

# California Native Plant Society

## Communications Plan

January 25, 2011



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Internal Document

**Version 1.0**

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# CNPS Mission, Vision and Goals

**CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY**  
**Mission and Vision Adopted by Chapter Council December 6, 2009**

## **MISSION STATEMENT**

To conserve California native plants and their natural habitats, and increase understanding, appreciation, and horticultural use of native plants.

## **VISION STATEMENT**

CNPS envisions a future where:

- Californians actively support the Society's mission, which is accomplished through education, plant science, advocacy, land stewardship and native plant gardening.
- Californians value native plants, plant communities and healthy ecosystems as essential to the well being of all living things.
- Californians can experience native plants throughout the state, in natural environments and human-made landscapes.
- California's extensive and interconnected natural habitats are preserved.
- CNPS is the leader for providing reliable information on California native plants and plant conservation. Comprehensive information about California's flora and vegetation communities is available throughout the state for conservation and educational purposes.
- CNPS's leadership influences personal ethics and actions, as well as public policy for native plant protection.

## **CNPS PROGRAM AND CAPACITY GOALS 2010-2012**

**Adopted by Chapter Council on March 13, 2010**

Increase public awareness about the importance of native plants and natural habitats and the need to protect them by expanding the resources of all CNPS programs.

Serve a greater role as a synthesizer and distributor of information about California native plants and plant communities by cooperating with diverse data providers, including public agencies, academic institutions, private organizations, and individuals along with CNPS's own wealth of data in members, chapters, and programs.

Continue to expand native plant information delivery systems within and outside of CNPS.

Advocate for the maximum protection of native plants and increase CNPS's presence and involvement in both state and regional land use planning efforts that support habitat and resource conservation.

Raise funds to hire a full-time Horticulture Program Director to more fully promote, support, and encourage the appropriate horticultural use of California native plants in gardens, landscapes and conservation activities.

Promote, support and encourage ecologically based land stewardship activities and practices.

Strengthen the network of people involved in native plant protection.

Increase the involvement in and effectiveness of local chapters.

Develop a more consistent and cohesive public face throughout the organization.

Mobilize a committed, diverse and effective pool of people to actively support CNPS.

Expand CNPS's membership to 15,000 members by 2012.

Develop stable and sufficient financial resources.

Continue to improve organizational infrastructure as necessary to support the growth of the organization and maintain professional and ethical operations.

Expand the organization's opportunities to realize its vision by seeking legislative, agency, organizational, and foundation partners in projects that support our scientific, educational, and conservation mission and objectives.

### **PRIORITY SETTING FOR THE GOALS**

All goals were viewed as important and valuable to pursue. The following five goals were identified as the highest priority for achievement:

- Increase public awareness about the importance of native plants and natural habitats and the need to protect them by expanding the resources of the educational and conservation programs
- Serve a greater role as a synthesizer and distributor of information about California native plants and plant communities by cooperating with diverse data providers, including public agencies, academic institutions, private organizations, and individuals along with CNPS's own wealth of data in members, chapters, and programs.
- Advocate for the maximum protection of native plants and increase CNPS's presence and involvement in both state and regional land use planning efforts that support habitat and resource conservation.
- Develop stable and sufficient financial resources.
- Expand CNPS's membership to 15,000 members by 2012.

## **Details about the CNPS Audience**

## **OUR INTERNAL AUDIENCE**

### ***Current Members – Internal Audience:***

- People with an academic, professional or recreational interest in nature and the environment
  - Academics, botanists, ecologists, restoration specialists, consultants, biologists, horticulturists, gardeners, birders, hikers, nature lovers.
- Californian

### ***How do they think and feel?***

- They believe passionately in environmental issues.
- They are actively involved in conservation activities.
- Academics or professionals that care about CNPS as a resource for solid, factual information.
- They care about quality and accuracy of information, sound actions/decisions.
- Environmentally conscious home gardeners who have an appreciation for nature, birds/bees/wildlife
- They who understand the value of native plant habitats
- They respect the history of CNPS and the early and ongoing efforts that have helped CNPS grow in its influence and effectiveness.
- Hikers who wish to deepen their enjoyment of the natural landscape by learning about native plants
- They may be familiar with CNPS but need to be convinced that their money will be put to good use.

### ***What message do we want them to come away with?***

- Contributing to CNPS will positively impact native plant conservation.
- Contributing to CNPS will positively impact the conservation of wild California and the native plants I love.
- That they can proudly say, "I'm a CNPS member."
- CNPS is the go-to organization for everything relating to California's native plants.
- CNPS is for all: specialists, serious enthusiasts, and the average person. CNPS has something for everyone.

### ***Why should they believe us?***

- CNPS has a long history of successes in native plant protection through advocacy and enforcement activities.
- CNPS regularly provides public disclosure of ongoing program activities and engages in continuous activism consistent with mission and vision.
- CNPS chapters are active and communicative.
- CNPS resource information is continuously updated and communicated through the organization's committees, website, and publications.
- CNPS is an authority on scientific information about plants / plant conservation; agencies and other organizations seek us out for what we know.
- CNPS is fiscally sound.

## **OUR EXTERNAL AUDIENCE**

### ***Some of the groups CNPS wants to reach in order to meet our goals:***

- **Youth** – CNPS’s membership tends to be older; the society must attract younger members faster to carry the mission and vision into the future.
- **Diverse Audiences** –CNPS must be more effective at reaching people of diverse educational, social, cultural, and professional backgrounds, age groups, and genders to ensure that our message reaches all Californians.
- **Potential New Members/Volunteers** – CNPS membership has been static over the last 10 years; growth is an essential part of our mission and vision.
- **Eco-Conscious Citizens** – CNPS membership is currently narrow demographically; we have potential to reach people who are members of other organizations that are actively working to conserve the environment, but are not necessarily educated or focused directly on plant conservation issues.
- **Gardeners** – CNPS must target and retain gardeners who wish to grow native plants in their gardens.
- **Birders** – CNPS should do special outreach to Audubon members and birders who understand the connection between healthy bird populations and healthy native plant habitats.
- **Hikers/Campers/Outdoor Types** – CNPS has something to offer to people who are physically active and enjoy nature-based activities and recreation.
- **Potential Large Donors** – CNPS must become more effective in engaging major donors and foundations who can support our goals and strategic objectives financially.
- **Influencers** – CNPS must become more active and pro-active in promoting information to elected officials, writers, reporters, bloggers and others that are actively involved in issues related to the CNPS mission.

### ***Characteristics of individuals who may be likely members/supporters of CNPS:***

- Environmentally aware
- Socially responsible; interested in strengthening their communities.
- Appreciate nature but are not necessarily scientists or botanists
  - Like to hike, garden, mountain bike, fish, etc.
- Consumes media such as:
  - NPR, National Geographic, Bay Nature, Inconvenient Truth Movie, etc.
- May be staff or members of similar organizations, nurseries, agencies, and botanical gardens but are not currently members of CNPS.
- Academics and botanical experts who are not currently members of CNPS.

### ***How do they think and feel?***

- They see themselves as being supportive of the environment.
- They see themselves as being socially responsible and care about building strong communities.
- They are not particularly knowledgeable about native plants, and are not necessarily aware of CNPS, but are open-minded and willing to learn/take a chance.
- They want to be part of an organization that is actually doing something, and that gets results.
- They are often members of more than one environmental organization.
- They are looking for tips on where to go to see wildflowers.
- They want advice and direction on native plant gardening.
- They want to learn how to identify plants.
- They want the ability to network and interact with others who share similar interests.
- They want to conserve California’s native flora and natural landscapes.

### ***What message do we want them to come away with?***

- CNPS is an organization that reflects my environmental values.
- CNPS is an organization that reflects my social values. CNPS is a vibrant, active local organization with state-wide reach and impact.
- CNPS plays a unique and effective role in conserving California's landscapes.
- CNPS members are warm, friendly, accessible and welcoming of new members, no matter their level of knowledge of native plants.
- CNPS has many activities for me and my family.
- If I join CNPS, then I will be doing something positive for the environment and positive for myself.
- If I join CNPS, I will be doing something good for my community.
- CNPS is an organization with a long history of significant contributions in plant science and conservation.

***Why should they believe us?***

- CNPS is visible in local media, local libraries, and local schools, colleges, and universities.
- They have attended one of more local CNPS programs, and are impressed by the quality of presentations and the warmth of the members.
- CNPS has a long history of successes in native plant protection, advocacy and enforcement activities.
- Active, communicative local chapters.
- Actions, results, and resource information are continuously updated and communicated through the organization's committees, website, and publications.
- CNPS is an authority on scientific information about plants / plant conservation.
- We are a resource of information, agencies and other organizations seek us out for what we know.
- Our extensive resource material on native plant gardening

**CNPS's EXISTING AND POTENTIAL AUDIENCES IDENTIFIED BY GROUP:**

<p><b><u>Internal Audience</u></b></p> <p>CNPS Members          CNPS Staff          CNPS Chapter Leaders          CNPS Board of Directors          Volunteers</p>	<p><b><u>Public Audience (External to CNPS)</u></b></p> <p>All Californians</p>
<p><b><u>Government Agencies</u></b></p> <p>Any agency involved in the following regulatory and oversight activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Habitat monitoring</li> <li>• Endangered species recovery, permitting, and monitoring</li> <li>• Regulation of wildlife</li> <li>• Public land management</li> <li>• Water Districts</li> <li>• Pollution Prevention Agencies</li> <li>• Weed Management Areas</li> </ul>	<p><b><u>Demographic Groups</u></b></p> <p>Our primary demographic audience includes all Californians of all ethnic and economic backgrounds that fall into the primary audience categories. Special emphasis may be given to reaching the following groups:</p> <hr/> <p>Academics – Botanists          Academics - Civil Engineers          Academics - Environmental Sciences          Academics - Horticulture          Academics - Landscape Architecture          Academics - Natural History          Academics - Geologists/Soil Scientists          Academics - Hydraulic Engineers</p>
<p><b><u>Working Partners</u></b></p> <p>Academic Institutions          Agencies          Botanic Gardens          Herbaria          Other Environmental Organizations</p>	<p>Regulatory Agency Management and Staff          All Ethnic and Economic Groups          Assisted Living – Outreach, Trips          Conservation Advocates          Elected Officials          Environmental Consultants          Garden Clubs          Gardening Enthusiasts          Government Agencies/Regulators          Homeowners          Land Developers</p>
<p><b><u>Organizations/Businesses</u></b></p> <p>Bird Seed Stores/Companies          Environmental Organizations          Environmental Consulting Firms          Garden Clubs          Land Trusts          Plant Nurseries          Restoration Firms          Wilderness Advocates          Tourism Industry</p>	<p>Land Use and Urban Planning Advocates          Landscape Maintenance          Landscape Designers &amp; Architects          Landscape Contractors          Local Agency Planners and Groups (Land Use)          Master Gardeners          Members of Other Conservation Organizations          Members of the press and other media broadcasters          Native Plant Gardeners          Nature Artists &amp; Photographers          Restoration Consultants          Students - all levels</p>
<p><b><u>Foundations &amp; Major Donors</u></b></p> <p>Environmentally focused foundations          Science and research focused foundations</p>	<p>Teachers - all levels          Wilderness Advocates          Wildlife Advocates</p>

**The CNPS Communication Style and Desired Outcomes**

### **OBJECTIVES OF ALL CNPS COMMUNICATIONS AND MESSAGING:**

1. Membership – increase membership from 10,000 to 15,000 members by 2012
2. Fundraising – increase overall fundraising by \$60% annually by 2012
3. Relevance – increase CNPS relevance and impact in achieving its conservation objectives

### **DESIRED TONE OF ALL CNPS COMMUNICATIONS AND MESSAGING:**

- Friendly
- Welcoming
- Willing to share information
- Accessible, easy to understand by all
- Authoritative
- Knowledgeable
- Confident
- Ethical

### **ROLE OF CNPS LOGO IN COMMUNICATIONS:**

- The logo is a symbolic representation of the CNPS mission, vision, and goals and should be used with all official and internal communications.
- The CNPS logo is a visual representation of who we are and what we do..
- Individual chapters use the logo to link themselves to the larger statewide organization, while still maintaining their own individual identities.

**Note:** The full name of “California Native Plant Society” should be used in all logo representations so that anyone who is not familiar with CNPS need not guess at the name behind the acronym.

### **CNPS VALUES REFLECTED IN THE LOGO:**

- CNPS plays a unique and vital role in the conservation of California’s plant heritage for future generations.
- CNPS is an organization involved in promoting and protecting California native plants and their habitats.
- CNPS is a welcoming and friendly organization.
- CNPS believes that humans have a role in protecting the natural world.
- CNPS is involved in protecting individual native plant species, as well as habitats and eco-systems.

# Primary Public Message

## **KEY POINTS:**

1. Native plants are essential to a healthy environment.
2. California's native flora is uniquely beautiful, and plays a major role in what makes California a wonderful place to live, work and visit.
3. The protection of California's native plants is essential to preserve the range of biodiversity in our state, and for providing habitat for California's endemic wildlife species.
4. CNPS is a non-profit, financially stable organization that has been focused on the conservation of California's native plant heritage since 1965.
5. CNPS is effective in conservation, and works with agencies, land conservancies, and other environmental organizations to achieve common conservation goals and objectives.
6. CNPS actively represents the public's interest in protecting California's native plants for current and future generations.

## **LONG NARRATIVE:**

The native plants of California are unlike any other in the world. From the richly colored expanse of spring wildflowers in the desert to groves of Monterey cypress on the coast, California's wild areas are immensely diverse and awe-inspiring in their beauty. They define the landscape and offer Californians a sense of place, pride and stability, and they provide habitat for native wildlife species that exist no place else on earth.

CNPS works hard to represent the public's interest in protecting California's native plant heritage and to preserve it for future generations. CNPS actively promotes the use of science in land use and management decisions through our Online Rare Plant Inventory and essential reference book: *Manual of California Vegetation, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition*, both of which are the most advanced resources available for identifying and managing critical habitat in California. We work closely with decision-makers, scientists, and local planners to advocate for well-informed and environmentally sound policies, regulations, and land management practices.

Originally formed in 1965 in the East Bay region, the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) is a statewide non-profit organization of amateurs and professionals with a common interest in California's native plants. Our nearly 10,000 members work to promote native plant appreciation, rare plant and vegetation research, education, and conservation through our statewide programs and 33 regional chapters in California. Through membership in CNPS, Californians of all walks of life are able to support and engage in opportunities to experience and learn about native plants and their habitats, gardening and landscaping with native plants, restoration of sensitive habitat areas, and conservation of natural areas throughout the state.

## **SHORT NARRATIVE:**

The California Native Plant Society, through its nearly 10,000 members and 33 regional chapters, has been working to represent the public's interest in protecting California's beautiful native plants and their habitats since 1965. Run by professional staff and volunteers, CNPS is a 501(c)3 organization active in promoting public education about native plants and the use of sound plant science in advocating for conservation of natural areas throughout the State of California.

## **SECONDARY MESSAGES**

### ***Youth and Students:***

1. California's plants play a vital role in a healthy environment. They absorb carbon, create oxygen, and supply the food energy foundation for almost all other terrestrial species.
2. CNPS is a cool, fun organization to be involved with.
3. Learning about plants is fun.

***College Students:***

1. CNPS is a cool, fun organization to be involved with.
2. CNPS has resources available to help expand your knowledge in botanical areas of study.
3. CNPS is a social organization, providing opportunities to meet and interact with like-minded peers, network for potential employment opportunities, and present research at meetings and conferences.
4. CNPS is actively and passionately involved in issues impacting the conservation and protection of California's native plants.
5. CNPS is a significant resource for data on native plants that may be needed to pursue research topics.
6. CNPS has a scholarship program for students pursuing botanically and ecologically related fields of study.

***Diverse Audiences:***

1. All parents want their children to live in a healthy environment with clean water, air and land. CNPS works to protect those resources through its efforts to conserve native plants and natural areas.

***Gardeners:***

1. CNPS is the definitive resource for information about growing and caring for native plants.
2. CNPS native plant sales are the best places to buy native plants.
3. CNPS offers talks, classes, workshops and symposia to develop and sustain your interest in native plant gardening 12 months of the year, not just once or twice at plant sale time.
4. CNPS meetings are a good place to meet others with similar interests.

***Birders:***

1. CNPS is the go-to organization for information about native plants that provide habitat for birds.
2. CNPS partners with Audubon to offer joint field trips on bird and plant identification.
3. CNPS partners with Audubon on native habitat conservation efforts.

***Hikers/Campers/Outdoor Types:***

1. CNPS is the go-to organization for information about native plants and the best places for wildflower viewing.
2. CNPS offers classes in native plant id and docent led plant id field trips for beginners.
3. CNPS offers field trips 12 months of the year to unique, interesting places.
4. CNPS partners with Sierra Club and other environmental organizations to protect native habitats throughout the state.
5. CNPS arranges field trips to locations normally not open to the public.

***Teachers:***

1. CNPS has resources available to help build a solid scientific foundation for botany-related curriculum and provide training for teachers.

2. CNPS is the “go-to” organization for data and other resource information about native plants and their role in the ecological systems in California.
3. CNPS provides specialized workshop training for students entering or engaged in occupational fields that involve the study and application of taxonomical principles.

***Agencies, Working Partners, Organization, Elected Officials, Land Developers & Urban Planners:***

1. CNPS bases its policies and positions on sound research and facts.
2. CNPS is a force to be reckoned with – with a long, proven history of successful enforcement action in protecting native plants.
3. CNPS provides technical training for professional botanists and ecologists who are responsible for ensuring the adequate protection of endangered plants and wildlife species in California.

***Foundations and Major Donors:***

1. CNPS is a fiscally responsible, well-managed organization effective at accomplishing its stated mission and goals.
2. CNPS is effective at converting contributions into action.

***Internal Audience:***

1. Achieving the mission and vision of CNPS involves a significant effort in outreach; and that all messaging – as conveyed through any public activity, meeting, or written material -- must be easily understood by those who have little or no understanding of the role California’s native plants play in sustaining a healthy and vibrant environment in California.
2. CNPS is an open, inclusive, growing society engaged in outreach to all demographic groups.
3. Being a member, staff person, or volunteer within CNPS carries with it a responsibility and an opportunity to help educate everyone else about the value of California’s native plants.
4. CNPS encompasses the passionate spirit of volunteering for a worthwhile cause, and recognizes its committed leaders and volunteers with special volunteer awards and Fellowship designations.

## Methods and Tools

<b>Tools for Combined Internal and External Messaging</b>			
<b>Communication Tool</b>	<b>Intended Audience (s)</b>	<b>Intended Purpose</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Website	Public and internal audience	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Convey information about the Society's current events, accomplishments and initiatives.</li> <li>2. Provide background information on CNPS programs</li> <li>3. Provide historical information about who we are and what we do</li> <li>4. Portal for data access on native plants</li> <li>5. Resource site to support public education and learning about the role of native plants in California</li> <li>6. Provides information on how to join CNPS and support our cause.</li> </ol>	Continuous
Facebook	Public and internal audience	Social interaction and exchange forum about local and statewide events, gardening with natives, and chapter events.	Continuous; at will
Conferences	Public and internal audience <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Professionals engaged in environmental sciences</li> <li>2. Agency Staff</li> <li>3. Members and CNPS leadership</li> </ol>	Provides an opportunity for academics, students, and professionals involved in conservation and land management to network and exchange the latest scientific information on native plants and related conservation issues.	Every three years
Press releases	Public audience	Conveys position statements and significant events or accomplishments via news media and direct communication	Rare; as needed
Chapter plant sales	Public audience	Provides opportunities for public outreach and promotes the use of native plants in private landscapes to expand habitat for pollinators and birds; increase the awareness and knowledge of native plants.	1-2/yr for most chapters
Chapter meetings	Public and internal audience	Provides opportunities for chapters to promote the mission/vision of CNPS; <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Educate the community on local plants and habitats,</li> <li>2. Inform locals about issues related to conservation,</li> <li>3. Inform locals about the care and maintenance of native plants in their own gardens,</li> <li>4. Sign up new members,</li> <li>5. Social interaction.</li> </ol>	Monthly for most chapters
Chapter Hikes and Events	Public and internal audience	Provides opportunities for chapters to promote the mission/vision of CNPS; <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Educate the community on local plants and habitats,</li> <li>2. Inform locals about issues related to conservation,</li> <li>3. Sign up new members,</li> <li>4. Social interaction.</li> </ol>	As scheduled
Chapter Newsletters	Regional Membership	Provides member education opportunities for chapters; <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Educate the community on local plants and habitats,</li> <li>2. Convey information about issues related to conservation,</li> </ol>	As scheduled
Workshop attendees	Public and internal audience: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Students &amp; Professionals</li> </ol>	Technical education and professional training for botanists and consultants	As scheduled

**Tools for Primarily Internal Messaging**

<b>Communication Tool</b>	<b>Intended Audience (s)</b>	<b>Intended Purpose</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Fundraising appeals / letters	Internal audience – 1. Members 2. Major Donors 3. Foundations	Convey information about the Society’s current accomplishments and initiatives and attract funding needed to support the Society’s projects and activities.	Bi-annual
Google/ Yahoo! groups	Internal audience – 1. Leadership 2. Members with specific skills or interests in the Society’s work	Communicate information about specific programs and obtain feedback and guidance on program initiatives	At will/as needed
Committees	Internal audience 1. Members with specific skills or interests in the Society’s work 2. Chapter and board leadership and staff	Committee representation and participation serves the underpinnings of program direction and management direction of the Society.	As scheduled
Email distribution lists (all listings, board, committees, etc.)	Internal audience	Conveys current information to chapter leadership about current programs, events, positions, and strategic initiatives	As needed
Chapter Council Meetings	Internal audience 1. Chapter volunteer leadership	Convey business information, financial, and capacity issues; and convey conservation and program strategy, initiatives, and accomplishments. Also to develop CNPS policies and recognize major donors, fellows, and special volunteers.	Quarterly

**CNPS Publications**

<b>Communication Tool</b>	<b>Intended Audience (s)</b>	<b>Intended Purpose</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
CNPS Directory	Internal audience	Provides information about organizational structure, leadership, committee composition, and chapter leadership.	Annual
Brochures	External audience	Conveys our primary message to the public and provides information on how to join CNPS.	As requested or distributed
eNewsletter	External and internal audience	Provides current updates on program actions and initiatives, positions and accomplishments, state and local events.	Monthly
Bulletin	Internal audience	Conveys social and program news and information about what’s going on around the Society.	Quarterly
Fremontia	Internal audience	Conveys in depth coverage of current botanical and botanically related conservation issues in California.	Tri-annually
CNPS Press – Scientific MCV2	External and Internal; professional demographic	Conveys the latest scientific information about native plant vegetation communities in California	Every 10 years
CNPS Online Rare Plant Inventory	External and internal; professional as well as casual users	Conveys information about rare plant species ranking and approximate location of rare plants around the state	Quarterly
CNPS Press – other publications	Internal and external audiences	Various books that convey information about native flora, taxonomy, conservation issues and strategies.	As they develop
Chapter Newsletters	Chapter Members	Conveys information about chapter news and events	Varies

**Media / Press Contacts**

Name of Publication/Media Type	Market Served	Contact Name/ Information
Sacramento Bee – Daily Newspaper	Capitol Region	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mary Lynne Villenga – Business News Editor (<a href="mailto:mvillenga@sacbee.com">mvillenga@sacbee.com</a>)</li> <li>• Matt Weiser – <a href="mailto:mweiser@sacbee.com">mweiser@sacbee.com</a></li> <li>• Marjie Lundstrom – <a href="mailto:mlundstrom@sacbee.com">mlundstrom@sacbee.com</a></li> </ul>
LA Times – Daily Newspaper	LA Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Richard Fausset – <a href="mailto:Richard.fausset@latimes.com">Richard.fausset@latimes.com</a></li> <li>• Kim Murphy – <a href="mailto:kim.murphy@latimes.com">kim.murphy@latimes.com</a></li> </ul>
Greenwire – Environmental News	National	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Scott Streater - <a href="mailto:ssstreater@eenews.net">sstreater@eenews.net</a></li> </ul>
Sacramento Business Journal	Capitol Business News	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Celia Lamb – <a href="mailto:celialamb@businessjournal.com">celialamb@businessjournal.com</a></li> </ul>
San Jose Mercury News	Silicon Valley	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Lisa Krieger (environment, parks) <a href="mailto:lkrieger@mercurynews.com">lkrieger@mercurynews.com</a></li> <li>• Paul Rogers (environment, parks) <a href="mailto:progers@mercurynews.com">progers@mercurynews.com</a></li> <li>• Linda Zavoral (gardening) <a href="mailto:LZavoral@mercurynews.com">LZavoral@mercurynews.com</a></li> </ul>

## Summary of Information to be Communicated –What, Who, How & When

Information CNPS Desires to Communicate – Primarily External Audiences				
What	To Whom	By Whom	What Tool(s)	Frequency
Mission, Vision, Goals	All Audiences	-State Staff -State Board	-Website -Publications -Press releases -Chapter Council Meetings	In all external messaging
		-Chapter Leadership	-Chapter newsletters -Chapter meetings	In all external messaging
Statewide Events	All Audiences	State staff	-website -publications -e-mail list serves	As needed As published (Frequent)
Legislative Concerns /Calls to Action	All Audiences -agencies -public officials -members -external	- State staff - Board	-website -publications -e-mail list serves -press releases	As they arise (Frequent)
		-Chapter volunteers	-chapter newsletters -chapter meetings -local media outlets	
Positions	All Audiences	- State staff - Chapter volunteers	-website -publications -e-mail list serves -committees -committee list serves -chapter meetings/events -conferences	As they develop (Frequent)
		-Chapter volunteers	-chapter newsletters -chapter meetings -Local media outlets	
Policies	All Audiences	-State staff	-website	As they develop or change (Infrequent)
		-Chapter volunteer leaders	-chapter newsletters -chapter meetings	
Project Initiatives	All Audiences	State Staff	-Website -Publications -Press releases -Fundraising appeals -Committee communication -Chapter meetings -Chapter council meetings	As scheduled
Project Outcomes	All Audiences	State Staff	Website -Publications -Press releases -Fundraising appeals -Committee communication -Chapter meetings -Chapter council meetings	As scheduled
Local Events	All Audiences	- State staff	-publications -website	As needed As published (Frequent)
		-Chapter Volunteers	-Chapter newsletters -Chapter meetings -Local Media	
Financial Needs		-State staff	-fundraising appeals	Ongoing

	-Potential donors -Members and contributors	-Special committees -State board -Chapter leadership	-website -publications -quarterly CC meetings -chapter plant sales -chapter meetings/events	
	-Foundations & major donors	-State staff	-fundraising appeals -personal appeals -foundation cultivation	
Public Financial Information	-All Audiences	-State staff -State Board	-Quarterly CC Meetings -Bulletin Annual Report -Website -Guidestar	Annually
Technical Resource Information	-All Audiences	-State program staff	-Website -Chapter Council Meetings -e-mail list serves -e-news -Press Releases	Ongoing as available and updated.
		-Chapter Leadership	-Chapter Newsletters	

**Information CNPS Desires to Communicate – Primarily Internal Leadership Audiences  
CNPS Board, Chapter Council Leadership, Chapter Boards, State Staff**

<b>What</b>	<b>To Whom</b>	<b>By Whom</b>	<b>What Tool(s)</b>	<b>Frequency</b>
Conservation Strategies	-All CNPS leadership -Working partners	-State staff -Chapter Leadership -Statewide Committees -Chapter Conservation Chairs	-e-mail list serves -monthly statewide conservation calls -quarterly CC meetings	As they develop or change (Frequent)
Budget/financial allocations	-All CNPS Leadership	-State staff -State board	-Quarterly CC Meetings -e-mail list serves	Quarterly
Internal Processes	-All CNPS Leadership	-State staff	-Quarterly CC Meetings -e-mail list serves	Quarterly and as needed
Internal Capacity Issues	-All CNPS Leadership	-State staff	-Quarterly CC Meetings -e-mail list serves	Quarterly and as needed
Staff Changes	-All CNPS Leadership -Membership	-State staff -Chapter Leaders	-Quarterly CC Meetings -e-mail list serves -Bulletin	As needed
	-Membership	-Chapter Leadership	-Chapter Newsletters -Chapter list serves	As needed
Organizational Structure and Leadership	-All CNPS Leadership	-State staff -Chapter leaders	-Annual directory -e-mail list serves -Quarterly Meetings	Annually and as needed
	-Membership	-State staff - state issues -Chapter leaders on chapter issues	-Website directory -Bulletin & E-News -Chapter Newsletters	
Technical Resource Information	-All CNPS Leadership -Program Committees	-State program staff	-Website -Chapter Council Meetings -e-mail list serves -e-news -Bulletin	Ongoing as available and updated.

## Strategies to Achieve Goals/Desired Outcomes

## **I. DEVELOP A CONSISTENT BRAND PRESENTATION**

Develop a consistent branding approach throughout organizational messaging and marketing materials (2011).

1. Develop a new CNPS logo that effectively communicates our organizational mission, vision and values to targeted audiences outside the organization (see Page 6).
2. Develop a tag line to be used with and that complements the message embedded in our logo concept.
3. Create and publish a style guide that specifies appropriate use of the official CNPS logo and any tag line(s) in all CNPS communications.
  - a. Copies of the style guide will be posted on the administrative pages of our website (CNPS Intranet).
4. Develop a web template that provides chapters with a consistent frame for presenting the overarching CNPS organization message in addition to individual Chapter message and identity.
  - a. The template will provide approved presentation of the CNPS logo and tag line along with template messaging (See section Primary External Message).
  - b. The template will include standard links to the main CNPS website for information, membership sign up, donations, and state program information.
  - c. The template will provide sufficient white space for chapters to present their individual regional identity, highlight local campaigns and events, and display regional messages.
  - d. The template will contain sufficient CNPS branding so than any outside user, when accessing a chapter website, can make the link to the larger organizational message, mission, vision and values.
  - e. The template will be developed in a commonly used, open source code to allow chapters the flexibility to manage and update their own sites.
  - f. The state organization will provide technical assistance to chapters at such time as they are ready to migrate to the standard template.

## **II. COMMUNICATION OF CURRENT CAMPAIGNS, ACTIONS, PROJECTS, RESULTS**

Develop a consistent approach of communicating the Society's campaigns, actions, project status, and results throughout all communication tools available to the organization (2010).

1. Develop and execute a communication checklist to ensure that communications are repeated in the plethora of communication tools available to CNPS including: State and Chapter websites, all CNPS publications, appeals, written updates, quarterly reports, and media outlets.
  - a. Use internal list serves to communicate updates to chapter leadership and chapter newsletter editors.
  - b. Prepare press releases as appropriate and distribute both to chapters and statewide to communicate campaigns, actions and results.
2. Keep the state web site "fresh"
  - a. Update the state website on at least a monthly basis to highlight campaigns, actions and results.
3. Obtain funding for a part time communications intern to ensure coordination of information to and from the chapters on conservation and other program successes, and distribute to all media outlets both within and external to the organization.

## **III. MAIN CNPS WEBSITE**

The main CNPS website will be considered the primary tool for communicating the CNPS mission and vision, campaigns, actions, project status and results to both internal and external audiences and should be updated on at least a monthly basis (2010).

1. The overall design and look of main home page of the CNPS website will be reviewed and updated to keep pace with current updates in technology and web design.
2. Program highlights that link from the front page will be updated monthly and new links will become active no later than the second business day of every month. Program highlights will typically direct the user to the most current information, including new updates on the inside web pages, recent articles in e-news, current press releases, or other up to date information on CNPS activities and projects. They may also used to highlight important advocacy causes that we want out members to respond to or participate in.
3. Internal program information will be updated at least quarterly.
4. Consistent messaging and important news on statewide projects should be linked from Chapter websites.

5. The website address will be published in CNPS appeal letters, the bulletin, placed on business cards, informal messages, and in e-mail signatures. Our entire audience will be encouraged to access the website for the latest information about CNPS.
6. CNPS will obtain funding for a part time communications intern to help develop and publish web updates, and coordinate the flow of State updates to chapters and vice versa.

#### **IV. PRESS RELEASES/WORKING WITH THE PRESS**

##### ***Guidelines for working with the Press:***

Statewide Issues: The decision to prepare and distribute a press release on any statewide CNPS position, policy, project, event or issues must be approved by the Executive Director. If the Executive Director is not available, press releases must be approved by the CNPS State Board President or Vice President.

Chapter and Local Issues: The decision to prepare and distribute a press release on a CNPS position related to a local issue, project or event must be authorized in a manner consistent with individual chapter bylaws and approved CNPS policy.

##### ***Strategies for Developing Media Relations and Leveraging the Press:***

1. The CNPS Communications Intern will develop a press contact list for the state. The list will include contacts for specific issues, and will also provide general contacts for CNPS policies and positions both local and statewide.
  - a. The CNPS Conservation Director will be responsible for updating the Press Contact List as new issues, projects, and campaigns arise at the chapter level.
  - b. The Executive Director will work with the Conservation Director to update the contact list for all statewide issues.
2. CNPS will provide training for Chapter Leadership on working with local press contacts at the March Chapter Council meeting annually.
  - a. The Board will work to raise funds for and recruit a professional media consultant to conduct this training. The meeting will be recorded and distributed with any associated slide show presentation among Chapter press contacts who cannot attend the actual meeting.

#### **V. INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS – SHARING OF KEY INFORMATION: State to Chapters**

The Board, Executive Director, and Committee Leadership will develop a schedule for presenting and explaining essential internal information to Chapter Leadership (2010).

1. Quarterly Financial Data
  - a. Quarterly financial data will include the following presentation elements: Budget to actual year to date showing major revenue and expense components, a fiscal year comparison year over year, and pie chart summaries.
  - b. All financial data should be summarized in a way that gets across the primary goals and concerns of the state organization for program and administrative support.
2. Quarterly Program Updates
  - a. A quarterly program update will be prepared by the Executive Director and staff and distributed to Chapter Council Representatives and Presidents.
    - i. Chapter Council Representatives will be held responsible for distributing the report to their chapter boards.
  - b. A public version of the quarterly report will be placed on the website within the two weeks following each chapter council meeting.
3. Membership Data
  - a. Membership data and trends will be incorporated into the Quarterly internal report. This report will also be shared with the membership committee and e-mailed / shared directly with Chapter Membership Chairs.
  - b. Detailed membership data showing new member contact information, changes in status, and membership lapses will be made available to chapter membership chairs on a shared website monthly.
4. Board Actions

- a. Official actions taken by the CNPS State Board of Directors (that are not closed session items) will be shared publically at Quarterly Chapter Council meetings by the Chapter Council Liaison board members.

Note: E-mail subject lines should begin with "CNPS" so that recipients can easily find announcements, reports, and exchanges for future reference.

#### **VI. INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS – CHAPTER COUNCIL ROLE**

- a. Chapter Council delegates have a fundamental responsibility to attend the Quarterly Chapter Council meetings to stay abreast of important statewide issues, policy and financial affairs of the organization and convey information discussed and actions taken to their Chapter Boards.
  - i. Chapter Council Leadership committees should regularly reinforce the importance of information transfer to chapter leaders by delegates, and provide the necessary leadership to ensure that communication happens.
  - ii. Presentations from quarterly meetings, a public version of the ED report, agendas and minutes will be posted on the Administrative pages of the State website for reference.
    1. Any sensitive or confidential information will be made available through secure transmission or posted on a secure intranet site.
- b. Delegates should plan to give an oral update to their Chapter Boards of events transpiring at CC meetings at their next scheduled Chapter board meeting. A review of posted information cannot replace a recount of the physical exchange of information that takes place at the actual meetings.

#### **VII. INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS – SHARING OF KEY INFORMATION: Chapters to State**

The Chapter Council Leadership will develop a schedule for presenting and explaining essential internal information to the CNPS Board of Directors, Executive Director, and key staff (2010).

1. Local Conservation Issues and Actions: will be included in the annual chapter report.
2. Chapters will provide quarterly updates on approved lawsuits in progress.
3. Important Financial Updates – Plant sale results, chapter bequests and major contributions will be reported to the state office quarterly.
4. Sharing of ongoing conservation issues by participating in monthly statewide conservation calls as chapter chairs are available.
5. Through active participation in Quarterly statewide meetings of the Chapter Council, CNPS Board, and staff and between meetings through the Chapter Council and Chapter President e-mail communication groups.

#### **VIII. STRATEGIES FOR REACHING YOUTH**

Youth is one of the key audiences CNPS desires to reach. Reaching young people and getting them interested in the beauty and importance of native plants will ensure that the organization's work continues on in the future.

1. Develop an interactive website that captures the secondary messages we want to convey to young people.
  - a. Designed for students K-12
  - b. Target date – 2012
2. Nature Journaling: Develop a curriculum for teachers, scout leaders, summer school/camp leaders to teach younger children how to observe and appreciate nature. Make the curriculum widely available through our website (in progress, to be completed 2010).
3. Rare Plant Treasure Hunt – expand the marketing of this program into secondary schools, community colleges and universities.
  - a. Develop a flyer on the program and distribute to high school science teachers across the state
  - b. Develop a media plan specifically for the Rare Plant Treasure Hunt program to help expand public awareness of the program throughout the state.

#### **IX. STRATEGIES FOR ENGAGING ACADEMICS AND PROFESSIONAL BOTANISTS**

CNPS should develop an aggressive campus outreach strategy that involves tapping students for chapter volunteer restoration projects, providing educational grant assistance, and suggesting research projects for advanced degree programs.

1. Develop a certification program for botanists (In progress through the new CAL-ECO entity, organized by Josie Crawford).
2. Organize a statewide Conservation Conference at least once every three years.
  - a. Solicit academics for session topics and papers
  - b. Provide financial support so students can attend
  - c. Solicit student research and abstracts for presentation – hold an open science café for topic discussion to provide a venue for students whose papers are not accepted for session presentation.
3. Continue to conduct professional training and workshops for botanists and other conservation professionals (Education Program – in place and ongoing).

**X. STRATEGIES FOR ENGAGING AND EDUCATING THE NON-CNPS PUBLIC**

Chapters and chapter events are the primary outreach tool for reaching members of the general public who may have an interest in home gardening with natives, getting outdoors in wild areas, and socializing with other conservation oriented people.

1. Chapter Plant Sales
  - a. The primary outreach tool for CNPS is the local plant sale events held by each chapter in the spring / and or the fall annually. Chapter Plants sales draw hundreds of potential new members to CNPS.
  - b. Additional tools should be developed and provided to the chapters to assist in signing up new members and renewing existing lapsed members. These may include:
    - i. State staff support at a limited number of plant sales
    - ii. Logo bonus gifts with sign up (canvas shopping bags etc).
    - iii. Display posters that explain the organizational mission and relationship between chapters and State (the chapter membership reps typically talk about chapter benefits only).
2. Native Plant Week (third week in April beginning in 2011)
  - a. A separate media and communications plan will be developed for this event.
  - b. Both the chapters and the state should build a frenzy of events around Native Plant Week – we sponsored the legislation.
3. Consistent Web Presence (see website in III above).
4. Develop a series of videos about the organizations conservation activities and post them on our website and on YouTube (by 2012).
5. Develop and implement education programs for landscape designers, builders, landscape maintenance crews, and others involved in creating and maintaining public and private landscapes.
6. Collaborate with public water agencies to provide resource information on water –wise native plants.

**XI. STRATEGIES FOR ENGAGING ELECTED OFFICIALS**

1. Develop a plan for individual outreach to key legislators
  - a. Develop a political and personal profile of targeted legislators and districts and update it annually.
  - b. Develop written handouts and tools to help facilitate legislative contacts
  - c. Prepare quality communication materials for legislators and develop a delivery schedule
  - d. Prepare and distribute freebies to legislators
  - e. Organize an annual lobby day or participate in CLCV lobby day
  - f. Seek statewide and local opportunities to thank friendly legislators
  - g. Send chapter delegations to meet annually with each local legislator
  - h. Invite legislators to chapter events and invite them to share their thoughts on our issues
  - i. Request comp memberships for key legislative officials
  - j. Identify a legislative chair in each Chapter to receive communication from the State office on legislative issues and activate chapter advocacy as needed to influence key legislators.
  - k. Identify key constituents in each chapter that are capable of influencing local representatives.
2. Form strategic partnerships with other environmental organizations and lobby groups that are closely aligned with CNPS conservation values and priorities.
  - a. Elevate CNPS issues in the work of Ca League of Conservation Voters.
  - b. Work closely with Planning and Conservation League and elevate CNPS issues with PCL for broader based support whenever possible.

- c. Prepare for and attend public visitation days at the Capitol
- 3. Track and monitor positions on legislation and conduct effective advocacy for our positions
  - a. Use Legislative Tracker and other tools to identify and keep up on key legislative issues.
  - b. Use press releases to communicate public positions on legislation
  - c. Issue CNPS wide communications to activate letter writing or phone campaigns to key legislators on key legislation.

# Evaluation Tools and Methods

## EVALUATION TOOLS:

- Membership
- Donations
- Grants awarded to CNPS
- Chapter plant sale attendance and financial results
- Legacy awards/bequests – State and Chapter
- Website Analytics
- Clips in print and web news outlets
- Media queries
- Chapter plant sale attendance and financial results
- Book sales (\$\$ and units)
- Sales of CNPS-logo merchandise
- Attendance at CNPS conferences
- Facebook Followers/Friends

## METHODS:

1. Membership – membership growth is the primary evaluation tool CNPS uses to determine whether or not our message is being accurately translated and heard. If membership is growing – we know that our message is on target and tapping into the environmental and conservation values of the California public.
  - a. Membership numbers and results will be communicated to chapters monthly
  - b. Membership trends and analytics will be communicated to Chapter Leadership in the Quarterly Program Updates.
  - c. Membership surveys will be periodically mailed out to members to assess member satisfaction.
2. Donations – increases in annual giving is another primary way of evaluating whether or not CNPS is effectively communicating its message.
  - a. Year over year contributions will be tracked, reported and analyzed.
  - b. Increases in individual giving will be monitored and analyzed.
3. Grants – in the recent past, CNPS has not been very active in soliciting foundations for assistance in funding our general fund work. While our Vegetation program director has been quite successful in achieving agency and grant funding for projects, we have lacked the resources and expertise to assemble quality proposals for other projects and research potentially matching foundation programs.
  - a. Beginning in 2010, CNPS will work to develop and submit quality proposals to multiple foundations – this will help increase name recognition even if funding is not achieved (See Major Donor Plan).
  - b. Increases in foundation funding above the usual 30K we receive annually for general fund programs will be seen as a measure of improvement in communication with foundations.
4. Chapter plant sale attendance and financial results – will be monitored year over year and accessed for increased attendance.
5. Legacy awards/bequests – annual contributions from legacy gifts will be evaluated as a communication success for our Fund Development Plan.
6. Website Analytics – measure month over month hits and trends.
7. Media Queries, clips in print and web news outlets – news articles in which CNPS is referenced or quoted will be tracked in a media database (late 2010).
8. CNPS Press sales and sales of CNPS-logo merchandise – measure quarter over quarter results.
9. Attendance at CNPS conferences – this is a longer range measure and will depend on the range of topics presented at each conference.