

The California Native Plant Society



Bristlecone Chapter

Volume 24 No. 4
July/August 2004

NEXT CHAPTER MEETING

Our next meeting will be our banquet on Wednesday, July 21, 6:00PM, at the new Crowley Lake Community Center, catered by Anything Goes. Our speaker is Jim Andre, director of the University of California, Riverside, Sweeney Granite Mountains Desert Research Center. Currently working on a flora of the East Mojave, Jim has recently conducted an inventory of the springs and seeps of the Owens Valley and compiled a checklist of plants found there. His topic will be Summer Annuals and Fall-flowering Plants of the Eastern Mojave. Learn some good reasons to keep visiting the desert year round. Watch for more information in this newsletter and then make your reservations immediately.

NEXT CHAPTER BOARD MEETING

The next Chapter Board meeting will be at 7:00 PM on Monday, July 12 at the home of Steve and Karen Ferrell-Ingram. Call Karen or Steve at 387-2913 for directions. All are welcome to attend.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I was lucky to spend most of last week in the Granite Mountains with a group of volunteers assisting BLM botanist Anne Halford with a rare plant survey. It was satisfying for all of us volunteers to be "extra eyes" looking for suspected rare plants in a wilderness study area that had never been surveyed. And we did find populations of several of the rare plants we were looking for! It was great to be living outdoors with the smell of sagebrush, songs of birds and the wind, and light shows from evening thunderstorms. I'm remembering the shirt one of our volunteers wore - a row of mountains with the words GET OUT beneath - you've probably seen it. Its message (to me) is to "get out" as often as possible - on the trails, into the wilderness, even down the street. I hope you will get out a lot this summer - especially on the many field trips listed in this newsletter.

I also hope you will get out to our banquet on July 21st. It's a good chance to see friends, hear Jim Andre talk about the blooms we have to look forward to in the seasons ahead and enjoy our social hour and a wonderful dinner. We especially encourage you to come if you are new to the chapter or here for the summer.

..... Sherryl Taylor

Bristlecone Chapter Summer Banquet

The Bristlecone Chapter of the California Native Plant Society will hold its semi-annual summer banquet on Wednesday, July 21 at 6:00 PM at the Crowley Lake Community Center. The public is invited and encouraged to attend! The speaker is Jim Andre, director of the University of California, Riverside, Sweeney Granite Mountains Desert Research Center. Currently working on a flora of the East Mojave, Jim has recently conducted an inventory of the springs and seeps of the Owens Valley and compiled a checklist of plants found there. His topic will be "Summer Annuals and Fall-flowering Plants of the Eastern Mojave." His talk will provide some good reasons to keep visiting the desert year round.

The banquet will be catered by Anything Goes Fine Catering and will feature a choice of entrees - southwest grilled chicken or toasted cashew and red lentil burger with mild curry sauce - plus Sonoran bean and pepper salad, fresh tomato salad with French feta and basil, rolls, fresh fruit cobbler and a choice of beverages. To find the Crowley Lake Community Center, take the Hilton Creek exit off #395 and go west on South Landing Road to Pearson Drive. The Center is at the corner across from the Crowley Lake Store. Reservations must be made by Wednesday, July 14. To make a reservation, send a check for \$25, payable to CNPS Bristlecone Chapter along with your entrée choice to Sherryl Taylor, P.O. Box 1638, Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546. For further information call Sherryl, 760-924-8742.

Volunteers Needed for Mountain Top Monitoring

Ann Dennis will be leading an effort in cooperation with Connie Millar (USFS plant geneticist) and others on a project to install and sample long-term monitoring plots on 2 groups of mountain summits, one in the White Mtns. and one in the Sierra between Virginia Lakes and Green Lakes. This is part of a global project

based in Vienna monitoring effects of climate change on distribution of alpine species - acronym GLORIA.

USFS is the lead on the project, in collaboration with NPS, White Mtn Research Station, and CNPS. Bristlecone Chapter members are needed who would like join in this project. Fieldwork will be **July 14-21 in the Sierra and August 13-20 in the White Mtns.** Ann is looking for 2 or more volunteers to join us for each of those sessions.

Here's the GLORIA website: for more background on the project.

http://www.gloria.ac.at/res/gloria_home/

Native Plant Nursery Open House

Come visit the Deepest Valley Cooperative Native Plant Propagation Center and learn about growing techniques, propagation equipment and more. See the native plants that will grace your garden after the sale in September in their cute toddler stage! Ogle the thousands of *Purshia tridentata* (Bitterbrush) that will be planted out on recent burns this fall. Plants won't be for sale but advance information about species to be offered at the sale in September will be available.

The Open House will be held at White Mountain Research Station at 3000 E. Line Street in Bishop on Wednesday, July 14 from 5-7 PM. Contact Karen at ingram@telis.org or 387-2913 for more information.

CONSERVATION

Inyo County Planning Department threatens Fish Slough Milk-vetch

In May 2004, the Inyo County Planning Department (ICPD) "released" the Draft Environmental Impact Report for the proposed expansion of the Desert Aggregates gravel pit

just north of Bishop, adjoining Fish Slough. "Released" meant ICPD gave an incomplete copy (lacking appendix A, which discussed critical hydrological modeling) of the DEIR to at least the Bishop and Independence public libraries.

Contrary to customary practice, ICPD did not send copies of the DEIR to people and agencies that had commented during the scoping period the previous summer. Instead, ICPD put an even less complete version (lacking two attachments and all five appendices) on its website for downloading (several of the download links didn't even work, but that's another story...), and offered to sell a CD of the incomplete DEIR for about \$10.00. ICPD did not disclose the fact that the versions available for public distribution were incomplete.

Why is the Bristlecone Chapter concerned about this? Fish Slough is the only place in the world where the Fish Slough milk-vetch (*Astragalus lentiginosus* var. *piscinensis*) grows. It is listed under the Endangered Species Act, and its numbers have been steadily declining. According to the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), the total number of plants decreased from 3200 in 1992 to just over 1500 in 2000.

The proposed gravel pit expansion will destroy a portion of the milk-vetch's "critical habitat" as determined by the USFWS. The project will also destroy rare alkali meadow habitat. Alkali meadow is already being destroyed throughout the valley by LADWP's groundwater pumping.

The gravel pit expansion will also require groundwater pumping, but the DEIR didn't even consider potential pumping impacts to subsurface flow patterns under Fish Slough. Indeed, the DEIR actually invokes the Inyo-LA Long Term Water Agreement (LTWA) as a reason why cumulative pumping impacts from this project and LA's groundwater pumping will not be significant! Is ICPD not aware of the Inyo County Water Department's detailed documentation of the failure of management under the LTWA to avoid pumping impacts? Is ICPD not aware of DWP's assertion in its 2004-

2005 annual report that average annual pumping has actually *increased* since implementation of the LTWA?

The gravel pit expansion DEIR, in a word, is a whitewash. It reflects a decision that the money to be made by mining gravel is more important than the increased jeopardy in which the project would place the Fish Slough milk-vetch (already in dire straits) and the loss of still more already-vanishing alkali meadows.

Although the comment period for the DEIR is over, there are still two important things readers can do.

1) Write a comment in support of the US Fish and Wildlife Service's designation of critical habitat for the Fish Slough Milk-vetch. Ask that the boundaries be **enlarged** to better protect against alterations of groundwater flow patterns from projects such as the proposed Desert Aggregates expansion. **The comment deadline for the critical habitat designation is August 3, 2004 – go to <http://ventura.fws.gov> or contact Lois Grunwald at 805/644-1766 for more information.** Given its desire to get the project approved, I wouldn't be surprised if the ICPD attempts to get the critical habitat boundaries reduced, and you can be sure project proponents will be trying to do the same thing. Upholding the critical habitat boundaries is the most important thing that can be done right now to protect Fish Slough and all the sensitive species which live there.

2) Remember this issue in considering your vote in the run-off election for Inyo County supervisor next November. Inyo County Supervisors are responsible for the ICPD. Indeed, less than two years ago Supervisors abruptly terminated the contract of its director, so they clearly pay attention to this agency. Unfortunately, ICPD's attempts to minimize public comment on this project, as well as the embarrassing deficiencies

of the DEIR itself show that serious problems in ICPD remain.

.....Daniel Pritchett, Conservation Chair

Groundwater Disaster Averted: Inyo County Supervisors reject a bad deal

Having frequently criticized Inyo County Supervisors regarding their dealings with the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (DWP), I'm delighted to be able to praise them. In May 2004, the Board voted unanimously to reject the proposed Draft Three Year Interim Agreement. This was the best decision the Board has made regarding groundwater pumping in the seven years I've been following this issue.

The draft plan was the fruit of 11 months of secret negotiations between Inyo County and DWP. The negotiations were initiated at the Standing Committee meeting of June 2003. Because DWP had once again ignored the requirements of the Drought Recovery Policy (DRP) in its 2003 pumping plan, Inyo County suggested negotiations with a facilitator as a final attempt to avoid the expense and risk of initiating the Dispute Resolution process of the Inyo-LA Long Term Water Agreement (LTWA) regarding DWP's overpumping and unilateral termination of the DRP.

The worst of the plan's numerous failings was the fact that it did not even attempt to raise water tables to vegetation rooting zones. The first year of the plan called for pumping 85,750 af, a volume that would produce drawdowns throughout the valley. In the subsequent two years, pumping would have been tied to annual runoff according to an arbitrary formula.

The proposal would have superceded the basic requirement of the LTWA that pumping volumes be determined by conditions of wellfield vegetation. By relating pumping, instead, to annual runoff, the proposal resurrected alternative 6 of the EIR to the LTWA.

Alternative 6 had been rejected 14 years ago in favor of management based upon impact avoidance.

In response to the Supervisors' rejection of the proposed agreement, DWP announced its intention to pump 92,000 af of water this year, an increase of about 6000 af over what it would have pumped had the agreement been accepted. The increase is a remarkable example of bad faith and can best be described as punitive.

Inyo County is now faced with initiating a potentially lengthy Dispute Resolution proceeding in the face of a budget crisis. However dismal this prospect may appear, the alternative of acquiescing to DWP's excessive pumping is far worse. Those of us who have the good fortune to live in Owens Valley have a responsibility to try to protect the environment which sustains us. I hope readers will keep informed on this issue and support our Supervisors in their new-found determination to curtail DWP's excessive groundwater pumping.

.....Daniel Pritchett, Conservation Chair

Bristlecone Chapter Activity Schedule for 2004

-Please note changes in schedule from last newsletter-

July 10, Saturday, We Work for Blooms.

Leaders: Sue Weis and Sherryl Taylor.
Meet at the Mammoth Ranger Station parking lot at 8:30 AM to carpool to Devil's Postpile National Monument. We'll attack a patch of cheatgrass near the Rainbow Falls trail (easy hike) and then search for sensitive plant *Hulsea brevifolia* in the burn area. After lunch Sue Weis will lead a native plant walk near Agnew Meadows. We'll return to our cars in Mammoth around 2:00. For more information, call Sherryl at 924-8742 or sherryt76@aol.com or Sue at 387-2349 or sueweis@aol.com.

July 14, Wednesday, Native Plant Nursery Open House, 5:00-7:00 PM. Come see where the native plants for our annual sale, along with plants for local restoration projects are grown. Propagation techniques and equipment will be shared. Plants will not be for sale but advance information on species to be available at the sale in September will be available. Drop in at the White Mountain Research Station, Owens Valley Lab, at 3000 E. Line Street in Bishop. Call Karen at 387-2913 or write ingram@telis.org for more info.

July 17, Saturday, Buckwheats in the White Mountains. Leader: Scott Hetzler. This will be an exploration of the numerous buckwheats to be found along Westgard Pass and on top of the White Mountains. No hiking involved but there will be numerous forays made out onto the rocky roadsides in search of diverse buckwheats. Bring field guides for keying out plants, lunch and water. Passenger cars are fine. Meet at the Glacier View Campground at the north end of Big Pine at 9am. Call Scott at 873-3892 for more information.

July 21, Wednesday, Bristlecone Chapter Summer Banquet. Speaker: Jim Andre, Director of the Sweeney Granite Mountains Desert Research Center. The Banquet will be held at the Crowley Lake Community Center. See announcement in this newsletter for details and buy your tickets now!

July 24, Saturday, Solitude Canyon. Leaders: Cathy Rose and Tony and Sherryl Taylor. You'll be surprised that this quiet, pristine canyon is so close to the town of Mammoth Lakes - just behind the Sherwins. Meet at 9:00 AM at the Coldwater Creek trailhead parking area for a strenuous climb to a volcanic plateau with views of the Mammoth Lakes basin and beyond. We'll take a break, identify alpine and sub-alpine species, and perhaps hike to a red volcanic dome for even more vistas. As we descend into beautiful Solitude Canyon we will find very large white and red fir and aspen in the drainage and, we hope, an abundance of native plants in bloom. This is an "on-and-off-trail" hike. Wear good

boots and clothes for changeable weather, bring lunch and plenty of water and definitely your camera. We will have left cars at the bottom of the canyon to transport drivers back to their cars. For more details, contact the Taylors at 924-8742 or sherryt76@aol.com.

July 31, Saturday, Horseshoe Meadows, Cottonwood Creek, Little Cottonwood Creek. Leader: Sue Weis. We'll take the Cottonwood Creek trail from the Horseshoe Meadow area, then loop back to the Horseshoe Meadow road along Little Cottonwood Creek (car shuttle back). We should see alpine flowers and foxtail pine. This is a 6 mile hike starting at about 9800 ft, with the highest point 10,600 ft. Meet at the park at the north end of Lone Pine at 9:00 a.m. and bring a lunch. Call Sue at 387-2349 if you have any questions.

August 28 and 29, Saturday, Glass Mountain. Leaders: Jerry Zatorski and Scott Hetzler. Glass Mountain is a unique geological feature chiefly composed of obsidian. The endless sagebrush scrub surrounding the area belies the incredible diversity of plant life that can be found on and around the peak itself. On Saturday, we'll botanize meadows looking for late summer blooms. We'll retire to the Sawmill Meadow primitive campsite for Saturday evening. Sunday morning we'll take the short but steep and strenuous hike up to the peak to search for plants that come into their prime after the midsummer monsoon season. The hike to the peak requires participants to be in good hiking shape at high elevation with proper footwear. Participants are responsible for their own camping gear, food and fluids (there is no water available at the campsite). High clearance vehicles are recommended on the dirt roads. We'll meet at 9:00 AM Saturday morning on Highway 120 and McGee Canyon Rd. ~ 38 mi. east of Hwy 395 or ~ 31 mi west of Hwy 6 from Benton. For more information contact Jerry Zatorski at 872-3818 or jerryzat@yahoo.com or Scott Hetzler at 873-3892.

September 11, Saturday, Blackrock. Leader: Daniel Pritchett. Meet at the Blackrock Fish Hatchery raceway parking lot at 8:30 AM. Take the Owens Valley challenge: learn about native alkali meadow vegetation south of Blackrock; learn what trout have to do with dying meadows, look at hydrographs and monitoring results; learn about relationships between meadows and water table depth; learn about exempt wells and the Inyo-LA Long Term Water Agreement and EIR. 4x4 not required but high clearance will help. Temperatures may be high. Bring water, snacks, hat, sunscreen. Trip will end by noon. . Contact Daniel at 873-8943 or skypilots@telis.org.

September 21, Tuesday, Plant Sale Preview. 7PM at White Mountain Research Station at 3000 East Line St. in Bishop. Slide show of plants that will be available at the plant sale along with information about growing them. Free plant raffle and refreshments will be offered. Contact Karen at 387-2913 or at ingram@telis.org.

September 25, Saturday, 8th Annual Native Plant Sale –9AM at White Mountain Research Station on East Line St. in Bishop. Native wildflowers, perennials, shrubs, and grasses will be ready to plant in the garden. Plant lists and more info will be available in mid-summer. Contact Karen at 387-2913 or at ingram@telis.org.

October 2, Saturday, Buckwheats of Red Rock Canyon, leader: Scott Hetzler. We'll check out the various annual and perennial buckwheats to be found on the northern tablelands and the beautiful rock formations in Red Rock Canyon. Meet at the Y (intersection of HWY 395 and HWY 6) in Bishop at 9:00AM. Bring a high-clearance vehicle and lunch. Call Scott at 873-3892 for more information.

October 9, Saturday, Work party at the DeDecker Native Plant Garden. Check future newsletters for details or call Jerry Zatorski at 872-3818 for information.

Field Trip Policies

For all field trips, be sure to bring plenty of water, good walking shoes or boots, hat, and appropriate clothing for hot sun or inclement weather. Also useful would be a hand lens, binoculars, camera, floras, and plant lists. Trips will leave at the time listed, so please arrive at the meeting site a few minutes early. Carpooling is encouraged. Everyone is welcome, but please no pets unless otherwise indicated. Do not hesitate to contact the trip leader for more details about each trip. If you would like to lead a field trip please contact Karen Ferrell-Ingram at 387-2913 or ingram@telis.org.

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

Tetracoccus Peak – June 5th and 6th

Escaping the triple digit heat down in the valleys, eleven of us took the weekend of June 5th and 6th to explore some of the Panamint Mountains lead by Cathy Rose and Steve Ingram. Saturday's excursion was up Wildrose Peak. The trailhead began at the Charcoal Kilns and there we were greeted by the first of many flowering Desert snapdragon, *Penstemon palmeri* var. *palmeri*, and Panamint Mountains lupine, *Lupinus magnificus*, both not common in California. As we ascended Grizzly bear cactus, *Opuntia erinaceae* var. *ursina*, was blooming along the route all the way to the peak. A few Giant purple sage, *Salvia pachyphyll* were beginning to bloom, and on the lower portions of the trail Panamint mariposa lily, *Calochortus panamintense*, was in bloom. While on our way up a flock of usually shy, Juniper Titmouse cruised past us calling as they went on their day's foraging. Once at the top the group paused for a well deserved lunch break and to gaze out at the vistas which spanned from Mt. Whitney to White Mountain Peak to Badwater and beyond. As we began our trip back we were entertained by a magnificent Collared Lizard in full orange and black breeding colors. And right near by we discovered the rare Wildrose Canyon buckwheat, *Eriogonum eremicola*, scattered around in the limestone talus. On the hike down the flowers of

the Grizzly bear cactus had darkened from yellow to various shades of orange by late afternoon.

The next day a few of us took the short walk up a service road from the Mahogany Flat campground to admire Mountain Maple, *Acer glabrum*, with their shiny red samaras. We then drove north to Aguerberry Point.

From there we ventured out to Tetracoccus Ridge which is a limestone fin of a formation that turns darker a little ways out from the parking area. In the darker limestone we found the ridge's namesake, *Tetracoccus ilicifolius*, which is a shrub in the Euphorbiaceae that looks a lot like a shrub oak to the untrained eye. Also on the ridge where other limestone endemics such as napkin ring buckwheat, *Eriogonum intrafractum*, rock midget, *Mimulus rupicola*, Utah buddleja, *Buddleja utahensis*, and cliff phacelia, *Phacelia peritoloides*. A few of us ventured further to the next high point on the ridge and were rewarded by bear poppy, *Arctomecon merriamii*, and Nevada sun-ray, *Enceliopsis nudicaulis*. During the hike back to the parking area we had time to admire the many blooming California buckwheat, *Eriogonum fasciculatum* var. *polifolium*, as White-throated Swifts buzzed past us with lightning speed. We all thank Cathy Rose and Steve Ingram for their enthusiasm and wealth of plant knowledge on this enjoyable weekend.

.....Jerry Zatorski



DESERT-LAVENDER

NEW MEMBERS

The Bristlecone Chapter thanks our members who have recently renewed and warmly welcomes the following new members:

Donalda Day - Chine Hills

James Holland - Boulder City, NV

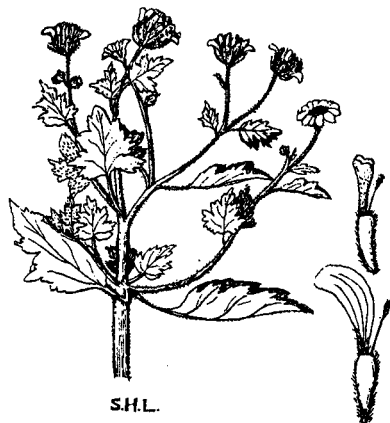
Kathy Davis - Darwin

Georgia Lowe - Swall Meadows

Molly and Dave Brining - Tiburon

Alan Murdock - Bishop

George H. Waite - Olancha



ROCK-DAISY

Next Newsletter Deadline: August 28th

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 – Sherryl Taylor (760) 924-8742
 Vice President – Sue Weis (760) 387-2349
 Secretary – Sally Manning (760) 873-3790
 Treasurer - Rosanne Higley (760) 387-2803
 Membership - Kathy Duvall - (760) 387-2122
 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 - VACANT
 Education - Edyth Irvine (760) 924-5778
 Programs - Sue Weis (760) 387-2349
 Field Trips - Karen Ferrell-Ingram (760) 387-2913
 Native Plant Sales - Karen Ferrell-Ingram - (760) 387-2913
 DeDecker Native Plant Garden – Jerry Zatorski (760) 872-3818
 Publicity – Cheryl Chipman – (760) 872-7636
 Historian – Ann Fulton (760) 873-9261
 Librarian - EvelynMae Nikolaus - (760) 878-2149
 Rare Plant Committee - 2004 Chair. – Anne Halford (760) 873-6714 hm., (760) 872-5022 wk.
 Book Sales - Sue Weis (760) 387-2349

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 (www.bristleconecnps.org) 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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