



INSIGNIS

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CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY ALTA PEAK CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

*Please send changes of address to Membership Chair,
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SPECIAL: NOTICE OF APRIL AND JULY CNPS WILDFLOWER WALKS, DAYS AND SITES

In recent *Insignis* we gave preliminary notice of wildflower walks scheduled for April and July. (June 30 details were available.) This update page provides more complete information. MARK ON YOUR CALENDAR.

14 APRIL: Very special, a tour of Tulare County VERNAL POOLS.

You may have been reading lately about the rarity and uniqueness of this particular vegetation habitat throughout California, and we have an opportunity this spring to visit 4 or 5 of these spots in our own area. What makes this very special is having Rob Hansen, of College of Sequoias in Visalia, conducting the tour and explaining how each site is different.

A vernal pool is a place where hard compacted soil ("hardpan") underneath low places in flat land keeps rainwater above ground, creating shallow pools that remain wet long after surrounding land has drained and dried. As these pools slowly dry out, plants around the edges emerge, grow, flower, and then gradually die as moisture moves toward the center of the pool. The pond water is quiet, which means that the seeds that drop each year remain just where they have fallen, ready to germinate the next year. Over time concentric rings of plants, adapted to this mode of living, become established and each pond, depending on size, soil, and depth can have very different kinds of plants associated with it. "All vernal pools are not the same" is the principle here. And this is the reason why visiting more than one gives us a chance to see some of the variety. Of course, weather during spring time determines what grows, for how long, and the 14 April date is chosen in hopes of not being either too early or too late to catch peak blooms.

Meet at the Highway 99 Rest Stop 'couple of miles' north of Tipton, on the East side of Highway, at 9:00 AM. This field trip is co-sponsored with the Kern Co. CNPS Chapter, and this meeting site is convenient for all of us. We will drive away at 9:15, so don't be late. Pools we hope to survey include Pixley, Yettum (Stone Corral), Herbert Ranch, and one or two others that are part of small Fish and Game Ecological Preserves. You can adjust your schedule to be with us all or part of the day.

USUAL COMMENTS: BRING HAT, FOOD, WATER. THIS WILL NOT REQUIRE MUCH HIKING, NOR ANY ELEVATION GAIN, AND CARPOOLS ARE UP TO YOU. BECAUSE THE VEGETATION IS CLOSE TO THE GROUND, IN DAMP SOIL, AND OFTEN DELICATE, DOGS NOT ADVISED, AND CHILDREN WILL NEED SUPERVISION.

We realize that the 14th of April is the day before Easter, which may affect some of your plans. This was the only day that suited both the anticipated show of flowers and Rob's schedule, so we decided to go head with the trip. Rob has surveyed and studied vernal pools extensively, and is an expert in the vegetation of Tulare County foothills and lower slopes near our towns and communities. He has written and spoken about many areas as they are reviewed for development, and understands our area very well. And besides his botanical expertise, he is an experienced all-around naturalist, so we can look forward to seeing much more than plants! See you then and there!!

And just to give you notice of the July Hike to Crescent Meadow, Julie Evens of Sequoia Park provides the following: 14th July is the date, meeting at Visitor's Center on Hwy 190 beyond Three Rivers and after the entrance to the Park. She advises carpooling from there for the 45 minute drive to the trailhead parking lot. See recent *Insignis*, and repeat announcement in next issue.

Insignia News, CNPS

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