December Annual Wreath Making
December 15th, 7:30

It’s our 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, ribbon, etc. Drop cloths, tarps, or old sheets to make clean-up easier will be greatly appreciated. We’ll have hot cider and Christmas cookies – bring some of your own favorites to share if you like. Come join the festivities and share some holiday cheer with CNPS friends. 

Lynn Houser

Plant I.D. Hour returns in January.

Join us for Dinner before the Meeting:
We’ll gather for dinner at 6PM at Kirin Restaurant, 2700 Yulupa Ave. We always have an enjoyable group of fellow members and a delicious Northern Chinese meal. Please contact, Liz Parsons, 833-2063.

Discover California Grasslands
Tuesday, January 19th, 7:30

In a state with towering redwoods, majestic oaks, vernal pools, and other more “charismatic” plant communities, grasslands are often overlooked. In this fascinating presentation, you will learn that, in fact, grasslands are very productive and diverse biologically and provide numerous ecosystem services that benefit humans and natural systems alike. Yet today, less than 2% of our native grassland heritage remains. Five topics included in this presentation are: California grasslands and grassland diversity, what are grasses, ecosystem values and services, restoration and landscaping with native grasses, and the important work of the California Native Grasslands Association.

(Continued on page three – January Speaker.)
This winter looks like a good year for rain in Sonoma County. Seedlings are everywhere and light rains in November have given the plants a good start. I hope you have put your gallon can and 4” potted plants in the ground from our sale in October. I always like to wait until the soil is moist, with the clay in NW Santa Rosa. Lots of weed seedlings up as well; see if you can recognize filaree (Erodium), Bristly Ox-tongue (Picris) and other weeds as they come up and give them a sharp hoe. This is a good time to take cuttings of many native perennials and shrubs like Arctostaphylos, Ceanothus, Mimulus and Salvia.

The Milo Baker Board of Directors met in November and discussed membership and involvement in the Sonoma County Water Coalition (SCWC) as well as our support for the joint collaboration with the Laguna Foundation, Adopt-A-Vernal Pool Program. Many of our chapter volunteers have been helping monitor vernal pool plants on the Santa Rosa Plain over the past few years, and the long term data we collect will be very useful in conservation, planning and land management. We are applying for a share of the June Bilisoly Funds (an $800,000 bequest to CNPS) to continue this project, and welcome matching funds from members and foundations. Thanks to Christina Sloop and Hattie Brown for spearheading the proposal.

We have found a Newsletter Editor for our Milo Baker publication. Lea Gillespie has offered to serve as Editor starting in January; thank you, Lea! The newsletter email address will not change; it is always cnpsmbsnewsletter@yahoo.com and we would really love to receive more articles from our general membership. I would like to give my greatest thanks to Katy Redmon for serving three years as Newsletter Editor. Not only has it been a beautiful, informative publication, but she has been a true pleasure to work with: always on time and detailed, giving good suggestions, and being patient about my late President’s Reports.

We would like to share our newsletter with many more people, as well as all the things we do that are not featured. Our website needs revamping, and I would like to make a call for members to share ideas and get it going. Plant lists, lectures and hikes, and other information should be readily available. Perhaps we can get this going before spring hits. The Milo Baker board will be discussing the budget and projects for 2010 in January and February. Your participation is welcome.

Lynn Houser

Conservation

Rincon Ridge Park
Fir Party at the Park:
Monday, Dec. 14th, 10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Gather materials for the Wreath-Making Workshop while improving rare plant habitat and fire safety. Douglas firs, with their rapid growth, need to be periodically removed where they grow with the Rincon Manzanitas and Ceanothus, to maintain the chaparral habitat. Each year we have a work party or two to cut firs from the sensitive plant area and, if the dates coordinate, use the branches for our wreath-making workshop (the following evening, this year). The rare plant habitat has benefited from recent coyote brush cutting, as it has been filling in lately. You’ll want gloves, loppers, and/or hand saws. We’ll need some tarps and rope for hauling and some pick up trucks to load. Come get a quick nature fix and help out. The hummingbirds are out at the park, buzzing the tall manzanitas that started blooming in November. The park is located on Park Gardens Drive off Fountaingrove Parkway (at Rincon Ridge Dr), in NE Santa Rosa. Heavy rain cancels; please contact Lynn Houser for more details at housers@sonic.net or 568-3230

Pat Sesser

Team Thistle - Cunningham Marsh
Be part of a growing movement!!! If you have a dislike for thistles (we have both Bull & Italian!), and a love of pulling them, please join Team Thistle at Cunningham Marsh. We may not have anymore projects this year; however, it will be great to have a Team in place for thistle eradication early next year. If there are any questions, or you would like to join, please contact Marcia Johnson - owlsnest@hughes.net - 707-829-3808.

Marcia Johnson
January Speaker

(continued from page one.)
Speaker Wade Belew is Stewardship Coordinator for the Cotati Creek Critters and President-Elect of the California Native Grasslands Association (CNGA). Several years ago Cotati Creek Critters wanted to plant a native understory of grasses and Wade joined CNGA to learn more. Wade quickly became a "grass-hugger" when he learned the great importance of grasslands, coupled with historic loss of native grasses. He was asked to join the Board, and will be CNGA President in 2010.

April Owens

Plant Sale News

Pacific Coast Iris Workshop
Saturday, December 12 at Mary Aldrich’s home.
We will begin at 10 AM. Bring clippers and your "can do" spirit. We have successfully potted up over 100 iris in less than two hours in the past. We will complete this task rain or shine because Mary has a good protected area where we can work.
This is the first workshop in preparation for the 2010 plant sale. The second will be in February when we divide plants, the third in May, at Cal Flora, when we pot up liners, and the fourth in August, at Casa Grande, when we pot up liners of fast growing plants. All members are invited to attend these workshops and join in the fun.

Liz Parsons

Legislative Notes

Status of Isolated Vernal Pools and Wetlands?

The struggle of environmentalists to clarify federal jurisdiction over isolated vernal pools and wetlands under the Clean Water Act goes on. Following U.S. Supreme Court decisions denying federal jurisdiction over abandoned and isolated gravel pit ponds (2001), and wetlands which were found to be "not adjacent" to navigable waters (2006), the federal protection for all isolated vernal pools and wetlands has been highly uncertain.
In an effort to settle the confusion left in the wake of the court decisions, on December 2, 2008 the Environmental Protection Agency and the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers jointly issued a Memorandum of Guidance to EPA regions and Corps districts. The Memorandum, like the court decisions and the Clean Water Act itself, is couched in terms of relationships to navigable waters. Key provisions require an analysis of whether the isolated ponds/wetlands significantly affect the chemical, physical and biological integrity of downstream traditional navigable waters. Proving this "nexus" could be difficult.
A Senate bill (S. 787 - Clean Water Restoration Act) introduced on April 2, 2009 by 24 Senators, including our Barbara Boxer, would eliminate the problem. Like earlier bills that died with the 110th Congress, S.787 deletes from the Clean Water Act all references to: "navigable waters" and substitutes "waters of the United States." They are defined broadly to encompass "all interstate and intrastate waters and their tributaries, including lakes, rivers, streams (including intermittent streams), mudflats, sandflats, wetlands, sloughs, prairie potholes, wet meadows, playa lakes, natural ponds, and all impoundments of the foregoing, to the fullest extent that these waters, or activities affecting these waters, are subject to the legislative power of Congress under the Constitution (emphasis supplied)."
If S. 787 (still in committee) is enacted, isolated vernal pools and wetlands will definitely have the protection of the Clean Water Act, subject to the caveat noted above. If not, we will have to continue to live with the uncertainties of the "nexus" analysis.
Reprinted with permission: Legislative Notes by David Anderson; The Pipevine, Dec 2009, Mt. Lassen CNPS

Invasives Corner

December/January. 2009

What's a Thistle? Or M.L. Gets In Over Her Head - Again
My dictionary says "any of various prickly, composite (Asteraceae) plants..." Jepson has a tribe under Asteraceae dedicated to thistle plants: "#3 heads discoid; receptacle naked; pappus 0 or reduced to crown". The 2007 Marin Flora has adopted an updated key to the tribes (Strothers 1997), which unlike Jepson gives the tribe a Latin name for each of the twelve tribes of Asteraceae. For the thistles, it states: "Tribe 11. Cynareae. Thistle Tribe". The first choice in the key for Thistles is to decide whether the plant has spiny leaves or not.
Centromadia fitchii (which used to be Hemizona fitchii) Fitch's spikeweed is an Asteraceae with spiny leaves, but it's listed under the Tarweeds. So spiny leaves or prickliness on plants, such as Picris echiodes, don’t qualify them as thistles. Using the Strothers key, the Thistle Tribe’s genus's for our area are Carthamus, ex: distaff thistle, Cynara, ex: cardoon, Cirsium, ex: bull thistle (and a raft of well-behaved and attractive natives), Silybum, ex: Milk thistle, Carduus, ex: Italian thistle, Centaurea, ex: Yellow star thistle. As you can see, most of them are plants which need to be removed and are not fun to remove. But we have to be careful, because misidentification can result in the harming of native plants. The Sonoma/Marin Weed Management Area has pledged not to remove plants unless they have been identified by a qualified botanist, or sent to UC Davis for affirmation. Given the fact that there are many species of thistles and thistle-like plants in our county, I don't trust myself to identify them except for a few obvious ones. I'll leave that to Peter Warner, whom I hope will write a much more illuminating article on thistles for us.

PS: In case you were confused by my unfortunate use of pronouns in the previous article about the Shollenberger outcome, Gerald Moore did not plant Ludwigia in the Petaluma wastewater ponds. It was the city. Gerald just isn't the type!

ML Carle

State News

By John O. Sawyer, Todd Keeler-Wolf, and Julie M. Evens
Available Now
Price $82.00
California is famous for its beautiful plant displays across the landscape. These patterns of plants are known collectively as plant communities or vegetation, such as redwood forests, oak woodlands, and Joshua tree woodlands. A Manual of California Vegetation, published in 1995, has since become widely accepted as the standard for classifying the state’s vegetation.

California is famous for its beautiful plant displays across the landscape.

CNPS has released the Second Edition of A Manual of California Vegetation. Greatly expanded from the previous edition, this revision comprises a collection of biological and ecological information on all of the known vegetation types in the state focusing on both the individual species and surrounding habitats. This completely updated edition features more than twice the number of vegetation descriptions as the original MCV and includes the following:

- Over 485 written descriptions of vegetation types with updated references
- 352 Vegetation Maps
- Definitions for over 430 native vegetation alliances
- Listings of characteristic plants within each alliance description
- Detailed life history information for the primary plants defined in the alliances
- Keys to differentiate groups of related vegetation types
- Detailed descriptions of the regional variation within each vegetation type
- Specifications on rarity and importance values of the vegetation
- Separate descriptions of the state’s rarest vegetation stands
- Accounts of 33 non-native vegetation types that are threatening natural landscapes
- Data on fire, flooding, and other natural processes
- Information on restoration and other management considerations
- Display of the new national and international classification of vegetation
- Standardized nomenclature complying with the National Vegetation Classification
- Detailed synonymy with translation to other commonly used classification systems

This guide has wide applicability to biologists, botanists, ecologists, environmental scientists, land-use managers, conservation planners, natural history enthusiasts, teachers, and students. The MCV provides a systematic approach to classifying and describing vegetation in California. John O. Sawyer is an emeritus Professor of Botany at Humboldt State University where he has taught ecology and plant taxonomy for 40 years. His interests are especially in the vegetation of the Klamath Mountains and North Coast and the state’s shrubs.

Todd Keeler-Wolf is an ecologist who has worked in California for over 30 years. Currently he is the Senior Vegetation Ecologist at the California Department of Fish and Game and lead’s their Vegetation Classification and Mapping Program.
Julie M. Evens is a vegetation ecologist with over 15 years of fieldwork and research in California. She is the Vegetation Program Director for CNPS where she manages projects to survey, describe and map vegetation statewide. The book is available directly from the CNPS Sales Department at (916)-447-2677 x. 204 or on the web: www.cnps.org.

**Events and Items of Interest**

**Riverkeeper Stewardship**  
**Park Volunteer Days**

On the entire 110 miles of the Russian River this is the place to see and participate in riverbank stewardship. Everyone and all ages are welcome to visit or volunteer. No experience necessary. Activities include: planting and caring for native plants, weeding, erosion control, restoration education and Park cleanup. Students can receive volunteer credit for participating. Light refreshments are provided.

Enjoy time on the Russian River every Wednesday except when there is enough rain to need a raincoat. Please join us from 8:30 - 11:30 am, for all or part of the time. We suggest that you bring your own drinking water and wear sturdy footwear.

The Park is located at 16153 Main St., Guerneville on the north bank of the Russian River directly upstream of the pedestrian bridge. Access is 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.

For more information contact Victoria Wikle at 865-2474 or VictoriaWikle@usa.net. See the website at http://www.russianriverkeeper.org.

**Cotati Creek Critters**  
**Creek Stewardship Days**

2nd Saturdays, 9 am – 12 noon: Dec. 12, Jan. 9

Last Sunday, 10 am – 1 pm: Jan. 31

**Inside/Outside Nature Education series**

Monday, Dec. 7, 7 pm: Helping Birds at Home - with PRBO.

Sunday, Jan. 10, 9 am: Tour of Petaluma Wetlands - with Petaluma Wetlands Alliance

For details and directions see www.CotatiCreekCritters.info or contact jenny@creeks.cotati.info or 707 792 4422.

**Native Plant Restoration at the San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge**

Saturday December 5, 9am-1pm.

Help us restore native plants to the tidal marsh-upland zone at Sonoma Baylands and Tubbs Island. We welcome all ages! Children under 14 must be accompanied by an adult.

The Wildlife Refuge will provide plants, gloves, and tools. Bring your lunch, water, sunscreen, and layered clothing.

Meet at the San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge Headquarters located on the eastbound side of Hwy 37 between Lakeville Hwy and Hwy 121 in Petaluma.

Reservations are required. Please contact Leia Giambastiani at 707-769-4200 ext 101 or 510-377-6146 or by email at giambastiani@bay.org.

Thanks for your participation and see you in the field!

**Habitat Restoration Volunteer Positions at Point Reyes National Seashore**

The National Park Service invites you to help restore and protect the natural communities of Point Reyes National Seashore while visiting some of the most beautiful areas of the park. Work parties are on the second and last Sunday of each month from 9:00am to 1:00pm. Contact Habitat Restoration Volunteer coordinator, Theo Michaels, at 415-464-5223 or Theo_Michaels@partner.nps.gov for more information. Get involved, meet new people, and make a positive impact on your environment!

**Holiday Networking Dinner Party, Wednesday, December 2, 2009, 5 – 8 pm**

Benefit for the Environmental Center of Sonoma County.

Join members of many local environmental groups for good food, great wine and other refreshments provided by local businesses and volunteers! Elected officials, candidates and movers and shakers will informally discuss recent accomplishments and possible collaborations. Don Taylor’s Omelette Express, 112 4th Street, Railroad Square, Santa Rosa $25 per person by donation; RSVP’s requested but not required.

For more information, contact Wendy Krupnick, 544-4582, wendyk@pon.net
We invite you to join CNPS

Name________________________________
Address______________________________
City/Zip______________________________
Phone________________________________
Email________________________________

Chapter affiliation:
- Milo Baker (Sonoma County)
- Other county ______________________

Membership category:
- Student or Limited Income………. $25
- Individual………………………….$45
- Family, Group or Library………….$75
- Plant Lover………………….……$100
- Patron…………………………….$300
- Benefactor………………………..$600
- Mariposa Lily………………… ..$1500

- New Member    - Renewal

Make check payable to CNPS and mail to:
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To pay by credit card or for more info call
916.447.2677 or visit www.cnps.org

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SSU Representative, Frederique Lavoipierre, 829-0751, lavoipie@sonoma.edu
Vine Hill Preserve, Sarah Gordon, 833-1243, Sarahpgordon@gmail.com

Lilium pardalinum ssp. pitkinense
Pitkin lily

Newsletter & Web Site Info:
Send newsletter submissions to:
Katy Redmon, cnpsmbnewsletter@yahoo.com
Deadline for inclusion in the February
Newsletter is January 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