

## Bakersfield Cactus Activities

by Lucy Clark

NEAR THE END OF JANUARY, AND THE FIRST of February, groups of CNPS volunteers gathered at the Nature Conservancy's new **Randall's Tehachapi Preserve**. Many thanks those who planted the pads, harvested from our first outing the previous month. The scars from our cuts had sealed over, and flags marked the planting locations. We buried the bottoms of our cacti in the dirt, and some pads were provided with a number so surveys can be carried out in the future. Water was applied. Cactus expert, **Ellen**, helped TNC's **Zach Principe** with evaluating each as a baseline of health to start our record of this second planting of the rare species *Opuntia basilaris* var. *treleasei*.



The hardy among us dug holes for **Bill's** sprouted blue oak acorns — *Quercus douglasii* — while others wrestled hardware cloth into protective cages. About 10:30 am, the oak planting and numbering began. The scene looked like an ant bed, with large ants hustling around in all directions, working together or alone to get that work done! Much appreciation for dedication to planting sessions goes to: **Carol, Clyde, Crystal, Diane, Donna, Ellen, Ely, Frank, Jon, Laura, Pat, Saya, and William/Bill.**

The February planting session consisted of five CNPS volunteers planting 30 Bakersfield cacti pads in another close-by grassy location. They also watered their babies. More appreciation and thanks go to **Carol, Crystal, Diane, Ellen, and William.** We also thank TNC's **Rachel Mason** for coordinating all of us and the materials we used.

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If you would like to participate with our growing band of helpers at the preserve, please let me know at [lucyg391@gmail.com](mailto:lucyg391@gmail.com), and I will add you to my email list for scheduled work days. 🌱



Alliances: *Juniperus californica* woodland (left) and *Ceanothus cuneatus* shrubland (right).

## President's Message: Vegetation Types in the Piute Mountains

by Rich Spjut

MOST OF MY CAREER HAS BEEN DEVOTED to biodiversity sampling of plant species for antitumor screening. Due to the quantity of dried material needed — 0.5–1 kg, which may be divided into root, bark and aerial foliage — the species sampled had to be fairly common. During the 1970s, species that showed anti-tumor activity were routinely recollected in quantities of 5–50 kg to isolate the active compounds. Back in those days, we did not have **Calflora**, **Calscape**, or the **Consortium of California Herberia (CCH)**, etc. to help determine where to find species in abundance, so I trained myself to recall the abundance of all species I collected in case I was asked to recollect it. Initially about 5% of the species were active, declining by 1980 to about 1% due to predictability of antitumor compounds occurring in families and genera.

My field observation habits have stayed with me even though my biodiversity sampling for biochemical screening has been mostly inactive since 2008. The **Piute Mountains** appear to be exceptionally diverse



Burned *Hesperocyparis nevadensis* woodland looking towards Breckenridge Mountains. White flowers are *Calystegia longipes*. CNPS Chapter Field Trip 6-2-2013

in the chaparral and woodland vegetation types.

In the last newsletter, I mentioned the *Garrya flavescens* alliance along **Saddle Springs Road**, which follows a ridge on the northern slope of Piute Mountain. The species is mentioned in **A Manual of California Vegetation** (2nd ed.) only in associations under other alliances, which on Piute Mountain would be with *Arctostaphylos viscida* (as *A. glauca*). Another is *Fremontodendron californicum* which is closely associated with *Garrya* and / or *A. viscida*, mentioned in the vegetation manual in association with either *Ceanothus vestitus* (as *C. greggii*), *Cercocarpus betuloides* (as *C. montanus*). Other alliances on the northern slope going from lower to higher elevations are *Ceanothus cuneatus*, *Quercus douglasii*, *Juniperus californica*, *Hesperocyparis nevadensis*, *Cercocarpus betuloides*, *Ceanothus vestitus*, *Quercus garryana*, *Arctostaphylos viscida* ssp. *mariposa*, *Abies concolor*, and *Pinus jeffreyi*. Many other species can be found in localized abundance such as *Ephedra viridis* and *Turricula parryi*, while others occur more often along road margins such as *Eriophyllum* and *Eriodictyon*. A number of rare species also occur within alliances. They include *Perideridia pringlei* in the California juniper woodland, *Sidalcea hickmanii* ssp. *parishii* in the Piute cypress woodland, *Eriogonum breedlovei* var. *breedlovei* and *Frasera tubulosa* in the Jeffrey pine woodland near Piute Peak. 🌱



Mixed montane chaparral just south of Eagle Rock (Peak) with *Arctostaphylos viscida*, *Ceanothus vestitus*, *Cercocarpus*, *Fremontodendron*, *Garrya*, and *Quercus garryana*. Although *Hesperoyucca whipplei* is conspicuous by its flowering stalks, they are not factored into what determines the dominant species for alliance classification, but it would be treated as belonging to the association because of its obvious frequent presence.



*Arctostaphylos glandulosa*, present in montane chaparral but not characteristic.

The **Piute Mountains** appear to be exceptionally diverse in the chaparral and woodland vegetation types.



*Fremontodendron californicum* shrub woodland regenerating after fire.



*Arctostaphylos viscida* ssp. *mariposa* shrubland. Plant with burl-like base regenerating apparently from seed but see following image.



*Arctostaphylos viscida* ssp. *mariposa* shrubland nearby showing thicket of shrubs scarcely burned. No sprouting evident.