

NEVADA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY



Penstemon albomarginatus in Hidden Valley, near Jean, NV. Photo by Ranae Sullivan.

NATIVE PLANT CONSERVATION NEWS

By Rose Strickland

The Earth's biodiversity crisis is making the news these days and Nevada's native plants are no exception. More petitions are being filed with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to list rare species as threatened or endangered under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) and more lawsuits are challenging the destruction of habitat critical for rare species. Declining populations, climate change impacts, habitat losses and development are threatening rare species and generating urgent demands for more federal protections of these species and their critical habitats. Following are brief reports on four native plant issues in the news. For more information on these actions, contact Rose Strickland, NNPS Conservation

Committee Chair at rosenreno@sbcglobal.net.

TIEHM'S BUCKWHEAT (*ERIOGONUM TIEHMII*):

On April 12, 2023, a federal judge in Reno vacated the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) approval of a molybdenum mine near Eureka, NV, due to recent court decisions on stricter interpretations of the 1872 Mining Law. The Nevada judge cited the 9th Circuit Court's ruling in an Arizona case last year that mining rights do not apply to neighboring national forest lands where mines were planning to dump waste rock, but which had no valuable mineral deposits. This appears to be the same situation in the proposed lithium mine at Rhyolite Ridge in Nevada which surrounds the only habitat of the endangered Tiehm's buckwheat on BLM managed public



Leaves of the aptly named white-margined penstemon. Photo by Ranae Sullivan.

lands and which proposes to dump its waste rock into an adjacent canyon. See: <https://www.nevadaappeal.com/news/2023/apr/14/judge-blocks-nevada-mine-is-thacker-pass-project-next/>

WHITE-MARGINED PENSTEMON (*PENSTEMON ALBOMARGINATUS*):

The Center for Biological Diversity (CBD) filed a petition on March 16th, 2023 to list the white-margined penstemon as threatened or endangered under the ESA. This rare Mojave Desert wildflower grows in three states and two Nevada counties - Clark and Nye - in four geographically disjunct and genetically distinct population centers. Its populations are declining in abundance and extent across its global range and face significant threats. Threats include exurban sprawl, utility corridors development and maintenance, renewable energy development, public land privatization, off-highway vehicle recreation, cattle grazing,

herbivory, historic and persistent drought conditions, competition with invasive species and pollinator limitation. Three significant threats to the penstemon in Nevada are the proposed Greenlink West transmission line in Nye County, the proposed Clark County Lands bill which would expand urban sprawl into the penstemon's populations areas south of Las Vegas, and the proposed Ivanpah Airport. See: <https://www.biologicaldiversity.org/species/plants/pdfs/Penstemon-ESA-Petition-03162023.pdf>

WHITEBARK PINE (*PINUS ALBICAULIS*):

Last December, the USFWS listed the whitebark pine as threatened. Although the populations of this pine are widespread, they have been declining and have been of concern to federal land managers for decades. White pine blister rust, a non-native fungal disease, is the primary threat,

but the pines are also dying from attacks of mountain pine beetles, wildfires, and climate change. Whitebark pine is a keystone species, supporting numerous plants, animals and watersheds. The pine has a mutualistic bond with Clark's nutcrackers which crack open the tough pinecones and disperse thousands of its seeds through caches in surrounding forests every year. Visitors to the Carson Range between Reno and Lake Tahoe have witnessed many of the century-old trees dying along the forest trails in recent years. Conservationists are concerned about the impacts of the loss of these trees on Clark's nutcracker populations. Recovery efforts are underway, including collecting seeds from disease resistant trees, growing them in nurseries, and planting the seedlings in restoration areas. See: <https://www.federalregister.gov/documents/2022/12/15/2022-27087/endangered-and-threatened-wildlife-and->

[plants-threatened-species-status-with-section-4d-rule-for](#)

PINYON-JUNIPER WOODLANDS REMOVAL PROJECTS:

Lawsuits in Nevada and other Great Basin States are challenging these projects on public lands. The rationale for these projects are variable: fuels reduction, sagebrush restoration for Sage Grouse, more grass for livestock grazing, even woodlands restoration.

In Nevada, two environmental groups filed a lawsuit in March, 2023 against a BLM project which was approved to remove pinyon-juniper forests across 380,000 acres in South Spring and Hamlin Valleys adjacent to the Great Basin National Park in violation of several environmental laws. The lawsuit says BLM failed to analyze harmful impacts from the project, especially on pinyon jays and other pinyon-juniper dependent species,



White bark pine on Mt. Rose. Photo by Ranae Sullivan.

and also failed to comply with land use plans for the valleys by removing extensive sagebrush, critical habitat for the imperiled Greater Sage Grouse. See: https://www.biologicaldiversity.org/species/birds/greater_sage_grouse/pdfs/South-Spring-Valley-and-Hamlin-Valley-Watershed-Restoration-Plan-Complaint.pdf

TRIP REPORTS

On Memorial day, Rose Strickland and Dennis Ghiglieri visited Fish Lake Valley on Hwy 264. A highlight of their trip was finding *Sphaeralcea ambigua* var. *rosacea*, commonly known as rosy apricot mallow or rose globemallow. This variety of globemallow is found in Arizona, California, Nevada, and Mexico (Sonora and Baja California). Flowers of this variety can be lavender, pink, or white; all variations Rose and Dennis were lucky enough to capture in one place! Thank you for sharing your wonderful photos, Rose and Dennis!

Have a trip report or notable observation you would like to share? Email Ranae at ranae.sullivan@gmail.com



Above, top right, middle right, bottom right: *Sphaeralcea ambigua* var. *rosacea* in a variety of color morphs. Photos by Dennis Ghiglieri.

SOCIETY NEWS

A BUSY SPRING!

We had a busy Spring here in Northern Nevada. NNPS tabled at 4 different events: TMCC Earth Day Celebration, Reno Earth Day, UNR's Museum Day, and the Arboretum Plant Sale! We spoke with lots of folks about the awesomeness of native plants and had lots of interest from folks about where to purchase native plants (hopefully options will increase in Northern NV soon). People still love the match the seed to plant game and our new game where folks try to match the plant to its native, invasive, noxious or non-native category was challenging and fun for all. HUGE shout out to our members who generously donated their time and made it possible for NNPS to attend these events and educate and share information on native plants with the public. Charlie Duncan, Connie Douglas, Tina Nappe, Tom Stille, Kris Kuyper, James Gatzke, and Amy Wruck all donated their time and Emma Wynn created all of our fun booth games. **THANK YOU** to you all.

NNPS is still looking for a Southern NV Event Coordinator! If you are interested in getting people excited about native plants down south please reach out to Shannon at shannonswim@gmail.com

NNPS 2024 WILDFLOWER CALENDAR

It is a wonderful year for wildflowers and we are excited to see some of the diversity reflected in the 2024 Nevada Native Plant Society calendar. We will take photo submissions for the 2024 calendar from Sunday, July 30th to Sunday, August 20th. Photos may be submitted to the NNPS Facebook page, via messenger or via email to emhwynn@gmail.com.



Volunteers at the 2023 Reno Earth Day.



Volunteers at the 2023 Reno Earth Day.



Volunteers at the 2023 TMCC Earth Day.

Each person may submit up to four photos. Photos should be taken in Nevada or on NNPS Field Trips. Please let us know where the photo was taken as we are going to include county location in addition to the plant name in the 2024 calendar. Photos must not contain borders, decorations, watermarks, trademarks, or other personally identifiable markings. The photographers will be credited on the calendar. The 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 we have finalized which photos are going to be used. Please do not submit photos that were entered in previous years.

CALL FOR SOUTHERN NEVADA EVENTS COORDINATOR

NNPS is looking for an Events Coordinator down South! If you are in the Vegas area and are interested in spreading the native plant joy, please reach out to Shannon (Northern Events Coordinator) at events@nnps.org.

UPCOMING EVENTS

June 15th, 2023:

Nevada Native Plant Society and Northern Nevada Permaculture will be combining forces to learn about and steward some of the prominent riparian plants in our area. We will be botanizing the riparian area with a focus on the current and historical ethnobotanical uses. We will also be identifying (and removing!) a number of non-native/invasive plants.

Meet at the Oxbow Parking lot (Reno, NV) at 4:55pm and will depart at 5:10 sharp! The field trip will officially end at 7:00pm but folks are more than welcome to stay afterward to hang out and talk plants. We will be hiking roughly 1-2 miles on established

paths with no elevation gain. Please send an email to cjmackessy@gmail.com if you wish to register for this trip.

July 9th, 2023: Sagehen Creek Field Station Bioblitz. This area is one of the most ecologically diverse places in our region and is always an exciting area to explore. We will see a number of fascinating plants with a handful that cannot be seen anywhere else. Last year, there was also the option of joining birding, mammal or insect groups which will likely be the case this time as well.

Registration is required for this trip (if you want to get the gate code!). Please do so with Christopher here - cjmackessy@gmail.com. You can also reach via text at 909-851-5325.

NEWSLETTER

Have something to share? We would love to consider your recent trip reports, phenology updates, or Nevada botanical musings for the NNPS newsletter. Have another idea? We would love to talk about that too! Contact the editor, Ranae Sullivan, for details. ranae.sullivan@gmail.com

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