



The Penstemaniac

NEWSLETTER OF THE AMERICAN PENSTEMON SOCIETY
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President's Letter

Dear American Penstemon Society Members,

I have a few thoughts to share. First, I would like to thank Walt Fertig for an outstanding summer 2024 APS meeting in Pullman, WA. It was fantastic again to connect with folks that we have met in past meetings and also to meet new folks interested in penstemon! THANK YOU, Walt, for preparing and leading us through a memorable 2024 meeting!

Second, I am excited to announce that we now have an APS Media Coordinator. Skylar Christiansen has volunteered to take that position, and he is sharing a little about himself in this newsletter, please check his article. Our new Webmaster (Matt Robbins), Social Media Director (Elliot Gordon), and Skylar already have been connecting and have begun to work on a unified approach to our public face. You already can see some of those modifications on our website, and other APS media connections!

The third item is that Stephen Love and I have been out on multiple scouting trips in the mountains south of Pocatello, Burley, and Twin Falls, Idaho in preparation for 2025 Annual APS meeting. This meeting will be in the early half of June next year. We are in the early stages of securing a meeting venue in one of the above mentioned three cities. There are several *Penstemon* species endemic to that region plus others with a wider distribution. Some of these locally endemic species easily can be confused but in fact have distinct characteristics. To add to the confusion some of these taxa geographically overlap with each other and show evidence of natural hybridization. We are planning to share what we know about this interesting penstemon complex next year.

Volunteer members support the APS mission and operations to accomplish them. Share your passion for Penstemons and skills by joining the Board and appointed members in this effort. We look forward to your involvement.

Finally, we still are looking to fill other outstanding APS positions. We are looking for a Newsletter Editor, additional Executive Board Members, a Grants Coordinator, and someone to head up the Awards Nominating Committee. Please contact me or one of the board members to learn more about how you can become involved with our society!

I hope you enjoy some aspects of penstemon the rest of the summer and I look forward to the next time we connect!

Mikel Stevens, President
American Penstemon Society

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Skylar Christensen, New Marketing Director

Ed: Skylar Christensen attended the Pullman Annual Meeting, responding to President Mikel Stevens' call for a volunteer to manage marketing for APS. Mikel Stevens announced Skylar's appointment to the marketing position in an email after the meeting. Skylar writes his story below.

By Skylar Christensen

My penstemon journey began as a young boy growing up in northern Utah along the foothills of the Bear River Range. It was, and still is, a picturesque landscape with quick access to the Mt. Neomi Wilderness and the Uinta-Wasatch-Cache National Forest. I was lucky enough to live in an area where *Penstemon cyananthus* grew wild along the road of our rural home. I remember being awestruck by those electric-blue flowers in late May. Surely this was the most perfect incarnation of blue nature ever had produced. I had to capture it! Not only for myself, but for my mother who frequently mentioned how nice it would be to have such beautiful flowers growing in her garden at home. I decided to surprise her by fulfilling her wish.

So early one morning I attached the trailer to the four-wheeler, grabbed a shovel, and drove down the street to the penstemon patch. There, with good intentions and the love of my mother in mind, I pilfered the entire

colony of *cyananthus* and plopped them into my mother's garden bed—where they all subsequently died a few days later. In my youthful ignorance, I had severed too much of their root systems during my botched transplant attempt. I'll never forget the feeling of seeing something I admired so much destroyed by my own doing.

Later in life I would go on to study plant science and agricultural communications at Utah State University. It was during these years I first became familiar with some of the more common *Penstemon* species and their use in ornamental horticulture, particularly their role in water-wise landscaping throughout the Intermountain West. But it wasn't until I graduated and began my career in the native seed industry that the first symptoms of penstemonia appeared. I started learning everything I could about the species I was selling. I took an interest in the seed collection and production processes. I also began growing as many as I could from seed in my home landscapes, *P. palmeri* being one of my favorites. Somewhere along the way I came to understand how significant Utah is in the story and history of the genus. That is, Utah being the epicenter of *Penstemon* diversity. Being the proud Utahn I am, that fact further fueled my fascination.



My daughter Isla admiring the same colony of *Penstemon cyananthus* that started me on my penstemon journey over 30 years ago!

 [APS Facebook page](#)

 [APS Facebook group](#)

 [Instagram](#)

 [Twitter \(X\)](#)

[Google Group](#) blue.heron3@verizon.net

It only was natural my path eventually would lead me to Mikel Stevens, Stephen Love, and Tony McCammon's book, "***The Heart of Penstemon Country: A Natural History of Penstemons in the Utah Region***". Their work educated, inspired, and elevated me into a full-fledged penstemaniac. I will be forever grateful for their contribution. And oh, what's this? A sticker inside the front cover mentioning an organization called the **American Penstemon Society!** Sign me up!

I realize now my penstemon journey actually is just getting started. Meeting and mingling with Society members during the recent APS Annual Meeting in Pullman WA was an amazing, and humbling, experience. The collective years of knowledge, the academic achievements, the professional experience... I felt there was little I could ever offer the Society. And then President Mikel Stevens sent out the call for help with marketing, an area I have a decent amount of experience in. Now here I am.

While I haven't been an APS member for very long, and I've only attended one annual meeting so far, I already can tell there's something special about this group. It feels refreshingly genuine. There's a story here that needs to be told. It's a story of camaraderie. It's a story of adventures in the field, scientific discovery, and quiet moments of observation in nature. It's full of personal triumphs and epic failures. It's a mystery, a treasure hunt, and for some a connection with something bigger than themselves. Folks are searching for authenticity in this increasingly artificial world. I believe the Society could provide this much needed grounding as we tell our story in novel ways and share our mutual appreciation of the genus *Penstemon* with the world. I'm excited for the opportunity to serve the APS, and look forward to learning and growing with you all.

Penstemon cyananthus still grows wild along the road where I grew up, although in much fewer numbers these days. But the colony I decimated over 30 years ago remains for now. Earlier this year I took my daughter there to observe it, and we recently collected seeds that together we'll germinate and plant in my mother's garden.



Penstemon compactus, endemic to the Mt. Neomi Wilderness and surrounding areas of the Bear River Range. As a Cache County native myself, this one is pretty special to me.



Once you start down the Penstemon Path, there's no going back.

Travels to Pullman

Penstemon finds on the way
to 2024 APS Annual Meeting in Pullman WA
by Teri Shore

Teri Shore is an accomplished program director, conservation advocate, leader and communicator with strong advocacy, organizing, lobbying, fundraising, media, writing, public speaking and management skills.

Photos by Teri Shore

Traveling by car from Sonoma, CA, to the APS annual meeting in Pullman, WA in mid-June, I stopped along the way to explore and look for penstemons. I added the APS meeting to the end of a two-week road trip that centered on a week in [Stehekin hiking with Sierra Club](#) into the surrounding North Cascades national park and wilderness. Then a visit to my brother in Spokane. I found six species that I think I've identified correctly: *Penstemon laetus*, *P. deustus*, *P. fruticosus*, *P. pruinusosus*, *P. serrulatus*, *P. confertus* and *P. attenuatus*. My only caveat is that I am an amateur "penstemaniac", still learning and making identifications based mainly on basic field marks such as corolla and leaves, which may not be enough.

Mt. Shasta, *P. laetus* (aka Shasta or Mountain Blue penstemon): A few patches of *P. laetus*



Penstemon laetus with pollinator along Mt. Shasta Everett Memorial Highway (CA).



Penstemon laetus along the Mt. Shasta Everett Memorial Highway (CA).

were blooming low on the Everett Memorial Highway but none on the slopes above Bunny Flat high up where I'd previously seen penstemons. Snow still was abundant with summiteers climbing down from up top in droves. The [Mount Shasta Wildflowers: A Field Guide](#) provides good "intel" on where to find wildflowers and when.

Mt. Ashland Botanical Area ([webpage](#)): No penstemons were blooming at Mt. Ashland yet, but it's always a spectacular spot in the late spring and early summer. Deep purple-blue upland larkspur, *Delphinium nuttallianum*, bright red scarlet *Gilia leptosepala*, white marsh marigolds *Caltha leptosepala*, purple and cream Pacific trilliums *Trillium ovatum* and a few sunny yellow glacier lilies *Erythronium grandiflorum* and fuzzy *Calchortus elegans* were decorating the hillside meadows. I highly recommend a visit as it is easy to get to and just superb.



Penstemon deustus at Cove Palisades State Park (central OR).



P. deustus at Cove Palisades (OR).

Cove Palisades State Park ([website](#)) (central Oregon Deschutes and Crooked River canyons), ***P. deustus* (aka hotrock or scabland penstemon)**: After a stopover in Bend, OR, I headed to Cove Palisades State Park in Madras. There on a cliff high above the reservoir and behind the barrier fence near the Crooked River campground access road just out of reach several bunches of cream to yellow flowered *P. deustus* were thriving in the desert-plateau habitat with big sagebrush *Artemisia tridentata* and rubber rabbit bush *Ericameria nauseosa*. I managed to shoot pictures with my iPhone through the cyclone fencing (left) and above to capture some nice shots. Two years ago in mid-July, I was delighted by a big display of sage mariposa lillies, *C. macrocarpus*, in abundance close to the lake by the lower campground.

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Entiat River, Silver Falls, WA

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Silver Falls, Entiat River, *P. fruticosus* and *P. pruinosus* (aka bush penstemon and chelan penstemon. Leaving Wenatchee (WA) on my way to Chelan to take the ferry to Stehekin, I took a spontaneous flyer (as I often do) up the Entiat River Road above the Columbia River. At Silver Falls, I pulled over and followed the steep steps and trail to discover not only an [amazing 140-foot waterfall](#) with a rainbow at its feet, but two beautiful *Penstemon* species growing everywhere together: *Penstemon fruticosus* and *P. pruinosus*.

Stehekin, *P. serrulatus*: After a ferry ride up 55-mile long Lake Chelan, I landed in [Stehekin](#) (north Cascades, WA), a recreational outpost where we stayed at Stehekin Valley Ranch. At the end of the driveway along the road on flat disturbed soil next to the river were batches of bushy *P. subserratus*, with purple-blue flowers and serrated leaves.

Steptoe Butte and Kamiak Butte, *P. confertus* and *P. attenuatus* (aka yellow penstemon and sulphur penstemon): In the last stretch from Spokane to Pullman, I stopped at [Steptoe Butte State Park](#) with lots of *P. confertus* yellow penstemon on top, easily reached by car on a short dirt road. It is the only hill for miles, described as a thimble-shaped, 3,612-foot tall quartzite butte. At Kamiak Butte, I learned at the annual meeting the cream colored beauties near its summit were the white variety of *P. attenuatus*, not more *P. confertus*. So much to learn!!!



Penstemon fruticosus at Entiat River Silver Falls Trail.



Penstemon pruinosus at Entiat River Silver Falls Trail.



Penstemon pruinosus along Entiat Silver Falls Trail.

Penstemon pruinosus along Entiat River Silver Falls Trail.



Penstemon fruticosus at Entiat River Silver Falls Trail.

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Penstemon confertus at Steptoe Butte Top parking lot.



Penstemon serrulatus (same plant as below left).



Penstemon serrulatus at Skehikin River Road.



Penstemon serrulatus (same plant as lower left).



View from Steptoe Butte of the Palouse, which is the deep fertile loessial deposited soils in farm lands between Pullman and Spokane and beyond. It is what you see from the top of Steptoe Butte and Kamiak Butte.



Penstemon attenuatus at Kamiak Butte Primitive Trail.

Memories of the Penstemon Meeting In Pullman

by Heidi Robbins

The 2024 American Penstemon Society Meeting was held in Pullman Washington. It was planned and hosted by Walter Fertig, Collections Manager for the Marion Ownbey Herbarium at Washington State University (WSU). Walter has studied botany and related subjects, including rare plants, for more than 35 years, mostly in Arizona, Utah, Washington and Wyoming.

The meeting began Friday afternoon, June 21st, with the annual Board Meeting in the Marion Ownbey Herbarium on the WSU campus. The Welcome Reception and meal followed in the “CUB” building of WSU. It was nice to see both old and new faces. We had the opportunity to reconnect with old friends and meet new ones as everyone registered and collected name tags and field trip information.

Following the meal, we enjoyed a presentation by Walter entitled, “Penstemons and Other Interesting Plants of the Blue Mountains”. He gave us a nice taste of wildflowers that we could expect to see on the field trips, including several *Penstemon* species. Walter has extensive knowledge of the flora of the Blue Mountains and surrounding areas.

There were two field trip options, Kamiak Butte and Moscow Mountain and a loop in the Washington portion of the Blue Mountains. On Saturday, June 22nd, attendees gathered near WSU’s Martin Football Stadium to organize carpooling for the day’s trips. We chose the Kamiak Butte and Moscow Mountain field trip.

Kamiak Butte is located between Palouse, WA and Pullman, WA, not far from the Idaho border. It once was an ancient sea bed that later became part of an early mountain range. It then was covered by lava flows creating a layer of basalt. The butte rises approximately 1,000 feet above the surrounding land, called the Palouse.

The Palouse region is made up mainly of fertile hills and prairies north of the Snake River on both sides of the Washington—Idaho border. This fertile land is used for dry farming and completely surrounds Kamiak Butte. Fields of wheat and legumes, and even beautiful yellow canola fields flow out as far as the eye can see. Due to this, the butte is a haven for naturally occurring, or native, plants and animals.

The hike is a beautiful climb! And despite the unusual heat we were kept cool by the large ponderosa pines (*Pinus ponderosa*), quaking aspens (*Populus tremuloides*) and Douglas firs (*Pseudotsuga menziesii*), as well as the breeze and rise in elevation.

Walter, our guide, told us about the area, plants and wildlife as we hiked. The trail zigzagged up the north side of the butte. We found the very rare white sharp-leaved penstemon (Photo 1. *Penstemon attenuatus*) soon after we began. We enjoyed seeing ferns on the cool moist cliff walls. We also saw foxglove (*Digitalis*), Lewis’ mock orange (*Philadelphus lewisii*), lava alumroot (*Heuchera cylindrica*), yellow/white shades of sharp-leaved penstemon (*Pen. attenuatus*) (Photos 1 and 2), ragged robin (*Clarkia pulchella*), wyeth buckwheat (*Eriogonum heracleoides*) and so much more. Along the way we heard and saw several kinds of birds. The view of the farms, fields, and beyond, from the top, was vast and pretty (Photo 3). Kamiak Butte is an excellent spot to visit.

After lunch we drove to Idler’s Rest Nature Preserve parking area to follow a trail up Moscow Mountain. This mountain isn’t as high as the Rockies, but it is an outdoor destination for many. It is



Photo 1. White sharp-leaved penstemon (*Penstemon attenuatus*). Photo by Matt Robbins.



Photo 2. Yellow:white shades of sharp-leaved penstemon (*Penstemon attenuatus*). Photo by Matt Robbins.

made of granite and was one of the high places that existed before the Palouse was formed. We took the “Penstemon Path”, which wound through meadowland up to the base of the mountain. Very tall Timothy grass (*Phleum pratense*) and other grasses lined the trail. Along the way we saw a stunning mountain lady’s slipper (*Cypripedium*) (Photo 4). A few plants of Wilcox’s penstemon (*Pen. wilcoxii*) were found still to be in bloom and there were several large Lewis’ mock orange shrubs. Due to the



Photo 3. View of Palouse landscape surrounding Kamiak Butte. Photo by Matt Robbins.

heat of the afternoon and the intensity of the climb many returned to the parking lot to wait. Others were able to continue up Moscow Mountain farther and were able to find more flowers blooming.

The evening's events included an excellent banquet, the annual business meeting, and our guest speaker. During the business meeting we learned that:



Photo 4. Mountain Lady's slipper (*Cypripedium*).
Photo by Matt Robbins.

- A high school in Paris, France contacted Rick Wes-seler, our Seed Exchange Director, requesting seed for their school.
- One person applied for and was given a grant this year to work on penstemon research.
- Thirty-three new members joined American Penstemon Society.
- We have members from eleven different countries and thirty-three different states.

Also during the business meeting we gave a heartfelt thanks to Hugh Mac Millan for the many years of work and dedication he has put into the society's website. The website has been instrumental in helping people learn about penstemon and join our society. Thank You Hugh! Other business included a call for new board members. Some members are no longer able to serve on the board or positions are unfilled. There is need for a Grants Coordinator, Marketing Board Member, and Newsletter Editor. Finally, next year's meeting was announced and a brief description was given by Stephen Love and Mikel Stevens on what they hope to show us.

Right now they are planning to host it out of Burley or Twin Falls, Idaho, the 2nd weekend of June (there is a chance it could be the 1st weekend of June instead).

Mark Darrach was our guest speaker for the evening. He has loved plants since he was a kid and planned to major in botany, but part way through his schooling changed his major to geology. Mark still loved plants and continued to enjoy studying them as a hobby until a job opportunity came and he switched back to botany as his career. Having knowledge in both areas of study has been very beneficial. His presentation, "Geology & Plants Interactions in the Blue Mountains of Oregon & Washington and Beyond" was very informative. It is clear that geology plays a very important role in plant growth. The composition of the rocks and soil of the area help determine what can survive there. Mark is very knowledgeable in both botany and geology.

Sunday morning, June 23rd, began as it did on Saturday morning. Everyone met near the WSU football stadium and organized carpools. Our vehicle went with the group going to the Blue Mountains.

The Blue Mountains are found in the area of Northeastern Oregon, Southeastern Washington and Central Western Idaho. The history of how they became what they are today is long. They largely are made of basalt from multiple volcanic eruptions over a long time. They then had a time of uplift and erosion. The basalt material creates a unique environment for plants to grow. Many plants can be found only in this region because of this.

During the field trip Mark Darrach was our guide (Photo 8). Stops were made to view hotrock penstemon (*Pen. deustus*), glandular penstemon (*Pen. glandulosus* var. *glandulosus*) (Photo 7), venus penstemon (*Pen. venustus*) (Photo 5 and 6) and other *Penstemon*. We also saw red columbine (*Aquilegia formosa*), upland larkspur (*Delphinium nuttallianum*), Cusick's paintbrush (*Castilleja cusickii*), prairie smoke (*Geum triflorum*), sulfur lupine (*Lupinus sulphureus*), Brown's peony (*Paeonia brownii*), and yeti phlox (*Phlox solivaga*). The wildflowers (Photo 9) all blooming together were beautiful! There was plenty to see and learn about. On the last stop of the day a group went in search of yeti phlox (Photo 10). After some searching they were able to find a nice collection. At this point the caravan began to break up with plans for dinner in small groups at different locations in Pullman.



Photo 5. Venus penstemon (*Penstemon venustus*).
Photo by Matt Robbins.

We had been planning to return to Pullman for dinner and to prepare for Monday's (June 24th) additional field trip, when our plans were changed for us. As we were returning back to Pullman, on highway 95, making the climb above Lewiston, ID a rock larger than a basketball fell from the cliff above the road. It hit the top of the retaining fence and came down right in front of our Chevy Tahoe. There wasn't any time to react. The rock bounced along underneath hitting multiple points of the frame. To our utter amazement we didn't lose control of the vehicle and nothing extremely vital was damaged. We were very shaken, but no one was hurt. We were able to pull safely to the turnout nearby and examine the undercarriage. We called 911 to report what happened and have someone help in removing the parts of our vehicle from the road since they were a danger to vehicles coming up the highway. We still were able to



Photo 6. Looking for the photogenic Venus penstemon (*Penstemon venustus*). Photo by Heidi Robbins.



Photo 7. Glandular penstemon (*Penstemon glandulosus* var. *glandulosus*). Photo by Matt Robbins.



Photo 8. Learning from Mark Darrach. Photo by Heidi Robbins.

drive, but the frame was marred and it was obvious in how it rode. We were a long way from home with an unsound vehicle, so we decided to head for home the next day instead of participating in the Monday field trip. Stephen Love and his wife, Monaquita, very kindly offered to follow us on our return trip to help if anything new happened. We are so thankful that they did! It was such a relief to know there was someone to help if we needed it. More than 10 hours later we were able to arrive home safely.

Even though we were unable to attend the final field trip I'm sure it was another enjoyable and educational experience. This year's American Penstemon Society annual meeting was a great success. We enjoyed seeing friends from far away, we saw beautiful flowers and learned more about penstemon, about the Palouse region, the Blue Mountains, and geology and how it plays an important role in plant survival. Thank you to all those who were involved in planning and executing this meeting! We look forward to next year!



Photo 9. Beautiful wildflower mix. Photo by Matt Robbins.



Photo 10. Yeti phlox hunters. Photo by Matt Robbins.

2024 Annual Meeting Photos



6/22/24 1400 hrs APS Blue Mountain fieldtrip. Sarah Walker with *Penstemon pennellianus*. Photo by Ann DeBolt.



6/22/24 Kamiak Butte. Yellow-flowered form of *Penstemon attenuatus*. Photo by Don Lepley.



6/23/24 1500 hrs Moscow Mountain fieldtrip leader Walt Fertig giving thumbs down to Dame's Rocket, *Hesperis matronalis*. Photo by Ann DeBolt.



6/22/24 Kamiak Butte, WA. *Penstemon attenuatus* var. *attenuatus*. (Taper leaved Penstemon, yellow:white form). Photo by Paul Slocombe.



Mary Poss and others with *Penstemon venustus*, west of Asotin WA during APS meeting field trip, 23 June 2024. Photo by Don Lepley.



Enthusiasts wander through sulfur lupine in search of treasures in a basalt scabland where the Blue Mountains endemic *Penstemon pennellianus* occurs, during the field trip of 23 June, 2024 in the Umatilla National Forest, west of Asotin WA. Photo by Don Lepley.



Penstemon spatulatus (Wallowa Mountain penstemon) 07-2024. Photo by Nan Vance.



P. globosus (Globe Penstemon) 07-2024. Photo by Nan Vance.

Photos by Nan Vance of *Penstemon fruticosus* var. *fruticosus* (shrubby penstemon), *P. globosus* (globe penstemon) and *P. spatulatus* (Wallowa Mountain penstemon) taken 20240714 at the summit of Mt. Howard about 8,000 ft in the Wallowa Mountains, Joseph, Oregon. *Penstemon spatulatus* is interesting as it is a narrow endemic of high elevation in the Wallowa Mountains.



P. fruticosus var. *fruticosus* (shrubby penstemon) 07-2024. Photo by Nan Vance.



6/22/24 Kamiak Butte, WA. *Penstemon attenuatus* var. *attenuatus* (Taper leaved Penstemon, yellow:white form). Photo by Paul Slocombe.



6/22/24 Kamiak Butte, WA. *Clarkia pulchella*. (Ragged Robin). Photo by Paul Slocombe.



6/22/24 Kamiak Butte, WA. *Hieracium scouleri* (Western Hawkweed) (Not sure of this ID). Photo by Paul Slocombe.



6/22/24 Kamiak Butte, WA. *Penstemon attenuatus* var. *attenuatus* (taper leaved penstemon, yellow:white form). Photo by Paul Slocombe.



6/22/24 Kamiak Butte, WA. Pale swallowtail butterfly (*Papilio eurymedon*) on hairy vetch (*Vicia villosa*). Photo by Paul Slocombe.



6/22/24 Idler's Rest Nature Preserve, Moscow ID. *Penstemon wilcoxii* (Wilcox's penstemon). Photo by Paul Slocombe.



6/22/24 Idler's Rest Nature Preserve, Moscow ID. *Penstemon wilcoxii*—Wilcox's penstemon. Photo by Paul Slocombe.



6/22/24 Idler's Rest Nature Preserve, Moscow ID. *Calypso bulbosa* (calypso or fairy slipper orchid). Photo by Paul Slocombe.



6/23/24 Lickfork Rd, WA. Participants huddle around Venus penstemon (*Penstemon venustus*). Photo by Paul Slocombe.



6/23/24 Lickfork Rd, WA. Stephen Love and *Penstemon venustus* (Venus penstemon). Photo by Paul Slocombe.



6/23/24 Lickfork Rd, WA. Posing with Venus penstemon (*Penstemon venustus*). Photo by Paul Slocombe.



6/23/24 Lickfork Rd, WA. *Penstemon deustus* (hotrock penstemon). Photo by Paul Slocombe.



6/23/24 Iron Springs Road, WA. *Corallorhiza maculata* var. *occidentalis* (western spotted coralroot). Photo by Paul Slocombe.



6/23/24 Devil's Eyebrow, Lickfork Rd, WA. *Penstemon pennellianus* (Blue Mountain penstemon). Photo by Paul Slocombe.



6/23/24 Devil's Eyebrow, Lickfork Rd, WA. Wildflower meadow. Photo by Paul Slocombe.



6/23/24 Devil's Eyebrow, Lickfork Rd, WA. *Penstemon pennellianus* (Blue Mountain penstemon). Photo by Paul Slocombe.



6/23/24 Iron Springs Road, WA. Relaxing in *Helianthella uniflora* var. *douglasii* (Douglas' Little Sunflower). Photo by Paul Slocombe.



6/23/24 Devil's Eyebrow, Lickfork Rd, WA. *Penstemon pennellianus* (Blue Mountain penstemon). Photo by Paul Slocombe.



6/23/24 Iron Springs Road, WA. Relaxing in *Helianthella uniflora* var. *douglasii* (Douglas' little sunflower). Photo by Paul Slocombe.



6/23/24 Devil's Eyebrow, Lickfork Rd, WA. Mary in the wildflower meadow. Photo by Paul Slocombe.



6/23/24 Devil's Eyebrow, Lickfork Rd, WA. Cynthia admiring *Penstemon pennellianus* (Blue Mountain penstemon). Photo by Paul Slocombe.



6/23/24 Devil's Eyebrow, Lickfork Rd, WA. Two admirers of *Penstemon pennellianus* (Blue Mountain penstemon). Photo by Paul Slocombe.



6/23/24 Devil's Eyebrow, Lickfork Rd, WA. Looking for pollinators of *Penstemon pennellianus* (Blue Mountain penstemon). Photo by Paul Slocombe.



6/24/24 West of Granite Point on the Snake River, WA. Admiring *Penstemon triphyllus* (Riggins' penstemon). Photo by Paul Slocombe.



6/24/24 Buffalo Eddy, Nez Perce National Historic Site, WA. *Penstemon triphyllus* (Riggins' penstemon) close to the Snake River. Photo by Paul Slocombe.

Photos by JoLynn Stevens



Mary Poss (from Bend, Oregon) sitting on the ground studying the Blue Mountain penstemon (*Penstemon pennellianus*).



L to R: Andrey Zharkikh, Mikel Stevens, Matt Robbins, Stephen Love and Randy Tatroe searching for penstemons during the Blue Mountain Field Trip.

Photos by Lupita Wesseler



2—APS Annual Meeting Day 1.



3—APS Annual Meeting Day 1.



4—APS Annual Meeting Day 1.



5—APS Annual Meeting Day 1.



7—APS Annual Meeting Day 1.

Photos by Lupita Wessler



8—APS Annual Meeting Day 1.



1—APS Annual Meeting Day 2.



5—APS Annual Meeting Day 2.

Photos by Lupita Wessler



2—APS Annual Meeting Day 2.



3—APS Annual Meeting Day 2.

Photos by Lupita Wessler



4—APS Annual Meeting Day 2.



6—APS Annual Meeting Day 1.



1—Annual Meeting Day 1.

Falling Rock or Fallen Rock?

by Mikel Stevens

For years I have heard jokes comparing or contrasting road signs that either say “Watch for Falling Rock” or “Watch for Fallen Rock.” Well, we “watched” (and felt) the rock in these pictures change from being a “falling” to it become a “fallen” rock. In this process we watched this boulder (a little larger than a basketball) fly from the top of the fence on the left out into the middle of the road where we ran over it at 65 MPH while it was still on the move! Matt Robbins was driving their 2013 Chevy Tahoe up the steep grade of US Hwy 95 (from Lewiston, ID towards the Washington border [the top quarter of the grade]) after our Sunday field trip into the Blue Mountains when we had the above experience. After careful inspection Matt found that we were able drive the Tahoe back home to northern Utah. The insurance determined that the frame and other parts of the under carriage were too severely damaged and considered the Tahoe to be totaled.

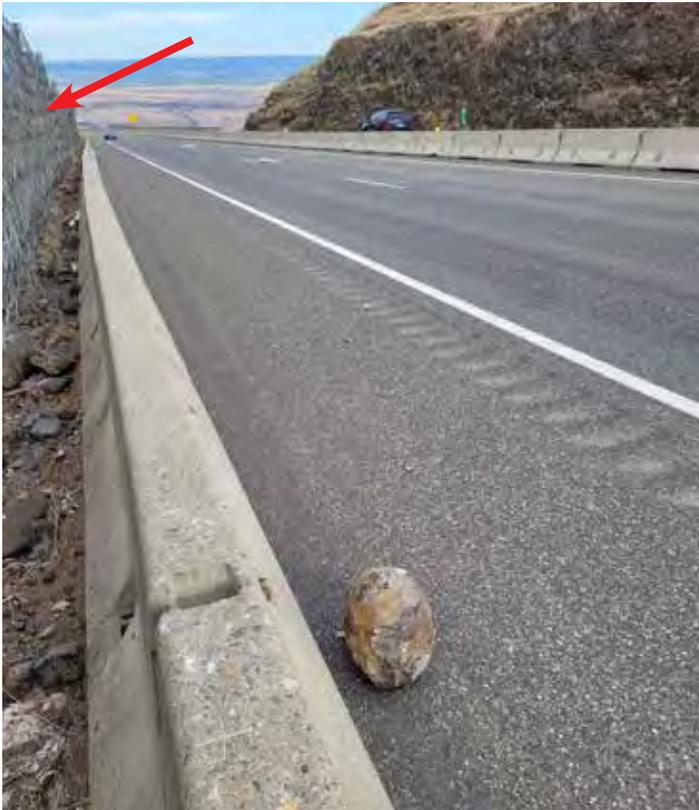
Note: see Heidi Robbins’ article (“Memories of the Penstemon Meeting in Pullman”) in this Newsletter for more details.



Road cut, bent retaining fence, and upward bound lane of US 95 where the rock fell from (apparently very high on the road-cut) hitting the retaining fence and lane that it bounced/rolled across as we hit it. Photo by Mikel Stevens.



(Left) This photo shows only some of the damage to the undercarriage of the Tahoe. Amazingly, nothing vital was damaged by the rock that started out significantly larger than a basketball and was ground down by the Tahoe and the road to a rock still bigger than a basketball! And there was evidence that the rock had either lightly hit or just barely missed both the transmission and rear transfer case! Photo by Matt Robbins.



On the very left side of the photo is the retaining fence, then the cement highway barrier, finally the rock and highway where it had rolled across in front of our vehicle. Photo by Mikel Stevens.



Remains of the rock that rolled in front of us as we were driving up US 95 from Lewiston, ID. My watch is on top of the rock for size comparison. Photo by Mikel Stevens.



The Tahoe absent its bumper, which remained in the lanes of Hwy 95 after hitting the rock. Photo by Matt Robbins.

Seed Exchange News

By Rick Wessler, Seed Exchange

Ed: Rick Wessler sent this May 11, 2024 after the 2024 seed deadline. Here's the link to the [APS seed program online](#).

Once again, I would like to thank the folks that contributed seed for the exchange this past year. We had a record number of contributors which is exciting to see to keep the exchange alive and growing. We sent out seed to 31 folks that sent in requests from all over the US, Canada, and Europe.

I did receive one interesting request from a horticulture high school outside of Paris, France. The director had found our website and asked about receiving seed for a new penstemon garden they are creating. While the school is not a member of the Society, we were happy to provide seed in this case to promote *Penstemon* to a wider audience. The school has a beautiful garden that is open to the public. I hope to have a report to share from the school in a future newsletter.

I was asked to share a little information about management of the seed exchange program. The seed exchange is open from December 15th – March 15th. I communicate with members throughout the year encouraging seed collection, submitting articles for our newsletter, and work with our web development team to post the seed exchange information on the website with the goal of having a successful year.

Seed donations are important to the success of the program, and I enjoy processing the seed that comes in from different places. In the fall, when I start to receive seed, any lots that arrive clean, I immediately re-package, label, and place in our spare refrigerator. Seed that is not cleaned, I will run through a set of screens that we have to remove some of the waste. Fine cleaning for me is a relaxing way to spend some time in the evenings getting the seed as clean as possible. That seed is then packaged and labeled. I also create a new database for the label printer program for individual packets that are sent out. After all the seed is ready, filling the orders is the next step.

The amount of one variety of seed that I receive varies, but I make every effort to spread out limited amounts so more members can receive some. These are decisions that I make so hopefully folks will understand if they receive small amounts of seed in their orders. Seed lots also run out, so we ask for members to list some substitutions on their orders. I don't like to guess what a member would like in these cases.

I attempt to package seed the best I can for mailing but if anyone has suggestions for improvement, please let me know. I would appreciate any other feedback to make our seed exchange better and increase participation. You can email me at aps.seedex@yahoo.com.

AMERICAN PENSTEMON SOCIETY SEED EXCHANGE ORDER FORM				
	Lot #	No.	Species Name	Fee
<i>Example</i>	<i>23-001</i>	<i>242</i>	<i>P. spectabilis</i>	\$ <i>1.00</i>
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				
9				
10				
11				
12				
13				
14				
15				
16				
17				
18				
19				
20				
SUBSTITUTIONS:			Seed packet fees @ \$1.00 per packet:	
			Handling and Mailing:	\$ 1.00
			Total:	
Name and Mailing Address:				

Your email address: _____

Payment Type:

Please include substitutions on order form

- Check Enclosed**
Mail order form to:
Rick Wessler
2841 NE Shepard Rd
Bend, OR 97701
- PayPal Payment Made via APS website: Penstmons.org**
PayPal Minimum Order \$5.00
Email order to: aps.seedex@yahoo.com

Membership

Beth Corbin, Membership Chair

APS New Members since April 2024

Benjamin Weinstein—Portland, OR—New LIFE member

Doreen Manley—Billings, MT

Jan-Willem Vos—Saint-Gilles, France

Katherine Darrow—Port Townsend, WA

Kris Valles—Logan, UT

Linda Cochran—Port Ludlow, WA

Matt Jevnikar—Bremerton, WA

Richard Strait—Sandia Park, NM

Sally Konen—Lewiston, ID

Sarah Walker—Moscow, ID

Welcome to the American Penstemon Society!

Reminder: Remember that memberships run for the calendar year, so renewals were due January 1st. If you received an email reminder from me and have not yet renewed, please do so soon. Per our bylaws, unpaid memberships become delinquent on May 1.

If you have any questions about your membership, please contact Beth Corbin, membership chair, at aps.membership@yahoo.com. You may [renew your membership online](#) or mail me a check (Beth Corbin, APS Membership, PO Box 52, Marsing, ID 83639). Please also let me know any updated contact information.

US & Canada memberships are \$25/year or \$50 for 3 years. International memberships are \$40/year or \$80 for 3 years. Life memberships are \$250 and Student memberships are \$5/year.



American Penstemon Society Membership Form

The American Penstemon Society is hundreds of penstemon aficionados world-wide, many of whom enjoy meeting other APS members and traveling to interesting venues each year for our annual meetings/field trips.

Dues include our APS Newsletter (with a link sent to our members electronically when each edition is published, and archived copies are posted on our website), the annual APS Bulletin, and the opportunity to obtain penstemon seed through the APS seed exchange. The membership year is January through December, and renewal dues are payable by the first of January in each subsequent year. The American Penstemon Society is a 501(c)(3) charitable organization, and all donations and memberships are tax-deductible to the extent allowed by the law. Unless otherwise specified, no goods or services are received for a donation. The receipt of a Newsletter or Bulletin is not considered as "goods".

Effective January 1, 2019, annual membership dues are \$25 for USA/Canada, \$40 for international membership, and \$250 for life membership. Three-year membership are \$50 for US and Canada and \$80 for International members. Members may pay two years in advance and receive the third year free.

Please do not send cash.

There are two methods to pay the dues, by PayPal on our [website \(https://penstemons.org/index.php/society/memberships\)](https://penstemons.org/index.php/society/memberships) or by check payable to American Penstemon Society and mailed to:

Beth Corbin, Membership Secretary
PO Box 52
Marsing, ID 83639

For new memberships, or to renew an existing membership, please print this page and fill in the member information section below and either email it to Beth (aps.membership@yahoo.com) or mail it to her at the same time as your dues are being paid. Please contact Beth with any questions about your membership, or to update your contact information currently on file. Thanks for your enthusiastic support of the Society!

Membership Level: New___ Renewal ___ Gift Membership: ___ from _____

- US & Canada, one year..... \$25
- US & Canada, three years..... \$50
- International, one year \$40
- International, three years \$80
- Student \$5
- Life Membership \$250
- OPTIONAL: Donation to Special Projects Program \$_____

Name _____

Address _____

Phone # _____

E-Mail _____

We do not sell, share or distribute member data in any manner. Ver.10/2020

Resources

Northwest Penstemons: Dee Strickler and Andy MacKinnon (Available through APS, [see order form page 16 of this newsletter](#))

Andi Wolfe's Lab: <https://wolfelab.asc.ohio-state.edu/database.php>

The Wessinger Lab – Plant Evolutionary Genetics: <https://wessingerlab.github.io/index.html>

APS YOUTUBE CHANNEL: The full APS 2020 ZOOM meeting video on the APS YouTube channel: <https://youtu.be/FUepcwa6kNI>

This icon points to [tables](#) that contain Utah penstemon data and photos on Flickr®, maintained by [Tony Frates](#). <https://www.flickr.com/photos/tonyfrates/>

Beth Corbin writes: There's a [petition](#) to list *Penstemon albomarginatus* under the Endangered Species Act. Many of us saw this plant at our meeting in Las Vegas a few years ago.

Growing Penstemons: Dale Lindgren and Ellen Wilde

Penstemons: Robert Nold

Penstemons: The Beautiful Beardtongues of New Mexico: Jean Heflin, Bill Heflin, and DeWitt Ivey

The Gardener's Guide to Growing Penstemons: David Way and Peter James

Penstemon of Southeastern Colorado: Don Barnett and Donnie Barnett

The Heart of Penstemon Country: A Natural History of Penstemons in the Utah Region: Mikel R. Stevens, Stephen L. Love, and Tony McCammon (available on Amazon and other resellers, \$65)

Wildflowers of the Rocky Mountain Region: Denver Botanic Gardens (Timber Press Field Guide 2018)

Vascular Plants of Arizona. Plantaginaceae Part One: Family description, Key to Genera, and *Penstemon*: Glenn R. Rink. <https://canotia.org/volume19.php>

APS GOOGLE GROUPS discussion forum <https://groups.google.com/g/penstemon/about>

Endangered Penstemons

Carol Fifer, Bozeman, MT, writes in the Google List that a new list of plants and animals under consideration for listing under the Endangered Species Act (ESA) has just been published. One species under consideration is the white-margined penstemon, *Penstemon albomarginatus*. It is considered a rare perennial that grows in the Mojave Desert.

Penstemon hesperius is listed in OR threatened and endangered plants by Oregon Department of Agriculture, which is proposing to add six endangered species to the State's list of threatened and endangered plants. Listing provides species-level conservation attention and state protection on non-federal public land. Tall Western Penstemon (*Penstemon hesperius*) is among the plants featured in the [online article](#).



APS Facebook page



APS Facebook group



Instagram



Twitter (X)

Google Group

Rick Charnes blue.heron3@verizon.net

Order Form for Dee Strickler “Northwest Penstemons”

Dee Strickler’s widow Claire gave the American Penstemon Society (APS) two cases of “Northwest Penstemons” authored by her husband, the late Dee Strickler, PhD, and illustrated by their daughter, Zoe. The book has 80 full-color pictures of *Penstemon* species along with maps, descriptions and growing information. Hardcover, 191 pages; published September 1, 1997 by Flower Pr; ISBN1560445726 (ISBN13: 9781560445722).

Title: ***Northwest Penstemons: 80 Species of Penstemon Native to the Pacific Northwest.***

Price: \$18.50

Your check or money order must be made payable to APS

Print and complete this form and mail with your check or money order to

American Penstemon Society
 c/o Lupita Wessler
 2841 NE Shepard Rd.
 Bend OR 97701

Books will be mailed after payment is received.

NAME	
MAILING ADDRESS	
CITY STATE ZIP	
NUMBER OF BOOKS	
AMOUNT ENCLOSED	\$

[email: aps.treasurer@yahoo.com](mailto:aps.treasurer@yahoo.com)

APS Board Members 2024-25

Elected Officers (term 3 years)	Name
President	Mikel Stevens
Vice President	Randy Tatroe
Treasurer	Lupita Wesseler
Secretary	Cindy Reed
Membership.....	Beth Corbin
At-large.....	Vacant
At-large.....	Gerald Klingaman
At-large.....	Bob Pennington

Appointed Officers	Name
Director of Seed Exchange	Rick Wesseler
Registrar of Cultivars/Hybrids.....	Dale Lindgren
Nomination Committee Chair	Vacant
Finance—Auditor	Ed Godleski
Librarian.....	Stephen Love
Custodian of Slide Collection	Stephen Love
Historian	Dale Lindgren
Special Projects.....	Dorothy Tuthill
Website Administrator	Hugh Mac Millan
Website Administrator	Matthew Robbins
Bulletin Editor	Stephen Love
Newsletter Editor	Vacant
Newsletter Publisher	Martha Dibblee
Email Administrator	Martha Dibblee
Social Media Director	Elliott Gordon
Marketing Director	Skylar Christensen

Minutes of APS 2023 Meetings

Two meetings of the American Penstemon Society were held by Zoom in 2023, one June 22, which documented cancellation of the 2023 Annual Meeting in Walla Walla and the Official Annual Meeting July 20, which included election of officers by acclamation. Links to the Zoom meetings provided by Past-President Andi Wolfe are below. In addition, Secretary Cindy Reed provided written minutes of the July 22 Board Meeting, available upon request. Below are the links for both the Board Meeting and Annual Meeting for 2023:

[July 22, 2023 APS Board Meeting](#)
 [July 20, 2023 APS Annual Meeting](#)
 [2024 Annual Meeting](#)

