DEDICATED TO THE PRESERVATION OF THE CALIFORNIA NATIVE FLORA

BRISTLECONE • CHAPTER

CNPS

NEWSLETTER

Vol. 11, No. 4 July 1992

NEXT MEETING

September 30. To be announced. Put it on your calendar.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

Happy summer to you! Nationally we are in the midst of an election year which gets more interesting as time goes on. In spending long days over my sewing machine , with the TV for company (However insane its babble, it at least keeps my mind from wandering on a side track away from my task.) I have heard some interesting comments. Conservation has become a recognized issue, eventually mentioned by most candidates. Some are merely giving it lip service; others are true believers really concerned for the earth. In the early days of this campaign we can listen carefully to all their concerns to help us make the best decision. We have an awesome responsibility. The outcome can affect the whole world. May the best man win!

. . . . . Evelyn Mae Nikolaus

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Doris Fredendall, who outdoes us all on field trips, has found two interesting new plants to add to our Inyo-Mono lists. One is *Lepidium texanum,* which is not shown in the Munz flora. It probably has escaped notice by its weedy appearance. The other is *Astragalus lemmonii*, a lovely little milk-vetch which comes down from northeastern California. Doris's collection is likely from its most southerly site. Both plants are from Rock Creek in Mono County.

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We are asked to announce the coming CALIFORNIA EXOTIC PEST PLANT SYMPOSIUM scheduled for October 9-10, 1992. The place is the Inn at Morro Bay. To receive an invitation please write to George Molnar, 801 Spring Drive, Mill Valley, CA 94941.

The successful work of the Exotic Pest Plant Council in Florida will be used as a model for this effort.

FIELD TRIP REPORTS

See the May newsletter, Vol 11, No. 3, for the complete field trip schedule for this year.

FOREST SERVICE FIELD TRIP TO SMOKEY BEAR FLAT- JULY 2.

We have not reported on Forest Service field trips in the past, although they are well worthy of it. Strangely, they have attracted only a few of our members. The Inyo National Forest has asked us to help in focusing on a single species each time to determine its distribution and vigor.

Each trip is thoroughly enjoyable for learning what occurs in a given area, and for the opportunity it give to develop rapport with Forest Service staff members. It is an opportunity to share ideas and to learn from each other.

The trip to Smokey Bear Flat was no exception. That pumice flat is typical of those in that area of vulcanism. It is named for a huge Smokey Bear sign that once stood beside the highway there. Sagebrush Scrub occupies its outer borders and the whole is surrounded by a beautiful forest of Jeffrey pine and red fir. Our leaders were Richard Perloff and Margie Palchak whom we now value as new friends. We were there to focus on the rare little Mono Milk-vetch (*Astragalus monoensis*) which is restricted to a few of the pumice flats. Happily, we found it doing well.

The trip to Sagehen Flat in the White Mountains will be over by the time you receive this newsletter but there will be another one on August 1. Kathleen Nelson has not been able to lead trips as announced in the schedule because she and her family have moved to Colorado. She will be botanist for a much smaller national forest which she looks forward to knowing more intimately. We knew Kathleen as an excellent botanist and a capable field person. Colorado's gain is our loss.

Smokey Bear Flat is such an interesting island in the forest that we give you a plant list for it.

ASTERACEAE

Agoseris glauca var. *monticola*. (The achene is not beaked at all, so it doesn't quite fit the key.)

Artemisia tridentata

Haplopappus bloomeri var. *bloomeri*. (The low sprawling stems from the woody root of this plant were common in the Sagebrush Scrub. It does not fit the key, but collection s from this area have been so labeled.)

Hulsea vestita ssp. ***vestita***

BORAGINACEAE

Plagiobothrys hispidus. White flowers 1 mm broad.

BRASSICACEAE

Streptanthus tortuosus var. *orbiculatus*. Colorful clasping leaves.

FABACEAE

Astragalus monoensis. Small gray perennial , white flowers suffused with lilac.

Lupinus tegeticulatus var. *duranii* (*Lupinus duranii*). Flowers rich violet or lilac.

NYCTAGINACEAE

Abronia turbinata or *Abronia exalata* A form with unwinged fruit, white flowers.

ONAGRACEAE

Oenothera xylocarpa. Large yellow flowers.

POACEAE

Stipa occidentalis var. *pubescens* (*Stipa elmeri*). Common grass on the flat.

Oryzopsis hymenoides. Indian rice grass.

POLYGONACEAE

Eriogonum spergulinum var. *reddingianum*. A very dainty species; leaves hairy.

PORTULACACEAE

Calyptridium umbellatum. Common pussy paws.

SCROPHULARIACEAE

Mimulus bigelovii. A tiny monkeyflower; flower red-purple.

VIOLACEAE

Viola purpurea ssp. *geophyta*. Flowers yellow.

. . . . . Mary DeDecker

May 9, 1992. Rose Valley and Coso Mountains.

Mark Bagley led us to this superb flower display in Rose Valley (Coso Junction). We had heard that it was unusually good this year, but unless you were there on May 9 you'll never know how good it was--unless it happens again soon. Blooms in profusion--most of them common, some less so, included *Antheropeas wallacei, Coreopsis bigelovii, Orthocarpus purpurescens* var. *ornatus, Lupinus odoratus,* an *Abronia,* a *Nama,* a *Nemacladus, Astragalus lentiginosus* var. *variabilis, Sphaeralcea ambigua, Monardella exilis, Eremalche exilis,* and on and on and on, all in the Desert Saltbush Scrub.

In the Mojave Creosote Bush Scrub we found *Eschscholzia minutiflora, Lupinus shockleyi, Eriogonum maculatum, Eriogonum pusillum, Amsinkia tessellata* and others.

About four miles east of Coso Junction we turned off the main road which leads to the geothermal development and went up a major canyon which headed northeasterly. *Delphinium* was common as was *Salazaria mexicana, Xylorhiza tortifolia, Salvia columbariae, Mimulus bigelovii, Caulanthus cooperi, Lupinus subvexus, Syntrichopappus fremontii,* hillsides yellow with *Eriogonum trichopes,* and some *Astragalus didymocarpus.* This canyon road ended at a huge boulder with many red pictographs. Surrounding it was a profusion of *Stanleya elata, Haplopappus linearifolius, Cayptridium monandrum,* some *Antirrhinum penduliflora, Cryptantha decipiens,* and *Castilleja chromosa.*

The 20 or so on the trip were treated to a display hard to match anywhere else in this eastern Sierra.

..... Vince Yoder

CONSERVATION CORNER

RANGELAND WORKSHOP SCHEDULE

The Inyo National Forest, in cooperation with the Forest Rangeland Steering Committee, is sponsoring a Forest Rangeland Workshop at Bishop Union High School auditorium July 31-August 1, 1992.

The committee is a coalition of ranchers, environmentalists, and regulatory agencies dedicated to the goal of fostering communication between different public user groups. The purpose of this workshop is to bring together these groups and focus on the many shared values and compatible goals. It will offer an opportunity for people interested in in the management and future of public rangelands to meet.

The workshop will be facilitated by Kirk Gadzia of the Center for Holistic Resources Management in Albuquerque, New Mexico. He has been very successful in assisting communities to develop models and goals for future desired conditions on rangelands

Early registration is advised. A fee of $10 per person will include a registration packet which outlines the content of the workshop, refreshments, and post-workshop proceedings. Registration will be accepted on the day of the workshop. Signups for field trips will be on a first come, first serve basis.

Application forms are available at the Inyo National Forest, California Department of Fish and Game, Bristlecone Chapter, CNPS, Eastern Sierra Audubon, and the University of California Cooperative Extension Offices. For further information contact Terry Hicks at the Inyo National Forest Supervisor's Office, (619) 873-2400.

Participation by Chapter members is strongly encouraged.

. . . . . Vince Yoder

May 30, 1992, Long Valley

The morning light, a golden wash, illuminated the contrasts of mountain escarpment and valley. Twenty-two of us, some as far away as Weymouth, England and Sacramento joined Doris Fredendall to find flowers amidst the sagebrush steppe, alkaline meadows and spring sites of Long Valley. Just before heading out we stopped to see the soft pink bursts of "long-leaved phlox" (*Phlox longifolia*), yellows from the "golden forget-me-not" (*Cryptantha confertiflora*) and the bright whites of the "prickly poppy" (*Argemone munita* var. *rotundata*) dotting the roadside.

At our first stop amongst the "low sage" (*Artemisia arbuscula*) and "bitterbrush" (*Purshia tridentata*) were the delicate branching "summer snow" (*Gayophytum diffusum*), yellow "gold buttons" (*Erigeron aphanactis*) and the tawny grass panicles of *Melica sticta*. As we walked further from the road we found the rare "Long Valley milk vetch" (*Astragalus johannis howellii*) with its small white flowers and another *Astragalus*, (*Astragalus purshii*) with it's characteristic fuzzy white seed pods also growing near by. Doris mentioned that if we looked closely along the base of a small rise where the soil was a bit moister we might find the indigo blue flowering stalks of the "sagebrush delphinium" (*Delphinium andersonii*). Low and behold elated voices brought us together to see the brilliant blue flowers.

As we walked around the base of the rise the landscape changed from shrubs to an open rocky site dotted with wonderful mounds of "mat buckwheat" (*Eriogonum caespitosa*), "sulphur eriogonum" (*Eriogonum umbellatum*) and the round, pink/white flowers of the "powder-puff" (*Eriogonum ovalifolium*). We then left this Zen-like rock garden to the meadows surrounding Little Alkali Lake.

Here we were to find the highlight of the day. As we approached the site, we found the subtle yellow bead-like flowers of the tiny "pygmy cleomella" (*Cleomella brevipes*), tufts of "alkali arrow-grass" (*Trigolochen cocinna* var. *debilis*) and a few yellow flowers of the "meadow hawksbeard" (*Crepis runcinata* ssp. *hallii*) and in the more open flats, the unique "alkali ivesia" *(Ivesia kingii*). Ahead, framed by the snow graced Sierra and rippling water was a meadow scape washed in magenta. We all quickened our pace and were greeted by an entire meadow filled with the beautiful "alkali shooting star" (*Dodecatheon pulchellum*).

After admiring the "shooting stars" and graceful walk of Avocets along the lake shore, we continued to a lunch spot where clear water emerges from flower graced rocks. Latent Springs is another unique place that contributes to the diversity of plant communities in Long Valley. Within this small oasis, the sagebrush abruptly ends and is replaced by a wet meadow interspersed with "blue-eyed grass" (*Sisyrinchium halophilum*) and yellow *Potentilla*, (*Potentilla gracilis*). The small stream that flows through the meadow is fed by a spring encased by hanging rocks covered with lush growth of "scarlet columbine" (*Aquilegia formosa*), and sunny yellow flowers of the "seep spring monkey flower" (*Mimulus guttatus*). Above this wet, rocky drape was "the desert sweet" (*Chamaebatiaria millefolium)*, and golden current (*Ribes aureum*). All of us ambled around the meadow and rocks enjoying the varied flowers and afternoon light. Long Valley with its tapestry of landscapes, had given us a wonderful day.

Anne Halford

JUNE 13, 1992, Mazourka Canyon

A cool and clear day was the setting for this well-attended field trip led by Mary DeDecker and Clem Nelson. Our caravan of vehicles headed east from Independence Park down Mazourka Canyon Road, stopping briefly at the Owens Valley fault scarp formed in 1872. There was a vertical displacement of 25 feet at some places in the valley. From this vantage point Clem pointed out the various granitic plutons which had invaded the Inyo Mountains about 200 my ago

At our next stop at dolomite cliffs in Mazourka Canyon, Mary helped us to identify *Scopulophila rixfordii*, Rixford Rockwort, an indicator of carbonate rocks. Several members of the cactus family were noted along the way, Cottontop, beavertail, Mojave Mound, Engelmann and Old Man Cactus. As we wended our way up the canyon many stalks of *Stanleyelata*, Prince's Plume,were observed in the gravelly wash. Otherwise the canyon was very dry and devoid of blooms, so we continued upward.

We took a side road to Santa Rita Flat which is located on top of the Santa Rita Pluton. It afforded us a fine view of the Sierra and the Inyos. Clem pointed out the steeply west-dipping Bonanza King dolomite and the Keeler Canyon Limestone which are approximately 50my old. Turning around we had a panoramic view of the Sierra and could identify many of our "old friends" whose rocks are somewhat younger, only 100my in age! We became acquainted with *Menodora spinescens*, Spiny menodora, as well as a very friendly *Lepus californicus*, juvenile Black-tailed Jack.

Continuing upward we passed into the Pinyon-Juniper Woodland. The road became steep and narrow as we traversed beds of steeply dipping carbonate rocks. We ate lunch on Badger Flat among the Utah junipers, *Juniperus osteosperma*. Flowers in that area included *Salvia dorii*, Great Basin Blue Sage, *Artemisia nova*, Broom Sagebrush, *Frasera puberulenta*, Low Green Gentian, and *Linum lewisii*, Blue Flax.

After lunch we went south to Tamarack Canyon where we parked the cars and took a hike. On the way we enjoyed *Penstemon floridus* var. *austinii*, Austin Penstemon, and *Penstemon speciosus*, Showy Penstemon.After about one-half mile up a winding wash we spied our first Bristlecone Pines, *Pinus longaeva*, which are very distinctive and stand out from the associated Limberpines, *Pinus flexilis*. We enjoyed seeing some good examples of plants which are restricted to dolomite, including the relatively rare *Chrysothamnus gramineus*, Rock Goldenrod, and *Echinocereus triglochidiatus* var. *mojavensis*, Mojave Mound Cactus. Several members of the group climbed a steep slope to get a closer look at the red blooms of the latter.

The field trip concluded at the parked cars. All members agreed that it had been a memorable one.

. . . . . John Gorham

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PLEASE WELCOME OUR NEW MEMBERS:

Jerry Eskew, Independence

Armin Kaufstein, Bishop

Steve Miesel, Mammoth Lakes

Mark Miller, Big Pine

James and Barbara Vijay, Ridgecrest

BOOK REPORT

Pavlik, Bruce M., Muick, Pamela C., Johnson, Sharon and Popper, Marjorie. Oaks of California. Published by Cachuma Press and the California Oak Foundation, 1991. 184 pp.

As a little girl growing up in California, I recall a real fascination with acorns. Many happy hours were spent gathering the smooth rounded brown fruit, organizing sizes and playing make believe tea party with the caps. It was with real delight, therefore, when the comprehensive and beautifully illustrated book Oaks of California was released. This book provides not only the natural history of the California Oak but includes the human history of this important California genus, Quercus.

The great diversity of the oak is illustrated in the first section of the book which individually describes each of the 18 species (both tree and shrub) of oak in California. Each species is discussed in terms of it's identifying characteristics, habitat, distribution and special qualities (i.e. unique adaptations to drought).

Two chapters of the book examine in detail the ecology of the oak species and oak communities. Associated plants as well as animals and their ecological relationships with California Oak are discussed. Many interesting and some astonishing facts are provided such as a single scrub jay may bury as many as 5,000 acorns in one season and oaks host more gall insects than any other native tree or shrub in the western United States.

One of my favorite chapters of the book examines the role of oaks in California's human history beginning with Native American use, continuing with pioneer development and concluding with the role modern development has played in the reduction of oak habitat and what steps are being taken to preserve oaks for future generations.

A guide to 110 of the best places to view the various species of native oaks throughout California concludes the book.

So what do you think I did when I finished reading this book; drive up Oak Creek, of course, for a little time with our oak locals! The book and the visit with our native oak are highly recommended.

(For additional reading on Native American use of the oak a book entitled It Will Live Forever by Bev Ortiz, Berkeley: Heyday Books, 1991, is suggested. This book contains a comprehensive and detailed discussion of traditional acorn gathering and preparation as practiced by the Miwok/Paiute people of the Yosemite area.)

Kathy Barnes

Report on the CNPS Plant Community Committee Workshop June 19-21, 1992

The CNPS Plant Community Committee (PCC) held a workshop for interested members the weekend of June 19-21. Approximately 40 CNPS members from all over the state attended. Twelve members of the committee served as trainers and assistants for the participants.

The purpose of the workshop was to introduce the PCC's proposed method for gathering information on virtually any plant community in California. Participants were to test the techniques and identify potential problems. Eventually, the participants will serve as trainers among members of their own chapters should the chapter be interested in describing a local plant community.

The workshop was held at the University of California James Reserve, which is located at an elevation of 5500 ft. on Mt. San Jacinto. The reserve's director, Mike Hamilton, welcomed the group with a slide show on the diverse plant communities that occur near the Reserve. Many participants stayed in the solar-powered dorm/lodge, while others opted to camp in a clearing near the creek, among the flowering Western Azaleas.

The workshop opened with some remarks from Plant Community Committee Chair, Professor Michael Barbour. He discussed the committee's objectives and activities. The PCC originated from the Rare Plant Scientific Advisory Committee's recommendation that CNPS become involved with preserving plants in their natural habitats. Many unique California plant communities are threatened by development. To aid in the preservation of natural communities, CNPS members state-wide requested "tools." Tools being devised by the PCC include simple field methods for describing a community and an updated written guide to the many California plant communities.

Next, a committee member described the inventory technique the PCC had developed. The method aims to minimize subjectivity and maximize quantitative information. A plot measuring 50 m in length and 5 m in width is laid out in the community to be assessed. Along the 50 m measuring tape that is stretched down the middle of the plot, a reading is taken at each 0.5 m interval. All species in the herb layer, the shrub layer, and the tree layer are recorded. Once this is completed, the plot is surveyed for any species that were not recorded along the tape.

For the workshop, plots were set up in grassland, chaparral and forest communities. Participants divided themselves into groups of two and each pair had the opportunity to inventory a plot in each community during the rest of the day. When they finished, data were tabulated by committee members. Results were presented that evening, and the advantages and disadvantages of the methods were discussed. There had been some confusion on the details of recording "litter" in the herb layer, but overall, most groups arrived at similar results for the plots they inventoried. Many participants commented favorably on the PCC's approach.

After a few more refinements, it appears that the PCC will have a technique that will be adopted by CNPS as an appropriate method for gathering information on a California plant community. At this point, the work - an iterative process - really begins. As more information is gathered on plant communities, community characteristics are described more precisely. Some "catch-all" communities may then be subdivided into distinguishable units, descriptions will be re-written, and communities on which information is vague may be targeted for more work.

Chapters are being called upon to supply the PCC (or Todd Keeler-Wolf of the Calif. Dept. of Fish and Game in Sacramento) with a list of rare communities in their area. Anyone with suggestions for Eastern Sierra communities that should be considered rare may contact me at 873-3790 in Bishop.

- Sally Manning

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.

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