



The Shooting Star

SIERRA FOOTHILLS CHAPTER

CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

MAY 2018

May Meeting and Program

Native Wildflowers of the Red Hills ACEC

Presenter: Don Kurtz

Thursday, May 3, 6:00 p.m.

Tuolumne County Library Meeting Room

480 Greenley Rd., Sonora

- There are literally hundreds of plant species at the Red Hills, some very rare. This talk is a sample of this population, described by photos Don has taken over the last 20 years of visits.
- Don Kurtz is just someone who likes plants and knows how to read. He is not all that technical with botanical terms and keying plants for identification. He says "If I see a flower I do not know I just get out every native plant book I have and look thru the pictures one by one till I either locate the specimen or run out of pictures."

In Memory Of...

It is with great sadness that we report the passing of former member and Shooting Star newsletter editor, Conny Simonis. She passed away on March 31st. Conny joined our chapter in 1996 and was our newsletter editor from late 2005 until May 2014 when she moved with her son Bert and daughter-in-law Berlynn to Palm Springs. Conny enjoyed going on field trips and helped out as a cashier at our fall plant sales.

Pat Stone shared these thoughts about Conny: "Still waters run deep. Connie was as sweet as anyone I ever met, always willing to help out no matter how mundane the chore. But beneath this kind person she was a very intelligent and adept person as well. She steered our newsletter along without much help, and it was the backbone of the chapter. She was such a treat on field trips, looking at things with almost a childlike astonishment, but then asking really interesting and astute questions. I still think of her often, she left a big mark on our chapter and on me."

I counted Conny among my close friends and always looked forward to spending a little time with her at newsletter time when I'd deliver the mailing labels to her. She was a generous person with a funny wit. She enjoyed putting together the Shooting Star and strived to make it a quality publication. Since moving to Palm Springs, Conny volunteered at the Senior Center until early this year when she slowed down from health issues. Conny left a lasting impression on those around her. – *Jennie Haas*

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.*

Field Trips

– Our field trip season got off to a great start with the February 24th Red Hills field trip but quickly went a little sideways due to the March 22nd downpour and resulting road flooding. The March 25th Bagby Serpentine field trip with Judy and Barry Breckling was cancelled due to the Highway 49 road closure which prevented access. The long dry spell from January through February until rains finally came in early March delayed the development of wildflowers and resprouting of perennials and shrubs in the post-wildfire Hunter Valley Mountain Access Road field trip. Add in the difficulty accessing the area from the north, Lynn Robertson decided to cancel the trip.

– Then in early April, reports started coming in about a super-bloom in the Merced Canyon wetting our appetites once again for the wildflower season, now fully underway. Lynn Robertson reports on the April 14 Merced River Trail field trip: “Saturday on the Merced River and North Fork trail was a truly beautiful day. Perfect weather with a wildflower super-bloom for the viewing pleasure of 13 lucky people. Douglas recorded sightings of 99 different wildflowers! We enjoyed the common ones like poppy (*Eschscholzia caespitosa*), spider lupine (*Lupinus benthamii*), fiddleneck (*Amsinckia intermedia*), and popcornflower (*Plagiobothrys nothofulvus*). We were also thrilled to find several less common flowers including wind poppy (*Papaver heterophyllum*), blazing star (*Mentzelia crocea*), speckled Clarkia (*Clarkia cylindrica*), and Hansen’s larkspur (*Delphinium hansenii*). I would encourage anyone who missed this hike to get out on this trail themselves in the near future.”

* * * *See p. 3 for some pictures from this field trip.* * * *

Here is latest info. on the next three scheduled trips:

April 28 – Monarch Butterfly Habitat Restoration – Cascade Falls, Yosemite National Park. Leader: David Campbell. Hiking Level: Easy. Help restore habitat for the iconic and once ubiquitous monarch butterfly, whose recent and dramatic population decline has led to its consideration for protection under the Endangered Species Act.

This will be the first of two trips where volunteers will help restore historically disturbed sites in Yosemite by hand pulling invasive weeds and watering recently planted native species. We’ll learn about the plants used for restoration and the weeds that threaten them. This trip will focus on a site at Cascade Falls along the Merced River. Meet at the El Portal Market to arrange carpools at 9:00 am or at Cascade Falls Picnic Area at 9:30 am. El Portal Market is located on Highway 140/El Portal Road just west of the Yosemite View Lodge and the Yosemite National Park Sign. There is a gas station, bathrooms, and store at this location. Cascade Falls Picnic Area is located about 3 miles east of Arch Rock entrance station and is the first parking area with a bathroom that you’ll see on your right if coming from the west/El Portal. For more info, contact David at 612-867-8700, or moonwort.campbell@gmail.com.

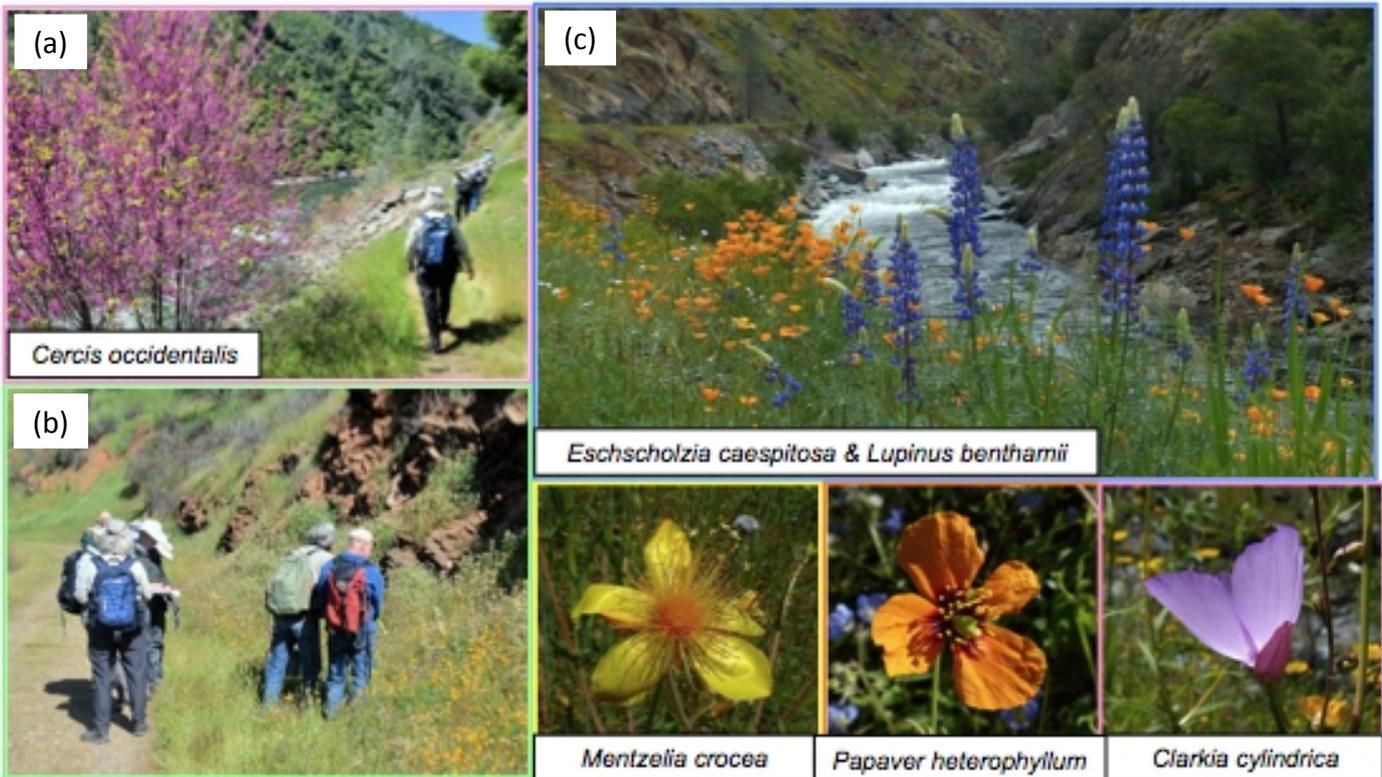
May 20 – Calaveras Big Trees. Leader: Bob Dean. Hiking Level: easy. Calaveras Big Trees State Park is a favorite destination for us. There are interesting habitats, soils and plants throughout the park. We haven’t done this trip in a few years so it will be nice to visit there again. Meet at 9:30 am in the park, at the picnic area on the creek behind Jack Knight Hall. There is an entrance fee to enter the park. For more info, contact Bob at goldrushdean@yahoo.com , or 209-754-5887.

May 26th – Monarch Butterfly Habitat Restoration – Cook’s Meadow, Yosemite National Park. Leader: David Campbell. Hiking Level: Easy. This will be the second of two trips where volunteers will help restore habitat for the iconic and once ubiquitous monarch butterfly in Yosemite by hand pulling invasive weeds and watering recently planted native species. We’ll learn about the plants used for restoration and the weeds that threaten them. This trip will focus on a site near Cook’s Meadow in the heart of Yosemite Valley, where meadow and upland species mingle under the shade of black oak canopy with spectacular views of Half Dome and Yosemite Falls. Meet at 9:00 am at the El Portal Market to arrange carpools or meet in front of the Yosemite National Park Visitor Center at 10:00 am. See April 28 volunteer opportunity above for directions. For more info contact David at 612-867-8700, or moonwort.campbell@gmail.com .

– For all field trips: bring lunch, water, sunscreen and appropriate clothing and footwear. Hiking level varies with each trip. Your trip will be enhanced by bringing field guides and magnifying lenses, although these are optional. Carpooling is encouraged. Call ahead if the weather looks iffy. Check http://www.twitter.com/SIE_CNPS for updates. Our field trips are open to everyone. Bring a friend or two. It is Chapter policy that pets are not allowed on our field trips. We appreciate everyone’s adherence to this policy.

– To sign up for our field trip alerts e-mails, send an e-mail with the subject line “Field Trip e-mail List” to Jennie at jhaas953@gmail.com . We’ll use this mailing list and Twitter to provide timely information of field trip changes and those impromptu “emergency field trips.”

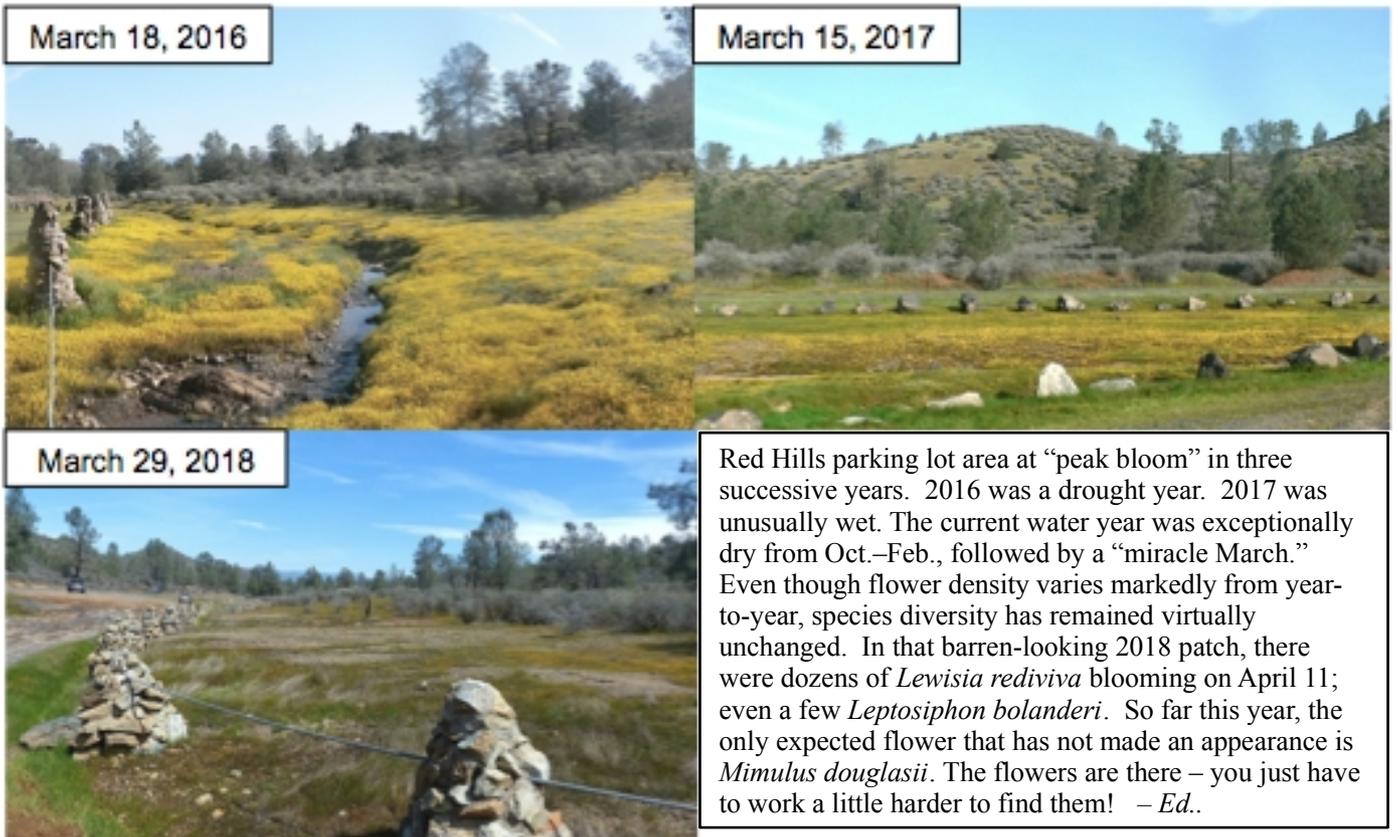
– Jennie Haas



A few highlights from April 14 field trip led by Lynn Robertson. Group photos © Barry Breckling. Photo of Merced River Canyon and flower close-ups © Doug Krajnovich.

What's Blooming?

If you see a native plant blooming in our chapter area that is unusual or special to you, please share it. Submissions to *What's Blooming?* should be limited to native plants appearing in Calflora. - Ed. djkran@comcast.net



Red Hills parking lot area at “peak bloom” in three successive years. 2016 was a drought year. 2017 was unusually wet. The current water year was exceptionally dry from Oct.–Feb., followed by a “miracle March.” Even though flower density varies markedly from year-to-year, species diversity has remained virtually unchanged. In that barren-looking 2018 patch, there were dozens of *Lewisia rediviva* blooming on April 11; even a few *Leptosiphon bolanderi*. So far this year, the only expected flower that has not made an appearance is *Mimulus douglasii*. The flowers are there – you just have to work a little harder to find them! – Ed..

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