ERIOGONUM SOCIETY NEWSLETTER

VOLUME 4 NO. 1 August 2012

***Eriogonum ovalifolium var. depressum/nivale*, Cushion wild buckwheat**
Steens Mountain, Oregon
Photo by Dr. James Reveal

The group that spent the day in the Alvord Desert, a dry lake bed or playa in the rain shadow of Steens Mountain, was treated to a unique and vast landscape of amazing features – but not much in the way of wildflowers. Unfortunately, 2012 is not only an exceptionally hot, dry year, but typically the Alvord desert wildflowers are more apparent in the month of May. & } Œ š Z š Œ • } v U } v ^ µ v Ç U š group opted to go to the Strawberry Mountains instead of the Alvord.

Janel Johnson and Reese in the Alvord. Photo by Hugh Mac Millan.

Alvord Desert – looking for wild buckwheats. Photo by Loraine Yeatts.

The Excursion to the Strawberry Mountains of Central Oregon

(Two tales of floral exploration)

"A Satisfying Trip"

By Ray Fletcher

On Saturday July, 21st, members of Group B endured very hot temperatures in the Alvord Basin and observed very few plants in bloom. So on Sunday July, 22nd, Group A decided to skip the scheduled trip to the Alvord Basin in favor of an excursion to the Strawberry Mountains, north of the Field Station. On Sunday morning we headed North on Highway 395 to the small town of Seneca. From there, we headed East on Logan Valley Road, which becomes 16, into the Malheur National Forest. Our first stop was at a National Forest Campground off the main road where we ate lunch under the trees. A creek ran through the campground and provided an opportunity to observe flowering species of several genera including: *Heracleum*, *Mimulus*, *Penstemon*, *Polemonium*, *Ranunculus* and *Senecio*. Our group counted four species of *Mimulus*, including *Mimulus lewisii*, which was putting on quite a show with very dark pink blooms. In the Sierra Nevada Mountains of California, *M. lewisii* has much paler pink flowers, so it was quite a treat to see these gorgeous plants. The pollinators were out in full force and we were fortunate to observe many species of butterflies, day-flying moths, bees, wasps and flies. One insect that stood out for me is the day flying moth *Gnophaela vermiculata* or the Police Car Moth (Fig. 1).

Figure 1. Police Car Moth. Photo by John Weiser.

We then proceeded on to a higher elevation overlook in the Strawberries, where we were able to see splendid natural rock gardens (Fig 2), montane meadows ablaze in brilliant colors (Fig. 3) and our first Eriogonum species. Eriogonum flavum var. piperi (Fig. 4) was in full bloom announcing its potential as a

Figure 2. Splendid natural rock garden in the Strawberry Mountains. Photo by John Weiser.

Figure 3. Montane meadows ablaze in brilliant colors. Photo by John Weiser.

valuable rock garden plant. We also observed the attractive creamy white blooms of Eriogonum heracleoides Growing among the rocks on the slopes we discovered a choice plant of Epilobium

obcordatum, or Rock Fringe, but unfortunately it was just beginning to flower. After a very satisfying day botanizing in the glorious Strawberry Mountains, we made the return trip to the Fields.

***Figure 4. Eriogonum flavum* var. *piperi*. Photo by Gary Monroe.**

John Weiser enjoying the Strawberry Mountains. Photo by Stephen Love.

***Eriogonum flavum* v. *piperi* against rock. Photo by Kathy Pyle.**

“A Super Day in the Strawberries”

By Kathy Pyle

K v ^ µ v Ç U ' Œ } µ ‰ ^ _ } ‰ š š } Z v } Œ š Z š } D o Z µ Œ E š] } v & } Œ into the Blue Mountains. We explored north Harney County along Highway 395 and the southern end of the Strawberry subrange of the Blues. Our first stops were U-turns on the King Mountain Lookout road Á Z v Á v } µ v š Œ ^ o } • _ •] P v X , Á v • µ • • (µ o] v Œ Z] v P seen Eriogonum umbellatum subsp. subalpinum and some nice Castilleja species. Our detours gave us close-up views of ailing Ponderosa Pines plus sighting of Cat’s chortus macrocarpus and a sample of Gallium borale. Stopping in the Silvies River Valley, where the Silvies flows south from the Aldrich foothills into sagebrush steppe, we checked out Eriogonum ovalifolium growing in sagebrush habitat with Lupinus argenteum and Ericamerica viridiflorus.

We turned up Forest Rd. 16 in Seneca and did some botanizing in ditches where we found two eriogonums growing: E. heracleoides and E. umbellatum var. dichrocephalum. Earlier in the season, snowmelt trickles through the ditches, creating moist habitat for Penstemon rydberg i, Castilleja cusick ii, Phlox diffusa, and later, a speckled pale peach variant of Ipomopsis aggregata.

The group lunched at Parrish Cabin Campground and drove along Bear Creek to Indian Springs where lush streamside habitat awaited us. Four species of Mimulus, Veratrum, Aconitum, Rudbeckia occidentalis, and Polemonium occidentale and pulcherrimum ~ š Œ µ o Ç o ^ • À µ v J _ • U as well as many species of pollinating flies, bees and butterflies delighted us. Earlier in the season, Calyptridium, Alliums and Dicentra uniflora dot the open sunny areas surrounded by Ponderosas, Lodgepoles and Hemlocks.

Keying out *Eriogonum flavum*. Photo by Kathy Pyle.

At the High Lake trailhead, south entrance to the Strawberry Mountain Wilderness, many of us immediately flocked to the high-alpine meadow swathed in early bloomers including Linanthus nutalliiv a magnet for Painted Lady butterflies v and drifts of knotweed (Polygonatum), an eriogonum cousin. Castilleja applegati i, Anaphalis margaritacea, two Lomatium species, and Calyptridium were also in early flowering among Artemisia tridentata, Ponderosa Pines and Lodgepole Pines. But the big show occurred below an exposed ridge

leading to the High Lake trail. There, Eriogonum flavum subsp. piperi U W] ‰ Œ [• µ l Á Z š U (o } µ Œ] •
alongside Epilobium obcordata. This west-of-the-Rockies subspecies features spatulate to lanceolate
foliage that is covered with silky hairs, a dense-forming growth habit and conical involucres. What a
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heat.

Saturday evening the group reconvened to watch a powerpoint on the 2013 Eriogonum Society
meeting in Farmington, New Mexico that Bob Pennington is the lead on. It all looked very exciting, and
Bob will be coming out with more information in the next newsletter.

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many of which adorn the landscaping around his own property in Nevada. Photos of native plants,
including wild buckwheats, that John has grown from seed, were inspiration for all of us to get busy
and collect or grow out seed.

Steens Mountain: Group "B" listens to Dr. Don Mansfield explain some finer points of the flora of Steens Mountain. Photo by Dr. James Reveal.

FOURTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE/MEETING

Farmington, NEW MEXICO

In the heart of America's beautiful southwest

Save the date! Registration will open in 2013!

The fourth annual meeting of the Eriogonum Society will be held in Farmington, New Mexico, September 2013. Eriogonums and Green Chili Peppers! Come see the big, shrubby wild buckwheats! More information will be available in the next newsletter and on the society website.

Results of the Eriogonum Society Membership Survey

Stephen Love, Aberdeen, Idaho

In the spring of 2012, Stephen Love (Society President) and Hugh MacMillan (Webmaster) conducted a web-based survey of the Eriogonum Society membership to determine member expectations toward society organization and activities. This information will be used to guide board decisions associated with future society function and to guide those helping put together annual meetings. Survey questions included topics related to most aspects of Society operations and activities. Opportunities were provided to give input on benefits of membership, annual meeting activities, Society publication plans, the seed exchange, and involvement in conservation of species. This article summarizes the findings of the survey.

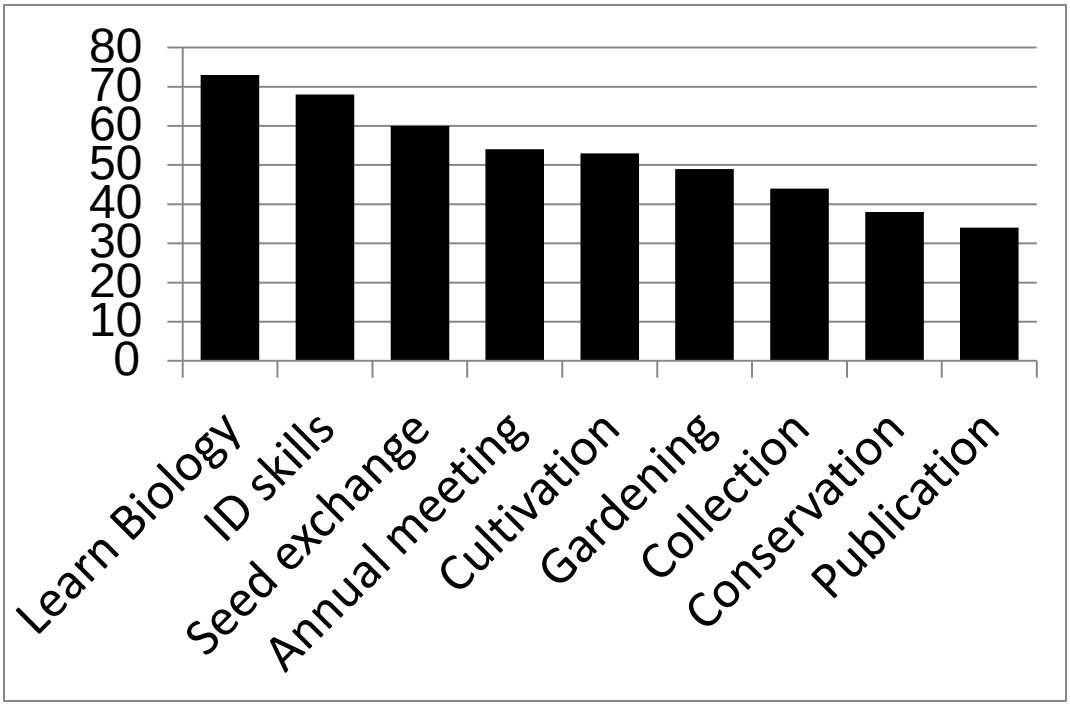
Fifty-eight people, almost half of the membership at the time, responded to the survey. This is an uncommonly high percentage of respondents for this type of survey and gives the results strong credibility, meaning it should be a good indicator of member opinions and desires. Here are the responses supplied by members to specific survey questions:

Question:

Why did you become a member of the Eriogonum Society?

Response:

Nine options were provided and respondents were asked to rate each option as to personal importance. The bars on the chart indicate the percentage of respondents who rated that category important, very important, or extremely important.



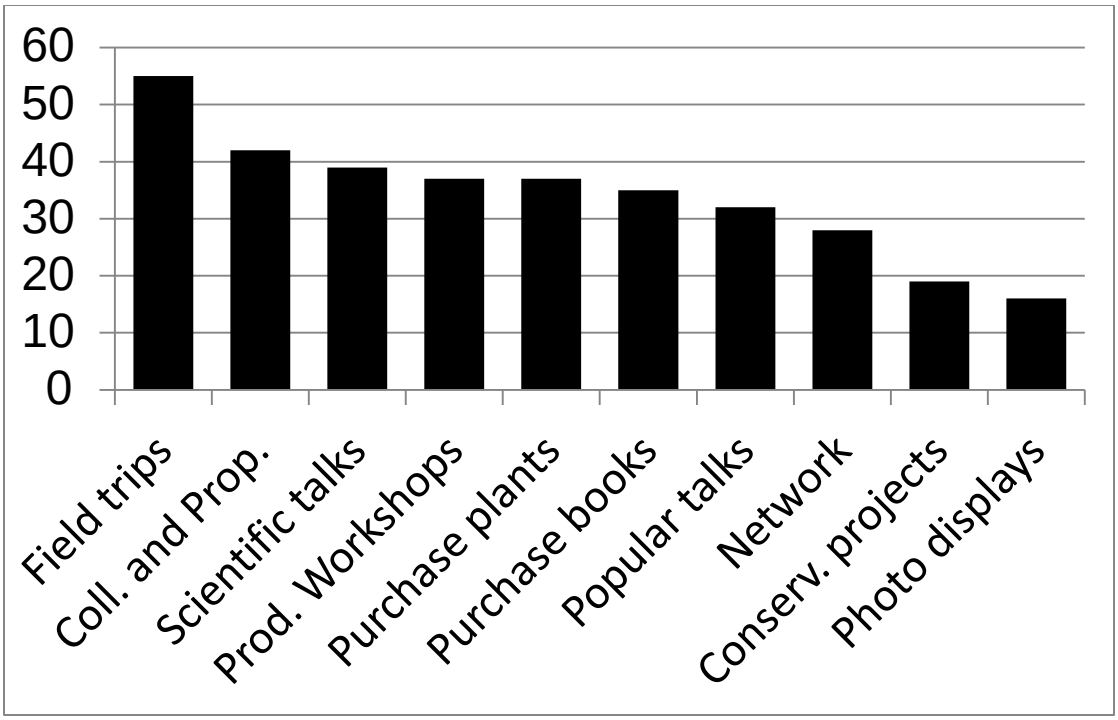
The two highest rated reasons for being a member of the Society are related to learning opportunities associated with the science of the genus, namely to learn more about the biology of Eriogonums and to improve species identification skills. Many members also became a part of the society for opportunities to participate in the seed exchange, attend annual meetings, and learn how to cultivate Eriogonum species. Learning about gardening with Eriogonums, finding opportunities to collect seed, becoming involved in conserving Eriogonum species, and having opportunities to publish information about the P v µ • o o Œ] À ‰ } •] š] À Œ • ‰ } v • • U µ š } v š Œ] š] À Œ • • š } u u Œ

Question:

Which features are important to you at annual meetings?

Response:

Ten options were provided and respondents were asked to rate each option as to personal importance. The bars on the chart indicate the percentage of respondents who rated that category important, very important, or extremely important.



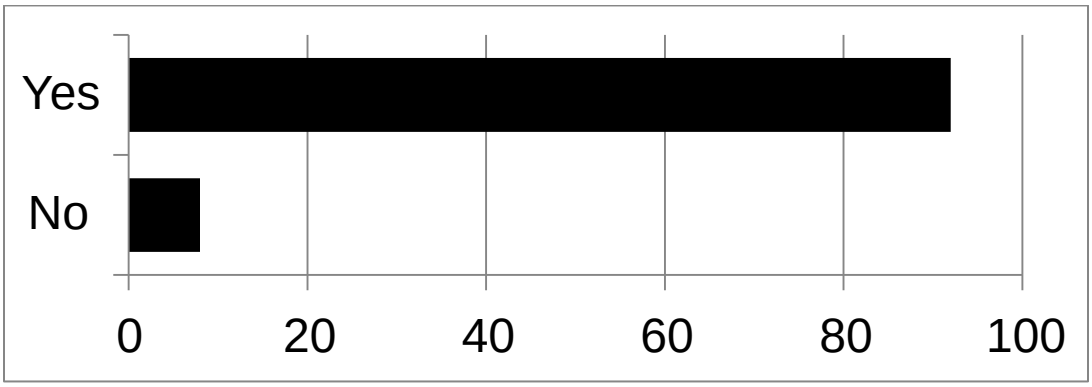
It was not a surprise that the highest rated activity at meetings was the opportunity to participate in field trips and to see plants. Also important to many members were opportunities to collect seed, learn about propagation and production of Eriogonum species, hear science-based talks, purchase plants, and purchase relevant books. Networking with members, participating in conservation activities, and viewing photo displays were less important to most members.

Question:

Do you consider the Eriogonum seed exchange to be valuable?

Response:

Respondents were asked to provide a yes or no answer.



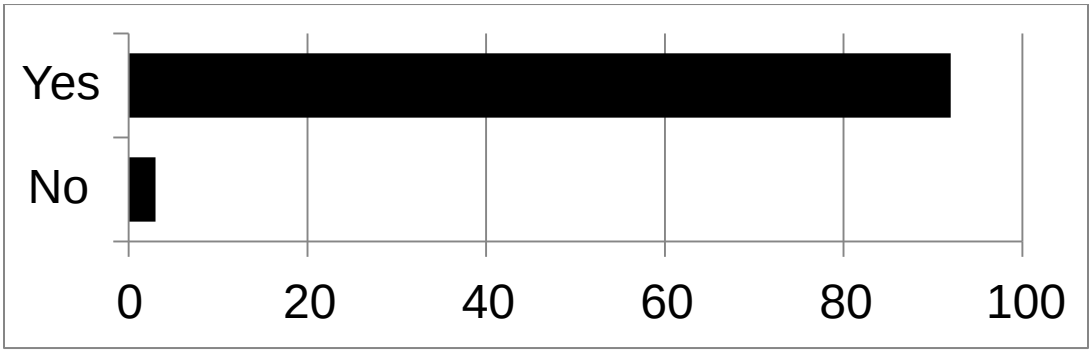
Ninety-two percent of the participants responded positively to this question, indicating strong support for maintaining and improving the seed exchange.

Question:

Would you like to see the Eriogonum Society publish an annual journal?

Response:

Respondents were asked to provide a yes or no answer.



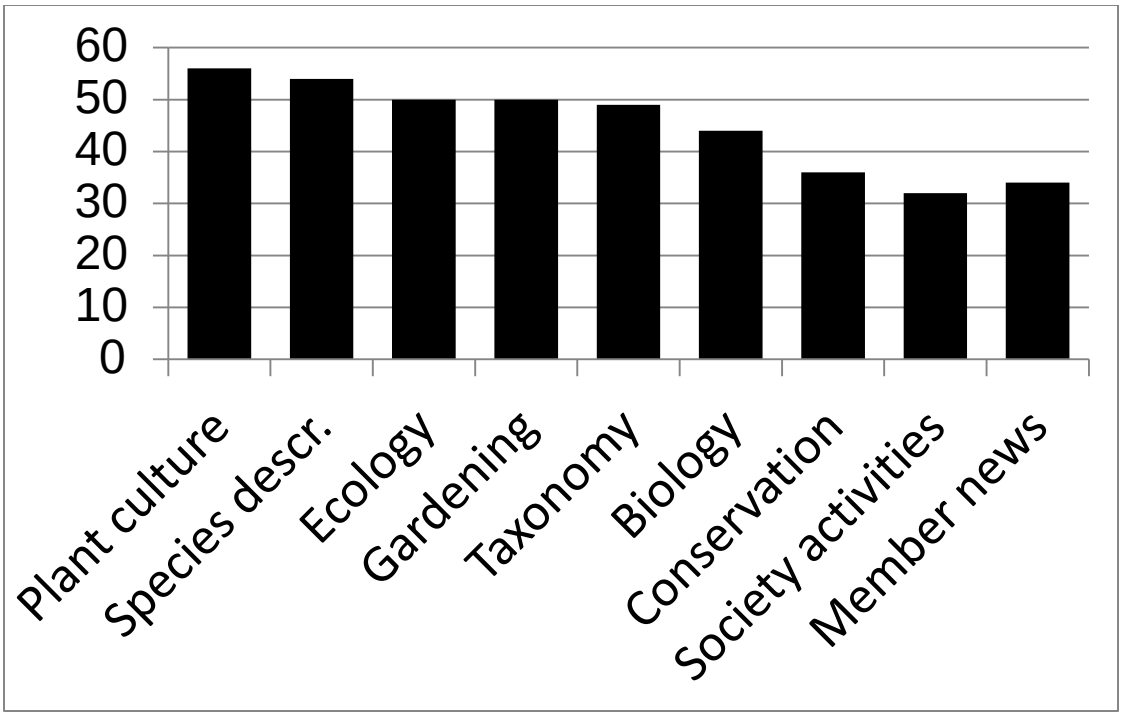
Ninety-seven percent of members indicated they would like to see the Society publish an annual bulletin or journal. This is a very strong indicator of a priority area for the Society. In a related question, 92% of respondents indicated that a digital format for the journal would be acceptable.

Question:

Would you like to see the Eriogonum Society publish an annual journal?

Response:

Nine options were provided and respondents were asked to rate each option as to personal importance. The bars on the chart indicate the percentage of respondents who rated that category important, very important, or extremely important.



The topics areas most members would like to see included in a Society journal are those related to Eriogonum culture, descriptions of species, ecology of the genus, and gardening with Eriogonums. Articles on the biology of the genus were also among the preferred topics. Information concerning conservation issues, society activities, and member news were less popular.

Three additional questions were asked. These questions and associated responses were as follows:

1 Would you like to see the Society become active in conservations issues? 92% said yes.

It appears that most members are concerned about conservation and would like to see the Society be active in working toward this end.

2 Would you like to see the Society develop monetary resources to promote conservations? 68% said yes.

Although most members would like to see the Society help with conservation, it appears that many feel]š]• v}š šZ ^}] šÇ[• (µvtošcontribute to this type of work.

3 Would you like to see the Society organize regional chapters and local events? 61 % said yes.

Although still a positive response, moving toward a more local organization, at least at this time, appears to be of less importance than many of the other subjects offered in the survey.

In summary, it appears the Society is a fairly diverse group with interests tied to many aspects of Eriogonum biology, propagation, culture, and taxonomy. There appears to be a slant toward interest in the science of the genus, but this is by no means universal. One thing that consistently emerged in the

survey was the desire of members to be given stimulating learning opportunities on topics related to the genus Eriogonum.

Board of Directors Introductions

Continued from last newsletter

Randy Tatroe: I am not a true plant nerd. While I am involved with, and held officer positions in, many plant societies (North American Rock Garden Society, American Penstemon Society, Water Garden Society and the Cactus and Succulent Society), my real reason for belonging to these societies is to meet and converse with plant experts, to talk about their passions and professions, and to travel to the beautiful areas in the world where these plants grow. What I do best with plants is buy the ones I like and ask my wife, Marcia, to find a place for them in our garden (I have been known on many occasions to buy the same plant over and over).

My professional careers were not associated with plants. My first career was as a hospital administrator in the USAF. After 22 years, I retired, changed careers and started working in higher education. I taught management, economics, hospital administration, critical thinking and some others, but soon was caught up in the new field of distance education. I pursued a PhD in that area and eventually became the Director of the Auraria Media Center in Denver CO. I retired from that career in 2008 and now spend my time traveling, supporting my wife in her writing and speaking career and photographing plants of all sorts wherever we find them.

Cheryl Beyer: t [o o š Z µ ‰ Á] š Z Z Œ Ç o] v š Z v Æ š v Á • o š š Œ X

Mike Bone stalking the wild Eriogonum cusickii near highway 20, Harney county, OR, June 20, 2012. Photo by Hugh Mac Millan.

Billy Hoyer on Steens. Photo by Kathy Pyle.

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 any topic? Do you have [illegible] article to the newsletter editor, whose email address is below.

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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!

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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, the second one in the White Mountains of California, and the third one at the Malheur Field Station. Our dues include qualification to register for our annual meetings, as well as the 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://eriogonum.org. Make checks payable to Eriogonum Society. Mail a completed form and check to:

Bob Pennington, Membership
1409 Agua Fria, Santa Fe, NM 87505-9507

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.