



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 28, Number 2

May 2018

President's Message
news from Barbara...
Page 1

Conservation News
the latest issues...
Page 2

Chapter Field Trips
summer schedule...
Page 3

Native Plant Sale
October 6, 2018
Page 8



The Salvias
local natives...
Page 6

Native Landscaping
using CA native plants
Page 3

Gentian Haven
native gems...
Page 7

Chapter Council Report
What's happening...
Page 4

Artificial lawns?
pros and cons...
Page 6

Field Trip Report
about bryophytes...
Page 4

2018 Chapter Grants
announcing winners...
Page 4

2017 Grant Report
foothills festival...
Page 4

Chapter Online
resource links...
Page 8

Board of Directors
Next meeting date,
open to all members...
Page 6



Chapter President's Message

by Barbara Brydolf

It's been a big wildflower season. It seemed as though the season was compressed because the rains were late. The popcorn flowers and the fiddleneck came with the wild hyacinth instead of before. I also was seeing species rarely or never seen before like baby blue eyes (*Nemophila menziesii*), fairy lantern (*Calochortus amoenus*) and shooting star (*Primula aka Dodecatheon hendersonii*). Poetic names, aren't they? Later in the season on our CNPS wildflower walk we saw purple milkweed (*Asclepias cordifolia*) and a delphinium for the first time at River Ridge Ranch (in Springville). We saw the old faithfuls, too, common madia (*Madia elegans*), Chinese houses (*Collinsia heterophylla*), golden brodiaea and Ithuriel's spear (*Triteleia ixioides and laxa*). On and on, too many species to name. And through it all, there was the foothill poppy (*Eschscholzia caespitosa*), just loads of it, more than I have ever seen before.

Much of Lumreau Mountain in Springville burned in the Pier Fire last fall, and big patches of "fire follower" plants appeared, creating spots of yellow on the hillside. Among them are the wind and bush poppies (*Papaver heterophyllum and Dendromecon rigida*), both known for sprouting from seed after

fires. With them are more foothill poppy. Fletcher Linton, local US Forest Service botanist, told me that the bulb soaproot or amole (*Chlorogalum pomeridianum*) is released when fire burns off the shrub layer shading it. It grows vigorously for a time until the shrubs grow back, putting to sleep again- the botanical version of Rip Van Winkle.

I continue to be fascinated by the aftermath of the fire.



foothill poppy (*Eschscholzia caespitosa*), photo © Barbara Brydolf

Conservation News

Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan

from Cathy Capone

President Trump and Secretary of the Interior Ryan Zinke have started a process whereby the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (DRECP) is being considered for reopening by the Department of the Interior. The DRECP which was finalized in 2016, provided historic conservation gains for public lands in California and provided a precedent-setting blueprint for how to balance renewable energy development with conservation on our nation's public lands.

Reopening the plan potentially puts at risk six million acres of vital conservation lands, such as the Silurian Valley, Centennial Flats, Mayan Peak, and Chuckwalla Bench, as well as the iconic plant and animal species that make their home in the desert, including the Joshua Tree, wildflower super blooms, bighorn sheep, microphyll woodlands, the Mohave ground squirrel, desert tortoises, and Gila monsters.

More info: cnps.org/cnps.conservation/desert-defense.php

Yaudanchi Ecological Preserve

from Barbara Brydolf

In an earlier edition of *Insignis*, I reported that the Yaudanchi Ecological Preserve (YER) had been delisted as an ecological preserve by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, at the request of the Porterville Developmental Center, which controls this state land. Now there is some new information. In order to officially de-list a Wildlife Preserve, it must be voted on by the California Fish and Game Commission. This process requires an environmental review and public comment period. It is thought that the Commission will not be considering action on the YER this year, but in 2019. The Vandalia Water District, which is seeking to enclose their open ditch (that runs through the YER) into a pipeline, scheduled a walk-over of the land and another open meeting to propose an addendum to their original proposal. Both those events were cancelled, and there is no new date set.

Giant Sequoia National Monument

from Barbara Brydolf

On April 4, I attended a meeting in support of the Giant Sequoia National Monument (GSNM) in Bakersfield. The meeting was attended by representatives from many different conservation organizations, both local and national. The coalition makes the argument that the Monument is worth more intact than reduced. From Sierra Business Council's webpage on their GSNM campaign "Giant Sequoia National Monument is good for business. The Giant Sequoia and Kings Canyon region attracts millions of visitors a year who stay in hotels, buy gear, eat in local restaurants and patronize local businesses. According to research conducted by Visit California tourism in the four-county Central Valley gateway to the Giant Sequoia is a \$2.3 billion industry generating 24,000 jobs. In Tulare County alone travel dollars generated \$37.8

million in local and state tax receipts. Since monument designation in 2000, average earnings in the region have increased by \$625 each year, greater than the five-year average before designation. Total employment in surrounding counties has also increased by 20 percent over the same period (despite the Great Recession)."

Accordingly, the coalition is supporting efforts to increase visibility of, knowledge about, and use of the Monument. The Sierra Business Council has paid for billboards to be posted at Hwy 198 and 99, and is supporting efforts to open a visitor's center and develop tourism materials for the Monument.

Field Trip Report: Two Days of Mosses!

by Barbara Brydolf

On May 5-6, the Alta Peak Chapter enjoyed two days of learning about and seeing bryophytes, hosted by Dr. Paul Wilson of the Bryophyte Chapter of CNPS. Bryophytes are composed of three categories of very small plants: mosses, liverworts, and hornworts. We were joined by Dr. Jonathan Nesmith of Sequoia National Park, Dr. Robert Urtecho, who brought a van load of COS students, and Nancy Bruce of Circle J Ranch, who brought two high school students, as well as members of Alta Peak Chapter.

Day one took place in Sequoia National Park. We walked through parts of the Giant Forest and then went to a lower elevation and walked down the closed Crystal Cave road to look at more species. In addition to looking at many bryophyte species, we were treated to an explanation of the effect of white pine blister rust on trees in the Park (Dr. Jon Nesmith), finding a rare grape fern (*Botrychium* sp.), and seeing a hatch of winged carpenter ant reproductives.

On day two, Dr. Urtecho granted us access to compound and dissecting microscopes, both needed to see the identifying characteristics of these tiny plants. We also learned more about bryophytes in general. While not particularly closely related to each other, these plants are put together in the catch-all category of bryophyte because they lack vascular tissue, which is the specialized cells of "higher plants" that move water and the products of photosynthesis around in the plant. Having vascular tissue allows a plant to grow large and resist drying out. One of the super cool things about bryophytes, that I learned on this weekend, is that they can dry out and still come back to life. That doesn't mean that they go into some sort of dormancy where they have a protective coating (like a seed or a spore). It means that all their cells dry out completely and then re-hydrate. Can you imagine us being able to do that?

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

cnps.org

Summer Field Trips

Free events and open to everyone, not just CNPS members

Big Meadow Wildflower Field Trip

Saturday, June 23, 2018 from 8:30 - early afternoon

*Lead by Mary Merriman, Alta Peak Chapter Rare Plant Chair
and Denise Griego, Alta Peak Chapter Secretary*

Explore the high altitude flora of Sequoia National Forest Hume Lake District, located between Giant Forest and Grant Grove. Big Meadow has the highest altitude with accessible roads in Tulare County. Its subalpine flora is dominated by lodgepole pine, white/red fir forest on exfoliated granite. It will still be late spring there! We may find a few relatively rare plants, such as Tulare County buckwheat and Sierra bleeding heart and we may find several kinds of monkey flowers although they are more unpredictable in dryish years. Wet meadows hide many floral treasures throughout the season and shady stream banks harbor a variety of shrubs.

From Three Rivers area, meet at the Veterans Memorial Building on Hwy 198 at 8:30 am for carpooling. Try to bring the fewest number of cars possible. From Visalia area, we will be taking the shorter route up Hwy 180 through the Kings Canyon entrance. If you are coming from Visalia area, contact Mary Merriman at 559-679-9152 or marymntnsprir@gmail.com for directions up Hwy 180 or for ride-sharing, especially if you do not have a park pass. There is now a \$35 entrance fee to the National Parks, so be sure to bring your annual or senior pass.

Meet on the Big Meadow road at 10:30 am at the first parking lot. There is only one way to turn at the Big Meadow Road but it has a fairly small sign. About 1/4 mile up the Big Meadow road, there is a gate (which will be open) and large parking lot on the right with an outhouse where we will start. We will

mostly be driving or walking with no significant hiking but plenty of uneven ground so wear sturdy boots. Bring lunch, water, sunscreen, hat, layered clothing (mornings can be cool), field guides and a lawn chair for lunch.

Giant Sequoia National Monument Field Trip

July 21, 2018 from 8 -3 pm

Lead by Barbara Brydolf, Alta Peak Chapter President

Come explore a Giant Sequoia Grove in the National Monument above Springville. In the heat of summer, find shelter under the canopy of the giants. We will explore either the Wheel Meadow Grove above Camp Nelson or the Black Mountain Grove near Mountain Aire. We may see mountain misery (*Chamaebatia foliolosa*), thimbleberry (*Rubus parviflorus*), Hartweg's wild ginger (*Asarum hartwegii*), and could see California tiger lily (*Lilium pardalinum*), stream orchid (*Epipactis gigantea*), scarlet bugler (*Penstemon centranthifolius*), and Scouler's St. John's wort (*Hypericum scouleri*).

Meet at the Springville Veterans Memorial Park, on the right side of Hwy 190 between Gifford's Market and the Fire Station in downtown Springville. We will carpool and caravan up the highway. Expect as much as a five mile. hike over varied terrain and elevations around 4500-5500 feet.

Bring lunch and water. Wear sturdy shoes and be prepared for sun and mosquitoes.

For more information, contact Barbara Brydolf at bbrydolf@gmail.com or 559-359-2827.

DIY Native Plant Landscape Design Clinic

Saturday, August 25, 2018 from 9-2 pm

College of the Sequoias in Visalia

*presented by Melanie Keeley, Native Plant Specialist, Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks
and Cathy Capone, Former owner of Cal Natives Nursery in Porterville, Alta Peak Chapter Horticulture Chair*

With California's unpredictable precipitation, it is time for new landscape style that will work in this hot, arid climate. California native plants use a fraction of the water that typical garden plants do, while being attractive and colorful as well. Designed for native plant novices, this class will help you learn practical applications related to 1) ditching your lawn, 2) tried and true native plants, 3) combining native plants for maximum color and effect, and 4) how to design your own drought tolerant native garden. Once a landscape plan is in place, the landscape can be installed in manageable steps. This class provides a great opportunity to transition from a high care, water indulgent garden into a natural, sustainable low water use, beautiful garden.

Registration Fee CNPS Members - \$45, Non-members - \$60

Pre-registration is required. Class size is limited.

Call Melanie Keeley at 559-799-7438 to register.

*By joining the Alta Peak Chapter of the California Native Plant Society during the clinic,
you will be eligible to pre-order your chosen native plants prior to our October 6, Annual Fall Plant Sale at a 10% discount.*

Report of March 2018 Chapter Council

by Cathy Capone, Chapter Council Representative

The meeting was held in Borrego Springs at the Steele/Burnand Anza-Borrego Desert Research Center. The Center, associated with UC Irvine, is a former country club built in 50's desert architectural style.

The Council heard an initial recap of the February 2018 Conservation Conference. One new event, a live auction with a professional auctioneer, yielded over one hundred thousand dollars that will go toward conservation. The opening plenary speech was given by University of Delaware entomology professor Doug Tallamy; his wonderful and fact-packed speech and Powerpoint are available on [youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com) (search for "Doug Tallamy: Restoring Nature's Relationships").

The State CNPS will be announcing a new lawn to garden program. CNPS is teaming with local water districts to provide assistance to property owners converting lawns to low water using gardens. This program will be started in Long Beach but be available to the all chapters via the Garden Ambassadors.

Steve Hartman, president of the CNPS Board of Directors, gave a report that included information on the summer 2019 Jamboree. The Jamboree will take the place of a Chapter Council meeting and be a family friendly event. The activities and accommodations will be primarily outdoors including camping, however the committee will select places where participants can rent a motel room if they prefer. The plan is to have a three-day weekend event in a region of California that is comfortable in June or July.

Calscape's website (calscape.org) had 60,000 hits in February 2018. There was discussion about needed corrections to Calscape and how to make the correction process work. Steve Hartman wants examples of errors sent to him and he will follow up and report back to Council.

Geothallus tuberosus, a liverwort, is being considered as the first bryophyte to be given an endangered plant status. This liverwort had historically been found at fourteen sites, with a very limited type soil and exposure. All of the historic sites have been affected by development and the plant no longer exists in these areas. This liverwort has only been found on private lands and agencies are looking at possible ways to detect and protect it.

The CNPS website hosts the CNPS Fire Recovery Guide. You can find it under the "Get Involved" tab and "Priority Initiatives" sub-tab at cnps.org. Following the 2017 wildfire season, some concerned members of the public have begun misguided efforts to improve the appearance and perceived safety of the burned areas. CNPS has contacted these groups and is attempting to provide them with guidance in scientifically sound responses to fire. The Council discussed the urgent need to get this information out and to help connect those people and agencies to best practices. Chapters are

monitoring the post fire response to identify and respond in a helpful way to both private landowners and agencies managing land or advising landowners.

The June Chapter Council Quarterly meeting will be held on June 8-10 in Groveland, California. Information on the meeting will soon be posted on the CNPS website.

Chapter Grants Awarded for 2018

by Cathy Capone

The Alta Peak Chapter proudly announces two 2018 Chapter grant recipients chosen from a total of four submissions.

Tule River Parkway Association, a local nonprofit in the Porterville area, was awarded \$500 for their "Native Plant Concept Garden Project". The funds will be used to purchase equipment for the installation and maintenance of eighteen native plant gardens along the Tule River Parkway near Porterville. The Alta Peak Chapter's grant funds will supplement a \$25,000 grant from U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service for this project.

Eileen Berbeo, a Clairmont Graduate University doctoral student, proposed investigating the Sierra Nevada endemic *Eriogonum polypodium*; species range limits and sexual system evolution. The \$500 grant will be used in conjunction with funds from Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden, CNPS, and the Mary DeDecker Botanical Grant to fund the estimated \$4804 cost of the study. This study may result in recognizing a new narrowly distributed species. Regardless, much will be learned about *E. polypodium*, its morphological range, its sexual system(s), genetic variations and its evolutionary history, helping to inform conservation efforts for this southern Sierra Nevada endemic.

The Alta Peak Chapter Board was thrilled about the quality of the grant applications this year and encouraged that each year the number of applicants has increased.

2017 Grant Report

Fall Foothills Festival deemed a "great success"

The sun shone on the first annual Foothills Festival Saturday, November 4, 2017, at Springville's River Ridge Ranch. The event was co-partnered by River Ridge Institute and the Alta Peak Chapter with a 2017 grant. Between 100-150 folks came by and were treated to music, food, art, native plants, tours and educational booths. The feedback from this event was enthusiastically positive! "We expect to grow to 250 visitors", said Gary Adest, the event organizer.

The purpose of this new festival is to raise awareness of the beauty, diversity and importance of the Sierra Nevada foothills. Local people frequently do not have access to the foothills nor the blue oak woodlands that comprise them because these properties are mostly in private ownership. The Foothills Festival opens River Ridge Ranch, a 722-acre nature

cont'd on pg 6

The Salvias: Native Sages

by Melanie Keeley

The Salvias, also known as sages, are now in their peak blooming season as the soil dries and temperatures begin to really heat up. All species put on a dramatic show of color when in bloom. Flower colors come mostly in all shades of blue to purple spectrum, but can also be found from white to pink and magenta. Although their flowers are largely in whorled flower clusters around a central, square stem, there can be variations on this arrangement. Complimentary-colored leaves provide a lovely foil to the flowers from medium green to gray to silver. These plants have a variety of growth forms: ground-covering rhizomatous herbaceous plants, such as *S. sonomensis* (San Diego sage), or mid-sized shrubs like *S. clevelandii* (Cleveland sage), with a few that are annual or herbaceous.

Sages can be found all over the state and on both sides of the Sierra Nevada Mountains. Primarily, the sages thrive in the hottest, driest, most inhospitable locations imaginable, but they are cold hardy as well. In cultivation, they can be drought deciduous if conditions are kept very dry. So, they benefit from deep watering every every month during the summertime once established, although they can survive without supplemental water in maturity. They look better with occasional watering. Some species, such as the dramatic magenta *Salvia spathacea* (hummingbird sage), can be found naturally growing in the shade of oaks. Though it is not generally recommended to plant under mature oak trees because of the increased risk of introducing fungal pathogens by changing the oak's watering regimes, these sages don't require much water and make great (and safe) companion plants to them.

The name of the genus *Salvia* literally means "to heal." Sage has a myriad of medicinal uses, as well as important culinary, nutritional and cultural applications. For example, *Salvia apiana* (white sage) is used as an antimicrobial, to sooth sore throats, coughing, to cure colds and flu, tooth aches, for cleansing wounds, bathing, etc. *Salvia clevelandii* (Cleveland sage) and its many cultivars have marvelous aromatic, edible foliage that can be used to flavor poultry and potato dishes or to scent the house as potpourri. The seed of the annual *Salvia columbariae*, also known as chia sage is widely known as having protein-rich nutrition and was used as a "starvation" food for southwestern Indians. A pinch of the seed would stave off hunger while providing energy for times when hunting was not possible. Sages have countless additional uses not the least of which is the importance of this genera to wildlife, sustaining butterflies, native bees and birds. Hummingbirds are drawn to their flowers and other birds such as quail nest within their sprawling canopies. Having said this, sage is one of the few genera that deer do not browse and gophers leave alone!

Some of the best of ground covers and cultivars are derived from *Salvia sonomensis* from San Diego County: *Salvia* 'Bee's Bliss', *Salvia* 'Gracias'. Recommended shrubs are *Salvia*

clevelandii and its selections, violet-flowered 'Winifred Gilman' or long-flowering deep blue 'Pocho Blue'; *Salvia leucophylla* (purple sage), with its silver-leaved, pink flowered spawn, *Salvia Point Sal* and *Salvia Figueroa*. Another favorite is a Channel Islands endemic sage, *Salvia brandegeei*, with pretty pale blue flowers foiled against deep green leaves. Santa Barbara Botanic Garden selected a long-blooming exceptional form of this, *Salvia brandegeei* (pacific blue sage) with dark green leaves and pretty deep blue flowers set in showy purplish whorled leaflike calyxes. One of the most desirable sages and certainly the most drought tolerant I've grown is called rose sage or *Salvia pachyphylla*. Its dramatic magenta calyxes are just as showy as its sizable blue flowers. Together, its three inch large whorls are stunning, making it very much in demand and very hard to find in nurseries. Each of these sages are stunning for their own individual reasons and are easy to grow and well worth trying in your drought tolerant garden!



Cleveland Sage (*Salvia clevelandii*) photo © Martha Widmann

Roasted Potatoes with Cleveland Sage ~ 8 servings

- 5 Tbsp Dijon mustard
- 3 Tbsp olive oil
- 4 minced garlic cloves
- 1 tsp Italian seasoning
- 2 Tbsp fresh or dried Cleveland sage, cut or crumbled into small pieces
- 1 lb ground Italian sausage
- 10 - 12 medium red potatoes cut into bite sized pieces
- 1 Red onion cut and separated into large chunks
- 2 Red bell peppers, cut into chunks

Directions:

1. Lightly grease 13" x 9" x 2" baking pan.
2. Brown Italian sausage in frying pan, set aside.
3. Mix together spices and oil.
4. In a big bowl, pour spices over the main ingredients, then add mixture to the baking pan.

Bake at 425F for 45 minutes to one hour or when fork easily punctures potatoes. Mix occasionally while cooking.

Artificial Grass Versus Live Lawn

by Melanie Keeley

Artificial turf is being touted as the solution to our water-deprived, drought-inclined climate. But, like Murphy's Law, (Eric) Sevareid's Law may be at work here: "The chief cause of problems is solutions!" Thinking of installing synthetic grass? Hopefully that isn't the case, though. Here are some thoughts to contemplate before you take the plunge one way or the other.

Drawbacks to Live Lawns

- Turf lawns account for one-third of all residential water use.
- To maintain lawns requires gas- and electric-powered tools—creating air pollution
- Chemical fertilizers and herbicides for grass can pollute the groundwater.

Benefits to Live Lawns

- Green lawns are living, breathing (oxygen and carbon dioxide producing), beautiful, functional carbon-sequestering sinks that can be played upon, and be enjoyed.
- The soil underneath a lawn also supports a living, breathing flora and fauna.
- As a way to minimize water waste, water real lawns with gray water from wash machines and shower.
- Synthetic turf can cost anywhere from \$5 to \$20 per square foot, while sod typically costs 14 to 60 cents per square foot.

Benefits to Fake Grass

- Truly a resource-saving device, it requires no watering, no mowing, and no feeding. Some manufacturers even use recycled materials, such as old tires or plastic bottles, with its life expectancy that is upwards of 25 years.
- No gophers, no mowing, no effort!
- It is permeable so liquids can percolate into the ground.

Drawbacks to Fake Grass

- Elevated health risks. Artificial turf is made of recycled rubber that may contain carcinogens.
- Synthetic turf absorbs heat and reradiates heat into the atmosphere. It has been documented to be 86.5 °F hotter than natural grass under identical conditions .
- It is a petroleum-based product whose manufacturing process pollutes and degrades resources.
- Once its lifespan reaches 15 to 25 years, it will, ultimately, end up in a landfill.
- It is not biodegradable.

Lawn Alternatives

- Non-plastic alternatives: wood mulch, and decomposed granite, sand
- Drought tolerant native plants*

***Come to the DIY Native Plant Landscape Clinic on August 25 to learn how! see page 3 for details**

cont'd from pg 4 2017 Grant Report

preserve, working cattle operation and demonstration/ education ranch, to the public.

The Festival featured live music in the Pavilion by the River Ridge Irregulars, Rob Hodges on cello and DJ Davis on solo guitar. Alternating with the main stage, a group comprised of locals Jim Pyles, Mark Eaton, Ben Munger and Gail Hill played at the River Barn, surrounded by local artists displaying works around the foothills theme. Wherever one strolled, music floated through the scene.

Nancy Bruce of Circle J/SCICON and board member of River Ridge Institute, led two interpretive walks that featured the watershed of the North Fork Tule and its plants and animals.

One of the most well-attended activities was Erik Gonzalez's graffiti wall painting. Using his multitude of colors, cans and experience, Erik free-handed an owl on the back of the River Ridge Art Wall. The public was invited to pick up a can and learn how and the kids loved it while Erik Gonzalez put some finishing touches on the owl.

When asked, "Why are you doing this event?", Gary Adest, co-owner of River Ridge with Dr. Barbara Brydolf, said, "Between Bakersfield and Fresno, there are two million acres of oak woodland, primarily located on private ranch lands. These middle watershed lands support enormous plant and animal diversity and also have all the Sierra watersheds passing through them. The mission of the Institute is 'to demonstrate and disseminate sustainable and regenerative land management practices.' An annual Foothill Festival, with its tours and demonstrations, is an excellent way to provide that information." Booths featuring Sequoia Riverlands Trust, CNPS, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and Quercus Landscape Design and rounded out the offering and drew significant interest from the crowd.

The Foothills Festival was sponsored CNPS Alta Peak Chapter, Sierra Nevada Brewing Company, Wal-Mart Distribution Center, Trader Joe's (Bakersfield) and Costco (Visalia).

The Second Annual Foothills Festival will be on Saturday, November 3, 2018, at River Ridge Ranch in Springville. In future years, it will always be the first Saturday in November.

Calling All Alta Peak Chapter Members!

We want you! We know you are strongly committed to the mission of this society. Now is the time to show that commitment. Giving back to this worthy organization can be very satisfying work. Please consider joining the Chapter Board of Directors. See open positions on page 7 and contact President Barbara Brydolf for ways to participate.

**Next Board Meeting on July 18, at 9 am
at the Three Rivers home of Denise Griego**

Call 559-561-4697 for directions. Chapter members are welcome.

Gentian Haven

by Mary Merriman

Most of us have traveled up the long tortuous road to Mineral King (in Sequoia National Park), maybe dozens of times. We visit this high altitude valley to restore our spirit, embark on adventure, or seek the small treasures of the trailside. One of the most precious treasures is the striking family of gentians. This family has adapted mostly to the cooler climates of the northern hemisphere. Here in Tulare County, cool means only in the high mountains! However, one exception is noticeable in mid spring about halfway up the Mineral King road. Large clusters of startling hot pink flowers jump out to greet us from the wet ditch on the roadside.

The new scientific name for this plant is *Zeltnera venusta*. Its whimsical and memorable common name of canchalagua means “field of water.” Late in the summer, we start to see the high elevation gentians in Mineral King Valley. In August 2017, we happened upon several plants of *Gentianella amarella* ssp *acuta*, dwarf autumn gentian, blooming near the water’s edge on the valley floor. Rather retiring for a gentian, it is a pale pink color and grows hidden in deep grasses with small flowers clustered in upright stalks. Many are familiar with explorer’s gentian, *Gentiana calycosa*, which adorns Mineral King trailsides with unbelievable blue chalice-shaped blooms on bushy plants like a florist’s bouquet. Delicate white dots sprinkle the petals. Patches of the elegant blue single-flowered Sierra gentian, *Gentianopsis holopetala* spread across the wet meadows and seeps. Climbing much higher at lower Franklin Lake, about 10,300 ft, we find the most unusual gentian— star swertia or *Swertia perennis*. The dusky blue star-shaped flowers appear in the seeps among many brighter late season flowers and are easily overlooked. Star swertia seems to be found at extremely high elevations in the wettest areas. They populate only the Southern Sierra Nevada high country. We continue above lower Franklin Lake to a grassy area near the inlet creek for a much needed rest and find the alpine gentian, *Gentiana newberryi*. The 2 inch trumpet-shaped flowers are white with dark stripes in the center veins and seem to spring directly from the grass. The flowers are much larger than the tiny plants—like the belly flowers of the desert. Each member of this gentian family is distinctive and there is no better place to view them than our own Mineral King.

My thanks go to Bill Thiessen for keying the *Gentianella amarella* and to Denise Griego and Carol Coffman for accompanying me on the arduous trips to Franklin Lakes.



Gentiana calycosa photo © Mary Merriman

Chapter Board of Directors

President

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

Vice President, Plant Sale, Books

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

Secretary

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

Treasurer

This position is open....

Membership

This position is open....

Horticulture, Council Delegate, Education, Grant Program

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

Newsletter, Outreach

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

Historian

Martha Widmann
559-561-7311
martha@marthawidmann.com

Programs

This position is open....

Field Trips

This position is open...

Conservation

This position is open...

Legislation

This position is open...

Rare Plant Team

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



CNPS MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name: _____

Address: _____

City / Zip: _____

Telephone: _____

Email _____

(optional): _____

I wish to affiliate with: ____ Alta Peak Chapter

Other Chapter _____

Membership Category:

____ Student / Limited income, \$25

____ Individual, \$45

____ Family \$75

____ Plant Lover, \$100

____ Patron, \$300

____ Benefactor, \$600

____ Mariposa Lily, \$1500

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* — click on JOIN.

Alta Peak Chapter Annual Native Plant Sale

October 6, 2018



Three Rivers Arts Center
North Fork Drive in Three Rivers

image: Melanie Keeley

Alta Peak Chapter ❖ Online Resources

website: *altapeakcnps.org*

facebook page: *facebook.com/altapeakchapterCNPS*

email: *altapeakchapter@gmail.com*

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