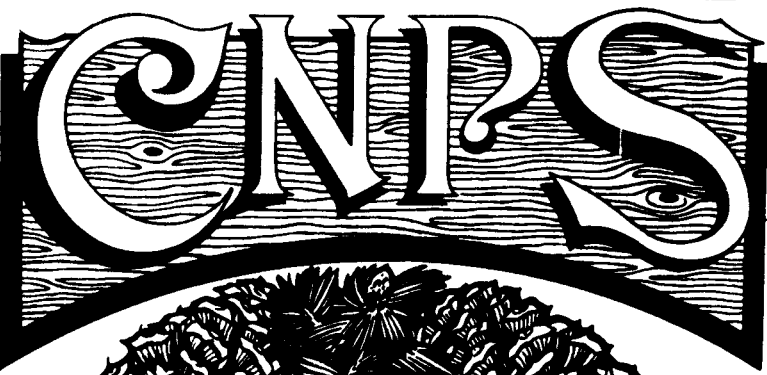


DEDICATED TO THE PRESERVATION OF THE CALIFORNIA NATIVE FLORA

BRISTLECONE • CHAPTER



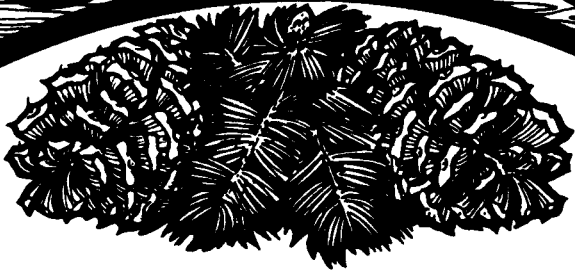
NEWSLETTER

Vol. 10, No. 3

May 1991

NEXT CHAPTER MEETING

Wednesday, May 29, 7:30 pm, at the Big Pine Methodist Church Social Hall, corner of Crocker and North School streets. The speaker will be Arthur Gaffrey, Chief Ranger, Mt. Whitney District of the Inyo National Forest.



PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

A bloomingful spring to each of you! As this newsletter is being prepared, we are bursting with blooms in our yards and around the countryside. Our chapter has some good field trips planned that should be real treats after the years of drought. Hopefully you have been, or will be, able to attend most of them. The "March Miracle" may not have totally recharged the groundwater, but it has allowed many annuals to do their thing. It is truly amazing that those seeds don't germinate until there is sufficient moisture to complete their life cycle. Be sure to see this year's display.

. Evelym Mae Nikolaus

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BE ALERT FOR MIGRANTS FROM NEVADA! Species which stray over the state line become new species for California. You will not find them in the California floras. The latest is *Plagiobothrys glomeratus* collected by Mary DeDecker in the Sweetwater Mountains in July 1984, at 9200 feet. It was mistaken for *P. hispidus* at the time. More recently it was collected by Mark Bagley on the bluffs above Mammoth.

Another species, almost new, is *Atriplex heterosperma*, a robust and handsome annual, collected by Mary DeDecker on the East Walker River, behind the Walker River Inn in Bridgeport, Mono County, 9/7/90. A previous collection in this state was made in Siskiyou County in 1979.

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"In pushing other species to extinction, humanity is busily sawing off the limb on which it is perched."

. . . Drs. Anne and Paul Ehrlich

(From The Pipe Vine, summer 1990.)

1991 BRISTLECONE CHAPTER FIELD TRIPS, LATE SPRING AND SUMMER SCHEDULE

JUNE 8-9. HUNTER MOUNTAIN. Leaders: Mary and Paul DeDecker. A visit to interesting mid-elevation Mojave Desert habitats. If it is not rainy, a regular car can make it on the gravel road. However, if you have one, bring a 4-WD or high clearance vehicle. Primitive, dry camp Saturday night. Meet at 10:00 Saturday morning, on the Darwin Plateau at the junction of Highway 190 and the road to Saline Valley (about 4 miles east of the turn-off to Darwin). Easy walking.

JUNE 29-30. FISH SLOUGH. Leader: Wayne Ferren. **Joint trip with the Channel Islands CNPS Chapter.** Wayne is the Herbarium Botanist at UC Santa Barbara and has conducted studies at Fish Slough for several years. The trip will be on Saturday afternoon and Sunday morning to accommodate the people driving to and from the south. We need to keep the size of the group below 30, so sign-up ahead of time by calling Mark Bagley at 873-5326. Make sure to reserve your space if you plan to go. We'll meet on Saturday at 1:30 pm at Wye Road and Hwy 6 in Bishop. Easy walking.

JULY 13. CEDAR FLAT, INYO MOUNTAINS, AND DEEP SPRINGS VALLEY. Leaders: Clem Nelson and Mary DeDecker. This is a combined geology and botany trip led by two of the leading experts on the Inyo Mountains. Clem is a Professor Emeritus of Geology at UCLA and has worked for many years on the geology of the range. Mary, of course, is an expert on Inyo plants. Meet at 9:00 am, in Big Pine at the Triangle Campground, junction of U.S. 395 and Hwy 168. Easy walking.

AUGUST 3. EMERALD LAKE, MAMMOTH LAKES BASIN. Leader: Diane Payne. This will be an easy leisurely walk up Coldwater Creek to the lake. It's about 2 miles round-trip, at 9000-9500 feet. Bring lunch, water and mosquito repellent on the hike. Lots of wildflowers are expected along the creek and we'll see several different plant communities. Meet at 10:00 Saturday morning at the Coldwater Creek Campground parking area at the Emerald Lake trailhead.

AUGUST 17. MINARET SUMMIT AND "SECRET" MEADOW. Leader: Ann Howald. This interesting area is a low point in the Sierra crest where a number of west-slope plants make their way onto the east side. We'll see alpine sagebrush, whitebark pines and a lush meadow on pure pumice with a pollywog pond. Ann is a chapter member from Sacramento where she is a Botanist in the Fish and Game Endangered Plant Program. Meet at 10:00 Saturday morning, at the Mammoth Ski Area parking lot in front of the main lodge. There will be an easy to moderate hike at about 9000 feet elevation. Bring lunch, water and mosquito repellent on the hike.

Generally, day trips last most of the day while the overnight trips conclude early Sunday afternoon. Bring a lunch and drinks on a day trip, and plenty of water or other thirst quenching beverages, a hat, dark glasses, sunscreen, and sturdy walking shoes. Please no pets. Unless indicated, the average car should do fine on our trips. Contact Mark Bagley, field trip chairman at 873-5326, for more information.

* * * * *

UPDATE ON THE ELKINS PRAIRIE TRAGEDY: The plowing of the tall grass prairie in Lawrence, Kansas, has a bright side. A natural Areas Program initiated by a local Land Trust group, succeeded in getting the county government to commit \$40,000 per year for five years to buy prairies and woodlands recommended by the Heritage Inventory. The Land Trust will share costs two to one. Of course this "waste of county funds" is being loudly protested. In the meantime, Jack Graham, owner of Elkins Prairie, has remained mum on his plans or motives. He has followed up on the plowing by disking the prairie this spring.

FIELD TRIP TO SOUTH FORK OF OAK CREEK

April 13, 1991

On a brisk sunny morning a small group of oakophiles gathered at the Mt. Whitney Fish Hatchery out of Independence. Vince Yoder, trip leader, had prepared an illustrated handout to help us identify the three species of oak that we might expect to find in the canyons on the east side of the Sierra.

Caravanning up the South Fork road we entered the Bright Ranch. We explored the areas around the ranch on foot and found this beautiful riparian habitat to be home of oaks too numerous to count, some ancient and enormous. The two species we found were the evergreen Quercus wislizenii, interior live oak, and the black oak, Quercus kelloggii. We found no Quercus chrysolepis, canyon live oak in the Oak Creek drainage, but we understand that they are in large canyons from Pinyon Canyon on towards the south.

Dense, dark green and dome-shaped, the interior live oak's crown is often twice as broad as it is tall. The leaves, 1-2½" long are variable, some having smooth margins while others have spiny-toothed edges like holly. They are very similar to the canyon live oak. The fruit provides the most reliable characteristics for distinguishing between the two. The acorns of the latter tend to be thick and fat up to an inch across and covered with a yellow fuzz. The leaves may have a yellow down on the underside, while the Q. wislizenii leaves are smooth and shiny, the cup being covered with imbricated scales without down or pubescence.

The black oak, Quercus kelloggii, is the largest mountain oak in west. Rising to a height of 60-80 feet its massive limbs, bare, in winter, and black bark distinguish it immediately. The leaves which do not begin to bud out until May set it apart from other oaks in this area. They are large, 4-10 inches long including the petiole, distinctly lobed with each lobe having a bristle tip.

We were most grateful to Jane and Keith Bright, our hospitable hostess and host, who gave us a fascinating tour of this historical site known as the old Parker Ranch. Jane and Vince transported the group up the canyon in two 4-wheel drive vehicles as far as we could go. Continuing on foot another half mile or so we reached a knoll from which we could overlook Tub Springs farther up and the continuing line of oaks

marching upstream for several miles. Coleogyne ramosissima, Pursia glandulosa, Prunus andersonii and Tetradymia axillaris were just beginning to leaf out at this elevation.

After a refreshing lunch by the stream we returned to the ranch. Bidding our gracious hosts goodby we drove up the North Fork as far as the Baxter Pass trailhead where spring had not yet arrived. Numerous oak trees inspired us to return another day to continue the inventory of oaks in the Eastern Sierra. Thank you, Vince, for another fun and informative field trip.

. Betty Gilchrist

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CNPS/USFS FIELD TRIPS

The Inyo National Forest has asked for help in gathering more information on sensitive plants. The first trip to Tunawee Canyon in the southern Sierra, April 20, was to look for *Phacelia nashiana*. Vince Yoder, Betty Gilchrist, Jane Bright and Mary DeDecker participated. Our reward was to discover a new population on a sandy south-facing slope. The vivid, deep blue flowers were unusually large. It was a great day.

Other trips are planned as follows. Anyone interested is invited to participate.

The Forest Service (White Mountain and Mt. Whitney Ranger Districts) has requested our help with some sensitive plant surveys this field season. They have several known or suspected population sites, but have no more information than a dot on a map. They need more complete information on these populations in order to make informed land management decisions.

We need interested people to help search potential habitat areas, and count plants if we find them. A short orientation/training session will be given at the beginning of each trip, so don't worry if you haven't done this before - anyone can participate! Be sure to come prepared as you would for any other field trip: lunch, water, good walking shoes, sunscreen, hat.

Schedule:

6/15 - Search spring areas along the base of the Sierras between Big Pine and Bishop for the Inyo Mariposa lily, Calochortus excavatus. Meet at Collins Road and 395 at 9:30 am.

6/22 - Survey for the Mono phacelia, Phacelia monoensis, in the Sugarloaf Mountain area, at the north end of the White Mountains. Meet at 10:00 am at Montgomery Pass, in the lodge parking lot.

7/6 - Survey for July gold, Dedeckerae eurekensis, in the Poleta Canyon area east of Bishop. Meet at 9:30 am at the White Mountain Research Station on East Line Street.

Field Trips with Dorothy King Young Chapter
May 3, 4, and 5

This much looked-forward-to weekend finally arrived. 15 or so cars, vans, campers, pickups with some 30-odd good people from Mendocino-Sonoma and Marin showed up. What a caravan!

The first day, Friday, we spent in the Alabama Hills, starting out in the morning at Betty Gilchrist's property to see Sidalcea covillei and Calochortus excavatus. The mallow was out beautifully but we were too early for the lily, just strap-shaped leaves and last year's capsule. Many other interesting plants on her property -- too numerous to mention. Thanks Betty.

A drive down Tuttle Creek Road revealed large groups of showy Lupinus excubitus.

Next on to a seepy area in granitic boulders and slopes. The prizes here were Oenothera caespitosa var. marginata, bright red Astragalus coccineus, and the stream helborine Epipactus gigantea. On to lunch in a sea of rocks, boulders, and deep clefts, then a stop to see a desert fern, Cheilanthes covillei. We stopped at a gully where the ladies could collect some true sage, Salvia dorii var. pilosa to dry to season next Thanksgiving's turkey. The day ended with a mile and a half walk in open country to a site where the four cacti growing in the Alabama Hills occur in a 30-foot area -- Echinocactus polycephalus (cottontop), Echinocereus engelmannii var. chrysocentrus (torch cactus), Opuntia basilaris (beavertail), and Opuntia echinocarpa (cholla), none in bloom as yet, but beavertail was in full bud and close to it.

Although the flower show was not spectacular it was good enough to be rewarding and everyone was satisfied.

The next morning we met at Big Pine and began the trip east towards Eureka Valley. Many stops were made to examine scattered floral shows along the way. Two were especially interesting, one to see the Mojave mound cactus, Echinocereus triglochidiatus var. mohavensis with its deep red blossoms. The other was in a limestone canyon where Eriogonum heermannii and Cercocarpus intricatus, Little-leaf mahogany, a limestone obligate, occurs. Then on to the dunes.

The balance of the afternoon was spent in eating lunch, setting up camp, and investigating the floral display around the sand mountain. Oenothera avita ssp. eurekaensis, Astragalus lentiginosus var. micans, A. sabulonum and the dune grass Swallenia alexandrae, Abronia turbinata, Baileya pleniradiata and Stanleya pinnata ssp. inyoensis were all in bloom and showy. Some folks dared to "bag" a new kind of peak, the top of the 700' sand mountain -- quite a trudge.

The next day, Sunday, we started early to DeDeckera Canyon -- a typical rough desert track -- 4-wheel drive a must. The large-flowered yellow Cryptantha confertifolia was present; green sandwort, Arenaria macradenia was plentiful; Scopulophila rixfordii (try to say that after happy hour!); Phacelia crenulata; P. perityloides; Eucnide urens, Velcroe plant; Oenothera primaverais; Camissonia claviformis var. lancifolia, Inyo-Mono yellow primrose; Penstemon fruticiformis, Desert bush penstemon; all out and showy. Unfortunately, we didn't spot DeDeckera eurekaensis as it may not have leafed out enough yet to be conspicuous. Anyway, the effort to get in and out of this beautiful canyon was worth it. I was going to call it

pristine, but it isn't! This is part of a Saline-Eureka Valley corridor (BLM route #1864) and thus has a primitive road through it. Wilderness Study Areas are on both sides of the road so it is truly in primitive country. Yet the handiwork of man is there. Four-wheel enthusiasts (with the help and concurrence of BLM) placed concrete at some rocky drop-offs to enable vehicles to traverse the canyon. Past storm runoff had created mini-waterfalls, unpassable without the ramps. We all thought that this addition was inappropriate in this otherwise pristine setting and feel that BLM pulled a boo-boo here. If the primitive track washes out, tough, you guys. Let nature take its course.

Well, it was a great week-end enjoyed by all. And we have an invite to do the same in their area, too. What say?

. Vince Yoder

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The time has come when scientific truth must cease to be the property of the few, when it must be woven into the common life of the world; for we have reached the point when the results of science touch the very problem of existence.

Louis Agassiz, Swiss-American Scientist, 1807-1873

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OWENS VALLEY WATER UPDATE

The Bristlecone Chapter, along with other local environmental organizations, find the EIR on the proposed Los Angeles Water Agreement entirely unacceptable. Inyo County supervisors concur with our objections, and continue negotiating in an effort to resolve the most serious flaws. Los Angeles finds it difficult to yield, however. It remains to be seen whether agreement can be reached before the agreed upon deadline of June 20.

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CORRECTION: On page 3 of Vol. 10, No. 2A, under ORCHIDACEAE, the new name for *Habebaria dilatata* var. *leucostachys* is *Platanthera dilatata*.

CONSERVATION CORNER

Would you believe that the mining activities in our nation are regulated by a law that is 119 years old -- the Mining Law of 1872!

In those days the west was still being "opened up"; the Federal Government was still interested in divesting itself of much of its land; and there was no evident environmental awareness. The land and minerals were there for the "taking" -- and still are.

Miners pay no royalties; are not required by this law to do any clean-up or restoration of abandoned mining operations; do not have to pay any fees to help the government recover any of its administrative costs; and patented mining lands can be purchased for \$2.50 per acre (and later be sold for the going market price!).

This is one of the most outdated of major laws still on the books. The mining industry loves it and fights any move to change it -- for obvious reasons. But there comes a time for updating any law and the time for this one is now.

Please write Senator John Seymour and ask him to co-sponsor Senator Dale Bumper's S-433.

Hon. John Seymour
720 Hart Senate Office Bldg.
Washington D.C., 20510

Also, please write to the
Hon. George Miller, Vice-Chair
House Committee on Internal
and Insular Affairs
1324 Longworth
Washington D.C., 20515

and tell him that you support HR-918 as a step towards much-needed mining law reform.

Do it now while you are still mad!

. Vince Yoder



We are especially happy to welcome Tom and Jo Heindel of big Pine as new members of our chapter. They are local bird authorities and active environmentalists.

CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY - 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 understanding of California's native flora and to preserve this rich resource for future generations. Varied interests are represented.

Name _____ P.O. or Street _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Phone _____

Membership Category:

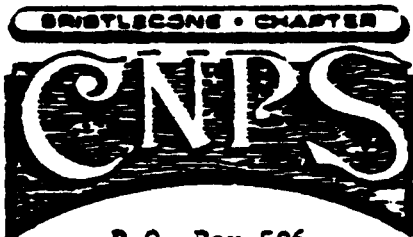
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| _____ Life, Couple | \$500 | I wish to be affiliated with the |
| _____ Life, Individual | 450 | Bristlecone Chapter _____ |
| _____ Supporting | 50 | Other _____ |
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| _____ Individual or Library | 18 | Please make check payable to: |
| _____ Student or Retired | 12 | California Native Plant Society |
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GIFT contribution: Where most
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The BRISTLECONE NEWSLETTER comes out bimonthly. It is mailed free to members of the Bristlecone Chapter, CNPS. The subscription is \$5.00 per year for others.
Editor: Mary DeDecker.

California Native Plant Society



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140 West Pavilion Street
Independence, CA 93526

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