

California Native Plant Society

Quarterly Program Updates
June, 2010



Author: Executive Director and Program Staff

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORT

Brand Development

As you all are all aware, meeting our conservation advocacy objectives in California requires influence ... and that larger organizations carry more influence. Increasingly in today's society, significant public awareness and support is required for environmental causes to prevail over commercial expediency.

As I have recounted in numerous earlier communications, we must become better known to the general public if we are to reach our mission and vision in California. While we all know that CNPS is a vibrant organization with a history of significant successes and expertise in conservation, the general public has no idea who we are. Most of us would agree that a substantial sector of the California public isn't even aware of plants at all, let alone considers them important when they think about conservation. This is a major obstacle that we must try to overcome if we are to reach our CNPS goals.

Getting the public to recognize and support CNPS is a big job. With that concern in mind, in March we embarked on a very exciting project aimed at expanding CNPS's influence and securing its future: Exploring the possibility of a new branding concept that can help us with fundraising, conservation impact, and membership growth.

A key element in developing an identity for an organization is its logo. Successful logos are readily recognized by the general public and, over time, they implicitly associate the logo's graphic elements with desirable qualities of the organization. This is no accident. Such visual communications are intentional and by design. Although it is often a very simple graphic, a successful logo will communicate key attributes about an organization, its members, successes and aspirations. Ideally, a society's logo both represents the accomplishments of its existing members and communicates an infectious attraction to those outside the organization.

Our existing logo and related messaging has served the organization for 45 years. But if you look at it through a modern, results-oriented assessment, it no longer succeeds. For example, very few people inside CNPS – much less outside -- can identify the flower depicted in our current logo. The artwork – this obscure flower with the society's name written around it -- says nothing about our varied missions today. Indeed, its obscurity suggests that CNPS is a club where only botanical insiders are welcome. It also fails in many basic modern-day marketing areas: it's not recognizable from a distance ... or when shrunk to thumbnail size for online use. The letters around our logo are unreadable when printed or sewn into shirts, bags or other marketing material that could be sold to raise funds.

Led by a professional marketing consultant and CNPS member, William Wayland, a representative stakeholder committee that includes chapter council representatives, CNPS board members and staff, has been working with Mark Naftzger to develop a new logo for CNPS. They have spent many hours discussing which of the varied audiences in California are most important for us to reach and which elements of CNPS are most important to be represented in a symbolic design. The committee agreed on some simple concepts that led to the design we are presenting for your approval.

We believe that the new design is successful because it incorporates symbols known to all Californians: a native plant that everyone knows, growing in an eco-system represented by a hillside that doubles as a caring human hand. On many levels, this simple logo sends the clear message that CNPS is active, vibrant and responsible in the conservation of both individual native plants as well as the landscapes of the great State of California.

Nearly all of today's successful and influential conservation organizations have recognizable, iconic logos. To succeed in the cluttered cacophony of today's world of pervasive fund-raising and political posturing, CNPS needs a logo that immediately communicates the truth that we all know about our incredible organization, and that we want the

general public to appreciate: That CNPS is the leading organization in promoting the appreciation and conservation of California native plants and their habitats.

Earlier in May, the candidate design was forwarded to each of you for feedback in advance of the June 4 meeting. While most of the feedback has been positive, some responses seemed to focus only on personal preferences about the logo as an art form, rather than on the more-relevant task of how the logo can help generate greater public recognition of CNPS and what we do.

While wide variations in personal taste are to be expected, I hope that each of you will maintain an open mind as you listen to what the committee has to share during the upcoming June meeting about the development process and the vision behind the design they are recommending. I urge you to focus on what's best for the future of CNPS as you vote, so we can build the influence we need to be successful.

Online Donations and Database Conversion

As previously reported, we completed the last part of our donor database conversion in January when our online donation system switched from Network for Good to Net Solutions, a product fully integrated with Raiser's Edge. This change allows a much smoother process for processing online transactions as we no longer have to manually transfer this information from the web to the donor database.

We are still, several months later, working on the migration of recurring donors/members to the new system. There are more than 250 active recurring memberships set up on the old system, and we also discovered that some chapters carried a live link to the Network for Good Account on their chapter websites, and consequently new members were still signing up on the old account rather than going to the State website and accessing the new one. These ongoing migration challenges have created a significant impact on administrative capacity at the state office, both in terms of dual account management and processing and follow up with members who are slow to set up their membership renewals on the new site.

We have sent out several notices by e-mail and made follow up calls to members, but there are still many who have not set up their renewals on the new site. Stacey Flowerdew has also posted a message on the Network for Good sign up page to redirect traffic to the new site location. We have also elected to terminate the Network for Good live access on May 31st. This will eliminate the possibility of processing any renewal memberships through the old account, and prevent any new signups from occurring on that site.

You can help us by re-posting the notice and sign up instructions in your chapter newsletters, and contacting members to ensure that those who have set up renewing memberships on the old system take the few minutes necessary to set up their accounts on the new site. Stacey Flowerdew has forwarded the migration instructions to all chapter newsletter editors for publication.

Marketing and Fund Development Committee Updates

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. After helping to get the Brand Development underway in April and May, the committee is holding off on doing further work on the communications plan until we know the end result of the branding effort in June. The committee also assisted in the development of the theme for this spring's general appeal letter, and Sandy McCoy, Fund Development Committee Chair and Marketing Committee member, helped write the initial draft of the letter. Committee member and Marketing Consultant William Wayland facilitated meetings and provided guidance to the ad hoc Brand Committee in its work to develop a new updated logo for CNPS. Mike Ross has also assisted with communications and the branding effort. We sincerely thank Sandy, William, and Mike for their extraordinary efforts these past few months.

The Fund Development Committee met on April 28th and reviewed and discussed updates to the development plan, the project funding plan, and the schedule for regular and standard fund raising appeals for the rest of 2010. Committee members also provided suggestions on the draft for the general spring appeal, which went out to CNPS members and contributors the second and third weeks of May. Committee members are also assisting the staff with communications to significant contributors and will assist in developing invitations for major contributors to attend the Conservation focused Chapter Council meeting and dinner in September. The committee meets quarterly.

COMMUNICATIONS & SOCIAL MEDIA – Tara Hansen

Facebook and Social Networking

In March, Stacey Flowerdew assumed the role of key administrator on the CNPS Facebook page. After learning more about the differences between Fan pages and Group pages, we decided to go ahead and set up a new fan page as well. Since April 6, the initiation date of the new fan page, we have had 1,360 people add themselves as “fans.” Stacey has been updating the fan page weekly with announcements of weekend chapter events around the state. The group site still has 1,914 very active members.

CNPS E-Newsletter

This monthly communication from the State office provides up to date information on current issues and program news. To subscribe to the e-newsletter, access the sign up link on the home page of the state website. Past issues are all posted on the website; you can find the link on the publications page.

As of the April issue, Stacey has also assumed the role of gathering articles and photos, as well as designing the CNPS e-newsletter from the State office. Stacey and I share the editorial role. The overall click and open rates for the e-newsletter remain strong, and the recipient list continues to grow. Subscribership has increased to 1969 people.

State Website

The state website underwent significant updates to the program sections last summer, including the re-alignment of information and introduction of program sub-menus accessible from the main page. Since the last update, we have received feedback that our webpage is too static, and one has to dig too deeply to figure out what we are really working on. Options for regular web revisions are limited without a media person on staff to centralize and handle communication flow, but we are working on a re-design of the home page to incorporate short statements with direct links to current issues / updates on the program pages.

Quarterly Chapter Council Reports

A public version of this important update will be posted on the State website beginning this month. The web link to the new public version of the report is http://www.cnps.org/cnps/admin/cc/reports_qtr.php.

CNPS Directory

The 2010 CNPS Directory has been printed! Some supplies have been distributed, but we still have copies available at the state office for those who request them.

FINANCE, ADMINISTRATION – authored by Cari Porter

Fiscal Year End Reporting

We have now completed another fiscal year. 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 were sent to the Chapter Treasurers in March and were due April 21, 2010. As of May 24, 2010 only 24 chapters

submitted the Annual Statement of Receipts and Expenditures and only 18 chapters submitted the Ending Inventory report. In order to complete the audit and file the tax returns without multiple extensions, it is important for reports to be submitted ASAP.

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.

Chapter Sales Tax Reporting

CNPS is now required to file all Sales Tax Reports with the Board of Equalization (BOE) electronically. With e-filing, a full street address needs to be entered for each location before moving to the next line. If even just one zip code is missing the report cannot be submitted. The full address is needed by the State Board of Equalization since sales tax is distributed to different cities, counties and special districts depending on the location of where the sales took place.

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 or call me at 916-447-2677 x 203 and I can provide the information.

General Liability Insurance

Now that the spring plant sale 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 even is scheduled.

CONSERVATION PROGRAM – authored by Greg Suba

Desert Renewable Energy Projects

Currently, political momentum in Sacramento and Washington D.C. has been behind "fast-tracking" large projects on sites that will fragment and degrade undisturbed public trust lands. CNPS has been working with other conservation organizations to find solutions that will provide for increased renewable energy generation while preserving California's native landscapes. Our message emphasizes the need to 1) site wind and solar projects on disturbed lands

(private and public) through a regional desert conservation planning process, 2) develop more distributed ("rooftop") and smaller-scale energy generation facilities, and 3) promote energy conservation measures. We are continuing to work for a better solution that will allow for increased renewable energy generation while preserving California's native landscapes.

There are nine solar, four wind, and one geothermal energy projects undergoing fast-tracked environmental review to begin construction and qualify for stimulus funds by the end of 2010. The CNPS State Conservation Program has intervened on the Ivanpah project, the farthest down the fast-track process, and CNPS Chapters are helping on two other fast-track projects. The CNPS San Diego Chapter has intervened on the Imperial Valley Solar project near El Centro, and the CNPS Bristlecone Chapter has provided important public comment on the Solar Millennium Ridgecrest solar project.

Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan

State and Federal agencies have begun development of a Natural Communities Conservation Plan / Habitat Conservation Plan (NCCP/HCP) for the California Desert Conservation Area. The purpose of this NCCP/HCP, whose official title is the Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan (DRECP), will be to identify covered activities and species associated with desert renewable energy projects, develop quantitative conservation goals for target species (desert wildlife and plants) and ecosystem functions, and identify allowable levels of "take" for target species during the construction and implementation of renewable energy projects in California's desert wildlands. Recently enacted legislation has created an in-lieu fee program that will be associated with the mitigation measures identified in the DRECP. The proposed DRECP timeline identifies a draft Plan available for environmental review by the end of 2012.

The map to be used as a starting point for DRECP conservation planning will be an Ecoregion Assessment map of the Mojave ecoregion developed by The Nature Conservancy. This map is itself based on the 2006 Landfire vegetation classification map for California. Identifying priority conservation areas using the Landfire map's vegetation classifications will be challenging because of the low-resolution of Landfire's dataset. CNPS and other groups are working to identify and provide high-resolution vegetation community data to agency staff as quickly as possible to improve the quality of information available to conservation planning map technicians and desert planning strategists.

Forest Plan Revision

The National Forest Management Act requires the US Forest Service to review and revise forest management plans every 10-15 years. Many of you will recall that this effort was undertaken recently for the four Southern California Forests, and CNPS eventually prevailed in a lawsuit contending that the forest management plans for those forests did not adequately protect wild landscapes from road building and other development, failed to adequately evaluate alternatives to protect natural resources and endangered plants and animals.

CNPS is participating in the Forest Plan Revision process for the 11 Sierra Nevada forests currently underway. An effort led by the Sierra Forest Legacy group to develop a comprehensive Sierra Nevada forest Conservation Strategy document provides conservation organizations like CNPS the opportunity to provide high-profile recommendations to the USFS during the plan revision process. To date, CNPS has been most involved with the *Species at Risk* element of the Strategy, by identifying plant taxa most at risk on USFS lands in the Sierra Nevada ecoregion and advocating for conservation measures to be adopted for them within the USFS's forest management plans. The *Restore Fire as an Ecological Process* element of the Strategy reinforces the rationale of the CNPS Native Plants & Fire Safety Policy, especially as it pertains to forested areas.

Statewide Vegetation Mapping Legislation & Native Plant Day/Week Resolution

CNPS has developed a draft Native Plant Week Resolution and identified a northern California assemblywoman interested in introducing our Resolution to the legislature (phenologically, her late-April birthdate would coincide

nicely with a spring CA Native Plant Week). Vern Goehring, Greg Suba, and Tara Hansen continue to work with others on preparing the draft for a wider, internal CNPS Chapter review.

During April and May 2010, Greg, Vern, and Tara met with other stakeholders and state legislative staff to explore interest and direction for a renewed effort to pass statewide vegetation mapping legislation. The CA DFG currently has *recommended* state vegetation mapping standards that provide the foundation for establishing alliance-level vegetation maps across the state. CNPS is seeking partner conservation groups with whom to pursue grant funding to commission a cost-benefit report for alliance-level statewide vegetation mapping standards. Such a report would help make the case for developing statewide mapping standards.

Chapter Conservation Support

The State Conservation Program office is working with dedicated conservation activists in Chapters across the state to provide both logistical and moral support for projects covering a range of issues. Following the CNPS Chapter Council meetings in June, Greg will begin statewide Conservation Calls during which Chapter Conservation chairs can join either Northern or Southern California conference calls to discuss Chapter-specific issues and statewide initiatives.

CEQA Challenges:

Vern Goehring has been working with the CNPS State Conservation Program to send our message to legislators in opposition of proposed bills that undermine CEQA. There are several bills making their way through the Capitol that in some way exempt projects from CEQA or shield projects from critical provisions of the Act, thereby rendering the Act meaningless. CNPS, on our own and together with others, has sent letters of opposition on various bills to key legislators reviewing these bills in committee.

Walker Ridge:

Walker Ridge, standing above Bear Valley to the east and Indian Valley Reservoir to the west, is home to islands of serpentine-soil dependent rare plants and vegetation communities. It is a special place in California and one that holds poignant memories for many CNPS members. In 2008, the fourth energy company in eight years applied to BLM to install wind turbines along Walker Ridge. CNPS is working closely with a coalition of groups lead by the non-profit group Tuleyome, to oppose building any wind generation facility on Walker Ridge, and to propose more suitable locations for this technology.

September Conservation Meeting:

Preparations and planning for September's 2010 Focus on Conservation are on-going. Greg continues to work with a coordination group to identify speakers for September.

EDUCATION PROGRAM –authored by Josie Crawford

The Stewardship and Education Committee

In mid-April we field tested a curriculum for children that will work in a multitude of settings from school yards to CNPS events, to camps and family outings. It is geared primarily towards children age 8 and up, grades 3 through 7.

Opening the World through Journaling: Integrating art, science, and language arts, is a curriculum written for CNPS by John Muir Laws and Emily Brueunig. The curriculum teaches children to become keen observers of the natural world by drawing and writing about the plants and animals they see. In a set of nested exercises, students use games to gain confidence in drawing and writing as a way to gather information. Later, they employ these skills to put together a field guide, make treasure maps, and write short stories and poems. John Muir Laws says:

“Keeping a field journal develops and reinforces the most important science process skills; observation and documentation. All other parts of the process of science depend on these skills. We assume that we are naturally good observers, but learning to really see is a skill that must be learned and developed. Journal activities tie directly to the State of California science framework content standards and the visual and performing arts framework content standards.”

The summer will be spent perfecting the curriculum, and we expect it to be ready for roll-out in the fall, and will be available for downloading on the CNPS Education webpage <http://cnps.org/cnps/education/>. This project has been funded by the Jiji Foundation.

Rare Plant Treasure Hunt

The CNPS Rare Plant Treasure Hunt is in full-swing throughout the state. From the Mojave to Marin, groups of volunteers have found rare plants that have not been seen for decades! At this date, well over 200 rare plant occurrences have been updated by staff and volunteers. This is invaluable information for both CNPS and land managers who lack resources to conduct professional surveys. We will move the Treasure Hunt outings to the coast and higher elevations as the deserts and valleys finish flowering, and then return to the Mojave to capture the rare fall-flowering plants.

Follow Amber Swanson’s blog about her efforts in the Mojave and Carrizo Plain to date <http://rareplanttreasurehunt.blogspot.com>. Find scheduled events on our calendar link <http://cnps.org/cnps/rareplants/treasurehunt/calendar.php> or for more details about the project go to <http://cnps.org/cnps/rareplants/treasurehunt/>.

Plant Science Training Workshops

In this quarter we will have provided 6 workshops: Vernal Pool Plant Taxonomy, Classification of Vernal Pool Plant Communities, Measuring and Monitoring Plant Populations, Riparian Ecology and Restoration, Wetland Plants and Ecosystems and Rare Plants of the Eastern Klamath Ranges. Workshop attendance is down this year due to the economy. Fortunately, funding from Bilisoly and the Jiji Foundation has been available to help students and underemployed people take workshops this year. This additional funding has helped sustain the program and has made the workshops available to those that need the training but cannot otherwise afford it.

CNPS 2012 Conservation Conference: Conserving and Restoring the Roots of California’s Richness

January 13-15 with workshops Jan 16-17, 2012
Town and Country Hotel, San Diego

Planning for the 2012 conference is in full swing, and the call for abstracts will go out in early spring of 2011. We plan to have a Science Café, student events, art and photography contests, and poetry reading. Two days of workshops will follow the conference (Jan 16-17) on a wide variety of topics. We are also looking at adding a public education day with field trips, workshops, and children’s programming.

Up to date developments and opportunities to contribute will be posted on the conference webpage at <http://cnps.org/cnps/education/meetings.php>.

California Ecological Conservation Organizations or Cal-ECO

The California Ecological Conservation Organization (Cal-ECO) has formed a committee to address the need for a certification program for botanists. The committee will have its first meeting in June to evaluate and compare existing certification programs.

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

Plant Taxonomy Curriculum by Glen Keator

There is a tremendous need in California for courses in plant taxonomy and plant identification. Glen Keator has been teaching plant taxonomy for many years at Bay Area Junior Colleges and has offered to provide his curriculum to others who are interested in teaching a plant taxonomy course in their region. He has authored the book, *California Plant Families, west of the Sierra crest and deserts*, 2009, UC Press, that will serve as a text for the course. Glen is offering to provide a two-day teacher's training to bring potential teachers with an initial understanding and experience of plant taxonomy up to speed to teach this sorely needed curriculum. We think this course would be perfect for extended education programs since so many junior college classes are being canceled due to budget cuts. This is an opportunity to earn extra money and provide an important service to people of all ages that are interested in learning more about plant taxonomy in California.

HORTICULTURE PROGRAM – Tara Hansen

Horticulture Web Development – Growing Natives Blog

Our new horticulture blog (<http://grownatives.cnps.org>) continues to receive high quality postings from our author group, which includes Vince Scheidt, Liz Parsons, Chris Lewis, Laura Camp, Arvind Kumar, Allison Shilling, and Betsey Landis. We would like to build traffic to the blog because additional traffic will help the site return more prominently in random web searches. 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. Anyone can made comments to current postings.

Native Gardens – Quarterly e-newsletter

The quarterly e-newsletter edition that is focused on Native plant Gardening continues to be a huge success. The next Horticulture/Native Plant Gardening issue will be going out toward the end of June, 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 submission 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.

Horticulture Database Project

As previously reported, we received partial funding from the Bilisoly internal grant process to develop a new horticulture database with the expectation that any additional funds needed 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.

In early April, an appeal letter was developed and mailed to water agency contacts provided by horticulture committee members and chapters, and Allison Shilling and I have been busy conducting follow up calls to those contacts to raise the additional funds needed for the project. Meanwhile, Laura Camp and Betsey Landis have been

involved in refining the attributes list for the new database, and will be soliciting input for both the attributes and the database implementation process at the horticulture breakout session at the June Chapter Council meeting.

The database design is structured around a standard plant search, but incorporates an electronic questionnaire based upon Betsey Landis's Garden Builder survey (see http://www.cnps.org/cnps/grownative/pdf/garden_planning.pdf). This survey tool offers a unique approach for people who are new to native plant gardening to select plants and redesign their home landscapes in a way that will work well based on their site characteristics. We believe that providing a centralized database incorporating the regional plant data held by our chapters around the state will be a huge resource for CNPS site visitors, and will also help to build chapter/member relationships. Chapters will be invited to link to the database housed on the main CNPS website, which averages 17,000 hits per month, with typically 60% of those attributed to new visitors looking for information on native plants.

Native Gardens Brochure

Last month, upon learning that the State was lacking funds to reprint the popular Gardening with Natives brochure, Steve Hartman (LA/Santa Monica Mountains Chapter) suggested that we ask the chapters to help fund the reprint. On March 29th, I forwarded an e-mail appeal to Chapter Presidents and Council Reps, and you responded! So well, that you pledged enough to print this year's supply and have a good start on next year's printing!

We are still counting on receiving all outstanding pledges for this appeal, so if your chapter made a pledge, but has not yet forwarded a check to the state office, please do so right away.

RARE PLANT – authored by Nick Jensen

2009 Conservation Conference Proceedings

We continue to make progress toward publishing the Proceedings of the 2009 Conservation Conference. We have received 55 manuscripts for inclusion in the Proceedings Publication. As of mid-May the initial technical editing is complete and copy editing is in progress at Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden. The final manuscripts will go to an indexing service (Columbia Indexing) in late-June, and will go to press (Commerce Printing) by late-July. Gordon Leppig and Amanda Jorgenson completed a foreword for the publication. Bart O'Brien is working on the cover design with Beth Hansen-Winter. The estimated publication date is late-May. Special thanks to all of the individuals who continue to participate in this effort. For more information on the Proceedings please contact Nick (njensen@cnps.org).

Rare Plant Inventory

The review of 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: 10 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 completed and the project is now fully-funded. We have hired an independent consultant to do the bulk of programming and technical revision required for completion of the new Online Inventory. If all goes as planned, the new web application will be online and available for use by fall.

Funding for this project has been provided by a CNPS member, the Bilisoly 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 (Update provided by Shannon Still, Botanist/Project Coordinator)

The statewide Rare Plant Treasure Hunt has been a success in the few months it has been active. Although we are still trying to organize some groups and individuals we have had about 100 people involved in searching for and/or updating occurrences. Individuals or groups from 22 CNPS chapters have been involved in the project. This has included individuals from 11 NGOs and agencies and 35 groups or businesses. As of the end of April, nearly 50 updated or new occurrences were submitted to CNDDDB. We expect additional forms to be submitted in the coming months. So far, 25 new occurrences have been documented, and more than 20 previously-documented occurrences have been revisited. The Rare Plant Treasure Hunt will continue through the summer and fall so if you are still interested in becoming involved in the project then please contact us.

Other News

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

Lastly, in late March, I attended the Rare Plants of Eastern San Luis Obispo County Workshop, led by David Keil, and co-taught the Vernal Pool Plant Taxonomy Workshop, led by Carol Witham.

A Fond Farewell

Many of you have probably heard that I am leaving my position with CNPS, effective July 1st.

The decision to leave CNPS is truly one of the most difficult decisions of my life. After more than four years of employment I can honestly say that the experience of working for CNPS has lived up to and exceeded my greatest expectations. Through CNPS I have learned a tremendous amount about our flora, plant science, and conservation. Furthermore, I greatly value the relationships and friendships that I have developed with CNPS Staff and members. I hope these relationships will last a lifetime.

Starting this July my wife, Rachel, and I will travel to Southeast Asia, India, Nepal and points beyond. We believe that this is an optimal time in our lives to put into effect this plan and our dreams. In the following year Rachel will begin graduate studies at the University of Idaho. With the permission of her faculty adviser she has decided to delay her enrollment at the University of Idaho one year so that we can pursue our long-standing dream of prolonged international travel. Additionally, following Rachel's completion of graduate school I also plan on enrolling in graduate school to pursue my interests in plant science and conservation.

I wish to thank all of you for all that you do for this organization and for your tremendous support over the past several years.

VEGETATION PROGRAM – authored by Julie Evens & Vegetation Program Staff***Chapter and Public Vegetation Workshops***

Julie Evens, Todd Keeler-Wolf, and John Sawyer co-taught a workshop at the SERCAL conference in Mammoth Lakes in May, providing an Introduction to the 2nd edition of *A Manual of California Vegetation*. Six participants attended, including biological consultants and land conservancy staff from northern and southern CA.

Julie also taught vegetation sampling to around 10 participants in Sonoma County in early May for the Pepperwood Preserve, OceanSong, and the Milo Baker and Sanhedrin Chapters. Training focused on using the CNPS plot-based relevé method for sampling rare and diverse vegetation assemblages, particularly grassland communities. Julie and Danielle Roach taught another workshop at Sierra Foothill Conservancy's Tivy Mountain Preserve in Fresno County in

May, also focusing on rare plant communities including grasslands with native grasses and rare plant species. These workshops are supported by Bilisoly grant funds.

Manual of California Vegetation

During workshops and other events, we have succeeded in selling dozens more copies of the Manual, and we have shown the utility of the book for resource assessment, conservation planning, and land management. We continue to answer questions about evaluating vegetation resources, and we plan to write a new *Fremontia* article that addresses issues of fire with vegetation.

The need to present the Manual's information and newer ecology information online to further enable its use and application is still apparent. We have received some donation funds and an appeal designed to generate more targeted fundraising for this project is planned for June. Currently, the co-authors are planning to distribute representative vegetation photos online and through a new CNPS picture book publication. DFG also sees the utility of the online display of range maps for the vegetation types described in the book, so two GIS staff are assisting in the databasing of the maps.

Grasslands Research Projects (Donation/Grant-funded)

Jennifer Buck and Betsy Harbert sampled a diversity of herbaceous plant communities this spring with grant-funding from Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and The Nature Conservancy (TNC). We visited many public and private lands within Kern, Merced, San Luis Obispo and Tulare Counties, and sampled notable wildflower displays at Tejon Ranch, Semitropic Ridge and Carrizo Plain National Monument. Our youngest new volunteer, Oscar Diaz, was present with stellar field nana, Nancy Buck. This data collection contributes to our grassland initiative in establishing a more comprehensive vegetation classification of herbaceous communities. Betsy also revisited the Carrizo to collect more ground data for detailed grassland mapping of around 5,000 acres at one of our sites.

With funding from the Coastal Conservancy, Julie met with partners for a new grasslands mapping project in Marin and Sonoma Counties. Julie assisted in training field staff to conduct grassland surveys this year. This project will assist in identifying the variation in coastal grassland vegetation types and in evaluating areas in need of restoration.

Carrizo Plain National Monument Project (Grant-funded)

CNPS established a new grant agreement with the Bureau of Land Management for identifying vegetation resources in the Carrizo Plain. The project includes collecting field vegetation data and producing a detailed vegetation map, which will serve as a baseline for evaluating potential climate change effects on vegetation. Four staff members are working for nine weeks to collect field data this year, including Melinda Elster, Betsy Harbert, Rhiannon Korhummel, and Deborah Stout. This work involves collaboration with DFG staff, who are helping collect field data this spring.

Northern Sierra Nevada Foothills (NSNF) Project (Contract-funded)

CNPS and sub-contractor Aerial Information Systems (AIS) continued work on mapping in the NSNF with funding from the Department of Fish and Game (DFG). In March, CNPS staff verified accuracy for a 3rd section of the map, with 182 surveys completed by Danielle Roach and Suzanne Harmon. About half of these surveys were entered into our database. In April, AIS completed photo-interpretation of vegetation for the 3rd quarter of the ecoregion (from El Dorado to Tuolumne County).

Kendra Sikes received and processed access permits from 17 different landowners who own large properties, and she sent letters to other landowners whose property contains uncommon vegetation types within the 3rd section. Additional request letters were sent to large landowners in the 4th quarter of the ecoregion, and CNPS, AIS and DFG staff made a field reconnaissance trip to review mapping questions by AIS in Mariposa County for this last quarter.

Betsy Harbert wrapped up identifying a backlog of plant specimens collected during the 2008 season vegetation sampling. About 65% of the specimens now have identifications confirmed, and 400 out of 4000 specimens were provided to UC Davis herbarium for accessioning.

Southern Sierra Nevada Foothills (SSNF) Project (Donation-funded)

With funding from a private donor, CNPS staff allocated time to vegetation sampling during the peak spring bloom in southern Mariposa, Madera, and Fresno Counties of the SSNF ecoregion. Kendra worked with the Sierra Foothill Conservancy to identify areas in these counties which were insufficiently sampled during our 2008 effort. By late May, Suzanne and Danielle had conducted 136 detailed surveys, and they did extensive reconnaissance on a focused 10,000-acre study area to produce a vegetation map of McKenzie Preserve at Big Table Mountain and surrounding lands. Staff will complete fieldwork at the end of May and will be mapping these areas during the summer months.

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

Kendra Sikes incorporated all review comments into a draft conservation assessment report for fen vegetation on National Forest lands in the Sierra Nevada region, in collaboration with the United States Forest Service (USFS) and UC Davis. Kendra is currently updating the report with new data received. We also completed a related project for Shasta-Trinity National Forest, which included sampling and mapping of three fen complexes. A final report included the classification of all fen plots sampled and a fen geodatabase.

We also were awarded a \$44,000 grant by the USFS through the Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act to further research fens in the Tahoe Basin and to allow detailed ranking of fen diversity and quality for conservation and management. Work is scheduled to begin in July 2010.

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

Julie Evens and Deborah Stout continued to classify vegetation data for the Mojave Network of the National Park Service (NPS). Julie completed classification of over 300 vegetation samples from Death Valley National Park, including high elevation samples of pinyon-juniper woodland and carbonate scrub vegetation. Deborah continued quality control of legacy datasets. Julie also discussed the goals and approaches for sampling in Death Valley National Park (DEVA) this spring, and Julie and Kendra met with NPS staff in DEVA to review the sampling protocols, discuss vegetation types found in the Park, and assist in sampling on a site visit in May.

Other Vegetation Program Details

Upon receiving a new grant from ESRI, Danielle completed a 3-day intermediate training on working with Geographic Information Systems (GIS) ArcView 9.3 software.

Jennifer and Julie are writing a new grant proposal to the NRCS, leveraging our new donation funds within the southern Sierra foothills to identify/ map vegetation features and model wildlife habitat in another focused area of these foothills.

SALES REPORT – authored by Stacey Flowerdew

As of the March CNPS board meeting, we have dramatically shifted gears on the Sales Program to focus only on CNPS Press and CNPS-exclusive items. Starting in May, Alicia Patrice has joined the staff part time in the office and has taken over the role of order processing and shipping. In less than two months we have already exhausted the supply of many titles we carried and have removed several from the online store. The Sierra Nevada poster reprint has started to move, and we added the *Wildflowers of San Luis Obispo County* from the San Luis Obispo chapter to our catalog and web store in April.

A Manual of California Vegetation, Second Edition continues to be a hit. Since its release last autumn through May 26th, a total of 600 copies have been sold. The CNPS-exclusive title, *California Mosses*, has sold 443 in the same time frame. The companion moss glossary, *Mosses and Other Bryophytes*, has sold 165.

The Sierra Nevada Poster reprint has sold 7 laminated copies and 129 un-laminated copies since March. *The Field Guide to Mather Field* continues to be a modest seller with 34 copies sold this year, and 30 of Klean Kanteens have sold. Judging from past performance, sales on all of these items will probably increase now that the Spring Catalog has been mailed.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT – by Stacey Flowerdew and Tara Hansen

Changes to Membership Accounting:

With our new database system, it is important to update all of you on a few key membership accounting changes. As previously reported, the 2010 membership numbers no longer include members who have not yet renewed, but are still within the 90 day lapse grace period. In the past, we have included members in our current membership count that were lapsed up to 90 days past their renewal anniversary date.

Also starting this year, our new database system allows us to track renewals and rejoins separately so they will no longer be combined into one number as “renewals” but reported separately. A rejoined member is someone who has renewed their membership after the normal 90 day lapse grace period has expired. Members sometimes come back several years after allowing their original membership to lapse, so this category allows us to track the original membership record while recognizing that it has not been a continuously renewed membership.

Renewals are counted based on the anniversary date, even if the member’s renewal gift is received early or within the 90 day lapse grace period of the actual renewal date. This means that the renewal numbers for any given month can change for up to 3 months after the actual reporting date, so you could see the renewal count number increase for any given month on subsequent reports.

Another important change in our membership accounting and reporting process for this quarterly report, is that with our new database, we are able to track the exact number of renewals for any period, and no longer need to estimate these numbers based on month to month standing membership totals as we did previously.

Membership Reports and Data Updates:

Since April, the state office has taken the step to upload monthly membership reports to Google docs instead of the cumbersome method of emailing them. This is in anticipation of creating a secure page on the CNPS website to upload these reports sometime this summer. All chapter membership chairs and other chapter leaders who need access to this data will be given a login and password to view the secure page. In order to make data retrieval more efficient and user friendly to both the state staff and chapter volunteers, we have been investigating other options including purchasing custom built membership reports from Blackbaud. Before any more changes are made to the way membership reports are distributed, we plan to schedule a training call to go over the details, help overcome any technical challenges, and answer questions.

Member Change of Address: One way to streamline the exchange of data updates from the chapters to the state office on member records is to direct members to use our web tool for address updates. This form is located at <http://www.cnps.org/cnps/join>. When address information is entered into this online form, we are able to retrieve and upload it into the system, negating the need for manual transfer of the information we receive in other ways.

Membership Committee News:

As most of you know, Arvind Kumar and Mary Francis Kelly-Poh 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 placed on growing the CNPS membership as one of the primary goals for achieving the CNPS mission and vision. As previously communicated, we are in the process of building a dedicated, formal committee focused entirely on building membership growth and retention strategies and addressing issues related to membership.

We have had a number of chapter leaders request to serve on this committee, and are still recruiting 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.

The newly reformed committee currently includes the following participants:

- Arvind Kumar, Co-Chair, Santa Clara Valley
- Mary Frances Kelly-Poh, Co-Chair, Willis Jepson
- Betsey Landis, LA/Santa Monica Mountains
- Joan Jernegan, Redbud
- Sarah Jayne, Orange County
- Dorie Diragosian, Kern
- Cindy Kondon, South Coast
- Tara Hansen & Stacey Flowerdew, Staff