

DEDICATED TO THE PRESERVATION OF THE CALIFORNIA NATIVE FLORA

Volume 20 No. 6 November 2000

The November meeting will be our Annual Potluck and Slide Show, on Wednesday, Nov. 15th at the Methodist Church on School Street in Big Pine. The potluck set-up will start at 6:00 with dinner at 6:30pm. Please bring a dish to share and some slides of plants or adventures during the past year.

NEXT CHAPTER BOARD MEETING

Tuesday, November 7 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

It is sad for me to report that Mary Dedecker passed away this past September. Probably everyone in our local chapter either knew her personally or at least knew of her. She helped start the Bristlecone Chapter back in 1982 and was already well known throughout the state for her knowledge of plants in the Eastern Sierra, Owens Valley and Northern Mojave. Mary also worked tirelessly for the protection of native plants in our area. All of us will miss her. The work for protecting native plants seems to be a never-ending job and I hope all our us will double our efforts at this important task.

At our last chapter board meeting it was decided that our chapter would plan and put in a native plant garden in honor of Mary Dedecker at the Eastern California Museum. We are now working with the staff of the museum and have a nice area just to the north of the museum in which to plant a garden. A trail has already been put in and there is a creek next to it. Our chapter hopes to grow the plants that will be put into the garden, but the site will require preparation including installation of a drip irrigation system. If you can help in anyway with the memorial garden and/or would like more information please contact me.

.....Scott Hetzler

Mary Caroline DeDecker
October 3, 1909 - September 5, 2000

In the recent passing of Mary DeDecker, our community has lost a treasured friend, a patient teacher, and a superb role model. Her varied and significant contributions have made and will continue to make the eastern Sierra and northern Mojave a better place. It is not possible to sum up a life in a short newsletter article, but I'd like to share a story and some thoughts on my friend, teacher, and role model:

About 9 years ago, I bought my 4WD vehicle. I was excited to be able to explore the more rugged areas of our nearby mountains. Within the next weeks, I eagerly packed then met some members of the native plant society for a field trip into the White Mountains. As our small caravan began descending into Cottonwood Canyon via the Eva Belle Mine road, I had the sinking realization that despite my vehicle's ability to negotiate steep, rocky roads bordered by precipitous drop-offs, the driver was not so adequately enabled. I began to sense white knuckled alarm. Would the brakes hold? Could I clear that next boulder without bouncing, flipping the vehicle over and plunging thousands of feet down into the canyon below?... Fortunately, I was not out there alone. To get a grip, I decided to concentrate on the vehicle ahead of me and watch how it handled the many obstacles. It was then that I noticed the pickup ahead of me contained two persons: Doris Fredendall and Mary DeDecker. I believe Doris was driving. They looked so calm. I reminded myself that both of them were in their eighties and either one would have cruised down that road as if it were her own driveway. The sense of panic gradually abated. This was not the first time that I followed the lead of these women; rather, it was another lesson to me a lesson in courage!

Mary DeDecker taught us many things, then inspired us to follow her lead. Mary had an immense territory over which she was the botanical authority. Her territory included not only the Owens Valley, eastern Sierra Nevada, Inyo and White mountains, it also stretched

beyond to Eureka, Saline, Panamint, Deep Springs, and Death valleys, and to the Coso, Argus, Cottonwood, Panamint, Last Chance, Funeral, Black, Grapevine, NoPah, and Sweetwater mountains, to name a few. Mary's intimate knowledge of the flora of this vast region led directly to her understanding that many of the habitats in which these fascinating and unique species occurred were fragile. She was ahead of her time in her realization that plants adapted to abiotic stresses such as low precipitation, high temperatures, temperature extremes, salts, and substrates composed of other unusual mineral composition do not always fare well with additional stresses humans bring to bear, such as off road vehicles, improperly managed livestock grazing, uncontrolled mining practices, feral animals, alterations of natural water sources, and even illicit plant and seed collection by hobby gardeners. Tirelessly, Mary DeDecker devoted her life to the protection of the extraordinary environment that was her home.

Mary never gave up hope that this protection could be achieved. She took her seat at the table, worked very hard to educate opponents (and supporters!), and thus helped to resolve so many struggles that, put simply, pitted so-called economic development against the conservation of natural resources. And, although many of these struggles were successfully resolved, she understood that vigilance would be required for years to come. Her work was never done.

Nor is it done yet. Mary was the pioneer; she did the hard part of laying the groundwork. Through her vision, knowledge, and courage, she has provided us with many essential tools and perspectives to continue her work. It is a big job, and her shoes can't be filled by one person. I know she hopes we will continue her work. I know I will continue to learn from her and be inspired, as I was that day on the Eva Belle Mine road. We have been so fortunate to have had our lives touched by Mary DeDecker.

.....Sally Manning

Our condolences go out to Paul, her husband of 71 years, her two daughters JoAnn Busby and Carol Wiens, their families, and all the family members of which Mary spoke of so lovingly and often. It was Mary's wish for memorial donations to be made to "CNPS, Bristlecone Chapter," PO Box 1585, Bishop, CA 93515.

The deadline for submission of grant proposals is **November 15, 2000**. To receive guidelines for the grant application or for more information, contact Karen Ferrell-Ingram at 140 Willow Road, Swall Meadows, CA 93514, or at (760) 387-2913 or ingram@telis.org.

UPCOMING EVENTS

Mary DeDecker Botanical Grant Program

The Bristlecone Chapter is pleased to announce a small grants program in honor of Mary DeDecker that will annually award two grants of not more than \$500 each. This program was initiated before her death on September 5 but will continue as a fitting way to remember her many contributions to the people and plants of the eastern Sierra.

The purpose of these grants is to facilitate research and projects that increase the understanding and appreciation of our region's native flora and ecosystems. There are a wide range of appropriate possible subjects for funding, from basic taxonomic or ecological research to a school garden featuring native plants. The only requirement is that the project be relevant to the native plants of the northern Mojave Desert, Sierra Nevada, and Great Basin portions of eastern California.

Biannual Sierra Spring Sojourn Being Planned

The Bristlecone Chapter is starting to get things organized for our popular Sierra Spring Sojourn. This May event will feature botanical trips throughout the eastern Sierra region. Look for specific details in the upcoming January 2001 newsletter.

Chapter to Hold Meeting in Mammoth, 2001

To encourage members from throughout the eastern Sierra region to participate, the Bristlecone Chapter will continue its tradition of holding regular meetings in different communities. During 2001, we have agreed on the following locations: January 31 in Bishop; March 28 in Lone Pine; May 30 in Independence; September 26 in Mammoth; and November 28 in Big Pine. Exact meeting times and locations, as well as details on speakers and important business items, will continue to be announced in our bimonthly newsletter, so stay tuned.

Chapter Election of Officers

Nominations for Bristlecone Chapter officers for 2001 are as follows:

President - Scott Hetzler
Vice President - Stephen Ingram
Secretary - Sarah Sheehan
Treasurer - Mary Allen

The election will be held at the November chapter meeting. Prior to the election, any other nominations will be accepted.

**Inyo-Mono Advocates for Community Action
(IMACA) receives U.S. Forest Service
Economic Recovery Grant**

The Lower Owens River Project (LORP) has potential to bring real recreational and economic benefits to central Owens Valley communities. The project can support innovative, small business creations based on ecotourism. Good planning is key to developing economic and recreational opportunities that are in harmony with a restored river ecosystem. Some of these opportunities include developing an Owens River Bikeway, wildlife and birding areas, footpaths, and plant community interpretation. Our grant intends to bring together Owens Valley citizens to assess how the LORP may best contribute to community vitality

IMACA invites the Bristlecone Chapter in assembling an informal group of "Visionaries". Group objectives might include such things as identifying small business creation opportunities, production of a river map pinpointing areas of interest, consideration of a Owens River Center and development of a marketing strategy for LORP.

If you have an interest in joining the Owens River Visionaries, please contact:

Bruce Klein – (800) 541-1822 or
(760) 873-8557
OR Richard Potashin – (760) 878-2388

CONSERVATION

The Technical Group and the Brown
Act - Again

In the September issue of this newsletter I mentioned that President Scott Hetzler and I had written to the Inyo County Board of Supervisors last July regarding apparent violations of the Brown Act by members of the Inyo-LA Technical Group. On October 5, we received a written response.

The response didn't directly address the issues we had attempted to raise. As a result, we will be writing the Supervisors again, as well as LADWP, and rephrasing our questions to make them clearer.

In brief, we seek: 1) a legal opinion as to the applicability of the Brown Act (California's open meeting law) when members of the Inyo-LA Technical Group seek to meet to discuss Technical Group business outside of regular Technical Group Meetings, and, 2) an explanation of how the public interest is served by the current practice of holding behind closed doors any meetings (of members of the Technical Group) not covered by the Brown Act.

This issue is important because the Technical Group is the governing body responsible for implementing the Water Agreement, and the Water Agreement is the vehicle by which native vegetation is supposed to be protected from adverse impacts due to LADWP's groundwater pumping and hydrologic alterations. While the Technical Group has great power, in my observation it avoids having serious discussions and very little is ever decided or resolved when the group meets. The Technical Group appears to be dysfunctional, which is very bad news for native vegetation.

Public scrutiny of the Technical Group provides: 1) a threat of public embarrassment to Technical Group members when the Technical Group fails to discharge its responsibilities, and, 2) a means for the public to document particular issues which go unresolved thereby allowing the public to bring these issues to decision-makers at a higher level of government i.e. the Inyo County Supervisors and the LADWP Water Commission.

Because the MOU allows meetings between LADWP and ICWD Technical Group representatives to occur which are not necessarily covered by the Brown Act (and therefore open to the public) it provides a big loophole for Technical Group members to avoid public scrutiny. We will ask Inyo County and

LADWP to justify their practice of excluding the public from these meetings, and, unless some compelling reason for closing them is provided, will ask that they voluntarily open these meetings to the public.

.....Daniel Pritchett

New UC Campus Threatens Vernal Pool Ecosystems

In a resolution passed in June 2000, CNPS supported the creation of a UC campus in the San Joaquin Valley, but opposed the siting of the UC Merced Campus on the Lake Yosemite site. This site is in the heart of one of the last remaining vernal pool systems in the State and is home to at least 7 federally listed and many special status plants and animals. Visit the vernal pools website for more information: <http://www.vernalpools.org>.

Please write or fax Governor Gray Davis asking him to withdraw his support from the currently proposed Lake Yosemite site.

Governor Gray Davis
1st Floor State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814
FAX: (916) 445-4633

.....Sherryl Taylor
Legislation Chair

Who's In a Name?

White tidy-tips (white layia), *Layia glandulosa* (Hook.) Hook. & Arn. (Asteraceae)

The 1820s and 1830s saw several plant explorers come to California seeking plants as yet unknown to science; among the more famous were Johann Eschscholtz, David Douglas, and Thomas Nuttall. Very few

collectors had come before, so it was nearly virgin territory. Most collections were "worked up" by botanists back home, such as Sir William Hooker, Professor of Botany at the University of Glasgow and, later (1842), Director of Kew Gardens near London. The Eastern Sierra hosts many plants bearing the names of these early 19th century collectors and/or back-home botanists. For example, there are nearly 150 associated with Hooker.

One lesser-known collector of the 1820s was George Tradescant Lay, naturalist on the English sailing ship Blossom, under the command of Captain Frederick Beechey. The Blossom left England in 1825, returning in 1828, on a voyage of exploration, and also to support another English party which was searching for the fabled Northwest Passage. For over two years the crew criss-crossed the now violently stormy, now aggravatingly placid, Pacific Ocean, at times tracing the paths of the ships of exploration commanded by Captains Vancouver and Cook some 35 to 60 years previously. The Blossom also followed part of the path of the Bounty, whose crew so infamously mutinied in 1789 against that strict disciplinarian, Captain Bligh.

Lay, and others on the Blossom, collected extensively on South Pacific islands, Hawaii, Kamchatka, Alaska, California (gathering 175 plant species there), China, Mexico, and South America. A famous flora by Hooker, "The Botany of Captain Beechey's Voyage", appeared in the years after the Blossom's return.

Hooker proposed the genus name Layia in honor of Lay, whom he credited as one of the discoverers of a plant now called *Layia gaillardioides*. (In a rare lapse, he also gave the genus name Layia to a legume Lay collected in China, an error later corrected.) The Eastern Sierra Layia, *L. glandulosa*, was first collected by the great Scottish plant explorer David Douglas while on the "plains of the Columbia", at about the time the Blossom was visiting California; it was named by Hooker in

the "California Supplement" to his work on the Beechey materials.

All early 19th century plant collectors who visited California, like most long distance travellers of the time, experienced the dangers and privations of the sea, something most of us can only appreciate vicariously, through books or movies. Richard Henry Dana's "Two Years Before the Mast" brilliantly describes a long voyage, from Boston around 'the Horn' to California and back in the mid 1830s. The 1935 movie "Mutiny on the Bounty" graphically portrays life at sea in those times.

It was fortunate for Lay and others on the Blossom that, although they faced the perils meted out by Nature to all seamen in the frail ships of the time, the gentlemanly Capt. Beechey was no grumpy Capt. Bligh! His delightful journal of the voyage of the Blossom is a joy to read. He tells us about the "natural productions" (the plants, mainly) found at each of their many stops, and the different kinds of people encountered - South Sea Islanders, Bounty mutiny descendants (and a sole survivor) on Pitcairn Island, Eskimos, and mission Padres in California, among others.

Little is known of the life of Lay (born ?, died 1841). His middle name is the surname of the John Tradescants, father and son (1570-1638, 1608-1662), famous plantsmen of their age - royal gardeners, horticulturists and plant explorers. Based on Lay's middle name, it's plausible to suppose that his family was involved in some way with botany, but nothing appears to be known now of his life before he joined the crew of the Blossom. A few years after the return of the Blossom, Lay was back in China, not as a naturalist but as a missionary, sent out by the British and Foreign Bible Society. Shortly before his death he published a book entitled "The Chinese as They Are: Their Moral, Social and Literary Character".

The 1935 version of "Mutiny on the Bounty" features a portrayal of the famous 18th century English botanist Sir Joseph Banks, who was largely responsible for sending the Bounty to

Tahiti. I'd recommend viewing it some winter day, while waiting for those first white tidy-tips to appear next spring.

.....Larry Blakely

The website for enhanced versions of these essays has moved to:
<<http://www.csupomona.edu/~larryblakely/who name/>>

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

The Lying Head – July 29th

“One must toil for beauty as well as bread,” wrote John Muir some 140 years ago, and the 17 people who joined leaders Kathy Duvall and Cathy Rose to climb the Lying Head, a projection of the shoulder of Yosemite’s Mt. Dana, proved the truth of those words.

The group passed meadows of grasses, sedges, and rushes dotted with *Castilleja lemmonii*, *Antennaria corymbosa*, and *Aster alpigenus* ssp. *andersonii*, went through patches of lodgepole and whitebark pines, to the Dana Gardens where rufous hummingbirds dived and called amidst swamp onion (*Allium validum*), giant larkspur (*Delphinium glaucum*), Lupine (*Lupinus polyphyllus*), creek groundsel (*Senecio triangularis*), Coulter’s daisy (*Erigeron coulteri*), ranger’s buttons (*Shenosciadium capitellatum*), icy monkey flower (*Mimulus tilingii*), and showy sedge (*Carex spectabilis*). The Gardens extend from high above the trail to far below it, and the plants are tall for an area above 10,000 ft. The hikers climbed straight up the trail until they emerged above tree-line, left the main route to Mt. Dana, and headed north over red metamorphics toward the Lying Head.

The flora became alpine, with such low-lying high-elevation species as king’s crown (*Sedum roseum*), Muir’s senecio (*Senecio wernerifolius*), the minute prickly parsley called *Podistera nevadensis*, alpine sorrel (*Oxyria digyna*), *Carex helleri*, alpine paintbrush (*Castilleja nana*), *Penstemon davidsonii*, tiny

Saxifraga aprica, *Androsace septentrionalis*, alpine buckwheat (*Eriogonum ovalifolium*) and a host of Rose Family members, including low, wind-pruned shrubby cinquefoil (*Potentilla fruticosa*), the tiny Linnaean plant *Sibbaldia procumbens*, and several Ivesias.

After lunch near a snow patch with a view much obscured by smoke from the Domelands fire near Kennedy Meadows, the group easily ascended the Lying Head to the summit, a satisfactory conclusion after the morning's climb of some 1,500 ft. The descent along the main trail was slow, but brisk wind blew away the smoke for a view of the Kuna Crest and the Cathedral Range.

With a variety of alpine, meadow, streamside, and forest plants behind them, and the Lying Head immense against the sky, hikers back at the trailhead reflected on an experience that required special effort and produced exciting rewards.

.....Cathy Rose

Glass Creek Meadow, August 12th

About two score of plant enthusiasts trudged up to Glass Creek Meadow on August 12th with the help of leaders Sue Weis and Kathleen Nelson. Surely one of the finest in the collection of gems within the range of the Bristlecone Chapter, the meadows, forests, and mountains of Glass Creek were enjoying a particularly fine day but did not complain about our nearly silent visit. In this dry year, the meadows were well past their peak of lushness, and wetness and the mosquitoes were gone, but many good plants were still to be found and a great deal of knowledge shared.

Kathleen warned us, as we approached the meadows, that if we weren't already in love the grasses, rushes, and sedges, we had better quickly get prepared for a life-altering experience. The beauty of the monocots extended far beyond the specimen level with pink clouds of *Agrostis scabra* (red top grass,

bentgrass) decorating the meadow.

After a leisurely lunch we walked about the meadow, paying particular attention to the creek bank areas, enjoying, in particular the fringed gentian (*Gentianopsis simplex*), very tart straggly gooseberry (*Ribes inerme* var. *inerme*), large-leaved avens (*Geum macrophyllum*), and brooklime (*Veronica americana*). One amongst us had the right touch (surely not a green thumb, but what?) for finding numerous toads, including a Yosemite toad. Looking quite confused, the critter tried "motionless" as a strategy to avoid injury by the giant, two-legged, book-and-bag toting creatures surrounding it. Then as lunch took its toll on lazy botanizers, a squad of us reclined in the lovely grass, only to find ourselves surrounded by ladies tresses (*Spiranthes romanzoffiana*). That's an orchid for those of us less in the know. A perfectly fitting ending to a perfectly wonderful day.

.....Charles Washburn

NEW MEMBERS

The Bristlecone Chapter would like to welcome the following new members

Wayne Butterfield – Independence
 Laura Hinrichs – Swall Meadows
 Dennis Jacques – Vancouver
 Molly Martindale – Richmond
 Judith Talbot – Ridgecrest
 Katie and Dave Wash – Ridgecrest
 Sia Morhardt – Bishop
 Annette Busby – Mill Valley
 Lynn and Steve Peterson – Bishop

Thank you for many newsletter subscriptions and renewals.

.....Kathy Duvall

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"/> 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.

Partial List of Bristlecone Chapter Directory

President – Scott Hetzler – (760) 873-8392
 Vice President – Stephen Ingram – (760) 387-2913
 Secretary – Sarah Sheehan – (760) 872-4039
 Treasurer – Mary Allen – (760) 872-3438
 Membership – Kathy Duvall – (760) 872-1466
 Newsletter Editor – Anne Halford – (760) 873-6714
 Conservation – Daniel Pritchett – (760) 873-8943
 Plant Communities – Sally Manning – (760) 873-3790
 Invasive Exotics – Brian Cashore – (760) 387-2789
 Legislation – Sherryl Taylor – (760) 924-8742
 Education - Sally Manning – (760) 873-3790
 Programs - - Stephen Ingram – (760) 387-2913
 Field Trips – Mark Bagley – (760) 873-5326
 Plant Sales – Karen Ferrell-Ingram – (760) 387-2913
 Publicity – Heidi Hopkins – (760) 647-6271
 Historian – Sacha Stuart – (760) 876-8012
 Librarian – EvelynMae Nikolaus – (760) 878-2149

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

The California Native Plant Society

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