

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

The California Native Plant Society



Bristlecone Chapter

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FROM THE EDITOR

Next Newsletter Deadline: April 25, 2012
Send articles to: newsletter@bristleconecnps.org

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Newsletter editor sought – if interested, please contact the email address above.

March General Meeting

Wednesday, March 28, 2012, 7:00 pm at
White Mountain Research Station, 3000 East Line St.
in Bishop.

Mike Davis of the Eastern Sierra Land Trust will speak about restoration work at Benton Hot Springs, including clearing non-native plants and reintroducing native species. This will be a preliminary report as the work is still underway, but this represents an important partnership with a private landowner. If time permits, other habitat improvement and land acquisition projects of the Eastern Sierra Land Trust will be discussed.

March Board Meeting

Wednesday, March 21, 2012, 7:00 pm at the
ESICE office, 512 N. 2nd St., Bishop. Members are
welcome.

REPORTS

News from the greenhouse

I know spring is coming when the bottom shelf of my refrigerator has been given up to seeds stratifying for the plant sale. I put the first seeds into their damp cold bags at the end of December and the number of bags keeps growing daily until the middle of March when I open the greenhouse and they all get planted in soil.

This year I tried something new and put some seeds into pots in cold frames in my garden, now I have some little lupine and *Balsamorhiza sagittata* starts showing their leaves. This is exciting because I didn't scarify the lupine seeds first, and if I can get lupine seeds to sprout this

way, I don't have to sit and scratch each seed before I plant it. Lupine is a tricky plant because it has a tendency to damp off.

At the greenhouse, the maintenance has been taken care of and the tables are ready for plants. The garbage cans are full of soil ready for planting day. I re-plumbed the drip system and moved the tables around so I can get the wagon and ladder between the tables. This should help my aching back. With this dry winter I have been going out every other week to water the overwintering plants. Besides watering, I check the goings on of the critters around the growing area. A mole has decided to push up a burrow in one of my planted beds; fortunately he came up between my plants and hasn't taken out any of the plants. I will have to see how extensive his excavation plans are.

It looks like the cottontails were having a hootenanny out in the grass because there is a lot of scat scattered about. Two years ago when I set out seedlings in the flower beds I discovered another great use for pots with the bottom cut out, they make great shade structures and rabbit fences. I had a great basin wild rye in one that was 2 years old, I figured that it was established well enough that it didn't need a shade protector any more, the day after I took it off the rabbits cropped the grass down to half its size!

Great basin wild rye is an important wildlife plant and I now know why my plant at home doesn't self-seed, between the birds, rabbits and mice, it is a wonder that grass grows at all. On the shade house tables the mice have cropped the little grass seedlings down. With the warmer weather and longer days I am seeing new sprouts come up so in the end I think their grazing won't matter much. But seeing the mice activity has reminded me to get the mousetraps out and super glue the nuts to them so they don't dig up all my seeds in the greenhouse. I have a love hate relationship with the mice as they dig up the seeds like the lupine, but they plant *Datura wrightii* for me. I haven't been able to get *Datura wrightii* seeds to grow myself, but the mice plant it in the overwintered plants, which allows me to transplant it, saving me the trouble of starting it. This week I noticed that the mice have been very busy planting seeds as there were lots of little holes dug in the various pots.

On May 3rd, from 3:30 to 5:30, the Eastern Sierra Land Trust will be holding their 2nd annual "Garden Fest" and I will have plants that have overwintered for sale. So if you missed the sale last fall, or realized that you have a spot for one more native, there will be plants available at the Garden Fest. To see what plants there might be go to the plant sale page for a current list of plants available. I won't be bringing all the plants to the sale but you can contact me if there are certain ones you would like.

Katie Quinlan

Native Americans and Native Plants

The January 2012 CNPS conservation conference in San Diego offered some excellent speaker sessions, poster and presentations by our own members and others working in the Eastern Sierra (unlike me, some attendees put in some effort!), and fun gatherings where we could catch up with the state's other botanists.

It was great to see a session on Tribal Conservation and Traditional Use of Native Plants at a CNPS event. CNPS was founded in 1965, but has generally done little to reach out to California's Native Americans. The session was chaired by Dean Tonenna, a BLM botanist with training in ethnobotany, who is also affiliated with the Mono Lake Kootzatukadu. Speakers included:

- Rick Flores, who works at the UC Santa Cruz arboretum and has become involved in a project to restore an area with deer grass and white sedge used for basket-making, located in Pinnacles National Monument, territory of the Amah Mutsun;
- Richard Bugbee who teaches at Kumeyaay Community College about the interdependence between land and people;
- Stan Rodriguez of the Santa Ysabel/San Diego Kumeyaay who spoke about how important the regional flora was and still is to traditional lifeways and said, "when we get along with each other, we get along with the earth";
- Abe Sanchez, an artist who makes traditional style baskets thus has an eye for quality natural material;
- Shana Gross, a USFS ecologist who is leading a planting/restoration project near Lake Tahoe (Tallac) to grow traditional plants for the Washoe, which they will be able to harvest and use as needed;

--Dean Tonenna, who gave two presentations, one about restoring the Truckee River to its natural channel and another about the importance of peage, the pandora moth larvae that feed on Jeffrey pines, and the setting aside of "Peage Park" in the Inyo National Forest; and

--Lucy Parker, Yosemite Miwok and Mono Lake Paiute, daughter of renowned basket weaver Julia Parker, who showed a video documentary about her mother and the respect for the land and the attention to detail that goes into basketry. Excellent examples of baskets were displayed, and Dr. Kat Anderson, author of *Tending the Wild* (and co lead on the Big Pine Tribe's nahavita project) was in the audience and her work was acknowledged appreciatively.

The session was a good reminder of human interdependence with native plants. Even as botanists, we might walk right by species that perhaps aren't so showy or rare. It's important to appreciate California's plants that for ages nourished, healed, or otherwise helped humans live their lives.

Sally Manning

CONSERVATION

"Avoid" is equivalent to "mitigate after the fact"

In the Sept-Oct, 2011 issue I discussed the fact that Inyo County's challenge to DWP's 2011 pumping program over pumping at Blackrock had led DWP to initiate its own challenge of Inyo's right to challenge a pumping program at all. DWP argued that challenging a pumping program in order to "avoid" creation of impacts was equivalent to seeking mitigation after the fact. The process for seeking mitigation after the fact requires a joint analysis by DWP and Inyo at the Technical Group. Hence, by DWP's logic, Inyo cannot challenge a pumping program with having first gone through the joint process for determining if mitigation after-the-fact is necessary. Because DWP is a party to this joint process, this reading of the LTWA effectively gives DWP veto power over Inyo's right to challenge a pumping program at all. In summarizing the situation I wrote,

"The good news is that finally, a decade after DWP put forth this self-serving LTWA interpretation, it may actually be challenged. The bad news is that it is entirely possible DWP will

win, not because of the merits of its arguments, but because of its virtually unlimited resources for bombarding the arbitrator/judge with BS, and because of the demonstrated ineffectiveness of Inyo County legal staff regarding the LTWA. It promises to be a thoroughly depressing spectacle."

The issue was sent to arbitration in December, 2011. Inyo County chose one arbitrator, DWP chose another, and the two arbitrators jointly chose a third.

As I feared, it was a thoroughly depressing spectacle. Inyo's legal team failed to persuade even its own appointee to the arbitration panel to support its argument. The three arbitrators were unanimous in their inability to see a distinction between "avoid" and "mitigate" and ruled that Inyo cannot challenge a pumping program in the interests of impact avoidance without first following the procedure for determining if mitigation after-the-fact is required.

Given that challenging individual pumping programs is not the most effective way to realize the LTWA's goals, the decision will not have too much immediate effect. In the big picture, however, it eliminates an important check on DWP's power, and means the important language in the LTWA about avoiding impacts is unenforceable by Inyo County. The decision is a striking example of how attorneys can take straightforward language and give it nonsensical meaning.

Daniel Pritchett

MEMBERSHIP

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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Please make membership checks payable to and send to:

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