President’s Message, March 2015

On Friday February 6 a much-prayed-for rain storm hit the Owens Valley. Unfortunately, the rain was preceded by a wind storm raging between 60 and 100 mph. A windblown power line started a fire near Lower Gorge Rd., and the wind quickly drove it up the canyon into Swall Meadows. By Saturday morning the blessed rain arrived, slowing the fire but leaving 7,000 acres torched and 40 families without homes.

The few people I have talked to who lost their homes are taking it in stride. Instead of bemoaning what they lost, they are thankful for what they still have--their lives, their pets, and the few possessions they were able to save.

Jean Vanier said one of the good things about community is that it enables us to welcome and help people in a way we can't as individuals. When we pool our strength and share the work and responsibility, we can welcome many people, even those in deep distress, and help them find resolve and inner healing.

The fire has given us the opportunity to pool our strength and help in ways we can't as individuals. Even during the fire, relief efforts were being set up. The fairgrounds had a drop-off site for physical goods. As the news got out of who lost their homes, Facebook campaigns and internet donation sites were set up. Three days after the fire started, donations had reached three times their original goals.

Although the effects of this fire are terrible, there is a hidden blessing in it as well. It allows what is the best about living in this community to shine through. We live in a generous place. People step up when their neighbors are in need.

Robin Hobb said home is people, not place. If you go back after the people are gone, then all you can see is what is not there any more. The people of Swall Meadows have lost their physical homes, but have a rich sense of what home is. Those of us in the larger community can experience as well this richer sense of home. With the strength given from all the well-wishing and help, the victims of the fire will be like the desert scrub in which they live--they will sprout new growth from the burned ruins.

If you wish to donate to any of the many sites set up for people, go to www.gofundme.com. Go to disaster relief and type in zip code 93514. You will get the list of all the campaigns.

A Facebook page “Swall and Paradise residents and friends” is organizing clean-up volunteers.

For some amazing pictures and video of the fire go to: wildernessexposures.com/round-fire-ravages-eastern-sierra-homes/

--Katie Quinlan

Bristlecone Board News

The CNPS Bristlecone Chapter has a number of people changes to announce.

1) Paul Satterthwaite is leaving our treasurer position, so we say goodbye to Paul and thank him for his service over the past three years. Nancy Hadlock will be the new treasurer and
Rosanne Higley will serve as bookkeeper. Please welcome Nancy and Rosanne.

2) Due to the Round Fire in Swall Meadows Stephen Ingram is unable to continue in the role as keepers of posters. We need someone to store and distribute our posters. The main responsibility is to have a place to store two 100-poster flats and ship them out occasionally to Death Valley, local visitors centers, Rock Creek Resort, etc. Sales are usually sparse and not too burdensome. If you have an interest in this position, please contact Katie Quinlan at 760-873-8023.

**March 25 General Meeting, 7 PM, White Mountain Research Center, 3000 E Line St., Bishop “Range Extensions in Death Valley National Park”**

Drew Kaiser has worked as a Biological Science Technician for Death Valley National Park since March 2010. During this time, he has focused on vegetation surveys in very remote areas of the Park. He will give a presentation on recent discoveries found within the Park that are range extensions for their taxa. Most are new to Inyo County and one is new to California. He will also give a short presentation on the State of the Death Valley Botany Program, including recent projects and future volunteer opportunities. (See volunteer opportunities on page 5.)

**Greenhouse Update**

This is the time of year for planning. I check my seed inventory and decide what to grow. I get out the calendar and start working backward. Ideally, all the seeds should be planted into seeding trays at the same time, so I have to time when the seeds that need pre-treatment go into the refrigerator, since they all have different stratification needs. From January to the end of March my calendar is marked with notes of when to start the different seeds.

This is also the time of year when I kick myself for not taking better notes the year before. Each year I am always experimenting, trying to figure out the best time to start certain plants. If I start this plant earlier, will it be ready for a spring sale? If this one has longer to grow, will it look better for the fall sale? Will the seeds germinate in the cold soil? I get off to a great start with good notes, but then the season gets too busy and the note taking is lost.

I am also planning what I want to do in my own garden. Where do I want to put more native plants? How will I arrange the drip system to accommodate them? Will I have to remove lawn and solarize all summer? Although the fall plant sale seems like a long time away, now is the time to start planning for what you will buy and to prepare your garden.

The City of Bishop has an incentive program for putting in sprinkler systems and converting existing sprinklers systems to drip. Go to their website to see...
if what they offer will help you. For drip conversion, you should go to Bishop Public Works and talk to them. The Eastern Sierra Land Trust Garden Fest will be May 1 for those of you anxious to get some native color into your garden before the fall sale.

--Katie Quinlan

2015 DeDecker Botanical Grant Recipients Announced

The Bristlecone Chapter is pleased to announce the recipients of this year’s DeDecker Botanical Grant. It is through the success of our annual native plant sale and the generous donations of plant enthusiasts that we are able to support a variety of excellent projects:

* Big Pine Paiute Tribe: Alice Piper Native Plant Garden Project

 Native plant garden to be installed at the Big Pine school, DeDecker botanical grants

* Brian Smithers: Comparative population structure and gene flow in bristlecone and limber pines

* Courtney Collins: Understanding the impacts of shrub expansion on alpine plant mycorrhizal communities in the White Mountains

* Eastern Sierra Land Trust: Eastside Wings – Native Plant and Pollinator Demonstration Garden at Eastern Sierra Land Trust

* Lee Vining School and Community Garden Enhancing the Lee Vining School and Community Garden to be an Eastside Pollinator Garden

* Erika Gardner: A Vascular Flora of the Kiavah Wilderness in the Scodie Mountains, Southern Sierra Nevada, Kern County

* Dylan Neubauer: Following in Mary’s Footsteps: Updating the Crooked Creek Station Vascular Plant Checklist and Creating an Herbarium Collection

Congratulations and good luck to each of you with your project!

--Michèle Slaton

In Memory of Betty Gilchrist

With fond memories, we say goodbye to one of Bristlecone Chapter’s founding members. Betty (Martha) Gilchrist passed away on January 17, 2015 at the age of 96 in Santa Cruz.

Betty moved from Long Beach to Lone Pine in the late 70’s after her husband retired. They bought ten acres in the Alabama Hills which had a spring mound. Betty soon discovered there were rare plants in the spring. She recorded the Inyo County star-tulip (Calochortus excavatus), Inyo County checker bloom (Sidalcea covillei) and Inyo phacelia (Phacelia inyoensis) growing in her yard. She was enthralled by these plants even in her old age before moving to Santa Cruz two years ago to be near her son.

Betty and Mary DeDecker were close friends, and together, learned the Latin botanical names for the native plants in the Inyo-Mono region. They were co-founding members of the Bristlecone Chapter on March 31, 1982 in Independence. Betty also co-founded the Owens Valley Committee with Mary and was an officer and board member for many years for both organizations.

The first issue of the Bristlecone Chapter newsletter was April 1981, reporting on the selection of the chapter name and the first officers: President Vince Yoder; Vice-president Francis Cholewa; Secretary-Treasurer Betty Gilchrist; Membership Kay C. Wylie; Newsletter Mary DeDecker.

A year later the newsletter reported on a proposed campout in Greenwater Valley in Death Valley and a president’s message by Vince Yoder:

We are reminded regularly of the "inalienable" rights of people. Seldom though do we think of, hear of, or even acknowledge that other living members of our biosphere may have "rights" also. We gather large bouquets of wild flowers, carve our initials upon trees, plink at ground squirrels, "develop" streams, "improve" roads, drive over rodent holes,
destroy plant cover, etc., etc—all without regard for other living companions with which we share this small planet. Since they are unable to plead their own cases, people must assume responsibility for their welfare. We must not forget that all forms of life are interdependent. Each one of us can help raise the level of concern in our own communities if we choose to do so. CNPS members are dedicated to the preservation of the native flora, a basic part of the natural system.

Some ideas endure.

When not botanizing, Betty hosted many chapter field trips to her beautiful property and welcomed visitors with her superb pies. She will be remembered for her generosity, her kindness, and her love and dedication to the native flora in nearby deserts and mountains.  

--Kathy Duvall

2015 CNPS Conservation Conference— from Steve Matson

On January 15 Eileen and I braved the overwhelming traffic of the Bay Area so that I might attend a botany conference in San Jose. Every three years since 2009 CNPS has sponsored a conference attended by scientists, conservationists, CNPS chapter members, university professors, students, policymakers, professional and amateur botanists, landscaping professionals, land use planners, nature photographers and odd balls like myself. Eileen dropped me off at the Double Tree Inn and the race was on.

Over 1,000 persons showed up for five days of workshops, seminars, poetry, music and photography. You had to be there! And so you were. I was very pleased to see Michèle Slaton, Sue Weiss, Martin Oliver, Julie Ann Hopkins, Michael Honer, Russell Kokx, Stephen Ingram and Karen Ferrell-Ingram representing our east side community, whether as CNPS chapter members or as agency members. Well done, Eastsiders! It was great to have people I knew to talk with during breaks.

With concurrent twenty-minute sessions beginning at 8 AM for three days running, I had to hustle to be in the right room at the right time to hear about research, trends, policy, taxonomy, social media, rare plants, restoration, horticulture, and much more. A few breaks allowed some time for coffee drinking, socializing, book and poster viewing and networking. Still there was not much time before I had to hustle off again.. I had to be on my toes to figure out in advance which twenty-minute session I found most intriguing and then to get to the appropriate venue.

It was great to see and interact with all the players in the botany world. I had to be quick to buttonhole various guests. It was hardly a relaxed environment and most of us had to depressurize after the event and subsequent traffic scenarios. It was bliss to be back in the Eastern Sierra again. Thankfully, these conferences do not occur every year. CNPS did a bang up job and I look forward, with only a bit of trepidation, to the next conference in three years.  

--Steve Matson

2015 CNPS Conservation Conference-- from Michèle Slaton

Many Bristlecone Chapter members were able to attend the state-wide CNPS Conservation Conference in San Jose this January. The Bristlecone Chapter funded the attendance of two student presenters at the conference – Erika Gardner and Joy England. They did an excellent job in their respective presentations on the flora of the Kiavah Wilderness in the South Sierra, and the Upper Rock Creek watershed in Inyo and Mono Counties.

Sessions presented information on everything botanical, from rare plants to weeds, lichens, pollinators, renewable energy projects, drought, and community outreach. It was hard to choose among the many talks, but of special interest to me was an abundance of new science on how our native plants are responding to climate, and about rapidly emerging mapping techniques to track change and how we as citizens might respond to changes. One way our local chapter can become involved in tracking the changes in our flora was presented by Brent Mishler, Bruce Baldwin, and David Ackerly – these prestigious botanists are working a “Phylogeny Project” to catalog diversity across the state at multiple levels of the evolutionary tree. We can all help out by venturing into long unvisited areas on field trips, making careful field observations, obtaining permits for appropriate collecting, and adding to and better organizing our existing local herbaria. If any of these activities interest you, please contact a chapter board member to find out how to get involved.  

--Michèle Slaton
Botanical Collaboration in 2014

Thoughts about the year in the last hours of December 31st.

Our Big Pine neighbors happen to be coming over for a New Years Party in a matter of hours. They are also the editors of the Bristlecone Chapter Newsletter. I promised an article and today is the deadline. So how about some highlights of my pursuit of interesting plants?

I have this project to photo document many of the vascular plants of California, especially those of Eastern California. I hope most of you know that. I have gone so far as to plead, prod and beseech local botanists to consider my interest in photographing plant taxa that are seldom or never imaged or shared with the public.

This last April, working together at Jepson Workshop and sparring over Cryptantha nutlet minutiae, I convinced our very own Ann Howald to notify me of botanical discoveries as she explores Mono County and vicinity. Wow, and does Ann deliver. First it was the rare Tonopah Milkvetch, Astragalus pseudiodanthus. Ann usually sends me a small image and locality data within hours of finding something good. Within days I blast off from Tahoe (yes, I have a job) to visit my beautiful wife in Big Pine. On the way, I make a brief foray out Highway 167 north of Mono Lake toward Hawthorne. I drive right to the spot Ann indicated and Bingo! There it is, this rare precious beauty. I had been on the lookout for this little gem for years. Pristine location? No. Disturbed roadside seemed its preferred habitat.

I cannot overstate what it means to have an able scout in the field, scaring up rare naked taxa for plant paparazzi like myself. (See images at: http://calphotos.berkeley.edu/cgi/img_query?stat=BROWSE&where-genre=Plant&where-taxon=Astragalus+pseudiodanthus&title_tag=Astragalus+pseudiodanthus)

This happened not once but five times referencing six taxa! Ann is my dream cohort. I only hope I can keep and create images worth delivering to CalPhotos.

Next best was a very tiny member of the Sunflower Family--another plant sneaking in from Nevada: Eatonella nivea. Or is it a Californian sneaking into Nevada? This little fellow was so small, I walked all over the area where Ann told me to go. I was feeling very discouraged as the minutes ticks by. I fell to my knees about to cry (borrowed dramatic element) when there it was right in front of my knees--tiny fuzzy piece of cotton with a yellow dot on it. What a score! I am not the first to image and share this plant, but I felt I could put a big notch in my camera memory card with this one. Of course, I believe this is one of those species that looks like a small Q-tip fragment, impossible to key out and only understood thoroughly by tall, handsome, and brilliant folks like Jim Morefield. (See images at: http://calphotos.berkeley.edu/cgi/img_query?stat=BROWSE&where-genre=Plant&where-taxon=Eatonella+nivea&title_tag=Eatonella+nivea)

Through this last season, Ann also led me to two species of Penstemon, a nasty weed along Highway 395, and a shrubby Artemisia in Mammoth Lakes. I did not even have time to get to that Artemisia (remember...beautiful wife... job...two adorable puppies...I am busy!).

Of course, there is always another season, and more opportunities. I have a list of plants I have looked for and never found. Let me ring out the old year and ring in the new with one : Oryctes nevadensis.

Please let me know if you ever see it and where. All substantive leads entitle you to an invitation to next year’s New Years Eve party in Big Pine.

As it was, the party was a very nice one, except the newsletter deadline had already passed and so...you get to see it just a little bit later. Belatedly, Happy New Year! --Steve Matson

(You have to be tough in this business. Plus one editor blames that party for the endless cycle of Somewhere Over the Rainbow in her head.—ed. note)

March 7-8: Amargosa Conservation and Exploration Weekend

Members and friends of the Amargosa Conservancy are invited to join us on March 7-8 for a weekend of conservation and fun in the Amargosa Watershed. We will get our hands dirty working on a restoration project; tour some of the sites proposed for conservation in the California Desert Conservation and Recreation Act; go birdwatching with a world-class ornithologist; and have a BBQ fundraiser for Death Valley Academy. There is no cost for this event. Let us know you are coming. We could really use
some hands with the restoration project on Saturday. For more information, contact Jane McDonald janemcd1@mac.com or 510-468-7113.

Volunteer Opportunity
Dates: March 23 – mid-April

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 4 species: Oenothera californica ssp. eurekensis, 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 10 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

Owens Lake Bird Festival, Lone Pine, April 24-25.

Friends of the Inyo invites all birders and lovers of wildlife to celebrate the spring migration during the Owens Lake Bird Festival, April 24-25. In its first year, the Owens Lake Bird Festival promises to honor this extraordinary place and the hundreds of thousands of birds that depend on it for rest and nourishment. It will also celebrate the communities of the Southern Owens Valley and their ties, through the watershed, to Los Angeles.

The festival begins Friday evening with a reception at the Lone Pine Film History Museum featuring the National Audubon Society’s short film The Legacy of Owens Lake. On Saturday, expert guides will lead morning and afternoon field trips to Owens Lake with explorations for beginners through experts in bird identification, a tour of the invertebrate food web, discussions of the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power Master Project (dust control and wildlife), and the wonders of migration. The festival will close with a reception at the Interagency Visitor Center featuring the photography exhibit “The Owens Lake Project” by Robin Black. For more information or to register, visit www.friendsoftheinyo.org/foiD7/owenslakefestival or call 760-873-6500.

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## Up-Coming Events

**April 10-12, 10am-5pm, Wildflower Exhibit at the Maturango Museum, 100 E. Las Flores, Ridgecrest**

Come see what wildflower treasures have been uncovered within a 50-mile radius of Ridgecrest. Volunteer teams with BLM permits will search for flora on the east-facing slopes and in the canyons of the Sierra Nevada, in the Coso and El Paso Mountains, as well as the Indian Wells Valley itself. Prolific blooms have begun at the end of February. Accurate records of the collections and herbarium specimens are as important as the 3-day exhibit itself.

**April 11-19, California Native Plant Week**

This year CNPS will celebrate the Second Annual California Native Plant Week, April 11-19, 2015. For more information: [cnps.org/cnps/conservation/nativeplantweek](http://cnps.org/cnps/conservation/nativeplantweek)

**May 16, Saturday. East Mono Basin.** Leader: Sue Weis. A Rare Plant Treasure Hunt for *Astragalus pseudiodanthus*, *Astragalus kentrophyta var. unguilatus*. We’ll visit the dunes on the east side of Mono Lake. Meet at the Von’s parking lot in Bishop at 9:00. Contact me if you need to meet the group somewhere else along the way. Roads are sandy, so 4WD is best. Check Bristlecone website at or call Sue Weis at 760-873-3485 or at sueweis@aol.com.

**May 30, Saturday. Bodie Hills.** Leaders: Julie Anne Hopkins and Jeff Hunter.

**June 6, Saturday. Mule Springs, Inyos.** Leader: Steve Matson. At the base of the Inyo Mountain southeast of Big Pine is a perennial spring surrounded by remarkable plant diversity. We seek *Hecastocleis shockleyi*, *Petalonyx nitidis* and *Eucnide urens*. Some interesting fish reside there as well. We will walk short distances but on uneven ground. Dusty dirt road access. Bring lunch, water and sunscreen. Meet at 8:30 at the Campground entrance at the junction of 395 and 168 in Big Pine. ssmat@sbcglobal.net or 760-938-2862.

**June 13, Saturday. Glass Mountains.** Sponsored by Friends of the Inyo. Visit our webpage at [www.friendsoftheinyo.org](http://www.friendsoftheinyo.org)

**June 18, Thursday. Coyote Plateau.** Leaders: Julie Anne Hopkins and Friends of the Inyo. Visit our webpage at [www.friendsoftheinyo.org](http://www.friendsoftheinyo.org)

**June 27, Saturday. Devil’s Postpile weed work day.** Leader: Sue Weis. This is a trip to help keep cheatgrass out of Devil’s Postpile National Monument with the park ecologist. We’ll check the trail to Rainbow Falls and also Bear Crag climbing area on the Inyo NF. Meet at the Round Valley Road turnoff at 8:30 and carpool or 9:30 at the Postpile parking lot. Bring a lunch, gloves, and regular field gear. Possibility of a visit to the Agnew Meadow wildflower trail on the way out. Call Sue Weis at 760-873-3485 or at sueweis@aol.com.

**July 18, Saturday. Upper Convict Creek and Mildred Lake Basin.** Leader: Jerry Zatorski. More information to come in next newsletter or contact Jerry at 760-387-2920, [jerryzat@gmail.com](mailto:jerryzat@gmail.com), or visit Bristlecone webpage at [bristleconecnps.org](http://bristleconecnps.org).

**July 24-25, Saturday (optional Friday). Glass Mountains and Sawmill Meadow.** Leader: Michael Honer.

**August 8, Saturday. Mono Pass (north).** Leader: Michele Slaton. More information to come in next newsletter or visit [bristleconecnps.org](http://bristleconecnps.org). There are options to day hike a short route, or to backpack in for 1 or 2 nights, so please contact Michèle Slaton (760-920-8693 or [mslaton02@gmail.com](mailto:mslaton02@gmail.com)) so we can discuss logistics and secure permits.

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## Bristlecone Chapter Directory

- **President:** Katie Quinlan 760-873-8023
- **Vice President:** Michèle Slaton 760-938-3258
- **Secretary:** Rosemary Jarrett 760-387-2782
- **Treasurer:** Nancy Hadlock 760-263-5022
- **Creosote Ring Sub-chapter:** Kathy LaShure 760-377-4541
- **Chapter Council Rep:** Stephen Ingram 760-937-9918
- **Conservation/Partnerships:** Julie Anne Hopkins 831-566-6012
- **Programs:** Michèle Slaton 760-938-3258
- **DeDecker Grants:** Michèle Slaton 760-938-3258
- **Field Trips:** Sue Weis 760-873-3485
- **Historian:** Kathy Duval 760-387-2122
- **Bishop Plant Sales:** Katie Quinlan 760-873-8023
- **Mammoth Plant Sales:** Sherry Taylor 760-934-2338
- **Publicity:** Kristen Luettke 703-862-4395
- **Newsletter:** Edie Trimmer/Thomas Brill 760-920-3702
- **Membership:** Edie Trimmer/Thomas Brill 760-920-3702
- **Websites:** Maggie Riley <[webmaster@bristleconecnps.org](mailto:webmaster@bristleconecnps.org)>
- **Posters:** Stephen Ingram 760-937-9918
- **Book Sales:** Sue Weis 760-873-3485
- **T-shirt Sales:** Scott Hetzler 760-873-8392
- **DeDecker Garden:** Richard Potashin 760-263-5022

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**Next Newsletter Deadline**

Please have your articles or information to us by April 15, 2015.
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: ____________________________

Membership Category

- Student / Limited Income $25
- Individual $45
- Family $75
- Plant Lover $100
- 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

Gift Contribution: _____________ Wherever needed □
Specific Area: ________________________________