

# Insignis

Spring, 2003

Vol. 13, No. 2

## California Native Plant Society Alta Peak Chapter Newsletter

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

### INTRODUCING NEWLY ARRIVED BOTANIST FOR SEQUOIA NATIONAL FOREST.

We delight in being able to make this announcement, because it is great to have Fletcher with us, and because it is perhaps in part due to CNPS persistence and their cooperative relationship with the Forest Service. With designation of Monument status for a portion of forest lands, it seemed even more imperative that a professional specialist should be available to help devise and comment on the management of these lands, not for just the trees, but for all the associated understory, meadow, riparian, and special species, and to bring an ecosystem, watershed perspective to how and where plants live.

So after an absence of five years, the Sequoia National Forest now has a Forest Botanist. Fletcher Linton started in January of 2003. He got his B.S. in Botany in 1990 from Cal Poly SLO so he is no stranger to the area. Fletcher came most recently from a position at Bryce Canyon National Park in Utah and has settled into the foothills of Springville with his wife (Laura), daughter (Rachel), and brand-new baby (Owen).

### TENTATIVE SCHEDULE for Spring and Summer Field Trips.

April ? So much is going on this month; but, consider this. We've been rained out the past two years for the "Flume Walk", an exploration of the low foothill country in the Tule River Canyon along Hwy 190 above Springville. Once again, as I sit here, clouds are black over the mountains. I will be glad to take anyone interested in this hike that helps re-survey *Clarkia springvillensis* populations that have been monitored for many years along the side of Mt. Lumreau. We will meet at my place at 9:30, and take a minimum number of vehicles up the road to the point where we begin. The walk is not for you if high places bother you or if you have balance problems. Easy downhill walking from near the PG&E forks to Lumreau, then down a steep road and hillside. Some cars will shuttle back up to recover parked cars. Please call if you want to join this outing, and we find a mutually agreeable day. Joan Stewart, (559) 539-2717

### Saturday, 26 April.

Fletcher Linton (see Introduction above) is leading a plant walk for the Kern Valley Bioregions Festival held on the weekend of April 26<sup>th</sup> and 27<sup>th</sup>. The plant walk will be on Sunday the 27<sup>th</sup> from 8 AM to Noon. The walk will be looking at the spectacular and beautiful recovery of the Rincon area in the McNally Fire. Contact [www.valleywild.org/bioregion.htm](http://www.valleywild.org/bioregion.htm) for more details on attending.

### **3 May, Celebrate the Great Outdoors at River Ridge, Springville.**

The Sequoia Riverlands Trust invites the public to a celebration of springtime at its newest and largest conservation easement, River Ridge, on May 3, from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. River Ridge is a 722-acre privately owned cattle ranch straddling the North Fork of the Tule River in Springville and will soon open as an education and recreation facility. Enjoy the great outdoors and get a sneak preview of the southern Sierra foothills' newest attraction.

Wildflowers will be at their best as you and your family stroll the nature trails guided by an expert from the California Native Plant Society. Joan Stewart will lead a walk, maybe two hours?, up the hillside, with springs and their down-slope aquatic or wet-soil vegetation, and views of Springville to the west, as we move through several vegetation zones up the north side of Lumreau. Several shorter wildflower walks with Fletcher, introduced above, will explore the riparian and meadow wildflowers, mostly on level trails in the area.

Learn about local birds on a one-hour walk (binoculars recommended), or enjoy a personalized tour of the River Ridge ranch from the owner. See demonstrations at the newly opened school of blacksmithing or wander by the riverside, pastureland, and blue oak studded hillsides. Special children's activities include fishing (bring your own pole) or swimming in the Tule River, nature crafts and a demonstration by the Sierra Search Dogs. Admission is free; a donation is requested for food and drink. To reach River Ridge, take Highway 190 to Springville. Turn left on Balch Park Road and go approximately 1.6 miles north. River Ridge is on the right.

### **SEQUOIA GROVES.**

Springville community organizations, local Forest Service staff, other organizations, and many individuals have been involved in reading and talking about proposed management plans for the Sequoia Monument, an area containing 38 "named" groves, other types of forest and shrub vegetation, meadows, and various recreational areas (trails, campgrounds, roads). In drafting the Alternative Management plans, various issues were covered, with fire being a major concern from many perspectives. Partly for these reasons, and partly because the areas designated as Groves also contain lovely and often unusual plants, our spring/summer list of mountain trips includes explorations of several groves.

### **24 May, Freeman Creek and Sequoia Grove.**

This area is being considered as a botanic area by USFS planners, confirming the belief of many that this is one of the more special places in the Monument. Trail follows the creek down starting in a small meadow (we saw a bear here last year) with an array of wildflowers, through Sequoia trees, and ends at the lower road. It is easy down, slower back up (elevation 7000' at top, about 5500' at bottom). If anyone wants to arrange it, someone could drive around with car to avoid the climb back up to North Road trailhead, just north of Quaking Aspen. This is all-day, in the sense that we suggest you bring lunch, camera, and make it a leisurely hike, with time to stop and enjoy whatever comes along. Meet at pull-off area on North Road near junction with end of Hwy 190 at 10.

### June 14, A Walk into another Sequoia Grove.

This one does not appear on older Forest maps, although goodness knows, the trees have always been there. These are trees on the east side of Wishon Fork (aka North Fork of Middle Fork) that can be seen from the trail up the canyon above Doyle Springs. The vegetation along the trail is special, even without big trees to view, with California nutmeg, ginger, wintergreen, bleeding heart, dogwood, and much more. Can't, of course, promise what we will find in bloom, but there is a lot to seek. Let's meet at the parking space at end of road beyond the Wishon Campground...10:00, and be prepared for several hours of exploring along a gentle gradient trail, mostly about 6000'.

### June 28, Jordan Peak.

Again, and yet again. Yes, we make this climb nearly every year, and it is one Fletcher especially wanted us to include. Repeating last year's information: we carpool, about 9 miles to trailhead, on North Road (turnoff from Hwy 190 at Quaking Aspen marked "Pack Station"), then hike about one mile along an easy trail from about 7000 to 9000' elevation. We are in Red Fir forest, and as we approach Jordan Peak we enter an area of rock gardens, high meadow flowers, with focus on the rare Fawn Lily. *Erythronium*, the genus, is considered a special garden lily in European landscapes, and people come from all over the world to see them in bloom, on Jordan Peak! Let's hope we once more are lucky and find them in bloom.

Hat, sunscreen, water, (it can be bright on top), whatever snacks you want for several hours in mountain scenery. Although walking is not hard, please note the elevation gain. Meet at same pull-off area noted for May's Freeman Creek/Grove hike.

**NOTE.** There will be a one-page mailing in June to confirm dates and details for the four July/August trips described below, or you may call Joan Stewart or Janet Fanning in late June for details. For each of the hikes to Giant Sequoia Groves, we will prepare a handout with information about the grove, its history, and unusual features.

### July---Sequoia trees below the Black Mt. Grove.

The owner of a small in-holding just east of Solo Peak, again has invited us to visit. (This was cancelled last summer when the McNally Fire closed the area.) The property has cultural interest in addition to forest vegetation, since it was logged in late 1800's using the drill-and-blast method. Gary will point out artifacts that demonstrate techniques used in these early logging days. Regrowth and associated vegetation can now be seen, and short nearby places may hold special wildflowers that we noted on scouting trips. We'll probably meet at Coy Flat Campground entrance at 10:00, then re-group just beyond Rogers Camp. Elevations will range from 5000-7000'.

### July---Robin Galloway, Wildlife Biologist.

Biologist for the Tule River Ranger District, Robin has prepared a display showing why the Slate Mt. Botanic Area was designated for special management because of the plants. We will try to locate the five rare or uncommon species that grow within this small area. We will start walking about 7000', but Slate Mt. sites can range up to 10,000'.

### August---Packsaddle Grove.

A member from Hot Springs invites us to join him to visit a portion of the Packsaddle Grove. This Grove was never logged, and contains several trees said to be huge, or mysterious, (Ghost Tree?). Note that although most of our field trips and activities are centered in either Springville or Three Rivers areas, our chapter is intended to cover Tulare County. This hike offers an opportunity to see and explore the southern part of our "southern" Sierra forest region, at an elevation of close to 6000-6500'. He notes that two "specimen" trees are no more than a quarter mile off the road, with only a gentle up and down. Others in vicinity are close.

### August---Onion Meadow.

At 8000', this is planned as a final outing, a unique example of a high mountain meadow where a giant Onion (*Allium*) grows. We will enter the Forest from the Western Divide Highway, drive to Windy Gap, then walk in--not too far and an easy trail--but note the elevation. Several of you have contacted me to ask about seeing some of the local orchids described in the Winter *Insignis*. It is possible that we can find some of the meadow species even this late in the summer. No promises.

### OTHER EVENTS.

The Tule River Parkway Association is having a dinner program meeting on May 7th, Wednesday, at Rustler's Steakhouse and Saloon, 29198 Highway 198, just below the dam at Lake Success. Program will be "Wild Life along the Tule River" by Eric Kleinfelter, Wildlife Biologist with the California Department of Fish and Game. Dinner will be ordered off the menu. Election of officers will be held after dinner. Please call and leave a message at Cathy Capone's house about how many will be coming to dinner. 784-8203

### May 17-18 Field Trip.

A trip into the Hardy-Idria Serpentine/Joaquin Rocks. The Bureau of Land Management, Hollister Field Office and CNPS will co-sponsor a fascinating, rugged field trip to southern San Benito and western Fresno counties. The trip will begin at the BLM Hollister Field Office at 9:00 a.m., on Saturday morning, May 17, and return late afternoon on Sunday the 19th. We approach the Idria serpentine from the east via Panoche Road through Griswold Canyon, up through the historic mining town of Idria.

Our trip will include several stops to observe plant community composition and to eat lunch, as we meander through the geologically diverse terrain. We will traverse the higher elevations of the Clear Creek Management Area, through the San Benito Mountain forest (containing Jeffrey and Coulter pines), with a final destination at the Joaquin Rocks for dinner and camping. Sunday morning we will botanize around the Rocks and develop a plant list. After lunch we will begin our journey back to the Hollister Field office and then home.

Expect to experience beautiful native plants, interesting geology, and the lore of the Joaquin Rocks under a full moon. Handouts will be provided including information on the Idria Serpentine Block, and the legend of Joaquin Murietta.

**May 17-18 Field Trip** (Continued)

High clearance, 4-wheel drive vehicles are strongly recommended and car-pooling is a must. A limited number of vehicles will be allowed into the vehicle restricted Joaquin Rocks Management Area. Bring food and water for the entire weekend. (NO POTABLE WATER WILL BE AVAILABLE ON FIELD TRIP.) Bring clothing and footwear for a range of temperatures and moderate to rough hiking. Contact trip coordinator Julie Anne for further information and directions to the BLM office, (H) 831-392-1820, (W)831-630-5028.

**PAST EVENTS.**

The few who met for the Urban Forest (Oak) tour of Porterville area on a grey cold day in January were grateful to leader Cathy Capone for the planning and experience that she provided. Working from a map of the area with sites marked, we were able to see examples of some of the original valley oak woodland ("as good as it gets!") that remain on the fringes of the city, unfortunately, consisting only of magnificent old trees without any regeneration, (saplings or young trees). Why this is so has more than a single answer. Cathy has a licensed nursery business and is growing many of the native trees and tall shrubs that are desirable for planting along paths or in city parks, or to be incorporated into residential landscapes.

Moving closer to town, 20-year-old neighborhoods, 10-year-old tracts, and more recent developments, were contrasted for their inclusion of oaks, and it was interesting to see how different homeowners care for, or utilize oaks in their yards. Cathy relayed the observation, based on extensive interviews with individuals who have oaks either in or near their homes, that about "half of them very much like old trees--in someone else's yard!" In the summer time, an interesting contrast between the microclimate under the canopy of a cluster of large mature oaks near Putnam/Cottage and away from the shade of the branch system is a vivid demonstration of the value of having these trees nearby. Cathy noted that as air-conditioning became a routine installation in new homes, people tended to disregard the advantage of more natural ways to cool one's environment, and to see fallen leaves as a chore that could be avoided by cutting down the "messy" tree.

Porterville is fortunate in having someone with Cathy's knowledge and willingness to keep focussed on the importance of staying in touch with the real, natural world around us. Pictures, TV programs, and indoor life are less satisfying ways of being connected to the real--in this case being out on a cold, foggy morning and standing under the huge branches of some of Porterville's oldest inhabitants. Thanks, Cathy.

**Kaweah Lake, with Denise Robertson of the Army Corps of Engineers.**

On March 29 Denise drove me up to the dam area to see the mitigation project required for the loss of taxa due to the raising of Lake Kaweah. We drove through two security gates and saw where the new spillway was being built to allow increased water storage. When we drove past spillway pond there were two fenced areas, one containing 400 plants and trees, the other 500. Department of Fish & Game and the Corps had surveyed the areas to be destroyed by the road construction and the Corps had moved

**Kaweah Lake** (Continued)

the plants to these beds. The first bed was planted in rows with the riparian plants near the waterway progressing back to the trees. The second bed was planted randomly with the riparian plants again near the water. The Corps is required to water all these plants for 10 years. Denise also said they enjoyed planting 80 Elderberry saplings.

**MORE ABOUT ORCHIDS:** A recent issue of an international plant conservation journal reports an astounding botanical find. In June 2002 a 13 year old boy in southern Australia "discovered eight young flowering heads of one of the world's most remarkable plants, the Eastern Australian Underground Orchid. When Evan first uncovered the orchid he thought it looked like a beautiful jewel with the distinctive white and purple translucent bracts and flowers appearing like magic from the forest floor." An underground orchid had been first discovered in 1928 in western Australia, and the eastern species was first seen in 1932. "Up to that point orchids had been known as living high up in trees or in fields or woods, but here were two species, growing at opposite ends of the Australian continent that had...literally gone underground." (If interested, call Joan for article with illustrations).

**IN CLOSING, MESSAGE FROM Chapter Board.**

Those of us who have worked together in past years to exchange information, to plan events, and to maintain an active Tulare County CNPS group will continue to serve in the coming year. By-laws require us to hold formal Elections at least every two years, so omission of this process this spring was intentional!

Nevertheless, we want and need new volunteers to be part of CNPS leadership in this part of California. As we scan the membership list, we note how many of you owe primary allegiance to other organizations or causes, and are grateful that you join us as 'interested' members, sharing our mutual concerns about natural landscapes. There are others of you whom we don't know, whose names we don't recognize although according to the addresses we are neighbors. We also, of course, know the many ways that your lives are full of responsibilities, with time and energy committed to other tasks.

The fact that you continue to support and care about the CNPS mission, says that you have some reason or interest in native plants and the habitats they provide. We want to offer programs, hikes, events, or information that matches what you want. Are there issues or places that you would like us to pay attention to or learn about? Many Chapters send a Survey Sheet asking these questions, but we choose this more informal way of asking for help in making CNPS in Tulare County relevant to as many individuals as we can. Call President Janet Fanning (see back page) to comment or volunteer.

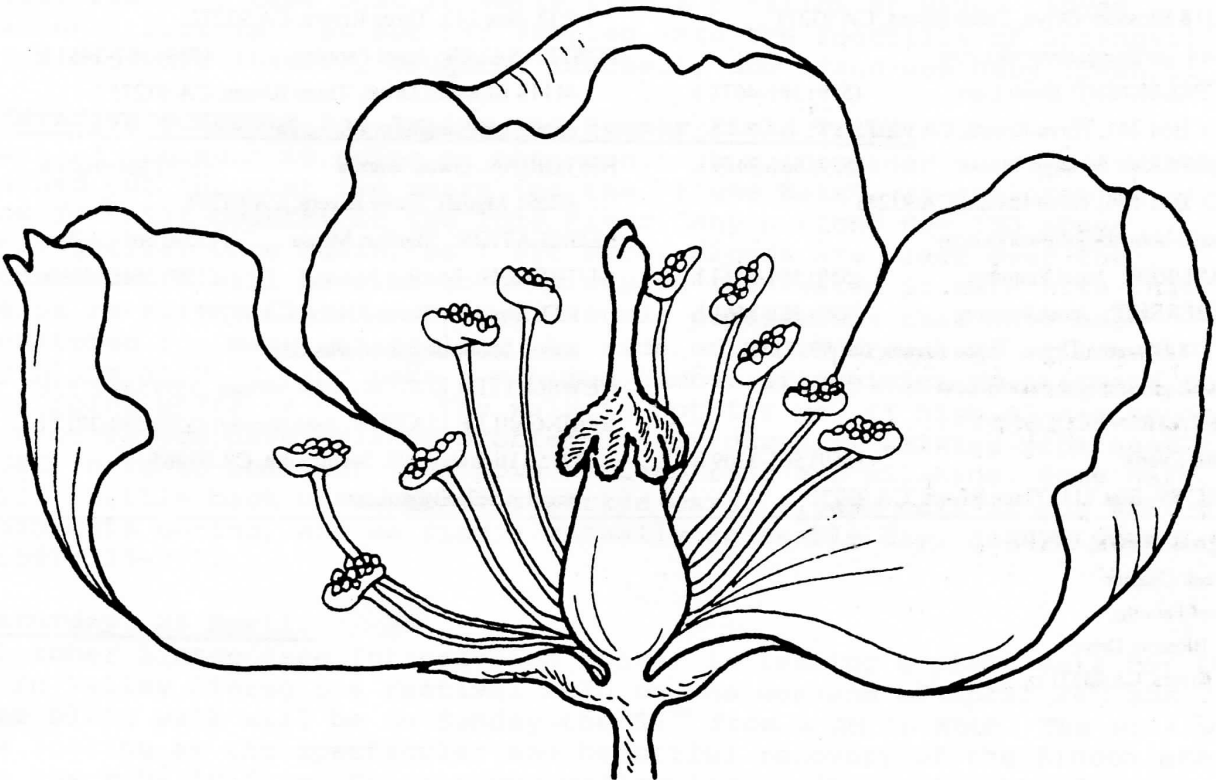
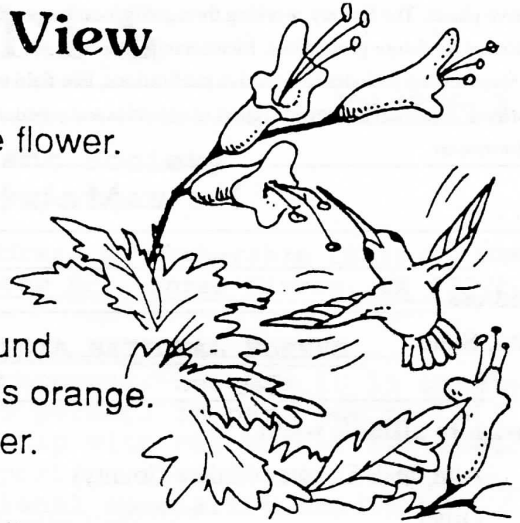
**Our Fall Insignis.**

This issue will describe our September Native Plant program and include a plant list for our annual Fall Plant Sale in Three Rivers.

## A Bird's-eye View

Follow the directions to color the parts of the flower.

- **Sepals** look like leaves. They are at the bottom of the flower. Color the sepals green.
- **Petals** are the colorful parts that surround the center of the flower. Color the petals orange.
- The **pistil** is the single stalk in the center. Color the pistil red.
- **Stamens** are the stalks around the pistil. **Pollen** is a yellowish dust made by the stamens. Color the top of each stamen with yellow specks to show pollen. Color the rest of each stamen brown.
- The **ovary** is the pouch at the bottom of the pistil. Seeds form in it. Make some black seeds in the ovary.



**Try This!** Draw an imaginary flower. Include the parts described above. Give your flower a name and explain where it would grow.

**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 \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City, State \_\_\_\_\_

Zip \_\_\_\_\_ Tel. \_\_\_\_\_

**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, \$1000

**Mail application and check to:**

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

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