

ERIOGONUM SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 3 NO. 2 September 2011



***Eriogonum gracilipes*, White Mountains Wild Buckwheat**
Endemic to White Mountains, California

Photographer - Ron Wolf

Dear Society Member,

2012 will mark the start of the fourth year of the Eriogonum Society. Both Hugh and I have been pleasantly surprised at the number of people who have joined and their great interest in all things Eriogonum. The society has almost 125 members in good standing, two good annual meetings under our belt, a good newsletter, two successful seed exchanges and \$4000.00 in the bank.

We think that the society has been successfully launched and can look forward to a fine future. After three years of starting and leading the society, Hugh and I believe that it is time to turn the leadership over to others who will plan and lead it into the future. To accomplish this we have developed a slate of offices, each of which needs to be filled for a two year period beginning January 1, 2012. Each of these positions will also be a member of the Board of Directors. We believe that each officer need only serve for 2 years and shouldn't be required to continue on through a chain of offices. Hugh and I also plan to continue to participate, help and advise the new officers in any way we can.

The timetable for the election process is found below.

The nomination form is on the following page and lists the eight offices that will run the society and comprise the Board of Directors. Each position has a short description of duties involved and a place to enter a nomination. Please read the jobs over carefully and send in your choice for nominations to one or more offices - either for yourself or someone you think would do a good job and someone you have discussed the position with. You will note that a few of the positions already are filled for the next two years and nominations are not required for them.

Oct 1. Due date for all nominations. Please send yours to Hugh at humanator@yahoo.com..

Oct. 15. Election ballot will be sent out by email to all members.

Oct. 22. Final date for submitting your vote.

Oct. 31. Election results sent out to all members by this date.

Nov. 1. New officers and Board installed.

We have a good organization starting to develop very well and really need your help and guidance to continue it on its way.

Best wishes, Hugh and Bob

The NOMINATION form follows on the next page.

ERIOGONUM SOCIETY

NOMINEES FOR OFFICERS AND BOARD MEMBERS, 2012-2014

1. **President***. Duties: Leader of society and Board. Schedules and leads at least one board meeting per year(can be done by email), implements Board decisions by coordinating with other officers. Plans overall direction of society.

Nominee: STEPHEN LOVE has accepted the job for 2012-2014.

2. **Vice President***. Duties: Selects annual meeting leaders and makes sure plans are reasonable and scouting and scheduling are performed successfully.

Nominee _____

3. **Membership Chair***. Duties: Solicits new members. Keeps up-to-date membership roster, notifies members of dues renewals, contacts delinquent members of past due dues twice - once in March and again in July.

Nominee _____

4. **Treasurer***. Maintains society funds in bank and PayPal accounts, pays bills, prepares annual Treasurer's Report on cash receipts, expenses and balances.

Nominee _____

5. **Newsletter Editor***. Duties: solicits articles and publishes at least four electronic newsletters per year.

Nominee: CHERYL BEYER has accepted the job for 2012-2014.

Seed Exchange Coordinator*. Duties: collects eriogonum seed from members, prepares list of species available for purchase, markets timing and need for seeds, publishes guidelines and timing for seed exchange, fills seed orders, and sends annual report to President, and cash collected to Treasurer.

Nominee: RAY FLETCHER has accepted to job for 2102-2014.

7. **Outside Board Member***. Duties: attends board meetings and provides help and counsel to President and other board members.

Nominee _____

8. **Website Manager***. Duties: maintains and improves content and usefulness of website, prepares information and codes for new members to utilize website.

Nominee: HUGH MACMILLAN has accepted the job for 2012-2014

* Member, Board of Directors

Second Annual Meeting

Bishop, California, August 11-14, 2011

By Beth Corbin

A great time was had by all at the second annual Eriogonum Society Meeting, in Bishop, California, on



August 11-14, 2011. The meeting kicked off on Thursday afternoon at the White Mountain Research Station, with brief socializing and then an interesting talk by Dr. James Reveal about the current state of the wild buckwheats. About 60 Eriogonophiles (OK, so I just made up that word) were present for the update on taxonomy, which we learned is still rather unresolved (and several appeals for graduate students were sounded...). It appears that *Eriogonum* proper will be limited to a small group of mostly Eastern US species. Other subgenera will be raised to genus level, but there are still questions

needing research about particular sorting and relationships within many of these groups. We were glad to get an updated and expanded manual of the *Eriogonums*, which we put through a rigorous test drive during the keying workshop on Friday.

We learned or reviewed *Eriogonum* terminology and morphology, and how to recognize subgenera. Now-familiar terms bounced off that old trailer/classroom's walls: floccose, elliptic, caudex, ternate, involucre, stipe, tepals (monomorphic or dimorphic), traces, achene, fascicled, etc. We also learned some interesting ecological facts, such as inflated (fistulose) stems, like *Eriogonum inflatum*'s, store carbon dioxide for carbon fixation at night when it's cooler, and photosynthesis occurs primarily in the green stem tissue rather than the early-withering leaves. *Eriogonum* stamens are arranged such that they're situated for



outcrossing the first 1-2 days per flower, then will switch to self-pollination if that doesn't

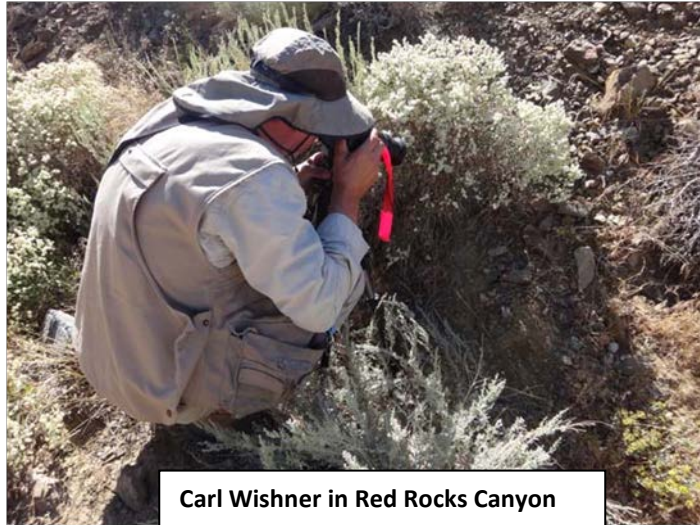
work. Eriogonums attract lots of different pollinators; a study in Colorado found 156 different visitors to one species. We also learned that *E. fasciculatum* is the single most important bee plant in the nation, because even though flowers are small, they are numerous per plant and the plants are abundant over a large area of the southwest. We looked at a few representatives as we talked about morphology: *E. microthecum* var. *laxiflorum* (a more primitive *Eriogonum*) in the subgenus Eucycla, *E. alatum* (a monocarpic perennial with winged fruit) in the subgenus Pterogonum, and *E. annuum* (a woolly biennial, despite the name, from the Great Plains) in the

subgenus Micrantha. It was a good overview.



Dr. Reveal's buckwheat revelations.

On Friday, half the group went to the field for the morning, and half was in the lab for the keying workshop, then groups switched for the afternoon. In the morning keying session, Dr. Reveal led us through a group keying exercise of species in three different subgenera: *E. umbellatum* var. *ellipticum* in the subgenus *Oligogonum* (flowers with stipes), *E. cernuum* (with pandurate/fiddle shaped outer tepals) in the subgenus *Ganysma* (mostly annuals with smooth involucre), and *E. vimineum* in the subgenus *Oregonium* (mostly annuals with angled, appressed involucre). After that, we were on our own to individually key some of the many excellent fresh specimens brought in by Dr. Reveal or workshop participants. I especially liked being able to key a plant, then flip the location card over to see whether we'd got it right. It was great fun, but there was no hope of getting to all the plethora of *Eriogonum* present. We also had a chance to examine some *Dedeckera eurekaensis* that Jim and others had made a pilgrimage to find the previous evening, and heard about how Mary Dedecker discovered this unique, long-lived genus in the *Eriogonoideae* tribe which rarely sets fruit.



Carl Wishner in Red Rocks Canyon

The Friday afternoon field trip was led by local Bishopite Scott Hetzler to the Chidago Canyon area north



**Aaron Sims, California Native Plant Society
rare plant botanist, slowly exhaling**

of Bishop. We caravanned out to the site on the low hills off the Fish Slough Road, in the Owens Valley. The route past Red Rocks Canyon was scenic, and we found nine *Eriogonums*: *E. heermannii* var. *humilius* (an intricately branched shrub), *E. nidularium* (aptly named bird's nest), *E. microthecum* var. *ambiguum*, *E. umbellatum* var. *nevadense* (the familiar sulfur wild buckwheat), *E. deflexum* (looks like a miniature African savanna tree), *E. baileyi* var. *baileyi* (a small, white-flowered annual), *E. brachyanthum* (a small yellow-flowered annual), *E. nummular* (round, coin-shaped leaves), and *E. rupinum* (just starting to flower). A report of *E. spargulinum* turned out to be *Oxytheca*; it was interesting to see the awn-tipped involucre that separate this genus from *Eriogonum*. Although it was hot at the lower elevation site, the plants were interesting, a breeze refreshed us, and Scott is an energetic and knowledgeable guide.

Friday night was the banquet at Whiskey Creek Restaurant. The business meeting was mercifully short, consisting of a report that the Society's finances are in good shape, encouragement from Bob McFarlane for members to step up into leadership roles for the Society, and notice that Cheryl Beyer has agreed to continue as newsletter editor and Hugh MacMillan as webmaster (thanks Cheryl and Hugh!) and Ray Fletcher volunteered to organize the seed exchange. Then Kathy Pyle gave us a great preview of next

year's trip to the Steens Mountains in Oregon (third weekend in July 2012 – mark your calendars now!) where we'll stay at the remote Malheur Field Station. We also got an invitation to join the California Native Plant Society's Treasure Hunt on Monday, to look for rare plant occurrences in the White Mountains. The highlight of the evening was an inspiring talk by Jim Reveal about discovery, using his own life's story as an example of how pursuing curiosity can lead to wonderful and important discoveries of the natural world. It was a great end to a great day.

Saturday I was with the Sierra group, led by Jim Reveal. We took the old Highway 395 north-northwest



Eastslope foothills. Photo by Rachel Fletcher.

of Bishop, making several stops along the way. We saw numerous *Eriogonums*, mostly in good bloom, on the east-slope Sierra foothills, and heard about the history and personality of early collectors. At the first stop, just past Paradise, we saw *E. deflexum* var. *deflexum*, *E. wrightii* var. *subscaposum*, *E. microthecum* var. *ambiguum* (and learned it has medicinal properties), *E. umbellatum* var. *nevadense*, and *E. baileyi*. A little farther up, we stopped to see *E. kennedyi* var. *purpusii* (a very nice compact mat that makes a good, early-flowering garden plant) and *E. umbellatum* var. *chlorothamnus* (literally "green shrub," with quite attractive flowers and foliage). Continuing up the road, we stopped near Rock Creek, where the hillside held *E. nudum* var. *pubiflorum*, a yellow-flowered variety with hollow, sometimes fistulose stems that photosynthesize. Farther up Rock Creek, we found a patch of *E. elatum* var. *elatum*, with tall stems adorned with numerous aphids, a common occurrence for this species. Continuing north, we regained "new" Highway 395, then turned west and went up to the McGee Creek Trailhead, at a bit higher elevation. Here we saw *E. umbellatum* var. *nevadense* still in

flower, and did some sampling about whether plants were female, male, or both. We saw two varieties of *E. microthecum*, the yellow-flowered and later blooming var. *ambiguum* and the white-flowered, early blooming var. *laxiflorum*, growing side by side but keeping their distinctions. Driving back down the McGee Creek Road, we stopped at a Forest Service campground for lunch in the shade of picnic table shelters. From there, we continued north on Highway 395, then turned east on Whitmore Road and stopped across from one of the many hot springs in the vicinity. There was a nice patch of *E. caespitosum* (in the



Examining *Eriogonum caespitosum* in the Crowley Lake Allotment. Cows were off to the side and in the distance.



Sexing male and female *Eriogonum* flowers. Photo by Rachel Fletcher.

flower, and did some sampling about whether plants were female, male, or both. We saw two varieties of *E. microthecum*, the yellow-flowered and later blooming var. *ambiguum* and the white-flowered, early blooming var. *laxiflorum*, growing side by side but keeping their distinctions. Driving back down the McGee Creek Road, we stopped at a Forest Service campground for lunch in the shade of picnic table shelters. From there, we continued north on Highway 395, then turned east on Whitmore Road and stopped across from one of the many hot springs in the vicinity. There was a nice patch of *E. caespitosum* (in the

subgenus *Oligogonum*); this particular occurrence was very white-leaved and tight-matted. It quite resembled the cow-pies in the vicinity... We also saw more *E. baileyi* here, and found that it can be with or without glands on the perianth. The last group stop of the day was at Benton Crossing, where we found the unusual Eriogonoideae *Goodmanii luteola*, with little yellowish flowers and awn-tipped, non-tubular involucre. Here we also found *E. ampullaceum*, an annual in the subgenus *Oregonium*, with urn-shaped flowers. Because it was still early in the afternoon, cars scattered in different directions to continue exploring. Our carload went back to the McGee Creek trailhead and took a lovely hike up into views of a glacial cirque; we found the annual *E. spergulinum* var. *reddingianum* along the trail.

Sunday, my group went with Scott Hetzler up the White Mountains, working our way from lower canyons on Highway 168 up to over 11,000 feet elevation. The first stop was at Tollhouse Spring, the



only water for miles around and very popular with the chukars and other birds. We found a different variety of *E. deflexum*, var. *beratum* with longer peduncles, and *E. fasciculatum* var. *polifolium*, near the north end of its range. We also saw the now-familiar plants *E. heermannii* var. *humilium*, *E. nidularium*, and *E. inflatum*. This site, as is much of the canyon, was on Cambrian rocks in the Campedo Formation, Scott told us. Farther up the canyon we stopped at an open pinyon pine forest and found *E. wrightii* var. *subscaposum* in flower, and *E. panamintense*, named for the Panamint Range just south of here. On a nearby

outcrop of limestone of the Poleta Formation, we found a different variety of *E. heermannii*, this one being var. *argense*, which is even more compact and intricately branched than other varieties and is limited to limestone. A roadside *Datura* plant was showing off its huge flowers. We climbed much higher on the road, and finally stopped near Schulman Grove at over 9,000' elevation. There were some pretty cushion wild buckwheats here: *E. gracilipes*, as graceful as its name and with reddish, capitate inflorescences and glandular involucre above a dense mat, and a very compact and matted *E. umbellatum* var. *versicolor*, which perhaps may be crossing with var. *dichrocephalum*. The *Eriogonums* were neat, and the bristlecone pines equally enchanting and awesome. We continued along the White Mountains on a gravel road to the Wyman Canyon cutoff, where we had a lunch spot on a rocky outcrop with unbeatable views and cool breezes. New *Eriogonums* were seen here: *E. ovalifolium* var. *nivale* forming a nice mat, and *E. mensicola*, closely related to the *E. panamintense* we had seen earlier. Most of us decided to venture further into the Whites, so drove on to Sheep Pass, where we found what Scott described as a "moonscape" of true alpine vegetation at 11,700' elevation. We saw tons of *E. gracilipes*, and other cute cushion plants. The stiff alpine breeze was quite a change from the valley. One last stop (for our car anyway) was at the Patriarch Grove, to see and photograph bristlecone pines. What a trip!

Many thanks to those that organized and contributed to the highly successful meeting, in particular Bob McFarland, Hugh MacMillan, Jim Reveal, and Scott Hetzler. Your excellent work to create such an enjoyable and educational event is much appreciated by all!



Seed Exchange

Dear Eriogonum Society Members,

The Eriogonum Society's Seed Exchange depends on your kind donations of *Eriogonum* seed. Please consider collecting and donating seeds of species and varieties common in cultivation as well as those unique beauties that deserve a place in our gardens. I hope to have a seed list out by the end of November so please think about collecting seed now if you haven't already done so.

For wild collected seed, please provide information on the state and county where the seed was collected. Additional information regarding location, elevation and habitat would be helpful. Seeds should be cleaned but partially cleaned seed of taxon that are difficult to process may be acceptable. Please contact me (plant_man@sbcglobal.net) if this is the case.

Seeds should be sent to:

Ray Fletcher
475 Missoula Court
Reno Nv, 89511

Thank you in advance for your kind donations!

Sincerely,
Ray Fletcher

A BIG THANK YOU TO CECILE SHOHEH!!!, who was our Seed Exchange Coordinator this past year. Cecile brought the remaining seeds to the Friday night banquet. That was a great idea, as it gave those who might have been reluctant to purchase unseen seeds could now examine the packets. Ray Fletcher has offered to be the new Seed Exchange Coordinator for the next 2 years. Thank you for volunteering, Ray!

THIRD ANNUAL MEETING STEENS MOUNTAIN, OREGON JULY 2012

The third annual meeting of the Eriogonum Society will be held in at Steens Mountain, Oregon, in July, 2012, possibly staying at the Malheur Field Station. Details will be forthcoming.



ERIOGONUM QUIZ!

Below are 2 photos. Test your skill to identify which is *Eriogonum caespitosum* and which is the cow pie. Both photos were taken in the Crowley Lake Allotment. Answer is in the next newsletter.



Photo 1



Photo 2



Eriogonophiles examining exciting find in the Crowley Lake Allotment. . Photo by Ray Fletcher.

Submissions to the newsletter

Do you have a favorite Eriogonum you would like to write about and submit to the **Eriogonum Society Newsletter**? Or would you like to write an essay on a pertinent topic? Do you have corrections to a past newsletter, or have a letter to the editor you'd like published? Please send your article to the newsletter editor, whose email address is below.

Eriogonum Society Contacts:

Membership	Bob McFarlane	denvrbob@gmail.com
Website	Hugh MacMillan	humanator@yahoo.com
Seed Exchange	Ray Fletcher	plant_man@sbcglobal.net
Newsletter	Cheryl Beyer	cbeyer@fs.fed.us

Articles for the Newsletter: If you are interested in writing or submitting an article to future newsletters, please notify one of the above contacts. Thank you!

Membership Renewal

The Eriogonum Society has attracted over 100 people who love eriogonums and are interested in learning more about them. A number of our members had a great time at our first annual meeting in Reno and we look forward to our next one in the White Mountains of California next August (2011). Our dues include qualification to register for our annual meetings, as well as an on-line newsletter, annual seed exchange and access to the members section of our website.

Dues run on a calendar basis, renewed at the first of each year.

Dues for all except students are \$10. Dues for students are \$5. Life Membership is \$150. In addition, members may pay two years in advance and receive the third year free. Please do not send cash.

You may pay either by check or by PayPal on our website at <http://erigonum.org>. Make checks payable to Eriogonum Society. Mail a completed form and check to:

Bob McFarlane, Membership

5609 S. Locust St., Greenwood Village, CO 80111

Please update any current info with new phone numbers or e-mail addresses. Thanks for your enthusiastic support of the Society

Name- _____

Address- _____

Phone #- _____

E-Mail- _____

We do not sell, share or distribute member data in any manner.