DICATED TO THE PRESERVATION OF THE CALIFORNIA NATIVE FLORA

BRISTLECONE • CHAPTER

CNPS

NEWSLETTER

Vol. 4, No. 3 May 1985

NEXT MEETING

Wednesday, May 29, 7:30 P.M. The place is the Security Pacific Bank, 362 North Main Street, Bishop. The program will be a presentation on Indian baskets by Enid Ashworth, nee Partridge. Her interest in the subject has developed during her lifetime in Owens Valley. She will show some of her collection and discuss the plant materials used.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

Until I attended a statewide meeting of CNPS Executives and Presidents in March, I did not realize the resources available to our chapter. Since these meetings are called four times a year it is easy to stay in touch with the personnel of the head office and the resources offered there. I give two examples:

Vince Yoder will seek the advice of the CNPS Legal Advisor when writing the agreement with CalTrans concerning our maintenance of Toll House Springs. (Any of our local chairmen can contact their counterpart at the state level for help or advice.)

State legislative proceedings in any way affecting our concerns are closely watched by a CNPS member and alerts are sent out when necessary to the Legislative Chairman of each chapter for possible action. Statewide, we also have membership in several environmental groups, such as the Planning and Conservation League and the Nature Conservancy. Thus we benefit from their greater resources in lobbying for or against bills in the state legislature.

We need the resources of the CNPS State Office, but it also needs each chapter's reports on activities and the types of plants in each area. I'm sure our field trip plant lists are studied with interest in Sacramento.

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On March 7, 1985, Senator Milton Marks (R-San Francisco) reintroduced legislation that would return the California Environmental License Plate Fund (CELPF) to its original purpose. Please write Governor Deukmejian voicing your support of SB-1165. Your letter can really make a difference in getting this much-needed and beneficial legislation signed and passed. For more information write to Planning and Conservation League, 909 12th Street, Suite 203, Sacramento, CA 95814.

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FIELD TRIPS

June 15. LOWER SILVER CANYON, White Mountains.
It is 4½ miles northeast from Bishop on Highway 6 to the right turn just past the large sign for Laws Railroad Museum. Silver Canyon road will take you past the Museum, a canal, and Poleta Road before climbing the alluvial fan to the mouth of Silver Canyon. We will meet just past the first stream crossing at 9:30 a.m. There is wide parking there for those who do not want to tackle the next 6 stream crossings which have a decidedly sharp hump on the downhill side. If need be we can crowd into pickups for the few miles.

Annuals will probably be scarce but we can concentrate on learning every shrub on the canyon floor, along with the streamside flora for the five mile stretch. The canyon walls are fascinating in their varied forms and support many cacti in one area. It may be hot, but we will find shade for lunch. LEADER: Doris Fredendall. (619/938-2787).

July 13: NORTH FORK BISHOP CREEK.
Everyone is invited to a potluck dinner at the Crowthers' home after the trip. Meet at 8:30 a.m. at the Crowthers' so you can put potluck perishables in their refrigerators. DIRECTIONS: TAke Highway 168 (Line Street) about two miles west from U.S. Highway 395 in Bishop, turn left on Meadow Lane (Manor Market on corner), take the first left turn onto West Birch, go down about a block to 3047 West Birch. LEADERS: Pat and Jack Crowther. (619/873-4565)

July 27-28: BODIE HILLS, Mono County.
Meet Saturday at 10:00 a.m. in parking lot of market on Highway 395 at west end of Bridgeport. We will visit subalpine sagebrush and aspen groves on the flanks of Masonic Mountain. We will look for 4 rare plants and see grand vistas of the Sierra Nevada and Sweetwater ranges. Saturday night we'll camp at a dry, undeveloped site among aspens. Sunday morning we'll visit Bodie Mountain, Travertine Hot Springs or Virginia Lakes, depending on group preferences. High clearance vehicles not needed for access to campsite, but helpful in car pooling to some areas. Moderate walking. LEADER: Tim Messick (916/758-7714 evenings).

August 17-18: WHITE MOUNTAINS.
Meet Saturday at the Triangle Campground, which is at the junction of Highway 395 and the road to the Bristlecone Pine Forest, at 9:00 a.m. We will caravan to a group campground near Cedar Flat at about 7300 feet. Trips up the White Mountain road will be taken each day. High clearance vehicles should not be needed, but might be preferred in some places. We may do some car pooling. Although the date is too late for the showiest floral displays, we will find an interesting variety of alpine species. We will see ancient bristlecone pines and the high, open spaces of the alpine world. Be prepared for cold evenings, and have warm jackets along. There could be showers. LEADERS: Mary and Paul DeDecker. (619/878-2389)

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ANNOUNCEMENTS

USSB EXTENSION. SIERRA SUMMER. Apply to Santa Barbara, CA 93106.

NATURAL HISTORY OF THE SOUTHERN HIGH SIERRA: AN EXPLORATION OF UPPER COTTONWOOD CREEK. Golden Trout Camp, out from Lone Pine. Thurs. 9:00 a.m.-Sun. 1:30 p.m., July 4-7. $240. EDP 51026--ENV S X431.17. Meals included. This 4-day outdoor learning experience combines beautiful high Sierra landscapes, on-site natural history instruction, and comfortable camping. Timed

to take advantage of the July 4th holiday weekend, the program provides a relaxing but invigorating experience for the people who love to walk and explore, and who want to learn about this perfect microcosm of the southern high Sierra Nevada wilderness. Enrollment deadline is June 22.
MARK BAGLEY, MA. Consulting Biologist. (619/375-5055) Units 2.

THE NATURAL HISTORY OF THE MINARETS AND THE SIERRA NEVADA: A FOUR-DAY BACKPACKING EXCERSION FOR BEGINNERS. Devil's Postpile National Monument. Trailhead Camp: 6:00 p.m. Sat. to late afternoon Wed., Aug. 17-21. $85.
EDP 51027--ENV S X431.20 (3)
If you are a beginning backpacker and would like to know more about the world through which you hike, this class is for you. The classroom is the minaret wilderness, part of the oldest rocks found in the Sierra Nevada located near Mammoth Lakes. A 4-day easy packpack excursion along parts of the John Muir and Pacific Crest trails will be our initiation into a learning experience in the field. Enrollment deadline is August 9.
GARY OGDEN, Ph.D, Biology Instructor, Moorpark College; Ranger/Naturalist Devil's Postpile N.M., instructor in basic mountaineering for the Sierra Club.

MONO LAKE BIKE-A-THON.

Sixth Annual Los Angeles to Mono Lake Bike-a-Thon, August 26-31, 350 miles, support vehicles, camping. Riders secure pledges to benefit Mono Lake. Prize for most $ raised. Registration deadline August 9. INFO: Send self-addressed stamped envelope to Mono Lake Bike-a-Thon, 1355 Westwood Blvd., #6, Los Angeles, CA, 90024; (213) 477-8229.

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TRIP REPORTS

ARGUS-COSO.

The two-day field trip, April 27-28, was enjoyed by 29 participants. It took them into the Argus and Coso ranges on the Naval Weapons Center, China Lake. All were grateful for the beautiful weather, after several days of strong winds. Thanks go to our hosts, Beverly Kohfield and Denise La Berteaux, from the Navy's Environmental Branch (both Bristlecone Chapter members) and to our Mary Ann Henry for providing the informative road logs.

In the Creosote Bush Scrub along the base of the Argus Range we visited a sandy wash and a desert pavement site with a surprising diversity of annuals, at least 34 species. Higher up in the Argus, in Mountain Springs Canyon, we stopped at a spring where Denise told us of her research on the Inyo Brown Towhee. This is a subspecies found only in the southern Argus Range and is currently proposed for listing as endangered by USFWS. The spring area had clumps of *Salix lasiolepis* and *Forestiera neomexicana,* and one large *Sambucus caerulea*. There were also numerous shrub species in the surrounding Mixed Desert Scrub-Joshua Tree community. Sagebrush Scrub was seen on the north-facing slope across the canyon and up at our campsite near Birchim Spring. After a walk to the spring we were greeted by a nice display of *Oenothera avita* ssp. *avita* among the large clumps of Joshua trees around the camp. Their white blooms had opened since our arrival.

That evening, around a campfire, the group was treated to an excellent introduction to the Petroglyph Canyon area by Navy Archaeologist Bill Eckhardt.

He informed us that the Coso Range contains the largest concentration of Native American rock art known in North America. The next morning, after a brief stop for a display of small annuals and brodiaeas along the way, we arrived at the petroglyph area. The richly colored blooms of *Calochortus kennedyi* and a large specimen of *Sclerocactus polyancistrus* topped by a full ring of open flowers were the botanical highlights of a wonderous visit to this amazing canyon.

--Mark Bagley

OWENS VALLEY.

The weather favored us with a pleasant day for a trip along the valley floor on May 11. Twenty people showed up to learn more about the Owens Valley which few people see. The Plant Community was mostly Greasewood Scrub dominated by *Sarcobatus vermiculatus* and *Atriplex,* with occasional clay playas and examples of Alkali Sink vegetation. The Goosefoot or Saltbush Family (Chenopodiaceae) reigned supreme. Of the 60 plants listed, representing 20 families, 16 of them were of the Chenopodiaceae. That plant family is well adapted to the unfavorable combination of heavy clay soils or loose sandy surfaces, varying degrees of alkalinity, intense summer sun, freezing winter temperatures, and low precipitation. The shrubs must depend on groundwater. This part of the Valley was once occupied by ancient Owens Lake which left thick beds of clay, now often overlain by stabilized sand dunes. Areas of white alkali are common, this deposit left by evaporation of groundwater which nears the surface. While not a showy plant community, it is an extremely interesting one.

The bad news of the day was the shocking infestation of Salt Cedar (*Tamarix ramosissima)* for miles along the way. The good news was an introduction to *Oryctes nevadensis*, one of California's rarest plants. It is a miniature nightshade known from no other part of the state. Fortunately it does not have to compete with Salt Cedar, but it is threatened by trampling of cattle.

--Mary DeDecker

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GREETINGS to the following new members:

Donna Grate
P. O. Box 153
Independence, CA 93526

Denise La Berteaux
P. O. Box 1713
Ridgecrest, CA 93555

Ginger V. King
4200 NW Walnut Blvd. #102
Corvallis, OR 97330

Norma Insley
P. O. Box 42
Shoshone, CA 92384

Terri Middlemiss
Star Route 1, Box 159-C
Inyokern, CA 93527

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The Inyos are one of my favorite mountain ranges. In my travels around the world, I've come to realize how lucky we are to have such diversity in our own back yard. There's a need for wilderness protection so that our children and grandchildren will be able to enjoy the Inyos. --Galen Rowell, renowned photojournalist and climber.

Arnold's Arabis is really Congdon's Rock Cress!

Any day in August is likely to be a good day for alpine botanizing in the High Sierra, and it certainly must have been so for Joseph Whipple Congdon on August 21st, 1894 when he roamed the summits in the vicinity of Mt. Warren, near Tioga Pass, in Mono County. Congdon probably approached the peaks from the mining town of Lundy. He was a lawyer by trade (having practiced in Mariposa for a period of years), and may have come to the eastern Sierra on business. However, he was a botanist by avocation, and a good one at that. His name is commemorated in the elusive genus Congdonia (a Sedum segregate reported from Mammoth in 1911, but which has not been seen since). There are "**congdonii**"'s in at least a dozen California genera, many are narrow endemics.

On that August day, Congdon collected an Arabis, which at that time was an undescribed species. In 1894, Arabis was poorly known, a condition which is still somewhat true today! Congdon's Arabis went unrecognized until 1982, when it was collected for the second time by Arnold Tiehm on the easterly slope of Mt. Rose, Nevada. Arabis tiehmii thus became the fourth taxon of this genus to be described from the eastern Sierra and adjacent ranges in the past three years (joining A. pinzlae from the White Mts., A. bodiensis from the Bodie Hills, and A. rigidissima var. demota from the Carson Range in the Sierra).

Upon reading the description of Arabis tiehmii published by Reed Rollins in 1983, I realized "I've seen that plant at Tioga Pass!". When Rollins described A. tiehmii, he was reluctant as to the identity of Congdon's specimen because of its fragmentary nature. However, a very distinctive growth feature of Arabis tiehmii - accumulations of old leaf bases and a strong rosette habit - were enough for me to suspect that the Mt. Warren plants were A. tiehmii. In my ramblings over the terrain about Tioga Pass, I had in the past seen such an Arabis, but only on sites underlain by metamorphic rocks and then only at very high altitudes - above timberline. I secured several specimens of the Congdon Arabis in the summer of '84, whereupon Rollins confirmed that they were indeed A. tiehmii.

Unusual? The two known sites for Congdon's Rock Cress (a fitting vernacular name for A. tiehmii) are about 100 miles disjunct. More unusual are differences in habitat for the two known sites. Habitat at the Mt. Rose site (insofar as it was described in print) is "near rock outcrops on decomposed granite", at about 8500 feet elevation. By contrast, the Tioga Pass locality is alpine: a windswept ridge, snow free in winter, with metamorphic-derived rocky soils, supporting a distinctive plant community dominated by Chrysothamnus parryi var. monocephalus, at 11,000-12,000 feet.

Additional populations of Congdon's Rock Cress are likely from the ridge crests from Tioga Pass north to Virginia Pass. Arabis tiehmii can be seen at Tioga Pass by ascending the south end of Tioga Crest to the summit of Peak 11401 via Gardisky Lake.

- Dean Wm. Taylor
Oregon State University

Editor's Note: Dr. Taylor has been an active plant explorer in Inyo-Mono, and has contributed greatly to its floristic lists.

DEDECKERA AND OTHER WHITE MOUNTAIN NEWS

contributed by
James D. Morefield
Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff

Recent readers of this newsletter may have noticed the increasing disarray of the flora of our beloved White Mountains. For this I must now take partial blame, and will now do penance by sharing some of my more interesting findings. For a more technical account, see Noteworthy Collections in the journal Madroño, April 1985.

My own appreciation for the White Mountain area began in 1979 during two years as a student at Deep Springs College, and has only grown over the years. The remoteness, serenity, stark beauty, great relief, diversity of environment, and peculiar abundance of water for such an arid range, all are attractive to visitors, and to the native flora as well. After seeing the floristic havoc already wrought by Dean Taylor and Mary DeDecker in their explorations of the range, I decided to have a look for myself during summer 1984. The 88 additional taxa soon to be reported in a third list of additions attest to an enlightening and enjoyable experience, and to further havoc to come. (Eventually it will all have to be organized into a single list again!) Ironically, the most notable finds last summer were not new reports.

Dedeckera eurekensis (known affectionately by some as "Eureka dedeckerensis") was first reported in the Whites from a small group of 459 plants in an unnamed canyon just east of Bishop. After seeing July Gold here for my first time, I moved north and was amazed to find an increasing abundance of the plant, first in Gunter Creek Canyon (about 0.1 square mile), culminating and apparently ending in Coldwater Canyon, just inside Mono County. Those who know how rare Dedeckera is can appreciate my reaction to seeing a continuous square mile of July Gold (earning its name well in mid-June) dominating the walls of Coldwater Canyon. The population extends from 5000 feet at the canyon entrance, to at least 7200 feet, beyond which I was unable to explore.

Mary and Paul DeDecker needed no persuasion to visit Coldwater Canyon, which is accessible for field trips by 4-wheel drive vehicle. The plants are best developed on deep north-sloping talus, and we measured one clump at about 10 feet wide and 4-5 feet high. The light gray and buff shales and limestones forming this talus have been mapped geologically as Poleta Formation, which is abundant in desert canyons throughout the Inyo-White range. The contrasting rarity of Dedeckera suggests that the Coldwater Canyon rocks may be of a different formation, perhaps similar to where Mary first discovered the species in Eureka Valley. Further studies along those lines would be valuable both geologically and botanically.

All told, these new Dedeckera populations about triple the previously known number of plants. This, coupled with the generally inaccessible habitat, bodes well for the continued survival of this most special part of our native flora.

In other news: a new population of Trifolium dedeckerae was found

doing well along Crooked Creek near Dead Horse Meadow. This is about 2 miles north of the first White Mtn. population discovered in Wyman Canyon, and is now the northern limit for the species. Collections of Opuntia pulchella (Sand Cholla) from Deep Springs Valley confirm Munz's prediction that this species would be found in California. It is endangered by grazing in that area, however.

The two most productive areas in terms of new White Mountain taxa were the upper Cottonwood Creek Basin in Mono County, and the Sand Springs area at the foot of the range in Fishlake Valley (Esmeralda Co., NV). The Cottonwood Basin, a secluded and quite beautiful subalpine granite area, produced Botrychium lunaria, Polypodium hesperium, Dryopteris filix-mas, Jamesia americana, Chrysothamnus parryi, Sphaeromeria cana, Cirsium eatonii, and Hieracium horridum, all reminiscent of a typically Sierran flora. The Sand Springs area, at the north-east end of the range, harbored such desert species as Atriplex parryi, Sarcobatus baileyi, Eriogonum ampullaceum, Cleomella plocasperma, Lotus purshianus, and Haplopappus racemosus. Finally, a brief visit to the mouth of Black Canyon just this past March produced 5 new reports of desert annuals!

Lloyd and Mitchell's A Flora of the White Mountains (U. of Calif. Press, 1973) firmly documented 797 taxa of vascular plants. Including the upcoming third list of additions, the number now stands at 963. My own 88 were found despite the nearly rainless Spring of 1984, and my concentration on the southern, most explored half of the range. The numbers increased rapidly in northern areas, though, and I predict at least 70 or 80 more additions before the list is nearly complete. If a new Flora is ever produced, it should contain well over 1000 taxa. Further field work is scheduled for 1986.

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ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT NEEDS YOUR HELP

The 1973 Endangered Species Act, landmark legislation in which CNPS played a major role, will expire on Oct. 1 unless Congress passes and the president signs a bill to renew it.

A recent issue of the Endangered Species Act Reauthorization Bulletin pointed out that the problem of endangerment and extinction of plants and animals is of enormous proportion today and threatens profound adverse consequences for human welfare. Indeed, Harvard scientist Edward O. Wilson has said that today's accelerating loss of species is the folly for which our descendents are least likely to forgive us.

Extinction is neither a new nor an unnatural process. What is both new and unnatural, however, is the rate of extinction, which today exceeds that of any prior period in the earth's history. Many believe that by the end of this decade the earth will lose more species each week than scientists estimate were lost over the previous three centuries.

The potential costs of today's accelerating loss of species are large. The sustaining ability of our basic food crops depends upon periodic cross-breeding with disease-resistant related wild plants; more than a quarter of our prescription medicines come from plants; and valuable advances in industry depend on a continued storehouse of genetic variation. Yet nature's great variety is being plundered like pages torn from an unread book.

HOW YOU CAN HELP: Let Congress know that the American public supports a strengthened ESA. Please write your Senators and Representatives in Washington.

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:

____	Life, Couple	$500
____	Life, Individual	450
____	Supporting	50
____	Household	30
____	Individual or Library	18
____	Student or Retired	12
____	Retired Couple	15

Gift contribution: Where most needed_____ Conservation_____

I wish to be affiliated with the following Chapter:
Bristlecone_____
Other_____

Please mail application and check for dues to:
Membership Chairman
California Native Plant Society
909 12th Street, Suite 116
Sacramento, CA 95814

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California Native Plant Society

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