

Insignis

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California Native Plant Society
Alta Peak Chapter Newsletter

FIELD TRIP MANAGER'S MESSAGE:

As this is being prepared in late May, the wildflower displays are as striking as we've ever seen them. Two very different Clarkia species make solid mats of lavender color over expanses in the foothill area, while higher up the Yucca, Fremontia, bush poppies, Mimulus, Yerba Santa, and lacy pale Ceanothus make it hard to keep ones eyes on the road if you are the driver. We had promised an early June update mailing on July-August field trips, but as we write it seems as if we had missed the chance to get together to enjoy and discover an absolutely glorious Springtime. So it goes!! Scheduling CNPS field trips is hard when the weather is so unpredictable. As you may have heard, the May hike down Freeman Creek had to be cancelled due to "adverse trail conditions", meaning the trail was either snow or mud-covered!!

REPEATED FROM SPRING INSIGNIS, WITH DATES AND DETAILS ADDED:

14 June: Into the Sequoia Grove area in the canyon of the Wishon Fork. A Grove that is not marked as distinct on older Forest maps, although the trees have always been there. These are trees on the east side of Wishon Fork (aka North Fork of Middle Fork) that can be seen from the trail up the canyon above Doyle Springs. The vegetation along the trail is special, even without big trees to view, with California nutmeg, ginger, wintergreen, bleeding heart, dogwood, and much more. Can't, of course, promise what we will find in bloom, but there is a lot to seek. Let's meet at the parking space at end of road beyond the Wishon Campground at 10:00, and be prepared for several hours of exploring along a gentle gradient trail, mostly about 6000'.

June 28: Jordan Peak, yes, again. We make this climb nearly every year, and it is one Fletcher especially wanted us to include. Repeating last year's information, we will carpool about 9 miles in to trailhead, on North Road (turnoff from Hwy 190 at Quaking Aspen marked "Pack Station"), then hike about one mile along an easy, but somewhat steep switchback trail from about 7000 to 9000' elevation. We are in Red Fir forest, and as we approach Jordan Peak we enter an area of rock gardens, high meadow flowers, with focus on the rare Fawn Lily. Erythronium, the genus, is considered a special garden lily in European landscapes, and people come from all over the world to see them in bloom on Jordan Peak. Let's hope we once more are lucky and find them in bloom. Hat, sunscreen, water (it can be bright on top), whatever snacks you want for several hours in mountain scenery. Although walking is not hard, please note the elevation gain. Meet at pull-off area just up North Road, just past end of hwy. 190 at 10:00.

July 19: The owner of small in-holding with Sequoia trees below the Black Mt. Grove, just east of Solo Peak again has invited us to visit (This was planned for last summer, then cancelled when the McNally Fire closed area.) The property has cultural interest in addition to forest vegetation, since it was logged in late 1800's using the drill and-blast method. Gary will point out artifacts that demonstrate techniques used in these early logging days. Re-growth and associated vegetation can now be seen, and nearby places may hold special wildflowers. We'll meet at Coy Flat Campground entrance at 10:00, then re-group just beyond Rogers Camp. Elevations will range from 5000-7000.

NOTE: The July trip to the Slate Mt. Botanic Area with Robin Galloway is cancelled.

August 16: A member from Hot Springs invites us to join him to visit a portion of the Packsaddle Grove. This Grove was never logged, and contains several trees said to be huge, or mysterious (Ghost Tree?). Note that although most of our field trips and activities are centered in either Springville or Three Rivers areas, our CNPS Chapter is intended to cover Tulare County, and this hike offers an opportunity to see and explore the southern part of our "southern" Sierra forest region, at an elevation of close to 6000-6500'. Jim Versteeg, leader, notes that two "specimen" trees are no more than a quarter mile off the road, with only a gentle up and down. Others in vicinity are close. Call to RSVP, and to get details of when, where to meet.

August 24: Onion Meadow, at 8000', is planned as a final outing, a unique example of a high mountain meadow where a giant Onion (Allium) grows. We will enter the forest from the Western Divide Highway, drive to Windy Gap, then walk in--not too far and an easy trail--but note the elevation. Several of you have contacted me to ask about seeing some of the local orchids described in the Winter Insignis. It is possible that we can find some of the meadow species even this late in the summer. No promises. This is a Sunday trip, to accommodate those who asked that not all the hikes be on Saturdays. We'll meet in the parking lot at Ponderosa Lodge at 10:00.

NOTE: Because of the difficulty in anticipating trail and weather conditions, we ask that you call field trip coordinator Joan Stewart, 539-2717 to confirm each of these dates. When we needed to cancel the Freeman Creek hike, it was hard to decide how to get the word out on short notice. By calling to say you want to join us, we can provide any last minute details about ridesharing possibilities, or changes in the day's plan.

PLANT IDENTIFICATION?

Anyone interested in mid-week daytime meetings to learn to identify some of the new plants we are finding, or to learn more about common or familiar species? If someone wants to organize or coordinate such sessions, I will offer my home/work room, with microscope and books available.
