



FIELD TRIPS FOR INPS ANNUAL MEETING, May 30-June 1

NOTE: The various and unique habitats and plants that Southwest Idaho offers are scattered over a vast area of wide open spaces, generally requiring lots of driving on the limited available roads of variable quality. Passenger cars will work for most of these trips, though some degree of clearance, and possibly all-wheel drive, can be desirable. Carpooling is encouraged.

FRIDAY (afternoon 3-4:30pm)

- **Three Island Crossing Campground Walkabout**
 - Description: Explore wild vegetation around the Three Island Crossing campground and along the Snake River shoreline
 - Habitats of interest: alkaline flat, riparian vegetation
 - Leader: Barbara Ertter (& possibly Michelle Stevens for culturally significant species)
 - Length: 1½ hours
 - Additional cost: State Parks pass, or \$7 park entrance fee (already paid if camping)
 - Activity Level: Low - Easy, 1 mile walk on relatively level ground
 - Driving: none

SATURDAY

Full Day

- **Mud Flat Road & Oolites**
 - Description: Check out the unique geology and flora of the Mud Flat Oolite. Mud Flat Oolite was established as an Area of Critical Environmental Concern by the Bureau of Land Management in the early 1990s because of its unique geology and botanical values, including five special status plants. The site's unique oolitic limestone was formed on the shore of Lake Idaho, 2-4 million years

ago. The small spheres called oolites form when calcium carbonate is deposited on the surface of sand grains rolled (by waves) around on a shallow sea floor. The hiking is not strenuous, but there will be some hills and irregular footing. Hiking poles might come in handy. Please, no dogs on this trip

- Background info: INPS [Presentation](#) by Ann Debolt
- Species/habitat of interest: On the field trip, we hope to see *Eriogonum shockleyi* (Shockley's buckwheat), *Mentzelia torreyi* v. *acerosa* (Torrey's blazingstar), possibly *Astragalus mulfordiae* (Mulford's milkvetch), and plenty of greasewood, Geyer's milkvetch, sand penstemon, and, if we are lucky, *Glyptopleura marginata* (White-margined wax plant).
- Leaders: Ann Debolt & Sandy Smith
- Length: Full Day
- Additional cost: None
- Activity Level: High, off-trail hiking
- Driving: One-hour drive (approximately 55 miles) from Three Island Crossing SP to the Mud Flat Oolite Site, located approximately 13 miles SE of Grand View. We will most likely stop a few times on the way or on the return.



- **Bennett Hills Driving Loop**

- Description: Transect of the Bennett Hills and Centennial Marsh on Bliss-to-Hill City road, stopping at multiple sites for short exploration of a diversity of habitats. The Bennett Hills comprise an unusual east-west-tending fault block, largely devoid of conifer forests except at the western end (Mount Bennett), that rises gradually from the north edge of the Snake River Plains to an abrupt escarpment dropping into the Camas Prairie. Sagebrush steppe and scablands host a good selection of interesting plants, including several subshrubby *Eriogonum* and lots of *Penstemon*. Depending on timing, there are possible additional side trips on the return trip via Hwy 20 and Mountain Home, for additional habitat diversity and noteworthy species.
- Species/habitats of interest: rhyolitic scabland, *Eriogonum thymoides*, *Artemisia potentilloides*, *Pyrocoma* sp. nov.
- Leaders: Barbara Ertter & Anne Halford
- Length: Full Day
- Additional cost: None
- Activity Level: Low - Mostly driving, with multiple stops for short exploration
- Driving: Over 100 miles for the entire loop, ¼–⅓ on decent dirt/gravel roads.



- **Castle Creek North Side**

- Castle Creek (in the foothills of the Owyhee Mountains between Oreana and Grand View) is an area of interesting geology and plants.
- Species/habitat of interest: Geologically, we'll see ash outcrops and other Lake Idaho sediment formations, and some active mining areas. For plants, we will be looking for interesting Great Basin disjunct species, including *Penstemon janishiae*, *Enceliopsis nudicaulis*, *Malacothrix glabrata*, *Glossopetalon spinescens*, maybe *Mentzelia torreyi* var. *acerosa*. There are likely to be cool *Astragalus* species as well. We'll stop at an area with *Eriogonum shockleyi* on the drive in.
- Leaders: Don Mansfield & Beth Corbin
- Length: Full Day
- Additional cost: None

- Activity Level: High, off-trail hiking about 3 miles; optional possible rock scrambling.
- Driving: 140 miles round trip, partially on decent gravel roads.



- **Babs Flat**

- Description: Off-trail hike from Mount Bennett Road to see a remote riparian corridor with petroglyphs, rhyolitic "hoodoo"-type formations, and various cool plants and animals
- Species/habitat of interest: Riparian community, sagebrush flats
- Leaders: Ty Clayton & Lynn Kinter
- Length: Full Day
- Additional cost: None
- Activity Level: Activity Level: High, off-trail hiking, may have some rock scrambling
- Driving: About 20 miles each way, partially on decent gravel road

- **Simco Rd Playa and Soil Crusts (Maybe also Trueblood Wetland)**

- Description: We will visit a large playa (ephemeral lake beds) with the endemic Davis peppergrass. This unique perennial mustard has a limited distribution and a special ecological niche. We will also explore several biocrust communities at low elevations and discuss their role in the plant community.
- Species/habitat of interest: *Lepidium davisii*; biotic crust
- Leaders: Roger Rosentreter +
- Length: Full Day
- Additional cost: None
- Activity Level: Moderate, hike
- Driving: About 40 miles each way to target playa, possibly with additional driving for more soil crust sites and other nearby areas of interest.



Half Day

- **Bruneau Sand Dunes**

- Description: Exploration of a variety of habitats at Bruneau Dunes State Park
- Species/habitat of interest: various sand-adapted plants
- Leaders: Mike Mancuso & Craig Carpenter
- Length: Half Day (AM)
- Additional cost: Additional cost: \$7 vehicle fee unless the vehicle has an Idaho State Park Passport (available through the DMV for \$10, good for all state parks)
- Activity Level: Moderate, including some climbing of active dune system
- Driving: about 25 miles each direction



- **Hagerman Fossil Beds Interpretive Center**

- Description: Visit new combined visitor center for [Thousand Springs State Park/Hagerman Fossil Bed National Monument](#). In addition to the visitors center we will make stops at overlooks along the Snake River in the Monument. If we are lucky the botanist for the Monument will join us and we may be able to visit the paleo lab.

At the end of the tour visitors will have the option of a 3.25 mile trail that parallels Oregon Trail ruts through the Monument. Cars can be dropped at the lower or upper end of the trail depending on which way they wish to hike, uphill or downhill. Dogs are not allowed on any hiking trails within the monument.

- Species/habitats of interest: View the manmade landslide that briefly blocked the Snake river and the Shoestring basalt flow over Lake Idaho Ash deposits. *Astragalus atratatus* var. *owyheensis*, *Mentzelia torreyi* var. *acerosa*, and *Stanleya pinnata* are some of the notable species we might see.. A species list of the Monument will be available as well as a 1997 fun “Idiot’s Guide to Species of Hagerman Fossil Beds” prepared by Dr. Pat Packard.
- Leaders: Carol Prentice & Anne Halford
- Length: Half Day (AM)
- Additional cost: None
- Activity Level: Low
- Driving: 34 miles each way, mostly highway with some gravel.



SUNDAY

¾ to Full Day

- **Mud Flat Road & Oolites** (repeat of Saturday trip)
 - Description: Check out the unique geology and flora of the Mud Flat Oolites. Background info: INPS [Presentation](#) by Ann Debolt
 - Species/habitat of interest: *Eriogonum shockleyi* (Shockley's buckwheat), *Mentzelia torreyi* v. *acerosa* (Torrey's blazingstar), possibly *Astragalus mulfordiae* (Mulford's milkvetch), and plenty of greasewood, Geyer's milkvetch, sand penstemon, and, if we are lucky, *Glyptopleura marginata* (White-margined wax plant).
 - Leader: Alan Crockett + Sandy Smith
 - Length: Full Day

- Additional cost: None
 - Activity Level: High, off-trail hiking
 - Driving: One-hour drive (approximately 55 miles) from Three Island Crossing SP to the Mud Flat Oolite Site, located approximately 13 miles SE of Grand View. We will most likely stop a few times on the way or on the return.
- **Indian Bathtubs and Bruneau River wetlands**
 - On the way in, we'll stop at an area with *Eriogonum shockleyi* along the highway above the town of Bruneau. From there, we'll drive to the west side of the Bruneau River.
 - We will see an ancient Miocene/Pliocene fossilized reef. Next we'll drive on to an outcrop with *Mentzelia torreyi* var. *acerosa* and *Peteria thompsoniae*. Then drive down a two-track and walk to the Indian Bathtubs, the former rock pools which are now dry due to groundwater depletion. From there, we'll hike down to the Bruneau River and check out riparian plants, and find some disjuncts like *Juniperus scopulorum*. We'll be looking for other interesting plants like *Prenanthes exiguus*.
 - On the drive back, we'll go to the Bruneau Overlook on the east side of the canyon. There we'll look for *Glossopetalon spinescens* and other rock crevice plants.
 - Leaders: Don Mansfield and Beth Corbin
 - Length: ¾ day
 - Additional cost: None
 - Activity Level: High - Expect off-trail hiking of about a mile, perhaps with some rock scrambles.
 - Driving: about 150 miles round trip, partially on gravel or unimproved two-track roads.



- **Gooding City of Rocks**
 - Description: Gooding's Little City of Rocks is named for its many hoodoos of volcanic rock

- Species/habitat of interest: Sagebrush grassland with lots of natives along creek in canyon bottom
- Leaders: Lynn Kinter and Sandy Smith
- Length: ¾ day
- Additional cost: None
- Activity Level: moderate—hiking about 3 mi on a rocky trail, with some off-trail hiking and stream crossings
- Driving: 1-hr drive on highways, then 1.2-mi drive on a rough dirt road



Half Day

- **Bruneau Sand Dunes**

- Description: Focus on rare plants on relatively flat sites at Bruneau Dunes State Park.
- Species/habitat of interest: *Abronia mellifera* var. nov., *Enceliopsis nudicaulis*, other sand-specialists
- Leaders: Barbara Ertter & Mike Mancuso
- Length: Half Day (AM)
- Additional cost: \$7 vehicle fee unless the vehicle has an Idaho State Park Passport (available through the DMV for \$10, good for all state parks)
- Activity Level: Low, relatively easy flat hike, some off-trail hiking in loose sand
- Driving: about 25 miles each direction



- **Hagerman Fossil Beds Interpretive Center** (repeat of Saturday trip)
 - Description: Visit new combined visitor center for [Thousand Springs State Park/Hagerman Fossil Bed National Monument](#). In addition to the visitors center we will make stops at overlooks along the Snake River in the Monument. If we are lucky the botanist for the Monument will join us and we may be able to visit the paleo lab.

At the end of the tour visitors will have the option of a 3.25 mile trail that parallels Oregon Trail ruts through the Monument. Cars can be dropped at the lower or upper end of the trail depending on which way they wish to hike, uphill or downhill. Dogs are not allowed on any hiking trails within the monument.
 - Species/habitats of interest: View the manmade landslide that briefly blocked the Snake river and the Shoestring basalt flow over Lake Idaho Ash deposits. *Astragalus atratatus* var. *owyheensis*, *Mentzelia torreyi* var. *acerosa*, and *Stanleya pinnata* are some of the notable species we might see.. A species list of the Monument will be available as well as a 1997 fun “Idiot’s Guide to Species of Hagerman Fossil Beds” prepared by Dr. Pat Packard.
 - Leaders: Carol Prentice & Anne Halford
 - Length: Half Day (AM)
 - Additional cost: None
 - Activity Level: Low
 - Driving: 34 miles each way, mostly highway with some gravel.



Monday Suggestions

- **Box Canyon Hike - SELF Guided**
 - Description: [State Park website](#)
 - Length: Half Day
 - Additional cost: \$7 vehicle fee unless the vehicle has an Idaho State Park (available through the DMV for \$10, good for all state parks)
 - Activity Level: Moderate, easy hike on partially paved path to overlook, more difficult descent on unimproved trail into basalt canyon. Full loop is 2.8 miles with 334 ft of elevation gain.
 - Driving: ca 50 miles each way



- More info being developed for other options
 - [Orton Botanical Garden](#) in Twin Falls
 - [Lawson's Legacy/Emu-Z-um](#)
 - [Balanced Rock Park](#)

Activity	Friday PM	Sat AM	Sat PM	Sunday AM	Sunday PM
Campground Walkabout	3-4:30				
Mud Flat Road & Oolites					
Bennett Hills Loop					
Simco Rd Playa and Soil Crusts					
Castle Creek North Side					
Babs Flat Hike					
Bruneau Sand Dunes					
Fossil Beds Interpretive Center					
Gooding City of Rocks				3/4	
Indian Bathtubs				3/4	