SACRAMENTO VALLEY CHAPTER HISTORY

SACRAMENTO VALLEY was the first chapter formed, Dec. 13, 1965, under the guidance of Dr. G. Ledyard Stebbins, who became the chapter’s first president. The following year, Dr. Stebbins became Society president. Other organizers of the Sacramento Valley chapter were Dora Hunt, Tom Fuller, John Tucker, and Mary Ann Wohlers. Affiliated with the Sacramento Valley chapter were to be members from the surrounding foothills as well as portions of the San Joaquin Valley, specifically Chico, Grass Valley, Roseville, Stockton, Modesto, in addition to the Sacramento-Davis areas.

Chapter Officers: President, Vice-president, Secretary-Treasurer:

Dec. 1965-1966 Dr. G.L. Stebbins
1967 Grady Webster, Albert Delisle, Mary Ann Wohlers.
1968 Albert Delisle, Joe Aparicio, Florence Marsh.
1969 " " , Prentiss Ferguson, " "
1971 George Dobbins, Don Smith, Florence Marsh.
1974-1975 Michael Baad, Joe Aparicio, " "
1976 Albert Delisle, Michael Baad, Florence Marsh.
1977 Christoph Hulbe, Michael Baad, " "
1978 " " , Roger Wilmarth, " "
1981-1982 Kay Antunez, Claire Barrett, " "
1986 Lorraine Van Kekerix, Kay Antunez, Susanne Tschaikovsky, Florence Marsh.

In 1968, Florence Marsh became chapter treasurer, a position she still holds today. She was newsletter editor for many years, and also brought lunch and refreshments to the meetings. Over the years it was often Florence who held the chapter together through unsteady periods.

Monthly meetings began in 1966. In March, James B. Roof of the Regional Parks Botanic Garden in Berkeley spoke on "Adventures with California Native Plants". The chapter has had a steady stream of excellent and instructive speakers nine times per year, frequently drawn from chapter membership. Slides taken on field trips by members provide occasional programs. In May 1987, the first annual potluck became an enjoyable addition to the meeting agenda. For many years, meetings and some other activities were carried on cooperatively with the Goethe Arboretum Society.

Field trips began early in 1966, the first being held on February 6, with 60 CNPS members in attendance, at the Ione Clay Barrens, for which CNPS was taking steps to have a reserve created. The second trip, on March 27, explored Pine Hill, and the Nimbus Reservoir areas, both of which were held as worthy of preservation. On the sunny day of April 16, 30 members examined the Dixon vernal pools (today's Jepson Prairie) with Dr. John Tucker and Dr. G.L. Stebbins. These three became favorite trips and have since been offered regularly. In the first year, Charles M. Goethe, Sacramento philanthropist and CNPS sponsor, donated money for refreshments on field trips. Chapter field trips often begin near the coast early in the year and advance with the season across the valley, finding themselves high in the Sierra in the summer. This chapter has been fortunate to have had many trips led by everyone's favorite, Dr. G. Ledyard Stebbins.
Plant sales have provided funds, and created public awareness of native plants. Through 1974 Sacramento Valley members contributed many van loads of plant materials to the Society's sales in the Bay area. In the 1960-70s the Goethe Arboretum Society celebrated its namesake's birthday by contributing native plants and trees to local school nature areas; our chapter gave plants and assistance. By 1976 the chapter began holding its own sales, with members raising natives and exotics, sold at the Goethe Arboretum on the CSUS campus. In those early years the chapter was highly pleased to net $200. from a sale. 1977 saw as special feature at plant sale time, a nine projector slide show of California flora. In 1985 the chapter added stock of natives from commercial nurseries, increased the range of species for sale, and improved advertising. 1987 and 1988 saw great enthusiasm and effort, in which years both a spring and a fall sale were held. The sale has become well known and profits have increased greatly; few members continue to raise plants for the sale.

Earliest conservation work of the chapter was often carried on as part of the Society's efforts. For many years from 1973 on, members worked to alleviate threats to Bushy Lake on the American River behind Cal Expo. The Ione preservation movement in 1977 engaged chapter members. In 1981 a large and active conservation committee was formed, members participating in Phoenix Field vernal pool problems, in the American River Parkway Revision Plan and dozens of such projects. The chapter's most important conservation effort was the saving in December 1982 and again in May 1983 from marina development of Bannan Island, a prime riparian area at the confluence of the Sacramento and American Rivers. Joined by other local groups, a media event was held with four TV channels and two newspapers giving attention at the site. In another solid success in 1984, chapter conservation committee action caused the entire Del Paso Regional Park Master Plan to be revised to preserve several natural areas which included regenerating Valley Oaks. The revised plan became known as a role model for park development. In 1986 the committee successfully requested State Parks and Recreation Dept. to install protective fencing at Nimbus Overlook wildflower area.

An Education committee began work in 1981 on plant family information to be used by teachers. In 1986 a video was produced on the ecology of the American River Parkway for use by schools.

Beginning in 1984 a Rare Plant committee started reviewing environmental documents of various agencies, a massive job, given the area spread of this chapter.

The first plant count, held in 1983, surveyed vernal pools, conducted a count around Polson Lake, and counted Pritillaria liliacea for several years at Jepson Prairie.

Over the years, the Sacramento Valley Chapter has participated in numerous ecological fairs, taken Hibiscus californicus as logo and sold T-shirts showing it, in 1974 hosted the Society's botanists working on the Rare and Endangered Species Committee, conducted plant keying clinics in 1974 and 1982, a slide contest in 1982, in which year the chapter also received the Sacramento Audubon Society's annual award for active conservation work.

The Sacramento Valley began with some 25 members. In October 1968, 100 newsletters were being mailed. At this time, the chapter ran out of funds which had been contributed by C.M. Goethe for expansion of the chapter. Members were asked to send postage stamps in order to continue receiving their newsletters. 109 members were on record in March 1969. In 1970-71 a membership drive was conducted. Sacramento Valley chapter membership today stands at over 600, spread over many counties.

1990, 25th Anniversary of CNPS

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Betty Matyas