

DEDICATED TO THE PRESERVATION OF THE CALIFORNIA NATIVE FLORA

## The California Native Plant Society



### Bristlecone Chapter

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Volume 22 No. 3 May 2002

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Our next chapter meeting will be at 7:00 on May 29 at the Methodist Church in Independence. Steve Hartman will be our speaker with a talk titled "How to Find Birds in the Desert". Many people think the desert is a lifeless wasteland of scrubby plants and cactus. Steve will explain that many areas of the desert are literally bird oases - of course, if there is water. But even if there isn't water on the surface, there are important desert tree and shrub species that only occur where water flows underground - particularly in desert washes. Steve will review the various desert plant communities and habitats that seem to attract birds, as well as identify particular areas where birdwatching can be very rewarding.

#### NEXT CHAPTER BOARD MEETING

Tuesday, May 21 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:

Here in the Eastern Sierra we like to think of ourselves as residents of one of the most beautiful and undeveloped parts of California. Other than our Spring Sojourns, we rarely get the opportunity to show other CNPS people what our area has to offer. But on May 31-June 2, our chapter will have the privilege of hosting the state Board of Directors and Chapter Council meetings at the Bernasconi Center outside of Big Pine. It has been a long time since the Bristlecone Chapter has hosted the state meeting, and we're looking forward to having some of the CNPS board members and chapter presidents here in "Bristlecone Territory." And don't forget about the variety of field trips this spring and summer! Even in such a dry year, our field trips are a great way to get out and try your botanical identification skills on dead or less than vigorous plants. It's also a good way to gain perspective as to how lousy a flowering season can really be, or conversely, how incredibly wonderful a floriferous spring can be. So think of it as a challenge, an avenue for historical perspective, and a good excuse to get out to a new place with interesting people. Come on El Niño!

..... Stephen Ingram

## UPCOMING EVENTS

The Bristlecone Chapter and Sierra Nevada Aquatic Research Laboratory (SNARL) are co-sponsoring a lecture "Success Stories in Restoration of California Native, Perennial Grasses" by Mark Stromberg on Thursday, May 16, 7:00 PM at the Green Church (Hwy 395 and Benton Crossing Road.) Mark Stromberg is Reserve Director at Hastings Natural History Reservation, University of California Natural Reserve System. The lecture is free and refreshments will be served.

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### Bristlecone Chapter Banquet

Our semi-annual summer banquet will be held at Whiskey Creek in Bishop on Monday, July 22, and will feature Dr. Connie Millar with a talk entitled "Climate Changes as an Ecosystem Architect: implications for rare plant ecology, conservation and restoration." Connie Millar is a Research Geneticist with the USFS at the Sierra Nevada Research Center in Albany, California, and is a popular speaker on issues involving climate change. Again this year there will be a door prizes of Plant Sale plants.

The gathering will begin at 6:00 p.m. with no host cocktails. Dinner will be served at 7:00 p.m., followed by Dr. Millar's slide presentation. This year's banquet menu offers a choice of Mushroom Ravioli, Honey-Dijon Half Chicken, and Santa Maria Style Tri-Tip. All meals include salad, bread, coffee or iced tea, and dessert. The price with tax and tip is \$20.00.

Reservations must be made by Tuesday, July 16. To reserve, please send your check payable to "CNPS, Bristlecone Chapter" along with your choice of entrée to Sherryl Taylor, P.O. Box 1638, Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546. You may also bring your check to the May Meeting.

## Land Trust Forums

The Eastern Sierra Land Trust is sponsoring two public forums entitled "Programs and Benefits of a Local Land Trust" on **Tuesday, May 7 at 7:00 p.m. in Bishop and Wednesday, May 8 at 7:00 p.m. in Mammoth Lakes**. The featured speakers will be Harriet Burgess, president of the American Land Conservancy and Jacques Etchegoyhen, rancher and Nevada Director of the American Land Conservancy. Topics will include conservation easements, working landscapes, and other land trust programs. Public comments and questions will be welcomed and refreshments will be served.

The May 7 forum will be held at the Patio Building of the Tri-County Fairgrounds in Bishop and the May 8 forum at the Rec Room at the Mammoth Mountain RV Park across HWY 203 from the Forest Service Visitors Center. Please call Karen at 387-2913 or Tony at 924-8742 for more information.

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### 6th Annual Native Plant Sale - Mark Your Calendars!

This year's plant sale will be held on Saturday, September 28 at 9:00 a.m. at the Tri-County Fairgrounds in Bishop. We have scheduled it a little later in the fall this year to avoid those hot summer temperatures and to make it easier on the newly planted seedlings. A plant list will be posted on our website in the month before the sale. Look in the July newsletter for the date of the Plant Sale Preview which will give an overview of available plants and discussion of their needs in the garden. For more information, please call Karen at 387-2913 or e-mail to [ingram@telis.org](mailto:ingram@telis.org).

## SNARL Spring 2002 Lecture Series

**7 p.m. Thursday evenings at the Green Church** (Hwy. 395 and Benton Crossing Rd.) Admission is free and the public is invited. Lectures last approximately one hour. For more information call Leslie Dawson at 935-4356 or email [ldawson@msi.ucsb.edu](mailto:ldawson@msi.ucsb.edu).

**May 2 Clearing the Air in Owens Valley: A Progress Report on Owens Lake Restoration**  
Dr. Jim Paulus, Biological Resources Monitoring Specialist, Great Basin Air Pollution Control District

**May 9 Is Stocking Necessary to Maintain Populations of Introduced Trout in the Sierra Nevada?** Trip Armstrong, Department of Aquatic Ecology, UC Davis

**May 16 Success Stories in Restoration of California Native, Perennial Grasses**  
Mark Stromberg, Reserve Director, Hastings Natural History Reservation

**May 23 Dumb Ants and Humans Solving Complicated Problems. Why Being Smart is not Always a Good Thing.**  
Dr. Peter Nonacs, Department of Biology, UCLA

**May 30 Developing Watershed Management Plans for Mono County**  
Dr. Rick Kattlemann, Planning Commissioner, Mono County

**June 6 Volcanoes Make Good Neighbors**  
Dr. Robert Curry, Professor Emeritus, U C Santa Cruz

## 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.bristleconecnps.org](http://www.bristleconecnps.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 (760) 387-2913 or e-mail to [ingram@telis.org](mailto: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

**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 (760) 387-2913 or at [ingram@telis.org](mailto: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 (760) 387-2913 or at [ingram@telis.org](mailto: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: (760) 387-2913 or at [ingram@telis.org](mailto: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 and 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 mannagrass (*Glyceria grandis*) and Lavin's milk vetch (*Astragalus lavenii*). Contact Anne at (760) 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 (760) 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

### CARMA takes on the 4-H Club

Last month I was mailed a copy of a letter sent to Inyo National Forest Supervisor Jeff Bailey. The letter was written in opposition to CARMA's proposed observatory at Juniper Flat and had been sent by members of a 4-H club in the central valley. Last week I received another communication from the same 4-H Club. CARMA's National Science Foundation-funded program manager, Dr. Tony Beasley, had read the 4-H club's letter to Jeff Bailey, was "deeply troubled" by it, showed it to his colleagues, and then wrote a personal reply to the 4-H club leader. While the hectoring tone of Dr. Beasley's reply was no surprise, his final comment was. He stated his belief "that balanced information and dialog leads to a good decision."

Dr. Beasley's assertion of a belief in "balanced information" is surprising because it is belied by his actions. He has been preventing the release to the public of Dr. Bruce Pavlik's botanical survey report (of Juniper Flat and two other potential observatory sites) for weeks.

Other news relating to CARMA's proposed project is that the Inyo National Forest will initiate the scoping period (required under the National Environmental Policy Act) for the project around the end of May. Scoping periods usually last 30 days. This period will be the last time to voice concerns with the project and have them addressed in the Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). After a draft EIS is prepared there will be a final comment period in which to address questions of the adequacy of the EIS

If you care about the Inyo Mountains and haven't yet written to Inyo National Forest Supervisor Jeff Bailey, please do so as soon as possible. Realize, however, that Dr. Beasley may obtain your letter and show it to his colleagues, and if you're really lucky he may actually write you a personal reply!  
Mr. Jeff Bailey  
Supervisor

Inyo National Forest

874 North Main Street  
Bishop, CA 93514

.....Daniel Pritchett

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### LADWP's 2002 Pumping Plan: Spin-Doctoring and Incomplete Analysis

The Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) released its proposed 2002 pumping plan recently. The plan calls for a slight increase over what LADWP proposed last year in spite of the fact that estimates for total runoff this year are even lower than last year's below-average total. In the cover letter accompanying the proposed pumping plan, LADWP's Gene Coufal presented a rationale for the proposed pumping. He wrote that, "Due to the success of the Drought Recovery Policy and associated ten consecutive years of low pumping, high water tables persist throughout the valley." This sentence is an excellent example of spin-doctoring and it is worthy of detailed examination.

First, note the adjective "low" describing past pumping. "Low" relative to what? LADWP's average annual pumping over the past 10 years has been approximately 74,500 acre feet. This is enough water to flood an area the size of Owens Lake one foot deep in water every year. Elsewhere in the Great Basin controversy has occurred over pumping volumes an order of magnitude smaller than this. Only LADWP would have the arrogance to refer to 75,000 acre feet of pumping as "low."

Next, note the adjective "high" describing water tables. This also is completely subjective. In this case, however, there is a biological standard which can be applied. The presence of groundwater-dependent vegetation is a good indicator of the long-term "average" water table depth over periods which may date back centuries. Groundwater-dependent plants could not exist if, in the long run, the water table stayed at a depth which could not be

reached by their roots. According to data from the Inyo County Water Department (ICWD), water tables under only about half the well field parcels sampled have recovered to the rooting zone of native vegetation. When water tables are considered with regard to this biological standard, what LADWP refers to as “high” turns out to be “below the long-term average” for about half the area of concern and “barely up to the long-term average” in the other half.

Finally, note the verb “persist.” This word connotes a degree of longevity. It implies these “high” water table conditions have been around for a long time. According to ICWD data, in those areas where water tables have actually recovered to the rooting zone the recovery has only occurred in the past few years. This condition is not accurately described in LADWP’s use of the word “persist”.

Having presented a self-serving and biologically meaningless description of current water table conditions, LADWP then admits, “The limited pumping outlined below will likely lead to temporary decline in parts of most well fields.” How long is “temporary”? Nowhere is the word “temporary” defined. How great will the decline be? Nowhere is the amount of the decline quantified. Under which parcels will the decline occur? Nowhere are the “temporarily” affected parcels identified.

Without further information on the affected parcels (including future management plans) how can the pumping program be reasonably evaluated at all? The vegetation protection goals of the Water Agreement are defined in terms of units of similar vegetation known as parcels – not in terms of the large areas of varied habitats known as well fields. LADWP presents its pumping plan primarily at the scale of the well field. If the pumping program is to be taken seriously there must be a parcel-based analysis of proposed pumping impacts. Quite apart from the problem of the absence of adequate data upon which to make an evaluation, the Drought Recovery Policy (DRP) alone provides

strong grounds for Inyo County to insist on changes in this proposed pumping program. The goal of the DRP is that “soil water *in the rooting zone* recover to a degree sufficient so that the *vegetation protection goals* of the [Water] Agreement are achieved (italics added).” The DRP also mandates “conservative management”. In terms of wellfield vegetation parcels the goal of the DRP has been only partly attained. Nevertheless LADWP is again proposing to lower water tables and is not stating how much lower or when they will finally be allowed to recover to the rooting zone of groundwater-dependent vegetation. This is not “conservative” management.

It is up to our county supervisors to insist that the DRP be enforced and that proposed pumping be consistent with both goals of the Water Agreement: 1) insuring a reliable water supply to LA and, 2) avoiding significant environmental impacts in the Owens Valley. Examination of pumping records shows the first goal is being attained. Examination of well field vegetation shows the second goal is not. If the 2002 pumping plan is accepted as written, the recovery of water tables and vegetation will be postponed yet another year. This will increase the likelihood that the limits of drought-tolerance of even our hardy native plants will be exceeded and that recovery from the over-pumping and drought of the late 1980's will never occur.

.....Daniel Pritchett

### **Field Trip Reports**

*Fossil Falls With Side Trip to the Alabama Hills- April  
21, 2002*

There is a picture in my mind of a landscape - a red cinder cone, black, undulating basalt interspersed by dozens of different flowers in shades of purple, orange, red and yellow... I actually have a slide of such a place with Bristlecone participants in 1994 as we gather amidst sprays of *Coreopsis bigelovii*, *Salvia carduacea* (thistle sage), *Salvia columbariae* and *Xylorhiza tortifolia* (Mojave aster). Of course our group of stalwart and optimistic friends were not treated to such flowers, but the contorted swirls of Pleistocene water-carved stone reminded us of the power of climate.

With a plant list biased towards more prolific annual blooms, we were still able to admire the perennial shrubs which were managing a bit of spring growth such as *Grayia spinosa* (spiny hop-sage), *Lycium andersonii* (desert tomato) and *Kraseninnikovia lanata* (winter fat). A few yellow turbans (*Eriogonum pusillum*) and apricot globe mallow (*Sphaeralcea ambigua*) awoke our flower-starved eyes and were often found alongside small patches of the creamy-white rattlesnake weed (*Chamaesyce albomarginata*). After admiring the precipitous drop off the falls we headed back to our cars to drive into the Alabama Hills where I promised we'd at least find a few more flowers in bloom.

There hidden amongst the granitic outcrops winds a narrow trail along which we found scattered blooms of *Mentzelia nitens* (Venus blazing star), *Phacelia fremontii* (yellow throats) and likely, *Astragalus variabilis*. Perched a bit further on is a small alkali meadow where isolated populations of our valley's rare plants thrive, in as yet, an intact place fed by a fault-derived spring. Here nestled in swards of still tawny-colored alkali sacaton (*Sporobolus airoides*) and *Leymus triticoides* (creeping wild rye) are *Sidalcea covillei* (Owens Valley checker bloom) and (*Calochortus excavatus*) Inyo County mariposa lily. We were able to delight in a blooming *Sidalcea covillei* and see the first emerging leaves of the *Calochortus*. We were glad to see these flowers and know that this alkali meadow, though

small in size is still untrammelled by grazing, vehicles or water diversion. Thanks to those that made the long trek to our meeting place at Fossil Falls - let's hope for that El Nino event in 2003!

.....Anne Halford

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### New Members

Thank you to all members who renewed their memberships and a warm welcome to new members:  
Margaret Flesher - Modesto  
Lynna Walker - Bishop

**Next Newsletter Deadline: June 28<sup>th</sup>**

## THE CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY - Membership Application

The California Native Plant Society is an organization of lay persons and professionals united by an interest in the plants of California. It is open to all. The society, working through its local chapters, seeks to increase the understanding of California's native flora and to preserve this rich resource for future generations. Varied interests are represented.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ P.O. Box or Street  
 City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip Code \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_  
 I wish to be affiliated with the Bristlecone Chapter \_\_\_\_\_ . Other \_\_\_\_\_ .

### Bristlecone Chapter Directory (Partial List)

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

President - Stephen Ingram - (760) 387-2913 Vice President - Sherryl Taylor (760) 924-8742 Secretary - Sarah Sheehan - (760) 872-4039 Treasurer - Roseanne Higley (760) 387-2803 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 - Vacant Programs - Stephen Ingram - (760) 387-2913 Field Trips - Alisa Ellsworth (760) 387-2081 Native 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 Rare Plant Committee - 2002 Chair. - Anne Halford Book Sales - Sue Weis (760) 387-2349
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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 \_\_\_\_\_ .

**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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