

CNPS Rare Plant Program
2004-2005 Planning Process: Project Proposal

Working Group: Locally Rare Working Group

Proposal Name: 2006 Plant Conservation Symposium

Proposal Sponsor: Gordon Leppig

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PROPOSAL DESCRIPTION:

A CNPS co-sponsored scientific symposium is proposed for February or March 2006. This symposium seeks to present some of the most significant current and future threats facing California's flora and to highlight the scientific and public policy tools available to minimize and avoid them. The target audience is 250+ professional and amateur botanists, ecologists, regional planners, land managers, and policy makers. Presented papers are intended to document important trends in species biology, abundance, and distributions and plant community and habitat dynamics. Data gaps, monitoring needs, and most importantly, effective regional and state-wide conservation efforts will be highlighted. This symposium is meant to act as a catalyst to empower the scientific and conservation community and to foment a radical reassessment of how plants, communities, and habitats are presently studied and conserved. Proceedings from this symposium will be peer-reviewed and published in book-form by CNPS Press. These proceedings will manifest the theoretical and applied framework for regional and statewide conservation planning for the coming decade. This symposium involves all CNPS programs, including development, vegetation, conservation, horticulture, education, and publications. The Sacramento-Davis area, given its central California location, is a potential Symposium site.

RATIONALE:

California's native plants and habitats face unprecedented threats from development and urbanization, introduced species, climate change, and spread of pathogens, to name a few. These dynamic and interrelated threats are radically altering the structure and distribution of California's native plant populations and habitats. Recent changes in the California flora have resulted in native plant extinctions and range contractions, habitat degradation or loss, and in some cases, the collapse of entire ecosystems and plant communities. Society's ability to understand these dynamic changes and to minimize and effectively respond to them is dependent upon understanding their magnitude and on integrating the best scientific tools and public policies. While a large body of data has documented the threats to California's native plants, the utilization of this data to develop land management decisions and conservation strategies that effectively ameliorate these threats has thus far been inadequate.

COMPETING AND SIMILAR EVENTS

The 2006 annual meeting of the Botanical Society of America, the American Bryological and Lichenological Society, the American Society of Plant Taxonomists, and the American Fern Society will be held in Chico, CA on July 28-Aug 3. Attendance is expected to be affected by the Chico botanical meeting, and this conflict should be considered in setting the final conference date.

Deleted: . Although this is a major botanical congress with some subject matter overlap, the CNPS symposium is focused exclusively on the conservation of the California flora. Therefore,

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TIMEFRAME*

Time Period	Action
Summer 2004	Develop symposium concept
Fall 2004	Present concept to CNPS board and Rare Plant Committee, find 3 co-chairs,
Fall- Winter 2004	Finalize concept, develop budget, formulate steering committee. Set date, arrange location, logistics, and co-sponsors. Write grants to defray costs
Spring-Summer 2005	Invite presenters and key note speakers, Call for abstracts (Madrono, Con Bio, Fremontia), Advertise, Setup Webpage
Fall 2005	Registration begins, Abstract submission deadline, schedule of speakers finalized
February-March 2006	*Symposium takes place, Manuscripts are submitted
Winter 2006	Publication of proceedings

*** Note if volunteers and staff are willing (Leppig is), the entire process could be moved up one season for a symposium in late October/early November 1995. 15 months is enough time to plan this event.**

RESOURCES NEEDED:

Organization: Three co-chairs will organize the event with the help of a 6-8 member steering committee. At least one CNPS staff person and one Board of Directors member should serve on the steering committee. Volunteer co-chairs will oversee all aspects of this symposium from budgets to publication of proceedings. This committee will meet regularly, most often electronically or by phone. Steering Committee subcommittees may be created to oversee 1) promotion and outreach 2) location logistics and budget 2) recruitment of presenters, 3) publication of proceedings.

Staff Involvement: Some oversight and involvement by the Executive Director and Rare Plant Botanist or Senior Land Management Analyst is desirable. Depending on Staff and Board assessment of work load priorities, the symposium could take up to 5-10% of the Directors' or other staff member's time in the three or four months leading up to the symposium. 80 hours of development staff time (working with a co-chair) would be ideal for grant writing and follow-through. Unless administrative assistant work for registration management, etc. can be done by a co-sponsor, a temporary 16 hour/ week, four month position may be desirable (16 hours/week X \$20/hour 4 months = \$5,500).

Budget: This conference is intended to result in a small net revenue for CNPS. The budget is principally driven by the hotel contract for conference room facilities, food, and refreshments. This in turn, is a function of the type and length of event, number of attendees and the number of paid hotel rooms. Based upon similar symposia, the greatest expenses are for food and conference space and this would be covered by registration fees. A detailed budget will be finalized after the symposium date and general location is determined (Spring 2005) and request for proposals are reviewed.

Funding Options: This conference is intended to result in a small net revenue for CNPS. Co-sponsorship donations of \$2,000-5,000 in cash or in-kind services will be sought to defray symposium costs, to provide student scholarships, and to publish the proceedings. Potential Co-sponsors include: California Department of Fish and Game; US Fish and Wildlife Service, UC Center for Wildland Conservation/Forestry, UC Jepson Herbaria, Jones and Stokes, PG&E, Chevron, Hewett-Packard Foundation.