March Meeting: Our March meeting will be at 7:00 on March 27 in Lone Pine at the Lo-Inyo Elementary School Conference Room (Room 4 in main bldg.) at 223 E. Locust St. The school is located 2 blocks east of Hwy 395 on Locust (turn left at El Dorado Savings). We will have a double feature presentation! Our first speaker, Kathleen Nelson, Forest Botanist for the Inyo National Forest, will give us a brief overview of the Sierra Nevada Forest Plan Amendment, i.e. the Framework, and how it may affect vegetation on the Forest. Land allocations, and standards with specific implications for native plants will be discussed."

NEXT CHAPTER BOARD MEETING

Tuesday, March 19th at 7:00 p.m. at Kathy Duvall’s residence. All chapter members are welcome and encouraged to attend. Please call Kathy at 872-1466 for directions.

President's Message:

It appears that the mention of a possible wet winter and good wildflower bloom in January's message was just wishful thinking. Oh well. Maybe March and April will bring numerous wet storms. But wet winter or not, we can always count on trees to satisfy that irresistible botanical desire to see plants thriving in the spring. And we can always visit the native trees, shrubs and perennials that we planted for the Mary DeDecker Memorial Garden at the Eastern Sierra Museum in Independence. Thanks to the wonders of drip irrigation and to the volunteers who set up the irrigation system and did the planting, you can visit the garden later this spring and see natives thriving. (But be patient because these are small plants that were transplanted as youngsters last fall).

I also wanted to mention again that the Owens Valley Committee's website (www.ovcweb.org) is a good source of information for water issues in the Owens Valley. When it comes to LADWP's relentless assault on the Owens Valley environment, it is good to know the OVC is watching and taking steps to force LADWP to do the right thing.

......... Stephen Ingram
Spring and Summer 2002 Bristlecone Chapter Field Trips

Below are listed our spring and some of our summer field trips. Additional trips will be listed in our upcoming newsletters and on our website (www.bristlecone.cnps.org) as soon as the trips are confirmed. Please join us. For general questions or interest in leading future trips please contact Field Trip Chair, Alisa Ellsworth at (760) 387-2081.

To volunteer for the 2002 Plant Sale Team, please call Karen at 387-2913 or e-mail to ingram@telis.org. The team will be on call to help periodically with propagation, maintenance of the nursery and plants, seed collecting, plant sale and preview planning, and with the plant sale

March 23, Saturday. Spring Cleaning and Seeding Party. Ah the seasons are soon to be changing and this ushers in the first Spring for the Dedecker Native Plant Garden. For the many, who volunteered their time and energy to the successful Fall events, this will be a chance to see how all of your hard work has paid off in a remarkable way. This garden, like any garden, is a continual work in progress. At the garden in Independence on Saturday, March 23rd at 9:00 AM will be the spring cleaning day. We will do a general clean up of the larger shrubs and tidy up the planted beds as well as direct seed additional species. Some recommended things to bring are sturdy garden gloves, hand pruners, shovels, rakes, and enthusiasm. Also if anyone has a wheel barrel and buckets, they would also be handy. For additional information, contact Jerry Zatorski 872-3818 jerryzat@yahoo.com

April 13, Saturday. Eastern Sierra Audubon Society and CNPS Bristlecone Chapter Panamint Valley Wildlife Tour. Join us for a springtime botany and birding venture through some of the canyons and springs in and around Panamint Valley. Expect to see springtime wildflowers at their peak and migrating and breeding birds. We’ll explore from Darwin Falls to the canyons just east of Ballarat. 4WD may be necessary for Panamint Canyons. There is an optional Saturday night camp at Ballarat and a Sunday tour up Wildrose Canyon. Meet at Panamint Springs parking lot at 8:00 a.m. on Saturday. Call Jerry Zatorski at 872-3818 or Kathy at 872-1466 for more information.

April 21, Sunday. Fossil Falls. Leader: Anne Halford. Flowers can be splendid here amongst the red and black volcanics where Pleistocene waters once plunged down through the canyon. Here if the “March Miracle” happens, we will find the beautiful thistle sage Salvia carduacea, which reaches its northern and western distribution around the Fossil Falls area, as well as other floristic treats. The walk will be 1-2 miles over uneven, but level ground. Meet at 10:00 a.m. at Cinder Road which is approximately 5 miles north of Little Lake along U.S. Hwy. 395. Questions - please call Anne at 873-6714.

April 27, Saturday. Barrell Springs Wildflower Hike. Leader: Sue Weis. Day hike around Barrell Springs. Expect to see a variety of wildflowers in bloom and breeding birds. Call Sue Weis at 873-2496 for more information.

CNPS Desert Issues Group Joshua Tree National Park Overnight April 19-21, 2002. Weekend camping trip at Joshua Tree National Park. A group campsite is reserved at the Lost Horse Campground. Meet Friday, April 19, 8:00am at Big Morongo Wildlife Preserve for bird watching and a nature walk. At noon, everyone will caravan to Joshua Tree National Park but stop along the way to view wildflowers. Friday afternoon will include various hikes to survey for Monardella and then a night hike later that evening. Saturday, April 20, will consist of hiking and weeding trips around the park. Sunday, April 21, everyone will drive south to Cottonwood Springs with stops on the way and a visit to “Native Canyon”. Please RSVP to naturebase@aol.com to Steve Hartman - Desert Issues Chair.
May 11, Saturday. Exploring The Tungsten Hills. Leader: Karen Ferrell-Ingram and Jack Ferrell. We will poke around among the interesting rock outcrops and wander through the sagebrush scrub of the Tungsten Hills just west of Bishop. If there aren't many flowers, we'll look more at the rocks! Good shows of annual flowers are possible along with beautiful shrubs such as Indigo bush, Brittlebush, and Horsebrush. Expect to hike 2-3 miles up and down sandy slopes. Meet at 9:00 a.m. at the junction of Ed Powers Road and Tungsten City Road. We'll drive to the beginning of the hike from there and will be back to the cars after lunch. 4WD not necessary. Contact Karen for more information at 387-2913 or at ingram@telis.org

May 26, Sunday, Swall Meadows. Leader: Steve Ingram and Karen Ferrell-Ingram. This will be a leisurely stroll designed for the residents of Swall Meadows and surrounding areas and chapter members to get to know the plants that live around us on the Sherwin Slope. We will walk 2-3 moderate miles looking for plants in bloom, appreciating the beautiful Jeffrey pines and ubiquitous grasses. Meet at 9:00 a.m. at the Gravel Pit on Sky Meadow Road in Swall Meadows. Please contact Karen for directions and more information at 387-2913 or at ingram@telis.org.

June 8, Saturday, Owens Gorge. Leader: Steve Ingram and Karen Ferrell-Ingram. Leaders: Stephen Ingram and Karen Ferrell_Ingram. We will walk down a trail along the north side of the gorge to see an unusual low elevation population of Limber pines, numerous buckwheats, and other shrubs and conifers. The trail, originally engineered and used as a road for aqueduct construction, leads to the Owens River. We'll walk approximately 4-5 miles, and the trip will be lightly strenuous. Plan to return by 1:30 p.m. Meet at Tom's Place Store at 9 a.m. We'll carpool from there to the trailhead northwest of Sunny Slopes. 4WD not necessary. Contact Stephen or Karen for more information: 387-2913 or at ingram@telis.org

June 15, Saturday, Juniper Flat. Leader: Daniel Pritchett. Astronomers from CalTech have been attempting for years to get a site upon which to construct a new observatory in the Inyo or White Mountains. Their sights are now set upon a beautiful un-named basin north of Little Cowhorn Valley. The astronomers call the proposed site “Juniper Flat”, while the Eastern Sierra Audubon Society refers to it as “Shangri-La”. Come on this hike an see why. We will walk about a mile-and-a-half up a wash then about two miles on a dirt road. We will see several species of CNPS-listed plants and if it is a good year there will be lovely flower displays. Meet at the Triangle (Glacier View) campground at the intersection of US 395 and CA 168 at 9:00 AM.

June 24-27, Monday thru Thursday, Slinkard Valley Leaders: Anne Halford, Alisa Ellsworth and Partner’s For Plants. The Slinkard Valley Area of Critical Environmental Concern (ACEC) is situated on the California/Nevada just south east of Monitor Pass. The 10,000 acre ACEC contains unique plant assemblages to include old growth white fir, Jeffrey/ponderosa pine, aspen and riparian communities. Rare plant surveys have been limited but suitable habitat for several rare plant species exists in this diverse topographic area. Rare species that will comprise our survey will include; Masonic Mtn. jewel flower (Streptanthus oliganthus), Masonic rock cress (Arabis cobrensis), American managrass (Glyceria grandis) and Lavin's milk vetch (Astragalus lavenii). Contact Anne at 872-5022 for more information on logistics and itinerary.

Eastern Sierra Audubon Society and CNPS Bristlecone Chapter Big Pine Creek Basin Overnight July 12 - 14, 2002. Weekend backpack to the North Fork of Big Pine Creek Basin. Excellent summer montane birds in full breeding plumage and prolific breath-taking wildflower displays. We’ll bird and botanize the scenic Lakes Loop and visit Sixth Lake’s yellow-legged frog population with biologist Phill Kiddoo. All participants are responsible for their own backpacking needs including wilderness permit. From the trail head, expect a steep climb (2000’) in 3.5 miles to the base camp below Third Falls. Saturday’s
hike will include additional elevation gain to Sixth Lake at 11,100’. Please, no beginning backpackers. Limit to 10 people. Call Jerry Zatorski at 872-3818 or Kathy at 872-1466 by July 10th.

Field Trip Policies

Everyone is welcome, including non-members, but please no pets. 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, plant books and floras. 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.

CONSERVATION

LADWP Tries To Evade Responsibility To “Avoid” Impacts

In the previous issue (January 2002) of the Bristlecone Chapter newsletter I wrote about the interpretation of the Drought Recovery Policy (DRP) presented at the Technical Group meeting of December 10, 2001 by LADWP’s consultant, Montgomery Watson Harza (MWH). A similar presentation was subsequently given by MWH to the Inyo County Supervisors and the Inyo County Water Commission.

At the presentation to the Water Commission, the public was invited to ask questions. After hearing MWH categorically assert that the condition of native vegetation has no role in determining whether the DRP is still in effect, I asked MWH how it could justify this assertion.

MWH’s response was that vegetation change is discussed in section I.C.1. of the Green Book, and, by implication this superceded the goal and methodology specified in the DRP itself. The passage of the Green Book cited, however, is a discussion relating to mitigation of pumping impacts that have already occurred. It is a discussion of how the Technical Group will determine, after the fact, that impacts are attributable to groundwater pumping and are candidates for mitigation.

This argument is disturbing. That is because in the ongoing McNally Canal dispute LADWP cited the same passage of the Green Book in its response to Inyo County’s complaint. It is as irrelevant to the McNally Canals dispute as it is to the interpretation of the DRP.

The vegetation protection goals of the Water Agreement are to “avoid” certain prescribed impacts (section III. A.). In the EIR accompanying the Agreement, the “avoid” clause is mentioned repeatedly in response to public comments. In effect, people were told not to worry because implementation of the Water Agreement would “avoid” the occurrence of impacts. Section I.C.1. of the green Book (cited by MWH) is a last resort, to be used only when the Technical Group has failed to carry out its mandate to “avoid” impacts in the first place.

By citing section I.C.1. of the Green Book in both the McNally Canals dispute and in interpreting the DRP, LADWP is ignoring its clearly stated obligation to “avoid” impacts and arguing, implicitly, that its only obligation is to mitigate impacts after they have occurred and are permanent. If this argument is accepted, it will render much of the Water Agreement meaningless. Inyo County will be reduced to watching helplessly as impacts occur. It will be able only to ask for mitigation after impacts have occurred and are permanent rather than cooperating with LADWP to prevent impacts in the first place. I don’t believe anyone in Inyo County would have ever accepted the Water Agreement had they thought this is what it really meant.

The McNally Canals dispute has gone to court. Because this is the first test of the “avoid” clause of the Water Agreement and of LADWP’s arguments to evade it, the court’s decision may affect much more that just the operation of the McNally Canals.
LADWP Reports On New Community Outreach Program

On the agenda for the February 19 meeting of the Los Angeles Board of Water and Power Commissioners was an interesting item: a letter to the Board documenting the progress of the “Northern District Community Outreach Plan.” The Board had apparently decided in November 2001 (shortly after LA Water and Power Commissioner Dominic Rubalcava boasted that the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power’s [LADWP] budget for litigation was larger than Inyo County’s entire annual budget) to initiate a community outreach program in the Owens Valley. The letter submitted to the February 19 Board meeting was a report documenting the progress of the new program.

The report’s summary includes the observation that “Due to LADWP’s long and controversial history in the Eastern Sierra, local public opinion of LADWP is mixed.” This must have come as a real surprise to the LA Water Commissioners! The summary went on to conclude that “providing timely, accurate information on LADWP activities, along with focused outreach efforts, is expected to improve the public perception of LADWP.”

If LADWP really wishes to improve the public’s perception of it, I suggest it start showing good faith in carrying out its obligations under the Long Term Inyo-LA Water Agreement and associated EIR and MOU. The fact that the Department is already a defendant in two lawsuits regarding its failure to comply with the Water Agreement should give the LA Water Commissioners a hint that LADWP’s problems are not simply a matter of public perception. Familiarity with the aphorism “actions speak louder than words” would eliminate the need for the “community outreach” program entirely.

Some other noteworthy items from the progress report:

1) A newsletter promoting the self-serving interpretation of the Drought Recovery Policy developed by LADWP’s consultant Montgomery Watson Harza (see the January, 2002 Bulletin article for the Bristlecone Chapter’s comments on this) will be sent to all Owens Valley residences. LADWP newsletters regarding other subjects are also under consideration.

2) LADWP is considering creating an “Owens Valley Alliance group” to provide a forum for LADWP to “provide information about ongoing activities” and receive input regarding “...issues of importance, concerns and needs of Owens Valley residents.” This is a particularly cynical strategy. LADWP knows that the Inyo-LA Technical Group and the Inyo County Water Commission are established forums designed specifically to accomplish the goals it has given for its “Owens Valley Alliance”. The intent seems to be apply the “divide and conquer” strategy. By creating a so-called “citizens group” LADWP apparently hopes to confuse the public and provide itself a vehicle to undermine the credibility of the existing forums.

The potential fly in LADWP’s ointment, however, will appear when it attempts to recruit members for its new organization. Does it seriously expect to find people interested in water issues who will donate their spare time to serve on LADWP’s committee? If not, how much will it pay people to become members?

What would you charge to become a dupe for LADWP? $1000? $10,000? $1,000,000? Would LADWP throw in health insurance as part of the deal? I hope readers will engage in some serious soul-searching on this question and make up your minds soon – you never know when the recruiter for the Owens Valley Alliance will call!

Wilderness For That Other Range
By Sally Miller & Paul McFarland

Sometimes it’s good to play second fiddle. Especially, if you’re a fragile island of alpine habitat rising nearly
10,000 feet from the populated valley below. With the majestic granitic escarpment of the Sierra Nevada rising to the west, it’s easy to see how the White Mountains may get glossed over.

But the only thing truly “secondary” about the White Mountains is that they contain the second largest Inventoried Roadless Area in the continental U.S. They are outstanding in every other way.

The highest range in the Great Basin, the White Mountains rise over 10,000 feet from the desert scrub below. This broad elevational gradient, combined with a high variety of soil-types, yields amazing biological diversity over a relatively small area. One moves quickly from desert alkali shrubs at the base of wide alluvial fans, up through pinyon-juniper woodlands into the high barrens of the gnarled bristlecones, and out onto windswept alpine fell barrens, an ecological journey equivalent to walking north from the Mojave Desert to the polar arctic. The 1988 *Vascular Flora of the White Mountains* (Morefield, Taylor and DeDecker) lists nearly 1100 taxa occurring in the Whites; 9 of these plants grace no other mountain range in the world.

The Whites embody the true spirit of Wilderness: desert sheep beds worn into the southeast facing slope of Sheep Mountain, the world’s oldest living trees, the Bristlecone pines, wild canyons of granite with paintbrush-lined creeks, pronghorn antelope scampering up onto the volcanic plateau above lower Cottonwood Creek and gardens of alpine belly-flowers and brilliant butterflies on the flats leading to White Mountain Peak.

Working together with local Eastern Sierra residents, we have drafted the White Mountains Citizens’ Wilderness Proposal. We’ve spent this last year traveling around the Eastside meeting with anyone who has shown an interest in sitting down and poring over maps and sharing their ideas. We’ve heard everything from, “Wilderness will bring more people,” to, “Wilderness will destroy our tourist based economy.” (This was from the same person!). We’ve also heard a great deal of support for preserving America’s highest desert mountain range as Wilderness. We’ve learned a lot from our time out in the field, and we’ve modified our proposed boundaries to accommodate the broad spectrum of folks who use and enjoy our public lands while still preserving the wild, roadless land beyond the end of the road. We’ve worked to develop proposals that strike a balance that preserves existing uses and access while ensuring that the Whites remain ecologically sound 100 years and tens of millions of Californians from now.

If we are going to see the majestic White Mountains preserved as Wilderness, we need your help. Please write to both of our California senators, and urge them to support preservation of the White Mountains as Wilderness. Without your help, this extraordinary desert range may one day become truly “secondary”.

For more information on the White Mountains Citizens’ Wilderness Proposal, go to www.friendsoftheinyo.org or call Sally Miller of The Wilderness Society at (760) 647-1614. If you have any questions about a particular route, campsite or ongoing use in the White Mountains, please call Paul McFarland of Friends of the Inyo at 647-0079.

Please send letters supporting Wilderness for the White Mountains to:

**Senator Barbara Boxer**
1130 'O' Street, Suite 2450
San Francisco, California 94104

**Senator Dianne Feinstein**
1130 'O' Street, Suite 2450
Fresno, California 93721

**PLEASE, ALSO SEND A COPY OF YOUR LETTER TO:** Sally Miller
P.O. Box 442
Lee Vining, California 93541

Notes From The Underdirt

The Owens Valley probably will never be known as a hot bed for mushroom hunters. However, we do get some species to pop up each year in their expected
season. Oyster mushrooms, *Pleurotus ostreatus*, magically appear from stumps with the onset of the first winter rains, and I have even have a few shaggy manes, *Coprinus comatus*, sprout among my strawberry plants each Fall. One particular species the Tork, *Agaricus bitorquis*, seems to make its presents known each April. The Tork is related to the more common, mass produced supermarket mushroom, *Agaricus bisporus*. To the untrained eye, they even resemble the common store bought mushroom in appearance by having a typical whitish cap and stem and dark brown gills. However, to the trained Torkaphile, that’s about where the similarities end.

In the wild, the Torks seem to thrive in slightly compacted soils associated with riparian trees and shrubs. Unlike many terrestrial mushrooms, Torks usually don’t grow above ground level, and that is one of their defining field characteristics as a species. Well you might be asking, Fun Guy how would one be able to find a mushroom if it doesn’t show itself? And this question alluded me for about four years after I first learned of *Agaricus bitorquis* for this does not seem practical for the distribution of spores. If you watch nature long enough, sometimes the answers come to you by accident. I found my first Torks right here in the Owens Valley after spotting some unusual cracks in slightly compacted dirt. Upon further investigation, I found the elusive Tork mushroom under about four inches of dirt in perfect condition. I’ve since found many more, all about 3 to 6 inches below the dirt level. I’ve also noticed that other torkivores, both mammalian or otherwise, also find these fungi quite possibly in a similar manner which helps to explain the spore distribution problem.

If you are interested in seeking Torks or any other wild mushroom for the dinner plate, I strongly urge you to do your homework and learn how to properly identify fungi as you would for edible, wild plants. Remember the mushroom collector’s most valuable cliché, when in doubt, throw it out.

Happy Torking,
The Fun Guy
a. k. a. Jerry Zatorski

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**Memorial Native Plant Fund For Cecelia Reich**

Many of you know Heidi Anderson, long-time back-country ranger and Inyo National Forest employee now working for the BLM. When her mother Cecelia Reich passed away, Heidi asked that her eastern Sierra friends who are so inclined consider making a donation to the CNPS Bristlecone Chapter in her memory.

"Plants were very dear to her heart," Heidi told us. Her mother was involved in the Garden Club in San Luis Obispo for 25 years, and served a term as its president. She was very active as a volunteer creating wonderful gardens around historical buildings as they were restored. She spent much time visiting the eastern Sierra and appreciating its natural beauty, and Heidi’s memories of visits to her mother’s home are linked with the happy clutter of plant pots and trowels.

Because they represent continuing life, "I think plants are an especially fitting memorial," Heidi says. Many thanks to those who have expressed their warmth toward Heidi and her family with a life-affirming gift to CNPS. If Bristlecone Chapter Members are interested in giving additional contributions to this memorial fund please contact Anne Halford at 872-5022 wk. or 873-6714 hm.

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**Next Newsletter Deadline: April 28th**
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
____ Student/Retired/Limited Income $20.00
____ Individual or Library $35.00
____ International $35.00
____ Family or Group $45.00
____ Supporting $75.00
____ Plant Lover $100.00
____ Patron $250.00
____ Life $1,000.00
____ Benefactor $1,000.00
____ Corporate $1,000.00

Bristlecone Chapter Directory (Partial List)

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<tr>
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<tbody>
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<td>Education</td>
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<td>Programs</td>
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<td>Field Trips</td>
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<tr>
<td>Native Plant Sales</td>
<td>Karen Ferrell-Ingram</td>
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<td>Publicity</td>
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<tr>
<td>Historian</td>
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<td>Librarian</td>
<td>EvelynMae Nikolaus</td>
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<td>Rare Plant Committee</td>
<td>2002 Chair. - Anne Halford</td>
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<tr>
<td>Book Sales</td>
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Please make membership checks payable to:

The California Native Plant Society.

Mail to: Bristlecone Chapter, CNPS
P.O. Box 364
Bishop, CA 93514-0364

Gift Contribution: Where most needed __________. Conservation __________.

APPLICATION FORM ENDS HERE

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: fkhalford@earthlink.net

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