



China Creek – April Update – Warren Shaw

As is true everywhere this year, things at the Park are late. Native blackberries had just a few blossoms at our March 19 workday; nothing much else was blooming; Valley Oaks weren't showing any sign of leaves, though annual (exotic) grasses were lush and (sigh) Yellow Star Thistle and other weeds were thriving.

Our crew welcomed the help of Stephanie Akers, Weed Technician --Sierra Resource Conservation District in identifying YST in its early, "rosette" stages, when it's easy to kill, under nicer working conditions, but hard to find.

While some of us walked the Park with Stephanie, a hard-working group continued hauling and spreading mulch on the trail. We continue to seek methods and equipment to make this laborious process more efficient, but for now, the load-haul-dump-spread method prevails.

Rain had been predicted, but the threat never materialized, and it was, once again, very pleasant to be in the park. We trust this kind of luck will hold for our April workday on Saturday, the 9th, from 8-12. (To get to the park, take Kings Canyon/180 to Smith or Oliver, east of Academy. Turn south about 1/4 mile to the intersection of Smith and Rainbow; follow Smith about 1/4 mile to the park gate.) We'd love to have you join us for a morning of communing with Nature, honest labor, coffee and homemade muffins, and great camaraderie.



A postscript: Hank Urbach called 2 days ago to say the ancient dead Valley Oak in the southeast section of the Park was on fire, cause unknown. He called Calfire, who soaked the trunk and surrounding debris, and the next morning the fire appeared to be out. This huge tree, which died in 1998 at an age estimated to be over 200, has stood since as a kind of stark symbol of the effects of civilization on the natural world.

At the left--
Stephanie, thistle—dead oak on the horizon.



The California State Assembly has established the third week of April as California native Plant Week, beginning this year. To read the text of ACR 173 and view a flyer, rack card, and press kit go to:

<http://cnps.org/cnps/conservation/nativeplantweek/>

Surprise on McKenzie

Jane Pritchard

On March 13, I went to one of my favorite spots – the north-facing vertical side of the table below the vernal pools on McKenzie Preserve. Water falls down eroded out crevices and drips from one rock to the next below it. Mosses, flowers, and native grasses take advantage of every crack and ledge. *Dodecatheon hendersonii* (mosquito bills, sailor caps) were in prime bloom. The numerous *Dudleya cymosa* plants were not even in bud. I was slowly nosing along over the grass and rocks at the base of the wall when there at my feet was a great surprise – *Isopyrum occidentale* (western rue-anenome). I had never seen it on McKenzie and had forgotten it was on their plant list. The flowers were pink instead of the usual white. The “petals” are actually sepals, a common situation in the *Ranunculaceae*. *Isopyrum* blooms early and prefers this rocky, shaded, moist habitat.

Needless to say, I had neither notebook nor camera. I had planned to lead a hike to the south end of McKenzie to the ruins of the fueling/water site of the railroad and then over a hill to the site of the proposed casino. Luckily for me, nobody had showed up.

I returned on 3/29 with camera ready to shoot my finger, hat brim, and odd angles when I tripped. I didn't find the *isopyrum* although it seems the foliage should have been there. It is a perennial so I'll try again next year. The shooting stars had gone to seed, and the *dudleya* all had young buds. After only a couple warm days, flowers everywhere were more profuse, and more species were blooming. Two species of poppies always bloom on the table top and are always cheery finds – red-orange *Eschscholzia californica* (California poppy) and lemon yellow *E. lobbii* (frying pans).

May 21—Tollhouse Rock—9:00 AM

Meet at the Park & Ride at Hwy 168 and Lodge Rd. (bottom of the 4-lane). Jane will lead us to Tollhouse Rock for trash clean up and flower viewing. The walk is a mile or less on a level dirt road with a short, steep climb to the rock. Afterward we can get great hamburgers at The Grill in Tollhouse.



FRESNO EARTH DAY 2011

Sequoia Chapter will celebrate Earth Day with a table at the Fresno Earth Day event at the Unitarian Universalist Church on Alluvial on Saturday, April 30. Please call or email Warren Shaw <warshaw@netptc.net> (559-855-4519) if you can help staff the table.

Observations

--from Thelma Valdez

On a recent March morning I was admiring the blossoms on a manzanita I planted outside the window, visible from my computer. Suddenly a couple of isolated branches started moving, and it wasn't windy. I slowly walked to the window and who did I see but a mockingbird having a breakfast of manzanita blossoms. Who knew?



Years ago I was happy to learn that many species of manzanita grow well in lowland home landscapes and I planted a few one-gallon plants. A few years passed before they bloomed and I can still remember my excitement at those first blossoms. Today they bloom regularly in spring but and it's always a joy to watch them emerge.

--from Warren Shaw

In the foothills, March's cool, wet weather prevented much progress, though after a few warm days, a few more poppies, blue dicks, etc. and lots of filaree are blooming. One big change, though, is most Blue Oaks are now in leaf, and some are beginning to flower. Some live oaks are still flowering and Buckeyes are beginning to form “candles.” In the two days since typing this text I saw that more blooms have appeared: tarweed, pretty faces, bird's eye gilia. Impressive what a couple of days' sun will do.

Water-wise Plant Exchange Saturday, May 7, 8AM-12N

Fresno State Horticulture Greenhouses
3150 E. Barstow—just east of Chestnut



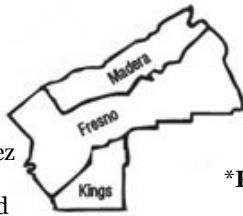
This free give-and-take event is an opportunity to acquire water-wise plants for your garden—even if you have nothing to share. Gardeners are invited to bring drought tolerant landscaping plants, cuttings, and seed, including natives. Native gardeners, please look at your garden and consider sharing plants, cuttings, seed, and knowledge with neighbors.



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.



SEQUOIA CHAPTER OFFICERS* AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

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Thanks to *New and Renewing Members

Fresno County: Oulton, Rivers

Out of area: Ballmer

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.



By using our SaveMart S.H.A.R.E.S. card, you enable Sequoia Chapter to receive a rebate based on your purchases. Cards can be used by members and by friends and can be obtained from Marian Orvis, secretary. 559-226-0145 mforvet@comcast.net

These cards can be used at any store in the SaveMart family, which also include S-Mart, FoodMaxx, and Lucky Stores.

Our chapter receives about \$30 per quarter. That doesn't sound like much but it offsets much of the postage for a newsletter.



Next Newsletter: May/June 2011

Send newsletter corrections or suggestions to Helen Shaw helshaw@netptc.net The deadline for the May/June newsletter is Friday, May 13.



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

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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

September 2010



CALIFORNIA NATIVE
PLANT SOCIETY
SEQUOIA CHAPTER

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

MADELEINE'S MUSINGS

Madeleine Mitchell

We've been to see the desert wildflowers twice in March and we think April will be even better. All that rain in December has been good for the annual bloom. We go to Short Canyon, a BLM area set aside to protect this ACEC. (Area of Critical Environmental Concern). It's in the eastern Sierra in the Owens Peak Wilderness area, above Indian Wells Valley. We didn't hike in to see everything due to Paul's painful hip, but just what we saw near our campsite was so colorful. See for yourself.



Coreopsis



Sand Verbena



Malacothrix glabrata

More on photo page

Five more photos from the Mitchells' trip to Short Canyon. Clockwise from top, right:

Camissonis claviformis

Lupine bicolor

Arabis pulchra

Phacelia, malacothrix

Eriophilum(?)



Below: two photos from the Windshield Wildflower trip March 12, with thanks to Gary Wheeler.

