March Chapter Meeting:

The Living Wild Project
Native Food Crops

Presented by Alicia Funk

The declining diversity in food crops, combined with the loss of genetic control of those foods and a changing climate, make it imperative to seek local solutions for food and health. Native foods, adapted to conserve resources and provide significantly more nutritional benefit, offer a key solution by placing control of healthy foods back in local communities. If done through a collaborative approach that is designed to share information and resources, native food crops could help us enjoy vitamin-rich, carbon-neutral food crops that protect biodiversity and cultural heritage, while bringing our families back outside.

Join author Alicia Funk on a seasonal discovery of the uses of plants native to our region as seen through photographs and tasted through a sampling of foods made from our native landscape.

Alicia Funk is the founder of the Living Wild Project and co-author of Living Wild—Gardening, Cooking and Healing with Native Plants of California. She first studied plant-based medicine in 1990 from an indigenous grandmother in Ecuador’s rainforest and is the editor of six books on plant-based medicine, including Herbal Medicine: Expanded Commission E Monographs, The ABC Clinical Guide to Herbs, and The Botanical Safety Handbook. The Living Wild Project works to deepen our relationship with the land we inhabit, remembering how we can eat, garden and heal with the sustainable use of local, native plants. For more info please visit: www.livingwild.org.
East of Merced, where the farmland ends and the rangeland begins, you’ll see a lot of open space. Here a ranch of 10,000 acres connects to other large ranches, creating a seamless landscape of uninterrupted prairie dotted with vernal pools. Surrounded by so much wildness, you’d be forgiven for not recognizing vernal pools as an increasingly rare ecosystem. Most folks who live around Merced don’t know there is an ecological treasure chest just beyond their door.

Statewide, less than 10% of California’s vernal pools still exist. In places like Sacramento County, even fewer persist. As urban and agricultural development continue to eat into what is left, fewer parcels of vernal pools exceed the 1000 acres needed to make a halfway decent preserve. Vineyards increasingly cover many thousands of acres in a seemingly relentless exchange of wine for wilderness.

How do you create a constituency that understands what is at stake? How do you extend that appreciation to the next generation? The answer is a funtastic 4-letter word: KIDS! Since 2000, more than 30,000 children in greater Sacramento have learned to understand and appreciate vernal pools thanks to Sacramento Splash.

Splash is a non-profit operating from the Splash Education Center at Mather Field. Each year more than 80 classes of 4th and 5th graders use its Investigating Vernal Pools curriculum to study science and prepare for a field trip to the Mather Field Vernal Pools. Splash is dedicated to getting science back into classrooms and children back into nature, and it’s working!

Eva Butler, the founder of Splash, and botanist Carol Witham go back a long way. With funding and help from many others, Eva and Carol worked to produce the first Splash curriculum back in 2000. Eva continued to build the Splash program while Carol spent a decade trying to redirect UC Merced’s development plans away from adjacent vernal pools. They hoped, if Carol succeeded, someday a place-based version of the Splash curriculum could be implemented in Merced. When the time was right.

And so it came to pass. Carol managed to get a grant from the Bureau of Reclamation Central Valley Improvement Project a couple of years ago. It provided funding to produce a Merced version of Investigating Vernal Pools and to pilot the program in Merced. The grant helped Splash partner up with the amazing Chris Swarth, manager of the UC Merced Vernal Pools and Grassland Reserve (the land that Carol saved!). With on-the-ground help from Chris and his students, Splash successfully piloted the program last year in eight Merced classes.

This fall Carol and Eva completed the Merced version of the curriculum. Thanks to recently approved funding from the Sac Valley Chapter of CNPS, Splash will return to Merced this spring to deliver field trips to seven classes. When asked about the future, Eva says, “All I know is that we’ve come further than we ever knew we could get. There is a curriculum, there are still vernal pools to visit, and there are children in Merced who are falling in love with them. That is where we started in Sacramento, 30,000 students ago. I am just grateful to Carol Witham and CNPS for this new beginning.”
SAVE THE DATE:
Wildflower Wonders 2015 –
April 18th from 10:00 a.m. – 4:00 p.m.

WILDFLOWER WONDERS
Native Plant Sale and Celebration

Native Plant Sale: A wide variety of native plants from Elderberry Farms, Cornflower Farms, and Hedgerow Farms will be available for purchase. “Ask a Designer” – You will be able to sign up for a half hour consultation for a nominal donation.

Native Plant Exhibit and Celebration: Several plant communities will be on display through hundreds of fresh-cut native wildflowers, shrubs, trees and grasses. Expert naturalists will be there all day to provide knowledgeable interpretation at each exhibit. This year Alicia Funk, author of Living Wild, will have a recipe card using a plant from each plant community. She will also have tastings at the book table. Plus other exhibits: Monarch Butterfly Waystations, Bees are not Optional, and Birds of a Feather.

Discovery Zone: Naturalists and volunteers will be there to facilitate your experience. Focus on Flowers - several microscopes; art table - with flowers in vases posing for the artists; scavenger hunt; plant pressing and identification activities.

Volunteers of all backgrounds and interests are asked to contact Chris to sign up. cnpschris@gmail.com
Highlights from the CNPS Conservation Conference, San Jose, January 2015

• In attendance were more than 1,000 conservationists and native plant enthusiasts from California and beyond
  • A record number of student attendees and contributors demonstrated that the future of our native plants is in very capable hands. The winners of the student oral and poster presentation contests can be found at the website. www.cnps.org/cnps/conservation/conference/2015/students.php
  • 20 Pre-Conference Workshops (6 sold out) taught professional skills and inspired CNPS chapter members
  • 5 field trips (2 sold out) gave attendees a chance to get to know the local flora
  • More than 300 inspiring speakers presented in 25 concurrent sessions on a wide array of conservation topics
  • Enlightening talks from key speakers Michael Soule, Jared Farmer, Rebecca Moore, Jack Dangermond, Kim Stanley Robinson, Peter Raven, and Paul Ehrlich brought us back to the big picture of conservation today, including and expanding beyond the plant life we know and love
  • Over 55 scientific and CNPS chapter posters demonstrated amazing research projects from around the state
  • 27 organizations and vendors in the sold-out exhibit hall displayed and discussed new technology, ideas, books, plants, projects, conservation resources, and more
  • Generous bidders raised funds for the CNPS Conservation Program through the auctions and drawing
  • The captivating botanical art and photography exhibits beautified the conference and highlighted the many talented artists who contributed their work
  • Malcolm Margolin brought together inspiring poets, including Robert Pack Browning, Lester Rowntree, Pireeni Sundaralingam, and Poet Laureate, Robert Hass, who read to a full house at the "Reaching High: Poets and Writers" event
  • Appreciation for nature and music came together at the Songfest and Music Jam, in the funky disco bar. Botanists and native plant lovers rocked out until they could rock out no more.
  • At the Friday Banquet, attendees united in celebration of CNPS’ 50th birthday and the progress made by our community throughout the last 50 years

Gardens Gone Native Tour Update

The 2015 Gardens Gone Native Tour is shaping up to be a very good representation of what can be done with California Natives in a homeowner’s landscape. We have 31 gardens in the Sacramento, Placer and Yolo county regions representing an array of sizes, landscape approaches and creativity. One of the gardens owned by Mike and Annette Heacox will be on the tour and was featured in the Sacramento Bee in February in the Home and Garden section. The interest in natives as an alternative to lawns and other ornamentals continues to grow. Registration for the tour will begin March 11, 2015, at gardensgonenative.eventbrite.com.

We are still looking for docents to help out our garden hosts on the day of the tour. A couple of hours of volunteer time would still allow time for tour docents to visit several gardens before or after their volunteer hours. If you can spare a couple of hours on April 11, 2015, email us at gardensgonenative.eventbrite.com or clrauh1@gmail.com.

Get Your eNews Here!
The Sacramento Valley Chapter CNPS emails announcements about upcoming events (talks, hikes, sales, and events). The eNewsletter is another way to get information about what’s happening in our Chapter. Don’t worry, signing up for the eNewsletter does not interrupt your Hibiscus newsletter service. Sign up at: sacvalleycnps.org or contact Chris at cnpschris@gmail.com.
Upcoming

Table Mountain Ecological Reserve Field Trip
Saturday, March 28, 10:00 a.m. – 2:00
The springtime floral display at Table Mountain is a California highlight that should not be missed. Mike Finan will lead this trip, Shellie Sullo and other volunteers will be assisting. Visit the Sacramento Valley CNPS website www.sacvalleyCNPS.org under the Events & Field Trips section for additional information including directions, what to wear, some of the plants in bloom and contact information. Bring a lunch and water or something to drink. Email Shellie at shellie_sullo@yahoo.com to sign up for the trip or for other information.

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

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

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

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. A plant will be available to take home. For more information, contact Cassandra at cnpsgarden@gmail.com.

CNPS Rare Plant Treasure Hunters

We have lots of news about the Rare Plant Treasure Hunt this year!

New list of critical rare plant data needs: The staff at CNPS Rare Plant Program recently released a list of high-priority plants of conservation concern, and we are excited to get more RPTHers looking for these plants. Relocating these occurrences is of utmost importance to the conservation of our State’s rare flora. The list includes plants not seen anywhere in California in over 20 years, highly threatened plants in serious need of conservation attention, and “watch-list” (Rank 4) rare plants that are poorly documented. Let us know if you’re interested in searching for any of these plants when you sign up as a trip leader for 2015!

2015 Trip leader signups: Now is a great time to start thinking about where you’d like to go rare plant hunting in 2015. To help us with planning, we ask that you take a brief Trip Leader Survey, If you’d like to participate in a training first, we have one on the schedule for April 24th-26th in Lake and Napa Counties, but stay tuned for more training opportunities on the RPTH Event Calendar. To help with planning, we ask interested trip leaders to fill out the survey by Friday, February 20th. Even partially filling out the survey will still be a big help to us.

2014 RPTH Awards: Although we did not have the Desert RPTH this season, we still had a very successful year, with many volunteers joining the RPTH in the northern Los Padres National Forest, and many others leading their own small group trips. We documented a total of 361 rare plant occurrences in 2014, and are extremely close to documenting our 1000th new-to-science rare plant population!

Ongoing

2nd Wed. of the month, 7 p.m. (Jan.–June; Sept.–Nov.)
Chapter Meeting & Guest Speaker
Shepard Garden & Arts Center, McKinley Park, Sacramento
See page 1. Contact John Hunter, jhunter@harveyecology.com for more information.

4th Wed. of the month, 7 p.m. (Jan.–June; Sept.–Nov.)
Chapter Board Meetings
CNPS, 2707 K Street, Suite 1 Sacramento CA 95816
Contact: John Hunter, jhunter@harveyecology.com

Elderberry Farms Native Plant Nursery
Located at Soil Born Farms
2140 Chase Drive, Rancho Cordova
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 and Field Trips.

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

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Sacramento Historic City Cemetery
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Other Items of Interest

Friends of the Chico State Herbarium
For details, contact info, and a registration form, please go to: www.csuchico.edu/biol/Herb/Events.html

Saturday, March 7 9:00 a.m. –4:00 p.m
Identifying Lichens to Genus.
Saturday, March 14
Intro into Mushroom Foraging and Identification.
Saturday, March 28
Soils and Container Gardening.
Here are three places you can get involved in protecting the environment:

**Habitat 2020.** Habitat 2020 is the Habitat and Conservation committee for ECOS, and a coalition that works to protect the lands, waters, wildlife and native plants in the Sacramento region.

The group meets at 7:00 p.m. on the first Tuesday of every month, at Mogavero Notestine Associates, 2012 K Street, Sacramento, CA 95811. For more information, contact Matt Baker, Habitat Director at habitat@ecossacramento.org.

**Environmental Council of Sacramento (ECOS) Land Use Committee.** ECOS supports Land Use policies and projects that promote infill development; foster walkable neighborhoods; promote a strong sense of place; and discourage urban sprawl.

The group meets at 6:00 p.m. on the second Monday of every month at Mogavero Notestine Associates, 2012 K Street, Sacramento, CA 95811

For more information, contact either co-chair Ron Maertz, at ronmaertz@surewest.net or Dr. Alex Kelter at akmn@macnexus.org.

**American River Parkway Coalition.** The Mission of the American River Parkway Coalition is to provide a forum for continuing communication, collaboration and coordination in order to protect and preserve the natural and recreational resources of the American River Parkway and/or around Folsom Lake. Our destination changes each week depending on the Nursery’s need and the group's interest.

For details visit: sacvalleyCNPS.org/Field Trips/Friday Walks

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**Wednesday Workday 10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. (or so)**
Can you help us at the Nursery or on our Friday Walks? Let’s talk! Join us for propagation work on Wednesdays and help pot up seedlings and learn various propagating techniques under the excellent direction of Robin Rietz, Propagation Director. We treat volunteers to peanut butter and jelly sandwiches (you’re also welcome to bring your own lunch).

Other ways to help include: Native Plant Gardening Speakers (training available); Writing (about a particular plant, plant community, plant in your garden, plants and bird/bee/butterfly, the life of a plant seed to maturity. Your choice.)

Are you interested in: propagating plants, or landscape design and maintenance? Join us!

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**2nd Sunday Workdays: March 8, 10:00 a.m. – 1p.m.**
Contact Pat Gilbert for details – battypatty296@gmail.com.

It’s time to revive our Demonstration Gardens so join us for some fun in the sun (hopefully). If the sun doesn’t shine, we can always work in the greenhouse! During February’s Sunday Workday we potted up plants happily while the rain pounded the greenhouse.

**Weekly Friday Field Trips.**
We walk most Fridays, check our website for updates. Friday walks are for seed and data collecting, plant identification, photography, and fun! The Nursery grows only plants that are native to the American River Parkway and/or around Folsom Lake. Our destination changes each week depending on the Nursery’s need and the group’s interest.

For details visit: sacvalleyCNPS.org/Field Trips/Friday Walks

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**Habitat Conservation**

The group meets at 7:00 p.m. on the first Tuesday of every month at Mogavero Notestine Associates, 2012 K Street, Sacramento, CA 95811

For more information, contact either co-chair Ron Maertz, at ronmaertz@surewest.net or Dr. Alex Kelter at akmn@macnexus.org.

**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

The mission of Elderberry Farms Native Plant Nursery is to promote awareness of the benefits of native plant habitat, encourage community involvement, and provide a source of local native plants for restoration projects as well as gardeners.
Congratulations Carol Witham and Carol Crofoot!

At the February Sacramento Valley CNPS meeting, two dedicated volunteers were honored: Carol Crofoot and Carol Witham. Carol Crofoot has served as the chapter’s Treasurer for the last eight years. Carol Witham has served as the chapter’s President for the past two years. Simultaneously, she was carrying responsibilities on the CNPS state level, as well as, planning the CNPS 50th anniversary conference and celebration.

Above from left to right: Our new Sac Valley CNPS President, John Hunter, assisting Cassandra Musto (Demo Garden Chair and co-Hospitality Chair) and Paul Barth (Publicity Chair) in cutting the cake.

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/u8iTb
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.
Submit content for the April Hibiscus by March 6!
Be sure your membership is current! See your address label for your renewal date.

March 2015

sacvalleyncps.org

The Sacramento Valley chapter newsletter, Hibiscus, is published monthly, except for July, August, and December. Deadline for Hibiscus contributions is midnight of the Friday before the monthly meeting for possible inclusion in the next month’s newsletter. Please send your submittals to editorhibiscus@gmail.com.

In this issue:
2 Merced’s Vernal Pools
3 Wildflower Wonders
4 CNPS Conference Highlights
5 Calendar of Events
6 Elderberry Farms

Join or renew today! CNPS members support CNPS’ success.

Registration for the Gardens Gone Native tour begins March 11, 2015. See page 4 for more information!

MARCH PRESENTATION:
The Living Wild Project: Native Food Crops
Presented by Alicia Funk

Our chapter meetings are free and open to the public!