



The Cypress Cone

The newsletter of the California Native Plant Society
SANTA CRUZ COUNTY CHAPTER

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July - August 2007

Chapter General Meeting

Images from Santa Cruz's North Coast

Dylan Neubauer

Monday July 9, 2007

7:30 pm

• UCSC Arboretum Horticulture Building •

Join us for a look at a gorgeous array of flowers seen up close from the North Coast of Santa Cruz County. The show will emphasize the many special plants and landscapes of the Scotts Creek Watershed, known for its botanical diversity. Accompanied by music, we will take a journey through a variety of plant communities through the macro-photography of Dylan Neubauer.

Dylan Neubauer is a graphic designer and photographer with a long-standing interest in California native plants. She edited and designed the *Annotated Checklist of the Vascular Plants of Santa Cruz County*, published by our chapter in 2005.

• Please note the change in venue. •



Dylan Neubauer

Checkerbloom (*Sidalcea*) and visitor

County Roadside Vegetation Management: Pesticide Use Policy

A three-year moratorium on the use of herbicide to control roadside vegetation along roadsides in Santa Cruz County went into effect on June 1, 2005. The Department of Public Works (DPW) has requested an exemption to allow herbiciding along ten percent of the county's 600 miles of roads. Specific stretches of roads are identified for treatment, and in some cases, particular addresses. Within the areas to be sprayed, individual species are targeted for control at intermittent locations: puncture vine, poison hemlock, thistle, Himalayan berry, broom, arundo, and poison oak. Areas within one-half mile of a school or within 150 feet of a perennial water body are excluded.

The initial control will not consist of broadcast spraying. DPW plans to mow first and then hand-spray the resprouts, an approach that significantly decreases the amount of chemical applied. Last year, 45 miles of county roads were mowed. About \$500,000 was budgeted for mowing in 2007, but it would take about \$2 million a year to mow all the county roads.

CNPS is concerned that special native plant populations may be affected by herbiciding. Other concerns expressed at a recent Board of Supervisors hearing included health consequences of herbicides, training of road crews to tell native plants and exotics apart (for example California Blackberry and Himalayan Blackberry), potential contamination of organic farms, and notification of property owners who may wish to take charge of their own roadside management. The Supervisors will consider the topic again in August. More information is available at http://sccounty01.co.santa-cruz.ca.us/bds/Govstream/BDSvData/non_legacy/agendas/2007/20070612/PDF/035.pdf

Do you know any native plant populations within the planned spray areas that should be avoided? Treasurer Suzanne Schettler (see masthead on last page) will compile locations within the planned roadways where native plants should be avoided and communicate them to DPW. Please relay comments within 5 days after receiving this newsletter.

Conservation Update

Arana Gulch Court Date Changed

The Arana lawsuit relating to the Santa Cruz Sunflower has been continued to Sept. 7 at 8:30 AM in Department 9 of Santa Cruz Superior Court. It was continued because of the court's current heavy case load.

Chapter Files Lawsuit to Defend Spineflower

Reprinted below is the press release CNPS sent out on June 6 to all local newspapers.

On June 6, 2007 the Chapter filed suit against the City of Santa Cruz for its approval of the 40-unit Branciforte development on one of the City's last remaining vacant parcels. The property is home to the federally listed Robust spineflower (*Chorizanthe robusta* var. *robusta*), an endangered species.

The suit alleges that the City failed to adequately consider impacts to the Robust spineflower, and that the Environmental Impact Report contained misleading information concerning the number of units that would have to be reduced to avoid impacts to the spineflower. "The Environmental Impact Report created a false choice between needed housing and protection of some of the last remnants of the Robust spineflower," said Vince Cheap of the CNPS's local chapter. "In reality, either creating higher densities in some locations or by eliminating two 'estate homes' could have reduced the impact."

A biologist hired for the Project contended that a 30-foot buffer for the spineflower from development was adequate. This assertion was against the recommendations of the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service and a respected study by the Conservation Biology Institute that recommended 80 to 100-foot buffers for "moderate" protection. The project as approved includes 30, 40, or 60-foot buffers depending on location.

The City argued that it needs to increase housing stock due to the unaffordability of the housing in Santa Cruz. "I fail to see how the approval of additional 'estate homes' or so-called 'executive homes' relieves the pressure of high cost housing," added Cheap.

The suit also contends that the EIR inflated the number of units possible when analyzing alternatives. Accordingly, the City Council was led to believe that the number of estate housing units lost by increasing the buffers for the spineflower was more dramatic. "It is a sad day indeed when within little more than weeks after the 37th Earth Day, the City Council approves a project that further endangers some of the remaining spineflower," said CNPS's Cheap. "This approval says that Santa Cruz is no longer committed to the environment."

The *Sentinel* covered the topic at www.santacruzsentinel.com/archive/2007/June/08/local/stories/03local.htm

Polo Ranch Project Subdivision Threatens Our County's Rarest Endemic Species

On June 6, 2007 the City of Scotts Valley published a Final EIR for a 41 unit housing development on the Polo Ranch property in northeast Scotts Valley. This location is home to four county endemic plant species (two are federally listed as endangered) and one state endangered species. The five include: the federally endangered Scotts Valley polygonum (*Polygonum hickmanii*) and Scotts Valley spineflower (*Chorizanthe robusta* var. *hartwegii*); the state endangered San Francisco popcorn-flower (*Plagiobothrys diffusus*) last seen onsite in 1989; an endemic race of Gray's clover (*Trifolium grayi*); and an endemic relative of California sandwort (*Minuartia californica*). According to Randall Morgan the polygonum is probably our most endangered endemic plant along with the sandwort. CNPS has been commenting on various versions of Draft EIR's (DEIR) of this development since 2000. We have retained as legal counsel attorney Bill Parkin to submit comments on behalf of CNPS in the past on this project. As a result of our comments and others the most recent DEIR published in December 2005 was a recirculated DEIR. Based on our comments on the RDEIR the City and developer finally included an "almost" environmentally superior Alternative, #4. In the real world of such extreme rarity "almost" doesn't cut it. Alternative 4 appears to give a 50 foot buffer from Lot 10 - already less than the recommended 80 to 100 feet; but due to the surrounding 30% slope and the need to reshape the slope for Lot 10, the required grading impacts shave that 50 feet to approximately 5 feet from the historic site. Both the proposed project and Alternative 4 destroy this historic polygonum site as possible habitat. The FEIR and the Recirculated DEIR contain other CEQA flaws. I have retained attorney Bill Parkin to comment as many of our original DEIR concerns remain unanswered. The deadline for FEIR comments is June 26. The Planning Commission hearing is June 28 at 6PM at Council Chambers. The Council meeting for final approval is July 18 at 7PM. All are welcome to attend and comment at the public meetings.

– Vince Cheap, Conservation Chair



Dylan Neubauer

Up close with a Santa Cruz Sunflower (*Holocarpha macradenia*)

Field Trip

Thursday July 19- Sunday July 22, 2007

Sponsored by UCSC Arboretum Native Plant Workshops
Willows on the Wing Workshop with John Bair
\$140 CNPS/Arboretum members or \$180 non-members

The best way to learn Californian willows is in the field. This field trip will travel from the eastern Sierra across the crest to the western slope. Willow species will be associated both with elevation and east west distributions. Almost half of the state's willow species will be seen "on the wing" as we visit areas from sierra crest near Saddle Bag Lake (+10,000 ft) down the streams feeding Mono Lake (6,500 ft in elevation) and finally up the Sonora pass (+9,500 ft) and down the western slope (500 ft) into the San Joaquin Valley.

The group will gather in the late afternoon Thursday at the campground in Lee Vining (approx 6,500 ft in elevation) and a brief trip overview and introduction to willows will be given Thursday evening. Thursday and Friday nights will be spent at the same campground. Friday will focus on willow species growing at higher elevations near the Sierra Crest with the group taking a couple of hikes near Saddle Bag Lake and Tioga Pass. On Saturday we will visit riparian areas along Rush and Lee Vining Creeks to learn a few more willows and discuss the reproductive relationship of willows and the snowmelt season. In the afternoon the group will begin to travel north to the Sonora Pass, stopping in Sardine Meadows just west of the pass. Saturday night will be spent at a campground near Kennedy Meadows. The group will wind down the western sierra slope on Sunday stopping a few times to get a sense of the effect of elevation on willow distribution. Our last stop will be along the Stanislaus River to look at common central valley willows. The trip will end in Oakdale at approximately 4pm on Sunday.

Folks will need to bring their own camping equipment and food. A hand lens and Jepson manual would be helpful but not essential. We will attempt to carpool wherever it makes the most sense. Number of participants will be limited to 20. Registration (831) 427-2998. Credit Cards OK. No online registration at this time.

For more information contact Brett Hall brett@ucsc.edu or Ellen Holmes ellen@centralcoastwilds.com.

New Members Welcome!

The Santa Cruz chapter is happy to acknowledge new members

Amy McCabe
Monica Holmes
Cara Lamb
James Cook
David Brush
Ezekiel Bean

We are also grateful to all our renewing members. You keep CNPS in motion!

Statewide Board Meeting Coming To Santa Cruz In September

The Santa Cruz Chapter will be hosting the CNPS state board meeting on September 7 and 8. There will be interesting talks on Saturday Sept 8 which are open to the general membership.

We also need some volunteers to help coordinate things and we are looking for people who can provide a room overnight for some of the participants from out of town. For more information please call Peggy Waters at 831-336-9283.



Habitat Restoration Team Events

We are a volunteer group working to restore native habitat in the parks and protected lands in Santa Cruz County. Our program provides an opportunity for people to learn about the natural systems that surround them while helping to restore special and wild places. No prior work experience is necessary, just show up at the park. We welcome individual volunteers from 8 to 80 years, as well as special group projects. Wear comfortable layered clothing, bring something to drink, and lots of enthusiasm! We work rain or shine, but if things get particularly unpleasant, we call it a day. Tools provided; bring gloves.

Contact: Program Leader, Linda Brodman 831.462.4041, redwdrn@pacbell.net

July 7, 2007 10 am to 1 pm
Sunset Beach State Park

July 21, 2007 10 am to 1 pm
Natural Bridges State Park

August 4, 2007 10 am to 1 pm
Sunset Beach State Park

• Annual Volunteer Recognition Event •

August 25, 2007 9:30 am to 11:30 am
Natural Bridges State Park

Once a year the State Parks hold a special event to thank volunteers for their past efforts.

Breakfast will be catered – please RSVP by August 10 at 831-335-3174

Join the California Native Plant Society!

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: ____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____

Email: _____

Chapter (County) Affiliation: _____

Please make your check payable to CNPS and send to: Membership Chair, CNPS, 2707 K Street, Suite 1, Sacramento, CA 95816

- Student/Limited Income \$25
- Individual \$45
- Family, Group or Library \$75
- Plant Lover \$100
- Patron \$300
- Benefactor \$600
- Mariposa Lily \$1500

All dues and gifts to CNPS are tax deductible.



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Vegetation: Casey Stewman

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Members at Large: Mary Ellen Irons 426-8410, 207 Archer Dr, Santa Cruz; Kim Hayes hayes@elkhornslough.org

CNPS is a non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of California native flora. CNPS has 31 chapters throughout the state and membership is open to all persons – professional and amateur — with an interest in California's native plants. Members have diverse interests including natural history, botany, ecology, conservation, photography, drawing, hiking, and gardening. Your membership includes *Fremontia*, a quarterly journal with articles on all aspects of native plants; the *Bulletin*, a statewide report of activities and schedules; and the *Cypress Cone*.



California Native Plant Society Santa Cruz County Chapter

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