

# Koma Kulshan

## Chapter WNPS

### Newsletter

<b>Inside this issue</b>  p1 President's Corner p1 New Books p1 Table Mountain Field Trip p2 Hart's Pass Field Trip p3 Programs p3 Field Trips	Fall (October, November, December) 2016	
<b>Find Koma Kulshan Online</b>  <b>Website:</b> <a href="http://www.wnpskoma.org">www.wnpskoma.org</a> <b>Facebook:</b> WNPSKomaKulshan	<b>President's Corner</b> by Abe Lloyd	
<b>New Books</b>  <b>Boundary Layer; Exploring the Genius Between Worlds</b> by Kem Luther Oregon State University Press  This book explores the ecological niches and functions of the stegnon: the ground-dwelling mosses, fungi, lichen, and plants that, the book argues, make up the foundation of terrestrial life.  The book profiles the work of a range of researchers, including Andrea Pickart, at the Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge; Carl Sieber at the Pacific Rim National Park; and Andy MacKinnon, among many others. More info at <a href="http://stegnon.com/">http://stegnon.com/</a> .  <b>New Book: The Quiet Extinction; Stories of North America's Rare and Threatened Plants</b> by Kara Rogers University of Arizona Press  Native plants throughout the United States and Canada are going extinct at an alarming pace, but no one seems to pay much attention. This book profiles the natural history of familiar and obscure rare plants and examines the forces that threaten them.	<p>The Pacific Northwest has a whopping 14 species of <i>Vaccinium</i>, the genus containing huckleberries, blueberries, bilberries and cranberries. With such dazzling diversity, it has taken considerable study and many a happy mission for me to track them down, but this year I've finally seen them all and tasted all but one.</p> <p>I spent the last week in August with my brother in Juneau and took full advantage of the foray to forage on the Last Frontier. Our journeys took us climbing to the top of Mount Juneau, braving the bowels of the Mendenhall Glacier, trudging across the muskegs of Douglas Island, and scampering along Gold Creek. Basically as far as bus fare and our feet could take us.</p> <p>This northerly corner of our bioregion graced me with discoveries of a precious and palatable sort. I had my first taste of Lingonberries (<i>Vaccinium vitis-idaea</i>), caught the last of the ripe Nagoonberries (<i>Rubus arcticus</i>), a berry that is thought by many Europeans to be the superlative fruit, and most exciting to me, I had my first fully ripe taste of Dwarf Bilberry (<i>V. caespitosum</i>).</p> <p>Dwarf Bilberry is a lowmat forming shrub that is usually less than 1.5' (50cm) tall with upright to prostrate stems. They have an extensive yet patchy range throughout western North America from Anchorage to San Francisco along the Pacific Coast and inland to the Rockies in British Columbia, Montana and Idaho, and the Sierra Nevada in California. They inhabit bogs, muskeg, and arctic/alpine meadows with other ericaceous shrubs such as Lingonberry (<i>V. vitis-idaea</i>), Bog Bilberry (<i>V. uliginosum</i>), Cascade Bilberry (<i>V. deliciosum</i>), and various heather species. Locally, they can be found in the rugged Twin Sister's Range and the remote Pasayten wilderness. I can honestly say that I've never found a Dwarf Bilberry in a boring place. It is almost as if a couple miles of bush-whacking is required to earn the right to find them.</p> <p>Capable of fruiting prodigiously, Dwarf Bilberries can be collected quickly by hand or rake by anyone willing to stoop for these hobbit sized bushes. They have juicy dark flesh, thin skin, and a sweet and sour flavor that is almost as good as its close cousin the Cascade Bilberry (<i>V. deliciosum</i>). When picking bilberries, I prefer to kneel on the ground and pick into wide mouth containers placed below the bush. I empty this vessel frequently into a lidded bucket to minimize losses should I slip or accidentally bump it over. Bilberry picking is messy business and I usually return with purple hands, knees, and tongue--Bilberry badges of courage.</p> <p>Christian and I were ill-prepared for our Bilberry bonanza; with nowhere to store the bountiful harvest we were forced to eat them all.</p>	
	<b>Table Mountain Field Trip</b> Bob Lemon	
	<p>This field trip started 10 or 15 years ago while passing a trailside snag just west of Herman Saddle. I was told that Professor Ron Taylor would point it out as a very special outlier pine, but what species was it? It was too late to recover any cones or needles, and the bark was nearly all gone.</p> <p><i>Pinus monticola</i> occurs as a loner, but it was unlikely at 5,200 feet. <i>Pinus contorta</i> could occur in just about any situation, but alone? The snag's growth form is multi-trunked, not unlike <i>Pinus albicaulis</i>, but below 5,500 feet and this far west? There are "West of the crest" records from Ruby Mountain, Sourdough Mountain, and Cascade Pass, and a 1947 W.S.U. herbarium specimen</p>	



# Koma Kulshan Chapter WNPS Newsletter

## Table Mountain Field Trip (Cont'd)

(collected by H.G. Coffin) from Mount Baker.

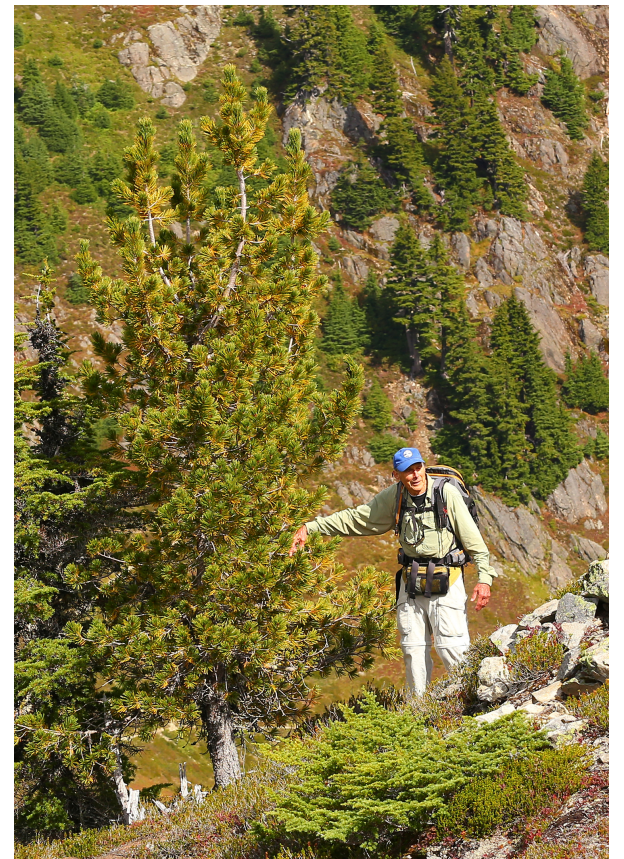
That tells us that *P. albicaulis* has existed as far west in the range as our mystery snag, but our site is much closer to Mount Shuksan. A year ago while exploring a historic trail accessing the lower half of Table Mountain, I stumbled across 6 little *P. albicaulis* trees growing, as they should, on the very edge of the cliffs high above Herman Saddle!

This discovery prompted this year's field trip to Table Mountain. Supporting the plant life was interesting geology, ice history, and a rough tabletop just emerging from permanent snowfields. The edges were greener with tarns feeding lovely little streams soon dropping over incredibly high cliffs. There were small meadows in all stages of development from sterile black sand, to a few green shoots, to *Carex nigricans* dominated meadows. *Empetrum nigrum* was common on higher, rocky ground, and abundant *Saxifraga tolmiei* provided nearly all of the late bloom.

Most of the pines were inaccessible except one krummholz shrub and one bearing cones. That would suggest that this was a 200 year old stand. In *Trees of N. America* (1968), Frank C. Brockman states these trees take 200 years to mature. In *Northwest Trees* (1977, Stephen Arno), John Muir described a 6 inch diameter trunk that was 426 years old and a twig that was 75 years old. I think we were seeing the struggling remnants of a relic stand established during the little ice age. Are there other Mt. Baker-Shuksan area stands? Where did H.G. Coffin get his?

And that wasn't the only highlight. Were those deer tracks I saw up here? Could be: I've seen them on glaciers. But the tracks and scat looked more like goat, though I have never known goats to inhabit Table Mountain. Ha!! A lengthy sighting of a wary dozen including several kids removed any question. What a way to end a field trip!

I did not do that field trip alone. Penny McGinty, Allan Richardson, Marie Hitchman, Rob Rich, Katrina Poppe, and Abe Lloyd were also along and I thank them for photos and identification help.



Bob poses with his prize  
Photo by Abe Lloyd

## Hart's Pass Field Trip

by Annie Prevost

The weather couldn't have been more perfect for our three day Hart's Pass field trip. Seven attended: Allan and Susan Richardson, Bob Lemon and Annie Prevost, Dimitri Katsaros and Barbara Miller and our organizer, Jim Davis.

We were able to get two side-by-side campsites at the smaller campground at Hart's Pass. Friday afternoon we botanized our way up the Slate Peak road. The blooms included *Phacelia hastata* and *P. sericea*, *Lomatium dissectum*, *Penstemon davidsonii*, and *P. procerus*.

Next we visited the lush meadow across the road from the horse parking. The meadow was dominated by hundreds of *Platanthera dilatata* (slender bog orchids) along with *Pedicularis groenlandica*, *P. bracteosa*, *P. racemose*, *Ligusticum canbyi*, *Aconitum columbianum*, *Castilleja* species and many more. Barbara, Dimitri and Annie got busy with their cameras, others sought IDs and Jim tracked pollinators.

Saturday we hiked the Pacific Crest Trail to Windy Pass, eight miles return. The profusion of bloom continued, especially the many colors of *Castilleja* species. Butterflies were plentiful, too. That evening was cooler so we enjoyed a campfire.

Sunday morning there was just enough cloud and mist to lend even more drama to the spectacular mountain scenery. Some returned to the meadow. Annie and Bob walked up Slate Peak looking for a mysterious buckwheat we had puzzled over on Friday. The "buckwheat" continued to defy an ID until Annie stumbled on a picture of it in the Encyclopedia of *Northwest Native Plants* (Robson, Richter and Filbert). It appeared to be *Spraguea umbellata* (Pussypaws) in the Portulacaceae family, also known as *Cistanthe umbellata* or *Calyptridium umbellatum*. It is in Hitchcock and is mentioned by Taylor as a Portulaca that looks like a buckwheat. And it is on the Hart's Pass species list.

The profusion of species was overwhelming, but by the end of the weekend we had identified more than 50 that appear on list numbers 2 and 3 for Hart's Pass and a couple that weren't on the list.



*Spraguea umbellata* (Pussypaws) a  
Portulacaceae that looks like a buckwheat. Found  
on Slate Peak near Hart's Pass.  
Photo by Annie Prevost



## Fall (October, November, December) 2016

### Chapter Meetings

Meetings begin at 7pm in the Sustainable Living Center education room at the ReStore (2309 Meridian St.). The entrance is off the back alley and the SLC is upstairs. For more information, call Vikki Jackson at (360) 319-6988.

#### October 19th: The Pyrogeography of Wildfires in the West

Climate change, building practices, and a century of fire policies have combined to leave many of our forests explosive. Wildland firefighters, trained for work in the backcountry, are increasingly expected to protect homes and communities. Meanwhile, fire-suppression costs are going up even in moderate years, and many people are pressuring wildland agencies to vastly increase the acreage of fuel reduction programs. Michael Medler will discuss many of the spatial considerations in this debate, presenting his findings about the spatial scale of some of the problems and the potential of some of the solutions. Dr. Medler is an associate professor at Western Washington University in the Environmental Studies department. He is a past president of The Association for Fire Ecology, and the founding editor of the journal Fire Ecology.

#### November 16th: A Seedy (Under) world: Commercial Nursery Propagation of Native Plants from Seed

Have you ever wanted to grow your own, or wondered about mass production of native species? Come learn with Dylan Levy-Boyd about seed collecting and processing, genetics and seed transfer zones, seed propagation strategies, and seedling care. Dylan coordinates the propagation of 300+ species of native plants at Fourth Corner Nurseries in Bellingham, WA.

#### December 14, 2016: Holiday Potluck

6-9 PM. 4682 Wynn Road

Please join us at our annual winter potluck to enjoy a feast of food, and share stories about the year. Mark Turner has offered his studio again for the potluck. Dinner will begin around 6:30 pm and we will finish off with a slideshow of highlights of the year. Bring a dish and a drink to share (last names N-Z bring entrees, and A-M bring a side or dessert). For those with photos to share, bring along a USB drive with up to 10 digital images.

### Field Trips

#### October 1, Saturday. 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM: Pacific Crest Trail, Rainy Pass to Cutthroat Pass

In Washington we have two species of deciduous conifers, Western and Mountain Larch, both of which display beautiful yellows in autumn as they begin to drop their needles. We will hike from Rainy Pass to Cutthroat Pass to view the fall color of the high elevation Mountain Larch, *Larix lyallii*, as well as whatever late mountain flowers we can find along the trail. The hike will be five miles long (one way) with an elevation gain of about 2000 feet – if we make it all the way to Cutthroat Pass. Meet at 7:00 AM. at the west side Park & Ride off Fairhaven Parkway. If you have any questions contact Jim Duemmel at 733-3448 or JimDuemmel@q.com.

#### October 8, Saturday. 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM: Big Beaver Valley

The Big Beaver Valley is one of the most remote and pristine areas in Washington State. It is recognized as a great place to see old growth trees and perhaps even wildlife. It also has a significantly different flora than most of the areas we visit in western Whatcom County. We will hike from the Ross Lake Trailhead on Highway 20, across Ross Dam, and along the west shore of Ross Lake. The hike is seven miles long one way with minimal elevation gain, but quite a bit of up and down along the trail. Meet at 7:00 a.m. at the west side Park & Ride off Fairhaven Parkway. If you have any questions, contact Jim Davis at 296-5159 or jimdavispc@comcast.net.

#### November 5, Saturday

Time and destination not yet decided. Details will be posted on the website and sent to the email list as soon as available. Trip leader is Mark Turner, who may be contacted at 360-671-6851 or mark@turnerphotographics.com.

#### November 19, Saturday, 9:00 AM to 4:00 PM: Mirror Lake bog

With Thanksgiving following closely after this trip, a walk to Mirror Lake is a timely chance to harvest fresh Cranberries. Mirror Lake has both our native Little Bog Cranberry (*Vaccinium oxycoccos*) and Big Bog Cranberry (*V. macrocarpon*) native to the east coast but introduced sporadically throughout the west coast for commercial production. Despite the small size of the Mirror Lake bog, there is a nice diversity of bog vegetation. Meet by the tennis courts at Whatcom Falls Park (off Electric Ave., near Lafeens Donuts) at 9:00 AM to carpool. Rubber boots are highly recommended. If time allows, we may also explore the Barrell Springs bog before returning in the late afternoon. Contact Abe Lloyd (arcadianabe@yahoo.com; 360 303-1339) if you have questions.

Koma Kulshan Board

Elected Officers

**President**  
Abe Lloyd: (360) 303-1339  
arcadianabe@yahoo.com

**Vice President**  
Jim Davis: (360) 296-5159  
jimdaviscpc@comcast.net

**Secretary**  
Katrina Poppe: (360) 303-7806  
katrinalee\_98@yahoo.com

**Newsletter Editor**  
Jim Kling: (360) 671-1156  
jkling@gmail.com

**Treasurer**  
Angela Nelson: (360) 303-5628  
wildginger2063@hotmail.com

Committees

**Program Chairs**  
Katrina Poppe: (360) 303-7806  
Vikki Jackson: (360) 319-6988

**Field Trip Chair**  
Allan Richardson: (360) 733-5477

**Backyard Habitat Liaison**  
Molly Porter: (360) 714-0781

**Greenhouse Chair**  
Vacant

**Grants Committee Chair**  
Barry Wendling: (360) 393-9181

**State Board Representative**  
Mark Turner (at large)  
(360) 671-6851

Koma Kulshan Chapter WNPS Newsletter

If you would like to join WNPS

Please return the membership application form to:  
Washington Native Plant Society  
6310 NE 74th St., Suite 215E  
Seattle, WA 98115

Please make checks payable to WNPS  
(outside US add \$5 to dues)

Name:_____		Mebership Category:
Address:_____		\$20 Budget (Senior/Student)
City, State, Postal Code:_____		\$35 Individual
Phone:_____		\$45 Family
Email:_____		\$65 Club/Institution
Koma Kulshan Chapter    Total Enclosed:_____		\$50 WNPS Friend
		\$100 WNPS Special Friend
		\$500 WNPS Best Friend
		\$1000 WNPS Sustaining Member

The Koma Kulshan chapter of WNPS is dedicated to the preservation and study of native plants and vegetation of Washington State and the education of the public to the values of native flora and its habitat.

WNPS -- Koma Kulshan Chapter  
Newsletter Editor  
1610 Grant St.  
Bellingham, WA 98225