

Hibiscus

California Native Plant Society
Sacramento Valley Chapter Newsletter

www.SacValleyCNPS.org

Serving the Sacramento, Yolo, Colusa, Sutter, Yuba,
lower Placer and northern San Joaquin County areas

JANUARY 2012

January Meeting:

Wed., 1/11, 7:00 p.m.

Shepard Garden &
Arts Center

McKinley Park

3330 McKinley Blvd.,
Sacramento 95816

Sabrina Okamura Johnson,
President (916) 929-7896

*Our chapter meetings
are free and open
to the public.*

Wildflower seeds, books and
Sacramento Valley Chapter
t-shirts are available
for purchase at meetings.
Refreshments provided!



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JANUARY PRESENTATION:

A Native Plant Nursery Restored

How a Shuttered Nursery Rose from the Ashes of Budget Cutbacks

Rich Marovich

© 2011 Libby Earthman



Former CalFIRE Deputy Director, Stephen Jones (left)
and Rich Marovich

The L.A. Moran Reforestation Center in Davis is home to the only state-run seed bank in California and formerly produced 400,000 conifer seedlings per year for reforestation projects throughout California. While seed bank operations continue today, in 2003, the container seedling program was shut down due to state budget cuts.

Rich Marovich of the Lower Putah Creek Coordinating

Committee (LPCCC) will recount how the unique and innovative partnership between LPCCC, the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CalFIRE), and the Putah Creek Council brought life back to the facility. LPCCC manages the nursery that specializes in native riparian plants, while the Putah Creek Council organizes community volunteer events to collect and process seeds and cuttings, and to transplant nursery stock. Community volunteers also plant the nursery stock in restoration sites along Putah Creek from Winters to Davis. For more information on nursery and field events, see: www.putahcreekcouncil.org. For photos, see: www.watershedportal.net/gallery/lpccc.

Rich Marovich is a Putah Creek Streamkeeper, a position created in 2000 by a landmark settlement agreement over water flows in Putah Creek. He oversees monitoring and restoration projects on thirty miles of Putah Creek from Monticello Dam at Lake Berryessa to the Yolo Bypass. Rich graduated from U.C. Davis in 1978 with B.S. in Environmental Horticulture.

Click arrows to turn pages!

The mission of the California Native Plant Society is to conserve California native plants and their natural habitats, and increase understanding, appreciation, and horticultural use of native plants.

Conservation of Vernal Pool Landscapes

by Carol W. Witham (cwitham@ncal.net)

This article is not about getting you jazzed over vernal pools. Multiple references are at your fingertips including the Sacramento Valley Chapter website (www.sacvalleycnps.org), a site dedicated to information about vernal pools (www.vernalpools.org) and the Sacramento Splash education site (www.sacsplash.org). If you haven't visited these resources recently, I encourage you to do so. They will inspire you and renew your appreciation of California vernal pools.

Instead I want to focus a bit on advocacy for vernal pool protection and the successes, failures, and ongoing issues. While the Sacramento Valley Chapter is of limited geographical area, we have not limited our advocacy work related to vernal pools to the confines of the chapter boundaries. Besides the works briefly discussed below, our chapter continues to be involved in vernal pool issues throughout the Sacramento and San Joaquin Valleys, plus others. CNPS chapters of more limited human and fiscal resources continue to appreciate our involvement in what is truly a state-wide issue. Other environmental groups also rely on our involvement and information resources.

The Sacramento Valley Chapter of the CNPS has long been the leader in advocating for conservation of vernal pools. The late George Clark was instrumental in bringing the plight of Mather Field to the attention of dedicated chapter members. Eva Butler who was recruited by George took her own passion about vernal pools and turned it into an award winning curriculum and program for fifth grade students (see www.sacsplash.org). I too was initially recruited by George and have used my knowledge of vernal pools to help further their conservation through information distribution, planning and implementation (see www.vernalpools.org). Many other chapter volunteers have helped carry the torch for these uniquely Cali-



Mather field vernal pool located in an area once proposed for gravel mining.

© 2011 Eva Butler

fornian landscapes (see www.sacvalleycnps.org/conservation/vernalpools.html).

Recovery Plan for Vernal Pools.

Through settlement agreements over the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's failure to designate critical habitat for the listed vernal pool species, the Recovery Plan for Vernal Pool Ecosystems of California and Southern Oregon was released in 2005. This document lists specific steps and measures to aid 20 federally listed species and an additional 13 species of concern. This plan is being implemented on a regional basis by working groups overseen by a statewide Recovery Team. CNPS is represented on that team and two working groups. (The recovery plan is available at www.fws.gov/sacramento/ES/Recovery-Planning/Vernal-Pools_recovery_vernal-pool-recovery.htm.)

University of California at Merced.

While the deal brokered between the environmental community, the regulators, and UC Merced did not receive much attention from the press, it was a huge accomplishment in consensus planning. In 2007 we collectively agreed on a modified footprint for the campus and adjacent community that shifted the impacts away from the most pristine vernal pool grasslands. The shift resulted in preserving an additional 120 wetted acres of vernal pools, swales, and clay flats, conserving 70 vernal pools occupied

by Succulent Owl's Clover, 104 pools with Vernal Pool Fairy Shrimp, 8 pools with Midvalley Fairy Shrimp, and two breeding pools for California Tiger Salamander. The Sacramento Valley Chapter was the lead environmental organization during five years of fighting and the two years of negotiations and even funded an attorney to attend some of the meetings. (See www.vernalpools.org/talks/Witham_3.ppt.pdf.)

Mather Field Vernal Pools.

Through the dedicated efforts of Eva Butler and her Mather Field Preservation Campaign, we can say that Mather Field is still there and has not been parceled off into numerous projects including an urban forest, a water treatment plant, gravel mining, etc. Hundreds of volunteers have spent thousands of hours fighting off projects on this site. However, Mather Field will be a continuing saga until after all planning has been completed for the area. (See www.sacsplash.org.)

Sunrise Douglas Area of Rancho

Cordova. Sometimes it takes more than negotiations and getting folks to attend meetings. Occasionally CNPS has had to resort to litigation in order to make projects do more for protecting vernal pools. The Sacramento Valley Chapter has again been instrumental in this work and raised over \$55,000 in funds to help pay for legal services. We have had two successful lawsuits, one in state court and one in federal court, related to various projects in this region. We continue to monitor this area and the numerous other projects being proposed here. (Additional information on these lawsuits can be requested from cwitham@ncal.net.)

South Sacramento Habitat Conservation Plan. I don't even want to think about how many years and how many volunteer hours have gone into this project. Unlike other successful consensus planning achievements, this process has lacked any political will aimed at achieving goals and success. Several chapter members continue to

endeavor on this project, but as stated below, many of the largest projects with the highest impacts to vernal pools may get permitted before any plan is in place. (See www.msa2.saccounty.net/planning/Pages/SSHCPPlan.aspx.)

Upcoming Projects. While the economy has slowed, planning new developments has not. Major developments are proposed in numerous locations in Sacramento County alone. The map shows the projects currently in some phase of planning or permitting. These represent a large portion of the vernal pools remaining north of the Cosumnes River. While most of these projects are proposing some on-site preservation, many will destroy up to 50% of the pools and will fragment the ecological functions provided by a larger landscape connectivity. The indirect impacts from proximity to development will be huge as well. With already permitted projects, projects well within the permitting process, and rumored projects, we are looking at over 13,000 acres in the eastern area of Sacramento County alone. Most of these will probably be permitted long before the much awaited South Sacramento Habitat Conservation Plan is in place. (Request additional information from cwitham@ncal.net.)

Unregulated Losses. It is relatively straight forward to comment upon projects that impact vernal pools

which are subject to permits and environmental impact assessments that require public participation. The Sacramento Valley Chapter of CNPS has a long history of providing comment letters on such projects. It is entirely different to deal with losses due to unregulated, often illegal, agricultural land conversions. In a report released in 2009, Bob Holland reported that Sacramento County had lost 6,424 acres of vernal pool landscape during the period of 1997 through 2005. Of that, a whopping 48% was lost due to agricultural conversion (mostly to vineyards). Since 2005, several thousand additional acres have been destroyed for the purposes of agricultural conversion (mostly to vineyards). (For a copy of the 2005 Holland report and other pertinent literature, see www.vernalpools.org/literature.htm.)

Looking Toward the Future. While all of the above seems rather bleak in total, the unique and truly incredible plants and animals that occupy vernal pools and their landscapes cannot defend themselves. Every single concession the environmental community can achieve that affords more protection, larger preserves, and better management of set aside lands will aid these species.

How You Can Help. Getting involved in advocacy, writing good letters, attending hearings and providing testimony, knowing what is and is not

important from a legal perspective, etc can all be very daunting for someone new to the game. I would like to help you get started on being an effective advocate for the issues that you care about. In exchange, I would like your first few endeavors to be about the ecosystem that I cherish the most – vernal pools. Contact me!

Saving Our California Prairies

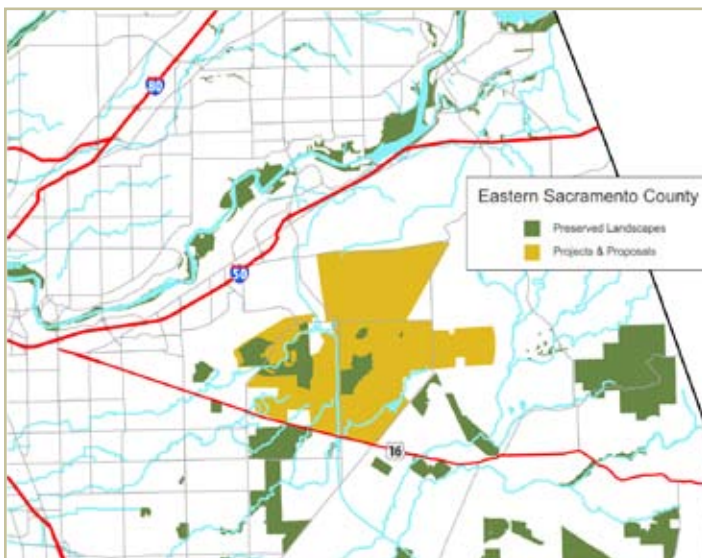
by Glen Holstein, Chapter Botanist

Traveling down I-5 to the March Chapter Council Meeting in Claremont this year I was surprised to see fields in northwestern Kern County covered for miles with the snow-white native wildflower *Layia glandulosa*. Other fields slightly farther south were golden masses of *Lasthenia minor*. This was the Central Valley as described by John Muir and the earliest explorers before him – colorful flowers as far as you can see and few if any grasses.

Why then do we call the valley grassland and constantly try to “restore” it with “native bunchgrass”? Unfortunately it all resulted from an academic mistake that’s gradually being corrected. That’s a nice thing about science – if it works properly it’s self-correcting. I’ve seen that happen with lots of things I learned in graduate school. We now know continents I was taught stood still actually move around quite a bit. We’ve also learned that mushrooms once included in botany as plants are actually closer to our own tree of life branch. Now we’re also gradually learning that California valleys once thought to be covered by bunchgrasses were actually earth’s largest flower fields.

Yes, there were bunchgrasses in valleys on a few special soils, but mostly they were on slopes above the valleys. Early explorers of California were quite clear about that. Where grasses were present in the valleys they were mostly rhizomatous ones like creeping wild-rye and saltgrass. It was flowers, though, that most often dominated California’s valleys.

Why have clear descriptions of this by John Muir and many others been so ignored? It is largely because two



Vernal pool landscapes in eastern Sacramento County currently being developed or with development proposals being developed. Some of these projects are proposing on-site preserves, but they are not shown.

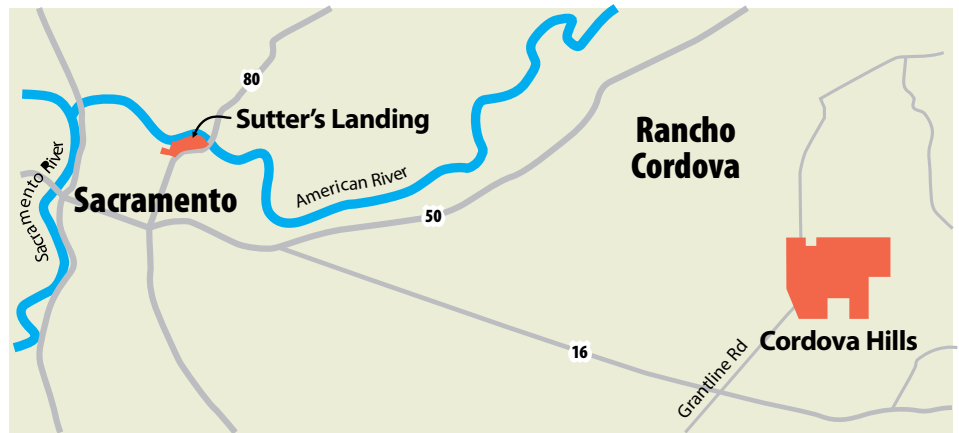
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Saving Our California Prairies

continued from page 3

taxonomic botanists, Munz and Keck, added an invented throwaway phrase “valley grassland” almost as an afterthought to their otherwise wonderful flora that taught so many of the baby boom generation to love our native plants. Unfortunately because of that book’s popularity, California Prairie, the previous term for vegetation of California’s open plains, one eclectic enough to include both grasses and flowers, fell into such disuse it was largely forgotten.

Without a name things tend to be unrecognized and treated as if they don’t exist. So it went with California’s wildflower prairies. Because their only grasses were often non-native weeds, “valley grassland” soon evolved to “non-native annual grassland”, a term depriving such landscapes of all ecological or conservation value. That’s how our chapter found conservation elements in local county general plans just a few years ago. Flowery open landscapes constituting the majority of undeveloped land in counties like Sacramento were targeted for intensive development by being labeled “non-native grassland” and consequently viewed as unworthy to conserve. That’s not just a local Sacramento Valley problem. It was the message in Tom Oberbauer’s wonderful banquet address on threats to San



Diego County landscapes at September’s Chapter Council meeting there.

We are in the midst of a major paradigm shift in how California’s open landscapes are viewed. It will have tremendous implications for their conservation. Abundant scientific evidence is now available demonstrating they are full of native plants, but these often aren’t grasses. CNPS can embrace this shift or try futilely to stifle it, but we’re currently so diverse that both happen simultaneously, a confusion exemplified by a photo in a recent CNPS publication showing flowers painting a slope solidly golden that was oxymoronically labeled “gold-fields grassland.”

In our chapter’s region prairies are at risk everywhere. Cordova Hills in eastern Sacramento County is a good example, a prairie so vast that from its center not a single building can be seen. It was approved for development during the housing bubble mania despite being far beyond any other urbanization with the promise it would be a college site. Colleges are long gone but threat of development remains for this last best habitat for Sacramento County’s only endemic rare plant, Sacramento Orcutt grass. Our chapter’s Carol Witham is leading the fight to save Cordova Hills in a coalition including our Habitat 2020 partners.

Even some restored places that really are non-native annual grassland function as important wildlife habitat when, as near city centers, this is rare. Sutter’s

Landing is one such place. Located near central Sacramento on the American River Parkway, it provides important habitat for native mammals and birds and is particularly important as a foraging area for threatened Swainson’s Hawks. Our chapter helped provide our Friends of the Swainson’s Hawk conservation partners in Habitat 2020 with habitat analysis they used in their campaign to save the Landing. We are also assisting there with restoration of a riparian tree stand carelessly destroyed by a local utility.

In Yolo County’s Woodland I’m working with past chapter president Jennifer Hogan and others to permanently protect a rare 150 acre patch of native prairie with six of California’s rarest plants thriving in the midst of one of California’s densest concentrations of nesting Swainson’s Hawks. Bird expert John Sterling reports that this is the last place in California where they regularly forage in native prairie. Its native flora is especially rich because, like California prairies described by John Muir, it has two crops of annual flowers plus perennial saltgrass. A spring crop with milk-vetch and others is followed by a late summer crop dominated by tarplants.

Protection of these specific prairies is part of a larger vision for protecting nature in and around Sacramento through vehicles like the California Heartland Project and local Habitat Conservation Plans and Natural Community Conservation Plans. In all these efforts our chapter works closely with our conservation partners in coalitions like Habitat 2020.

© 2011 Glen Holstein



Layia glandulosa along miles of I-5 in Kern County, March 27, 2011

Sacramento Weed Warriors Chair/Director Needed

After 10 years of dedicated service with CNPS Frank Wallace, Chapter Chair/Director of the Sacramento Weed Warriors (SWW) project is retiring! Yep — Frank is hanging up his hula-hoe. CNPS will be working with Frank to find and train a new chair/director for this very important chapter conservation project. For more information about the filling this position please contact Frank at 916-213-4682 or frankw2@pacbell.net.

California Native Plant Society

Sacramento Valley Chapter
Stockton Subchapter



STILL WANTED: A volunteer to serve as the Stockton Subchapter Representative to Sacramento Valley CNPS in 2012. Activities include attending the monthly native plant programs in Sacramento; organizing field trips and local meetings; creating blurbs for the Hibiscus; and writing a two-page annual report. Please phone Martha at 477-3966 if you can volunteer for an exciting year as our subchapter representative. You'll have lots of help!

Hibiscus welcomes news and listings from our Stockton subchapter, serving San Joaquin Valley CNPS Sac Valley members. If you would like to contribute, please contact Martha Mallery at (209) 477-3966 or Bob Stahmer at (209) 943-2277.

<http://www.sacvalleycnps.org/stockton/stockton.html>

CNPS Sacramento Weed Warriors 2011 Update

by Frank Wallace

The CNPS Sacramento Weed Warriors (SWW) project has continued on a somewhat limited basis in 2011. In April, in collaboration with the Sacramento Area Creek Council's Creek Week Clean-up Day event, SWW volunteers removed French broom infestations along Arcade Creek at the Stock Ranch Nature Area.

Also on Creek Week Clean-up Day, a team of Sacramento Regional

Conservation Corps members, along with community volunteers recruited by the American River Parkway



Protective cage for oak seedling.

Foundation, cut down a massive stand of milk thistle in the River Bend Park area of the American River Parkway. This area has been

planted with oak seedlings (see photo), part of a long-term Oak Mitigation Project to enhance the Parkway's native plant canopy. During the past 4 years, volunteers have planted more than 2500 seedlings and acorns through this project.

In June and July, 4 teams of AmeriCorps high school Summer of Service participants worked along upper Steelhead Creek to remove Red Sesbania, a highly invasive plant native

to Argentina, that is spreading rapidly throughout this watershed.

Throughout the year, SWW conducted 9 volunteer work groups that generated 450 hours of community volunteer time.



AmeriCorps high school Summer of Service participants worked along upper Steelhead Creek.



Sacramento Regional Conservation Corps members, along with other volunteers, cut down a massive stand of milk thistle along the American River Parkway.

Social Networking in the Garden

The Historic City Cemetery Demonstration Garden is now on **Facebook!** "Like" our page, **California Native Plant Demonstration Garden :: Sacramento.**

Yelpers! Give us a review and help put us on the map as a cool Sacramento garden. Look for special Yelp promotions.



Calendar of Events

See our calendar online at www.sacvalleycnps.org for more, updated events and happenings!

CONSERVATION CONFERENCE

Tues.-Sat., 1/10–1/14/2012
CNPS 2012 Conservation Conference, San Diego
Register now! Something for everyone: 200 presentations in 22 sessions, field trips, 30 exhibitors and vendors, social events, photo and botanical art contests, and more. See <http://www.cnps.org/cnps/conservation/conference/2012/> for more information.

OTHER EVENTS

Wed. 1/11, 11 a.m.–8 p.m.
Dining Fund-raiser at Chevy's
See page 7 for more info.

Sat. 1/28, 7 a.m.–5:30 p.m.
Ecolandscape 2012 Conference, Eco-Evolution: The New California Landscape, Woodland, CA
Sustainable Landscaping Businesses Are Successful and Profitable – Now. Presenting cutting edge information on ecological solutions for the landscape industry. See <http://www.ecolandscape.org/pdfs/ELCFlyer2012conf.pdf> for more information.

Sat. & Sun. 3/10–11
Introduction to the Identification of Bryophytes
For details and a registration form, please go to: www.csuchico.edu/biol/Herb/Events.html.

Thursdays March 1–April 26, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m.
Local Wildflower Families Sacramento SPLASH Lifelong Learning Programs
Splash Education Center Taught by Pam Kirkbride
Suitable for beginners and beyond. Learn how to make family associations, use keys and reference guides, get out in the field to see the flowers first hand, and make new friends. Several field trips will be

offered, some with optional camping. **Cost:** \$160 if paid in advance, or \$20 per session, plus \$25 for materials (payable first class). The Field Guide is an additional \$12.

Registration is open until February 15, 2012 or until the class is full. To register or request more information go to www.sacsplash.org/wildflowers or leave a message for Splash at 916-364-2437.

Sat. & Sun, April 14–15
Wildflower Weekend 2012
See page 11 for more info.

ONGOING

Chapter Meeting & Guest Speaker
2nd Wed. of month, 7:00 p.m.
(Jan.-June; Sept.-Nov.)
Shepard Garden & Arts Center, McKinley Park, Sacramento
See page 1. Meetings are free and open to the public. Books, wildflower seeds, and our SacValley t-shirt always available for purchase. Refreshments. For info: Sabrina Okamura-Johnson (916) 929-7896 or email soj@surewest.net.

Sundays, 10 a.m.–noon
Native Plant Demo-Garden
Sacramento Historic City Cemetery
1000 Broadway, Sacramento
Wear hat, long-sleeved shirt, boots and bring water, gardening tools, gloves, and knee pads. To volunteer during the week contact Sabrina (916) 929-7896 or soj@surewest.net.

Wednesdays, 9 a.m.–1 p.m.
Elderberry Farms Native Plant Nursery Workdays,
Located at Soil Born Farms
2140 Chase Drive, Rancho Cordova
Join Robin and Chris for weekly propagation work and peanut butter sandwiches at the nursery. If you are joining us for first time, please email Chris (lewisc916@yahoo.com) for directions & the sandwich count.

Fridays, 9:00 a.m.–11:30 a.m.
Seed Collecting Walks

Meet with Chris and friends for walks along the American River Parkway trails and other areas along the American River watershed. If this is your first time email Chris (lewisc916@yahoo.com) for walk location.

Chapter Board Meetings
4th Wed. of month, 7 p.m. SMUD Art Gallery & Community Center, 6301 S Street, Sacramento, CA95817 (Jan.-June; Sept.-Nov.)
Contact: Sabrina Okamura-Johnson (916) 929-7896 or soj@surewest.net.

Ceanothus - Collaborative Plant Identification Workshops
3rd Sat. of month, 9 a.m.
Davis Center for Biological Diversity. Michael Bower, (530) 902.8721
Bring any plants you're curious about, the Jepson Manual, and your enthusiasm! Visit www.ceanothus.org for upcoming workshop dates, locations, and directions. Free. Questions to ceanothusfieldbot@gmail.com

Habitat 2020
Day and Time TBD
For information contact Glen Holstein, holstein@cal.net; (530) 758-6787

Biking and Hiking the American River Parkway



The American River Natural History Association has released a new edition of *Biking and Hiking the American River Parkway*, a mile-by-mile narrative of the natural and cultural history along the Jedediah Smith Memorial Bicycle Trail.

The new 4th edition from ARNHA Press sells for \$14.95 and is available at the Discovery Shop inside the Effie Yeaw Nature Center, at bicycle shops, and other stores, and ARNHA.org.

Effie Yeaw Nature Center

California Avenue and Tarshes Drive, Carmichael, CA
Park entrance fee: \$5.00 per car, FREE to ARNHA members.

Hours: Wed. - Sun. 9:00 a.m. - 5:00 p.m.

The Nature Center may be closed in stormy weather. Please call to confirm hours.

(916) 489-4918 • www.sacnaturecenter.net

All ages welcomed unless stated otherwise.

Sat. 12/31/11, 10:30 a.m.

Flying Tiger

Have an up-close visit with a young great horned owl.

January 2012

Special Event: New speaker series, "Nature of Things," starts with a presentation on *Venomous Bites and Stings* by Mike Cardwell.

Pre-registration is required, space is limited. \$5/person. Call 489-4918 or go to www.sacnaturecenter.net to register.

Sat. 1/7, 10:30 a.m.

Black-tailed deer

Grab your binoculars to catch a closer look at the black-tailed deer in their habitat and learn more about their world.

Sun. 1/8, 1:30 p.m.

Nature's Art Box

Expert artists NOT required! Join a naturalist and learn some simple skills needed to capture nature on paper. Supplies provided.

Sat. 1/14, 10:30 a.m.

Beginning Wildlife Photography

Chris Knight will teach you some of the techniques NOT to use, tips to take better shots, how to approach wildlife and ethics while out in the field. Bring your camera and prepare to get some good shots! Suggested ages 10 and up.

Sun. 1/15, 1:30 p.m.

Cold-blooded critters.

Some have scaly skin, some have slimy skin, some have legs and some don't. Can you guess what they are?

Sat. 1/21, 10:30 a.m.

Animal tracks and signs

There are many animal-made signs in the woods that reveal who has used the trail before you. Become a nature detective by playing tracks and scat games, then take a walk to find some animal signs in the Nature Area.

Sun. 1/22, 1:30 p.m.

Coyote tales

Join us for a Native American story about a Coyote, then get a close-up look at a coyote pelt, skull, and mounted specimen. Discover facts about them and take a walk in their habitat.

Sat. 1/28, 10:30 a.m.

Winter Bird Walk

Discover why winter is a great time for bird watching. Join a naturalist for a guided hike while looking for some of the Sacramento area's most common birds. Bring your binoculars.

Sun. 1/29, 1:30 p.m.

Night hunters

Uncover the mysteries of owls: what they eat, where they sleep, how they find food and more! Get a close-up look at the Nature Center's newest resident, Echo, our great horned owl.

Support Nature Center programs by joining the American River Natural History Association! Join at the Nature Center or at www.arnha.org.

Native Bee Calendar

MAKE YOUR GARDEN BEE-UTIFUL!

The "Garden Variety Native Bees of North America" perpetual calendar is both a guide to some of our more common native bees and a gardening calendar that never goes out of date. This 9" X 12" calendar includes stunning photographs by Rollin Coville and accompanying descriptions and recommended plant lists by Celeste Ets-Hokin. For more info go to http://members.printable.com/california-lithographers/bee_calendar/.

\$11.99 + 3.00 shipping.

HAVE FUN, RAISE MONEY... *Make a Difference*

Please Join Chevy's At Our Fundraising Event For Sacramento Valley Chapter California Native Plant Society

Invite all of your friends and family to dine with us and Chevy's will donate 25% of the proceeds to our fundraising partner!

DATE: Jan. 11, 2011 TIME: 11:00 A.M. - 8:00 P.M.

ADDRESS: 1234 Howe Ave., Sacramento, CA, 95825

- present flyer to your server
- staple to bill when you pay

It's just our way of giving back to the community!

Chapter Fundraiser @ Chevy's

We've booked a chapter fundraiser-dining event with the Chevy's Fresh Mex restaurant at 1234 Howe Avenue Wednesday January 11th from 11:00 am to 8:00 pm. Invite friends and family to dine with us, and Chevy's will donate 25% of the proceeds to our chapter (except for alcohol purchases).

Give copies of the fundraiser flyer to friends/family and instruction them to present the flyer to the server and to make sure the flyer is stapled to the bill when they pay. Contact Sabrina (soj@surewest.net for more information).

Farewell to Tara Hansen

by Carol W. Witham

On November 18, 2011, Tara Hansen announced her resignation as Executive Director of the California Native Plant Society. Tara will continue to work through the 2012 Conservation Conference in San Diego and follow up. Her last day with CNPS will be February 10, 2012.

During her three year tenure with CNPS, Tara upgraded and overhauled all of our systems from the web pages to new membership and donor tracking software. Her thorough research and thoughtful implementation of these new systems has helped streamline many duties in the central office. Tara had many other accomplishments during her time with us and will be missed.

The state Board of Directors has formed two committees to work through this transition and hire a new Executive Director. The Transition Team will be filling in gaps and trying to make sure everything stays on track. The Recruitment Committee will be tasked with the details of getting a job announcement out and performing initial review of applicants. The entire Board plus representatives of the staff will participate in final selection.

Local chapter and state board members Alison Shilling and Carol Witham are serving on the Transition Team and Ellen Dean is on the Recruitment Committee.

Spring events present volunteer opportunities!

Please save these dates:

March 31, Gardens Gone Native

&

April 14-15, Wildflower Weekend



Recognizing Barbara Wolf

by the SVCNPS Board

The Board asks you to join us in recognizing Barbara Wolf for her outstanding contributions to CNPS at our January 11th chapter meeting.

Barbara has never failed to provide enthusiastic, consistent, creative, and flexible support to our CNPS chapter in all activities. She has often initiated tasks that were important to do, but that others had not thought of, and has always stepped in when limited help was available to complete a task. We are very fortunate that she took on the present job of vice president when it was offered, since her clear, logical mind keeps us on course at our monthly board meetings with probing questions that are necessary to consider before making a decision.

As editor of our chapter newsletter from fall 2006 to fall 2011, Barbara did an outstanding job in keeping the news and graphics flowing on all aspects of conservation, botany, and gardening. She filled in details of what other groups were doing in our area when members could not supply her with enough material to fill the newsletter, as well as finding and using attractive photos or drawings. Her knowledge of fonts, layouts and graphics is considerable, and she even provided a mini-seminar on the emotional aspects of printing fonts to a very interested CNPS group at a recent chapter council meeting. If you have appreciated all that Barbara has done for us these past five years, please join us at the January 11th meeting to recognize her and share some refreshments with all of us.



SVCNPS Programs Chair Needed

Mary Maret has been our Chapter's Programs Chair for the past four years and is looking to find a replacement, or co-chair to assist her. The job of the Programs Chair is to arrange the speakers for our member meetings, and to attend the member meetings to help set up. Mary would like to step down this coming fall/winter. She has currently has programs scheduled out through September 2012, which will make it easier for a new person to ease into the role. If you are interested or would like more information, please contact Mary Maret at maretm@sac-county.net or (916) 489-1548.

Yuba/Sutter County NCCP/HCP Citizen's Advisory Committee

Yuba and Sutter Counties are preparing a joint Natural Community Conservation Plan/Habitat Conservation Plan (NCCP/HCP). As part of the preparation of the NCCP/HCP, a Citizen's Advisory Committee is being formed to provide input on the NCCP/HCP. They are looking for representatives of groups such as the California Native Plant Society to be a member of the Citizen's Advisory Committee. If at all possible they are looking for members who live or have property in either Yuba or Sutter Counties. Since both Yuba and Sutter Counties are in our chapter's service area, we would like at least two chapter members to step forward to apply to serve on the citizen's advisory committee.

For more information about the Yuba/Sutter County NCCP/HCP visit: www.yubasutterhcp.org or contact Leanne Mueller, Senior Planner, Sutter County Community Services Department (email: LMueller@co.sutter.ca.us, phone: 530 822-7400).

Please contact Leanne if you are interested in applying. The application form can be found at www.yubasutterhcp.org/Documents/Applications/Application%20NCCP-HCP.pdf.

Elderberry Farms Native Plant Nursery

Elderberry Farms had an awesome year in 2011. Our volunteers built a greenhouse, held our first Wildflower Weekend at Born Farms, expanded our growing grounds by 800 square feet, collected and propagated thousands of plants and planned, planted, and tended demonstration gardens around the nursery! Every Wednesday morning, Robin Rietz, our propagation manager, leads weekly propagation sessions. Whether you are interested in learning how to propagate plants or just enjoy getting together with people who share a common interest... or you really, really like peanut butter & jelly sandwiches,



Soil

you are welcome to join us! On Fridays we walk the beautiful trails of the American River Parkway and surrounding areas. To find out more, contact Chris at lewisc916@yahoo.com.

Our story of *Arctostaphylos viscida ssp. viscida*

When our State CNPS Botanist Danny Slakey spoke at our September Chapter meeting, he told me then that he would like to come out to the Nursery and give us a hand sometime. It was nice to hear but who knew he was serious! It turns out that Danny worked at the Presidio Nursery and helped propagate the newly re-discovered Franciscan manzanita. Since then he took on the Rare Plant Treasure Hunt full time. He sent me this email:



© 2011 Chris Lewis

Maybe we should make a game of guessing how many of the 260 Manzanita starts will make it?

'My schedule doesn't really permit me to come out to volunteer for the nursery and seed collecting volunteer days, but I was wonder-

ing if there was any other way I could help out the nursery. I don't get any horticulture time in my current job, so it would be nice to get back into that for a few hours a week. ...just let me know, and I could see if I'd be able to help out.'

Always happy to accommodate, we eventually settled on *Arctostaphylos viscida ssp. viscida* and ferns. So where to collect the Manzanita? El Dorado Chapter CNPS Former President Amy Hoffman came to our rescue. She and husband Greg Kiefer own a 27 acre parcel of land in Latrobe (south of El Dorado Hills). On a Sunday in November, we met at their property and Danny guided us in the collection. It was a beautiful morning and Danny & I got our Chaparral fix! Then Danny led the propagation workday at the Nursery.



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Jared Tharp, Danny, Amy Hoffman, Greg Kiefer pose with a beautiful Manzanita.

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Woodland Regional Park

By Jennifer Hogan, Past President, Sacramento Valley Chapter and Kids in Native Gardens Grant Coordinator

A grassroots movement is growing deep in Woodland, seated at the heart of Yolo County. With the assistance of concerned neighbors and a handful of Woodland residents we have come together to preserve a local treasure.

The Woodland Regional Park is a 167-acre property located just beyond a new residential development along roads 102 and 25 on the east end of Woodland. The east edge of this property connects to Conway Ranch, which reaches into the Yolo Bypass. Unique alkali sink soils, a claypan layer, and the right topography have come together to provide a suite of rare and unusual plants in a vernal pool, alkali prairie, annual grassland, and riparian forest complex. Large trees in the vicinity provide nesting opportunities for the State-listed Swainson's hawk, while the site and Woodland's nearby agricultural fields provide this raptor foraging opportunities.

The first hero of our story is Greg Kareofelas, a long-time Sacramento Valley Chapter member who is known for his vast knowledge of local butterflies and dragonflies. Raised in Woodland, Greg had noticed this site in the 1980s while driving down Road 102 from Davis. Recognizing vernal pool topography and plants, Greg knew a good thing when he saw it. He and Carol Witham, another long-time Sacramento Valley Chapter volunteer and well-known vernal pool ecologist, did the first recorded surveys of the site in 1995, identifying the rare plants *Astragalus tener* var. *tener* (Alkali milk-vetch) and *Lepidium latipes* var.

heckardii (Heckard's peppergrass). When noticing that the land was being disked for weed control, Greg went to the City of Woodland to try to get them to manage the land in a better way for the rare plants. Then in the early 2000's, Greg got other botanists involved in learning about the site and attempting to preserve the land.

Since the site's "discovery," other special-status plants have been recorded: *Atriplex cordulata* (Heartscale), *A. depressa* (Brittlescale), *A. joaquiniana* (San Joaquin spearscale), *Chloropyron* (*Cordylanthus palmatus*) *palmatum* (Palmate-bracted bird's-beak), and most recently *Trifolium hydrophilum* (Saline clover). This has been very exciting for botanists. But why

should the existence of these plants even matter to the average person? The Woodland Regional Park contains a vanishing ecosystem and should be protected for its own sake. Vernal pools in Yolo County are rare to start with and only a remnant of what was common here remains. Additionally, the unique flowers provide nectar and pollen to uncommon insects, including native solitary bees and migrating butterflies. This site should be permanently protected and appropriately managed into perpetuity.

The City of Woodland owns the land. The City is starved for funds. Revenue could be made off of this land. One idea the City recently proposed was to lease this property for solar farming. Earlier the City was ready to sell it to a large housing developer. Prior to this, the land had been leased by the Woodland-Davis Aeromodelers, whose mowing management was great for the rare plants (after switching from disking the soil— at Greg's insistence). The Aeromodelers' lease was terminated after noise complaints from the nearby Spring Lake housing development residents. The land has been left fallow ever since, allowing non-native invasive annuals and perennials to move in rather aggressively.

Greg brought in more heroes. Glen Holstein, Ph.D., a long-time volunteer as our chapter's rare-plant botanist and Ellen Dean, curator of the U.C. Davis Center for Plant Diversity, fell into the cause. In 2009, Ellen Dean did a Special-Status Plant Survey and report of the site. About that time, Glen mentioned this site to me and suggested that I get involved in preserving it. Already living an over-booked life, I put this effort in the back of my mind. But through Glen's persistence I finally decided to turn my energy to learning about the site and doing something to help protect it. Glen had already been educating Swainson's hawk activists, but he also got word out to other Woodland residents with botanical and avian backgrounds who were willing to get involved.

This past summer, a newly formed group of residents and neighboring activists began our plan to start meeting with environmentally-friendly City Council members to convince them to sell the City land for preservation. Fellow Woodland residents Sami LaRocca, an Audubon member; Cathy Little, a preserve manager working for the Center for Lands Management; Barry Rice, Ph.D., a researcher at U.C. Davis and professor at Sierra College; and myself (wildlife biologist and hobby botanist) became the Woodland team. With the inclusion of Glen, we most recently met with City Council member Martie Dote, who also represents Woodland on the Yolo County Natural Heritage Plan, and the interim City Manager, Kevin O'Rourke.

Woodland city representatives gave up on the idea of leasing the property to solar farmers when the solar developers withdrew their proposal. Since the City is still looking to produce some revenue from the land, we are proposing that they sell it to the State of California with Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) funds. The Center for Lands Management has committed in writing to managing the land into perpetuity once the land has passed over to them to manage. We are also



Alkali milk-vetch (*Astragalus tener* var. *tener*)



by Maria Kochis

The Gardens Gone Native task force is working hard to make our second annual garden tour for the Sacramento Valley a success.

We could use your help in a variety of ways.

If you can volunteer to act as an assistant to the host on the day of the event (March 31, 2012), please contact Chris Lewis (lewis916@yahoo.com).

If you have the skills and willingness to help us manage some of our electronic information, or you have a garden to add to the tour, please contact Maria Kochis (kochism@csus.edu).

We will begin scouting for gardens in January. Gardens are required to be 50% native. We would ideally like to have clusters of gardens in many areas of Sacramento and Yolo counties, including some of the more far flung cities and towns.

We're looking forwards to making this a great tour!

looking for other funding opportunities to purchase the land and provide an endowment that will cover annual management costs. The land would become part of the reserve system for the Yolo County Natural Heritage Plan. But first, we must convince the entire City Council to consent to the sale. We will meet again this month with Martie Dote and Kevin O'Rourke, to decide how to approach other City Council members who may need convincing.

Stay tuned. As I visualize it, this land will soon be protected into perpetuity, showcasing one of Woodland's greatest natural assets. Chapter members have already contributed

Wildflower Weekend

**Saturday, April 14, 10:00–4:00 and
Sunday, April 15, 10:00–3:00**

Soil Born Farms

2140 Chase Dr, Rancho Cordova

Admission is Free and open to the Public.

- *Plant exhibit & interactive fun.* The plant exhibit will showcase native plants of the American River Watershed. It will be hosted by expert naturalists. Focus on Flowers — get lost in the delicate details of flowers and their pollinators using a microscope and more.
- *Native plant sale.* Elderberry Farms (our Chapter Nursery) and Cornflower Farms will have plants for sale. Gardening experts will be there to help you the best plants for your garden. As always, a wide variety of gardening books, field guides, and other native plant literature will be for sale.
- *Walks & talks (Family Friendly).* Each walk will start with a talk! Including: native plants & why we should care!; birding walk; bees & you; Soil Born Farms tour; our demonstration gardens.

We would love to have your help!

Contact Chris (lewis916@yahoo.com) to help plan or participate in Wildflower Weekend 2012.

towards this possibility. \$1250 of your donations have gone towards a real estate appraisal and to help the land purchase move forward. With further contributions and volunteers, I see a group providing plant and bird identification training for docents, then spring and summertime wildflower and bird watching docent-led tours. And if I think really big, I see an interpretive learning center and educational program similar to that done by SacSplash by the Mather vernal pools. Through a true grassroots effort, I see this one-of-a-kind alkali grassland vernal pool wonder showing off its grandeur for generations to come.

Gardening Workshop Planned for Fall 2012

Recently, Kelly Cohen, Alison Shilling, Julie Serences, Jennifer Hogan, Joan Kodani, Betsy Weiland, and Chris Lewis formed a committee to plan a Symposium for Native Plant Gardeners. Julie Serences and Chris Lewis will Co-Chair the effort. A one-day workshop is planned for September 8, 2012 at the Effie Yeaw Community Center. If you are interested in helping with planning, please contact Chris at lewis916@yahoo.com.

Internship Opportunity

Field Technician Needed for Native Bee Ecology Study at Pinnacles National Monument, CA.

Researchers from Utah State University and the USDA-ARS are currently working to survey the bee fauna throughout the monument and answer questions about bee community.

They are looking for one technician who will spend February–June living in this beautiful area and working full time assisting these efforts. Some field biology, entomology, or botany experience is preferred. Main requirements are hardiness, flexibility, willingness to learn, and a good attitude.

The selected individual will gain experience with ecological sampling techniques, a variety of side pollination projects, netting and pan trapping bees, insect pinning, observing and recording plant-pollinator interactions, and identifying the diverse flora in this natural California ecosystem. He/she will work closely with the graduate student and spend long days hiking across the monument with heavy gear, sometimes in extreme heat.

Compensation: \$200-275/week

To apply, please send an email with an attached resume, contact info for three references, and a cover letter explaining your interest in the position and any previous experience with fieldwork, bees, and/or plants to: paul_johnson@nps.gov. Send questions to: joan.meiners@usu.edu.



CNPS Newsletter
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Save the Date! Gardens Gone Native March 31, 2012

www.SacValleyCNPS.org

The Sacramento Valley chapter newsletter, Hibiscus, is published monthly, except for July, August, and December. Subscriptions are \$10 per year. To subscribe solely to this newsletter, send your \$10 check to: CNPS Sac Valley Membership, 2707 K St., Ste. 1, Sacramento, CA 95816-5113. Deadline for Hibiscus contributions is midnight of the Tuesday before the monthly meeting for possible inclusion in the next month's newsletter. Email to kodanij@yahoo.com.

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JANUARY PRESENTATION:
A Native Plant Nursery Restored
How a Shuttered Nursery Rose from the Ashes of Budget Cutbacks
Rich Marovich

Our chapter meetings are free and open to the public!

Chapter Fundraiser @ Chevy's
 Help the chapter raise funds by dining at Chevy's!
 See page 7 for more info.

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