

INSIGNIS

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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*

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE The native spring flowers have not been deterred by the frosty nights and have begun to paint our hills with a palette of orange, yellow, white, pink, blue, and purple. Be sure to bookmark a time in your daily calendar to enjoy the beauty. \

Our Membership is primarily in the foothill area; Three Rivers, 47%; Springville, 23%; Lindsey, Porterville, Exeter, Strathmore, and Lindsey, 14%, Others, 14%. You can see our problem in locating meeting places that would serve everyone. We welcome your input.

BOARD MEETING

The February Board meeting was given over mostly to looking ahead to plan springtime walks, work parties, and as we frequently do, trying to decipher members' preferences as to where and when to hold events. We'd like more of your comments on this. We'll go back to Exeter for the next program.

The Alta Peak Chapter is not alone in facing the challenge of drawing CNPS friends together from large areas...some Chapters cover two or more counties, and most draw from widely scattered communities (see **PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE**). This also means that

what holds us together in CNPS is a shared mission for all of California, not any single local issue. We have set aside 21 May at 1PM for the next Board meeting at the home of Janet Fanning in Three Rivers, and all are welcome.

LOOKING BACK-

Our January meeting was fun and intriguing. Thanks, again, to Art Cowley for showing us some of the "biggest of their kind" native trees. Of course, some were actually shrubs, but still, not everything can be (or wants to be?) a giant Sequoia!

CALENDAR--PROGRAM

Starting with the big Spring event, May will be full. The second weekend brings Dr. Todd Keeler-Wolfe to Tulare County from Sacramento where he heads the (Wildlife) and Habitat Conservation Division, of the Department of Fish and Game. He works closely with the Natural Diversity Data Base, and is especially charged with the effort to better describe and map the plant communities ("alliances") of California.

CNPS, Sequoia Park and most other agencies that manage public land, are cooperating in this, following guidelines and methods established by the CNPS Vegetation Program. As many of

us realize, the southern portions of the Sierra are much less known than others. And our plant life here is complex, with high desert taxa extending up and west into the Kennedy Meadows region and more southern taxa reaching into habitats in the Greenhorns. Other species found to the north (such as Douglas Fir and Yew) are absent. Identifying discrete assemblages of chaparral can be somewhat simpler than working in forested areas, but even in this denser, lower-growing vegetation taxa can be mixed in surprisingly different proportions.

Todd, with Julie Evens of Sequoia Park, will present a Friday night program, 11 May. that we are calling SOUTHERN SIERRA VEGETATION: WHAT IT IS, WHERE IT IS. They will describe what we know about the major, large groupings of plants from the lower elevations to high mountain meadows. This introduction to our backcountry mountains will indicate the gaps in our information, and the initial maps will additionally interest us.

At this point in the program, he and Julie will very briefly explain the procedure that has been adopted to quantitatively survey vegetation. The method we now are using is a compromise between earlier techniques that took a lot of time to produce very precise data, and drive-by windshield estimates of what could be seen from roadsides. This latter, despite provoking disparaging jokes, has actually proved useful in the desert!

Besides offering an interesting evening about places and plants we like to visit, it is hoped that the program will encourage you to help with the follow-up work parties.

Remember: 11 May, 7:00 PM, Exeter Women's Club, 201 N. Kaweah (Hwy 65).

SATURDAYS, 12, 19, 26 MAY

There will be three sampling field days with the first led by Todd himself who is personally very interested in this region. One will be in a grassland-meadow, one in a forest, and one in a mixed tree/shrub area. The same method will be applied to each, and reviewed on each day so you can come to any or all work parties. The more the merrier! Details will be announced at the evening program, or you can call Joan Stewart or Julie Evens after 1 May for this information. Phone numbers are on back page.

We would like to encourage family participation, meaning that school age children probably can help with simple tasks, and certainly might find the idea of "what is where" an interesting one. But note that no babysitting is provided!

WILDFLOWER WALKS

We've had calls already asking when and where we plan to go in coming months. We've tried to accommodate several specific requests in our schedule. Let us know if there is something special you would like to visit as a group. Post the following schedule on your refrigerator so that you don't miss a single event.

March 25:

Exploring Scicon with Nancy Bruce, Sunday 1:00-4:00 PM. Meet at Scicon Office.

April:

Vernal pools: Herbert Ranch and Yetttem, with dates and leaders unconfirmed at this moment. Call Joan or Janet after 15 March. Our Chapter contributed to the acquisition of the vernal pool complex on Herbert Ranch, and this will be our first time to visit them, probably as a joint trip with the Kern Chapter. We also are not yet sure just when the bloom will be at its peak, hence postponing setting a date.

May 12, 19, 26:

Vegetation of Southern Sierra. What and Where. See 11 May program above.

June 30:

Jordan Peak, repeat hike, by 'popular demand', to see rare Erythronium lilies, plus?. Meet at turnoff from (end of) Hwy 190 to North Road (to "Packstation,") at 10:00 AM. Late season snows will cancel. Call Joan if in doubt.

July 14:

Crescent Meadow, in Sequoia Park with Sequoia NP botanist. Easy walking to carnivorous plants, bog orchids, (bears?)

August:

Freeman Creek, down and up, with Leopard Lilies, columbine, much more. More Details in June *Insignis*.

August:

Watch for mailing of plant list for September or October sale.

HORTICULTURE PROGRAM

15 September. See preliminary announcement in last *Insignis*. We are greatly pleased that Ellen Zagory, horticulturist at the UC Davis Arboretum, has accepted our invitation to be guest of Alta Peak and provide our annual pre-Plant Sale program. She refers to her experience in growing native species as learning Secrets to Success, and this is the title she gives us for the talk. Put this date on your calendar. See August *Insignis* for time and place. (Probably the same site in Exeter that "worked" last year.)

SPECIAL OFFER

We find ourselves with a supply of the first printing of the CNPS Spring Wildflower Poster, with pre-Jepson nomenclature. Some scientific names were changed for the second printing; unless you are concerned about being up-to-date on the Latin binomials, this one is just as useful as the newer version.

"Spring" was the first Poster CNPS produced with original art work, and has 75+ of the loveliest and most often seen wildflowers of California. This is the poster you see everywhere in classrooms, halls, offices, and homes. Our Sacramento office sells these for \$12, postage paid and tax. Now we offer 15 of the non-laminated ones for \$5 each. Pick them up personally from Janet in Three Rivers or from Joan in Springville. (In other words, we don't want to deliver or mail!). Call to arrange to get one. Phone numbers on back of this Issue of *Insignis*.

MORE BUSINESS

Please don't skip this. At the January meeting, we officially elected officers for the coming year by a formal motion to approve the Board-nominated slate as described in the last *Insignis*. There were no nominations from the floor (surprise), and no one had called President Janet to offer to help with any of the positions.

This is a common situation for CNPS chapters (and probably for most other organizations you work with), and the plea for new volunteers to share the work and fun of planning and carrying out CNPS work is heard throughout the state. Seriously, there is a lot more that could be done to carry out the mission of CNPS, if we had a few more special people. Remember, volunteers do just what they choose to do, so you can decide what type of activity you are best suited to, or most willing to try.

As noted above, the next Board meeting is at 1:00 PM, 21 May, at Janet's home in Three Rivers. Call her for more information, or just show up!

EXCITING NEWS FOR OUR AREA

The Dillonwood (Sequoia) Grove on the headwaters of the North Fork of the Tule River is the largest privately owned stand and contains an estimated 70% of the remaining unprotected trees. The Grove, as were most of the giant redwoods, was logged in the past, but recent owners have allowed the forest to revert to natural conditions. Many old growth trees remain and the Grove

itself is wild and remote. Biologically it forms a single unit with the Garfield Grove, already within the National Park.

The Save-the-Redwoods League has negotiated an option to purchase Dillonwood (and give it to the Park) for \$10.3 million, of which \$5 M has been obtained from federal funds. Many individuals and organizations are joining to raise the funds to complete the purchase.

Achieving this serves many purposes. It contributes to broad watershed management of the Tule River. It preserves habitat for birds and animals that require undisturbed old-growth forests. It allows designation of an 1800 year old seasonal Indian encampment and a 19th century sawmill as important Cultural Resources. And it offers tremendous recreational opportunities, linked trails for fishing and hiking from the North Fork riparian corridor, and a small tent cabin facility.

CNPS is not soliciting funds for this, but we want you to know about it.

"WHY CARE"

(about California's native vegetation and wild gardens where special plants grow?).

Last winter's *Insignis* included the first paragraph, "For Profit", from a four part article that was written for statewide PR distribution. The second section, "For Nature", is copied in this issue on the following page:

"Beyond yielding economic value, plant communities teach us about how life processes work to sustain health and vigor in our natural world. A healthy environment maintains connections among plants, animals, and humans. All of us (plants, animals, butterflies, birds, fungi, soil, and water) are inextricably interdependent for health, food, shelter, and reproduction.

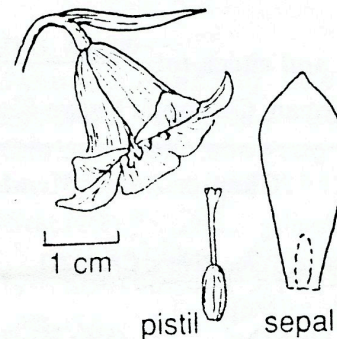
Better understanding of interactions between plants and their environment brings improvements in farming and timber harvest methods and helps protect all kinds of wildlife. Changes in plant associations can help us gain insight into weather dynamics.

Recent federal and state legislation has focussed on rarity as a criterion for protecting single species, but preserving bio-diversity means protecting watersheds and large preserves that function naturally."

SPECIAL IN TULARE COUNTY

Continuing this intermittent series there are indeed several species that are rare in California and that occur predominantly in this County. This makes them especially special for us! Of the 111 "Rare and Endangered Vascular Plants" listed with known occurrences in Tulare County in the CNPS Inventory, 52 are considered to be "rare, threatened, or endangered in California and elsewhere". Many of these grow in isolated habitats and although rare, are not now threatened or endangered.

One of the several that are restricted to lower elevation closer to our homes and more threatened habitats is *Fritillaria striata*, the Striped Adobe Lily, that thrives in certain clay-type soils near Porterville. It has been found in only 20 sites, some in Kern County. It is treated as threatened, but not currently in danger of extinction. The Lewis Hill Preserve north of Porterville was established for this and one other plant, and is managed by the SLT Land Trust.



Fritillaria striata



Erythronium californicum

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 is 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 _____

Membership category:

Address _____

____ Student, Retired, Limited income, \$20

City, State _____

____ Individual, Library, \$35

Zip _____ Tel. _____

____ Household, Family, or Group, \$45

I wish to affiliate with:

____ Supporting, \$75

____ Alta Peak Chapter (Tulare County)

____ Plant Lover, \$100

____ Other

____ Patron, \$250

____ Benefactor, \$500

____ Life, \$1000

Mail application and check to:

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

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