

# California Native Plant Society

Quarterly Program Updates  
March, 2010



**Author: Executive Director and Program Staff**

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**INTRODUCTION:**

Below are program updates provided by key program staff, along with key administrative updates.

**DEVELOPMENT – update by Jack Tracey, Development Director**

***Online Donations and Database Conversion***

In Mid-January, we completed the last piece of the conversion of the donor database as our online donation system switched from Network for Good to the Net Solutions product that is part of our new database. This change allows for a much smoother process for processing online transactions, both donations and memberships, as we no longer have to manually enter this information.

One major ongoing project is the migration of recurring donors/members to the new system. While we had a relatively small number of recurring donors with Network for Good (<10), we had more than 250 active recurring memberships, most on an annual basis. In January, each of these members received an email asking them to take steps to cancel their Network for Good Account and to utilize Net Solutions to continue their recurring donations or memberships. In late February, we began sending mail reminders to those who had not cancelled their Network for Good account. Since recurring membership renewals are spread out over the entire year and represent a fairly large monthly income, the old account will remain open at a nominal cost to CNPS through the end of 2010 to allow time for members to make the transition.

***Fund Development Committee***

The Fund Development Committee will be holding a planning retreat on Friday, March 12<sup>th</sup>, just prior to this Chapter Council meeting. This meeting will help to put the finishing touches on an annual revision to our Fund Development Plan and further develop our Leadership Donor planning. Monthly meetings are continuing as well.

***Annual Banquet South***

For the Rancho Santa Ana Chapter Council meeting in March we will be planning a special banquet event, similar to the one we traditionally hold in December. By holding this separate event in Claremont, we hope to engage CNPS Fellows and Circle Members who are located in the southern part of the state that are not able to travel to Northern California in December. With a larger expected attendance, the dinner will be moved to the nearby Doubletree Hotel (formerly the Claremont Hotel). The social hour will start at RSABG upon conclusion of the Saturday afternoon session.

***Marketing and Communications Subcommittee***

The Marketing and Communications Subcommittee has continued to meet both as a larger group and in a smaller working group around branding and messaging issues. We are in the process of forming a special ad hoc committee to focus just on developing branding concepts for CNPS, and the marketing committee remains engaged in the development of an organization wide communications strategy.

***Facebook and Social Networking***

Our Facebook group reached 1600 members on March 3<sup>rd</sup>! Growth has slowed somewhat as there hasn't been much time devoted to this. We have picked up several chapter-level administrators, and I'm hoping they will become proactive in posting events. Facebook may have contributed a small amount to the sold out crowd for the February Channel Islands Chapter Symposium, and we continue to have both new and regular postings from folks interested in getting or sharing information on native plants. Our photo collection on the page continues to grow as well.

Although I continue to be excited about the potential for social networking within CNPS, particularly in support of our Conservation Program, the Rare Plant Treasure Hunt and the CNPS 2012 Conservation Conference, budget and time continue to be an issue.

**CNPS E-Newsletter**

Subject	Date	Recipients	Opens	Clicks
CNPS E-News January 2010	Jan 29, 2010	1670	38.96%	11.90%
CNPS E-News December 2009	Dec 30, 2009	1650	43.19%	18.51%
CNPS E-News November 2009	Nov 24, 2009	1654	32.29%	6.48%

The most significant change for the e-newsletter to date came in December when that month’s Horticulture focused issue was produced with a new template, thanks to some funding from the Horticulture Committee for that purpose. The template will be used for all e-newsletters, and provides a clean, consistent look for this publication.

**CONSERVATION PROGRAM – update by Greg Suba**

***Renewable Energy Projects- Ivanpah***

Events in January, 2010 marked important milestones in the application proceedings for the proposed Ivanpah Solar Electric Generating Systems (ISEGS) project. On January 4, and 11-14 the California Energy Commission (CEC, the lead CEQA agency for this project) convened evidentiary hearings during which the applicant (Brightsource Energy), the CEC, and several intervenor groups, including CNPS, presented testimony on the project’s site-related issues.

If approved and built, the proposed project will have unmitigable impacts to several rare desert plant taxa. CNPS sponsored Jim Andre as our expert witness in the hearings. Jim provided testimony on the botanical importance of maintaining intact ecosystem functions within Ivanpah Valley (and throughout the greater Mojave), commented on the nature of the Mojave as a botanical frontier, and emphasized the importance of adding a requirement to conduct both Spring and late summer/early fall floristic surveys on proposed project sites in the Mojave in order to obtain a more accurate census of project impacts to rare plants. Throughout the hearings, Jim Andre and I maintained that the current project proposal does not provide real mitigation for rare plant impacts. Partner intervenor groups presented the same argument for desert fauna, particularly for impacts to desert tortoise.

All parties are now preparing briefs to present to CEC in March. The applicant has stated on the record that "...there are complex issues of both fact and law related to rare plants," and that they "intend to brief them." We believe that in their briefs, Brightsource Energy will challenge the status of CNPS List 2 taxa - claiming that it doesn't meet the definition of special status under CEQA. In the CEC's Final Staff Assessment report (CEQA-equivalent document), CEC

staff included a detailed narrative on the history and data quality of the CNPS listing process, and supported List 2 taxa in meeting the definition of "rare, threatened, or endangered" as defined by CEQA Guidelines. Therefore, CEC will represent the first line of rebuttal to List 2 status challenges by the applicant during the briefing stage. Following briefs and rebuttal briefs, the Energy Commission will issue a decision regarding the project application. A parallel application decision process (without hearings) is proceeding through the Bureau of Land Management at the Federal level, and I have submitted all of the necessary documents pertaining to that process on behalf of CNPS.

### ***Other Fast-tracked Desert Projects***

There are nine solar energy projects on BLM land within the California Desert Conservation Area whose environmental review and permitting processes are being expedited to meet a December 2010 start-of-construction deadline for federal stimulus dollars. CNPS has submitted comments for five of the projects, with comment periods for three others still open. I have posted a job announcement for a CNPS intern position to assist with these projects.

### ***Conservation Work around the State***

From December 2009 through February 2010, the CNPS State office has provided assistance to plant conservation efforts across multiple Chapters when issues have had broader statewide implications and when time has allowed us to do so. Examples include:

- Participating in multiple-stakeholder meetings, and writing comment letters to address the native flora impacts of a proposed wind energy facility along Walker Ridge (above Bear Valley),
- Submitting comments to the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CalFire) disagreeing with their decision to approve timber harvest plans without requiring surveys for CNPS List 2 plants,
- Submitting comments to Los Angeles County planners to encourage more effective oak woodland conservation practices,
- Providing funding to support mapping and reporting of unauthorized OHV routes in areas of the Mojave desert to facilitate a more effective outcome in on-going litigation settlement proceedings for the WEMO case, and
- Working with partner groups to identify and sponsor state and federal listing petitions for rare plants (Wild Equity Institute for the *Arctostaphylos franciscana* petition; Center for Biological Diversity for a prioritized candidate list of desert rare plant taxa). Nick Jensen, CNPS Rare Plant Program Director has provided invaluable information and assistance in these efforts.

### ***Statewide Vegetation Mapping Legislation & Native Plant Day/Week Resolution***

I continue to work with Vern Goehring, Julie Evens, and others to build a network among agency personnel, state legislative representatives, and local officials to advocate for the use of vegetation classification mapping efforts consistent with CNPS and CA DFG VegCAMP protocols. Vern and I plan to pursue sponsorship of a CA Native Plant Week Resolution that would be submitted to the state legislature this year. If passed, the resolution would raise awareness about the benefits of conserving California's native flora and provide statewide outreach opportunities for CNPS Chapters. I have submitted a Bilisoly application to fund additional time for Vern Goehring to work on these two initiatives during the 2010 fiscal year.

Vern Goering, Tara Hansen, and I have attended meetings and conferences during the December 2009 - February 2010 work period to stay abreast of recent CEQA-threatening legislative proposals and ballot initiatives.

**EDUCATION PROGRAM – update by Josie Crawford**

***The Stewardship and Education Committee***

John Muir Laws and Tom Baird have completed the first steps in the production of a series of short, how-to videos about drawing from nature. Tom Baird has shot the videos of Jack and he is in the process of editing them now. Jack is working on creating a standards-based curriculum that emphasizes the use of drawing and field sketching to explore and understand native species of plants and animals. The videos should be complete in April. After initial drafting, the curriculum should be ready to field test with the Splash Center by May, 2010; after revisions, the completed work will be set to launch in Sept 2010.

***Rare Plant Treasure Hunt***

The Rare Plant Treasure Hunt (RPTH), a joint project of the Rare Plant, Education and Vegetation Programs is in full swing now with the hiring of two project coordinators. Amber Swanson will coordinate volunteers and conduct rare plant surveys in the Mojave Desert and Carrizo Plain, while Shannon Still will coordinate teams for the rest of the state from the Sacramento DFG office. For this project we will team botanists with amateurs to search for new occurrences and update historical occurrences of rare plants statewide. There are two components to the project. The first is a project on BLM lands in the Mojave Desert and Carrizo Plain supported by a grant from the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation (NFWF). A grant from the Billisoly fund will support the short-term position of coordinator for the rest of the state.

We are developing rare plant and other educational materials for RPTH teams and outreach materials and presentations for potential volunteer groups. Amber Swanson will be available to give presentations to chapters and groups in southern CA that may be interested in participating in the RPTH. We have already generated substantial interest and have compiled a volunteer list of people and organizations ready to jump to action. We believe this project has great potential for outreach, encouraging new people to get involved with CNPS and stewardship activities as well as the chance to collect vital data on our rare plants over several years.

***Plant Science Training Program***

We have 12 workshops planned and publicized for 2010. You may view these on our website and in the upcoming Bulletin and recent E-newsletters. We have been graced with funds from Billisoly and the Jiji Foundation to provide workshops for students and lower income participants. With the Billisoly funding, we will develop outreach materials for college and university students and offer 1 year membership and a free workshop to a minimum of 15 students. Jiji funds will provide training for 12 lower income people and/or students. In March, we will offer two workshops in eastern San Luis Obispo County: Rare Plants of Eastern San Luis Obispo County, followed by CNPS Vegetation Rapid Assessment in the Carrizo Plain. In April, we will offer two vernal pool workshops: Vernal Pool Plant Taxonomy and Classification of Vernal Pool Plant Communities.

***CNPS Conference 2012***

The Conference Steering committee has met twice to make recommendations about the scope and content of the next CNPS conference in San Diego in 2012. The title of the conference will be *CNPS 2012 Conservation Conference: Conserving and Restoring the Roots of California's Richness*. Volunteers from this committee have stepped forward to form the Program Committee which will recommend session topics, plenary speakers, field trips, and workshops. Others members are volunteering and recruiting to fill key committee chairs. We are looking for chairs for the Arts, Public Day, Student, and Fundraising Committees. We may follow a similar format to the 2009 Conference with the addition of a Public Day, which will include field trips, art shows, and activities for the general public. We are working with the San Diego Convention and Visitors Bureau to find a venue that fits our needs. We have a chance to serve as hosts or partner hosts of a travelling John Muir: Nature's Beloved Son exhibit in conjunction with the conference.

### ***California Ecological Conservation Organizations or Cal-ECO***

Late this spring, Cal-ECO will convene the first meeting of the Botanist Certification subcommittee. At this meeting we will devise a timeline for program development and examine the certification programs of other organizations to see what might work for our program.

We will convene the Educational Subcommittee in the early summer to discuss ways to strengthen botany and wildlife programs and institutions, such as herbaria and museums, and provide support for students.

Cal-ECO is comprised of CNPS (lead), California Native Grasslands Association, Society of Ecological Restoration- CA, Cal-Invasive Plant Council, Northern CA Botanists, Southern CA Botanists, California Botanical Society, Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden, Jepson Herbarium, and the UC Davis, Center for Plant Diversity. The purpose of the alliance is to address the timing and collaboration of our conferences, an alliance-driven certification program for botanists, and how we could jointly support academic, organismal biology programs, herbaria, museum science and natural science students. The two sub-committees above were formed to look into botanist certification and educational support.

### **HORTICULTURE PROGRAM – update by Tara Hansen**

#### ***Horticulture Web Development – Growing Natives Blog***

All during 2009, we would bring up the idea of instituting a CNPS blog on the Horticulture menu to replace the old forum, which was almost never used. There wasn't much interest during the year with all of the other work going on and the major commitments from the Horticulture Committee on other projects, but during the December Chapter Council break out session, we had seven horticulture enthusiasts commit to authoring and monitoring blog posts if we set one up. In early January, our webmaster Mark Naftzger put together a blog package for the Horticulture program for a very nominal cost.

During the past two months, our contributing authors have joined conference calls to discuss process, and have subsequently been testing out the blog features and posting formats on the new site. Last week, we made the decision to link the test site with our primary website! Our blog authors are Vince Scheidt, Liz Parsons, Chris Lewis, Laura Camp, Arvind Kumar, Allison Shilling, and we just recently added Betsey Landis. Be sure to check it out on the state website when you can, and let us know if you are interested in becoming a guest author or contributing author on the blog!

#### ***Native Gardens – Quarterly e-newsletter***

The quarterly e-newsletter edition that is focused on Native plant Gardening continues to be a huge success. Our December edition received the most opens and most clicks of any CNPS e-newsletter distribution to date! This added success was partially supported by the willingness of the Horticulture Committee to appropriate funds for a new template design that is now being used for all e-newsletter editions. Many thanks to our Horticulture Committee volunteers who continue to help coordinate the material for this newsletter – it is due to their ongoing efforts that we have exiting material related to native plant gardening in both the quarterly native gardens edition as well as other editions of the e-newsletter.

The next Horticulture/Native Plant Gardening issue will be going out toward the end of March, and we are looking for submission of new articles and content. If you have recent horticulture related articles with state or regional implications that could be published in the State CNPS e-newsletter or posted to the website please get in touch with us. Also, if you have expertise in any aspect of native plant gardening or maintenance and have new material of interest to CNPS members that you would like us to publish in our newsletter or on our website, please contact us. The Horticulture/Native Gardens program article submissions standards and instructions are posted on the "About the Program" landing page for the Growing Natives section of our new website. If you would like to submit an article for

consideration, please forward it to the following e-mail address: [cnps-horticulture-review-sub-committee@googlegroups.com](mailto:cnps-horticulture-review-sub-committee@googlegroups.com).

### ***Horticulture Database Project***

Late last year, we looked at a proposal to procure and customize a database platform for native plant gardens. After looking at the database and talking about the customization possibilities for CNPS, Laura Camp and I decided to submit a funding proposal to the Bilisoly Committee to partially fund the project, with the expectation that the additional funds could be raised from water agencies and other potential sponsors that have an interest in seeing increased use of native plants in public and private gardens. Partial funding was awarded through the Bilisoly internal grant process, and earlier this month we formed an ad hoc committee within the Horticulture Committee to work on refining project requirements and implementation process strategies. The objective of the project is to provide appropriate, regional and site specific plant recommendations via an online survey process and database tool that would reside on the main CNPS website. More details about the project will be forthcoming as we start meeting to refine the scope and requirements for the database.

### ***Program Goals for 2010***

Raising funds to hire a full time Horticulture Program Director remains a key priority for the Horticulture Committee. The CNPS Horticulture program is the only State level program that does not have a program director. We will continue to explore ideas to raise funds for the program.

### **RARE PLANT – update by Nick Jensen**

#### ***2009 Conservation Conference Proceedings***

We continue to make progress toward the publication of the Proceedings of the 2009 Conservation Conference. We have received 55 manuscripts for inclusion in the Proceedings Publication. All initial editing should be completed by March 1<sup>st</sup>. Copy editing of the manuscripts of the first batch of 35 reviewed manuscripts is currently being completed by staff at Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden. Copy editing should be completed by April 15<sup>th</sup>. The final manuscripts will go to an indexing service (Columbia Indexing) around April 15, and will go to press (the printer will be Commerce Printing) by May 1st. Gordon Leppig is working on a foreword and introduction with Amanda Jorgenson. Bart O'Brien is working on the cover design with Beth Hansen-Winter. The estimated publication date is late-May. Special thanks are in order to all of the individuals who continue to participate in this effort. For more information on the Proceedings please contact Nick ([njensen@cnps.org](mailto:njensen@cnps.org)).

#### ***Rare Plant Inventory***

The review of California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB) data has resulted in dozens of changes to CNPS Rare Plant Inventory data over the past three months. Most of the changes were updates to the threats, phenology, elevation ranges, and the habitat of dozens of taxa.

During the late-November to early-March time period, the following rare plant status reviews were completed:

- Additions: 8 plants
- List Changes: 3 plants
- Deletions: 2 plants

For a complete list of changes please contact Nick



### ***Online Inventory Revision Project***

Design and project requirements for the revision of the Online Inventory are near completion, and we now have the funding needed to complete the project. This spring Brad Jenkins, Larry Levine and I will be working with a website developer, graphics designer, and database manager to implement this long-needed project. If you would like to review beta versions or would like more details on the newly-revised Online Inventory, please contact Nick.

Funding for this project has been made available by a CNPS member, the Billisoly Bequest, and several botanical consulting firms. I would like to express sincere thanks to all of our donors for making this project a reality.

### ***Rare Plant Treasure Hunt***

Our grant proposal to the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation was funded. The grant will provide funding for us to coordinate surveys for new and historical occurrences of rare plants on BLM lands in the Mojave Desert and Carrizo Plain. To help coordinate the project in these regions we hired Amber Swanson. Additionally, Josie Crawford and I applied successfully for Billisoly funds to hire a coordinator to help implement rare plant survey efforts across the state. This enabled us to hire Shannon Still. He will be supervised by me, will work out of our office in Sacramento, and will provide support for teams of volunteers conducting surveys for rare plants throughout the state.

For more information on the Rare Plant Treasure Hunt please contact Nick.

### ***Other News***

I continue to coordinate with Conservation Program Director, Greg Suba, on impact to rare plants from renewable energy projects across California.

Lastly, in April, I will serve as an instructor for the Vernal Pool Plant Taxonomy class led by Carol Witham.

## **VEGETATION PROGRAM – update by Julie Evens & Vegetation Program Staff**

### ***Chapter and Public Vegetation Workshops***

Julie Evens and Todd Keeler-Wolf co-taught a public workshop in mid January titled an Introduction to the 2<sup>nd</sup> edition of *A Manual of California Vegetation*, at the Northern CA Botanists symposium. Around 20 participants attended, including biological consultants from northern and southern CA, federal agency staff from National Park Service (NPS), United States Forest Service (USFS), US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), state staff from Caltrans and California Department of Forestry (CDF-CalFire), and chapter members.

Julie also taught a chapter workshop for 25 members in late January for the San Diego Chapter with their new vegetation chair, Anna Bennett. The training focused on vegetation sampling using the CNPS plot-based relevé method for sampling rare vegetation assemblages. Anna has set additional dates once monthly, starting in February, to sample vegetation on gabbro soils across San Diego County.

### ***Manual of California Vegetation***

The second edition of the Manual is now for sale through CNPS, with over 420 copies already sold. The co-authors have received many positive reviews from both agency staff and biological consultants about the book, and have been answering questions that arise locally for evaluating vegetation in land planning, management and conservation efforts. Todd and Julie wrote a *Fremontia* article about the contents and applications of the manual, and we will continue to provide workshops and outreach including a one-day workshop at the SERCAL conference in May 2010.

We already see the need to present newer ecology and distribution information since people are using the book locally and regionally to describe, map and preserve vegetation. We applied for Bilosoly funds to produce a digital and online version of the book; however, other projects ranked higher. Julie and Todd will be working with Jack Tracey to fundraise for this project so that we can efficiently archive 480+ vegetation descriptions, display vegetation range maps, establish custom queries and reports, enable more regular updates, and distribute the information online. The co-authors are planning to distribute photos online and in a new CNPS picture book publication planned for 2011.

***Grasslands Research Project (Donation/Grant-funded)***

Vegetation staff continues to identify sampling areas for our grasslands project, including areas in the Central Valley and Carrizo Plain. With funds from private donations, NRCS and TNC, we are planning to survey and map grasslands across 5,000-10,000 acres with a focus on grazing lands. We have talked with the California Rangeland Trust, Center for Natural Lands Management, Sierra-Cascade Land Trust, and Tejon Ranch Conservancy about our project with hope of gaining access to public and private lands and establishing stronger partnerships for assessing and protecting grassland resources.

We also met with partners who are initiating a new grasslands project in Marin and Sonoma Counties. Coastal Conservancy has provided funds to survey, map and restore grasslands in the region. Julie will assist by training field staff to conduct grassland surveys over the spring and summer. Since local counties are starting to develop definitions, maps, and thresholds for evaluating native and non-native grasslands, we hope to expand the project in other areas to identify the need and value of protecting grasslands across California.

***Sierra Nevada Foothills (SNF) Project (Contract-funded)***

With bond-funding reinstated, CNPS and partners of Aerial Information Systems (AIS) and Department of Fish and Game (DFG) have continued to work on mapping in the northern foothills. We have already completed a map covering about half of the northern Sierra Nevada Foothills that ranges from Shasta to El Dorado County, and the map is available through the DGS's BIOS public viewer. Our sub-contractor (AIS) continues to photo-interpret vegetation for the third quarter of the eco-region (El Dorado to Tuolumne County), and plans to complete a full draft map by late June 2010. CNPS has restarted field efforts to verify the map's accuracy, with plans to complete surveys through October 2010. Kendra sent out over 200 letters requesting access to private lands in the area. CNPS, AIS and DFG staff did a field reconnaissance trip to review mapping questions by AIS photo-interpreters in January, and Danielle and Suzanne began accuracy assessment surveys in February.

In January, we rehired Betsy Harbert, who worked with us to conduct vegetation surveys in 2008. Betsy is currently helping to identify a backlog of plant specimens collected during that year's vegetation sampling in the southern SNF and San Joaquin Valley. Completing the plant identification piece is important for us as we continue classifying and mapping vegetation in the region. Volunteers Belinda Lo and Abigail Genelsa assisted Betsy with keying plant information and conducting herbarium visits. Another new employee, Deborah Stout, started to help with this and other contract-funded projects. To date, we have confirmed over 1800 specimen identifications.

***Fen Research Project of National Forest Lands (Contract/Grant-funded)***

Staff continued to assess existing knowledge of fen vegetation on National Forest lands in the Sierra Nevada region in collaboration with USFS and UC Davis. After writing a draft fen conservation assessment report, Kendra began incorporating review comments from several Forest Service botanists from this region. Kendra has also initiated discussions with botanists and co-authors about what components should be included in an augmented version of the report for eventual publication as a USFS General Technical Report.

We also are finalizing a related project in the Shasta-Trinity National Forest of the Klamath-Cascade region, which included sampling and mapping of three fen complexes. Final steps include adding vegetation classification details into a fen geo database and completing a short report with methods and results.

***Mojave Network of National Park Service Vegetation Mapping Project (Contract-funded)***

Vegetation staff continued to advise NPS on vegetation classification and sampling for their Mojave Network. Julie and Suzanne completed a classification of over 500 vegetation samples that NPS and UNLV staff conducted at Lake Mead National Recreation Area and Red Rock Canyon National Conservation Area. We are also continuing to review additional legacy datasets to distinguish areas that already have survey data. We drafted a preliminary vegetation classification of over 160 alliances for the region, which will guide vegetation survey and mapping efforts for three national parks (Death Valley NP, Mojave NP, and Lake Mead).

Julie and Suzanne met with NPS staff and partners to review the classification and proposed sampling and mapping efforts. We trained six new field staff on standardized methods for collecting vegetation samples, and we discussed the goals and approach for sampling this spring and summer.

***Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy (Contract-funded)***

Staff completed a contract to advise the Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy on the production of a vegetation map. Julie performed a detailed review of their map delineations and attributes for 1,400 acres of land. Both Julie and Kendra provided edits and tables for a final report that summarizes the classification and mapping efforts within the area.

***Other Vegetation Program Details***

Kendra completed submission of a \$38,500 ESRI conservation grant for Geographic Information Systems (GIS) software and related training that was awarded in February. In order to gain experience in GIS vegetation mapping, Danielle worked on mapping vegetation in a pilot area within San Diego County, and Kendra, Danielle, and Suzanne are enrolled in training workshops with ESRI to improve their skills with the map-making software. Julie, Danielle and Todd wrote a Bilisoly grant proposal for \$15,000 to fund efforts in training chapters and students to sample and map rare plant communities, and we were awarded \$10,000.

The Vegetation Program received a private donation from a CNPS member to sample and map vegetation in the southern Sierra Nevada foothills. Staff is evaluating focus areas in the foothills this year with a proposed goal to map 10,000 acres of vegetation. Staff is also working with Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and DFG to initiate a new project to sample and map vegetation in the Carrizo Plains National Monument.

**FINANCE, ADMINISTRATION – authored by Cari Porter**

***Chapter Sales Tax Reporting***

The chapters can assist in making this process easier by including the full street address (no PO Boxes), tax rate, total sales, and County for each location where sales took place. In hopes of making this easier, new forms were sent to Chapter Treasurers last quarter which allow for all locations to be entered on one form (instead of a separate form for each location). Also, to make the process quicker - just the totals by customer type (retail, wholesale, out of state...) is required. The total for the breakdown by item type is not required for the sales tax reporting.

With 33 chapters and many having sales in multiple districts, there is a significant amount of data to enter on the consolidated sales tax report. Individual location addresses must be entered and individual district taxes must be calculated or each chapter and entered into the consolidated report. It is important for complete reports to be

submitted on the date requested (21 days after quarter end) to give our administrative staff the time necessary to enter and consolidate the data before the final report is due to BOE.

Also, please verify the sales tax rate of the location before the sales take place. There can be several different tax rates within one county. If you are unsure of a tax rate please email [cporter@cnps.org](mailto:cporter@cnps.org) or call me at 916-447-2677 x 203 and I can provide the information.

### ***Fiscal Year End Reporting***

We have just completed the audited financial statements for 2008-09. The tax returns for the year ending March 31, 2009 were filed on February 16, 2010. Two extensions were filed (the maximum allowed) before we were able to complete the returns.

We are now completing another fiscal year and need to start the process again. In order to process the tax returns we need each chapter's Ending Inventory report for March 31, 2010, and the Annual Chapter Statement of Receipts and Expenditures. The forms will be mailed to the Chapter Treasurers by mid March. In order to complete the audit and file the tax returns without multiple extensions, it is important for reports to be submitted on time (April 21, 2010).

Volunteer treasurers are not expected to be financial experts and can contact the State Board Treasurer or the Finance and Administration Manager if there are any questions or concerns. We appreciate the Chapter Treasurer's efforts and would welcome the opportunity to discuss the reporting process.

### ***General Liability/Property Insurance Renewal***

With the end of the fiscal year approaching, it is also time to start planning for the renewal of the General Liability/Property Insurance Policy. The following reports/forms will be sent to Chapter Presidents in March and will need to be reviewed and returned to the State Office by April 21, 2010:

1. Chapter property and premises liability coverage
2. Insurance certificates issued for chapter
3. General questions

Now that the spring plant sales season is upon us, I want to remind chapters that all of the insurance certificate applications are available on the CNPS website. If the chapter has an event (plant sales, meeting, etc.) and needs a certificate, complete the CNPS Certificate/Additional Insured Form and return to the state office. Please allow at least a couple of weeks for processing.

Separate Special Event Coverage is necessary for all events where attendance will be over 500 (or an activity not covered under the basic policy, such as races and festivals). The chapter will need to complete a CNPS Special Event Coverage Form in addition to the CNPS Certificate/Additional Insured Form. Special event coverage does incur a fee and takes longer to process, so please submit the application as soon as your event is scheduled.

### **SALES REPORT – by Stacey Flowerdew**

The CNPS Sales program has had a very good year. 2009 started with the CNPS Conservation Conference which allowed us the opportunity to sell books that are not usually popular with the general public - books that are more academic in nature or require to be seen to be appreciated and are not easily sold via title or description alone. The year ended with an unbelievable boon for our Sales department: the release of CNPS Press's own *A Manual of California Vegetation* and the delivery of *California Mosses* and the accompanying glossary, *Mosses and Other*

*Bryophytes*. CNPS is the sole distributor for *California Mosses* in the Northern Hemisphere. Through February 28, 2010 a total of 446 copies of the MCV, 374 copies of *California Mosses*, and 145 copies of *Mosses and Other Bryophytes* have sold.

It is our pleasure to report CNPS Press and products have been the top sellers in the Sales Program. Aside from the Moss books, only two other top 10 titles are from other sources: *California Plant Families*, from UC Press, and *California Native Plants for the Garden*, from Cachuma Press. CNPS Klean Kanteens, the laminated Grass Posters, the *Field Guide to the Vernal Pools of Mather Field*, *California's Changing Landscapes*, and the *Flowering Plants of the Santa Monica Mountains*, and *Coastal and Chaparral Regions of Southern California* continue to be strong sellers.

At the other end of our spectrum, our lowest sellers are published by other sources and are now mostly out of print. *Plants of the Tahoe Basin* is not out of print, but low sales of our hard cover edition are likely due to the availability of a soft cover edition of this book.

The chart below represents a summary of the top selling products for the Sales Program from January 1 through December 31, 2009:

**Top Sellers**

<i>Title</i>	<i>Qty</i>	<i>CNPS Product?</i>	<i>Rationale for sales count</i>
Mosses and Other Bryophytes	103		New
California Mosses	254		New and unavailable anywhere else in N. Hemisphere
California Plant Families	77		New as of last year
California Native Plants for the Garden	75		Most popular Gardening book
A Manual of California Vegetation, 2nd Edition	322	CNPS	New
Klean Kanteen	186	CNPS	Most popular CNPS non-book product
Flowering Plants of the Santa Monica Mountains, Coastal and Chaparral Regions of Southern California	78	CNPS	Used in docent training in S. Ca.
Field Guide to the Vernal Pools of Mather Field	112	CNPS	Popular ID guide for laypeople in Central Valley, used in docent and education programs
California's Changing Landscapes	146	CNPS	College Text
Grass Posters (L)	195	CNPS	Most popular CNPS poster

**OTHER EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORTS**

***Membership Trends***

More explanation is needed about the membership trend numbers. Although the total membership numbers dropped in the fall, we believe this was primarily a fictitious drop because actual renewals were very high for the months of September through November. We believe the primary reason for the drop was due to the database clean up and removal of duplicate records that took place during and after the conversion in early October. The uptick again in December reflects high renewal rates for that month, with a year-end membership count of nearly 9,400 members, and a whopping 11.3% join rate!

Lagging or non-renewals are still a challenge in some chapters, with negative net growth occurring even while adding new members. Santa Clara Valley, Orange County, Willis Jepson, and San Gabriel Mountains lead all chapters in total net membership growth. **Great job!**

Early trends for January and February show 156 new members added, with total membership based on our previous count method at 9209, still down slightly from year end due to lagging renewals. Note that the final numbers for December still reflect counts for memberships that have lapsed for up to 60 days.

## Annual Membership Trends

Year	Total Count	New Members	Join Rate	Non-Renewals	Attrition Rate
2010 - January	9399	1087	11.3%	1319	13.7%
2009 - January	9631	982	10.9%	345	3.8%
2008 - January	8994	938	10.2%	1178	12.8%
2007 - January	9234	816	8.8%	835	9.0%
2006 - January	9253				

The table below shows the monthly membership trends for 2009 YTD for all of CNPS:

	Total Memberships	New Members	% New Member Growth	Est Not Renewed	% Non Renewal (est)	Net Growth
<b>2009</b>						
January	9631	87	0.9%	278	2.9%	-191
February	9440	54	0.6%	(16)	-0.2%	70
March	9510	99	1.0%	68	0.7%	31
April	9541	154	1.6%	105	1.1%	49
May	9590	137	1.4%	160	1.7%	-23
June	9567	71	0.7%	206	2.2%	-135
July	9432	65	0.7%	131	1.4%	-66
August (e)	9366	49	0.5%	38	0.4%	11
September	9377	88	0.9%	218	2.3%	-130
October	9247	158	1.7%	157	1.7%	1
November	9248	79	0.9%	78	0.8%	1
December	9249	46	0.5%	(104)	-1.1%	150
January 1, 2010	9399				0.0%	
Cumulative Totals		1087	11.3%	1319	13.7%	-232
Negative Net Growth						-2.4%

\*negative numbers represent members lapsed from the previous cycle who renewed during a later cycle.

**Upcoming Changes to Membership Accounting:**

As previously communicated, our total membership numbers for 2009 include lapsed members who are up to three months behind in sending in their renewals. After discussing this method with members of the Membership Committee last fall, we agreed to cease the practice of including "lapsed" memberships as actual memberships at the end of the year. Membership numbers included in future Chapter Council reports will undoubtedly show a significant drop from December 2009 totals due to this change.

*\*Note that the non-renewal estimates differ in the month to month accounting (above) from the year to date accounting by chapter represented in the table below. New memberships are based on actual new member counts,*

*whereas net growth and estimated non-renewals are calculated estimates. Due to new system capacities, we will use actual month to month numbers for renewals and lapsed memberships as well as for new memberships added beginning in 2010.*

**Membership Committee News:**

As most of you know, Arvind Kumar and Mary Francis Kelly Poe have generously co-chaired our membership advisory committee for the past few years. This committee began as a sub-committee of the Fund Development Program, and has since developed as its own committee with the greater emphasis that has been placed on growing the CNPS membership as one of the primary goals for achieving the CNPS mission and vision.

Attendance at Membership Committee meetings in the past has involved primarily staff (myself, Jack Tracey, and Stacey Flowerdew) and our two co-chairs (Mary Francis and Arvind), plus occasional participation by various chapter membership chairs on a random basis. During our first meeting of this year, we agreed that the formation of a regular working committee would best serve our needs and help us to focus on working strategies to achieve CNPS's membership goals. Fortunately, Arvind and (we believe Mary Francis) have agreed to continue co-chairing the committee, and we are now actively recruiting other participants who are able to commit to a working committee with a quarterly conference call schedule. If you have an interest in working on strategies to increase membership growth and sustain current membership, and are able to commit to a working committee process, please contact Stacey Flowerdew, Arvind Kumar or myself. One of the first tasks of this newly re-formed committee will be to develop the committee's mission, goals and objectives within a set of guiding committee documents.

Our existing membership communication network (on Google Groups) that includes all chapter membership chairs and other interested chapter leadership will continue to be used as a primary communications link for reporting, news, and information about membership successes and strategies, as well as discussion about important membership related topics that impact our chapters around the state.