

# INSIGNIS

Volume 25, Issue 1 Newsletter for the Alta Peak Chapter of the California Native Plant Society February 201



Blue Oak breaking bud by Ann Huber

## President's Letter

By Melanie Baer-Keeley

"Celebrating 50 Years of Progress and Promise," truly reflects gains made by the California Native Plant Society over a half century anniversary last month. This special occasion coincided with its biennial conservation conference which brought together well over 1,000 participants, indicative of a thriving organization. One aspect I found most encouraging was the record high number of student participants who presented either oral or graphical posters of their work. Their presence and developing relationships with the well represented stalwart "old guard" botanists, some of the most noted scientists in the field, filled me with great optimism that the strong and unified conservation ethics that this organization and its members have promoted over the last fifty years will persevere over the next years. There is much promise in the coming generation. More than 300 inspiring speakers presented topical subjects such as *Science of Threats, Plant Science, Pathogens & Pest, Restoration, Plants and Wildlife, Emerging Tools, Negotiating, Horticulture, Climate Change, Managing Lands* to name a few. Remarkably, at the Friday night banquet, exceedingly generous auction item bidders raised approximately \$30,000 to benefit the CNPS Conservation Program. It was a memorable event where like-minded plant- and life-loving people could join together to plan, share and commemorate a grand anniversary.

*President's Letter continued on page 2*

## Phenology Workshop

An Introduction to Phenology: Tracking plants to detect responses to climate change

By Ann Huber

Where: Three Rivers Arts Building

When: Saturday, February 28, 2015 2:00 – 4:30 pm

What to bring: snacks, hat, pencil, and clipboard

Do you like to observe plants? Are you interested in how an observation like the first day that a lilac blooms, or the first opening of a flower on a California buckeye tree might help us understand how native plants respond to changes in climate?

Ann Huber (Alta Peak board member and biologist with Sequoia Riverlands Trust) will give an introduction to phenology – the study of the various seasonal developmental stages that plants and animals undergo, such as leafing and flowering, migration of birds, and emergence of insects. If you ever noted a Sycamore's leaves changing color and dropping, that was a phenological observation. Paying attention to phenological changes is not a new phenomenon for people, but linking these observations in native plants to the current changes in climate that we are observing is a relatively new field, and scientists are looking for help from all corners of the globe. Much more is known about agricultural plants than native California species.

After about a 1-hour presentation, participants of this workshop will move outdoors to get hands on experience with Nature's Notebook; a free online resource produced by USA-NPN (National Phenology Network). When you participate in Nature's Notebook, your observations are added to a national database that scientists and land managers can access for research and make better informed decisions about natural resources in their care. You will also be introduced to the free resources available for observing native plants in our area via the California Phenology Project's website. While it serves a greater purpose, it's also a lot of fun to observe nature!

For questions, please contact Ann Huber at [ann@sequoiariverlands.org](mailto:ann@sequoiariverlands.org) or (559) 738-0211 ext. 109

*President's Letter continued from page 1*

The Alta Peak Chapter has our own wonderful news. I would like to welcome two new board members: Denise Griego of Three Rivers will be the Recording Secretary and Shelley Quaid, of Exeter will be the Field Trip Chairperson. Denise formerly worked in elementary education, and in her retirement, has become an avid hiker, birder and native plant gardener as well as native plant enthusiast. She has been active in the Three Rivers Redbud Garden Club, overseeing their public native plant gardens and volunteering at Sequoia National Park. Shelley, also formerly in elementary education, has worked for California State Parks in Monterey, Riverside, Santa Cruz counties. She is a dedicated hiker and volunteers for several worthwhile charitable organizations as well as Sequoia National Park in the Interpretive and Resources Division. She has a deep interest in native plants and wildlands. Please join me in welcoming these very committed individuals!

We are excitedly offering some great field trips and events this year. Two of the field trips will take place in the southern reaches of Tulare County, with one in the foothills and one in the mountains. The others will be held in the northern regions of the county. These are wonderful opportunities to talk to and learn from the experts. *(Please see details on the following pages.)*

With regards to events, in late February, Ann Huber, Alta Peak board member and Stewardship Director of Sequoia Riverlands Trust, will be presenting a talk on the California Phenology Project, which enlists citizen scientists to help track the timing of growth stages of plants and animals through the seasons. The data is coming in! Find out how climate variability is affecting these organisms and what it means in the long term for plants and climate change. *(See page 1 for details.)*

Cathy Capone, who plays the combined board roles of Horticulture Chairperson and Newsletter Editor, and I will again be teaching a do-it-yourself landscaping workshop in early May. We look forward to enabling class participants to design their own native plant garden. *(See Page 5 for details!)*

Also this spring, on Saturday, April 18<sup>th</sup>, the Alta Peak Chapter will be selling native plants in conjunction with what will be a wonderful fundraising event for Three Rivers Elementary School. Five drought-tolerant gardens will be on tour (including mine!), featuring many native plants. Touring these gardens will visually illustrate how to have a beautiful garden even in times of severe drought. *(See Page 4 for details.)*

My personal thanks go to our board members, field trip and event leaders for all of your efforts. We've looking forward to the great year ahead!

--Melanie Keeley

## Calendar of Events

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## BIRDS AND BLOOMS

Joint Field Trip with Tulare County Audubon:  
Eshom Valley and Bravo Lake  
**By Sylvia Haultain and Mary Merriman**

When: Saturday, March 21, 2015

This special trip is designed to help the birder become a well-rounded naturalist and the well-rounded naturalist to become a better birder! In past years, this trip totaled an amazing 102 species of birds and at least that many plants. Yes, on this trip, you could become a member of the very prestigious 100/100 club, by seeing 100 different birds and 100 different plants ALL ON THE SAME DAY! Since this trip traverses over 4,000 feet in elevation, we are undoubtedly guaranteed to experience a glorious peak bloom of wildflowers at least somewhere along our transect.

This trip will begin with a quick scoping of Bravo Lake in Woodlake (440 feet). After that, we will head towards Eshom Valley, possibly making a brief stop at Sentinel Dome. Our route will then head north on Highway 245 past Elderwood; where on the top of the hill at Badger (2,700 feet), we will take a restroom break. A few miles east of Badger lies the mountain dale called Eshom Valley (3,376 feet elevation), one of the true hidden treasures of Tulare county. The valley is several miles long and, in places, a mile wide and the site of beautiful specimen valley oaks. From here we will continue up into the mixed conifer forest above Hartland. We plan on returning by traveling south on Dry Creek Drive to finish our loop.

Directions: We will meet on the south side of the Sears parking lot (the corner of Mooney and Caldwell) in Visalia at 7:15 a.m., leaving promptly at 7:30 a.m. There will be a second meeting place at Bravo Lake Botanical Garden at 8:00 a.m. at 2116 E. Naranjo Blvd. in Woodlake. The botanical garden is located 2 blocks east of Valencia Blvd/Hwy 245 on the north edge of Bravo Lake in Woodlake directly across from the N. Pomegranate Street junction. Bring your family, friends, binoculars, spotting scope if you have one, a bird book, a flower book, a hat, sunscreen, water and a lunch.

*Birds and Blooms continued from page 2*

For further information, please call Mary Merriman (559)732-5459, Penny Stewart (559)224-9403, or Sylvia Haultain (559)679-3864. This will be a joint field trip with our Tulare County Audubon friends, who know exactly where to go to find amazing birds and are happy to join us as we look for early spring wildflowers.



Blue Dicks *Dichelostemma capitatum*  
By Cathy Capone March 2014

## Conservation Report

By Joan Stewart

As reported in the September *Insignis*, the Sequoia National Forest Plan is in final stages of approval and implementation. Newly arrived on my desk is a major proposed restoration project for the Tobias Forest Ecosystem. I anticipate considerable time and thought will be called for to understand and comment on the project. The project area is approximately 10,900 acres. The plan proposes to treat approximately 50 percent of the forested project area through non-commercial and commercial thinning treatments. Comments concerning the scope of the analysis must be received by March 2, 2015.

Alta Peak Chapter will comment on or remain in touch with two other, much smaller, issues. Planners on a riparian restoration project near Farmersville have asked for input on appropriate plants to be used. Above Springville, PG&E is asking for a short extension time for filing a report on the noxious plant monitoring they are undertaking along a flume.

## Buckeye Ranch Field Trip

By Cathy Capone

When: Saturday April 11, 2015

Buckeye Ranch is owned by Gay and Jim Ver Steeg. We will be touring the Tyler Creek section of the conservation easement. As I write this, it is raining on the ranch and I hope we will see a crop of wildflowers on our trip in March.

Directions: 9:00 am - Meet in the parking lot at Lowes, 500 W. Vandalia Porterville, Ca 93257. We will meet in the small parking lot just west of the traffic circle which is in Lowes parking lot. We will leave the parking lot by 9:15 am.

The drive from the parking lot to Buckeye Ranch is approximately one hour. Further directions will be provided at the meeting location and by email upon request. The field trip will last until approximately 1:30 pm and then the drive back to Lowes in Porterville is one hour.

Buckeye Ranch is at 3,700 feet elevation and our one mile walk will have less than one hundred feet of elevation change. The walk is an easy to moderate walk along informal trails. Buckeye Ranch lies in stately blue oak woodland. Tyler Creek, a tributary of Deer Creek, runs through the property; beautiful sycamore trees grace its banks. The ranch covers an extensive wildlife area that is home to bobcats, bears, deer, mountain lions, and numerous Sierra birds. An old stagecoach road winds its way through the property and one can find grinding rocks used by Native Americans, maintaining the memory of California's early history.

Bring a sack lunch and beverage so that we can stop for a picnic along our walk. As always, bring walking shoes, hat, sunscreen, and insect repellent.

After our CNPS walk on Buckeye Ranch is finished, you might consider non CNPS trip to California Hot Springs just 2 miles away from the Ranch. See the following web site <http://www.cahotsprings.com/> Bring you swimsuit and towel or just go for a meal or snack at the café. The pools close at 5:00 pm.

For more information contact Cathy Capone (559) 361-9164  
[cathycaponemail@gmail.com](mailto:cathycaponemail@gmail.com)

# Garden Tour

By Kristina Rope-Graber

The Hidden Homes and Gardens of Three Rivers Tour will take place on Saturday, April 18, 2015. The Tour will feature five unique homes and gardens. Highlights of the tour include native and drought-tolerant gardens, a working farm, and interior tours of five distinctive Three Rivers homes. In addition, local artists (including one painting on site), musicians, and a "Taste of Three Rivers" (provided by local restaurants), will be offered at each home and garden. Volunteers and docents will help guide you through the homes and gardens.

Self-guided tours of local public gardens will also be included in the Tour. Native plants seen on the Tour will be available for purchase courtesy of the Alta Peak Chapter of the California Native Plant Society and Intermountain Nursery, at the Three Rivers Veterans Memorial Building by their native plant garden.

TICKETS are \$40 each, and are available at Three Rivers Union School and online at [www.trusfoundation.org](http://www.trusfoundation.org). Tours begin at each location at 11 am and end at 4 pm. Tickets and brochures can be picked up beginning at 10:30 am on the day of the Tour at Three Union School. More information on each home and garden will be available soon at [www.trusfoundation.org](http://www.trusfoundation.org).

Note : The Hidden Homes and Gardens of Three Rivers Tour is a fundraiser benefitting the Three Rivers Union School, and is sponsored by the Three Rivers Union School Foundation.

## Chapter Council Report

By Delegate, Joan Stewart

In September, Chapter Delegates gathered on the other side of the Sierra in Big Pine, for meetings hosted by the Bristlecone Chapter. In general the business and topics covered are discussed in the State bulletin, so here I pass along only some personal reflections. It was a good meeting, with most of us camping. The two field trips, to the Bristlecone Forest in the White Mountains were memorable... many of us had not the chance to explore this California ecosystem with leaders familiar with the plants and animals. Lo and behold, the cones are bristly!! Looking at the Jepson description, page 145, one reads, "scale tip knob prickle 1-6 mm, slender, stiff". The picture, p. 149, really doesn't show this feature. But when we picked up old fallen cones, it was obvious what gave the species this name!!

*Chapter Council Report continued in next column*

Many, including myself, missed the December meeting due to widespread "bad" weather. But we are looking forward to the upcoming Chapter Council meetings on the high desert, in the town of Yucca Valley on March 13th-15th, hosted by the Riverside/San Bernardino Chapters. This spring the attendees will have opportunities for desert field trips before and after the business sessions.

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# CHAPTER GRANTS

TWO AWARDS FOR 2015

By Betty Avalos

The Alta Peak Chapter is pleased to announce two grant awards for 2015. The Eleanor Roosevelt Community Learning Center Ecological Restoration Project will receive \$497.25 and the River Ridge Ranch Oak Woodland Restoration/Demonstration Project will receive \$300.

Eleanor Roosevelt Community Learning Center (ERCLC) is a charter school with a seven-acre campus located in Visalia. The restoration project includes two sites with two very important ecosystems: Valley Oak Riparian Woodland and Valley Sacaton Grassland. The sites have already been treated with prescribed fire and over five pounds of native wildflower and grass seed was spread in winter 2014-15. The project's over-arching vision is to restore the campus with California native plants and to construct an interpretive trail system to utilize the restored areas in curricula and events. College of the Sequoia students and staff, ERCLC students, parents and community members will contribute to the design and implementation of the project. The Alta Peak grant will provide funds to purchase interpretive signage materials and native plants. Jeff Alexander, ERCLC lead staff person and Bobby Kamansky, Ecologist and owner of Kamansky's Ecological Consulting are leading the project.

The River Ridge Ranch Oak Woodland Restoration and Demonstration Project in Springville are led by Dr. Gary Adest and Dr. Barbara Brydolf, owners. This re-vegetation, restoration, conservation, demonstration project features three natural stream courses that currently support Valley Oak Woodlands. College students from COS and local community volunteers have already gathered and processed over 600 acorns and have begun planting. Additional plantings will occur in fall, 2015 and fall, 2016 with support from the NRCS and the US Fish and Wildlife Service's Partners for Wildlife programs. These programs call for fencing out cattle, removing exotic/invasive plants, prescribed burning and re-vegetation with native trees, shrubs and grasses/herbs. All plants will be harvested from the restoration sites and propagated by the River Ridge Ranch Native Plant Nursery. River Ridge Ranch will have fully-restored and functional restoration/demonstration sites by 2019 that will host organizations, agency personnel, schools, universities, and the general public.

*Chapter Grants continued in right column*

*Chapter Grants continued from left column*

River Ridge is visited annually by 7,000 people and hosts hundreds of students throughout Tulare County free of charge. The Alta Peak Chapter grant will provide funds to professionally letter plant identification signs to highlight trees and shrubs within the oak copses.

The Alta Peak Chapter Board of Directors congratulates this year's grant recipients and wishes them continued success with their projects. Information about Alta Peak Chapter grants for 2016 will be available in the spring Insignis newsletter and on the Alta Peak website and Facebook page.

## California Native Plant Landscape Design Clinic

**Date:** Saturday, May 2, 9 AM until Noon

**Location:** College of the Sequoias  
915 S Mooney Blvd, Room # 133  
Visalia, CA

**Cost:** Members \$30.00  
Non-Members \$45.00

Note: reservations are required

**Contact:** Melanie Keeley, (559)799-7438 or Cathy Capone  
(559)361-9164

Having a low care and low water use, attractive landscape in our arid hot climate is challenging, but native plants are pro survivors! Having a simple planting plan with compatible native plant selections can ensure your landscape is a beautiful success. To help you plan your own garden, the Alta Peak Chapter of the California Native Plant Society is offering a DIY native plant landscape design clinic. This workshop is a great opportunity to beautify your yard in a water-conserving sensible way. With a plan in place, you can break down the landscaping process into manageable steps or phases.

With a combined 30 year experience growing California native plants, Melanie Keeley and Cathy Capone, will teach the most colorful, showy, and popular native plants; principles of planting and care and how to combine plants in your new landscape for the longest possible flowering. (Note: Many of the plants for your new landscape will be available for purchase at our annual native plant sale scheduled for Saturday, Oct 3rd at the Three Rivers Art Center). We will also have relevant reference books available to purchase at this class.

*Design Clinic continued on page 6*

*Design Clinic continued from page 5*

Bring to class the following items:

- Photos of the existing landscape
- A Rough sketch of area to be landscaped, with a directional “North Arrow” and dimensions, noting sun and shade exposure and special features or concerns

We will supply:

- Plant and landscape expertise
- Graph paper
- Pencils
- Beverages and snacks

## Springville Mountains

### Field Trip

By Cathy Capone

Date: Saturday May 30, 9:00 am until 3:00 pm

Meet in the parking lot at Lowes 500 W.

Vandalia, Porterville, CA 93257. We will meet in the small parking lot just west of the traffic circle which is in Lowe’s parking lot. We will leave the parking lot by 9:15 am. If you wish to meet us higher up highway 190 arrange a meeting location with Cathy Capone.

Joan and Cathy will scout the potential hike locations two weeks before the trip. We plan to look at the following areas to determine which ones are accessible, and have the most interest this year; Freeman Creek Grove, Jordon Peak, Wishon Trail, high elevation meadows, or the trail to the PGE forebay. The high elevation meadows are easy walks but the other hikes are moderately difficult with substantial elevation gains. Please call Cathy or any of the board members May 17 or later to find out which hike was selected.

Bring hiking shoes, water, food, a hat, sunscreen and bug spray. Wear or bring layered clothing, temperatures can change quickly in the mountains.



*Sequoiadendron giganteum*, Giant Sequoia  
Alpine Village, Photo by Cathy Capone

## Long Meadow Loop Walk

Sequoia National Park

By Ann Huber

Date: Saturday, June 13, 2015 at 12 pm

Join us for the 2<sup>nd</sup> annual Long Meadow stroll! This year, Tyler Schmidt from Sequoia and Kings Canyon National Parks will help lead the hike with Ann Huber along Long Meadow, one of the most gentle and botanically lovely walks in the front country. The trail is flat to gently sloping less than 2 mile loop around the open Long Meadow, with shaded portions that dip into the surrounding upper mixed conifer forest. Along our way, we will catalogue the plants that we come across to continue filling out a plant list for Long Meadow.

Our meeting spot will be on the deck of the Wolverton snack shop (now closed) that overlooks the meadow. We will gather here for lunch (bring your own) and then depart for our walk around the meadow at 12:30 pm. This is a field trip for all ages, so bring the whole family.

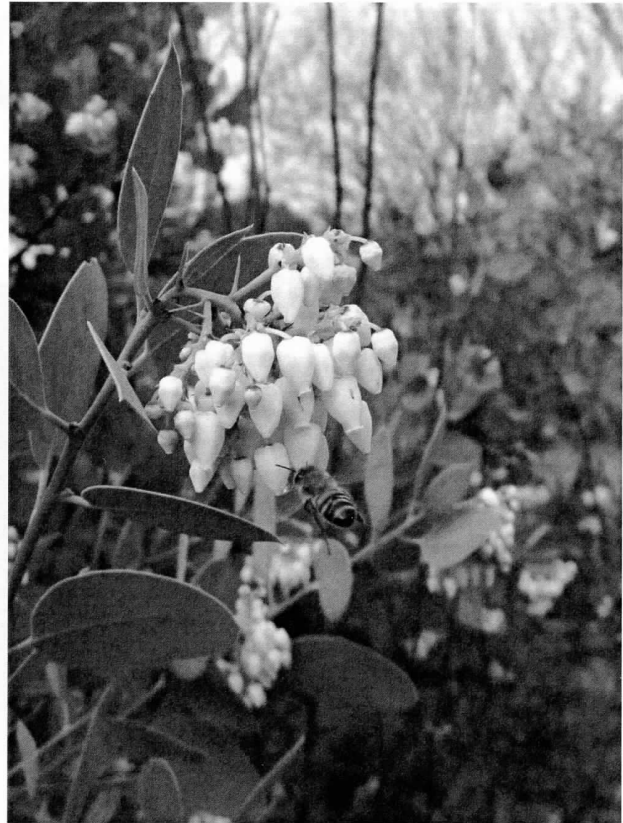
*Long Meadow continued on page 7*

*Long Meadow continued from page 6*

To get to the meadow, follow the sign to Wolverton on Generals Highway. In the winter, Wolverton is a snow play area; the large open area of the snow play area is Long Meadow. Wolverton / Long Meadow is at 7,250 ft (2,160 m) elevation, two miles north of the General Sherman tree in Giant Forest. The drive to Wolverton from the Ash Mountain entrance station to Sequoia National Park takes about 45-60 minutes. 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.



Above: *Ribes aureum*, Golden Currant  
By Cathy Capone, location: Cathy's garden Feb. 2015



Above: *Arctostaphylos* Manzanita 'Dr. Hurd'  
By Cathy Capone, location: Cathy's garden Feb.2015



Above: *Garrya fremontii*, Fremont's Silk Tassel  
By Cathy Capone, location: Cathy's garden Feb. 2015

## Ask the Expert

By Cathy Capone

Ask the Expert is a column designed to assist members in any area of CNPS interest. This is a new column/service to members. You may email questions and pictures to Cathy. Please put Ask the Expert in the subject line. Cathy will direct the question to the board member with knowledge specific to your question. Your question may be featured in the next newsletter. We plan to respond to all questions with timely emails.

CNPS MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_

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

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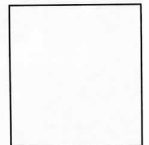
\_\_\_\_ Mariposa Lily, \$1500

Or you can join or renew automatically via the website  
[www.cnps.org](http://www.cnps.org) and click on JOIN



Photo by Cathy Capone  
*Cercis occidentalis*, Western Redbud  
Location: Cathy's garden Feb. 2015

Ms. Cathy Capone  
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ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED

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