



## China Creek Update

Warren Shaw

Our last '08 workday at the park was spent spreading mulch on the trail. Rain had been threatened, but it turned out to be a beautiful day, with everyone shedding a layer or two as we warmed to our work.

As the workday wound down, some took time to travel the perimeter, attempting to ID some "mystery plants" and checking on the little patch of deer grass near the big dead oak. We found ourselves being observed by a large, mature great horned owl, who seemed interested in us but was not intimidated, and never left his comfortable perch, even when we got within 25 or 30 feet of him (her?).

While we can't promise a great horned owl sighting at our January workday, we can promise great natural botanical beauty, and there is always at least a chance of seeing one or more of the park's many avian and mammalian residents and visitors.

In addition to the January date above, we've scheduled workdays (actually "work mornings") for the following "Spring Semester" dates: Feb. 21, Mar. 21, Apr. 18, May 16, and June 27). Please pencil (it's possible some may change as events unfold) these in on your calendars and try to join us for at least some of them.

**January Workday.** The workday is scheduled for Saturday, January 24 from 9 -12. Rakes and pitchforks will be useful, as we will continue spreading mulch. Please join us if you can. Call me, Warren Shaw, at 855-4519, or email me at <warshaw@netptc.net> for directions or with questions or suggestions.

## "Green" Energy Meets the California Desert

*Following is an important President's Message from the Orange County chapter of CNPS. Laura Camp is president of that chapter and shares information from a talk at the December CNPS Chapter Council Meeting.*

On December 6, 2008, I was privileged to represent the Orange County chapter at the CNPS Chapter Council meeting at Mills College in Oakland. One of the presentations at the meeting was an eye-opening look at the potential impacts of green energy proposals, presented by Nick Jensen, Rare Plant Botanist for CNPS.

Major solar energy projects in Western US deserts are close to fruition. A patchwork of 79 projects representing 679,790 acres or 1,052 square miles are permitted or near to it in California. Most projects are on Bureau of Land Management (BLM) land, representing approximately 5% of BLM land in California. Up to 500,000 additional acres are rumored to be under consideration for renewable development. In the western US, up to 6 million acres of wind and solar energy projects are being proposed.

The construction of solar panel complexes in the desert is quite destructive to the environment. Plants and animals are wiped away and little habitat remains after installation. In addition to the footprint of the project, roads and transmission lines directly

impact intact habitat, are unsightly, create habitat fragmentation, promote the spread of invasive plants, and cause other indirect impacts.

The demand for energy, and the desire to wean the country from oil dependence, for national security and serious climate change and other environmental considerations, is real and not going away. The permitting process at the federal and state levels is in the process of being considerably streamlined because of these concerns. Some major environmental groups have already supported the rush to solar. Now the economic crisis adds another impetus to expand worthy public works projects and create jobs.

But we shouldn't delude ourselves that "green" solar and wind projects have no negative impact on our deserts. We know that the public is largely unaware of the treasures in the native plant communities in their own backyards. It's even more difficult to care about the more remote and "barren" deserts.

When is it acceptable to eliminate pristine habitat and rare native plants? Is it for national security, such as the irreplaceable canyons and mesas at the US/Mexico border that have already been filled and scraped, eliminating the last native stand of *Agave shawii*? Is it for oil and gas development? Is it for housing? Is it for solar and wind projects? The complexities are enormous, and trade-offs are inevitable, but we should learn the facts, speak for the plants and animals, and seek to minimize the

environmental damage as much as possible.

Nick's constructive suggestions:

- Focus on energy conservation, where improvements can still make a huge difference in our energy demands.
- Consider alternative sites, such as rooftops, abandoned urban sites, degraded agricultural land, etc.
- A full analysis of impacts should be required, so that we know what we're losing and can mitigate appropriately.
- Consider grouping smaller projects into a larger more concentrated area, hopefully one with less biodiversity, which will require fewer transmission lines and roads.
- Design measures that could leave some valuable habitat, even if fragmented.

Let me know what you think, and I will pass your feedback on to CNPS staff and officials as policy is developed at the state level.

*Laura Camp ends her message by saying,*

"Let me know what you think and I will pass your feedback on to CNPS staff and officials as policy is developed at the state level."

*Laura is also happy to receive ideas or opinions from Sequoia Chapter members. Email her at*  
[laurac@treeoflifenuresery.com](mailto:laurac@treeoflifenuresery.com).

## 2-Day Symposium on Native Plant Gardening

### Growing Natives: Celebrating California's Beauty in Dry Times

**Day 1:** March 28, 2009, at the Lafayette Community Center, Lafayette

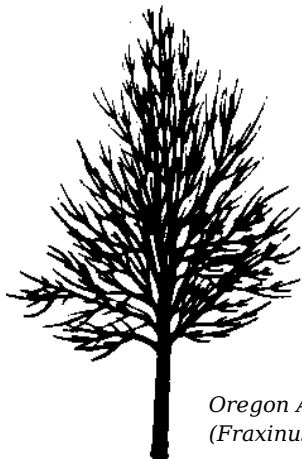
**Day 2:** March 29, 2009, at Regional Parks Botanic Garden, Berkeley

Learn about creating beautiful water-wise gardens with California native plants. The Saturday program includes presentations on the flora of California (by botanist and author Glenn Keator), garden design (by author Carol Bornstein), the structure of the garden (by Phil Van Soelen, from Cal Flora Nursery), herbaceous perennials and bulbs (by plantsman Roger Raiche), creating a native meadow (by David Amme), and connecting with the garden (by Mike Evans from Tree of Life Nursery). The program includes a continental breakfast, lunch, and wine reception. A selection of books will be available for purchase.

The Sunday program at the Regional Parks Botanic Garden begins with an inspiring talk by Director Steve Edwards, followed by a choice of guided garden walks and workshops on plants for dry gardens, aesthetic pruning, principles of irrigation, and gardening practices. After lunch in the garden, the program continues at Native Here Nursery with a presentation by Charli Danielsen and an opportunity to purchase plants. The day concludes with an invitation to visit two spectacular private native gardens: the Fleming garden in Berkeley and the Greenberg garden in Lafayette. Registration opens January 1st, 2009. Members and subscribers of the sponsoring organizations, CNPS, Regional Parks Botanic Garden and Pacific Horticulture, will receive a discount on registration fees.

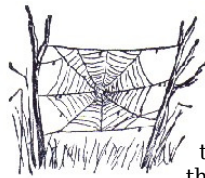
Visit [www.nativeplants.org](http://www.nativeplants.org) for more information.

REGIONAL PARKS BOTANIC GARDEN  
c/o Tilden Regional Park  
Berkeley, CA 94708-2396  
General Information, Tours  
(510) 841-8732 or [bgarden@ebparks.org](mailto:bgarden@ebparks.org)



Oregon Ash  
(*Fraxinus latifolia*)

## Observations

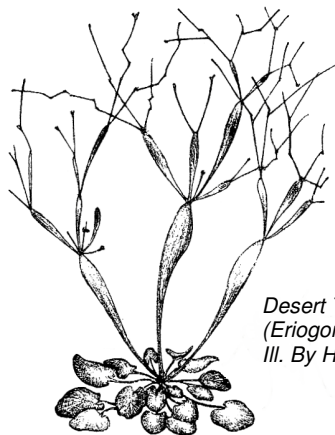


In the foothills the blue oaks are behaving oddly; though they started defoliating early, they've kept most of their leaves for an unusually long time, and have, in recent weeks turned color rather prettily. We can't say it looks like Vermont in October, but we have more shades of gold than we've ever seen before. This odd circumstance may be due to an unusual lack of frost, in combination with a little rain.

These same conditions have produced vigorous sprouting of annual grasses and other plants. Blue dicks, bedstraw, and many other early spring species are well started, and it wouldn't be surprising to see red maids blooming within a month.

Certainly the weather has us all shaking our heads. I started doing that back in November and December when it refused to get cold. Now the Harvest Brodiaea leaves have been emerging since early December and Miner's Lettuce leaves, too. Recent freezing weather has not been enough to dampen their march forward, though. Native bunchgrasses are looking really good. On the heels of what has been a very dry winter thus far, our native survivors will again show their mettle.

-Editor



Desert Trumpet  
(*Eriogonum inflatum*)  
Ill. By Henry R. Mockel

## Climate Change and the California Desert Conference

Join the National Parks Conservation Association, The Defenders of Wildlife and The Joshua Tree National Park for the annual Climate Change and the California Desert Conference February 27<sup>th</sup>, 9am-5pm at the Joshua Tree Community Center in Joshua Tree.

### Featuring:

**Nobel Laureate Jean Brennan** (*Defenders of Wildlife*) on the impacts of climate change on desert wildlife, management strategies and wildlife corridors.

**Kirsten Ironside** (*Northern Arizona University*) on the declining range of Joshua Trees.

**Lynn Fenstermaker** (*Desert Research Institute*) on the capacity of arid lands to store carbon.

**Bill Powers** (*Engineer*) on the Sunrise Power Link, Green Path North and the local generation of energy.

### And...

A World Café Conversation engaging all participants to talk about challenges and opportunities related to climate change.

The conference is free of charge, but we ask that you RSVP to Seth Shteir, Program Coordinator for Air and Climate California Desert Office National Parks Conservation Association  
[sshteir@npca.org](mailto:sshteir@npca.org)  
760-366-7785

## Acorns: The Staff of Life

"Acorn consumption was big business in ancient times, and not only in California. In fact, Californians were surprisingly late in exploiting them intensively. Fourteen thousand years ago, the oak forests of Syria produced such bountiful harvests that entire villages lived mostly off acorns and rarely moved from one place. Ancient and medieval European farmers consumed bushels of acorns; so did North American Indians in the Midwest. As late as the nineteenth century AD, acorns provided about 20% of the rural diet in Italy and Spain."

Who knew?

The quote above is from *Before California: An Archaeologist Looks at Our Earliest Inhabitants* by Brian Fagan, Rowan & Littlefield Publishers, 2003. This is a fascinating, readable book about the effects of California's ecology and climate changes on the life of California's Native Americans.

## Membership

Helen Shaw

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

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



### \*New Members and Membership Renewals

**Fresno** : \*Hutchinson

The IRS considers dues in excess of \$12.00 per year and all gifts to CNPS as tax deductible.

## YEAR of SCIENCE 2009

The Year of Science 2009 is a national, year-long celebration of science, designed to engage the public in science and improve public understanding about how science works, why it matters, and who scientists are.

For more information and nationwide event listings, visit the Web site: [www.yearofscience2009.org](http://www.yearofscience2009.org)

## SEQUOIA CHAPTER OFFICERS\* AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

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<b>Plant Sale</b>	Marian Orvis	(see Secretary)
<b>Conservation Co-chairs</b>	Jeanne Larson Joseph Oldham	(see Treasurer) (see Horticulture)
<b>Directors at Large</b>	Jim Seay Verna Arnest	jaseay@comcast.net vernaj@sti.net

### Next Newsletter: February 2009



Send newsletter corrections or suggestions to Thelma Valdez at [nmtv@att.net](mailto:nmtv@att.net). The deadline for the January newsletter is Thursday, February 5.



JOIN



THE CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY



RENEW

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

I wish to affiliate with the Sequoia Chapter.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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Make your check payable to "CNPS" and mail with this form to:

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- ☐ Mariposa Lily ..... \$1500

**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

January 2009



CALIFORNIA NATIVE  
PLANT SOCIETY  
SEQUOIA CHAPTER

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

Dedicated to the Preservation of the California Native Flora.  
For a membership brochure call Helen Shaw at 559/855-4519.  
CNPS Web site: [www.cnps.org](http://www.cnps.org).

## FEATURED CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT

### Manzanita



Manzanitas (Artostaphylos) are found growing in a wide range of soils and elevations. They range from ground cover to a shrub or small tree.

Calflora  
([www.Calflora.org](http://www.Calflora.org)) lists

over 100 varieties of manzanita native to California with over 50 varieties known to grow in chaparral. They grow in nearly every combination of soils, elevation and weather.

A distinctive feature of this member of the Heath Family (Ericaceae) is the red bark. The small pink or white urn shaped flowers mature to a pulpy, berry-like fruit. The berries are edible raw but are more palatable when cooked.

Native Americans crushed the green or ripe berries, covered them with an equal amount of scalding water to make a cider drink. Squirrels and birds favor the ripe fruit while hummingbirds seek the flower nectar.

When looking for a manzanita to plant in your garden it is important to identify the area where they naturally occur. Before you buy, talk with a knowledgeable nursery person, or do your homework to be sure you know where they will do best, that is, the type of soil, light and amount of water that occurs in their natural area. The more closely your area matches the selected species natural habitat the more successful you planting will be. Although many are adapted to dry soil and sunny locations, a little afternoon shade in our area will be welcomed.

In 3-5 years your manzanita should be able to survive without any additional care except winter pruning for shaping, and occasional summer water during very hot summers.