



NEVADA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

New species of *Ranunculus* (Ranunculaceae) described in Elko County by Arnold Tiehm and Jacqueline Lucero

Ranunculus legerae (Elko buttercup) was recently described in the July edition of the Journal of the Botanical Research Institute of Texas. This new species, related to *R. triternatus*, *R. glaberrimus*, and *R. adoneus*, was first collected in 1937, but its rediscovery did not occur until 2017 due to poor label information. In Benson's 1948 monograph on North American *Ranunculus*, he references a specimen collected on May 13, 1937, from 18 miles northwest of Elko at an elevation of 5,660 feet. Benson compared this specimen to *Ranunculus glaberrimus* var. *reconditus* [*R. triternatus*] but noted that the leaves were less divided. Whittemore's 1997 Flora of North

America treatment of *Ranunculus* lists *R. triternatus* as occurring in Idaho, Nevada, Oregon, and Washington. However, Holmgren and Holmgren's 2012 Intermountain Flora treatment of *Ranunculus* questions its presence in Idaho and Nevada, stating that no voucher specimens for these records have been located. Legler's 2018 Flora of the Pacific Northwest treatment of *Ranunculus* restricts *R. triternatus* to Klickitat County, Washington, and Wasco and Hood River counties in Oregon.

Benson is apparently the only botanist who examined the 1937 specimen collected by University of Nevada, Reno students Nichols



Ranunculus legerae in flower ©Jan Nachlinger

and Lund as part of the Indian Medicine Project, a collaboration between UNR and the USDA's Bureau of Plant Industry. Their specimen label stating "18 miles northwest of Elko, summit of Round Mountain cutoff" is challenging to locate on modern maps, and discrepancies in their labels further complicate the situation. For instance, specimen #11, collected on May 15, 1937, is labeled "cut off road, 6 miles NW of Elko," while specimen #12 is dated May 12, 1937. Despite these issues, the general area described by Nichols and Lund aligns with where plants resembling *R. triternatus* were later found.

The Nevada Division of Natural Heritage [NDNH] has *R. triternatus* on its tracking list based on the citation in Benson (1948). Due to this watchlist citation, *R. triternatus* is on the Bureau of Land Management's Sensitive Plant list for Nevada. Since early 2021, Jacqueline Lucero and Almeta Helmig of the Great Basin Institute, as well as Steph Frederick of the Elko BLM office, have looked for *R. triternatus* using the rather large potential distribution polygon NDNH has on its website. In 2017, Steph Frederick collected plants resembling *R. triternatus* on April 21 but misidentified them as *R. glaberrimus*. By 2021, Jacqueline Lucero used Frederick's collection location to search the Adobe Range. In spring 2022, Lucero independently discovered plants resembling *R. triternatus* in the same general area. Consulting with Arnold Tiehm in March 2022, she followed his advice to collect additional specimens when the plants were in fruit. By early June 2022, these specimens were examined. Although the Nevada plants showed similarities to *R. triternatus*, they had notable differences compared to specimens from Oregon and Washington, such as leaf dissection, petal length, and sepal length.

The winter of 2022–2023 brought heavy snowfall to the Great Basin, delaying a planned visit to the Nevada site. On May 12, 2023, Steph Frederick and Almeta Helmig, accompanied by Jan Nachlinger and Arnold Tiehm, explored the Elko Snobowl area. They

found a large population of plants, with those closer to snowbanks in bud and flower, and those farther away in mature fruit. These plants resembled *R. glaberrimus* var. *ellipticus* but had all-lobed basal leaves. The following day, Tiehm and Nachlinger discovered another population southwest of Highway 225. A thorough examination of all Nevada collections previously identified as *R. triternatus* led to the conclusion that these plants did not match any known species. This finding confirmed that the Nevada plants represented a new species, *R. legerae*.

Etymology: The species is named in honor of Elizabeth Leger, a distinguished professor at the University of Nevada, Reno and a lifetime member of the Nevada Native Plant Society. Beth received her Ph.D. from the University of California, Davis, and has since made significant contributions to botany and education. She joined the University of Nevada, Reno in 2006, where she became a Foundation Professor in the Biology Department. She co-founded the Museum of Natural History at the University of Nevada, Reno, which houses the herbarium, vertebrate collection, and entomology collection. This institution benefits from strong support from both the College of Agriculture, Biotechnology & Natural Resources and the College of Science.

Conservation Status: *Ranunculus legerae* is geographically limited but currently not facing immediate threats. At present, there does not appear to be a threat to its existence. Tiehm and Lucero recommend it be placed in the IUCN's Vulnerable category. They also recommend that it be placed on watchlists for the Nevada Native Plant Society and the BLM, and on the Nevada Division of Natural Heritage's tracklist.

Note: This article was adapted by Alison Agneray from the original publication with author permission (Tiehm & Lucero, 2024).



Ranunculus legerae in flower ©Jan Nachlinger

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Rosa bridgesii found in the Carson Range

by Arnold Tiehm

It is hard to get away from *Rosa woodsii* in Nevada when I am hiking in the foothills and lower slopes of the Great Basin. Growing along creeks, canyon drainages, around springs, and on moist shady slopes, it forms impenetrable thickets that dare you to try to go through them. Granted, I tend to wear shorts in the field, but even when clad in long pants, I hesitate to tackle these prickly thickets.

Rosa woodsii in Nevada is represented by four varieties: var. *ultramontana*, the most

widespread, has records from all counties except Clark, Lincoln, Nye, and White Pine; var. *arizonica* is known from Clark, Lincoln, and Nye counties; var. *gratissima* is known from Churchill, Clark, Eureka, Lander, Lincoln, and Nye counties; and var. *puberulenta* is known from Lincoln and White Pine counties. Varieties can be separated using the treatment in Flora of North America North of Mexico (Lewis, Ertter & Bruneau, 2014). The Intermountain Flora treats var. *ultramontana*



Rosa bridgesii in flower ©Jan Nachlinger



Rosa bridgesii stem close-up ©Jan Nachlinger

as a catch-all for the plants of the Intermountain Region (Cronquist & Holmgren, 1997). On page 136, the authors state: “*Rosa woodsii* var. *ultramontana* is by far the commonest rose in our range and is the only wild rose known from Nevada (except in the Mt. Rose region, which is Sierran)”. I have often wondered as to the identity of this other Sierran rose from Nevada.

Cronquist initially created the treatment of *Rosa* for Intermountain Flora when he was writing for the Flora of the Pacific Northwest (Cronquist, 1961; Holmgren 2017). Unfortunately, Cronquist died by the time Rosaceae was done for Intermountain Flora. His initial treatment was updated by Holmgren and both are credited as authors of the treatment (Cronquist & Holmgren, 1997). When Cronquist wrote the original treatment, he was housed at the New York Botanical

Garden and referenced other herbaria, especially the University of Washington, Harvard University, and the Smithsonian Institution. Database searches have not yielded another species of *Rosa* from Nevada. So, the identity has been a conundrum for quite some time.

This year has had a dry summer across the Great Basin. After early summer Great Basin fieldwork, I have been working in the Sierra Nevada mountains. With its proximity to Reno, I can do day hikes, getting there early in the morning to enjoy the cool air while it lasts. Even the upper reaches of the Sierra Nevada are not immune to intense heat. On June 28th, I went over Mt. Rose highway, past Tahoe Meadows, past Vista Point, and stopped near a locked gate on the old Mt. Rose Highway. I went up the road for a quarter mile or so and botanized a damp area with some willows

Rosa bridgesii showing habitat ©Jan Nachlinger



continuing a years-long search for *Kyhosia bolanderi* in Nevada. The only Nevada record was collected above Incline Village in 1938. There I found the usual suspects associated with wet areas, but no *Kyhosia*. I then went further up the road and in a dense conifer forest with lots of pine needle duff, I found a low-growing *Rosa*. Plants formed an open patch about a foot and a half tall, with some prickles but not covered with them. Many of the prickles tended to be opposite on the stem and the petals were deciduous. I stared at this plant and thought “What in the world is it.” I knew it was not *R. woodsii*. While I was collecting it, I remembered the note in Intermountain Flora and thought to myself “FINALLY, the other rose in Nevada.”

I used the Jepson Manual to identify my new *Rosa* find. The key relied in part on mature fruit and whether the sepals were deciduous or persistent in fruit. My material was in flower only. With some consternation I managed to get to *R. bridgesii* in the key and my collection fit the species description. The RENO herbarium does not have a specimen of *R. bridgesii* so I had nothing for comparison with my new find. I contacted Barbara Ertter, who wrote the treatment of *Rosa* for the Jepson Manual (Ertter, 2012), who agreed to look at my collection. To my relief, she agreed with my determination. Now if we could just find the long-lost location where *Kyhosia* is hiding...

It is still unknown if this is the rose mentioned by Cronquist in Intermountain

Flora (Cronquist & Holmgren, 1997). Hopefully, specimen will turn up someday that will solve that mystery. I mentioned the plant to Jan Nachlinger and told her where it was located so she could capture some images of it. These images were taken on the 4th of July, six days after I initially stumbled upon the rose.

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2024 Eriogonum Society Meeting registration now open

From their website: Join us amid the soaring sandstone cliffs of Zion National Park for this year’s annual meeting, **September 12-15th**. Workshops and lodging at the [Zion Ponderosa Resort](#) near the east entrance of the park. Symbiota lists more than 50 *Eriogonum* taxa within a one-hour drive, including the endemic *Eriogonum zionis* so we will have plenty of buckwheats to keep us busy.

Group lodging is available in the Moose Lodge, a large bunkhouse near the main lodge and restaurant. Five bunkbeds are available in a shared bunkroom, price includes one whole weekend registration. Additional lodging is available in vacation homes, cabins, tents, even a replica Conestoga wagon!

Registration is now open to members. If you are not a member and register, you will be eligible to register for the meeting. All private rooms have been claimed and are no longer available. Visit Eriogonum.info to register today.

Featured plant: *Eriogonum lemmonii*

Part One by Emma Wynn

I was thrilled to go on my first NNPS field trip with Arnold (Jerry) Tiehm earlier this year. On June 2nd, we headed to the sand dunes near Fallon making several stops and finding a surprising variety of species including several Nevada endemics. After a lunch stop with *Penstemon arenarias*, we continued on unnamed roads in the hills between highways 95 and I-80. After a couple stops to view *Eriogonum inflatum* var. *inflatum* and the Nevada endemic *Astragalus porrectus*, among others, we noticed a change in the color and make-up of a small hill. Jerry halted our vehicle convoy to view a slope dotted with plants exhibiting bright green leaves and tall flowering stems. They looked so fresh and spring-like in contrast to many of faded plants we had seen earlier in the trip. The bright green leaves stood out against the pale soil crust, the erect flowering stems were covered in pink buds, with a few flowers just emerging. Jerry had led us to another endemic, *Eriogonum lemmonii* (Lemmon's wild buckwheat).

E. lemmonii was the highlight of the trip for me for two reasons; one is the plant itself; the other is Jerry's enthusiasm for it. *E. lemmonii* is in Jerry's list of top 10 favorite plants. He saved it until last on the field trip, waiting until we were all gathered to tell us the story of *E. lemmonii*'s history and rediscovery, as described in Part Two below.

Description of *E. lemmonii* from the Flora of North America 5:394. 2005:

- Herbs, erect, annual, (0.1-)1.5-8(-10) dm, glabrous, green. Stems: caudex absent; aerial flowering stems erect, occasionally hollow and fistulose, 0.1-3 dm, glabrous. Leaves basal; petiole 2-5 cm, pilose; blade round, 1-3 × 1-3 cm, pilose and bright green on both surfaces, margins plane.
- Inflorescences narrowly cymose, open, 10-80 × 5-50 cm; branches infrequently fistulose, glabrous; bracts 3, scalelike, 0.5-2 × 0.3-0.8 mm. Peduncles absent or only at proximal node, erect, straight, slender, 0.1-0.5 cm, glabrous. Involucres campanulate, 2-3 × (1.5-)2-3 mm, sparsely villous; teeth 6-8, erect, 0.5-0.8 mm.
- Flowers 1.5-2 mm; perianth white or greenish with pink to red midribs, becoming pinkish, glabrous, papillate in fruit; tepals monomorphic, lanceolate; stamens included to exserted, 1-2 mm; filaments glabrous. Achenes dark brown to black, 3-gonous, 1.3-1.5 mm, glabrous.
- Flowering May-Jun. Clayey or tuffaceous outcrops, flats, and slopes, saltbush and greasewood communities; 1300-1700 m; Nev.
- efloras.org/florataxon.aspx?flora_id=1&taxon_id=250060362



Eriogonum lemmonii basal leaves (left), flowers close-up (middle), and entire plant (right) ©Emma Wynn

Part Two by Arnold Tiehm

At the last stop of our NNPS field trip to the Fallon area, we found a Nevada endemic, *Eriogonum lemmonii*. This was the fifth Nevada endemic we saw that day. The others were *Lycium shockleyi*, *Penstemon arenarius*, *Astragalus lentiginosus* var. *kennedyi* and *A. porrectus*.

E. lemmonii has an interesting history. It was first discovered by J.G. Lemmon, of Sierra Valley, in 1875. Lemmon was notorious for being a poor record keeper. The sketchy label data on the type specimen at Harvard University reads "Sand hills near Reno". An isotype at the New York Botanical Garden reads "Near Reno". The next collection, made in 1922, was by F.B. Headley from "Alum mine near Lahontan [Reservoir]". In 1937 P.A. Lehenbauer made a collection from Wilson Canyon along the Walker River in Lyon County. It was next collected in 1942 by Ripley and Barneby from "NE of Springer's Hot Springs." This location is unknown. The name does not appear on topo maps and is not in Carleson's Nevada Place Names.

In February of 1978, the Nevada Native Plant Society co-sponsored the first Nevada Rare Plants Workshop. It was held at the Fleischman Atmospherium at the University of Nevada, Reno. One of the co-hosts was *Eriogonum* expert Jim Reveal. He pointed out that *E. lemmonii* was only known from historic collections, the type location was rather vague, and his efforts to re-find the plant had been fruitless. That summer, I worked on a floristic inventory of Charles Sheldon National Wildlife Refuge. On May 22nd, I was looking at the large light-colored volcanic ash deposits in Virgin Valley and I discovered the northern most location for another Nevada endemic, *Eriogonum rubricaula*. At first I thought it was the long lost *E. lemmonii*. When back in Reno, I showed the specimens to Margaret Williams who then helped me correctly identify them as *E. rubricaula*. We noted that these two species were each others' closest relatives. I was intrigued by the habitat of clay soils in ash deposits. It was a surprise to find any plants

on these seemingly barren habitats. On May 28th, with this habitat in mind, I began to search east of Reno off of I-80. I looked around Painted Rock and found some barren habitats but the soils were rather shallow and gravelly. I then looked south of the Truckee River. There is a road south of the Derby Canal that now has a locked gate on it. I took this road and botanized my way up into the foothills. I drew blanks on the first couple of spots until I drove over a small hill and, bingo, right into a large population of *E. lemmonii*.

The first thing that caught my attention was the flower color, bright pink. All of the previous collections had been made later in the year or the flowers had faded to a non-descript brownish color. The other thing that jumped at me was the color of the leaves. They were a yellowish-green like *E. rubricaula* and sort of like *E. inflatum*. I immediately made a collection and when back in Reno showed it to Margaret Williams. She was as enthusiastic as I was at re-finding a lost botanical treasure. I then headed back to Sheldon for another ten day work stint.



Arnold Tiehm standing over *E. lemmonii* ©Emma Wynn

Margaret went out to my site, photographed the plant, and studied the habitat. She then contacted Pat Lott, an amateur botanist in Fallon, and asked her about the “Alum mine near Lahontan [Reservoir] and explained the habitat to her. On the 17th of June Pat went to the “Old Alum Mine” and sure enough, found *E. lemmonii*.

On my next trip home I learned that Jim Reveal was due in town shortly. On June 21st Margaret and I took Jim down the Truckee River Canyon to Painted Rock where we showed him my location for *E. lemmonii*. We

then went to Lahontan Reservoir where Pat Lott took us to the Old Alum Mine and showed us her location for *E. lemmonii*. We all then proceeded to Wilson Canyon where we again found *E. lemmonii*.

Since 1978 we have found a lot more locations for *E. lemmonii* and we now know it from Churchill, Lyon, Pershing, Storey, and Washoe counties. The plant has a narrow east-west distribution and it ranges from the southern Trinity Mountains in Pershing County to the Wilson Canyon area in Lyon County.

Featured book:

Review of “Brave the Wild River”

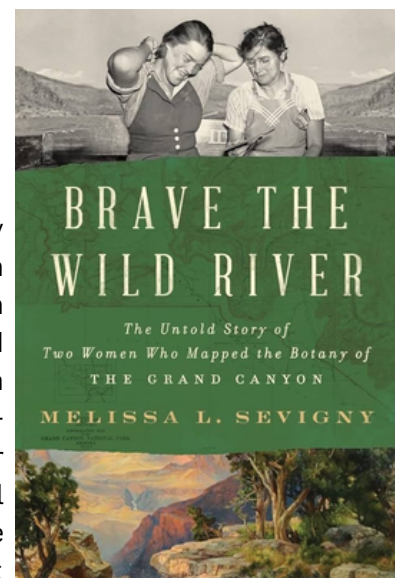
by Dennis Ghiglieri

This page-turning, true story written by Melissa L. Sevigny (2023) plunges the reader back in time to when boating down the Colorado River through Glen and Grand Canyons meant facing a torrent of red, gritty waters, discomfort, and daily dangerous rapids. Glen Canyon wasn't just a memory in 1938, but a place where a few intrepid adventurers could marvel and explore before construction of the dam that forever tamed the Colorado River.

Elzada Clover, a professor of botany at the University of Michigan, “had a dream” to “make a field study of all the cacti in the Southwest.” This led her to the Mexican Hat Lodge in 1937 and self-proclaimed river guide Norm Nevills where she realized how her dream could be accomplished by botanizing the Canyons of the Colorado River. Clover together with Nevills planned a trip down the length of the Colorado through Glen and Grand Canyons all the way down river to the recently completed Boulder Dam and still-filling Lake Mead. She was accompanied by her much younger PhD student Lois Jotter. Both botanists knew the trip was a first to allow for the collecting and identifying of plants along the way. However, in 1938 there were few people who had successfully run the

river all the way to Black Canyon in Nevada. Both women faced opposition from the few well-known river runners - all men - of the time saying that

running the river wasn't suitable for women. Further, women in science were subjected to discrimination and had to overcome many professional and societal obstacles in addition to the huge rapids and river flows during spring runoff. Against all odds, six adventurers, including the women botanists Clover and Jotter, took off on June 23, 1938. Author Sevigny immerses the reader into the botany, the conflicts, the beauty and hardships of the 40-plus river days using the journals of the participants, correspondence, interviews, and newspaper stories of the day. The reader experiences the day-to-day work of collecting plants after long days on the river, where Clover and Jotter did all the meal preparation, and faced life-threatening rapids, storms, and frequent public disapproval. Nevertheless, their love of botany and science



could not be dampened despite the disappearance of a third of their collection carefully packaged for shipment to Michigan at one of the few resupply points. Through

missed plant collection opportunities and joys of discovery, the book weaves a thoroughly engaging botanical journey down a long-lost wild river.

Conservation news:

Old-Growth Forests: Can they be saved?

by Rose Strickland

Have you noticed the extensive die-offs of trees in national forests and on public lands in Nevada? What is causing this and what is being done to counter these threats to Nevada's forests, including our rare old growth trees?

Old-growth forests are not only marvels of nature, but are also invaluable for storing large amounts of carbon, a natural climate change solution. The current administration has released a proposal to amend 128 national forest land management plans to better protect and steward old growth forests across the country (fs.usda.gov/managing-land/old-growth-forests/amendment).

This is a huge undertaking, starting with how to define old-growth and mature growth, how to identify the major threats to the survival of old-growth, and how to update land management activities to be more responsive to rapidly changing disturbances and conditions.

The U.S. Forest Service (USFS) and the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) first inventoried the remaining old-growth forests and found 32 million acres of old-growth and 80 million acres of mature forests (fs.usda.gov/sites/default/files/mature-and-old-growth-forests-tech.pdf). On pages 37-38, the report lists 12 types of old-growth trees in the USFS Intermountain Region, including the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest in Nevada. These include Whitebark Pine, Western White Pine, Bristlecone Pine, Aspen, Lodgepole Pine, Limber Pine, Ponderosa Pine, Pinyon Pine, Western Juniper, and Utah Juniper.

According to the report, pinyon-juniper (PJ) woodlands are the most abundant forest type

of mature and old-growth forests, with 9 million acres of old-growth PJ across Forest Service and BLM lands and an additional 14 million acres of mature PJ (fs.usda.gov/sites/default/files/pinyon-juniper-fact-sheet.pdf).

Then the agencies analyzed threats to old-growth forests and identified the primary threat - increasingly severe fires, exacerbated by climate change. The next major threat is due to insects and diseases. Cutting trees is now considered a minor threat (fs.usda.gov/sites/default/files/fs_media/fs_document/MOG-threat-analysis.pdf).

Based on the information in the inventory and threats reports, plus scoping comments from the public, the agencies have drafted a programmatic EIS with four alternatives designed to devise a consistent framework to guide conservation and restoration of our old-growth forests. Besides the no action alternative, there is a preferred alternative (with exceptions), a more restrictive alternative (no logging), and a less restrictive alternative. The three action alternatives also have standards, guidelines, goals and objectives which must be met for all proposed projects in forests with old-growth trees, especially fuels reduction projects.

The Forest Service is asking for public input on its proposals. The NNPS conservation committee will be reviewing the draft Environmental Statement and its four alternatives. NNPS will submit comments by the deadline of **September 20th**. Please contact Conservation Chair, Rose Strickland with any concerns or comments you may have with this old growth forest proposal.

The Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest and the BLM are implementing a number of forest restoration projects in Nevada, many in areas with old-growth trees. In the Elko District, USFS staff are working on two projects: the Deer Mountain Timber Improvement and Hazardous Fuels Reduction Project and the East Humboldt and Ruby Mountains Fuels Reduction and Landscape Resilience Project. All the districts in the Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest have projects under the

Prescribed Fire Program to address wildfire threats by reducing fuels, increasing resiliency of native vegetation to invasive species, and improving the ecological function of vegetation communities and wildlife habitat. The planner said the forest districts would be glad to schedule tours or do presentations on their restoration projects for NNPS and other interested groups and welcomes volunteers who want a hands-on experience with restoring native plants to our forests.



In the Carson Range's upper elevations, thousands of mature conifers -- primarily white-bark, lodgepole, and western white pines -- have been killed recently by insects and diseases fueled in part by increasing temperatures. Photo taken on July 25, 2024. ©Dennis Ghiglieri

Field trip report:

June Garden Party in Sparks

by Emma Wynn

On June 1st, NNPS member John Weiser opened his dryland garden for viewing by Society members and friends. Over 30 people visited the garden to admire its beauty and pick John's brain to learn about growing native plants and creating a diverse and stunning garden in Northern Nevada. John and his wife Jeanne were wonderful hosts! Jeanne welcomed everyone, provided drinks and snacks, and shared some stories about the garden from her perspective. I'm surprised John didn't lose his voice as he answered questions and shared information all day. John started his garden twenty-four years ago and it features many dry land plants from around the world. Yucca, Cacti, and Agave form the backbone of the planting, which is filled in with an assortment of native and exotic herbaceous perennials. Noteworthy are the collections of *Eriogonum* and *Penstemon*, both great Western North American genera.



John (with the brimmed hat) taking NNPS members through his garden ©Emma Wynn



View of one garden bed full of Yucca, Cacti, and Eriogonum species ©Emma Wynn

Society updates

The Nevada Native Plant Society will begin monthly meetings again on September 5th. For the latest updates, either reach out to events@nvnp.org; check the calendar on the new website: nvnp.org/calendar; or follow us on Facebook. NNPS would love to host more events outside of the Reno area. If you are interested in leading any efforts for NNPS, please reach out to Emma Wynn at president@nvnp.org or Shannon Swim at shannonswim@gmail.com.

Upcoming Events:

- August 3rd Tahoe Meadows Interpretive Loop Field Trip
- August 10th Slide Mountain Field Trip
- August 17th Osgood Swamp Field Trip
- August 24th Doyle Field Trip

We want to extend a special welcome to our new members!

- Elaine Pinnow
- Halina North
- Holly Kinser
- Liz Bailey
- Pete Johnson
- Sam Sanchez
- Suki Lee

If you are interested in having your work featured in the newsletter or if you have any comments, please reach out to Alison Agneray, Newsletter Editor, at aagneray@gmail.com. Newsletters are published six times per year in even-numbered months and distributed only to active NNPS members.

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