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Volume 24, Issue 2 Newsletter for the Alta Peak Chapter of the California Native Plant Society

May 2014

High Meadow Field Trip

Ann Huber

On June 14, 2014, at 12 noon, take a stroll with National Park Service botanist, Erik Frenzel, and plant ecologist, Ann Huber, along Long Meadow (in the Wolverton area). This is one of the most gentle and botanically lovely walks in the front country of Sequoia National Park. The trail is flat to moderately sloping for less than two miles, looping around the open Long Meadow, with shaded portions that dip into the surrounding upper mixed conifer forest. Along the way, the group will catalogue the plants that are discovered and begin a plant list for Long Meadow. After the walk, those who want to continue the botanical adventure will visit Dorst Campground to monitor the rare sunflower *Hulsea brevifolia* (Short-leaved Hulsea).

The meeting spot will be on the deck of the Wolverton snack shop which is now closed. Gather here for lunch (bring your own) at 12 noon. The guided walk will begin after lunch, around 12:30 pm. This is a field trip for all ages and is open to everyone. Long Meadow is at 7,250 feet elevation, two miles north of the General Sherman tree in Giant Forest. Those people who are interested in carpooling can meet at

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Wilderness Act Turns 50

Celebrating the 50th Anniversary

Sylvia Haultain

On September 3, 1964, President Lyndon B. Johnson signed into law the Wilderness Act. This historic bill established the National Wilderness Preservation System (NWPS) and set aside an initial 9.1 million acres of wildlands for the use and benefit of the American people. Over the past 50 years, and as a result of America's support for wilderness, Congress has added over 100 million acres to this unique land preservation system. The 1964 Wilderness Act defines "Wilderness" as areas where the earth and its communities of life are left unchanged by people, where the primary forces of nature are in control, and where people themselves are visitors who do not remain.

The NWPS was established for the use and enjoyment of the American people and provides many direct and indirect benefits, such as those relating to ecological, geological, scientific, educational, scenic, spiritual, economic, recreational, historical, and cultural uses and activities. The 757 wilderness areas within the NWPS are managed by all four federal land managing agencies, the Bureau of Land Management, Fish and Wildlife Service, Forest Service, and National Park Service. To learn more about the Wilderness Act and the NWPS, visit wilderness.net, the official wilderness information website providing both general information about wilderness and specific information about each of the 757 wilderness areas.

For those of us living in the southern Sierra Nevada, the wilderness is closer than you might think. Over 96% of Sequoia and Kings Canyon National parks is either designated or managed as wilderness. The Sequoia-Kings Canyon Wilderness is bordered by the John Muir

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President's Letter

Melanie Baer-Keeley

While I knew this day was approaching, I had hoped it would occur in the distant future. Somehow, I was still surprised when Joan Stewart, our indispensable, inimitable board member recently declared her intention to retire from her positions as Vice President, Conservation Chair and CNPS State Delegate.

Serving the Alta Peak and the San Diego Chapters in nearly every board capacity possible, in addition to participating in many state-level committees for well over 40 years, Joan has an unparalleled record of activism. Joan's extraordinary service to this organization was recognized in 1999 when she was honored as a CNPS Fellow. Her long-standing dedication to this organization has set a high standard for those to follow.

As Conservation Chair, the protection of Tulare County native plants and wild habitat has been her utmost priority. With her academic background in botany, Joan has been an effective and outspoken advocate of CNPS policy. This is her most tangible legacy and without her in this role, our chapter suffers a tremendous loss.

Although Joan is relinquishing her formal board positions, she offers us continuing support as Springville liaison. Her role as such benefits our chapter by helping to integrate the southern range of a vast county. Fortunately, she will continue to informally provide guidance as Alta Peak Chapter weathers this change. Joan's dedication to this organization deserves the highest praise and our sincerest appreciation.

On another note, upon receiving Alta Peak Chapter quarterly membership results, I am pleased to report that we have a dozen new members and fourteen lapsed members who have recently rejoined. I would like to welcome new members, LaVerne Daniels, Sarah Elliot, Denise Griego, Bonnie McCassey, Lavada Metzger, Maureen Montgomery, Kristy Noble, Mark Roberts, Larry Underhill, Tom & Linda Warner, Erika Williams and to thank the others for renewing their support. I look forward to broadening our outreach and increasing our membership further.

High Meadow Field Trip continued

10:45 a.m. at the Three Rivers Memorial Building on Highway 198 in Three Rivers. If you decide to drive to Wolverton on your own, follow the signs on the Generals Highway in Sequoia National Park. The Wolverton turn off is two miles north of the General Sherman Tree. The drive to Wolverton from the Ash Mountain entrance station to Giant Forest in Sequoia National Park takes about 45-60 minutes (maybe longer if there is road construction). For directions, it's best to follow the park map that is given at the entrance station of the park. Be prepared to pay the \$20 entrance fee to the park if you do not have an annual pass. Bring sack lunch, water, hat and sunscreen as needed. For more information, contact Ann Huber at ahuberdas@gmail.com or call 559-561-4562.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

HIGH MEADOWS FIELD TRIP

Giant Forest Long Meadow
Saturday, June 14, 2014 noon

A botanist-guided stroll in a high elevation meadow.

WILDERNESS ANNIVERSARY PHOTO EXHIBIT

Fresno Art Museum
3427 E. McKinley Ave.
11:00am -5:00 pm

Thursday through Saturday

Open Now Through August 31, 2014

A display of wilderness photographs from throughout California, with particular emphasis on the Sierra Nevada.
(559) 681-6305

LANDSCAPING WITH NATIVES WORKSHOPS

College of the Sequoias, August 16
915 S Mooney Blvd, Visalia
9 a.m. until noon

Porterville College, Porterville, August 23
100 E College Ave, Porterville
9 a.m. until noon

Do it yourself landscape design with drought tolerant native plants. Information: (559) 799-7438

ALTA PEAK CHAPTER NATIVE PLANT SALE

Three Rivers Art Center
Saturday October 4, 2014 9:30a.m. - Noon
More information in August newsletter

California Native Plants and the New Science Framework

By Betty Avalos

The *Science Framework for California Public Schools: Kindergarten Through Grade Twelve* is being revised to incorporate and support the New Generation Science Standards (NGSS). The NGSS are internationally benchmarked and were developed by states, the National Research Council, the National Science Teachers Association, and the American Association for the Advancement of Science among other critical partners. The California Department of Education website, www.cde.ca.gov, has detailed information about the NGSS and the development of the new science framework.

Alta Peak Chapter members are exploring ways to advocate for including the study of California native plants in the science curriculum. It is important for students to understand and appreciate native plants and their ecosystems as part of their science education. California native plants should be incorporated into lesson plans and educational materials that teach the new science standards.

The Curriculum Framework and Evaluation Criteria Committee (CFCC) will meet from September 2014 through February 2015. There will be a 60-day public review period of the *Science Framework* draft from June through July 2015. The framework will be presented to the State Board of Education for approval in January 2016. Alta Peak Chapter members who want to submit written comments about the framework may send an email to scienceframework@cde.ca.gov.

River Ridge Restoration Field Trip report

By Joan Stewart

The CNPS Field-trip-Program on Saturday, March 15 at River Ridge Ranch near Springville was enjoyed by a dozen or so members and friends. This was a tour/walking seminar focusing on River Ridge's past, current and future efforts at landscape restoration. Dr. Gary Adest spoke of general land uses and compatibilities, restoration concepts and applications. The practices include selected enclosure of cattle, free access for wildlife, and removal of exotic-invasive plants using a variety of methods. The long range plan calls for prescribed burns, sequential plantings of trees, shrubs, herbs and grasses, with necessary follow-up treatments.

Throughout California restoration is becoming a major focus when considering how to manage or bring back lands with potential for native plant habitat. The morning walk with Gary, and his helper/intern Vaughan Williams, offered all of us an opportunity to observe and understand what restoration means to us here. Thank you, River Ridge for a morning that was both pleasant and interesting.

Birds and Blooms of Eshom Valley

Field Trip Report

By Sylvia Haultain



Photo By Cathy Capone
fivespot (*Nemophila maculata*)

At the end of March, several Alta Peak CNPS members joined the Tulare County Audubon Society on their annual trip through the foothills, which started at Bravo Lake in Woodlake and continuing to Eshom Valley and up past Hartland. The return route dropped down Dry Creek Road and back to Woodlake, bringing the trip full circle. Led by Mary Merriman and Sylvia Haultain, it was a wonderful opportunity to bring together both bird and plant enthusiasts. This special transect, from the Valley floor at Bravo Lake to Hartland at 4,500 feet, encompasses multiple habitats with an amazing variety of life, a tribute to the diversity that can be found in the remote corners of Tulare County. We saw 76 different bird species, and over 100 different plants. The ornithologists were quite patient with the botanists, and we were able to learn a great deal from one another. Some of the high points for this botanist included watching a merlin hunting next to a creek bed on Hwy 245, and both wood ducks and barn owls along Dry Creek Road. Despite the dry winter and early date, there were plenty of flowers to see, including some very nice displays of fivespot (*Nemophila maculata*) and baby blue eyes (*N. menziesii*). We'd like to do this again next year—so watch for an announcement in the newsletter or on the Alta Peak Chapter Facebook page!

A Colorless Spring

By Charles Repath, Ecologist, Mariposa, CA

A few years ago, I was working with a friend in Montana, monitoring the response of a rare plant - I forget which species - to prescribed fire. Afterwards, we drove a bit farther to what my friend told me was a particularly spectacular hillside for native plants. When we stepped out of the truck, my friend broke into tears. The beautiful bunchgrasses and wildflowers she had described to me were mostly gone, replaced by spotted knapweed. That is the way it sometimes is in the Rockies, Cascades, Sierra Nevada, and in other mountain ranges. Even in middle and high elevation habitats, and in designated wilderness, non-native plants are rapidly moving into montane plant communities.

When I moved to the Sierra Nevada six years ago, I was pleasantly surprised at how ecologically intact its montane habitats still are. The foothills were another matter. While poppies, lupines and dozens of other foothills natives still put on spectacular displays, in most areas, Eurasian bromes, wild oats, thistles have replaced native grasses and forbs, making up over 90 percent of the understory biomass.

The conventional wisdom has been that invasive plants are not a problem in the middle and higher elevations of the Sierra Nevada. And, many non-native species never spread beyond roadsides. However, most people who spend time in the mountains - even many resource managers - are not aware of the new scientific studies that are showing that high elevation habitats are much less resistant to invasion than previously thought. The on-the-ground evidence is actually alarming, as dozens of non-native species are becoming established in meadows, riparian wetlands, and other habitats. Some of these are transformer species, which can permanently alter vegetation composition, structure and ecosystem processes across entire habitats, are being found in. For example, reed canarygrass, velvet grass, and Himalayan blackberry are not only present in heavily-visited Yosemite Valley, but also in remote wilderness in Pate Valley, Tehipite Valley and Kern Canyon. Cheatgrass, which has already overrun millions of acres of sage steppe in the Great Basin, is now found on both sides of the Sierra Crest at elevations up to 10,000 feet.

At the same time that non-native plants are becoming more widely established in the Sierra Nevada, resources available to land management agencies for invasive plant management are continuing to shrink. While we know more than ever

about managing invasive plants, and can point to many examples where invasive plants have been successfully controlled. However, state and federal resource management agencies do not have funding to actively prevent new introductions, or to find and control new introductions before they become established and are too expensive or widespread to control.

Many resource managers have already thrown in the towel. They explain that, given climate change and the unwillingness of agencies and environmental organizations to fund ongoing invasive plant management, fighting invasive plants is a losing battle. Others, however, are still hopeful. They have seen that preventing introductions and detecting as well as controlling new infestations early works to protect native plants, and that it is important to keep native habitats intact and resilient to climate change, so that a greater diversity of species will survive into the future.

Convincing people that it is important to act now to protect native species diversity can be difficult. Successful invasive plant management is unglamorous, physical and monotonous work that requires dedicated and ongoing effort. And, we must recognize that problems that took many years to develop cannot be solved overnight. In many cases, non-native plant populations do not begin to damage to native species abundance and diversity until they are too widespread and well established to be feasibly controlled. Also, whether we take no action at all or insufficient action, the results are likely be the same. If we do not act now, our children and their children will still not be able to experience the beauty and diversity of native plants that we have always taken for granted.

So, we are at a crossroads. Do we Native Plant Society members and others who love native plants and wildlife, speak up for what we love? Or, or do we stay silent and allow those who do not care, or have already given up to control the conversation? Rachel Carson ignited the modern environmental movement when she warned against the loss of songbirds in her book *Silent Spring*. The replacement of native plants and wildlife by non-native species is a Rachel Carson issue for our region and for our time. I for one am continually amazed at the beauty and diversity present in the vast and still intact native habitats of the Sierra Nevada, and I don't want to give up just yet.

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Citizens who care about the Sierra Nevada should demand that those who we allow the privilege of acting as stewards of our natural legacy prove that the actions they take are sufficient for actually protecting this legacy. You and I can still hike into the Sierra Nevada and see meadows thick with native sedges and grasses and splashed with the colors of hundreds of species of native wildflowers. But for how

By Melanie Baer-Keeley

I would like to thank ecologist, Charlie Repath for his important article, "Colorless Spring." His breadth of experience and depth of understanding of the extent of native plant displacement by invasive plants in the West awakens us to the potentially irrevocable transformation occurring now. It is imperative for CNPS members to insist that public and private agencies recommit to protecting the resources from these potentially disastrous invasions. Find out what your local resource management agencies are doing to stem the spread of exotic pests and contact your elected representatives to ask that they support resource protection. Inaction should not be tolerated.

Invitation to join the Board

In view of Joan Stewart's vacancy, we do need to fill the Conservation Chair and Vice President positions. The Alta Peak Chapter is in an exciting transitional stage with new, active board members collaborating with those more seasoned. Getting involved as a board member at this time means that you will be helping to chart the course of this chapter and determine its focus and approach. Tulare County faces numerous upcoming conservation challenges, for example: the environmental review for the Boswell project in Yokohl Valley, drought/water, land management usage issues and post-fire management issues. CNPS, with the backing of over 10,000 members certainly can and must effect policy decisions. Advocacy is an integral part of this organization. In our chapter, many of the current board members involve themselves in commenting on these issues, independently as well as collaboratively, so the new Conservation Chair will have the support of other board members. Please contact either Melanie Keeley or Ann Huber, if interested in this very rewarding role.

YOSEMITE WILDFLOWERS:

AN APP WORTH CHECKING OUT

By Sylvia Haultain

Judy and Barry Breckling and High Country Apps, LLC have recently released a fabulous electronic tool for identifying the wildflowers of Yosemite National Park. This guide works very well for identifying wildflowers in the foothills and mountains of Fresno and Tulare County. I've used it both on my iPhone and iPad, and have found it extremely useful. Each plant is generously illustrated with beautiful photographs that show both the whole plant and close ups of the flowers. Plants can be searched for by name or identified by using the dynamic key, which allows one to narrow down the possible species by selecting leaf and flower characters as well as habitat and flowering time. This powerful resource will now be in my pocket whenever I go out, and I recommend it for amateur, professional, and student botanists alike. Cost: \$7.99

Native Plant Design Clinics

By Melanie Keeley and Cathy Capone

Saturday, Aug. 16 at College of the Sequoias 9 till noon

Saturday, Aug. 23 Location TBA 9 till noon

The traditional garden: lawn, lolly-popped shrubs, and sporadic trees are a thing of the past. With the onset third year of drought, it is time for a beautiful new model. California native plants not only use a fraction of the water that typical gardens do, they are attractive and colorful as well. In classes designed for native plant novices, we will help you and introduce you to some of the tried and true native plants, how to combine them for maximum effect and help you to design your own drought tolerant native garden. This is a great opportunity to transition to a natural, sustainable low water use garden.

Cost: CNPS Members - \$25.00 Non-members - \$35.00

Pre-registration is required. Class size is limited.

Instructors

Melanie Keeley, Restoration Ecology, Sequoia and Kings Canyon, Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks

Cathy Capone, Former owner, Cal Natives Nursery, Porterville

Call [559-799-7438](tel:559-799-7438) for registration as well as questions.

Native Garden Notes

By Cathy Capone

Japanese Influenced Fence

Constructed of Poles

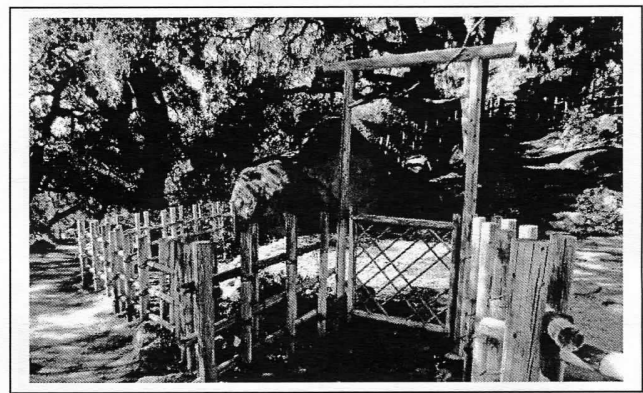
While I was visiting the Santa Barbara Botanical Gardens, I walked past the ShinKanAn Teahouse and Garden. This area is enclosed with a fence made of lashed poles. This fence style could be adapted for different uses, and as I hope the pictures show, can be used on uneven terrain.



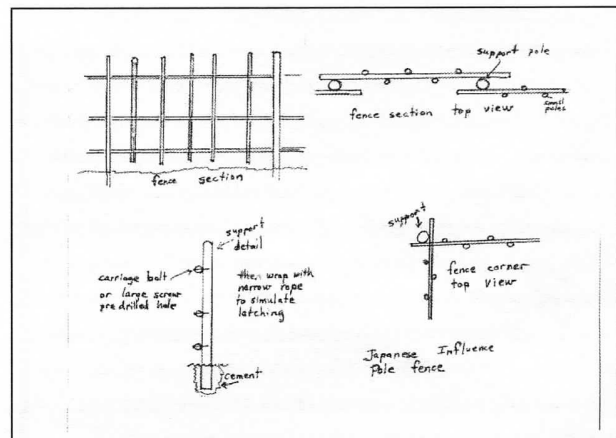
The horizontal pieces that support the fence are 3 to 4 inch in diameter and the rest of the pieces are 2 to 3 inches in diameter. These materials are available at most lumberyards and are sometimes called lodge-poles. Additionally, you will need large screws to attach the poles to one another and twine or small diameter rope. The fence will last longer if you cement the poles into the ground. Cementing the support poles or other techniques to lengthen the life of the support poles is worth the effort and will pay off by doubling the life of your fence. Make sure to slope the cement so that water does not collect at the base of the pole.

The poles are joined together with one large screw or carriage bolt per connection. Pre-drill a hole all the way through the piece you are attaching and part of the way into the fence part you are attaching it to. After the fence is built, lash the intersections with narrow rope. This fence could be constructed by using only lashing but the lashing would deteriorate in time. For an authentic knot see eHow.com and look for the Japanese Knot video segment.

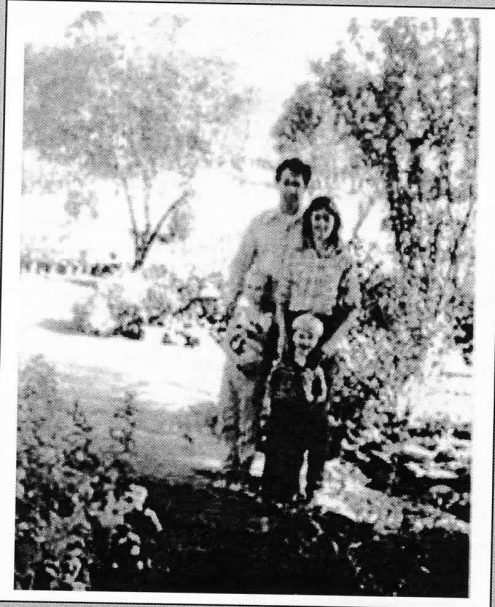
The ShinKanAn Teahouse and Garden had a beautiful but simple entry gate. The support poles at the ends of the fence at the gateway are seven or more feet tall above the ground and there is a larger diameter pole across the top which extends beyond the support poles. The top piece is drilled to allow the support poles to fit into pockets. A decorative natural branch is attached to the support poles in a horizontal position under the top piece. The swinging gate is as tall as the fence and is constructed with a rectangular frame made of the same poles as the fence. A lath of smaller diameter poles or bamboo sticks are attached to the rectangular frame and then the frame is attached to one support pole with hinges.



This fence could be built with tree branches or bamboo poles instead of purchased wooden poles. I encourage you to think outside of the fence (box) when designing your garden. Coming in the next editions of the newsletter are two more fence plans as seen at the Santa Barbara Botanical Gardens.



IN MEMORY OF BERT WILSON
FOUNDER OF LAS PILITAS NURSERY



From Bert's daughter, Penny:

"My dad passed away the night of Tuesday March 4th. He worked his normal 12 hour day of answering email, writing website content, taking videos, fixing the broken tractor and growing plants. He planted 150 baby 'Poza Blue' sages and 50 baby *Penstemon* 'Margarita BOP'S that day, two of his best cultivars. He had a nice dinner with my mom and worked late with my brother on a new website idea. Then he went to bed and died an hour or so later. He was the epitome of good health. He had a pedometer and liked to tell me how he walked 10 miles a day working around the nursery. He worked outdoors in the clean fresh air. His only vice was his lunch of fresh fruit and ice cream. We are all shocked and so sad. However, he didn't leave us altogether. He left so much of himself behind on the website, thousands of pages of his thoughts and knowledge, and his voice on his videos..."

For further information about Bert and for one of the most informative California native plant websites, please visit: laspilitas.com

Come by, sit back and relax with us.

The memorial event in Escondido has been rescheduled for June 8th. This event is listed on the Las Pilitas website.

Wilderness Act continued from page 1

wilderness to the north and east, the Mojave, the Golden Trout Wilderness to the west, the Golden Trout Wilderness to Krebs Wilderness to the south. Taken together, Nevada contains one of the largest tracts of wilderness in the NWPS.

This year, our nation will celebrate "50 Years of Wilderness." Find out about more about the 50th anniversary events planned, visit www.wilderness.org or your local park or forest. Make this the wilderness!

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CNPS MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name: _____

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Email optional: _____

I wish to affiliate with: _____ Alta Peak Chapter

Other Chapter: _____

Membership Category:

_____ Student/ Limited Income, \$25

_____ Individual, \$45 Mail with check to CNPS,

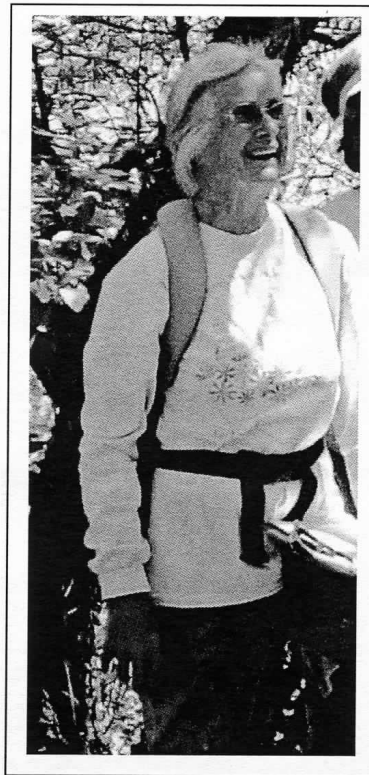
_____ Family, \$75 2707 K Street, Suite 1

_____ Patron, \$350 Sacramento, CA 95816

_____ Benefactor, \$600

_____ Mariposa Lily, \$1500

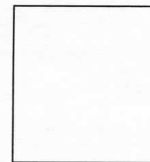
Or you can join or renew automatically via the website
www.cnps.org and click on JOIN



Joan Stewart 2008 Field Trip to Jenkin's Ranch

Photo by Cathy Capone

Ms. Cathy Capone
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