December General Meeting: Annual Wreath-Making Workshop
Tuesday, December 19th, 7:30pm

It’s our 13th annual wreath-making event. Grab your pruning shears, or something with which to cut greenery, and try your hand at creating a lovely, festive wreath to decorate your home or to give as a gift. You’ll get the few simple instructions needed to discover your hidden creative talents and watch others discover theirs. Hoops, wire, and greenery will be provided. To add special touches, please bring anything you have on hand for your own wreath or to share: berries, pine cones, acorns, lichen, eucalyptus pods, dried flowers, holly, pomegranates, ribbon, raffia, etc. Drop cloths, tarps, or old sheets to make cleanup easier will be greatly appreciated. We’ll have hot cider and Christmas cookies – bring some of your own favorites to share if you like. You’ll also have an opportunity to do some Christmas shopping. Choose from T-shirts, posters, and a wide selection of books – great for gift giving. Come join the festivities and share some holiday cheer with CNPS friends.

The Many Faces of California Monkey Flowers
Tuesday, January 16th, 7:30pm

Steve Schoenig is a senior scientist for the integrated pest management branch of the California Agriculture Department. Among his many and varied accomplishments, he has spent many years photographing all 80 species in the genus Mimulus all over the state. He will focus on local & regional species, and rare species from throughout the state. He is currently writing a book on the genus.

Be an Advocate for Sonoma County’s Native Plants!

Chapter Conservation Chair and Coordinators Needed for 2007

As John and Bob step down, they are motivated to train new volunteers on how to become familiar with CNPS policies, conduct project review, and prepare public comments. As incoming Chapter President, Lynn Houser is available to meet with members interested in conservation, and will them give support in prioritizing work, finding information needed to write comment letters, and reviewing and signing letters in a timely manner. It is essential that the chapter’s conservation work continue.

- Learn how to use science and the law to protect our native flora.
- Celebrate victories and keep the momentum going!

**Continued on page 2**
President's Corner

Fall has been an exciting time with the plant sale, two new members joining the board and our recent Conservation Committee Vision to Action. The plant sale was a great success; and we did so well thanks to all of you that participated. Being our only fundraising event it is extremely important that we have your support, thank you! Beth Robinson has joined the board as the new Field Trip Coordinator and Joan Schwan, a graduate support, thank you! Beth Robinson has joined the board as the new Field Trip Coordinator and Joan Schwan, a graduate student at Sonoma State University doing her research on grazing impacts on vernal pool species, has joined us as SSU Representative. You’ll be reading more from Beth and Joan later. Thanks for joining the board.

On November 11, the Conservation Committee held a Vision to Action, facilitated by Dave Henson from the Occidental Arts and Ecology Center. The goals of the meeting were to inform participants on the current work of the Conservation Committee and the role of the co-chairs, John Herrick and Bob Hass, identify current and possible chapter conservation issues and activities and set the stage for the committee’s next steps, including selecting Conservation Committee co-chairs by Jan 2007. The meeting was successful and set the stage for strong conservation-oriented leadership in Sonoma County from the Milo Baker Chapter. A huge thank you to all who participated! For more information on conservation volunteer opportunities, see the “Conservation News” article in this newsletter.

In the New Year, Lynn Houser will be taking over as president with Liz Parson as vice president; we are looking forward to the strong leadership team they will provide. But even with new board members and recent elections, we still have vacancies, which I hope you will consider. Please see “Board of Directors” at cnpsmnb.org as a starting point.

Conservation News

***Continued from page 1***

The capacity of our chapter to make a difference in land use, native habitat protection, education, and preservation of open space has never been greater, given the level of our conservation activity over the past several years. Also, the resources now available to chapter volunteers, combined with a new structure that divides conservation tasks between more people, will make the work easier for everyone involved. The former chairs are here to lend their experience: John has commented on many projects, met with agencies and government officials, and led outings with the Rare Plant group. Bob has worked for several years on the Sonoma County General Plan 2020 to insert protective language for native plants and their habitats, and to get countywide vegetation mapping off the ground. Lynn has learned a lot about conservation strategies from CNPS statewide conferences, and about the most effective ways to advocate for plant protection and to monitor rare plant populations from many hours spent out in the field with the chapter’s former conservation advocate, Betty Guggolz.

If you have questions about the Conservation Chair or Coordinator positions, or about the Vision to Action workshop, please do not hesitate to contact Lynn Houser (568-3230, housers@sonic.net) or Ruby Herrick, Volunteer Coordinator (887-8542, rdherr@yahoo.com). For information on CNPS policies, or more about the CNPS Conservation or Legislation Programs, go to www.cnps.org.

Santa Rosa Citywide Creek Master Plan Draft EIR Available for Review

The City of Santa Rosa recently published its draft Citywide Creek Master Plan and draft EIR for review. The comments deadline is Tuesday, January 9. If you enjoy or are concerned about any of the 90 miles of creek/riparian habitat within the City of Santa Rosa’s urban growth boundary, we welcome your help in preparing the Milo Baker Chapter comments. We will be commenting on the draft EIR on a creek-by-creek basis.

Copies of the draft Plan/EIR are available for review at:

- Santa Rosa Public Works Dept, 69 Stony Circle
- Branch libraries in Santa Rosa- Central (3rd Street), Rincon Valley and Northwest (Coddingtontown)

If you have questions about the draft Plan/EIR, contact Sheri Emerson at City of Santa Rosa sjemerson@srcity.org

Santa Rosa provided the chapter a digital version of the draft Plan / EIR. If you’d like a CD copy, please contact me. Members requesting a CD copy before Dec 24 will also receive our ever-popular bonus CD “Having a Milo Baker Holiday” as long as supplies last- supplies are limited, operators are standing by.

Hearing on Lower Pitkin Marsh Project Continued for 60 Days

Due to substantial agency and neighborhood concern, the November 9 hearing on Mitigated Negative Declaration for True North Health application was continued for 60 days as the applicant considers reducing the size of the project. If you would like to be kept informed about future hearings regarding the application, please contact me.

Plant Sale News

Pacific Coast Iris workshop will be held Saturday, January 6, at Mary Aldrich's 4775 Newanga, Santa Rosa at 10 AM. We will be dividing and potting up iris for the plant sale. These are very popular at the sale. If you have any PCN iris to share, bring them and if you want to help please attend. Call Mary 539-9005 for more information. Rain date-the next Saturday-January 13, same time, same place.

Chapter Field Trips

Pt. Reyes Mushroom Foray with Sonoma County Mycological Society

Saturday, December 9, 9:00 AM- 1:00 PM

The Point Reyes MycoBlitz is an ongoing attempt to document the macro-fungi at Point Reyes National Seashore. Through a series of forays spanning several seasons, armies of volunteers, made up of professional and amateur mycologists, collect fungi from all the major plant communities in the park. We’ll join SOMA for this fun event.

Meet at the Bear Valley Visitor Center in Olema at 9:00 a.m. to sign up for a collecting route and get maps, wax bags, and field labels. This is an effort to document the fungi at Pt. Reyes—a cooperative venture of local mushroom clubs, UC Berkeley,
and the national park. Learn about fungi and the unique habitats of Pt. Reyes. Bring mushroom collecting baskets, a tackle box (for small specimens) digging tools or a pocket knife, water, whistle, compass, and lunch. For more information, contact David Rust at incredulis@yahoo.com or 510-468-5014, http://www.bayareamushrooms.org/pt_reyes_mycoblitz.html.

**Pinnacles Gulch Walk in Bodega Bay**  
**Saturday, January 27, 9-11AM (NOTE: Date has been changed)**  
We’ll take a short, leisurely walk, weather permitting, through this nice area of coastal scrub to the beach to possibly do some birding. Bring snacks or an early lunch to eat on the beach if you like. We’ll meet at 9AM at the Pinnacles Gulch parking lot. There is a $4 parking fee. Directions: From the junction of Bodega Highway and CA 1 (south of Bodega Bay), drive north on Hwy 1 about 3.5 miles, then turn west (left) onto South Harbor Way. At the crest of the hill, turn left on Heron Drive. Drive about 0.9 mile through a residential neighborhood, turn left onto Mockingbird, and continue a short distance to a small parking lot on the left. Rain cancels. Contact: Beth Robinson, 490-4951, bethysmail@gmail.com

**Armstrong Woods/Austin Creek Walk, Guerneville**  
**Saturday, February 24, 9-12**  
We’ll take a 3-4 mile loop hike along part of the East Ridge Trail through grasslands and oak woodlands, stopping by Bullfrog Pond and several stunning vistas. We’ll see what’s starting to come up in these different ecosystems. Bring your rain gear because this one goes rain or shine! There will be some strenuous sections on this hike. We’ll meet at the parking lot at the front of Armstrong Woods, before you pass through the kiosk, and carpool up to the trailhead from there. There may be a $6 parking fee per car that drives up, but more details on that next month. Bring sturdy shoes, water, and snacks or lunch. Contact: Beth Robinson, 490-4951, bethysmail@gmail.com.

**Coming in March:**  
Visit Sonoma State’s Galbreath Wildlands Preserve! Details to come… Beth Robinson

**Field Trip Report**  
Weed Removal Day a Success!  
On Nov 4th, approximately 20 volunteers descended on the Flat Rock area at Santa Rosa and Brush Creeks to take part in weed removal. Chapter member Suki Winship organized the day and was able to get Alistair Bleifuss and Sheri Emerson from the City of Santa Rosa’s Creek Stewardship program to talk to us about their program as well as give us an overview of our adopt-a-plot for the day. The City provided tools, gloves, water, and expert guidance. We removed several large patches of ivy as well as some pampas grass, cotonester, and french broom. We also did some grass planting and seeding along the bank of Brush Creek and one large area where we had removed ivy. Thanks to everyone who came out! Beth Robinson

**Spots available for January Manzanita Workshop**  
Openings are available for the two-day Manzanita identification workshop scheduled for Saturday January 20 and Sunday Jan 21. Saturday’s session will be lecture/lab emphasizing Manzanitas found in Sonoma County and Sunday, a field trip.

The workshop will be lead by CSU San Francisco professors Tom Parker and Mike Vasey leading the workshop. Mike and Tom are preparing the Arctostaphylos key for the upcoming Jepson Manual revision and will use their key during the workshop.

The workshop registration fee is $125 for CNPS members and $225 for non-CNPS members (membership application forms will be made available to non-members). Student discounts will be available.

See the November newsletter for further details. Workshop attendance is limited. Please contact me to reserve your place. John Herrick, 887-8542, joherr@yahoo.com

**Chapter Activities**

**Cunningham Marsh Workday**
Begin your holiday celebrations by preserving the natural wonders of Cunningham marsh preserve, home of our chapter logo, the endangered Pitkin lily. Meet at 1460 Big Cedar Ln, Sebastopol Sunday 12/10, 9:30 am-1 pm. Come out and help:  
- collect native seed  
- plant black oak seedlings  
- divide and replant rushes and sedge to expand the marsh

Bring gloves, shovel or trowel and water. Light rain is a go, heavy rain cancels. Call Betty with questions or for directions - 415-497-5671.

Marcia Johnson

**Discover Your Native Flora at Plant I.D. Hour**
Please note: There is No Plant I.D. Hour before the Wreath-Making workshop in December; but you can enjoy the variety of fresh material all around the room.  
**Plant ID hour will be back in January!**  
Come to Plant I.D. Hour in winter and figure out the Mysteries of the Manzanitas! Many evergreen shrubs and trees are blooming now, energized by the fall rains. **Arrive at 6:30, an hour before the January 16**th **General Meeting**, and bring specimens of plants you want to identify. At Plant I.D. Hour we feature plants of interest from the local area, see them through a dissecting microscope, and discover the differences between our many native species. I bring field guides and hefty taxonomic publications! I really enjoy helping you work through the keys in The Jepson Manual and A Sonoma County Flora or just answering questions. Keying can be fun, even if you get stuck! The best-learned plants are those learned with friends. You can bring your dinner if you want to, a hand lens and a copy of Jepson or Sonoma Co. Flora if you have them. A copy of each will be available. I also have L.H. Bailey’s Manual of Cultivated plants (my first manual used to key plants) for your latest garden mystery or escape.

Marcia Johnson

**Invasive Plant Corner**

**Cotoneaster ssp. francetii, lacteus, and pumposus.**  
Suki Winship of our chapter and Alistair Bleifuss of Santa Rosa Parks and Recreation organized a weed removal project on Santa Rosa Creek. Though the jobsite is surrounded by homes, the creek runs through a quite beautiful riparian area. Alders, big leaf maples, oaks, madrones and bays flourish here. However, there are many invasives, *Vinca major, periwinkle,*
and Hedera helix, English ivy are probably the worst. There is not much broom, thanks to the work of previous volunteers. What I discovered that Saturday was Cotoneaster. We noticed many seedlings about the size of the Scotch broom we were removing. When we tried to pull them up, we found them more stubborn than the broom, with larger and more deeply buried roots in relation to their height. As we walked past a bridge, we spotted a full-sized Cotoneaster full of berries. At first I thought, “Oh goody, toyon!” Not. There were several adolescent cotoneasters near the tree. I didn’t have the equipment to take the tree out, so I clipped the branches, so that the berries wouldn’t roll down the slope and into the creek or be dispersed by drunken robins. Feeling quite pleased with myself, I crossed the bridge to finish up by helping plant creeping wild rye to stabilize a section of creek bank. I glanced up at the steep bank across the creek - and rats! A huge cotoneaster burst into my sight - shamelessly displaying it’s wealth of splendid berries. Why couldn’t it be Heteromeles arbutifolia; toyon? Cotoneasters, members of the rose family, interbreed easily between species. They love the coast. Ranked highly for invasiveness by the California Invasive Pest Plant Council, they spread quickly, shading out and out-competing native understory plants. Cut them down and they sprout. Digging them up is a bear. They have a long history as popular landscape plants. For many years they were not a problem, but something has changed. Like our native toyon, the berries are quite attractive and the birds love them. So if you are thinking cotoneaster in your garden, please rethink and purchase toyon, Heteromeles arbutifolia. While you are purchasing, you might ask about whether the nursery carries Cotoneaster and let them know of its bad behavior. The Nursery Project - JOIN US!

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Chapter Rep Needed for Water Coalition

At its October 2006 meeting, the MB Board of Directors voted to join the Sonoma County Water Coalition (SCWC) as a supporting member. The Board agreed that our chapter should be represented in this 33-member coalition, especially given the increasing importance of water issues in the county, and the critical connection between water and the health of native plants and plant communities.

SCWC provides a mechanism for sharing information, developing positions on issues, establishing strategies, and taking action to gain acceptance of approved positions. As a supporting member of SCWC, we are seeking a motivated individual (or two individuals working as a team) to serve as our chapter’s representative(s) to the Coalition. Your job would be to keep the MB Board apprised of decisions taken by SCWC, solicit Board input when appropriate, and attend meetings when possible.

For more information or to volunteer, please contact Bob at 938-8868; bob_cnpsmb@comcast.net.

Bob Hass

Thank you Board Members

With good people, come good things.
The Milo Baker Board would like to thank these board members for their dedicated work for CNPS. Our chapter is very lucky to have enjoyed the company and great productivity of these volunteers, and we celebrate them as they move on to other adventures:
- Jon Akre, Poster and T-shirt sales
- Barney Brady, Director-at-large
- M.L. Carle, Field trip coordinator
- Sarah Gordon, SSU Representative
- Bob Hass, Conservation trip coordinator (policy)
- John Herrick, Conservation Co-chair (projects)
- Ruby Herrick, Volunteer Coordinator
- Pauline Haro, Publicity
- Ralph Johnson, Website Designer
- May Miller, Pre-meeting Dinner Host
- Lily Verdone, President

And the engine keeps running: M.L. Carle is now chapter coordinator for Invasive Weeds. Sarah Gordon has been approved as the new steward for Vine Hill Preserve in Sebastopol. The board welcomes Beth Robinson as new Field Trip Coordinator and Stephanie and Mike Lennox for Publicity Co-Chairs.

In October Joan Schwan was elected Sonoma State University Representative. Jim Piercey was elected Treasurer; Liz Parsons, Vice President; Lynn Houser, President; and Directors-at-large: M.L. Carle, Dea Freid, and Gary Hundt. The new terms run 2007-2008. We hope to fill the rest of our vacancies right away: see more of this issue for open positions and contact Lynn Houser if you are interested in helping out. Training is available.

Lynn Houser

A Special Thank You to Our Conservation Co-Chairs

The Native Plants of Sonoma County, and those who love them, would like to thank Bob Hass and John Herrick for their amazing dedication and contributions as Conservation Co-Chairs of the Milo Baker Chapter.
Your newsletter
Our chapter has been fortunate to have many dedicated newsletter editors in the past, and Heide Keeble carries on this fine tradition. She works behind the scenes to ensure our newsletter is edited, completed and to the printers on time each month. Our newsletter gives us a sense of community by keeping us informed, motivated and connected. The issue you are reading is the product of many people and the responsibility of the editor. The Milo Baker chapter board of directors would like to say thank you, Heide, for your valuable contribution to our chapter as newsletter editor.

Welcome New and Returning Members!
We’d like to welcome our newest members;
Andrea C Munger, Andre Gauthier, Celia Cummings, Claire Green, Chris Draper, Claudia Cleaver, Deb Drew, Dan Holtman, David Moring, Deborah Dobish, Elizabeth Phegan, Stacey Llanes, Harriet Draper, Julienne Skai Arbor, Linda Demers, Linda Webster, M Rose, Marjorie Johnson, Mary Dedanah, Patrick Lynch, Yvonne Milligan, Margo Vanveen, Patrick and Linda Smithson, Janis Newell. Thank you all for being a part of the Milo Baker Chapter, and supporting our native flora through your donations.

Items of Interest

Holiday Networking Party
Wednesday, December 6, 2006 5:00 – 8:30 pm
Don Taylor’s Omelette Express, 112 4th Street, Railroad Square, Santa Rosa.
Environmental Center Benefit - Fundraising can be fun! Greet old friends, meet new ones! All Sonoma County environmental groups are invited for an evening of socializing and synergy with acoustic music, food, wine and refreshments.
Donation: $25 per person, sliding scale; RSVP requested. $100 for groups of 5 plus $20 for each additional person – advance purchase only.

Additional tax deductible donations welcome – remember this is a fundraiser! Open to the public - plan to bring friends and family! Benefits the Environmental Center of Sonoma County; A project of the Sonoma County Conservation Council (SCCC) Volunteer help welcome: food prep, set-up, ticket sales, servers, clean-up.
Send checks to: PO Box 4346 , Santa Rosa , CA 95402 Contact: Wendy Krupnick, wendyk@sonic.net/544-4582 or Portia Sinnott, LITE@sonic.net /824-9931 Thanks to Don Taylor’s Omelette Express (www.omelette.com) for this opportunity.
For information about the Environmental Center and the Council groups please visit: www.envirocentersoco.org

Cotati Creek Critters
Help us plant native trees and shrubs along the Laguna de Santa Rosa in Cotati! Community Planting day: Saturday, December 9, 9 a.m. - noon.
Also Inside/Outside Nature education series: “Amphibians of Sonoma County” presentation by David Cook, on Monday, December 4, 7 p.m. at Cotati Community Center.
See www.CotatiCreekCritters.info for Planting Day information, directions, and details or contact jenny@creeks.cotati.info or 792-4422.

Russian Riverkeeper Park Volunteer Days
Wednesday’s, 8:30 am – 11:30 am, join us for all or part. The park is at 16153 Main St., Guerneville, located on the north bank of the Russian River directly upstream of the pedestrian bridge. Visit the park to see the transformation or be part of the transformation taking place and help restore riverbank habitat. Restoration activities include: planting and caring for native plants, weeding, erosion control, restoration education and trash removal. Bring water, and wear sturdy shoes. Access is down a driveway west of Woody’s River Glass. At the bottom of the driveway look for the blue and white sign that says, “Russian Riverkeeper Demonstration Riparian Restoration Project Future Community Park.”
Parking is available near the sign. See the website at http://www.russianriverkeeper.org or call Don McEnhill at 217-4762, or e-mail him at rkeeper@sonic.net.

Gardening in November
November is the beginning of the seasons for California. If you haven’t already started your new planting, now is a good time. After about six months of dry weather, the rainy season is upon us. Annuals like California poppy, Eschscholzia californica, grow easily from seed by getting their start during the fall rain to bring beautiful blossoms the following spring, summer and fall. If conditions are right, they are prolific re-seeders so they will naturalize in your garden. The flowers are attractive to insects and the seeds are good bird food. Other more permanent plants also provide habitat and benefit from getting started at this time of year. Planting now gives the roots time to get established during the rainy season, long before the next dry summer season. A healthy garden as well as a pleasing landscape has many layers: trees, shrubs, perennials and ground covers.

Do you have room for a tree? A tree is usually defined as plants that are taller or wider than 25’. Trees help to set the tone of the landscape, as demonstrated by the different feel that comes from, say, oaks versus redwoods. Before selecting a tree, determine how much space you have and find out the characteristics and ultimate size of the trees you like. This will avoid problems such as a tree that gets too large, provides too much shade or needs constant pruning. Some wonderful trees like a California buckeye, Aesculus californica or western redbud, Cercis occidentalis can add a dramatic effect to a landscape. Most trees have habitat value so are worthwhile planting to support wildlife. For example, buckeye supplies springtime nectar for birds and butterflies. Also planting trees is one of the many things you can do to reduce carbon in the atmosphere to help slow global warming.

Shrubs have much to offer as interest points in the landscape and for wildlife habitat. A good shrub for a dry environment is toyon, Heteromeles arbutifolia. It has clusters of white flowers for the bees in the spring and red berries for the birds in the winter. One of my favorite riparian shrubs is blue elderberry, Sambucus Mexicana. They have clusters of cream colored flowers that attract insects followed by delicious berries. They are quite a treat if you get to eat the berries before the birds do.

The next layer in the garden is usually the flowering perennials, ferns and grasses. There is usually room for many selections of these. It’s fun to go plant shopping to find just the right plant for that special spot. May you have a healthy garden filled with butterflies and birds, and banana slugs too!

Milo Baker Chapter Newsletter – December 2006/January 2007
Lilium pardalinum ssp. pitkinense
Pitkin lily

Newsletter & Web Site Info
Send newsletter submissions to:
Heide Keeble: nemorphila@yahoo.com
Deadline for inclusion in the February newsletter is January 15.
For newsletter/membership issues contact:
Wendy Born  spores@excite.com

The chapter web site www.cnpsmb.org contains a wealth of information plus current and archived newsletters.
To receive notification of the online newsletter, sign up at http://groups.yahoo.com/group/cnps