

# Carpenteria

CNPS SEQUOIA CHAPTER



July/August 2019  
www.cnps-sequoia.org

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## MEMBER'S REPORT

### Fire Station Native Flower Garden

--Kara Ayik

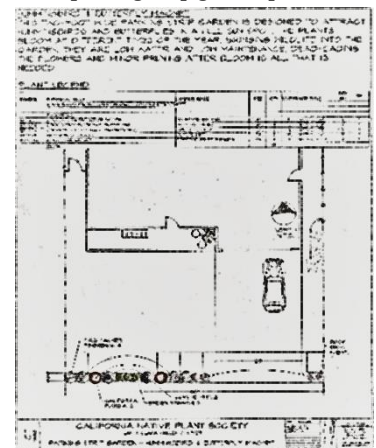
Evren Ayik, a seventeen year-old Merced resident, had dreamed of becoming an Eagle Scout since the sixth grade. To achieve that honor, Evren had to complete an Eagle Scout project—a service project that would benefit the community and prove his leadership skills. He decided he wanted to do a project that would honor his family's and the Boy Scouts' commitment to environmental stewardship. I, Evren's mom, who first learned about native flowers from the Xerces Society when working on a turf replacement project, suggested that a native flower garden would be a wonderful idea, and Evren agreed.

Evren would be responsible for all phases of the project, including planning, acquiring materials, and leading the installation. To his delight, he found a simple, downloadable plan on the California Native Plant Society's website showing how to install a native flower garden. The plan was for a parking strip pollinator's garden (*page 26*; <https://www.cityofpaloalto.org/civicax/filebank/documents/64395>).

Originally, Evren's plan was to install the garden at a local park in Merced, but planting the native flowers proved too complicated for city bureaucrats who wanted to present the idea to different committees and decision makers for a formal vote, which would not only have meant months of delay, but also missing the rainy season.

Evren began searching for other beneficiaries to no avail. Just as we were about to give up the quest, Evren spotted a perfect site at a local Merced County Fire Station (McKee Station), which had the added bonus of being visible from a major road. Other than two healthy geraniums and a few agapanthus plants (non-natives, albeit drought tolerant), the garden in front of the fire station was empty.

—parking strip garden plan—



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## MEMBER'S REPORT (CONTINUED)

Fortunately, Captain Ralph Goodwin saw Evren and me fixedly evaluating the front area of his station and came out to see us. After explaining Evren's aspirations for a fire station native flower garden, he kindly gave his approval. The strong native plants would be easy for the firefighters to maintain, freeing up their time for other work or relaxation.

We turned to Intermountain Nursery in Prather for the native plants. Substitutions were made for plants listed in the plan that Intermountain did not have available; however, the owners' recommendations still closely matched those listed in the plan. Plants purchased included yarrow, California Fuchsia, salvias, Shasta sulfur flowers, coyote mint, and woolly sunflowers. I purchased the plants in exchange for Evren's promise to help with a future garage sale.

Our friends and family donated planters, soil, and the materials needed for the irrigation system. A local landscaping company, Sierra Materials, donated three and a half cubic yards of undyed wood chips that would replace the existing red-dyed wood chips.



Finally, installation began. The Boy Scout team, led by Evren, removed the dyed mulch and environmentally unfriendly geotextile weed barrier. When the Scout Master tried to convince Evren not to remove the weed barrier, Evren explained to him that the geotextile barrier was not beneficial for maintaining healthy soils or plants.

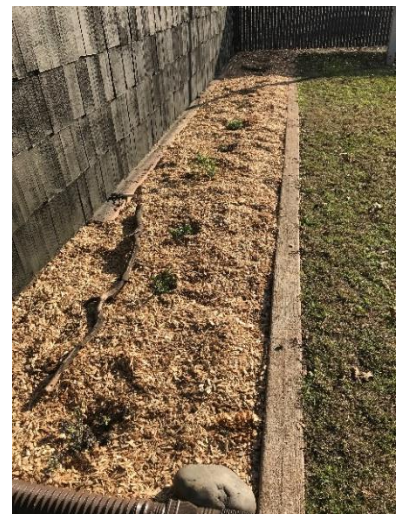
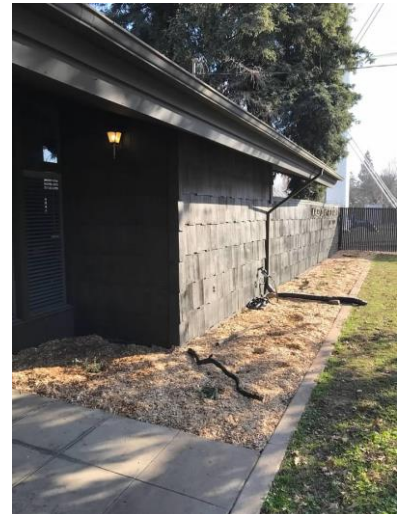
Instead, they would be using a more environmentally friendly approach to weed control called sheet mulching — using cardboard and mulch.

We made use of the removed non-natives. The agapanthus was planted in the front of the property where a small retaining wall sat empty, and the geraniums were placed in the two donated half-barrel planters next to the station's honorary Dalmatian dog statue.

The following weekend, Evren and his team cut cardboard to fit the garden and installed the native flowers and irrigation system. The project was "topped off" with the undyed mulch.

It was not a huge garden, but it was a great learning experience. Evren's project was approved and accepted by McKee Station and by the Eagle Scout Board of the Greater Yosemite Council, and Evren achieved his goal of earning the rank of Eagle Scout. Hooray!!

So far, all the plants but one have survived, and most have blossomed. Evren plans on asking permission to plant some golden poppies in the garden this fall.





# FIELD REPORT

## Prescribed Burn by CAL FIRE

--Gene Richards

Here's a short story about how 'perseverance furthers' (the idea of re-aligning ourselves with a vision of the future, furthering oneself through the undertaking of something, carrying out our understandings to create success by putting them into practice for the highest good of all involved, and reaping the rewards to create a new beginning; from the Yijing or I Ching or Chinese Book of Changes): we had been thinking about the use of fire in China Creek Park for ages but mostly thought that the Air Pollution Control District (APCD) would not allow it. During our work party field trip a few years ago to Kaweah Oaks Preserve (344 acres in Tulare County very near Visalia, run by the Sequoia Riverlands Trust, a successor to the Nature Conservancy ownership) they said they were using fire as a tool. We thought... well, how about us? Here's where 'perseverance furthers' comes in: after many calls and conversations with the APCD and then California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE), we found that CAL FIRE was jumping at the chance to work with us. It seems they do training exercises every year for new crews but usually do not use real fire on these.

The Chapter wants to stop the spread of invasive weed species at China Creek Park that are too many to enumerate, but thistle, fig, ailanthus and various grasses and forbs would be primary. AND we want to encourage natives, like the valley oaks, elderberry, anemopsis, various rushes and sedges, creeping rye grass, etc. Could fire help us in this? Would we still have to spend so much time hacking and sometimes poisoning thistles in the

spring and poisoning the invasive trees? And could we stop relying on cattle for keeping the weeds down? In some respects, cattle bring in problems as well — they do not kill weed seeds well in their gut and they are hard on some native species, particularly saplings and shrubs, and on fences.



In late 2018, we came to meet and work with Michael Bowman, Battalion Chief, Fresno Kings Unit Training Bureau. He came out to the Park many times to study our local conditions and wanted to work with us on achieving our goals while training fire crews.

Jump forward to April 8, 2019: the Fresno County Board of Supervisors approved an agreement with CAL FIRE to operate training burns at the Park. It had already been approved by the Public Works staff. Environmental permits, plans, etc. were obtained by CAL FIRE to begin this year and possibly continue for four more years. They would have a forester and



(continued on next page)

## FIELD REPORT (CONTINUED)

archaeologist working with the grader crews when creating the breaks and scraping existing roads in case anything was missed while researching our site.

An area of the Park to the west would not be burned this year, and the north pasture was not slated to be burned at all. This would allow us to test whether burning and major cutting are good alternatives to other methods we've used, such as hand labor, which ain't cheap (in muffins, not cash).

There would be many crews from all or almost all of the various fire departments in Fresno County, municipal and state, doing the wildland burn training as well as chainsaw work. CAL FIRE would be using its own heavy equipment to make the fire breaks. They would also be 'limbing' branches, cutting to clear the understory from many trees so fire could not climb up into the upper branches and cause serious damage. Prunings would be laid out into the field to burn, placed in piles the fields after the burns to encourage quail and rabbits, or hauled away if necessary.

We asked CAL FIRE to cut out the fig trees *completely* down to the stumps so we could poison them afterward for long-term control and stop them from coming back. Their crews have already reduced the very large fig in the southwest, next to the road, to an ungainly stump. You might want to come out now to take a look.



We hope the fire destroys all thistle seeds, on the ground or standing, and a new abundance of bedstraw we've noticed under the oak canopies. BUT, the thistle and new elderberry plants grow in the same areas, especially in the southeast pasture — how to deal with this? We gather CAL FIRE can be very selective on what to protect, including wooden fence posts and signs.

In conclusion, the key word in all this activity is experiment...so we can learn what works and what isn't so effective in our job of restoring China Creek Park to a semblance of its pre-European migration look. Want to help us? WE NEED YOU!

Stay tuned for details regarding burn results.

## CHINA CREEK REPORTS

### May 2019 Work Party

--Gene Richards

The work party on Saturday, May 25, was good — weather fine and volunteers fed and happy. Wadwedo? We were killing mainly bull thistle in the north pasture — lots of small rosettes, too tough for cattle feed, and a very few yellow starthistle, which is still at the tender stage when cattle will forage it. For some reason, the cattle were in the south pasture despite the fences along the creek being down, meaning they could wander to the south of the creek and be very hard to retrieve, and a calf had gotten herself onto the road. Hank hustled her butt back in with mom.



## CHINA CREEK REPORTS (CONTINUED)

Then we checked out CAL FIRE's prep work for the prescribed burns that were to begin June 10 — they scraped a break around and inside both south pastures, west and east. They cut and piled fig branches onto the road, but not sure how to dispose of these yet — maybe burn or push back into the pasture for critter habitat, or ask county to haul away.

Some of us collected abandoned cages so they wouldn't get burned and others cleared the berm of overhanging willow, mostly, next to the north pond. Others, gluttons for punishment, continued hacking at various thistles in the north.

For some reason known only in the minds of young male park-goers, the very heavy picnic table had been moved from the entrance kiosk to the south pond 100 yards away, and a small fire had been started. Warren and I put the table in the bed of the trailer and moved it back (we will ask the County to chain it down!), and CAL FIRE worried about the small fire taking up the training area — no.



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### First June 2019 Work Party

--Warren Shaw

The June 15 work party started with a kind of Chinese fire drill: as we set up for our work party, fire equipment rolled in from all over Fresno County, and Brett Ricken, our current grazing lessor, tried to load his cattle to move. The narrow road was pretty congested for a while.



Eventually things settled down, with CAL FIRE burning in the south areas, the cattle gone, and our crews caging valley oak seedlings in the north area of the Park, digging and spot spraying thistles, and checking out the controlled burning from time to time.



Our second June work party (the last of the "spring semester") occurred Saturday, June 29, and will be explored in the next newsletter.



## Upcoming Classes and Events

### •July 13, Native Basketry Techniques Saturday, 9:30am – 4:30pm

Location: Intermountain Nursery, 30443 N. Auberry Road, Prather, CA 93651

- Learn the basic weaving techniques used to make baskets with natural and modern materials.
- You will be taught traditional and contemporary weaving.
- You will learn about which materials to use and when to harvest them.

Cost: \$90

Information:

<https://www.intermountainnursery.com/classes.htm>

### •July 27, Cool Season Vegetables Saturday, 9:30am – 11:00am

Location: Fig Garden Regional Library, 3071 W. Bullard Avenue, Fresno, CA 93711

- Did you know that cool season vegetables have a higher food value than warm season ones?
- You will learn how to expand your gardening repertoire to include cool season crops.

Cost: Free

Information:

[https://ucanr.edu/sites/mgfresno/Gardening\\_Classes/?calitem=449495&g=45154](https://ucanr.edu/sites/mgfresno/Gardening_Classes/?calitem=449495&g=45154)

Contact: [mgfresno@ucdavis.edu](mailto:mgfresno@ucdavis.edu)



### •August 12-15, Pygmy Forest Flora & Ecology 1:00pm Monday – 5:00pm Thursday

Location: Mendocino Coast Campus, Fort Bragg, CA

- Open to anyone interested in learning about Mendocino cypress woodland.
- Will introduce the ecology and floristics of the pygmy forest.
- Will introduce the process to identify and classify rare plant communities using CNPS/CDFW rapid assessment protocol, including field practice.
- Will visit six-plus locations.
- Last day to register is July 28, 2019.

Cost: \$395 CNPS members/\$415 non-members

Registration:

<https://www.cnps.org/education/workshops/pygmy-forest-august-2019#register>

### •September 16, Vegetables: Preserve & Serve Saturday, 9:00am – 3:00pm

Location: Madera County Fairgrounds, 1850 West Cleveland Avenue, Madera, CA 93637

- Check-in begins at 8:30am and workshops begins promptly at 9:00am.
- Learn how to make gourmet pickles from your vegetables.
- Learn why you should pressure-can your vegetables and soups.
- Learn how to make versatile vegetable powders.
- Leave with lots of recipes and ideas.
- Light lunch or dinner included with cost.

Cost: \$15.00

Registration: <http://ucanr.edu/vegetables-sept16>

Details:

<https://ucanr.edu/sites/mgfresno/files/305441.pdf>

Contact: Robin at 530-621-5528 or [rkleveland@ucanr.edu](mailto:rkleveland@ucanr.edu)

### •October 15 – 18, Cal-IPC Symposium

Location: Riverside, CA, Convention Center

- Gather with colleagues from across the state to network.
- Explore plant management projects and restoration efforts.
- Early bird deadline for registration is August 1.
- Online registration closes October 1.
- Photo contest opens July 15.
- Optional training sessions Tuesday, October 15 (with added fee).
- Optional field trips Friday, October 18 (with added fee).

Cost: \$320-\$370 member/\$370-420 non-member/\$295-\$345 presenters/\$25-\$55 student presenters/students \$50-\$80/\$195 volunteers (with 5 hours of work)

Information: <https://www.cal-ipc.org/resources/symposium/>

Registration: <https://www.cal-ipc.org/resources/symposium/register/>



**SEQUOIA CHAPTER OFFICERS\*  
AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS**

**Membership**

Thanks to new and renewing members.

If you require corrections or additions to your membership information, contact Helen Shaw at [helshaw@gmail.com](mailto:helshaw@gmail.com).

The Sequoia Chapter serves Fresno, Madera, and Kings counties.

The IRS considers dues in excess of \$12 per year and all gifts to CNPS as tax deductible. Renew your CNPS membership online using a credit card. As an option, renew automatically year after year. It is quick, easy, and convenient, and reduces renewal-mailing costs. Visit [www.cnps.org](http://www.cnps.org) and click on the JOIN button.

**Next Newsletter: September 2019**

Send newsletter suggestions to Laura Castro at [lacastror@outlook.com](mailto:lacastror@outlook.com). The deadline for submissions to the next newsletter is **Monday, August 26, 2019.**



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**JOIN THE CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY RENEW**

Membership includes the quarterly CNPS journal, *Fremontia*; the quarterly *Bulletin* which gives statewide news and announcements of Society activities and conservation issues; and our chapter newsletter, *Carpenteria*.

I wish to affiliate with the Sequoia Chapter.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
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The California Native Plant Society is a statewide nonprofit organization of amateurs and professionals with a common interest in California's native plants. The mission of the Society is to increase understanding and appreciation of California's native plants and to preserve them in their natural habitat through scientific activities, education, science, and conservation.



# CARPENTERIA

July/August 2019

## CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY SEQUOIA CHAPTER

c/o Jeanne Larson ♦ 3457 Redlands ♦ Fresno, CA 93726

### RARE PLANTS OF FRESNO COUNTY

--Jane Pritchard

The plants described below are listed in the CNPS Inventory of Rare & Endangered Plants of California, 8<sup>th</sup> edition.



-*H. brevifolia*-  
©2009 Keir Morse

Short-leaved hulsea (*Hulsea brevifolia*), also known as shortleaf alpinegold, in the Asteraceae family, is a California endemic. It is a perennial that grows on gravelly soil in montane forest at 1500–3200 meters in the central and southern High Sierra Nevada. Gold flowers appear May through August. Pappus scales are 1–3 mm wide, unequal, and tinged red. G.W. Hulse (1807-1883), for whom the genus was named, was a botanist and surgeon in the U.S. Army.

Prairie wedge grass (*Sphenopholis obtusata*) is in the Poaceae family. It is a perennial that is common outside of California and grows in wet meadows, streambanks, and ponds at 300–2000 meters. It is found in the southern High Sierra Nevada (Fresno Co.) and blooms from April through July. The genus is from the Greek word for wedge scale, referring to the upper glume shape of prairie wedge grass.



-*S. obtusata*- ©2009 Steve Matson