

MANZANITA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

THE KANE COUNTY CHAPTER OF
THE UTAH NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

May 2005 News

Upcoming Events



May Monthly Meeting: Wildvisitors and Wildflowers: Vegetation Management in Zion National Park by Denise Louie. Our next meeting will be held on Monday, May 2 at 7 PM (UT time) in the public meeting room of the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument Visitor (next to the Holiday Inn and golf course). Denise Louie, Vegetation Program Manager for Zion National Park will offer an inside look at challenges and solutions to managing native vegetation in a park that receives 2.7 million visitors annually. Denise will describe her program for small scale habitat restoration using park partners, local volunteers, and interns. A dessert potluck will follow the meeting. The public is welcome and invited to attend.

May 14 Glen Canyon Field Trip: John Spence, ecologist/botanist/ornithologist/all-around naturalist with the Glen Canyon National Recreation Area will be leading a field trip to the Ahlstrom Point area of the NRA on Saturday, May 14. The trip will commence from the Big Water visitor center of the Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument (located in beautiful Big Water, UT, on the south side of Hwy 89) at 9 AM (UT time) and continue until ca 2 PM. From Big Water, we will proceed north through Tropic Shale and Kaiparowits badlands to Ahlstrom Point above Lake Powell. Due to our wet spring, wildflowers should be in peak bloom in several desert habitats along the way. Be sure to pack a lunch, bring extra water,

Above: Fields of blue lupine and yellow Mexican poppy carpeted the base of the Virgin Mountains, east of Mesquite, NV on our April 16 field trip with Lee Hughes and the St. George Audubon Society. Photo by Walter Fertig.

and dress appropriately (with hiking shoes and a hat).

Mark your Calendar

7 June (Tues) – monthly meeting – topic/speaker to be announced.

25 June (Saturday) – field trip to Lick Wash

23 July (Saturday) – tentative - Kaibab Plateau with ethnobotanist Phyllis Hogan

August: Field trip/camp out at Calf Creek and Deer Creek near Boulder.

Recap

March Meeting Nearly 40 members and guests were treated to a lively discussion of local Piute plant lore by Dora Homer. Dora showed examples of baskets constructed from yucca fibers, cradleboards constructed of willow, and a variety of native plants used for food, dyes, medicines, and other handicrafts. A surprising number of native species were used by indigenous peoples, including some common species that are often considered weedy today - such as the tansy mustards of the genus *Descurainia*

Virgin River Field Trip Eight hearty Kane County members made the trek over to St.

George to see Mohave wildflowers in bloom with Lee Hughes of the Arizona Strip BLM and the St. George Audubon Society. Unfortunately, our group got separated from the main party, but thanks to the intrepid navigation skills of Larry Baer and keen eyesight of Barb Warner we were able to find them again on a dirt road at the base of the Virgin Range, east of Mesquite. Before rejoining the others, we stopped to explore a patch of Bur-sage/Creosote bush vegetation in full and glorious bloom. The Bur-sage (*Ambrosia dumosa*) is a shrubby relative of the pesty ragweed that differs in flowering in the spring rather than the fall. Among the many noteworthy species we observed were the white-flowered Desert chicory (*Rafinesquia neomexicana*), Barrel cactus (*Ferocactus acanthodes*), Beavertail cactus (*Opuntia basilaris*), purple-flowered Phacelias (two species), and tiny white-rayed goldfields (*Lasthenia*) carpeting the rocky ground. The oddest plant of all, however, was probably Turpentine-bush (*Thamnosma montana*), a purple-flowered shrub in the citrus family (Rutaceae) with inflated, lemony-green two-lobed fruits covered with aromatic pits. After reuniting, our subgroup decided we had to continue to the very base of the mountains to see a field of blue lupine and orange poppies that the larger group had just seen. We were not disappointed – as the photo on the previous page does not do the area justice.



Above: Desert chicory (Rafinesquia neomexicana), one of the many showy spring wildflowers encountered on the Virgin River field trip. Photo by Laura Fertig (in the interest of full disclosure, this picture was actually taken in Death Valley).

Below: Jana de Peyer capturing an image of Buckhorn cholla (Opuntia acanthocarpa) on the Virgin River field trip. Photo by W. Fertig.



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This edition of the Kane County Native Plant Society news was written and illustrated by Laura Fertig, Walter Fertig, and Jan Gisler. Reader submissions are welcome. For more information about upcoming events, contact Walt Fertig at 644-8129 or walt@kanab.net.