

Manzanita

Newsletter of The Kane County chapter of the Utah
Native Plant Society

June-July 2006 News

Upcoming Events

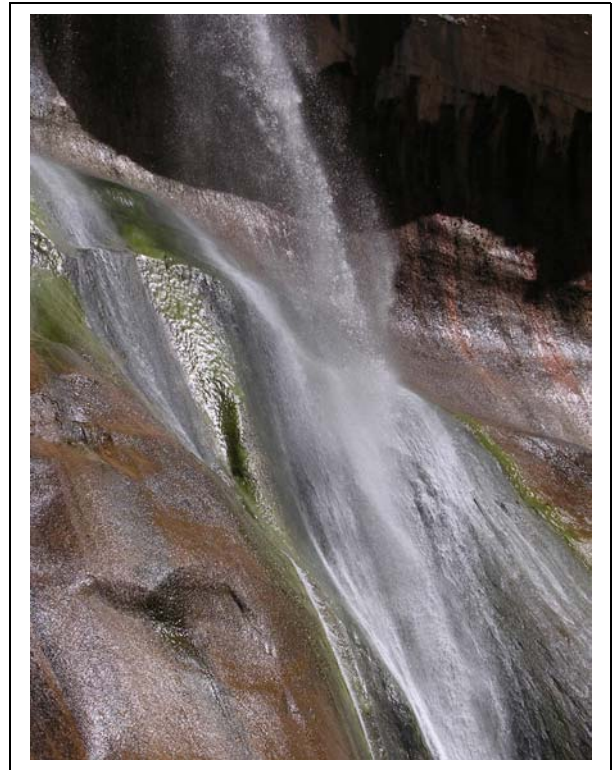
Summer Meeting Hiatus: Our regular first-week-of-the-month meetings will resume in September. In place of an indoor meeting, we will have weekend and evening outdoor events, including the following:

Cedar Breaks Wildflower Festival: The inaugural Cedar Breaks Wildflower Festival begins Friday June 30 and runs through Sunday, July 16. Cedar Breaks enjoyed a very wet snowfall in March, and advance word has it that this summer will have an even better bloom than last year. Each day of the festival a volunteer botanist will be roving about the park's main roadside pullouts from 10-12 AM offering wisdom and insight on wildflowers. From 1-3 PM these same volunteers will be leading more formal guided hikes along the park's main trails. Doug Reynolds (who many will remember as the featured speaker at our celebrated Halloween 2005 meeting) will be leading trips on June 30 and July 2, 6, 11, and 13, as well as conducting Zion Canyon Field Institute classes on July 8 and 12. I will be leading trips on July 1, 3, and 4.

On **Saturday, July 1**, I'll be offering a special field trip for Kane County native plant society members and hangers-on, starting at 10 AM from the Cedar Breaks National Monument Visitor Center parking lot. We will make stops along several of the main scenic pullouts (including a short side trip to see the park's rarest plant, the Arizona willow (once a candidate for listing under the Endangered Species Act), and if time permits stop along the road to Brian Head to see what is flowering. After a lunch break, I'll be leading hikes at 1 and 2 PM from the Chessman Ridge Overlook pullout to Alpine Pond on the Alpine Pond Trail. WF

Monday, 7 August: Coral Pink Sand

Dunes: Spend an evening strolling through the deep pink sands of Coral Pink Sand Dunes, enjoying the area's unusual desert flora. Expect to see Welsh's milkweed (listed as Threatened under the



Above: Calf Creek Falls in the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument, east of Escalante. Photo by W. Fertig.

Endangered Species Act), Mule's-ears, Kanab yucca, and Brandegees's sandplant. Plan to meet at the junction of the Sand Springs Road and the Hancock Road (a.k.a the first paved road to Coral Pink Sand Dunes state park, on the left hand side of Hwy 89 just past the upper turnoff to Best Friends) at 7 PM. We will be exploring BLM lands at the north end of the dunes and will proceed to Sand Springs if time allows. Car-pooling will be encouraged on the sandy roads, but the parking area at the junction of the Sand Springs and Hancock roads is suitable for non 4-wheel drive vehicles.

Field Trip Wrap-up

Counting Cacti near Fredonia: Our first evening trip of the season took place on May 15 and featured a visit to the Moenkopi badlands south of Fredonia. The highlight of the trip was finding the federally Threatened Siler's pincushion cactus (*Pediocactus sileri*) on the barren gravelly plains.



Above: Siler's pincushion cactus (*Pediocactus sileri*) from 2005, showing the yellowish flowers at the top of the nipple-like ribs of the small, ball-like plant. Photo by W. Fertig.

Unfortunately, due to the dry spring the cactus flowered earlier than anticipated and was just past flower on our field trip day. Thanks to the skilled eyes of 8 participants (and two dogs) we located over 30 individuals, including several tiny plants that were probably new sprouts or just a year old. The evening concluded with a view of the rare San Rafael phacelia (*Phacelia rafaensis*) just as the sun set over the red badlands east of Fredonia.

Navajo Ethnobotany: Octogenarian Navajo elder Bertha Curley, ably assisted by her daughter and granddaughter, led a hike on Saturday, May 27 along the Bunting Trail and in Angel Canyon. Bertha described various native tree, shrub, and wildflower species used by the Navajo for food, fiber, and medicine and was able to out-hike several participants, despite recent hip surgery!

Calf Creek Foray: Our first inter-chapter field trip with our Escalante colleagues was a great success, drawing 8 Kanabites and 8 Escalantians to the Calf Creek campground/trailhead of the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument for a morning hike to the lower Calf Creek Falls. Along the way we encountered numerous wildflowers (despite the droughty conditions) and birds, before the big payoff: an early morning view of the falls and their associated hanging gardens of Alcove columbine (*Aquilegia micrantha*), maiden-hair fern (*Adiantum capillus-veneris*), and the occasional

helleborine orchid (*Epipactis gigantea*). A large stand of Columbian monkshood (*Aconitum columbianum*) also greeted us near the trail's terminus. This relative of the larkspur differs from *Delphinium* in having the upper sepal shaped like a hood rather than ending in a pointed spur. We also documented at least two and possibly three new weedy grass species not previously reported from the monument's flora before repairing to the Kiva Coffeehouse for cold drinks and general socialization.



Above: Columbian monkshood (*Aconitum columbianum*) at Calf Creek Falls. Photo by W. Fertig.

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This edition of the Kane County Native Plant Society news was written by Walter Fertig. Reader submissions are welcome. For more information about upcoming events, contact Walt Fertig at 689-0224 or walt@kanab.net.