



Bristlecone Chapter

Dedicated to the Preservation of California Native Flora

The California Native Plant Society

Bristlecone Chapter Newsletter

Volume 35, No. 2
March-April 2014

March 2014 President's message

The US Forest Service is updating all the forest management plans. These plans provide direction to guide the management of forest resources over the next 10-15 years. The current forest plan for the Inyo National Forest was adopted in 1988 and it took 6 years to complete. This time, the US Forest Service would like to complete the process in 3 years.

The Inyo National Forest is one of the first three forests in California to update their plan using the "2012 National Forest System Planning Rule." It is an "adaptive management" plan, based on science and includes both public values and effective land management practices. The focus is on restoration of land and water at a landscape level. One of its goals is to support vibrant rural communities by considering the social, cultural and economic conditions of the area and how the forest might contribute to these conditions.

This plan emphasizes public involvement throughout the planning process. During the writing of this document, the Forest Service would like to hear from as many stakeholders as possible. If you use the forest in any way – hike, bike, horseback ride, off-highway use, climb or just sit – you are a stakeholder.

The next deadline for the process is April 1, 2014 when the "Notice of Intent" will be available. You can get more information on the plan and how to comment on the Inyo National Forest's website <http://www.fs.usda.gov/inyo>. Choose "forest plan revision" under "related links."

The Forest Service is working to include the public throughout the process; if you don't participate, you can't complain. We all have valuable insights into this vital resource so please take the time to give your input.

--Katie Quinlan

March General Membership Meeting "Tracking the Effects of Climate Change on our Flora and Fauna"

**Thursday*, March 20, 7 PM, White
Mountain Research Station, 3000 East
Line Street, Bishop**

**Please note change to Thursday from usual Wednesday*

The California Phenology Project (CPP; www.usanpn.org/cpp) is a new state-wide monitoring program designed to track the effect of climate change on the seasonal behavior of our flora and fauna. From backyards and schoolyards to National Parks and UC Natural Reserves, we are observing and recording the day-to-day activities (phenology) of plants and animals and reporting our observations online. Since 2011, scientists, educators, and citizen scientists have contributed over 500,000 observations to the California Phenology Project, and we are now able to see that many of our monitored plant species are highly sensitive to climate. Come join us for a fun and informative evening where you'll hear the latest about this exciting project and how you can get involved, whether at the UC Valentine Eastern Sierra Reserves or elsewhere in the Eastern Sierra.

This lecture will be presented by Brian Haggerty and Julie Anne Hopkins. Brian is the Field Coordinator for the California Phenology Project and a PhD student in evolutionary ecology at UC Santa Barbara. He has helped to design and cultivate the California Phenology Project and has created many of its training and education materials, including a lesson plan in a book on citizen science recently published by the National Science Teachers Association Press. Julie Anne, our Bristlecone Chapter's Conservation Chair, is a CCP volunteer at SNARL and Valentine Reserves.

--Julie Anne Hopkins

Notes from January General Membership Meeting--“Weed Wars, Rare Plants, and Outdoor School on the Tribe’s Conservation Land”

On January 22, our Chapter hosted Brian Adkins and Hillary Behr of the Bishop Paiute Tribe Environmental Office to speak about their work on the Tribe’s Conservation Open Space Area (COSA). This 25-acre piece of conservation land was created in 1997 as wetland mitigation for developing some surrounding parcels. The Conservation Area sits between See Vee lane to the West, Pioneer Cemetery and the Pine St. School to the east, and the Forest Service/BLM building to the south.

Brian Adkins, the Director of the Tribe’s Environmental Office gave us a brief history of the COSA as well as background on the 2011 project that included building a half mile of walking trails which connect the Pine St. Elementary School to the Paiute Shoshone Cultural Center. Two ponds serve as a desert fish refuge. He outlined the goals of the COSA project, which are preservation of rare and culturally important native plants and animals, trails for transportation and recreation, and educational uses.

Hillary Behr spoke about habitat restoration projects that she had worked on during her AmeriCorps term with the Tribe. One project is the preservation of the Owens Valley Checkerbloom (*Sidalcea covillei*), which occurs on lots adjacent to the COSA that are slated for development. She has been working on transplanting the species to the COSA as well as growing it from seeds collected last summer. Other rare plants in the adjacent areas include Hall’s Meadow Hawksbeard (*Crepis runcinata ssp. hallii*) and Inyo County Star Tulip (*Calochortus excavatus*).

Another interesting project is the solarization of the soil around one of the COSA ponds. The area was infested with perennial pepperweed (*Lepidium latifolium*) and other weeds. Although the Tribe sprays herbicides for weed control on other parts of the COSA, they wanted to try an alternative method. Hillary coordinated the effort to lay clear plastic around the pond for the three hottest months of the summer to raise soil temperatures to a point that kills seeds and roots. So far the method seems successful and revegetation of the area with native plants is under way.

Hillary also spoke about community events and

environmental education on the area. “The goal of outreach efforts is to let the Tribal community as well as the general public know that this space is available to recreate, relax, and learn about cultural and natural history. We also want users to engage in stewardship of the area”, Hillary said. One opportunity to engage is the Eastern Sierra Audubon Society’s monthly bird walks on the COSA, which occur the second Saturday of every month. An opportunity to help take care of the area is the COSA Stewardship Days, which begin in April and meet from 8 AM- 12 PM the first and third Fridays of the month.



*Checkerbloom transplanting
Photo by Hillary Behr*

The Conservation Area is located directly behind the Pine St. Elementary School, which provides an incredible opportunity to get students outdoors and learning about nature. The Tribe hosts two third grade classes for a field trip every month as part of a program called “Taking Root: Nature-based Learning in the Eastern Sierra.” Hillary says, “The point of this program is to get kids outdoors, observing nature, and asking questions. It is important for kids to know that nature is safe, fun, and deserves respect.” Programs on the COSA have also included field trips for the Bishop Indian Education Center summer program, the third grade GATE program, a September field trip in partnership with Eastern Sierra Institute for Collaborative Education called “Exploring a Wetland,” and fifth grade World Water Day field trips.

The COSA is open to the public during daylight hours. There are entrances to the trail behind the Paiute-Shoshone Cultural Center and from the Forest Service/BLM building parking lot. For more information about the project and how to be involved, contact Brian.Adkins@bishoppaiute.org or Hillary.Behr@bishoppaiute.org.

--Hillary Behr

Valentine Eastern Sierra Reserve and Sierra Nevada Aquatic Reserve System – Observations in our Backyard

Climate change is already beginning to transform life on Earth. Around the globe, seasons are shifting, temperatures are climbing and sea levels are rising. Our March General Meeting will present the ongoing plant phenology project, including observations from the UC Valentine Eastern Sierra Reserve (VESR) and Sierra Nevada Aquatic Reserve System (SNARL).

The UC Reserve System is a network of protected natural areas throughout California. One of many research projects at VESR and SNARL is participation in the USA National Phenology Network (USA-NPN), a national consortium of organizations and individuals that collect, share, and use phenology data to better understand resource responses to changing climates and environments. The California constituent of the USA-NPN is the California Phenology Project (CPP).

As defined by the USA-NPN, phenology is the study of seasonal or periodic biological events such as plant leaf-out and flowering, insect emergence, and animal migration. Put simply, phenology is the science of the seasons. The phenological status of plants and animals across the seasons is dynamic and is closely linked to climatic and ecological variables. The information will be used for resource management and land-use decision making.



--Photo by Julie Ann Hopkins

Both Valentine Camp and the Sierra Nevada Aquatic Reserve System provide excellent locations for phenological observations and data collection. Valentine Camp encompasses several distinct habitats: Sierran upper-montane forest and chaparral, Great Basin sagebrush, and wet montane meadow, all occurring within a relatively small area.

Mammoth Creek flows through the site, bordered by high montane riparian vegetation. Several large springs and small seeps add to diverse habitats. Nearby Sierra Nevada Aquatic Research Laboratory encompasses Great Basin sagebrush, riparian woodland, and riparian meadow communities. Protected from entry and grazing for many years, these communities are in excellent condition. Non-aquatic research is permitted and encouraged, such as the CPP. Check out the VESP website for a wealth of information at www.vesr.ucnrs.org.

Educators and students of all ages monitor the impacts of climate change on plants and animals in the United States – anyone can participate in their schoolyard, local reserves and their own backyard. Join us at our March presentation to learn how you can be part of this important project. For more information check out California Phenology Project and USA National Phenology Network at www.usanpn.org/cpp.

--Julie Anne Hopkins

A New Bench in the DeDecker Garden in Memory of Gary and Cindy Sims

Walk the DeDecker Garden path, and you'll find a bench with a plaque reading:

*Gary and Cindy Sims
With their love*

*They made the desert bloom
From HMSSurprise.org*

Who were Gary and Cindy Sims, and why a bench to honor them? Raised in Southern California, they met in high school and married after graduation. Gary joined the Air Force, which sent them to such exotic locales as Taiwan and Greece. Following Major Sims' retirement, he worked at Jet Propulsion Laboratory and Loral before he and Cindy founded an engineering analysis firm, Stonehaven Laboratory. Gary also joined The Gunroom of HMSSurprise.org, an online discussion group named for the gathering place of naval officers aboard a frigate in the Royal Navy, where we talk about the works of Patrick O'Brian and everything else.

The Gunroom's worldwide participants knew Gary as a witty, opinionated, and erudite man who loved his wife deeply. Gary regaled us with

stories of their past travels and of their daily life in Lancaster, California. Gary recounted the success he and Cindy had in turning an arid patch of land in the Antelope Valley into an oasis, despite encounters with rattlesnakes and feral dogs. He told us of their mutual love of fast cars. And he told us of his untiring efforts to aid Cindy's everyday life after a 1998 heart attack, and a devastating stroke following a 2003 heart attack. Finally he allowed the Gunroom to stand virtual watch with him in the long hours leading to Cindy's death in April, 2012. They enjoyed 50 years together, and she died holding his hand.

The Gunroom was shocked but not surprised to learn of Gary's death in February 2013. Determined to raise a memorial to this remarkable couple, we chose to donate a bench in this desert garden where passersby can rest and contemplate life, love, nature, mountains, and everything else.

--Astrid Bear



*Memorial Bench for Gary and Cindy Sims
--Photo by Julie Anne Hopkins*

Greenhouse Update—March 2014

This winter exciting things happened at the greenhouse. With the help of some wonderful CNPS volunteers we raised the shade house tables so they are at a back friendly height. With funding from CNPS and muscle from two BLM seasonals, we were able to expand the shade house to include two or more benches. This increases my growing space by 128 square feet or 2048 more pots. I am looking forward to having a little more flexibility of space so I can grow more plants for everyone.

I know spring is coming when the bottom shelf of my refrigerator is full of stratifying seeds for the plant sale rather than leftover food. The first seeds were put into their stratifying bags at the end of December and the number of bags has kept growing since. My family looks forward to the middle of March when I open the greenhouse, the seeds get planted and the refrigerator is free again.

If this drought year is motivating you to take out your lawn, the Bristlecone Chapter and the Master Gardner Program will be co-hosting a workshop on April 26 covering the best way to remove turf and the top local native plants to replace it with. Check our websites for details about where and when this workshop will take place.

For those of you who can't wait until the fall sale, which will be held September 13 this year, the Eastern Sierra Land Trust will be holding their annual Garden fest on April 24. I will be there with some native plants for sale.

If you are planning a big garden project and will need a lot of native plants you may contact me now and put in a pre-sale order. That way I can plant extra numbers of the plants you would like.

--Katie Quinlan

Fish Slough Field Trip – February 8, 2014

Under cloudy cold winter skies, 16 people from around Inyo and Mono Counties gathered for an introduction to the geology, ecology, and human history of the Fish Slough area. This was a joint field trip sponsored by the Bristlecone chapter, Friends of the Inyo, and Range of Light Sierra Club, and was led by Our President Katie Quinlan, Leigh Parmenter and Andrew Shurr.

We met at Jean Blanc and Fish Slough roads, signed liability release forms, and traveled about three miles north up the historic stage-coach route from Benton to Bishop. Here we stopped to practice differentiating the common components of Upland Desert Scrub. Ten species were counted including good dried specimens of *Psorothamnus nevadensis*, *Artiplex confertifolia*, *Menodora spinescens*, *Tetradymia axillaris*, *Ephedra nevadensis*, and the Owens Valle endemic "white rabbitbrush," *Ericameria nauseosa* var. *hololeuca*.

Strolling over to some nearby spring-fed pools, we saw several restoration projects underway by Friends of the Inyo and California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and discussed methods of eradicating the invasive "five-hook bassia" (*Bassia hyposifolia*). We marveled at the clusters of brightly colored pinflags marking the newly-planted Alkali sacaton (*Sporobolus airoides*), which contrasted with the dry tawny Alkaline Meadow vegetation here, dominated by *Distichlis spicata* and *Anemopsis californica*, with nice populations of *Heliotropium curassavicum*, *Lythrum californicum*, *Asclepias californica*, and some *Helianthus nuttallii*.



Yvonne Wood with Atl-Atl
--Photo by Kristen Luetkemeier

Our next stop was farther up Fish Slough Road. Here we checked-out "house rings," threshing floors, and grinding rocks related to early native inhabitants of the area. Next, a one million-year history of Owens Valley geology was displayed by a long linear scale time-line strung across the landscape. This presentation was designed for fourth graders but we struggled to comprehend the magnitude of massive volcanic and glaciation cycles which formed the landscape before us. Finally, we got to shoot actual spears using atl-atls – the challenge of the trip.

Our final stop was along some restored ponds near the eastern edge of the slough. These areas had been excavated to clear-out invasive tules, exclude non-native bass, and provide habitat for the Owens Valley Pupfish – an Endangered Species endemic to the Owens Valley. We listened to a reading of "Species in a Bucket" describing the last-ditch efforts of the Fish and Game Biologist to save this species. As the skies cleared, we watched dozens of these diminutive fish flitting about, their scales flashing electric blue in the warming sun.

--Michael Honer

Steve Matson's Best Plant of 2013

Journalists frequently use such hyperbolic headlines to draw us in for a read that turns out to be far more mundane. I am guilty of this as well. But wait! Have any of you plant-o-philes ever been asked "what is your favorite flower?" You may have felt nonplussed by such a question ("there are so darn many" you probably think, as I have). But I can honestly say I have had **daily** favorites, little surprises that crop up on some hike or field trip. I will now extend this notion to even having a favorite plant for the year, hence the title of this article.

This putative Best Plant of 2013 (for me) was a serendipitous surprise discovered while hiking above South Lake with my wife Eileen and our two new pups, Juno and Luna, this last July 2nd. We had hiked up the pipeline trail past Blue and Green lakes on our way to Coyote Ridge. In spite of a second year of drought the wildflowers on the steep trail above Green Lake were spectacular. Higher up we found a more alpine community as we shuffled on up to Coyote Ridge just south of the summit known as the Hunchback. No, we did not find any geocache with Victor Hugo references. Instead we sat down for lunch looking west over the Bishop Creek headwaters.

I looked down and noticed a little blossom with a shape that screamed out "Pea Family." I am a great fan of the Pea family (Fabaceae), especially of the genera *Astragalus* (Milk Vetch or Loco Weed) and *Lupinus* in all their glorious desert diversity. I immediately knew this was a plant I had never seen before, largely because it was only a few inches tall and was very glandular. The genus name "*Oxytropis*" came unbidden to my brain. This turned out to be fortuitous as research upon getting home to Big Pine directed me to *Oxytropis borealis* var. *viscida*. What helped me in my prognosis was that this little plant is found in California only on or near Coyote Ridge and in the White and Inyo Mountains. Also, according to the Consortium of California Herbaria, it has been collected only ten times in California, nine of which are around the Coyote ridge locale and once by Mary DeDecker on Waucoba Mountain. It is known from Oregon and other western states and is considered circumboreal in distribution; very rare in California but clearly not rare elsewhere.

Besides being a very attractive little plant--we might call this a little cousin of *Astragalus*-- its restricted

California distribution was very curious. Sure, you can find rare plants in the White Mountains and the Sierra as well. But for Sierran plants, why one little region of the entire Sierra, one that is not known for unusual soils or rocky substrate such as limestone? It is also not some little alpine Sierran endemic. Some have considered it a relic from more continental populations, holding on to this one tiny unglaciated piece of the central Sierra. In any case, locally rare or disjunct populations frequently pique our curiosity as to “why?”



Oxtropis borealis var. viscida
Photo by Steve Matson

To see photos: search on “CalPhotos”, click on “plants”, then the “O” under “Browse scientific names”, scroll down and over to *Oxtropis borealis var. viscida*. More can be read about this taxon in the Jepson Manual but better yet in volume 3 part B of “Intermountain Flora” where it goes by the name *Oxtropis viscida*.

So what was YOUR favorite plant for 2013??? Keep looking and start writing!

There are plants, and then there are always our stories about them.....

--Steve Matson

Volunteer Opportunity

Help Wanted: Dates: March 24 – mid-April
Did you know there was a big bloom at the Eureka Dunes this fall that may continue this spring?

Death Valley National Park is looking for volunteers to assist in data collection surveys at the Eureka Dunes. Project involves surveying the three dune systems in Eureka Valley (Main dunes, Saline Spur, Marble Canyon (Hidden) Dunes) and collecting presence/absence data for four species: *Oenothera californica ssp. eurekaensis*, *Swallenia alexandrae*, *Astragalus lentiginosus var. micans*, and *Salsola sp.* Survey areas range in difficulty from gentle sloping shrubland to steep, deep sand hiking. A minimum commitment of three consecutive days and the ability to hike at least ten miles a day are required. Botanical and GPS skills welcomed but not required. On-site orientation will be given. Contact Drew Kaiser at Death Valley National Park, if interested: Andrew.Kaiser@nps.gov 760-786-3235

Bristlecone Chapter Directory

President: Katie Quinlan 760-873-8023
Vice President: Michèle Slaton 760-938-3258
Secretary: Rosemary Jarrett 760-387-2782
Treasurer: Paul Satterthwaite 773-208-7858
Creosote Ring Sub-chapter: Kathy LaShure 760-377-4541
Chapter Council Rep: Steve McLaughlin 760-938-3140
Partnerships: Steve McLaughlin 760-938-3140
Conservation: Julie Anne Hopkins 831-566-6012
Programs: Michèle Slaton 760-938-3258
DeDecker Grants: Holly Alpert 760-709-2212
Field Trips: Sue Weis 760-873-3485
Historian: Kathy Duvall: 760-387-2122
Bishop Plant Sales: Katie Quinlan 760-873-8023
Mammoth Plant Sales: Sherry Taylor 760-934-2338
Publicity: Kristen Luetkemeier 703-862-4395
Newsletter: Edie Trimmer/Thomas Brill 760-920-3702
Membership: Edie Trimmer/Thomas Brill 760-920-3702
Website: Maggie Riley webmaster@bristleconecnps.org
Posters: Stephen Ingram 760-937-9918
Book Sales: Sue Weis 760-873-3485
T-shirt Sales: Scott Hetzler 760-873-8392
Highway Clean-up: Scott Hetzler 760-873-8392
DeDecker Garden: Richard Potashin

Up-Coming Bristlecone Events

Bristlecone Chapter Members, Take Note!!

Our events calendar is very full this issue. But there are additional events of interest to our members. These include seminars sponsored by the state office of California Native Plant Society, lectures by Sierra Nevada Aquatics Research Laboratory and by Metabolic Studios. You can also see many wonderful photos that we cannot fit into this newsletter as well updated information for field trips.

Visit our webpage to learn about these events at bristleconecnps.org/ or "like" us on our facebook page **Bristlecone Chapter, CNPS**

March 16, Sunday--Highway clean-up. Leader Scott Hetzler.

Meet at the intersection of Highway 395 and Pine Creek Rd., west of 395, at 9:00 AM. We will try to be done by 1 PM. For information call 760-873-8392.

March 19 Wednesday 7 PM--Board Meeting.

At Maggie Riley's home, 1420 Lazy A Drive Bishop.

March 20 Bristlecone Chapter Meeting and Program, "Tracking the Effects of Climate Change on our Flora and Fauna" Brian Haggerty and Julie Anne Hopkins.

7 PM, White Mountain Research Station, 3000 E Line Street, Bishop

April 11-13 Maturango Wildflower Exhibit, Maturango Museum, Ridgecrest.

April 12 2 PM "What a Surprise—the Amazing Panamint Mountains Watershed known as Surprise Canyon"

April 13, 2 PM "Day Tripping with California Wildflower" Kathy LaShure, USO Building, 230 Ridgecrest Drive.

April 19, Saturday—Darwin Falls, Plants and Insects. Leader Richard Potashin

Visit website for more information.

April 24, Thursday—Eastern Sierra Land Trust Garden Fest. Katie Quinlan.

Visit website or call 760-873-8023 for information.

April 26, Saturday-- Bristlecone Chapter and the Master Gardner Program. Katie Quinlan.

Visit webpage or call 760-873-8023 for information.

May 5-7 Rare Plant Treasure Hunt. Leader Kathy LaShure.

Walking the Pacific Crest Trail at Walker Pass looking for the 9-Mile Phacelia. Visit webpage or call 760-377-4541

Up-Coming Bristlecone Events

May 16, Friday—DeDecker Garden Clean-Up Leader Richard Potashin

Visit webpage for more information.

May 24, Saturday—Bodie Hills. Leaders Julie Anne Hopkins and Jeff Hunter

Visit webpage or call 831-566-6012 for information.

June 3, Tuesday, 7 PM —Snarl Lecture "Cacti, Agaves and Yuccas of Eastern California" Speaker Stephen Ingram

Green Church at Hwy 395 and Benton Crossing Road

June 14, Saturday—Pleasant Valley Meadows. Leader Jerry Zatorski

Visit webpage for more information.

June 8, Sunday—Highway Clean Up. Leader Scott Hetzler.

Meet at the intersection of Highway 395 and Pine Creek Rd., west of 395, at 9:00 AM. We will try to be done by 1 PM. For more information contact Scott at 760-873-8392.

June 21, Saturday—McGee Canyon. Leader Paul Satterthwaite.

Call 773-208-7858 for information.

June 28, Saturday—Glass Mountains, Leader Julie Anne Hopkins and Sherryl Taylor.

Visit webpage or call 831-566-6012 for information.

July 12, Saturday - Waucoba Peak. Leader Jerry Zatorski.

Visit webpage for more information.

July 19 (or 20), Saturday - Aspendell to North Lake. Leader Michael Honer

Visit webpage for more information.

September 27, Saturday--Mollie Gibson area. Leader Michèle Slaton.

Visit webpage or call 760-938-3258 for information.

September 13, 9-Noon. Bishop Native Plant Sale, White Mountain Research Station.

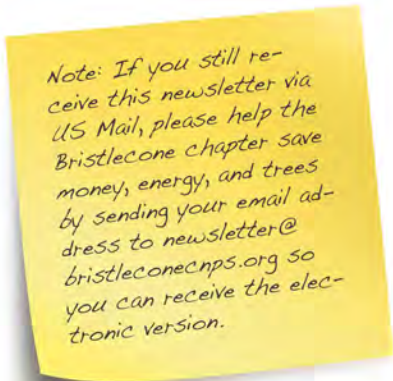
Call 760-873-8023 for more information

October 12, Sunday - Highway Clean Up. Leader Scott Hetzler.

Meet at the intersection of Highway 395 and Pine Creek Rd., west of 395, at 9:00 AM. We will try to be done by 1 PM. For more information contact Scott at 760-873-8392.

The California Native Plant Society

Bristlecone Chapter
P.O. Box 364
Bishop, CA 93515-0364
RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



Membership

The California Native Plant Society is an organization of laypersons 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.

To Join or Renew Online: Go to cnps.org and click on the JOIN/renew button at the top of the page, or mail in the form below:

Name: _____
Address: _____
City: _____ **State:** _____
Zip Code: _____ **Phone:** _____
Email: _____
I wish to be affiliated with the Bristlecone Chapter: _____
Other: _____

- | | |
|----------------------------|--------|
| __ Patron | \$300 |
| __ Benefactor | \$600 |
| __ Mariposa Lily | \$1500 |
| __ Additional Contribution | _____ |

Mail To / Make Payable To:
CNPS Membership Coordinator
2707 K Street, Suite 1
Sacramento, CA 95816

- Membership Category**
- | | |
|-----------------------------|-------|
| __ Student / Limited Income | \$25 |
| __ Individual | \$45 |
| __ Family | \$75 |
| __ Plant Lover | \$100 |

Gift Contribution: _____ Wherever needed
Specific Area: _____