



# Kinnikinnick Journal

Volume XIX Number 1

March/April 2015

Kinnikinnick Native Plant Society, Inc. / PO Box 1092 Sandpoint, Idaho 83864 [www.nativeplantsociety.org](http://www.nativeplantsociety.org)

## Upcoming Programs

**Presentations Sponsored by**  
Kinnikinnick Native Plant Society  
and Sandpoint Parks and Recreation  
Community Hall, First Ave, Sandpoint  
(Across from County Courthouse)

All meetings begin at 9:45 and are held at the Community Hall  
unless otherwise indicated.

**Saturday, March 28, 2015**

**Dr. Brenda Beckwith and Valerie Huff**

***Camas Populations in the Kootenays***

*Sponsored by the Pend Oreille Chapter of the Master  
Naturalists Program and Mythweavers*

**Saturday, April 25, 2015**

**Roger Blew**

Ecologist for the Department of Energy, contractor at  
the Idaho National Laboratory

***The Idaho National Laboratory and its Sagebrush  
Steppe Ecosystem***

## January Program Summary

### Landscaping for Birds, Bees, and Butterflies

On January 24, 2015, Gail Bolin, owner of Earthwise Northwest and past president of our KNPS, spoke to a large audience about landscaping to provide and enhance habitat for birds, bees, and butterflies. Having grown up on a sustainable dairy farm rich with critters, Gail is passionate about the connection between native habitats and native birds, bees, and butterflies. With rapid declines in their populations attributed to human activities, birds, bees, and butterflies need our help. Landscaping with native plants can restore natural habitats that offer critters food, water, shelter, and a place free from pesticides to raise their families, as op-



posed to other landscaping components such as lawns and non-native plants that have the consequence of harming and reducing habitat.

Gail gave many examples of how to support birds, bees, and butterflies in our gardens. Simply put, think native! Native plants provide habitat and require no fertilizer, pesticides, or water, once established. Deep-rooted, they are hardier than non-natives. (Definition: native plants were here prior to European settlement.) Planting in fall allows time to get roots down before a hard freeze. Remember the little critters (decomposers, frog larva, snails, and slugs) and leave the leaves! Other habitat-enhancement tips include no deadheading; leave brush piles; and provide rocks, snags, and downed wood.

Carol Jenkins offered tips on landscaping waterfront properties. Leaving a natural buffer will pay off at resale and it provides critter habitat, shade, erosion control, and eliminates need for fertilizers and pesticides.

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## Committee Reports

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### Arboretum News

The Arboretum Committee will have its first planning session on Wednesday, March 4. We will be discussing projects for this coming season. We will be doing a cleanup at the Arboretum toward the end of April and start actively working there the first of May. We each spend one morning a week working in assigned areas or wherever nonnative weeds decide to come up. If you are interested in helping, please email me at [smchatburn@gmail.com](mailto:smchatburn@gmail.com).

### Conservation Committee

KNPS has been a strong supporter of Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness since they started a decade ago to make Scotchman Peaks a Wilderness. Now, with the Forest Plan in place, 2015 is the time! Watch for a Letter to the Editor in the Bee from KNPS supporting the ramped-up push for Wilderness. Before our next newsletter, the Conservation Committee will meet to discuss ways to effectively help 2015 be the year of congressional action.

Why KNPS? Scotchman Peaks is a botanically important area in myriad ways. It's home to Ross Creek Cedars –old growth rare in these parts. Enticingly, the Scotchman landscape hovers at the southern reach of the Canadian Boreal region and slips into Rocky Mountain habitat. Plus, we're unique in being "inland north wet" as we snuggle into mountains to the east. The result is a varied, rich native flora; we are fortunate to have such a unique spot to call our near neighbor.

Whitebark Pine, a species of concern, competes for space and survival at high altitudes where it needs protection and restoration. Alpine meadows, creeks and wetlands plus a variety of forest habitats ensure that this is a special place richly deserving KNPS support.

Helping Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness achieve permanent protection for this area will be a priority this year, as will assisting the Clark Fork Delta Restoration.

Watch for an email announcing our Conservation meeting in April, and join the conversation. Even now, feel free to send personal letters of support for the Scotchman Peaks Wilderness to the Bee, if you'd like. All voices help.

Molly O'Reilly, Chair, [conservation@nativeplants.org](mailto:conservation@nativeplants.org)

### Landscape Committee

The landscape committee is looking forward to the 2015 season. We already have a full complement of projects but anyone who is interested should contact the committee so their name can be put on the list in case an opening would occur. To contact the committee please send an email to [landscape@nativeplantsociety.org](mailto:landscape@nativeplantsociety.org). Check out the KNPS website [nativeplantsociety.org/landscape](http://nativeplantsociety.org/landscape) for additional information on the landscape committee.



## February Program Summary

### **Survivors: Tracing the Story of Native Plants in our Region**

On February 28, 2015, author, teacher, and naturalist Jack Nisbet shared stories about the adventures of David Douglas, a gifted collector of native plants in our Pacific Northwest in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century. Unlike Lewis and Clark who merely pressed plant specimens, Douglas was able to collect and send viable, live specimens and seeds to England. Douglas's activities altered the dynamics of the native plant world in ways that could not have been imagined.

Nisbet described the context of human interactions in the Pacific Northwest during Douglas's travels. From the native Americans, Douglas, an active trader of goods for information or plant specimens, gleaned thousands of years of knowledge about plant properties. For instance, he learned about the precise timing of cooking camas with two different onion species. His own background, though, did not prepare him for many challenges. Hearing that the Shoalwaters ate rhizomes of bracken fern, he misunderstood and told of Indians eating rhizomes of Pacific Northwest native sword fern, which does not have rhizomes. He noted that while gathering and eating salmonberry, coastal Indians did not eat available pigweed. He could not have realized that pigweed was not familiar to the Indians, as it was a plant he was used to eating. He found Mariposa lilies to his liking, comparing them to farina, the cereal grain he was familiar with as a native of Northern Scotland.

Many of the native plants Douglas sent to Europe did so well they achieved weed status. The London Horticultural Society sprouted Salal seeds and marketed the plant with artwork and seed catalogs; it became a weed in Scotland. Douglas recognized and collected Reed canary grass, which hybridized in England, and was distributed here and in the Willamette Valley to revegetate stump farms. Another culprit, fireweed, showed up in bomb craters during WWI. With hybrid vigor, it altered its number of chromosomes and became a weed in the Northern British Isles.

Other plants Nisbet connected to Douglas include Lupine, Indian Hemp, Beargrass, Twist Tobacco, Western Labrador Tea, and Bitterroot. Douglas's collecting skills served to introduce Pacific Northwest conifers to Europe. From wood planks to seeds to live plants, his samples demonstrated traits of Western Red Cedar, Douglas Fir, Grand Fir, Sugar Pine, Western White Pine, Ponderosa Pine, Monterey Pine, and Sitka Spruce. Some species grew well on non-

native soils; Western White Pine did not. Nisbet offered historical botanist Oliver Rackham's word for describing plants located where they don't want to be: "innervated."

Douglas, singularly remarkable in his skills and abilities, could not have foreseen the results of his plant collections. It seems the story is still unfolding.

The "David Douglas: A Naturalist at Work" exhibit will be on display at the Washington County Museum in Hillsboro, Oregon, through August 2015.



## Member Profile: Ken Thacker

*Article and Photo by Mark Stockwell*

Confusion can arise when your business is named “The Weed Guy.” Misguided customers might initially be quite excited to learn you grew up in Humboldt County, California, only to exhale their disappointment hearing of your successes eradicating various plants. They may hang up quickly once they discover your knowledge of Yellow Devil Hawkweed and Giant Salvinia trumps that of hothouse grown Indica and giant Sativa. However, if you have problems with noxious weeds there are few people in our region with as much expertise as Ken Thacker.

Ken grew up a 4th generation northern Californian not far from where his maternal great grandmother was born in Vallejo in 1860. His dad was among 9 children whose family migrated from Oklahoma, *Grapes of Wrath* fashion, in the 1930s. The dominant crop in Humboldt County in the 1950s was in fact trees, so Ken’s father made his living supporting the forestry industry by installing sawmill infrastructure. As a youth Ken’s hunger for the outdoors was fed in the forests and hills of northern California – fishing, hunting and exploring were his passions. Finishing high school in 1965 meant a choice of either continuing school or meeting with the draft board, so he enrolled at Oregon Tech to study electrical engineering. Unfortunately, his love of the outdoors didn’t translate well with engineering and the draft board revisited him in 1967, just as the Tet Offensive was beginning in Vietnam.



Under duress, Ken joined the U.S. Air Force in 1968, fortunately sidestepping Vietnam and spending tours of duty in England and Greece. Ken’s time in the military was one of self-discovery. During those years he found that running was a better outlet than sitting in bars, a lesson learned on a trip to Olympus, Greece, highlighted by running laps around an ancient stadium. Living in Europe for four years also opened his eyes to the importance of wild places and reignited his longing to return to the woods.

After realizing that an Air Force career would be a huge mistake for him, Ken decided to leave the service, return to school to study forestry in Missoula, Montana, and pursue his truer passion for outdoor adventure. He continued running as a lifestyle throughout those college years and also interned for the Bureau of Land Management during his summer breaks. Upon graduating, he was quickly hired by the BLM and started a 25 year career as a soils scientist in Montana, Oregon and Idaho, often monitoring mining reclamation activities and the effects of grazing and logging on public lands. While in Vale, Oregon, Ken met his future wife and fellow runner, Bonnie, who worked as a wildlife biologist for the BLM. After starting their life together, they moved to Pocatello where Bonnie worked as the Education Coordinator at the local zoo and Ken continued with the BLM, adding noxious weed management to his resume. In 2004 Ken decided he’d had enough of government employment, opting to retire early and start his own business in weed management. A few years later, Bonnie took a Fish and Game job in Salmon, Idaho where they both learned of the advantages and disadvantages of living in isolated, rural western America.

While in Salmon, Ken and Bonnie began looking for a more permanent retirement area. Ken’s brother suggested Sandpoint after discovering our area during his travels as a salesman, so Ken and Bonnie visited one week around 3 years ago. Their decision to move here was easy to make. These days Ken continues biking, kayaking, hiking and fishing. He and Bonnie have been active with KNPS for a couple years and Ken is currently the Board Secretary. Ken is also involved with the Friends of Scotchman Peaks Wilderness and KRFY Panhandle Community Radio.

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## A Voice From the Moist Montane

*Story and Picture by Marilyn McIntyre*

I keep waiting for the other “shoe to fall” as it usually does after a February faux spring fling. Well, it has grown quite a bit colder by the end, but no new snow. Here at 3200’ in a snow belt, we have had a total of only 54” of snowfall. And to make it more interesting 51” of that fell before January 19<sup>th</sup>. Now, in late February we have less than one foot of snow on the ground and the creeks are ice-free except in places that never see the sun; where ice organ pipes form in the current’s edges and overflows. My climate angst melts into gratitude for us here, as once again we ache for our family and friends who live east of the Continental Divide and in drought ravaged California.

The native plants, as they always do, are holding out for spring before they



Wolf Lichen on Humbird Ghost Larch

break buds; though I did see some willows trying back in early February before the Arctic blast stopped the thaw. That was when the Chickadees were practicing their mating calls, which have also been quieted by the nighttime temperatures into the teens. A solitary Junco has been drawn to the patches of ground showing here and there and the heavy concentrations of seed and catkins left behind by the melting snow. He doesn’t really count because he showed up the day after the Great Backyard Bird Count. The illustrated Wolf Lichens (*Letharia vulpina*) are bright chartreuse green in their forest habitat. I will keep an eye on the Twin Berry Honeysuckles because they are the earliest bloomers around here and might just give a hint of how early spring will arrive in the “not so moist” Montane.

## It's Time to Renew—last notice!

Memberships expired at the end of the year. If you have not renewed yet, you will see 2014 on your address label. If you have renewed, it will read 2015. For those of you receiving the newsletter electronically, you will be receiving a reminder if you haven't sent in your dues for 2015. For those who are not renewing, this will be your last newsletter. If you are uncertain if you have renewed, contact John Albi (265-8370, email: john.valerie.albi@frontier.com).

### *Membership Categories*

<i>Patron</i>	<i>\$100</i>
<i>Sustaining</i>	<i>\$50</i>
<i>Sponsor (commercial)*</i>	<i>\$50</i>
<i>Household</i>	<i>\$25</i>
<i>Individual</i>	<i>\$20</i>
<i>Student</i>	<i>\$15</i>
<i>Senior</i>	<i>\$15</i>

*\*non-voting membership*

### Renew By:

Mail - send a check to PO Box 1092, Sandpoint, ID 83864

Online using PayPal at [www.nativeplantsociety.org/membershippaypal.htm](http://www.nativeplantsociety.org/membershippaypal.htm)

Or in person at any of the general meetings

## Kinnikinnick Native Plant Society presents:

### Replant Your Refund Day

At Baxter's, 109 Cedar Street, Sandpoint

A fund raising event, with Baxter's generously donating 5% of the proceeds from the day to KNPS. Come for lunch or come for dinner or come for both. We will have a raffle for at least a sailboat ride on Lake Pend Oreille with a catered picnic lunch. Your participation will help support our monthly educational programs, the Arboretum, and local projects.



*Sage Buttercup*

## Business Sponsor

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