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CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

BULLETIN

CEQA Reform Looms in 2013

By Carolyn Longstreth

The language of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA)—with terms like "scoping," "negative declarations," "EIR," "mitigation," and "no-action alternative"—is decidedly esoteric. But it rolls lightly off the tongue of many a CNPS advocate for native plant conservation.

Signed into law by Governor Ronald Reagan in 1970, this landmark legislation created the framework used by every California county and city to evaluate proposed development projects. Local planning agencies must identify likely impacts of new development in an environmental impact report (EIR), consider alternatives, and "mitigate" environmental harm—that is, incorporate changes that lessen adverse impacts or avoid them altogether.

CEQA includes a robust public process: detailed information on development proposals is revealed and input from concerned citizens is encouraged. After approval, groups or individuals can sue to correct deficiencies in the process or outcome. Lawsuits are the only recourse available to enforce or ensure accountability. In short, CEQA is an invaluable tool for CNPS and other conservation-minded organizations.

But CEQA may be about to change. In August 2012, State Senator Michael Rubio (D– Shafter), supported by business interests, used a back-door procedure to introduce a bill that would have created broad exemptions and rewritten the law in other ways. A large number of legislators cried foul and Rubio's effort collapsed, but the impetus for change remains strong in Sacramento. Governor Jerry Brown declared last summer that "CEQA reform is the Lord's work." For his part, Senate President pro tem Darrell Steinberg promised that "we're going to take it on in a big way" in 2013 and named Rubio as the new chair of the Senate Environmental Quality Committee.



Spencer Dykstra

Rare basaltic vernal pools like these at Table Mountain near Oroville in Butte County show off fantastic spring color, but are in peril from development and over-grazing.

The business community maintains that CEQA harms California's economy by adding cost and delay to construction projects, especially when the matter goes to court. Industry groups are promoting proposals that would excuse mitigation or bar lawsuits if the developer can show that the new project would comply with other environmental laws, such as the Endangered Species Act, or with a County General Plan that itself has gone through CEQA review.

CNPS Conservation Director Greg Suba and our Legislative Consultant Vern Goehring have joined with Green California, a coalition of environmental groups, to develop messaging and strategy. This collaboration has spawned a CEQA defense campaign, "CEQA Works" (ceqaworks.org), bringing together environmental, civic, tribal, labor, and environmental justice groups in a comprehensive effort to protect, as well as improve, CEQA.

Suba and Goehring, along with our partners, are preparing counter proposals that would improve the CEQA process at the agency level. For example, CNPS wants planning agencies to hire the consultants that prepare EIRs, instead of delegating this responsibility to the applicant.

CNPS also hopes to bar confidentiality agreements between developers and the consultants who prepare EIRs. Goehring is critical of the proposal to merge CEQA with federal statutes, pointing out that the current law has the advantage of providing agencies and the public with a single, comprehensive report that addresses all the applicable issues together and a fully transparent process. Goehring predicts that the issue of CEQA reform will not be resolved until much later in the year.

[Editor's Note: As of press time, we have learned that California State Senator Rubio, former chairman of the State Senate's Environmental Quality Committee, has resigned to become manager of California governmental affairs for Chevron.]

Carolyn Longstreth is Chapter Council delegate for the Marin Chapter, a retired attorney, and writes about nature and the environment.



From the Executive Director

On resilience: Oaks and CNPS members

Have you noticed all the young oaks? If you've been in a part of California that supports oaks then I imagine you have probably noticed seedlings, saplings, and juvenile oaks coming up in unexpected places. Gangly valley oak teenagers brushing up the strip between the highway and the fence line. Prickly coast live oaks of all ages and sizes pushing through *Baccharis*, invading ugly urban landscaping, and popping out of flower pots.

As a teenager, 30 years ago, I planted a strip of oleander plants along the fence line of my family home. For decades those few dozen plants grew taller and thicker and provided a great screen from the nearby road. Now the plants are all dying, victim of an introduced disease that is wiping out oleanders across California; researchers predict 90% of oleanders will die. Visiting my father's San Diego County home I see nearly complete mortality of those plants I installed, but



Steve Pedas

I also see something very exciting: coast live oak saplings popping up at regular intervals along the entire fence line.

We all love the great grandmother oaks, but we should also be thankful for the many lesser oaks and their entrepreneurial energy. These young oaks remind us that California plants are not delicate little victims that need intensive care. These hearty natives remind us that California plants are by definition survivors. These lineages have experienced massive climate change, endured asphalt and weeds, and are still betting their acorns and achenes on a distant future.

Almost all of these hopeful oaks will die before they mature—it is the way of all plants that produce copious seeds. Far too many will be destroyed by *Phytopthora*, gold spotted oak borer, polyphagous (having many host plants) shot hole borer, and other pests introduced and spread by messy and careless humans. Regardless, even with no help from humans, many will survive, thrive, cast acorns and shade, and begin to heal our land. What might they accomplish if oak-loving humans were to assist?

As you know, we are working hard to find out. Across the state we are teaching about, planting, and protecting native plants. We are grateful to the thousands of volunteers who sow hope in the name of CNPS through their varied efforts, and to the thousands of donors who demonstrate hope for the future with a gift to support our mission. As shown by the success of the Conservation Campaign (see page 6), CNPS is blessed with a community of supporters who repeatedly demonstrate tremendous faith in our vision of a more wild California.

We all owe a debt of gratitude to those who give, including a tremendously generous donor's Thanksgiving gift of $345,595. With this support, CNPS will extend the successful Rare Plant Treasure Hunt to serve more chapters, complete critical vegetation maps, deliver scholarships and other support to more students, hire full-time staff for the CNPS Horticulture Program, and more. It's going to be a great year!

Dan Gluesenkamp
CNPS Executive Director

Announcements

The third annual California Native Plant Week is April 15–21, 2013. We hope your chapter is sponsoring one or more events, or collaborating with other local agencies and groups. Please send news and photos of your activities to cnpw@cnps.org.

Now is the perfect time for your chapter to start planning a Rare Plant Treasure Hunt! We have funds to focus on the central coast, especially on Los Padres National Forest and State Parks, as well as the deserts again this year. For more information, contact Danny Slakey at dslakey@cnps.org for Northern and Central California, and Kim Clark at kclark@cnps.org for Southern California and deserts.

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Northern California Botanists Hold 2013 Symposium

Redwood ecology a featured topic

By Julie A. Verran

Northern California Botanists held its fifth symposium at California State University, Chico this past January. The symposium's theme was "From the Redwoods to the Sagebrush: Botany Ranging Far and Wide." Research topics ranged from estuarine eelgrass and offshore seaweeds to Great Basin seed dispersal. Most sessions included at least one talk on redwood ecology, and the effect of climate change on California's plants was a common theme.

Plenary speaker Professor Todd Dawson of UC Berkeley's Department of Integrative Biology gave one of the most engaging presentations—a dramatic synthesis of the current state of redwood research. He first took his audience deeply into the past, using complex charts and graphs to illustrate past redwood range changes, and changes in climate factors.

Dawson showed that for millions of years redwoods covered vast areas of the U.S., Canada, Asia, and Europe. Now, however, they are restricted to the coastal fog belt from southern Oregon to south-central California. Recent climate measurements, and predictions of future temperature rise and fog decline, show redwoods are now facing conditions they have never before experienced. A new climate may cause redwoods to be replaced by brushy ecosytems, Dawson warned.

In addition to Dawson, others presented research on coast redwoods and associated plants. Redwood scientists have been working together on similar lines of inquiry ever since the 1980s when Professor Stephen Sillett and his Humboldt State University students learned to climb high into redwoods without harming them, and found whole unknown ecosystems in their crowns.

Professor Emeritus Michael Barbour of UC Davis and his team used powerful statistical tools to assess dominance of coast redwood and Douglas fir in old-growth forest stands. The groves, found from Mendocino County south, had no roads or trails and had not been logged for at least 200 years. The researchers found that distance from the coast is by far the strongest factor in forest dominance by redwood and other conifers, with redwoods dominating nearer the ocean, most likely due in part to the fog drip. Barbour added that fog drip has still not been quantified for this part of coastal California.



William Davis

A common theme throughout sessions at the Northern California Botanists Symposium in January 2013 was redwood ecology. Pictured is a view east of Redwood Regional Park.

In another talk on the importance of fog drip, Save the Redwoods League's science director Emily Burns reported that while a doctoral student in Dr. Dawson's lab, she followed up on his finding that redwoods absorb water through their leaves. Burns found foliar uptake also occurs in most understory plants (10 out of 12 studied) in the redwood ecosystem. The shallow-rooted sword fern was the most susceptible to drying among the plants she studied. It absorbed the most water through its leaves and became fully hydrated by summer's end.

Ayzik Solomeshch of UC Davis discussed his work classifying forest plant communities of Redwood National Park and several state parks using vegetative plots 1,000 meters square. For each plot he compiled complete species lists, cover percentages of all species, and habitat characteristics. Then, correlating his work with the U.S. National Vegetation Classification, he found *Sequoia sempervirens* (coast redwood) and *Alnus rubra* (red alder) Alliances were the most diverse.

Professor Teresa Sholars of College of the Redwoods reported on her recent studies of mycorrhizal mushroom species in redwood forest, mixed-conifer forest, and pygmy forest in coastal Mendocino County. Noting that mycorrhizal associations can help plants survive climate changes such as warming and drying, she advised people to focus on connections between species, and not just dominant vegetation.

Other reports at the symposium provided examples of resiliency of native species, which may provide hope of continued adaptation to changing conditions.

Julie A. Verran conducts small-scale botanical surveys on the Mendocino coast.

CHAPTER NEWS

SAN DIEGO CHAPTER:
Baja a concern on both sides of the border

By César García Valderrama

Those who live in Southern California are really fortunate to have a local CNPS chapter in San Diego. As someone who lives and works in nearby Tijuana, Mexico, I'm aware of the incredible activities that the chapter promoted in 2012 for the benefit of the surrounding community.

Some of the most impressive activities were the San Diego Chapter's first Native Plant Garden Tour, the ongoing Rare Plant Treasure Hunt, and many of the spectacular field trips, such as the trip to the Del Mar Mesa scrub oak chaparral/woodland and vernal pools, or to the Tecate cypress stands on Guatay Mountain. Let's not forget the annual Fall Native Plant Sale, and that doesn't even include the conservation activities that CNPS is directly involved in.

All this was kicked off last January with the 2012 CNPS Conservation Conference held in San Diego, which I was able to attend. It featured many of the big names in California botany, plus a series of workshops and wonderful related activities. One of the sessions that really touched home for me was, of course, the one with a focus on Baja California, where scientists like Matt Guilliams and Rich Minnich (just to mention two of many), talked about the unique and beautiful, but very endangered environments that exist on the Mexican portion of the California Floristic Province.

This is why a CNPS chapter in San Diego is so important. It affords people the opportunity to take advantage of all of these resources on the beauty and uniqueness of the region's wonderful biological diversity, and the tools to protect them. In Tijuana where I live, activities, resources, and knowledge like this are hard to come by, difficult to procure, or simply non-existent. Sadly, development threatens our unique ecosystems, and the situation is becoming more dire every day.





Top: Maritime succulent scrub south of Ensenada, Baja Mexico, in 2005. Dozens of unusual species are found in this habitat, including vernal pool endemics and others. Bottom: The same area in 2012. The vernal pools are long gone, as are the succulents. Most of this acreage is now used for growing organic tomatoes for export to the U.S. Both photographs by Vince Scheidt.

This year saw the demise of some of the last stands of Baja California birdbush (*Ornithostaphylos oppositifolia)* in the United States, courtesy of the new border fence. In Mexico, this shrub remains common in areas, although it is rapidly declining as the hillsides are scraped away in the name of progress. Most endangered in Baja are the coastal bluffs, where agriculture has decimated literally tens of thousands of acres, many supporting rare and endangered species.

And as I write this from my home south of the border, I recognize the great challenges facing the Mediterranean ecoregion of Baja California. My country shares many species with Alta California, but it also has a great number of endemics and one-of-a-kind jewels that are seriously threatened. We really need an organization in Baja that is comparable to the San Diego CNPS chapter, one that would bring together the needed resources and citizen action to help us protect and preserve our vanishing but beautiful and valuable native plants and plant communities.

César García Valderrama is an environmental advocate with a focus on conservation through education. He runs the Urban Conservation Program for Nativ@s in partnership with Terra Peninsular in the Tijuana metro area.

CNPS Open World Field Guides

The CNPS Education Program has launched the Open World Field Guides as an extension of the second edition of its curriculum, "Opening the World through Nature Journaling" by John Muir Laws, Emilie Lygren, and Emily Breunig.

Open World Field Guides encourages school classes, camps, homeschoolers, scouting organizations, creek groups, and CNPS members to create hand-drawn field guides to plants and/or animals of a special habitat in their neighborhood. The habitat can be a school yard, park, forest, garden, creek, or even a vacant lot.



This Grass Valley charter school class benefited the community when they distributed their student guide locally at South Yuba River State Park at Bridgeport, CA. Over a three-year period, the students led younger students along the Buttermilk Bend Trail and shared with them what they had learned about wildflowers.

Through their participation, children learn about their local environments and then share what they learn with other children, parents, and/or community members by leading walks. All field guides can be shared online as well. Group leaders can upload guides to the CNPS website, where their location will be displayed on a map of California, at http://fieldguides.cnps.org.

Volunteer Recognition 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 these volunteers have done.



Nancy Morin

Nancy Morin

The latest recipient is Nancy Morin, who is being honored for her many activities which have contributed significantly to the growth and outreach of CNPS in the Dorothy King Young Chapter area, including helping to strengthen ties with the Mendocino Coast Botanical Garden, starting the chapter's first wildflower show, helping with plant sales, and serving as chapter president. At the state level she is on the CNPS Board of Directors, chairs the CNPS Publications Program, and serves as delegate to the Chapter Council. And word has it that she's also a very down-to-earth person and fun to work with!

Want to Lead a Rare Plant Treasure Hunt?

New online manual now available!

The Rare Plant Treasure Hunt (RPTH) training manual is now available online. This manual will prove useful for anyone thinking about taking part in a Rare Plant Treasure Hunt, and especially for those who want to lead a trip on their own.

Novice rare plant "hunters" will acquire a better understanding of this project's importance for rare plant conservation, learn how to conduct research on rare plants, and find out how to prepare for a trip. More experienced botanists will find practical advice on how to organize a RPTH event with their local CNPS chapter or with other groups. To download the training manual, just go to http://www.cnps.org/cnps/rareplants/treasurehunt/data_collection.php.

The CNPS Rare Plant Treasure Hunt is a citizen-science program designed to obtain up-to-date information on many California rare plants, especially populations documented decades ago or from parts of the state not previously explored botanically. New populations are often discovered in the process.

Danny Slakey
Rare Plant Treasure Hunt



Danny Slakey

Rare plant treasure hunters paddled their kayaks to a small, unnamed island in the California Delta, where they searched for delta mudwort *(Limosella subulata)*, California Rare Plant Rank (CRPR) 2.1, and mudflat quillplant *(Lilaeopsis masonii)*, CRPR 1B.1. The two plants turned out to be growing side-by-side!

New Book on Weed Control

Weed Control in Natural Areas in the Western United States by Joe DiTomaso et al. 2013. UC Davis Weed Research and Information Center. 544 pages. $37 plus tax and shipping.

This is the first comprehensive book to focus on chemical and nonchemical weed control options as part of an Integrated Pest Management approach for invasive plants in 13 western states. Compiled by 15 authors, it covers 340 species found in rangelands, grasslands, pastures, and riparian and aquatic areas. Available from the California Invasive Plant Council at www.cal-ipc.org/shop or 510-843-3902.

Conservation Campaign Reaches Its Goal

The CNPS Conservation Campaign was a special fundraising effort initiated by the CNPS Board of Directors with the goal of raising $100,000 to sustain the CNPS Conservation Program. The Campaign debuted at the CNPS 2012 Conservation Conference in January and was extended through the end of CNPS's fiscal year, March 31, 2013.

Conservation is at the heart of CNPS's mission. The challenges facing California's native plants and landscapes are many,



Terra-Gen Power, LLC.

Creosote bush and Joshua trees on public land are being destroyed to make way for wind power projects.

with urban sprawl, invasive species, and climate change an everyday reality. It's more important than ever that CNPS make the case for science-based plant and habitat conservation at every level of government.

CNPS chapters are effective local voices for conservation, and the Conservation Program supports them on many significant local projects, as well as working on federal and state policies that affect all regions of California. Statewide, the Conservation Program works diligently to influence policymakers on preserving and strengthening the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA), improving timber harvest review practices in the state's forests, and advocating for native plant protection in California's deserts, where there has been an unprecedented explosion of proposed large-scale renewable energy projects.

The response to the Conservation Campaign has been tremendous. Hundreds of CNPS members and chapters have contributed almost $97,000 toward the campaign as of February 28, 2013. This strong showing of support has ensured that the CNPS Conservation Program has a sound foundation going into 2013, and we are tremendously grateful for it.

All of us have a special place in California that we consider our own "wild garden." By working together and supporting CNPS's Conservation Program, as so many already have, we can help save California's unique wild areas for future generations.

Sandy McCoy, CNPS Fund Development Committee



Greg Suba, CNPS Conservation Program director, spoke about plant conservation to University of Missouri-Columbia journalism students in Sacramento during the summer of 2011. The students were touring California to prepare a special Center for Plant Conservation publication on the threats to California's flora. Photograph by Benjamin Zack, Center for Plant Conservation.

Chapters Support the Conservation Campaign

At the June 2012 Chapter Council meeting, delegates considered what chapters could do to support the CNPS Conservation Campaign. Delegates, staff, and CNPS board members brainstormed several ideas, and the "Chapter Challenge" was born.

The Challenge was rolled out in September 2012. Several chapters and members had already made substantial contributions to the Campaign and, in a sense, challenged the others. All chapters were encouraged to publicize the Campaign to their members and other contacts through chapter newsletters, meetings, emails, and social media. They were also asked to consider making a chapter-level contribution. Only an average of $12 per member was needed to meet the entire Campaign goal.

Chapter delegates and chapter boards responded enthusiastically, and Dorothy King Young, El Dorado, Marin, Mt. Lassen, Milo Baker, Monterey, Napa Valley, Orange County, Sacramento, San Diego, Santa Clara Valley, Sierra Foothills, South Coast, and Willis Jepson chapters made gifts from chapter funds totaling just over $20,000! We are very grateful for the substantial and important contributions from these chapters, as well as to the many members who have made individual contributions.

There is great power in our numbers and in working together to support work that makes a difference. We hope that chapters and members have learned more about our statewide program and understand the irreplaceable work that CNPS does to help protect our plants and habitats. Thanks again are due, especially to your Chapter Council delegates and other chapter leaders, who carried the message of the Conservation Campaign to their chapters, and who do so much every day to support CNPS.

Laura Camp
Orange County Chapter

Beautiful Buckwheats

They're tough and rewarding

By Ellen Zagory

I love growing buckwheats, the tough and beautiful California native plants in the genus *Eriogonum*. I first saw members of this diverse genus as diminutive rock garden plants on granitic slopes in the high Sierra Nevada. The low mats sported "fists" of flowers in yellow, pink, or white that frequently held new and interesting butterflies and other insects. While these montane species require excellent drainage and are impossible to cultivate in the Central Valley, there are southern and central coast species that thrive. The following buckwheats are tough, low-water-use plants that are easy to grow provided that they have adequate soil drainage.

At the UC Davis Arboretum we grow buckwheats in our demonstration gardens, as well as in the California native plant collections. Everything we grow here will perform just as well in the home garden as long as the soils are not too heavy or poorly drained. The largest is St. Catherine's lace *(Eriogonum giganteum)*, a shrubby perennial with grayish-white, oval leaves that grows three to four feet tall. Large, flat-topped clusters of white flowers appear in summer, transforming the plant into a large, fine-textured ball. The sheer number of flowers makes it popular with an amazing diversity of winged creatures.

Similar in size but slightly lower and wider is the Santa Cruz Island buckwheat *(Eriogonum arborescens)*, with lance-shaped leaves and smaller rounded clusters of creamy white flowers. The California buckwheat *(Eriogonum fasciculatum)*, with more needle-like leaves, is perhaps the most variable buckwheat we grow. Plants vary in size and time of flowering and, surprising to me, have lent themselves to hedging to make them bushier in display areas. Two varieties, *E. fasciculatum* 'Theodore Payne' and *E. fasciculatum* 'Warriner Lytle,' are both successful for us as prostrate ground covers, the first with more apple-green foliage and round inflorescences, and the second with grayer foliage and more diffuse flower clusters.

We grow two of the smaller buckwheats for spring flower color as well as nectar and pollen value. Red-flowered buckwheat *(Eriogonum grande* var. *rubescens)* has beautiful pink "fists" of flowers that vary from pale to dark pink on different plants. Also variable is the size of the leaves and height of the plant. Lastly there is the sulfur buckwheat *(Eriogonum umbellatum)*, a plant with bright sulfur-yellow blooms on a mat-forming plant that gets one foot high and two feet wide. This plant grows on the sandy alluvial soils of old Putah Creek but dies on heavier clay loams at our demonstration gardens, so we don't recommend it unless soil is very well drained.

The larger buckwheats are useful in large-scale plantings such as along roads, and the smaller ones look good in smaller-scale areas, including home gardens. All combine beautifully with other low-water-use natives like toyon (*Heteromeles arbutifolia)*, maritime ceanothus (*Ceanothus maritimus* 'Valley Violet'), Wayne Roderick seaside daisy (*Erigeron* 'W.R.'), and canyon snow Pacific iris (*Iris* 'Canyon Snow'). We also recommend mixing California natives with compatible non-natives to extend the season of color. Good companion plants include *Nepeta* x *faassenn*, *Achillea* 'Coronation Gold', *Lavandula* 'Goodwin Creek Gray' and *Salvia greggii* selections.



Ellen Zagory

The beautiful acmon blue butterfly *(Plebjus acmon)* is abundant and widely distributed in California, and feeds on both leaves and flowers of buckwheat species. Pictured here is red buckwheat *(Eriogonum grande* var. *rubescens).*

Regarding their care, we grow buckwheats in sunny areas with infrequent irrigation—only every two weeks in summer. We remove spent flower stalks when they become unsightly by clipping them off where they attach to the stem, although we try to leave some where possible because the seeds provide food for birds. The species we grow are evergreen perennials that become woody at the base, and the larger ones are used as shrubs in the landscape.

While I first fell in love with buckwheats because of a fascination with the insects that visit them, I have come to appreciate them for their usefulness in the hot interior California garden. They provide color and interesting foliage and form, while being undemanding of water and time. If you haven't already, give them a try. The bees and the butterflies will thank you!

Ellen Zagory is director of public horticulture for the UC Davis Arboretum, and has a strong interest in California native plants and their pollinators.



The California Botanical Society is celebrating 100 years!

Founded in 1913 by Willis Linn Jepson, CBS is celebrating their milestone anniversary with a Centennial Symposium, *Botanical Frontiers: Past and Future*, April 12-14, 2013, in Berkeley. As part of the centennial celebration, CBS is offering CNPS members a special discounted membership rate for new members. Through 2013, CNPS members can join CBS for just $30 – that's $10 off an individual membership!

To join CBS or register for the CBS Centennial Symposium, go to calbotsoc.org.

Next Chapter Council Meeting

(Details available at: http://cnps.org/cnps/admin/cc/)

MAY 31, JUNE 1–2, 2013 – WALKER CREEK RANCH, PETALUMA
HOST CHAPTERS: MARIN, MILO BAKER, NAPA VALLEY

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