

Sagebrush Sentinel

Newsletter of the Central Washington Chapter of the Washington Native Plant Society
June 2015

www.wnps.org/chapter_info/central_washington/home.html

Tronson Ridge Field Trip

May 16, 2015

Five WNPS members enjoyed a glorious May day walking along Tronson Ridge. After driving up the rough Five Mile Road off of HWY 97 the group was ready to get out and hike. Most of the climb was already done by the time we arrived at the trailhead so the trail was relatively flat for most of the way. Since spring came early this year, May was a perfect time to see a mix of flowers. Within the many rock outcrops we saw three different types of lewisa including *Lewisa redivia* and *Lewisa tweedii* in bloom, along with the leaves of *Lewisa columbiana*. On the drier hillsides we saw Balsamroot (*Balsamorhiza sagittata*), Phlox (*Phlox speciosa*), and Paintbrush (*Castilleja miniata*). We found a nice rocky outcrop to sit for lunch and enjoy the views of the surrounding Wenatchee Mountains. After lunch we continued to walk through some forested areas where we found and kinnikinni (*Arctostaphylos nevadaensis*) and Current (*Ribes viscosissium*) flowering. At the last rocky outcrop we found the fruits of the Balloon milk-vetch (*Astragalus whitneyi*) and twinpod (*Physaria alpestris*) along with the Scalloped Onion (*Allium crenulatum*) flowering. We turned around at the Red Hill Trail Junction and enjoyed seeing all those great plants one more time on the way back.

Keyna Bugner – Trip Leader



Photo by Keyna Bugner

Arbor Festival 2015

The Arborfest at the Yakima Arboretum took place on April 11 this year and our theme was “Native Plant Eco-Zones”. The presentation was primarily directed at students in grade 6 and younger, using special hand-made stickers with examples of plants that can be found in one of 5 general eco-zones in the state of Washington. (Yes I did a lot of “lumping” to come up with only 5 zones.) A short back and forth discussion with the kids about what an eco-zone is and why a particular plant would be better suited to live in a particular environment was followed by having the kids put the plant stickers on the appropriate places on their map hand-outs. For the adults and older children, we again had a table-top and tarp display of commonly found native plants of our area, this year with an emphasis on trees that live in the forest. The presentation was well received in spite of the usual challenges from the ripping winds that always seem to get worse in the afternoons out there. A special thanks to the Arboretum volunteers and to Keyna and Bonnie, all of whom made our presentation a great success.



Arborfest 2014
Photo by Keyna Bugner

THE AIM OF THE WASHINGTON NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY IS “TO PROMOTE THE APPRECIATION AND CONSERVATION OF WASHINGTON’S NATIVE PLANTS AND THEIR HABITATS THROUGH STUDY, EDUCATION AND ADVOCACY”.

Arnicas I have seen . . . in Central Washington
by Don Knoke

The Arnicas are a group of herbs in the Aster Family that have upright stems with a few simple opposite leaves. Ours all have yellow, perfect disk flowers in fairly large heads, and most have pistillate ray flowers, with the heads relatively few and broad. With a good hand lens you might be able to see that the styles terminate in a tuft of short hairs. In all species the pappus consists of numerous white or tawny, barbellate or subplumose capillary bristles.

Mountain arnica (*Arnica latifolia*) – The common species at mid to high elevations in the mountains, mountain arnica, like most of our species, has no more than four pair of stem leaves. The leaves are pinnately veined and fairly broad, with the lower leaves occasionally cordate. The several moderate-sized heads have yellow ray and disk flowers. The achenes are usually glabrous, and the involucre have few, if any, long hairs.

Heart-leaved arnica (*Arnica cordifolia*) – Similar to mountain arnica, and very common at low to mid-elevations in wooded mountains, heart-leaved arnica may also be found occasionally at higher elevations. It may be distinguished from mountain arnica by having fewer and larger flowering heads, broader and more cordate leaves, long white hairs on the involucre and short hairs on the achenes.

Twin arnica (*Arnica sororia*) – Twin arnica is at home in the open, dry areas of the foothills, but may be found at moderate elevations. The leaf blades are narrowly elliptic and acute, with three to five main veins from the base. The two to three pairs of stem leaves are much reduced, while the larger basal leaves are densely tufted. The foot-tall stems have one to three flowering heads (two, if the common name is correct), with yellow ray and disk flowers and white barbellate pappus.

Hairy arnica (*Arnica mollis*) – Hairy arnica will be found in wet areas at moderate to high elevations in the mountains, where it is often common in seeps. It has no basal leaves; the three to four pairs of stem leaves are reduced upward, and vary from obovate to lanceolate. The few broad heads have the usual yellow ray and disk flowers, but the pappus is tawny and subplumose.

Nodding arnica (*Arnica parryi*) – Nodding arnica is the only species in our area which has no ray flowers, although another species (*A. discoidea*, which has broader leaves) is found in Klickitat County. The solitary stems average about one and a half feet tall, with the two to four pairs of lanceolate to somewhat broader stem leaves strongly reduced upward. There are usually several heads on the stem, and, as advertised, they are nodding in bud. Like hairy arnica, it has tawny pappus, but it is found in drier meadows and woods at moderate elevations.

WNPS Study Weekend 2015
(from the WNPS web page)

Islands in the Sky:
A North Cascades Adventure

The Koma Kulshan Chapter invites you to join them for this year's Native Plant Study Weekend. Come enjoy the splendor of the Heather Meadows area at road's end as well as destinations along the Mount Baker Highway. The North Cascades is a rugged mountainous region, with steep-sided valleys and snowy peaks, as well as the largest number of active glaciers in the lower 48 states. The complex geologic history of mountain building, glacial advance and retreat, and climatic factors has created a patchwork of isolated mountaintops. Like the floras of oceanic islands, these "sky islands" are home to a unique flora of cold-adapted plants that are maintained through migration barriers and amenable climatic conditions. The surrounding forests, wetlands, and river valleys offer rich botanical opportunities as well.

They are planning a wide range of outings with varying degrees of difficulty, including strolls, hikes, and workshops. Your options will range from taking a leisurely walk along a wheelchair accessible path to using your ice axe to break your own trail on a snow-covered slope en route to some of Washington's premier alpine habitat. For more information and to register, go to:

http://www.wnps.org/study_weekend/home.html

Restoring Native Pollinator Habitat:
Puget Sound Lowlands
by Matt Schwartz

Learn about the importance of restoring native pollinator habitat in the Summer 2015 edition of *Douglasia*, the quarterly journal of the Washington Native Plant Society. And visit <http://www.wnps.org/> for an overview of using pollinator-friendly plants and to access plant lists for particular habitats.

Arnica cordifolia



Photo – B. Mayer

**WNPS Central Washington Chapter
Late Season Field Trip Schedule- 2015**

All drivers should have a current Discover Pass. At trailheads on National Forest property, a Northwest Forest Pass or Golden Age Passport (Interagency Senior Pass) is often required. Contact the trip leader before the trip; if this year is like last year, there could be some destination changes. Unless otherwise stated, these are all-day hikes; bring lunch and water.

Saturday, June 20 – Pete’s Lake. We will follow the trail 6.4 miles each way to Pete’s Lake. 300 feet elevation gain. We will pass through riparian vegetation, old-growth forest, lake, rock outcrops, and stunning views. Meet at the west side of the Super-1 parking lot in Ellensburg at **8am** or meet at Roslyn library at 8:45. Maximum 12 people Wilderness area- maximum 12 people. Laura Potash, leader. Email: lauraleepotash@msn.com Phone: (206) 678-7866

Saturday, June 28 -- Fifes Ridge. We will drive to the upper trailhead of the Fifes Ridge Trail (USFS 954) from the Crow Creek side of the Ridge via Road 1920. The hike will be on the open Fifes Ridge line (elevation 5400 feet) and along trail 954 into the caldera of a 25 million year old volcano. The major habitats are mesic forest, grassland and rock. If spring arrives later than usual, we may hike along Wash Creek on the lower end of the Fifes Ridge Trail (USFS 954) from SR 410 instead. Meet at the south side of the 40th Avenue Bi-Mart parking lot in Yakima at **9:00 am**. Ed Lisowski, leader. Email: lisowski@nwinfo.net Phone: (509) 248-4590

Saturday July 11 – Cash Prairie. Drive right to this large, open prairie with seeps and streams in it and spectacular views across the deep canyons to the southwest. Large patches of Penstemon should be blooming, along with little gems like three-leaved lewisia and yellow-staining collomia. Meet at the south side of the 40th Avenue Bi-Mart parking lot in Yakima at **8:30am**. Ed Lisowski, leader. Email: lisowski@nwinfo.net Phone: (509) 248-4590

Saturday, July 25 – Paris Creek. Paris Creek flows into the Cle Elum River about two miles north of Salmon la Sac. We will climb the Paris Creek Trail, looking for slender wintergreen (*Gaultheria ovatifolia*) in bloom along the way, hoping to reach the wet meadows where butterwort (*Pinguicula vulgaris*) grows. Meet at the west side of Super 1 parking lot in Ellensburg at **8:30 am**. Noel Knoke leader. Email: nbknoke@yahoo.com Phone: (509) 313- 3233.

Saturday, August 1 – Buckwheats of Vantage. Join us for a short, half day trip to see the summer flowering buckwheats at Vantage. This will mostly be a driving trip with stops including Basalt Gardens and Gingko State Park. Meet at the west side of Super 1 parking lot in Ellensburg at **8am**. Noel Knoke leader. Email: nbknoke@yahoo.com Phone (509) 313-3233.

Late Season Field Trip Schedule- 2015, cont...

Saturday, August 8 – Wetlands of the American River (SR 410). We will explore forested wetlands, open marsh areas, and seep areas along the American River (SR 410). We will begin at the Mesatchee Creek campground with the hope of finding *Drosera rotundifolia* and end the day west of Chinook Pass to find *Pinguicula vulgaris*. The hike will be mostly walking on level areas with some driving between stops. If you have Wellies, bring them, but they are not necessary. Meet at the south side of the 40th Avenue Bi-Mart parking lot in Yakima at **8:00 am**. Ed Lisowski, leader. Email: lisowski@nwinfo.net Phone: (509) 248-4590

August 14-16- WNPS Study Weekend, Islands in the Sky: A North Cascades Adventure. Visit www.wnps.org for more information.

From Conservation Northwest’s May 2015 E-Newsletter
(<http://www.conservationnw.org/news/e-newsletter>)

Wolf on Camera near Leavenworth

State and federal biologists have confirmed it: the animal in a photo captured by our Citizen Wildlife Monitoring Project in the Chiwaukum Mountains between Leavenworth and Stevens Pass is a gray wolf! It's the first officially documented in the area since wolves began to recolonize Washington in the late 2000s. The animal is likely a dispersing wolf that traveled into or through the area. Still, it's an exciting discovery that shows Washington's wolves are expanding their range and moving west! Check out more photos of this mysterious canine, and learn about how our Wildlife Monitoring Project helps document wolf recovery and other rare Northwest wildlife in this News Update

Wolverines in the Teanaway Valley

Wolverines have been recolonizing the Cascade Mountains in recent years. Once locally extirpated, these elusive creatures have spread south from Canada since the early 2000's, with up to three dozen likely present in Washington's North Cascades today. And this spring, researchers from the Central Cascades Wolverine Study captured some fantastic images of wolverines in the upper Teanaway Valley, including what's likely the area's new dominant male! Unfortunately, even with less than 300 wolverines in the lower 48 states, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has overruled its own biologists and abandoned proposed Endangered Species protections for wolverines. That's why we joined an Intent to Sue letter to ensure the agency follows well-established science and gives wolverines protections vital to their species' survival.

Join the Washington Native Plant Society

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MEMBERSHIP CATEGORY

Each membership entitles you to affiliation with one chapter, add \$5.00 for each additional chapter selected.

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2015 Field Trips

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Check inside or online for more information on upcoming Field Trips
www.wnps.org/chapter_info/central_washington/home.html

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