October Chapter Meeting:

The Connection Beneath our Feet - Partnerships of Native Plants and Fungi

We seldom think about what lurks beneath the soil, the fungi (called mycorrhizae) are the hidden, but beneficial partners for native plants. Over 90% of plant species live in association with mycorrhizal fungi. Mycorrhizal means fungus (myco) and root (rhiza) and refers to the combination of fungus and root commonly found in the underground world of natural habitats.

Stella Copeland will help us understand and appreciate the wide variety of mychorrhizal relationships with California native plants and their importance to plant conservation. Emphasis will be on the orchid family, plants of serpentine habitats, and the flora of the Klamath-Siskiyou Mountains.

Stella Copeland is a PhD student of plant community ecology at UC Davis. Her research interests and experience range from ecosystem ecology in the Brazilian Cerrado, to restoration science in the temperate rainforests of the Pacific Northwest, as well orchid diversity and conservation in the neotropical cloud forests of Ecuador and Peru. Stella has a special fondness for orchids, rare species, and heterotrophic plants (drawing all or part of their nutrition from other living beings).
From the President
by Carol Witham

Have you been away for the summer? The letter from CNPS Executive Director Dan Gluesenkamp requesting a donation to support the many great things CNPS is doing to understand, document, and preserve rare plants and rare plant communities may have gotten lost in the stack of summer mail, or maybe you tossed it (by mistake) into the circular file thinking it was “junk mail.” If you have not already sent in a donation, pop a check in the mail and send to CNPS, 2707 K Street, Suite 1, Sacramento, CA 95816-5130, or go to the website, www.cnps.org, and hit the “donate” button. This is a great way to invest in the future of California’s native plants.

The state staff are doing wonderful work for California’s plants, and for all of us who love them. Dan Gluesenkamp has just completed his first year as Executive Director, and he has brought all of the passion, smarts, and energy that we had hoped for. All of the state staff bring professionalism and good science to our efforts to conserve and protect the plants and places we love. The CNPS conservation, rare plant, vegetation and education programs and their staff are invaluable to accomplishing our good work.

Today we can announce one more staffed state program—horticulture. In September, CNPS completed the process of hiring the first staff director of the CNPS Horticulture Program. Susan Krzywicki began working for CNPS in late September. While she is based in the San Diego area, we expect to see her in northern California on a regular basis. Native plant sales and workshops and symposia on growing native plants are important activities for many CNPS chapters, including ours. Susan will help us figure out how to do all of this better, and she will make it possible for us to have new publications, new information on the website, and new events that will help people be successful in using native plants in their gardens.

Chapter Officer Nominations

According to our bylaws, nominations for chapter officers are to occur at the October chapter meeting. Currently two chapter officers originally slated to serve for 2013-2014 have asked to be replaced if possible. They are Hazel Gordon (Secretary) and Carol Crofoot (Treasurer). Additionally, when elected last fall, Carol Witham (President) and Mona Robison (Vice President) committed to serve for only a single year. So nominations for all four chapter officer positions are desired.

I ask all of you to consider a self-nomination. Additionally, talk to others in the chapter who you know would do a great job. For more information about the nomination process, or the positions, please give me a call at 916-452-5440 or email cwitham@ncal.net.

Elderberry Farms Native Plant Nursery
2140 Chase Drive, Rancho Cordova, on the American River Parkway at Soil Born Farms
By Chris Lewis, Nursery Leader
cnpschris@gmail.com

Summer is waning but our need for volunteers is not! As we move into winter our volunteer work force shrinks to five to eight people. Join us Wednesdays at the nursery from 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., to help out, and get a free peanut butter and jelly sandwich.

We had a wonderful surprise in September. The speaker, Helen Popper, requested to come see our nursery, so a small band of us enjoyed a take-out dinner at the nursery with her. Pictured here, from left to right are Susan Fregien, Gardens Gone Native (GGN) tour chair; Julie Serences, Sacramento Valley Chapter board member and ‘Bee-ologist’; Helen Popper; me; Mary Maret, Programs Chair; and Bonnie Ross, Education Chair. Not photographed: Jim Wadsworth, photographer; Dan Gluesenkamp, CNPS Executive Director; and Pat Gilbert, GGN Committee member. It was a heavenly evening and Helen kept raving about the nursery!

FRIDAY WALKS - We walk most Fridays, year-round. On Sept. 13 we walked River Bend which had a horrible burn this year. Helen talked about the buckeyes and how beautiful they are. The burn cleared out lots of the weedy grasses (temporarily), so this buckeye got to shine! The leaves under it formed a carpet of gold with pipevine coming up here and there.

We walked around a bend and saw the devastation from the burn. As we walked we saw a patch of Mugwort in full bloom.

This area was untouched by the burn and the oracle oak looked beautiful as ever. Quite the acorn year, isn’t it? The Friday Walkers: scientists, the curious, and tree-huggers!

Walks are listed in on page 4 in the calendar section of this newsletter, our eNewsletter, and on our webpage: SacValley.CNPS.org/Field Trips/Friday Walks.
In recent months wildfires have grabbed a great deal of attention. The largest fire in the history of the Sierra Nevada Mountains, the catastrophic Rim Fire, burned more than a quarter million acres—nearly 4000 square miles. Numerous smaller fires have also grabbed headlines, including the Clover Fire in Shasta County that burned over 8000 acres of forest, and the Morgan Fire that has reduced much of Mount Diablo to cinders. Dozens of other conflations, covering tens to tens of thousands of acres, have burned throughout the state, this year alone.

It is widely known that modern fire suppression practices build up fuel load in forests increasing the risk of less frequent, but more calamitous, forest fires. This has not always been the case. Prior to the arrival of European immigrants to the North American continent, and to a lesser degree for hundreds of years after, indigenous Californians regularly started wildfires of their own. More frequent fires kept underbrush down and would have acted to sharply decrease the frequency of larger, more catastrophic burns.

Burning was the most significant of a number of practices Indians employed to foster the growth and proliferation of favored species. Burning served a variety of roles including pest control and the reduction of competition for desired resources, especially the acorn producing oaks. In some instances, regular burning may have acted to slow down normal vegetative succession processes and fundamentally alter the character of an environment.

The Martis Valley, located just east of Truckee, may provide an example of just this kind of environmental manipulation. Several tributary streams and Martis Creek flow through the valley (now dammed), and three distinct vegetative communities exist around these waterways. In the immediate vicinity of the creeks and streams, vegetation is characterized by the sedge/spikerush community, with dense stands of willow in the streams. The valley floor outside this community is dominated by low sagebrush and bitterbrush which extend to the tree line, where mixed conifer (Jeffery and ponderosa pine) forest begins.

Old ranchers in the area tell stories about a very different valley during their childhood, one characterized by rich grassland, extending from the creeks to the tree line, with little or none of the sagebrush and bitterbrush scrub.

This transition is not unexpected in the normal course of vegetative succession, but why has this change just taken place? Human management is a likely explanation, one that is best understood in the context of the varied ways in which people have used the area.

Ethnographic and archaeological data suggest that the Washo Indians, and their ancestors in the area, made use of a number of resources that are available in the wet portions of the valley along the creeks: camas, wild onion, pines, and grasses were harvested for bulbs and seeds; and sedge rhizomes, willows, and grasses were harvested for basketry materials. Perhaps surprisingly, grasshoppers were also a highly prized food resource due in part to their very high caloric yield. Rock lined ovens, almost certainly used for roasting roots, tubers, and greens are known from archaeological sites in the area that are thousands of years old. Artifacts associated with seed grinding are yet more abundant—dozens of which are located on archaeological sites in the Martis Valley that are now overgrown with dense sagebrush.

Regular burning would have

Continued on page 4 ...
kept the sagebrush scrub from becoming established, and
would have fostered the successful growth of more desir-
able resources that would quickly infill after a fire. Burning
meadows was also a method of harvesting grasshoppers—
either to drive them into a concentrated area where they
were easy to catch, or to simply roast hundreds of them at
once for easy collection later.

When Euro-American ranchers arrived in the valley,
the open expanse of grass would have been appealing for
grazing cattle and sheep. Sagebrush is reasonable browse
for sheep, but is very undesirable for cows, whose meat and
milk assumes some of the flavor of the sage itself. Ad-
ditionally, in areas that were too swampy, cattle could not
graze safely.

Like the Indians, the ranchers were interested in keeping
sagebrush out of the valley, but unlike the Indians, they
were less inclined to start fires. Their solution was to cut
a series of irrigation ditches leading out of the creeks and
streams into the drier portions of the valley. This irrigation
fostered the growth of grasses, and also kept the sagebrush
at bay. The remains of these ditches are
still detectable walking around the valley,
but they have long since dried up, now
overgrown with sagebrush.

Modern effects to the ecology of the val-
ley are numerous, including pesticide and
fertilizer run off from nearby golf courses,
unleashed dogs that drive off migratory
birds, modern redirection of streams,
quarry scarring from dam construction,
and the dam itself. Attempts to manage
the ecology of the area typically strive to
maintain conditions as close to a natural
state as is possible. But this history of
varied human management raises the
question: What is “natural”??

Sagebrush and bitterbrush are natural,
native species. However the densities
in which they presently occur is likely
the highest it has been in centuries, possibly thousands
of years. Similarly, the grassland habitat in the valley
has very likely declined under federal management. The
Martis Valley is a very small portion of the state, and
certainly the effects of indigenous plant
management were not so pronounced
throughout the state as they were here. Next
time you find yourself out in the wild enjoy-
ing our beautiful state, take a look around

This is your newsletter. Contribute!

We want to hear about your recent trips, hikes,
gardening activites, research, or general curiosi-
ties. To submit an article for the Hibiscus send
an email to editorhibiscus@gmail.com. Deadlines are
the first Saturday of the month. Send text in a
Word file and specify if it is an article or an event
for the calendar. Pictures must sent as a separate
file in jpeg format, 640x480 pixels or larger.
Calendar of Events

Upcoming

**Fall Plant Sale**
Shepard Garden & Arts Center
3330 McKinley Blvd.
Sat & Sun, Sept. 28-29, 10 a.m.–3 p.m.
Gardening advisors will roam the plant sale offering assistance. Both days we’ll have a table of experts to answer your botany questions. Plus: books, our chapter tee-shirts, Elderberry Farms information table including a slide show of local native plants, membership, and more.

**Saturday: 11:00-11:45 a.m:** Designing Your Garden with Paul Weller
**Noon-12:45 p.m:** Maintaining a Native Garden with Alison Shilling
**1:00-2:00 p.m:** Bringing Nature Home with Julie Serences

**All day:** Alicia Funk, author of “Living Wild,” book signing and answering questions.

**Sunday: 11:00-11:45 a.m:** Bringing Nature Home with Julie Serences
**Noon-12:45 p.m:** Local Native Plants for Your Garden with Chris Lewis
**All day:** Julie Serences, “Bee-ologist,” for all of your bee questions.

**Garden Work Days at the Native Plant Demonstration Garden**
Sacramento Historic City Cemetery
1000 Broadway, Sacramento
Bring a hat and water and wear garden-appropriate clothes. Gardening tools available for use and refreshments provided. Pacific Coast iris and red buckwheat will be available to take home. For more information, contact Cassandra at cnpsgarden@gmail.com.

**Ceanothus—Collaborative Plant Identification Workshops**
3rd Sat. of the month, 9 a.m.
UC Davis Herbarium (Center for Plant Diversity).
Michael Bower, (530) 902-8721

**Music in the Meadow**
Saturday, Oct 5th from 1 p.m.–4 p.m.
Placer Nature Center
Fundraising event for Placer County’s environmental education center. Features gourmet food, beverages, an auction of treasures and adventures, and jazz, folk and blues music from Proxy Moon. Nature walks by CNPS friends and a vast assortment of native grasses to enjoy. For a $25.00 donation, you will support an organization that brings science and nature to children, planting the seed of conservation awareness that will grow through their lives. For tickets, call Placer Nature Center at (916) 878-6053 or visit placernaturecenter.org.

**Save the Date**

**Lichens for Beginners**
Taught by Pam Kirkbride
Saturday, Jan. 11, 2014, 9 a.m. – 4 p.m.
3075 Sciences Lab Bldg., UC Davis Campus
Do you want to learn more about lichens? Save the date for this all-day class for beginners to learn lichen morphology, terminology and identification. We will look closely at 24 species of common lichens, use keys, and take an afternoon field trip to view two different lichen habitats. This class is hosted by the UC Davis Center for Plant Diversity and CNPS Sacramento Chapter. All proceeds will go to benefit these organizations. Contact Pam Kirkbride for additional details at pank7@frontier.com

Other items of interest

**Elderberry Farms**
Native Plant Nursery
Located at Soil Born Farms
2140 Chase Drive, Rancho Cordova
**Wednesday Workdays 9 a.m.–1 p.m.**
We pot up seedlings and learn plant propagation techniques. Peanut butter and jelly sandwiches provided. RSVP to Chris, cnpschris@gmail.com.

**Friday Walks 9 a.m.–noon.**
Plant identification, photography, art and fun! Go to SacValley.CNPS.org. find Friday Walks under Events & Field Trips.

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

Sign up for our biweekly e-newsletter at SacValley.CNPS.org or e-mail LewisC916@yahoo.com.

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*Other Items of Interest*

**Get Your eNews Here!**

*Get Your eNews Here!*

The Sacramento Valley Chapter CNPS announcements about upcoming events.
The eNewsletter is another way to get your information about what's happening in our Chapter. Signing up for the eNewsletter does not interrupt your Hibiscus newsletter service. Sign up at: SacValley.CNPS.org or contact Chris at cnpschris@gmail.com.
I am a lifelong hiker and backpacker. In recent years I discovered the joy of contributing to natural science studies while pursuing my hiking hobby. Volunteering my time for field based studies in science continues to enrich my outdoor experience. Greatly improved are my powers of observation, expanded awareness of the ecology I walk through, along with my increasing knowledge of the flora and fauna I see. Pt Reyes National Seashore is a 70 acre Shangri-La teeming with biodiversity in its marine and terrestrial landscapes: embayments, marshes, estuaries, forests, sand dunes and beaches, streams, and chaparral, among others form a tapestry interwoven with historic ranches.

Over this past year, I volunteered as a member of a group of National Park volunteers that have been carrying out a 20-year-plus study of Harbor Seals. The volunteer study activity involved making formal observations and recording data on Harbor Seals during their pupping season and molting season at various sites within the park. I chose the Tomales Point area through the Tule Elk Reserve to do field work.

A typical day monitoring along the Tomales Point trail means hiking about nine miles round trip, on and off trail, with binoculars and spotting scope to four different vista points where Harbor Seals were usually observable. Along the way, I was treated to big skies, beautiful displays of wildflowers, and sweeping dramatic views of the ocean's rocky intertidal ecosystem through the Gulf of the Farallones. Relatively close encounters with Tule Elk were common. Along my route I came to expect seeing courting and other displays from a variety of birds from Brown and White Pelicans to Brants Cormorants, as well as a wide variety of raptors.

For now, the Harbor Seal monitoring season is officially over as it usually goes from March to August. The camaraderie between those of us who volunteer to do this work is enriching and palpable. I'm looking forward to next March when I will again be a part of an adventurous cadre of volunteer citizen scientists monitoring Harbor Seals at Point Reyes National Seashore.
Gardens Gone Native Tour
May 10, 2014

The committee is in full swing for next year’s event to be held in May 2014. Last year’s tour was a huge success with nearly double the participants from the previous year. We want to continue that trend. The committee is now accepting host garden applications for the 2014 tour as well as volunteers to help make this event even better. If you, or someone you know, has a garden with 50% or more California native plants and would like to be on the tour, please send an email to gardensgonenative@gmail.com.

If you are able to volunteer even a few hours to spread the word about California natives, send an email to the same address. We are looking for someone to help with publicity. If you have those skills we would love to hear from you.

Lodi Sandhill Crane Festival

Interested in sandhill cranes? The Stockton sub-chapter needs volunteers for this year’s CNPS booth at the Lodi Sandhill Crane Festival on November 2nd and 3rd at Hutchins Street Square. We will be educating festival-goers about the joys of CNPS and California native plants. For more information on volunteering to staff the booth, contact Nadia Zane at nadia.zane@gmail.com

Visit the Stockton subchapter’s website for latest news: eepurl.com/u8mNj
Use this link to subscribe to the Stockton sub-chapter e-mail list: eepurl.com/u8iT

CNPS members living in Stockton who would like to find others in the area to carpool to chapter activities in Sacramento should contact Nadia Zane, (209) 931-5151.

The native garden of Bonnie Ross
October 2013

Sacramento, CA 95816-5113
CNPS 2707 K Street Suite 1
Limited income (individual $65, student or member contribution due)
CNPS Sacramento Valley Chapter
Sacramento, CA 95816-5113
SacValley.CNPS.org

We need you!

We need your help! We are looking for volunteers who want to utilize their leadership, organization, and communication skills for board positions. Chapter officer nominations are needed for the positions of President, Vice President, Secretary, and Treasurer.

Join or renew today!

Opportunities
1. Volunteer
2. Message from the President
3. Native Americans use Elderberry Farms
4. Calendar of Events
5. Fire
6. Outreach
7. Call to the Public

In this Issue:
2. Message from the President
3. Native Americans use Elderberry Farms
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5. Outreach
6. Volunteer

See page 2 for additional details.

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Join or renew today! See your address label for your renewal date.

Be sure your membership is current! Set your address label for your renewal date.

Fall Plant Sale!
Saturday & Sunday, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.
See page 5 for more information.

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February 2013

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