

**DEDICATED TO THE PRESERVATION OF THE CALIFORNIA
NATIVE FLORA**

The California Native Plant Society



Bristlecone Chapter

**Volume 28 No. 4
July/August 2007**

Next Chapter Meeting

The next chapter meeting will be on Wednesday, September 26 at 7:00 p.m. at the White Mtn. Research Station. Our speaker will be Karen Ferrell-Ingram, Lands Director for the Eastern Sierra Land Trust who will present a talk titled; "Conserving Special Resources in the Eastern Sierra: Benton Hot Springs Valley."

This presentation will cover how a conservation easement can protect rare plants and migratory water fowl while maintaining agricultural viability on a historic meadow in Mono County.

Next Board Meeting

The Bristlecone Chapter Board meeting will meet on Wednesday July 18, at 7:00 PM at the USFS/BLM Conference Room, 351 Pacu Lane in Bishop. Everyone is welcome.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I hope you will join us for the first ever Sierra Summer Sojourn. Here's a chance to spend a weekend at White Mountain Research Station's Crooked Creek Facility in the ancient bristlecone pine forest with Bristlecone members and other native plant lovers from around our state. The weekend will include field trips in search of alpine plants, an evening program given by Dr. Connie Millar, Research Geneticist with the U.S. Forest Service, and time for conversation and for enjoying the spectacular views that the White Mountains provide.

The plan is to meet at Crooked Creek at 11:30 AM on Saturday, August 11 for check-in. You can set up in a bunk room or bring your own tent. After lunch (which you will bring) there will be afternoon field trips followed by social hour, dinner and our evening program. After breakfast on Sunday, you'll be off on a field trip which will last until mid-afternoon. The cost for the Sojourn which includes accommodations and three meals is \$100. For complete information and to register, go to our website www.bristleconecnps.org. Registration deadline is July 28.

Hope to see you at the Sojourn!

.....Sherryl Taylor

2007 Bristlecone Chapter Spring and Summer Field Trips

July 14, Saturday. North Fork Big Pine Creek. Leader: John Smiley. This will be a fairly strenuous all-day hike with the goal of reaching Sam Mack Meadow, although participants can drop out at any time to enjoy the incredible scenery and rushing waters of Big Pine Creek. The botanic focus of the trip will be a discussion of the amazing variety of willows in the drainage (12+ species), and how they can support an equally fascinating community of colorful insects. Bring your willow keys and/or descriptions if you have them! Meet at Glacier Lodge trailhead (not the backpacker trailhead) at 8 am, and we should be back down to the trailhead by 6 pm. Bring food and a jacket, and water if you don't want to drink out of the creek. Total elevation gain is about 3500' and the distance is about 15 miles, so be prepared to be tired by the end of the day! For more information contact John at (760) 873-4344 or jsmiley@wmrs.edu.

July 21, Saturday. Convict Lake to Broken Bridge. Leaders: Cathy Rose and Sherryl Taylor. Be ready for wild drama! As we leave the backpacker's parking lot and proceed toward Convict Lake, we will be greeted with spectacular views of Laurel Mountain and Mt. Morrison and then of the lake itself. Leaving the pinyon pine, juniper and white fir behind, we will follow the trail up along Convict Creek, with Red Slate Mountain rising before us, through limber pine, red fir and abundant black cottonwoods while searching for a disjunct population of bearberry (*Arctostaphylos uva-ursi*) and other plants of interest. We'll stop for lunch near the broken bridge at the confluence of Genevieve and Convict Creeks where we can perch on red metamorphics with the creek roaring below us. Meet in the Convict Lake backpacker's parking lot at 9:00 AM. The trip will end around 3:00 PM. Bring lunch and water for

this moderately strenuous hike. For more information contact Cathy at (760) 935-4329 or Sherryl at staylor@npgcable.com.

FIELD TRIP POLICIES: For all field trips, be sure to bring plenty of water, lunch, good walking shoes or boots, and appropriate clothing for hot sun and/or inclement weather. Also useful would be a hand lens, binoculars, camera, floras, and plant lists. Trips will 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. Everyone is welcome, but not pets. For general questions on field trips or if you would like to lead a trip, please call Jerry Zartoski at (760) 872-3818 or write jerryzat@verizonmail.com

ADDITIONAL UPCOMING EVENTS

2007 Bristlecone Chapter Native Plant Sale

The 12th Annual Native Plant sale will be on Saturday, September 22nd at 9:00 at the White Mtn. Research Station



Thanks to the expert advice gleaned from the native plant propagation workshop put on by Karen Ferrell-Ingram this March, several of us – the Owens Valley and Mammoth growing teams - have been feverishly growing a pretty good number of native gems. We will have approximately 40 different species available in various numbers and container sizes. There will be an update on the plant sale in the September newsletter.

Bristlecone Art Show

Inyo Council for the Arts Gallery is featuring a Bristlecone show now through August 3, 2007. The show includes photographs, paintings, and sculptures by eastern Sierra Nevada artists, with an additional feature of original art and prints by Della Taylor Hoss who also illustrated "Trees of Yosemite". ICA, 137 S. Main

St., Bishop. Open Mon.-Sat. 10-5 pm. For more info: 873-8014.

CONSERVATION

Effort to Control Invasive Bouncing Bet is Under Way

Bouncing Bet (*Saponaria officinalis*), an aggressive non-native found in disturbed areas across the country, is thriving and spreading in LeeVining and along tributaries that feed Mono Lake. A task force representing the Bristlecone Chapter, the Mono Lake Committee, California State Parks, USFS, and the Eastern Sierra Interpretive Association is working to determine the extent of spread of Bouncing Bet and the best methods for removing or containing it. The task force is planning an education program about non-natives for LeeVining residents whose gardens contain large patches of the weed. The idea of offering native or other environmentally appropriate plants to Lee Vining residents as a substitute for Bouncing Bet in their gardens is being considered.

Volunteers meet Wednesdays at 9:00 through the summer to map occurrence of Bouncing Bet, to monitor weeded test plots and do some weed removal. We could use your help. If you are interested in participating, call Jessi at the Mono Lake Committee at 647-6595.

.....Sherryl Taylor

A 20th anniversary and a challenge

Twenty years ago DWP pumped a record-breaking 209,394 acre feet of water, thereby initiating an enormous drawdown from which Owens Valley has yet to fully recover. The drawdown's effects are more apparent every year, and I challenge readers to

commemorate its 20th anniversary by visiting a crime scene:

Turn east off US Highway 395 about 12 miles north of Independence onto the paved road to Blackrock fish hatchery. After a third of a mile, turn right (south) onto a good dirt road. This is Coliseum Road.

Drive south, remembering to close the gate behind you. Approximately 0.9 miles after leaving the paved road, stop at a turnout by a small rectangular fenced area about 120 meters long with some metal fence posts. This is permanent monitoring site TS2 in parcel BLK094, which is classified as groundwater-dependent meadow. Notice how little grass is in this meadow, and notice, in particular, how little of the grass is green.

Drive south another 1.1 miles, until you see another small rectangular fenced area with metal fence posts. This is permanent monitoring site TS3 in parcel BLK099. Notice how much more abundant the grass is and how green it is.

Starting in 1987 the water table under TS2 and parcel BLK 094 was drawn down, never to fully recover. It has been around 4 meters (13 feet) below the surface since 1998. At TS3, on the other hand, the water table was only slightly drawn down, and recovered to around 2 meters below the surface in 1996 where it has remained.

Grass around TS3 is green and growing (notwithstanding 2007 being one of the driest years on record) because it has access to groundwater. The little grass remaining around TS2 will have to wait until a year of heavy precipitation to grow (assuming it's still alive) because it can't access groundwater. Meanwhile, shrubs at TS2 grow vigorously, because they can access groundwater.

If conditions in parcel BLK094 don't represent a crime – a violation of the California Environmental Quality Act/Inyo-

LA Long Term Water Agreement (LTWA) - it's hard to imagine what would. Shrub increases and loss of grass are exactly the pumping impacts the LTWA is supposed to prevent. Several things make this violation particularly painful:

- 1) Parcel BLK094 was the finest remaining wellfield meadow when the LTWA was signed;
- 2) Inyo County is complicit with DWP in the crime. Inyo agreed with DWP in 1991 to grant an unlimited exemption to wells for the Blackrock Fish Hatchery. DWP and Inyo have known for years that excessive pumping from the exempt wells prevents needed water table recovery;
- 3) Water table recovery is feasible. DWP dried up Blackrock Spring and pumps about 12,500 af/yr through Blackrock hatchery to mitigate the loss of the 8000 af spring flow. A ceiling of 8000 af/yr on the hatchery exemption could lead to recovery in as few as four years.

As of June 24, Coliseum Road was in good shape and neither 4-wheel drive nor high-clearance were needed. But don't take the challenge unless you have a strong stomach - crime scenes aren't pretty.

.....Daniel Pritchett, Conservation Chair

Field Trip Reports

Walker Pass - April 2, 2007

To paraphrase T. S. Eliot, April is the craziest month, at least weather-wise this year in the Indian Wells Valley. It seems as though we have had scarcely any balmy spring days, instead being treated to fierce winds and chilly temps. But Sat. April 21 was an exceptionally fine day, sunny, still, a few puffy clouds. 20 folks eager to see wildflowers, no matter how few or how tiny, gathered at the Inyokern Post Office to meet

field trip leader Naomi Fraga & carpool up to Walker Pass campground, just west of the pass proper. We strolled more or less northward along the Pacific Crest Trail though pinyon-juniper woodland searching for blooms until we reached Highway 178. The ground was damp from showers the previous day.

Naomi had scouted the area earlier in the week when she was doing field work in nearby Kelso Valley. We were able to locate all the species she had on her plant list & added one additional, *Balsamorhiza deltoidea*. As we expected there were few annuals & they were widely spaced and small in stature. We saw the smallest tidytips that many of us had ever seen, growing alone right in the trail. It was hard to recognize with its tiny size. There were some blooms on the Joshua trees. Other shrubs were just beginning to flower. The complete plant list can be accessed at the Southern California Botanists website: <http://socalbot.org/board/topic/3?replies=2>.

Interestingly, Naomi reported that native grasses in this part of the southern Sierras seem to be doing better than the highly invasive aliens that were so prevalent last year. So the winter's dryness has had one unusual benefit. Apparently the alien grass seed bank is shorter-lived, so we can be cautiously hopeful that they may diminish with time.

.....Kathy LaShure

*Inyo Mountains Odyssey
June 9, 2007*

Nine participants joined leader Jerry Zatorski as he delivered on his Inyo Mountains Odyssey. Despite the dry spring, the hike provided a variety of plants of interest, in addition to the promised fantastic views of the Sierra Nevada to the west and Saline Valley to the east.

Mazurka Canyon was dry as expected.

Sandpaper bush (*Petalonyx nitidus*) stood out with its bright green foliage and abundant flowers. Otherwise just a few creosotebush (*Larrea tridentata*) and an occasional beavertail cactus (*Opuntia basilaris*) were in flower.

The hike up to the crest of the Inyo Mountains and over to Seep Hole Spring was strenuous but rewarding. The trail climbed steeply up 2400 feet through single-leaf pinyon (*Pinus monophylla*)/Utah juniper (*Juniperus osteosperma*) woodland to the crest at 9300 feet elevation. Many plants of prickly pear (*Opuntia erinacea*) and claret cup (*Echinocereus triglochidatus*) were in flower. At about 9000 feet we encountered what appeared to be hybrids of the two mountain mahogany species, *Cercocarpus intricatus* and *C. ledifolius*. At about the same elevation the north-facing slopes supported excellent stands of bristlecone pine (*Pinus longaeva*) and limber pine (*P. flexilis*). Wild flowers were sparse along the trail, but those seen included the shrubby form of prince's plume (*Stanleya pinnata* var. *inyoensis*), several penstemons (*Penstemon floridus* var. *austini* and *P. speciosus*) and paintbrushes (*Castilleja applegatei* and *C. nana*), blue flax (*Linum lewisii*), and prickly phlox (*Leptodactylon pungens*).

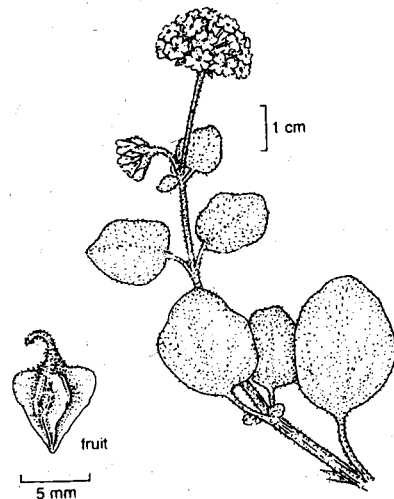
Just below the crest there was a playa-like area of clay soils with many interesting plants, including a few small buckwheats that even stumped Scott Hetzler. Relatively common were plants of ballhead gilia (*Ipomopsis congesta*), the mat-forming composite *Stenotus acaulis*, spiny milkvetch (*Astragalus kentrophyta*), and another small milkvetch lacking fruits. Plants of star felwort (*Swertia puberulenta*) were just in bud. One area of nearly bare clay soils had a high-elevation population of what appeared to be fragrant evening primrose (*Oenothera caespitosa* ssp. *crinita*).

Seep Hole Spring was fairly dry. There were a couple of large Sierra juniper

(*Juniperus occidentalis*) growing next to bristlecone pines, an unusual sight. The springs also had a large population of crimson columbine (*Aquilegia formosa*) plants that were essentially acaulescent.

This was a trip that would be well-worth repeating in a wetter spring.

.....Steve McLaughlin and Jan Bowers



Abronia villosa

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) 873-3485
 Posters – Stephen Ingram (760) 387-2913
 Kathy LaShure, Creosote Ring Sub-chapter Coordinator,
 (760) 377-4541

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: kasch@cebridge.net

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