



# The Shooting Star

SIERRA FOOTHILLS CHAPTER

CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

FEBRUARY 2019

**February Program TBA**  
**Thursday, February 7, 6:00 p.m.**  
**Tuolumne County Library Meeting Room**  
**480 Greenly Road, Sonora**

## Ideas Needed for 2019 Programs

What would get you to come listen to an interesting speaker on a Thursday evening in Sonora? Is there a topic you've been dying to learn about? Is there a particular expert that you'd like to hear talk? Maybe you know someone who has knowledge or talent on the native plant spectrum. Or perhaps you have such knowledge or talent and would like to do a talk.

While our chapter board and collaborators have been finding outstanding speakers for years, it is always refreshing to get ideas from a broader pool of plant lovers.

After our chapter first formed in 1989, we filled the library meeting room month-after-month, often with 40 to 50 members and guests filling the room, eager to hear that month's speaker. In the past few years, we typically have only 10 to 15. It makes us wonder if we're missing the mark on our topics.

We've considered moving our meetings to a weekend day-time meeting to eliminate night-time driving but find that there are no venues on a consistent, monthly basis to hold such meetings. Changing to a different night or week of the month has the same results. There are too few venues for the number of groups needing the space.

So, please take a few minutes to think about a program topic or speaker that might be important enough to you that you would attend a first-Thursday-evening-of-the-month meeting. And also feel free to volunteer yourself to do a presentation on a native plant topic. Send your ideas to Jennie at [jhaas953@gmail.com](mailto:jhaas953@gmail.com), or call her at 209-962-4759.

## Field Trip Planning

If our recent weather trends continue into the spring, we should be in for a great wildflower season. Our chapter field trip committee will come together on **Saturday February 9<sup>th</sup>, noon to 3 p.m.**, at the Tuolumne County Library meeting room, 480 Greenly Road in Sonora, to put together another fantastic schedule to capture the best colors and most interesting plants for the year.

Please consider this your invitation to join us on the 9<sup>th</sup> to help plan the schedule. We're looking for old favorites and fresh new locations to go check out the plants. If you decide not to attend the meeting but have ideas for us, send your ideas to Jennie, [jhaas953@gmail.com](mailto:jhaas953@gmail.com), 209-962-4759.

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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*Dedicated to the Preservation of  
California Native Flora.*

## What's Blooming?

If you see a native plant blooming in our chapter area that is unusual or special to you, please share it. If there is space remaining after chapter announcements, I will include your observations in the next newsletter. Just a sentence or two (and an optional photo) will do. We have nothing against tulips and daffodils, but submissions to *What's Blooming?* should be limited to native plants appearing in California. - Ed. [djcran@comcast.net](mailto:djcran@comcast.net)

### January 22

“White alder (*Alnus rhombifolia*) is blooming in Grizzly Gulch at the bottom of Priest Grade at Moccasin along Hwy 120. Also, Common manzanita (*Arctostaphylos manzanita*) along Jacksonville Road at Lake Don Pedro.” – Jennie H.

### January 21

“The Sierra National Forest has closed the Hite Cove trail due to legitimate safety concerns after the Ferguson Fire. But if you are able and willing to do some hard manual labor, there is a way to get out on the south fork without trespassing. Bill King runs a volunteer group called the South Fork Trail Blazers, in coordination with SNF (cf. panel at bottom of page for contact info.). I joined a work crew on Jan. 21 and was pleased to see that two Hite Cove wildflowers that typically appear first were both present, albeit in very small numbers: Waterfall Buttercup (*Ranunculus hystriculus*) and Western Rue Anemone (*Enemion occidentale*). (Both are perennials in Buttercup family.) I am glad that both survived the fire. We also saw robust, peculiar-looking specimens of a Monkeyflower that must have been *Mimulus guttatus*. The peculiarity (besides crazy bloom time) is that the bracts in the upper part of the inflorescence were fully perfoliate. This monkeyflower was seen at the same spot in December.” – Doug K.

### December 26 & January 18

“I visited Red Hills on each of the above dates. On Dec. 26, all of the “2018” wildflowers were gone, but the first “2019” wildflower, Chaparral Currant (*Ribes malvaceum*), was just starting to appear. On Jan. 18, Chaparral Currant and Common Manzanita were both close to peak bloom (cf. photos below). Anna’s Hummingbirds were enjoying them even more than I.” – Doug K.



## South Fork Merced River Trail Blazers

If you want information on volunteer opportunities along the south fork, contact Bill King at [explorer@sti.net](mailto:explorer@sti.net), 209-626-9898. Bill’s work outings are approved by, and coordinated with, the Sierra National Forest, but there is no affiliation with CNPS. Fresh air, beautiful scenery, hard work, no pay... what more could one ask for?

## Did you know?

The California Department of Water Resources maintains a website with up-to-date precipitation data for the current water year (which resets on Oct. 1). It includes comparisons to record wet and dry years and the 50-year average. Here is a link to the main page for precipitation which you can explore on your own: [http://cdec.water.ca.gov/snow\\_rain.html](http://cdec.water.ca.gov/snow_rain.html)

On the main page you will find the following links, which may not activate from this newsletter::

Northern Sierra 8 Station Precipitation Index Water Year Plot:

Current (PDF) | Interactive

San Joaquin 5 Station Precipitation Index Water Year Plot:

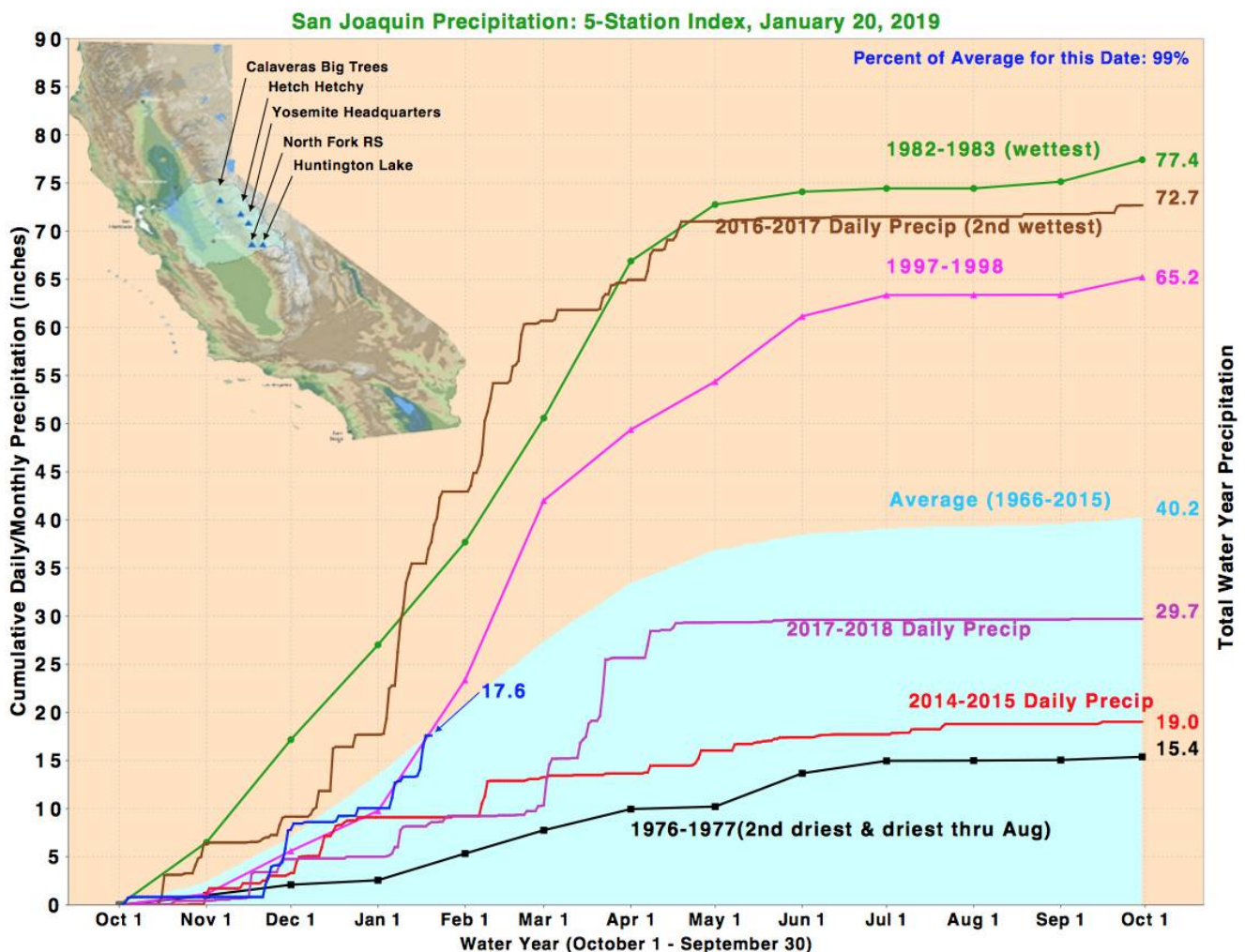
Current (PDF) | Interactive

Tulare Basin 6 Station Precipitation Index Water Year Plot:

Current (PDF) | Interactive

When you click on the San Joaquin 5-station Water Year Plot, you get the graph below, which pertains to the Central Sierras. Three of the five measurement stations lie in our chapter area: Calaveras Big Trees, Hetch Hetchy, Yosemite Valley.

The red line is the severe 2014-2015 drought year, with less than half of normal precipitation. The brown line is the winter of 2016-2017, with nearly double our normal precipitation. The current water year (2018-2019) is represented by the dark blue line. At 17.6 cumulative inches, we are right around average for this time of year. If the precipitation pattern continues, 2019 should be an excellent year for wildflowers!



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Chapter Officers and Chairpersons (All phone #'s are 209 area code unless otherwise specified.)				JOIN NOW
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