Changes on the Chapter Board

Most of the 2006 Board of Directors are candidates for re-election. A notable exception is that Vince Cheap will be stepping down from his position as Conservation Chair. He has been doing a phenomenal solo job for several years. The Board is delighted that he has agreed to complete the Arana Gulch lawsuit and that he will support the fledgling, partially-staffed conservation committee. His guidance will be invaluable as the committee grows and learns the ins and outs of Environmental Impact Reports, the California Environmental Quality Act, public comments, and the processes which can help protect rare plants.

This election is a great opportunity to increase your participation in CNPS. Vice-president and conservation chairs are open; committee positions are also available. Additional nominations for the Board may be made at the meeting.

Conservation News

If any of these projects are new to you just check our website for background.

Arana Gulch

Our day in court is March 13, 2007. Several days to some weeks after that day there will be a decision. This could be appealed by the losing party, so the lawsuit may well continue for some time. I will not let any reasonable legal opportunity to protect Arana’s tarplant go untried. I will especially not let any flawed EIR go unchallenged, which could set a bad precedent for future development. There will be a Coastal Commission hearing, which should be attended by a chapter member; our attorney may submit a letter on our behalf.

Soda Lake Facility Expansion:

We are hoping to interest a group (e.g., a land trust) in buying the conservation easement for this expansion, and to compensate Graniterock for any increased expenses in shipping the particulate “fines” to somewhere which does not impact the Soda Lake Valley. The county and Graniterock have neither reissued a new Draft EIR as we have requested nor have they issued a Final EIR disregarding our concerns.

Polo Ranch:

A housing development proposed for the north end of Scotts Valley has been quiet for some time after CNPS retained Bill Parkin to commented on a very flawed Draft EIR. This site contains the listed Scotts Valley polygonum and an undescribed “Minuartia californica” ssp., probably our most

(continued on page 2)
Conservation News (continued)

endangered endemic plants. This grassland is similar to the existing 150 acre Glenwood open space on the other side of Highway 17, and could conceivably be managed together. The site will not be easy to develop due to the 2 listed species (Scotts Valley spineflower being the other) and the riparian area (east fork of Carbonera Creek) and steep slopes. CNPS comments on 2 slightly different projects during their DEIR phases over the years has caused the project to be withdrawn.

Branciforte Creek Residential Development:
The Draft EIR on the Santa Cruz city website is flawed. It recommends mitigations that are totally inadequate to protect its small population of robust spineflower. It would create the kind of preserve that is all too common: not enough money for management, no real oversight and only public activism by groups like CNPS would keep the population alive over time. We hope to get a preserve with adequate buffers, non-wasting funding and effective oversight with penalties for noncompliance.

To the Chapter:
I wish that I could continue to be the one to handle all conservation issues. It is something I truly believe in. Yet I cannot give it all the time it needs – and indeed time it takes.
My goal is to complete my current projects, but to no longer carry the full responsibility for every new threatening project that comes up. The Conservation Committee and I need others to help: writing letters, tracking new projects, and especially submitting oral comments at public hearings and meeting CEQA deadlines. One person need not take over everything: even being responsible for a single facet of a single project helps.
I will be there to help whenever it is needed. I will see the Arana Gulch lawsuit through to the end. I will try to alert the Board about new threats, though I probably will not challenge them myself.
I thank you all for the support, time, and excellent review and critique you have given the conservation issues I have brought before you. You have all been quite gracious and generous.
Sincerely – Vince Cheap, Conservation Chair

Education & Outreach

Santa Cruz City Museum Slideshow
The Museum is converting its natural history presentation about our bioregion to a digital "slideshow" to be used for education. Shauna Casey, Education Coordinator, is leading this project. Will you help with any of these activities?

- presentation or booklet design
- image collection
- creating a teaching guide
- bibliography
- dvd or booklet production
- narration
- filtering requests

Contact her at 420-6113 or shauna@santacruzmuseums.org

Rare Plant Fact Sheets
Do you remember the Santa Cruz Tarplant fact sheet which was inserted into the Sept-Oct issue? The Board is supporting the production of these flyers for 20 more of our rarer local plants. The existing descriptions are available at www.elkhornsloughctp.org via the "Fact Sheet" button.

And now, a little Jeopardy...

Answer: A subscription to another chapter’s newsletter
Question: What is a little-known membership benefit?

Is there another region of California which interests you? Sign up to receive another chapter’s newsletter and stay informed about that bioregion’s flora and activities. Just send a note to Christina Neifer (State Membership Coordinator) at cneifer@cnps.org or 2707 K Street, Suite 1, Sacramento, CA 95816-5113. You can also make the request on your renewal form: e.g. “I’d also like the newsletter for ...” Check out http://cnps.org/chapters for a list of names and of newsletters now available online.

Thank You for Being a Member

As the year draws to a close, the Board of Directors would like to acknowledge each chapter member — without you the chapter wouldn’t exist. We are grateful to new members for joining our ranks and to our ongoing members for their continued support. You make our programs possible.

Here are this year’s new members. If you find any omissions or errors, please let us know! Corrections may be given to Anne Hayes at 479-9405 or hayesanne@mindspring.com.

Becky Mary Allen  Marsha Bassett
Charles Baughman  Bonnie Bladen
Claudia Boulton  Cecily Cahill
Nancy Caldwell  Carol Carson
Susan Coale  Jay & Kat DeDonctney
Cindy Ferguson  Lucy Flanigan
Steve Gerow  Todd & Daniella Irish-Allen
Ann Lopez  Steve Maurer
Lisa McAndrews  George McMenamin
Louise Minton  Nancy Mott
Berdell Spellman  Andrea Steiner
Susan Szemeredi  Kim Tobak
Junco Uno-Raymond  Terry Winston
Field Trips

Any additional field trips that could not be finalized for this newsletter will be posted on the chapter website http://www.cruzcnps.org

Sunday, February 11, 10am – 2pm
Cave Gulch and Environs
with Tonya Haff and Aaron Schusteff

Come experience and enjoy two early season delights: Slinkpods (aka Fetid-Adders Tongue) and Manzanitas. Slinkpod (Scoliopus bigelovii) is an inconspicuous but richly interesting member of the Lily family, with beautiful flowers, an intriguing scent, and many fascinating growth and ecological aspects… some of which were discussed during Tonya’s recent talk last November at our CNPS chapter meeting. Manzanitas (Arctostaphylos sp.), with their lovely bark and flowers, are well known to many, and are major evergreen components of many cismontane plant communities (e.g. chaparral). California is the epicenter of this speciose genus of about 80 taxa. We’ll look at some of the key characters and interesting aspects of these plants, whose taxonomy is often regarded as challenging! During the outing we’ll be hiking through some of the rich and wild environs around UCSC and will likely find other treasures to enjoy and discuss as well. In particular, we’ll be looking for interesting invertebrates (arthropods, slugs, etc.) and exploring some of the natural history of plant-invertebrate interactions. For the most part the hike is not anticipated to be strenuous, but participants should be prepared for some possibly challenging trail segments (i.e. brushy, muddy, steep). Long sleeves and pants are recommended for those who may be allergic to Poison Oak. Bringing a hand-lens is always encouraged!

Meet at 10am at the “West Remote Parking Lot” at UCSC. To get to West Remote from the Main Entrance to UCSC (at the corner of High Street and Bay) follow High Street west for 1.2 miles to Heller Dr (aka the “West Entrance” to UCSC). Turn right on Heller, and then take the next right (about 500 ft) to enter the driveway for West Remote. Local folk wisdom and UCSC Police Dept online parking info indicate that parking permits are not necessary for parking at West Remote on Saturdays. But, as with all things in life, you are responsible for the consequences of your actions, neither CNPS nor the trip leaders can be held responsible for any parking citations which may arise. For more info contact Aaron Schusteff (831) 566-9565 or Tonya Haff at (831) 459-4763.

Saturday, February 24, 9am – 1pm
Birds and Plants of Maritime Chaparral
with Laird Henkel and Grey Hayes

Field trip leaders Laird Henkel and Grey Hayes will interpret the birds and plants, respectively, of the areas’ unique and rare maritime chaparral. Maritime chaparral includes many beautiful shrub species, especially manzanitas and ceanothus, which with luck will be in blossom for the trip. The habitat also hosts interesting bird species including the California Thrasher and Wrentit. The field trip leaders will lead you on an exploration in the interactions between wildlife and plants and the factors that influence their lives. The trip is by registration only and is limited to the first 30 people to sign up. The meeting place will be announced upon registration. Hiking will be moderately strenuous, and probably less than 2 miles long. Email Grey Hayes at coastalprairie@aol.com or call 831-728-8050 to sign up.

Native Plant Propagation

Looking for an opportunity to make a difference, and to learn about growing native plants? The Plant Propagation group needs you now! Enjoy the company of a small group of friendly, native plant lovers learning and helping to propagate a wide variety of native plants, many of which will be sold at at the twice-yearly CNPS plant sales, or auctioned off to benefit the SC Native Plant Society. This is a wonderful opportunity to have fun, meet a few great new people, and learn a lot about native plants, or contributing gardening skills you already have. No experience required. Meet usually on the third Sunday of each month at 9am at Suncrest Nursery, east of Watsonville. For info and directions, contact Mike Luther at 831-688-3897; or Denise Polk at 831-685-3235.

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, redwdwn@pacbell.net

January 6, 2007 10 am to 1 pm
Sunset Beach State Park

January 27, 2007 10 am to 1 pm
Quail Hollow Ranch County Park

February 10, 2007 10 am to 1 pm
Natural Bridges State Park

February 24, 2007 10 am to 1 pm
Quail Hollow Ranch County Park
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.

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
P.O. Box 1622
Santa Cruz, CA 95061
Address Service Requested

Board of Directors
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Past President: Casey Stewman gentiana43@sbcglobal.net
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Invasive Exotics: Linda Brodman 462-4041, redwdrn@pacbell.net & Fred McPherson fredwood@cruzio.com
Vegetation: Casey Stewman
Educational Outreach: Fred McPherson fredwood@cruzio.com
Legislation: open
Programs: Linda Brodman 462-4041, redwdrn@pacbell.net
Publicity/Outreach: Abbie Blair 722-4065, arblair@cruzio.com
Field Trips: Ellen Holmes 684-2363, ellen@centralcoastwilds.com
Newsletter: Charles Koester 335-9466, cnps@koester.com
Hospitality: Angel Guerzon 429-4047, 1900 Smith Grade Road, Santa Cruz
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