



## China Creek Update – Warren Shaw

Saturday, November 19 -- Today was beautiful in the Park. It was the day of our November workday and “Thank-You” Barbecue. Predictions had been so dire that we switched to lunch at the Blossom Trail Cafe, but, as often happens, the predictions were wrong. Nonetheless, the 14 of us who attended had a great lunch and a good time. We wish all the China Creek Volunteers could have joined us, but we understand you’re a busy lot. Maybe next year. (BTW, The next workday will be in January, ’12).



**Volunteers at the 2011 Thank You Luncheon.**

Though we didn’t work very hard this morning, we did break up and do a rough survey of invasive exotics in the Park, with an eye to maybe, someday, getting some help from the County. We tried, specifically to get a better idea of how many fig and Ailanthus trees we had, and how much area is infested with Himalayan Blackberry and Japanese Honeysuckle. Though this was by no means a scientific survey, we did cover most of the park, and did discover that fig is the most numerous and most widespread of our exotics. There is one large (and rapidly expanding) grove of Ailanthus, but it’s confined to one area. The honeysuckle seems to be mostly on the edges of the wooded areas, but is so intertwined with native trees and shrubs that removal would be incredibly tedious and time-consuming. The Himalayan Blackberry is very dense in some

areas, but doesn’t seem to be spreading rapidly, and we do have a healthy population of native blackberry. We noted a few other random exotics: a few Osage Orange trees (now, where did those come from?) One pistachio in brilliant fall color, a few mulberries, but nothing too scary. It was also a great excuse to just wander around and enjoy the Park.

Our old enemies, the exotic thistles are already well started, and we’ll need to get back to battling them soon, but not until after Thanksgiving, Chanukah, and Christmas.



## December Events

### **December 3 8AM – 3PM winter festival**

Sponsored by the San Joaquin River Parkway. Enjoy live entertainment, refreshments, booths, craft, games for children. River Store open for shopping. Also available-- pancake breakfast and soup/salad lunch. The River Center 11605 Old Friant Road 559-248-8480

**December 4 9AM-noon** History of the SJ&E Railroad. Learn about this railroad which operated in the foothills of the Sierra Nevadas in Fresno County during an easy/moderate 4 mile hike along the old railroad bed. sierrafoothill.org

### **December 11 – Sunday 10AM – 3PM**

**Holiday Open House** – Intermountain Nursery - Enjoy refreshments and live music while you shop for unique gifts by local artists. 30443 N Auberry Rd at Hwy. 168, Prather CA 559-855-311

# Sample Meadow and Twin Lakes

Jane Pritchard

On Friday 9/2/11 Aaron, Eileen and I hiked at Sample Meadow campground. Aaron had scouted things so on the way up we pulled over by a creek on the left just past Kaiser Meadow. We walked up to the NW to a great view of Ritter and Banner. Flowers were magnificent along the creek and on the moist slopes down to the creek. Ones I don't commonly see were *Kalmia polifolia* (laurel) and *Polemonium californicum* (Jacob's ladder). We drove on, turned left onto the Sample Meadow Campground road, and stopped at the first pullout on the left. We walked E to a view of Ritter and Banner to the N and Edison Lake to the SE.

Kaiser Creek runs through the campground. We had lunch by the creek and hiked part way to Twin Lakes. I only had time to ID *Aster integrifolius* (entire-leaved or subalpine aster) with very hairy leaves and *Lonicera conjugialis* (double honeysuckle) with its fused red berries. We decided to come back the next day and camp there even though it was Labor Day weekend. Eileen drove up at 5 AM Saturday, set up her tent and put a sign on the table to reserve our spot. Then she returned home to await her botanist daughter Anna who was arriving that afternoon.

Aaron and I drove up around noon. There were many cars but fortunately they all went somewhere else. To our astonishment only a few campsites were taken all weekend so it had not been necessary to save one. We crossed the bridge over the creek and walked up a gravel road that goes to a mine. Probably it is a tungsten mine – maybe with garnets in the tailings. Before going that far we turned left on 7S304 which soon became overgrown with plants and young trees. We saw *Aster breweri* (golden aster) which has yellow disk flowers only; *Stephanomeria tenuifolia* (narrow-leaved Stephanomeria or wire lettuce – why lettuce?); *Aster campestris* var. *bloomeri* (western meadow aster); *Chaenactis xantiana* (pincushion) with cream colored disk only flowers and pretty seeds

similar to blow wives but more delicate. Anna and Eileen arrived soon after we got back to camp. Sunday we hiked to Upper Twin Lake. *Agoseris glauca* (short-beaked agoseris) grew on a dry slope. A few feet away water was running over exposed granite. *Mitella breweri* (mitrewort) had tiny green cups containing its dark



seeds. Another dry hill had a creek at its bottom with a wet meadow sloping down to the creek on the other side. Eileen thought she saw *Swertia radiata* (monument plant) there. We made a beeline down across the creek. Not only were there several monument plants just starting to bloom (see photo, left) but too many different flowers to ID in the allotted time. Ones I

knew were *Parnassia fimbriata* (grass-of-parnassus), *Pedicularis attollens* (little elephant heads) and/or *P. groenlandica* (elephant heads), *Allium validum* (swamp onion), and *Helenium bigelovii* (sneezeweed).

The rocks above Upper Twin Lake are quite interesting geologically but none of us knew what we were looking at. I'm reading up on geology of that area and am looking forward to returning this coming summer. *Pellea breweri* (cliff-brake) grew along the base of steps in the rocks. On the open grassy hillside sloping down to the lake, Anna recognized capsules of *Fritillaria pinetorum* (Davidson's fritillary). Weeden describes the capsules, which reminded me of a push-up ice cream.

We plan to return next year to explore the rocks, mine, and flowers of the area. If anyone wants to join us (especially a geologist), email me. <xxiii\_xx@yahoo.com> If you have a favorite place to camp or hike, tell me. Sample Meadow campground is beautiful and free, has toilets but no drinking water. There is also a gravel road that says "Big Creek 31 miles" that I want to explore. It might be easier on your nerves than driving up the narrow paved road with blind curves on the side of a cliff.

## 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 October 16, and here are some highlights: •The China Creek restoration project may be eligible for some funds—details on the next page. •Our membership is holding steady at about 100. •Upcoming events include several in December (see page 1), the Master Gardeners' conference in February,

the Home and Garden Show in March and another Windshield Wildflower Tour in late March/early April. •We approved a \$50 contribution to Friends of Jesse Morrow Mountain (next pg.) •Michele LuValle was welcomed as our newest Board Member.

**Next meeting** Sunday, January 8, at 12:30 at the home of Thelma Valdez. All are welcome. Contact Thelma or Helen for address/directions. (see pg. 6)

## Jesse Morrow Mountain

Jeanne Larson, Conservation chair

The Jesse Morrow Mountain strip mining project has many environmental and social problems. One statement given in answer to the EIR-posed questions is that the area has been denigrated by calling it non-native grasslands. These vast areas of herbage in the San Joaquin Valley foothills are annual grasslands and both native and non-native grasses and forbs (broadleaves), bulbous and grasslikes (sedges and rushes) predominate in various percentages dependent upon rainfall patterns.

A better description is oak woodland savannah of annual grasslands. One of these non-native grasses, soft chess (*Bromus mollis*) is very nutritious and seed is available for use in seeding pastures.

Two federally endangered plants, San Joaquin Adobe Sunburst (*Pseudobahia peirsonii*), and Keck's Checkerbloom (*Sidalcea keckii*) may also grow on Jesse Morrow Mountain and a survey should be taken when these plants are known to be in bloom to determine the presence and density of these species.

The Sequoia Chapter Board voted to donate \$50 to Friends of Jesse Morrow Mountain. Should you wish to make a contribution also, the address is JMM, P.O. Box 855, Sanger CA, 93657. For more information see <jessemorrowmountain.org> Additional information can be found by Googling "Jesse Morrow Mountain."

You can also voice your concerns by writing your County Supervisor, Hall of Records, 2281 Tulare Street, Fresno CA 93721 or online [www.co.fresno.ca.us](http://www.co.fresno.ca.us)



## Ernest Lawrence Estate

Recently a generous and civic-minded man named Ernest Lawrence died and willed \$777,000 to Fresno County, to be used for the development and improvement of public parks and facilities.

We have asked that a share of this money be designated for China Creek. Although we asked for a total of \$23,500 in a prioritized list, only two items constitute what might ordinarily be considered "improvements." These were a basic restroom (actually a portable unit) and two very heavy and very durable picnic tables.

The largest amount we asked for was a budget to have a one-time clearing of invasive exotic plants from the Park done. Our reasoning here, is that we could then have a chance of keeping exotics at bay with our little group of volunteers, whereas, now, we have to focus on only a few species and turn a blind eye to the rest, knowing we lack the person-power to tackle any more. We feel this would greatly benefit the public by making the Park a truer sample of native California habitat – and by removing species, such as fig and Ailanthus which are toxic to some degree, and those such as the exotic thistles and blackberry which have vicious stickers and thorns.

The latest from County personnel is that they intend to invest the money and do improvements with the interest. At current interest rates this will be a slow process, so we have no immediate expectations. We are, however, hopeful that, in time, some of Mr. Lawrence's generosity will reach China Creek.



## Three Environmental Education Guides

*The Conifer Connection*, *A Guide to the Side of the Sea* and *Redwood Ed*, are recently published resources for classroom teachers, outdoor educators, docents, interpreters, naturalists and anybody else who wants to learn and teach about the environment. With a publication date of 2011, *The Conifer Connection* is the most up-to-date.

All are available to examine or download at: [www.parks.ca.gov](http://www.parks.ca.gov). In search box put “teacher’s guides” then click on “Guides for Educators” All guides contain: •A review of basic ecology • The natural history of the respective ecosystems • suggestions for organizing a field trip safe for kids and the environment • Activities and lessons for before, during and after a field trip • Up-to-date resources



---

## Miscellaneous (but useful) Information

- ✓ CNPS publications available: • [Fremontia](#). Journal published three times/year. • [CNPS Bulletin](#) quarterly newsletter • [CNPS e-newsletter](#) available monthly by request. To view [Fremontia](#) or the [Bulletin](#) or to request the [e-news](#), go to [CNPS.org](http://CNPS.org) and click on “publications.”
- ✓ New edition of the Jepson manual is available through The Jepson Herbarium for \$100 presale price. [www.ucpress.edu](http://www.ucpress.edu) → Browse Books, Natural Sciences, Natural History, Plant

**Next Newsletter**  
**January 2012**

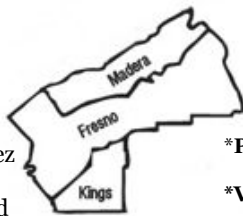
Please send corrections and contributions to Helen Shaw  
[helshaw@netptc.net](mailto:helshaw@netptc.net) by Friday, January 6.



## Membership

Thelma Valdez

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



## SEQUOIA CHAPTER OFFICERS\* AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

### \*New and Renewing Members (as of November)

#### Thanks to:

**Fresno County** :Gorman

**Madera County**: Richie

**Out of Area**: Graber

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.

<b>*President</b>	open	
<b>*Vice-Pres.</b>	Paul Mitchell <a href="mailto:paul30@comcast.net">paul30@comcast.net</a>	559/638-2784 (h)
<b>*Secretary</b>	Marian Orvis <a href="mailto:mforvet@earthlink.net">mforvet@earthlink.net</a>	559/226-0145 (h)
<b>*Treasurer</b>	Jeanne Larson <a href="mailto:jrjlars@aol.com">jrjlars@aol.com</a>	559/243-0815 (h)
<b>Membership</b>	Thelma Valdez <a href="mailto:nmtv@unwiredbb.com">nmtv@unwiredbb.com</a>	559/323-8962 (h)
<b>Hikes</b>	Jane Pritchard <a href="mailto:xxiii_xx@yahoo.com">xxiii_xx@yahoo.com</a>	559/323-8253 (h)
<b>Newsletter Editors</b>	Warren&Helen Shaw <a href="mailto:warshaw@netptc.net">warshaw@netptc.net</a> <a href="mailto:helshaw@netptc.net">helshaw@netptc.net</a>	559/855-4519 (h)
<b>Hospitality</b>	Madeleine Mitchell <a href="mailto:madeleine43@comcast.net">madeleine43@comcast.net</a>	559/638-2784 (h)
<b>Horticulture</b>	open	
<b>Education</b>	Warren Shaw	(See Newsletter)
<b>Rare Plant</b>	John Stebbins <a href="mailto:johnst@cvip.net">johnst@cvip.net</a>	559/297-0144 (h)
<b>Plant Sale</b>	Marian Orvis	(see Secretary)
<b>Conservation</b>	Jeanne Larson	(see Treasurer)
<b>Directors at Large</b>	Jim Seay Verna Arnest Michele LuValle	<a href="mailto:jnjseay@gmail.com">jnjseay@gmail.com</a> <a href="mailto:vernaj@sti.net">vernaj@sti.net</a> <a href="mailto:lualle@mcn.org">lualle@mcn.org</a>

It is with regret we pass along the news from Tara Hansen, Executive Director of CNPS, that she has decided to resign effective February 10, 2012. Our organization's 33 chapters are far flung and serve very diverse populations of people and plants. Tara responded personally to our Chapter's concerns-- a large territory with small membership. We thank her for this attention at the chapter level and wish her well in her next endeavor.

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: \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
City: \_\_\_\_\_  
State: \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

- Student, Limited Income ..... \$25
- Individual ..... \$45
- Family, Group, or Library ..... \$75
- Plant Lover \$100
- Patron ..... \$300
- Benefactor \$600

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

September 2010



## CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY SEQUOIA CHAPTER

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

### MADELEINE'S MUSINGS

#### Another Gravel Mine?

Madeline Mitchell

My column this month concerns another gravel mine proposed for the Kings River. The proposed Carmelita mining project is on Goodfellow and Reed, a 1500-acre farm, with 898 acres that will be mined. I attended the Draft EIR comments meeting in late October. On Nov. 13 a group of about 30 people met with an attorney, for education on how to fight this issue. It was decided to start a group to protest all the mining projects on the Kings River. There are now 3 in operation, with 2 more awaiting conditional use permits. The Jesse Morrow mountain project is also in the Draft EIR process; comments due by Dec. 7th. This project is not on the river but within the same area.

The cumulative effect of 5 aggregate mining operations is unknown, as there hasn't been a joint study done, only the proposed effects of each one individually. We'll need to find someone to study air quality and other issues. Each mine could have hundreds of diesel gravel trucks driving in and out daily. Carmelita proposes 600 truck trips a day. Vulcan is doing at least that now. The name chosen is "Friends of the Kings River", as this beautiful and habitat-rich area will be changed forever if these two projects are approved. With the valley's air pollution problems how can this be ignored? The health of the remnant Valley Oak forest is also at risk as the water levels will be changing as the sand and gravel is pulled out and then the gaping hole filled with water. If anyone is interested in helping, contact me; [madeleine43@comcast.net](mailto:madeleine43@comcast.net). We have another meeting Nov. 27







**Photos from Jane's hike  
to Sample Meadow  
and Twin Lakes**

**from top**

**Taking a break  
Momentum flower  
Swamp onion  
White Rein Orchid  
Orobanche  
Upper Twin Lakes**

**Bottom**

**Mary McClanahan  
showing  
an oak tree "this big"  
at China Creek Park**



**NOV. DEC. 2011**  
✦  
**SEQUOIA  
CHAPTER  
CNPS**

