

Insignis

Summer, 2004

Vol. 14, No. 3

California Native Plant Society
Alta Peak Chapter Newsletter

President's Message

It has been customary, for all chapters, for the president to open each newsletter with pertinent, timely (?) comments. Topics generally include mention of what members are doing on a wide variety of projects, reference to upcoming events, and often requests for help with specific tasks, as well as acknowledging those who have done Special Things.

I certainly can do this last, thanking all who helped make the just-past State Chapter Council meeting at SCICON the success it was. Alta Peak co-hosted with the Sequoia (Fresno Co.) Chapter. Their President and spouse, Warren and Helen Shaw, were stalwart in working with us and the SCICON staff. Sequoia members sent lugs of locally grown fruit and nuts both for meeting eating, and for delegates from all around California to take away as a 'souvenir' of what Tulare County has to share. Warren arranged for the Saturday evening after dinner program, and dealt with numerous details during the Friday-Sunday gathering. Paul Mitchell, their past president, coordinated camping, both facilities and campers. We all were happily surprised at the number of delegates and guests who found being so much outdoors for one of these quarterly meetings a real bonus! Board members from Three Rivers showed up to be counted as "hosts", and Springville residents helped with the various chores on all three days. We especially thank the pair who planned and provided the Non-Alcoholic Happy Hour... (per SCICON requirements as a County educational facility). Many had wondered how this would work, and were pleasantly surprised!!!

Fletcher Linton, Sequoia NF/Monument Botanist, offered a Friday evening program on the special plants of our mountains. That proved to be an exciting start for the weekend. Making it all possible was the support from the CNPS members who are also on the staff at SCICON...I hesitate to name names, but let me simply say again, thank you for all you did to put Tulare on the map!! The only slightly negative comment was one woman (not a member/delegate) who wondered why we hadn't washed the fuzz off the peach that was given her...Oh well!!! So that is over, and we can rest on our mutual laurels for another few years while chapters in other areas take their turns in hosting Chapter Council meetings. Personally, again, thank you. You know who you are, what you did.

ABOUT CNPS FIELD TRIPS: Always open to all, with no charge. "All hikes begin and end, officially, at trip location or announced trailhead. Carpools are not our responsibility (although we always encourage them). Individuals who choose to make carpool arrangements with others assumes all risks involved."

Slate Mountain Botanical Area Hike

Sunday, 18 July, 2004, 12:00 Noon to 5:00 PM

Slate Mountain Botanical Area in Sequoia National Forest, was designated to protect a unique assemblage and concentration of endemic Southern Sierra plants. The summit of Slate Mountain is composed of a mix of metamorphic rocks, a rare rock type in this land of Granite. The flanks and rocky flat summit of Slate Mountain support many rare plants including: Purple Mountain-parsley (*Oreonana purpurascens*); Twisselmann's Buckwheat (*Eriogonum twisselmannii*); and Unexpected Larkspur (*Delphinium inopinum*). Slate Mountain is the type locality for Purple Mountain parsley which was discovered in 1976. Twisselmann's Buckwheat is only found on Slate Mountain and at the nearby Needles area.

Join Robin Galloway (District Wildlife Biologist) and Fletcher Linton (Forest Botanist), at Noon on July 18th. We will meet at the Quaking Aspen Campground which is on the Western Divide Hwy, just south of the end of Hwy 190 about one and a half hours east of Porterville. The Campground is located on the right-hand side just before Ponderosa. The hike up Slate Mountain is 4 miles one-way (8 miles round trip) with 2,000 feet of elevation gain (and loss). There is a lot to see on the way up, so there is no need to reach the summit in order to find much to enjoy. Please contact Fletcher Linton with any questions at: (559) 784-1500 ext. 1185.

Annual Meadow Walk

Saturday, 31 July, 10:00 AM

Remember, the High Sierra to the north of Sequoia/Kings Parks has lakes; while here to the south, we have meadows. And we try to explore at least one or two every summer. They all are different, hydrologically or botanically. Somewhat arbitrarily we select Saturday, 31 July for exploring Onion Meadow. It seems a long way off now, as we enjoy late spring weather. Mountain meadows will respond to sunny days throughout the coming weeks and it is hard to promise any particular scene. This Meadow, however, has Giant Onion, orchids, and numerous other plants that grow in damp, boggy places. Perhaps we can include a second stop during the day; we'll decide this when we see what Onion Meadow holds. Plan a full day, and perhaps arrange carpools from where you are coming, as it is a rather long drive.

Actual trailhead is at Windy Gap, on Crawford Road that turns west off Western Divide Highway...south of Quaking Aspen. See marked FS map enclosed or find locations on the Sentinel Quad sheet. Let's meet at the junction of Crawford Road and Western Divide Hwy at 10:00. Feet probably will get wet, or at least damp, so shoes need to be able to handle this. Hat, sunscreen, lunch, water...all the usual for a day in high country. The hike in to Onion Meadow is about 1.5 miles each way, along a rather easy trail, between about 7500 and 8100' elevation.

Old Sequoia Grove, on Private Property

Saturday, 7 August, 10:00 AM

"If at first you don't ...try try again". In 2002, McNally fires turned us away from mountain areas. In 2003 a heavy and unseasonal storm hit the Middle Fork of Tule River canyon. In 2004 Earthquake?. In response to considerable interest (and disappointment over the previous cancellation), we reschedule the trip up from Coy Flat Campground to an area that was logged for Giant Sequoias before chain saws were invented.

Old Sequoia Grove (Continued)

This is a small in-holding with Sequoia trees below the Black Mt. Grove, just east of Solo Peak. The site has cultural interest in addition to forest vegetation, since it was logged in late 1800's using the drill-and-blast method. Gary, owner and host, will point out artifacts that demonstrate techniques used in these early logging days. We can see re-growth of a Sequoia grove and associated vegetation, and nearby places hold special wildflowers.

Turn off Hwy 190 at Camp Nelson sign and follow signs to Coy Flat. We'll meet at Coy Flat Campground entrance at 10:00, then re-group just beyond Rogers Camp. Elevations will range from 5000-7000'. Call 539-2717 for any questions.

ABOUT WEEDS ("Plants you don't want")

Many CNPS chapters schedule work parties to help remove invasive weeds from particular parks or wildlands in their area. Tulare County has a Weed Management Area group (irregular meetings this past year) and has printed and distributed a brochure, "Identifying and Controlling Tulare County's Invasive Weeds". If you need to see, or to obtain a few, call Joan at 539-2717. If you need a large quantity, contact the County Ag. Commissioner's office at 685-3323.

And on this subject, we reprint the following paragraphs from the San Luis Chapter newsletter, courtesy of Charlie Blair, author.

"Weeds...the Cancers of the Plant World"

Comparison of invasive exotic plants, aka Noxious Weeds, with cancers is not meant to trivialize the impact of cancer, but to emphasize the real threat these aliens pose to agricultural, horticultural, and native plant communities. One has only to see the extent that pampas grass, veldt grass, yellow star thistle, arondo, and Cape Ivy ('California kudzu') have invaded various areas to appreciate their impact. It is estimated that the annual economic toll from their depredation amounts to millions of dollars.

As a surgeon, I spent much of my career dealing with cancers. During that career, I found using the behavior of weeds, especially crabgrass, very useful in explaining how cancers act, and in discussing the various available treatments. *Cancer* is the Roman name for crabs and the scientific name for their genus. I understand that a surgeon many years ago noted that the appearance of a melanoma reminded him of a crab clinging to a rock prompting the use of its Roman name for malignant neoplasms. Now that I have retired from active practice, I find the cancer analogy equally effective in discussing the destructive behavior of invasive plants and animals in ecosystems. To begin with, the rapid invasive growth of weeds, especially their roots, depletes the soil of nutrients necessary for the health of the host plant communities. In much the same way, widespread cancers drain the patients' resources. Both, by their sheer bulk, can interfere with vital functions.

The pattern of invasion of weeds, bacteria, viruses, and cancer is also similar. When an initial event occurs, such as an infectious organism; the introduction of a species into a new environment; or the early growth of a cancer, there is a period of slower growth of the invading population or tumor. If conditions are suitable, then there is a rapid growth phase,

Weeds (Continued)

which levels off towards maturity, often reaching a steady state (in ecosystems called carrying capacity) with periodic fluctuations. Limiting factors such as moisture, nutrients, and temperature often determine these fluctuations. Other limiting factors include predators and grazers in ecosystems and host resistance in the invaded organism.

Where these limiting factors are missing or weak, the invading species or tumor overwhelms the host location or individual, resulting in degradation or death. Most of our worst weed and animal pests are not natives, therefore often lacking predators. The presence of rabbits in Australia is a prime example. At higher levels of infestation, they crowd out native or desirable species. Much of the damage that invasive weeds cause is in the soil, as noted above. Depletion of desert water by tamarisk is an all too familiar example.

Control strategies for both weeds and cancer also have many parallels. Maintaining healthy, intact ecosystems, discouraging the introduction of invasive species, and early removal can help prevent major invasions or infestations. In much the same way, maintaining good health, avoidance of known carcinogens, and early detection and removal of a cancer can often result in recovery and possible cure. With major infestation with plant or animal pests, manual removal often needs to be supplemented by chemical control. In widespread cancers, drastic measures such as chemotherapy or radiation are often needed. In neither situation should chemicals or drug be seen as substitutes for adequate initial care and maintenance of overall health."

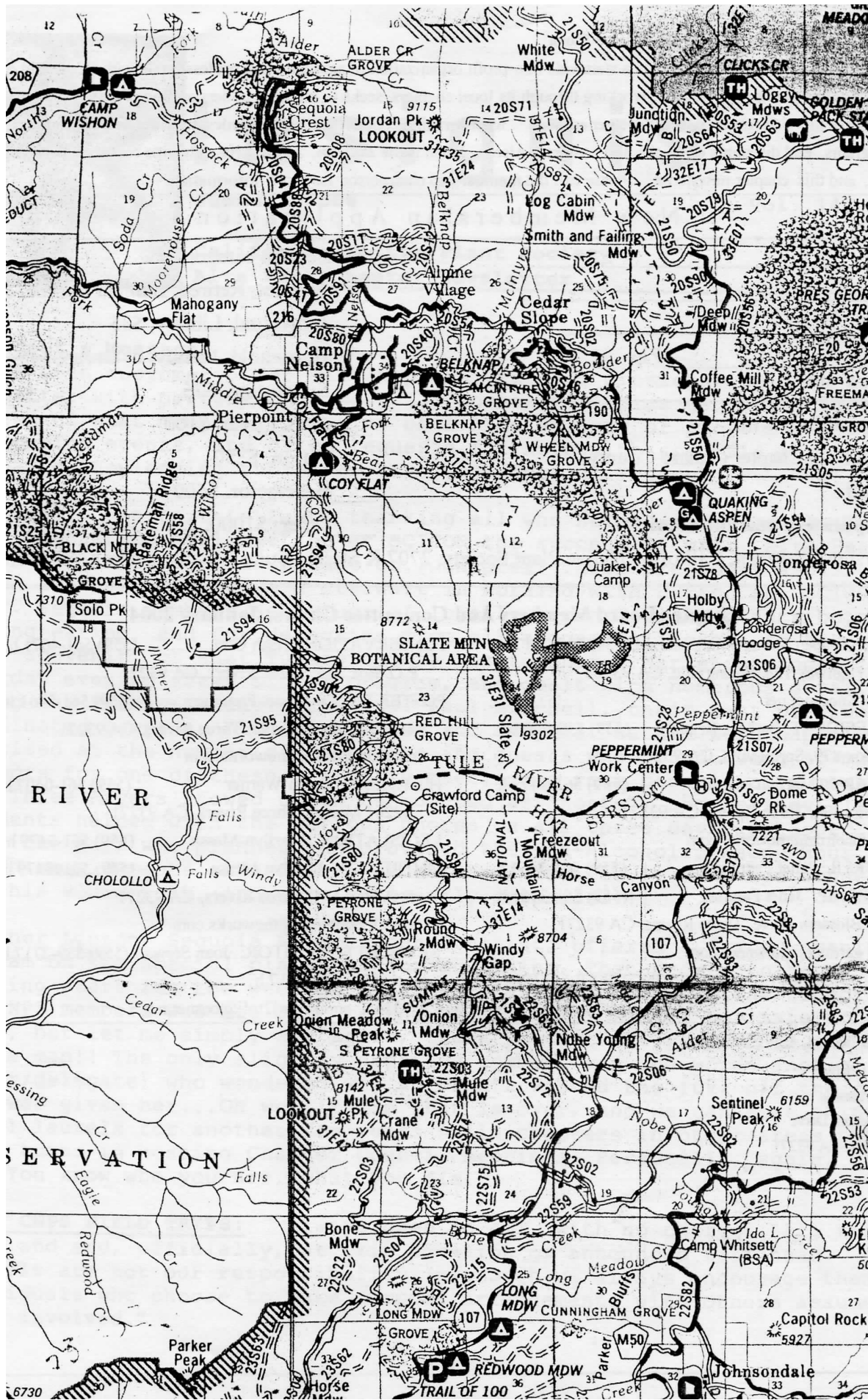
PLANT SALE

Coming up this fall, our annual Native Plant Sale, in Three Rivers, with opportunity to preorder at discount price. Details in Fall Insignis, but mark the 9th of October on your calendar. Start thinking of what you might want, and call Janet Fanning to offer your help and support. Without more volunteer workers, the core group of CNPS members in Three Rivers can't be expected to continue to plan, arrange, and do all the work that this project entails. We know that our members are scattered over Tulare County but let's rally behind these friends to help share the chores.

It has been called to our attention that last fall (Nov. p. 91-95) Sunset magazine wrote: "Native plants are suddenly chic. They've certainly been 'in' before; every time the West faces a serious drought, we rediscover indigenous plants. Then the danger passes, we go back to our old habits, and natives are 'out' again. The current wave of popularity seems different, though. More permanent somehow. It's no wonder---native plants are the perfect choice for easy-care gardens with regional appeal." Janet's number: 561-3461.

SEPTEMBER PROGRAM, 25 September, 7 PM

As is traditional, the program will be related to gardening, and a prelude to the Plant Sale. Barbara Lahmann, a chapter member and foothill resident will present Native Plants Are Not your Ordinary Garden Plants. She has taught horticulture both in high schools and recently for a number of years at COS in Visalia. Additionally, she has nursery experience, and has worked in residential landscaping projects. Mark the date on your calendar and see Fall Insignis for time, place, and more about the evening.



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, and includes informative publications, free field trips, programs, and discounts on books and posters. Also included is the *Bulletin*, a quarterly statewide report of activities and schedules, and this chapter newsletter. Please call the membership chairperson for more information.

New Membership Application

Name _____
Address _____
City _____
State _____ Zip _____
Tel. _____

Membership category:
____ Student, Retired, Limited income, \$20
____ Individual. Library, \$35
____ Household, Family, or Group, \$45
____ Supporting, \$75
____ Plant Lover, \$100
____ Patron, \$250
____ Benefactor, \$500
____ Other: \$1000, 2500, 5000, 10,000

I wish to affiliate with:

____ Alta Peak Chapter (Tulare County)
____ Other

Mail application and check to:

Membership Chairman, California Native Plant Society, 2707 K Street, Suite 1, Sacramento, CA 95816

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