Next Chapter Meeting
September 16
No meetings July and August

Save the dates!
Maintenance In Native Gardens -
Pruning, etc., workshop at GWCNG
October 2

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Fall Plant Sale
October 23
9 – 4 at Tree of Life Nursery

Visit our website at occnps.org
PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

I’ve written here before about solar energy development in the west, which I believe is CNPS’s great environmental challenge for this decade.

CNPS has been heavily involved in the fight to protect intact desert ecosystems, which are threatened by the “renewable energy gold rush”. I highly recommend reading the Coyote Crossing blog by Chris Clarke. His recent article “Desert Solar Is Not Renewable Energy” examines the irreversible impacts on desert aquifers, native plants, and vegetative communities. He also gives the dire statistics about the number of acres of our public lands that are slated for destruction, some on the “fast track” Chris’s blog post can be found at http://faultline.org/index.php/site/item/not_renewable

Solar power is a part of our future, a crucial alternative energy source. But destroying irreplaceable desert habitats, wildlife and plants, much of which has not even been adequately studied so that we know what is lost, is not the best long-term solution for our health and lives. Alternatives to the alternatives must be sought and exploited. I hope you’ll take the time to familiarize yourself with this complex environmental issue.

Greg Suba, CNPS’s Conservation Director, is working hard on this fast-moving issue. From Greg’s recent update to the Chapter Council: “CNPS has been working with other conservation organizations to find [Continued on page 2]

CONSERVATION REPORT

CEQA STILL BEING CHALLENGED: The California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) is the state’s principal environmental law. It gives communities the ability to participate in decisions that determine how they grow, and how to avoid adverse effects from development. It also is the basis on which the enviro community can work to preserve rare species, hence their habitat, hence the natural open space lands that hold the habitat.

CEQA requires extensive public hearings and community input on projects that affect the community and nearby natural environment. Non-enviro critics consider these procedures to be onerous and time wasting, and blame them for holding up projects that would create jobs—thus implying blame for CEQA for current economic conditions.

Several bills that in some way would exempt projects from all or part of CEQA (thereby rendering the Act meaningless) are currently before the State Legislature. CNPS’ Legislative Consultant Vern Goehring and the Conservation Program have been working, on our own and with other groups, to get our message of opposition to these proposed bills to legislators. ACTION NOW: tell your State Assemblyperson and Senator (find them at http://www.legislature.ca.gov/port-zipsearch.html) that you want a strong CEQA.2

OC PARKS & IRVINE RANCH CONSERVANCY: After more than a year of negotiations, the transfer of seven designated natural open space land parcels, totaling 20,312 acres, from The Irvine Company (TIC) to OC Parks was approved by the OC Parks Commission on June 17. Final approval by the OC Board of Supervisors took place on June 29. The land transfer has been long-planned and is a fulfillment of OC’s Central-Coastal NCCP. Most of the acreage encompasses the foothills at the northern end of TIC lands, abutting the Trabuco District; a 172-acre portion fills a gap in the Laguna Coast Wilderness Park. All the many official documents (which include maps) related to the transfer are available at www.ocparks.com.

The Green Vision Coalition’s Land Transfer Steering Committee had worked with OC Parks administration since September to ensure that the transfer included:

• Enough funding: OC Parks administration is confident that the transfer includes sufficient funding to properly manage the lands.
• Preservation of the lands’ conservation values.
• Public oversight and transparency.
• A state-of-the-art management plan.

See http://www.fhbp.org/projects/PDFs/Final-Q&A-on-Land-Transfer.pdf for background on the transfer and the part that Friends of Harbors Beaches & Parks/Green Vision, and the rest of the enviro community, had in it.

OC Parks Director Mark Denny’s message about the transfer: Transferring ownership from a private corporation to the public ensures that the land will remain as protected open space. “Protected” = “special,” the land must be respected.

Educating the public to respect the land is most important, so that the public will understand what’s appropriate to do in these special places.

Each of the seven parcels has its own Habitat Management Plan. A science-based team has been formed to synthesize the seven plans into one and coordinate it with OC Parks’ Management Plan. Public hearings will be held on the synthesis process in fall 2010. ACTION NOW: enjoy your local OC Parks, and plan to participate in the upcoming hearings.

Celia Kutcher, Conservation Chair
participated in the silent auction and raffle. It was a big success because of you!

inadvertently omitted from this list.) We are grateful to so many members and friends who attended our event and participated in the silent auction and raffle. It was a big success because of you!

On June 17th, we held our annual Chapter Celebration. We had great food courtesy of Elizabeth Songster, Diane Wollenberg and Tessa Cone. Kathy Glendenning did an incredible job organizing our silent auction and raffle, which raised $2,000 for chapter grants, including school gardens and research grants. Many thanks to our business donors Roger’s Gardens, Tree of Life Nursery, Golden West College Native Garden, Acorn Naturalists, and artist Mark Kerckhoff, and our member and friend donors including Pegi Black, Jeff Upton, Fran Collato, Joan Hampton, Dennis Keagy, Bob Perry, Randy Musser, Beth Butterfield, Allison Rudalevige, Brad Jenkins, Nancy Heuler, Dan Songster, and Kathy Glendinning. (Please accept my apologies if you were inadvertently omitted from this list.) We are grateful to so many members and friends who attended our event and participated in the silent auction and raffle. It was a big success because of you!

Laura Camp, Chapter President

Native Gardener’s Corner—Member’s Tips, Tricks, and Techniques
This column offers chapter members a chance to briefly share information on many things related to gardening with natives. The question for this issue was: “What diminutive native plant would you happily recommend for use in small gardens, (or in small spaces)?”

Nancy Heuler—My south-facing, partly shaded, small condo strip with clay soil, competing roots and HOA irrigation is suited best to woodland-type plants. I dug in pumice, some organic matter and gypsum to loosen it up some.
So far, the Ribes sanguineum, Ribes viburnifolium, Iris douglasiana, Sisyrinchium bellum and Fragaria californica are doing OK, tucked among generic preexisting non-native shrubs.

Joan Hampton—I’ve been successful with Giant Chain Fern (Woodwardia fimbriata) in my Garden of Death, where the sun don’t shine and the soil is only fit for making ashayots in kindergarten classes.

Laura Camp—Penstemon ‘Margarita BOP’—easy to grow, vivid border color. It’s the cat’s meow!

Thea Gavin—in honor of July 4th, I give you my “red, white, and blue” choices:

Red (Sort of): The red fescue clumps (Festuca rubra “Patrick’s point”) I planted last October have grown a bit, but are still nice and small (about 6”) clumps of a native grass that is not at all red, but a wonderful silvery/blue color.
White: Chalk dudleya (Dudleya pulverulenta)—it’s compact and interesting to watch as it goes through the seasons, shrinking into dormancy in the summer, swelling its silvery-white fleshy pads with fall rains, and then in spring sending forth fabulous flower stalks a foot high or more that dangle narrow bells of pink and white striped little flowers.

Blue: Blue flax (Linum lewisii) is a compact perennial (12” or so) with multiple airy stems. The leaves are tiny, but the stems are tipped with heaven-blue flowers with a yellow center.

Sarah Jayne—in full sun or part shade, the lavender flowers of Monardella are stunning in combination with the chartreuse flowers and white leaves of Conejo Buckwheat. Neither takes up much space and the Monardella has a delightful pungent fragrance when brushed lightly.

Dan Songster—I always think of Dudleya as a great pocket plant. Lots of sizes and leaf colors as well as flower colors. Normally tough and resilient, it usually dies back in late summer but the rains bring it back. Also, must mention Eriogonum crocatum—Conejo Buckwheat. Full grown might be 18 inches tall and 24 inches wide with silvery foliage and those chartreuse flowers!

Next Newsletter’s Question: “Which native gardening blog or website do you always make a point to visit and why?”
Email your responses to Dan Songster. Songster@cox.net and Please Remember to keep replies brief so we can include most of the responses!

Conejo Buckwheat—Eriogonum crocatum
NATIVE PLANT WEEK PROPOSED!

Assembly Member Evans has introduced a measure that would proclaim the 3rd week of April, each year, as California Native Plant Week and would encourage community groups, schools, and citizens to undertake appropriate activities to promote the conservation, restoration, and appreciation of California’s native plants.

To track the progress of this bill at cnps.org—under Conservation go to Legislative Tracker, Current Legislation.

“Bedight” is an old word that means “to dress or array”—this live-oak-shaded landscape is arrayed in light! I have re-read this poem several times, slowly, and love how the poet describes the wonderful dazzle of light on oak leaves and water—have you ever witnessed this spectacle here in our Orange County wild lands?

(Ethel Jacobson was an Orange County resident in the mid-20th century who wrote quite a few poems about our local landscape. I'm trying to find out more about her, so if anyone has any leads for me, please email Thea Gavin gavinfam@aol.com)

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Sunlit Canyon

By Ethel Jacobson
(From The Relief Society Magazine 53 (1966): 398)

Dazzle lies
On leaf and stream—
A dancing brilliance,
A quicksilver gleam.
Wherever the live oak
Canopy parts,
The sun’s massed archers
Loose their darts
To splinter on eddy,
Stone and stem,
Making a shattered
Mirror of them,
Reflecting each other
Diamond-bright,
A fluid,
Shimmering bedight
Landscape less of land
Than light.
A Case for California Native Garden Design

by Rob Moore

“Designing cutting-edge suburban landscapes utilizing California native plants” is more than a hip new slogan. It is an idea whose time has come! Once relegated to the realm of the niche market, this concept is now rapidly ascending to the forefront of public consciousness where it is promising to take its logical and rightful place.

The idea of the California native plant garden is not new. In 1891, Theodore Payne recognized the intrinsic value of the designed native garden with its promise to attract beneficial garden-friendly wildlife, and to conserve precious natural resources, when he saw a large display of California native plants at The Royal Botanical Gardens at Kew in England. The premise of developed gardens and landscapes being aligned with the ecosystem they were to be implemented within made perfect sense to him.

This premise today is supported with more relevant data than ever before. With legislation pending in Sacramento, dwindling water resources a stark reality, and native plant communities, such as our coastal sage scrub, dangerously depleted, making a case for designing California native landscapes and gardens is now imperative.

It is a common (and understandable) misconception that California native plants are esthetically unfit for suburban garden and landscape applications. Most people think of dry hills covered with brown sagebrush and dead weeds left over from winter rains. The fact of the matter is, there are select nurseries located throughout the state of California that propagate native plant species specifically to grow—and flourish—in suburban landscapes with a fraction of the water required to sustain a landscape stocked with thirsty, imported species. Many of these native varieties are evergreen, look great year round, are adaptable to soil and micro-climate variations, and are perfectly suited for use in the suburban garden.

California native plants also have a longer life span than your traditional nursery cultivars, (commonly used varieties can live from 40 to 200+ years) and have less need for fertilizer, insecticides, and pesticides. They have increased aroma, drought tolerance and require far less maintenance, all but eliminating the need for noisy, gas-powered, polluting yard maintenance equipment.

California natives, with few exceptions, are disease free and restore much-needed natural habitat to dwindling populations of animals whose breeding grounds, sources of food and water, and protective cover have been polluted and destroyed by decades of unchecked, rampant development and urban sprawl. A California native garden has much more to offer than mere esthetics. Emulating native plant communities, while employing traditional design elements and principles, coupled with the return of native fauna, offers homeowners throughout the state a deeper relationship with their gardens.

Invite change into your garden, discover the essence of authentic California, and join us in restoring a sense of regional identity to a suburban setting that has forgotten the unique, natural beauty of our state.

—Rob Moore
714-904-9069--robbrooke@dslExtreme.comwww.CaliforniaNativeLandscapeDesign.

2010 NATIVE PERENNIAL AWARD GIVEN TO FRED ROBERTS

The Native Perennial Award is presented to a chapter member who has shown long time dedication to the programs and goals of the Orange County chapter of the California Native Plant Society.

This year’s award was given to Fred Roberts in recognition of his many years of commitment to the understanding and conservation of Orange County’s native flora. Rare plant expert, speaker, field trip leader, author, photographer, and artist, Fred’s contributions to the awareness and enjoyment of our local flora are immeasurable. In addition, he serves as Rare Plant chair for several southern California chapters, providing invaluable information and support for our conservation efforts.

Thank you, Fred!

CNPS EDUCATIONAL GRANTS PROGRAM

Each year the CNPS Educational Grants program receives funding to help support field research related to California’s native plants. Students, CNPS members, or postdoctoral botanists are eligible, in that order, for grants that are generally not more than $1,000. Proposals should involve taxa or plant communities that are of concern due to direct or indirect potential impacts. The grants need to be relevant to our conservation mission. Certain small endowed funds are available specifically for graduate students planning research involving rare plants or evolutionary botany.

If you are interested in obtaining support from CNPS for your work, request a copy of the guidelines (for drafting and submitting a proposal) from the state CNPS office. Requests for this or other information can be directed to Chair, Educational Grants Committee, 2707 K Street, Suite 1, Sacramento, CA 95816-5113. Completed proposals must be received in the CNPS office no later than September 30, 2010.

—Joan Stewart, Chair
CNPS Educational Grants Committee

Speaking of grants, the Orange County chapter offers four grant programs: the O’Neill Grant for university-level research, the Horticulture Grant at the community college level, the Traveler’s Grant for attending a conference or symposium, and the Acorn Grant for projects at the elementary and middle school, including Eagle and Gold Award Scout projects. Please visit our website at occnps.org for details.
Coastal Mountains

Up a warm, sinewy trail;
Traversing in and out of small canyons, vistas change.
Calming, rejuvenating aroma of coastal sage, my early companion. Continue to rise, zig and zag, find chaparral, and look close;
Trustworthy green needle leaves shield chamise;
Smooth earthy red bark supports manzanita.

Drop into a cool canyon of coast live oak and sycamore;
Sit beside a string of shallow rock lined pools.
Short maidenhair and giant chain lined ferns are lush company;
Back into the sun on the meandering trail;
More aromas, more vistas, more flora friends.

Brad Jenkins

The United Nations has declared 2010 as The International Year of Biodiversity. Visit the website to learn more about it, http://www.cbd.int/2010/welcome/