June 2007

Milo Baker Chapter
California Native Plant Society

June General Meeting: Rincon Ridge; A Botanical Treasure
Tuesday, June 19th, 7:30pm

Beautiful chaparral and woodland plants are highlighted in this presentation representing local flora, plus chapter efforts in conservation and education. The hill in northeast Santa Rosa that is crossed by Fountaingrove Parkway is historically called Rincon Ridge, known for many years for its botanical diversity and volcanic rhyolite geology. Lynn Houser, steward of Rincon Ridge Park Sensitive Plant Area and chapter President, has been working for several years with the city parks, homeowners’ association, and fire department to conserve the rare plants and unique chaparral that occurs on Rincon Ridge in the open space that remains.

Through field trips, work days at the park, and several meetings with interested parties, CNPS has been striving to obtain continuing protections for the native plants despite harsh fire clearing regulations. The plants continue to amaze us with their tenacity and beauty. Come see what is blooming in the Fountaingrove area and learn about our unique Rincon Ridge chaparral.

Note: there will not be any Plant ID Hour before the meeting in June, so that we may join the speaker for dinner before the meeting. However, you are welcome to bring in plant identification questions, and there will be fresh material displayed.

Join us for Dinner before the meeting! Let’s gather with our speaker at the Kirin Restaurant before the April General Meeting. We meet at 6 pm. Please call or e-mail Lynn Colborn at 829-9128 or lcolborn@earthlink.net by the day before the meeting.

Sonoma County Celebrates National Trails Day
Saturday, June 2nd, 2007 – All Day Celebration of Trails & Public Lands

On June 2, 2007, Sonoma County groups, including nonprofits, recreation clubs, retailers, public agencies, land trusts, and businesses will host opportunities across the County for the public get outside and experience local trails. Participants are invited to attend a morning trail stewardship project from 9AM-1PM followed by an afternoon National Trails Day Celebration honoring volunteers to be held at Juilliard Park in Santa Rosa from 2-7pm.

Volunteers will be served lunch and refreshments. The event will include informational booths, children’s activities, outdoor gear raffle prizes, and live entertainment from local Bay Area music artists Steven Pile & the Piledrivers plus headlining act: Vinyl. National Trails Day, initiated by the American Hiking Society, is now in its 15th year. This is a long standing dedication to the celebration, promotion, and protection of America's magnificent trail system. All are welcome at this free, public celebration of Sonoma County's trails. Volunteers can choose from three trail stewardship projects in the morning that are scheduled from approximately 9-1:

- Annadel State Park- Join the Sonoma County Trails Council, Marmot, REI, and The Bay Area Ridge Trail Council for a tread maintenance project. For info & RSVP, contact the Trails Council: directorsctc@gmail.com or (707)490-4950.
- Hood Mountain Regional Park and Open Space Preserve – Join the Sonoma County Ag Preservation & Open Space District, Sonoma County Regional Parks and LandPaths at a trail project on the newest addition to Hood Mountain. For info & RSVP, contact LandPaths: outings@LandPaths.org or (707)524-9318.
- Kortum Coastal Trail Project – Join the Sierra Club and Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods for trail mowing & stewardship on the scenic Kortum Trail. For info & RSVP, contact Stewards: stewards@mcn.org or (707)869-9177.

In This Issue
Field Trip news.........................2
Education Report....................3
Invasive Plant corner.............3
Items of Interest....................4
Gardening with Natives.........5
Newsletter Submissions & Website..................6

*General meetings are held on the 3rd Tuesday of each month at Luther Burbank Art & Garden Center, 2050 Yulupa Avenue, Santa Rosa
**Milo Baker Chapter Board meetings 7:00pm, 2nd Tuesday nine months of the year, Environmental Center, 55 Ridgeway Avenue, Suite A, Santa Rosa. Next meeting is June 12th. Anyone interested in the work of the chapter is welcome to attend!
There have been many opportunities this spring to network with local conservation partners and educate the public. Chapter volunteers have been active lately in several ways. For example, on Earth Day, Liz Parsons hosted a CNPS table at Wildwood Farms in Kenwood, and we received good publicity and donations from their fundraising. Liz also led a very successful potting workshop at CalFlora Nursery on May 13th, and is always looking for members to grow plants for the sale on Oct. 13th. If you have native plant cuttings or seedlings that can be of saleable quality before fall, contact Liz Parsons so she can see about plant labels and take note of potential inventory.

Mayacamas Mountains: We know and love our mountain range, but how do we conserve its unique qualities? On May 10th I attended a meeting with Denise Woods, Conservation Director for the Mayacamas Conservation Area with the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District and a roomful of knowledgeable and dedicated folks, to discuss plans and strategies. The working group has identified various threats to oak woodlands, riparian, chaparral, and other plant communities, and would appreciate any input you can provide to this ongoing process. Please contact me for more information and I will put you on the email list for future notice of meetings and current proposals for the Mayacamas Conservation Area, which mostly comprises the north part of the range (from Santa Rosa) up to Cloverdale. I hope to see you on the field trip to the Mayacamas Mountains Audubon Sanctuary, for Red Hill serpentine on Saturday, June 23rd with Madrone Audubon, where we’ll see late-season blooms and beautiful views (see field trip schedule for details). Santa Rosa’s Rincon Ridge and its diverse plant life will be the feature of the June 19th meeting. Several plant communities will be highlighted, with photos from the park and the Fountaingrove II open space, plus current conservation news.

Your help is needed: A replacement or assistant Newsletter Editor position is still open. The Milo Baker Board also needs a few more Directors at Large to help with the work of the chapter. We have an agreeable, productive board, meeting on second Tuesdays nine months of the year in Santa Rosa. A Conservation Coordinator is needed to respond to current proposals and delegate letter-writing to interested members. Rare Plants: If you are inclined to fill out a CNDDB form (see www.cnps.org) on any rare plant populations that you know of, the chapter would appreciate a copy of it, to know that you are monitoring! Any information in any part of the county is welcome.

The chapter needs volunteers this summer and fall for public outreach and membership recruitment. Pick your venue and get the CNPS message out there; you’ll be amazed at the public interest in native plants. We have materials for you to use. I wish you a great summer and thank you for your membership and dedication to native plants and CNPS.

On a sad note, local biologist Marco Waaland died April 28. Marco’s decades-long work contributed to our understanding of the Santa Rosa Plain and Laguna de Santa Rosa. Marco was instrumental in the effort to preserve vernal pool and upland habitat and the resident endangered species. He was a presenter at the chapter’s 1989 Vernal Pool Symposium, introducing the audience to preserve design and conservation potential on the Plain. Marco collaborated in Santa Rosa Plain vernal pool studies that remain the standard reference works. Marco also prepared the first comprehensive biological study of the Laguna. Marco will be missed, however, “Waaland, M.” endures through the literature on the Santa Rosa Plain.

Marco’s family suggested that donations be made to the Milo Baker Chapter. The Milo Baker Board will decide at the June Board meeting how to best use the generous donations we have received to acknowledge Marco’s legacy and to support his vision for the Santa Rosa Plain and the Laguna. We will announce in a future newsletter how the donations will be used. We would also like to invite anyone who worked with Marco to submit personal recollections, which we hope to share in an upcoming issue.

Lynn Houser

Chapter Field Trips

Serpentine Plants with Roger Raiche, Coleman Valley Road, Occidental
Saturday, June 9th, 9am-1pm

We’ll join botanist Roger Raiche for a stroll on Pieter Meyers’ conservation easement protected property in Occidental. For those of you who missed out on the Cedars walk (and I know there are some sad folks out there!), this is another opportunity to walk with Roger on serpentine. We’ll lunch at Ocean Song. Meet in
Occidental at the public parking lot on Main Street, just behind the tennis courts, next to the health clinic. If you're coming from the east, take Graton Rd into Occidental. Turn left onto Main Street (before you get to the stop sign on Bohemian Hwy) and the parking lot is on your right. Parking is limited on Coleman Valley Road, so we'll carpool from there. Contact: Beth Robinson, bethysmail@gmail.com or 490-4951.

Red Hill Serpentine Walk with Lynn Houser
Saturday, June 23rd 9am - 3pm

Lynn Houser will lead a summer field trip to Red Hill in the Mayacamas Mountains Audubon Sanctuary above Healdsburg to see late serpentine flowers. A seep on the west side features Helianthus exilis and Tritelia peduncularis, and the rocky outcrops have plenty of tarweeds and grasses to keep us busy keying. We will see some orchids if they are up yet, hike to the top of the hill for a wonderful view, and most certainly take some fantastic photos of the flowers and new vegetation, now three years after the major wildfire that swept the area in September 2004. Bring a lunch, water, and sun protection. Camera, binoculars, and plant books are also encouraged. Meet on the side of the road on highway 128, near the Sausal creek bridge (before the elbow, past Jimtown). Contact Lynn Houser at 568-3230 for more information.

CNPS Brings Kids into the Field and Plants into the Classroom

A Message From the Education Chair

In April and May I had five more opportunities to teach kids at Hidden Valley Elementary School in Santa Rosa about native plants and local plant communities.* April 19th was a day in the Chaparral on Rincon Ridge, in Fountaingrove II open space above the school. Twelve 4th-6th graders in the GATE program read fun facts on the Chaparral trip**, learned to recognize manzanita, ceanothus, and other native plants, and saw burned snags and wood rat homes as we meandered through the brush. The vernal pools and Sonoma Sunshine were quite dry, we measured a small pool full of popcorn flowers (Plagiobothrys sp.) and saw many lupines, checkermallow, and purple needlegrass. The parents learned a lot on this trip also.

May 1st was the first of two lessons on flowers and fruits for third graders in Ms. Chaffin’s class. With the vernal pool and 3rd grade flower lessons, the Sacramento Splash website (www.sacsplash.org ) was a fantastic resource. I designed handouts focusing on the Sonoma County specifics to add to them. The first week we looked at five flowers: wild oat, vetch, rock rose, onion (the weedy one), and sticky monkeyflower. The kids worked on finding the flower parts and marveled that the vetch flower could turn into a pea pod.

May 9th was the fruit lesson, and I had experience on my side this time (when Calvin was in 3rd grade my lesson was a bit too ambitious). I brought in a basic food assortment: almond, banana (chip), carrot, olive, onion, parsley, pea, potato, raisin, strawberry, sunflower, and tomato. We talked about how you can tell a fruit from a seed (or a leaf or root) and guessed which parts of plants they eat each day. We identified the foods on our plate as fruits, roots, etc. and then gobbled them up.

April 27th was the final trip to Jacob’s Ranch with Ms. Parker’s class with the IOOBY (In Our Own Back Yard) program, out of LandPaths and sponsored by the Open Space District (SCAPOSD). I was able to teach botany to a small group of kids in January on one of the three visits, and saw great enthusiasm. On the last trip I was able to be just a chaperone, and managed to jot down over 80 plants in the day’s hike to the top of Sonoma Mountain. Special thanks to Moth Meg, Bree Bird, Lizard Liz, Dragonfly Dave, and the rest of the gang for your inspiration and teaching!

CNPS Houser

*The Houser kids, Calvin and Kate, have just finished up 6th and 3rd grades at Hidden Valley School. I have enjoyed volunteering lessons in their classes (and their scout troops) since 2001.

**Lesson plans and links will be on the chapter website soon under Education. www.cnpsmb.org

Invasive Plant Corner

The Weed Management Area has an upcoming Invasive Weed Seminar scheduled to take place on Wednesday, June 6, 2007, from 1pm – 4pm at the Tomales Town Hall (upstairs). There is no charge to attend. We are requesting that attendees RSVP to the Marin County Department of Agriculture at 415.499.6700 by June 4th with their name and the number of people who will be attending. The speakers are Stacy Carlson, Marin County Agricultural Commissioner, Stephanie Larson, Livestock & Rangeland Management Advisor, University of CA Cooperative Extension, Peter Warner, Environmental Scientist, CA State Parks, Mark Heath, Shelterbelt Builders. My colleague, Anita Sauber, will be on site to answer questions pertaining to organic agriculture. Topics to include the biology,
identification and control of gorse, broom and thistles. Rangeland and pasture management following gorse removal, and problems associated with secondary colonization of weeds. Weed Awareness Week is coming up in July. Check out our website for more information in July.

M.L. Carle  mlml@svn.net

**Items of Interest**

### Sudden Oak Death Affected Tree Removal Assistance

Fire Safe Sonoma has been awarded a grant through the California Fire Safe Council Grant Clearinghouse with funding from the Bureau of Land Management. The approximately $150,000 grant provides funds for homeowners to help defray the costs of removing Sudden Oak Death-affected hazardous trees. Homeowner groups are also eligible to receive financial support for chipping activities to help minimize infested debris. The funding runs for 18 months starting October, 2007. For more information on this grant assistance program, contact Caerleon Safford at csafford@mcn.org or (707) 206-5467.

### Gardening with Native Plants Class

There is a class being offered this summer through the Santa Rosa Junior College which may be of interest to native plant enthusiasts: Gardening with California Native Plants (Horticulture 119). This is a 1.5 unit class, held Mondays, 6-9pm, on the Petaluma Campus, June 18 through August 6. The instructor for the class will be Philip Van Soelen. This class will focus on identification, nomenclature, cultural requirements and landscape uses of California native plants suited to Sonoma County's climate and soils. Classroom and field lectures will address plant selection and combinations as well as maintenance practices.

Philip Van Soelen

### The Hallberg Annual Open Gardens

Each summer, Hallberg Butterfly Gardens invites friends and neighbors from all over to come to Graton and enjoy a day with us. This year, we are celebrating our 10th anniversary as a non-profit organization, and our 10th annual Open Gardens Day! Please come celebrate with us on Sunday, June 24th, from 10 am to 4 pm. Look for announcements in local nurseries, local papers, or the current Farm Trails guide...or become a Friend of the Garden and we will notify you in our annual newsletter. http://www.hallbergbutterflygardens.com

### Sierra Club Fundraiser for Ramona's Memorial Bench

Ramona Mooney came on many MBCNPS outings, was an avid environmentalist, and we miss her greatly. The local Sierra Club is raising funds for a memorial bench in her honor; please help achieve the financial goal by attending a fun event. Blue Sky, the Sierra Singles’ own band, will be playing to raise funds and celebrate Ramona’s life, Sat. Jun. 16th, from 7:30 - 10pm; donation $10 requested. Blue Sky will play some great rock & roll (lots of oldies), blues and country-rock tunes. Location is Jean-Michele and Debbie's house, 4363 Parker Hill Road, Santa Rosa. *Reservations are required*. Call Denese at 575-3229 by June 14th. Directions: if you're coming south on 101, take the Steele Lane exit, turn left (east) and get right back on 101 North. From 101 NORTH, take the Bicentennial exit and go EAST, and go straight across Mendocino and up the hill. Go approximately 2 miles past the Albertson’s turnoff, and then turn LEFT on Parker Hill Rd. Go about 200 yards to the sign for #4363, and park on Parker Hill Rd around the cluster of mailboxes. Walk down the short side-street between the mailboxes and big pine tree, to #4363 which is the 2nd house on the right.

### National Weed Awareness Week

**Saturday, July 28, 9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.**

Come help us remove ivy from the grand old trees of Doyle Park! Many of the old oak, bay, buckeye, maple, and alder trees in one of Santa Rosa’s oldest parks are stressed by tons of English ivy that climb to the treetops. After a short presentation on botany and creek history, spend the morning in the shade along Spring and Matanzas Creeks providing relief to the trees by girdling the ivy and creating ivy free zones around the trunks. This project continues the work of Wright School, Montgomery High School, Brookhill School, and AmeriCorps volunteers who, under the guidance of STRAW and LandPaths, have used the riparian areas in the park for nature study and restoration projects. Join neighbors, CNPS, and Creek Stewardship Program volunteers. Bring long sleeved work clothes (fortunately, there is very little poison oak), gloves, small pruning saws, loppers, and hand pruners. Keep an eye out for other invasive plant species.

Directions: Meet at Doyle Park’s north entrance on Doyle Park Drive (south of Sonoma Ave. and east of Brookwood Ave.) Contact: Alistair Bleifuss: ableifuss@srcity.org or 543-3845 for directions and details as the date approaches.

Alistair Bleifuss
Creek Stewardship Program Coordinator, Sonoma County Water Agency and City of Santa Rosa

### Sonoma Land Trust Outings

**Friday, June 15, 10am-3pm**

Santa Rosa Creek Headwaters Volunteer Workday
Join SLT staff for a volunteer workday at a 162-acre conservation easement property near Hood Mountain Regional Park. The property includes headwaters for steelhead spawning Santa Rosa Creek, gorgeous views & abundant Oak Woodlands. Volunteers are needed to remove plant protection hardware from native plants beginning to outgrow their protective cages. For info or to RSVP, contact Shanti Wright; 526-6930 ext. 100 or email volunteer@sonomalandtrust.org.
**Russian Riverkeeper Park Volunteer Days**

Wednesdays, 8:30am – 11:30am, join us for all or part. Heavy rain cancels. Help restore riverbank habitat. No experience necessary. Everyone is welcome. Restoration activities include planting and caring for native plants, weeding, erosion control, restoration education and Park cleanup. Students can receive volunteer credit for participating. Visit the park to see the transformation or be part of the transformation taking place. Light refreshments provided. The park is at 16153 Main St., Guerneville, located on the north bank of the Russian River directly upstream of the pedestrian bridge. 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. For more information, visit http://www.russianriverkeeper.org, call or email Don McEnhill: 217-4762 or rrkeeper@sonic.net or contact me at 865-2474 or victoriawikle@usa.net.

Victoria Wikle

**Sonoma County Park Pass Promotion**

Sonoma County Regional Parks will hold the ‘Park Pass Promotion’ April 1 - June 30, 2007. The Park Pass offers unlimited day use parking in all 43 Sonoma County Regional Parks for a full 12 months. Park enthusiasts get much more for their money with the special offers available only during this 3-month promotion, with discounts and freebies from many local businesses. Check out http://www.sonomacounty.org/parks/releases/07_releases/07_passpromo.htm for the entire list of offers. ‘Day Use’ passes (individual or family) cost $55, ‘Golden Years’ passes (60+ yrs.) cost $25, and ‘Access’ passes (for the permanently disabled) cost $15. During the promotion, the Day Use & Golden Years Passes are available at all 12 Longs Drugs stores in Sonoma County, and REI-Santa Rosa, Sonoma Outfitters, Rincon Cyclery and the Bike Peddler/NorCal Bike Sport in Santa Rosa, Bodega Bay Surf Shack, Sebastopol Hardware Center, or at any staffed Regional Park entry station. Day Use passes may also be purchased online at www.sonomacounty.org/parks. Access passes are available only through the parks’ main office. For more information, call (707) 565-2041 weekdays.

**Middlebrook Gardens Grand Opening**

Middlebrook Gardens Announces our Nursery Grand Opening - Offering California Native Plants, Sustainable Solutions, and Local Art. Join the community to celebrate the grand opening of Middlebrook Gardens Nursery, May 5 - 6, 2007 from 10 a.m. - 2 p.m., at Middlebrook Gardens; 76 Race Street, San Jose, CA 95126. Choose from a hearty selection of native plants, learn to create beautiful California native gardens, view demonstration gardens and sustainable landscape solutions, learn how original art can be incorporated into the garden. The nursery is organized by the natural plant communities of the region, reflecting the local ecology. It was established to celebrate the beauty and ecological appropriateness of California native plants and increase their availability to the gardening public. For more information please visit www.middlebrook-gardens.com, or call (408) 292-9993.

**Garden Feature: A Native Plant Memorial Garden**

It may be the loss of a favorite pet or the wish to remember someone close to you who has died recently that provides the inspiration for this garden feature, one that is rarely planned. Our family survived three elderly cats dying last spring, and although it was not the optimal time for planting, I saw to it that each one got a native plant on their grave in the memorial garden that I began for our alpha male cat, that died tragically in January 2003. A spot in a corner of the yard we never used became a valuable asset.

A memorial garden should be of a size that can be maintained in about 10 minutes per day, when you can sit to remember and reflect on your loved ones. Our garden is no more than 15 feet square, but with some room for expansion, on the east side of the house which is shaded in the afternoon. Initially I planted sixteen native plants, one for each of Skyler’s years. Since 2003 only a few plants have died (the native Rhododendron, of course), and the additions have made up for it. The central feature of the memorial garden is a statue from Gado Gado in Santa Rosa, of a cat standing with a bowl (birdbath) on his head. It seemed like a decent tribute to the birds he had eaten over the years. My son soon made me a bench to sit on while I think about my missed feline friends.

In northwest Santa Rosa clay with very little amendment, these plants are thriving: Honeysuckle: *Lonicera hispidula*: on the fence and birdbath; Wood Fern, *Dryopteris arguta*, which comes up every fall and disappears over the summer; Phil’s New White Monkeyflower (from CalFlora nursery in Fulton, his hybrid of *Mimulus aurantiacus*), Twinberry, *Lonicera involucrata*, Huckleberry, *Vaccinium ovatum*, a slow grower, and Mock Orange, *Philadelphus californicus*. Other natives in the garden are Island Alumroot, *Heuchera maxima* and Elderberry, *Sambucus mexicana*. I try to add things as they need to go in the ground, and water every few days when it is dry like this year. I feel the connection to my beloved pets when I water and see the plants grow in their place. Rocks or gemed stepping stones mark their final resting spots around the plantings.

Lynn Houser
Newsletter & Web Site Info

Send newsletter submissions to:
Heide Keeble: cnpsmbnewsletter@yahoo.com
Deadline for inclusion in the July/August newsletter is June 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