



NEWSLETTER

Vol. 38, No. 4

MAY 2012

NORTHERN NEVADA HAPPENINGS

MEETINGS

MAY 3rd - Carol and Howard Thomas, past President and past Vice President of NNPS, respectively, will graciously host members at their home and garden in Verdi. They've emphasized native plants including *Penstemon* and *Eriogonum* species, cold hardy cacti, alpine rock garden species, and they also have a vegetable garden. Please email them at plantweaver@sbcglobal.net or call 775-345-0161 for directions. Be there at 6 pm with a potluck dish and beverages to share for a fun evening.

FIELD TRIPS

MAY 12th - Silver Saddle Ranch/Prison Hill on the eastern outskirts of Carson City. Take 5th street east from downtown to Carson River Road (the first right after the roundabout at Fairview) and follow that down to Silver Saddle Ranch (marked by a large brown sign on the right hand side.) Follow the one-way drive around to the group of barns and park in the designated areas. Meet at 10am. We will follow trails through some washes and sandy areas and then climb up the east side of Prison Hill. Expect to see a variety of annuals and blooming shrubs; herbaceous perennials will probably not be bloom this early. Leader Janel Johnson (775) 684-2911.

MAY 19th - Mormon State Park Located in Genoa, NV. This will be a work day to help the staff of two get the grounds spruced up for the summer season. The park is in the middle of Genoa at the NE corner of the main intersection. It can be accessed from 395 either from Jack's Valley Road or Genoa Lane. Meet near the entrance to the stockade in front of the museum at 10am. Snacks will be provided but you may want to pack a more substantial lunch. Please wear sturdy shoes and sunscreen, gloves and knee pads are also recommended. We will be transplanting some flowers, pruning shrubs, and sprucing up the garden in the stockade where events are held. We will have a plant swap in the parking area during lunch. Leader Janel Johnson(775) 684-2911.

MAY 26th - Red Rock area located between Cold Springs and Hallelujah Junction on the Hwy 395 corridor. On this trip we will be botanizing the area around the colorful rock and soil formations found in this area. We will be staying in the immediate area and may have to do a short hike to the formations since the fenced access gate to the area was closed as of a month ago. Bring a lunch, water, warm jacket, gloves and head gear, due to our ever changing spring

weather. For the adventurous hikers that may wish to climb up the formations I would suggest appropriate hiking gear such as walking sticks and good boots etc. Those traveling from the Carson area should meet at the U.S. Forest Service Offices located at 1536 South Carson Street, in Carson City at 7:50am to car pool. Plan on heading to the McDonalds Restaurant located at 120 Lemon Drive in north Reno by 8:00am. Those traveling from Reno will meet at the Lemon Drive McDonalds at 9:00am to await the arrival of the southern contingent. We will leave the second meeting point at 9:15 hooking up with our leaders at Hallelujah Junction. For further information you can contact Nancy or Bill Harnach at 530-994-3464 or John Weiser at 775-331-4485, any time after 5:00pm.

JUNE 2nd - no trip planned as this is the date for the plant sale at the Wilbur D. May Arboretum in Reno.

JUNE 9th - Lake Basin area of Sierra County, CA. Leaders Nancy and Bill Harnack.

JUNE 19th - Pine Nut Mountains to help BLM's Carson District Botanist Dean Tonenna with rare plant surveys in the Pine Nut Mountains seeking *Ivesia pityocharis*.

JUNE 23rd - West end of Wilson Canyon at the north end of the Pine Grove Hills located in Lyon County to explore *Eriogonum alexanderae* habitat. Leader John Weiser.

JUNE 30th - Open at this time with a tentative plan to seek out *Leucocrinum montanum* around Washoe Lake, should the runoff recede enough to access their habitat.

JULY 14th - Paige Meadows located in the Tahoe Basin on the western shore. Leader Cheryl Beyer

JULY 28th & 29th open at this time. Several members are researching the possibility of a two day trip to the Sonora Pass.

AUGUST 4th - Osgood Swamp south of Lake Tahoe. Leader Tom Schuster.

AUGUST 11th - Meadows on Mount Rose accessed via the US Forest Service access road to Relay Peak. Leader Elizabeth Bergstrom.

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

MAY 7th - Cayenne Engel with the UNLV Applied Ecology Research Group will be presenting recent work her lab has performed. Her lab focuses on Mojave Desert ecology and restoration. Presentation title TBA.

CLAYTONIA UMBELLATA - An Elusive Flower

by Gary Monroe

On March 24th four of us met for an impromptu trip to find *Claytonia umbellata* near the top of Peavine Mountain. The weather in Reno was a nice 67 degrees with fairly gentle winds. The road to the peak was in good shape with only a couple of snow drifts to go over. Also, there were dust devils passing over us at the same time. When we got near the top of Peavine Mountain, the winds were blowing about 50 miles per hour and the temperature was 47 degrees. It felt more like ZERO. My hands were numb even with gloves on and I had a hard time with my camera.

Margaret Williams had showed me the plant the first year that I was in the Northern Nevada Plant Society, as it was known then, and I have been looking for a flower in bloom since. On my other attempts I was always too late. I found seeds but never a bloom. The four of us started searching the rock field where I had seen the plant. I had asked Jerry when it blooms and he said right after the snow goes off. There was very little snow this year so I figured we should look now. I found a plant, but it did not have any open flowers, only buds. They are hard to spot as the leaves have a reddish coloration to them and the buds are red. They also grow down in the rocks with only a few leaves sticking out.

Charlie found the first flower by looking next to the last snowdrift in the rock field. Finally, after almost 30 years of searching, I saw my first *Claytonia umbellata* in flower. The plant is also known as Great Basin spring beauty. The white flowers are about one-half inch across with white petals that have pink on them. Finally I was able to get photos of this elusive plant in flower. After we all photographed the flower, the others wanted to go to the top of Peavine. Man was it cold but we went anyway. The view over Reno was great. There was a haze so we couldn't see Sand Mountain that is possible to see at times.

After we got done on Peavine, we went to the trailhead on Kiowa Road looking for plants. We found *Fritillaria pudica* in bloom and leaves of *Viola beckwithii*.*



MORE ABOUT *CLAYTONIA UMBELLATA*

by Arnold Tiehm

I had to smile at Gary's story about searching for flowers on *Claytonia umbellata*. Amazingly I first saw this plant in flower on the fourth field trip the then Northern Nevada Native Plant Society ever took, on June 28-29 of 1975 to the Hinkey Summit area in the Santa Rosa Range of Humboldt County. On Saturday night we camped at Martin Creek Ranger Station and for our Sunday morning constitutional we explored the ridges between there and Hinkey Summit. It was a good precipitation year and there were still some remaining snow banks. In fact, on our way in we had barely maneuvered the vehicles around a snow bank on the main road just north of the summit. Margaret Williams was always a master at finding things that emerge as snow banks melt and this day was no exception. We first encountered *Dicentra uniflora*, steers head, a plant that simply defies description. Next in line was *Claytonia umbellata*. We carefully dug out a few of the thick fleshy tubers for herbarium specimens and marveled at how their shapes reflected the soil pockets in the surrounding rocks and gravel.

I have also seen *Claytonia umbellata* in the Pah Rah Range on the southwest side of Pyramid Lake and on the west side of Spanish Springs Peak. On the Pyramid Lake side it occurs in the area of the yellow pines but is on a north facing slope and at a lower elevation. In the late 90s Janet Bair and I found a large population at the head of Minehaha Canyon in the Pine Nut Mountains next to a snow bank that blocked the road. I have also seen it several times in the Virginia Range around Virginia City but have never been there early enough to see flowers. Virginia City is the type locality where it was discovered by Sereno Watson in the spring of 1868. Jan Nachlinger and I have twice come across it, once on Buckskin Mountain in the Santa Rosa Range and once in Water Canyon in the Diamond Mountains of White Pine County. The RENO herbarium also has specimens from the Truckee River canyon east of Sparks and from the Stillwater Range in Churchill County. According to the forthcoming volume of Intermountain Flora (Volume 2A due out later this summer) *C. umbellata* occurs from "n., c., and e. Oregon (in our area in Harney and Malheur Cos.), n. Calif. (as far s. as the Sweetwater Mts. in Mono Co.), and nw. Nev., s. to Douglas Co. and e. to sw. White Pine Co.; waif collected along the railroad grade in Wyo. (Albany Co.) in 1876."*

WILDFLOWER REPORTS NOW AVAILABLE ONLINE

The wildflower reports are now available on the NNPS website under the Field Trips tab. After logging in, members may create and edit wildflower reports, including up to four photos. Jim Morefield will be transferring the old wildflower reports from the Nevada Natural Heritage Program website later this year.*

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Ann Bollingen, Reno, NV.
Cary Meister, Yuma, AZ

The following illustration of *Claytonia umbellata* is from L.R. Abrams. 1944. Illustrated Flora of the Pacific States. 2: 125. Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA. (Reproduced larger here so that the plant is approximately life size.)



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