REMINDER--February 17.

Sierra Scenes and Flora
Springville Memorial Building, 7:00.
Invite your neighbors, friends!!

When the Winter Insignis was
mailed last month, it didn't address the
topic of upcoming Springtime walks,
explores, hikes, field trips...in other words
where we might go to enjoy our rapidly
greening world. Suddenly spring is here,
in the sense that hills are green, buds are
swelling at stem tips, and with intervals of
warmth and sunshine in our foothills, the
soil surely is no longer too cold for roots
and bulbs to think about growing. This
Insignis adds a Calendar. Mark dates now.

The first follow-up survey of what is
happening in the area burned by Deep
Fire in 2004 will be 18 March. A large
group went there in May of last year, on a
walk led by Fletcher Linton, to examine
post-fire regeneration of vegetation.
Amazing!! a virtual ground cover of
Chlorogalum (Soap Plant), re-sprouts as
well as germings of dominant
chaparral species, and the anticipated “fire
followers”, flowers that are seen only in
the first or second season after a fire.

After this 2005 visit, some of us
returned in following months to observe
changes. We found some very unusual
taxa, and decided to continue watching
how the area changes. So, we are
formally scheduling 3 visits to what we
called Oak Flat, off the Wishon Road, on
18 March, 15 April, and 27 May. For our
first visit to the burned site, now going on
=two years into Recovery, meet at the
“Stone Steps/Stairs” parking, pull-off on
190, about 7 miles above Springville at 9:30
on 18 March. Times for other walks will
probably be the same. Call to confirm.

For April 29 we are planning a
Work Party/ Visit to the Demonstration
Native Plant Garden at Cathy Capone’s
Native Plant Nursery in Porterville. She is
a longtime gardener, and a few years ago
accepted the challenge of growing valley
oaks and three non-native trees to
provide shade trees to donate to school
groups and several tree projects in
Porterville. Witnessing the denuding of
the Tule River banks through Porterville
and finding that native plants of local
origin are not available for Tulare County
got her interested in trying other native
species, and from there.....well, you have
to See It to Believe It. She and Clyde
Amaral have over an acre of land, with
their own well, and some of the most
marvelously rich soil around.... the
original alluvial valley soil washed down
and deposited over the years. In just a
few months plants grow in her yard 3,4
times as much as I see other places...
(redbud seedlings come up like weeds) but
surely part of her success is due to the
attention and experience she brings to the
Nursery.

In 2004 she decided to plant a
portion of the area to display a variety of
the more attractive, and therefore
promising for others to want, of our native
plants and flowering shrubs. It is this
Garden she invites us to visit in April. I
asked if we could additionally make it an
opportunity to help, and perhaps to
actually practice some of her techniques,
to learn about something of how she does
it. She agreed to this suggestion, and has accumulated a “shopping list” of tasks for us to share...thus making it a Work Party. Join us for a Saturday afternoon of hands-on botany. Bring gloves, trowel, favorite tool, and questions about native plant gardens. We’ll have cold drinks.....

Anytime after 1:00, come to the corner of Westfield and Indiana. Address: 806 W. Westfield Avenue. Use a gate to the left, west of the house to enter the yard. Walk toward the back of the lot, behind the house, until you find us. Parking is difficult near the intersection; please park on Indiana or Ohio Court and walk a short distance.

May 13 is scheduled for a CNPS Hike, and we are hoping to go up the west facing slopes above the Wishon Fork, to the top of the ridge. This is an interesting climb through some rather unique shrubby vegetation...some in cool damp canyons, others on exposed slopes. We can anticipate finding Garrya and Staphylea in bloom...if you haven’t seen these, it’s not surprising as they are not common, and the Staphylea (Bladder Pod) occurs only in isolated spots, mostly north of our area. This is a walk we have taken before, but because of the interest in the plants along the road, the attraction of seeing the components of a 1910 hydroelectric plant (flume brings water from the river from near the Wishon Campground down to the ridge top where our road ends, thence from forebay down the penstock to the power plant), and the views along the way and from the top, it is one worth repeating for newcomers as well as those who have been with us in an earlier year. It’s about two hours up on a dirt road that begins on the road to Wishon/Doyle Springs. Elevation is between 3000’ and 4100’ elevation. As for the Oak Flat, March walk, let’s meet at Stone Steps pull out on Hwy 190, before the junction with the Wishon Road, at 10:00. We can eat lunch, or snack, or...., at the top. As for all CNPS walks, dress for weather, and steady hiking up/down.

One of our members has come up with two prospective walks that I explored and found of great interest. There is a man-made pond uphill from Balch Park Rd, near the Conservation Camp, about 4500’ elevation. Marshy edges, aquatic taxa, and I suspect there is an interesting history concerning when, why, the creek (Bear Creek drainage?) was dammed. We plan on going 17 June, assuming roads will be clear.

To repeat what has become an annual climb, we will once more climb Jordan Peak, 24 June with Erythronium pusaterii, rare and exquisite, at the top, and a group of sub-alpine species, mostly above timber line growing midst rocks on slopes below the Lookout. This is an easy, but mostly uphill 2+ mile climb, to the peak at about 9100’ elevation. From Giffords in Springville, it is 24 miles up Hwy 190 to the junction with North Road, near Quaking Aspen Meadow where we will meet at 10:00 AM.

In July, for our annual Giant Sequoia experience (we have to visit at least one of these trees/groves each year), we go to the Octopus Tree, aka the Great Bonsai Tree. You have to see it to understand why it has been called this. Tentatively 22 July is the date. Details of where, when to meet to follow in next Insignis, or call Joan at 539-2717.

August, September we’ll move to high elevations to wander through meadows—last couple of years some of us have explored many of these special habitats, finding no two the same. As for July, details to follow.

For further information, or to suggest your favorite place as a place for a group visit, call Joan Stewart, 539-2717, or email at tori2tol@ocsnet.net. There surely are many special places, with amazing
collections of plants in our region.....we will only know about them if you share your favorites!!! [See “LOOKING BACK” in the previous Insignis]

Continuing as background history of CNPS in Tulare, we reprint here from a State publication a summary description of important Conservation Efforts in past years. We do this as a preface to calling attention to some projects that are coming up here in our foothill area in which CNPS may become involved in the next year.

"A sand and gravel mining operation in Dry Creek, east of Woodlake, began to remove trees from one of the largest sycamore groves in California, under a permit issued by the County in 1985. After a long and unpleasant effort to curtail or impose conditions on the owner’s permit, supported by Todd Keeler-Wolf, mining was continued, but somewhat less destructively. The company eventually found it unprofitable to work the area, and the land was bought by the Sequoia Riverlands Trust that now is beginning to restore the habitat as far as possible. Thus, although our chapter work was unsuccessful in one way, the end of the story is positive.

In 1992, we were part of group invited to the site in Sequoia National Forest where Pres. H.W. Bush made his statement about wanting to protect the Sequoia Groves. This established CNPS in the area as an organization interested in working with, and supporting, USFS in managing the Forest resources in ways that were consistent with our mission. We continue to have a good working relationship with their professional resource staff.

Another sand and gravel operation was proposed for a site with vernal pools in Yokoohl Valley. Alta Peak CNPS joined others to file a CEQA lawsuit against the County, on the grounds that the County had not required the applicant to do an EIR with more extensive studies. In subsequent public hearings we expressed concerns about insuring adequate protection for riparian trees, freshwater marsh, and vernal pools. This operation never happened, although the land currently is under consideration for a huge housing development (see below).

Although we’ve had no single outstanding "achievements" in more recent years, we’re maintaining our foot in the door with a Weed Management working group, and staying involved as the County General Plan is updated.”

Which brings us to today, Now. Yokohl Valley “New Town” and an Adult-Only development in Springville are beginning to draw alot of attention. Right now planning is “conceptual”, meaning that neither proponent has proposed a definite plan for us to comment on. But each in its own way will have great impact on communities in which we live. CNPS will confine our comment strictly to “plant issues” as is our policy. At present, traffic and water are what we hear most about. In addition to the question of whether such projects will be appropriate under the updated General Plan that is due later this year. Do they represent the kind of planning that Tulare County sees as desirable?

We need for a Conservation Chair or pair of co-chairs, to follow the process as these (and other) huge projects move forward. Riparian vegetation may/may not be impacted to a greater or lesser extent, and other plant related concerns need to be considered. Other community groups, organizations, and interested individuals are watching these projects... we won’t be alone!!

As the season slides into Spring, watch the hills, take your local walks, and discover, share, enjoy what green plants and their reproductive morphology (i.e. Flowers) can bring to our daily routines. Join us on walks.
California Native Plant Society
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 are 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 ________________________________ Membership Category ____________________________
Address _______________________________ ___________ Student $25
City ___________________________ Zip ___________ Individual $45
State ___________________________________ ___________ Family $75
Tele. ____________________________________ 
I wish to affiliate with: ___________ Group, library, agency, business $75
______________ Alta Peak Chapter (Tulare County) ___________ Plant Lover - $100-300
______________ Other ___________ Patron - $300-600

Mail application and check to: ___________ Benefactor - $600-1500
California Native Plant Society, 2707 K Street, Suite 1, Sacramento, CA 95816 ___________ Limited income $ 25

Mariposa Lily, $1500+

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