Highlights from July 20 Plant Walk to Beaver Meadows

Nine of us took a leisurely stroll up to Beaver Meadows this past Saturday, and had a rewarding time taking in all the beautiful plants along the way (see list below). Beaver Meadows was chosen as our ultimate destination as it is a reliable place to see Parry’s Harebells, and, while one of my field guides (Beidleman and Beidleman, 2000) says that it is common in montane and subalpine meadows, that has not been my experience and I always relish getting to see these guys.

It was initially a bit difficult to move the group out of the parking lot at Camp Rock Campground, because of the numerous flowers, e.g. *Galardia*, Fairy Trumpet, and Common Harebell, growing in the roadside riparian, aka ditch. I always like using the scientific name for Shrubby Cinquefoil as a nice example of why it’s fun to embrace some of these binomials. When you look at the leaf it has five obvious leaflets, hence the genus name, *Pentaphylloides*, five-leafed, and then with the plant’s always numerous flowers, the *floribunda* part makes perfect sense, abundant-flowers.

We then moved into the shade of the dense, tall spruce growing along a tiny creek. Here we scored with many wonderful flowers, including Tall Chiming Bells, Twisted stalk, and Canada Violet. A real highlight was getting to see a lot of three species of Pyrolas – Wood Nymph, Green Pyrola, and Pink Pyrola. These members of the Pyrolaceae, or Wintergreen Family, are among my favorites. Generally, they grow in deep-shade forests, and because they are not very tall, and their blossoms hang downward, they can be easily missed. Seeing such a profusion of them was great fun.

We then climbed up through a somewhat depauperate portion of the forest composed primarily of Lodgepole Pine with a few scattered Rockcresses. Next, moving out on to a beautiful south-facing slope of scattered aspen and ponderosa we chanced upon another group of flowers including Nodding Onion, Mountain Parsley, Black-eyed Susan, Golden Draba, and Western Wallflower. A favorite of mine here was Blue Mist Penstemon. I don’t understand why the writers of plant field guides persist in using any other common name,
such as: Low Penstemon, Front Range Penstemon, and Pride of the Mountain. “Blue Mist” is clearly the superior name as it so captures the ambience created by a whole patch of these vividly blue flowers growing all together.

We finally did make our way up to Beaver Meadows and were indeed fortunate to find many Parry’s Harebell along with some other great flowers like Prairie Smoke and Purple Avens. All in all, a really satisfactory morning. So, make sure to get out there and see some of our great mountain flowers. It ain’t fall yet!

- Equisetum arvense COMMON HORSE TAIL
- Juniperus communis COMMON JUNIPER
- Pinus flexilis LIMBER PINE
- Pinus ponderosa PONDEROSA PINE
- Pinus contorta LODGEPOLE PINE
- Picea engelmannii ENGE Leg MANN SPRUCE
- Acer glabrum ROCKY MOUNTAIN MAPLE
- Allium cernuum NODDING ONION
- Cerastium strictum MOUSE- EAR CHICK WEED
- Eremogone fendleri FENDLER’S SANDWORT
- Heracleum sphondylium COW PARSNIP
- *Pseudocymopterus montanus* MOUNTAIN PARSLEY
- *Apocynum androsaemifolium* SPREADING DOGBANE
- *Achillea millefolium, lanulosa* YARROW
- *Agoseris glauca, dasyccephala* TALL FALSE DANDELION
- *Antennaria rosea* PINK PUSSYTOES
- *Anaphalis margaritacea* PEARLY EVERLASTING
- *Arnica cordifolia* HEART-LEAVED ARNICA
- *Erigeron flagellaris* WHIPLASH DAISY
- *Gaillardia aristata* BLANKETFLOWER
- *Rudbeckia hirta* BLACK-EYED SUSAN
- *Solidago missouriensis* SMOOTH GOLDENROD
- *Tragopogon dubius* YELLOW SALSIFY
- *Hackelia floribunda* FALSE FORGET-ME-NOT
- Mertensia ciliata
- Draba aurea
- Distegia involucrate
- Sambucus racemose
- Erysimum asperum
- Calochortus gunnisonii
- Campanula parryi
- Campanula rotundifolia
- Maianthemum stellatum
- Artostaphylos uva-ursi
- Amerosedum lanceolatum
- Astragalus spp
- Thermopsis montana
- Trifolium pratense
- Aconitum columbianum
- Aquilegia coerulea
- Delphinium nuttallianum
- Geranium richardsonii
- Geranium caespitosum
- Hydrophyllum fendleri
- Phacelia heterophylla
- Sisyrinchium montanum
- Chamerion danielsii
- Limnorchis dilate
- Ipomopsis aggregate
- Dodecatheon pulchellum
- Moneses uniflora
- Pyrola chlorantha
- Pyrola rotundifolia
- Anemonidium canadense
- Drymocallis fissa
- Erythrocoma trifolium
- Fragaria vesca
- Geum rivale
- Ribes spp
- Jamesia americana
- Pentaphylloides floribunda
- Rosa woodsii
- Rubus idaeus
- Populus tremuloides
- Salix spp
- Galium septentrionale

- TALL CHIMING BELLS
- GOLDEN DRABA
- TWINBERRY
- RED ELDERBERRY
- WESTERN WALLFLOWER
- MARIPOSA LILY
- PARRY'S HAREBELL
- COMMON HAREBELL
- STAR SOLOMON'S SEAL
- KINNIKINNICK
- YELLOW STONECROP
- VETCH
- MOUNTAIN GOLDEN BANNER
- RED CLOVER
- COLORADO COLUMBINE
- NELSON'S LARKSPUR
- RICHARDSON'S GERANIUM
- FREMONT GERANIUM
- WATERLEAF
- SCORPIONWEED
- BLUE_EYED GRASS
- FIREWEED
- WHITE BOG-ORCHID
- WHITE FAIRY TRUMPET
- SHOOTING STAR
- WOOD NYMPH
- GREEN PYROLA
- PINK PYROLA
- MEADOW ANEMONE
- LEAFY POTENTILLA
- PRAIRIE SMOKE
- WOODLAND STRAWBERRY
- PURPLE AVENS
- GOOSEBERRY spp
- WAXFLOWER
- SHRUBBY CINQUEFOIL
- WILD ROSE
- WILD RED RASPBERRY
- QUAKING ASPEN
- WILLOW spp
- NORTHERN BEDSTRAW
- *Heuchera parvifolia*  COMMON ALUMROOT
- *Castilleja miniate*  SCARLET PAINTBRUSH
- *Pedicularis procera*  GIANT LOUSEWORT
- *Pedicularis groenlandica*  ELEPHANT HEAD
- *Penstemon virens*  BLUE MIST PENSTEMON
- *Penstemon virgatus ?*  TALL PENSTEMON ?
- *Thalictrum fendleri*  MEADOWRUE
- *Streptopus fassetti*  TWISTEDSTALK
- *Viola scopulorum*  CANADA VIOLET