



[Santa Clara Valley Chapter](#)

THE BLAZING STAR

May-June 2000

GENERAL MEETING

SPEAKER: Don Potter

TOPIC: Sierra Nevada Meadows

Friday, May 19, 2000 7:30 P.M.

Don Potter will present a slide show on plant communities of the Sierra Nevada. The program will focus on riparian meadows. Don is the Province Ecologist for Region 5 of the US Forest Service. Region 5 covers the Western Slope of the Southern and Central Sierra Nevada. A graduate of UC Berkeley, Don has worked with the Forest Service for 41 years and has served as an ecologist since 1986.

You can join our speaker for dinner before the meeting at Jing Jing Chinese Restaurant, 443 Emerson in Palo Alto, by making a reservation with Mary Simpson (marysimpson@earthlink.net or leave a message at 408-370-2177). Please, make your reservation no later than Tuesday, May 16, 2000. We meet for dinner at 6:00 p.m.

Driving instructions to the meeting: From the Bayshore freeway (Hwy 101) take the Embarcadero Road East exit. Drive on Embarcadero Road past the Palo Alto Municipal Golf Course and the Airport until

you reach a stop sign and turn left. The Baylands Interpretive Center is one half mile further on your left. The parking lot is on your right. Lighting is poor, flashlights are helpful.

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

ULISTAC NATURAL AREA

I was pleased to attend the opening ceremony for a new park in the City of Santa Clara, at the end of March. Designated an open space park, the area covers 41 acres along the west bank of the Guadalupe River. The surrounding neighborhood is, like so much of Silicon Valley, developed wall-to-wall with apartments, townhouses, malls, and high-tech manufacturing facilities that dominate entire blocks with stark, imposing, windowless edifices. The little weed-choked remnant of a golf course along the river, that has become the park, looked like something waiting to be filled in. And it was. The city-owned golf course had been moved elsewhere and the plan called for housing on the old Fairway Glen, and much of it had already been put in place by 1995.

But to birders of the Santa Clara Valley Audubon Society this golf course remnant with its cattail-filled water hazards was a special place. The Guadalupe River, channelized inside 15 foot levees, is a corridor for raptor movement, and a nesting and feeding site for waterfowl and shorebirds. Remaining riparian vegetation outside the levees, black cottonwood, box elder, and elderberry, provided habitat for migrating songbirds. The word got out. Why couldn't this habitat be preserved? There were those in the city establishment felt that they should hold to the commitment to fill in the remnant with housing. Some plant conservationists wondered what role we could play in an area not only devoid of rare plants, but of even much native habitat. But we did play a role.

Santa Clara Valley CNPS members were asked to evaluate the plant habitat of the area and its potential for restoration. The chapter board decided to call in outside expertise. We retained Santa Cruz-based Suzanne Schettler, former state president and wetland restoration expert. She surveyed the area and presented a report to the Santa Clara City Council to the effect that area was characterized by hydric soil, it had been a wetland, it was an excellent candidate for restoration.

People for Open Space in Santa Clara, the citizens' group that emerged to advocate preservation of this spot as a natural area, did a classic job of identifying public support and coalition building. It was discovered that this had been an important Ohlone site and Native American groups joined in the preservation effort. Public support for a natural area won over the establishment opposition. The next step is removal of exotics and restoration of native habitat.

The group has just been awarded a \$30,000 grant from the Habitat Restoration Trust for restoring native habitat. This will include restoring the riparian habitat that originally was there, but also adding other plants characteristic of the valley floor as part of a demonstration garden and education program involving local schools and Santa Clara University. Spearheading the grant project has been Open Space and Audubon activist Jeanne-Michelle Salander. She is also a member of our chapter and consulted extensively with us on the proposal, I was pleased to add our name to the project and hope that chapter members will join in this volunteer activity. Watch this space!

Don Mayall

CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

GARDENING WITH NATIVES

Join us Sunday, May 7 for three native garden visits. From 9:00 am to approximately noon we will be visiting:

- Helen Popper's home - Helen will be available to discuss (and get ideas for) her oak woodland garden.
- Carolyn Curtis/Don Mayall's home - Carol and/or Don will be on hand to answer questions as we enjoy their native garden.
- David Fritchle's former home (now owned by the Mitchner's) - Please view this garden from the sidewalk only. The owner is aware of our group's visit but we do not want to disrupt their garden.

To keep the crowding in each garden to a minimum, please visit these gardens in any order you choose. Enjoy this chance to see and photograph these native gardens! Maps

will be distributed in our upcoming email and postal newsletters. Also included will be information about our garden visits and potluck planned for June. Contact Stephanie Mangels at 408.629.8004 or stephmangels@hotmail.com to be added to the newsletter mailing list or receive more information.

PHOTOGRAPHY GROUP

Join us on May 1 and June 5 at 7:30pm at PCC, E. Bayshore and Corporation Way. For further information call Sonja Wilcomer (650) 494-0104. The CNPS Photo Group will have a photography exhibit at the Don Edwards Wildlife Refuge in Newark, beginning July 1st.

CAPE IVY REMOVAL AT LOS GATOS CREEK

Come out and help us remove parts of three patches of Cape Ivy on the Los Gatos Creek Trail. Wear a long-sleeved shirt and gloves. **From Hwy 17 southbound**, exit Lark Avenue which becomes Garden Hill Drive. It curves left, then right and becomes Garden Hill Way. Proceed 0.2 miles south and park in the residential area as you approach a leftward bend. The locked gate on the right is the entrance to Los Gatos Creek Trail. The Cape Ivy patch is about 40 yards below the dam. **From Hwy 17 northbound**, take the Lark Avenue exit, turn left onto Lark Avenue and cross the freeway, then turn left at the first light onto Garden Hill Drive and follow the above directions.

Join us Sundays at 1pm: May 21 and June 11. For details contact: David Chapman:408-296-3587, dchapman@aimnet.com or Don Thomas 831-336-3224, .

THISTLE REMOVAL IN FOOTHILLS PARK Do something for mother earth on

Mother's day, May 14... join the yellow star-thistle removal efforts at Foothills Park. Meet at 9 am at Orchard Glen in the park and tell the ranger you are there for weed pulling to waive admission. The plot weeded last year was full of star-thistle but this year has lots of lupines. Questions? call Ellie Gioumousis 650-494-6276.

EXPANDED EDGEWOOD EXOTICS REMOVAL

Beginning May 16, we will expand our scheduled evening session to include Tuesdays, as well as Wednesday evenings. Our target pest plants will be Italian thistle and teasel (May and early June) as well as yellow star-thistle (late June). Bring gloves. Sessions start at 5:30pm. We will also work throughout the year on Friday mornings. Call Ken Himes if you can help out at 650-591-8560.

- May 3: West Kiosk Junction of Edgewood and Serpentine Loop trails. Park along south side of Edgewood Road on west side of Highway 280.
- May 10: no session
- May 16,17: Edgewood Trail at Bush mallow site. Proceed north and east from west kiosk on Edgewood Trail. Park along Edgewood Road.
- May 20: SPECIAL SATURDAY SESSION Meet at West Kiosk 9am till noon weeding Italian thistle
- May 23,24: Same location at May 16,17.
- May 30,31: Serpentine Loop Trail at Mow Site I. This is located near the Frog Pond about 3/8 mile southeast of the west kiosk. Park along Edgewood Road or at Clarkia Trailhead on Calada Road.
- June 6,7: Mow Site I along Serpentine Loop Trail.
- June 13, 14: Area in the vicinity of west kiosk at the junction of

Edgewood and Serpentine Loop Trails. Park along Edgewood Road west of Highway 280.

- June 20, 21: Mow Site II. This site is along the Service Road in the northeast part of Edgewood. Park at Day Camp and walk up the Edgewood Trail, turn left onto the Service Road and continue to the site.
- June 24: SPECIAL SATURDAY SESSION Meet at West Kiosk 9am till noon weeding yellow star-thistle
- June 27, 28: Sylvan Loop Trail, south wing → proceed up hill to the second switchback where an isolated patch of yellow star-thistle occurs. Park at Day Camp

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Volunteers and Monitoring at Edgewood Park We need a group of dedicated volunteers to help us complete the first year of our monitoring plan that assesses management techniques to reduce invasive weeds at Edgewood Park. Four areas have been identified for this work. To sign up for the informational orientation session to take place Saturday May 13th at Edgewood Park from 9am-noon, call Ken Himes at 650-591-8560.

Friends of Los Alamitos Creek is interested in finding people in the 95120 zip code area of San Jose to help with weeding and propagating in the native plant garden at the stream bank restoration site. Call Lilah at 408-997-6383.

Ulistac Natural Area is looking for people to help with restoring a wetland and planting a native plant garden at this site along the Guadalupe River in the

City of Santa Clara. Call Jeanne Salander at 408-293-6885.

Native Garden at Foothill in Jeopardy
The Native Plant Garden at Foothill College (Native Hill) was started in 1982 by Robert Will, horticulture instructor at the college and chapter president from 1981- 83 and state president from 1984-86. He started the collection to teach students native plant identification and care.

In 1986, Ellie Gioumousis initiated a program to work with CNPS to expand and improve the collection. In 1991 Don Brandeau and Mary Kaye, both design professionals and chapter members, created a unified planting design. The College added irrigation as well as removed blue gum eucalyptus, frozen in 1990, through agreement with Mal Leal, director of operations at Foothill. The native plants responded to the tree removal with improved vigor.

Currently 160 species of natives planted on this hill bring tremendous educational and aesthetic benefits. This includes our tours at the wildflower show each spring, many classes, and community members looking for information about native plant design and care. The community TV station on campus made a video featuring the garden in 1994. Channel 6 had a half hour show on it in 1999. The SJ Mercury News had a full-page article on Native Hill in the weekend edition in 1993.

Recently, the college administration has developed a new master plan for the campus. The map of the proposed plan moves the loop road circling the campus to the perimeter, eliminates the current horticulture facilities (greenhouse and shade house), and shows the native garden area as parking lot.

We are planning a presentation to the board of trustees at their regular meeting May 1. It will be held at 7 pm in the district office on the Foothill campus. The office is just off the loop road; the first right after entering the loop. We hope many supporters will be able to attend. Your letters are urgently needed to help change this plan and save Native Hill from the bulldozers. Write President Bernadine Fong and the Foothill-DeAnza Board of Trustees, 12345 El Monte Road, Los Altos Hills CA 94022.

State CNPS Strategic Planning Retreat

The State CNPS board of Directors, which includes the Executive Council and the Chapter Presidents is now engaged in developing a strategic plan. A retreat was held in March at Rancho Santa Ana Botanical Garden in Claremont in conjunction with the state board meeting. A second was held at the Marin Headland Institute at the beginning of April.

Facilitator Marc Smiley remarked at the beginning of the retreat that a vital organization should do a five year plan about every three years. Chapter presidents and other members of the state board brainstormed fundamentals such as the importance of plant science, conservation, outreach, and strategies for achieving our goals in these arenas. Also addressed were organizational issues such as the role of the Executive Director, staff, and volunteers. The next issue to be addressed will be the state executive council nomination and election process.

The importance of chapters emerged as a driving force in the organization because of their roles in public outreach- meetings, field trips, volunteer work- in knowing local flora, and their role of being on the conservation battle lines.

Chapter vice president Mary Simpson, participating in her role as member-at-large of the Executive Council, and Don Mayall, as Chapter President, both agreed that a skilled facilitator had been engaged and saw good prospects for an expanded and more dynamic CNPS. If you have ideas about the future of our organization please contact one of them.

Coastside Workshop on Restoration

On Saturday May 13, the San Mateo County Resource Conservation District plans a half day workshop on non-native removal and native propagation and planting, focusing on coastal plants and ecosystems. There will be speakers on invasive species, wetland and upland planting and home native gardening. For location and information call Kelly Howard 650-712-8938.

Field Trip Report: San Francisco Watershed- January 29th

This once in a lifetime trip to the SF watershed had 33 people including a few people from the NPS, a few from the Mycological Society of SF, and most from the California Lichen Society. Despite the late start, Bill Freedman moved us along by car 3 miles from Sweeney Ridge to a place known as 5 points. It is an intersection of the roads going in all different directions. We proceeded on foot to Pilarcitos Canyon admiring the lake en route and passing by trees covered with hanging lichen. Bill took us to a spot thought to be used as a picnic place from the early 1900's. All that was left was a stone wall and an ornate horse watering trough. Our destination was the Stone dam reservoir, built in the early 1900's of stone. Checking out the hillside next to

the road we saw liverworts, alum root, fringe cups and polypody in granite-like soil. The best discovery were the Mist maidens (*Romanzoffia californica*). The plant was named by the botanist Chamisso who discovered it on a voyage to the California coast in 1815. He named it for Count Romanzoff of Russia who promoted the exhibition. Leaving the dam, I had feelings of solitude and serenity as we were spread out and moved at a slower pace. Along the way we heard the beautiful long songs of the winter wren. We also saw various lichen and fungi, clusters of ladybugs by the thousands. a large hazelnut bush with many hazelnuts still on the branches, silktassels that had very long catkins and two giant Douglas firs that I estimated had 12ft. diameter trunks. All in all it was a very exciting and memorable trip. A photo album of the trip can be found at <http://briefcase.yahoo.com/uuvnvrceen1>.

Tom Cochrane

Santa Clara Valley Chapter Research Scholarships Awarded

The Santa Clara Valley Chapter of the California Native Plant Society has awarded three \$1,250 scholarships to graduate students doing research on plant systematics, plant ecology, plant physiology, or other related botanical studies of plants that grow in habitats in Central California.

The recipients of the 2000-2001 scholarships are:

Jodi McGraw, University of California at Berkeley. Jodi's research involves examining the potentially conflicting roles

of disturbance in the sandhills plant communities found in the Ben Lomond area of Santa Cruz County. Her research will examine the direct and indirect effects of fire and soil disturbances in the sandhills on endangered plant species. One of the goals of this research is to provide management information that will aid in the conservation of the endangered plant species found in the unique natural community of the Ben Lomond sandhills.

Lisa Anne Moore, Stanford University. Lisa is studying the role plant roots play in grasslands within the Jasper Ridge Biological Preserve. Her work will study root distribution and water use patterns of slender wild oat (*Avena barbata*), a non-native grass, and common spikeweed (*Hemizonia pungens*), a native tarweed.

Neil J. Hausmann, University of California at Berkeley. Neil is studying comparative ecology of Sierra Nevada montane meadow species at Sagehen and Kiln Meadows in Nevada County. In the coming field seasons, Neil will study the growth, physiology and water use efficiency of selected species in this habitat. One of the goals of his research is to test mechanisms for assessing plant responses to drought.

This year's scholarships are being funded by the Chapter and by memorial donations. These research scholarships recognize the academic accomplishments and research plans of graduate students and the potential of their research to further the understanding of plant ecology and plant communities in Central California.

FIELD TRIPS

All trips are open to the public but sign-ups are sometimes necessary where we have space or parking limitations. Bring lunch, water, warm clothing and walking shoes. Heavy rain cancels. Call field trip leader for questions.

May 6-12, EAST MOJAVE. Excursions will be taken into the Clark Mountains, the Mescal Range, the New York Mountains, Providence Mountains and the Granite Mountains. A number of rare plants are found in these areas, some are the only stations in California for common plants of the Great Basin. We will be staying in the Hole in the Wall Group Campground. The cost will depend on the number of people on the trip and the number of nights they stay. Please call Paul Heiple 650-854-7125 or lugh3o@aol.com to reserve a spot.

May 7, MT. HAMILTON - Joanne Geggatt will repeat her renowned trip. You will see a large and diverse flora on this full day trip. Bring hat, lunch and full tank of gas. Reservations required by calling Joanne at 916-939-3394.

May 13, THE CEDARS (Sonoma Co.) 10:30 am. Leaders: Roger Raiche and David McCrory. With the Santa Cruz and Yerba Buena Chapters, come along for a tour of the Cedars, a unique serpentine canyon that is home to a plethora of native plants. Our walk will be led by Roger Raiche and David McCrory. Roger is the gardener of the California section at the UC Berkeley Botanical Garden. He and David run Planet Horticulture, the company that re-designed the entrance to Strybing Arboretum, and own the property we will visit. The hike is about 6.5 miles with some stream-crossing. A hat, sunglasses, insect repellent, camera, hand-lens and Jepson Manual or Sonoma Flora are other recommended items. The trip is limited to 50 people so reservations are

necessary. Directions to the meeting place will be given to those who have signed on. Expect over three hours of driving time. No pets please. Call Marck Menke (415) 824-8959 to sign up or get more information.

May 20, WOODS ROAD-SIERRA AZUL OSPD This is a beautiful walk with nice views of the Valley, there will be oak, madrone, California nutmeg, Ceanothus and many spring flowers. 10 am start. Directions: from highway 85 south, exit Almaden expressway south, Travel about 4 miles, turn right on Almaden Road. proceed 3 miles thru town of New Almaden. Pull into Almaden Quicksilver CP parking lot on right just after leaving town. We will car pool from here to Woods Road. Leaders: Dick Gehrer 408/268-6922 & Jin Sugai 408/356-6003

June 3, Lower Windy Hill and Coal Mine Ridge Tom Cochrane leads a search for early summer wildflowers, while enjoying the diverse oaks through vistas of forest, savannah and grasslands. Expect to hike about 6 to 7 miles, climb 500 feet at a moderate pace. Bring lunch. Meet at 9 AM at Windy Hill Parking Lot on Portola Rd. Directions: Take I-280, exit west on Alpine Rd., proceed 2.9 miles to junction of Portola Rd., continue .8 miles to parking lot. For further information call Tom at 650-969-3181 or trailtraveller@webtv.net.

July 1&4, SMITH RIVER. John Allen leads adventurers to this wonderful corner of NW California. July 1 & 4 are travel days. July 2 & 3 will be exploration days near Gasquet on State 199. Group camping at USFS campground on Smith River. Hotel accommodations nearby. Details, call John at 650-366-4910.

July 4&8, SISKIYOU WILDERNESS Back Pack . For those adventurers who

didn't get enough of NW California, we pick up where the Smith River trip ended. We start at Siskiyou Pass Trail Head, an elevation of 2300 feet, packing in about 5 miles to a base camp area from which we take day hikes to explore the high grounds around Devil's Punch Bowl, and Preston Peak, the latter being at 7,000 feet. Plenty of wet forest and tundra flora to encounter. Consider this an exploratory trip, camps subject to change. Ken Himes will supply the botanical details. Joe Cernac will attend to all other trip details. Info: Joe 408 292 5465

July 7-9, MONITOR PASS, Eastern Sierra. The Milo Baker Chapter is inviting other CNPS chapters to join them on a weekend adventure in the Eastern Sierra. Monitor Pass, one of the most scenic of all the Sierran passes. will be the focus. Carson Pass, south Lake Tahoe, and the Sweetwater Mountains are all within a short drive from the Monitor Pass area as well.

Five campsites (8 people/2 vehicles each) have been reserved for Friday and Saturday nights. The camping fee is \$10/person for one night and \$15/person for two nights. Each campsite has a firepit and grill, cupboards, bear-proof lockers and tables, and is near drinking water and restrooms (no showers). The park's mineral springs are channeled into concrete pools, where you can swim or just soak (\$4 for adults, \$2 for children). Carpooling is recommended. Drivers of extra vehicles will need to arrange for offsite parking at the park and/or pay a fee. Please bring the materials you need for meals and their preparation.

Reservations can be made by sending payment (payable to CNPS - Milo Baker Chapter) to: Peter Warner, 555 Magnolia Ave., Petaluma, CA 94952-2080. Contact leaders Peter Warner at (707) 763-7405 or

peterjwarner@earthlink.net, or Ann Howald at 939-0775, annhowald@vom.com for more information.



Recording Hotline for CNPS Events
415/853-5634



Deadline for the next newsletter is Friday 23 June 2000. Cynthia Gilbert, editor, 2216 St. Francis Dr. Palo Alto, CA 94303 Phone 650-320-9225 eMail: cgilbert@jps.net

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