

# FIELD OBSERVATION REPORT

By Mary Wilson  
February 18, 2018

## Poppy Reserve

There are plants of filaree, fiddleneck, blue dick, cheat grass and some bunch grasses are getting new blades. Also spotted four o'clocks starting to get new leaves along with lupine. Found some common parsley and it was the only plant that had flowers. There are poppies but not like last year. I checked the weather and by February 19, 2017 the reserve had received 10.10 –inches of rain. As of February 13, 2018 only 1.87 –inches. The photo on the left shows a poppy plant photographed on February 20, 2017. It was 5-inches across and the first poppy bud was emerging from the center of the rosette. The photo on the right was taken on February 15, 2018 has less leaves and was only 2-inches across. Probably will not have a spectacular year like last year.



Photo taken 02-20-17. 5-inch poppy rosette and first bud.



Photo taken 02-15, 2018. 2-inch poppy rosette.

## Arthur B. Ripley Desert Woodland

Where is the entrance sign? It has been taken down to make way for a new sign which should be installed soon.



bladder pod

There are filaree and some grasses coming up. One of the first plants to flower in the spring is the bladder pod. There are two plants one on the east and one on west side of Lancaster Road before the entrance. Not seeing any Joshua trees forming buds just yet—they usually blossom around March. The male Juniper cones are still brown and a few are starting to open and will be releasing pollen soon.



**Cream cups**

## Wildflowers

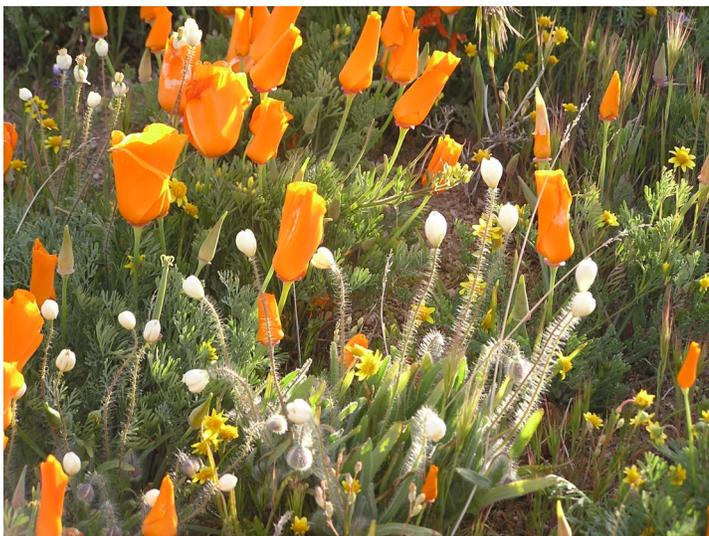
# Meet the cream cups

By MILT STARK  
Cream Cups

*Platystemon californiacus*  
Poppy Family

This hairy stemmed, and hairy leaved, eight to twelve inch high plant produces a lovely cream colored flower with five to nine petals and a multistemoned center.

On the Poppy Park they are probably as common but not anywhere as showy as their cousin, the California Poppy. Recently we found a large group of cream cups on Backus Road, northwest of Rosamond, which has spots of butter yellow on some petals. Probably one of the most showy displays of these yellow spotted cream cups will be in late May on top of Sawmill Mountain, southeast of Three Points on the Valley's Westside.



Cream cups and poppies

## SOME CALIFORNIA POPPY FOLKLORE

### Spanish

- Poppies once covered the mountains of coastal California, so impressing Spanish explorers that they named the vast fields of poppies “La Terra Del Fuego,” the land of fire. Sailors marveling at the fields of poppies blanketing southern California shores in the late 1700s called the sight “La Sabanilla de San Pasqual,” the altar cloth of St. Pascale, after the shepherd saint who tended his flock and knelt in the fields of wildflowers to commune with God.
- The early Spanish felt poppy petals would help grow hair and they would put suet or lard in a pan and sprinkle heavily with poppy petals and simmer it until it made a jelly-like substance and they would rub it into their balding heads.



### American Indian Women

- A love charm was traditionally made from the California poppy by the native Indian women to lure unresponsive lovers, the charm must have worked as it was once considered a crime under tribal law and such women would face expulsion from the tribe if they were unlucky enough to be detected.
- Women used the pollen for a cosmetic and the whole plant as a sedative for babies.
- Some cooked the plant in olive oil to make a hair tonic that is said to make the hair grow thick and shiny.
- The California Indian called the blossoms “fire flowers” and the women used the blossoms to make wreaths and garlands, which they wore during a “dance of the poppies” spring ceremony.

### Spiritual

- The Great Spirit sent Fire Flower (poppy) to drive away the evils of frost and famine, and to fill the land with warmth and plenty.
- Among Indians, spiritual health and physical health were inseparable. In fact, an unhealthy spirit leads to an unhealthy body. Most Indian healers start by healing the spirit, then the body. Prayer, singing, talking and comforting are an essential part of healing.

### Gold Rush

- The Indians believed that the countless prospectors in the 1850’s were searching for fallen golden poppy pedals rather than gold.
- When the rush for the gold first began in California, the Indians are said to have expressed the belief that the petals of the “Great Spirit Flower” (the Golden Poppy), dropped year after year, sank into the earth and gradually formed the bright metal for which the strangers were searching.
- During the gold rush, prospectors with a flair for romance, often enclosed pressed poppy petals inside their letters home as a souvenir of California, the land of gold.



## COURTSHIP

Around February and March burrowing owls will look for a habitat and a mate..



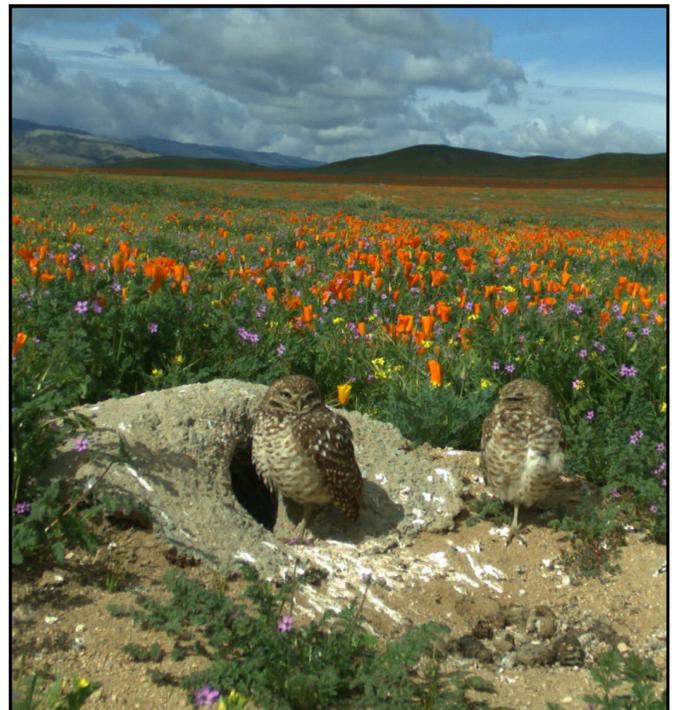
Burrowing owl checking out potential living quarters.



Another owl comes to check out the potential mate and habitat.



They check out the area for living and nesting.



This couple seems to approve.