

# NEWSLETTER

Vol. 40, No. 6

JULY & AUGUST 2014

## NORTHERN NEVADA HAPPENINGS

### FIELD TRIPS

It is suggested that you check the website before the dates of scheduled field trips to see if changes and updates have been posted. We have several dates open if a member wishes to schedule additional field trips. Please contact John Weiser at [johnpweiser@yahoo.com](mailto:johnpweiser@yahoo.com) or 775-331-4485 if you should have any questions.

Bring plenty of water, lunch, hiking gear, appropriate clothing, wide brimmed hat, sunscreen and insect repellent.

**JULY 12th** Grass Lake Meadow, El Dorado County, CA. Our leader will be Tom Schuster. Call or Email 690-2953 or [tom-mail@sbcglobal.net](mailto:tom-mail@sbcglobal.net)

**JULY 19th** Castle Peak, Nevada County, CA. Our leader will be Tom Schuster. Call or Email 690-2953 or [tom-mail@sbcglobal.net](mailto:tom-mail@sbcglobal.net)

**JULY 26th** Open at this time.

**AUGUST 2nd** Open at this time.

**AUGUST 9th** Slide Mountain, Washoe County, NV. Our leader will be John Weiser. Call or Email 775-331-4485 or [johnpweiser@yahoo.com](mailto:johnpweiser@yahoo.com)

**AUGUST 16th** Little Washoe Lake mud flats, Washoe County, NV. Our Leader will be Charlene Duncan. [thistledown@sbcglobal.net](mailto:thistledown@sbcglobal.net).

## SOUTHERN NEVADA HAPPENINGS

### MEETINGS

Meetings are on the first Monday of every month starting at 6:30 pm. They are held at the U.S. Geological Survey office at 160 N. Stephanie Street in Henderson. Contact Cayenne Engel ([cpepper3@gmail.com](mailto:cpepper3@gmail.com)) or Gary Reese ([greese@logansimpson.com](mailto:greese@logansimpson.com)) if you have any questions or would like to be added to the notification by email list.

### Botanizing with a Historical Twist in Long Valley By Bonnie Larsen

On June 7th there was a good turn out to explore a site at the Anderson Ranch in Long Valley, CA. The trip was arranged by Bill Harnach with the ranch caretaker, Marco Sandi, and was attended by Marco and ranch owners, Tom and Tamia Anderson, as well as NNPS members.

The ranch includes the historic site of Chat, an enclave that existed to support a local railroad which was supposed to reach Portland, but never did. This is where the field trip was centered - an interesting place. There is a debris field of old cans and other items which suggested that the site included Chat's dumping area. A particularly nice artifact was a large rusted olive oil can from Italy with raised lettering. Participants checked out a concrete spring box and speculated about a strangely constructed concrete ditch.

Bill assembled a plant list made from a collection by Marcus E. Jones in 1897. The object of the field trip was to see how many plants from Mr. Jones' collection we could find in 2014.

Participants had a beautiful day for their efforts, warm but with a consistent breeze. A big loop was made around the designated area and various plants on Jones' list were found, though not so many considering that the list numbered more than a hundred. Allowances have to be made, however for not having the time to cover as great an area as Jones did and likely not being on site at exactly the same time of year with the same conditions. A personal list of plants found on Jones' list is below.



*Taraxia tanacetifolia* by Janel Johnson

Spotted along the road upon arrival were the bright yellow flowers of the former *Camissonia*, now *Taraxia tanacetifolia*, but still tansy-leaf evening primrose. Still a *Camissonia*, *C. andina* with ¼ " yellow flowers was seen later. First on the list was *Agoseris heterophylla*, or mountain dandelion, and it was blooming, as were various members of the Aster Family such as *Achillea millefolium*, yarrow, *Crepis occidentalis*, western hawk's beard, *Erigeron pumilus*, shaggy fleabane (a very cute clumps of white daisies), *Heterotheca villosa*, hairy false goldenaster, *Malacothrix floccifera*, wooly desert

dandelion, and *Sphaeromeria potentilloides*, cinquefoil tansy.

Two *Astragalus* from Jones' list were found, *A. lemmonii* with showy yellow flowers and *A. lentiginosus* with beautiful fat, shiny green pods. Another Pea Family member seen was pink-flowered *Trifolium andersonii* subsp. *andersonii*, a ground-hugging clover that forms large mats.

*Paeonia brownii*, western peony was not looking its best, but *Ranunculus californicus*, California buttercup was bright and shiny, and *Stipa hymenoides*, Indian rice grass was particularly lovely.

Not on the list, but showy and abundant was *Senecio integerrimus* var. *exaltatus*, Columbia ragwort, *Sisyrinchium idahoense*, an iris called red root blue-eyed grass and *Silene nuda*, western fringed catchfly, plus fine looking clumps of *Leymus cinereus*, great basin wildrye. Jones ignored things such as sagebrush and rabbit brush, as did we.

As hunger set in the group moved back to the cars where lunch was eaten. There then was a foray to the creek on the east side of the road to see a beaver dam which was not there, but a particularly nice broomrape, *Orobanche fasciculata*, was seen en route, making the little side trip worthwhile.

Thanks to Nancy and Bill Harnach and those associated with the Anderson Ranch for a fine outing. Bill promises a comprehensive list from this outing in September.\*

## TRIFOLIUM GYMNOCARPON AND OTHER HIDDEN FLOWERS by Arnold Tiehm

Jan Nachlinger and I were recently in central Nevada on one of our annual bouncing botanical bivouacs. In the course of six days we managed to visit an alkali flat, a cirque with snow banks, and lots of places in between. In the Ravenswood area of the Shoshone Range we were botanizing a rocky, clayey slope in a juniper area and we came across a large population of a clover. At first it appeared to be in leaf only but on further inspection we realized it was in full flower. The reason for the confusion was that the plant, *T. gymnocarpum*,

has its flowers hidden under the leaves. The flowering peduncles are recurved and are mostly hidden beneath the 3-5 foliate leaves (Barneby, 1989). The flowers themselves are whitish, few in number, and once found are quite delightful. If it wasn't for the habit of forming large colonies *T. gymnocarpum* would be harder to find and probably collected even less, which at best is seldom. It is known from western Montana and Idaho south to Colorado, New Mexico, and Arizona. In Nevada I can find records from Clark, Elko, Humboldt, Lander, Lincoln, Nye, Washoe, and White Pine Counties.

So this got me thinking about other herbaceous plants that produce flowers that are mostly hidden by the leaves. It would be easy to include any plant with small or inconspicuous flowers in this category but that is not what I had in mind. I managed to come up with two others that have large, brightly colored flowers that are produced from the base of the plant and are hidden from a casual glance. The commonest one is *Hydrophyllum capitatum*. Here again the flower peduncles are greatly exceeded by the leaves and in many cases one has to push aside the leaves to realize that the plant is even in flower. It occurs on moist open slopes and from foothills to mountains. Once found the flowers vary from whitish to lavender or bluish. In the spring it is always a delight to find *H. capitatum* in flower and many times it is found near another early flowering plant, *Mertensia oblongifolia*, which has a showy inflorescence. In Nevada *H. capitatum* is represented by



*Astragalus megacarpus* plants and fruit  
by Jan Nachlinger



variety *alpinum* which is known from Idaho, Oregon, Utah, California and is known in Nevada from Churchill, Elko, Eureka, Humboldt, Lander, Nye, Storey, Washoe, and White Pine Counties (Cronquist, 1984).

The third plant that fits the bill takes us back to the pea family, ***Astragalus megacarpus***. Here the peduncles lay on the ground beneath the erect tufts of leaves and the plant has the appearance that the flowers have been clipped and dropped on the ground. In the spring the pink-purple flowers literally form a ring around the leaf clusters. As striking as the flowering plants are the fruiting plants are even more distinctive. As the specific name indicates it possesses very large fruit. The pods can reach two and a half inches long, are greatly inflated, and can have some mottling. When they are mature the papery pods can be translucent which allows viewing of water droplets within the pods. These make for rather dramatic and peculiar photography, as seen in Jan's images here from a trip we made to Elko County in 2003. Outside of Nevada ***A. megacarpus*** can sometimes have whitish flowers. Its distribution is from Wyoming, Colorado, and Utah east to Elko and Eureka Counties in Nevada (Barneby, 1989).

Barneby, R.C. 1989. Fabales pp 1-279. In: A. Cronquist, A.H. Holmgren, N.H. Holmgren, J.L. Reveal & P.K. Holmgren. Intermountain Flora 3B: 1-279. New York Botanical Garden, Bronx, NY.

Cronquist, A. 1984. Hydrophyllaceae pp 155-206. In: A. Cronquist, A.H. Holmgren, N.H. Holmgren, J.L. Reveal & P.K. Holmgren. Intermountain Flora 4: 1-573. New York Botanical Garden, Bronx, NY.\*

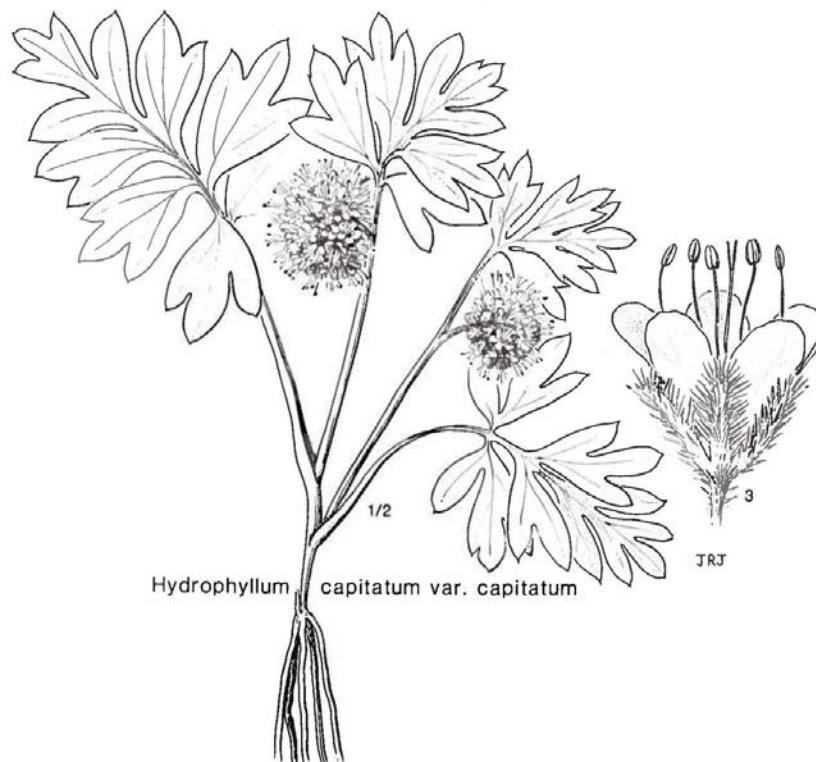
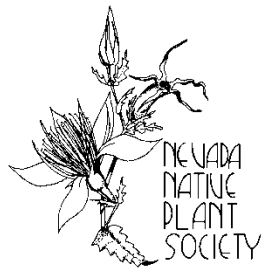


Illustration of *Hydrophyllum capitatum* from Intermountain Flora 4: 203.

Nevada Native Plant Society  
PO Box 8965  
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