

NEWSLETTER

Vol. 38, No. 7

SEPTEMBER 2012

NORTHERN NEVADA HAPPENINGS

MEETINGS

SEPTEMBER 6th - Jackee Picciani, local botanical consultant, will present the evening program titled Churchill Narrows Buckwheat: "Discovery" and Subsequent Investigation.

OCTOBER 4th - Dr. Robbin Thorp, Professor Emeritus in the Department of Entomology, University of California, Davis, will discuss his expertise in a talk entitled "Bees: Their diversity and lifestyles" making an argument for their importance to plants and need for conservation.

NOVEMBER 1st - Ann Pinzl, a founding member of NNPS, will give a program on her recent travels to desert regions of southern Africa. Title 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 Matt Hamilton (702) 468-2251 if you have any questions or would like to be added to the notification by email list, mojave0827@aol.com

SEPTEMBER 10th - To be announced.

OCTOBER 1st - Doug Merkler with NRCS will give a presentation on some of his recent projects.

NOVEMBER 5th - Julie Thompson with the Eastern Nevada Landscape Coalition, based in Ely, NV, will present some of their recent projects.

DECEMBER 3rd - Annual holiday potluck and member slide shows!

PURSUING THE PRIMROSE by Bonnie Larsen

Nine people met at Carson Pass on July 28th to attend an outing led by Elizabeth Bergstrom. The ultimate goal of this foray was to see the Sierra primrose, *Primula suffrutescens*. It was rumored that rock fringe, *Epilobium obcordatum*, might be seen as well. Our destination was just past Winemucca lake, about 2 ½ miles from the trailhead.

Participants proceeded from the parking lot at the ranger station, through the wonderful shade of red firs, *Abies magnifica*, and white bark and lodgepole pines, *Pinus albicaulis*, and *P. contorta*. A small pool was passed and then Frog Lake. None of this was noticed as the plan was to hike straight to the primroses and check out other plants of interest on the way back. The lead group, proceeding like mountain goats, sped away from the majority, which pretty much failed to follow the plan and noted the wonderful views of lakes and mountains and quite a few blooming plants along the way. This group was regularly passed by the numerous hikers on the trail.

Up where the trees were sparser, flowers abounded. Even though some people were bemoaning the dry year, plants bloomed so profusely that all can't possibly be mentioned here. On drier banks *Ipomopsis tinutubia* was of particular interest. In varied and generally paler shades than the scarlet gilia, *I. aggregata*, it has a much longer floral tube so that it looks like an extra long trumpet. Interesting to see were the various species of *Castilleja*, paintbrushes, that stole the show with *Castilleja applegatei* and *C. miniata* in various shades of red. Yellowish Copeland's owls clover, *C. copelandii*, and hairy *C. pilosa* added to the variety. The yellow buckwheat, *Eriogonum incanum*, was unique, with pistillate and staminate flowers on separate plants.

In wet meadow gardens, amidst willows, prominent blooming plants included fine-looking ranger's buttons, *Sphenosciadium capitellatum*, the large lupine, *Lupinus polyphyllus*, bright yellow *Arnica sp.*, and little elephant heads, *Pedicularis attolens*. A large stand of tall *Delphinium sp.* was spotted and much yellow-blooming mountain mugwort, *Artemisia norvegica*, an aromatic subshrub.

Passing Winnemucca Lake, the slower contingent found the speedy goat group sitting on rocks eating lunch. Here the Sierra primrose easily was found not far from the trail, as was the rumored rock fringe, both with bright pink flowers and living among somewhat treacherous loose rocks. Fun to see with a hand lens was *Castilleja nana* with its black stigmas. Here also were the fuzzy blooms of the diminutive alpine willow, *Salix arctica*, a fairly large (one inch?) yellow monkey flower *Mimulus tilingii* and a wood rush with delicate branching flower stalks, *Luzula divaricata*.

By this time it was around 3:00 p.m. and time for some to go back down the trail. Some devoted spirits, including our leader, stayed to key less well-known plants. Many thanks to Elizabeth for such an enjoyable outing.*

SWAMPING by Bonnie Larsen

On August 4, thirteen lucky people converged on Osgood Swamp in Eldorado County, California. On this trip, arranged by Tom Shuster, there was diversity of attendees. Besides the expected plant people, there were birders and people associated with the Tahoe Institute for Nature Study, one of whom was our leader Will Richardson.

Walking through a forested area from Highway 50, we soon arrived at Osgood Swamp, which at first sight was somewhat disappointing as it seemed to be mainly a large pond surrounded by mud. Much of it was ringed by dead trees and fallen wood which made circumnavigation all but impossible. It was explained that it was less swampy than originally because previous to it becoming a preserve, there were efforts to turn it into a pasture, a pond, and possibly other things as well.

Since this was a swamp outing, plants in water and mud proved interesting. Floating on the surface were the brownish oval leaves of pondweed, *Potamogeton sp.* There was narrow-leaved bur-reed *Sparganium angustifolium* a sedge with the staminate flowers on the top of the stem and the pistillate flowers below them. Mare's tail, *Hippurus vulgaris*, the only member of its family, Hippuridaceae, in California, has one-inch linear bright green leaves arranged in whorls around the 1 foot stems and would make nice trees in a herbarium. Perhaps most fascinating, was Bladderwort, *Utricularia vulgaris*. Growing in water, its finely divided leaves support little bladders that lie open and close to snap up minute larvae or whatever might be swimming by. Yellow flowers rise above the water to brighten things up.

While the plant people were checking out the ground near the pond, Will was ranging about with a big net. Because of this activity, we were able to see a variety of beautiful dragonflies, and also the exoskeleton of their larvae, fierce predators called water tigers. Will also turned up damselflies and excitingly enough, leeches, slick-looking dark creatures, perhaps an inch long, which had tiny pin-like babies clinging to them. Will said he had warmer feelings toward leeches having discovered their parenting habits.

After losing and finding part of the group and having lunch, we proceeded to the other side of the pond where we saw and felt sphagnum moss, which is known for its water-holding capacity and can form bogs, but not much of one here due to human activity. It was somewhat hard-going to the moss site because of the fallen debris, brush, mud and prolific plant life. We were warned by one of our botanists to watch for hazardous water-filled holes, and she soon demonstrated the danger of these by disappearing into one which was about thigh deep, startling our president, Janel who was right behind her. Luckily Cheryl was only wet, not injured, and all proceeded more cautiously about the area. Besides the sphagnum moss, there were plants too numerous to mention at this site and in other areas about the pond. A noticeable shrub was *Spiraea splendens*. Particularly nice monkshood, *Aconitum columbianum*, ranged in color from white to blue. Also noted were orange and spotted *Lilium parvum*, red-flowered marsh cinquefoil, *Potentilla palustris*, and cowbane, *Oxypolis occidentalis*, one of which was mistakenly dug up to show the edible roots of yampa (alas).

Despite a few glitches, this was a fine time, and we thank all those who helped make it so.*

NEW EVENT - POTLUCK PICNIC AT MORMON STATION, GENOA, ON SEPTEMBER 15TH

In appreciation for our volunteers' work on the flower beds at Mormon Station, the park supervisor has offered us the use of the park's large picnic pavilion on September 15th from noon to 3pm. Please bring photos, stories, seeds, and snacks to share. Contact Janel for more information, president@nvnp.org or 684-2911.

FLORA ID NORTHWEST REVIEW AND NNPS ONLINE STORE OFFERING

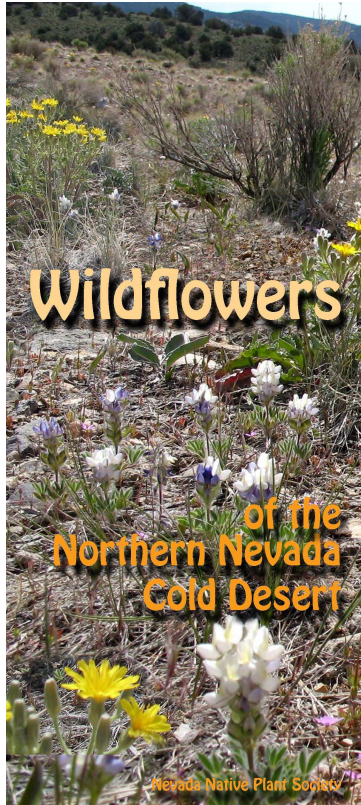
Bruce Barnes, a NNPS member from Oregon, has been developing electronic plant keys for most of the western states and provinces for the past 17 years. His keys are based on a database system that stores information about species attributes in many categories, such as plant height, flower color, leaf shape, and more. The software allows the user to select any attribute they want in any order, as opposed to traditional keys that offer a series of choices in a set order. For instance, if you have flowers and leaves but no fruit you can enter the information you have available instead of getting stuck on the second couplet in a key that wants to know the shape of the fruit. The software also allows the selection of multiple options for a attribute if you are unsure which one to choose. Not sure if the flower would be called blue or purple? You can select both options. Many of the attributes, such as leaf shape, also include drawings of each option.

The result of making selections is a smaller and smaller list of plants to choose from. An analyze function will return the list of attributes most likely to help you choose between species. When you have entered everything you can observe and still have more than one plant in the list you can click on each species to view the description and photos. There are photos of 99% of the plant species in the database, though some are scanned herbarium specimens and a little harder to compare to live plants. The biggest limitation of the software is that it keys only to species. While there are often short descriptions of some varieties in the species description, users who need to key out varieties in the field, particularly rare varieties, will still need to carry the Intermountain Flora or other appropriate key.

The family and genus taxonomy has been updated to be consistent with the work of the Angiosperm Phylogeny Group (APG) and the California flora is consistent with the new Jepson Manual. Bruce offers updates and technical assistance for all of his software. Read an article about the software from the native Plant Society of British Columbia here: http://npsbc.org/Flora_ID_Northwest.pdf.

We are now offering several of Bruce's plant keys in our online store including Nevada, California, the Great Basin, and the Southwestern US. Members can receive a discounted price but must be logged in for the discounted price to apply. Part of the proceeds will go to the general NNPS fund, which pays for programs, grants, and general operating costs.

**NEW PUBLICATION NOW AVAILABLE
WILDFLOWERS OF THE NORTHERN NEVADA COLD DESERT**



After years of collecting photos, writing descriptions and trying to get it together, the plant society's booklet, *Wildflowers of the Nevada Cold Desert* has been published and is now available. This book was written for the person with a beginning interest in wildflowers, and designed to be easy to use. Color photos of the flowers are arranged by color, and the booklet shows only the most common wildflowers of the local area. Thus one is not faced with a book of several hundred pages and the problem of eliminating flowers not found here. Information about the Great Basin, some common non-native plants, a glossary and other features are included.

The booklet may be purchased at Reno area society meetings and events. It also is available at Sundance Books in Reno, Greenhouse Garden Center in Carson City, and Woodfords Station south of Gardnerville. It would make a great gift for someone who is beginning to take an interest in native plants.

**LOOKING FOR VOLUNTEERS TO SHIP BOOKS
an appeal from the President**

Our online store currently offers only a few items because we lack volunteers to fill orders for different kinds of items. I would like to offer our new NW Nevada Wildflower books online but my travel schedule for work means I'm often not around to fill orders in a timely manner. A volunteer (or better yet, volunteers) would need to commit an hour or two **one day per week** to fill envelopes, print receipts and mailing labels, and drop them off at the post office. We do not expect our volunteers to go running to the post office every day and we state that clearly on the ordering pages. The volunteer(s) would need to have the following: a safe, dry place to store the books, a printer (any type, color not necessary), an email account, and internet access. NNPS will provide envelopes, paper, postage, and any other necessary supplies. No website design necessary, I will take care of the website end of things. Contact Janel for more information, president@nvnp.org or 684-2911.

WELCOME NEW MEMBER

Carol Hummel, Minden, NV.

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 Dues are for the calendar
- Individual, family or group for three years ..\$40.00 year in which you join.
- Student or senior citizen, each year\$10.00 Membership expiration dates
- Life membership\$450.00 are on the mailing labels.

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