

A CASUAL EXPLORATION OF A SIERRAN MADRE FOOTHILL



Highway 166
June 17, 1973
Looking at the
north facing slope,
left panel, the
west facing slope,
the center panel,
and the south
facing slope, the
right panel.

Though ten years had passed since I had done any concerted ecological studies, I had begun to be drawn to trying to understand the occurrence of *Dudleya pulverulenta* which I ran across in what I thought were rather odd places, such as just above Colson Canyon Creek. One day while I was trekking over to the turn-off to Miranda Pines I noticed what appeared to be the chalky succulent growing on the east facing and west facing slopes overlooking the Cuyama River.

After stopping to take a closer look I found that the west facing slope was accessible though very rocky and of a loose shale out of which various outcrops were to be found. At the base of some of these outcrops were individuals of the *Dudleya*. Often associated and surrounding them was this dry and dead looking plant. I identified it as *Selaginella bigelovii*.



The *Selaginella* species formed a brown carpeting next to the various outcrops and further out onto the loose rocky slope.



Dudleya pulverulenta
with *Selaginella*
bigelovii surrounding.

After making some photos of the area and of the plants, I resumed my trip to the campgrounds at Miranda Pines. It was interesting to note the occurrence of the *Dudleya* and the *Selaginella* in an area above a river that had some water flowing through it. Yet the two did not occur together in Colson Canyon.

Later on in the year, on November 18, 1973, I made the trek to visit the site just to see the *Selaginella* after we had some rain. Sure enough those dried up and dead looking stems had been resurrected!

An interesting mystery!

Jerry Copeland
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