



NEVADA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

Native Plant Gardening in Nevada: A Practical Guide

by Hannah Bishop-Moser

When I started my career as a field biologist, I discovered the beauty of the high desert. Much of the landscape I explored would have new flora and fauna, showing me the unique ecosystems of Nevada. It is difficult for anyone to be here long without recognizing the distinct qualities of the state in which we live. I wanted to capture the beauty of these ecosystems in my own back yard. After trials and tribulations, and learning from the experts, I have created a general guide on why and how to create a native plant garden.

Why Have a Native Plant Garden?: Native plants evolve to their soil, landscape, and climate over thousands to millions of years. Nevada Native plants do well here because of that evolution. Other ornamental garden plants struggle because they did not evolve to the same soil, landscape, or climate conditions. This leads to Native plants having beneficial qualities such as:

1. **Drought tolerance:** Native plants typically use less water than common garden plants. This saves more of this precious resource.
2. **Require less fertilizer, compost, and other soil amendments:** Since most native plants evolved with low nutrient and low organic matter soils, they don't require it. This saves the gardener time and money in purchasing these amendments. It also lessens pollution as fertilizer runoff can pollute waterways.



Bumble Bee butt in *Penstemon* ©Hannah Bishop-Moser

3. **Extreme weather tolerance:** Native plants are well adapted to Nevada's climate and are generally more resilient to its weather extremes than many traditional landscape plants. They typically do not need to be covered or brought indoors when late spring snowstorms occur after dormancy has broken. Likewise, they are better adapted to withstand intense summer sun and heat without suffering from sunscald, wilting, or other common stressors. Native seeds can often be sown directly outdoors, eliminating the need for indoor seed starting and the hardening-off process required by many ornamental and vegetable species.

4. **Wildlife benefits:** Native plants provide food and habitat for the wildlife that evolved alongside them. Their seeds and fruits support native birds, while their flowers supply nectar and pollen for native bees, butterflies, wasps, and other pollinators. Although many common garden plants originate from Europe and primarily attract European honey bees, native bees often rely on native plants to meet their nutritional needs and complete their life cycles (UNR, 2024). By planting native species, gardeners help support the health and diversity of Nevada's native wildlife.
5. **Shows Nevada pride:** Beyond the practical benefits, gardening with native plants is a meaningful way to celebrate Nevada's unique landscapes and natural heritage. By growing species that belong here, we demonstrate an appreciation for the ecosystems that make our state special. A native garden reflects not only an understanding of Nevada's environment, but also a commitment to preserving its beauty and biodiversity for future generations.



Native bee on *Eriogonum* ©Hannah Bishop-Moser

How Do I Make a Native Plant Garden?: While spring is often thought of as gardening season, fall is actually one of the best times to plan a native landscape. Cooler temperatures make it more comfortable to survey your yard, map out your design, and research the right plants before the busy planting season begins. Many Nevada native plants can also be planted in fall, allowing them to establish roots over the winter and be better prepared for the heat of summer. While it is tempting to start with putting plants in the ground, that is the last step in the process to ensure the garden is successful. The main steps if starting from scratch are the following:

1. **Survey the property:** Note all physical features of the property. This includes property lines; the locations of windows and doors on the house; existing water lines, faucets, and irrigation boxes; existing hardscape and sidewalks; trees and other vegetation; fences and gates; nearby power lines; and any buildings or structures.
2. **Do your research:** If you are in a rural setting, research additional information about the property, such as easements or water rights. Visit the “Call Before You Dig” website at <https://www.nvenergy.com/safety/call-before-you-dig> or dial 811 to have underground utility lines mapped. Dig into the soil and note its rockiness, texture, structure, and permeability. More information on testing soil texture can be found here: <https://cmg.extension.colostate.edu/Gardenotes/214.pdf>. Also note any soil compaction, which is common around newer homes because heavy equipment is often used during construction. If you are concerned about soil pH, mineral composition, conductivity, organic matter, or texture, consider having the soil tested by a laboratory. Additional information on soil testing can be found here: <https://extension.unr.edu/publication.aspx?PubID=2223>.

3. **Map it out:** Create a large, accurately scaled drawing of the house and yard. Include everything identified during the survey and research steps. For firescaping considerations, draw a line five feet around the house and label it the “Flammable Zone.” Then draw another line 30 feet around the house and label it the “Firebreak.” It is recommended that nothing be planted within the five-foot zone and that particularly fire-prone plants, such as pines, not be planted within the 30-foot zone. More information on creating a fire-safe landscape can be found here: <https://www.livingwithfire.org/>. Next, note the different microclimates throughout the yard, including sunny areas, shady areas, and locations with greater moisture due to their proximity to existing sprinklers or other water sources.
4. **Plan your hardscape:** If alterations need to be made to the soil or hardscape, add those changes to the map. Consider wildlife-friendly landscaping features, such as water sources, nesting sites, and other forms of shelter. Decide whether the soil should be amended, raised garden beds should be added, or grading needs to be completed. Add all proposed changes to the map. Keep the available water source in mind and determine how the irrigation system will be set up. Native plants typically do not respond well to frequent sprinkler irrigation, which can contribute to fungal infections and root rot. Drip irrigation or infrequent overhead watering is generally recommended.
5. **Plan your softscape:** Decide whether any existing plants will be removed or relocated. Then choose the plants you would like to include in the garden. Research where each species is naturally adapted to determine whether it is likely to thrive in your local climate.

Remember that just because a plant is native to Nevada does not mean it will grow well at every Nevada home. For example, a riparian plant from the Tahoe region is unlikely to thrive in Las Vegas. Conversely, many Mojave Desert species may die during Reno’s hard freezes.

Group plants according to their soil, water, and sunlight needs. Then decide what to add and where, working in this order: trees, shrubs, forbs, and grasses. Larger plants should be considered first because they have a greater impact on the garden’s overall design, shading, and water needs.

To create visual interest, include a variety of colors, textures, and patterns. Repeat these elements throughout the landscape to draw the eye around the garden. Consider including plants from each category—trees, shrubs, grasses, and forbs—and repeat individual species or plants with similar appearances throughout the design.

Add each plant to the map and account for its full mature size, rather than its size at the time of planting.

Calscape.org is an excellent resource for landscape design inspiration, see here: <https://calscape.org/garden-gallery/>



©Hannah Bishop-Moser

- 6. Build your garden:** This is the fun part! Complete any necessary hardscaping and soil alterations, and then purchase your native plants. Nurseries and events offering native plants can be found here: <https://www.nvnps.org/blog/where-to-buy-native-plants> and here: <https://extension.unr.edu/publication.aspx?PubID=6921>. **Also see the events section of this newsletter!** Once you receive the plants, place them in their pots throughout the yard where you intend to plant them. Observe the design from several angles and make changes as needed. Once you are satisfied with the layout, put the plants in the ground and install the irrigation system. Native plants may need to be watered anywhere from once a week to once a month, depending on the species, season, soil, and growing conditions. They generally benefit from infrequent, deep watering because of their long root systems.
- 7. Enjoy:** Take time to appreciate your accomplishment. Add art, chairs, or other personal touches, and relax in your beautiful garden. You might even host a garden party to show off your work! Creating a native plant garden—or any garden—can take a great deal of effort. These steps may seem daunting at first, but they will ultimately help create a more successful garden. However, when in doubt, simply put the plant in the ground and see what happens. Your yard is meant to be experimental and to bring you joy, so get out there and have fun!

Literature Cited

Nevada - State Summaries 2019. (n.d.). In statesummaries.ncics.org. Retrieved July 24, 2026, from <https://statesummaries.ncics.org/chapter/nv/>

Ask the Professor: Which bees will my garden attract? (n.d.). In University of Nevada, Reno. Retrieved July 24, 2026, from <https://www.unr.edu/nevada-today/news/2024/atp-which-bees-will-my-garden-attract>



©Hannah Bishop-Moser

Field Trip Report: Toiyabe Range June 2026

by Patrick Silbey

As relative newcomers to the NNPS, at least compared to the tenure of some of our fellow members, Blake Ferrell, Allison Peterson-Park, and I couldn't recall having the opportunity to join an overnight field trip, although we were aware they had been hosted in the past. Given that we all enjoy spending much of our time from March to August each year looking for plants somewhere in the basin and range during the day and sleeping in (or, in Blake's case, on top of or underneath) our trucks at night, we thought it would be fun to organize such a trip for interested NNPS members. We decided on the Toiyabe Range for its mix of interesting plants and developed trails and campgrounds – the latter being rather rare in Nevada, the former being present just about everywhere if you have the right eye and mindset.

While Blake and Allison were incommunicado as they floated the Colorado River in wooden boats, I put together some basic outreach materials and fielded RSVPs. We were half-expecting to end up out there as a group of just us three hosts, but interest was strong, with seven NNPS members and guests from northern Nevada and southern California responding to our call, including at least three people who had never before attended an NNPS event of any kind.

On Friday night, everyone managed to find their way to the Columbine Campground on the west slope of the range, although the haphazard directions I had emailed out combined with the lack of signage and occasionally confusing and often bumpy dirt roads may have caused some delays. A campfire, snack buffet, and good conversations kept everyone up maybe just a bit later than we had planned. Everyone still was awake and ready to begin our hike to the crest on Saturday morning.



©Patrick Silbey

As we hiked up, we learned that a couple of attendees were new not just to NNPS but to botany as a whole, while others were relatively inexperienced in Nevada, and everyone pitched in with impromptu walking lessons on topics like the basic morphology of the *Asteraceae*, *Fabaceae*, and the genus *Castilleja*, Great Basin geology, vegetation zones, and many other topics, including, vitally, the correct pronunciation of “Nevada.” In exchange, we were treated to some new knowledge on grizzly bear ecology, rock art, and the activities of the local Audubon Society chapter. In an aspen grove on the way up, Tyler Hannum spotted and immediately recognized a mint that wasn't the common *Agastache urticifolia*.

Rather, it was *Dracocephalum parviflorum*, a plant that had not been collected in the Toiyabes before, at least according to the SEINet list Allison had printed in advance of the trip. Many other species in the sagebrush and aspen zones were in full flower, and our steep ascent was aided by the vibrant displays of *Castillejas*, *Penstemons*, lupines, and asters that accompanied us. *Eriogonum ovalifolium* var. *caelestinum*, which occurs from central Nevada to Mono County at high elevations, was our first rare plant, its adorable cushions and vibrant yellow heads spurring us onwards and upwards. *Primula fragrans* lit up a small meadow, but we passed quickly, thinking of the crest of the range.



Dracocephalum parviflorum ©Patrick Silbey

Just before reaching the crest, the trail we were following descends into a drainage. Not wanting to surrender any of our hard-won elevation, we decided to shortcut by following the base of some sheer cliffs. And lucky we did – we were treated to a beautiful display of *Geranium caespitosum* in the rocks. While appreciating these, we noticed a pink haze just below the cliffs ahead of us, which turned out to be the well-known Sierra stunner *Epilobium obcordatum* – a species not previously documented from anywhere in Nevada’s central ranges,



Epilobium obcordatum ©Patrick Silbey

although it is found in the Rubies and the Jarbidge area. A new 150-mile disjunct before reaching our goal!

At the crest, we appreciated the many low alpine species, including *Castilleja nana*, *Erigeron compositus*, and *Oxytropis parryi* as well as some tall *Cirsiums* and searched unsuccessfully for *Toiyabea alpina*. We caught the endemic *Trifolium rollinsii* on our way down, just a bit past peak flower.

With everyone a bit tuckered out from the long hike, we chose to drive up to Ophir Pass the next morning, where we explored another section of the crest and found the rare mustards, *Boechera ophira* and *Nevada holmgrenii*, tucked among the rocks. We had a discussion about varieties of *Ipomopsis congesta* while failing to find the endemic var. *nevadensis*, and everyone was happy to see *Sphaeromeria cana* (or *Artemisia albicans* if you insist) before making our way to Middlegate Station in a loose group and saying our goodbyes over burgers and fries with an all-biker audience.

We were grateful to receive some rave reviews, including from a new member who said NNPS “definitely beat out the Audubon Society,” and were left with some sage advice from John Weiser – “Don’t get old.”

Hope to see you at the next one!

Featured plant: *Sphaeralcea parvifolia*, small-leaf globemallow

by Alison Agneray

Sphaeralcea has about 40 species and is notoriously complicated. Intermountain Flora describes it as having “very weak character differences” between species that are frequently obscured by hybridization, rampant polyploidy, and leaves that change shape depending on how much it rained that spring. Today, I’ll focus on small-leaf globemallow, *Sphaeralcea parvifolia* A. Nelson, but much of this information applies to the entire genus complex. The name *Sphaeralcea* comes from the Greek *sphaira* (globe), plus *Alcea* (the genus for hollyhocks in the same Mallow family). *Parvifolia* comes from the Latin *parvus* (small) plus *folium* (leaf), meaning small-leaved. This species was typified from Nevada, collected by Leslie Goodding on “steep hillsides and rock crevices, Caliente, Lincoln Co., Nev., 22 May 1902.” Two other botanists described *S. marginata* (1906) and *S. arizonica* (1913), thinking they were distinct species, but they were eventually folded into *S. parvifolia*. It was also shuffled into *S. ambigua* as subspecies *rugosa* and pulled back out again, and it hybridizes so readily with Munro’s globemallow (*S. munroana*) that the two are hard to separate.

S. parvifolia grows in washes, along roadsides, and among greasewood, blackbrush, sagebrush, and juniper communities, at elevations from roughly 750 to 2,450 m (about 2,500 to 8,000 ft). Its range covers central Nevada, adjacent California, southern Utah, western Colorado, northwestern New Mexico, and northern Arizona. It is a perennial herb growing from a stout taproot and a woody base (caudex), sending up slender stems 25 to 75 cm (roughly 10-30 inches) tall. The leaves are grayish-green and covered with stellate hairs, tiny star-shaped hairs that branch into several rays from a single point, a hallmark of the mallow family (*Malvaceae*). The leaves are thickish, sometimes shallowly lobed, and have palmate veins that stand out prominently on the underside.



S. parvifolia flowers with monadelphous stamens
©Kent Trulsson, iNaturalist

The flowers are truly delightful! They have five petals in reddish-orange, 9 to 14 mm (<1 in.) long, cupped around a column of fused (aka monadelphous) stamens. They are reminiscent of a Hibiscus flower, which is also in the *Malvaceae*. The flowers are crowded along the stem in an indeterminate, narrowly clustered spike that opens from the bottom up and keeps going from March into October. The fruit is reminiscent of a miniature Laughing Cow cheese wheel, though technically a schizocarp that splits into about ten wedge-shaped mericarps arranged in a ring, each usually holding one or two kidney-shaped, black seeds. Those stellate hairs earned the genus its least flattering common names. Globemallows are widely known as sore-eye poppy, or mal de ojo, and the usual explanation is that the hairs are miserable if you get them in your eyes (although I can’t speak from experience). So, don’t rub your eyes after touching them.



Cheese wheel fruit and kidney bean seeds ©BLM SOS
UT040

As for trying to tell *S. parvifolia* apart from the other *Sphaeralcea* in the field, good luck! A few things help. If you are in Nevada, look at the leaves first: if they are deeply lobed, you likely have gooseberryleaf globemallow (*S. grossulariifolia*), although scarlet globemallow (*S. coccinea*) is also reported in eastern Nevada. Among the shallowly lobed species, desert globemallow (*S. ambigua*) tends to have larger flowers, cespitose globemallow (*S. caespitosa*) is cushion-forming, Munro's globemallow (*S. munroana*) has greener leaves with less prominent veins, and narrowleaf globemallow (*S. angustifolia*) has narrower and longer leaves. But remember these species hybridize freely, so sometimes the honest answer really is just "*Sphaeralcea* sp."

The globemallows are a strong nectar and pollen source for the globemallow bee, *Diadasia diminuta*, a specialist that depends almost entirely on *Sphaeralcea* pollen. Male globemallow bees build no nests, so on cold or windy nights they sleep curled inside the flowers, sometimes several to a bloom. The plant also hosts the common checkered-skipper, *Pyrgus communis*. In larger animal studies, globemallows made up 21% of desert tortoise diets in the Lower Grand Canyon, and in Arizona's Harquahala Mountains they made up about a fifth of bighorn sheep diets and nearly a quarter of mule deer diets in the fall.

As abundant as they are now, pollen from packrat middens in Glen Canyon shows *Sphaeralcea* has declined substantially since domestic livestock arrived on the landscape. The plant also has a long record of human use. Because mallows are rich in mucilage, a gel-like sap, the Havasupai mixed the juice into their clay before molding it into pots, which improved the clay's workability and helped it hold together. As medicine, Hopi people chewed the roots or boiled them with cactus root to ease constipation in adults and infants, applied the plant to sores, cuts, wounds, and broken bones, and included it in mid-winter ceremonies.

If you would like to grow it yourself, be sure to scarify the hard-coated seed, since it is slow to sprout without a little help. Folks report close to 100% germination in two days at 70°F after filing a hole through the seed coat, and 4% when they did not. The plant itself is easygoing: drought tolerant, long blooming, and happy to be cut back after flowering, which keeps it compact and brings on a second flush. It goes largely dormant through summer drought and greens up again with any summer rain. So, plant some globemallow near you and check your flowers on a cool morning for sleeping bees. You may find a bachelor or two tucked in for the night!



Sneaky bee taking a nap ©Spencer Hurt

Random aside: Scarlet globemallow's stellate hairs once starred in a lawsuit. After a twin-engine aircraft crashed in a New Mexico snowstorm in 1989, the victims' heirs sued the makers of the plane and engine, claiming plant debris had been sucked in midflight and caused the crash. Botanists found the star-shaped hairs of *S. coccinea* in the engine but found that the plant grew around the storage hangar, not the crash site, and that it would have easily burned up at engine temperatures, plus loose plant bits were unlikely to be airborne in a snowstorm. The globemallow was exonerated in the end.

References:

- Gucker, C. L., and N. L. Shaw. 2018 (updated November 2025). Small-leaf globemallow (*Sphaeralcea parvifolia*). In Western Forbs: Biology, Ecology, and Use in Restoration. westernforbs.org/species/small-leaf-globemallow-sphaeralcea-parvifolia [ecology, pollinators, wildlife diets, ethnobotany, germination, horticulture]
- Holmgren, N. H., P. K. Holmgren, and J. L. Reveal. 2005. Intermountain Flora: Vascular Plants of the Intermountain West, U.S.A., Vol. 2, Part B. New York Botanical Garden Press, Bronx. [genus complexity and quote, etymology, typification and synonymy, description, distribution, field key]
- USDA Forest Service. n.d. Globe mallow bee (*Diadasia diminuta*). Celebrating Wildflowers, Pollinator of the Month. fs.usda.gov/wildflowers/pollinators/pollinator-of-the-month/globe_mallow_bee.shtml [bee that sleeps in the flowers]



Roadside blooms ©Coppertop32, iNaturalist

Botanizing the Ruby Mountains: Highlights from the 4th annual Intermountain Botanical Foray

by Halina North

Each year, the folks at Utah State University and the Intermountain Herbarium select a new and interesting location in the Intermountain Region to host a BioBlitz, with the goal of documenting the area's biodiversity through iNaturalist observations and herbarium collections. From July 24–27, 2026, the Intermountain Botanical Foray made its first mark in Nevada in the stunning Ruby Mountains of Elko County for a weekend of bonding over botany.

Base camp was set at Terraces Campground in Lamoille Canyon. This was the largest group the foray has ever had, with participants traveling from as far east as New Hampshire, as far north as Idaho, and as far west as northern California. It was a passionate group of professional and amateur botanists alike, eager to collect plants and explore new areas of the Rubies.

On Thursday evening, participants started to arrive and mingle. On Friday, the groups set out to forage all day. Smaller teams dispersed throughout Lamoille Canyon to explore Island Lake, Lamoille Lake, and Lamoille Creek.



Trip planning ©Melissa Sinka

One group braved the hike up and over Liberty Pass, one of the longest excursions of the foray, and was rewarded with breathtaking alpine views and several unique plants. Some highlights included two Nevada endemics known only from White Pine and Elko counties: *Draba sphaeroides* (ball draba) and *Eriogonum kingii* (Ruby Mountains buckwheat). The team also collected *Chamaenerion latifolium* (dwarf fireweed), a circumboreal species known in Nevada only from the Ruby Mountains.

More participants joined the group Friday night and Saturday morning, so many areas of Lamoille Canyon were revisited with fresh, eager eyes. One group hiked Thomas Canyon in search of *Primula capillaris* (Ruby Mountains primrose). Although they were unsuccessful, the search led to a remarkable discovery by Lucas Pearce that was later dubbed the "Plant of the Foray": *Opuntia fragilis* (brittle prickly pear). If the identification is confirmed, it would represent a new state record for Nevada. Other groups explored the North Fork of Lamoille Creek and ventured farther north into the range to survey Soldier Creek Canyon.



Opuntia fragilis observation ©Lucas Pearce, iNaturalist

On Sunday, groups dispersed farther south, driving to the southern end of the range to botanize around Harrison Pass, where they encountered much hotter and drier conditions. On Monday, the foray concluded with a final excursion to the beaver ponds along Lamoille Canyon Road in search of sedges. Deemed the "Plant of the Foray 2.5," *Carex capillaris* (hair-like sedge) and *Carex alascana* (northern bog sedge) were observed and collected in Nevada for the first time since Bassett Maguire documented them in the 1940s.

Nevada's inaugural Intermountain Botanical Foray was a resounding success. The group logged more than 150 species in the iNaturalist project, while the Utah team returned to the Intermountain Herbarium with an impressive collection of new specimens. It was an incredible collaborative effort that once again demonstrated the remarkable botanical diversity, and vibrant botanical community, found within Nevada's mountain ranges.



Collection success! ©Melissa Sinka



Thomas Canyon ©Melissa Sinka

*Chamaenerion latifolium* ©Halina North

Conservation News:

Changes to the Endangered Species Act: What They Mean for Nevada

by Hannah Bishop-Moser

In the United States, environmentalists, scientists, and policymakers recognized the loss of our planet's biodiversity and the need to protect it. In 1973, the Endangered Species Act (ESA) was established. "The purposes of the Endangered Species Act of 1973, as amended (16 U.S.C. 1531 et seq.), are to provide a means to conserve the ecosystems upon which listed species depend, develop a program for the conservation of listed species, and achieve the purposes of certain treaties and conventions" (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 2025).

In recent years, however, several changes have been made that reduce protections under the ESA. The U.S. Department of the Interior states that these actions are intended to "strengthen American energy independence, improve regulatory predictability, and ensure federal actions align with the best reading of the law" (U.S. Department of the Interior, 2026). Three of the most significant changes are outlined below.

Removal of the Regulatory Definition of "Harm"

For decades, federal regulations defined "harm" under the ESA to include significant habitat modification or degradation that kills or injures wildlife by impairing breeding, feeding, or sheltering behaviors (46 FR 54748; U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, 2026).

By removing this definition from federal regulations, habitat destruction is no longer explicitly recognized as a form of "harm." Instead, whether habitat modification violates the ESA will likely be determined on a case-by-case basis through the courts. Attorney Kristen Boyles summarized the concern by stating, "The one thing that this repeal of this rule is going to certainly do is cause complete confusion in the regulated community... and it's going to cause an increase in litigation over each and every project that's proposed that doesn't protect habitat" (Daniel, 2026).



Eriogonum tiehmii ©Aspen, iNaturalist

This issue extends beyond a single species. Habitat loss and degradation remain among the leading causes of biodiversity decline, and the World Wildlife Fund reports that nearly 20% of North American species have gone extinct over the last century (Simms, 2024).

Changes to Critical Habitat Designation

A rule finalized in July 2026 requires that economic impacts and national security be considered when designating critical habitat under Section 4(b)(2) of the ESA (Goldstein, 2026). Critical habitat identifies areas essential for the survival and recovery of threatened and endangered species. Under the new rule, land may be excluded from critical habitat designation if the perceived benefits of exclusion outweigh the benefits of protection. Supporters argue this provides greater flexibility, while critics worry that economically valuable habitat may receive less protection.

Shortly after the rule change, the Endangered Species Committee approved exemptions for certain Gulf of Mexico oil and gas activities following requests citing national security concerns (Kranz, 2026).

Repeal of the "Blanket Rule"

Section 4(d) of the ESA previously provided many threatened species with protections similar to those afforded to endangered species. Often referred to as the "Blanket Rule," these protections prohibited activities such as taking, possessing, transporting, or selling threatened species without authorization (U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, 2024).

With the repeal of the Blanket Rule, protections for threatened species will now generally be developed individually on a case-by-case basis (Goldstein, 2026). Conservation organizations have expressed concern that delays in developing species-specific protections could leave vulnerable plants and animals at greater risk.



Nitrophila mohavensis ©Matt Reala, iNaturalist

Why This Matters for Nevada: Nevada is home to 49 federally listed threatened and endangered plant and animal species (Nevada Division of Natural Heritage, 2026). As development pressures increase, decisions affecting habitat conservation will have lasting impacts on the state's unique plants, animals, and ecosystems. These changes to the ESA will be devastating for the United States and Nevada alike.



Ivesia webberi ©Eric Koberle, iNaturalist

These changes, along with the changes being finalized for the “Roadless Rule” are intended to allow for development on otherwise protected land. Although the public comment periods for these ESA changes have closed, several conservation organizations, Tribal governments, and legal groups have filed lawsuits challenging portions of the new rules (Daniel, 2026). NVNPS is still waiting for the comment period of the Environmental Impact Statement for the Roadless Rule. Objection from citizens and organizations during the comment period did not appear to alter the outcome of these rules. Supporting organizations that conserve Nevada's native plants and wildlife, participating in future public comment opportunities, and staying informed are all meaningful ways Nevadans can help protect the state's remarkable natural heritage.

Literature Cited:

Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants; Regulations Pertaining to Endangered and Threatened Wildlife and Plants. (2025). In Federal Register. <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2025/11/21/2025-20552/endangered-and-threatened-wildlife-and-plants-regulations-pertaining-to-endangered-and-threatened-wildlife-and-plants>

U.S. Department of the Interior. (2026, July 17). Trump Administration Finalizes Endangered Species Act Regulation Reform. U.S. Department of the Interior. <https://www.doi.gov/pressreleases/trump-administration-finalizes-endangered-species-act-regulation-reform>

Rescinding the Definition of "Harm" Under the Endangered Species Act. (2026, July 14). Federal Register. <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2026/07/14/2026-14195/rescinding-the-definition-of-harm-under-the-endangered-species-act>

Daniel, A. (2026, July 14). Environmental groups sue government to stop a big change to the Endangered Species Act. NPR. <https://www.npr.org/2026/07/14/nx-s1-5891858/trump-esa-harm-endangered-species-act-threatened-lawsuit>

16 U.S. Code § 1538 - Prohibited acts. (n.d.). In LII / Legal Information Institute. Retrieved July 24, 2026, from <https://www.law.cornell.edu/uscode/text/16/1538>

Simms, D. (2024). How Habitat Loss Imperils US Wildlife. In Earth.Org. <https://earth.org/lost-species-the-impact-of-habitat-destruction-in-the-us/>

Goldstein, N. (2026, July 21). FWS Finalizes Major Revisions to Endangered Species Act Rules. Office of Advocacy. <https://advocacy.sba.gov/2026/07/21/fws-finalizes-major-revisions-to-endangered-species-act-rules/>

Kranz, E. (2026). When National Security Meets Endangered Species: Uncharted Legal Territory in the Gulf of Mexico. <https://eelp.law.harvard.edu/wp-content/uploads/2026/03/ESA-sec-7-NS-exemption-FINAL.pdf>

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. (2024, March 28). FWS.Gov. <https://www.fws.gov/node/267756>
Frequently Asked Questions | Nevada Division of Natural Heritage. (2026). Nv.Gov.
<https://heritage.nv.gov/about/frequently-asked-questions>

Nevada Department of Agriculture - Foundation Seed Program

by Stephen Kielius

Nevada has the dual distinction of being both the driest state and the state with the highest percentage of federal land in the United States. This means land managers face many challenges when making decisions about environmental restoration, especially after a wildfire event. They must work to restore immense areas with few resources in an environment that does not easily give up its most precious commodity: native seed.

The Nevada Department of Agriculture (NDA) has supported the environmental restoration community in Nevada for more than a decade by certifying seeds used in restoration projects and connecting with farmers to encourage them to introduce native seed production into their operations as a drought-tolerant alternative crop. Since 2022, the NDA has increased their capacity to supply seed for these restoration projects by putting seed directly into the hands of farmers through several programs, with the first of these programs being the Foundation Seed Program.

This program was designed to reduce the barriers of entry into the native seed production market by providing genetically appropriate seeds to farmers at no cost. After receiving starter seed, participants in this program are required to sow, cultivate and clean the seed harvested from the produced plants, then return a small portion of the first harvest to the NDA. After that, farmers may keep those fields in production for profit or use the seed for their own restoration projects.

The program further reduces barriers by keeping participation requirements low, which allows smaller operations to participate. The only hard requirement of the program is that the production area must be primarily located within Nevada. There is no minimum acreage requirement, and while applicants with secured water rights may be given priority over those without, it is not a requirement of the program.



Indian ricegrass, *Achnatherum hymenoides* seeds
©BLM CPI, Seeds of Success.

This has expanded the NDA's ability to not only work with larger, more experienced farming operations but also with smaller niche producers.

Thanks to the efforts of the farmers already participating in this program, significant acreage of Great Basin Wildrye, Ricegrass and Globemallow has been established across the state. The seed produced from these fields will be reintroduced into the program for further increase in capacity or handed directly back to land managers for use in post-wildfire restoration projects. Special recognition also goes to federal partners whose funding and support have made this program possible.

The NDA typically holds two open application periods throughout the year, once in the Spring and again in the Fall, so there are plenty of opportunities for farmers to apply for seed. Individuals interested in learning more about any of the NDA's native seed-related programs or with questions related to native plants, please reach out to Stephen Kielius at seeds@agri.nv.gov.

What NVNPS Means to Me

by Emma Wynn

It is 10 years since we moved to Nevada and I joined NVNPS, that anniversary has prompted me to reflect on why NVNPS is such a special part of my life here. Of course, I love learning about and seeing our wonderful plants, I appreciate having the opportunity to share our flora with different groups and to hopefully open some people's eyes to the importance of native plants in healthy ecosystems and home landscapes. I hope building awareness will lead to increased preservation of our imperiled plants. However, a big part of the pleasure I get from NVNPS is not the plants but the people I meet and interact with.

Maragaret Williams wrote these words in 1975: "It is my hope that this society will bring together people of all walks of life who share a common bond ... the love of native plants.

Not all of us are interested in plants in the same way, or have the same training or experience, but we can learn from each other and hopefully pass our feelings for native plants on to others." Her words reflect the community of people that make up NVNPS today; I have met plant professionals, passionate gardeners, hikers, photographers, birders, entomologists, interested amateurs and more. I have learnt to see plants through their eyes, enjoyed hearing the stories of what engendered their love of plants. I love spending time with 'my plant people', whether it be on a field trip, volunteering at an outreach event or just chatting in the herbarium or before a meeting.

What does NVNPS mean to you? What do you want to get from your membership, how can we continue to build our plant community? Send any comments and ideas to president@nvnps.org



A very chilly field trip to Churchill Narrows, June 21, 2025. ©Emma Wynn

Upcoming Events - August & September 2026

NVNPS Programs

In 2026 NVNPS will host seven in-person programs, held at 7:00 PM on February 5, March 5, April 2, May 7, September 3, October 1, and November 5. Programs are open to everyone and available via Zoom, with in-person meetings in Reno and Henderson. Social time begins at 6:30 PM for informal connection and refreshments.

See you at our next program in September!

Classes and Workshops

Nevada Butterfly Course

Saturday, August 22, 2026 | 9:00 AM – 4:30 PM

University of Nevada, Reno Museum of Natural History

Classroom: Fleischmann Agriculture Building, Room 300G | Field location within 45 minutes of UNR

This one-day butterfly identification course is designed for beginner to intermediate butterfly enthusiasts, including students, agency personnel, and members of the public. The morning classroom session uses museum specimens to teach butterfly identification with an emphasis on the Great Basin and Sierra Nevada. Participants will also learn tips for identifying challenging groups such as golden skippers and fritillaries, along with an introduction to butterfly ecology and survey methods. The afternoon includes a field component at a nearby location.

The registration fee is \$75, with group rates available for five or more participants from the same organization.

Instructors: Matt Forister, Foundation Professor, UNR Biology Department; Cynthia Scholl, Education and Collections Coordinator, UNR Museum of Natural History.

Contact: Cynthia Scholl | cscholl@unr.edu | 775-250-4839

Registration is required by emailing Cynthia to reserve your spot.



Monarch butterfly, Washoe County, NV ©juditga, iNaturalist

Community Science

International Monarch Monitoring Blitz

Friday, July 31, 2026 – Sunday, August 9, 2026

Join thousands of community scientists across North America in the 10th Annual International Monarch Monitoring Blitz! Hosted by Journey North, a program of the Monarch Joint Venture, this cross-border effort encourages participants to report sightings of monarch butterflies (adults, eggs, and caterpillars) and their host plant, milkweed.

The Blitz provides an annual snapshot of monarch and milkweed distribution during a critical 10-day period and helps researchers better understand monarch populations and migration. Whether you submit a single observation or participate throughout the event, every report contributes valuable data for monarch conservation.

Participating is easy—simply visit the Journey North website and select "Report Observation as Guest," or create a free account to submit your sightings.

More information:

Journey North:

<https://journeynorth.org/projects/monarch-butterfly>

Report an Observation:

<https://app.journeynorth.org/>

Great Basin BioBlitz

Wednesday, August 5 – Friday, August 7, 2026

Join National Park Service staff and fellow community scientists for the annual Great Basin BioBlitz at Great Basin National Park. This year's event will focus on documenting the park's tree species while helping collect valuable biodiversity data. Advanced registration is required.

Location: Great Basin National Park

More information:

<https://www.nps.gov/grba/learn/nature/great-basin-bioblitz.htm>

4th Annual Parks for Pollinators BioBlitz

Saturday, September 12, 2026 | 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM

Help document pollinators and other wildlife during the City of Las Vegas' annual Parks for Pollinators BioBlitz. In addition to community science activities, attendees can enjoy educational booths, local vendors, partner organizations, and a community plant swap. No registration is required.

Location: Floyd Lamb Park at Tule Springs, 9200 Tule Springs Rd., Las Vegas, NV

More information:

https://www.nevadawilderness.org/northern_nevada_calendar_of_events



Walker Basin Conservancy Plant Sale ©WBC

Native Plant Sales

Washoe Conservation Nursery – Fall Opening

Thursday, September 17, 2026 – Saturday, October 10, 2026 | Thursdays–Saturdays | 9:00 AM–3:00 PM

Browse a wide selection of Nevada native plants grown for restoration and home landscapes.

Location: 885 Eastlake Blvd., New Washoe City, NV 89704

Springs Preserve Fall Plant Sale

Saturday, September 19, 2026 | 9:00 AM–2:00 PM

Discover a variety of regionally adapted plants perfect for Southern Nevada landscapes at the Springs Preserve Fall Plant Sale. Admission to the sale is free, and members receive early entry beginning at 7:00 AM. No reservations are required.

Location: Springs Preserve, Las Vegas, NV

Nevada Monarch Society Fall Native Plant Sale & Education Event

Saturday, September 26, 2026

Celebrate pollinators and native plants at this family-friendly event hosted by the Nevada Monarch Society in partnership with Nevada Bugs & Butterflies and the Washoe Conservation Nursery. Shop native plants, seeds, and nature-themed merchandise while enjoying educational activities for all ages and free goodie bags.

Location: Washoe Conservation Nursery, 885 Eastlake Blvd., Washoe Valley, NV 89704

Walker Basin Conservancy Native Plant Sale

Saturday, October 10 – Sunday, October 11, 2026 | 9:00 AM–3:00 PM

Celebrate autumn by exploring a diverse selection of native plants suited to Nevada's landscapes while supporting the Walker Basin Conservancy's conservation efforts. Whether you're creating pollinator habitat, restoring a landscape, or simply adding beautiful native species to your garden.

Location: 170 Smith Gage Rd., Smith Valley, NV

Volunteer/Fundraising Opportunities

KTMB Raise the River Fundraiser

Thursday, August 20, 2026 | 4:30 PM – 9:30 PM

Support Keep Truckee Meadows Beautiful at its annual Raise the River fundraiser, an evening dedicated to celebrating and protecting the Truckee River and the surrounding community. Enjoy food, drinks, entertainment, and opportunities to support KTMB's programs that keep Northern Nevada beautiful. Advance ticket purchase is recommended.

Location: National Automobile Museum, 1 Museum Dr., Reno, NV 89501

More information:

<https://www.ktmb.org/events/ktmbs-raise-the-river-fundraiser>

Under a Nevada Sky

Saturday, September 12, 2026 | 4:30 PM – 9:00 PM

Celebrate the ranching and natural heritage of Northern Nevada at Under a Nevada Sky, Walker Basin Conservancy's signature annual fundraiser. This ranch-to-fork dinner features locally sourced cuisine, live and silent auctions, and an evening dedicated to supporting the restoration of Walker Lake while protecting the agricultural, environmental, and recreational resources of the Walker River Basin.

Location: Mormon Station, Genoa, NV

More information:

<https://www.walkerbasin.org/uans>

KTMB Truckee River Cleanup

Saturday, September 26, 2026 | 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM

Join Keep Truckee Meadows Beautiful and fellow volunteers for the annual Truckee River Cleanup. Help restore the health of the Truckee River by removing litter, planting native vegetation, and removing invasive species at more than 20 cleanup sites throughout the watershed. Site assignments will be provided during registration. Registration is required.

More information:

<https://www.ktmb.org/events/ktmbs-truckee-river-cleanup-2>



River Clean Up ©KTMB



Solidago spectabilis ©WBC

Society updates

Calendar Time!

About the Calendar

Each year, we produce a limited number of wildflower calendars featuring photos taken by our friends and members. The landscape 11x8.5 calendars are printed on heavy-duty matte paper.

2027 Theme: Native Plants and Pollinators

The theme for the 2027 calendar is native plants that are important to pollinators. These plants support pollinators in many ways beyond providing pollen and nectar. They may serve as larval hosts, nesting sites, sources of nesting material, or other essential habitat.

Photo Submission Guidelines

- Each person may submit up to four photos.
- Photos must be taken in Nevada or on an NNPS field trip.
- Photos must be taken in the wild, not in a pollinator garden or other landscaped area.
- Please include the plant name, photographer's name, and the county where the photo was taken, as county locations are included in the calendar.

Submission Window and How to Submit

We will accept photo submissions for the 2027 calendar from Saturday, August 1, through Sunday, August 16. Photos may be submitted through the NNPS Facebook page, via Messenger, or by email at info@nvnp.org.

Photo Requirements

- Photos must not contain borders, decorations, watermarks, trademarks, or other personally identifiable markings.
- Original photos must be at least 3300 pixels wide and/or 2500 pixels tall to print properly.
- Photographers will be contacted for original photos after final selections have been made.
- Please do not submit photos that were entered in previous years.

Ordering Information

Calendars will be available to order beginning October 1. They will cost \$15, with shipping and handling to be determined. Pickup options will be available at monthly meetings and at the UNR and College of Southern Nevada herbaria.



Welcome new members!

A special thank you to our new members who joined since June 1st, 2026

- Rosemary Robinson, Yerington
- Ed Kleiner, Gardnerville
- Anya Karakozov, Las Vegas
- Emma Williams, Reno
- Walker Fee, Reno
- David Rockow, Southern NV
- Alexandra Kovary-Turnsek, Brookings SD (moving to NV & WBC in July)
- Karen Parke, ESCONDIDO, CA
- Renee Swackhamer, Reno
- Sean de Queiroz, Reno
- Lane Chickanosky, Reno
- Steve Seymour
- Rik Eckert, Reno
- Kathy Williams, Reno
- Trevlyn Williams, Emerald Hills, CA

Board of Directors

Officers

- President: Emma Wynn, president@nvnp.org
- President Emeritus: Arnold Tiehm
- Vice President: Alison Agneray, aagneray@gmail.com
- Recording Secretary: Esther Hwang, secretary@nvnp.org
- Treasurer: Patrick Cassady, treasurer@nvnp.org

Members-at-Large

- Laurel Tashjian
- Cory King
- Lara Derasary
- Hermi Hyatt
- Cody Ernst-Brock
- Brianna Kramer

Committee Chairpersons

- Archivist: Connie Douglas
- Conservation: Hannah Bishop-Moser
- Outreach:
 - N. Nevada: **Vacant**
 - S. Nevada: Brianna Kramer and Hermi Hyatt
- Field Trips,
 - N. Nevada: Christopher Mackessy,
 - S. Nevada: Brianna Kramer and Hermi Hyatt
- Grants: Jim Morefield, grants@nvnp.org
- Horticulture: John Weiser and Charlie Duncan
- Membership Coordinator: Alison Agneray
- Newsletter Editor: Melissa Sinka, newsletter@nvnp.org
- Photography: Larry Lodwick
- UNR Herbarium Curator: Arnold Tiehm
- UNLV Curator: Marcus Hooker
- Programs: programs@nvnp.org
 - N. Nevada: Sarah Kulpa
 - S. Nevada: Marcus Hooker
- Publications: Arnold Tiehm
- Rare Plants: Joshua Lovera, rareplants@nvnp.org
- Social media: Emma Wynn & Sarah Kulpa, social@nvnp.org
- Webmaster: Patrick Silbey, psilbey@gmail.com

