



Bristlecone Chapter

Dedicated to the Preservation of California Native Flora

The California Native Plant Society

Bristlecone Chapter Newsletter

Volume 41, No. 1
January–February 2020

President's Message, January 2020

Winter gives us another perspective in the native plant world. It is a time to see plants in their stark, bare forms with no distractions of leaves or flashy flowers. I like gazing at the elemental forms of the deciduous trees, how each species pattern of branching is a little different. I have a honey locust tree in my yard and the bare stems have little knobs that remind me of gnarled arthritic hands. My neighbor has a box elder that keeps its leaves on its branches after the fall season, so it is aglow with clouds of yellow. Walking out along the canals, the red stems of the willows add nice color to the fields.

There are specific trees I like to go visit in this time of year. In the Mono Basin at the beginning of the Mono Pass trail at Walker Lake there is a truly impressive juniper. Skiing up in Lakes Basin in Mammoth, I like to visit a group of red firs between Lake Mamie and Horseshoe. There are other grand trees out there. And this is the season to go and find them and take your hat off to some truly impressive trees.

--Katie Quinlan

Now Accepting Mary DeDecker Botanical Grant Applications

The Bristlecone Chapter of the California Native Plant Society is pleased to request applications for the Mary DeDecker Botanical Grant. This small-grants program is named in memory of a local botanist renowned for her many contributions to the botany and history of the Eastern Sierra Nevada and northern Mojave Desert.

Our goal is to promote research and projects that increase understanding and appreciation of native plants and ecosystems of the Eastern Sierra. Anyone may apply, but we are especially interested in helping

graduate and undergraduate college students as well as elementary, middle, and high school pupils and their teachers. The only requirement is that the project include studies within the Bristlecone Chapter area—generally defined as Inyo and Mono Counties, but including adjacent biogeographic areas of the northern Mojave Desert, Sierra Nevada, and western Great Basin. Subjects appropriate for funding cover a wide range, from basic taxonomic or ecological research to native plant gardens. The committee evaluates applications based on the extent to which the proposed project is specific to our regional flora, fills information gaps, and contributes to public awareness of native flora. We seek well-organized proposals that demonstrate a clear objective and a pathway to achieve success.

The program will award grants of up to \$1,000 each. Proposals exceeding \$1,000 may still be considered, contingent on chapter funding and project justification; in such cases, applicants are advised to develop their project acknowledging that only \$1,000 or less may be available, and line-item the budget accordingly.

Criteria and Procedures

Submit written proposals to the Mary DeDecker Grant Committee. Each should contain 1) title, 2) objectives, 3) methods, 4) expected final product, 5) relevance to chapter area (at least part of the project should be conducted in Inyo or Mono Counties), 6) proposed budget, 7) permitting plans for collection and research from relevant land managers, and 8) applicant's resume. Electronic files may be in Word or pdf format, and named following the format: LastNameFirstName_2020application (or _2020letter). Proposals should not exceed three pages in length, excluding resume. Student proposals must include a letter of support from their adviser or teacher. **Deadline is January 23, 2020.** All applicants will be notified of the committee's decision by early March, 2020.

A progress report explaining how Bristlecone Chapter funds were used is due at the end of the calendar year. Applicants are encouraged to give a talk about their project at a chapter evening meeting and/or to write a brief explanation of their work for the Bristlecone Chapter newsletter.

Send proposals or requests for information to:

grants@bristleconecnps.org (electronic submissions are preferred but not required)

OR:

Michèle Slaton
Mary DeDecker Grant Committee Chair
P. O. Box 364
Bishop, CA 93514

You can find more information about the Bristlecone Chapter Grants Program, including this Request for Proposals, at <http://bristleconecnps.org/dedecker/grant/>

Conservation Updates

Current Agreement for Five Bridges Area

After years of legal disputes and community concerns about the reactivation of wells 385 and 386 in the Five Bridges area, the Technical Committee approved a two-month pumping test of modified well 385 that began December 16, 2019. The Technical Committee is comprised of representatives from Los Angeles Department of Water and Power (LADWP) and Inyo County Water Department (ICWD). The Technical Committee provides advice to the Inyo County Board of Supervisors and LADWP to administer terms of the Long Term Water Agreement negotiated in 1991, but has had no authority to enforce those recommendations.

History

In 1987, LADWP drilled wells 385 and 386. The effects of pumping on vegetation were immediately observed in the meadow areas in the Five Bridges area. These wells were not used until 1993–1994 when LADWP conducted a two-month pumping test in December and January. Groundwater levels dropped significantly, and the wells were permanently shut down. Meadow vegetation never recovered. Instead, fire, erosion, loss of the Owens

Valley checkerbloom and an invasion of pepperweed have marred the recovery of the area.

In 2014, LADWP modified wells 385 and 386 by sealing off the shallow aquifer and reducing the well diameters to produce 2.8 cfs instead of 10.5 cfs. ICWD challenged LADWP's right to perform a two-month test. LADWP then filed a Negative Declaration claiming the right to conduct pump testing because they considered the two wells as new rather than reconfigured wells. In 2018, Inyo County challenged the Negative Declaration's proposal to conduct a two-month pumping test. The grounds for challenging the Negative Declaration were as follows: "whether Well W385R is a new well; whether the 1999 Revegetation Plan is applicable to the Five Bridges site; whether the goals outlined in the 1999 Revegetation Plan have been met for the Five Bridges mitigation site; what are LADWP's continuing obligations in Five Bridges, if any; and consideration by the Technical Group of revised management for Five Bridges."

In June 2018, LADWP and ICWD reached a settlement. The settlement allows for a two-month pumping test for only well 385 in December and January. A concurrent lawsuit filed by Owens Valley Committee and the Sierra Club, joined by California Fish and Wildlife and the California State Lands Commission reached a settlement in December 2019 to augment the conditions for the Monitoring and Mitigation Plan described in the Settlement agreement between LADWP and Inyo County.

Unresolved in the lawsuit are whether the mitigation standards for the Five Bridges area have been met. However, there has been a mitigation plan adopted for the years 2019 and 2020 which LADWP must adhere to.

An additional concern is whether pumping from these wells will impact the Fish Slough area. Fish Slough, designated as an Area of Environmental Concern, has seen a decline in both ground and surface water flows. This decline may be tied to water users in the Tri Valley area. But California Fish and Wildlife, as well as many citizen groups, are concerned about the cumulative impacts.

Current Agreement for two-month pumping test

In the current test pumping agreement, there are 29 monitoring wells and 6 "trigger" wells. The trigger wells set specified groundwater drawdowns that shut off test pumping if a specified groundwater decline is

observed. Amendments from the Owens Valley Committee/Sierra Club lawsuit plus input from California Fish and Wildlife helped set these trigger levels and added two new monitoring wells in the Fish Slough area.

This is a two-month test. If triggers are exceeded, pumping will stop and the original agreements will hold. If not, new discussions will need to take place, and LADWP will add the well(s) to their pumping rotation.

--Edie Trimmer

Year-end Update on Long Valley Agricultural Leases

In March 2018, Los Angeles Water and Power (LADWP) announced that ten leases to ranchers, encompassing 6,400 acres in Long Valley and Little Round Valley, would be reissued without assurances of water for stock use or irrigation. That summer, LADWP provided approximately 4,500 acre-feet of water for those leases. This was an abrupt change in policy from the past 70 years which has been to provide water based on annual run-off, with up to 32,000 acre-feet possible.

There was an immediate response from the public and elected officials. The arguments of Eastern Sierra residents and elected officials are that the past 70 years of LADWP policy have created wet meadows that are de facto replacement of meadows lost with the creation of Lake Crowley. The meadows provide grazing for livestock and habitat for species such as the Bi-State Sage Grouse. LADWP is not seeking long-term solutions, nor acting in good faith toward its neighbors in the Eastern Sierra. Instead, LADWP's history is to challenge all limits on the water it owns, by policy or legal strategy, until forced to accept sustainable policies for both the Owens Valley and Los Angeles. Mitigation after unacceptable impacts instead of adaptation with stakeholder collaboration ends up being expensive and often not successful.

In August 2018, the Mono County Board of Supervisors (BOS) voted unanimously in favor of seven action options as drafted by staff:

- 1A. Approve proposed letter to LADWP Commission President Mel Levine correcting inaccurate information contained in various communications regarding this issue; provide any desired direction to staff;

- 1B. Approve proposed letter to Los Angeles Mayor Eric Garcetti thanking him for his attempts to encourage a negotiated solution with LADWP but informing him that the negotiations between the County and LADWP have ended without Mono County's concerns having been addressed; provide any desired direction to staff;
- 2A. Continue outreach to elected officials, agencies and others to further a political/collaborative solution;
- 2B. Continue participation with interested parties including environmental organizations, recreational groups, wildlife agencies, state and federal representatives, ranchers and others to coordinate efforts in response to LADWP's actions;
- 2C. Pursue state and/or federal legislation restraining LADWP's actions in Mono County to protect the natural environment and related Eastern Sierra values;
- 2D. Pursue the development of a long-term water management plan for Long Valley and Little Round Valley which is based on sound science and protects environmental and other Eastern Sierra values; and/or
- 2E. File litigation against LADWP to restrain LADWP's actions this year and prevent further harm.

These action options have been completed or are in process.

Mono County initiated litigation against LADWP in August 2018 as proposed in Option 2E. Jason Canger, Deputy County Counsel for Mono County summarizes the litigation:

In its petition, the County alleged that the new leases proposed by LADWP to its Long Valley agricultural/ranch lessees that provided no irrigation water were new "projects" under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), and that LADWP violated CEQA when it proposed those new leases without first doing any environmental review. Thereafter, in October 2018, the County filed an amended petition to join the Sierra Club as a petitioner and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife as a real party in interest. So, now, the litigation parties include the County, Sierra Club, and CDFW against LADWP. In November 2018, LADWP filed a demurrer (i.e., a motion to dismiss) to the petitioners' CEQA complaint. In January 2019, the Alameda Superior Court heard argument from the parties on that

demurrer and, ultimately, ruled against LADWP (and thus in favor of petitioner) in February 2019. As result of the Court's ruling on the demurrer, the petitioners' lawsuit against LADWP was allowed to continue. Since the Court's ruling, the parties have spent much of 2019 working on preparing the administrative record for the case. Although the admin record has not yet been finalized, it is my understanding that it will be finalized soon and lodged with the Court. At the same time, the County has been discussing with LADWP the possibility and potential terms for settling the litigation. There is no guarantee that these discussions will go anywhere or result in settlement, it's still very early in this process. However, it's worth noting that the County would not agree to any settlement unless any such proposal was found acceptable to both the Sierra Club and CDFW.

As proposed in Option 2B, Mono County has participated in a collaborative effort to establish parameters for a healthy and sustainable meadow ecosystem in Long Valley. Jason Canger describes this effort:

Separately, after the County filed its litigation against LADWP, the County and its partners pulled together an informal stakeholder group of lessees and ranching organizations, environmental organizations, recreational interests, and tribal governments interested in issues with LADWP's water management activities in Long Valley and the greater Eastern Sierra. This group of diverse stakeholders, now known as the Keep Long Valley Green Coalition, has been meeting regularly for the past year and [a] half to discuss Long Valley issues and develop advocacy materials aimed at bringing awareness to the LADWP dewatering issue and representing the communities and resources within the affected area, including but not limited to the agricultural and recreational economies, the natural environment and habitat that it supports (especially in relation to the potentially to-be listed bi-state sage grouse), and potential adverse aesthetic and wildlife impacts dewatering will have on the valley.

The Bristlecone Chapter has been invited to join the stakeholder group.

--Edie Trimmer

Herbarium databases: Mrs. J. D. Wright and Aurora—yes, there is a problem

The plethora of botanical databases has allowed instant access to millions of herbarium specimens. As anyone who has worked extensively with herbarium specimens can tell you, just because a specimen is in a database does not mean it is correct. Usually the problem is misidentification of the specimen. Read on and you will see that sometimes it is the label data that has problems.

Five or six years ago I got an email from Peter Zika. He was then working on *Sedum* with the Carex Working Group. He had two old records for *Sedum obtusatum* var. *obtusatum* in Nevada, C. L. Anderson, mountains west of Carson City in 1864 (GH) and Mrs. J. D. Wright, Aurora [Mineral Co.], 10 June 1929 (SBBG). *Sedum obtusatum* var. *obtusatum* is common on the west side of Lake Tahoe and I see no reason why it would not be on the Nevada side of the lake. Anderson's vague location, mountains west of Carson City, is not helpful in trying to refind this plant. I have worked extensively with C. L. Anderson specimens and I have never seen one that I thought was mislabeled. In the past few years we have looked for *Sedum* in the Sierra Nevada on the east side of Lake Tahoe and so far have not been able to find it.

The existence of *Sedum obtusatum* var. *obtusatum* at Aurora in Mineral County is rather perplexing. The only seemingly adequate habitat would be either on Aurora Peak or Mt. Hicks. So I took a collecting trip to Aurora and the surrounding areas, including Aurora Peak. The plant was not found and I did not believe that adequate habitat existed. I later went back and checked out Mt. Hicks. Same result.

Lately Jan Nachlinger and I have been working on a Flora of the Carson Range in Nevada. This is the piece of the Sierra Nevada that gets into Nevada on the east side of Lake Tahoe. In doing database searches we turned up two more Wright collections of plants from Aurora, Nevada that we do not know east of the Sierra Nevada, *Streptanthus tortuosus* and *Juncus chlorocephalus*. A search of the Consortium of California Herbaria 2 database showed *Juncus chlorocephalus* as a Sierra Nevada endemic. *Streptanthus tortuosus* was shown as occurring in the Sierra Nevada and north, west, and south of the range. The only occurrences east of the Sierra Nevada were in the Glass Mountain area. Neither of these species

are present in the online flora for the adjacent White Mountains.

A further search of Wright collections from Aurora found *Achillea borealis*, *Antennaria*, *Arenaria* [*Minuartia*] *nuttallii*, *Calochortus leichtlinii*, *Castilleja miniata*, *Castilleja viscidula*, *Delphinium depauperatum*, *Erigeron compositus*, *Eriogonum lobbii*, *Eriogonum nudum* var. *deductum*, *Eriogonum umbellatum*, *Erythranthe guttata*, *Erythranthe primuloides*, *Gayophytum*, *Geranium richardsonii*, *Ledum glandulosum*, *Linanthus ciliatus*, *Linanthus filipes*, *Lupinus lyallii* var. *danaus* [L. *lepidus* var. *lobbii*], *Monardella odoratissima*, *Polygonum bistortoides*, *Polygonum*, *Potentilla diversifolia*, *Ranunculus alismifolius* var. *alismellus*, *Rumex paucifolius*, *Senecio scorzonella*, *Solidago multiradiata*, and *Triteleia ixioides* ssp. *scabra*. In looking at this list several things jump out at me. *Linanthus* [*Leptosiphon*] *filipes* and *Triteleia ixioides* ssp. *scabra* would both be the first records for Nevada. A check of these in the Consortium of California Herbaria 2 database yielded no specimens east of the Sierra Nevada.

Several more of Mrs. Wright's Aurora, Nevada collections would be new records. *Eriogonum lobbii* occurs east of the Sierra Nevada in the White and Sweetwater Mountains but is not known from adjacent Nevada. The nearest Nevada record of *Rumex pauciflorus* is from the Pine Nut Mountains, over 50 miles to the north and the closest Nevada record of *Ranunculus alismifolius* var. *alismellus* is from the Sierra Nevada around Lake Tahoe, some 70 miles to the north. *Eriogonum nudum* var. *deductum* is not known east of the Sierra Nevada. *Senecio scorzonella* is in the Sweetwater Mountains in California and the only known Nevada occurrence is in the Wassuk Range. *Solidago multiradiata* occurs in the Sierra Nevada, White Mountains, and the higher ranges in Nye County, Nevada.

In looking at Wright's collections from the time span during which the Aurora, Nevada collections were made, I find that from June 5–9 she was at Silver Lake, Gem Lake, June Lake, and Twin Lakes, all in the Sierra Nevada of Mono County, California. Her only collections from the 10th of June were from Aurora, Nevada. On the 13th of June she was in Mono County at Fern Creek and on the 14th she was in Tuolumne County. So there are two possibilities here. One is that on the 10th of June, 1929, Mrs. J. D. Wright collected plants at Aurora, Nevada, and some of her California collections were intermixed with the

Nevada specimens and all labeled Aurora, Nevada. The other is that she collected in the Sierra Nevada of California at some unidentified place that she called Aurora. It could be that someone else prepared her labels and since the only Aurora on maps is in Nevada, her collections were all labeled as being from Nevada. Another possibility is that her location was misread and the result was Aurora.

The majority of her specimens are now deposited at the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden herbarium. Several of these have been imaged with the images available online. The labels are standard labels from the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History with Flora of Santa Barbara Region printed on the labels. The rest of the data are typed in. The Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History herbarium was deposited at the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden herbarium in 1965. A clue that the labels were prepared by someone other than Mrs. Wright is that two of the specimens list the year as 1930. In these two cases the rest of the date is still the 10th of June.

I checked with Dieter Wilken at the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden who provided the following information: Mrs. J. D. Wright: aka Mrs. John Dutton Wright; aka Ysabel Galban Wright (25 Dec 1885 - 1 July 1960). At Dieter's suggestion I contacted the librarian at the Santa Barbara Museum of Natural History, Terri Sheridan. She replied, "Alas, we have nothing specific to Mrs. Wright in our archive collections. No journals, field notes, or diaries. I can only find mention of her (Mrs. John D. Wright) in our annual reports from this era. They confirm that she donated herbarium specimens to the Museum, but do not list species nor quantity of items."

My conclusion is that Mrs. J. D. Wright's collections probably did not come from Aurora, Nevada. I believe that they likely all came from a Sierra Nevada location that was mislabeled as Aurora, Nevada. I realize that she could have been at Aurora and some of her Sierra Nevada specimens were inadvertently mixed with her Aurora specimens but this does not seem very plausible. We plan to continue to search for the species in question whenever we find ourselves near Aurora in the future.

--Arnold "Jerry" Tiehm

Garden Updates

The propagation center fared well in the November windstorm. The day before the storm hit, my son, who had come early for Thanksgiving, helped me pull in the shade cloth. I was thinking that with the modifications to the way the shade cloth is attached to its frame it has held up to the wind pretty well, but a snow load on it would be disastrous. Our timing was great because we had a nice calm sunny day to pull it and tie it up, and the next day the wind hit and then the snow. The seven inches of snow on the greenhouse plastic was stretching it a bit but I was able to go out and rake that off before it caused any problems.

It was hard to tell what happened to the tremendous amount of leaves that were on the ground, but I am hoping that the wind blew them all against the fence so it will make for easier cleanup.

The plants are buried beneath a blanket of snow which will keep them insulated and watered for a while. It will be fun to see what happens come spring.

The final plant sale results are finally tallied, and we had 10 volunteers helping 89 customers who bought 713 plants on the plant sale day. I had 14 more customers through the month of October who bought an additional 224 plants. This earned us about \$8,000 for the DeDecker grants this year.

--Katie Quinlan

Call for Field-Trip Leaders and Ideas

Although there is no field trip planning meeting this year, the Bristlecone Chapter continues to organize field trips for 2020. Anyone in the public are welcome to join (sorry no pets) and explore the native plants in our local area. Trips are typically day hikes that require at least comfortable walking shoes or boots, clothing appropriate for the local weather, lunch/snacks and water. For more information, if you have trip ideas, or would like to lead a trip, please contact Sue Weis at treasurer@bristleconecnps.org.

Warm Winter Welcome to New Members!

We hope to see your new faces at any of our events (field trips, presentations, pot lucks, etc.) when you're in the local area. Thank you for deciding to join our chapter!

Bob from Santee,
Chris from Cornell,
Martin from San Clemente,
Nancy from Corvallis,
and
Rebecca from San Francisco



Already missing seeing native flowers? Enjoy these photos taken last year by Stephen Fletcher. From top to bottom: *Epilobium obcordatum* in Darwin Canyon, *Aquilegia pubescens* at Hybrid Granite Park and *Delphinium parishii*.

Up-Coming Events

(For updated information, visit
www.bristleconecnps.org/events)

Wednesday, January 15, 6:00 pm

Bristlecone Chapter Board Meeting

Eastern Sierra Land Trust, 250 N. Fowler, Bishop

All members are welcome.

Thursday, January 23

Mary DeDecker Botanical Grant Deadline

Send proposals or requests for information to:
grants@bristleconecnps.org (electronic submissions
are preferred but not required)

OR:

Michèle Slaton

Mary DeDecker Grant Committee Chair

P. O. Box 364

Bishop, CA 93514

More information about the Bristlecone Chapter
Grants Program, including this Request for
Proposals, can be found at
<http://bristleconecnps.org/dedecker/grant/>

Wednesday, March 18, 7:00 pm

Bristlecone Chapter General Meeting

Location TBD

Speaker Bryan Hatchell of Friends of the Inyo will
discuss botanical restoration projects in the eastern
Sierra.

**Please send your articles and other
information to us by February 15, 2020
for the next issue.**

Bristlecone Chapter Directory

President: Katie Quinlan president@bristleconecnps.org

Vice President: Michèle Slaton 760-920-8693

Secretary: Kathleen Nelson goatheads@aol.com

Treasurer: Sue Weis treasurer@bristleconecnps.org

Chapter Council Rep: Stephen Ingram

stephen@ingramphoto.com

Conservation/Partnerships: **OPEN**

Programs: Michèle Slaton 760-920-8693

DeDecker Grants: Michèle Slaton 760-920-8693

Field Trips: Sue Weis treasurer@bristleconecnps.org

Historian: **OPEN**

Bishop Plant Sales: Katie Quinlan

president@bristleconecnps.org

Mammoth Plant Sales: **OPEN**

Publicity: **OPEN**

Newsletter: Elaine Chow newsletter@bristleconecnps.org

Membership: Elaine Chow membership@bristleconecnps.org

Website: webmaster@bristleconecnps.org

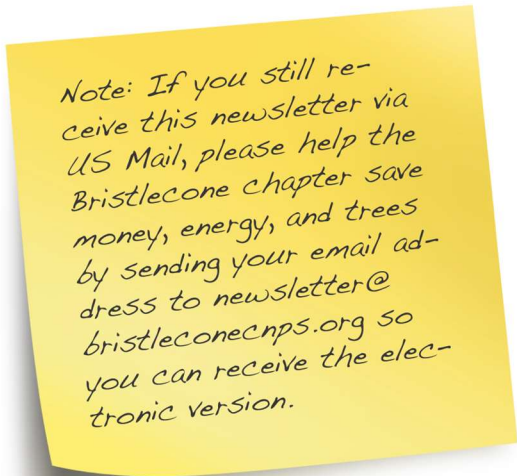
Hospitality: **OPEN**

T-shirt Sales: Stephen Ingram stephen@ingramphoto.com

DeDecker Garden: Peter Anderson

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: _____

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

Gift Contribution: _____ Wherever needed
Specific Area: _____

Membership Category

- _ Student / Limited Income \$25
- _ Individual \$50
- _ Plant Lover \$120
- _ Supporter \$500
- _ Patron \$1,000
- _ Benefactor \$2,500
- _ Steward \$5,000
- _ Guardian \$10,000
- _ Additional Contribution _____