Meadows wildflower walk. Leader: Karen Ferrell-Ingram. Meet at 1:00 pm at the gravel pit on Sky Meadow Road in Swall Meadows. Planned especially for residents and others who are interested in the many beautiful plants that occur naturally around the Swall Meadows area. This will be an easy walk through the sagebrush scrub and Bishop Tuff deposits that are just north of Swall Meadows. Call Karen at 760-387-2913 for directions.

June 3, Saturday. Upper Harkless Flat, Inyo Mountains. Leader: Daniel Pritchett. Meet at 9:00 am at the Glacier View Campground, at the junction of Hwy. 395 and 168, just north of Big Pine. Upper Harkless Flat is a lovely basin at about 8500' in the Inyo Mountains just north of Papoose Flat. The basin is noteworthy for its beautiful views, the numerous CNPS-listed species which grow there, as well as for the undisturbed quality of its vegetation. Unfortunately, the Owens Valley Radio Observatory is considering development of a

new observatory in this pristine setting. We will leave vehicles in Harkless Flat and hike up a steep slope through pinyon pine forest to reach the site of the proposed observatory. A visit to a nearby disjunct, low-elevation stand of bristlecone pines will be one of the highlights of the trip. There will be some strenuous steep off-trail hiking. High clearance vehicles recommended, 4WD not necessary.

June 10-11, Saturday and Sunday. Dry Lakes Plateau, Bodie Hills. Leader: Anne Halford. Meet at 9:30 am at the Mono Lake Visitor's Center. 4-wheel drive required. Hiking will be moderate. Camping will be primitive so bring all applicable "car-camping" supplies including water. The Dry Lakes Plateau located at the northwest edge of the Bodie Hills at an elevation of 8,000' is a large volcanic plateau containing two pleistocene lake basins. This "island in the sky" offers an incredible array of floristic diversity that includes 5 rare plant species such as the Great Basin "vernal pool" endemic, *Polycytenium williamsae* or combleaf, a diminutive perennial in the Brassicaceae Family. Other rarities we'll find are the Bodie Hills draba (*Cusickiella quadricostata*), Bodie Hills Arabis (*Arabis bodiensis*), Long Valley milk-vetch (*Astragalus johannis-howellii*) and Mono Phacelia (*Phacelia monoensis*). After a day of exploring the plateau we will enjoy an evening under the scintillating Great Basin skies. We will depart the plateau around 12:00 on Sunday. For more information call Anne Halford at (760) 873-6714 or email at fkhalford@earthlink.net

July 7-9, Friday-Sunday. Monitor Pass, Alpine and Mono counties. Leaders: Ann Howald and Peter Warner. Joint trip with Milo Baker Chapter. Several campsites at Grover Hot Springs Campground near Markleeville are reserved for Friday and Saturday nights (a fee will be collected for camping there). Friday afternoon, Saturday, and Sunday morning will be the main botanizing times. More details in the May newsletter.

July 16, Sunday. SNARL and Valentine Camp. Leaders: Ann Howald and Mark Bagley.

Located near Mammoth Lakes, the Sierra Nevada Aquatic Research Laboratory (SNARL) and Valentine Camp form the Valentine Eastern Sierra Reserve, a part of the University of California's Natural Reserve System. We will begin the trip at 9:30 am at SNARL, with the rare and disjunct California population of *Pedicularis crenulata*, the scalloped-leaved lousewort (CNPS List 2). We'll then move on to Valentine Camp which contains an unusually diverse sample of eastern Sierran habitats at the ecotone between Great Basin sagebrush desert and coniferous forests of the higher Sierra Nevada. This will be an easy walking trip at elevations of about 8000'.

Because this is a reserve, our numbers will be limited so you must sign up with Mark by e-mail at "markbagley@qnet.com" or by calling 760-873-5326.

July 19, Wednesday. O'Harrel Canyon, Glass Mountain. Leader: Scott Hetzler. Meet

at 9:00 am at the Little Green Church at the intersection of Hwy. 395 and Benton Crossing Road. We'll drive from there up to O'Harrel Canyon, which has a perennial stream, and hike up the canyon towards Glass Mountain Ridge. A moderately strenuous cross-country hike. High clearance vehicles recommended, 4WD not necessary.

July 29, Saturday. Tioga Pass area. Leader: Cathy Rose. This will be a wildflower hike somewhere in the vicinity of Tioga Pass. More details in the May newsletter.

Look for our later trips in the next newsletter.

WHO'S IN A NAME?

Cliffbush, *Jamesia americana* Torr. & A. Gray (Philadelphaceae)

You're at about 10,000 ft. in the Eastern Sierra when you come around a bend in the trail and there, adorning a fissure in a granite wall, is a diminutive shrub bedecked with rose-tinged white flowers much like those of an orange tree. Its leaves are small, rounded, fuzzy, serrate, and prominently veined. You have encountered cliffbush, first discovered in 1820 in the Rocky Mountains by a botanical pinch hitter, who hit a one-time-only grand slam home run.

Edwin James (1797 - 1861), the hero of this essay, was born and raised in Vermont. He trained in medicine and studied botany, the latter, most notably, with John Torrey. But his star quickly faded from botanical notice after his one great year of solid accomplishment. And the cheerful aspect of the cliffbush, which must have given James much joy when he discovered it (along with so many other Rocky Mountain plants in full July glory), was apparently not reflected in the discoverer's later years.

James was botanist, geologist, and chronicler on the second season of the 1819/1820 US Army expedition led by Major Stephen Long. William Baldwin, a well-regarded US botanist but a person of chronic ill health, was selected as the expedition's botanist and served well during the first season. Unfortunately, he died in Missouri near the end of that season. A replacement was needed, and, upon recommendation of Torrey and others, James, at age 23, got the job.

Long returned from the east, with fresh orders as well as with James, to the winter encampment of the small expedition on the Missouri River, near present day Omaha, NB. The purpose of the expedition now, much reduced from original plans, was to search for the sources, in the Rocky Mountains, of the Platte, Arkansas, and Red Rivers, and to gather scientific data along the way. Before setting out they were assured

by Indians and Whites alike that they could not possibly survive such a trip, that they would succumb, if not to hostile Indian bands, then to the lack of water and animal fodder over much of the way. They were indeed to suffer numerous hardships, but survive they did.

Soon after reaching the base of the Rockies, James, with two other men, set out to climb a high peak described, but not climbed, by Zebulon Pike in 1806 (Pike had considered it impossible to climb, and so had others later). Nevertheless, carrying 10 lbs. of buffalo meat, 2 cups of corn flour, a small kettle, and a light blanket each, these men succeeded in reaching the top, the first Whites to climb an American peak over 14,000 ft in elevation. The excursion took only 3 days. On the second day they needed to hurry to get to the peak's top and back down to a more hospitable altitude before dark, but "... we met, as we proceeded such numbers of unknown and interesting plants, as to occasion much delay . . ." James became the first to collect many new alpine plant species, which were then in riotous bloom. Major Long named the mountain James' Peak, but some years later the name Pike's Peak came to be accepted.

James returned to the East with some hundreds of new plant species. In addition to cliffbush, there were others which also occur in our area, including limber pine (*Pinus flexilis* James), mountain maple (*Acer glabrum* Torrey), narrow-leaved cottonwood (*Populus angustifolia* James), and streamside bluebells [*Mertensia ciliata* (Torrey) G. Don]. The expedition's zoologist, Thomas Say, discovered a number of new bird species which also grace our region, including Say's Phoebe [leaving no doubt about who it's named for, its scientific name is *Sayornis saya* (Bonaparte)].

Most of James' plants were named by Torrey. James named only a few, then turned his collections over to Torrey when he thought he would be going along on a second expedition led by Long, this time to the head waters of the Mississippi. (It's a bit strange that he wanted to

go on Long's second expedition, considering that he had greatly disapproved of Long's leadership on the first. He considered Long to be a "humbucker".) But somehow he missed connections and was left behind.

Surprisingly, considering his obvious talents, James made no further marks on botanical science. He served as a surgeon in the US Army for a few years (during which time he studied Indian languages), later edited a temperance journal, and, in 1836, moved to Iowa, where he lived out his years. He died at age 64 of injuries sustained in a wood hauling accident.

With his move to Iowa, his "... peculiar traits ... became more conspicuous. His mode of life, his opinions, and his views on moral and religious questions generally, were inclined to ultraism ... [though] his errors were on the side of goodness...". "He was a remarkable man in many respects ... a unique character. ... a mystic, a recluse, an abolitionist, ... a non-resistant ... more perhaps like a Tolstoi of to-day." "He has his peculiarities, and the masses cannot appreciate him, he is at least two hundred years ahead of the time in many things ...".

James wrote to Torrey (who had written to ask of his activities in his later years) in 1854: "...I see not much to regret in my course of inaction ... I feel myself approaching the chill and foggy domains of theology, to walk in which ... should be wholly distasteful to a true lover of nature like yourself, John Torrey, ..." ending, with a touch of sad cynicism, "It enters my day dreams that I may yet go forth to gather weeds and stones and rubbish for the use of some who may value such things, and perhaps drop this life-wearied body beside some solitary stream in the wilderness."

.....Larry Blakely

Spring in the Native Plant Garden

Looking out at the furiously falling snow, it is hard to remember that this has been a dry winter but its true. Even a native plant garden would do better with some well timed supplemental water this year. Watering recommendations are always hard to make because there are so many variables involved: type of soil, type of plant, watering techniques, weather conditions, and so on. But in general, spring is a rather fool-proof time to give your natives some extra water. The days are getting longer but are still cool and the plants are coming into active, above-ground growth. The same old adages still apply - water deeply by making a well around your plant and filling it up several times, water when the soil is dry, and water in the morning. To take the guess work out of "watering deeply", dig into the soil after watering (gently and away from main root area) and see where the moist soil stops. For best results the moist area should extend deep into the root zone of the targeted plant. These extra waterings can continue through May. Remember that the plants of our region are well trained to survive a dry summer!

Another spring job in the native plant garden is to keep the weeds from out-competing the desired plants. With all the watering, weeds will be quick to respond. Diligence at weeding in the spring will make life more pleasant in the summer for you and more productive for your native plants.

Spring is a good time to replenish the mulch in the garden. A light top-dressing of compost will supply all the needed nutrients. Be careful to keep the compost away from the stem of the plant. Rocks and gravel make a nice mulch for our area especially as that is what is found around plants in the wild. The most beneficial and realistic mulch would be a mixture of sandy soil, gravel, and larger rocks.

The final job to do in the garden is to enjoy!
Take special pleasure in all the other creatures

(hopefully not too many herbivores) that are also in the garden enjoying your natives.

.....Karen Ferell-Ingram

NEW MEMBERS

The Bristlecone Chapter would like to welcome the following new members:

Bob Ellis, Dana York, Steve and Jan Miller, Joyce Wilson, Grace and Brian Webb, Kathleen C. Brophy and Gerry Zatorski. Thank you members for renewals, too.

I personally would like to thank K.C. Wiley for membership training and Diane Payne for setting up the data base on my computer. As a reminder, if members would like to become more involved in our chapter, please see Scott Hetzler for information on committee openings. Also, all members are welcome to attend the board meetings held every other month. See Scott for times.

.....Kathy Duvall

Next Newsletter Deadline: April 26th

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 CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY 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

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