An Alpine History Mystery:

Searching for your Valentine? February 2014

How many of you men out there (or ladies for that matter) would be willing to walk up to 20 miles to find your special Valentine? What if you don't know exactly where that special someone is and you just have to strike out and "follow your nose" so to speak? She could be anywhere within 20 miles of where you are when you get that unspoken call from the romantic part of your brain that says "I've just got to go find her". And just to make it interesting – what if you only have four days to find your lovely Valentine? Does this sound impossible?

Well, here's the thing. No humans that I know would take on the challenge, but there is a creature in the chaparral environment around Alpine that will do just that! And so far they have been successful at this annual ritual for millennia. The males of the species are especially equipped to sense their soul-mate up to 20 miles away. And they will search relentlessly, fighting wind and rain and even going without food and water for up to four days in order to fulfill their destiny with their Valentine.

This annual ritual occurs every spring. In years of balmy winter weather, it may even start at the end of January or early February. So, if you know what to look for, you may see this lover's pursuit take place in your own back yard, but you'll have to get up early as they are most active several hours before dawn.

Now I haven't yet told you what kind of creature performs this miraculous search. Well, that is the question for this month's Alpine History Mystery. What creature living in Alpine's chaparral, emerges every spring to search for its special Valentine and will travel up to 20 miles in less than four days to find her?

If you know the answer, send us a note to mystery@alpinehistory.org . Need help solving this one? Come visit us at the museum open house from 2 to 4 pm on Saturday, Feb. 22 or Sunday, Feb.23, where docents will be on hand to help you solve this mystery. The museum is located at 2116 Tavern Road in Alpine.