



January 2018

# Naturalists

EXPLORE. LEARN. CONSERVE.

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## In the Native Plant Garden

Fall color is pretty much gone, nothing is blooming, BUT the flowers in summer are there in the buds of winter. Go out and see the buds in our garden. Read the labels and IMAGINE.

## December hikes

Winter has now officially arrived. In our region this means mosses, lichens and birding.

### December 3 – Union Bay Natural Area

Shelley Williams led a group for birding at Union Bay. As you might guess there were lots there including this lovely male green winged teal below. Oddly, the green wing shows up distinctly only on the female. The male, however, is not too shabby. Note the bluish beak.



### December 9 – Hansville reach and Point-No-Point

This was a day beginning in fog and ending in clear sunshine. Ten of us braved the ferry trip and headed over to Hansville, where we began in deep fog on Buck Lake (the usual bird suspects, mostly enshrouded in fog with the occasional break), then through the woodsy Hansville reach with a visit to several ponds. After a lunch in funky Hansville we headed over to Point-No-Point for birding. We had two scopes and they were quite useful. The lagoon contained the usual teal, mallards, gadwalls, baldpate, coots and herons, but on the point birding was hot. There were droves of Bonaparte's gulls leaping and circling, and then the fun began. Drove of pacific loons and red breasted mergansers, grebes of all kinds, especially western grebes. There



were harbor seals scoping us out, sea lions sporting farther offshore and porpoises moving in and out. We had seen orca on the ferry going over. The scopes helped with rhinoceros auklets, ancient murrelets and common murre. The light was excellent for viewing and we braved the cold on the point.



Lichen at Buck Lake was magical in the fog



Wavy leaf cotton moss



More pond magic

## January Field Trips

Sign up online under *Explore, Find Activities* and check *exploring nature*.

### Vashon Island Birding Trip

**JANUARY 13**

This trip will explore various birding locations on Vashon Island for both freshwater and seabirds. Loons, grebes, scoters, mergansers form part of the fare. The trip is led by Stewart.

[Register Here](#)

### Freshwater Bird Identification Workshop and Field Trip

**JANUARY 18 (WORKSHOP) AND JANUARY 20 (FIELD TRIP).**

Vicki King, one of our master birders, has put together a two hour clinic on freshwater bird identification to be followed by a field trip at a local bird haunt. Vicki is knowledgeable, enthusiastic and helpful.

[Register Here](#)



White birch trees in Alaska - by Anita Elder

# 2017-18 Naturalists Lecture Series. All are at Seattle Program Center, 7 pm



**WED. JAN. 10, 2018**

Goodman A

## **LOSS OF GLACIERS IN WASHINGTON'S NATIONAL PARKS**

For more than 30 years, Dr. Jon Riedel, a geologist with the National Park Service at North Cascades National Park, has researched the response of Washington's glaciers to climate change from the last ice age 30,000 years ago to modern glaciers. Jon established glacier monitoring programs at Olympic, Mount Rainier, and North

Cascades National Parks to track changes in more than 500 glaciers. He will show images of glacial change, share results of the monitoring program, and conclude with an example of how the loss of glaciers affects summer stream flow.

[MORE INFO](#)

**WED., FEB. 14, 2018**

Dave Nunnallee, co-author of the authoritative guide, "Life Histories of Cascadia Butterflies," focuses on native buckwheats and the butterflies they host.

**WED., MARCH 14, 2018**

Clay Antieau on What's the Matter with Worms: our favorite soil engineers have a dark side.

All lectures are 7 p.m. at the Seattle Program Center.

## **Call For Lecture Volunteers**

There are a lot of volunteers that help the lectures come together, from finding speakers to setting up chairs to welcoming people to writing profiles for Naturalists newsletters and the Mountaineers magazine. If you'd like to help, please contact Rose O'Donnell, [r.a.odonnell@icloud.com](mailto:r.a.odonnell@icloud.com).

In particular, we need someone to attach the speaker's microphone, and connect the laptop to the projector. Training is provided. This is a key job, and we very much need your help. Please contact Rose O'Donnell, [r.a.odonnell@icloud.com](mailto:r.a.odonnell@icloud.com)



## Odds and Ends

LAST MONTH'S MYSTERY PLANT. And the answer is: *Rubus nivalis* snow blackberry or snow dwarf bramble. No one guessed it (did anyone even notice?). Better luck next time. There is a REAL prize for this.



## WA Native Plant Society Program

### Upcoming Programs

- 1/4/18 Holiday Party (Mountaineers Program Center)
- 2-1-18 Lynda Mapes "Witness Tree: What the life of a single, 110-year old oak, tells us about climate change" (Mountaineers Program Center)
- 2-13-18 Stewart Hougen "Learn to Identify the Common Mosses and Liverworts of Western Washington"
- Bellevue Botanical Garden/Redmond Watershed (workshop 2/13/18 & field trip 2/17/18) (limit 40 participants for workshop, 30 for field trip, requires registration)
- 3-1-18 Mike Marsh on Kittitas County vegetation studies (Mountaineers Program Center)
- 4-5-18 Daniel Matthews "Early Days of Natural History in the Northwest" (Mountaineers Program Center)



## Poetry

### HERONS IN WINTER IN THE FROZEN MARSH

All winter  
two blue herons  
hunkered in the frozen marsh,  
like two columns of blue smoke.

What they ate  
I can't imagine,  
unless it was the small laces  
of snow that settled

in the ruckus of the cattails,  
or the glazed windows of ice  
under the tired  
pitchforks of their feet—

so the answer is  
they ate nothing,  
and nothing good could come of that.  
They were mired in nature, and starving.

Still, every morning  
they shrugged the rime from their shoulders,  
and all day they  
stood to attention

in the stubbled desolation.  
I was filled with admiration,  
sympathy,  
and, of course, empathy.

It called for a miracle.  
Finally the marsh softened,  
and their wings cranked open  
revealing the old blue light,

so that I thought: how could this possibly be  
the blunt, dark finish?  
First one, then the other, vanished  
into the ditches and upheavals.

All spring, I watched the rising blue-green grass,  
above its gleaming and substantial shadows,  
toss in the breeze,  
like wings.

*"Herons in Winter in the Frozen Marsh" by Mary Oliver,  
from Owls and other Fantasies: Poems and Essays.*

### The Everglades by Campbell McGrath

Green and blue and white, it is a flag  
for Florida stitched by hungry ibises.  
It is a paradise of flocks, a cornucopia  
of wind and grass and dark, slow waters.

Turtles bask in the last tatters of afternoon,  
frogs perfect their symphony at dusk—  
in its solitude we remember ourselves,  
dimly, as creatures of mud and starlight.  
Clouds and savannahs and horizons,  
its emptiness is an antidote, its ink  
illuminates the manuscript of the heart.  
It is not ours though it is ours  
to destroy or preserve, this the kingdom  
of otter, kingfisher, alligator, heron.  
If the sacred is a river within us, let it flow  
like this, serene and magnificent, forever.

*Copyright © 2016, commissioned by the Academy of  
American Poets and funded by a National Endowment  
for the Arts Imagine Your Parks grant.*

### Winter Solstice – Anonymous

When you startle awake in the dark morning  
heart pounding breathing fast  
sitting bolt upright staring into  
dark whirlpool black hole  
feeling its suction

Get out of bed  
knock at the door of your nearest friend  
ask to lie down ask to be held

Listen while whispered words  
turn the hole into deep night sky  
stars close together  
winter moon rising over white fields  
nearby wren rustling dry leaves  
distant owl echoing  
two people walking up the road laughing

Let your soul laugh  
let your heart sigh out  
that long held breath so hollow in your stomach  
so swollen in your throat

Already light is returning pairs of wings  
lift softly off your eyelids one by one  
each feathered edge clearer between you  
and the pearl veil of day

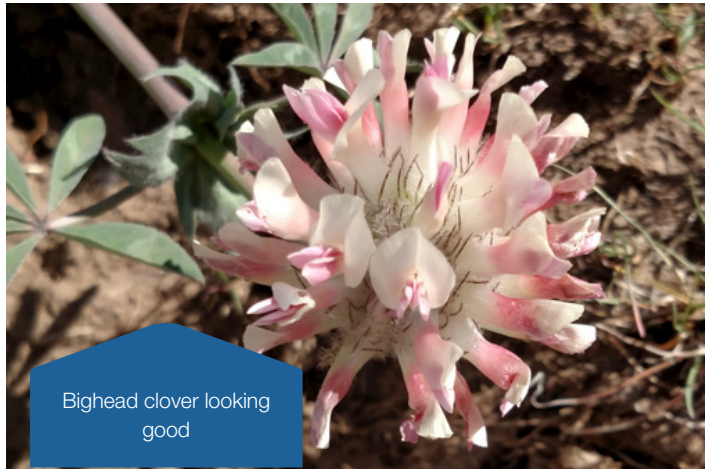
You have nothing to do but live.

# Photographs

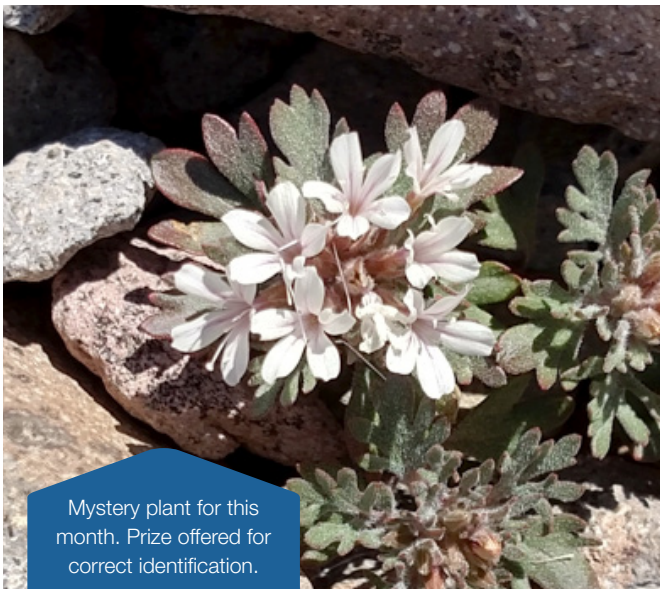
By Carolyn Appleton



Bitterroot flowers after the leaves are gone



Bighead clover looking good



Mystery plant for this month. Prize offered for correct identification.



Cladonia lichen with british soldiers



Mt. St. Helens from the Harry's Ridge trail



by Andrew Pedersen

## Seattle Naturalists Committee Officers and Subcommittee Chairs

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We welcome comments, ideas, information to share, original short articles, and photos. If you have information you'd like to have appear in the newsletter, please send it to Gordie ([g.swartzman@gmail.com](mailto:g.swartzman@gmail.com)).