

The BAY LEAF

December 2000



California Native Plant Society • East Bay Chapter • Alameda & Contra Costa Counties

Calendar of Events

■ There will be no Membership meeting in December.

December 1, 8, 15, 22, and 29, FRIDAYS:

■ Native Here Nursery open, 9 a.m.-12 noon.

December 2, SATURDAY:

■ Native plant restoration in Tilden park (see p. 3).

December 2, 9, 16, 23, and 30, SATURDAYS:

■ Native Here Nursery open, 10 a.m.-1 p.m.

December 5, 12, and 19, TUESDAYS:

■ Propagation sessions for the 2001 plant sale (see p. 3).

December 6, WEDNESDAY:

■ Board of Directors' meeting at the home of Holly Forbes, 7128 Blake St., El Cerrito. 7:30 p.m. All members welcome.

December 9, SATURDAY:

■ Deadline for January *Bay Leaf*. Give items to Brett Boltz.

December 9 and 16, SATURDAYS:

■ Bryophyte workshop (12/9) and field trip (12/16) with Dan Norris (see p. 4).

December 31, SUNDAY:

■ Seed sowing, Mitchell Canyon entrance at Mt. Diablo (see p. 3).

December 31, SUNDAY:

■ Field trip to Mitchell Canyon, Mt. Diablo (see p. 4).

January 3, 2001, WEDNESDAY:

■ Board of Directors' meeting at the home of Joe Willingham, 2512 Etna St., Berkeley. 7:30 p.m. All members welcome.

Ballot for year 2001 Elected Officers

The nominating committee presents the following slate of officers for the East Bay Chapter, CNPS, for year 2001:

2001 Ballot

- President:* **Barbara Ertter**
- Vice-president, administration:* **Tony Morosco**
- Treasurer:* **Holly Forbes**
- Secretary, recording:* **Michele Lee**
- Secretary, corresponding:* **Joanne Kerbavaz**

Although voting in an uncontested election may not seem necessary, an election is required by our bylaws. Please vote as an expression to those who are willing to serve as volunteer officers in our organization.

Please send your ballot to CNPS, P.O. Box 5597, Elmwood Station, Berkeley CA 94705 or bring it to the January Board Meeting.

During the last several months, overshadowed by a multitude of election-year controversies, a series of meetings have been quietly taking place that will have an unknown but potentially far-reaching impact on the East Bay's native vegetation. These are the various hearings being held by the Grazing Review Task Force of the East Bay Regional Parks District, which will be used to determine future grazing policy on the wealth of public lands owned and managed by EBRPD. Each hearing has solicited comment and testimony from a different (though often overlapping) group representing various interests or areas of expertise, such as park users, conservation groups, private land owners, and vegetation/wildlife specialists.

As the East Bay Chapter CNPS president, I have attended several of these hearings, both to "speak for the plants" and to learn more about the immensely complex factors that must be taken into consideration if critical decisions are to be based on science and not just emotion. My testimony was accordingly that:

- we do not take either a purely pro- or anti-grazing stance, but instead caution against the sweeping application of any policy without a commitment to case-by-case monitoring to determine what the actual results are, in what is still essentially an experiment-in-progress.
- monitoring of a handful of supposed indicator or listed species is not sufficient, given that the vast bulk of any region's biodiversity is represented by a wealth of species that are somewhere between common and endangered, and which are therefore prone to falling through the "management cracks" and incrementally declining.

Some CNPS members might be surprised to learn that CNPS does not take an automatic anti-grazing stance: after all, how can it be other than harmful for our lovely native wildflowers to be eaten and trampled by cattle? Even leaving aside the fact that these same wildflowers flourished for millennia while being grazed by tule elk and other pre-European herbivores, there is the overwhelming challenge now wrought by aggressive non-native competitors such as annual grasses and yellow star-thistle. These invaders, largely from the Mediterranean regions, have made themselves thoroughly at home in low and middle elevations throughout California, converting huge expanses into habitat favorable to themselves and fellow invaders at the expense of the native species. Once our native spring annuals had the leisurely opportunity to germinate on otherwise bare ground in the mid-winter rains, setting the stage for the displays of color that John Muir and others described so vividly but which have become increasingly rare. Now, however, their remnant offspring struggle to survive in a landscape dominated by solid stands of annual grasses

and other invaders, which often germinate earlier than the natives, shading out the native seedlings and laying claim to available water and nutrients.

As a result, there are numerous examples where rare species, rather than benefiting from the removal of cattle grazing, disappear entirely from an enclosure when the aggressive non-natives are no longer kept in check by hungry herbivores. Nevertheless, I found myself becoming increasingly nervous when I saw how avidly the grazing task force members were taking notes whenever one of these studies was cited, fearing that only a simplistic "Grazing Good" message was being heard without sufficient appreciation for the confusing mixture of untested variables that were also involved. For example, to what extent can the positive effects of grazing on a fall blooming unpalatable tarweed be extrapolated to tasty, tender, spring-blooming wildflowers? Does mechanical clipping serve as a suitable research surrogate for grazing, without likewise mimicking the trampling of heavy hooves? Do the arguments for grazing on deep-soiled areas dominated by annual grasses have any bearing on the mosaic of other vegetation types within a grazing unit? Are we in fact seeing massive disappearance of native species in areas where grazing has been eliminated, such as at Mount Diablo, or are there counter-examples of improved biodiversity? Furthermore, will the level of grazing be determined by its proven value as a management tool to encourage native biodiversity, or will other factors (e.g., economics, fire control) dictate a higher level? Most important, will there in fact be a commitment of the monitoring resources that will be needed to determine if the resultant grazing programs are in fact bringing about the desired outcomes on a case-by-case basis? Ideal situations are rarely met, and for every case study showing the benefits of grazing under carefully managed conditions, one can find examples of areas devastated by improperly managed grazing, in which all remnants of the native flora have been completely eliminated or reduced to only the most persistent representatives.

This latter concern takes on extra relevance when one realizes that the East Bay Regional Parks District is the de facto custodian of some of the largest remaining concentrations of the Bay Area's world-class biodiversity. And that this biodiversity consists not just of a handful of formally listed endangered species, but includes over 1,500 different kinds of vascular plants native to the East Bay (e.g., fourteen different *Lupinus*, fourteen *Phacelia*, thirteen *Plagiobothrys*, twenty-two *Trifolium*, fourteen *Clarkia*, eleven *Delphinium*, thirteen *Eriogonum*, and twelve *Linanthus*). Three-fifths of our native plants are locally uncommon enough to qualify as *Unusual and Significant Plants of Alameda and Contra Costa Coun-*

(Continued on page 4)

Native Plant Restoration Activities

Native Here Nursery

December is a great month to plant in Northern California, providing there is no hard frost. Come by and browse whenever the nursery is open (Fridays 9-noon, Saturdays, 10-1). Volunteers are welcome to join in at those times, as well. Many little seedlings are ready to start their journey into ever larger containers, and eventually to yards and planting projects. Native Here is a pleasant place to be, tucked between the Tilden Park golf course and the east edge of Berkeley. Located at 101 Golf Course Dr. in Tilden Park, the driveway is about at the halfway point on Golf Course Dr. which runs from Grizzly Peak Blvd. (at the top of Centennial Drive) to Shasta Road.

Restoration of a Native Bunchgrass and Wildflower Grassland

Mitchell Canyon, Mt. Diablo State Park

Come sow seeds of grasses and wildflowers on the last day of the year. Seeds were collected this spring and summer from near the restoration site. Meet at 10 a.m. at the Mitchell Canyon Entrance. Turn immediately left after entering through the toll gate. The sowing will only take a few minutes, then there will be a field trip.

Restoration of the field began in 1992 and has proceeded slowly over the years. Grasses planted from seed collected that first year have been producing crops of seed for several years now, and the original plantings have spread considerably. A controlled burn accelerated the spread of purple needle grass, but also opened up ground for yellow star thistle to re-invade. A big effort

fourth of July weekend will attack the star thistle. Volunteers are also needed to mow in late spring and early summer. If interested in mowing, contact Charli Danielsen, charlid@pacbell.net, 525-9076 to arrange mowing schedule.

. . . Charli Danielsen

Native Plant Restoration Team

On December 2 we will return to our oblong spurge (*Euphorbia oblongata*) site in Tilden Park, along the Selby Trail. We are working to remove this aggressive perennial euphorbia from a grassland edge that has a nice population of native plants, including soap plant, blue wild rye, *Aster chiloensis*, buttercups, woodland strawberry, canyon gooseberry and yampah. We weeded it out twice last year, in December and March, and drastically reduced the euphorbia seed set. What condition will it be in this year?

Please note that in December we will switch back to our winter (afternoon) schedule so folks can attend the EBRPD Botanic Garden lectures: meet at 1 p.m. at Native Here Nursery on Saturday, Dec. 2. Wear pants and a long sleeved shirt, sturdy shoes, a rain coat just in case; bring water and lunch. We have gloves and tools to lend. Heavy rain cancels; call 840-9367 if it's coming down. January 6 we will return to Canyon School for creek/slope work under the redwoods with those great Canyon folk; meet at Native Here at 1 p.m. or on site before 2 p.m. Feb. 3: Gwin Canyon Mayten Mayhem, starting at 1 p.m. March: Arrowhead Marsh with Save the Bay! For a monthly Team email update, please send a note to casartunda@aol.com.

. . . Noah Booker

Plant Sale Activities



Work sessions this month:

Tuesdays, December 5, 12, 19 (not 26)
9 a.m.-noon

Merritt College Landscape Horticulture grounds.

With the arrival of the holidays, the propagation volunteers take their major break from work sessions. We will not be at Merritt Tuesday, December 26 or Tuesday, January 2. With these exceptions, we will be in the CNPS nursery to sell plants on Tuesday work days and will continue sales to the end of January.

There is still a good selection of manzanitas and assorted shrubs. (Overstocked items this year: wild ginger,

ninebark, mahonia, giant sequoia). We may be able to add in some of the plants that weren't quite ready for the annual October sale.

Winter weather does not cancel work sessions: someone will be there. Find us either in the nursery or a greenhouse. This is a good time of year to get in on propagating plants from cuttings.

Dress warmly, bring your lunch and two quarters for the parking permit machine outside the gate.

. . . Shirley (925) 376-4095
. . . Phoebe (510) 525-6614

Workshop and Field Trip

Take the Bryophyte Challenge!

Our new Bryophyte Coordinator, Daniel Norris, is ready to open the eyes of a select group of East Bay Chapter members to the wonders of the bryophyte flora that has (literally) been under our collective feet. Those of you wishing to be part of Team Bryophyte are invited to attend an introductory workshop on Saturday, December 9, during which Dan will introduce some of the more obvious-to-the-naked-eye kinds of local mosses, liverworts, and hornworts. He will also talk about recognition characteristics and introduce participants to his comprehensive key to the bryophytes of California. The workshop will begin at 9 a.m. in the University and Jepson Herbaria, 1001 Valley Life Science Building, UC-Berkeley.

On the following Saturday, December 16, Dan will build on the previous week's observations and lead Team Bryophyte to a nearby area (to be determined) appropriate for both mosses and the weather d'jour. Participation in the workshop is strongly encouraged but not required for attendance on the field trip. For more information, call Dan Norris (evenings: 558-1305; day: 642-2465) or email him at norris_daniel@hotmail.com.

At the Chapter Board Meeting

This will be a monthly feature reporting on all motions carried at the last Chapter Board of Directors' meeting. On November 1, 2000, the following motions passed:

- To donate \$500 from the Conservation budget to Carol Witham's organization, Vernalpools.org, which is dedicated to opposing the Lake Yosemite site chosen for the UC-Merced campus.
- To adopt an email alert list on a one-year trial basis, with Peter Rauch as the Administrator and with various Board members assisting him as List Editors.

Presidents Message (from page 2)

ties, as tabulated by our Chapter Unusual Plants Coordinator, Dianne Lake. I am accordingly concerned with the limited attention paid to the full spectrum of our rich heritage of native plants, beyond the handful of bunchgrasses and endangered species that are the focus of most controlled studies and resultant management efforts. How well will all of these species fare in the face of proposed grazing regimes? For more information on the Grazing Task Force, and the East Bay Regional Parks District in general, see the EBRPD web site at <http://www.ebparks.org/>.

Field Trip



Sunday, December 31: Dan Norris will lead a field trip in the Mitchell Canyon area of Mt. Diablo State Park focusing on bryophytes, sometimes known as mosses, liverworts and hornworts. The field trip will assemble between 10 and 10:30 a.m., and will leave at 10:30. Charli Danielsen will sow seed at the restoration area in the same area at 10 a.m. Those who are interested may first sow seed, and then go on the field trip. Many mosses and their allies are very small, and a hand lens or magnifying glass is recommended. Mosses almost always appear at ground level, so participants may wish to wear clothing appropriate for hands and knees work. A general introduction to bryophytes is *Mosses, Lichens & Ferns of Northwest North America*, by Vitt, Bovey, and Marsh, published by the University of Washington Press. Directions: From I-680, take the Ygnacio Valley Road exit and go east through Walnut Creek. Past the Cal. State Hayward/Concord campus, turn right onto Pine Hollow Road. Follow Pine Hollow Road to the stop sign where it intersects with Mitchell Canyon Road. Turn right onto Mitchell Canyon Road and follow it into the state park to the overflow parking. Bring \$2 for parking or a state parks pass. Bathrooms are available at the parking area, but bring water, and lunch if desired. Charli Danielsen has spotted rattlesnakes in the area. Give the snakes plenty of room, and be careful.

The Wayne Roderick Lectures

Winter 2000-2001

The annual Wayne Roderick Lecture Series is being held at the Regional Parks Botanic Garden, Wildcat Canyon Road and South Park Drive in Tilden Park, Berkeley (841-8732). The lectures are held on Saturday mornings as indicated, 10:30 a.m.-12 noon, and are free to the public. The Lecture Series runs through February 2000.

December 2

Yet more plants and places in and near the Klamath Mountains

Speaker

John Game

December 9

Oroville Table Mountain and Feather Falls

Glenn Keator

December 16

Plant-hunting in Rock Creek Basin and the Mammoth Lakes Area

Bob Case

January. 5

The botany of Pt. Reyes National Seashore

Steve Edwards

2000 Board of Directors

Elected Officers

President:

Barbara Ertter 1859 Catalina Ave., Berkeley 94707 h/526-4592
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Vice-president:

Administration:

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Joe Willingham 2512 Etna St., Berkeley 94704 841-4681

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w/643-0448

Recorded Chapter Information: 464-4977

CNPS Home Page:

<http://www.cnps.org>

East Bay Chapter CNPS Home Page:

<http://www.ebcnps.org>

All area codes are 510 unless noted



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David Bigham 1542 La Loma Ave., Berkeley 94708 848-6308

Myrtle Wolf 181 Stonewall Rd., Berkeley 94705 843-8759

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Kathleen Dickey 2374 Eunice St., Berkeley 94708 525-6489

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Hospitality:

Irene Wilkinson 440 Camino Sobrante, Orinda 94563 (925) 254-3675

Legislation:

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Membership:

Delia Taylor 1851 Catalina Ave., Berkeley 94707 527-3912

Native Here Nursery:

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Native Plant Restoration Team:

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Phoebe Watts 1419 Grant St., Berkeley 94703 525-6614

Publicity:

Elaine Jackson 3311 Estudillo St., Martinez 94553 (925) 372-0687

Programs:

Vacant

EBRP Botanic Garden Liaison:

Jenny Fleming 2750 Shasta Rd., Berkeley 94708 848-3455

New Membership Application

The California Native Plant Society is open to all. The mission of the California Native Plant Society is to increase understanding and appreciation of California's native plants and to preserve them in their natural habitat through scientific activities, education, and conservation. Membership includes a subscription to the quarterly journal *Fremontia*.

Name _____

Address _____

Zip _____ Telephone _____

I wish to affiliate with:

East Bay Chapter (Alameda and Contra Costa Counties)

Other _____

Mail application and check to:

Membership Chairman, California Native Plant Society, 1722 J St., Suite 17, Sacramento, CA 95814.

Membership category:

Student, Retired, Limited income, \$20

Individual, Library, \$35

Household, Family, or Group, \$45

Supporting, \$75

Plant lover, \$100

Patron, \$250

Benefactor, \$500

Life, \$1000

Activities of Others

Help Restore Wetlands with Save The Bay: Saturdays, December 2 and 16, 9 a.m.-12.30 p.m. Save The Bay is seeking community volunteers and students who are interested in working together to protect wetlands and to improve the health of our estuary. The Martin Luther King, Jr. Shoreline and neighboring Arrowhead Marsh, near the Oakland Airport, are part of the East Bay Regional Park District. They form a beautiful, little-known spot that has some of the last tidal wetlands in the East Bay, which provide important native plant habitat for dozens of species of shorebirds, fish, invertebrates, and marine mammals. Help restore the shoreline and salt marsh by removing invasive non-native plants, collecting seeds for native plant propagation, monitoring water quality and conducting shoreline and creek clean-ups. If you have any questions or would like to RSVP, check out the website at <www.savesfbay.org> or contact Marilyn Latta at Save The Bay, 452-9261 or email mlatta@savesfbay.org.

At the **San Pablo Creek Watershed Awareness Program** monthly meeting on Wednesday, December 6, at El Sobrante Library, 4191 Appian Way (at San Pablo Dam Road) participants will be brainstorming names, a mission statement and logo designs. Come to the meeting with your vision for the direction of the program. This program is sponsored by Contra Costa County and the City of San Pablo.

The **31st Annual Fungus Fair** of the Mycological Society of San Francisco will be held on December 9 and 10 at the Hall of Flowers, Golden Gate Park, in San Francisco. Over 250 species of mushrooms will be on display. Speakers include: Paul Stamets, on the use of mushrooms for bioremediation; Janet Doell of the Lichen

Society, who will give a multimedia presentation of "Lichens Exposed"; and Dr. Mo-Mei Chen, visiting professor at UC-Berkeley, who will talk about medicinal mushrooms. Local chefs will demonstrate cooking techniques both days. For more information, call the MSSF hotline at (415) 759-0495, or visit www.mssf.org.

Volunteer in the University and Jepson Herbaria! Saturday, December 16 (and every third Saturday), 10 a.m.-5 p.m. (participants do not need to stay the full time). Help mount, sort and file some of the backlog of pressed plant collections from California and around the world. No previous herbarium experience is necessary, but a level of dexterity and attention to detail is valued. The University and Jepson Herbaria are in the Valley Life Science Building on the campus of the University of California at Berkeley. The entrance is on the ground floor of the atrium, opposite *Tyrannosaurus rex*. For information, call Barbara Ertter at 642-2465.

Nursery Manager Needed!

The San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge Complex Headquarters in Fremont, California is in need of a volunteer to manage all aspects of their Native Plant Nursery. The person must have native plant, nursery or horticultural skills, or a strong desire to study and learn, and must make a one year commitment. Enjoy the satisfaction of working with native plants, with people who share a passion for restoring the land to its natural state. For information call James Aliberti at (510) 792-0222, ext. 41, or email <james_aliberti@fws.gov>.

**California Native Plant Society
East Bay Chapter
P.O. Box 5597, Elmwood Station
Berkeley, CA 94705**

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