

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

The California Native Plant Society



Bristlecone Chapter

**Volume 32 No. 1
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January General Meeting

Wednesday, January 26, 2011, 7:00 pm at
White Mountain Research Station, 3000 East Line St.
in Bishop. Katie Quinlan, co-director of the Eastern
Sierra Watershed Project, will give a presentation
entitled "The LORP, What We Have Learned So
Far."

One of the largest river restoration projects in history is happening in the Owens Valley. In the winter of 2007, the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) reintroduced water into 63 miles of the Lower Owens River that has essentially been dry since the river was diverted to Los Angeles in 1913. While the LADWP, Inyo County and other agencies conduct formal monitoring of the entire project for adaptive management use, the Eastern Sierra Watershed Project gives local middle school students the opportunity to participate in their own monitoring of the river restoration. The ongoing project has given new meaning to hands-on science education, as local students experience their natural environment as a living laboratory through real-world scientific activities. Students began collecting baseline data from four study sites along the Lower Owens River in 2002 and have gone back to these sites every year since. Come see photos and data collected and hear observations about change that don't show up in the data.

January Board Meeting

Wednesday, January 19, 2011, 7:00 pm at the
ESICE office, 512 N. 2nd St., Bishop. Members are
welcome.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

No president's message until we have a president! To volunteer please contact Stephen Ingram at ingram@bishopwireless.net

FROM THE EDITOR

Next Newsletter Deadline: February 25, 2011
Send articles to: newsletter@bristleconecnps.org

REPORTS

2010 Plant Sale Summary

This was my first year of being in charge of the propagation and sale of the native plants for the Bristlecone Chapter Bishop plant sale. Anne Halford and Diana Pietrasanta guided me through the early months of seed preparation and selection

of the species that we would grow. They neglected to explain that we don't necessarily use all the seeds in an envelope – that it is a good idea to save some for next year. I seeded all the seeds in a packet and we ended up with 1,235 seedlings started in the greenhouse – oops! This created a bit of a space problem when it came time to repot the seedlings from the flats into their individual cups.

The summer progressed without major mishaps. I had some wonderful volunteers who worked for about 4 hours at a time repotting the seedlings into larger containers. By the time the plant sale rolled around there were 946 plants that looked good enough to sell. We had 3 experienced CNPS folks and a bunch of new volunteers who helped set up the night before the sale.

When I arrived at 8 am the next morning (the sale started at 9) people were already lined up waiting to buy! In an hour and a half we sold 767 plants, making \$3725. It was a mad rush, but a lot of fun too. It was exciting to see all these people who are enthusiastic to add more natives to their gardens. We made \$90 in new memberships, \$81 selling t-shirts and hats, and \$30 in books.

I repotted The 227 left-over plants into gallon containers so that we can sell them at next year's plant sale.

In talking to and watching people at the sale I have some ideas for improving next year's plant sale. The first is to move the sale to the second week in September – between the fair and the Millpond Music Festival. This weekend seemed much less busy than the last weekend of September. The plants looked much better at that time also. By the time of the plant sale many plants were moving into dormancy. For people who miss the sale (for whatever reason) I would like to take the left over plants to our local Farmer's Market.

I would also like to focus on growing plants that people would like in their gardens. For example, I had 40 *Datura* plants for sale, could have had more, but only sold 9. I don't want to use up precious greenhouse space with plants not very many people want. So at the next member meeting I will have tally sheets where people can put a check next to plants they are interested in, and a sheet where people can write down other species they would like to see at the sale.

Another project would be to add information to the website regarding growing the plants in gardens. I would like to have a paragraph

about each plant, what kind of soil and location it likes to grow in, when it blooms and other gardener information. Then I would like a little box telling what size and how many I have in production.

My next idea is to have a slide show in June that will highlight local native plant gardens and then individually show which plants from those gardens I am growing for the year. This will give people time to plan and prepare their gardens during the summer so when the fall sale comes around spots in their garden will be ready for the plants. I would like to be able to have this slide show on the website so people could go and watch it over and over again for ideas.

January starts the next growing season as it is time to clean seeds and get those seeds that need to be stratified into the refrigerator.

If you bought plants at the sale and have the black pots in any size I would gladly welcome them back so I can reuse them.

Katie Quinlan

FEATURES

Birch Creek Journal

After six days of overcast skies, fog, rain, sleet, snow, and floods, I was startled by sunshine pouring through our windows this morning. It was like a presence, and suddenly I understood why one might worship a sun god. Here at Birch Creek we are more than ready for a little sun. The massive storm just past gave us eight and one-half inches of precipitation, most of it rain. "Shall I build us a boat?" Steve asked on Sunday. Runoff flowed down dry ditches and over embankments. The dry ravine that I call Teakettle Wash flowed for the first time since we've lived here; where it crossed Birch Creek Road, the water excavated a four-inch pipe that had been half-buried in dirt and rocks for years.

Needless to say, Birch Creek itself went on a little rampage. Normally, an athletic person can leap from one side of the creek to the other, but on Sunday the creek must have been ten feet wide where it flowed past our house. Brown and foamy water swirled around birch trees, bumped up against cottonwoods, tore out what remained of a low rock dam our son-in-law built on his first visit. The path through willows that Steve cleared was flowing, too, as the creek found old channels that it had not used for years. Squishing up the path in my Crocs, I was astonished at how cold the water was,

although I should not have been: it came to us directly from a snow bank, after all.

Hydrologist Rick Kattleman (“Historic Floods in the Eastern Sierra Nevada,” *The History of Water*, White Mountain Research Station Symposium Volume 4, 1992) found that the biggest and most damaging floods in the Eastern Sierra come from summer thunderstorms but that rain-on-snow events can also bring catastrophic flooding in which bridges and railroad tracks wash out and the Owens River spreads for half a mile from side to side. I find it surprising that even though the recent storm dropped almost twice as much precipitation as our annual average, this was still not enough to cause widespread damage. Kattleman’s historic data suggest that we need twice as much again, or at least sixteen inches, for catastrophic floods. I’m just as glad we were spared.

In the Sonoran and Mojave deserts, extraordinarily wet winters make for extraordinarily beautiful wildflower displays the following spring. We had lovely wildflower displays in the Owens Valley last spring, so the soil should be well charged with seeds as well as moisture. Do I dare to predict an incredible spring in 2011? I think I do. Keep in mind, though, that my reputation as a predictor is pretty well shot: last week I scoffed when the National Weather Service predicted five straight days with a forty percent chance of rain each day. They say that a little more rain might be on the way; meanwhile, I am grateful for a chance to dry out and grateful for the sun

Jan Bowers

CONSERVATION

Resurrection of the Water Commission

The year 2010 was a traumatic one for the Inyo County Water Commission (WC). It underwent a near-death experience, as four of its five members resigned. It lapsed into a coma as it was unable to raise a quorum for much of the year. While comatose, things looked particularly bleak because the WC’s own staff, the Inyo County Water Department (ICWD), twice recommended to the Board of Supervisors that they pull the plug and disband the WC entirely. The Supervisors ignored ICWD’s recommendation, however, and opened a new recruitment for WC members. I applied to serve (for the fourth time), but my application was rejected.

In the rejection letter I received, Inyo County Supervisor Richard Cervantes wrote “Having such a well-qualified pool of applicants makes our job more difficult...” Precisely. Well-qualified applicants make it difficult for the Supervisors to appoint people who won’t ask difficult questions and tell Supervisors things they don’t want to hear. Lest this sound unduly cynical, consider the agenda of the first meeting of the newly-resurrected WC. It consists largely of introductions to the ICWD staff and presentations on what the staff does. There are no substantive agenda items at all.

Several applicants rejected by Inyo Supervisors are already very familiar with the Water Agreement and the workings of the ICWD. Had such applicants been appointed, it wouldn’t have been necessary to waste an entire meeting on staff introductions. Equally important, the WC would have been more likely to think critically about the implementation of the Water Agreement. Critical thinking, however, is not an activity in which the Supervisors and ICWD wish the WC to engage. Time will tell whether the new WC accomplishes anything useful, but its first meeting agenda is not grounds for optimism.

Daniel Pritchett

MEMBERSHIP

The Bristlecone Chapter heartily welcomes the following new members:

Noelle Dienken - Mammoth

Bev Johnson - Burbank

Jennifer Richardson - Bishop

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. To join, please see back of newsletter.

To RENEW: please contact Sally Manning or

RENEW ONLINE:

Using a credit card, go to www.cnps.org and click on the JOIN button

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Bristlecone Chapter
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I wish to be affiliated with the Bristlecone Chapter: ____
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<u>Membership Category</u>	
<input type="checkbox"/> Student, Limited Income	\$25.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Individual	\$45.00
<input type="checkbox"/> International	\$45.00
<input type="checkbox"/> Family 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

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 _____

Bristlecone Chapter Directory

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Vice President – Holly Alpert
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Membership – Sally Manning (760) 873-3790
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DeDecker Native Plant Garden - **VACANT**
Publicity – Jenny Richardson – (760) 872-6589
Historian – Ann Fulton (760) 873-9261
Librarian - EvelynMae Nikolaus (760) 878-2149
Rare Plant Committee: Kathleen Nelson (760) 873-2400
DeDecker Grant Program: Jan Bowers (760) 938-3140
Plant Sale Committee –
Sherryl Taylor (924-8742), Denise Waterbury (873-4344)
Book Sales - Sue Weis (760) 873-3485
Posters – Stephen Ingram (760) 387-2913
Creosote Ring Sub-Chapter Coordinator - Kathy LaShure
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THE CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY (www.bristleconecnps.org) Bristlecone Chapter Newsletter comes out bimonthly. It is free to chapter members. To subscribe to this newsletter without joining CNPS, please send \$5.00 per year to CNPS, P.O. Box 364, Bishop, CA 93515-0364. ATTN: subscriptions. Send newsletter articles not memberships to newsletter editor Daniel Pritchett at newsletter@bristleconecnps.org.