



INSIGNIS

Winter 2000

Vol. 10, No. 4

CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY ALTA PEAK CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

*Please send changes of address to Membership Chair,
Janet Fanning, 41118 Blossom Drive, Three Rivers, CA 93271*

LOOKING BACK--PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

I want to thank everyone who helped setting up the plant sale and all those who spent the day assisting customers. I especially want to thank Bill Tweed and Melanie Keeley for their expertise. This was our biggest annual plant sale. Thanks to all of you who came to the sale and I wish you continued success in growing natives in your gardens.

The Alta Peak Chapter's primary focus is promoting the use of native plants and plant communities in the landscape. The growth of interest in native plants can be seen by the progressive increase in purchases at our plant sales over the last six years. We hope you will join us as we pursue activities that help you in the use of native plants.

Janet Fanning

LOOKING AHEAD-----CALENDAR

January 26. BIG TREES, Species Native to California, and of Interest to Tulare County

Art Cowley will give us an account of how he personally photographed 36 Tallest of its Kind trees that are native to our state. He has also visited many introduced species, but our program will focus on those that live naturally here. His work on this project was recently described in the Porterville Recorder, and CNPS is grateful to be able to offer this particular program to our member friends and all interested.

7:00 P.M., Social Hall, First Congregational Church, 4th and Mill, Porterville.

APRIL: Vegetation of the Southern Sierra, Todd Keeler-Wolf from Sacramento Natural Heritage Data

Base, Julie Evens, and others with interest in better understanding the plant communities above our valley and foothill regions, will provide an overview of what is known, and how additional data is being collected.

We want to plan work parties on three successive Saturdays after this program, to actually demonstrate and practice the methods being used to survey different kinds of natural vegetation. What it is. Where it is. And then, through the summer, walks through special meadows, and hikes, to be announced. Have suggestions???

September 15. SECRET TO SUCCESS, California Natives for Central Valley Gardens presented by Ellen Zagory, horticulturist at the Davis Arboretum. More of this in the next Insignis.

PLANT SALE: Late September or Early October.

QUERIES??

It is difficult for your chapter leaders to know where to plan events and meetings. We would like to make these convenient to as many of you as possible. Meeting locations in Three Rivers, Exeter, Springville, Visalia, and Porterville have been identified. Let us know your opinions. And if you have ideas about programs or projects, also please share them.

OUTREACH

Alta Peak Chapter has bought a table-top display module to make it easier for individuals to show our posters, offer membership information, and to explain who we are at Tulare County events. Contact Janet if you or your organization would like to use this.

TREASURERS REPORT

At year end we have a profit of over \$600 with assets and cash of almost \$6000. A major source of income is our annual Plant Sale, and we are grateful for all the support we receive in this way. We donated \$884 to assist the newly merged Sierra Los Tulares Land Trust in purchasing the Herbert Ranch, a site rich in vernal pool species near Visalia. We hope to schedule a trip there next spring.

WELCOME TO NEW MEMBERS: Richard & Barbara Merline, Nancy Bruce, Lydia Carr, Billie Chandler, Gail Januska, Donald Peter, Paul Tidwell, Charles Travis, Lowell E, Brown, Jr.

CHAPTER OFFICERS: At the 25 November Alta Peak Chapter Board meeting we realized that bylaws require annual election of officers. In this season of confused election procedures, we decided to nominate and unofficially re-elect your present officers and Board members for another years term, subject, of course, to approval by the membership. Usually this action would be recommended at a regularly scheduled general meeting prior to the end of the year. As in many of the smaller Chapters, however, our formal meetings are not routine. Therefore, we submit this slate of current officers and board members (see back of Insignis) with the recommendation that they be approved. Nominations from the floor will be accepted by phone to Janet or at the January meeting; and at that time we will ask for a formal motion to accept your present Board. Objections? If you truly want to serve, to help, note the positions listed on the back of this Newsletter, consider which would match your talents and interests, and nominate yourself!

WELCOME to Julie Evens, a vegetation ecologist with Sequoia, Kings Canyon National Parks. She has offered to serve on our Chapter Board and additionally came to the November board meeting. Thank you Julie. We will depend on you for support in organizing the spring program on Vegetation of the Southern Sierra--What, and Where.

Regarding the OAK DISEASE that you may have been reading about: Since

the disease symptoms were first recognized in Marin County in 1995, large numbers of coast live oaks (*Q. agrifolia*), tanoak (*Lithocarpus densiflorus*), and black oak (*Q. kelloggii*), have died in coastal areas of central and northern California. It has now been confirmed in Marin, Monterey, Napa, Santa Cruz, and Sonoma counties, in areas within 20 miles from the coast. There are unconfirmed reports from southern Mendocino County, possibly even into Santa Barbara County. David Rizzo of UC Davis recently identified the disease as a previously unknown species of the fungus *Phytophthora*, the same genus as the fungus that caused the Irish potato famine. A UC Berkeley plant pathologist notes that this new species is almost identical to a root fungus that has killed thousands of Port Orford Cedars in northern California and Oregon. If the disease, referred to as Sudden Oak Death, continues to spread, it could potentially devastate forest ecology and ecosystems in California.

To address these issues, a statewide meeting on SOD was held in Santa Cruz County in August, with CNPS represented. Each of the agencies or groups in attendance spoke of differing concerns: decreased watershed and aesthetic values, hazards to recreation, decreased property values, increased fire risk, and how to best manage dead and diseased trees. U.C. researchers outlined what is known about the disease and priorities for future research. Is the fungus air-borne? Spread through water or soil? Can beetles spread it? Does the fungus survive in dead wood, in soil, or in leaf litter? Is it an exotic species that only recently arrived in the area or is it a native species that has become active due to changing environmental conditions? Signs to look for, (but note that not all are present in many cases), include brown or black discolored bark on the lower trunk, reddish-brown to black sap exuding from the bark, dark-colored fruiting bodies of another fungus that look like hemispherical buttons, and granular dust resulting from the tunneling of beetles. Beetles do not invade healthy trees. Leaves on affected trees can suddenly die, turning brown within weeks. This

seems to be a late symptom of trees that have been infected for awhile. Currently, the major concern is to recognize how the disease may be spread...(shoes, tires, animal feet, infected firewood, soil moved in construction areas) by human actions, and to work to contain it from spreading into new areas. For updated information, you can check the website:

<http://www.suddenoakdeath.org>, or the UC oak mortality research team:

<http://camfer.cnr.berkeley.edu/oaks>

Compiled from information in newsletters of the East Bay, Santa Clara Valley, and Santa Cruz CNPS Chapters.
Joan Stewart

NEWS FROM SEQUOIA/KINGS CANYON NATIONAL PARKS

Plant ecologists recently began a multiple-year project of vegetation description and mapping. Our goal is to classify and map the terrestrial vascular vegetation of the two parks at high levels of detail and accuracy. We will rely on the national vegetation classification of alliances and associations as developed by The Nature Conservancy, which are comparable to series (alliances) and associations of California Native Plant Society's *A Manual of California Vegetation*. Under project leaders Sylvia Haultain and Julie Evens, we began our first year of intensive field sampling this past summer. With a crew of seven people, we collected data from over 175 plots across Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks. The crew focused on sampling shrublands, grasslands, and herblands in the montane, subalpine, and alpine regions. Some of the vegetation types sampled were relatively rare such as the *Dodecatheon redolens* (mountaineer shooting star) Herbaceous Alliance along wet hillside drainages and the *Torreyochloa pallida* var. *pauciflora* (pale false mannagrass) Herbaceous Alliance along semi-permanently flooded pond margins. Some vegetation types, though, were more common such as the *Chrysolepis sempervirens* (Sierran chinquapin) Shrubland Alliance, which forms almost impenetrable thickets along slopes and ridges with shallow rocky soils. In July of this past summer, overflights were conducted to obtain aerial images of the parks. Air photo

interpreters will delineate mappable units of vegetation and identify additional areas for field sampling. In the spring, we will start sampling the foothills and chaparral to capture the diverse grasslands, woodlands, and shrublands of the lower elevations. Once field data are collected and the process of interpreting all the photos are complete, we will focus on creating the final classification and map, which will serve as an invaluable tool for resource planning, management, and research applications. We also will generate dynamic, digital products that will be available on the World Wide Web.

Julie Evens

WHO WE ARE...WHY WE CARE

The State outreach program has developed a series of short statements that describe the work and goals of the California Native Plant Society. I'd like to include some of these in the next several issues of the *Insignis*, and perhaps add some more personal comments from you about your reasons for joining the organization.

I'll start with Why Care? For Profit! Native plants have economic value. Humans depend on the resources of the natural world. Native plants offer food, products, and medicines. For example, commercial strawberries are hybrids developed from a wild beach strawberry. California black walnut rootstock is resistant to diseases and makes it possible to grow English walnuts as a profitable crop. Monterey pine is grown for lumber in New Zealand, and the few remaining wild populations in central California are crucial to the survival of this \$12 billion industry. Chemicals unique to native plants are used for our medicines, including the life-saving cancer drug Taxol, derived from the Pacific Yew tree. Healthy vegetation helps clean our air and water, provides flood control, and protects and enriches soil. Visitors from all over the world spend billions of dollars each year to marvel at the astounding variety and beauty of California's natural places. Economists and biologists agree that a healthy environment is necessary for a healthy economy.

DEDICATED TO THE PRESERVATION OF THE NATIVE FLORA

The California Native Plant Society is a statewide non-profit organization of amateurs and professionals with a common interest in California's native plants. The Society, working through its local chapters, seeks to increase understanding of California's native flora and to preserve this rich resource for future generations. Membership is open to all.

Membership includes informative publications, free field trips and monthly programs and discounts on books and posters. Also included are *Fremontia*, a quarterly journal with articles on all aspects of native plants, the *Bulletin*, a quarterly statewide report of activities and schedules, and the chapter newsletter. Please call the membership chairperson for more information.

NEW MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Name _____

Address _____

Zip _____ Telephone _____

I wish to affiliate with:

___ Alta Peak Chapter (Tulare County)

___ Other _____

Membership category:

_____ Student, Retired, Limited income, \$20

_____ Individual, Library, \$35

_____ Household, Family, or Group, \$45

_____ Supporting, \$75

_____ Plant lover, \$100

_____ Patron, \$250

_____ Benefactor, \$500

_____ Life, \$1,000

Mail application and check to:

Membership Chairman, California Native Plant Society, 1722 J St., Suite 17, Sacramento, CA 95814

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