

2007 Annual Report

Walla Walla Subchapter
Columbia Basin Chapter
Washington Native Plant Society

Prepared by Laura Maier

Field Trips

We had a great time getting ready for Botany WA. We thought about different hikes, tested some, eliminated some & tried some hikes a second time. I am sure we all learned more in the process of trying to find hikes for our guests. After Botany WA, our regular second Wednesday hikes were larger. More participants showed up. On one hike, a sub group joined Betsy Kaiser to gather *Poa secunda* seeds for the Forest Service.

2006 - 2007 PROGRAMS October - March 2nd Wednesday of each month.

We provide an activity for the public every second Wednesday. On second Wednesdays October thru March we provide speakers for our meetings located at Whitman College Hall of Science. April thru September we offer hikes on second Wednesdays, usually in or near the Blue Mountains.

October 11. Gary Lentz, Park Ranger, showed us native plants via his power point presentation, "Native Plants of Lewis & Clark Trail State Park". He discussed the useful applications of the various plants he showed and provided extensive information about each plant. Gary brought his own beautiful pressed and framed specimens of plants, identified by Capt. Meriwether Lewis on his journey through the area in 1806.

Nov. 8. Sean Currans, local native plant seed consultant and grower, presented information about the Currans Family Farm. The Currans family grows ten native grass species, twenty native shrub species, and several forb species on contract with the Forest Service, the CREP program, as well as other agencies. Their native plants are grown from local native seed sources.

Jan. 10. Bob Carson, Professor of Geology and Environmental Studies, presented images of Tibet and wildflowers surviving in gravelly soil at high elevations, as seen by the 2005 Whitman College geology-environmental studies expedition to Tibet and the Himalayas.

Feb. 14. Mike Denny presented photographs and discussed the condition of plants growing in the gravelly, weathered lithosol openings of the Blue Mountains, commenting on the ecosystems he noticed during his surveys, for example, he found gray rabbit brush at all elevations and he explained how its fall blooms are important for insects and birds. His observations included many aspects of nature in the mountains, such as where the wind moves the soil, a new cycle of plant relationships begins.

March 14, Janelle Downs, PhD., Sr. Research Scientist, Ecology Group, and meteorologist Bill Gustafson working on global climate, both at Pacific NW National Laboratory explained and illustrated potential changes in plant functional types as a result of climate change, and the resulting community /ecosystem changes we would see in the different regions of the northwest.

First Thursday, every month: Noon lunch at Reid Campus Center, corner of Park and Boyer for informal discussion of issues related to native plants, & books.

Other Activities of Interest

On March 24, we provided a workshop at the Garden Center on "Including native plants in your garden," sponsored by Walla Walla's Sustainable Living Center. We used a powerpoint created from Marianne Uyeda's photos of the Demonstration Garden and also a few photos of Jim Swayne's garden. We also included the Currans, who run a local native plant nursery. We

scheduled a tour of Jim Swayne's garden as a follow-up, later in the spring. We were surprised that 37 people attended our workshop.

The Native Plants in Downtown Pots had some problems. The plants now are large enough to survive pigeons munching and crowded downtown auto or basketball events.

However, a lovely specimen of giant wild rye was carefully removed in the night, and a few of the heavy, 3' high cement city pots disappeared in the night!

At the Demonstration Garden, we added more garden candidates (including some Paintbrush, grown with a native grass at Curran's Family Farm), more weed barrier, and two more sections of Buffalo grass. We enlisted the help of Whitman College students in removing the thousands of Russian Thistle plants, blown over the fence in the winter winds. Our spring and fall plant sales both provided a larger variety of native plants for the community and became a social occasion for us and our clients.

We are starting another project, an introductory guide to the wildflowers of the Blue Mountains. Jean Ann Mitchell, Steve Roy, Priscilla Dauble, and Laura Maier are working on this guide with a simple key for about 100 wildflowers.

For 2007-2008 we are planning a historical focus, first with a program on David Douglas (and books), and later we hope to have a few spring hikes hunting for plants listed by C. V. Piper in the 1880's as found in the North Fork of the Touchet River.

The small Walla Walla subchapter of the Columbia Basin Chapter acts as a committee. We do not have officers or Board of Directors.

Submitted by Laura Maier, Coordinator.