

Carpenteria

CNPS SEQUOIA CHAPTER



February 2021
www.cnps-sequoia.org

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INTRODUCTIONS

Fresh Blood on Sequoia Board

--Warren Shaw

The Sequoia Chapter Board of directors is pleased and proud to announce the addition of eight new members and the filling of nine positions! For the first time in many years, the Chapter will have an official president, in the person of Reagen O’Leary, Environmental Scientist and Ecological Reserve Land Manager with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, who has been and will continue as our Plant Sale and Program Chairs. She bravely volunteered and has been duly elected by the Board.

In the wake of Thelma Valdez’s untimely death, Kate Wazelkov Ph.D., Professor of Botany at Fresno State, has agreed to move from Conservation Chair to Treasurer, and Michael Kunz Ph.D., Program Director of Environmental Science & Environmental Studies at Fresno Pacific University, is taking over the Conservation Chair position. Sarah Bahm, Senior Environmental Scientist with California Department of Fish and Wildlife, is assuming Thelma’s role as Webmaster and has joined the administration of the Chapter’s Facebook account. As introduced in last month’s newsletter, Leslie Lipton, the fearless leader of the Yosemite Lakes Park native plant enthusiasts, is the Chapter Horticulture Chair.

Since the last newsletter, we have had a switch in positions regarding the China Creek Project; after the resignation of the previously announced coordinator of the China Creek Project, long time dedicated volunteer Chris Kurowski has courageously stepped up to take this position.

In addition to all these changes, we have three additional new leaders stepping up to hold vacant chair positions. Chris Winchell, rare plant botanist and biological consultant with Calibri Ecological, will move into the Rare Plant Chair position left vacant by Jane Pritchard’s retirement. Kate Ludwig, botanist with the National Ecological Observatory Network, has stepped up as secretary. Chris Velez, of Intermountain Nursery, will be taking over the position of Education Chair that Warren Shaw held.

The addition of all these very well-qualified people gives us great hope for renewed vigor in the Chapter’s efforts to protect and promote California native plants in Fresno, Madera, and Kings Counties.



CHINA CREEK REPORT

January 2021 Work Party

--Warren Shaw & Chris Kurowski

After months of clear, dry weather it seemed ironic that on the one day that we needed dry weather – our first China Creek work party of 2021 –we’d get a much needed rain. However, it cleared by about 9:30 and we were able to get organized for the day’s work.

(Continued on next page.)

The planning committee had decided that we needed to survey the park to get a good idea of where to concentrate our weed-abatement efforts. So, equipped with maps and sharpies, about ten people lined up and walked the 40-acre southeast leg of the park to see what nasty weeds had reared their ugly heads. What they found was that, due probably to those months of drought, there weren't a lot of our target weeds (mostly thistle species) up yet. They found some milk thistle and bull thistle, but no yellow star-thistle, or at least none recognizable as such.

After a coffee and muffin break, many of that same crew went back to deal with those weeds they had found, while the rest of us went to the south pond to deal with a water emergency. We had noted some time ago that the south pond was dry, and an investigation had revealed that this was due to a combination of low water in the creek and a break in the little cobble and mud, beaver dam-like, weir that was supposed to divert water into the pond. With water bird nesting season upon us and complaints to the irrigation people unproductive, we decided to do our best to make repairs. This was very gratifying because, in a matter of minutes, we were able to see water rising and flowing into the pipe that leads to the pond.

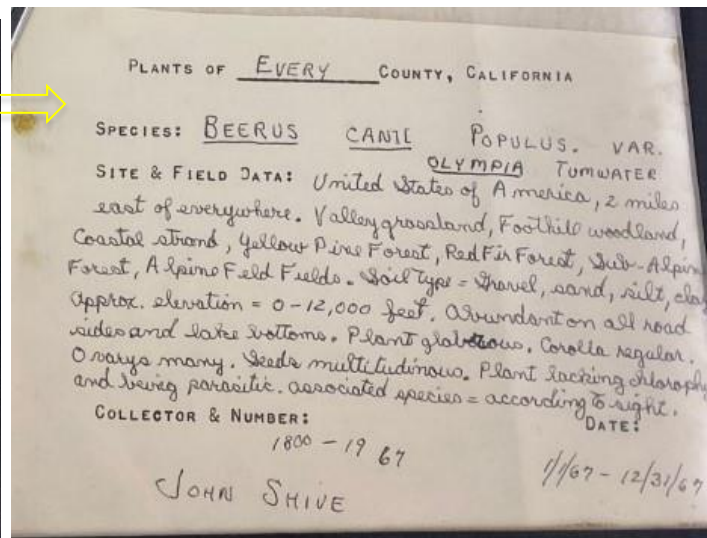
Kathy, a park neighbor and a member of the dam repair team, reported that on the next day, Sunday, there was water in the pond and that there were five people fishing in it. She didn't have the heart to tell them it had been dry the previous day.

On a side note, we had announced in the last newsletter that Warren Shaw (who is one of the initial founders of the China Creek project and who has persistently taken on the role of Volunteer Coordinator since the inception of the project) was ready to retire his post, and that Silvia Montoya-Gomez would be filling the position. However, due to unforeseen circumstances, Silvia has stepped down from her role as China Creek Park Volunteer Coordinator. Fortunately, Chris Kurowski is willing to give this ever important role a try. Chris has been a volunteer at China Creek for about 12 years and knows the ins and outs of what we are trying to accomplish out there, which is currently to assist the return of native plants to the park by removing invasive ones, to maintain natural but tidy surroundings, to impart information to the public through educational signs placed along the delightful trails, and to create a management plan.

As we embark on a new era, Warren and China Creek volunteers are committed to assisting our new Volunteer Coordinator in whatever she needs to ensure the success of the China Creek Park project.

Our February work party will be on Saturday, February 20 from 8am to 12pm. We'll get down to serious weeding, planting some willows around the new equipment container, checking the trail for maintenance needs, and some graffiti abatement. With any kind of luck, it will be a beautiful early spring day to spend in the park. Please join us if you're able.

JUST FOR FUN



IN YOUR GARDEN

Grasses and Time

--Leslie Lipton



Some scientists theorize that our attraction to expanses of grass, as in a park or a generous backyard, is an inheritance from our deep evolutionary past. As we roamed East African savannas, we hardwired our sense of “home” and connection to those grasslands punctuated by trees and sparse understory. Maybe that triggered my response when I drove into Thelma Valdez’s garden in early December, down a long driveway lined with desert willows. Underneath, the trees were carpeted thickly with layers of deergrass and purple needlegrass. The grasses flowed in swaths down the drive, and then deeper into the far reaches of Thelma’s Clovis property. Descended from a few nursery plants years ago, these grasses have naturalized to an extent rarely available to view outside a botanic garden. Thelma was in the process of giving the clumps a haircut with her weed whacker, a not insubstantial job.

She told the story of her grasses, the details of which now escape me. The essence was her dedication to leaving the native grasses and pulling the exotics, a task many of us know all too well. Where does that passion come from, if not the recesses and reaches of heart and generosity?

Every year I buy one-gallon pots of deergrass and have some lovely areas where their numbers are lush. But they’ve not naturalized at all, so they still look planted by a human, which of course they were.

Purple needlegrass, gorgeous in bloom and a luxuriant green beforehand, seeds aggressively in my garden, causing me to regret having planted it so close to the path. But naturalization casts a spell, transforming a slice of my garden into a blast from the past, a backwards ride in the existential timeline, a brain charge to the savanna perhaps.

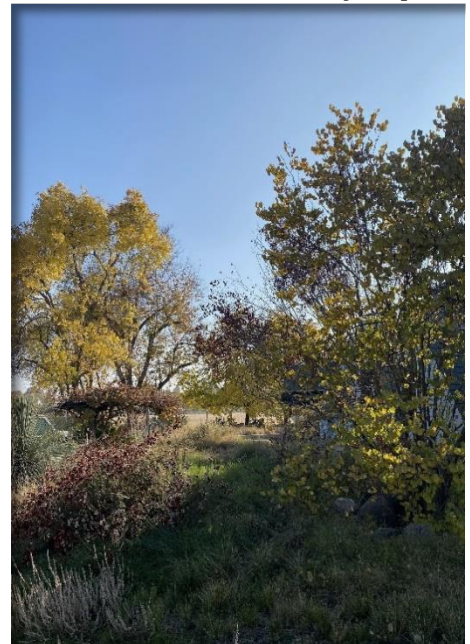


Thelma’s garden is blessed by timeless expanses of these native grasses, inviting us to know our local land as it was – before.

As we sat in the garden sharing lunch and a long conversation, Thelma shared her own foreshortened timeline, though she did not know just how soon it would end. In

her wild aliveness, as she introduced me to the solitary wasp who surprised us with an unseasonable visit, she revealed the truth about a garden: that it is inside of us. We summon landscapes from a past just outside our view, hoping to catch a glimpse of forever.

-Photos by L. Lipton-



Leslie Lipton is Horticultural Chair and leads the Native Plants Live Here group in Coarsegold.

In future newsletters, Reagan O’Leary plans to capture and share seasonal changes in Thelma and Nye’s garden

ANNOUNCEMENT

Parkway Opens Newly Acquired Sumner Peck Ranch for Public Visits

--Brooke Nelson

The San Joaquin River Parkway and Conservation Trust in January announced open house days at its newest acquisition of San Joaquin River-adjacent land, the 76-acre Sumner Peck Ranch near Friant.

“The Trust intends to continue operating the site as a farm and special event venue in the short term (3-5 years),” according to the Parkway website. “Long-term plans include restoring the site to wildlife habitat with a natural surface trail system.”



View of San Joaquin River toward Sumner Peck Ranch



Ledger Island from Sumner Peck Ranch

--Photos by B. Nelson--

UPCOMING WEBINAR CLASSES

•Floral trait evolution and parallel local adaptation in a hyper-diverse California endemic lily, *Calochortus venustus* Thursday, February 11, 7:00 – 8:00pm

- The California Botanical Society speaker series aims to showcase and promote the work of early career botanists.

Information: <https://calbotsoc.org/events/>

•Diversity of Orchids in North America Thursday, February 18, 7:00 – 8:00pm

- Learn about the distribution of native orchids in North America and their pollination and fungal associations.

Information:

<http://www.friendsofthechicostateherbarium.com/eventsviewcalendar>

•Wildflower or Weed?

Monday, February 22, 7:00 – 8:30pm

- To receive a link for the Zoom meeting, either email Leslie directly at leslienativeplants@gmail.com, or join the *Native Plants Live Here* group and receive all their emails, including Zoom invitations.

•USFS Research & Development Sciencex Webinar Series, 12:30 – 1:30pm

February 22: Invasive Tree Pests and Pathogens

February 23: Invasive Tree Diseases

February 26: Invasive Plants

Information: <https://www.fs.fed.us/research/sciencex-webinars/>

SCHOLARSHIP

•Northern California Botanists Research Scholarships, Applications due March 15, 2021

Information:

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

SEQUOIA CHAPTER CONTACTS

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Hospitality	vacant	

Membership

Thanks to new and renewing members.

If you require corrections or additions to your membership information, contact Cherith Merson at echerith@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 and click on the JOIN button.

Next Newsletter: March 2021

Send newsletter suggestions to Laura Castro at lacastror@outlook.com. The deadline for submissions to the next newsletter is **Friday, February 26, 2021.**



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: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____ Zip: _____

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California Native Plant Society
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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

February 2021

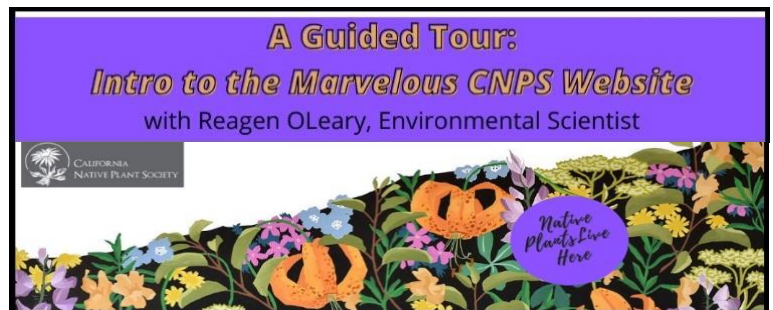
CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY SEQUOIA CHAPTER

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MEMBER REPORT

--Brooke Nelson

The CNPS Sequoia Chapter paired up with Native Plants Live Here, a 98-member horticulture group based in Yosemite Lakes Park (Madera County), to host a January 25 Zoom meeting titled, “A Guided Tour: Intro to the Marvelous CNPS Website.”



CNPS-Sequoia’s new president Reagen O’Leary, Native Plants Live Here founder Leslie Lipton, and CNPS headquarters Outreach Coordinator Elizabeth Kubey gave the 37 attendees an overview of the CNPS website, which included a brief overview of *Calscape*, *Inventory of Rare Plants*, and *A Manual of California Vegetation Online*. Reagen discussed species endemic to the Yosemite Lakes/Coarsegold area, including the rare orange lupine (*Lupinus citrinus*), and Elizabeth pointed viewers to upcoming webinars accessible through the CNPS website.

The Sequoia Chapter and Native Plants Live Here organized the Zoom meeting to bring both groups’ native gardening enthusiasts together as we attempt to reach a wider audience. Yosemite Lakes Park is home to many native plant aficionados who have worked together to plant native residential and neighborhood gardens throughout the community.

“There is so much to learn; if you get involved in your local chapter it would be a great way to do that,” said Elizabeth. “Our members are what really breathe life into CNPS.” CNPS has 47,000 members and 35 chapters statewide.