

Insignis

Newsletter of the Alta Peak Chapter, celebrating and supporting the native plant communities in Tulare County, serving the Central Valley and Sierra Nevada Mountains and Foothills.

Volume 19, Number 1

January 2009

Winter Program

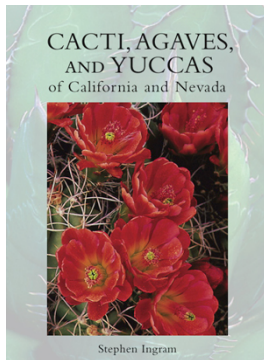
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WINTER PROGRAM

February 7, Saturday, 7 pm
Springville Memorial Building

Cacti, Agaves and Yuccas of California and Nevada

Presented by Stephen Ingram, botanist, writer and photographer, from the Bristlecone Chapter

A multimedia presentation explores some of the unique attributes of the cacti, agaves, and yuccas and highlights what makes them such intriguing components of our native plant communities. With stunning images of their colorful blossoms and unusual growth forms, this program showcases a number of species and varieties that occur in California's deserts and coastal areas. The main slideshow-talk will be approximately 40 minutes, with time for questions. A second 10-minute show set to music illustrates the beauty of these remarkable succulents.

More about Stephen Ingram's work on page 2.....

Photographs wanted for Alta Peak Chapter website

www.altapeakcnps.org

Do you have digital photographs of local native plants, plant communities, native gardens, CNPS events? Our chapter is looking for photos to include on our new website. We also want to include links to native plant related websites, articles and ideas. Newsletter pdf files will be posted on website, as well as a calendar of Chapter events.

Please email photos or suggestions for website to elsahc@dishmail.net or call Elsah Cort at 561-4671.



CONSERVATION CONFERENCE

January 17-21, 2009
Sacramento Convention Center

The conference will focus on:

- 1) finding and promoting solutions to the environmental challenges that are confronting California's flora
- 2) integrating the best science with the most effective public policies to meet these challenges
- 3) pressing forward more and better regional and statewide landscape-level conservation initiatives.

By addressing such topics as climate change, rare plant biology, restoration, mitigation strategies, vegetation ecology, environmental policy, invasive species, conservation genetics, regional planning, urbanization, and more, this conference will integrate and synthesize conservation science with policy and catalyze California's plant conservation in the 21st century.

more Winter Program notes...

Following the Winter Program on February 7, Stephen Ingram will sign copies of his new book, *Cacti, Agaves, and Yuccas of California and Nevada*

About the Book:

California and Nevada are known for their astonishing array of plant life, and few components of this diverse flora are more intriguing than the cacti, agaves, and yuccas. These spiny succulents -- which share many of the same arid habitats -- have long been a source of fascination for explorers, naturalists, and scientists. *Cacti, Agaves, and Yuccas of California and Nevada* features more than 60 species with a detailed text that is accompanied by 262 color photographs, 16 botanical watercolors, and 52 range maps. Much more than a field guide, this book examines the natural history of California's and Nevada's cacti, agaves, and yuccas, including their origins, ecology, and conservation. It also provides practical horticultural advice for their cultivation and describes some of the best places to see these remarkable succulents in the wild.

Botanist, writer, and photographer Stephen Ingram traveled more than 30,000 miles -- much of it on remote backroads -- to search out, study, and photograph the cacti, agaves, and yuccas of California and Nevada. He also delved into the scientific literature, visited numerous herbaria, and interviewed our region's leading experts on Cactaceae and Agavaceae. The result is a detailed, highly readable, and beautifully illustrated natural history and field guide. *Cacti, Agaves, and Yuccas of California and Nevada* is an engaging and substantive reference book that can be enjoyed by novice and expert alike.

About the Author:

Stephen Ingram is a native Californian with a long-time interest in plants and plant ecology. He received a B.S. degree in Biology from Lewis and Clark College, and an M.A. degree in Botany from the University of California, Santa Barbara. Following graduate school, Stephen was employed as part of the Research Department at Selby Botanical Gardens in Sarasota, Florida, managing the herbarium and working on an epiphyte flora of Monteverde, Costa Rica. He has also worked as a botanical consultant doing rare plant surveys in the Eastern Sierra and the Mojave Desert. Stephen is past president of the Bristlecone Chapter of the California Native Plant Society. His photos have been used in numerous books, magazines, and calendars.

Visit Stephen Ingram's website

www.ingramphoto.com



photos by Stephen Ingram

Chapter President's message

by Joan Stewart

The October 2008 Chapter Plant Sale was again a great focus for CNPS work and presence in our region. Each year we find new prospective members and increase the appreciation and pleasure in knowing what we have here in Tulare County's natural vegetation. We want to especially pay tribute to Janet Fanning who is the Producer, Director, Star, and financially Responsible Person for the plant sale, our only fundraising effort of the year. Working with her on Friday when plants arrive and are sorted, and on Saturday when they leave and are taken away to the growing number of gardens where they thrive (we hope), we see clearly the amount of planning, thought, and time she provides for this project. Without Janet, CNPS wouldn't be the effective voice in our area that it has come to be. Thank you Janet!!

As with many Chapters, our members are scattered, busy, and much of our Board Meeting "business" is conducted via phone or email. In this manner we agreed to offer financial support to two students who are presenting papers at the January Conservation Conference. One person lives in Visalia and is studying grasslands in Santa Barbara County. The other person is a student at Northern Arizona University, studying a rare plant in the eastern part of the County in the National Forest. Both of them have been contacted and invited to report to and hopefully provide programs for Alta Peak meetings.

We accepted Elsie's proposal to prepare, distribute, three or four issues of *Insignis* this year...this one in early January, a Spring issue to list and describe field trips, and one in late summer with information about the Plant Sale. Each newsletter will include reports or news items about local issues, regional events, and state wide interests. Let Elsie know what you particularly want to read about.

Janet prepares and submits our Chapter Treasurer's Reports....anyone interested in reviewing these, call her. We receive regular update information from the Sacramento office on new and lapsed members, and we try hard to keep our own membership records up to date. *Please* let us know if there are changes or corrections that need to be made in your contact information.

I submit an Annual Report of Chapter Activities to the State each year. These are compiled, from the 33 chapters, into a Report that each Chapter receives early in the year. They make very interesting reading. Let me know if you would like to peruse the 2008 volume (or any earlier years). Last year's report is included in this newsletter.

And in conclusion to this "message" from the Alta Peak President, I must remark on the unusual (for this past November and December) greening our foothills have displayed. Warm soil and an early mild rain has stimulated seeds to germinate in profusion. We'll see (I am writing this in December) what comes next, if they will grow to flower or whether a freeze will halt the cycle?



October 2008
Alta Peak Chapter Plant Sale

above Jane Fanning on right
below Joan Stewart on left
(both photos taken near the end of the day)



photos by E. Cort

Chapter Annual Report

by Joan Stewart

Overview: Once again, we continue to offer field trips and programs to the community, and participate in local groups' efforts to steer land management decisions in ways that further our CNPS purpose. We, as many other chapters report, are weak in getting new active members....in effectively filling Board positions, and enlarging the pool of individuals working on chapter projects. Despite this, however, we feel that CNPS presence in Tulare County does make a difference, and we believe that there is a fair amount of (unspoken?) support for what we do.

A February program introduced the anticipated series of spring/summer hikes: intended to explore, compare, enjoy high elevation Mountain Meadows of the Southern Sierra. Sylvia Haultain, from Sequoia-Kings Canyon National Park, presented pictures and information, first to review the hydrology and botany of these unique habitats, then to remind us of the diverse at-that-season snow covered flora. Rather than worrying about which "wet" place is technically a bog, a fen, or something else, she illustrated the amazing differences in what grows in these various sites.

Our winter programs are provided during the cold "dreary" time of year here, and feature OOh and AAh glimpses of California's vegetation, usually including flowers. Open to all, and no charge, on Saturday evenings they attract families, many non-members, and the evening includes gather-social intervals both before and after the main speaker. The Sales Table and a Table-Top display attract a lot of attention, and lemonade and cookies are available. A short business meeting precedes the introduction of the evening's speaker, meeting the requirement for a formal Chapter Meeting!!

Field Trips were carefully scheduled to fit expected weather and road conditions. High mountain meadows are, of course, not accessible until snow melts and roads are opened. And spring, summer of '08 did not cooperate!! A late freeze, then unseasonal heat, then a dry summer, combined to require changes in the Plan. Mid-June found access roads to the announced site still closed, but Quaking

Aspen Meadow, at the end of HWY 190, although still squishy, gave a preview of what was coming. The first July trip also had to be changed, and by this time we were all feeling confused by the uncertainty. But the hike into Sequoia National Park, led by Sylvia Haultain and Athena Demetry in mid-July was successful, logistically and botanically. Athena is supervising a major restoration project in Halstead Meadow, and it was amazing to realize what can be done after years of erosion and channeling in an area. We followed this by rambles through Crescent and Huckleberry Meadows, popular meadows for casual visitors to the Park. Drosera, two orchids, carpets of Camassia, gentians, scattered specimens of some very unusual species, proved to be a lovely high-point for the summer season. Other impromptu hikes later in the season came along, all depending on last minute weather conditions.

The Fall program in most years is intended to complement the October Plant Sale in Three Rivers, and in the past we have had evenings devoted to horticultural topics. This year, because Fire dominated conversations (not just in our part of California) throughout the summer, we asked Jon Keeley, Research Scientist, USGS Western Ecological Research Center, to be our speaker. He brought together his experience and perspective in a way that would be directly applicable to local situations.

A large percentage of Tulare County is managed as public land by USFS and NPS, with smaller portions designated as preserves by other agencies and organizations. As is true everywhere around the San Joaquin Valley, there is great pressure to direct new development into the lower foothill oak woodland region, formerly range land, above the "valuable" valley agricultural lands. Threat of fire in the urban/wildland interface looms as a major concern but nevertheless permits are issued with little realistic planning for this issue. Jon's program was one of the best I have ever heard, and I've attended many such. Thoughtful discussion followed, and we are grateful to have him in our community.

Board meetings consist primarily of irregular phone and email conversations. Our new (but she filled the position many

years ago in the early days of CNPS in Tulare County) newsletter editor, Elsie Cort, gathers information and reports from other officers, and is producing *Insignis* with a flair we all enjoy! Treasurer's and membership reports are circulated and reviewed on a regular basis, and whenever several of us are together for any reasons, we bring up CNPS news and business. Information that is solicited for these Annual Reports asks for comment on "major challenges" and, as is true for most of us, the dispersed geographical extent makes it difficult to bring us together at regular intervals.

Spring, Summer, and Winter issues of our *Insignis* newsletter is mailed to 75 paid up members, 5-10 prospectives, as well as others interested in our work.....local newspapers, friends.

A very visible presence for CNPS is our participation in several collaborative, ongoing, efforts involving land use decisions. CNPS has a place at the table as the USFS works toward drafting a management plan for the Giant Sequoia National Monument. We are part of the group interested in shaping a revised County General Plan that directs new growth more to existing urban centers than into undisturbed foothill lands. One particular topic here is the proposal to develop a huge "new city" in a valley that is historically a ranch, with slopes rising, as corridors, into higher country that harbors wildlife and plants of special concern. In these meetings, CNPS speaks for vegetation, plants, although issues of water, air quality, infrastructure, county finances, attract more media attention.

The October Plant Sale, as always, is a high point of the year, a focus of general interest in CNPS. Held in a small area behind the Art Center in Three Rivers, the Chair, Janet Fanning, prepares a list of available (we hope) plants and a pre-order form for the September *Insignis*, and we try very hard to provide the material that is requested. Plants are delivered on Friday, sorted and grouped, and the mostly paid-for pre-orders are "pulled", set aside to be picked up either that morning or early on Saturday. On Saturday books, posters, membership information, are ready by 9:00 am when we open, and as for all chapters, business is brisk, to say the least. We continue to

continued on page 6

2-Day Symposium on Native Plant Gardening

Growing Natives:

Celebrating California's Beauty in Dry Times
March 28, 2009, at the Lafayette Community Center, Lafayette and on March 29, 2009, at Regional Parks Botanic Garden, Berkeley, learn about creating beautiful waterwise gardens with California native plants. The Saturday program includes presentations on the flora of California (by botanist and author Glenn Keator), garden design (by author Carol Bornstein), the structure of the garden (by Phil Van Soelen, from Cal Flora Nursery), herbaceous perennials and bulbs (by plantsman Roger Raiche), creating a native meadow (by David Amme), and connecting with the garden (by Mike Evans from Tree of Life Nursery). The program includes a continental breakfast, lunch, and wine reception. A selection of books will be available for purchase.

The Sunday program at the Regional Parks Botanic Garden begins with an inspiring talk by Director Steve Edwards, followed by a choice of guided garden walks and workshops on plants for dry gardens, aesthetic pruning, principles of irrigation, and gardening practices. After lunch in the garden, the program continues at Native Here Nursery with a presentation by Charli Danielsen and an opportunity to purchase plants. The day concludes with an invitation to visit two spectacular private native gardens: the Fleming garden in Berkeley and the Greenberg garden in Lafayette. Registration opens January 1st, 2009. Members and subscribers of the sponsoring organizations, CNPS, Regional Parks Botanic Garden and Pacific Horticulture, will receive a discount on registration fees.

See www.nativeplants.org
for more information.

REGIONAL PARKS BOTANIC GARDEN
c/o Tilden Regional Park
Berkeley, CA 94708-2396
General Information, Tours
(510) 841-8732 bgarden@ebparks.org



A Tale from Wales: "Key Flower"

(from *The Moon in the Well, Wisdom Tales to Transform your Life, Family, and Community* by Erica Helm Meade, 2001 Carus Publishing)

Long ago atop a green hill in Wales, a shepherd watched his flocks peacefully grazing. In the grass at his feet he noticed an unusual flower. Its blossom bore the shape of a key. He picked it and put it in his buttonhole. All morning he enjoyed its sweet scent. That afternoon he led the sheep to another hill. There on the hillside he came upon a stone door that he had never seen before. He wondered if somehow he'd got lost, but no, looking around he saw this was indeed the old familiar valley where the sheep had always grazed.

The shepherd tried opening the stone door but it wouldn't budge. Then he noticed it had a little keyhole. Chancing that the key flower might fit, he tried it in the hole. To his surprise it fit perfectly. When he turned the key flower the stone door opened.

You might expect it to be dark and chilly inside that hill, but it wasn't. From the center of the hill there shone a light that glistened like sunrise on a lake. The shepherd stepped inside and walked toward it. There he found all manner of treasure mounds of shimmering gold and shining silver, heaps of bright emeralds, rubies, sapphires and pearls. The poor astonished shepherd could barely catch his breath, for such riches were beyond imagining. He thought of his loved ones waiting back at the cottage, and began stuffing his pockets to the brim. He took off his socks and used them as pouches. He used his wool cap as a sack.

Hurriedly he set off for home. The weight of the riches was great upon him, but his gait was light nonetheless, for he imagined the joy on his loved ones' faces when he shared with them the dazzling gems.

The further he got from the hill, the lighter the load seemed to grow. Soon he could no longer feel the weight of it. He stopped to check his pockets and pouches. To his great dismay they were filled with not jewels, nor riches, but with leaves---crumbly dry leaves---the likes of which he would rake up and toss on the compost heap. The shepherd turned his pockets inside out. The bits of dry leaves blew away on the wind. The shepherd trudged home, puzzling

over the day, trying to make sense of what had happened.

When he got home, he wanted to tell the story of the key flower, the stone door, and the riches inside the hill. But when he tried to speak of it, his throat grew dry and his thoughts scattered. He knew whatever he said would sound foolish, so he kept still.

In the days and weeks to come, he often searched for the stone door, but he never found it. He often scanned the grassy hills for another key flower, though none was ever to be found.

It wasn't until much later, sitting at the fireside one night, that he decided to tell his tale. In his mind's eye he saw it all with great clarity as if it had been yesterday. The thoughts formed freely in his mind and flowed from his lips like a bright river. Afterwards, his loved ones remarked what a fine story it was, and that he was a good teller of tales. He told them it was true, every last detail, and they scoffed, "What a rascal you are."

As the years passed by, the memory of that afternoon stayed bright within him. Even as a very old man thinking about it brought a smile to his lips.

Meade writes in her commentary on this tale, "Naturalist philosopher David Abram told me this tale is about those amazing unexpected moments when we stumble upon a natural wonder, such as a double rainbow or a pod of leaping whales. Suddenly the world reveals in full its true exuberance and we are struck with the wonder of it. That naturalist's peak experience is not unlike that of the surfer who's just had the ride of his lifetime, the monk who experiences a flash of enlightenment, or the love-struck newlyweds on their honeymoon. We can evoke the memory of such experiences, we can partially relive them through the imagination, we can strive to capture them through art, music, and poetry, but like the key flower, they are by nature ephemeral. Try as we might, we cannot stuff our pockets with the exuberance of peak moments and tote it home with us. A bittersweetness befalls us when our rare mood dissipates, and, as Yeats' poem on ecstasy says, 'the common ground of day resumes.' Like the shepherd, our best hope is to internalize the moment of illumination, to keep it alive as he does, in the heart and in the mind's eye. Recently a meditation student reflecting on this tale said, 'Nirvana can't be captured, and expecting to possess it is a definite setup for failure. Meditation is about daily practice, like tending your sheep. If a transcendent moment comes, it comes unexpectedly. There is no hope of ever finding the key flower without doing daily practice. In the mystic traditions, illumination strikes, maybe only once. The true mystic makes it the beacon of a lifetime, guiding each step thereafter.'"

Rare Plant Adventure Invite

from Sarah De Groot, Ph.D Graduate Student

Sarah.Degroot@cgu.edu

Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden
and Claremont Graduate University
1500 N. College Ave.
Claremont, California

Dear California Native Plant enthusiasts,

Anyone interested in a field trip next summer? I am a graduate student in Botany, working at Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden and Claremont Graduate University in the Los Angeles area. My research is on the genus *Eriastrum* (woolly-star), in the *Polemoniaceae* (Phlox family). Eventually I hope to provide a better classification than what we have currently (you may have found the key in the 1993 Jepson manual to be a bit frustrating). However, the first step in revision of the classification is to determine how many species or subspecies exist in nature, and also to determine which of these forms are already named. This is where type specimens are important: they allow us to relate a species name with a particular morphology.

However, some morphological characteristics cannot be determined from pressed and dried herbarium specimens (for example, corolla color or symmetry). In these instances, finding live plants at the locality where the type was collected can be a good representation of the type morphology, in a live form, where these additional characteristics can be seen.

Eriastrum sparsiflorum was described by Alice Eastwood in 1902, based on specimens collected "in Kings River Canyon" and "also along Bubbs Creek Trail." The 1993 Jepson Manual states that it ranges from Oregon to Nevada and Baja California. However, as was pointed out recently by David Gowen (2008 Madrono 55: 82-87), the wide-ranging form of "*sparsiflorum*" did not match the type specimen. This wide-ranging form is now called *Eriastrum signatum*, while *E. sparsiflorum* is rather restricted, geographically. Most herbarium specimens have been collected on the east side of the Sierra Nevada, near Lake Tahoe and down into Owens Valley. However, the type locality is still in Kings Canyon, on the western side of the mountains. Considering the habitat differences, could plants from the eastern and western sides of the mountains

belong to the same species? It seems the best way to find out is to find plants on both sides and compare them.

Plant samples are already in hand from the Lake Tahoe area and Owens Valley, as well as a number of samples of *E. signatum*. What remains is to re-discover the type locality of *E. sparsiflorum* in Kings Canyon.

In addition to Eastwood's 1899 collection on which the name *E. sparsiflorum* is based, I am aware of only one other collection from Kings Canyon (Zumwalt Meadows, J. T. Howell 16142). This collection was not made recently, however, and a search in July 2008 along the Kings River from Zumwalt Meadow nearly to Bubb's Creek did not locate any *Eriastrum* plants.

Before we give up and conclude that *Eriastrum sparsiflorum* no longer occurs in Kings Canyon, we really should consider a few other options. (1) last summer's search was made by two people. Given the size of the area of potential habitat, there was no way all of the habitat could be thoroughly searched. A small population easily could have been missed. A large group of people (15 or more) would be able to cover the area much more thoroughly. (2) Eastwood states that she also found the plant along Bubb's Creek. A 2006 hike in this area did not locate any *E. sparsiflorum*, but again this hike did not cover much of the possible habitat, and also was late in the season.

So it seems the best strategy to re-discovering *Eriastrum sparsiflorum* at its type locality in Kings Canyon would be to: 1. get together a large group (>15) of plant enthusiasts, 2. search all potential habitat in Kings Canyon, between Bubb's Creek and Zumwalt Meadows [and additional areas if there is time], and 3. if no *Eriastrum sparsiflorum* is found along the Kings River, search along Bubbs Creek. Given a large enough group, #2 could be completed in a day. #3 may require backpacking.

So... would you like to re-discover *Eriastrum sparsiflorum* at its type locality? I sure would!

I'm sending this to both the Sequoia and Alta Peak CNPS Chapters, and would love to know how much interest there is among the membership. Could we get a large group together? Happy Trails, Sarah

Annual Report *continued from page 4*

try to offer predominantly plants that are both "native" to our area, or if not actually found in the county, of proven usefulness in "native" plantings. We discuss this question, and hope to encourage a reasonable mixture, along with promoting the mission of CNPS in number of ways.

About Walnuts... by Joan Stewart

No, this is not a report on orchard groves or the condition of this year's crop. But a local member has called several times to report some interesting "native", he believed, a California walnut shrub or tree on his place below Balch Park, east of Springville. Following up on the question, we learned (and many of you may already know this?) that *Juglans nigra* or *regia*--both Linnean names with *regia* used in Jepson, native to Europe, Asia, eastern US--was brought to California in early years and became naturalized, widespread throughout the state many years ago. The native California walnut, treated as two species in Munz and a single species with two varieties in Jepson, is found mostly in coastal regions and on the fringes of the two Central Valleys. Reportedly, indigenous people made use of the nuts, probably moving them from one area to another, and perhaps accounting for the distribution of the taxa by the time botanists began mapping vegetation in the state. No native populations were found by Twisselman in Kern County--and he was familiar with the lands abutting southern Tulare county. *Juglans californica* var. *hindsii* would presumably be the "species" here in this area, but it is difficult to say clearly what any individual specimen is since our native trees are known to hybridize easily with the imported English walnut. Also the native species was used as rootstock for orchards of the non-native agricultural stock. So, what do we see here, now? Non-native "escaped" hybrids, or "pure" natives"? Both have pinnate compound leaves, but the key character is 7-9 leaflets on non-native and 11-19 on the native taxa. The two varieties, one essentially in southern California and the other more northern are separated by size of nut +husk (=fruit). So if you have walnuts near you, or you see some shrubs or trees along lower elevation trails, feel free to call them anything you choose!!

STATE CONSERVATION CONFERENCE

January 17-21, 2009
Sacramento Convention Center

Goal and Objectives

The main goal of this conference is to identify and promote science- and policy-based strategies and solutions to improve the conservation of California's native flora and natural landscapes. The principal objectives of the conference are to:

- * Convene a broad spectrum of public policy makers, scientists, land stewards, and conservationists to discuss and disseminate strategies and solutions for native plant conservation in California and western North America.
- * Communicate the most recent and effective conservation science, land management, and public policy tools to the widest audience.
- * Foment a greater understanding and appreciation of California's unique flora.
- * Promote the flow of information and ideas within and among people of diverse disciplines in the private and public sectors.
- * Provide professional training opportunities to enhance and update the skills of the conservation and botanical communities.
- * Inspire a new generation of researchers, conservationists, and environmental advocates who will be confronted with unprecedented environmental challenges.
- * Publish the results of the conference in bound proceedings.
- * Maintain conservation momentum by planning future conferences, symposia, and other educational and professional development opportunities.

for more information see CNPS website link at:
www.cnps.org/cnps/conservation/conference/2009/about.php

Conference Highlights

- * Plenary sessions and keynote speakers including: environmental justice and clean energy advocate Jerome Ringo; Professor Steven Hopper, Director of the Royal Botanic Garden; and naturalist, educator, artist, and author John (Jack) Muir Laws.
- * Over 200 accomplished presenters featured in 13 session topics including: mitigation, habitat fragmentation, environmental policy, conservation genetics, and much more—highlighting the latest science and policy strategies and solutions related to native plants and habitat conservation in California.
- * Sessions devoted to challenges and successes in specific California bioregions hosted by local conservation leaders; and poster displays of successful CNPS chapter conservation projects from around the state.
- * Central Capitol City location with beautiful parks, fine dining and great shopping within walking distance.
- * Photography and Illustration Contests and Gallery.
- * Up to 25 Exhibitor's booths with a wide range of products, services and educational information.
- * Social events, working groups, and associated meetings with additional opportunities for networking, planning, recognition and celebration!
- * Student and volunteer discounts, scholarships, and travel stipends.
- * Post Conference workshops on a wide array of related topics (January 20-21, 2009).

I want to think about trees. Trees have a curious relationship to the subject of the present moment. There are many created things in the universe that outlive us, that outlive the sun, even, but I can't think about them. I live with trees. There are creatures under our feet, creatures that live over our heads, but trees live quite convincingly in the same filament of air we inhabit, and, in addition they extend impressively in both directions, up and down, shearing rock and fanning air, doing their real business just out of reach. A blind man's idea of hugeness is a tree. They have their sturdy bodies and special skills; they garner fresh water; they abide. This sycamore above me, below me, by Tinkers Creek, is a case in point; the sight of it crowds my brain with an assortment of diverting thoughts, all as present to me as these slivers of pressure from grass on my elbow's skin. I want to come at the subject of the present by showing how consciousness dashes and ambles around the labyrinthine tracks of the mind, returning again and again, however briefly, to the senses: "If there were but one erect and solid standing tree in the woods, all creatures would go to rub against it and make sure of their footing." But so long as I stay in my thoughts, my foot slides under trees; I fall, or I dance.

from *Pilgrim at Tinker Creek* by Annie Dillard

Planning for Earth Day 2009

The TCCRG (Tulare County Citizens for Responsible Growth) is sponsoring an Earth Day event on May 2, 2009, at the Three Rivers Memorial Building from 10 am to 4 pm.

Tentative participants will include Alta Peak CNPS, Sierra Club, Audubon, Natural Resources Conservation Service, National Wildlife Federation, Three Rivers Village Foundation, CA Air Resources Board, Students of TRUS, Three Rivers Lions Club, Three Rivers Woman's Club, Sequoia Foothills Chamber of Commerce, Southern California Edison, CA Energy Commission, Sierra Home Performance, Three Rivers Mercantile, Woody's Wood Works, Bank of the Sierra, and more. Information will be distributed about clean air, clean water, reliable water, land use, shrinking your carbon footprint, saving on your electric bill, solar cooking, eating local food, recycling, reducing wildfire risk, creating a friendly backyard, bird houses, bat houses and feeders, worm composting, organic gardening, lowering your home heating and cooling costs, and weed management, along with a display of energy efficient vehicles and a student Earth Day art show.

Call 561-4661 or visit www.tccrg.org for more information.

Alta Peak Chapter Board of Directors

**President,
Conservation:**
Joan Stewart
37759 HWY 190
Springville, CA 93265
559-539-2717

tori2toli@ocsnet.net

Vice-President:
Barbara Brydolf
PO Box 879
Springville, CA 93265
559-539-0207

**Treasurer,
Poster Sales,
Membership:**
Janet Fanning
41118 Blossom Drive
Three Rivers, CA 93271
559-561-3461
jcfcgardner@earthlink.net

Historian:
Gwen Warner
42261 Mynatt
Three Rivers, CA 93271
559-561-0407

Newsletter Editor:
Elsah Cort
PO Box 245
Three Rivers, CA 93271
559-561-4671
elsahc@dishmail.net

Horticulture:
Cathy Capone
806 W. Westfield Ave
Porterville, CA 93257
559-361-9164



JOIN CNPS today and INVITE YOUR FRIENDS to JOIN with you!

The California Native Plant Society (CNPS) is a non-profit organization dedicated to the understanding and appreciation of California's native plants and how to conserve them and their natural habitats through education, science, advocacy, horticulture and land stewardship.

CNPS members enjoy the following benefits, and more:

- Membership in the statewide CNPS organization
- Affiliation with the local CNPS chapter
- Quarterly *Fremontia* journal
- Quarterly CNPS Bulletin
- The local chapter newsletter
- Access to a wide range of local and statewide activities
- Meeting people with similar interests
- Access to chapter plant sales, book sales, lectures, classes, workshops, hikes, field trips, and wildflower shows
- NEW: A membership card with benefits from partner organizations like Smith and Hawken and Pacific Horticulture Magazine

www.cnps.org

Elsah Cort, Editor
PO Box 245
Three Rivers, CA 93271