

4-4-86

## THE NIPOMO DUNES

"The most unique and fragile ecosystem in the State of California"...  
1980 Inventory of California  
U. S. Department of the Interior  
Fish and Wildlife Service

"...the most urgently needed landscape preservation project  
in the State of California."

20-year Master Plan  
California State Department of Parks and Recreation

### A Partial List of the Plants of the Nipomo Dunes habitat, San Luis Obispo County, California

#### RARE AND ENDANGERED:

Castilleja mollis  
Cirsium lancholepis  
Cirsium rhotophillum  
Dithyrea maritima  
Lupinus nipomensis  
Monardella criscoa  
Monardella undulata var. frutescens  
Cardamine (Masturtium) gambelii  
Arenaria paludicola

#### COMMON NAMES

Dunes Indian Paintbrush or Soft-leaved Paintbrush  
La Graciosa Thistle, or White Marsh Thistle  
Surf Thistle or Crystalline Thistle  
Beach Spectacle Pod  
Nipomo Mesa Lupine  
Crisp Dune Mint  
San Luis Obispo Woody Dune Mint  
Gambel's Watercress, Swamp Cress  
Perennial Sandwort

#### RARE but not ENDANGERED:

Erigeron foliosus var. blochmaniae  
Malacothrix incana var. succulenta  
Prunus fasciculata var. punctata  
Senecio blochmaniae

Blochman's Leafy Daisy  
"Dunedalion"  
Sand Almond  
Blochman's Groundsel or Comet's Plume

#### TREES in the Nipomo Dunes:

Salix lasiolepis  
Salix lasiandra  
Myrica californica  
  
Sambucus mexicana  
  
Populus trichocarpa  
Quercus agrifolia

Arroyo Willow (common)  
Yellow Willow  
Wax Myrtle (Willow/Wax Myrtle Communities are significant, unusual, and need study.)  
Blue Elderberry (a shrub to tree: varies from 6 ft. to as high as 25 ft.)  
Black Poplar. Black Cottonwood  
California Coast Live Oak

#### PLANTS AT THE BEACH AND FOREDUNES (BEACH-DUNE COMMUNITY)

Cakile maritima

Sea-rocket (an alien species that has become widely naturalized)

Atriplex leucophylla

Surf Saltbush grows so close to the ocean that incoming tides may swish through it.

Atriplex californica

Seashore Saltbush grows away from the tides; on bluffs and arrested dunes near beaches.

Mesembryanthemum (or Carpobrotus) chilense Coastal Ice-plant or Sea Fig (magenta only) (Native to the coast of Chili and the Pacific Coast from Oregon to Lower California.)

Magenta or Purple Sand Verbena

Abronia maritima

European Beach-grass or Maram Grass (an aggressive, persistent and vigorous alien invader which is unwelcome because it crowds out native plants)

Ammonia arenaria

PLANTS FOUND IN THE OPEN DUNES AND FROM ONE MILE TO SEVERAL MILES FROM THE BEACH: COASTAL DUNE SCRUB (Dr. Robert L. Hoover, Vascular Plants of San Luis Obispo County, names this plant community COASTAL SAND-PLAINS AND STABILIZED DUNES):

Here we come to the abundant wealth of the vegetated dunes.

Lupinus chamissonis

Blue Dune Lupine or Silver Dune Lupine (grows in great mounds with flowering plumes light blue & fragrant)

Abronia umbellata

Lavendar-pink Sand Verbena

Abronia latifolia

Yellow Sand Verbena

Eschscholzia californica var. maritima Seacoast California Poppy (petals yellow, center orange. (a dwarf gray-leaved variety clings on wind-blown cliffs)

The Chorizanthe genus: a whole splurge of delicate flowers, carpeting in pink or white or even red. The red one is called Turkish Rugging.

Shrubs such as Eriogonum parvifolium, a common Buckwheat with pink and white balls of flowers. . . and shrubs such as the common Baccharis pilularis var. consanguinea, Coyote Bush.

Coreopsis gigantea - a large wildflower plant, almost a shrub, its sturdy stalks in candelabra-like form; from tufts of feathery filiform foliage slender stems extend brilliant golden-yellow daisy flowers swaying in the breeze. The Oso Flaco Lake area of the Nipomo Dunes is the significant northernmost limit of this plant. Visit Coreopsis Hill early March.

Phacelia douglasii

Dunes Baby Blue-eyes. (This delicate blue-lavendar little plant of early spring in the dunes was ~~named~~ -

NAMED FOR ~~him~~ by David Douglas, the earliest known botanical collector in the area now known as San Luis Obispo County. In 1831 he traveled by land from Monterey to Santa Barbara.)

Phacelia distans

Dunes Heliotrope (a small, shrubby violet-blue phacelia)

Malacothrix californica

Sandy Dandelion (with red-striped underwear! It is woolly, too, as plants often are when near the coast.)

Collinsia bartsiaefolia var. bartsiaefolia Dunes Chinese Houses

Eriastrum densifolium

Dunes Blue Phlox

Gnaphalium spp.

Everlasting (Pink ones and white ones.)

Orthocarpus purpurascens

Owl's Clover

Senecio blochmaniae

Comet's Plume or Dunes Golden Ragwort or Dunes Groundsel

Senecio californica

Yellow Dune Daisy or Butterweed. This one is golden and abundant. One can wade knee-deep in yellow over acres.

Corethrocline filaginifolia var. robusta Christmas Aster. (We find it in flower in December.)

Castilleja mollis

Dunes Indian Paintbrush or Soft-leaved Paintbrush

Chaenactis lanosa (2 varieties)

Woolly Yellow Pincushion

Meconella linearis var. pulchella

Yellow-and-White Dwarf Poppy - "Carnival Poppy" (Carnival Poppy Valley is spectacular some springs in March: acres of this delicate flower with other flowers)

Ericameria ericoides

Mock Heather, a common green shrub; mustard-yellow in September when Stephanomeria virgata blooms.

Stephanomeria virgata

Wreath-flower. Dune slopes are lavendar in September!

Dichelostemma pulchellum

Blue Dicks or Brodiaea, and other names. Many habitats.

Cirsium occidentale

Western Thistle or Cobweb Thistle.

Leptodactylon californicum

Pink Prickly Phlox (The coastal form in the dunes has more crowded leaves...it needs study.)

Erysimum suffrutescens

Dune Wallflower (not species insulare, as Hoover thought)

Pholisma arenarium or paniculatum

Purple Pincushion or Sand Food (needs study to clarify difference between desert plant and Nipomo Dunes plant) Deerweed - very common. . . and colorful in summertime

Lotus scoparius

Dune Larkspur

Delphinium narryi var. blochmaniae

Lanceleaf Dudleya or Live Forever

Dudleya lanceolata

Rock Fern (yes, a fern in moist, rocky sand dunes!)

Polypodium californicum

Bracken Fern (in Black Poplar grove on Coreopsis Hill)

Pteridium aquilinum

Indian Pink

Silene laciniata

Woodland Star (on steep northfacing slope of Coreopsis Hill overlooking Little Coreopsis Lake)

Lithophragma affine

AND MANY, MANY MORE