



# INSIGNIS

Spring 2007  
Volume 17, No. 2

CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY  
ALTA PEAK CHAPTER NEWSLETTER

Please send changes of address to Membership Chair  
41116 Blossom Dr., Three Rivers, CA 93271

## LATE MARCH, EARLY APRIL- President's Message

The last Insignis was dated as Winter 2007, so this must be the Spring issue. Several weeks ago snow dusted lower hills, peaks were white, and only a couple of short rainy periods had broken the dry "rainy" season months. What does this mean for natural vegetation? Less of some species, more of others, but certain ones follow others in predictable patterns.

The field trip to Oak Flat Burn reflected this on/off weather, with slopes and ridges appearing recovered with new growth on several in-coming-years-to-be dominant chaparral species. Single tiny blooms here and there were the extent of any wildflower display; bush poppies once more filled their fire-follower niche. Elsewhere foothills are covered with the sheen of orange fiddleneck and white popcorn flowers, spectacular red bud, and looking closely, we can find delicate tiny lupines, a few red maids, with some but not all bulb species in bud or bloom. Another Tulare County Spring, different blooming dates, but sequences similar from year to year. [see Project Budburst, on page 4]

Shifting to thoughts about us as CNPS members, your responses to the letter mailed by Janet Fanning,

(from both of us as President and Past President) a month ago, have given us renewed faith that CNPS mission is important to many in this part of California. What you wrote and said invariably referred to oversupply of tasks, undersupply of our time and energy, but support for CNPS work. Other Chapters have the same concern--they also cover a lot of territory, central meetings are not feasible, or at least not simple, and everyone is busy. But everywhere a strong commitment to "do what we can" about natural resources we want to enjoy and preserve. No one has a single, nor a magical, solution, but everyone says "don't quit, we care", and so we will carry on.

Janet says yes, she'll go on being Treasurer, maintaining membership records, and sending information about CNPS events to media. With backing from Three Rivers members, she'll carry the brunt of the fall Plant Sale. Joan asks for help with planning and leading field trips/walks, and an offer to help with this newsletter would be welcome. Note, in theory, newsletter "editor" compiles, edits, then formats news, articles, that are sent by other members. This doesn't mean that 'editor' is necessarily responsible for writing, gathering all the contents. You need to send to the Editor items

you think interesting or important.

I'll continue to serve as President (anyone interested in breaking in as VP?), as chapter delegate to state meetings, and as contact person for both chapter and state business. I'll organize programs, and coordinate conservation work. Outreach? We've been asked again to have a table at an upcoming Porterville event but declined the offer. Janet and I agree to go on because of reassurance we've had from you. Thank you--- you know who you are and what you said.

CNPS will continue to maintain a presence in Tulare County, speaking out for what we believe. We are presently participating in meetings concerning the updated County General Plan, and proposed developments in Yokohl Valley and the Springville area. Watch local media for announcements on this topic.

A landscape architect from southern California who also is a botanist has agreed to come to Three Rivers for the September horticultural program. She'll combine professional design principles with "what will grow here" information. Useful approach!!

Unresolved is the question of how to develop a chapter board, a group that meets now and then to provide guidance, leadership, different suggestions, ideas, and mutual support. We'll contact those who have indicated possible help in this.

As an FYI inclusion, copied here is the required Report as submitted to the State for last year. It helps to

read a summary of what was actually accomplished.

## "ALTA PEAK ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2006

We began the year with Volume 16 of our *Insignis* Newsletter, sixteen years of working to further the CNPS mission in Tulare County. *Brodiaea insignis* is a species distinguished from others in the genus by the flaring petals, spread out horizontally, and inrolled staminodes. In the past year new occurrences have been noted, not far from previously known populations on the Circle J ranch which is owned/managed by the County Education Department for outdoor education. This stimulated discussion among the students about "rarity", and what biodiversity means.

Linda Vorobik offered our midwinter February program, Sierra Scenes and Flora. We traditionally have 2,3 'meetings' each year, with short formal 'business' preludes, followed by a free, open-to-all program. These are well publicized, and well attended. We make efforts to collaborate with other local organizations with overlapping interests. In '06 this involved a *Quercus kelloggi* restoration project in an area of Sequoia National Forest that had burned, cooperation with the Porterville-based Tule River Parkway group, and attempts to develop a master calendar for hikes, work parties, and other events.

Springtime meant a series of field trips, observing recovery of burned areas, annual hikes to see

favorite flowers, exploring places both familiar and new. Our schedule begins with lower elevation sites, then moves up to high meadows and peaks as roads open after winter snows melt. Every year we include a giant Sequoia "experience", in a different, unfamiliar area of our Forest.

Fletcher Linton, botanist on the Sequoia National Forest/Monument provided an evening program in June, repeating the one he presented at the June Chapter Council meeting in Ridgecrest. This combines pictures and information about the vegetation in this southern Sierra area of California.

The fall program brought together four local experts, each with a different kind of horticultural focus and gardening background. This panel-format meeting was held in the town of Three Rivers as a lead-in to the annual Plant Sale later in the season. Both events draw from widely separated parts of our area, and bring new members. An ongoing major conservation "issue" activated CNPS during this late summer season when a long awaited draft updated County General Plan was presented for review and comment. CNPS will continue to take part in discussions about where projected growth is to be directed over the next 20+ years. CEQA documents are still being prepared and are anticipated to provoke a long and controversial process. We take this as an opportunity not simply to interject CNPS comments, but to share information with all the other groups

involved.

In summary, six newsletters, three public program/ meetings, numerous hikes and outdoor gatherings, a successful plant sale, were what Alta Peak CNPS achieved in 2006."

#### FIELD TRIPS, HIKES.

Vernal Pool trip scheduled for May 5 CANCELLED. NO POOLS..

June brings the hike on the 24th to Jordan Peak to see *Erythronium pusaterii*, and maybe also *Fritillaria pinetorum*. Meet at 10:00 where North Road meets the end of Hwy 190. This assumes snow will have long since melted and North Road is open to the trailhead. See Winter, previous Insignis or call Joan for more details. About 2+ miles up a good trail, and the same distance downhill. Peak is about 9100' elevation, and we start walking above about 8200'. This is a climb that we repeat annually, not just for those two rare taxa, but for the walk through an old growth red fir forest and all the associated species, and the sub-alpine and timberline plants near the top. A plant list helps us recognize plants that we see very seldom in other places.

Slate Mountain Botanic Area, a new Giant Sequoia Experience, a day wandering through high mountain fens with Fletcher Linton, Botanist on SNF, and one or several mountain meadows provide a varied, something-for-everyone summer. Tentatively we suggest July 14 for Slate Mt., Aug. 11 for a fen/meadow trip, and later in

August for the Sequoias on Solo Mt/Ridge and, if they aren't all dried up, another meadow. We'll have handouts for each with more about the plants and their environment, but here we note that Slate Mt. involves a 10 mile round trip hike, elevation gain of about 2000'; Meet 10:00 at the Quaking Aspen Campground. Fens are along North Road, so as for Jordan, 10:00 at junction of this road with Hwy 190. Easy walking, below 8000'. Call to confirm and for other details. Next Insignis will give dates for later August. Your suggestions about future outdoor hikes, walks?

**PROJECT BUDBURST** the following was received from Sacramento CNPS:

Phenology is the timing of seasonal events such as germination and flowering time in the spring. Early clues to the onset of spring have been used for centuries by farmers to time sowing in order to maximize crop production. Today, phenological patterns are used to track the effect of climate change on plants and animals, to anticipate wildflower displays (and allergies), and to make predictions about fuel loads and about when to plant our gardens.

The U.S. National Phenology Network (NPN) was created in 2006 to facilitate the collection and sharing of phenological data. **Project BudBurst** is an annual campaign designed for the public; it's the collective effort of scientists and educators interested in encouraging citizen scientists to record flowering

times in nearby natural areas. **Six steps will enable you to complete your phenological investigation:**

- 1) Go to the Project Budburst website ([www.budburst.org](http://www.budburst.org)), where you may subscribe (it's free) and find complete directions at the **Participate!** link. Here you will:
- 2) Select and identify one or more species using the plant list or by geographic area;
- 3) Locate the site where you may observe each species, including its latitude and longitude;
- 4) Determine which phenophase (phenological stage) you are looking for (i.e. Budburst/First Leaf, First Flower). For help, you may download plant descriptions by selecting species from the "**Plants by List**" link.
- 5) Report your observations (the dates of each phenophase) online.
- 6) Compare your observations on our maps to thousands of others around the country.

With your help, we will compile phenological information that will be compared to historical records to see how our backyards, parks, and forests are changing. You can do your part by participating in Project Budburst!

#### **OTHER EVENTS, WALKS**

CNPS continues to cooperate, collaborate, link, support, all those useful verbs....with organizations with shared work and purposes. A joint CNPS/Audubon member sends this announcement, and we say Thank You Mary! Maybe some of you can arrange car pools?



"Tulare County Audubon invites you to the annual Bravo Lake and Eshom Valley field trip on May 12. Join the 50-50 Club- Identify 50 bird species and 50 wildflower and plant species- Or you may make the 75-75 Club!! We start at Bravo Lake looking for waterfowl, the magnificent American White Pelican or Osprey. We travel up Hwy 245 all the way to Eshom Valley at about 4,000 ft with its variety of habitats and species! Wildflowers grace the winding road through riparian, chaparral, Blue Oak woodland, and Oak Savannah woodlands. Eshom Valley is home to the beautiful Fivespot (*Nemophila maculata*). We eat lunch at the historic Eshom Cemetery, then drive to conifer areas around Hartland. The drive home on Dry Creek Road may bring even more birds and wildflowers. This is always an outstanding day full of discovery and camaraderie.

Meet at Sears parking lot in Visalia at Mooney and Caldwell at 7:15 am. We leave promptly at 7:30, or meet us at the southwest corner of Bravo Lake at the dirt parking area at 7:50. Bring family and friends, bird and flower books, binoculars, food and water, sun protection. Contact Gary (734-0833), e-mail , felix6014@aol.com, or Kim (783-2486) e-mail, kkuska.redfox@yahoo.com."

### MEMBERSHIP

One of the goals set by the State CNPS Board for 2006-07 is to increase membership. When our leaders and staff talk with legislators, agency heads, leaders at

any level of government, or funding sources, one of the first questions asked is about the size, in terms of members, of the organization. For this reason it is important that we have the (at least dues-paying) support of as many as possible. The Alta Peak Chapter began in 1991 with 37 members, mostly in Three Rivers, who were concerned with the effects of proposed developments along the middle and north forks of the Kaweah River. By December of 2007 we had 71 paid-up members, with another 20+ on our mailing list. A few of these were complimentary memberships, but many were lapsed, not paid-up. The State office sends renewal notices and retains your name on membership records for three months. For awhile we continue to send you the Insignis and other Chapter mailings, but at some point you are dropped, unless you renew through the Sacramento Office. The most common reason for not renewing is "I forgot", so this serves as an extra reminder!! Six new members joined in 2006, and we welcome you, one and all.

### GLEANINGS

Another member offers to read through all the Chapter newsletters we receive from around the state and mark items that she finds interesting. Next Insignis will begin her Gleanings Report. Perhaps a second person could share this 'work' with her? Thanks Teresa. Last, not least, another expression of appreciation to all who offered encouragement.

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 _____	___ Individual \$45
City _____	___ Family \$75
State _____ Zip _____	___ Group, library, agency, business \$75
Tele phone. _____	___ Student, Limited Income, \$25
I wish to affiliate with:	Mail application and check to:
___ Alta Peak Chapter (Tulare County)	
___ Other _____	California Native Plant Society, 2707 K Street

#### Chapter Board Members and Committee Chairs, 2007

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