General Meeting:
Plant and Habitat Conservation Projects - CNPS Marin
February 17, 2015 7:30 pm

Abstract: Join Eva Buxton, from CNPS Marin Chapter, and learn about some of the conservation activities in our neighboring chapter.

Speaker Bio: Eva Buxton grew up in Sweden, introduced to the world of plants at an early age. At 11, a school project required a collection of 50 pressed and mounted herbarium labels. Her interest in plants persisted after moving to the United States of America and after having three children, she received a M.A. in Systematic Biology and Ecology from San Francisco State University. She worked for many years at LSA Associates, an environmental consulting firm, as the senior botanist and project manager. She retired in 2008 but is still active in the environmental field, serving on boards and committees, as well as doing restoration work. She recently described a meadowfoam subspecies (Ornduff’s meadowfoam) and is presently researching a plant that grows on Mt. Tamalpais.

You see the plants blooming but the names are unclear? No need to fret, Plant I.D. Hour is here! Arrive at 6:45 pm before the General Meeting, and bring specimens of plants you want to identify. At Plant I.D. Hour you can see plants up close and key them to species, while getting to know fellow Milo Baker Chapter members. Plants that you key out or learn with friends are easily remembered! Bring in some mystery plants to challenge us.

Join us for Dinner before the Meeting: We will gather for dinner at 6 pm at Kirin Restaurant, 2700 Yulupa Ave. We hope our speaker will join us, but we always have an enjoyable group of fellow members and a delicious Northern Chinese meal in any case. Please contact Liz Parsons at 833-2063 or lizpar8993@aol.com by Feb 16th, if you plan to attend.
**Chapter News**

**Education & Outreach Committee**

Our Milo Baker Chapter of the California Native Plant Society has recently established a new Outreach and Education Committee. It was approved at the board Meeting in November.

The purpose of this committee is to develop a program of interactive informational tables suitable for community events in Sonoma County. Santa Rosa Junior College’s Day Under the Oaks, the Heirloom Festival and similar events are under consideration. The public interest shown at our modest information table last year at a Cornerstone Gardens event in Sonoma led to the formation of the New Outreach and Education Committee.

The committee currently consists of four Milo Baker members; Lea Davis and Virginia Hotz-Steenhoven, co-chairs; Kerry Wininger, the SSU representative and author and native plant habitat garden designer, Nancy Bauer of Sebastopol. We would like to expand the committee to include at least six more volunteers who would be able to assist with graphic design, photography and art work for display materials; assist with the development of hands-on activities for adults and children suitable for an information table. Also needed are individuals who would be willing to periodically volunteer for 2-3 hour shifts at the planned Sonoma County event tables.

Outreach activities of this sort are an invaluable educational tool for the public, especially with the growing awareness of the importance of California plant habitat preservation, native plant use in private and public landscapes and gardens and the importance of California native plants to water conservation.

The committee has developed a beginning wish list and will gladly accept donations of materials or funds for the purchase of these materials. Our current wish list includes: One 6 foot long folding table; a dissecting microscope with built in light; a scientifically accurate plant structure model; a 5-6 foot canvas banner; a 12 inch by 6 inch plexiglass donation box and three portable folding chairs.

Those individuals interested in volunteering with the Outreach and Education committee and or making donations please contact either Lea Davis (legil42@SBCglobal.net) or Virginia Hotz-Steenhoven (vsteenhoven@sonic.net; phone: (707) 528-6030.

The committee members look forward to developing a strong program of outreach activities in the future.

∗ Virginia Hotz-Steenhoven

**Plant ID Volunteer Needed**

Additional Volunteer needed for Plant Identification time at monthly general meetings: (Alternate months) 4-5 times per year. Lea Davis, Milo Baker Board member and our current plant identification volunteer for monthly general meeting, seeks another enthusiastic member to volunteer to alternate general meetings with her. Duties include arriving at the meeting at 6:30 pm, setting up the two chapter microscopes, bringing plant specimens for attendees to examine (your imagination and limits are yours to reach), making reference materials available for the specific meeting (usually what you own and wish to share for the evening); If possible tying in the subject of the talk with the examples being shown.

Further information can be had by contacting Lea Davis at (legil42@sbcglobal.net).
Gardening with Natives

There were two unexpected surprises when I toured the native habitat garden at Santa Rosa Rural Cemetery with Becky Montgomery the first week of January: an island bush poppy (Dendromecon harfordii) in bloom, and, echoing the bright buttery yellow flowers of the bush poppy, a pair of Townsend warblers flitting about the garden. They are gorgeous little birds with black eye patches edged in a swath of bright yellow, and though they overwinter here, they are not common to backyard gardens — so what a treat! The bush poppy, which comes from the Channel Islands, is an evergreen, drought tolerant shrub that can vary in size from 5 to 10 feet, and can bloom in any season.

In August 2001 Becky and Linda Ross and several other volunteers set out to create a certified wildlife habitat garden in a public space as a demonstration garden. Their compact plot, just past the heavy iron gate on Franklin Avenue, is a great example of how to plan a habitat area with local wildlife, soil, sun, and flowering times all in the mix. They chose to make it a native garden because these are the plants that have evolved with our climate and geology and animals. They chose plants that would bloom in different seasons and that would feed birds, bees, butterflies, and other pollinators.

Becky sent me a 7-page plant list for the garden (http://ci.santarosa.ca.us/doclib/Documents/Memorial_and_Habitat_Garden_02-2011.pdf) that includes plant origin, food and nectar provided, and for which wildlife species. There are manzanitas, Ribes spp., and salvias, for example, that provide nectar for hummingbirds in late winter and early spring, and penstemons, monkeyflowers, and California fuchsias for summer and fall. There are shrubs that produce berries and seeds for birds, including our California quail’s favorite plant, quail bush (Atriplex spp.). Becky and her husband have seen as many as 20 birds at one time on the quail bush in their home garden.
Various species of buckwheats, including St. Catherine’s lace (Eriogonum giganteum) and California buckwheat (E. fasciculatum) provide a nectar source for bees and other pollinators. As Carol Bornstein (California Native Plants for the Garden) points out, the California buckwheat may be the most widespread shrubby buckwheat in California, but it is rarely found on “favorite plant” lists. And that’s too bad, because this easy-to-grow buckwheat produces masses of nectar flowers, and the seed heads, which we could see clinging to the branches, still held their pretty copper fall color. Buckwheats feed birds and pollinators and some double as larval food plants for various butterflies. Scattered here and there throughout the garden are wildflowers—California poppies, Doug iris, phacelias, Western columbine, madia, clarkia—and grasses such as California fescue, rye grass (‘Canyon Prince’), deer grass, and purple needle grass.

Becky and her partners use no mulch, do not deadhead, and prune very lightly—all good habitat gardening practices. Weeds that haven’t gone to seed are placed back on the ground as natural mulch. By allowing the plants to go to seed and by not pruning plants back in the winter, Becky is providing food and cover for wildlife through the months when food sources are scarce.

This garden is a certified wildlife habitat garden (National Wildlife Federation) and a Monarch Waystation. As a demonstration garden in a public space, it has great potential for educating the public on habitat and native plants. Educational flyers available at the garden disappear very quickly. However, ID markers for some of the plants are missing and new signage is planned. Becky is looking for a volunteer to help with identifying plants. Contact her at: montyb@sonic.net nbcoyoteridge@gmail.com.

Invasives Corner

Greetings – I’m honored to be your new Invasive Chair for the Milo Baker Chapter! I’m taking over from ML Carle who stepped down last fall after serving in the position for over 8 years. Thank you ML! She is busy training the next generation to go after invasive plants through the tutelage of her granddaughter, who I hear has taken up the cause! Good job ML.

I am excited to join the Milo Baker board. I have been working primarily in a habitat restoration program and some regulatory work the past 20 years or so (Bay Area and Central CA) as a biologist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS). At the end of 2014, I took the voluntary early retirement program at USFWS, and immediately sought to reconnect with CNPS. I’ve been impressed with the dedication of so many people in CNPS over the years and I have deep appreciation for those with botanical field knowledge and a passion for California’s native plants. It’s not a big enough field, sadly. I consider myself a generalist/ecologist. I embrace it all (except invasives). I hold a BS from Cal Poly in Environmental & Systematic Biology (about ½ botany, ½ zoology) and a Masters in Wildlife Biology (plant people don’t hold that against me!) from Colorado State. I started working with USFWS in 1994 in Ventura. While there, I joined the CNPS Channel Islands Chapter Board as Treasurer. In 2004, I moved up to Sonoma County to be nearer to family, and was glad to be back in Northern California and North Bay specifically, near to where I grew up. Through my work with the USFWS Partners for Fish & Wildlife Program, I started collaborating with several CNPS members and other partners to support endangered plant projects in Sonoma County including habitat enhancement for the Pitkin marsh lily (Lilium pardalinum pitkinense) at Cunningham Marsh, white sedge (Carex albida, now synonymized...
with Carex lemmonii) at Lower Pitkin Marsh, the Kenwood marsh checkerbloom (Sidalcea oregana ssp. valida), and I helped occasionally with surveys of Vine Hill clarkia (Clarkia imbricata) at Vine Hill Preserve. With the U.C. Botanical Garden, we’ve reintroduced the endangered Baker’s larkspur (Delphinium bakeri) to several sites in Marin. Working to save endangered plants in California, even on sites that are preserved forever, has often meant dealing with invasive vegetation on an ongoing basis. It’s a daunting task, some say never ending. It probably is. But to completely walk away doesn’t seem like a comfortable option either. But my hope is that carefully picking one’s battles will lead to some accomplishments within one’s sphere of influence.

I’m looking forward to carving out what those battles will be as the Invasive Chair. I envision seeking out opportunities to engage Milo Baker members; collaborating with others on common goals; sharing and disseminating information, such as developing a watch-list for invasives new to or not yet established in our County so we can work with the pertinent parties to try and head off any new occurrences in our County; participation with members in nursery invasive surveys with another NGO; keeping tabs with what’s going on with other CNPS Chapters, Weed Management Areas, and the California Invasive Plant Council (I was on the Board in 2008); and perhaps leading occasional weed worker days for hand’s-on work. It’s tricky to list these things before getting started, in case things take a different direction or we’re overly ambitious. But in that vein, I’m open to hearing from Milo Baker Chapter members what your priority ideas are, and especially what would you like to be a part of! Let’s chat! Contact me at kate@terraserve.net.

Kate Symonds

Plant Sale News

Division Workshop
February 28, 10:30 AM Saturday

There will be a workshop at Liz's house in Kenwood on Saturday February 28 at 10:30 AM. At this workshop we will dig up plants that grow in Liz's yard, put them into gallon containers, and grow them on until our plant sale on October 10, 2015. Among the plants that we will dig up are bleeding hearts (Dicentra formosa), zauschneria or CA fuchsia (Epilobium canum), polypody ferns (Polypodium californicum), wild ginger (Asarum caudatum), and goldenrod (Solidago californicum).

The next workshop will be in May at Cal Flora. For more information, call Liz at 833-2063.

Liz Parsons
**Events**

February 7, 2015, Saturday  
10am – Around 2pm  
Leader: Prahlada Papper  
Pepperwood Preserve – Phenology (Plant Life Stages) Project and more

Join Prahlada Papper, our January meeting speaker, to see and learn more about the critical phenology project. This project, to simplify, uses data collected by citizen scientists to track how plants respond to climate change in future years by recording dates of bloom, seed set, etc. We will look at the monitoring plots for the project with Prahlada and then take advantage of this amazing site for a longer walk to discover early wildflowers and more.

Carpools will gather at 9:15am at the Park and Ride under Hwy 12 across from Fairgrounds and Vets’ Hall. Meet in the Pepperwood parking lot by the Red Barn.

Bring bag lunch, hat, water, etc. RSVP to youngb0721@msn.com questions to Betty 707-595-1463.

February 22, 2015, Sunday  
10am – 3pm  
Leader: Peter Warner  
Blooming Manzanitas, Goodspeed Trail at Sugarloaf State Park

Check out the many beautiful species of manzanitas and ceanothus in bloom along the Goodspeed Trail at Sugarloaf with our Peter Warner. Along the way learn a little about how to tell the manzanita species apart.

Meet to carpool at 9:30 at Hwy 12 park and ride (some of us have passes for free entry into park) or at 10am in the parking lot just inside the Sugarloaf State Park entrance.

Bring bag lunch, hat, water, etc. Questions to Betty, youngb0721@msn.com or 707-595-1463.

February 27, 2015, Friday  
9:30am – noon.  
Leader: Becky Montgomery  
Rural Cemetery Native Plant Garden Tour,  
1600 Franklin Ave., Santa Rosa

In 2001, just 2 weeks before 9/11, our own Becky and Bill Montgomery and Linda Ross established a National Wildlife Federation Certified Backyard Wildlife Habitat garden at the Santa Rosa Rural Cemetery to serve as a memorial garden and affirmation of life after 9/11. The garden design focuses on native, drought-tolerant plants that attract native bees and butterflies. It has also been designated an official Monarch Sanctuary. Click here for a list of the hundreds of plants in the Memorial and Habitat Garden. All but three are natives to California and most are native to Sonoma County. See this well established garden and what might work in your garden. We will be there during the garden volunteer program, so if you are inspired, you can stay after the tour and help. Or you can also immerse yourself in Santa Rosa history with a visit to the carefully restored cemetery dating from 1854.
Parking is on neighboring streets or near the Town & Country shopping center. Entrance is at Monroe St and MacDonald Ave.
Bring bag lunch, hat, water, etc. Questions to Betty youngb0721@msn.com or 707-595-1463.

March 8, 2015 – Sunday
10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
Leader: Peter Warner
Salmon Creek Road, Town of Bodega
Trip by Reservation only

This will be a leisurely walk along Salmon Creek Rd., starting about 1 mile west of the village of Bodega to see an abundance of locally native shrubs, some of which might be in flower, including gooseberry, currant, osoberry, and the northernmost population of western leatherwood. Bring lunch or snacks and water; the canyon can be a bit cooler than surrounding areas. There are no facilities along this walk, which will cover 2 to 3 miles, relatively flat road – generally not busy with vehicles.

Parking is very limited along the road, and all properties adjoining are private; in consideration, I’m limiting how many people can join our group. We will carpool from somewhere nearby, such as along Bodega Hwy. or Salmon Creek Rd. in the village. Get details when you contact Peter to RSVP
Please call or email Peter to reserve your place: Peter phytopagan@sonic.net or 707-666-9071.

The 39th annual Environmental Awards Dinner, Restoration; Helping Nature Heal, will be held Sunday March 15, 2015, from 5:00 to 8:30 pm, at the Sebastopol Community Center. The event will feature a virtual tour of the student-run hatchery and watershed restoration work by students with United Anglers of Casa Grande High School. Posters of many other restoration projects in Sonoma County will be on display along with information tables from many local non-profit organizations.

Tickets for the March 15 Environmental Awards Dinner are now on sale. Tickets are $40 until February 14; $60 thereafter. Student tickets, (with ID) are $25 until March 10. Purchase tickets or sponsorships at http://envirocentersoco.org/dinner/ or send a check to SCCC, PO Box 4346, Santa Rosa, 95402

The Sonoma County Conservation Council (SCCC) is the Federation that operates the Sonoma County Environmental Center in Santa Rosa. Milo Baker chapter is a member of SCCC and the Board meets at the Center. The SCCC has been presenting awards since 1975.

Contact: Wendy Krupnick, 707 544-4582, wlk@sonic.net
http://envirocentersoco.org
Lilium pardalinum ssp. pitkinense
Pitkin lily

Newsletter & Web Site Info:
Send newsletter submissions to:
Editor, cnpsmbnewsletter@yahoo.com
Deadline for inclusion in the March Newsletter is February 15.
The chapter web site milobaker.cnps.org contains a wealth of information plus current and archived newsletters.
For newsletter mailing/membership issues, contact: Suzanne Harmon at cnpsmbmembership@gmail.com