March Chapter Meeting:
Morrison Creek Restoration Project: Restoring an Urban Drainage

Presented by Vern Goehring and Nailah Pope-Harden

Local community groups and residents are playing a key role in the design of the Morrison Creek Revitalization Project, a multi-benefit project in south Sacramento that seeks to turn one mile of a fenced storm water channel into a positive community asset, improving the natural riparian habitat along the creek while creating a safe natural recreational environment for the community. Morrison Creek is an important tributary of the Sacramento River and part of the Sacramento flood control system. By reshaping the creek channel, planting native riparian vegetation, and constructing a bicycle and pedestrian path the project will safely connect residents to nearby schools and parks, return migratory bird species and pollinators to the urban neighborhood and maintain the creek’s flood protection function.

The community-led effort will establish a secure, walkable route linking Elder Creek Elementary School, Sim Park, and the George Sim Community Center along Morrison Creek between Power Inn Road and 63rd Street, roughly parallel to Lemon Hill Avenue. In addition to the ecological benefits, the project will increase access to and community understanding and stewardship of Morrison Creek. (www.morrisoncreek.com)

The project design is being developed with the community’s direct input to ensure it best fits the needs of those who live, work, and play in the area. Through listening sessions and visioning exercises the residents are revitalizing their community. An important project objective aims to tackle serious
environmental justice issues that are also urban problems in the area, such as homeless encampments, illegal dumping and violence.

Come and learn how this diverse community is reclaiming this space for social, economic and environmental benefits and becoming good stewards of the place they live.

Nailah Pope-Harden is a community organizer in south Sacramento who focuses on environmental justice and community development. She serves as an appointed member of the Mayors’ Climate Commission and participates in the commission’s Community Health and Resiliency Technical Advisory Committee. She is also part of the environmental justice group advising the city on its new general plan. She is the State Policy Advocate at ClimatePlan, and serves on the boards of various environmental organizations, including the Sacramento unit of Sierra Club. Nailah received her BS in government and journalism from California State University, Sacramento in 2015.

Vern was a government management and policy professional in California, with more than 45 years working for state agencies and non-profit organizations. He served in a variety of agency executive and management positions, including legislative advocate for both Caltrans and the Department of Fish & Game. He is a graduate of the University of California, Davis, in Economics and with graduate studies in Government Administration at Cal State, Sacramento. Stating in 1997, he consulted with clients focused on natural resource conservation, state budget appropriations, fish and wildlife, natural lands acquisition, consumer protection, transportation, and state administrative procedures, including 20 years representing the California Native Plant Society at the State Capitol. He retired at the end of 2017.

Spring in Stockton

March is a beautiful time in the Central Valley for plant and nature lovers. A particular place of interest to visit if you find yourself in Stockton is the Oak Grove Regional Park. This 180-acre park boasts two miles of walking trails amongst hundred-year-old valley oak trees. It is truly a place of solace and peace in such a loud, busy city! Be sure to venture to the Nature Center and hear from the wonderful docents about the flora and fauna native to the valley oak grassland that Stockton was built upon. The CNPS-Stockton Subchapter is proud to have ownership of the native plant garden surrounding the grounds of the nature center. Visiting in March you’ll be treated to a welcoming committee consisting of bright pink flowering western redbud (Cercis occidentalis) in full bloom by mid-spring. There is a native valley grasslands section as well as a drought-tolerant native plants section, which features aromatic and renowned southern California natives such as hummingbird sage (Salvia spathacea) and Cleveland sage (Salvia clevelandii). It’s important to highlight preservation efforts, especially in an everchanging California landscape. Oak Grove Regional Park is a unique stretch of preserved land hidden in a suburban setting, but it has proven itself as a model for recreational enjoyment as well as an advocate for promoting city-wide wildlife habitat. Please be sure to visit soon and keep an eye out for volunteer opportunities in our native garden! --Nellie Zapien

Homegrown Habitat Volunteer Opportunity

On April 25, 2020, the 10th annual Gardens Gone Native Garden Tour will be held. Homegrown Habitat is looking for 2-3 volunteers to table at 2 or 3 different gardens from 9:30 AM to around 1:00 PM to share the initiative and encourage people to plant local natives for wildlife. If this is something you would like to help with, please contact me at: clrauh1@gmail.com.

–Colene Rauh
Early Bloomer: Stinkbells

Although California always needs a good wet winter, spring brings a welcome change in weather to those of us who love rare plants. One of the earliest bloomers are the fritillaries, which may begin poking up their leaves starting in February and can reach full bloom by March.

One of my favorite fritillary species is stinkbells, *Fritillaria agrestis*. This lovely lily (family: Liliaceae) can be found growing in clay soils in grasslands, woodlands, and chaparral, sometimes in serpentine areas. Stinkbells is endemic to California and is currently known to occur in 18 counties, ranging from Ventura County in the south to Yuba County in the north. It is a perennial herb that grows from a bulb and has nodding flowers that are green-yellow at the tips and splotchy purple-brown in the center. Although quite sweet in appearance, the flowers do emit a faint unpleasant smell, hence the common name “stinkbells.” Plants may grow up to between 11 and 23 inches in height, but are often much shorter as they are a favorite snack among both wild and domestic herbivores. Herbarium records of this species date as far back as 1846, and many records in the Sacramento area are pre-1960s. Stinkbells is listed in the CNPS Inventory of Rare and Endangered Plants with a rare plant rank of 4.2, meaning it is of limited distribution in California, and fairly endangered in California—in fact, most populations are quite small and threatened by invasive plants, overgrazing, off road vehicle use, and loss of habitat. As with all California native plants, it’s important that visitors tread lightly in their habitat and leave the flowers intact so they can complete their life cycle and sustain their populations. –Ellen Pimentel

Homegrown Habitat Update

Here’s a quick update on some of the efforts underway to further promote the use of local native plants in our landscapes. As stated in Homegrown’s summary statement, we accomplish our goal of ‘supporting birds, bees and butterflies and the rest of nature’ by working together—environmental and community-based organizations, local and regional government, commercial and industrial interests, conservation landowners, agricultural interests, and regional residents—to plant local, California native plants. To this end there are several efforts underway: Read comments here: tinyurl.com/ECOSPDF.

We have a generic set of comments covering Homegrown that have been and will be submitted as part of every ECOS CEQA review of planned developments in the region.

We also intend to work through the State required Climate Emergency Action planning process to require HH as a mitigation measure. Our initial target is the City of Sacramento.

A presentation has been made to the Regional Water Authority about Homegrown and they seem willing to help promote our efforts.

Another target is homeowner associations (HOA’s). We have no projects as yet, so if you have an HOA and would like someone to come talk about the Homegrown Habitat initiative please let us know.

There are many efforts underway to support this initiative. If you are interested in helping, please contact Colene Rauh at: clrauh1@gmail.com or Chris Lewis at: cnpschris@gmail.com.

NCB Botany Research Scholarship Program

Reminder -- Applications are due March 15, 2020

http://www.norcalbotanists.org/scholarships.htm

Northern California Botanists (NCB) is accepting applications for the Botany Research Scholarship Program for the 2020-2021 academic year. All application materials should be submitted by March 15, 2020. See the application packet for more details on application guidelines and requirements.

NCB provides competitive botany and plant ecology research scholarships to undergraduate and graduate students attending a college or university. Research scholarships are funded by NCB with the goals of encouraging undergraduate students to pursue academic endeavors toward a career in botany, promoting undergraduate and graduate botany and plant ecology research, and implementing objectives of the NCB mission. Research scholarships consist of $1,000 awards, designed to support basic undergraduate and graduate research.
**Water Efficient Landscape Plant of the Month:**

**Muhlenbergia rigens** (deer grass)

Pronounced: muh-len-BER-jee-ah REE-genz, this is a perennial bunch grass, a California native, a UC Davis Arboretum Allstar and an amazing plant. For the lazy gardener it is ideal. It is drought tolerant but does fine with some summer watering. You never have to prune it, but if you desire greener foliage you can cut it to the ground every year. It does great in full sun but can handle partial shade as well. It is a beautiful accent plant but is tough enough to withstand the harsh conditions and reflected light along driveways and paths. If you do nothing to this plant it will still provide a beautiful showy grass for any landscape.

This attractive native bunch grass has narrow leaves and long silver-gray flower panicles that arch gracefully 2-3 feet over the gray green foliage. Deer grass will tolerate sand, clay and seasonal flooding. It is found in chaparral, valley grassland, yellow pine forest and central oak woodland communities below 7,000 feet elevation, from near the Oregon-California border south to Mexico and east to Texas. The flower stalks are used by California Native Americans as the foundation for coiled baskets, and the seeds for food. Some native tribes encouraged and managed *Muhlenbergia rigens* using fire, in the fall after the seeds have fallen.

According to one source, despite it’s common name deer don’t really like to browse on it, but prefer to lay on the mounds. According to the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, “In California dense patches of deer grass provide cover during the fawning period of mule deer in mountain meadows and grassland openings. The younger palatable tufts are grazed by deer, horses, and cattle and can remain palatable if continually grazed. It is particularly sought for forage by animals when first resprouting after a burn… In sunny openings where deergrass occurs, it forms a larval food plant for one of the Satyrid butterflies, the California ringlet (*Coenonympha california*) and for the umber skipper (*Poaones melane*). Massive numbers of ladybugs overwinter in deergrass clumps.”

It is not invasive but it does make a few little deer grasses under the grass canopy which are easily dug up, potted or replanted. This picture reflects a plant that has probably been allowed to grow with little or no pruning. You can see *Muhlenbergia rigens* in the California Native Plant section of the WEL. —Colene Rauh

The Water Efficient Landscaping (WEL) demonstration garden is located at the Fair Oaks Horticultural Center, 11549 Fair Oaks Boulevard (Map/Directions).

Learn more here: https://tinyurl.com/FO-WEL.

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**CNPS Volunteers Needed for Monarch Butterfly Conservation Project**

The Xerces Society is looking for knowledgable CNPS volunteers to help with a new monarch butterfly conservation project. Volunteers are needed to help identify locations and potential seed gathering sites for six native plants (listed below), as well as information about the best time frames for collection of seed. Seed will be grown out at Hedgerow Farms. The project aims to increase the commercial availability of a wider range of species and ecotypes that are important to monarchs than are currently available. The project will be focused on the following plants:

- *Asclepias californica*
- *Asclepias eriocarpa*
- *Asclepias cordifolia*
- *Asclepias vestita*
- *Dichelostemma capitatum*
- *Verbena lasiostachys*

If you are interested in helping with this effort, please contact Stephanie McKnight at stephanie.mcknight@xerces.org.
The 2020 Gardens Gone Native garden tour is our 10th annual tour. The tour is a free, self-guided tour featuring home gardens in and around Sacramento and Yolo counties. Gardens are comprised of at least 50% California Native plants. Attendance continues to grow with 1200 attendees in 2019. Participants will be inspired by a variety of gardens that showcase the beauty, versatility, and hardiness of California native plants as well as their role in water efficient landscapes. A diversity of garden styles can be viewed, including: small city lots to large semi-rural parcels, professional and homeowner designs, and hundreds of native plant species.

Late Calendar Addition

CNPS Garden Ambassador Spring Garden Visit

March 22, 10:00 am - 2:00 pm

Enjoy CNPS Garden Ambassador Patricia Carpenter’s one-acre Delta garden on a typical spring day. See more than 400 species and cultivars of California native plants on a typical spring day. Registration is required. https://www.cnps.org/events.
Upcoming Events

LANDSCAPING WITH NATURE

March 13, 2020
UC Davis Campus, Asmundon Hall, Rm. 242
This workshop is suitable for landscape professionals and anyone interested in maximizing habitat values. Design, build, and maintain attractive native landscapes that support wildlife and reduce water usage. cnnga.org/event-3621340 $$

CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT PROPAGATION WORKSHOP

March 28 or 29, (depending upon the weather), 9:30 am to 1:00 pm
Learn to grow native plants from cuttings, divisions, or seeds at one-acre native plant garden. Proceeds will benefit the Kids in Native Gardens Program of the Sacramento Valley Chapter of CNPS. Register at: tinyurl.com/CNPS-Pro. $$

SPRING NATIVE PLANT SALE

April 4, 9 am-2 pm, Elderberry Farms Native Plant Nursery
Located at Soil Born Farms, 2140 Chase Drive, Rancho Cordova. For more information, contact Chris Lewis at cnpschris@gmail.com. To volunteer, contact Amy Ithurburn at: svccnpsvolunteer@gmail.com.

CALIFORNIA NATIVE GRASSLAND ASSOCIATION 13TH ANNUAL FIELD DAY

Friday, April 17, 2020
21905 County Road 88, Winters California
CNGA is holding its 13th annual of field day at Hedgerow Farms in Winters, California. Enjoy speakers, networking, tours, expert talks, and beautiful scenery. For more information and costs, contact CNGA at 530-902-6009. Download flyer at: https://cnnga.org/event-3621340. $$

INTRODUCTION TO KEYING MANZANITAS ARCTOSTAPHYLOS, ERICACEAE, CSU CHICO

Saturday, April 25, 2020
Learn to key out the manzanitas at CSU Chico Friends of the Herbarium workshop. Tom Parker (Professor of Biology, SF State) and Mike Vasey (Director, SF Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve) promise that it will be easy once you learn the key characteristics. Register in advance, class size is limited. $$ For information and to register: tinyurl.com/ChicoManz

Gardens Gone Native Tour

April 25, 2020
The 2020 Gardens Gone Native garden tour is our 10th annual tour. The tour is a free, self-guided tour featuring home gardens in and around Sacramento and Yolo counties. Gardens are comprised of at least 50% California Native plants. Register at gardensgonenative@eventbrite.com.

Ongoing Events

CHAPTER MEETING

2nd Wednesday of the month, 7 p.m.
(except July, August, and Dec.)
Shepard Garden & Arts Center, McKinley Park, Sacramento
Info? Contact Tara Collins, svcnpspresident@gmail.com

CHAPTER BOARD MEETINGS

4th Wednesday of the month, 7 p.m.
(except Jul, Aug, and Dec.)
Shepard Garden & Arts Center, McKinley Park, Sacramento
Info? Contact Tara Collins, svcnpspresident@gmail.com

ELDERBERRY FARMS NATIVE PLANT NURSERY

Every Wednesday workdays, from 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
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 at cnpschris@gmail.com.

FIELD TRIPS

Sign up for automatic email notice when a new trip is planned, email John Schmidt at john_waif@msn.com. Or call or text John at 916-500-8456. You can also subscribe to the CNPS enews, and receive updates when the plant walks are scheduled. Subscribe on the home page at https://www.sacvalleycnps.org/.

FRIDAY WALKS

Friday Walks are for seed and data collecting, plant identification, photography, and fun! Our destination changes each week depending on the Nursery’s need and the group’s interest. Walks are listed in the eNewsletter and on our webpage. Contact Friday Walks leader John Schmidt at 916-500-8456.

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

by H.D. Harrington

A grass can be “glumey” in more ways than one,
When its classification remains to be done;
You pull off the parts, and soon feel your age
Chasing them over the microscope stage!

You peer through the lenses at all of the bracts
And hope your decisions agree with the facts;
While your oculist chortles with avid delight
As you strain both your eyes in the dim table light.

You are left on the horns of quite a dilemma
When you count the nerves on the back of the lemma;
Then you really get snoopy and turn each one turtle
To see if the flower is sterile or fertile.

And then the compression, no problem is meaner—
Is it flat like your wallet or round like a wiener?
“How simple,” you think, “for a mind that is keen”—
But what do you do when it’s half-way between?

You probe and you guess how the florets will shatter,
For you know later on it is certain to matter;
You long for the calmness of labor that’s manual
When the question arises—“perennial” or “annual”?

And that terrible texture, the meanest of all,
Is one of the pitfalls in which you can fall;
“Cartilaginous” maybe—or is it “chartaceous”?
Has even the experts exclaiming “Good gracious!”

Then you must wail as you wade through the long tribal key,
“Oh, why must this awful thing happen to me?”
“Grasses are easy,” our teacher declares,
As he mops off a brow that is crowned with gray hairs!

From How to Identify Grasses and Grasslike Plants.
Swallow Press, Ohio University Press, Athens, Ohio, a classic and essential text by H.D. Harrington, Emeritus Professor of Botany at Colorado State University.

While you’re here, just a reminder that the California Native Grassland Association is holding their 13th Annual Field Day, Friday, April 17, 2020, in Winters, California at Hedgerow Farms.

Register and further information at: admin@cnga.org

Get your eNews HERE!

The SacValley Chapter of CNPS emails updates about upcoming events (hikes, sales, talks, workdays...)

Members and non-members alike sign up for the eNews Bulletin at our Home page: SacValleyCNPS.org
Homegrown Habitat OUTREACH Training

We are looking for outreach help during:
- Native Plant Sales
- Garden Tour
- Neighborhood meetings
- HOAs
- Libraries and more

If interested please email Amy at SVCCNPSVolunteer@gmail.com with HH Outreach in the Subject line.

March 2020

sacvalleycnps.org

The online version of the Hibiscus is in full color and contains live links to websites. If you would rather receive the link to each new issue of the newsletter in your inbox, instead of a paper copy, please let us know at editorhibiscus@gmail. Find us on the web at https://www.sacvalleycnps.org/home/newsletters

Spring Native Plant Sale
No neonicotinoids used
Saturday, April 4, 9am-2pm

Elderberry Farms Native Plant Nursery
2140 Chase Drive, Rancho Cordova, at Soil Born Farms
on the American River Parkway www.SacValleyCNPS.org
Sign up to volunteer with Amy: svccnpsvolunteer@gmail.com