



[Santa Clara Valley Chapter](#)

# ***THE BLAZING STAR***

September-October 2000

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## **GENERAL MEETING**

**Friday, September 22, 2000 7:30 P.M.**

**SPEAKER: Pete Holloran, President,  
Yerba Buena Chapter, CNPS**

**TOPIC: The Great Sand Waste:  
Natural History of San Francisco's  
Sand Dunes**

Come learn more about the fascinating sand dunes which once covered the San Francisco coastline. Less than two centuries ago massive sand dunes covered vast stretches of San Francisco, extending all the way to the bay shore seven miles inland. As the city grew, the fourth largest coastal dune system in California was transformed beyond recognition into Golden Gate Park, the Sunset, Richmond, and Fillmore districts. Dune lakes, mobile dunes, dune scrub, and coast live oak woodlands provided habitat for a diverse and interesting flora and fauna, including endemic species. Though much has been lost, pockets remain at the Presidio, Fort Funston, and in neighborhood parks. In recent years, with the advent of natural areas stewardship programs run by the National Park Service and the San Francisco Recreation and Park Department, hundreds of volunteers have begun restoring the remnant dunes by removing invasive plants and planting natives. Pete Holloran reviews the natural history of San Francisco's dunes and current stewardship efforts. His talk will include dramatic historic photographs.

Pete Holloran began working in San Francisco's dunes in 1993 when he joined the National Park Service's Presidio Park Stewardship Program as a volunteer. He is president of the Yerba Buena chapter

of the California Native Plant Society, co-editor of 4 volumes of Martin Luther King, Jr.'s speeches and sermons, and author of the natural history section in *Shaping San Francisco*, a multimedia excavation of the city's hidden history. He is currently working on a book about the natural history of Pacific Coast sand dunes with two other writers.

**Directions to Saratoga Community library:** Exit Highway 85 on Saratoga Avenue. Head southwest, toward the hills, and take the first driveway on the left after Fruitvale into the library parking lot.

## **President's Message**

Speaking out for Diversity

Carolyn and I slipped away for a little vacation at the beginning of August on the quiet island of Molokai. Rather than apologize for leaving the conservation issues of the Santa Clara Valley behind, let me just say we visited two Nature Conservancy preserves and caught up on our reading. TNC has done an outstanding job of preserving significant pieces of Hawaiian and endemic species. My reading included several back issues of Nature Conservancy magazine, and in the May/June issue I found an article ranking the "Hot Spots of Biodiversity in the United States." It was not too surprising to see that Hawaii, with its large number of specialized plants and animals and disturbed environment, ranked

number one. But I was surprised to that the San Francisco Bay Area ranked number two, the second-densest hot spot of imperiled species.

The Nature Conservancy is a very strong voice for protection of rare and endangered species and preservation of threatened habitat. It is thus very gratifying to find them actively working in this area. They recently began the Mount Hamilton Project, an ambitious plan to preserve critical habitats and open spaces lying between Silicon Valley and the Central Valley. The planning boundary of the project lies between US 101 and I-5 from Alameda County south into San Benito County. They have already acquired several pieces of property in Santa Clara County and opened a project office in San Jose.

I am pleased to report that our chapter of CNPS and TNC Hamilton Project staff have established a good working relationship. We are now sharing data from our computerized database on serpentine endemics, and have met with their staff a number of times to discuss the areas of greatest plant diversity, and the areas we feel are of the highest priority for preservation in our valley. We are currently working on a color brochure on the threatened serpentine endemics of Santa Clara County, which you will be hearing more about.

Don Mayall

## CHAPTER ACTIVITIES

### Gardening With Natives

Our September meeting will be a special presentation on WEDNESDAY, September 6 from 7:30 PM to 9:30 PM at the Saratoga Library Community Room. We will have a

special presentation by Jeff Caldwell. Jeff is the founder of the Garden Habitat Network, a new organization promoting biological diversity in the man-made landscape. His talk will focus on resources available for nature gardeners, locally native plants for garden use, and aspects of landscaping for wildlife. A question/answer discussion session will follow the presentation.

Directions: Take Highway 85 south to the Saratoga Avenue exit. Turn right onto Saratoga Avenue. The library will be on your left side right after the stop signal for Fruitvale.

On October 5, we will have on our normal first Thursday of the month meeting. A short tour of the DeAnza ESA facility will be followed by our annual seed and cutting exchange. Start planning now to bring any seeds, cuttings, seedlings, or plant divisions from your garden to share with the group.

For more information or to be on the group's mailing list, contact Stephanie Mangels at [stephmangels@hotmail.com](mailto:stephmangels@hotmail.com) or 408.629.8004. New members are always welcome!

### Cape Ivy Removal: Los Gatos Creek Trail

Sunday, September 10, 1 P.M.  
Sunday, September 17, 1 P.M.  
Saturday, October 14, 10 A.M.  
Saturday, November 4, 10 A.M.

We are continuing our efforts to remove Cape Ivy from the Los Gatos Creek Trail, just below Vasona Dam. Sessions are on Sundays in September and then move back to Saturdays. As always, wear a long-sleeved shirt and gloves to guard against blackberries.

Directions: from Hwy 17 southbound, take the Lark Avenue exit. Proceed straight through the intersection onto Garden Hill Drive. Follow it as it curves left, then right. Proceed 0.2 miles south, then 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; head down and follow the trail to the right. 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.

For details, call David Chapman at (408) 296-3587, email [dchapman@aimnet.com](mailto:dchapman@aimnet.com) or Don Thomas at (831) 336-3224, email [don\\_e\\_thomas@yahoo.com](mailto:don_e_thomas@yahoo.com)

### HABITAT RESTORATION IN FOOTHILLS PARK

We will resume our restoration work in Foothills Park in Palo Alto Sunday, September 24. The native plants are beginning to return to the areas where we have been working; Indian Warriors, *Mimulus*, some native grasses and Franklin Olmsted found a few blue oak seedlings, which he has not seen for many years. The blue oaks themselves look much more peaceful without all the French broom crowding around them.

We will be setting up a test area to compare the effects of pulling broom vs. cutting at ground level. According to Joel Ussery, who wrote his master's thesis at Simon Fraser University on broom removal, pulling causes soil disturbance which enhances broom seed regeneration. Others say that broom seed is viable for thirty or more years and it is best to encourage germination to eliminate as many as possible. We do not know which is best for encouraging restoration of the native plants in Foothills Park and this experiment may help us to decide.

Come join us, enjoy the views, the walk to the sites, and you need not be a resident of Palo Alto to participate. Meet at **9 am** in the Orchard Glen Picnic area. Call Ellie Gioumousis at 650 494-6276 for more information.

## **EDGEWOOD EXOTICS: Expanded Summer Schedule Continues**

The expanded exotic plant removal effort will continue until Sept. 30 at Edgewood Park. The Saturday work parties will meet at 9 AM in the Caltrans Park and Ride, I280 and Edgewood Road. If you are late, a map will be posted on the West Kiosk. Bring water, gloves and sunscreen.

The Tuesday and Wednesday evening session will continue until October 25. Meet at the West Kiosk at 5:30PM. Park along Edgewood Road west of I280.

The Friday morning session will continue to meet at 8 AM until it is too wet to work, if that happens. Call Ken Himes 650-591-8560 or Paul Heiple 650-854-7125 for the meeting location.

## **Photography Group**

The Photo Exhibit at Don Edwards Wildlife Refuge will come down September 26th. There will be no meeting in September. Our next meeting will be October 2 at 7:30PM at the Peninsula Conservation Center. In November, we will meet on November 6. For information call Sonja Wilcomer at 650-494-0104.

# **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

## **Fall Plant Sale Saturday, October 21, 10 AM – 4 PM**

Again the chapter will have a fall plant sale at [Hidden Villa Ranch](#). We wondered last year if people would come to this new location. They did and loved it! The difference between the cool windy parking lot at PCC and the warm sunny spot at Hidden Villa was wonderful. And, we did not have to move all the plants, which is always hard on them. This year will be a little easier for you because we now have wonderful new tables in the shade area so you can see the plants at counter height. This has been a great convenience to those of us lifting pots year-round. We hope to have all the same vendors as last year...books of course, seeds and others. The Ranch is always a pleasure to visit with small children. They love the animals and you may spot a Western bluebird if you are lucky. Bring a box to carry your plants home. Please try to leave strollers in the car...our space is tight. Remember fall is the very best time to plant native plants. See you there!

If you can help with cashiering or sales we need you! Please contact Jean Struthers at 650-941-2586 or [jeanstruthers@aol.com](mailto:jeanstruthers@aol.com); or call Ray Deutsch at 650-725-7927.

Also, if you want to recycle one gallon pots and 4-inch pots we will be happy to take them any time. Same contact information as above, or deliver them to the nursery on Wednesdays when we are there. Thanks!  
Jean

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## **OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS**

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☎ Deadline for the next *Blazing Star*:  
Friday, October 20, 2000. Cynthia Gilbert,  
Newsletter Editor, 650-320-9225 or  
[cgilbert@jps.net](mailto:cgilbert@jps.net)

☎ Recording Hotline for CNPS Events 415/853-  
5634

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