



The Shooting Star

SIERRA FOOTHILLS CHAPTER

CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

APRIL 2016

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stink bells (*Fritillaria agrestis*), Chinese Camp, late February 2016 (a bit early)

The Sierra Foothills Chapter
California Native Plant Society

Native Plant Sale

Saturday April 16, 2016
10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
San Andreas

Calaveras County Water District Building, 120 Toma Ct.
from Hwy 49 at the north end of San Andreas, turn south onto Pool Station Rd, left onto George Reed Rd to Toma Ct. (c/nr George Reed and Toma Ct.)

Books
Handouts
Knowledgeable
People



Pacific Coast Iris Society (Linn 1003)

Trees
Shrubs
Perennials
Grasses
Water-Wise
Plants

Join CNPS at the Plant Sale and get \$5.00 off your plant purchases that day.

Hand Crafted Bird Houses, Bat Houses, Books and Information Presented by the Audubon Society of Tuolumne County

Photos: Jennie Haas



Bolander's mules ears (*Wyethia bolanderi*), Hunter Valley Mtn. Access Rd., March 2012

SPRING NATIVE PLANT SALE IN SAN ANDREAS Saturday, April 16

This year's Spring Native Plant Sale will be held on Saturday, April 16, from 10 am to 1 pm. It will be held on the grounds of the Calaveras County Water District located off of Pool Station Road in the Reed Business Park, in San Andreas.

We will have the same selection of rare high quality plants for sale as well as a fine

selection of books and material that every gardener and native plant lover should have in their personal library.

Directions to the Calaveras County Water District Building at 120 Toma Court, San Andreas: Take HWY 49 to San Andreas. Turn left onto Pool Station Road, and go

ALERT!!!

Change of location for the April & May General Meeting!

Location: Senior Center (next to Sonora Library)

(General Meeting will resume in September at Sonora Library on Thursdays)

2 miles; turn left on George Reed Road. Turn left on Toma Court. CCWD is on the corner of George Reed and Toma Court.

If you would like to volunteer or if you have any questions, please contact Stephanie Garcia at sjgarcia@mlode.com or Judy Dean at goldrushdean@yahoo.com

April Calendar

Thursday, April 7:

6:00 pm—Board Meeting at Senior Center (all members welcome to join discussion with your Chapter Board)

7:00 pm—General meeting with Presentation Speaker

Saturday, April 2:

FIELD TRIP: West Side Railroad Grade Trail

Sunday, April 10:

FIELD TRIP: Red Hills ACEC

If you change your mailing or e-mail address, be sure to send a note to Jennie Haas. This will keep your newsletter on time!

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jhaas953@gmail.com

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Sacramento, CA 95816
www.cnps.org

Sierra Foothills Chapter
www.sierrafoothillscnps.org
Dedicated to the Preservation of California Native Flora.

Field Trips



Red Hills, *Lewisia rediviva*, 2009.

Photo: Jennie Haas

The relatively warm winter and dry February brought on an early bloom for many species of wildflowers in the lower elevations. Poppies started bursting out in the Merced and Tuolumne River Canyons and along O'Byrne's Ferry Road near Lake Tulloch in mid-February. Goldfields started lighting up the Red Hills near Chinese Camp in late February. Red bud started blooming in early March at Moccasin and along Highway 120 near Lake Don Pedro. By the second week of March, blue dicks were popping. It makes us antsy to get out and enjoy it all.

March came in with a lot of periodic rain and snow – all welcome in this era of persistent drought. Our first field trip of the year, UC Merced Vernal Pools, was cancelled due to rain and refilled vernal pools which inundated the flowers. We're hoping to reschedule this trip to late April or early May. The folks who reserved for the original trip and the waiting list people will be given first and second chances at the rescheduled trip, if there is one. We'll put out the word by e-mail if there is space available.

Places to go on your own to see wildflowers this month include Hite Cove (site of our second field trip, March 26; participant numbers limited and RSVP required), Preston Falls Trail on the Tuolumne River, the Merced Wild and Scenic River Trail downstream from Briceburg (Highway 140), Hunter Valley Mountain Access Road, Bagby Serpentine along Highway 49 south of Coulterville, New Hogan Dam area, Table Mountain and, of course, the Red Hills.

See the special pull out section included with this issue of the Shooting Star for the schedule of 2016 field trips. We have some awesome trips planned with a variety of experts to lead them. We hope that you can make it to a few. These trips are fun and informative. You don't need to be able to speak Latin to enjoy yourself. Be sure to check to see if reservations are required. Some of the trips have limiting factors which require us to restrict the number of participants.

If you would like to participate, have ideas to contribute and/or wish to lead a field trip, contact me at 209-962-4759, or jhaas953@gmail.com.

- - Jennie Haas

Call for Botany Assistants to Help With the Yosemite BloomBlitz, May 22nd 2016



Wildflowers carpeting the forest floor two years post-Rim Fire

The Yosemite Bloom Blitz will be held on May 22nd in Yosemite National Park. This celebration of biodiversity and discovery is one of over a hundred bio blitzes, each with their own theme and focus, occurring in national parks across the country that will commemorate the National Park Service's Centennial.

We will conduct botanical surveys with specific focus on flowering plants in recently burned areas. These surveys will document the floral diversity that follows fires in various elevations, habitats, and times since the last fire, and share those findings with the public. We will survey around ten trails with about ten participants each.

Each trail will have designated trip leaders who will be in charge of the logistics of the day and **Botanically skilled CNPS members are invited to join the event as Botany Assistants to help with plant ID.**

Botany assistants will be given park passes good for the two weeks prior to the BloomBlitz and are encouraged to attend the May 14th field trip. If interested, please contact David Campbell at moonwort.campbell@gmail.com (preferred) or 612-867-8700.

- - David Campbell, Mariposa Vice President

VERNAL POOLS WITH CATTLE OR ALMONDS

(Reprinted from 2012)

If you have traveled up Hiway 4 between Farmington and Copperopolis in the last few years you may have noticed a zone of profound conflict. This low foothill area, above most irrigated agriculture and below the Foothill Woodlands is an area of rapidly disappearing vernal pools., grazing cattle, and greatly expanding acreage of almonds.

You may have heard that almonds are an excellent snack food and that they have been become a profitable export crop to areas such as China and India. Here in the low foothills of the Sierra Nevada are vast acres of gently rolling foothills which can be relatively easily converted from cattle grazing land to almonds and other nuts such as walnuts and pistachios. The acreage of these nut crops has been increasing rapidly in recent years. But there is conflict. This area is occupied by many of the remaining vernal pools. The loss of vernal pools in range land of California has been estimated to be at least 50% and possibly as much as 85%. There is little information available. A few vernal pool areas are protected in preserves but many of the largest pools are gone including one the size of a small lake which once existed east of Turlock. I have seen foothill acreage which included pools converted to orchards from Tulare County in the south to the Chico area in the north all on the east side of the Central Valley.

This land sells for such more as orchard land than for cattle grazing. The water is there, underground where it is being "mined" for irrigation. Few varieties of almonds have been developed which do well in these soil and water conditions. But well managed grazing land protects and can enhance the pools. Conversely the development of the land for orchards involves "deep ripping" of the soil to break up the shallow hardpan soil layer. This destroys the vernal pools forever.

This time of year you can still see some vernal pools ringed by white meadowfoam, *Limnanthes* sp. The disturbance by the cattle grazing helps to control invasive, weedy species. Other species, some endangered, occupy the pools. These include colorful species of *Downingia* and *Blenosperma*. Many species are endemic to the pools and some such as *Orcutt Grass* are vernal pool obligate species and grow nowhere else. Other species occur in the pools and in other grassland wetlands such as "swales" where the rain runoff flows slowly unlike in the pools where it sits above the hardpan.

There are also unusual animal species which occur in the pools such as Fairy Shrimp, Tadpole Shrimp, Red Legged Frogs, solitary bees and the California Tiger Salamander.

Many of the ranchers want to keep ranching and some are involved in efforts to protect the pools and their inhabitants. Studies sponsored by the California Rangeland Conservation Coalition are starting this year to assess rangeland management practices and their impacts on wetland, riparian, and upland habitat to improve rangeland, protect valuable habitat and insure that rangeland remains productive in the future.

- - Steve Stocking



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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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PLEASE INCLUDE ME AS A CNPS MEMBER!

Student/Retired/Limited income ...\$25
 Individual \$45
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 Library..... \$75
 Plant Lover \$100
 Patron.....\$300
 Benefactor \$600
 Mariposa Lily..... \$1,500

As always, donations above the membership level chosen will be greatly appreciated.

Name _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ Zip _____
 Telephone _____ E-mail _____
 (Dues and gifts to CNPS are tax deductible)

I Wish to affiliate with the **Sierra Foothills** Chapter.

Please make your check payable to "CNPS" and send it to: 2707 "K" street, Suite 1, Sacramento, CA 95816 Tel. (916) 447-2677.

Join or renew on-line at www.cnps.org.

Membership includes the journal Fremontia, CNPS Bulletin and the Sierra Foothills monthly newsletter, The Shooting Star.