The mission of the California Native Plant Society is to increase understanding and appreciation of California’s native plants and to conserve them and their natural habitats through science, education, advocacy, horticulture and land stewardship.

Sacramento Valley Chapter Meeting
Wednesday, October 10, 7 p.m.
Shepard Garden & Arts Center
McKinley Park • 3330 McKinley Blvd.
(the eastern extension of E St.)
Sacramento 95816
Mary Maret, President (916) 961-4057

Ecology and Conservation of Vernal Pools
by Carol Witham

From the cracked mud and seemingly barren plains comes an eruption of color on the alluvial terraces of the eastern edge of the Great Valley of California and the surrounding lower foothills. A succession of rainbows of color forms in concentric rings around the drying vernal pools—small, rain-filled depressions with an impermeable layer of clay, hardpan or volcanic material that prevents the water from percolating downward. Blooms of golden yellow, azure and violet-blues, pink and pale amethyst, white and silvery green are typical of the seasonally wet habitats of vernal pools. In the spring of 1868, naturalist John Muir noted the staggering numbers of wildflowers that carpeted the Central Valley: “Sauntering in any direction, my feet would press about a hundred flowers with every step...as if I was wading in liquid gold.” Once widespread, approximately 90% of vernal pools and the wildflowers that characterize them are now gone from the state.

Vernal pools are homes to a flora and fauna found nowhere else on the face of this planet. Because the pools are fish and predator-free, they are also home to a unique fauna of small crustaceans and amphibians. Carol’s presentation will feature the distribution, ecology, and unique flowers and other organisms of vernal pools. The visual tour includes vernal pools from around the state and a variety of geomorphic settings.

Carol Witham is a botanical and biological consultant and an authority on vernal pool ecosystems. She is the editor of Ecology, Conservation, and Management of Vernal Pool Ecosystems and author of Field Guide to the Vernal Pools of Mather Field. Carol is also very active in several conservation organizations and was president of the Board of Directors of the California Native Plant Society in 2004-2005.

Carol will provide updates on several large projects impacting vernal pools and on recent legal victories.

Our chapter meetings are free and the public is invited to attend. Each meeting includes a “Know Your Natives” Plant Identification Challenge. Books, wildflower seeds, and Sacramento Valley Chapter t-shirts will be available for purchase at the meeting. Refreshments too!

The mission of the California Native Plant Society is to increase understanding and appreciation of California’s native plants and to conserve them and their natural habitats through science, education, advocacy, horticulture and land stewardship.
**OCTOBER 2007 Calendar of Events**

**Calendar of Events**

**OCTOBER**

Fri. 10/12, 8:00 a.m.-12 noon  
Bannister Park Hike  
Meet Jack at the end of Bannister, just off Fair Oaks Boulevard for a hike along this beautiful part of the American River Parkway.

Sun. 10/21, 8:00 a.m.  
Habitat Improvement  
Come and help Jack improve the Nature Area. Call Jack at 967-0777 if you are planning to come out and help.

Wed. 10/24, 8:00 a.m.-noon  
Nature Walk at William Pond Recreation Area  
Meet Jack at the outside entrance to the park at the end of Arden Way.

**ONGOING**

Native Plant Demo-Garden  
Saturdays and Sundays  
10 a.m. until noon (Rain cancels). Wear a hat, long shirt and boots (or sturdy tennis shoes). Also bring gloves, gardening tools and knee pads if you have them. RSVP by Sunday at 5 p.m. to confirm 929-7896. For more info, Sabrina soj@surewest.net

Chapter Meeting & Guest Speaker  
2nd Wed. of month, 7:00 p.m.  
(Jan-June; Sept.-Nov)  
Shepard Garden & Arts Center, McKinley Park, Sacramento.  
Meetings are free and open to the public. Books, Wildflower Seeds, and our SacValley t-shirt always available for purchase. Refreshments.

Habitat 2020 Conservation  
Mon. 10/8 7:00 p.m. - 9 p.m.  
Arden-Dimick Library, 891 Watt Ave, Sac 95864 (corner Watt & Northrup)  
Contact Chris Lewis for information, lewisc@surewest.net / (916) 812-2876.

American River Native Plant Nursery/Demo Garden - TBD  
For meeting information, contact Chris Lewis, lewisc@surewest.net / (916) 812-2876

Chapter Board Meetings  
4th Wed. of month 7:00 p.m.  
(Jan-June; Sept.-Nov) Arden-Dimick Public Library, 891 Watt Ave. at Northrup, Sacramento 95864.  
Call Mary Maret for more information (916) 961-4057.

Effie Yeaw Nature Center - Selected October 2007 Events

**Interactive Exhibit: Endangered Species of California’s Central Valley**  
The Nature Center is located in Ancil Hoffman County Park,  
2850 San Lorenzo Way, Carmichael, CA  
All programs are FREE unless stated otherwise.  
Park entrance fee: $4.00/car, FREE to ARNHA members.  
For more information about the Center or events, contact:  
www.effieyeaw.org / (916) 489-4918

Sat. 10/6, 10:00 a.m.-4:00 p.m.  
Maidu Indian Day: Special Fundraising Event  
A celebration of the Maidu culture. Enjoy traditional food tasting, games and demonstrations, watch Maidu dances and make Maidu crafts. This fundraiser supports the Nature Center’s educational programs. Event admission $3.00/person, children 3 and under free.

Sun. 10/7, 1:30 p.m.  
Riparian Habitat Walk

Sat. 10/13, 1:30 p.m.  
Owls of October  
When are owls most active? Can they turn their heads all the way around? What is an owl pellet? Meet a resident owl and learn the answers and more!

Sun. 10/14, 1:30 p.m.  
Salmon Stroll  
Catch a glimpse of the migrating salmon.

Sat. 10/20, 1:30 p.m.  
Fall into Music  
Celebrate Fall with local musician, Lisa Phenix. Suitable for all ages!

Sun. 10/21, 1:30 p.m.  
Things that Slither  
Come and learn the differences between reptiles and amphibians.

Sat. 10/27, 1:30 p.m.  
Spooky Story Time  
Gear up for Halloween with some spooky stories told by the Sacramento Story Tellers Guild. Stories guaranteed not to cause nightmares!

Sun. 10/28, 1:30 p.m.  
Endangered Species  
A naturalist-guided tour of the Nature Center’s newest exhibit, Endangered Species of California’s Central Valley. Lively, hands-on, and featuring life size California condor wings and a kit fox burrow.

**CNPS Plant Science Training Program**

**Upcoming Workshops**

For more information visit CNPS state website at http://cnps.org/cnps/education/  
or contact  
Josie Crawford at  
(916) 447-2677 or  
jcrawford@cnps.org

Oct. 16-18, 2007  
Vegetation Mapping  
UC Berkeley/ Mount Tamalpais  
*Primary Instructors:* Todd Keeler-Wolf, Julie Evens, John Menke

Nov. 7-8, 2007  
Riparian Ecology and Plant Identification for Professional Botanists  
*Casitas Springs, Ventura Co.*  
*Primary Instructors:* David Magney, Cher Batchelor

Mar. 4-5, 2008  
Rare Plant Surveys, San Diego County  
*Primary Instructors:* Fred Roberts, Michele Balk

Check out the calendar online at www.sacvalleycnps.org for more, updated events and happenings!
Legal Victories for Vernal Pools!

Story and photos by Carol Witham

The California Native Plant Society recently won two important court decisions related to vernal pools in Rancho Cordova. This area is the home of the most dense and diverse complexes of vernal pools in Sacramento County.

As reported in the last issue of the Hibiscus, on July 6, 2007 the Superior Court of California ruled that the City of Rancho Cordova had violated the law in approving a 530-acre residential project because it deferred mitigation and simply assumed that adequate mitigation would occur. The project was proposed by developer Angelo K. Tsakopoulos, who cynically named it “The Preserve at Sunridge.” The developer had offered to set aside a mere 90 acres of the site for a preserve, despite the fact that state and federal regulatory agencies had strongly recommended preserving over 200 acres in order to adequately protect sensitive vernal pool habitat. The City and developer have notified CNPS’s attorney that they will be appealing this decision.

In a separate action, on July 10 the U.S. District Court found that the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers had failed to adequately analyze alternatives or cumulative impacts for numerous interrelated projects in the Sunrise Douglas area of Rancho Cordova, totaling over 1,000 acres. The court issued a preliminary injunction that prohibits any further construction or other on-the-ground activity that may affect vernal pool habitat or listed species until the case can be heard on its merits.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service are named as codefendants. Attorneys for the developers have also joined the case in support of the defendants. Defenders of Wildlife and Butte Environmental Council are coplaintiffs with CNPS. A trial date for this lawsuit is expected in early 2008.

Winning these two rulings increases CNPS’s influence within the environmental and development communities, and in the end—we hope—will result in protecting our treasured vernal pool habitat.

Funding for these lawsuits was provided by the Sacramento Valley Chapter of CNPS, state CNPS, numerous local environmental groups, and donations from individuals. However, we need to raise another $25,000 for attorney fees and other costs in order to continue advocating for increased environmental protections during the state Superior Court appeal process and the federal District Court trial.

Please consider making a donation toward the important and successful environmental lawsuits described in the accompanying article. With your help, CNPS can and does make a difference.

Make checks payable to CNPS Litigation Fund and mail to Carol Crofoot, 2280 Stillwind Ln., Rancho Cordova, CA 95670. Any funds not needed for these lawsuits will be used for similar litigation.

SAVE THE DATE!
Sat., Nov. 3 ♦ 6-9 p.m.
2nd Annual Celebration for Vernal Pools!
Benefit and fundraiser for vernal pool education, conservation, and advocacy. Enjoy finger food, beverages, door prizes, a silent auction, and music by RSVP (Rock Stars for Vernal Pools).
Tickets: $25 per person, reservations required.
For additional information or to volunteer to help with this event, which is still in the planning stages, e-mail celebration@vernalpools.org

Sacramento orcutt grass (Orcuttia viscida), a vernal pool plant endemic to Sacramento County.
Sacramento Splash presents a Nature in the Neighborhood workshop:  
Tracks and Scat – Find the Signs Left Behind  
Saturday, October 13  1:00 p.m. – 4:00 p.m.

Hone your skills as a nature detective and learn to identify wildlife by the signs they leave behind.

Hosts David Rosen and Jeanette Wrysinski will do an indoor introduction to the clues that wildlife leave behind, including feathers, hair, tracks, and scat (a.k.a. poop!). We’ll go for a walk in Mather Regional Park to find signs and learn about the animals that left them. We’ll visit several baited “track stations” and see what critters have dropped by. Afterwards, you’ll get to make your own plaster cast of an animal track to take home!

David is highly-respected naturalist and wildlife photographer and Jeanette has experience in wildlife monitoring through her job with the Yolo County Resource Conservation District.

Wear good walking shoes for the field portion of this program. Reserve your spot early!

Important Information:
For more information visit www.sacsplash.org and click on “Nature in the Neighborhood.” You may reserve a spot for this program (required) on our website or by calling Splash at (916) 364-2437. The Splash Education Center is located at 4426 Excelsior Rd., Mather, CA 95655. For directions, click on “Find Us.”

Pay by cash or check:  
$10.00/adult, $5.00/child (8-18).  
Children must be accompanied by an adult.

Contact: Emily Butler, Program Coordinator.  
Work: (916) 364-2437 / Cell: (916) 508-7607.  
E-mail: emily@sacsplash.org
HABITAT 2020:
TOGETHER WE CAN DO MORE!

by Janie Booth

Power consists in one’s capacity to link his will with the purpose of others, to lead by reason and a gift of cooperation.

-Woodrow Wilson

CNPS is one of many local environmental organizations. Ultimately, we all want the same thing - to preserve habitat, ecological integrity, and species diversity in the Central Valley.

In recognition of the power of a united, collective voice, Habitat 2020 was formed. Habitat 2020 is a committee of environmental organizations collaborating on common issues in and affecting Sacramento County. Members organizations are: Sacramento Audubon, Save the American River Association, Sacramento Urban Creeks Council, California Native Plant Society-Sacramento Valley Chapter, Environmental Council Of Sacramento, Sierra Club-Mother Lode Chapter, Friends of Swainson’s Hawk, Save Our Sandhill Cranes, and Stone Lakes National Wildlife Refuge Association.

We urge you to lend your voice, support, and expertise to this important effort. We have a special need for contributors with technical expertise in protecting plant communities and rare species. However, we welcome anyone to our meetings with open arms. It is vital that we educate the other Habitat 2020 members on the threats facing our native flora and how our goals fit with larger conservation goals in the region.

Habitat 2020 meetings take place on the second Monday of each month. Meeting information is posted at <www.sacvalleycnps.org> and <www.habitat2020.org>. For more information please contact Chris Lewis at lewisc@surewest.net.

RARE PLANT BRIEF

Brandegee’s Clarkia
(Clarkia biloba ssp. brandegeae)

Status: CNPS 1B - Rare, threatened, or endangered in California and elsewhere.

Habitat: Chaparral
Blooming Period: May – July

Range: California endemic occurs from Butte County south to El Dorado County

Threatened by: Road maintenance and alteration of fire regimes

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American River Native Plant Nursery Takes Root!

It’s finally happening!! After a year and a half of working and wishing and hoping, Soil Born Farm has been officially awarded a 10-year lease on a farm property on the American River Parkway (near Hagan Park in Rancho Cordova). CNPS SacValley Chapter will enter into a sublease agreement with Soil Born to build our native plant nursery and demonstration garden on the site. We have been anxiously waiting for months, and now...

WE FINALLY START!!

You can help make this dream a reality by volunteering with CNPS at our planned native plant nursery and demonstration garden. There are opportunities for every interest. Bring expertise or learn as you go! Tasks we need help with include:

- fund-raising and grant writing
- nursery design
- sales
- bookkeeping
- keeping nursery records
- sowing seeds
- watering and potting-up plants
- weeding
- landscape design
- creating native plant and wildlife habitat
- collecting seeds and cuttings
- tool maintenance
- building nursery structures
- maintaining nursery structures

Contact Chris to find out the date, time, and location of the next Nursery meeting! lewisc@surewest.net or (916) 812-2876.

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Many thanks to those who have joined CNPS and/or our Chapter in recent months, including those who have been reinstated after an absence.


Special appreciation to those loyal members who reliably renew their memberships from year to year!

Hazel Gordon, Membership Coordinator

Cosumnes River Preserve Volunteer Naturalist Training

Love learning and talking to people about nature? Share your enthusiasm! We will train you, guide you, and soon you will be walking around the Cosumnes River Preserve wearing a volunteer vest, leading walks, and teaching kids about nature, all while enjoying the great outdoors!

Starts Wednesday October 3, 6 pm - 8 pm. Additional classes in October and November. Where: Cosumnes River Preserve’s Visitor Center, 13501 Franklin Blvd., Galt. For more information, please call the Cosumnes River Preserve at (916) 683-1700 or email aveselka@sacparks.org

Join the Team!

Our chapter board needs some fresh faces. We currently have vacancies for Hospitality, Programs, Books and Horticulture chairpersons.

Contact Mary M. (916) 961-4057 for more information.

Got e-mail?

Subscribe to the chapter listserv by sending a blank email to: CNPS_SacramentoValley-subscribe@yahoogroups.com Contact Harry Spanglet (spanglet@water.ca.gov) for more info.

To request the email version of this newsletter, notify Barbara W. at <bwolf@surewest.net> and Hazel G. at <hazelpgordon@hotmail.com> if you’d like to stop your paper copies.