

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.

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Chapter President's Message

by Melanie Keeley

One of the busiest and most rewarding times in my botanical year is approaching. For those of you who don't know, I work at Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks in what is called "Disturbed Lands Restoration", in the Division of Natural Resources Management and Science. The sites needing our help have been altered by any number of means: erosion, construction, landscape-scale drought events, for example. Simply put, the stages of land restoration include developing a planting prescription, collecting seed or cuttings on-site, cleaning the propagules, growing new plants, then outplanting them from whence they came, all the while controlling the exotic weeds that want to fill in the gaps. Though these tasks can be simply stated, there are always many complexities and unknowns making restoration work at once humbling, gratifying and endlessly interesting.

Nurturing life and restoring land to its wild state can be deeply fulfilling. It fosters connections to natural patterns and seasonal rhythms of all life forms which is reward in itself. Through this process, and once natural habitat has been restored, what follows truly belongs there, insects, bees, birds—they are nature's reciprocal gifts. I encourage you to create habitat, restore your land. Then watch and wait, and you'll see exactly what I mean.

Heads Up.... Bryophyte Chapter Event

22nd annual SO BE FREE—March 27-30, 2017

St Anthony Retreat Center, Three Rivers CA *Local Alta Peak Chapter members are encouraged to participate.*

SO BE FREE 22 will be held just outside Sequoia National Park, roughly 5 hours by car from the Bay Area, from Los Angeles, and from Las Vegas. A nearby airport is Fresno-Yosemite (FAT). The habitats we will be visiting are spectacular and very rich in bryophytes, including the foothills where the valley fog hits the rock outcrops and oak savannahs. The geology includes marble as well as granitics. Depending on snowpack, we may be able to take a group field trip to the giant sequoia forests.

This year we want to especially encourage participation by staff and consultants of land management agencies. We will be learning many of the mosses and liverworts that are common throughout the foothills. The foray is being coordinated with the National Park Service and the U.S. Geological Survey. And as always, beginners are very welcome to SO BE FREE. A beginners session/walk will be offered on the first day." Find registration info at *bryophyte.cnps.org* under events. You can stay at the retreat or commute locally. Late registration (and cancellation for a refund) must be received by February 26, 2017. For more information, contact Paul Wilson, organizer of SO BE FREE, at *paulsiriwilson@gmail.com* or 541-840-7524.

Chapter Council Report

About the December 3-4, 2016, meeting held in Berkeley by Cathy Capone, Chapter Council Delegate

The quarterly Chapter Council meeting was held at the UC Berkeley Campus on December 3-4, 2016. I attended as your Alta Peak Chapter delegate. There is only one vote per chapter, The meetings give a unique opportunity to learn about native plant issues throughout the state, increase knowledge on the science behind the issues, and visit our state's rich diverse habitats with those who know them the best.

If you are interested in attending as a guest, contact Cathy Capone.

At the December meeting, the Council heard presentations by the East Bay Conservation Analyst, Karen Whitestone, and by Holly Forbes, curator at the University of California Botanical Garden at Berkeley.

Karen Whitestone, East Bay Conservation Analyst, gave a presentation to the Council which explained the scope of the position of Conservation Analyst. Karen's twenty hour a week position supports the conservation committees in these chapters with both direct advocacy with stakeholders and background support for chapter conservation efforts. These two chapters currently are involved with twenty conservation projects. Karen is hired by the CNPS State organization and her payroll is managed through the State office, however funds are raised by the two chapters for the position. The chapters fundraise for this position by a yearly appeal to their one thousand members. More information about Karen and the position of Conservation Analyst is available through either viewing the PowerPoint presentation on *cnps.org*, the link for the power point is on the March meeting agenda under the administration tab.

Holly Forbes, curator at the University of California Botanical Garden at Berkeley, gave an overview of the Botanical Garden and then focused on one conservation project. She explained that the garden has 11,000 plant species and that there are many programs within the garden including conserving the seed of common species for restoration after disasters. Holly then highlighted a conservation program for Amsinckia grandiflora, large flowered fiddleneck. The species is down to one self-sustaining population, near Livermore. The Botanical Garden's project is attempting to increase the number of plants in the wild and increase the number and distribution of sites with self-sustaining populations of this species. The project grows fiddleneck in two gallon containers to produce seed using best management practices. They have produced 60,000 seeds in two years. The project has identified ten plant-out sites and has attempted to plant seed directly at the sites. This has proven ineffective. The project is now growing and planting-out in December and January young plants grown in cone-tainers. The sites are being monitored, evaluated and replanted in the attempt to establish self-sustaining populations with diverse gene pools.

Conservation of native plant communities including concerns about risks to native plant communities is a central topic of each quarterly meeting. This meeting included reports on two litigations and two threats to native plants.

The first litigation situation is that CNPS is developing a friend-of-the-court brief to comment on a suit filed by the Center for Biological Diversity on the concern of conservation of milk vetch at Algondones Dunes, in southeastern California near El Centro. The issue is that BLM is attempting to exclude areas from protection from off highway vehicles.

Secondly, the Santa Cruz Chapter is being assisted by state CNPS on the issue of Santa Cruz City failing to monitor and enforce the protection of an endangered plant, *Chorizanthe robusta*, robust spineflower. Robust spineflower, a federally listed endangered plant, is growing on private land in Santa Cruz. The city gave permission for development of the land with the condition that this plant population be monitored and maintained in perpetuity, however the city is not taking action as this plant population is crashing. Since the plants are on private land, there is no federal protection. If this plant were a state listed plant, there would be protection on private land. The Chapter has been advocating for the issue locally, but is now gaining the added support of the State organization.

The two threats that were discussed were *phytophthera* and beetles moving into new regions. *Phytophthera* ad hoc committee reported that there are resources on the CNPS website. Look in the right side green box at *cnps.org* entitled "CNPS News & Announcements" for a link to resources. The committee requested and received the support of the chapter council in working toward CNPS providing assistance for chapters to implement best management practices at chapter nurseries and plant sales.

Beetles Spreading: There are two types of beetles spreading north in firewood and green waste. The gold spot beetle is from Arizona and Mexico. Both types of beetles are hitch hiking on firewood and green waste. Individual counties can make ordnances which restrict the moving of wood products. Commercial mesquite firewood is reported to originally have brought this beetle to California. If you buy firewood you may be bringing the beetle to your home. These beetles are moving into urban environments and into native habits.

In addition to local presentations and conservation issues each Chapter Council meeting is given a series of reports by paid staff and key volunteer leaders. We also discuss, make recommendations and vote on organizational issues. =

Dan Gluesenkamp, the Executive Director, announced:

• Liv O'Keeffye has been hired to fill the newly created staff position of Communications and Marketing. She will be directing work in several areas including website, membership, publications and others.

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Chapter Council cont'd from pg 2

- The positions of Operations / Finance and Rare Plant Treasure Hunt are open.
- The statewide strategic plan has been under development for three years. Currently, Staff is writing action plans for segments of the strategic plan. The Staff's work will be presented in writing at the March meeting. The actions plans are being written for the 2017-2018 fiscal year.
- 70% of the CNPS web traffic goes to the Calscape resource. If you have not looked into this resource, I highly recommend it. You can see it on the main page of *cnps.org* and search plants by location, type, name, water requirement or other factors.
- There are ongoing efforts to create and fund the position of Southern California Conservation Analyst. Dan explained to the Council that the previously announced bequest of Elizabeth Schwartz was being considered to fund this position. The bequest is being targeted to this position out of respect for Elizabeth's love of Southern California flora. Elizabeth had served as Executive Director of the Theodore Payne Society for Native Plants and Wildflowers, and as a Board President of the Southern California Horticultural Society. Elizabeth passed away suddenly on August 12, 2015. Her husband, Benjamin Zuckerman, is partnering with CNPS to increase the bequest by leveraging the money through matching fund incentives and other fundraisers.
- CNPS assists with the publication of selected books. The following are in the pipeline. *The Monterey Flora* will be available at the March meeting. *The Sequoia and Kings Flora* is in the out-to-be-designed stage. *Napa Flora* is working through corrections. The Redbud Chapter is doing a second edition of *Wildflowers of Placer and Nevada Counties*. There is a process for book proposals available online if a chapter is interested in CNPS publishing a book.

The next Chapter Council Meeting will be March 10-12, 2017, in Carpinteria, sponsored by the Channel Islands Chapter with an all day field trip on Sunday to Santa Cruz Island, along with a hike from Prisoners Harbor to Pelican.

The Chapter Council meetings are open to the membership of CNPS. They are wonderful opportunities to increase your knowledge, see a part of the state flora, make a difference, and meet interesting people both as a Chapter Council Delegate and as a guest or member attending the Quarterly Chapter Council meetings. Contact Cathy Capone, if you want to hear more about this opportunity.

Editor's Note by Elsah Cort

Chapter members are encouraged to send articles, topics, photographs, and interesting native plant tidbits to include in our newsletter and/or online sites. We would love to hear the voices of our general members and swap stories.

Email contributions to altapeakchapter@gmail.com

Notes from the Statewide CNPS Conservation Report

Gleaned by Melanie Keeley

[Joan Stewart, our Chapter Conservation Chair, is on an LOA while in rehab from a recent fall. We wish her a healthy, speedy recovery.]

The Important Plant Area (IPA) Initiative

Regional conservation planning has increased in both pace and scale. CNPS recognizes this as a powerful opportunity to improve plant conservation statewide. Inspired by the CNPS East Bay Chapter's Guidebook to the Botanical Priority Protection Areas of the East Bay, CNPS is launching an ambitious initiative that collects comprehensive baseline botanical knowledge for California, puts it all together on a map, and uses it to accomplish sound conservation planning. Thanks to funding from the Giles W. and Elise G. Mead Foundation, an anonymous Thanksgiving donor, and others, CNPS science and conservation staff are combining efforts to map California's Important Plant Areas (IPAs) region by region. CNPS will then generate a priority plant protection database that will contribute to regional planning like statewide least-conflict models and RCIS projects.

The first CNPS IPA focal region is the San Joaquin Valley floor, starting with the Southern region on the valley floor from the Tehachapi Mountains north to the Kings River and from the Inner Coast Range east to the Sierra Nevada. This effort will allow CNPS to leverage existing information and to assess the accuracy of the recent SJV least-conflict map's ecosystem evaluation model.

The IPA database will be a major contribution to the state of California. For the first time ever, the state will have a comprehensive map showing the most important plant conservation targets statewide. This plant-based support tool can shape local, regional, and statewide development and conservation planning. It also establishes a baseline from which to track vegetation changes over time, whether from climate change or other factors. Just as the CNPS Rare Plant Inventory is to tracking rare plants, and the Manual of California Vegetation is to vegetation mapping, IPAs will become fundamental to native plant conservation in California.

Forestry in the Face of 100 Million Dead Trees

California's forests are making news — and not the good kind. As recently as November 2016, The New York Times reported on California's latest grim statistic, bringing to light the complex brew of drought, fire, and resource management that characterizes forest management in our state.

The good news is that we now have a chance to revise our forest management plans — an opportunity that happens about once every 10 years. In August, CNPS joined other NGOs to submit a joint letter with detailed comments in response to the new USFS draft forest plans for the Inyo,

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Chapter Field Trips

Friday, April 7, 2017 from 1-4 pm Rare Plant Treasure Hunt-Nature Journaling Field Trip Led by Erik Frenzel, Ann Huber and Christy Brigham

Three rare plant species can be found in the foothill Ash Mountain area of Sequoia National Park. This field trip will focus first on a visit to Munz's iris (*Iris munzii*), a southern Sierra Nevada foothill endemic, known only from the Tule and Kaweah River drainages. After a short drive from the Park Entrance, field trip participants will view the rare iris and learn about what makes it so unique. The group will establish a study plot and collect population monitoring data, which will be given to the Park and the CA Department of Fish and Wildlife's database for rare plants. Depending on road conditions, it will be an easy walk of 0.2 to 1.2 miles along a closed dirt road, with some portions on uneven ground, to access the iris populations.

If there is time and interest, we can make a side trip to look for the rare Norris' monkeyflower (*Mimulus norrisii*) and Mouse bBuckwheat (*Eriogonum nudum ssp. murinum*) on the marble outcrops above the Ash Mountain Headquarters — a strenuous but short walk.

Time will be spent nature-journaling and sketching this exquisitely beautiful Munz iris. Some complimentary journals, pencils and pens will be provided, if needed. Participants are welcome to bring favorite drawing materials for journaling.

National Park entrance fee is \$30 without a a pass. The group will meet outside the park and carpool. This field trip is appropriate for all ages. Wear sturdy shoes and long pants.

RSVP deadline is Tuesday, April 4.

Participants need to RSVP for meet-up location and directions. To RSVP, call Ann Huber at 559-561-4562

or email Ginger Bradshaw at gingerbradshaw936@gmail.com



photo credit: Iris munzii by Ann Huber



Photo credit: Case Mountain, Salt Creek Canyon by Elsah Cort

Saturday, April 29, 2017 from 9:15 am- 2 pm Joint Sierra Foothills Field Trip with Kern Chapter Case Mountain BLM Area in Three Rivers Led by Denis Kearns, BLM Botanist

Field trip description from Kern Chapter:

"We're going to stay at the lower elevations because there will be plenty to see there. The walk will be easy. The group will determine how far they want to walk but it's mostly just wandering around and looking at the flowers. In our past experience, this area has a spectacular diversity and abundance of wildflowers in late April. We don't have a specific route. We'll just be following the wildflowers as Denis directs. Bring water, lunch, a hat, and wear boots."

Field trip limited to 25 participants. RSVP required RSVP Deadline is Tuesday, April 25, 2017 RSVP to Patty Gradek at pattygradek@gmail.com

Alta Peak Chapter members will meet at Veterans Memorial Building on Highway 198 in Three Rivers at 9:15 am for carpooling. The entire group will meet together at 9:30 am at the Craig Ranch Road entrance for special parking just inside the locked gate.

From KCET in Southern California, **Tending the Wild** shines light on the environmental knowledge of indigenous peoples across California by exploring how they have actively shaped and tended the land for millennia....This documentary examines how humans are necessary to live in balance with nature and how traditional practices can inspire a new generation of Californians to tend their environment.

Some of the topics include

- establishing native gardening areas in local communities
- traditional Native American herbalism
- reviving Native food practices

Stream the episodes here or find broadcast schedule: kcet.org/shows/tending-the-wild

Conservation cont'd from pg 3

Sequoia and Sierra National Forests. Since then, this coalition has met with regional forest planners to improve the plans before they're finalized and to help prepare input for the next wave of new plans for the Stanislaus, El Dorado, Tahoe, and Plumas National Forests. The CNPS Conservation Program recently started engaging chapter experts to help forest botanists prepare biological assessments for upcoming drafts.

Meanwhile, California's timber harvest planning process now includes the formation of a new Ecological Performance Work Group. This development comes after years of hard work on the part of CNPS and its partners to expose gaps in our evaluation of the cumulative effects of timber harvesting. That work culminated in 2012 timber tax legislation (AB 1492), which includes a requirement that CNPS fought to include to evaluate the "ecological performance" of California's timberland regulations. Since the passage of AB 1492, forestry officials are now exploring how to implement this requirement, and are asking the kinds of questions conservationists are prepared to help answer. Conservation forestry experts are needed now more than ever to help resource managers understand the ecological thresholds involved in saving our forests.

Drones for Conservation?

Yes! In 2016, CNPS learned that vast areas of desert wash woodlands (microphyll woodlands) weren't receiving appropriate levels of DRECP protection. Part of the problem was that these landscapes were so remote, most people didn't know what was there; so CNPS used innovative drone footage to help BLM get a birds-eye view of life in these woodlands. The case was so compelling that the BLM is now exploring how to incorporate drones into long term desert monitoring.

Read the full report at cnps.org/cnps/conservation/report.php



Sixteen volunteers, including Alta Peak Chapter secretary, Denise Griego and her husband participated in "A Day in the Woods" at River Ridge Ranch in Springville, on December 10, 2016, from 9 am -12 noon. The Ranch is a fully protected ecological reserve. Guided by Dr. Gary Adest and his wife, Barbara Brydolf, Alta Peak Chapter treasurer, we planted a variety of native trees, shrubs, and grasses at their oak restoration site. The planting went effortlessly due to pre-dug plant holes. The plants are off to a great start with rain showers falling soon after.



Stream Bed Workshop: Put to the Test by Gary Adest, President, River Ridge Institute

River Ridge Institute (in Springville), with financial support from the Alta Peak Chapter, held a Stream Bed Workshop in October, 2016. The goal was to train twenty land management influencers on stream bed erosion prevention, water quality enhancement, water conservation and water banking.

Since October, River Ridge Ranch received nearly 16" of rain, about 5" of which fell in one week (January 6-13). Update: 23" as of February 7, 2017, and raining!

The installations built during the workshop are designed to trap sediment, prevent bank erosion and gradually raise degraded stream beds so that they reconnect with their floodplains. Returning to a more natural watershed helps provide enhanced habitat for a variety of riparian plant species and the wildlife and humans that depend upon them. The follow up included planting 400 trees, shrubs and grasses of fifteen different native species propagated from River Ridge stock. Examples are valley oak, blue oak, cottonwood, elderberry, buttonbush, red and arroyo willows, grape, gooseberry and needle grasses.

The following picture was taken after the North Fork of the Tule River had been in flood stage several times in the previous two weeks. We are experiencing a decadal event with another atmospheric river forecast for the following week.



photo credits: Gary Adest

Alta Peak Chapter Grant Program



2017 Grant Proposals deadline extended to March 31 Notification of grant awards will be given by May 1, 2017.

Mail grant applications to: Alta Peak Chapter

PO Box 217, Three Rivers, CA 93271 California Native Plant

Project Grants will be awarded in 2017. \$250-500 will be given to applicants, based on the project's itemized proposed budget. Any person or organization, including K-12 students and teachers, college students and their professors, are encouraged to apply for a grant.

Applications will be evaluated based on these parameters:

- ❖ Relevance of the project to native plant education, conservation or restoration
- Primary focus on the native plants and native plant communities found in Tulare County, the Central Valley or the Southern Sierra Nevada mountains
- A combination of academic background, work experience, and personal commitment from the applicant needed to successfully complete the proposed project, or participation in a profession that seeks to further the mission and goals of the California Native Plant Society
- ❖ Feasibility of successfully completing the project

Proposal applications should not exceed three pages in length and should be submitted in the following format:

- 1. title page with the project's title and applicant contact info
- 2. statement of applicant's qualifications
- 3. project objectives
- 4. methods employed to implement the project
- 5. description of the expected final product and its duration

In addition, the proposals should include an itemized proposed budget and letters of support for the project.

Applicants who are awarded grants will provide a progress report to the Chapter at the end of the first year. They will be asked to give a talk about their project at a chapter meeting, or write a brief explanation of their work for this newsletter.

Encourage your friends and family to join the California Native Plant Society.

cnps.org

Native Plant Gardening Tips

from cnps.org/cnps/grownative

Have you visited the State's website and looked at all the wonderful resources about growing a native plant garden? There are links to plant lists and the amazing Calscape Native Plant Database, garden plans, sources for where to buy native plants, how to propagate native plants, how to manage pests and invasive plants and the latest horticultural research. Find links to arboretums and botanic gardens to visit and find inspiration for your own garden. Enjoy the gardening blog.

Why garden with natives?

While California's native plants have graced gardens worldwide for over a century, few of the landscapes designed for our state's gardens reflect the natural splendor for which California is famous. By gardening with native plants, you can bring the beauty of California into your own landscape while also receiving numerous benefits.

Save Water

Take advantage of water conserving plants in your landscape. Once established, many California native plants need minimal irrigation beyond normal rainfall. Saving water conserves a vital, limited resource and saves money, too.

Lower Maintenance

In a garden environment, native plants do best with some attention and care, but require less water, fertilizer, pruning, less or no pesticide, and less of your time to maintain than do many common garden plants.

Reduce Pesticides

Native plants have developed their own defenses against many pests and diseases. Since most pesticides kill indiscriminately, beneficial insects become secondary targets in the fight against pests. Reducing or eliminating pesticide use lets natural pest control take over, keeping garden toxins out of our watersheds.

Invite Wildlife

Native plants, hummingbirds, butterflies, and other beneficial insects are "made for each other." Research shows that native wildlife clearly prefers native plants. California's wealth of insect pollinators can improve fruit set in your garden, while a variety of native insects and birds will help keep your landscape free of mosquitoes and plant-eating bugs.

Support Local Ecology

While creating native landscapes can never replace natural habitats lost to development, planting gardens, parks, and roadsides with California native plants can help provide an important bridge to nearby remaining wild areas. Recommend native plants to homeowner associations, neighbors, and civic departments. You can also get involved with local land-use planning processes.

SCICON Wildflower Festival and BBQ

Sunday, April 9, 2017 from 11-4 pm

41569 Bearcreek Road, Springville, CA 93265

Friends of SCICON will be hosting the 57th Annual SCICON Barbecue and Wildflower Festival. All students, families and the general public are invited to SCICON for this beautiful event. The wildflowers will be at their peak with hundreds of them in bloom. The SCICON staff will be on hand to lead wildflower hikes, bird watching hikes, and nature hikes. The museum, planetarium, observatory and Tree Nursery will be open all day. Natural resource agencies will staff many different displays. Musical groups from local schools will provide live entertainment. A delicious meal is provided by the Friends of SCICON with a traditional deep pit barbecue. There is no charge to attend for the day. Meal prices are \$15/adult, \$10/senior (60 years and over) and \$5 for children (12 years and under.) The Clemmie Gill School of Science and Conservation—SCICON is the outdoor school of science and conservation operated by the Tulare County Office of Education.

For more information, call the SCICON office at 559-539-2642. For directions go to *tcoe.org/SCICON*



photo source: thenuthousefive.blogspot.com

Chapter Board Meeting on March 25 at 9 am

Home of Barbara Brydolf in Springville. Call 559-359-2827 for directions. Chapter Board meetings are open to all Chapter members. If you are interested in joining the Board, contact Melanie Keeley. The positions of

Membership, Education/Grants, Legislative and Historian are open.

Alta Peak Chapter * Online Resources

website: altapeakcnps.org
facebook page: facebook.com/altapeakchapterCNPS
email: altapeakchapter@gmail.com



Chapter Board of Directors

President, Plant Sale, Books

Melanie Keeley 559-799-7438 mbaerkeeley@gmail.com

Vice Pres, Newsletter, Outreach

Elsah Cort 559-561-4671 elsahcort@gmail.com

Secretary

Denise Griego 559-561-4697 bdgriego@sbcglobal.net

Treasurer

Barbara Brydolf 559-359-2827 bbrydolf@gmail.com

Membership

This position is open....

Field Trips

Ginger Bradshaw 559-827-7604 gingerbradshaw936@gmail.com

Conservation

Joan Stewart 559-539-2717 tori2toli@ocsnet.net

Horticulture, Council Delegate

Cathy Capone 559-361-9164 cathycaponemail@gmail.com

Education, Grant Program

This position is open....

Rare Plant Team

Ann Huber 559-561-4562 ahuberdas@gmail.com Mary Merriman 559 679-9152 marymtnspirit@att.net





CNPS MEMBERSHIP FORM

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Address:
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Other Chapter
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Individual, \$45
Family \$75
Plant Lover, \$100
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Mariposa Lily, \$1500
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Mail with check to CNPS, 2707 K St., Suite 1, Sacramento,
CA 95816, or you can join or renew automatically year

after year via the website — cnps.org — and click on JOIN.

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