

DEDICATED TO THE PRESERVATION OF THE CALIFORNIA
NATIVE FLORA

The California Native Plant Society



Bristlecone Chapter

Volume 28 No. 1
January/February 2007

Next Chapter Meeting

January 31st, 7pm--Annual member slide show. Bring slides or digital images on a CD of plants and/or adventures from 2006. White Mtn. Research Station. Please limit to 25 per person. A field trip planning meeting will take place at 5:30. All are welcome to attend.

Next Board Meeting

The Bristlecone Chapter Board meeting will meet on Wednesday January 24th at 7:00 PM at the USFS/BLM Conference Room, 351 Pacu Lane in Bishop. Everyone is welcome.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

At our annual potluck in November, we recognized and thanked Karen Ferrell-Ingram for the enthusiasm, time and energy she has shared with our chapter growing native plants and conducting plant sales. While Karen is stepping down as plant sale chairman, she wants to continue to share with our chapter what she has learned about growing natives. She plans to teach a class for those interested in growing native plants sometime this year. A group of us will be meeting soon to talk about the role of growing natives and holding plant sales in our chapter. If you are interested, please let me know. We would love for you to join us.

As the New Year begins, I'd like to thank the members of the Bristlecone Board for their work in 2006. I'm so pleased that they will continue in the jobs they do so well. We welcome Cheryl Chipman to the Board as Vice President and program planner. We have some plans for exciting new events this year including a summer "sojourn" at Crooked Creek Station in the White Mountains on the weekend of August 11th. If you would like to be more involved in any of our activities, we would really appreciate your help and ideas.

Happy New Year!

.....Sherryl Taylor

UPCOMING EVENTS

Seed Propagation Workshop

Grow your Own – Propagating Native Plants of the Eastern Sierra

Two Wednesdays: February 28 and March 7, 6:30-8:30 PM

Location: To Be Announced

Topics to be Covered:

- Seed collecting: permits, locations, timing, seed viability, seed cleaning, seed storage
- Seed propagating: pretreatments, tools, seed sowing
- Seedling care: watering, fertilizing, transplanting

This workshop will be an informal, hands-on discussion of propagating our wondrous Eastern Sierra native plants; grasses, shrubs, perennials, and even a few trees. Workshop supplies provided. Cost: \$20.

Contact Karen at ingram@bishopwireless.net or at (760) 387-2913 to sign up or with questions.

University of California White Mountain Research Station 2007 Winter Lecture Series

All lectures are held on Thursdays at 7:00 PM and are FREE to the public!

January 11, 2007

Physiological predictors of Acute Mountain Sickness

Nicholas Kanaan - School of Medicine, University of California, San Diego

January 18, 2007

Thinking outside the lake: Do fishes and finches fight for food?

Pete Epanchin – Department of Entomology, University of California, Davis

January 25, 2007

A Comparative Study of Rock Art in Australia and Western North America: PART 2

David Lee – Reserve Steward, Sweeney/Granite Mountain Desert Research Center

February 1, 2007

The Pluto problem: What is a planet?

Ron Smith – WMRS Friend, Cerro Coso College, Former Planetarium Director at Santa Ana College and Santa Monica College

February 8, 2007

High altitude metabolism in mice and men: Keeping the fire burning

Greg Russell – Department of Biology, University of California, Riverside

February 15, 2007

To Be Announced

Sarah Kimball – Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology, University of California, Irvine

March 29, 2007

To Be Announced

Gerald Dubowitz MD – Department of Anesthesia, University of California, San Francisco

April 26, 2007

The legacy of Joseph Grinnell: The future of California's vertebrate fauna based on surveys of the past

James Patton – Curator of Mammals - Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, Professor Emeritus, Department of Integrative Biology, University of California, Berkeley



CONSERVATION

Standing Committee defers action on disastrous management plans

In the September/October Issue I wrote about an interim management plan proposed by Inyo County Water Department Director Tom Brooks. The proposal would control groundwater pumping through March 31, 2010. For a variety of reasons I believed his proposal would be a disaster and urged that it be withdrawn.

In November Brooks's proposal was substantially changed. Unfortunately, the changes weren't improvements. Where the original version proposed no constraints on pumping at all, the new version would simply constrain pumping to try to keep existing drawdowns from worsening. The county would not even attempt to continue water table recovery, a recovery in some areas almost 20 years overdue. Because abandoning the goal of water table recovery would violate the Drought Recovery Policy (DRP), Brooks' proposal calls for "removal" of the DRP.

The only rationale given by Inyo County for abandoning its long-time goal of full water table recovery -- as the DRP and the goal of the Water Agreement require -- was that, "DWP would never agree" to any plan which called for recovery. A more striking example of the extent to which fear of DWP -- rather than science and the Water Agreement's goal of impact avoidance -- controls Inyo County policy is hard to imagine.

There was virtually no opportunity for public discussion and Inyo Supervisors approved Brooks' proposal for presentation at the November 27 Standing Committee Meeting. DWP, meanwhile, proposed its own interim management plan which would, not surprisingly, increase existing drawdowns.

On November 27, the Standing Committee was given the dueling interim management plans to consider, neither of which was consistent with the Water Agreement's mandate to "avoid" pumping impacts. The LA members of the Standing Committee said that they weren't prepared to

discuss either, so no decision was made. The dueling plans will, presumably, be re-considered at the next Standing Committee meeting in February 2007.

If you value our endangered valley floor meadows, please contact your Inyo County Supervisor. The biological basis for groundwater management under the Inyo-LA Long Term Water Agreement (LTWA) is simple: drawdowns of "one to several years" followed by recovery. DWP made enormous drawdowns in the late 1980's, recovered water tables under some areas, but now refuses to finish the job. Acquiescing to permanent drawdowns, as our Supervisors and Water Department Director Brooks are proposing, fundamentally violates the LTWA and betrays the public trust.

.....Daniel Pritchett, Conservation Chair

Creosote Ring Sub-chapter Doings
by Kathy LaShure

As 2006 draws to a close, I'd like to take this opportunity to thank all those who helped, even in small ways, to make this first year of the Creosote Ring so memorable. Although our group is still in the process of defining our role here in the Indian Wells Valley, we had some truly wonderful events this past year and are looking forward to expanding our efforts in the coming one.

Our major fall effort was to staff a display at the Highway 178 Expo in Ridgecrest on October 28. This event brought together a variety of organizations representing the diversity of communities from Bakersfield on the west, through the Kern River Valley & Indian Wells Valley, all the way to Death Valley NP on the east. Being a new group, we had to come up with something to display. One of our goals from our inception has been to inform the public of the importance of our namesake plant, the Creosote Bush. So we set out to create both a visual display & handouts doing just that. Three of us, Janet Westbrook, Terri Middlemiss & I, did the writing; I did the editing & layout. We ended up with 2 different handouts: one that's bold & to-the-point; the other is a more leisurely detailed read about this amazing plant. I

also put together a colorful 3-panel display featuring the Creosote Bush. These materials will be useful in the future too. And we hope to get this information before the public at Ridgecrest City Hall.

In Nov. we co-sponsored with Kerncrest Audubon, Steve Hartman's delightfully entertaining & informative presentation "How to Find Birds in the Desert." Because there is much cross-membership between the various environmental groups in our valley, we felt that pooling our resources might be a good thing to try. At the least, we will try not to compete with one another & will try to coordinate dates as much as possible. Since Terri Middlemiss, who has been my right hand (taking excellent minutes), is the Program Chair for Audubon, this should be easy. Also most local environmental groups meet at the Maturango Museum where it is easy to check the master calendar.

We will continue to meet on the first Wed. of most months at the Maturango Museum at 7:00 pm. Our January meeting will focus on field trip planning so look for our "southern territory" outings in the next newsletter. We're hoping that there will be enough rain to make the desert bloom bountifully this spring!

Field Trip Report

Bald Mountain Botanical Area, August 12

While titled as a visit to the "Bald Mountain Botanical Area", this trip could have been called "A Panorama of Southern Sierra Flora." Led by Judy Breitenstein, an enthusiastic group of 20 CNPS folks went to look at a number of forest and meadow areas, ranging from recently-burned habitats at moderate altitude (about 5000'), to higher-altitude meadows and forest sections, topped out with a visit to the Bald Mountain Botanical Area. This area is located along the road between Kennedy Meadows and Kernville, on the Kern Plateau.

The carefully-planned tour started with observation of the few remaining flowers (mostly eriastrum) along the Nine Mile Canyon Road. From there, we went up to a couple of locations scarred by the 70,000-acre Manter Fire. Even though it was mid-

August, there were a surprising variety of plants in bloom in an area that, at first glance, looked to be nothing but dried-out grasses and plant stems. It certainly filled everyone's socks with seeds and stickers. In this fire-scarred area, at roughly 5000' elevation, we found more eriastrum, golden eardrops, fremontia, bush mallow, and chicory.

Our group wanted to stay and examine more plants, but Judy gathered us all up to head further up the road, to another burned area. This one was characterized by a vitrified clay soil, which had been difficult to re-colonize after the Manter fire. Judy discussed the soil structure, the Forest Service's attempt to initially re-seed with (sterile) wheat, and the fact that now it has become a huge zone of cheatgrass.

At our break, Judy admonished everyone to not go too far at the next stop as there would be so much to see, that we wouldn't be able to get away. In Rodeo Flats, we were treated to a discussion of long-past grazing practices, and current land management. One treat was to sniff the butter-rum/caramel-aroma bark of a huge Jeffrey pine tree.

Next stop was Troy Meadows where we saw nude buckwheat, lupine, pussy paws, elderberries, and had a discussion of changing plant communities in the dry zones bordering Troy Meadows.

When we got to Bald Mountain, we all walked the 1/3 mile uphill trail to the fire-lookout station. This area has 440 acres designated as the Bald Mountain Botanical Area, home to (among others) the rare Bald Mountain Potentilla. Following a short talk about the geology of this area (uplifted metamorphic sea-floor, distinctively different than the usual Sierra granite), our group enjoyed the climb to the fire station, visiting with the lookout, and examining the 100-mile vista, which included views of Mt Whitney, Mt Langley, Owens Peak, as well as the smoke plumes from the Tamarack and Beck Meadows fires. We didn't miss examining plants in the area, including mustard, chinquapin, scarlet gilia, yarrow, ranger buttons, angelica, yampa, white phacelia, pennyroyal, Wright's buckwheat, pine drops, currant, wallflower, and others.

After our picnic lunch, we headed to a small unnamed meadow west of Paloma Meadows. Here we truly violated Judy's dictum about spending so much time, since we were in an area that was quite rich in blooming plants. Two types of monkey flowers, yarrow, bog mallow, corn lily, indian paintbrush, lady's tresses, Bigelow's sneezeweed, Mariposa lily, rein orchid, mugwort, wild geranium, fireweed, larkspur, checkermallow, sierra onion, and others kept us busy looking for, examining, identifying, and enjoying plants. Not to mention (fun) arguing over the proper identification of the various species.

It was also a pleasant surprise to see how much there was in bloom this late in the season. Our group had a long and very enjoyable day, filled with excitement over the various "finds". There were lots of discussion, with checking and re-checking of various guidebooks to help key out different plant species. Thanks to the research done by our tour leader, everyone went home feeling that they had seen a tremendous variety of plants, yet wanting to return in order to examine other plants that they didn't have time for. It was great fun, we learned from each other and from our leader Judy.

.....Mike Mumford, Creosote Ring Subchapter

Book Review

Wild Plants of the Sierra Nevada. Univ. of Nevada Press. Ray S. Vizgirdas and Edna M. Rey-Vizgirdas.

Vizgirdas (US Fish and Wildlife Service) and Rey-Vizgirdas (USDA Forest Service) aim to provide an inventory of the plants of California's Sierra Nevada range along with interesting information about each plant's uses, ancient and modern. This new book offers a wealth of interesting ethnobotanical information and is as handy reference for further research. A useful appendix provides checklists of plants in distinct Sierra Nevada habitats, showing which plants in each area have been used for what purposes.

The Song of The Shepherd's-Purse Fairy

Though I'm poor to human eyes
Really I am rich and wise.
Every tiny flower I shed
Leaves a heart-shaped purse instead.

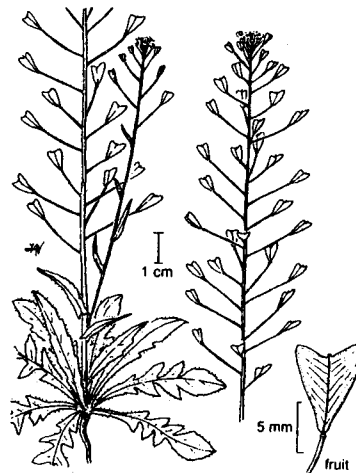
In each purse is wealth indeed-
Every coin a living seed.
Sow the seed upon the earth-
Living plants shall spring to birth.

Silly people's purses hold
Lifeless silver, clinking gold;
But you cannot grow a pound
From a farthing in the ground.

Money may become a curse:
Give me then my Shepard's Purse.

Cicely Mary Barker (1985) *Flower Fairies of The Winter*

Editor's Note: Although a non-native, shepherd's purse (*Capsella bursa-pastoris*) was always fun to find as a child and still reminds us what wonderful shapes plant fruits can be.



Capsella bursa-pastoris

Next Newsletter Deadline: February 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

Membership Category

<input type="checkbox"/> Student, Limited Income	\$25.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual	\$45.00
<input type="checkbox"/> International	\$45.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Family, Group, or Library	\$75.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Supporting	\$75.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Plant Lover	\$100.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Patron	\$300.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Benefactor	\$600.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Mariposa Lily	\$1,500.00

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Rare Plant Committee - 2007 Chair. - Anne Halford (760) 873-6714 hm., (760) 872-5022 wk.
Book Sales - Sue Weis (760) 387-2349

Please make membership checks payable to and send to:

CNPS - Membership Coordinator
2707 K. Street, Suite 1
Sacramento, CA 95816

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: kash@cebridge.net

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