



NORTHERN NEVADA

See NVNPS.org for updated meeting details.

AMERICAN PENSTEMON SOC.

July 10-13 – The Penstemon Society's annual meeting in Chico, California, includes field trips to the Feather River, Lassen Peak, and the Weaver Bally Lookout. Registration limited to APS members. For more information go to apsdev.org.

ERIOGONUM SOCIETY

July 24-27 – NNPS is co-sponsoring the annual meeting of the Eriogonum Society in July. It is open to NNPS and Eriogonum Society members only.

Details are on the Eriogonum Society website, erigonum.org

SOUTHERN NEVADA

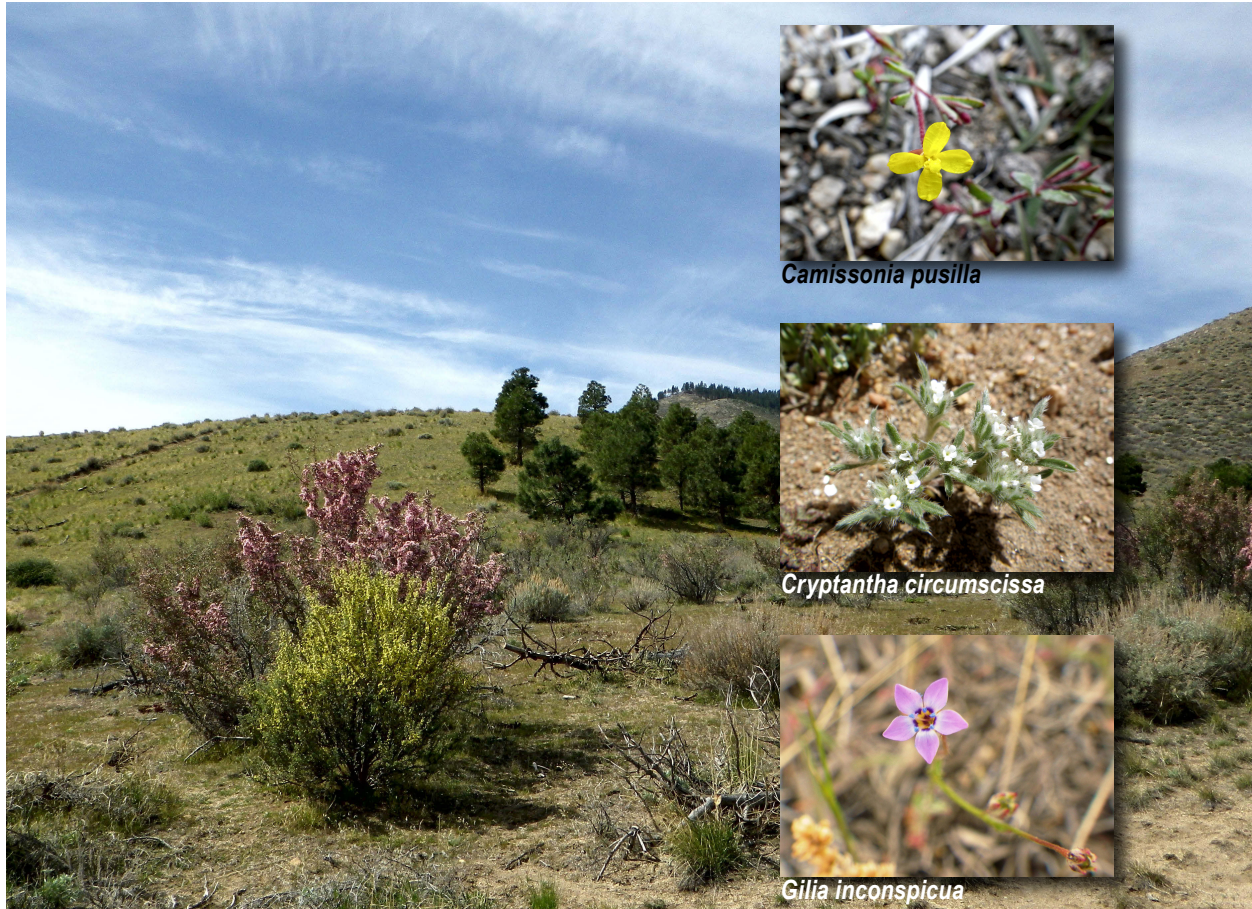
Southern Nevada Meetings are suspended while we search for a new program coordinator. Please contact Cayenne Engel at cpepper3@gmail.com to help organize meetings and get our group out in the field again.

IN SEARCH OF the rare carson valley monkeyflower



Erythranthe carsonensis

On Sunday, April 12th, members of the Nevada Native Plant Society met behind Western Nevada College (WNC) in Carson City to explore the habitat and to conduct a census of the rare Carson Valley monkeyflower (*Erythranthe carsonensis*). Our leader, Janel Johnson, as part of her ongoing professional work monitors the various populations of the Carson Valley monkeyflower in our area. Equipped with cameras and GPS devices (provided by Janel), participants walked the area and documented the location of as many Carson Valley monkeyflower plants as possible.



Carson Valley monkeyflower habitat, northwest Carson City

The Carson Valley monkeyflower is a rare species that inhabits an area surrounding Carson City, Nevada. It is also found at one location in Alpine County, California. Making its home in sagebrush and bitterbrush scrubland, it grows on coarse soils composed of decomposed granite. Carson Valley monkeyflower has a distinctive yellow flower with a large red spot on the lower limb. Its leaves are linear to spatulate. Unfortunately, this pretty little flower is seriously threatened by agriculture, development, and off-road vehicle traffic.

During the Society's census of the slopes behind WNC, we found only a handful of scattered small plants, the most prolific of which had only three flowers. This is a result of the fourth

year in a row of extreme drought in our area. The plants that we saw were much smaller and had fewer flowers than is typical under wetter normal conditions.

Other plants seen include:

- *Balsamorhiza saggitata* "arrowleaf balsamroot"
- *Calochortus bruneaunis* "Bruneau mariposa lily" (not in flower)
- *Camissonia pusilla* "little wiry suncup"
- *Cryptantha circumscissa* "sand cryptantha"
- *Gilia inconspicua* "shy gilia"
- *Mentzelia albicaulis* "whitestem blazingstar"
- *Paeonia brownii* "Brown's peony"
- *Prunus andersonii* "desert peach"
- *Purshia tridentata* "bitterbrush"



Prunus andersonii - desert peach



Purshia tridentata - bitterbrush

Let's hope we get some real moisture next year so that we can return to the site to witness a healthy monkeyflower population and a glorious floral display! Our thanks go to Janel for planning and leading this trip.

by Ray Fletcher

SUMMIT LAKE SURVEY

On April 24th, six volunteers met at the Summit Lake Paiute Tribe's office in Sparks to journey to the Summit Lake Reservation for a plant survey. Five were members of the Nevada Native Plant society: Ray and Rachel Fletcher, Charlie Duncan, John Weiser, and Bonnie Larsen. Joining us was Menemsha

Zotstein, a biology teacher at Truckee Meadows Community College.

The trip was organized by Emily Gibson, the tribe's environmental specialist. Emily, a Southern Paiute, grew up in Washington and is a graduate of Washington State University. Upon arrival in Reno with AmeriCorps, she was not impressed with the area. In time, though, she began to see the charms of Nevada. When the job came up with the Summit Lake Tribe, she applied and soon began her new career: preserving the natural resources of the tribe. The work involves a lot of travel to the reservation, located in Humboldt County, 140 miles north of Reno.

The reservation's 12,157 acres include Summit Lake, a terminal lake fed by small creeks and home to Lahontan cutthroat trout. Before the arrival of Europeans, the tribe, currently 120 members, once controlled a much larger area extending north into what is now Oregon and west into what would become California. From 1867 until 1871, a military installation known as Camp McGarry occupied tribal land. When the camp was abandoned, the land passed from the military to the Department of the Interior and, finally, back to the Paiutes when the reservation was established in 1913. Members of the tribe do not, for the most part, live on the reservation, but visit to engage in traditional activities.

The tribe requested the survey in preparation for construction of a new road to access the reservation. It will replace an existing road that is rocky, steep, badly eroded, and requires 4-wheel-drive vehicle to navigate it.

The area of the survey is on Bureau of Land Management property from which the tribe hopes to excavate gravel for the



Summit Lake

new road. Meeting at the tribe's Sparks office, we were introduced to the tribe's director, William Cowan. Following a short briefing by Emily, our group proceeded to Gerlach via Fernley. Along the way, we enjoyed views of mist- and cloud-shrouded mountains and the Black Rock Desert. Soon after a Gerlach rest stop, we left the paved road and headed down Soldiers Meadow Road. We could not take the flat playa road because of recent rain, and I was expecting to be bounced around a lot. Happily, Soldiers Meadow Road is pretty good and Emily very practiced at dodging chuckholes, though there were a few surprises due to the recent rains.

Though the trip description suggested primitive accommodations, we were surprised and happy to find we would be housed in a modern mobile home with electricity, appliances, and indoor plumbing. No outhouse trips in the deteriorating weather! By the time we arrived around five in the evening, it was cold and getting colder. The prediction was for rain early the next morning, but the cold hinted at something else.

The next morning we awakened to snow on the ground. Would we see any plants at all? We soon were joined by Renee Aldrich of the Pine Forest Ranch, a lady who doesn't mind camping in the



Eriogonum caespitosum - matted wild buckwheat



E. ovalifolium var. *ovalifolium* - cushion wild buckwheat



Members of NNPS near the shore of Summit Lake

snow. Lounging about, waiting for the sun to shine did not result in improved conditions, so we departed for the survey site. We hoped going downhill to the site would get us below the snow line - it did!

While we thought we would be looking for several sensitive plants, it developed that we were doing a general survey. This was good for a couple of reasons, one being that if there were any sensitive plants, they were not blooming and therefore could not be positively identified in the field. Unidentified plants of a sensitive plant genus will have their DNA checked by the BLM. These were few, so if we hadn't been doing a general survey, we would have done very little.

As it was, we proceeded to hike around the flagged area. Rachel and Bonnie filled pages of narrowly lined

paper while Charlie, Ray, and John told them what to write.

The sun eventually made a brief appearance but nobody was giving up their parka. All day, moments of tolerable weather were interspersed with blasts of cold wind from the surrounding mountains which brought face-stinging little pellets of "corn snow" or hail.

We covered the flagged area by lunchtime and were happy to return to the mobile home to have lunch and warm up. Thereafter we received a very nice tour of the reservation, seeing remnants of military buildings, checking out the lake, the creeks, and seeing different plants than on the surveyed site. We also visited the fish facility, which is capable of isolating fish traveling in the creek so that biologists can net and monitor them. If considered large enough and healthy



Ionactis alpina (*Aster scopulorum*) - lava aster



Oncorhynchus clarkii henshawi - Lahontan cutthroat trout

enough, the fish are tagged with RFID chips, weighed, and released. When the tagged fish subsequently pass through the facility, their presence is recorded. The fish we saw looked very beautiful and healthy and inspired inappropriate carnivorous thoughts.

Sunday morning found us cleaning up the mobile home to leave it as we found it, then heading home with various stops to check out the flora. So, what about the flora?

The majority of the plants seen were ones we have seen around Reno or on trips to nearby areas of the desert. Near Fernley we saw an amazing number of white evening primroses, *Oenothera caespitosa*. A slope on the reservation was covered in sand lilies, *Leucocrinum montanum*. Eriogonum fanciers were delighted to find an unknown-to-them annual buckwheat. Most cheerful, and blooming in great numbers, was the bright yellow balsam root, *Balsamorhiza hookeri*.

Arriving back in Sparks, Emily took the dust-covered tribal car off to the car wash and the rest of us went home, having had an unusual, enjoyable, and interesting weekend. We thank Emily and the Summit Lake Tribe for the opportunity to visit this exceptional place and be helpful by doing what we all like to do: look at plants.

by Bonnie Larsen

DOWN AND UP SLAUGHTERHOUSE CANYON

On June 6th, nine plant lovers gathered with leader Gary Monroe for the

outing to Slaughterhouse Canyon and Prey Meadows. Right off, one trip leader was lost to a misunderstanding about the meeting place and a subsequent failure to connect by cell phone.

Despite a late departure from Carson City, we arrived at our destination in good time and quickly found parking places in the desired location. After a minor medical emergency and starting down the trail in a steeply undesirable place, we were on our way down, really down, Slaughterhouse Canyon on quite a good dirt road.

Along the road, in an area dominated by Jeffrey pines, *Pinus jeffreyi*, we saw numerous shrubs. Wild lilacs, *Ceanothus velutinus* and *C. cordulatus*, displayed white flowers and smelled good, too. *Purshia tridentata*, antelope bitterbrush, was a little past bloom though some plants still had good flowers. Two currants, *Ribes nevadense* and *R. cereum*, had pink and white flowers, respectively.

The first wildflower spotted on the trail was puffy pink *Cistanthe monosperma*, one-seed pussypaws. Very small flowers were observed on *Madia minima*, least tarweed (yellow), *Cryptantha affinis* (white), and the airy stems of the buckwheat, *Eriogonum wrightii* ssp. *subscaposum*. Eye-catching on the dry roadbank were *Asclepias cordata*, a milkweed with beautiful purplish foliage and *Penstemon speciosa* in vibrant blue. Among the pines, *Ranunculus occidentalis* (Western buttercup) was cheerful with its five-petaled yellow flowers, as were the much larger sunflowers, *Balsamorhiza saggitata*, balsam root, and *Wyethia mollis*, mule's ear. The yellow pea flowers of ground-hugging *Lotus nevadense* were



Asclepias cordata - milkweed



Penstemon speciosa - showy penstemon

seen in several places and *Maianthemum stellata*, false Solomon's seal, occupied a large patch - its little white flowers in terminal racemes. The many plants of *Erysium capitatum*, wallflower, displayed perfect, startling yellow flowers.

Drawing the most attention was parasitic *Sarcodes sanguinea*, the snow plant, in total gorgeous red. Several people commented that they'd never seen so many snow plants. Indeed, the display truly was exceptional with eighteen being counted in one clump and many more nearby. An additional treat was seeing *Pterospora andromedea*, pinedrops, just emerging - strange, yellowish, and reminiscent of the tops of paintbrushes.

In time, averaging at least a speedy mile-an-hour, we reached Prey Meadows. By now it had clouded over and thunderstorms were a possibility. We ate lunch in a pre-disastered area, there being a good amount of burnt wood from an old lightning strike. There was a nice view of the meadow, which was pretty dry for a meadow in spring. Nevertheless we saw blooming the blue *Penstemon rydbergii*; yellow *Potentilla gracilis*, cinquefoil; and *Polynonum bistortioides*, called bistort or dirty socks. Also seen

were *Aquilegia Formosa*, columbine; *Dodecatheon jeffreii*, shooting stars; and the little white star-like flowers of *Stellaria longipes*, unsurprisingly called starworts. A few of us, leaving early, proceeded back up the road, which Gary says has gotten longer and steeper since he was on it ten years ago. As we neared the top there was a big clap of thunder.

Departing, we wondered if our recent companions would be rained on. It is reported that they weren't, only a little disappointing - because of the drought, of course. Thanks to Gary for this good outing.

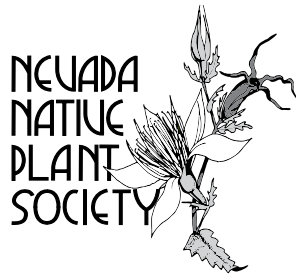
by Bonnie Larsen



Sarcodes sanguinea - snow plant

Nevada Native Plant Society
PO Box 8965
Reno NV 89507-8965

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name_____

Phone_____

Mailing Address_____

City_____ State_____ Zip_____

Email_____ ☐ Renewal

Newsletter preference: ☐ Paper ☐ Electronic

- Individual, family or group for one year \$15.00
- Individual, family or group for three years \$40.00
- Student or senior citizen, each year \$10.00
- Life membership \$450.00

Dues are for the calendar year in which you join. Membership expiration dates are on the mailing labels. 2016 dues increase will take effect in November.

Gifts, and bequests are tax deductible.

Your donation in any amount is appreciated \$_____

Please make checks payable and mail to: NNPS • P.O. Box 8965 • Reno, NV 89507