

VOLUME 45 NUMBER 4 - AUGUST 2019

# NEVADA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

*Castilleja chromosa*

Photo by J. Johnson

## SOCIETY NEWS

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### NORTHERN NEVADA EVENTS

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**October 3 – Jeanne Sharp Howerton**, author, historian, 4<sup>th</sup> generation Nevadan, and educator presents, “The Astonishing Backstory Behind the Discovery and Naming of *Primula nevadensis*, the Nevada Primrose.”

**Meetings are held in room 300G** of the Fleischmann Agriculture Building on the UNR campus, north of 9<sup>th</sup> Street and Evans Avenue. Enter the building under the breezeway on the west side near the street. There’s an elevator at the east end of the building. Meet on the third floor and down the hall from the **UNR herbarium**.

**Social time at 7:00 PM**; program at 7:30. The outside doors are locked at 7:30.

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### SOUTHERN NEVADA EVENTS

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**August – Summer Break.** No meetings scheduled. Enjoy the summer and keep an eye out for our fall program beginning in September.

Our program coordinator is Lesley DeFalco. Contact her at [defalco@usgs.gov](mailto:defalco@usgs.gov) to receive email updates for Southern Nevada events.

**Events subject to change.**  
**Visit [nvnps.org](http://nvnps.org) for updates.**

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## CARSON CITY iNATURALIST HIKE

**O**n **August 24 from 9:00 AM to noon**, join the Carson City Parks, Rec & Open Space Department and the Greenhouse Project for a free interactive educational hike in Rose Canyon. Participants will be encouraged to use the **iNaturalist** app and instructions will be provided. Download the

app to your smartphone in advance. Meet at the **Foothill Garden** located behind the Carson-Tahoe Cancer Center at 1535 Medical Parkway. **Online registration** is appreciated. More details at: [carson.org/Home/Components/Calendar/Event/10315](http://carson.org/Home/Components/Calendar/Event/10315)



*Eriogonum ovalifolium* var. *purpureum*



## A WHIRLWIND BUCKWHEAT TOUR OF CENTRAL NEVADA

Story and photos by Janel Johnson

In June the **Eriogonum Society** met in Beaver, Utah, and I was asked to teach the identification workshop because our usual instructor, Ben Grady, couldn't attend. Since I was driving to Utah anyway, I decided to make a few side trips to gather as many interesting buckwheats as possible along the way. Having lots of live specimens gives the class plenty of plants to practice keying and provides examples of different characteristics such as leaf shapes, hair types, and branching structures.

Before I left, a coworker and I made a quick trip up to Red Hill and Peavine Mountain in Reno. At Red Hill we collected *Eriogonum umbellatum nevadense*, *E. strictum*, *E. sphaerocephalum*, *E. ochrocephalum*, *E.*

*robustum*, and a few *E. baileyi* that were just starting to bloom. As we climbed the road up Peavine, we were able to find *E. ovalifolium ovalifolium*, *E. douglasii meridionale*, and *E. rosense*. *Eriogonum nudum*, *E. elatum*, and *E. microthecum* were not yet blooming so we passed them up, since they wouldn't be much use to the class. It's amazing how many buckwheats you can see just driving around for an hour near Reno.

On Wednesday, June 19th, I left Carson City early and headed out Highway 50. The carpets of *Malcothrix glabrata* (desert dandelion) and *Oenothera deltoidea* (evening primrose) I had seen just a few weeks earlier were long gone but the *Cleome lutea* (yellow bee plant) was in full bloom. I stopped near



Middlegate to search for *E. rubricaula* but I was unable to locate any plants. Near New Pass Spring the white soil outcrops yielded *E. ovalifolium* var. *purpureum* and a host of other wildflowers, but not the *E. beatleyae* I was seeking.

Continuing east, I headed up Highway 305 toward Battle Mountain to collect *E. anemophilum* from a low elevation site. About 10 miles north of Austin I saw a familiar car on the side of the road so I stopped and sure enough, it was my friend Bill Hoyer from California. He was also scouting for buckwheats on his way to the meeting and had already visited the *E. anemophilum* site. He gave me his specimens, which left me enough time to stop for lunch at the **Toiyabe Café** on my way back through Austin.

After Austin, I crossed the **Toiyabe Range** and turned south toward Tonopah. While there are some *E. esmeraldense* var. *toiyabense* near this stretch of highway, they weren't blooming yet. At the south end of Highway 376, I turned east again, this time on Highway 6. Highway 50 is dubbed the

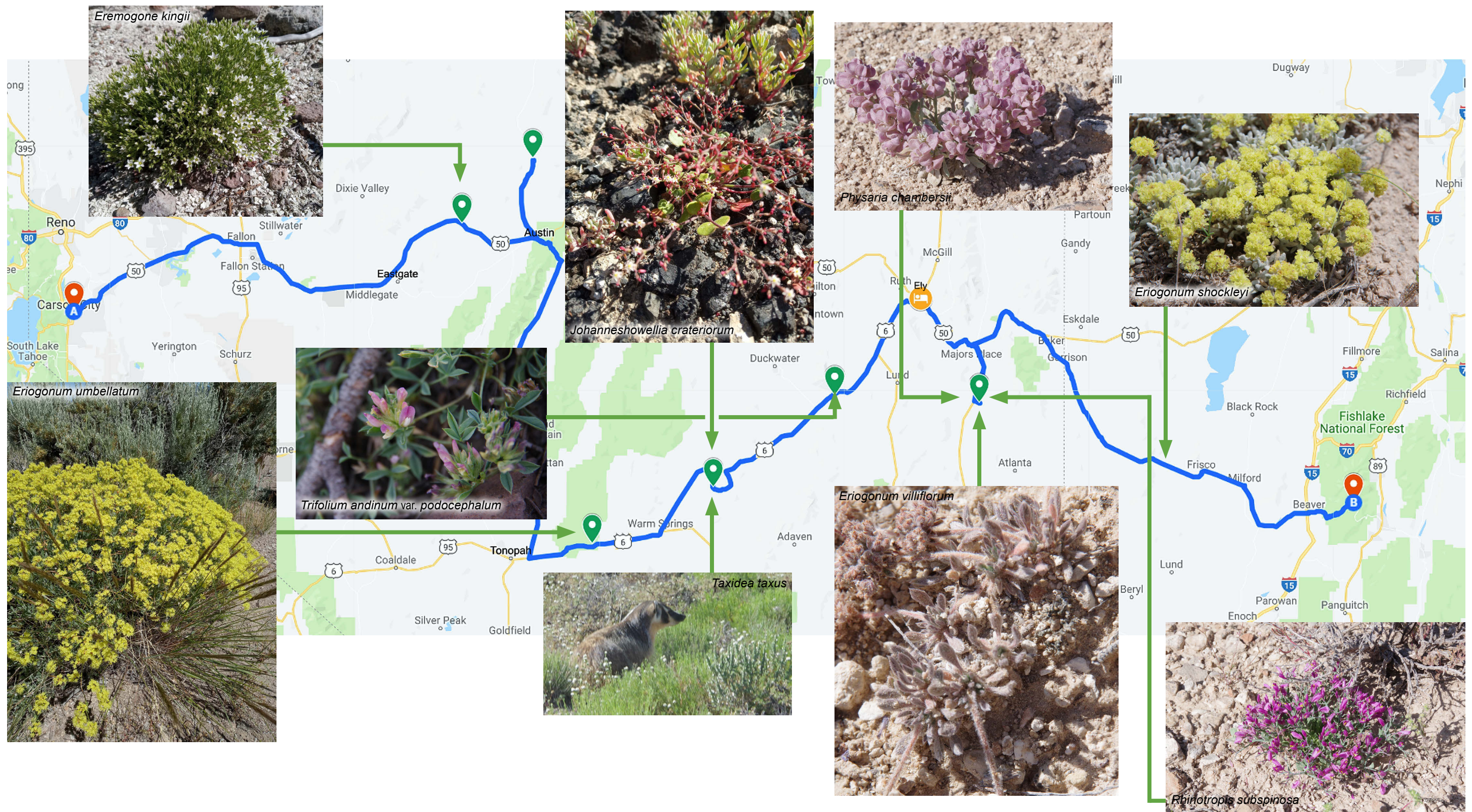
Loneliest Road but this stretch of US 6 is far more desolate. Now that the Blackrock Station is closed, there are no service stations between Ely and Tonopah, just a few scattered ranches, campgrounds, and ghost towns.

Climbing east from Saulsbury Wash, bright yellow shrubs on the roadside caught my eye; I had found *E. umbellatum* var. *vernum* at the northern end of its range. As I passed Warm Springs, more yellow grabbed my attention. The whole southern end of Hot Creek Valley was a sea of *Cleome lutea*.

While I have been past **Lunar Crater National Natural Landmark** several times and seen several craters from the highway, I had never driven down to Lunar Crater itself. Lunar Crater is home to *Johanneshowellia crateriorum*, a tiny annual that looks like a buckwheat but has a slightly different type of involucre. I wanted to add it to the plants for class to see if people noticed the difference. This little plant certainly earns its name because it grows right at the rim of the crater itself, along with *E. pusillum*, a tiny annual with











*Penstemon dolius*

yellow flowers. Farther around the scenic loop I saw two badgers and one stood still long enough for me to take a picture, a first for me.

After a quick stop in a wash in Railroad Valley to collect *E. shockleyi*, I continued to my last stop of the day, Currant Summit. There is a rare clover that grows at Currant Summit, *Trifolium andinum* var. *podocephalum*, and every previous visit had either been too late for flowers or dark, rainy weather so I stopped on the off chance I wasn't too late again. To my delight I found a few patches still had fresh flowers so I was able to get some good photos of the species. The site also had *E. caespitosum*, *E. purpureum*, and *E. umbellatum* var. *versicolor*, all of which were harvested and stuffed in the cooler, which was nearly overflowing with buckwheats.

After a good night's rest and a trip to the store for more plastic bags, I hit the road again. The first stop was down Highway 93



*Calochortus flexuosus*

near the **Fortification Range** where a pale gray clay outcrop hosts a diverse array of plants. I was unable to find *E. darrovii* but did locate two small *E. villiflorum* plants that were too small and mud-plastered to be useful for the class and one *E. microthecum* plant with a handful of open flowers. The site was a natural flower garden with *Penstemon*, *Astragalus*, *Delphinium*, *Rhinotropis*, *Physaria*, *Erigeron*, *Caulanthus*, and more. Sadly, I had no time to wander among the flowers because I needed to be in Beaver by two o'clock.

As I drove across the broad valleys of western Utah, I was on the lookout for more specimens for the class. Crossing the **Wah Wah Mountains**, I spotted a white outcrop with a small dirt track leading up to it and I was certain there would be some sort of buckwheats on it. I was pleased to find large mats of yellow flowered *E. shockleyi*, a good



*Echinocereus engelmannii* ssp. *engelmannii*





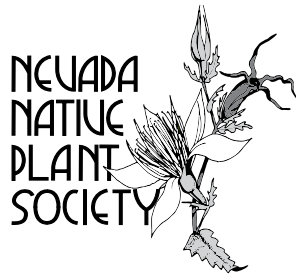
contrast to the white flowered specimens from Nevada.

With all of these specimens plus more brought by the class participants, we had a great class with plenty of new buckwheats to keep everyone busy for the whole afternoon.

On our field trips over Saturday and Sunday we also saw ***E. nutans***, ***E. palmerianum***, *E. villiflorum*, *E. shockleyi*, *E. ovalifolium* var. *purpureum*, *E. microthecum*, and a host of limestone loving wildflowers.

Nevada Native Plant Society  
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Reno NV 89507-8965

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED



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