



The Shooting Star

SIERRA FOOTHILLS CHAPTER

CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

SEPTEMBER 2019

September Meeting

We're working on lining up a speaker for our next member meeting, scheduled for **Thursday, September 5th, 6 p.m.** at the Tuolumne County Library. Watch your e-mail for an announcement.

Upcoming Field Trip

The wildflower season may finally be winding down, but that doesn't mean there's nothing to see. In fact, there are plenty of interesting and beautiful plants to see, even if there are fewer wildflowers to add their colorful accents. With that in mind, Bob Dean will lead one more field trip to the beautiful Carson Pass area high country.

September 8 – Lake Winnemucca/Mokelumne Wilderness. Leader: Bob Dean. We'll meet at the Carson Pass sno-park parking lot on the north side of Hwy. 88 at 10 a.m. and hike to the visitors center and trail entrance at that time. I want to start then so we can cover some ground and begin our walk back no later than early afternoon. That time of year there's the possibility of thunderstorms building up by late afternoon and I don't want to be caught in the open. There should be plenty of leisure time to look at plants and catch an occasional bird. Carry a poncho or rain cover of some sort and something to hold body heat. Be sure to bring water and something to munch on. Despite the altitude the walk will be leisurely so I don't anticipate too much exertion. To RSVP or for more information, contact Bob at goldrushdean@yahoo.com, or 209-754-5887.



Meet here at
10 a.m. on
Sunday, Sep. 8

For all field trips: bring lunch, water, sunscreen and appropriate clothing and footwear. Carpooling is encouraged. Call ahead if the weather looks iffy. Our field trips are open to everyone. It is Chapter policy that pets are not allowed on our field trips. We appreciate everyone's adherence to this policy.

– Jennie Haas

If you change your mailing or e-mail address, be sure to send a note to Jennie Haas. This will keep your newsletter on time!

Jennie Haas
19287 James Circle
Groveland, CA 95321
jhaas953@gmail.com

California Native Plant Society
2707 K. St. Suite 1
Sacramento, CA 95816
www.cnps.org

Sierra Foothills Chapter
www.sierrafoothillscnps.org

*Dedicated to the Preservation of
California Native Flora.*

CNPS NATIVE PLANT SALE

October 19, 2019

SAVE THE DATE... Our sale is on Saturday, October 19, from 9 a.m. until noon. We will be at the same location: Rocca Park, Main Street, Jamestown. We will have many different species of shrubs and perennials that need minimal water, once established, during our hot summer months. At the sale, there are always many knowledgeable people to answer your questions and help you choose the appropriate plant for your location.

Remember to come early for the best selection. Better yet, volunteer to help at the plant sale. Volunteers get to select plants before the sale is open to the public. We need volunteers with a truck or SUV to load plants the night before and deliver them the morning of the sale. We also need cashiers and tag pullers. So email Stephanie at sjgarcia@mlode.com to volunteer.

Reports on High Sierra Double Header

Day 1. Gaylor Lakes Yields a Dazzling Diversity of Bountiful Botany!

by David Campbell

On August 17th, day one of the High Sierra Double Header, nine of us were met with a wide diversity of blooms, glorious views of the Sierra High Country, and beautiful weather along the trail to Gaylor Lakes in Yosemite National Park. In just under four miles, we found over 80 species of blooming plants and identified another 20 more. Starting at 9,950', we spotted nearly 20 species within sight of the parking lot. It seemed that we couldn't have timed it better to witness peak bloom in the area. It's been a good year to follow spring wildflowers up the mountains from March at 2,000' to August at 10,000'. Climbing up from Tioga Pass, we were met with a new species every hundred yards. The trail climbs through lodgepole pine forest but contains fine meadowy openings along the way that reward the hiker with new blooms and views of the snow capped Cathedral Range in Yosemite.

Cresting the ridge overlooking Lower Gaylor Lake, a new suite of species develop on metamorphic rock derived soils as you peak out above tree line. The trail closely follows the division between granitic and metamorphic substrate, and is partly to thank for the diversity found along the way. Lakeside and along the stream between Upper and Lower Gaylor Lakes, a handful of species make their appearance that are found nowhere else along the route. At Upper Gaylor Lakes, we said goodbye to a handful of our group before crossing a mid-August snowfield and climbing once again above treeline to the site of the Great Sierra Silver Mine at around 10,750'. Dotting the landscape were pockets of wizened but healthy whitebark pines, *Pinus albicaulis*, a candidate species for protection under the Endangered Species Act whose populations in the Southern Sierra are not faring as well as ours. Finally we found our target: an odd, solitary stand of narrow leaved, or desert yellow fleabane, *Erigeron linearis*. This disjunct population of a species more commonly found in the mountains of the Great Basin seems to be doing well. Well sated with our finds, and with the sun well behind the ridgeline, we headed back to get a good night's rest before day two of the Double Header.

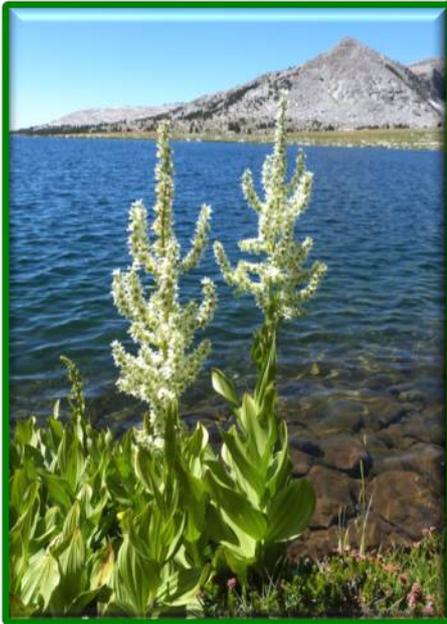
Day 2. Harvey Monroe Hall Research Natural Area

by Doug Krajnovich

On August 18th, a slightly reconstituted group of nine began day two of the Double Header at Sawmill Walk-in Campground. We made brief stops in the campground and at Lee Vining Creek, to check out some wildflowers that we did not see yesterday, including: two cute belly flowers (*Polygonum minimum* & *Erythranthe breweri*); Western Monkshood (*Aconitum columbianum*); Sierra Bog Orchid (*Platanthera dilatata* ssp. *leucostachyus*); Giant Mountain Larkspur (*Delphinium glaucum*); Large-leaf Avens (*Geum macrophyllum*). Then we crossed Lee Vining Creek and entered the RNA, where we were greeted by a great diversity of wildflowers – many familiar from day one, but also some new faces. We walked through sub-alpine forest, wet meadows, rocky areas covered in *Sedum*, then climbed into the lower reaches of the alpine zone. Our turnaround point was a lovely spot with three cascades spilling down from the cliffs. John Muir's favorite wildflower, *Cassiope mertensiana*, was blooming near our lunch spot. We said our goodbyes and returned to "civilization," mindful of John Muir's words: "Thousands of tired, nerve-shaken, over-civilized people are beginning to find out that going to the mountains is going home; that wildness is a necessity."



Photos from Gaylor Lakes field trip. TOP: Melissa, Doug, Louise, and Karie botanizing along the ridge (© David Campbell). BOTTOM: Viewing southwest from the Great Sierra Mine (© Karie Lew). The lake in the distance is Middle Granite Lake. (Gaylor Lakes are to the left of this frame.) If you want to meet *Erigeron linearis*, this is the area to search. (Our thanks to Barry & Judy Breckling for promoting the *Erigeron* hunt.)



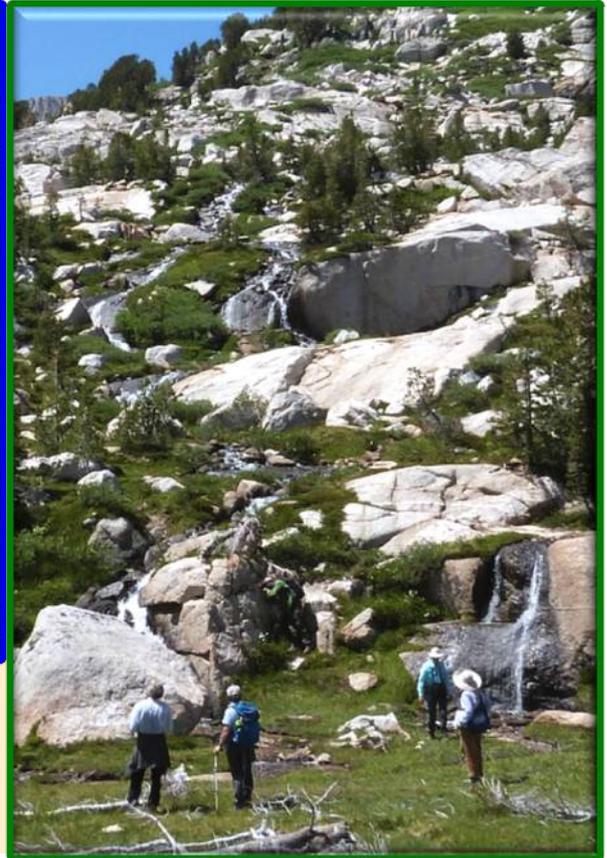
TOP ROW: Corn Lilies at Gaylor Lake (© Karie Lew); *Erigeron linearis* (© David Campbell); Bull Elephant's Head (© David Campbell). MIDDLE ROW: Clodius Parnassian on Scapose Raillardella (© David Campbell); Pussypaws (© Louise Christy); Orange Dandelion (© D. Krajnovich). BOTTOM ROW: *Polygonum minimum* (© D. Krajnovich); *Pinus albicaulis* with sap drop (© David Campbell).

GAME STATS

Over both days of the Double Header, we saw approximately 110x species of wildflower – ranging in size from the tiny *Polygonum minimum* to the towering *Delphinium glaucum* – not counting trees, ferns, and graminoids. At least ten other species were blooming higher up or in adjacent areas. Karie found *Aquilegia pubescens* in the Twenty Lakes Basin. Doug found *Epilobium obcordatum*, *Hulsea algida*, and *Ivesia muirii* higher up in the RNA. In a year like this, two days is hardly enough time to greet all the plant people.



ABOVE: An energetic group entering the Harvey Monroe Hall RNA (photo © Editor). RIGHT: Our turnaround spot, where we found *Cassiope mertensiana* blooming alongside the cascades (photo © Karie Lew). BELOW: Close-up of *Cassiope*, accompanied by a famous John Muir passage (photo © Editor).



“Here, too, in this so-called ‘land of desolation,’ I met cassiope, growing in fringes among the battered rocks. Her blossoms had faded long ago, but they were still clinging with happy memories to the evergreen sprays, and still so beautiful as to thrill every fiber of one’s being. Winter and summer, you may hear her voice, the low, sweet melody of her purple bells. No evangel among all the mountain plants speaks Nature’s love more plainly than cassiope. Where she dwells, the redemption of the coldest solitude is complete. The very rocks and glaciers seem to feel her presence, and become imbued with her own fountain sweetness.”

Remembering Huell Howser

A note from your Editor

Huell Howser (1945–2013) was a native Tennessean who moved to LA. He hosted a series of PBS programs in California – most notably *California’s Gold*. Before his death, Mr. Howser bequeathed the rights to all of his programs to Chapman University. Chapman has worked diligently to make all of the episodes available for free on-line viewing. My memories of *California’s Gold* were revived by the Hall RNA field trip. Huell did a program on Conness Glacier in 2009. He rode the water taxi across Saddlebag Lake and hiked through the RNA to Conness Lakes to get a look at Mt. Conness and its remnant glacier. I had been to Yosemite dozens of times – *but I had never even heard of Saddlebag Lake or the Hall RNA until I watched this episode*. Here is the link if you would like to check it out: <https://blogs.chapman.edu/huell-howser-archives/?s=conness>

Our field trip was in a different part of the RNA, but this episode gives you a feel for what it looks like and feels like, including the wildflowers. Huell Howser could be repetitious – sometimes annoyingly so! – but he brought a sweetness and enthusiasm to all of his subjects that made him a beloved fixture to both native and transplanted Californians.

CNPS Sierra Foothills Chapter
 19287 James Circle
 Groveland, CA 95321

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

| Chapter Officers and Chairpersons (All phone #'s are 209 area code unless otherwise specified.) | | | | JOIN NOW |
|--|------------------|----------------|--|---|
| PRESIDENT | OPEN | | | <p>PLEASE INCLUDE ME AS A CNPS MEMBER!</p> <p>Student/Retired/Limited income ...\$25 Individual \$45 Family or Group \$75 Library..... \$75 Plant Lover \$100 Patron.....\$300 Benefactor \$600 Mariposa Lily..... \$1,500</p> <p>As always, donations above the membership level chosen will be greatly appreciated.</p> <p>Name _____ Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____ Telephone _____ e-mail _____</p> <p>(Dues and gifts to CNPS are tax deductible)</p> <p>I Wish to affiliate with the Sierra Foothills Chapter. Please make your check payable to "CNPS" and send it to: 2707 "K" street, Suite 1, Sacramento, CA 95816 Tel. (916) 447-2677. Join or renew on-line at www.cnps.org. Membership includes the journal <i>Fremontia</i>, CNPS Bulletin and the Sierra Foothills monthly newsletter, <i>The Shooting Star</i>.</p> <p>E-mail: sierrafoothillscnps@gmail.com</p> |
| VP AMADOR CO. | OPEN | | | |
| VP CALAVERAS CO. | Judy Dean | 754-5887 | No E-Mail | |
| VP MARIPOSA CO. | David Campbell | (612) 867-8700 | moonwort.campbell@gmail.com | |
| VP TUOLUMNE CO. | OPEN | | | |
| SECRETARY | Stephanie Garcia | 586-3593 | sjgarcia@mlode.com | |
| TREASURER | Pat Gogas | 586-9043 | pfgogas@yahoo.com | |
| CONSERVATION CHAIR | Bob Dean | 754-5887 | goldrushdean@yahoo.com | |
| EDUCATION CHAIR | OPEN | | | |
| FIELD TRIP COORDINATOR | Jennie Haas | 962-4759 | jhaas953@gmail.com | |
| GROWING AREA MGR. | Stephanie Garcia | 586-3593 | sjgarcia@mlode.com | |
| HOSPITALITY COORD. | OPEN | | | |
| INVASIVE EXOTICS | OPEN | | | |
| MERCH./SALES COORD. | Diane Williams | 586-1557 | dianewilliams3664@gmail.com | |
| MEMBERSHIP COORD. | Jennie Haas | 962-4759 | jhaas953@gmail.com | |
| NEWSLETTER EDITOR | Doug Krajnovich | 580-4595 | djkran@comcast.net | |
| PLANT SALES CHAIR | Stephanie Garcia | 586-3593 | sjgarcia@mlode.com | |
| SPRING PLANT SALES COORD. | Judy Dean | 754-5887 | No E-Mail | |
| PROGRAM COMM. CHAIR | OPEN | | | |
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