

INSIGNIS

CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY
ALTA PEAK CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

Please send changes of address to Membership Chair

Items for the next Insignis have been slowly accumulating since the September program, but mailing needed to wait until after the holiday busyness. Better late than never, however, we start here with Janet's report on the **Fall Plant Sale**, a major outreach and our only fundraiser, held in October in Three Rivers.

"The plant sale was a complete success and we want to thank all the people who helped on Friday and Saturday. We could not have done it without you all. We sold 616 plants from Intermountain and 106 from Cal Natives for a total of 722 plants. The total sales price of plants was \$4112.29 less cost of 2857.60 for a profit of \$1254.60. We sold 7 books and 7 posters for a profit of \$64.94. Total Gross Sales... \$1319.34."

Our Pre-order system allowed many of you to purchase just what you wanted, guaranteed (as much as anything in Life is For-Sure!) to be delivered, and picked up more or less at your convenience. After assembling a master Order Sheet, we add on a lot of species that we anticipate might also be needed. We have to make guesses about what, and how many at this point, and since plants can't be sent back (at least not without much difficulty), we have to be careful not to over-buy. This tries to explain why many of you weren't able to get all that you had hoped for....especially if you arrived later in the morning on Sale Day. We regret any disappointment or frustration this may have caused.....if you have suggestions please let us know. The Pre-order system is a lot of work for all, but it does achieve the goal of matching

supply/demand. We'll continue to use this procedure, trying to meet needs of all. Note, many chapters avoid pre-orders as making things "much too complicated", but here, for Alta Peak members, we believe it helps.

Dan Songster's Program was, as anticipated, greatly encouraging to all who use native plants for landscaping, and we, once more, thank him for coming to Tulare County to share the evening with us.

FEBRUARY PROGRAM, Sierra Scenes and Flora. 17 February, Friday evening, 7:00, Springville Memorial Building
Speaker: Linda Ann Vorobik

You probably know Dr. Vorobik as editor of the CNPS journal *Fremontia* or as illustrator for *The Jepson Manual*, but these are only two of her many hats. She worked on the systematics of *Arabis* (rockcress, in the mustard family), for a PhD degree from U. of Oregon, and with molecular techniques and intensive field surveys continues to further elucidate the relationships among these species. She enjoys teaching for workshops, and at UC Berkeley. As she comes to the end of her term as *Fremontia* Editor, she looks forward to being able to finish her book on Sierra Nevada plants, the topic of this month's program.

Writing about the program she brings to us, she hopes to "happily anticipate the coming year's field season". She will share with us images from field work for her book, which she describes as "more than a wildflower guide, but less than a flora!". Her slides follow her treks

through Sierra habitats and their special plants, and incorporate some of her original art work. Based on the interests or questions of her audience, she can talk about the tools and philosophy of teaching field botany. Our Chapter Sales Table will display a sample of her art as prints and cards.

As are all CNPS programs and walks, this evening Program is free, open to all, and offers a lovely warm evening, a chance to look ahead into Spring, Summer, and flowery vistas in the mountains we see on our eastern horizons. MARK YOUR CALENDAR.

President's Message: In autumn, now into winter, as we wander through the foothills and mountains, or simply drive around local roads, we note all the changes from spring, summer....the plants are still here, but so different. It has been (was?) a long drawn-out and glorious fall season. Yes, more rain would have been welcome, but in the meanwhile.....up high snowberries (*Symphoricarpos*) lives up to its name, with all the leaves gone, and a plentiful crop of shiny white round berries, you can stand back and "see" the ground covered with a sprinkling of snow. As always, buckeyes are spectacular with the (mostly) single "chestnuts" dangling at the ends of what months ago were multi-flowered inflorescences. After one, usually the terminal, flower is fertilized the others mostly "shut-down", an adaptation to let the large, single, fruit get sufficient nutrition to develop.

Fall color is often not thought of as a significant aspect of our area.... but when the season is spread out as it was, the dogwood, Kellogg oak, choke cherry, sycamore, even poison oak, are brilliant, with willows and cottonwoods providing bright yellow contrast.

Looking ahead into warmer, dryer months, we will re-visit the burn area we explored last May-June. Information is

becoming more available about the way the "fire-following" species are adapted to their roles, and it will be interesting to watch these, observed first as new green germlings, come and go in the next year or two. Several of you have suggested walks into the area off Blue Ridge Road, toward Denison, or on up the Ridge.

Anyone familiar with these slopes, a recommended trail? We'll be assembling everyone's ideas, and offers to lead?, for hikes/walks so let us know your interests.

The theme of this winter Insignis, one that has been slowly-surely becoming an obvious topic for us to explicitly recognize, is the overlap, sharing among local groups that have a mutual interest in understanding, 'preserving" and enjoying open natural areas. Because memberships also overlap, it seems reasonable to try to avoid conflicts in scheduling events, or in duplicating work. WildPlaces, Audubon, Tule River Parkway, Sequoia Riverlands Land Trust, all offer hikes, work parties, or programs that attract us. Some of these are jointly sponsored with CNPS.

Just for fun, several of us have thought about all the terms that could be used to describe the way we come together: alliance, coalition, collaboration, confederacy, cooperation, partnership, league, union. Each, by definition, has a somewhat different connotation, but each is used as a synonym for some of the others. Some invoke a permanent joining with complete unity of purpose, while others imply a less-close association.

We highlight WildPlaces in this issue because one of their current projects could just as well have been designed as a CNPS project. Working ("cooperating") with the National Forest, the hope is to assist restoration of the Kellogg oak component in an area burned 12 years ago, south of Parker Pass. The first task was to tag and map 35 "clumps" of oak resprouts, each representing a large tree that had been destroyed. The intent is to

enhance the growth of probably the tallest 3 "leaders" by cutting the smaller stalks close to the ground. Patches of tall oak trees, with canopy to provide shade, shelter, and home for other wildlife, will be an important part of the recovering forest. The project is being designed to compare more than one management procedure, although because of the setting a rigorous experimental approach won't be feasible. The initial surveys of this fall will be the basis for continuing monitoring and activities. CNPS' participation is encouraged.

Wild Places's mission is "To preserve, restore, and protect California's wild and rural places and the peoples who are part of these native landscapes through volunteer-driven habitat restoration, environmental and cultural education, political advocacy and career development". They work to help preserve natural features of the landscape, working with ranchers, agencies, or other non-profits, neighborhoods. Schedules, calendars, announcements about their activities are posted outside the office on Hwy 190, on the west end of Springville, or at www.wildplaces.net.

New, just published California Native Plants for the Garden by Carol Bornstein, David Fross, and Bart O'Brien. Meant primarily for cismontane areas (not as useful in desert). General sections discuss the plant community concept, design guidelines, care and maintenance, and provide a bibliography of resources. More than 500 + "plant profiles" are the bulk of the book. Bulbs and annuals are briefly included, but because they are rather unavailable (bulbs) or an ephemeral part of gardens, they are not emphasized. We'll have copies at the February program.

California Grass Posters: also New in Catalog of CNPS publications, this is a

stunning 4-poster set depicting selected grasses in California. Laminated posters (use as place mats?) each measure approximately 12 x 17 inches. Three feature illustrations of native grasses on one side and information (Facts about Grasses, California Native Grasslands, Anatomy of a Grass) on the other. The fourth poster illustrates and discusses non-native grasses. The sets are also available unlined ("paper"), for framing or simply displaying as you wish.

Chapter positions? Anyone able to help?

Year end is also time to submit Alta Peak's Annual Report, to be combined with 31 others in the 2005 Summary of CNPS Chapter Activities. We look back on our two programs, a long list of hikes, field trips, the demonstration garden in Three Rivers (a collaboration with CDF/Fire Department), taking our display and sales table to numerous events around the County, and five issues of Insignis sent to members and others who have asked to be on our mailing list. What does this all add up to?

There are two areas where we currently lack a volunteer coordinator.... One southern California chapter uses the term "promiscuous plants" to refer to invasive non-native pest-plants. Tulare County has several weed management programs, and Sequoia NF considers invasive species as a major threat to the natural systems. Cal-IPC (California Invasive Plant Council) has recently issued a draft inventory of plants rated of High, Moderate, or Low ecological concern, and after intensive review, this list will be the basic reference for land managers and planners throughout the state. (This document has been developed by and for individuals working in wildlands, as opposed to ag-lands.) Is there someone in our Tulare County Chapter interested in providing comments on this draft? And then continuing to be our contact person

for questions, information dealing with **non-native species** problems?

And what do we do, get involved with, in the area of '**conservation**'? What does this mean for us here in this part of California? Sequoia NF, BLM, Fish & Game, all play major roles in Tulare County, with responsibilities for extensive public land. Perhaps this is why in the past few years our chapter has not been actively involved in advocating for/against particular projects or issues. Remember, those of you who have been members for more than recent years, however that we first came together to speak as a CNPS chapter to help support those trying to protect riparian areas in the Three Rivers area. (see the brief chapter history on page 5)

Several of our Board members submit comment letters to agencies and local officials when there are plant issues we want to call attention to. The update for the County General Plan is expected to be completed in 2006. Is it wise to issue permits for large projects prior to adoption of this Plan, when there are reasons to wonder whether some aspects of the proposed development may not be consistent with current ideas about this Plan? There are also concerns about the practice of amending the current, outdated (?) Plan to allow a project to move ahead. Several of the organizations that CNPS works with want to sit down together to consider how best to present a shared view of land use planning to those responsible for land use decision making. Remember, we offer comments about native plant resources, based on best available information. Species that have been identified as 'special' for some reason are monitored, and plant communities of particular concern are noted. Birds, fish, clean air, traffic we leave to others as long as we are speaking for CNPS...this doesn't mean we don't understand indirect effects (aka Ecosystem Integrity),

but we try to maintain our position as speaking for plants. Is there anyone interested in sharing the tasks of joining with others to work on a strategy for providing County planning staff with our points of view?

And the third position that lacked a body, has been filled!! Cathy Capone, currently president of Tule River Parkway Association and long time activist in on behalf of oak trees, grows a variety of native plants at Cal Natives nursery located on 1.5 acres in Porterville. She provided some of the plants offered at the October Chapter plant sale, contract-grows material for use in restoration or revegetation projects in our area, and has agreed to serve as Alta Peak **Horticulture** "chair". This means she will be in touch with other Hort-Chair persons around the state. One of her contributions will be responding to questions about using native species in garden settings. For example:

"Oaks are important in these settings, but sadly, they can be killed by inappropriate management. "Planting around, or under **OAKS** is a concern in almost every part of California, and here in our foothill communities, we hear frequent questions about how to keep oak trees healthy in a residential landscape. Many Chapters promote lists of "dry, shade" plants that presumably will grow in the shade of an oak, and some of these may be useful here. This is in keeping with the requirement that oak root systems are vulnerable to warm weather watering, and when damaged, the tree dies, quickly or slowly. The trunks are extremely sensitive to watering, meaning that grass or other water-requiring, plants can't be used nearby. Roots need adequate oxygen, natural winter rain, and the cover of decomposing leaves, rather than plants that compete for soil nutrients. Leaves that accumulate naturally are important in this

respect. Other mulch or rocks are useful if one needs to cover area under oaks."

Membership renewals: We received a year-end membership list from Sacramento, and note that some of you need to renew in order to maintain active status. And the same list includes some new names...WELCOME.....to all. Be with us, explore, enjoy our native plants, wherever they persevere!!

AND LOOKING BACK, to give you some sense of what CNPS has meant to Tulare County:

You may have read this column in Fremontia....we repeat it here with a thank you to Historian Gwen Warner who makes it possible to write an Alta Peak CNPS Chapter (Tulare County) history .

"Early in 1991 a group in Three Rivers, concerned about proposed development along the Kaweah River, affiliated with CNPS as the Alta Peak Chapter. Catharine-Elsah Cort was the first President, with the Insignis chosen as the logo. *Brodiaea insignis*, a CNPS List 1B species, grows only in the drainages of the Kaweah and Tule Rivers.

Alta Peak Chapter took positions on setbacks and development along the River, on the County Foothill Management Plan, and sand/gravel mining in/near river beds . Being active in the name of CNPS was often not a pleasant role, and we acknowledge the courage, perseverance, and willingness to "stick with it" that these Three Rivers members demonstrated. A widely publicized, well attended, open-to-all workshop, Living With a River, rallied growing support for CNPS work.

In 1994 Janet Fanning became President (and continued until end of 2003). As our membership grew into other areas of the County, wildland fire and non-native invasive species became Chapter concerns. We were part of the

fight to protect Sycamore Alluvial Woodland stands from sand/gravel extraction in Dry Creek . F&G was a valuable ally in this 'battle'--we lost in one sense, when the permits were given, but just recently the property, abandoned by the concrete company, was bought by the land trust and will be 'restored', we hope, in the coming years.

More History next time.....again, we need new energy to work, act, lead the Tulare County CNPS Chapter. "same old...." isn't the best way to work toward the mission we believe in.... consider what you can offer, call a Board member, see listing on back, and talk about your ideas.

and finally, we share this announcement:

The Tule River Parkway Association, in collaboration with the City of Porterville, is sponsoring three tree care days this winter, on February 4th, 11th, and March 4th, 2006 All the days are Saturdays from 9:00 to noon. Please meet at the Jaye Street Park and Ride Lot on the south bank of the Tule River at Jaye Street in Porterville. Before volunteers prune the young trees along the paved parkway path, Brian Kemp will provide training in tree pruning techniques in a classroom setting. This training will be available only in February. Everyone is welcome, those who attend the pruning training will be able to prune trees. Others can perform different tree care tasks such as tree planting, basin improvement and mulching, irrigation inspection and correction, weeding, trash pick up, stake and tie adjustment, and fertilization. Tools will be available, however you are encouraged to bring your own garden tools and gloves. Groups and families are welcome. This program is supported by a grant from California ReLeaf Urban Forestry program. For more information call Cathy Capone 361-9164.

Insignis News, CNPS
 Alta Peak Chapter
 c/o Janet Fanning
 41118 Blossom Drive
 Three Rivers, CA 93271

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 _____	___ Individual \$45
State _____ Zip _____	___ Family \$75
Tele. _____	___ Group, library, agency, business \$75
I wish to affiliate with:	___ Plant Lover - \$100-300
___ Alta Peak Chapter (Tulare County)	___ Patron - \$300-600
___ Other _____	___ Benefactor - \$600-1500
	___ Limited income \$ 25
Mail application and check to:	___ Mariposa Lily, \$1500+
California Native Plant Society, 2707 K Street, Suite 1, Sacramento, CA 95816	

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