



GOLD FIELD NOTES

EL DORADO CHAPTER ☼ CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY ☼ SEPTEMBER-OCTOBER 2004

CALENDAR

September 17 (Friday) (9am to 11 am)

Workshop.
Starthistle control methods field workshop. Sponsored by the El Dorado County Integrated Weed Management Program. Workshop is focused on control methods and demonstration plots will be observed to illustrate methods of mowing and herbicide treatments. \$3.00 registration fee. Contact Nancy Starr (530) 621-5528 to register.

September 21 (Tuesday)

Monthly program.
Annual potluck. Bring a few slides and a dish to share. Drinks, plates/utensils will be provided.

October 2 (Saturday)

Twice yearly plant sale.
Native plants, seeds and books will be on sale from 9 am to 1 pm at Building "C" of the El Dorado County Government Center in Placerville.

October 15-18

Conference and workshop.
Bioneers Conference. This is huge environmental conference that takes place at the Marin Center in San Rafael. For more information go to: www.bioneers.org and click on the link for Bioneers 2004 Conference.

October 19 (Tuesday)

Monthly program.
To be arranged. Check the chapter website for an update.



Monthly programs are held on the third Tuesday of each month with the exception of August and December. Programs begin at 7 PM at the Placerville Public Library, 345 Fair Lane, Placerville.

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FALL PLANT SALE
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SATURDAY, OCTOBER 2
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9 am to 1 pm
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It's that time of year again. The best time to plant natives is in the fall when the weather is cooling and the rains are on their way. After the rains begin is also the time to plant seeds for a furious bloom early next spring. Once again Cornflower Farms and Steve Dowty will be offering native and drought tolerant plants that will grow well in our area. We will be selling seeds of wildflowers suited to our area. Books on gardening with native plants and natural history will also be available at the sale.

If you are new to gardening with native plants, there will be several experienced gardeners at the sale to answer your questions.

Consider pre-ordering to get the plants that you want and save yourself time at the sale. Many plants are only available if you pre-order. Use the pre-order form included with this newsletter. Forms will be accepted until September 20th at El Dorado CNPS, P.O. Box 1948, Placerville, CA, 95667-1948. Unless other arrangements are made, all pre-ordered plants not claimed by 10:00 a.m. the morning of the sale will be sold to others.

The sale will be held in the entry way to El Dorado County Building C, 2850 Fairlane Court, Placerville (down the hill from the Main El Dorado County Library).

HOT FUN IN THE SUMMERTIME

By Steve Perry, Field Trip Committee

In spite of the strange weather last winter, we had a great series of field trips this summer. Based on a report from a member of the Sacramento chapter, we moved the June 26 hike from Sagehen Creek to Pole Creek. We had over a dozen people on the trip, with a variety of experience levels. This was our third trip to Pole Creek in the last few years, but we seem to find something new every time we go there. This time we noted about 140 species of plants. We made it to the new Bradley Hut and the meadow beyond by mid-afternoon. We had some directions that we thought might lead us to a patch of the rare *Lewisia longipetala*, but as we got closer to the ridge west of the hut, our directions seemed more and more vague. So, with the sun sinking slowly into the west, we headed back to the parking lot. But on the way back to the highway we stopped to look at some Arnicas, and stopped at the meadow near the highway where we always see *Porterella carnosula*. Even though it (cont. on page 2)

For updates between newsletters
www.eldoradocnps.org

SUMMERTIME (cont. from p. 1)

was a dry year, there were lots of *Porterella* still there. We'd like to thank everyone who came along on the trip.

On July 17, our destinations were Van Vleck Meadows and Tells Bog. We never actually made it to Van Vleck Meadows. We stopped at a meadow along Ice House Road, at an elevation of about 5000 feet, known for a profusion of Camas lilies (*Camassia quamash*). On the map it's near Jones Place and

Photo courtesy of Steve Perry



Bog Wintergreen
(*Pyrola asarifolia* var. *asarifolia*)

Bosworth Meadow, on the west side of Ice House Road. Although the Camas lilies were mostly past it, we headed toward the southern, boggy end of the meadow, and found Sundew (*Drosera rotundifolia*), bog orchids (*Platanthera leucostachys*), monkshood (*Aconitum columbianum*), and lots of other flowers. Well after noon we dragged ourselves away from the meadow to go up to Tells Bog. There we found a similar boggy area with many of the same plants. We also found some bright yellow seasonal puddles full of primrose monkeyflower (*Mimulus primuloides*). Thanks to Rich Wade for leading a great trip!

On July 24 we went on the annual Don Smith Memorial Hike, this time to Lake Audrian and Osgood Swamp, two of Don's favorite places. The first stop was at Lake Audrian near Echo Summit, where we saw lots of interesting plants. We saw four different species of Ribes –

R. cereum (wax currant), *R. nevadense* (Sierra currant), *R. roezlii* (Sierra gooseberry), and *R. viscosissimum* (sticky currant). We also saw three types of Pyrola – *P. asarifolia* var. *asarifolia* (bog wintergreen), *P. minor* (English wintergreen), and *P. picta* (white-veined wintergreen). We also saw two patches of sugarstick (*Allotropa virgata*). At Osgood Swamp we found that the local

beaver population has kept it more of a lake than a swamp. We also found that the boggy area we explored several years ago has become overgrown over the years. But there are still a few bog orchids (*Platanthera leucostachys*), ladies tresses (*Spiranthes romanzoffiana*), and bladderworts (*Utricularia vulgaris*). We had a good time at both locations, and saw some plants we don't see very often.

Our last official hike of the year was to jewel-like Emigrant Lake on August

7. We started out with a list of about fifty plants from a Sierra Club trip 34 years ago. By the end of the day we identified over 130 more plants (well, we were moving more slowly than they were). The most interesting plants we saw were a yellow hawkweed (*Hieracium gracile?*), and a campion that Ron Stork (Sacramento Chapter) called a "*Silene douglasii/verecunda* complex". The Jepson Manual says that the two are hard to separate. We found that out. The toughest plant to key out, however, was a member of the Portulaca family we found in a dry, rocky streambed. After much cogitation, and a trip back there a few days later, it keyed out to *Montia parvifolia*.

Again this year we had a lot of fun, and learned a lot, on our informal hikes. The first one in June was a trip to Lower Bassi Falls on June 12. Since we were

there last year, the trail from the parking lot to the falls has been moved up the hill a short distance, so we got to see a different variety of plants in the first half mile. Along the new trail we identified *Clarkia rhomboidea* (diamond-petaled clarkia), *Viola purpurea* ssp. *integrifolia* (smooth-leaved viola), and found some *Nemophila maculata* (fivespot). We spent the rest of the day down around the falls and the surrounding granite, where we identified *Streptanthus tortuosus* var. *orbiculata* (mountain jewelflower), *Penstemon roezlii* (Regel's mountain penstemon), and many other plants. It's still nice to be able to hear the falls since motorized vehicle traffic was blocked off a few years ago.

On June 19, we took a field trip to Shot Rock Vista, a highway rest stop along highway 88 about a mile east from where Mormon Emigrant Trail joins the highway. While most people stop there to take a break and maybe climb up the hill to see the view of Carson Pass, there are a lot of plants to see between the picnic area and Tragedy Creek about 400 feet below. There's a greater variety of plants than one might expect. Up in the sunny granite areas are the smaller, low-growing plants – *Lewisia triphylla* and *L. nevadense* (bitterroot), *Tritellia ixioides* (pretty face), *Allium*



Bitterroot (*Lewisia triphylla*)

campanulatum (dusky onion), and *Gilia capillaris* (miniature gilia), among others. Down along the creek you get the larger plants like *Lonicera conjugalus* (honeysuckle), *Ledum glandulosum* (Labrador tea), and *Veratrum californicum* (California corn lily). My highlight of the (cont. p. 7)

Photo courtesy of Steve Perry

SUMMERTIME (cont. from p. 2)

day was finding half a dozen *Lewisia kelloggii* (Kellogg's lewisia) growing on a sandy shelf. It's on the watch list, and it's always good to see it in a new location.

On July 3 we went up to Red Lake Peak at Carson Pass. We had a diverse group of hikers, young and old, beginners and the more experienced botanists. As usual when we're stopping to key out plants, it was noon before we'd gone a mile. But we identified a lot of plants along the way. In the back of our minds, however, was the possibility of finding *Viola beckwithii* (Great Basin violet), which, according to Julie Stauffer Carville's "Lingering in Tahoe's Wild Gardens", is found on the slopes of Red Lake Peak. It's a beautiful flower that blooms just after the snow melts. As it turned out, we didn't see any until we were heading down the hill at the end of the day. Ron Stork had been looking at the line drawing in the Jepson during lunch, and finally noticed that we were walking past hundreds of dried up leaves that looked vaguely familiar. Sure enough, they're all over the southwest side of Red Lake Peak above the cattle pond. Next year we're going to waterproof our boots and head up there in early June.

Thunder Mountain is always a nice place to find alpine plants, and that's where we went on July 10. In the first few miles of the new trail, constructed in the 1990's, you pass through Red Fir forest, a meadow, a sunny lava cap, mixed pine/fir forest, and finally a volcanic spur overlooking Kirkwood, Carson Pass, and the Crystal Range. Not bad for a two mile hike! We saw lots of the usual plants on the way up – *Wyethia mollis* (mule-ears), *Castilleja* (paintbrush), *Ipomopsis aggregata* (scarlet gilia), and others. But the big payoff is when you get to the cliff overlooking Kirkwood. We found *Epilobium obcordatum* (rock fringe), *Phlox condensata* (condensed phlox), and even some *Orobanche fasciculata* (clustered broomrape). We had some new discov-

eries too, such as the *Senecio canus* (woolly groundsel) that Ron and Shellie keyed out. We were a little late for the *Anemone drummondii* (Drummond's anemone) this year, but we had a great time!

As the summer passes, the days get shorter, and we head for higher ground. On July 31 we set course for Lake Winnemucca at Carson Pass. Our main motivation in going, other than the famous flowers of Carson Pass, was to find and key out a mysterious fuzzy plant that we found last fall. It was in October that we saw the mystery plant, and it totally defied identification. So, we made waypoints on our GPS units and waited. We started our hike from Woods Lake and spent three or four hours enjoying all the flowers from there to Lake Winnemucca. Then I switched on the GPS and found the fuzzy plant, past blooming again, but with some dried flower heads. Susan Durham and Shellie immediately identified it as a member of Rosaceae (five petals and five sepals), but didn't get much further. Later on we ventured up toward the snow packs at the southwest end of the lake. Up among the rocks we found several more of the mystery plants, but these were still in bloom. Now at least we knew that it had yellow flowers. It wasn't until we got back to the car, and Susan had a chance to sit and read the Jepson at length, that she pronounced it to be *Potentilla drummondii* ssp. *breweri* (Brewer's potentilla). Not a rare plant, and one that is on the plant lists, but not one that we'd identified before. Good job Susan and Shellie!

One of the most scenic places in this part of the state has to be Ebbetts Pass where we went on August 14. Reynolds Peak, Raymond Peak, and even Ebbetts Peak, with its recently installed American flag, are remnants of long dead volcanos that have left a landscape that is just breathtaking. We didn't take a plant list, or even write down what we saw; we just enjoyed the scenery and the plants we found along the trail. There were some new discoveries – a possible

find of *Arabis davidsonii* (Davidson's rockcress), and a very old *Eriogonum* (buckwheat). And we met some very shy cows in Raymond Meadows. We all agreed that this would be the perfect place to camp and just explore the surrounding hills. I hope that everyone gets a chance to visit that area at least once. It's only 100 miles from Placerville and a beautiful drive.

THE PASSING OF A DEAR FRIEND

It is with great sadness that I tell you about the death of long-time chapter member Jeannine Wilkinson. Jeannine served for a number of years as Chapter Secretary and then Book Sales organizer. Jeannine is also well remembered for her generosity and hospitality in hosting the chapter board meetings in her home for several years. The board meetings were especially enjoyable for her coffee and treats, not to mention the bits of gardening and cooking talk that went on before and after the meetings. Jeannine is survived by her husband Randy, another faithful CNPS member, and their two daughters.

Jeannine's dry sense of humor and quick laughter will be missed by many. *sb*





El Dorado Chapter
California Native Plant Society
P.O. Box 1948
Placerville, CA 95667

September-October 2004

**VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR THE
OCTOBER 2 PLANT SALE!**

If you are interested in helping with the sale, we still need people to help prepare the plants on Friday and to assist with various tasks on Saturday. Contact Steve or Shellie Perry (530) 644-6335 if you can lend a hand.

Learn more about State CNPS at:
www.cnps.org



**DEDICATED TO THE PRESERVATION OF
CALIFORNIA'S NATIVE FLORA**

The California Native Plant Society is a statewide nonprofit organization of amateurs and professionals with a common interest in California's native plants. The mission of the Society is to increase understanding and appreciation of California's native plants and to preserve them in their natural habitat through scientific activities, education, and conservation. Membership is open to all.

Membership includes the quarterly journal, *Fremontia*, the quarterly *Bulletin* which gives statewide news and announcements of Society activities and conservation issues, and the chapter newsletter *Gold Field Notes*. To join, call our main office in Sacramento, (916) 447-2677.

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