**2020**

**Wednesday, February 5, 1—3 pm: Foothills Learning Center**

**Winter Tree Identification** (lecture and hike)

Just because winter is here doesn't mean you can't enjoy being outside and learning how to identify trees in winter.  Learn how to appreciate the beauty of tree architecture when the leaves are gone, along with differences in bark characters, leaf scars, and other clues in winter tree identification.

**Thursday, February 26, 6-7 pm, Boise Main Library**

**"Treasures of the Boise Front"** (presentation)

Did you know that the Boise Front is also special for its diversity of rare unusual and even recently discovered wildflowers? We will go on a photographic journey to explore the floristic treasures of the Boise Front, from Bonneville Point to Mores Mountain to Spring Valley, growing in a diversity of unique habitats.

**Wednesday, March 4, 9 am to noonish** (Hulls Gulch)

**"Get the Jump on Spring" Wildflower Walk:**

Get a jump on spring with an invigorating late-winter walk in Hulls Gulch.  With luck, we will find both sagebrush buttercups and orogenia/Indian-potato in bloom, and also discuss whatever other elements of winter botany that we encounter, including shrubs, trees, grasses, fruits, and galls.  Meet at the junction of Red Cliffs and Lower Hulls Gulch trails (¼ mile east of the Foothills Learning Center).  Be prepared for a 5-mile walk with 600-foot elevation gain.  Serious rain or mud cancels.

**"Treasures of the Boise Front" Wildflower Walk Series, Wednesday evenings**

The “Treasures of the Boise Front” series of wildflower walks is an introduction to a selection of public trails with the best diversity of native wildflowers throughout the Boise Front. While a few hikes are easy rambles, most walks include some “target” species or habitats that are a mile or more from the nearest trailhead. Expect a steady pace to reach these goals within the 2-3 hour timeframe, interspersed with occasional stops to discuss other plants of particular interest and general natural history. Unless otherwise indicated (CONFIRM), walks will begin at 6 pm. NO DOGS, PLEASE.

**March 25:** **Buena Vista trail in Hillside to Hollow** Reserve (Cusick’s primrose, Aase’s onion)

For the chance to see some of Boise's most significant spring flowers, come look for our native primrose and Aase's onion at Hillside to Hollow Reserve. Planned hike is 1-2 miles long, with moderate elevation gain. Meet at Ussery Street trailhead (limited parking)

**April 15:** **Polecat Loop Trail** (*Idahoa* and other belly flowers)

Our tiny "treasure" for this walk is the elusive, eponymous *Idahoa* on the Polecat Loop Trail, along with more Aase's onion, hairy wild-cabbage, and an abundance of belly flowers. Meet at the Polecat Gulch trailhead on Cartwright Road, between Pierce Park Lane and Bogus Basin Road.  Significant rain or existing muddy conditions cancel the walk; otherwise, expect about a 3 mile walk with minor elevation gain.

**April 22:** **Oregon Trail** (wildflowers on Columbia basalt flows)

For this wildflower walk we venture south of the Boise River, to see what’s in bloom above basalt cliffs along the Oregon Trail.  Meet at the Oregon Trail Recreation Area parking lot on the south side of Hwy 21/Gowen Road opposite E Lake Forest Drive (NOT the Oregon Trail Reserve accessed from E Lake Forest Drive).  We’ll enjoy the early spring flowers of the basalt flats, including several not known from the foothills north of the river.  Difficulty:  2-3 miles roundtrip, modest elevation gain.

**April 29:** **Lydle Gulch** near Lucky Peak Dam (hare’s-foot milkvetch, Bolander’s yampah)

Come look for the rare hare's-foot milkvetch and other plants known from few other sites in the Boise Front. Meet near the restroom for the Lydle Gulch disc golf course above Foote Park, on the right side of the road opposite Barclay Bay parking lot after crossing Lucky Peak Dam from Highway 21.

**May 6: Cobb Trail** (longer-than-average hike to windswept ridge with Hood’s phlox and scabland fleabane, with Andrus’s biscuitroot enroute)

Our goal will be the uncommon "windswept ridge" habitat, with Hood's phlox and Bloomer's fleabane. Enroute we will encounter the new Andrus's biscuitroot, non-native Mojave ceanothus, wild violets, and numerous other interesting wildflowers. The full hike will be four miles round-trip and 1000 feet elevation gain on a (mostly) well-graded road. Several turn-around options exist for those who don't want to go the distance; those wanting to do the full distance might want to bring head lamps as a precaution for the return hike. Meet at the trailhead at the end of West Highland Valley Road off of east Warm Springs Road, in the East Valley development of Harris Ranch.

**May 13:** **Currant Creek from Dry Creek Trailhead on north side of Hidden Springs** (camas, Tolmie’s onion, freckled milkvetch)

From the Dry Creek trailhead on the north side of Hidden Springs, we will follow the Red Tail Trail to Currant Creek, to see the only known populations in the Boise Foothills of camas, Tolmie's onion, and freckled milkvetch, along with a nice diversity of other wildflowers.  Total distance is 2 to 2½ miles; total elevation gain (and loss, since we'll be going over the ridge between Dry Creek and Currant Creek) is about 300 feet.  Meet at **6:30 pm** at the Dry Creek Trailhead on the north side of Hidden Springs, on the south side of Dry Creek Road between Cartwright Road and Seamans Gulch Road.

**May 20. 6:30: Camelsback/Hulls Gulch**

The recently named Boise Sand-Verbena is our special "treasure" for this walk, along with the rare Mulford's milkvetch.  We will then explore a diversity of habitats on Camel's Back and lower Hull's Gulch, including late-spring wildflowers and riparian woodland consisting of native and non-native trees and shrubs.  Total distance is 1½ miles; total elevation gain is about 350 feet.  Meet at **6:30 pm** at the 9th Street Trailhead (backside of Camel's Back Hill).  Heavy rain cancels.

**June 3, 6:30: Oregon Trail from Bonneville Point**

For a very different experience than provided by most trails in the Boise Front, we will explore a section of the Oregon Trail from Bonneville Point (accessed from Blacks Creek Road east of I-84; meet at **6:30 pm**). Serene views, mid-season wildflowers, history, and maybe even a pronghorn or two will be our reward. Distance will be determined by weather conditions and enthusiasm of participants.

**June 10: Bob’s Trail**

Today’s “Treasures of the Boise Front” hike, is one of our shorter options, following the lower end of Bob's Trail along a tributary of Crane Creek.  Highlights include syringa and checker-mallow in bloom, along with a nice selection of other streamside plants.  Total distance is a bit less than a mile; total elevation gain is 150-200 feet (depending on return option).  Meet at **7:00 pm** at the trailhead at the end of Hearthstone Drive (access from East Braemere Road in the northeast Highlands).

**June 17, 6:00: Hull’s Gulch Interpretive Loop**

Take advantage of slightly cooler temperatures at higher elevations (1500-2000 feet above the Boise Valley) to enjoy an evening exploration of the upper reaches of Hulls Gulch. In addition to spectacular scenery, we’ll enjoy a wonderful diversity of mid-elevation wildflowers, including Wilcox’s penstemon, white mariposa-lily, and two different varieties of sulphur-flowered buckwheat. Meet at **6:00 pm** at the uppermost trailhead (about 6 miles beyond Foothills Learning Center on dirt road); carpooling recommended. 2½ mile loop, 550 feet elevation loss and gain. Sturdy footwear strongly recommended; hiking poles also appropriate.

**June 24:** **Hidden Springs wetlands**

A relatively short (1/2 mile) and easy amble around the remnant wetlands that probably represent the original “Hidden Springs”, and which provide a refuge for several locally rare species such as Macoun’s buttercup, slender cinquefoil, and yellow avens. Meet at **7:00 pm** at the Dry Creek Trailhead on the north side of Hidden Springs, on the south side of Dry Creek Road between Cartwright Road and Seamans Gulch Road.

**July 1: Upper Dry Creek**

Enjoy spectacular mountain flowers and views along the Upper Dry Creek trail at the lower edge of the conifer forest, 2500 feet above the Boise Valley heat. In addition to penstemon and other showy “treasures”, we’ll be looking for the inconspicuous but special treat of two native orchids. Meet at **6:30 pm** at the 12 Mile trailhead on Bogus Basin Road (limited parking; carpooling recommended). Difficulty: 2--3 miles along dirt road, 350 feet gradual elevation gain.

**Annual Mother’s Day Wildflower+ Show** **Sunday, May 10, 11:00 am to 4:00 pm.**

Are you curious about the multitude of flowers that occur in Boise Front? Here’s your chance, when the flowers come to YOU! Enjoy Mother’s Day admiring over 100 freshly collected local wildflowers, weeds, and other plants on display at the Foothills Learning Center, attractively arranged and labeled with both common and Latin names. Plants will be collected, under permit, by members of the Idaho Native Plant Society, Master Naturalists, and other volunteers, some of whom will also be available during the show to answer questions.