



China Creek Update

Warren Shaw

After our last workday, in November, the park was almost immediately trashed by vandals. In consultation with Fresno County and park neighbors we determined that the next logical step was to place gates across Smith Avenue at Rainbow. Our goal is to prevent automotive travel to the park at night in hopes of discouraging vandalism. We realize this won't prevent all tagging and destruction but we believe it will help.

Recently the necessary agreements were completed and we erected the gates. These will be closed and locked from dusk to dawn, more or less, with various persons and agencies having their own locks.

We'll start the "spring semester" of work in the park on the morning of Saturday, January 23. We'll be cleaning up around the kiosk, continuing to spread chips on the trail, and replacing some trail signs. We can't promise nice weather but we hope some of you will brave the conditions and join us from 9-12.

To receive email notifications of work days and other events at China Creek, please email warshaw@netptc.net.

Calling all wildflower enthusiasts...

If you've taken photographs of wildflowers that are native to Sierra Foothill Conservancy's preserves and would like to have them featured, contact Rich Gilman (rgilman46@comcast.net). Rich is in the process of building a series of tutorials specific to SFC's preserves and is soliciting photo contributions. Visit www.sierrafoothill.org/education to see the prototype of the tutorial. You'll also find photo submission information on that site.

No photos but can help in other ways? Perhaps you are interested in assisting with the tutorial itself or checking botanical names and providing other specific wildflower information. However you can lend your talents, Rich is ready for you!

Sequoia Chapter – Upcoming Activities

Saturday,
February 27, 2010 **Smart Gardening Conference** sponsored by the UC Master Gardeners. Ramada Hotel, 324 E. Shaw Ave., Fresno. We will have a table at this event (8 am to 5 pm). Contact Marian Orvis at mforvet@earthlink.net or 559/226-0145 if you can help for any part of the day.

Friday-Sunday
March 5-7, 2010 **Home & Garden Show.** Fresno Fairgrounds. We will have a booth at this three-day event that always draws big crowds. Please contact Marian Orvis mforvet@earthlink.net or 559/226-0145 if you can help on any of the days even for only an hour or two.

An Evening with John Greenlee

Thursday, March 18, 2010, 7-9 pm

Through popular demand, John Greenlee lectures throughout the US and Canada on the use of natural lawns, native grasses and meadow restoration. He is an internationally known horticulturist and landscape designer specializing in the cultivation and study of grasses and grass-like plants. He is the founder of Greenlee Nursery in Pomona and in 2009 published a new book titled *The American Meadow Garden* (Timber Press). As an expert in grass ecology and champion of sustainable design, Greenlee has made meadows throughout the United States and all around the world.

The Sequoia Chapter of CNPS and the Clovis Botanical Garden are jointly sponsoring this event. It will be at the Clovis Veterans Memorial Building, 453 Hughes Avenue, Clovis. Attendance is free but seating is limited and an R.S.V.P. is required by February 28, 2010. R.S.V.P. To cbg.cnps@yahoo.com or call Anne (559.493.8052) or Thelma (559.323.8962) to reserve your seat.

A \$100 donation helps to sponsor this event and grants one person to an exclusive pre-event dinner with John Greenlee. Visit www.greenleenursery.com to learn more about John Greenlee.

Observations



It looks like it will be a good, long week of welcome rain. Native needlegrasses have been green since late

November and the

unusually warm winter even convinced a few to bloom around Christmastime. Crazy.

In the foothills confusion reigns. It has been so warm that some blue oaks aren't yet fully defoliated. Many spring species are well started, with buckeyes' buds swelling and many annuals up and growing fast. A week before Christmas the Shaws saw a redbud near Tollhouse showing definite color. It may be in full bloom by now. It's hard to imagine what the hills may look like by April.

-Editor

When is "Green" not green?

Jeanne Larson, Conservation Co-chair

State CNPS is following the assault on the Mojave Desert by solar companies. CNPS is working to suggest a compromise that the companies use land for solar panels that has already been disturbed. What kind of erosion will result from run-off from solar panels during heavy thunderstorms? What about the loss of herbage for the small desert animals that are so infrequently seen?

Recently The Fresno Bee reported on the threat to our desert tortoises, stating that power companies wanted our plodding friends moved to another area. We really don't know that a move in the wild would have the necessary habitat.

One is reminded when many years ago there was a small hydro craze in our Central Sierra that would have only generated electricity in the winter when we had plenty, but not in the summer when the streams were low. With much combined effort that plan was stopped.

Winter Hiking

Jane Pritchard

Peg and I stopped at Cressman's for coffee today (January 8) before our hike. Great news! The new owners plan to open a café in about two weeks. It's very important to have some place near our mid-elevation hikes to eat and socialize. Their website www.cressmans.org has updates and they got 100 Facebook friends in a couple days.

Even in the house, I have been covering my long neck, big ears waving in the wind, and nearly hairless head with a scarf and knit cap. If the cap is pulled down to cover my ears, it scoots down over my eyes. The scarf drags through muck and gets in the way when I bend down to pick up the dogs or look at something. I haven't been able to find knit caps with ear flaps like they wear in Peru. Cressman's had them – not authentic but good enough – lined and with a tassel. Now I only wear the cap and no scarf indoors.

We drove past the many houses on Cressman Road, parked by a locked gate, and walked down a dirt road to its intersection with a paved road coming up the hill and going on to Bretz campground and Soaproot Flat. During lunch we decided to go up 168 to Bretz Mill Road and see if it came back to the same place. However, the snow looked worse and worse so we turned around before we got to the turnoff. We went back down 168 and turned left at Tollhouse Road and left again on Peterson Mill Road. It went through another bunch of houses. I never realized the hills were so heavily populated.

We arrived at the same junction we had hiked to earlier. We continued on to find where Peg had seen *Lewisia disepala*. The road became snow covered and icy. Peg was too lazy to put on tire chains so we turned around again and drove home. We need to return in May or June to see it in bloom.

Our hike past the locked gate on Cressman Road should be very nice on a hot day. It is mainly shaded by evergreens and oaks and covered on both sides with bear clover (*Chamaebatia foliolosa*). Sometimes *Ceanothus diversifolius* (Pine Mat) poked through the bear clover. On some Pine Mat plants the leaves were 3 centimeters or more and less than a centimeter on others. The leaves were very soft and velvety. At the correct angle in the sunlight, the hairs outlined the leaf in silver. There were many iris plants – always a treat to see in bloom. And lots of *Ceanothus integerrimus* (Deer Brush) with bare green twigs. Do they photosynthesize or is the green something other than chlorophyll? By the way, what is the plural of *Ceanothus*? Is it *Ceanothuses*, *Ceanothae*, *Ceanothi*?

Peterson Mill Road past the houses would be very pretty in spring when black oak leaves are pink or fall when they are yellow-gold. The hillsides are thick with buckeyes that would smell good and hum like power lines with their white candelabras of flowers. Tollhouse Road just south of the Peterson Mill turnoff has bush poppies, harlequin lupine, and the little creeping sage *Salvia sonomensis* that is truly beautiful when it blooms. I saw it just once. A couple days later I took a photographer friend up the fantastic Jose Basin Road and planned to cap the day off with the blooming sage. It had already gone to seed. She just offhandedly dismissed it like I had wasted her time pointing it out and went on to better things. I was totally crestfallen. However, we drove the back roads home and saw a roadrunner standing on a rock in a field.

Membership

Helen Shaw

If you require corrections or additions to your membership information, contact Helen Shaw at helshaw@netptc.net

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



*New Members and Membership Renewals (June)

Fresno : *Bennett, Bergthold, Carmean, Hughes, Madden Library
Madera : Ritchie
Out of Area : Graber (Merced)

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

Renew your CNPS membership online using a credit card. As an option, set it up to 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.

Our task must be to free ourselves...by widening our circle of compassion to embrace all living creatures and the whole of nature and its beauty.

--Albert Einstein

SEQUOIA CHAPTER OFFICERS* AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

*President	open	
*Vice-President	Paul Mitchell paul30@comcast.net	559/638-2784 (h)
*Secretary	Marian Orvis mforvet@earthlink.net	559/226-0145 (h)
*Treasurer	Jeanne Larson jrjlars@aol.com	559/243-0815 (h)
*Past President	Peggy Jones autumn_aspen@hotmail.com	559/897-9646 (h)
Membership	Helen Shaw helshaw@netptc.net	559/855-4519 (h)
Programs	Jane Pritchard xxiii_xx@yahoo.com	559/323-8253 (h)
Newsletter Editor	Thelma Valdez nmtv@unwiredbb.com	559/323-8962 (h)
Hospitality	Madeleine Mitchell madeleine43@comcast.net	559/638-2784 (h)
Horticulture	open	
Education Co-chairs	Warren Shaw	559/855-4519 (h)
Rare Plant	John Stebbins johnst@cvip.net	559/297-0144 (h)
Plant Sale	Marian Orvis	(see Secretary)
Conservation Co-chairs	Jeanne Larson	(see Treasurer)
Directors at Large	Jim Seay Verna Arnest	jaseay@comcast.net vernaj@sti.net

Next Newsletter: February 2010



Send corrections or suggestions to Thelma Valdez at nmtv@unwiredbb.com. The deadline for the September newsletter is Monday, February 8.



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: _____

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- 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

January 2010



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.

Buttonwillow



Cephalanthus occidentalis a, flower. b, fruit

Cephalanthus occidentalis californicus, commonly known as Buttonwillow, is not a true willow, but is so called because its leaf shape is willow-like. It is a shrub that ranges in size from a 3 foot bush to a 15 foot tree.

New growth is red or bronze. Older leaves are glossy green, 3-6 inches in length, and like the young branches, often grow in whorls of three or more.

Its most notable feature is the creamy white 1-2" nearly spherical flowers that bloom throughout the summer. Bees and many types of butterflies are attracted to these flowers.

In the fall its foliage turns bright yellow with some orange. The dry seeds are eaten by water birds. It definitely prefers wet areas.



From "FOREST TREES OF THE PACIFIC SLOPE" by
George Sudworth (1908), originally published by the Forest
Service Department