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CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY
BULLETIN

Preserving Open Space

Open space districts have become one of the most effective ways of protecting natural areas

BY JENNIFER KALT

Open Space Districts are local and regional agencies that protect natural areas, agricultural lands, and public trails. They provide multiple benefits by preserving wildlife habitat, clean air and water, and outdoor recreational opportunities near population centers.

The first such district in California, the East Bay Regional Park District, was formed to preserve open space and park land in the hills behind Berkeley and Oakland. Today, more than 350,000 acres in California are protected by Open Space Districts, with nearly half of these lands concentrated in the San Francisco Bay Area. Monterey, Riverside, Los Angeles, and Sonoma Counties also have Open Space Districts (see sidebar on page 6).

Most Open Space Districts are formed by voter support for creation of a special tax to protect open space. Many are funded by a quarter cent sales tax (requiring a two-thirds voter approval) or annual property tax of around $30–40. Benefit assessment taxes can also fund Open Space Districts. In many areas of the state, these small tax increases are offset by the increase in property values and tourism resulting from open space protection.

Once districts are established, additional revenue comes from grants, private donations, and bond measures. Funding can also come from real estate transfer taxes and hotel occupancy taxes. Local funding sources and elected representatives on district boards allow communities to prioritize open space protection that best suits their needs. Many districts also have associated land trusts that work to acquire land and establish conservation easements, which are then donated to the district.

Open Space Districts are more likely to be approved when support for open space protection is broad-based, and includes ranchers and farmers, taxpayers, realtors and

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Julie Evens

Chaparral pea *(Pickeringia montana)* at the Elarra Conservation Easement in Sonoma Valley, held by Sonoma Land Trust. Photo courtesy of Sonoma Land Trust.

Harness That Rain

Harvesting rainfall is not only good for the garden, but also for the environment

BY MIKE KOSLOSKY

Most savvy California gardeners are aware of the need to treat water as a precious commodity. We use catchment basins to store water underground, collect roof runoff in downspout rain barrels, use drip irrigation systems, and mulch our landscapes to prevent excess evaporation.

Lately a new landscape feature has been gaining in popularity, namely the rain garden. The principle behind rain gardens is to capture runoff and allow it to infiltrate into the soil and recharge ground water supplies, as opposed to its flowing rapidly down storm drains where it adds to already swollen urban creeks, while carrying with it eroded soil and pollutants such as home and garden chemicals and pet wastes.

Ideally rain gardens are located between one's property and the sidewalk or street, and slope away from the house. Capturing water from roof downspouts, the driveway, and garden runoff into a pond-like depression will hold it until the water has time to drain into the soil.

The most important component of any rain garden is having a substrate that will drain and replenish the water table. Compacted or hardpan soils must be broken up and amended with organic material or fast-draining gravels. To see if your soil is a candidate for a rain garden, dig a six-inch hole and fill it with water. If the water drains away within 24 hours you are set. Rain gardens are not ponds or bogs. They need not be any deeper than six inches but

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From the Executive Director

Help Fund the Conservation Program

CNPS strongly believes in the importance of having permanent full-time staff supporting our five core programs. Although conservation work has continued with support from dedicated volunteers, the program will greatly benefit from the continuity and focused attention that full-time, permanent staff can provide. Last year, the Board of Directors and the Chapter Council voted in favor of hiring a new Conservation Program Director to begin in 2008.

What will a Conservation Director do to further our conservation mission? The CD will work with CNPS chapter conservationists to address statewide, regional, and local issues. At the state level the CD will develop a CNPS policy and guidelines on fire and fuel management in urban-wildland interface areas. This policy will emphasize plant conservation while recognizing public health and safety issues. The initial focus will be on chaparral and woodland habitats close to urbanized areas, and will include plant conservation areas close or adjacent to such urbanized areas.

At the regional level, the CD will create a regional or thematic network of chapter conservationists to identify critical issues, common challenges, and solutions that may lead to statewide initiatives, as well as increase collaboration among chapters. At the local level, the CD will provide advice on chapter conservation projects.

Once the decision to hire a Conservation Director was announced, enthusiastic members immediately stepped forward with contributions totaling $28,000 to help fund this critical position. Two board members donated $10,000 each, a Chapter Council delegate and long-term volunteer donated $5,000, and the South Coast Chapter donated $3,000. These generous donations came with an open invitation for matching contributions. We are actively seeking to match these funds with an additional $28,000 of support. Help us strengthen CNPS's leadership role in California plant conservation.

Amanda Jorgenson
Executive Director

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Legislator, Agency Employee Awards Announced

Lois Wolk, Assemblywoman from the 8th District (Davis), has received the CNPS Legislator of the Year Award. Ms. Wolk has been a persistent leader on conservation and general environmental issues, serving on several committees related to natural resources and sponsoring and carrying many important bills. As the mayor of the City of Davis and county supervisor for Yolo County, she led and supported efforts to protect open space and farmland, including restoration of Putah and Cache Creeks, and is the recipient of numerous environmental awards.



Lois Wolk

Cay Goude, assistant field supervisor for the Endangered Species Program at the Sacramento Fish and Wildlife Office, has received the CNPS Outstanding Agency Personnel Award. She was the major driving force in facilitating the recent consensus agreement between UC Merced, the environmental community, and the regulatory agencies. Her persistent efforts resulted in significantly reducing impacts to vernal pools, thereby conserving for the future many populations of listed plants and animals.



Al Donner

Cay Goude

Charles Blair, Chair
Volunteer Recognition Committee

A Natural Connection

Taking the small leap from native plant gardening to sustainable landscaping

BY STEPHANIE MORRIS

Like many, I was drawn to CNPS through gardening. I joined in 1998 and was quickly persuaded to chair the Santa Clara Valley's active subgroup, Gardening with Natives. There I found a wealth of enthusiasm and expertise for native plant gardening. As a landscape architect, I became excited about the possibility of using more native plants in my design work.

It wasn't long before I met several other landscape professionals in the group, and we started discussing the practice of sustainable landscaping, a concept gaining momentum in the Santa Clara Valley. The leap from using native plants in our design work to a whole-system site approach came fairly naturally. We realized that promoting a complete package of residentially-oriented habitat conservation and site design could make a big difference over time if more homeowners became involved, and if more design professionals become well-versed in ecological practices.

Sustainable landscaping includes a number of basic concepts: working with existing site systems; conserving existing natural areas; reusing concrete and other salvaged materials on site; incorporating recycled products; reducing hardscape and using pervious paving materials; conserving water through efficient irrigation; retaining graywater and storm water on site; and of course incorporating native plants and edibles into the design. In a nutshell, a "sustainable" landscape is designed to use fewer resources and less energy, divert needless waste from the landfill, and require less maintenance.

Sherri Osaka of Sustainable Landscape Designs suggested the idea of forming a special group to discuss these emerging ideas, share successes and failures, and collaborate on new products. We began to meet monthly, selected the name Sustainable Landscape Roundtable (SLR), and decided fairly early on that what was needed was a way of measuring how "ecologically oriented" a given landscape is.



Stephanie Morris

Alongside this native plant garden in Sunnyvale, California, is a driveway of porous concrete that helps to retain water on the site. Along with other permeable paving materials, porous concrete is one of the newer sustainable technologies gaining in popularity. On-site water percolation allows for soils and plant roots to naturally clean toxins from water before it is discharged into local creeks.

We were all familiar with nationwide LEED standards (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) and knew we wanted to create measurable standards with a similar format. We especially wanted a format that logically flows with the design process: site design first, then grading/drainage, then materials, then planting.

Our standards have developed gradually over a three-year time frame and are still being refined. Our current document is available at www.landscapestandards.com. We have also added a number of new features on the website, including a listing of local native plant professionals and the beginnings of a photo library of ecological landscape concepts.

We have kept a fairly small core group to allow us to push forward with the standards, and have invited several professionals to be involved with peer review. We have opened up other SLR meetings to a larger audience, and several times have hosted events, such as reviewing the latest in ET (evapotranspiration) or "Smart" irrigation controllers, learning about energy-conserving LED landscape lighting, and discussing porous concrete.

Recently several other measurable landscape standards have become available. Our group supports the efforts of *Stopwaste.org*—the organization that oversees waste management and recycling in Alameda County—and their Bay Friendly Landscape Guidelines: *www.bayfriendly.org*. Currently there is momentum to promote these guidelines and the practices of sustainable landscaping throughout the entire Bay Area.

Overall, the SLR group has allowed us to share information with fellow professionals and become collaborators as we try new ideas. Ecological principles remind us that everything is interconnected; so it seems natural that native plant enthusiasts and sustainable landscape professionals interlink.

Stephanie Morris is a licensed landscape architect in Campbell, California.

CHAPTER NEWS

SAN LUIS OBISPO CHAPTER :
Dune Restoration and Middle School Students

The Los Osos Middle School Dune Restoration project is a native garden initiative begun in 2001. As part of the school's seventh grade ecology unit, students are reestablishing dune habitat right on the school grounds. The school was the only one of 11 receiving a state grant to incorporate native habitat restoration into its school garden program.



Rose De Haro

Los Osos Middle School students proudly show off their native plants in newly seeded flats and larger pots. The plants they are helping to grow represent the surrounding dune scrub community, and will be planted at the school as part of an ecology unit.

CNPS members assist students in plant propagation experiments and service learning restoration activities. All of this, including lesson plans in ecology and plant development, is part of a curriculum package prepared by science teacher Annie Stoneman and aligned with California's science instructional framework.

Key ingredients to the project's success is a stable group of committed CNPS volunteers from the San Luis Obispo Chapter, access to a greenhouse on campus, and the mild winter climate that aligns the school year with the propagation cycle.

CNPS members work directly with students, teaching them how to propagate plants native to the dune coastal habitat, and later how to plant them outside. The natives selected for propagation illustrate a range of seed and seedling strategies, but crucial to student acceptance are the wallflower, monkeyflower, and evening primrose that flower in the first season. There is nothing more important than blooms to attract students to plants.

The keystone plant in the restoration effort is silver dune lupine (*Lupinus chamissonis*), which serves as a host plant to a local rare butterfly. This plant-butterfly association is crucial to student empathy and understanding of the dune natives.

John Chesnut and Susi Bernstein
San Luis Obispo Chapter

Research Grants Encourage Young Botanists

Each year CNPS awards research grants to promising young botanists, and this year 14 such grants were made. The awards were smaller than in previous years because reviewers suggested dividing available funds among a larger number of students. Our hope is to encourage the work of these young people, while sharing with them our concerns about conservation issues.

Recipients included graduate students, as well as two chapter members not currently enrolled in a college or university. Topics being studied include species distribution, reproduction and evolutionary processes, effects of grazing, competition abilities of rare versus common plants, environmental stress, plant morphology, species adaptation, and floristics.

If you are interested in supporting this grant program, contact the state CNPS office (916-447-2677). Potential grant recipients may obtain a copy of the guidelines at the CNPS state website under "Administration/CNPS Grants" (*www.cnps.org*).

Joan Stewart, Chair
CNPS Educational Grants Committee

New Staff

I am pleased to announce that we have a new Rare Plant Botanist and a new Vegetation Ecologist.

Nicholas Jensen, formerly CNPS Vegetation Assistant, is the Society's new Rare Plant Botanist. Nick has assisted the Vegetation Program on the Sierra Nevada Foothills, Lassen Foothills, and other projects. He holds a B.S. from UC Davis in environmental horticulture and urban forestry, with an emphasis in plant biodiversity and restoration ecology.

Donna Shorrock joined the Vegetation Program in November 2007. She will assist with identification and documentation of rare plant communities in California. Donna earned her M.S. in plant biology at Arizona State University. Prior to coming to CNPS, she worked for the National Park Service as a regional wetlands biologist.

Amanda Jorgenson
Executive Director

Volunteer Service Awards

CNPS regularly recognizes members for outstanding contributions to the preservation and appreciation of California's native flora through its Volunteer Recognition Award. CNPS is grateful for all they have done.

Sally Casey was named a CNPS Fellow in 1997. At age 88 she continues her dedicated service to CNPS and the Santa Clara Valley Chapter through teaching and plant propagation. Using her skills as a certified Master Gardener (by UC Extension) combined with her academic background, she has made significant contributions to the preservation of California's native vegetation and is an inspiration to all who know her.



Arvind Kumar

Sally Casey



Vicki Hotaling

Bob Hotaling

Bob Hotaling has served for the past 10 years as editor of *The Obispoensis*, the San Luis Obispo County Chapter's stellar newsletter, and been an active participant in plant sales and field trips. He is one of those consistent workers whose efforts benefit the Society as a whole as well as his own chapter.

CNPS members are encouraged to submit award nominations to *blairce@verizon.net* through—or with the concurrence of—their chapter presidents. Also, many CNPS Fellows continue valuable activity long after being elected. Following a suitable period, their ongoing contributions could be considered for a Volunteer Recognition Award.

Charles Blair, Chair
Volunteer Recognition Committee

Donate Books to San Diego Fire Victims

Six CNPS members lost homes in the large fires that burned in San Diego last fall. A larger number lost structures and/or landscaping. The San Diego Chapter of CNPS is helping members who lost their homes replace books in their libraries. If you would like to donate an extra copy of a botanical or gardening book, or make a cash donation, please contact Cindy at cindyburrascano@cox.net, 858-578-8040.

Accolades

A number of CNPS members in the East Bay Chapter were honored recently and are acknowledged briefly here:

Charli Danielsen received a Jefferson Award for community and public service, honoring her 30 years of work to preserve and protect California's native habitat, and 13 years as volunteer manager of Native Here Nursery in Berkeley's Tilden Park. An article about her appeared in the San Francisco Chronicle (November 18, 2007) as well as a TV segment (November 21) which may be viewed at *http://www.cbs5.com* (search for "Danielsen").

Mary Ann Hannon was one of five recipients of Diablo Magazine's 2007 Threads of Hope Award for major accomplishments in community service. She was cited for having spent 35 years volunteering for the Sunol-Ohlone Regional Wilderness. Much of this time was spent leading wildflower walks and special events, and helping to create an inventory of the park's plants.



Janice Bray

Charli Danielsen



W. J. Hannon

Mary Ann Hannon

Kathy Kramer was honored by the National Wildlife Federation in Washington, D.C. last November, along with Governor Arnold Schwarzenegger and former Vice President Al Gore. She received the Education Achievement award for exemplary leadership over the past 20 years in educating and engaging both students and adults about their local environment. She developed the San Francisco Bay Area's Bringing Back the Natives Garden Tour, and founded and and directed the Richmond-based Aquatic Outreach Institute, where she developed a number of teacher training workshops and oversaw a dozen annual watershed conferences.



Mike May

Kathy Kramer

Preserving Open Space

(from page 1)

developers, environmental groups, and elected officials. When a proposed district's goals include public access, habitat protection, and agricultural land protection, it has the best chance of garnering broad support.

The first step in establishing an Open Space District is assessing a community's needs, and then educating the public on how those needs will be met. This can be done through polling residents on open space priorities and willingness to support a tax increase, and by creating a task force to help build relationships between various interest groups.

California's newest district, the Napa County Regional Park and Open Space District, won voter approval in 2006. Five other Open Space Districts—in Ventura, Sacramento, San Bernardino, San Diego, and Santa Barbara Counties—have been authorized by the State of California but have not yet been approved by voters.

In the interim, supporting land trusts is an effective way to protect open space. To learn about local land trusts in your area, visit *http://www.calandtrusts.org/trustregions.cfm*.

Jennifer Kalt is the conservation chair for the North Coast Chapter, a region that does not yet have an Open Space District.

A CLOSER LOOK AT ONE OPEN SPACE DISTRICT

Sonoma County's Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District was established in 1990. To date it has protected over 70,000 acres. Unique in its focus on preserving agricultural lands, it is one of the biggest publicly funded farmland preservation districts in the country, generating $17 million annually from a quarter cent sales tax.

The District's mission is to permanently protect the diverse agricultural, natural resource, and scenic open space lands of Sonoma County. The County Board of Supervisors serves as its Board of Directors, with an independent Open Space Authority overseeing sales tax expenditures. A Citizen's Advisory Committee advises the Board and staff on policy and proposed land protection efforts.

The District's Small Farms Initiative supports continued viability of agricultural lands. District-owned land leased to farmers keeps agricultural land in production, provides local produce, contributes to the local economy, and allows access for farmers who may not otherwise be able to find land. Other projects include trails, natural areas, greenbelts, community gardens, and city parks, including a skate park and ball fields. For more information, visit *http://www.sonomaopenspace.org/*

Harness That Rain

(from page 1)

should have a flat bottom. Gently sloping sides will allow you to create three different zones for planting. Choose plants based on your specific conditions of sun and shade and plants suited to your locale.



Carol Bornstein

The principle of a rain garden works in any climate, although the physical look may vary. This one is from Santa Barbara Botanic Garden and includes sedge *(Carex* sp.*)* and meadowfoam *(Limnanthes* sp.*)*.

Zone 1 is the bottom of the depression where water will sit the longest. Plant it with species that can tolerate periods of flooding. Good candidates include various sedges *(Carex* spp.*)*, rushes *(Juncus* spp.*)*, red-twig dogwood *(Cornus sericea)*, both seep and red monkeyflower *(Mimulus guttatus* and M. *cardinalis)*, redwood sorrel *(Oxalis oregana)*, ninebark *(Physocarpus capitatus)*, and meadowfoam *(Limnanthes douglasii)*.

Zone 2 surrounds Zone 1 and includes plants that don't mind having their roots wet, but need drainage. Examples are Oregon grape *(Berberis* sp.*)*, columbine *(Aquilegia formosa)*, snowberry *(Symphoricarpos albus)*, and assorted ferns.

Zone 3 is the outermost layer of the rain garden and features plants that prefer drier conditions. Choose species such as western bleeding heart *(Dicentra formosa)*, assorted grasses, oceanspray *(Holodiscus discolor)*, goldenrod *(Solidago* spp.*)*, and annual wildflowers.

For a comprehensive guide to rain gardens, see *Rain Gardens: Managing Water Sustainably in the Garden and Designed Landscape* by Nigel Dunnett and Andy Clayden, 2007, Timber Press.

Mike Koslosky is a naturalist, outdoorsman, and writer. His work has appeared in *Bay Nature, Fremontia, Parent's Press*, and *Flower and Garden Magazine*.

Native Gardening in Season

Leave Some for the Birds

By Barbara Eisenstein

Each year the wildflowers are spectacular. In mid-May they are still blooming in many parts of the state, but in my southern California garden most are past their peak. The poppies *(Eschscholzia californica)*, tidy tips *(Layia platyglossa)*, and gilias *(Gilia tricolor, G. capitata)* are now going to seed, but earlier they put on quite a show!

I feel a surprising melancholy as I look over the matted gray plants, tawny stems, and silvery seed heads. The question is whether to tidy up now, removing the fading annuals, or to leave them go for a while. The flitter of sparrows and finches in the brush convinces me to eschew the suburban obsession for a manicured yard and leave the seeds for the birds. Rather than filling a bird feeder, I can pull up a chair, pour myself some lemonade, and watch the birds as they feast on a variety of healthy, nutritious seeds.

In fact, as I look over the garden, I begin to appreciate its seasonality. The garden is transitioning from the exuberance of spring to the quiet of our long, hot, and dry summer. The orange poppies *(Eschscholzia californica)*, yellow and purple lupines *(Lupinus* spp.*)*, and blue phacelias *(Phacelia tanacetifolia, P. minor)* will give way to the ecru of cool season grasses *(Nassella* spp., *Melica californica)* and the grays of sages *(Salvia* spp.*)* and sagebrushes *(Artemisia californica)*. Even as the spectacular blue flowers of the Frosty Blue wild lilac *(Ceanothus* 'Frosty Blue'*)* fade, its shiny, dark green leaves provide a refreshing contrast in my subdued summer garden.

Three months ago the anticipation of this year's colorful display was almost unbearable. As it comes to an end I contemplate how I will extend it next year. I will sow seeds over a longer period of time, from October through February. I will include more annuals that bloom into late spring and early summer. Although the deep and soft pinks of the clarkias *(Clarkia amoena, C. unguiculata)* are still adorning my garden in May and June, next year I will plant more of them and add madias *(Madia elegans)*, tarweeds *(Hemizonia* spp.*)*, and sunflowers *(Helianthus annuus)* to provide cheerful yellow flowers late in the season.

And the poppies *(Eschscholzia californica)* I cut back now will return for a second or third bloom, brightening my summer garden with their brash orange flowers. As the season progresses I will selectively remove and cut back the wildflowers, leaving some seed for the birds, and collecting some for next year.

Looking over my garden, it feels like autumn in the East. Just as I used to look forward to winter as a time of subdued color and reduced outdoor activity, I now take a long, deep breath in anticipation of a slower season. When I first arrived in California I had a hard time distinguishing seasons. Now I find that they are as obvious as the autumn foliage and winter snows of the east coast.



Barbara Eisenstein



John Macdonald

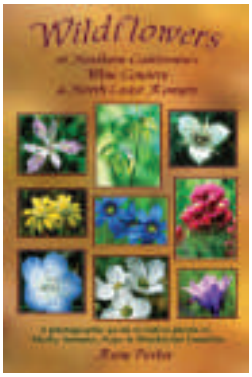
Top: Wildflowers blooming along sidewalk of author's home welcome walkers. Bottom: Goldfinch enjoys food and cover from spent wildflowers *(Astragalus* sp.*)*.

*[**Note**: Plant California natives wisely. Protect rare and endangered species and prevent gene pool contamination by using locally grown species in the landscape. Avoid using invasive plants, whether native or introduced.* http://www.cnps.org/cnps/archive/landscaping.php]

Barbara Eisenstein is the horticulture outreach coordinator at Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden. She arrived in California ten years ago and fell in love with the state and its extraordinary flora.

NorCal Wildflower Guide

A popular photographic guide by Reny Parker, *Wildflowers of Northern California's Wine Country & North Coast Ranges*, offers a visual journey through the environmentally diverse counties of Marin, Sonoma, Napa, and Mendocino.



This handy guide, containing 542 color images, groups flowers by color and contains close-up photos to aid in identification. Included are 358 species from 83 plant families. Information on bloom times, habitats, garden tips, native uses, natural history, and wildflower hotspots is provided.

To view the contents and sample pages, go to *http://RenysWildflowers.com/guide.html*. The guide is available through CNPS and local chapters as well as in bookstores.

California Native Plant Society

2009 Conservation Conference: Strategies and Solutions

January 17–19, 2009, Convention Center and Sheraton Grand Hotel, Sacramento, California

Call for Papers and Posters: Submission Period: March 1 to June 30, 2008

The CNPS 2009 Conservation Conference: Strategies and Solutions aims to bring together over 1,000 scientists, conservationists, university students, public policymakers, local and regional planners, and land managers from all regions of the state and beyond to share and learn about the latest developments in conservation science and public policy.

We seek solutions-based papers and posters on the following topics: climate change and California's flora; rare plant conservation and restoration; mitigation and monitoring of impacts to plants and communities; invasive species; vegetation classification and mapping to promote native plant conservation; conservation genetics; achieving equal protection for plants; regional planning tools; land management; conservation through land acquisition; and basic conservation-related plant science. We also seek papers on plant conservation from regional and ecosystem-level perspectives, including Baja California. See *www.cnps.org* for details.

Next Chapter Council Meeting

JUNE 7, COLOMA, HOST GROUPS: CENTRAL SIERRA CHAPTERS
(Details available at: *http://cnps.org/cnps/admin/vcc/index.php*)

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The California Native Plant Society is a statewide, nonprofit organization of amateurs and professionals with a common interest in learning about and preserving California's native plants and plant communities. Membership is open to all. Visit cnps.org

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