June General Meeting
Tuesday, June 17th, 2008
7:30 pm

Summer in the Sierras: California’s Alpine Wildflowers with Stewart Winchester

High above the noise and busyness of human activity is a zone of harsh beauty, of snow and wind and intense light, with little heat and less soil, and a growing season mercilessly short. On Sierran peaks and slopes, alpine plants adapt to their stark conditions in marvelous ways. Often with large, brightly colored flowers, the thrifty plants are compact, often tiny or prostrate, with leaves that are furry, grasslike, lacy or tough-skinned. Appearing as if by magic in soilless gravel, in granite cracks and crevices, these lovely plants may spring from hard corms or long tap roots following the seep and trickle of snowmelt. Some hardy perennials may be decades or even centuries old and may grow only millimeters in a season. Others, limited to wet meadows and creeks, may enjoy a brief season of lushness. A few alpine plants have come into the nursery trade and may be enjoyed in lowland rock gardens. The Upper Convict Lake Basin offers a good cross-section of alpine flora in the Sierra. Stewart has explored the area on his legendary field trips and has been spotted at dawn clinging to cliffs to get the perfect photograph (he will deny this). As summer begins, his photographs will inspire all of us to visit a little-known place of sublime beauty in our imaginations, and perhaps a few of us in reality.

With a background in Environmental Science, Stewart Winchester has taught in the Diablo Valley College and Merritt College Horticulture Departments for over twenty years, and has been taking students into the field to explore floristically diverse regions of the West, in the process inspiring hundreds of native plant enthusiasts and gardeners, amateur and professional botanists, and passionate environmentalists.

Betsy Livingstone

Refreshments will be provided.

Do you have mystery plants? Plant ID Hour is held at 6:30 preceding the presentation.

Join us for Dinner before the Meeting:
We'll gather for dinner at 6PM 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 Lynn Colborn at 829-9128 or clc123@comcast.net by June 15th if you plan to attend.
President's Report

Summer seemed to arrive early this year, with a heat wave in mid-May that came just weeks after a late frost, and was followed by some nice cool fog. What were the plants doing? We welcome your scientific observations about the local flora, especially where rare plants are concerned. CNPS members are often the most knowledgeable people in a location where small plant populations occur, and we have a large county with many endemic and rare plants.

The Chapter needs a Conservation Coordinator and committee volunteers to help with the conservation work, such as reviewing projects, writing comment letters or meeting on site with landowners on issues relevant to the chapter. If you can only help out occasionally, let me know what your interests are and I can give you an overview of current chapter activities and issues. There will be a weekend’s worth of CNPS conservation topics at the September 6th Chapter Council meeting in Santa Rosa, so if you want to learn more about what the state staff and other chapters are doing, then mark your calendar and be sure to attend.

I’d like to introduce April Owens as new Program Chair. April joined the board this spring. Betsy Livingstone has done a great job with our general meetings, and now she can retire and we welcome April. Our general meetings have been very well-attended, and are always open and free to all. We had a great talk by Autumn Summers in May. This month we’ll have Stewart Winchester, as we look to the Sierras this summer now that we have our new Sierra Nevada field guides by John Muir Laws. Thanks to Betsy Livingstone!

Field trips: Outings are essential to our chapter, and Beth Robinson would be happy to talk to you about Field Trip Coordinator, which opens up at the end of the year.

The Nominating committee is looking for candidates to fill chapter board and other positions for the upcoming term. Candidates for officers and directors at large are welcome. Elections will be in October. If you are interested in running for a board position, please contact any board member and the nominating committee will get in touch with you.

Gardening and the summer drought scene: If you have friends and neighbors interested in saving water and inviting birds and butterflies into their gardens, talk to them about CNPS and local native plants. You can take a walk at the Santa Rosa Rural Cemetery Native Plant Garden, now in its seventh year. There you can see a landscape of beautiful, flowering native plants, buzzing with pollinators and requiring a lot less energy than mowing and watering a lawn or trimming boring hedges.

The Rural Cemetery Garden is located on Franklin Ave. and maintained by Becky Montgomery and 2-3 other volunteers (photo, left). It is a certified Habitat Garden by the National Wildlife Federation.

Liz Parsons led a successful potting workshop at California Flora Nursery on May 18th. Thanks to all for coming out! Make your design plans over the summer and you can find the plants you need at our Annual Plant Sale on October 11th.

Plant I.D. Hour

Come see what’s blooming in June after the record-setting temperatures in May. Arrive at 6:30, an hour before the June 17th General Meeting, and bring specimens of plants you want to identify. I’ll bring in the dissecting microscope and some flowering plants from the local area. At Plant I.D. Hour, 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. One of each will be available. I also have some picture books and Munz, plus L.H. Bailey’s Manual of Cultivated Plants for your latest garden mystery or escape. Keying is worthwhile and challenging for all of us, and the more references, the better.

Composites and grasses make up a large part of our local flora, especially the late season bloomers. At Plant I.D. Hour you can have a close look at those sticky tarweeds and use the microscope to key out that mystery grass pressed in your book. Come see tiny flowers up close and get to know some Milo Baker members. Plants that you have keyed out or learned with friends are always easier to remember!

Lynn Houser
**State CNPS News**

The next Chapter Council meeting is June 7th in Coloma, California. See www.cnps.org for meeting details.

**September 7th Conservation Conference, Santa Rosa** The Chapters are coming! Stay tuned for details. Contact me or Liz Parsons if you can help out that weekend.

© Lynn Houser

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**2009 Conservation Conference Photo Contest** Sponsored by CNPS and Lowepro

**Subject & Criteria:** “California Native Plants”

Photos must feature plants native to the California Floristic Province, may be macros or landscapes, or of people or animals interacting with the natural environment of California. Photos may be of - but are not limited to - rare or common flowers, trees, shrubs, vines, grasses, bryophytes - surprise us!

**Entry Deadline:** November 15, 2008

**Winners** will be contacted in December to receive two complimentary tickets to the banquet at the 2009 CNPS Conservation Conference at the Sacramento Convention Center on January 17, 2009. 1st - 3rd Prize winners receive respectively $750, $500, $250, and a Lowepro Primus recycled material backpack. Three Runners-Up receive a Lowepro Fastpack 250. All selected photos will be published in *Fremontia*. A *Conference Choice* will grace the cover of the CNPS 2009 Conservation Conference: Strategies & Solutions Proceedings.

**Panel of Judges**

**Nick Jensen**, an avid photographer of California’s flora, is currently the Society’s rare plant botanist. **Sally Mack** exhibits at the Berkeley Faculty Club, at museums and galleries, in The Berkeleyan and more. **Ree Slocum** does macro flower photography and documentary/photojournalism as ArcadianImages.

**Entry Specifics:** Visit the CNPS Conference page at www.cnps.org.

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More questions? Ask: © Stacey Flowerdew: sflowerdew@cnps.org

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**Preserve Stewardship**

**Cunningham Marsh**

Get involved this summer:

We are looking for a few volunteers to help us this summer with the watering of the newly planted hedgerows. This could involve as little as two or three hours of your time. You would be working in small teams and could schedule time any weekday or weekend that you are free. If you can help on a semi-regular basis, please contact: Joe Honton at 527-9277 x105 joe@lagunafoundation.org, or Marcia Johnson at owlsnest@hughes.net. This will be an easy way to get to know this special place.

**Progress Report:**

On **Sunday May 4th**, nine volunteers showed up and got an amazing amount of work done in a short three hour period: weeding grass from around the young naturally recruited black oaks; watering nearly 400 young plants located in two new hedgerows; installing vexar browse guards on recently planted specimens; protecting a rare species of *Calamagrostis* found on the site; mowing grass around some of the newly planted specimens in the interior part of the riparian area; and trimming a fallen black oak that was leaning on a mature hawthorn.

Two new volunteers, Julian Leibowitz & Christian Mariano cleared and leveled the ground for the soon to be installed watering system to be put in place by Joe Honton of the Laguna Foundation. Much thanks goes to Julian, Christian & Joe, as well as CNPS volunteers: Mary Rooney & Dan Noreen, Betty Young, M.L. Carle, and John Herrick.

On **Sunday, May 18th** CNPS volunteers again watered the hedgerows via one-gallon containers, and helped the Laguna Foundation crew clear blackberry from around the pump platform, lay and connect PCV pipe between the creek, pump, storage tank, and the hedgerow areas, (which involved pushing pipe thru 100s of feet of blackberry thicket!) After the system is operational water will no longer be hauled by tractor from the house, but pumped from the creek. © Marcia Johnson, Cunningham Marsh Steward

**Cunningham Marsh grant**

In May we received a check for $15,102.76 from the City of Santa Rosa which represents half of the grant allocation for restoration work at Cunningham Marsh. Thanks to everyone who worked on this grant, especially Betty Young.

© Jim Piercy, Chapter Treasurer
Preserve Stewardship, Continued:

Rincon Ridge Park Work Party & Rare Plant Outing:
Monday, June 16th, 10am-1pm
Focus on Coyote Brush and Sonoma Brodiaea

Brodiaea californica ssp. leptandra, occurs in the park and in other chaparral vegetation on Rincon Ridge. We will spend the first part of the morning making trails by cutting and hauling coyote brush. We’ll open up some habitat for the brodiaeas and the Rincon Ridge Ceanothus and Rincon Manzanita. Then we can spend some time wandering the park to look for the Brodiaeas, do some counting, and maybe find some Napa Lomatium (Lomatium repostum) as well. I’ll go over how to fill out a CNDDB (CA Natural Diversity Database) form and talk about where this information goes (and why it’s important!)

Details: Meet at Rincon Ridge Park sensitive plant area; follow the fence left to the gate. From Fountain Grove Parkway (coming from the west) take a left onto Rincon Ridge Drive, then a right on Park Gardens drive. It may be hot, so bring some water and snacks or lunch. I recommend wearing long pants and long-sleeved shirt, boots, hat and gloves. There is poison oak in the park, but our work is starting to produce some good trails and you can get around it. Bring hand saws, loppers, pruners, (and pick-mattock if you want to knock out Harding grass, Phalaris aquatica)

Report from May 19th workday: Bill and Becky Montgomery, Gary Hundt, Pat Sesser and I cut coyote brush among wildflowers like Diogenes’ lantern (Calochortus amabilis) and Goldwire (Hypericum concinnum) at the Rincon Ridge work party in May. We made some trails and opened up rare plant habitat at the park. Thanks to all for coming out with loppers and saws! Rincon Ridge work parties usually fall on the 3rd Monday of the month, and we are making some visible progress.

If you would like to visit the fenced area of the park on your own, please contact me at 568-3230 and I’ll give you the combination to the gate. The Milo Baker Chapter has been involved at Rincon Ridge park for five years now, and new volunteers are needed to keep up our progress at this lovely, easily accessible spot of rare chaparral. A plant list is available at our chapter website, www.cnpsmb.org under ‘Preserves’

Native Plant Gardening

Companions in the Native Plant Garden: Twinberry and Huckleberry

Let’s face it: there are some natives that we want to grow so much, we will try and try despite their difficult requirements or slow growth. Patience, trial, and error are part of the challenge when it comes to gardening with natives. That is my experience with the California huckleberry, Vaccinium ovatum. I was determined, though, so I took fall cuttings from huckleberries in Boonville while on a camping trip in the early 2000’s. They seem to be the slowest rooting and growing plants ever, but they have not had any care on the side of my house other than watering. The east side, with shade from the house, is a good place for forest plants in the garden. I bought the twinberry, Lonicera involucrata at our chapter plant sale. Twinberry occurs in our local riparian areas. I water the huckleberry and twinberry in the dry season and the fog keeps them moist when I don’t water.

In the ground for 3 ½ years now, the two plants have begun to bloom and set fruit. The combination of the slow, petite huckleberry and the robust, towering twinberry has given me some pride in growing a favorite redwood forest plant with the instant gratification of new lush growth in the garden.

Lynn Houser
**Invasives Corner**

Hey you foodies and foody providers! I know you are out there, because I've been to the CNPS summer potlucks. What with all the bad things in the news of late, sometimes I think my column just adds another dollop of bleakness to our psychological landscape, so I thought some of you might help lighten it up by providing us with recipes for invasive plants. *We might as well learn to eat them* - what with the rising cost of food. Some of you must know great recipes for fennel, mustard greens, calendula, cherry plum, Himalayan berries, "wild" radish, cardoon, or chicory. Maybe you know of more invasive non-natives we can eat. Just don't plant them, OK? I just returned from the Sonoma Marin Weed Management Area meeting on May 14th. Dan Gluesenkamp presented his draft of a request for grant monies to hire a full time rapid response coordinator to work with BAEDN, The new Bay Area Early Detection Network. Up to now there was been no shortage of great people with great ideas, but no one has had time to encourage, accept and organize the reporting of weed sightings, prioritize eradication needs, and keep track of what weeds have been treated or eradicated. BAEDN will be mapping and prioritizing the need for removal of invasive weeds so that people and resources can be allocated in the most efficient manner. The WMA rapid response coordinator will be responsible for:

1. Informing landowners of the presence of high priority weeds on their land
2. Ensuring that our counties’ data is in the BAEDN database, so that our special needs are recognized when priorities are being set, and eradication actions are recorded
3. Providing public information and training re invasives, and encouraging the informed public to report weed sightings.
4. Working with Caltrans and other public agencies, and volunteers to see that high priority weeds are addressed

It's hard to imagine a chess player would ever win if the strategy were to make random moves, but that's kind of what's been happening with invasives up to now. It's really exciting to see the momentum building for a truly effective attack on invasive plants in our area, after so much under funding and neglect!

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As many of you know, **bees**, of great value as **pollinators** for natives, as well as crops and ornamental plants, are being **heavily impacted by farming practices and disease**. Especially hard hit are hive bees. For all pollinators, poor air quality interferes with a plant's ability to produce perfume, and thus the pollinators' ability to find them. So we need even more pollinators than ever. Here is some information about how you can encourage our native bees and other helpful insects such as ladybug beetles with your gardening practices:

- Drill holes in dead trees for solitary bee nests.
- Leave areas of undisturbed and unmulched soil for bee nesting. Most of our native bees need bare soil for nesting. Gopher holes work for some.
- Plant several different flower species of various heights that bloom at different times of year.
- Minimum: 3 early bloomers, 3 mid-bloomers, 3 late bloomers and a bunchgrass. This multiplies the number of insect species and ensures they will have ample time to reproduce. If each species is planted nearby, insects can more readily access them.
- Some nearby native species that provide good habitat: willow, yarrow, Phacelia, Erigonium (buckwheats), Oregon grape, tidy tips and various sunflowers.


**Biofuel Crops: A New Source of Invasives?**

Many plants used for new biofuels have similar biology as weeds; they are fast growing and tough. You may have already heard about a plant called Switchgrass; but other crops are being used too. A recent article in the S.F. Chronicle (by Elizabeth Rosenthal of the NY Times) said that the Florida Native Plant Society is opposing a proposed biofuel plantation of Giant Reed (*Arundo donax*) because it could invade the Everglades. Most of us know that Giant Reed is a big problem in Sonoma Co. riparian habitat and statewide. Perhaps it is time for all the native plant societies, including similar groups in Europe, to take a close look at this breaking technology and develop some policies that will prevent the invasion of biofuel crop plants.

*Lynn Houser*
Chapter Field Trips

The Cedars, Sonoma County’s Remarkable Serpentine Canyonlands

Sunday, June 8, 9:30am-4pm Cazadero
(This trip is currently full. Please contact Beth Robinson, 490-4951 bethysmail@gmail.com, if you wish to be on the waiting list, or if you were planning to go but now cannot, to make someone else very happy.)

If you are one of the twenty participants going this year, you should be in good hiking condition and prepared with sturdy hiking boots, layered clothing and plenty of water, energy snacks or lunch, your high-clearance 4WD vehicle cleared of clutter to accommodate passengers, or your gear packed to transfer into another 4WD vehicle, and expect a bumpy ride on a steep jeep trail passing through flowing creeks before disembarking to continue by foot on narrow trails traversing tall ridges with steep canyon walls, massive barrens and talus slopes that alternate with old-growth Sargent cypress groves, crossing perennial creeks and exploring cascades, waterfalls, and fascinating travertine seepages and formations, observing an intricate mosaic of vegetation with 7 plants found no where else in the world, and others whose only Sonoma Co. populations are here. Roger Raiche, co-owner of this rugged area with David McCrory, will point out the early summer plants and explain the features that make this land one of the most amazing serpentine ecosystems in the world.

Beth Robinson

Lake Sonoma 25th Anniversary Celebration
June 14, 10am-12pm

CNPS has been invited to be a part of this celebration at the Warm Springs Recreation Area at Lake Sonoma. We will have an informational booth along with several other local conservation organizations, and may be leading an organized walk as well. Details on the walk are still working themselves out at print time. Lake Sonoma staff will provide a BBQ at noon. Bring your swimsuit, kayak, raft, etc for a fun day at the lake! Contact: Ranger Michael Carroll, 431-4535. michael.t.carroll@usace.army.mil

Russian River Riparian walk & swim
Saturday July 19, 9:30-2:00 pm
River Road Park and Ride, River Road (west side of 101)
Mystery Location, a.k.a. Secret Adventure!

On this (hopefully) hot Saturday in July, we’ll learn about some of our river plants along the Russian. Get to know your willows and other riparian vegetation. Stick around and cool off with a swim after our walk. In addition to a lunch and water, bring your swimwear, sunscreen, hat, towel, walking shoes and/or comfortable sandals. Binoculars recommended for spotting the ospreys and other birds on the river.

We’ll meet at the River Road park and ride at 9:30 a.m. Contact Lynn Houser to RSVP at 568-3230 or housers@sonic.net.

Events and Items of Interest

Pepperwood Preserve
Offers free and fee education at the Bechtel house. (limited space, register at pepperwoodpreserve.org)
These include:

Fire in the Landscape Saturday, June 14, 9am-2pm
(Free, registration began May 14, may be full)
Tim Laughlin, ecologist, consultant and teacher with over 25 years of experience in California’s fire-prone landscapes, will lead participants on a tour of Pepperwood plant communities, explaining the role of fire in shaping the landscape. Consideration of the risks and ways to adapt to living in or near the wildland environment will be included.

Weeds of Pepperwood: Grasslands: Is Restoration Possible? Saturday, June 28, 9am-3pm
(Fee-based Community Education program)
Peter Warner, public lands manager in Mendocino County with experience in botany, plant ecology, ecological restoration, environmental compliance, invasive species management, environmental design and planning, will review factors that have contributed to the demise of the state’s native grasslands and herbaceous plant communities, then will focus on the identification of herbaceous invasive plant species and discuss strategies for restoring historical herbaceous plant communities. Please bring plant collection materials (notebook, tape and or small plant press) a hand lens, water, hat, sunglasses, hiking shoes, backpack, snacks, and a towel to sit on.

Watershed Monitoring and Assessment
6 Tues-eve’s and 3 Satur-days mid-June thru July (enroll at SRJC: Natural Resource Management 86)
Karen Gaffney identifies habitat factors limiting fish production, critical habitat needs & study methods for developing suitable restoration work plans.
Sonoma Land Trust
For more info or to RSVP, contact Shanti Wright at 544-5614 ext. 2 or volunteer@sonomalandtrust.org.

Sonoma Baylands Trail Clean-up
Friday June 6th, 10am - 2pm
Clear shoreline debris along 1.6 levee-top Bay trail.

Glen Oaks Ranch Trail Maintenance Hike
Friday June 13th, 10am – 1pm
Clear 2 miles of trail along Stewart Creek, view riparian restoration project and historical buildings.

Santa Rosa Creek Headwaters Seedling Care and Monitoring Workday
Friday, June 20th, 9am-2pm
Hike to creekside restoration site to remove out-grown seedling cages and gather survival data at restoration site on a 162-acre in-holding in Hood Mt Regional Park with gorgeous views and abundant oak woodlands, protected by a conservation easement to restore and maintain ecological richness and steelhead spawning habitat.

2nd annual Julliard Park Trails Jamboree
Saturday June 21st, 2:00-8:00 pm in downtown Santa Rosa. Our chapter will have a table.

Riverkeeper Park Volunteer Days
Every Wednesday 8:30 – 11:30am
Join us for all or part of the time. Enjoy time on the Russian River working with other volunteers to restore riverbank habitat. Activities include: planting and caring for native plants, weeding, erosion control, restoration education and Park cleanup. Students can receive volunteer credit for participating. Everyone and all ages are welcome, no experience necessary. Visit the park to see the transformation or be part of the transformation taking place. Light refreshments provided.

Bring: water and gloves - wear sturdy shoes
Where: 16153 Main St., Guerneville, located on the north bank of the Russian River directly upstream of the pedestrian bridge. Go down a driveway in front of Sonoma Nesting Co. 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.

Give Back Tuesday
June 10th 5 - 8 p.m, at: Rainbow Cattle Company
16220 Main Street Guerneville
Food hosted by Riverkeeper Volunteers
Meet your Riverkeeper, enjoy some food and drink & show your support for the health of the Russian River. All Proceeds to benefit Riverkeeper Park!
For info call: 869-0206

Hallberg Butterfly Gardens
Historic Habitat Gardens & Educational Nonprofit
Volunteer Work days 2nd & 4th Saturdays in June
8687 Oak Grove Road in Graton/Sebastopol.
Driveway diagonally across Oak Grove School.
Orientation 9:30 am, Garden Projects 10 am to 2 pm, Garden Walk 2:30 pm. Kids over 5 welcome with parent, but please, no pets. Bring gloves, clippers, sunscreen, and bottled water. Wear layers, closed-toe shoes, and a hat. Snacks and tools provided. Rain cancels. Contact: Wintress 823-8753, wintress@hallbergbutterflygardens.org

Open Gardens Day
Sunday, June 29, 10 am - 4 pm
Come celebrate our 11th annual Open Gardens Day with us! Street parking, shuttle available, Limited wheelchair access. Hallberg Butterfly Gardens is a 501 c 3 corporation formed to educate the public about butterflies and preserve habitat. This special event is free and everyone is welcome.

Learn about the butterfly life cycle, wildlife gardening, habitat preservation, and the West County’s rich agricultural heritage. There will be docents to assist with butterfly and bird sightings; informational displays, self-guided tours; children’s activities; plant, book, and stationery sales. Please, no smoking or pets.
For more information call 823-3420 or www.hallbergbutterflygardens.org

I appreciate the misunderstanding I have had with Nature over my perennial border. I think it is a flower garden; she thinks it is a meadow lacking grass, and tries to correct the error.
~~Sara Stein, /My Weeds/
Lilium pardalinum ssp. pitkinense
Pitkin lily

Newsletter & Web Site Info:
Send newsletter submissions to:
Katy Redmon, cnpsmbnewsletter@yahoo.com
Deadline for inclusion in the July/August Newsletter is June 15.
The chapter web site www.cnpsmb.org contains a wealth of information plus current and archived newsletters.
To receive notification of the online newsletter, or for newsletter mailing/membership issues, contact: Gary Hundt, ghundt@gmail.com