DEDICATED TO THE PRESERVATION OF THE CALIFORNIA NATIVE FLORA

BRISTLECONE • CHAPTER

CNPS

NEWSLETTER

Vol. 9, No. 5 September 1990

NEXT CHAPTER MEETING

September 26, 7:30 p.m., at the White Mountain Research Station on East Line Street. Robert Holland of the Dept. of Fish and Game's Nongame Heritage Program will speak to us on "Wetland Communities in Inyo County, their inventory and Preservation". Come to be informed on this vital and timely issue.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

Summer is nearly over - time to end the aestivation (excepting our summer field trips). Our fall and winter activities should renew our interest in being active in Eastern Sierra botany and all its relationships with our environment, both natural and manmade.

In keeping with the designation of 1990 as "The Year of the Oak" Mary DeDecker suggested that we initiate a survey of the distribution of oaks on the east side of the Sierra in our area (Walker Pass to Topaz Lake). Occurrence by species will be recorded along with size of population, apparent condition. parasitism, recruitment, etc. This is a project in which all of us can participate and enjoy. It eventually means visiting every Eastern Sierra canyon - no small task. It may take several years.

We should eventually be able to publish a booklet about "Our Oaks" from the data we accumulate. This will be of interest to the scientific community as well as to our lay members.

Thanks Mary.

. . . . . Vince Yoder

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NOMINATIONS FOR OFFICE FOR THE COMING YEAR.

President	Evelyn Mae Nikolaus
Vice-President	Carla Scheidlinger
Treasurer	Scott Hetzler
Secretary	Sally Manning

Elections will take place at the November meeting.

OCTOBER FIELD TRIP

October 6: Deep Springs Lake, Deep Springs Valley, east of Westgard Pass. Leader Carla Scheidlinger. We should find some desert wetland species, and also the rare black toad. This trip does not require a 4-wheel drive vehicle. Meet at 9:00 a.m. at the Deep Springs College gate. Take lunch and water.

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

Green Lake, July 7: Pat and Jack Crowther, leaders: We started our hike under clear skies but by afternoon big, bossy cumulus clouds developed. We had fine views of the Thompson Ridge, Mts. Emerson, Humphreys, Tom and Basin Mountain. The Green Lake area is a good mix of metamorphic and granitic rock. The lake is fed by a small glacier which gives the lake its distinctive green coloring. Brown Lake, which is not fed by the glacier, was down dramatically in this drought year, as was South Lake. The water at South Lake had not reached the dam. We saw evidence of the last adequate water year (1986) when we had to wind our way through downed *Pinus albicaulis*, white bark pine, which were in the path of an avalanche.

Below Brown Lake *Calamagrostis brewerí*, purple mist, was very showy. It has been especially attractive this year throughout the eastern Sierra. We saw a relative of *Astragalus* at Brown Lake, *Oxytropis viscida*, sticky oxytrope. Above Brown Lake *Ivesia lycopodioides*, club-moss Ivesia, and *Penstemon heterodoxus*, whorlflower penstemon, made a lovely scene of yellow and blue. As we worked our way to Green Lake we were rewarded by an *Ivesia* show. There were *Ivesia muirii*, Muir Ivesia, *Ivesia shockleyi*, Shockley ivesia, and the above *Ivesia lycopodioides*.

Near Green Lake we saw *Erigeron pygmaeus*, dwarf daisy, its reflexed lavender rays reminding one of tiny umbrellas. Also scattered throughout was the delicate *Astragalus lentiginosus* var. *ineptus*, little paper-pod, and the attractive *Eriogonum ovalifolium* var. *nivale*, fell-field buckwheat.

We found the best floral show on a glacial moraine immediately south of Green Lake, the lovely magenta blooms of *Primula suffrutescens*, Sierra primrose, with *Hulsea algida*, alpine gold, spread throughout for contrast. This is the easiest walk in the Bishop Creek drainage for a viewing of *Hulsea algida*. At the base of the moraine were found *Carex helleri*, Heller sedge, with its distinctively dark heads, *Eriogonum lobbii*, Lobb buckwheat, with its ball-shaped inflorescences on the ground or nearly so, and *Penstemon davidsonii*, timberline penstemon, showing its large blue-purple blooms.

.....Jack and Pat Carothers.

August 11: About 12 people met on Lubken Creek Road south of Lone Pine for the trip to an extensive wetlands and springs in the southerly part of the Alabama Hills. Our leader, Vince

Yoder, handed out a plant list to cover species of the area. The list was very helpful - far easier to check off plants there than to look them up in Munz.

One of our first stops was to look at *Eriogonum mummulare*, Kearney buckwheat (Syn. *E. kearneyi* var. *monoense*) This is the only known occurance for this species in the Alabama Hills and it may be a new southerly extension for the Owens Valley.

We then walked a large loop around the wet areas and visited several seeps and springs that still flow even after the prolonged drought we have been having. Some of the interesting plants that we observed were *Lythrum californicum*, common loosestrife; *Cuscuta indecora* var. *neuopetala*, pretty dodder, which was parasitizing the willows; *Rhamnus californicus* ssp. *cuspidatus* with its grape-sized blue-purple cofeeberies; and *Mimulus cardinalus*, scarlet mimulus, with its showy flowers.

Some of the rock plants, such as *Ericameria cuneata*, cliff goldenbush, (Syn. *Happlopappus cuneatus*), required a little climbing to see them, but it was well worth the effort.

To continue our tour we had to bushwhack through a willow thicket. This was a real adventure as we could not see where we were going. In reward for our efforts Vince showed us a nice group of *Fraxinus velutina*, desert ash. The Alabama Hills is the northern-most extension of its range in our area.

These wetlands interfinger otherwise dry rocky dsesert-type plant communities so the contrast in plant diversity is striking. We would have seen even more plants, but there are a lot of cows grazing the area. You know what that means!

Our group then drove over to Tuttle Creek where we sat in the shade by the creek near an abandoned homestead and had lunch. Afterwards we checked out the old fruit trees and enjoyed grapes that were still growing there. A great time weas had by everyone. We should do this again after several normal years of precipitation.

..... Scott Hetzler

WALNUTS IN OWENS VALLEY?

One of our alert members gives the following account of finding native walnut trees growing here. Can anyone contribute more to the story?

In early August I happened upon a group of northern California walnut trees, *Juglans hindsii*, growing at the base of the Sierra near Symmes Creek, west of Independence at about 5600 feet in elevation. This species is native to areas of central California to 500 feet in elevation, so it is surprising to find it here. It can be distinguished from other walnuts by its more mumerous leaflets, in this case 17 per leaf.

The walnut trees near Symmes Creek include two clumps which have stump-sprouted since 1985 when thousands of acres, including that site, burned. The largest stump is about 18 inches in diameter so it had been established for quite a while when it burned. It must have been a beautiful specimen. The wood, typical of walnut wood, is quite rot and termite resistant. The site is near and just downslope from a population of *Quercus kelloggii*, black oak, which grows along an earthquake fault. Seepage from the fault makes a favorable habitat.

Northern California walnut is now naturalized in many California locales. It could have been planted here by the owner of a long defunct slaughterhouse operation, the foundation of which is still visible nearby, but I have not been able to verify this.

Willis Linn Jepson in his Trees of California discusses the tree as follows:

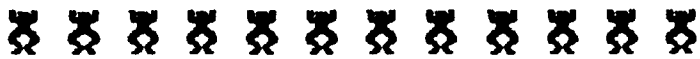
"As a native tree *Juglans hindsii* grows only in Central California, being limited to a few isolated stations very much restricted in area. Such stations in every case represent old Indian village sites or camping grounds, and it seems likely that these trees may be survival connected with the use of the nuts as food and their unconscious plantings by the native tribes". Dr. Jepson ads "Horticulturally the tree plays an important part in the walnut industry, since it is universally used as a stock graft for English Walnut, and is thus widely distributed over California as a cultivated tree. It is also grown as a windbreak, and very commonly as a roadside tree for which purpose it is admirably adapted." The fact that these trees occur near an oak grove raises the question whether they might have been planted, accidentally or intentially by local Indians who came to the site to gather acorns.

If anyone knows more about this paticular group of walnuts, knows of others, or would like to see them in their rich sidehill habitat, Please contact me. (619/878-2222.)

.....Andrew Kirk

We extend a warm welcome to The following new members:

Ruth and Larry Blakely, Bishop



CONSERVATION CORNER

This month I want to call two magazine articles to your attention. Both concern grazing on the public lands. One begins on page 37 in the September "Sierra" and the other begins on page 30 in the September "Smithsonian". (Beautiful pictures are a bonus in each!)

These articles are wonderfully timely for me. I've been studying the "Green Book" and have been struck by the reality that grazing as permitted by LADWP on its lands on the floor of the valley can't help but have a major effect upon the vegetation. This would appear to be in direct conflict with the scientific capability to monitor plant water stress and recovery. If plants are being severely overgrazed (as they appear to be) won't this aggravate the plant's conditions as regards overpumping and subsequent recovery? Following this drought when rains again wet the valley floor any new annual and perennial herbage will be so heavily grazed that measurements of plant recovery and density will be of questionable value.

In addition, stress is placed upon the condition of natural wetlands and riparian areas (Type D Vegetation) and maintenance of their integrity. Then how can we reconcile burning these same lands that we acknowledge in the Report are to important to the health of the valley?

Clearly, there needs to be some changes made by LADWP in its approach to its grazing management goals. We believe that the only context within which this can be assessed properly and thoroughly is through the environmental report process. LADWP must now join the US Forest Service and the BLM in preparing an environmental analysis on its public lands before reissuing grazing permits to valley ranchers. (This might also mean that permits would be issued for a longer time period which would also please the ranchers.)

CNPS must really press for this as a necessary part of the responsible management of the Owens Valley.

. . . . . Vince Yoder

CARLA SCHEIDLINGER ON CONSERVATION

Americans in general, and Westerners in particular, have long had a very ambivalent relationship with the concept of conservation. Our cherished ideas of freedom and the pursuit of happiness have led us to develop strong attachments to unfettered use of private property, expression of rugged individualism, and faith in the ability of our technical expertise to utilize for our own gratification the apparently limitless "resources" provided to us by nature.

But two conflicting realities have challenged the unregulated expression of thesedeals. The first of these is what William Ophuls calls the "politics of scarcity". Natural resources we now know beyond a shadow of a doubt, are **not** limitless, and there is a critical need to regulate their exploitation now and on the future to assure their continued existance. The second reality is what Michael Smith identifies as the "ecological revolution". Just as Galileo showed us that we are not the center of the physical universe, and Darwin revealed that neither are we the lynchpin of life itself, so ecological science is teaching us to question the assumption that nature is merely the storehouse of "commodities to fuel human progress". That is, elements of the natural world are inextricately bound together in both structure and function, and portions of them cannot be exploited as commodities without jeopardizing the function of other elements upon which we may rely for our own life processes. We are thus obliged to adopt a more holistic world view - one that is imcompatible with a commodity relationship to nature.

Out of these conflicting ideas and realities was born the modern conservation movement, which has, in the past several decades, had political expression in a number of regulatory acts and agencies. The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)was adopted in 1970, and it requires thorough documentation of the environmental consequences of a variety of developmental projects. It is CEQA that has mandated the preparation of an Environmental

Impact Report (EIR) regarding groundwater pumping in the Owens Valley by the City of Los Angeles, This is a document that many of us are very interesting in reading, as CEQA also that the public be given ample opportunity to comment on the findings of an EIR before it is approved in its final form. We can, and must, evaluate this document thoroughly and critically.

I will be teaching a course for California State University Baskersfield this fall that will examine aspects of the development of environmental policy in this country that led to the passage, and the enforcement, of CEQA. It is very important to understand what an EIR can and cannot do in terms of enforcing environmentally sound project implementation. It is also important to be able to evaluate the findings of the EIR from the point of view of the ecological resources of the area. The course will use as a primary text the groundwater EIR itself, which we will read and discuss, with the ultimate goal of submitting written comment on it during the public comment period.

The class will meet on Monday evenings from 6:30 to 8:30 in room 4 at Big Pine High School.There will be several weekend field trips as well. It is a 10-week course beginning on September 17, and it carries 3 upper-division quarter units in the Department of Policy and Administration, which can be applied as electives toward any undergraduate degree. The fee is $180 for credit, or $90 non-credit. For more information call Carla Scheidlinger at 619/873-8439.

ANNOUNCEMENT

"THE HISTORY OF WATER: EASTERN SIERRRA, OWENS VALLEY, WHITE-INYO MOUNTAINS"

Fortieth Anniversary Commemorative Symposium; University of California;White Mountain Research Station. September 19-22, 1991.

GENERAL TOPICS;
- Ancient Seas and waterways
  - Paleogeography/paleoecology
  - Paleoenvironments
- Paleoclimate/paleoclimatic Indicators (geologic, biologic, archaeologic); projections
- Water usage
  - Prehistoric/archaeologic
  - Present- day, Future, Impact:
    - Biologic (endangered species, extinctions, predictive biology)
    - Sociologic (community structures)
    - Economic (e.g., growth)
- Enhancement/recovery/protection (availability, recapture, groundwater, hydrology/ hydrogeology.

Presentation of White Mountain Research Station medals for "Distinguished contribution to Science of the White-Inyo Region" and Best Student Paper award for original work will be made.

FIRE

from the viewpoint of Frank Havore, administrator of North Region Natural Areas, County of Los Angeles Department of Parks and Recreation.

Precious few of earth's creatures have no innate fear of fire, and fewer still are ignorant of it. Only those plants and animals which live in totally wet or frozen environments are historically without the experience of periodic fire. Most terrestial ecosystems, whether grassland, swamp, desert or tropical forest, have evolved some sort of natural relationship with wildfire. For many plants and animals, naturally-occurring wildfires are an integral part of the cycles of growth and decomposition. In western North America, no ecosystem is more fire-dependent than the chaparral.

The topic of fire, as it relates to the natural areas of southern California is at once both simple and complex. Most local plants and animals are adapted to surviving occasional fires, and are directly dependent upon fire for reproduction or long-term population vigor. However, neither humans and nor their dwellings are fire-adapted or fireproof. While we are the only creature to have captured and harnessed fire, in the chaparral it sometimes slips from our grasp and rages against our efforts to regain control of it. The chaparral literally demands the presence of fire for its survival. We are equally vehement in our desire to have no fire except that which remains within our control. And so the story of fire ecology is in part one of conflict between the needs of nature and the wants of man.

Human considerations aside, the effects of fire upon the natural community are quite amazing. Far from being the "destroyer of brush", as fire is so often described by vaccuous newscasters, it is the rejuvinator of chaparral life. To be sure, nothing enjoys being consumed by 2000 degree heat, just as no prey organism willingly surrenders its life to a predator. The processes by which plant and animal populations remain healthy and balanced are rearely voluntary, and are often temporarily unpleasant. Many plants and animals do die in brushfires, unwillingly swept up in nature's terrifying means to an ecological end. In the immediate wake of a brushfire nothing seems to have survived; the devestation appears total.

But almost as quickly as life vanished, it returns--and in ways which challenge our senses, For every rabbit or lizard lost, a dozen seem to appear from nowhere to replace them, where once stood but single shrubs now sprout a hundred. Species diversity is also richer following a fire--plants and insects and birds not seen in an area for decades may suddenly appear in profusion. Wildflowers abound. The tortured, seemingly lifeless, "ashscape" is quickly blanketed by millions of seedling plants, taking advantage of he newly opened space and fertile soil to grow at astonishingly rapid rates. In the first spring following fire, burned areas may be distinguished from unburned chaparral not so much by the absence of life on their surfaces as by the profusion of it.

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 Bristlecone Chapter _____

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