



Claytonia umbellata - John P. Weiser

NORTHERN NEVADA NEWS

Events subject to change. Visit nvnps.org for updates.

May 5 – Picnic at the Pollinator Garden at UNR. 5:30 PM. Bring a hand lens, folding chair or lawn blanket, finger food to share, and your own beverage.

Meet in the pollinator garden behind the Fleischman Ag building at UNR. If you haven't been there before, follow the usual directions to the herbarium, but instead of turning to enter the building, pass through the breezeway and turn right to enter the garden area.

If the weather is unpleasant, we will retreat to the herbarium classroom in room 300G of the **Fleischman Agriculture Building** on the UNR campus, north of 9th Street and Evans Avenue. Park in the lot on the southeast corner of Evans and Record Way.

May 5 – Moana Nursery

Landscape Center, Reno.

NNPS members are invited to attend the May 5th meeting of the **Orchid Society of Northern Nevada** where Curtis Green will present a program on native orchids of the Sierra Nevada. The OSNN meets at the **Moana Nursery Landscape Center**, 1100 W. Moana Lane, Reno at 7 PM. Note that this meeting overlaps with the NNPS picnic at the UNR Herbarium.

May 12 – Wilbur D. May

Museum, Reno. 6:30 PM. Nevada

Bugs and Butterflies and the

UNR Museum of Natural History

sponsor “Getting to Know the Bees in your Backyard” by Dr. Joseph Wilson.

Dr. Wilson is an assistant professor

of biology at Utah State University

and author of the newly published

(and beautiful) book ***The Bees in Your Backyard: A Guide to North***

America’s Bees. Copies of the book will

be for sale and Dr. Wilson will be signing his book following the talk. The Wilbur D.

May Museum is in Rancho San Rafael

Park at 1596 North Sierra St., Reno.

Visit nevadabugs.org for details.

May 14 – Schurz. Search for

Grusonia pulchella south of Fallon

near Schurz. The majority of this

cactus’s range is through central

Nevada. Contact Charlene Duncan at

cirsium.down@gmail.com or

(775) 530-7458.

May 21 - Fernley. Search for *Penstemon*

arenarius, an endemic found only

in Nevada. We will be traveling to

the sagebrush steppe northeast of

Fernley and travel on backroads toward

the south. Contact Gary Monroe at

g.monroe@att.net or (775) 359-4863.

May 22 – Sparks. 10 AM-3 PM.

Open house at the John Weiser’s

dry-land native garden, located at

485 O’Brien Way, Sparks. Contact

johnpweiser@yahoo.com or

(775) 331-4485.

May 26 – Red Hill, Reno. 5:30 PM.

A short mid-week trip to Red Hill

to see six species of *erigonum*

in bloom on the slopes of altered

andesite. The destination is on the

west end of Dandini Road in north

Reno and detailed directions are here:

<https://goo.gl/maps/veoyMSzMWx22>.

We will meet in the gravel parking

lot just northeast of the roundabout.

We will be walking on steep, rocky

slopes and narrow trails. Please wear

sturdy shoes. Contact Rose Strickland

at rosenreno@sbcglobal.net or

(775) 329-6118 or Dennis Ghiglieri at

dnnevada@sbcglobal.net.

May 29 – Silver Springs. A trip to

Churchill Narrows to see *Eriogonum*

diatomaceum, a rare endemic restricted

to the diatomaceous deposits in

this area of Lyon County. Contact

Gary Monroe at g.monroe@att.net

or (775) 359-4863 or John Weiser at

johnpweiser@yahoo.com or

(775) 331-4485.

May 30 – Beckwourth, CA. The annual

Memorial Day foray with Bill and

Nancy Harnach. Explore the edges of

the Feather River in Plumas County,

California as it passes through Sierra

Valley. Conducted for the local public,

this will not be a typical NNPS field

trip. We will meet the group under the

bridge at the intersection of Highway 70 and Co. Rd. A23 and be on-site by 10 AM. Those traveling from the Carson area should meet at the **Save Mart** at the corner of College and Carson Street in Carson City at 7:50 AM to carpool. The group leaves for the **McDonald's restaurant** located at 120 Lemon Drive in north Reno by 8 AM. Those coming from Reno will meet at the same **McDonald's** at 9 AM.

We will leave the second meeting point at 9:15 AM traveling north on US 395 to Highway 70 (Quincy turnoff). Just past the town of Beckwourth is the Calpine turnoff (Co. Rd. A23). Turn left, cross over the bridge and promptly turn left at the end of the bridge, traveling downhill into the parking lot.

Contact Bill Harnach at billh@digitalpath.net or (530) 944-3464 or John Weiser at johnpweiser@yahoo.com or (775) 331-4485.

June 4 – Reno. 8 AM - 12 PM.
May Arboretum Society plant sale.

June 5 – Plumas County, CA. A trip to see the vernal pool areas of Sierra Valley. This will be a joint field trip in conjunction with the **California Native Plant Society**. The leader for this trip will be Bill Harnach. Details of the meeting place and time have yet to be determined. Contact Bill Harnach at billh@digitalpath.net or (530) 944-3464 or John Weiser at johnpweiser@yahoo.com or (775) 331-4485.

June 10-12 – Wildhorse. An overnight trip to **Sunflower Flat** in Elko County. Contact Janel Johnson at president@nvnp.org.

June 19 – Peavine Mountain, Reno. A trip to the base of Peavine Mountain to see the only known population of *Lilium kelleyanum* in Nevada. Contact Gary Monroe at g.monroe@att.net or (775) 359-4863.

June 23-27 – Fairmont, MT. Annual **American Penstemon Society** meeting.

July 2 – Peavine Mountain, Reno. A journey to the summit of Peavine Mountain to see *Phlox condensata* and numerous other flowers in bloom.

July 24 – Reno. BioBlitz at Idlewild Park, organized by the **Truckee Meadows Parks Foundation**.

August 13-14 or August 20-21 – Truckee, CA. A trip to Castle Peak to find *Lewisia longipetala*.

August 27 – Tahoe City, CA. Travel to Barker Pass southwest of Tahoe City to see *Epilobium canum* ssp. *Latifolium* and *Gentiana calycosa*.

September 15-19 – Baker, CA. The **Eriogonum Society** annual meeting.

SOUTHERN NEVADA NEWS

Southern Nevada Meetings are held in Henderson the first Monday of every month from 6:30-7:30 PM at the U.S. Geological Survey office at 160 North Stephanie Street.

If you would like email updates for southern Nevada events, please email Cayenne Engel at cpepper3@gmail.com and ask to be added to the list.

SPRINGBEAUTY ON PEAVINE SUMMIT

The clouds hung low over the summit of Peavine in northern Reno as we scrutinized the target of our trip. The peak had a dusting of snow and we hoped the wind wouldn't be too strong at the top. Our plan for Saturday, April 23rd, involved ascending Peavine Mountain hoping to find the pretty Great Basin springbeauty (*Claytonia umbellata*) in bloom.

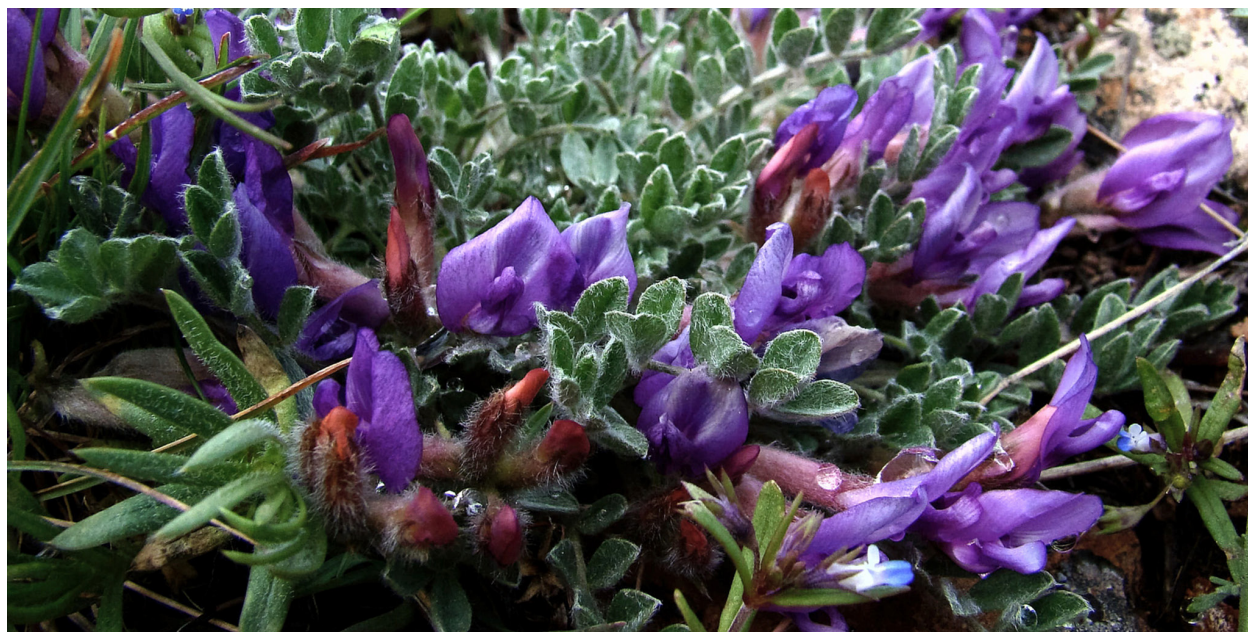
A cold breeze was blowing as we stuffed ourselves into Gary Monroe's Subaru and headed out. The lower section of Peavine Road was somewhat rough and rutted but easily passable. We made our first stop midway up the mountain at the intersection with Hopi Lane. While ambling up the slopes to the east of the intersection, we discovered many plants already in bloom or budding out. *Allium parvum*, *Astragalus purshii* var. *tinctus*, *Lupinus nevadensis*, *Balsamorhiza sagittata*, and *Wyethia mollis* were noted. Other denizens of the sage brush community were in the midst of their vernal growth spurts including

sprays of *Toxicoscordion venenosum*, gray mats of *Eriogonum ochrocephalum*, and the succulent rosettes of *Lewisia rediviva* var. *minor*.

As we drove ever higher, white patches of *Phlox diffusa*, *Phlox stansburyi* and lavender and pink carpets of *Ceanothus prostratus* were seen spilling out from under the stands of curl leaf mountain mahogany (*Cercocarpus ledifolius*). Time for a quick photo stop!

We disembarked again at the lower saddle near the summit. Buttoning our coats against the light breeze while the sun was played hide-and-seek, we noted that the dusting of snow was starting to vanish. The stands of mountain mahogany, bedecked in feathery ice crystals, were aglow. All in all, not a bad spring day at 8,000 feet in April.

After gathering equipment, we proceeded north across the talus slopes, heads bowed, scanning for reddish brown leaves of *Claytonia umbellata* peeking out of the crevasses. A short walk and we



Astragalus purshii var. *tinctus*



Cercocarpus ledifolius

were seeing it all around. Unfortunately, the blossoms were tightly closed due to the lack of sun that day. On Peavine, this tiny claytonia grows in the veins of loose fractured basalt that lace their way through the more stabilized formations close to the summit.

Rarely encountered in its high elevation habitats, *Claytonia umbellata* (aka the Great Basin springbeauty), can be found on many of the drier mountain ranges across southern Oregon to the eastern Sierras of California and eastern Great Basin ranges of Nevada. These tiny succulent plants sprout from small tubers $\frac{1}{2}$ to two inches in diameter which are found nestling on the soil four to six inches below the rubble. After threading their way up through the coarse stone,

the elliptical leaf blades, measuring about $\frac{1}{2}$ to one inch across, lie flat against the chunks of talus. Their color can be reddish brown to green, making them hard to spot against the brown shades of the local basalt stones. The flowering season starts very early just as snow recedes. The dainty little flowers measure $\frac{1}{4}$ to $\frac{1}{2}$ inch across and locally are white with pink highlights but in other populations pinks though magenta are common. They set seed quickly and go into dormancy by mid May to early June, so, should you want to see them in bloom, head to the top of Peavine on the next sunny day.

A few other plants were starting to flower at the summit. *Phlox condensata* with a smattering of white and *Astragalus purshii* var. *tinctus* in rich blues and purples were just breaking bud. After this invigorating stroll, most of the participants were ready for the cozy interior of the car. As we headed back down the road we passed the carpets of *Ceanothus prostratus* we had seen earlier, I noticed several patches of yellow glowing in the shade of the mountain mahogany. After a short scramble up the bank we found that the short patches of yellow were the annual wallflower *Erysimum repandum* (an introduced species). On closer examination of the area we discovered



Claytonia umbellata



Claytonia perfoliata

miner's lettuce (*Claytonia perfoliata*) and blue-eyed Mary (*Collinsia parviflora*) in the richer humus soil accumulations beneath the shrubs. On the bare bank we found a plant with thick glabrous leaf blades, spatulate shaped, the margins with shallow teeth on the end, purple



Collinsia parviflora

with a glaucous sheen. Turns out this is the new spring growth of heart-leaved jewelflower (*Streptanthus cordatus*). After this last stop, it was all downhill to our parked cars, brief goodbyes and homeward bound.

Story and photos by John P. Weiser



Erysimum repandum

BOTANIZING NOTEBOOK: LINANTHUS BIGELOVII FOUND & LOST

2005 was an incredible spring. I was knee deep in wildflowers everywhere I went, surrounded by spectacular displays composed of an impressively diverse number of species. My favorites from that spring were *Calochortus kennedyi* var. *munzii* in Esmeralda County, fields of *Mentzelia nitens* var. *nitens* in Mineral County, and *Eucrypta micrantha* - the name means “small-flowered,” but it was abundant in pinyon and juniper stands.

The one big failure I had that summer was Bigelow’s linanthus (*Linanthus bigelovii*), a slender, six to eight inch tall annual with white, phlox-like flowers. I was doing a rare plant survey south of Dayton. After many miles of transects we were nearly finished when we came upon a small patch of *L. bigelovii*. The flowers were closed so I was reluctant to collect it. I decided to mark the spot and return early in the morning in hopes of getting it in full flower (I have since learned that it is best to collect it just at dark after the flowers have opened). Turning on my GPS, I took a waypoint.

The next morning I got up at 0’dark thirty, drove back to the location, trudged out to the general area, and fired up my GPS. I soon realized the recorded waypoint was nowhere near where I wanted to be. I had not waited long enough for the GPS unit to acquire satellites before I saved the waypoint and the unit defaulted to its last known location - about a mile away, near where we had parked the cars.

I had found the plant once - surely I could find it again. I spent over two hours searching for the patch to no avail. What still gets me about this is that when we first found it we were on a rare plant survey – we had flagging with us! We could have just flagged a bush and I could have easily walked right back to the spot. But no! I had to try the modern way of marking things and I totally botched it. Jan Nachlinger and I went back a few years ago in hopes of finding *L. bigelovii* but it was a dry spring and we did not find any sign of it.

I have records of *L. bigelovii* in Nevada from Clark, Lincoln, and Nye counties. It also is in California’s White Mountains in Inyo and Mono counties. The Dayton location is well north of the known distribution and I knew this when I found it in 2005, hence the frustration.

A few weeks ago I was working through the Polemoniaceae at the New York Botanical Garden and came across an old manila folder marked *Gilia bigelovii* (*Linanthus bigelovii* was originally described as a *gilia*). Inside was one specimen labeled: *Truckee Pass, May 1868, S. Watson 905*. WOW! A specimen to prove that *L. bigelovii* does get to west-central Nevada. Jan and I also plan to try to find the Dayton population again. This is a decent spring so we will head out there and see if I can redeem myself. Stay tuned!

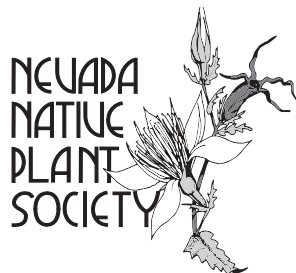


Linanthus bigelovii

Story by Arnold Tiehm
Photo courtesy of Jim Andre

Nevada Native Plant Society
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