

INSIGNIS

Volume 26, Issue 1 Newsletter for the Alta Peak Chapter of the California Native Plant Society January 2016

Winter Program

Floristic Study, South Fork Tule River

Date: Saturday, February 6, 7:00pm
Meeting and Greeting at 6:30 pm
Location: Springville Memorial Building
35944 CA 190, Springville
Contact: 559-539-2717

By Joan Stewart

Yes, February is midwinter, but it won't be too long before our hills and meadows explode with new growth, flowering shrubs, wildflowers in sunny grassy slopes. The CNPS program for this spring features Jessica Orozco, a graduate student in Botany at Claremont Graduate School University Rancho Santa Botanic Garden, Claremont, CA. Who has spent the past three years exploring the area south of Springville, within the drainage of the south fork of the Tule River. This is a mostly unstudied place; the fork drains mountains with Giant Sequoias, foothills that lie adjacent to and beyond Cow Mountain, and includes the Tule River Indian Reservation.

The Tule River Indian Reservation was established in its current location in 1873 on the ancestral land of the Yaundachi Yokuts people of the Central Valley. Vegetation includes oak woodland, grasslands, chaparral, riparian that changes seasonally along the river, and temporal streams, as well as coniferous forest and Sequoia groves. This area is the ideal place for a floristic study because it represents a botanical "black hole". Access to the area by botanists has been previously limited as is the case with many tribal trust lands in California. Poorly documented plant diversity on the Tule River Reservation speaks to the need for collaboration between native American communities and interested plant and animal biologists. All benefit from the exchange of knowledge.

Jessica has carefully documented her detailed information with color slides, which will share a vision of the land with those of us who gaze up and wonder what lies beyond. Leaders of the Tribe and those who manage these tribal lands have supported her and they understand the mutual gain from her botanical explorations.

Join us on Saturday February 6, 2016 at 7:00 pm at the Springville Memorial Building on Hwy 190 for this free, open to all, program offered by our Tulare County Alta Peak Chapter, of CNPS. Arrive before 7:00 pm to chat with friends and set up the chairs. Mark your calendars

Native Plant Project Grants

Grant Applications Due on Feb. 1, 2016

By Betty Avalos

The application deadline for Alta Peak Chapter Native Plant Project Grants is February 1, 2016. The Chapter's grant program, which began in 2013, has funded projects for the Redbud Garden Club in Three Rivers, the Eleanor Roosevelt Community Learning Center in Visalia, the River Ridge Ranch in Springville and Tulare Tech Prep High School in Tulare.

The Redbud Garden Club received a grant to develop brochures for the five Three Rivers community native plant gardens. Club members, Bonnie McCassy and Marcia Goldstein, created colorful brochures with photos of the gardens' native plants. The brochures have been distributed to establishments throughout Three Rivers and placed in brochure holders at each garden.

The Eleanor Roosevelt Learning Center (ERCLC) in Visalia is using their grant funds to make signs that mark trails and identify plants throughout their ecological restoration project. Jeff Alexander is in the process of locating many of the native plants the school hopes to acquire including slender sedge, creeping rye, purple needle grass, yarrow, milkweed and yerba mansa.

River Ridge Ranch in Springville received a Chapter grant to produce a series of interpretive signs for the Valley Oak Restoration/Riparian Demonstration Project. Signs identifying the perennial shrubs and trees have already been installed. Next, Gary Adest and Barbara Brydolf will install a series of three large-format signs that explain the project to visitors.

Tulare Tech Prep High School will have an update in the next newsletter on the progress they're making with their native plant nursery project.

There are currently two grants available, between \$250 and \$500 each, for projects that promote the restoration, conservation and study of native plants throughout Tulare County including the Sierra Nevada Mountains and Foothills. The Chapter is willing to consider applications from schools, researchers, and community organizations. Grant guidelines and more details are available on the Chapter's website at www.altapeak.cnps.org. For more information, please contact Betty Avalos, Education and Grants Chair, Alta Peak Chapter of the California Native Plant Society at bvalos@hotmail.com or (559) 561-3211.

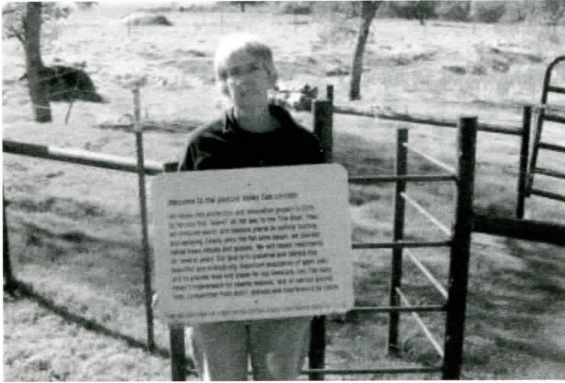


Photo submitted by Barbara

Barbara Brydolf New Chapter Board Member

I'm very excited to be a part of the Alta Peak Chapter Board and CNPS. This was a long time coming, but seems an inevitable next step in my life. I've lived all my life in California, and I love the diversity and uniqueness of our state.

I come from Southern California. My father, an avid outdoorsman, taught me an appreciation of the plants and animals of the San Gabriel Mountains. His influence led me to study Biology at Cal State LA, a move I have never regretted.

However, as I was growing up, I was struck by the continuing loss of the wild land in my neighborhood. The fields where I used to wander and see cottontails and butterflies were replaced with houses, and the native plants and animals disappeared. When I moved to San Diego in 1980 to study at the graduate level, I was impressed by how much more open space was there. Unfortunately during the ten years I lived there, I saw a repeat of the pattern of building and habitat destruction. I was saddened by this seemingly inevitable pattern and the apparent lack of appreciation of California residents for the diverse and beautiful native plants right at our doorstep. Why did we have to put plants from around the world in our yards, while ignoring our own? The English seemed to have a far greater regard for the California flora than we did.

When my husband Gary and I moved to Tulare County in the 1990's, I came back to the California I thought I had lost, only my new home was much richer than any I had lived in before. I saw butterflies I hadn't seen since childhood and had forgotten existed, and more wildlife besides: deer, bear, bobcat, coyote, ringtail cat, salamanders, rosy boa- the list seemed endless. I also found many native plants I had never known from the Southland: buckeye, redbud, valley oak, bush poppy, coffeeberry. How wonderful that was! And still is.

However, I soon learned that this fabulous treasure trove that surrounds us in Tulare County was under-appreciated by many of its residents. How could they, when they hadn't seen what I had in other parts of the state? Because they still had so much, they didn't seem to see that what they had was really scarce and valuable. I wanted to save what I loved, and when Gary and I had the opportunity to buy a piece of land that was slated for subdivision, we did so. It was quite a stretch for us, and had I realized how it would take over our lives, I might not have had the courage.

Becoming the owner of what became River Ridge turned out to be a big job. We wanted to protect the land, so we placed a conservation easement on it. We had to figure out how to make the property pay for itself, so we created an event venue that helped pay the bills. We wanted to improve the wildlife habitat and restore the landscape, so we fenced off areas from grazing and planted natives. I wanted to use plants from our watershed and local area, so I started trying to collect and grow plants from our ranch. The collecting and growing became bigger and bigger, until now I have a native plant nursery in my yard.

So you can see how becoming involved with CNPS seems the inevitable next step. I'm eager to find out what will happen as a result!

Remembering Janet Fanning

Sadly, Janet Fanning, our long standing, devoted Alta Peak Chapter board member and CNPS Volunteer Service Award recipient passed away recently on January 3, 2016. For twenty years, she dedicated herself to this organization, giving selflessly so that we might flourish.

To those of us that had the fortune of knowing her, Janet was "...strong, kind, smart as a whip", a "...lover of plants, animals and children...", very generous with her "time, knowledge of plants, gardening, and canning". She will most certainly be missed.

The following is an article that ran in the May 2010 Insignis.

Honoring Janet

Janet Fanning, our long time Alta Peak Chapter treasurer, membership and plant sale chair, is being honored by CNPS with a Volunteer Service Award. Janet joined the chapter eighteen years ago. She has been invaluable in keeping our financial records in order. And she has been the mainstay for organizing our annual native plant sale. Thank you, Janet!!



Janet in her garden photo submitted for May 2010 article

Conservation Report

By Joan Stewart

Conservation during the recent summer and fall months has been mostly a case of wondering what management will be feasible and important in our forests as the more permanent effects of the summer's heat and drought become clear. It became obvious that many of the higher elevation trees would not survive, and at present, not only in Tulare County but over the entire State, dead and dying trees are a dominating concern. There is at present no clear answer as to what to do and we have not been asked to comment on any proposed actions. Each of the possible projects has serious unwanted effects on the ecosystem. Use of machinery damages soil and seedlings. Other actions include fire or selective clearing. But then what does one do with dead material since lumber mills are over-supplied. So, CNPS as of this winter is not taking any single position, but will wait for more of a consensus as to what can be done to salvage or remove dead trees. Other consequences of the drought and heat present other questions about management of the area's plants. We'll report further as information becomes available and our Chapter is asked to review any proposed plans.

Rare Plant Branch

By Ann Huber

We are pleased to announce a new branch to our chapter, the Rare Plant Committee. This new group will bring added awareness to the many rare and sensitive plant species in our region, with a goal of providing at least one local rare plant field trip a year. The committee will be led by Ann Huber and Mary Merriman. Ann is our Chapter's former treasurer, and is also a biologist, and Stewardship Director with Sequoia Riverlands Trust (a non-profit land trust). Mary is an active member of the Alta Peak Chapter, and as well as our local Audubon Society Chapter.

When thinking of rare plants, many people only think of those species listed as threatened or endangered. But there are many other levels of rarity, species not be listed as threatened or endangered but are also vulnerable due to a limited distribution and/or small populations or declining populations. For instance, our region is home to a large number of species that are endemic (only occur in a defined geographic area) to Tulare County. Many species are endemic to an even smaller geographic area, for example, *Eriogonum nudum* var. *murinum* (mouse buckwheat) which only occurs in the mid-elevation band of Middle Fork of the Kaweah River watershed. Rare plants can also be locally rare, meaning that there are few populations within this portion of the species' overall range. Locally rare plants can be rare in a local area because it is on the geographic edge of the species range. (Some of you may be familiar with the East Bay Chapter of CNPS's locally rare effort, led by Dianne Lake.) While not under

immediate threat of extinction, many rare plants are becoming increasingly vulnerable because of a changing climate, such as those that occur only in the high elevation meadows in the southern Sierra Nevada. There is a great deal of concern about the fate of plants restricted to these meadows as the climate continues to warm.

The Rare Plant Committee will make an effort to highlight these local gems in the months ahead. As a first foray, they will sponsor one or more CNPS-sponsored Rare Plant Treasure Hunts. The treasure hunts are not just an excellent educational opportunity. They also provide very valuable information about our local species. Many rare plants have not been surveyed in many years, and information about the extent of their populations is either out of date or missing altogether. During a treasure hunt, a group of volunteers join an organized search for a particular rare plant in a given area, providing critical data to the CNPS rare plant program and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. For more information please visit the Rare Plant Treasure Hunt website at <http://www.cnps.org/cnps/rareplants/treasurehunt//>

So, in the months ahead, keep an eye out for announcements from the Rare Plant Committee. As with everything we do, its success will rely on your interest and support. We hope to see you out there soon, learning about and helping protect our local treasures!

Phytophthora

By Cathy Capone

At their December 5, 2015 meeting in San Carlos, the CNPS Chapter Council unanimously adopted a policy on actions to reduce the threat of Phytophthora infestations and other harmful pathogens in native plant nursery stock. This policy was prepared at the request of the Willis Linn Jepson Chapter. This policy will help guide CNPS actions and allocate its resources to minimize this threat.

CNPS has not released the final wording of the policy, but that should be available shortly.

President's Letter

By Melanie Bear-Keeley

December 2015

I am excited to share with you some of the highlights from our recent trip to the quarterly state chapter council meeting, held in San Carlos, in the Bay Area. Alta Peak was very well represented this time, with Joan Stewart, Cathy Capone, recently elected board member Barbara Brydolf and I in attendance.

Joan, who has been an unparalleled and dedicated delegate for countless years, turned over the responsibility of her position and vote, amidst appreciative applause. Cathy Capone (currently serving on the board as *Insignis* editor and Horticulture Chair) will be stepping in as Alta Peak Chapter delegate. Joan and I will be serving as alternates. Joan has represented our chapter's interests to the state, reporting on conservation matters along with any other of native plant concerns. She will continue to attend these meetings to participate more so in conservation-related activities, which, fortunately for us, impassions her. Thank you, Joan, for serving the needs of the organization and those of Tulare County so powerfully for so long. Thanks also to Cathy Capone, who, by accepting this role is, once again illustrating her dedication to protecting this area's native resources. Serving as delegate is no minor commitment. It requires meeting in all corners of this expansive state four times a year, serving on various state committees while bridging state board and chapter communications. Thanks again to both.

Efforts by the state staff include the soon to be completed new strategic plan, which will serve to unify and focus conservation efforts across the state. This document will outline how CNPS proposes to accomplish its primary goals to "...increase knowledge, action, and engagement to protect, appreciate, celebrate, and restore California's native plants and places."

Several conservation-oriented discussions of interest were had, on 1) the multiagency "Desert Renewable Energy Development Plan" (DREDP) which affects 22 million acres of southern California deserts. This document mandates that renewable energy project developers who must adhere to federal and state environmental statutes are "...preserving, restoring and enhancing natural communities and related ecosystems." CNPS Conservation Program Director, Greg Suba, has provided lengthy comments to ensure that there be "...effective protection and conservation of desert ecosystems..." during the development of these projects. Also, 2) concerns about forest issues as related to drought-incurred dieback of millions of conifers, particularly in the Sierra Nevada were intensely discussed, as was need for a CNPS state policy about forest management as it pertains to the handling of diseased, dead or dying trees. Please see Joan Stewart's Conservation Report for details.

Although it was a little overwhelming to hear about so many dire statewide conservation concerns, I left the CNPS Chapter Council Meeting encouraged knowing that there were so many truly committed and knowledgeable members whose involvement in conservation and legislation was effecting important positive change at both the state and regional level.

Certified Botanist Program

By Cathy Capone

A CNPS committee has been working on a system which would certify Botanists. The committee has completed work on the system and this article presents an overview of the process and reasoning behind the certification. This article includes information posted on the CNPS website.

Over the years, it has become clear that a formal identification of minimum standards for botanists is needed for California. The California Botanist Certification Program (CBCP), administered by the California Native Plant Society (CNPS), fills this need by formally recognizing botanists that:

- Incorporate scientifically sound botanical principles in decision-making
- Meet a minimum set of standards in knowledge and experience
- Adhere to high ethical standards

Goals and Function

- Certify only well-trained, competent, responsible, and ethical professionals.
- Establish widely accepted standards of proficiency and professionalism that guide the training, development, and performance of botanists and their products.
- Facilitate relevant professional training.
- Maintain and elevate courses and training in academic, field oriented, and reporting arenas.
- Require routine recertification to ensure botanists continue to stay up-to-date with current scientific practices and regulatory requirements.

Objectives

- Serve the needs of botanists who wish to establish and validate their professional credentials.
- Guide biologists, governmental entities, regulatory agencies, courts, and the public in defining minimum standards of knowledge and ability for professional botanists.
- Establish a critical peer evaluation of a botanist's knowledge and skills based upon defined minimum technical skills and knowledge.

- Encourage all practicing botanists to meet established professional standards.
- Assist the public, regulators, and project proponents in identifying qualified professional botanists.
- Create and maintain confidence in the advice and opinions of Certified Botanists, as well as educated and experienced professionals, who have pledged to uphold the Botanist Code of Ethics.

Certification Benefits

- Recognized on the Register of California certified botanists
- Hold a Certificate as a Certified Field or Consulting Botanist
- Receive a Certification number and relevant acronym for business cards and (email) signatures
- Receive Certification patch
- Annual California Professional Botanist newsletter

Caring for and Multiplying California Native Irises

By Melanie Keeley



With about two dozen species, countless subspecies, and ever more named hybrids and selections of native irises in California, there is a wide choice in flower color, shape, and growth habit available for gardens. Each flowering spike produces a dramatic ephemeral flower consecutively each day for a couple of weeks in springtime, although irises of different types can flower in early, mid or late season. In combination, these can extend the

flowering period to about one month. The native species tend to bloom in blue, yellow, or white, but with such a vast array of hybrids and selections, blossoms can be bi- and tri-colored in all shades of the rainbow, making them admired and desired the world over. Ease of growth, disease resistance, with striking foliage and flowers, they are an asset to any landscape.

Tulare County is host to two lovely native irises. *Iris munzii* (Munz's iris) whose rarity is listed by the California Native Plant Society as 1B: meaning that it is rare, threatened, or endangered in California and elsewhere, while *Iris hartwegii* (Hartweg's iris), occurs more widespread throughout the state. Both can be seen in the Sierra Nevada, with Munz's iris tending to grow in isolated patches in the foothills and Hartweg's iris inhabiting higher elevations, although there is overlap. Here, Hartweg's Iris flowers yellow, while Munz's iris blooms pale blue.

Most commonly found at nurseries and in cultivation though, are the "Pacific Coast Irises" also known by the scientific name, *Iris douglasiana*. The countless named selections produce flower colors ranging from white and pale yellow to almost black. Bearing memorable names such as "Egocentric", "Sunburn", "Distant Nebula", and "Ocean Blue", it is clear the popularity of the derivatives warrants a Pacific Coast Iris fan club! (<http://www.pacificcoastiris.org/>).

Division of cultivated Pacific Coast irises in your garden is one of the best ways to propagate them. This should take place in winter, after the first soaking rains. Check for fresh, plump, white, actively growing roots, and then lift a clump and separate sections with one leaf fan. Promptly replant them so the crown is just visible at the soil surface, then water well after dividing. To ensure against losses, divide part of your plants this year and part next. Once divided, leave the plants alone and let the fans naturally multiply and get crowded again for a few years before dividing them again.



Photos by Melanie Keeley

Left column *Iris douglasiana* Right Column *Iris munzii*

Bryophytes, What They Are, and Why We Should Care

By Melanie Keeley

They are ubiquitous throughout the landscape. They grow on almost all surfaces: rock, soil, wood, in streams and meadows at all elevations. Although they are strongly affected by changes in moisture, precipitation and temperature, they can be found growing from arid to aquatic situations. While they are minute in stature, they are evidently visible. Though there are well over 600 species throughout diverse climates and landscapes in California, they are among the least known and recognized plants in the plant kingdom.



Welcome to the wide world of mosses, liverworts and hornworts also known generally as Bryophytes. For our purposes, the word “Bryophyte” will refer to these three divisions although, please note that technically speaking, until recently “Bryophyte” was an inclusionary term used for all three which had been categorized together into a single division due to their similarity. However, it now has been determined that they are not as closely related as once thought, so they currently have been classified into three distinct divisions (Bryophyta = mosses; Anthocerophyta = hornworts; Marchantiophyta = liverworts).

Bryophytes are considered to be important indicator species of larger environmental issues. Interestingly, scientists consider them to be “biomonitors” of man-made or naturally induced environmental change. Lacking roots and vascular systems typical of higher plants, bryophytes take in moisture and nutrients directly through the single cell thickness of their leaves. This characteristic and others make them highly sensitive and vulnerable to changes in air and water quality as well as to other environmental effects such as increased levels of ultraviolet radiation, which can quickly cause genetic mutations. They have also been found to accumulate heavy metals such as lead from the environment, a concern because of the cumulative buildup in the food chain.

Although California bryologists have been academically active for the past twenty years, in spring of 2015, the California Native Plant Society welcomed the new Bryophyte Chapter as the first interest-based chapter. This group of professional as well as amateur bryologists continues their focus on inventorying and updating the status as well as condition of the state’s bryoflora. Headed up by James R. Shevock, currently Research Associate at the California Academy of Sciences and Paul Siri Wilson, faculty

at Cal State Northridge, they have proposed coming to Tulare County in spring of 2017, particularly to update a previous inventory taken at Sequoia National Park. Then, they will be offering classes and field trips to instruct and enthuse participants, helping to demystify the cryptic, but fascinating mosses, hornworts and liverworts.

Chapter Council Summary

By Cathy Capone

The Chapter Council meetings of December 5th and 6th were packed to overflowing with issues, work, and reports.

CNPS is in stable financial shape.

Plant Science - An updated Kern County Flora is being developed. A new book on California’s botanical landscapes will be out soon.

Dan Magney reported on CNPS efforts to protect plants that would be affected by two developments. He also explained the work of a CNPS committee which is developing a system which will provide for certification of botanist. The certification program will be self-supporting.

It has been decided that CNPS and Calflora will not merge. This issue has been under discussion for over a year. Although combining our efforts, financial support, and volunteer expertise would improve the publically available database, Calflora has a broad array of internet tools some of which are outside of our areas of interest and might not fit with our mission.

The Chapter Council unanimously adopted a policy on actions to reduce the threat of Phytophthora infestations and other harmful pathogens in native plant nursery stock. This policy was prepared at the request of the Willis Linn Jepson Chapter. This policy will help guide CNPS actions and allocate its resources to minimize this threat. CNPS has not released the final wording of the policy, but that should be available shortly. CNPS has hired a plant pathologist to develop best management practices for the chapters and there will be more work on this at the March meeting.

Intense discussion was held on the Strategic Plan. The revised framework for the Strategic Plan was approved. This framework will guide the development of the goals and actions which will fill out the Plan. A Strategic Plan will be prepared by staff with input from chapters and it is hoped that a plan will be ready for a vote at the March meeting.

Information and discussions were held on dead and dying trees, wind farm issues in Baja California, and outreach to potential members in community subgroups.

Board of Directors

President, Plant Sales, Poster and Book Sales: Melanie Keeley
mbaerkeeley@gmail.com
44246 August Drive Three Rivers, CA 93271
(559) 799-7438 (C)

Vice President, Outreach, Webmaster: Elsayh Cort
elsahcort@gmail.com
P.O. Box 245 Three Rivers, CA 93271
(559) 561-4671 (H)

Conservation: Joan Stewart
tori2toli@ocsnet.net
37759 Highway 190 Springville, CA 93265
(559) 539-2717 (H)

Secretary: Denise Griego
bdgriego@sbcglobal.com
43582 L. Cienega Drive Three Rivers, CA 93271
(559) 561-4697

Treasurer: Barbara Brydolf
bbrydolf@gmail.com
PO Box 879, Springville, CA 93265
(559) 359-2827 (C)

Newsletter Editor, Horticulture, Delegate to Chapter Council:
Cathy Capone
cathycaponemail@gmail.com
806 W. Westfield Ave. Porterville, CA 93257
(559) 361-9164 (C) (559) 783-0201 (H)

Education & Grants: Betty Avalos
bavalos@hotmail.com
45257 Hammond Drive Three Rivers, CA 93271
(559) 561-3211 (H)

Membership, Outreach: Ginger Bradshaw
gingerbradshaw936@gmail.com
47050 Generals Hwy, #56
Three Rivers, CA 93271
(559) 827-7604 (W)

Field Trips: Shelley Quaid
Shelley.quaid@gmail.com
201 Windsor Court Exeter, CA 93221
(559) 623-4233(C)

Rare Plant Team: Ann Huber and Mary Merriman
Ann – ahuberdas@gmail.com
41043 Grouse Drive Three Rivers, CA 93271
(559) 561-4562
Mary – marymtnsprit@att.net
2344E. Four Creeks CT. Visalia, CA 93292
(559) 732-5459

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

_____ Benefactor, \$600

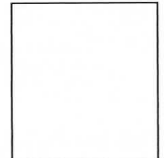
_____ Mariposa Lily, \$1500

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



Vitis californica California Wild Grape
Submitted by Barbara Brydolf

Ms. Cathy Capone
806 W. Westfield Avenue
Porterville, CA 93257-1254



ADDRESS CORRECTION REQUESTED