Picnic News
On Sunday, August 15, the Annual Chapter Picnic will be held at Alan Brubaker’s garden located at 1401 Adobe Canyon Road in Kenwood. This is the road to Sugarloaf Ridge State Park. The garden is located on the left side of the road. Parking will be tight, please carpool. We are pleased that Alan has once again agreed to host the picnic. Sonoma Creek runs through this loveliest of gardens. The garden is planted with botanical delights including many California natives and an extensive collection of conifers. The large xeric garden in the rear of the property is filled with marvelous Mediterranean and desert plants. We will begin to assemble at 3:00 PM and a potluck dinner will be served at 4:00 PM. Bring your own utensils and a dish to share. There will be no barbecue available. Call Liz Parsons 833-2063 for more information.
President's Report

Sonoma and Lake County residents and visitors will enjoy unusually majestic displays of wildflowers and wildlife this summer thanks to the late and abundant rainfall. The lake levels and creeks are high and the Russian River is deceivingly hazardous with the current flowing so fast. I took a swim on June 6th between Rio Nido and Guerneville and nearly got swept away! Please be careful out there and watch the kids.

As the second half of 2010 begins, I am reflecting on my time volunteering for CNPS and the Milo Baker Chapter. I have been on the MB board for nearly 10 years and have learned many new plants and where to see them. I have made good friends and gained valuable experience in conservation, stewardship, and leadership, meeting people who share my enthusiasm for the native flora. Through Plant I.D. Hour, Rincon Ridge Park, bringing plants in to classrooms and general outreach, I feel I have been able to give back much of what I have learned, and I would like to thank all our members for your support and participation in CNPS. I hope to continue to be involved next year as Past President, and I want to extend the invitation to our members to consider running for the board next term.

The illustration above is a Mariposa Lily, Calochortus vestae, drawn by Slow. We saw them on the hike I lead at the Mayacamas Sanctuary's Red Hill on June 13th with Madrone Audubon.

Gardening with Natives

Through The Garden Gate
Woodland Rock Garden
If you're fortunate enough to have a shady area in your yard where moisture can be provided year round, you've got the makings for a woodland rock garden area. First, of course, comes the need for rocks. I'll leave you to your own devices to find those, but landscaping supply businesses come to mind. Then you need a good humus type soil, full of organic matter, rich and moist, on which to build your rock garden.

The photos here are by Phyllis Schmitt, from our day in the field. Thanks Phyllis!

I wish you all a happy summer. See you at the Chapter Picnic in August!

Lynn Houser
There are lots of wonderful native woodland plants available to choose from, the Maidenhair, or Five Finger Fern (*Adiantum pedatum*) being a great beginning. Everyone loves its shiny, deep purple stems (stipes) and lacy green fronds. Its thirsty roots will need moisture year-round. They do go winter dormant...cut off the old fronds to keep them looking tidy.

Add some native species of coral bells, also known as alumroot, which are members of the saxifrage family. They'll display pretty flowers hanging bell-like on tall, slender stalks that will bloom from spring through the summer. The easiest are *Heuchera maxima* and *Heuchera micrantha*; also *H. rubescens*.

You can't miss with Western bleedingheart (*Dicentra formosa*) for its tall pink flowers (careful, it's "invasive"); piggyback plant (*Tolmiea menziesii*) for its green foliage and spidery purple flowers; wild ginger (*Asarum caudatum*) for ground cover; brook saxifrage (*Boykinia elata*) with airy white flowers; sugar scoops or Western foam flower (*Tiarella unifoliata*); or Douglas or Pacific coast iris.

For spring flowers, our native columbine is a pretty red and yellow bloomer that will nod a nectar-invitation to the hummingbirds. *Aquilegia formosa* self-seeds and is easily found at nurseries.

We have a native wake-robin, or trillium, *Trillium ovatum* or *californicum*, which is a beloved woodland native that blooms early in white, fading to maroon. The rhizomes should be planted where they can be left alone to increase.

Native lilies include *Lilium pardalinum* or tiger lily, and *Lilium parvum*, the fairy lily. The tiger lily will spread by rhizomes and blooms orange with brown spotting. Fairy lilies are bright orange and may produce a stalk up to 6 feet tall. Grow lilies with ferns, columbines, and stream orchids.

Stream or brook orchid, *Epipactis gigantea*, is an easy orchid to grow, unlike lady or fairy slippers. The leaves are dormant in winter, appearing in spring, followed by the orchid flowers of pink, brownish, green or yellow on 12" stalks.

Another woodland plant worth trying is the "inside-out" flower, or *Vancouveria planipetala* or *V. hexandra*. The winter-dormant foliage is as bright, delicate and pretty as a maidenhair fern's, its airy white or yellow flowers with turned-back petals appearing from late spring through June.

For a blue-flowering perennial, choose one of our two native lobelias, *Lobelia dunnii*. If you want a vivid red flower, *Lobelia cardinalis* will attract hummingbirds. Both are winter dormant.

These are suggestions; there are more available, so check with your favorite native plant nursery. Have fun!

Judy Brinkerhoff
joodbrink@comcast.net

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**Invasives Corner**

*Holcus lanatum*, Velvet Grass.
This last weekend I ran into velvet grass in three different places; weeding my poor wimpy garden, at Cunningham Marsh working on the hedgerows, and on a field trip at the remote Lost Valley on BLM land in Mendocino County. Two things are nice about this grass – its seeds don't get into my dog's ears and create pain and vet bills, and it is easy to pull up. But read further before you run out and gather seed for your acreage!

Common velvet-grass is a hairy, perennial grass that grows 50-100 cm tall. The panicle (seed head) is often purplish and ranges from spike-like (compressed against the stem) in the
spring to more open later in the season. The soft velvety leaves are the most consistent feature for identification of velvet-grass. The base of the shoots have red veins on a white background, and in the field, silly botanists describe this attribute as stripey pajamas syndrome. (I did not make this up, except the silly botanist part.) Velvet-grass can also unfairly reproduce from decumbent tillers (stems that lie on their sides and grow roots).

Holcus is just another weed among others in my “garden,” but it has serious effects at Cunningham Marsh. Velvet grass competes aggressively for water and nutrients and forms dense swards that shade out the seedlings of native plants. Non-native grasses can affect the amount and quality of litter, alter nutrient cycling and significantly change the plant composition in ecosystems. Velvet grass can also alter soil chemistry and modify the composition and quantity of soil microbes and fungi.

Because of the dangers Holcus presents to sensitive native plants, particularly in wetlands, I was appalled to see it cropping up in Lost Valley where many vernal pool species were in evidence. I've seen how it has taken over the acreage near Sonoma County's Pitkin Marsh, which harbors rare plants and used to harbor more, forming a monoculture of several acres. I hope something can be done before it is too unmanageable.

Weed Workers' Handbook, put out by Calipc, suggests pulling seedlings, or chopping below the root crown. Mowing must be done at the right time and often, or the situation will worsen. Other control methods? Logging interests have found it efficacious to leave clear-cut doug fir litter on the ground because it keeps down the Holcus, broom and blackberries. Young trees grow better without the competition. However, forest fires are a drawback. Cattle do not like Holcus, but elk do. So far, Marcia Johnson has not shown enthusiasm for either dumping doug fir slash on the marsh or hiring elk as weed workers, even at non-union wages! Times are tough, even for elk.

M.L. Carle

Plant Sale News

Casa Grande Potting workshop, Saturday, August 7, 10 AM
Come and help us at this important workshop. We need a lot of help to pot up over 500 plants. We can do this in about 2 hours! We will meet at Casa Grande High School where we will be potting up Mimulus, Salivas, and other fast growing plants. We have a wonderful growing space there. Our thanks go to John Schribbs, who is in charge of the growing area. The plants that we grow at Casa Grande are blooming beautifully and sell rapidly at the sale. We will meet at Casa Grande High School in Petaluma in the NW corner of the campus off of Ely Road at the end of Juliet Drive. This is the last workshop before our 39th annual plant sale on October 9. Call Liz, 833-2063, for more information or meet us there.

Liz Parsons

State News

Conservation Conference Call
On Thursday, June 14, 2010, I attended what Greg Suba hopes will be the first of many Chapter Conservation meetings via conference call. Greg intends to use the calls as a venue to broadcast updates on pressing issues of both Statewide and Chapter-specific importance, and to take advantage of our broader network of conservation expertise.

On this call, we discussed the Statewide issue of renewable energy: the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (DRECP). This is a State and Federal process to establish a Natural Communities Conservation Plan/ Habitat
Conservation Plan (NCCP/ HCP) for 23 million acres of California's desert region. A NCCP/ HCP means development plans for large areas.

At best, the DRECP will identify where renewable energy projects will go with the least impact on covered species. It will do this by identifying biological objectives for the conservation of desert plants, animals, and ecosystems that will be impacted by development of wind and solar energy projects. With widely varying opinions and interests of companies, environmental and regulatory agencies, conservation organizations and the public, we must find common ground. The final product will be somewhere between the differing plans that environmental groups, regulatory agencies, and developers put on the table.

Some energy projects will be built. We must advocate for the least amount of damage. Most of the currently proposed projects will fragment intact areas which have low populations of invasive species.

DRECP details can be found at the following California Energy Commission (CEC) website: The main page with related DRECP documents: http://www.energy.ca.gov/33by2020/documents/index.html

There are links to the DRECP Planning Agreement, the DRECP Stakeholder Advisory Group (current list), and the DRECP Independent Science Advisory Panel list.

If you scroll down the Main page to the Public Meetings section, there are several informative presentations available from the April 22, May 27, and June 9 meetings if anyone is interested. Particularly:

- John Randall's presentation of TNC mapping recommendations to the Panel
- A telling list of questions for the Panel from the DRECP regulatory lead agencies
- Scott Flint's presentation from CA DFG to the Panel
- And others. The presentations from the energy industry reps are all there as well and of course provide their perspective.

From the May 27th meeting:

- Wayne Spencer's presentation to the Stakeholder Group listing the Science Panel's "emerging consensus points"

From the June 9th meeting:

- Kevin Hunting's presentation re: the DRECP Interim Mitigation Strategy.

The next DRECP meeting will be in Riverside, CA on Wednesday July 14.

The preliminary plant list that appears in the DRECP Planning Agreement grossly under represents the list of plant taxa that need to be considered. To date, Greg Suba has been involved in CNPS's effort to make a prioritized list of the taxa and vegetative communities in possible energy project locations. CNPS is not currently a stakeholder in the advisory group. But, on this conference call, a representative from a local chapter mentioned experience with becoming a stakeholder by being so consistently present that our expertise was requested and included.

The timeline for this process is a draft plan for environmental review by December of 2012. The whole process is to be finished by 2013.

Separate from the DRECP, there are projects which must move dirt by this December 2010. They will not access stimulus money unless they do; the subsidies push them forward. Without a comprehensive conservation planning document, developers will continue to site projects based on few criteria, which include siting projects on public land, near existing power lines, and not in a specially designated conservation or wilderness area. Of the 9 "fast-tracked" solar projects that are
attempting to begin construction by the end of 2010, all 9 have significant impacts to desert plant taxa and vegetation communities.

On future conference calls, we expect to discuss the general plans and transportation plans of chapter areas. Here we have the opportunity to work with the local flora and local laws.

To participate in future conference calls, contact Greg Suba at gsuba@cnps.org.

Katy Redmon
Legislative Chair

Events and Items of Interest

WILDCARE’S Family Adventures/Aventuras Familiares
WildCare invites you and your family to join experienced naturalists on Saturday visits to nearby parks to enjoy a day in nature. WildCare’s naturalists will lead fun, free family programs to discover butterflies, flowers, birds and much, much more. Free to the public, these programs will be conducted in both English and Spanish. Estos programas son en español e inglés y gratuitos para el público. Programs begin at 10:00 a.m. at the trailhead. Questions? Contact Juan-Carlos Solis at 415.453.1000, ext.17/ juan-carlos@wildcarebayarea.org. WILDCARE :415.453.1000 www.wildcarebayarea.org

Estero Americano Preserve Workday
July 10, 10am-2pm.
Come join Sonoma Land Trust and REI for a stewardship workday at the scenic Estero Americano Preserve near the town of Bodega. Together we will steward this unique coastal grassland area by removing invading thistles and collecting native grass seed for grassland enhancement. Level 2 RSVP to volunteer@sonomalandtrust.org or (707) 544-5614 x2.

Native Plant Nursery Volunteer Opportunity
July 30th 9am-11:30am
Potting Up Volunteer Event at San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge. Open to adults and children accompanied by adults. Help pot-up native plants for restoration projects along San Pablo Bay. The refuge nursery is located at 2100 Hwy 37 near Lakeville Hwy.

RSVP to Leia Giambastiani at 707-769-4200 ext 101 or giambastiani@bay.org

Bay-Friendly Landscape Conference
September 17th, 2010 8:00am - 5:00pm
St. Mary’s Event Center, San Francisco, CA
Keynote Speaker Brad Lancaster, author of "Rainwater Harvesting for Drylands and Beyond"
The 2010 Bay-Friendly Conference will feature interactive sessions, professional networking, and a marketplace of cutting-edge technologies and products. Experts will offer practical tools and solutions for creating landscapes that conserve natural resources, prevent pollution, cut greenhouse gas emissions and work with the uniqueness of the San Francisco Bay Watershed.
Price: $125 Coalition Member, $150 Non Member
Lunch and materials included.

Pre-Conference Tour of Bay-Friendly Landscapes
September 16, 2010, 8:00am - 5:00pm
Join us for an exciting pre-conference tour of Bay-Friendly Rated landscapes in Alameda County! Don't miss this unique opportunity to travel via bio-diesel bus to a diverse selection of innovative Bay-Friendly landscapes.
Price: $70 Coalition Member, $85 Non Member
Lunch, transportation and materials included.

Register now for the conference and/or tour.
Check our website for additional information on how to qualify for discount registration, speakers, topics and more:
www.BayFriendlyCoalition.org/2010Conference

MuRefuge
3/4 acre in rural residential Sonoma County, boasts over 150 natives plus edibles. NWF Backyard Wildlife Habitat and NABA Butterfly Garden Certified, MuRefuge offers food, water & shelter for all creatures. Talks/tours are offered with 1 bag of Fox Farm Organic Potting Soil as the “fee”. “Pass-a-long” plants and treats from “the land” are included with participant numbers limited at each offering. Please contact Cathie Haynes at afsp@sonic.net for the next available talk/tour to enjoy the experience of a whole ecology.

Riverkeeper Stewardship Park Volunteer Days
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 from 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.

San Francisco’s Conservatory of Flowers Docents and Jungle Guides Needed
Jungle Guides lead tours for 2nd-5th grade classes. Tours are held every Tuesday-Friday from September through May at 10:00 a.m. Tours are offered at no cost to schools, and cover the basics of plant evolution, conservation, botany, and tropical ecosystems. Docents educate adult visitors on the Conservatory’s extensive collection of tropical plants. Docents lead the daily free tours at 11:00 and 2:30, as well as special guided tours for groups.

Training program The Conservatory welcomes volunteers of all ages and experience levels. The 7 session training program will be held at the Conservatory every Monday from July 12 through August 23 from 1:00-4:00 p.m. The $50 cost of the training program covers all mandatory training materials. Trainees will be paired with an experienced volunteer mentor to guide them through their first tours. We ask all volunteers to commit to two shifts per month for at least one year. In return for this commitment, the Conservatory offers a comprehensive training program, ongoing educational and social opportunities, a 25% gift shop discount, and annual guest passes. For more information, please contact: Erika Frank, Director of Volunteer Services, San Francisco Conservatory of Flowers, (415) 637-4326

Field Trips

Salt Marsh Harvest Mouse Trapping at San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge
6/28-7/1, 7/26-7/29 and 8/1-8/4 from 5-7pm and 7-10am Come explore the North Bay’s salt marsh and see what lives among the pickleweed. Get lucky enough to see the Endangered Salt Marsh Harvest Mouse. Trapping occurs on the above listed dates. Rain boots are recommended. Reservations required. Contact Giselle Block 707-769-4200 ext 104 or Giselle_Block@fws.gov
Lilium pardalinum ssp. pitkinense
Pitkin lily

Newsletter & Web Site Info:
Send newsletter submissions to:
Editor, cnpsmbnewsletter@yahoo.com
Deadline for inclusion in the September Newsletter is August 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

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:
CNPS, 2707 K Street, Sacramento, CA 95816

To pay by credit card or for more info call 916.447.2677 or visit www.cnps.org