

THE NEWSLETTER
Carpenteria

CNPS SEQUOIA CHAPTER



July/Aug. 2013

www.cnps-sequoia.org

--ed. note We welcome **Belinda Gilbert** and her contributions to the newsletter. Belinda lives in Madera County, one of three counties represented by our chapter.

My name is Belinda Gilbert and I am a new field reporter for the CNPS newsletter. During the next few newsletters, I would like to share my experiences sowing annual native seed on my foothill property near the small town of Ahwahnee, California. My ultimate goal is to replace the non-native grass ground cover with annual wildflowers and native bunch grasses. When the rainy season begins in the fall, I will also share my observations of what's blooming locally in the foothill area near Yosemite National Park.

In 1992, my family of four moved from Coarsegold to six acres of foothill woodland and built a house there. The known history of the property includes a section of 1800's-era "Chinese Ditch" constructed by Chinese workers to divert seasonal stream water to irrigate crops on adjacent property, an old home dating to the 1930's, cattle and sheep grazing, an apple orchard, and black walnut trees. The property burned in the 1960's during the Harlow Fire. Each of these has influenced the flora of the property as it now exists, but the most significant change factor for mid-elevation foothill woodlands such as my property (3,000 feet elevation) was the introduction of grazing animals such as cattle and sheep which carried seeds of the non-native grasses (and other sticky seeds) to almost all locations. Also important were their grazing patterns, which favored the survival of the grasses over native annuals and perennial bunch grasses.

The natural history of the Ahwahnee property includes deep, granitic soil, rolling hills, a south facing slope, and a swale which is seasonally damp. The climate type is cool, moist winters, with about 30 inches of precipitation, including snow, alternating with hot, dry summers. The open, south facing slope, low, rolling hill profile, lack of intermediate sized shrubs and the hot, dry, summers influenced the success of non-native species here.

The native tree cover is about 65 % *Quercus wislizenii*, 20% *Quercus lobata*, 5% *Pinus ponderosa*, 5% *Quercus kelloggii* and 5% *Pinus sabiniana*. The very sparse under story is composed of *Ceanothus cuneatus*, *Toxicodendron diversilobum*, *Arctostaphylos manzanita*, and the ground cover is 90% non-native *Bromus* spp. including Smooth Brome, and Ripgut Brome. There are isolated populations of Fox Tail, Subterranean Clover and Common Mullein. Some of the trees have fire scars which probably date to the Harlow fire. There are no stumps or standing snags on the property, which suggests the fire burned quickly through the grasses without "crowning out" in the oaks or pines.

The floral treasures mixed among the non-native grasses are several native annual wildflowers which naturally occur on the property, including *Amsinckia menziesii*, *Calandrinia ciliata*, *Castilleja lineariloba*, *Clarkia purpurea*, *Claytonia perfoliata*, *Lupinus bicolor*, *Lupinus nanus*, *Madia elegans*, *Madia gracilis*, and *Plagiobothrys nothofulvus*. There are also perennial native grasses which thrive, including *Elymus glaucus*, *Melica californica*, *Bromus carinatus*, *Elymus multisetus*, and *Hordeum brachyantherum*. There is beauty tucked among the foxtails! I hope you will follow the progress of native plants as they become established on my property.

One of our other field reporters is Jane Pritchard, who reports every month on her hikes. On the next page she tells us about a great wildflower walk she took near "downtown" Shaver Lake. Jane describes dozens of blossoms on an easy trail accessible to everyone able to take a stroll. As usual she welcomes any who care to join her. The times, places, levels of difficulty, and dates vary, and her contact information is on page 6. Check with her about her next hike. Those who requested email delivery of the newsletter will see photos of more plants Jane saw in May.

If you would like to receive the newsletter electronically, send your request to Helen Shaw..... helshaw@netptc.net

A bonus will be a page of photos, in addition to color in the body of the newsletter.

Blooming Service-berries --Jane Pritchard

An easy trail between the north side of Ken's Market in Shaver and the museum leads through shaded forest beside a meadow much of the way. Aaron showed it to Eileen and me on May 18. Eileen and I returned with Peg on May 22. Many flowers along the trail are not seen on our usual hikes. All plants reported below grew in the forest unless indicated otherwise.



The clusters of blooms on *Ribes nevadense*=Sierra currant/mountain pink currant looked like big red berries from a distance. Green berries were forming on *Arctostaphylos patula*=green manzanita. Manzanita means "little apple." We saw both *Fragaria vesca*=California strawberry and *F. virginiana*=broad-petaled strawberry, the latter with larger flowers almost 2 centimeters diameter. Yellow buttercups=*Ranunculus* (species not Ided), white macloskey's violets=*Viola macloskeyi* (sometimes very fragrant), and horsetails=*Equisetum arvense*, just beginning to leaf out, covered the meadow. Pretty little *Cerastium arvense*=meadow cerastium/mouse-ear chickweed trailed close to the ground beneath the trees. Five white petals, each deeply V-notched, had pointed green bracts showing between the petals. The 10 anthers contained red-brown pollen.

A violet with deeply lobed leaves is aptly named *Viola lobata*=yellow wood violet/pine violet. Petal undersides are pinkish. A variety of *V. purpurea*=mountain violet is also yellow but its leaves are entire. Two petals and the leaves are purple on their undersides. Too bad that *Rumex acetosella*=sheep sorrel came from Europe and Asia. This sorrel has hastate leaves, crowded flower panicles that turn pink with age, and tastes good. Don't overdo it though unless you boil the plants in lots of water to remove the acids. We ate lots of wild greens when I was little including dock, a member of the same genus. I don't think Mom leached the acids but they were probably broken down by being boiled all afternoon with a hunk of unsliced bacon.

Beautiful tube-shaped flowers with dark red sepals tipped with white flowers hung from the branches of *Ribes roezlii*=Sierra gooseberry. Red-orange bracts and sepals of a variety of *Castilleja applegatei*=wavy-leaved paint-brush punctuated the trail sides. The flowers may be eaten raw but it is kind of like playing Russian roulette unless you know the soil content. Castillejas can concentrate selenium from the soil. Some single-stemmed groundsel=*Senecio interrimus* buds had opened to yellow flowers (disk only) 4 days later. *Senecio* means "old man." Is it because of all the bristles (whiskers?) around each flower? Another mystery – *integerrimus* means "almost perfect." The reasoning behind some names died with the namers.

A mound of white was out in the meadow. It looked like an apple tree left over from an old homestead but turned out to be a Utah service-berry=*Amelanchier utahensis*. The purplish-black fruit may be eaten raw, cooked, or dried. On the north side of the service-berry and in a few other shady places, *Hydrophyllum occidentale*=waterleaf had many clusters of pinkish-white flowers and was just beginning to develop lighter spots on the leaves. Hydrophyllaceae is now Boraginaceae=borage or waterleaf family. Patches of corn-lily=*Veratrum californicum* were a couple of feet tall, too young to bloom yet. Corn-lily contains toxic alkaloids with a list of symptoms not quite as long as the medicines advertised on TV.

Some are depressed heart rate, salivation, burning in the mouth, and headache. Thimbleberries=*Rubus parviflorus* were still around a foot tall. On the coast they are called salmon berries; buffalo berries in Colorado.

On the trail again, Scouler's willows=*Salix scouleriana* in the meadow provided a beautiful background of immature yellow-green leaves.

A cross-section of the stem of a snow plant=*Sarcodes sanguinea* that someone had beheaded looked like Christmas candy. It was pink with a red margin and a circle of red spots toward the center. Snow plants have no chlorophyll and can't synthesize sugars for their food. They used to be classified as saprophytes (obtain food from dead matter). They were found to be mycoheterotrophs (myco=fungus, hetero=other, troph=obtain food). Mycoheterotrophs rob sugars from fungi associated with plant roots. Fungi also have no chlorophyll and obtain their sugars from a green plant. Other mycoheterotrophs in the heat family=Ericaceae are Allotropa=sugar stick, Hemitomes=gnome plant, Pityopus (from Greek for pine foot), Pleuricospora=fringed pine-sap, and Pterospora=pinedrops.

Openings with sunlight were covered with rosy petaled, yellow throated *Linanthus ciliatus*=whisker-brush. *Horkelia tridentata*=3-toothed horkelia also grew in openings. Leaflet tips are toothed but there are more than 3 teeth. Purplish sepal almost hide the white petals. Small, light green Sierra nemophila=*Nemophila spatulata* grew in an area that recently had been very wet. With magnification you can see a purple blotch on the tip of each bluish-white petal, like a micro-fivespot. Leaves are less than 1 cm long with spatulate lobes. Near a fork in the trail, *Maianthemum* (nee *Smilacina*) *racemosa*=racemose false Solomon's seal and *M. stellata*=panicked false Solomon's seal grew next to each other. *M. racemosa* has much wider leaves and a thicker cluster of yellowish-white flowers.

The trail left the forest and crossed the upper slope of a meadow. Three-petaled white flowers of *Calochortus minimus*=lesser star-tulip peered through the grass everywhere. This was a first sighting for Eileen, and she went crazy over them. A blue grass named *Poa bulbosa* is a non-native listed as rare and below 4500' in the 1996 Weeden. In 17 years it has invaded everywhere I went this spring around Shaver, out Big Creek Road, Big Creek Road near Pine Flat Dam, and at Hite's Cove. It is interesting. Florets form a cluster of dark purple bulblets at the tip of the stalk. The stalks have a bulb-like base. We crossed a creek with a native grass near its edge, *Poa secunda*=1-sided bluegrass. Its stems turn dark pink-brown as it dries, and sometimes the seeds all fall over to 1 side (meaning of secunda). The creek sides were loaded with the wavy leaves of soap plants=*Chlorogalum pomeridianum*.

We ascended a short rise of granite ledges and decomposed granite dotted with fuzzy pink pussy paws=*Calyptidium umbellatum* and a few pretty faces=*Tritelia ixioides*. Along with numerous unkeyed flowers, we saw the yellow and white petaled *Mimulus bicolor*, yellow *M. floribundus*, and *Minuartia douglasii*=Douglas' sandwort. We sat on a shaded granite outcrop awhile and saw more snow plants and pinedrops as we started back to the car. I don't know how far we were from the museum. Signs at every fork in the trail pointed to Shaver and the museum but never gave the distance.

Saturday, September 28, 2013, 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon
Free Admission!

Water-Wise Plant Sale & Fair

Clovis Botanical Garden - 945 N. Clovis Ave.
(Clovis & Alluvial Ave. in Dry Creek Park)



Guided Tours
Landscape Design
Garden Experts

clovisbotanicalgarden.org
cnps-sequoia.org

Volunteer Request

We are hoping for some new and enthusiastic volunteers for the plant sale. Please contact Thelma Valdez or Marian Orvis if you can help. As usual, we need help on the Friday before the sale to unload and setup the plant area. Can we borrow your canopy? We need pop-ups, umbrellas, or any other portable shade structure to help shade plants and customers. On Saturday, you can help early or sleep in and help around 11 or noon when we could use fresh energy to help us pack up. Do you have ideas? Please contact us. We'd love to hear your ideas about how to make the plant sale a success.

Thelma Valdez nmtv@unwiredbb.com **559/323-8962**
Marian Orvis mforvet@comcast.net **559/226-0145**

Board Report

Several times a year our Board meets. These are open meetings—all are welcome. We gather for a potluck lunch, followed by reports and updates from committees and a time for planning upcoming events. Our last meeting was May 19, and here are some highlights: •Water Wise Plant Event - May 4, Saturday, 8 a.m. - 12 Noon. - Well attended, great interaction with other tables, beautiful weather, handed out most of our freebies. •Our membership is holding steady at about 100. •Received a Certificate of Appreciation from The Yale Club of San Joaquin Valley. • Conservation concern-Proposed Pharmacy School at Millerton •Planning report-Annual Native Plant Sale at Clovis Botanical Gardens Sept. 28.



Next meeting Sunday, September 15, at 12:30 at the home of Thelma Valdez. At the top of the agenda will be final plans for Plant Sale. All are welcome—join us if you can. Contact Thelma or Helen for address/directions. (see pg. 6)



Effort launched to reform state parks system

Excerpted from an article by Matt Weiser, Sacramento Bee
mweiser@sacbee.com

Published: Monday, Jun. 3, 2013

State officials have launched a new program to analyze and reform California's troubled state parks system, to be led by a volunteer commission.

Called Parks Forward, the effort is required by the California State Parks Stewardship Act of 2012. That law was passed in the wake of a financial scandal, first reported by The Bee, in which top officials at the parks department were found to be hiding \$23 million in "surplus" money even as they set about closing 70 parks due to budget cuts.

Among its other troubles, the department has a deferred maintenance backlog at the 280 parks in the system that exceeds \$1 billion. That is partly because the state general fund subsidy to the department has declined sharply over the past 20 years, and revenues collected from visitor fees have not filled the gap.

California Natural Resources Secretary John Laird said Monday the Parks Forward initiative will seek to make the parks department "sustainable" over the next century. Asked to define that, he said: "We would like to get to a point where we are not deferring maintenance and we are adequately funding the stewardship of the parks."

Laird will appoint the commission members, which will include park users as well as experts on conservation and finance. The only commissioner named so far is Lance Conn, a venture capitalist and former investor for Microsoft co-founder Paul Allen. He vowed to confront the "brutal facts" about how state parks are operated and funded.

The commission is expected to produce a report on its findings and recommendations by the end of next year, Conn said, which will include public input and examples from around the nation and the world.

"I love California parks and I love tough problems," Conn said. "We're not going to toss the report over a wall and sneak away under cover of darkness. We're going to stick around and see that the measures are implemented."

Parks Forward will be funded by several grants under the auspices of the Resources Legacy Fund. For more information, visit: <http://www.parksforward.com>.

JUNE/JULY CHINA CREEK REPORT

The June work party was problematic because the acknowledged leader bailed at the last minute. However a small but intrepid group of stalwarts showed up anyway, built cages and caged the last of the Valley Oak seedlings that had been flagged in the north grazing area. Well done!



Conyza Canadensis
Horse weed

The July work party was problematic also, because the date was changed and it was predicted to be 100 degrees. Again, however, we fielded a team. We trimmed the overhanging willows along Smith Avenue, approaching the gate, picked up trash, and walked the south grazing area looking for Yellow Star Thistle plants. Most of the area was sparse enough that we simply pulled or chopped the plants, which we then hauled to the pavement and stacked for solarizing. We noted a few areas where plants were thick enough to warrant spraying, which Hank volunteered to do.

As we walked the area, we noticed numerous new seedlings, which we dutifully flagged and will put on the work list for caging soon. We also noted our new weed, mare's tail or horse weed, is just starting to show, and are still wondering what to do about that. The cattle have clearly been eating it, but there is so little forage left in the area that they will no doubt be pulled out soon. If it isn't one thing....

The August work party is scheduled for Saturday, August 17 from 8-12. We trust it will NOT be problematic. It would be wonderful if you could join us. Take Kings Canyon/CA 180 east across Academy to Centerville. Follow Smith or Oliver south to Rainbow 1/4 mi. Turn south on Smith about 1/4 mi. to the Park gate. Call (841-2712) or email <warshaw@netptc.net> for more information.

Next Newsletter – September 2013
Please send contributions by
Friday, September 9, to
Helen Shaw helshaw@netptc.net



Membership

Thelma Valdez

If you require corrections or additions to your membership information, contact Thelma Valdez at nmtv@unwiredbb.com
The Sequoia chapter serves Fresno, Madera, and Kings counties.



*New and Renewing Members (as of July)

Thanks to:

Kerry Arroues, Roland Bergthold, Barbara Beroza*, Laura Castro, Holly Deniston-Sheets*, Darrel Eckenrod, Earl Knobloch, Martha Johnson*, Marian Orvis, Karen Oulton, Will Siegfried, James Snyder, Jim Tietz, Hank Urbach, George Whitmore.

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 and click on the JOIN button.

SEQUOIA CHAPTER OFFICERS* AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

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Horticulture	open	
Education	Warren Shaw	(See Newsletter)
Rare Plant	John Stebbins johnst@mail.fresnostate.edu	559/297-0144 (h)
Plant Sale	Marian Orvis	(see Secretary)
Conservation	Jeanne Larson	(see Treasurer)
Directors at Large	Jim Seay Verna Arnest Michele LuValle	jnjseay@gmail.com vernaj@sti.net lualle@mcn.org

Every little bit helps

Bit #1- Your empty ink cartridge can be exchanged at Office Depot for credit toward newsletter printing expenses. Contact person: Jeanne Larson <jrjlars@aol.com>

Bit #2- Use our SHARES card when you shop at Save Mart or Food Maxx and our chapter receives a quarterly check. Contact person: Marian Orvis <mforver@comcast.net>

Sequoia Chapter, CNPS
thanks Derrel's for their support



JOIN



THE CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY



RENEW

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

I wish to affiliate with the Sequoia Chapter.

Name: _____

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- Student, Limited Income \$25
- Individual \$45
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Make your check payable to "CNPS" and mail with this form to:

New Member

Renewing Member

California Native Plant Society
2707 K Street, Suite 1
Sacramento, CA 95816-5113

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/Aug. 2013



CALIFORNIA NATIVE
PLANT SOCIETY
SEQUOIA CHAPTER

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

MADELEINE'S MUSINGS

Madeline Mitchell



I wrote last month about finding interesting native plants while on an Audubon bird walk at Avocado Lake. I also saw a plant that I didn't recognize, but there was a Swallowtail butterfly sipping the nectar from the pale lilac bloom. It turned out to be Eriodictyon californicum, commonly known "Yerba Santa". Well, I had seen it many times before, as Paul had pointed it out to me on foothill hikes. In the past, I thought it was an ugly, sticky, dusty leaved plant, that seemed to attract spiders. Obviously, I'd never seen it in April before our dry summers begin. There are nine species of Eriodictyon but E. californicum is most common in the Sierra and grows on disturbed soils in the chaparral belt. It spreads by underground runners and is good at stabilizing soils. It was named by the Spanish after the missions were established, as the Yerba Santa means 'holy plant'. The Spanish were taught some of the many medicinal uses of the plant by the "First People" (Native Americans) and began to use, it too.

Here's a website for more info.
http://plants.usda.gov/plantguide/pdf/cs_erca6.pdf

JULY AUG. 2013

◆
SEQUOIA
CHAPTER
CNPS



Photos from Jane's Shaver
Lake Hike
With thanks to
Eileen Bennett

From top

Cerastium arvense
Mouse-ear chickweed

Hydrophyllum occidentale
Waterleaf

Mimulus bicolor
Yellow/white monkeyflower

Horkelia tridentate
Three-toothed horkelia

