

NEWSLETTER

Vol. 40, No. 8

OCTOBER 2014

NORTHERN NEVADA HAPPENINGS MEETINGS

We meet down the hall from the UNR herbarium in room 300G of Fleischman Agriculture, at the University of Nevada. This is just north of the intersection of 9th St. and Evans Ave. The elevator is located at the east end of the building. You can park just east of this in the lot on the southeast corner of Evans and Record Way. Social time starts at 7 pm and the program will start at 7:30 pm. If you would like to join any of the speakers for dinner beforehand, meet at Carrow's Restaurant on the northwest corner of Wells Avenue and 6th St. at 5:30 pm. NOTE: Enter the building under the breezeway on the west side. The outside door will be automatically locked at 7:30.

OCTOBER 2ND – Second fall meeting for 2014. Janel will present photos from the cactus field trip in May.

NOVEMBER 6TH – Final fall meeting for 2014. Speaker to be announced.

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) or Gary Reese (greese@logansimpson.com) if you have any questions or would like to be added to the notification by email list.

NEWSLETTER EDITOR AND MEMBERSHIP CHAIRPERSON NEEDED by Arnold Tiehm

When ya'll receive the November newsletter I will have completed 20 years as newsletter editor and membership chair. It is time for me to step down. Don't get me wrong, I have enjoyed compiling information, reading other plant society's newsletter in hopes of stealing something from them, and especially writing articles. Over the years I have received lots of positive feedback on my articles about botanizing in Nevada and I intend to continue contributing these articles as interesting things come to light. But 180 newsletters is a lot of work and time and I simply do not have the oomph or desire to continue. Also, as computers get more and more sophisticated I find myself getting more and more frustrated in trying to figure out their nuances, short cuts, and non-intuitive protocol. What ever happened to "Word Perfect", it was so easy to use. Yes, I know, it still exists but since no one else uses it, it is senseless for me to go back to it.

So we need someone, or a couple of someones, to step up and take the non-ending task of newsletter editor by the horns and ride it into the future. I am sure that the future will be just as much fun as the past has been.*

MUD FUN AT WASHOE LAKE

by Bonnie Larsen, photos by Charlie Duncan

Eleven people turned up at Little Washoe Lake at 8:30 a.m. on August 16th for the last field trip of 2014. Due to a recent rain, it was thought that the water, which had been higher a few days earlier would remain so, but it had subsided, though its effects remained.

The buckwheat, *Eriogonum baileyi*, in full bloom, was pointed out before we left the parking lot. From there we walked into an area surrounded by willows and cattails. Damp mud allowed easy walking, and a good variety of plants were seen. Among the grasses seen were prickly grass, *Crypsis alopecuroides* and rabbit foot grass, *Polypogon monspeliensis*. A large patch of the yellow aster, *Bidens cernua*, was blooming profusely, making a cheerful sight, as was the evening primrose *Camissonia tanacetifolia*, which faded to an attractive orange at the end of bloom. The aromatic mint, *Mentha arvensis*, was good for a pinch and quick sniff, and *Veronica anagallis-aquatica* showed off small white flowers with violet stamens and markings best seen with a hand lens. *Sagittaria cuneata*, with arrow shaped leaves and reportedly large white 3-petaled flowers displayed only its ½"+ ball-like seed heads. Its relative, the lanceleaf water plantain, *Alisma lanceolatum*, also past bloom, displayed its seeds in a small circle above the papery calyx on its branching stems. Water smartweed, *Polygonum amphibium*, had beautiful pink flowers reminiscent of grape hyacinth flowers.

Coming to open water, we were treated to the sight of several wetland birds. First noticed were pelicans, but there also were white egrets, great blue herons, night herons, ducks and more. Wild horses, seen from a distance, disappeared into the willows as we drew closer, and appeared again as we returned to the parking lot.

By this time it was 10:00 a.m. and the group moved to a new location south of Washoe City between Slide Mountain and Washoe Lake. Here it was drier, though with many depressions where



Bidens cernua, Beggar's tick.



Polygonum amphibium, water smartweed



Alisma lanceolata, water plantain.

water had been. Looking spiky in a depression was the annual saltbush, *Atriplex truncata*. Nearby was its fellow family member *Chenopodium desiccatum*. Prettier in flower was the uncommon-in-Nevada ground-hugging *Plagiobothrys mollis* with forget-me-not white flowers. Several weedy species did well, such as willow herb, *Epilobium densiflorum*, foxtail grass, *Hordeum jubatum*, dandelion *Taraxicum officinale* and sweet clover, *Melilotus alba*, which made up for its giant weediness by hosting very numerous little blue butterflies as well as little brown ones with an orange line on their wings.

A special treat was seeing *Lupinus sellulus* which had produced masses of blue flowers in a second bloom due to recent rains. Fellow Pea Family members *Astragalus canadensis* displayed off-white flowers on upright stems like lupines, and the perennial low-growing birdfoot trefoil, *Lotus corniculatus* bloomed bright yellow.

We were fortunate to have a pleasant sunny morning, but the day was warming up and we returned to the vehicles. Many thanks to Charlie Duncan for this really interesting and enjoyable wetland trip, and to Jerry Tiehm for coming along and helping with plant identification.*

Walking on Water at Grass Lake by Bonnie Larsen, photos by Tina Nappe

On July 11th, five people traveled from Reno to check out Grass Lake near Meyers, California. Grass Lake, is classified as a sphagnum bog/montane meadow, and is considered the best example of this type of area in California. It has been set aside as a Research Natural Area in the Eldorado National Forest.

Tom Schuster arranged the outing and Will Richardson, a founder of The Tahoe Institute for Natural Sciences, came along as did members of the Eldorado Chapter of the California Native Plant Society and a few other people who happened to find out about the trip. The plan was to visit this unique area and contemplate wildlife, birds and insects as well as plants in order to gain an appreciation of the whole. As participants included members of two or three native plant societies, there was a tendency to focus on plants a little more than other things. The Reno group arrived in a more or less timely manner. Others straggled in over the next hour, causing Tom to give the introduction twice and getting things off to a slow start, but increasing the number of attendees to 23, some of whom were very enthusiastic about the area and knowledgeable about the flora.

Entering the meadow through a mixed conifer forest, we came upon a vast area of grass (unidentified, strangely enough) surrounded by willows, aspens and conifer forest. We proceeded toward the distant center where there was open water, the ground becoming progressively muddier and spongier due to the presence of the water-saturated moss, *Sphagnum squarrosum*, which ultimately would be several feet deep beneath our feet. We saw a great amount of the uncommon buckbean, *Menyanthes trifoliata*. Marsh cinquefoil,



Menyanthes trifoliata, buckbean.

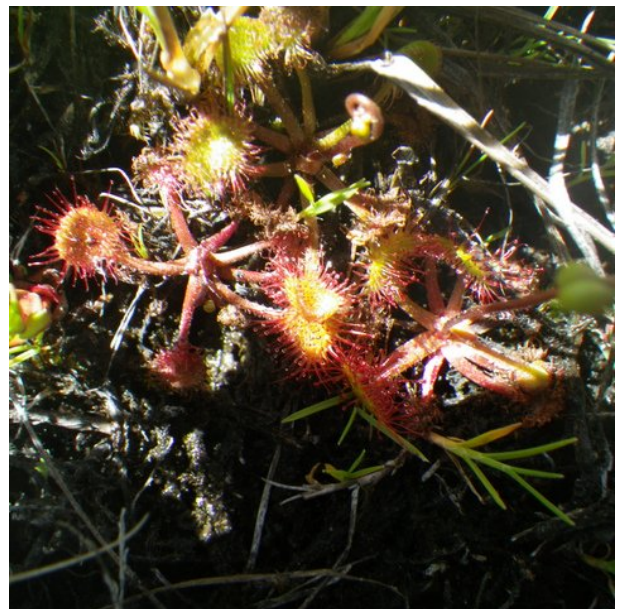


Potentilla palustris, Marsh cinquefoil.

As we progressed, the ground became spongier and we were wading in many places, though it was possible to momentarily stand on hummocks of grass or blueberries. Because walking while sinking at every step is wearing, a break was decided upon. We nipped into the woods at the far side of the bog and immediately were in a very different habitat, there being various distinct plant communities associated with the bog. Here grew side bells, *Orthilia secunda*, its wintergreen relative, *Pyrola minor*, the orchid *Platanthera sparsiflora*, Labrador tea, *Rhododendron glandulosum*, bishop's cap, *Mitella breweri*, and numerous violet asters, *Erigeron alpinum*.

Leaving the woods to resume slogging, we arrived near the open water. Here we all came as close as we probably ever will to walking on water. Those who didn't come missed something unique and fun as the sensation is fascinating and a little unsettling. With every step into sponginess, everything for several feet around quivers. Beneath is moss and soupy muck, to a depth of 7 or 8 feet.

Potentilla palustris, with showy red calyxes was plentiful as was yellow *Mimulus primuloides* and the sedge, *Carex limosa*. Finally we came to little carpets of the round-leaved green and reddish sundew, *Drosera rotundifolia* the carnivorous plant that many were eager to see. *Drosera* traps prey when it lands on a leaf's sticky red stalked glands, then the leaf slowly rolls up to encompass and consume it. Happily not caught by carnivorous sundews were many little green and brown frogs which leapt about and can change color to match their surroundings in a few hours. Many damsel flies, tule bluets, *Enallagma carunculatum*, flitted about as did various cheerful birds. Tiny mushrooms grew on the bog and the general impression was of teeming life prospering in the sun and water.



Drosera rotundifolia, round leaf sundew.

Adjacent to the open water was a dazzling display of cotton grass, *Eriophorum gracile*, actually a sedge, which looked like a carpet of snow as we approached. We had seen the cotton-like little seed heads on our way, but not in impressive profusion. Yellow water lilies, *Nuphar luteum*, grew in the open water, relatively large and very interesting at close range. Blooming here was the buckbean which has quite attractive with hairy white flowers, something not obvious when seen at a distance. Flitting about was the mountain emerald dragonfly, *Somatochlora semicircularis*, with lovely diaphanous wings, and beneath the surface lurked bladderwort, *Utricularia* sp., another carnivorous aquatic plant which has small oval bladders that entrap passing victims when tiny hairs at the opening end are triggered.

Hiking back to the car yet another plant community was seen. It contained many plants common to shady areas not seen on the other side of the bog. On the drier upper slope toward the road, there were showy patches of mule's ears and other plants that prefer drier places. It seems one could move from place to place near Grass Lake and see multitudes of plants in varying habitats.

Last visited on a NNPS field trip in August 2002, this was a most satisfying outing and well worth repeating. Thanks to Tom for thinking of it and arranging it, Will for explaining insects at close range, and Shellie Perry from the El Dorado plant society for helping with plant identification.*



Eriophorum gracile, cotton grass.



Utricularia sp., bladderwort.

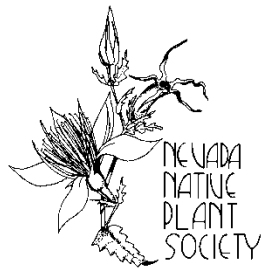
THE BOG

Standing water
 Flowing water
 Grasses growing
 Willows winding
 A liquid jewel among the trees
 Snakes swimming
 Dragonflies dancing
 Frogs flipping
 Birds bathing
 A place of nature's wonders
 Ocean of flowers
 Sea of leaves
 Torrents of flies
 Waves of beetles
 A sight of sheer abundance

By Tom Schuster

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