MEMBERS’ MEETING

Wednesday, April 27, 7:30 pm
Indian Baskets of Northern California and Oregon

Speaker: Ralph Shanks
Location: Garden Room, Orinda Library (see directions below)

California and Oregon weavers have created what may be the finest baskets in the world. Though these baskets are truly works of art, they have traditionally served as far more: they were vital to the survival of most native cultures in the region.

Ralph Shanks has studied California and Oregon Indian basketry for over 40 years, and with his wife Lisa Woo Shanks has published a three-book series on the subject. For this month’s meeting, Ralph will present information on basketry and botany in a richly illustrated slide show based on his newest book, Indian Baskets of Northern California and Oregon.

Ralph Shanks is a research associate in anthropology at UC Davis and teaches classes on the analysis of Native American basketry. He is also president of the Miwok Archeological Preserve of Marin (MAPOM). Ralph has written two other books on California Indian basketry, Indian Baskets of Central California: Art, Culture, and History and California Indian Baskets: San Diego to Santa Barbara and Beyond to the San Joaquin Valley, Mountains and Deserts. Lisa Woo Shanks is editor and photographer of the Indian Baskets of California and Oregon book series. All three of the Shanks’ books will be available for purchase at the presentation.

East Bay CNPS membership meetings are free of charge and open to everyone. This month’s meeting takes place in the Garden Room of the Orinda Public Library at 24 Orinda Way (in Orinda Village). The Garden Room is on the second floor of the building, accessible by stairs or an elevator. The Garden Room opens at 7 pm; the meeting begins at 7:30 pm. If you have questions, email sr0433@yahoo.com or call 510-496-6016.

Directions to Orinda Public Library at 24 Orinda Way:

From the west, take Hwy 24 to the Orinda/Moraga exit. At the end of the off ramp, turn left on Camino Pablo (toward Orinda Village), right on Santa Maria Way (the signal after the BART station and freeway entrance), and left on Orinda Way.

From the east, take Hwy 24 to the Orinda exit. Follow the ramp to Orinda Village. Turn right on Santa Maria way (the first signal) and left on Orinda Way.

Once on Orinda Way, go 1 short block to the parking lot on the southeast side of the two-story building on your right. There is additional free parking beneath the building as well as on the street.

From BART (4 blocks): Exit the Orinda station, turn right and cross a pedestrian bridge, then cross a second pedestrian bridge on the left. Go 1 short block on the sidewalk to the third pedestrian bridge. Go 2 blocks on Orinda Way to the Orinda Library.
UNUSUAL PLANT DATABASE NOW AVAILABLE

The new online rare and unusual plant database is ready for use. See the description on our website, http://ebcnps.org/. To view the database, you must become a registered user. Click http://ebcnps.org/user-agreement/ to get access (it typically takes several days to get set up).

Once you are registered, go to https://ebcnps.fatcow.com/cgi-bin/cpi-bin/ebcnps/ebcnps.cgi to access the database. Once in, you can query the database by taxon (what plant or plants that you are interested in), by location, and by other categories. In the first two pictures, we see the various search categories:

We display the Genus menu:

Unusual Plant Database

We chose Dirca, the genus of Western Leatherwood. We clicked on Search (and we chose Observation Records as What to Display) and got these results:

Criteria

Location

UPCOMING APRIL BOARD MEETING

The next Board of Directors meeting will be held on April 19 at 7:00 pm at the home of Lesley and Bill Hunt, 236 Warwick Drive, Walnut Creek. Welcome starts at 6:30.

STATE TO OPEN NEW EAST BAY OFFICE

Last month the State CNPS Board of Directors approved the opening of a new office in the East Bay for Dan Gluesenkamp, state CNPS Executive Director. Dan has long considered the East Bay his home and he plans to use this office as a base of operations for fundraising in the Bay Area. Other to-be-filled positions may also operate from this office, including communications and publications specialists, while the state CNPS headquarters will remain in Sacramento. Dan has changed his membership affiliation to the East Bay Chapter, so we know he is here to stay. Stay tuned for more information.

Barbara Leitner
BRINGING BACK THE NATIVES GARDEN TOUR

Registration is now open for the free Bringing Back the Na-
tives Garden Tour, which will take place on Sunday, May 1, 2016, from 10:00-5:00 at various locations throughout Alam-
eda and Contra Costa counties. Participants on the twelfth annual, free, self-guided Bringing Back the Natives Garden Tour can choose from thirty showcase native plant gardens. They will have the opportunity to learn how to select and care for California native plants, lower their water bills, design a low maintenance garden, attract butterflies, birds, and bees, and garden without using pesticides. More than forty talks will be offered, and more than 5,000 people are expected to register for this annual event, which will fill; early registration is suggested to ensure a place.

The delightful collection of gardens offered this year ranges from five-acre lots in the small gardens in the flats, and from professionally designed gardens to those designed by homeowners. Garden styles range from the garden from restoration gardens containing a mixture of natives from throughout California, and to gardens containing a mixture of natives and Mediterranean plants.

In the “View the Gardens” section of the website are photo-
graphs of each garden, and extensive garden descriptions and plant lists. The list of nurseries that sell native plants, as well as a list of landscape designers familiar with designing with native plants. Many of these designers offer discount consultations to tour participants.

A companion feature, the Native Plant Sale Extravaganza, will take place on Saturday and Sunday, April 30 and May 1. This exclusive sale features a number of native plant nurseries that sell native plants, as well as a list of landscape designers familiar with designing with native plants. Many of these designers offer discount consultations to tour participants.

BRINGING BACK THE NATIVES PLANT SALES

April 30 and May 1: On the weekend of the Bringing Back the Natives Garden Tour, once again, a number of native plant nurseries, including our own Native Here Nursery, will be open on either or both Saturday, April 30, and Sunday, May 1, 2016 from 10:00-5:00. Take advantage of this opportunity to shop for unique or hard-to-find native plants that are not normally available in most nurseries.

This shopping extravaganza will offer native plant fans a good selection of native plants and provide a more relaxed and less crowded shopping experience than one normally finds at native plant sales. Knowledgeable staff will be on hand to help shoppers select the right plants for their gardens. You do not have to register for the Tour in order to shop at these nurseries.

Talks will be given at several of the nurseries, and music will be played at two. See the website for details:
http://www.bringingbackthenatives.nativeland.sale

NATIVE HERE NURSERY

Native Here Nursery is always full of exquisite flora native to the East Bay, and right now we are particularly enamored of our selection of Iris douglasiana, or Douglas Iris. Boasting gorgeous blooms in shades of velvety purple and blue with shiny, evergreen foliage, Douglas Iris is easy to care for, adapt-
able to both sun or shade, is able to grow under oaks, and requires very little water. Their ease of care and versatility make Douglas iris a great choice for folks new to gardening with California native plants and experienced gardeners alike.

BRINGING BACK THE NATIVES SPRING WORKSHOPS

Read full descriptions of these workshops and register for them at www.BringingBacktheNatives.net. ($35 per person.)

1. Saturday, April 16, 10:00-3:00, Oakland - FULL: Designing Native Gardens for Color and Interest Throughout the Year, led by Pete Veilleux of East Bay Wilds

2. Saturday, April 16, 10:00-3:00, Orinda/Lafayette/Moraga gardens: Introducing The New California Lawns, led by Michael Thilgen of Four Dimensions Landscape Company

3. Sunday, April 17, 10:00-2:00, Livermore: “How to remove your lawn (and get paid for it, too!) sheet mulching workshop” led by Kathy Kramer of the Bringing Back the Natives Garden Tour

4. Saturday, April 23, 10:00-3:00, Walnut Creek: Introducing The New California Lawns, led by Michael Thilgen of Four Dimensions Landscape Company

5. Saturday, April 30, 10:00-3:00, Walnut Creek: Gardening with Nature in Mind, led by Judy Adler

VOLUNTEERS FOR JPESON HERBARIUM ON CAL DAY

Curatorial volunteers are needed at the University and Jepson Herbaria, Saturday, April 16 (Cal Day), 10-4 pm (partici-
pants don’t have to stay the whole time). Volunteers will help greet students, prospective students, their families, and other visitors. Volunteers can be involved with our community of people from all over the world who are interested in the study of plants. They can be involved with our community of people from all over the world who are interested in the study of plants.
CONSERVATION COMMITTEE VIEWS A BPPA

The Conservation Committee took our new Conservation Analyst, Karen Whitestone to visit one of our Botanical Priority Protection Areas (BPPAs). The purpose of the field trip was to allow the participants to become more familiar with our BPPAs. This spring we are making a special effort to visit those that are currently conservancy targets or are expected to be this year (for examples Pt. Molate and Tesla). Additionally, we are making an effort to see what we and our other BPPAs in Eastern Alameda and Contra Costa Counties. The field trip was to part of our Byron BPPA. From our BPPA Guidebook: “The Byron BPPA is a botanical diverse, habitat rich area unlike any you will encounter in the immediate Bay Area. The alkali-influenced habitats are reminiscent of the eastern San Joaquin Valley…” (gobs of which are in bloom right now!)... and supporting an exciting assemblage of annual and perennial species not found elsewhere in our chapter areas. It is part of a generally uninterrupted stretch of open space between the Central Valley, the Altamont Hills and Mt. Diablo. Some of the plant communities it supports are rare in the region and harbor rare plant and animal species. Nearly all the alkali wetlands within the East Contra Costa Habitat Conservation Plan inventory area are found in the Byron area.”

CONSERVATION ANALYST REPORT

I am pleased to present my first report as the Conservation Analyst of the East Bay Chapter of the California Native Plant Society (EBCNPS). I have been representing EBCNPS at meetings with the East Bay Regional Parks District (EBWRP) Board and staff, Citizens for Sustainable Point Molate, SF Bay Shoreline Advocates, Assemblywoman Catharine Baker, and our Chapter Board of Directors. I am still introducing myself to our East Bay conservation network and agency partners. I received excellent advice from former Analysts Lech Naumovich and Mack Casterman. Jean Robertson, our Conservation Committee Chair, and I meet every week and she has been invaluable in guiding my progress.

Jean Robertson

Carnegie’s SVRA: proposed expansion into Tesla-Alameda properties, Tracy, CA

February gave us two opportunities for our organization to continue to advocate for preservation of Tesla as a non-motorized park or preserve, in order to give maximum protection to these biologically and botanically significant lands. Tesla area is still considered for expansion as part of Carnegie State Vehicular Recreation Area (SVRA). Our organization submitted comments, as well as spoke at the public Off-Highway Motor Vehicle Recreation (OHMRV) Commission meeting on February 5, in Tracy. We reiterated that their Draft Final Environmental Impact Report (EIR) did not adequately address our previous comments on the true impacts of Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) use on botanical resources, to the point of failing basic requirements under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). We feel they missed the opportunity to improve the General Plan/ EIR, and adequately survey and map the Tesla area for rich resources such as curly blue grass grasslands (Poa secunda).

The opposition speakers who also believe the Tesla area is inappropriate for OHV use included groups we do not always see standing together. Conservation nonprofits, researchers, and students agreed with local ranchers, federal agencies, and local government that the Tesla area should not be open to OHVs. It was a heartwarming chapter in the struggle to get this area recognized for its amazing array of resources (see Corral Hollow Botanical Priority Protection Area (BPPA)).

Assemblywoman Catharine Baker (whose district 16 covers approximately Orinda to Livermore) convened her first Bay Regional Park District to effectively steward important vegetation stands for their true impacts of Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) use on botanical resources, to the point of failing basic requirements under the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA). We feel they missed the opportunity to improve the General Plan/ EIR, and adequately survey and map the Tesla area for rich resources such as curly blue grass grasslands (Poa secunda).

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CONSERVATION ANALYST REPORT (CONTINUED 1)

are carefully monitoring how this fuels reduction work will be carried out. As part of that process, we wait the release of the Pallid Manzanita Management Plan, a document that will guide how the fuels reduction work will be performed for the benefit of the pallid manzanita and its characteristics, sensitive community.

The California Native Plant Society and East Bay Regional Park District agree that appropriate management of the maritime charparral and its nearby buffering charparral vegetation is critical. We are eager to better understand which of their vegetation management protocols options they plan to follow for areas such as Huckleberry Preserve. We continue to stay sharp on monitoring these entire habitat regions.

We recently noticed that a multiyear grazing contract for about 800 acres that was approved by the Park District for managing fuel breaks lacked robust plant protections. For example, covering tree gridding was required, but maintaining any measurement of native bunchgrass on each parcel was not. In this case vegetation management protocols do exist to guide the contractor in the form of the Park District’s own robust Wildland Management Policies and Guidelines. We assert that incorporating whole-habitat vegetation management standards within the contract language lends enforceable value to plant protections. We all want these plant protections from invasive non-native plants such as eucalyptus, brooms, and various grasses. This land is notable to our chapter because it falls within our Richmond Shoreline BPPA. Future development needs to manage for the health of the native grasslands, and the eelgrass beds. Our chapter will continue monitoring development proposals for this area, and will continue advocating for a continuous open space corridor, from shoreline to hilltop. Other Shoreline advocacy groups, like Citizens for Sustainable Point Molate, would also like to see this area preserved as open space with recreation, and to protect the remaining important eelgrass beds of the bay from excess acidification and polluted runoff.

SF Bay Shoreline Advocates

On March 7, 2016, the Shoreline Advocates hosted a meeting at the Shorebird Park Nature Center. We had a roundtable introduction to current events within organizations such as Field Museum, blue dicks (Dichelostemma capitatum) and Citizens for Sustainable Point Molate, and a lone California poppy (Eschscholzia californica). One spot had gooseberries, blackberries, and poison oak (close to each other, which helped prompt the species’ differences. They had just discussed ocean acidification in class, so we talked about how well bunchgrasses store carbon in its fibrous but deep roots. We also had the pleasure of seeing an Allen’s hummingbird (Selasphorus sasin). It was exciting to experiment with my youth teaching strategies for inspiring conservation principles. I have a lot to learn! Although I was prepared for discussing the botanical bounty of this bay area, I realized it takes another kind of focused teaching to keep groups engaged. The students wanted to know how the color and shape of flowers affected which pollinators looked up from the city view of the Bay we talked about the mostly intact and uninterrupted stretch of vegetation in this section of the watershed, running from the mountain top to the shore and underwater eelgrass beds on the way. We connected the dots and we also discussed the rain shadow of Mount Tamalpais. Of course, the concrete and buried fuel tanks visible from Point Molate’s naval depot history still carry a large effect into the present day. The Olin’s use of this land factored into our discussion of edible native plants, and how invasives interrupt the food cycle for native plants. I introduced the idea that this was the first time people walked in one day, and it is up to everyday citizens like ourselves to understand the value of land from multiple perspectives. I think they walked away with some great facts and ideas to talk about in biology class, a closer connection to parks and open space, and an appreciation for making sure we have areas like this close to our urban environments.

Development plans for Point Molate may be up for discussion soon, due to recent litigation resolutions. The area is home to beautiful examples of native coastal prairie, as well as salt and riparian scrub habitats. It struggles with pressure from invasive non-native plants such as eucalyptus, brooms, and various grasses. This land is notable to our chapter because it falls within our Richmond Shoreline BPPA. Future development needs to manage for the health of the native grasslands, and the eelgrass beds. Our chapter will continue monitoring development proposals for this area, and will continue advocating for a continuous open space corridor, from shoreline to hilltop. Other Shoreline advocacy groups, like Citizens for Sustainable Point Molate, would also like to see this area preserved as open space with recreation, and to protect the remaining important eelgrass beds of the bay from excess acidification and polluted runoff.

CONSERVATION ANALYST REPORT (CONTINUED 2)

movements. Our group also touched on how to learn from citizen science tools like iNaturalist, and the smart phone applications iNaturalist and Observer.

Concord Naval Weapons Station

The Concord Naval Weapons Station (CNWS) development is coming to a point again this Spring, as the city chooses a developer for the first phase of housing, and EBRPD launches plans to manage the 70% conserved open space of the more than 12000 acre former Superfund site. I had an informative workshop on this project with Bay Area BPPA Board President Lesley Hunt and an associate of hers from the CNWS Neighborhood Alliance. They both helped me contextualize the long process of Concord community involvement in coaxing this development into supporting local economy while also preserving a maximum of open space in perpetuity. The CNWS-associated conservation groups have done an excellent job with this citizenry, turning this project into a model of EBNCS support. Soon, I will meet with Save Mount Diablo’s Juan Pablo Galvan, so I can educate myself on their deep involvement with the CNWS project and BPPA area.

Byron BPPA mini-tour

The Conservation Committee and I are arranging a series of field trips to our Botanical Priority Protection Areas, in order to increase our knowledge of these hidden beauty habitats. I have especially appreciated the help of our volunteers Heath Bartholz, also of Nomad Ecology, and Jean Robertson, who helped organize and guide our recent trip exploring the alkali meadow and scablands habitats on March 20, 2016. We celebrated this first day of spring with a botanizing hike through whitened patches of these soil-driven sensitive community types. The idiose bush (Alnus flexuosa) still stood out as the most imposing alkaline plant, surprisingly capable of surviving heavy grazing. The little oak orach (Atriplex fruticulosa) stays tighter to the ground, perhaps to avoid advertising its holiday-colored fruticatus bracts; description credit is attributed to Jespon. The surrounding hills and meadows were a sea of beautiful greenery. From this brief introduction to our Eastern Bay Area BPPAs, I understood immediately how these salty areas have trouble scoring points in favor of their own preservation. But, I learned to love its charms along the way, and look forward to sharing about our future trips with you. I think we’ll join our chapter on field trips by checking out the EBNCS website, http://ebnca.org/field-trips/. Conservation Analyst blog updates can be found at: https://ebnca.wordpress.com/.

Karen Whitesetter, Conservation Analyst

OUTREACH OPPORTUNITIES

Can you help with outreach in April?

Outreach is an easy and pleasant way to inform the public about our chapter’s existence, programs, and goals. People are interested in gardening with native plants and the right posters make it easy to open a conversation about conservation. There’s no need to worry about not being able to answer all their questions, because you’ll be working with an experienced person. You do not have to sign up for the whole time; crowds are usually larger in the early part of an event. If you can help at any of the following times and places, please write to Lesley Hunt at ldhunt@astound.net to detail the events.

Friends of San Leandro Creek, Saturday April 9, noon-2 pm: A smaller event with the accent on native plant gardening. I’ll be giving a brief talk and need someone to cover the table at least during that period. This is a good chance to reach people in an area where our CNPS chapter is not so well known.

Wild Birds Unlimited, Saturday, April 30, 10 am-4 pm: A smaller event with the accent on native plant gardening. I’ll be giving a brief talk and need someone to cover the table at least during that period. This is a good chance to reach people in an area where our CNPS chapter is not so well known.

Help me work this booth for a couple of hours or longer. Lunch is usually available from food trucks or you can bring your own.

Please Hill Instructional Garden, Sunday April 17, 1-4 pm: A smaller event with the accent on native plant gardening. I’ll be giving a brief talk and need someone to cover the table at least during that period. This is a good chance to reach people in an area where our CNPS chapter is not so well known.

Pleasant Hill Instructional Garden, Sunday April 17, 1-4 pm: A smaller event with the accent on native plant gardening. I’ll be giving a brief talk and need someone to cover the table at least during that period. This is a good chance to reach people in an area where our CNPS chapter is not so well known.

San Lorenzo Creek, Sunday April 9, noon-2 pm: A mixture of gardening and citizen science. You’ll be working with an experienced chapter board member. It would be a lot if you could pick up the display materials and some display plants and a small table and two chairs, from Native Here Nursery either Friday or Saturday morning and transport them to the event. Transportation of the materials to the event on Saturday would be a big help even if you can’t help with the outreach itself. Location is Root Park in San Leandro.

Sunol Wildflower Festival, Saturday April 9, 11am-4pm: EBRPD’s annual wildflower festival at Sunol Regional Park.

Lesley Hunt
ldhunt@astound.net
FIELD TRIPS
North Table Mountain Ecological Reserve, Saturday April 2, 9:00 am, North Table Mountain, 2488 Cherokee Road, Oroville: RSVP. We will carpool, this is a 2.5 hour drive each way from Berkeley. Hosted by Gregg Weber. (Co-Organizer). For more information go to http://www.meetup.com/echps/events/229170627/.
Toyon Canyon at Briones Regional Park, Sunday, April 3, 9:45 am, Briones Regional Park - Briones Road Staging Area, Briones Road, Martinez. RSVP Native plant expert Gregg Weber leads this trip to a floristically rich area of Briones Regional Park. For more information go to http://www.meetup.com/echps/events/223750944/.
East Trail at Mount Diablo State Park, Saturday, April 16, 9:45 am to 3:00 pm, 9800 Marsh Creek Road, Clayton Hike led by Gregg Weber. For more information go to http://www.meetup.com/echps/events/221880279/.
April 16, 10:30 am Jepson Prairie vernal pools and Playa Lake Tour. In honor of California Native Plant Week, join naturalist Russ Huddleston of the Solano Land Trust to see both invertebrates and vernal pool flora at Lake Okcut and the surrounding area. There will be a $10 per person charge as a fundraiser; funds raised are to be spent on interpretive signage for Jepson Prairie. We will start with the “dipnet tour” of vernal pool invertebrates, and then proceed with Russ Huddleston to get up close with some truly unusual flora. Bring your Jepson Manual (paper or electronic) to work through keys on genera you won’t see in most locations. RSVP is not required, but it will help planning if you check in at www.Meetup.com/echps/ or e-mail janetgawthrop47@gmail.com.
Monday, April 18, 2016 7:00am to Friday, April 22, 2016, 10:00 pm See once in 100 year bloom in parts of Death valley and Panamints, Death Valley National Park, Death Valley. See the once in 100 year bloom in parts of Death Valley if there is space. Drive back starting 11 am, Friday April 22. There are several motels in Death Valley and Panamint Springs if you prefer to stay in a motel, and meet us for botanizing. For more information go to http://www.meetup.com/echps/events/229548094/.
Gregg Weber, co-organizer and event host Tuesday, April 12 at 10 am, Friday, April 22 at 10 am, and Saturday, April 23 at 10 am. We have scheduled our vernal pool tours at Warm Springs. There are still quite a few spaces in 3 tours, to sign up go to the website: https://www.eventbrite.com/e/50-80-warm-springs-248www.eventbrite.com/e/50-80-warm-springs-tours-226294064
There’s a short description of the tours on the site linked above. Tours are about 2 hours, heavy rain will cancel, and good walking shoes are a must as we will be doing lots of off-trail walking. Directions to the meet site are sent out in an email as part of the registration confirmation.
Ivette Loredo
Wildlife Refuge Specialist
Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge 1 Marshlands Road Fremont, CA 94535 (510) 792-4275 x 134 office phone (510) 792-5828 fax (510) 377-5956 cell

BIOENGINEERING FOR EROSION CONTROL WORKSHOP
Saturday, April 2, 9:30 am-12:30 pm, Bioengineering Tools for Erosion Control. Workshop presented by Lech Nau- movich, Golden Hour Restoration Institute RSVP: garberparkstewards@gmail.com
Join us for our 2nd Winter Workshop of the 2016 Season. Lech will take a pragmatic look at an eroding slope at Waterfall Creek in Garber Park and plan rehabilitation efforts from site analysis to monitoring outcomes. Among the topics to be covered: define the problem, introduce the site and selection process, identify the goals and success criteria, bioengineering techniques (spilling, living fascines, willow/ perennial staking, erosion fabrics), native mulching, and monitoring approaches.
Meet at the Evergreen Lane entrance to Garber Park at 9:30. Come early for coffee, tea, and snacks and to meet fellow workshop participants.
Directions: The closest address is 144 Evergreen Lane, Berkeley. From Ashby Avenue, take Alvarado Road to Slater Lane, turn right onto Evergreen Lane. The park is at the end of the street. A map and directions can be found at garberparkstewards.org. Click on directions in the menu bar.
All skill levels are welcome. No previous experience is necessary. Dress in layers you can get dirty, wear sturdy shoes, and bring a refillable water bottle. We provide tools, water and snacks. We work in light rain; downpour will cancel.
Shelagh Brodersen
Volunteer Coordinator, Garber Park Stewards Email: garberparkstewards@gmail.com Tel: 510-517-1918 Blog: www.garberparkstewards.org

JOHN MUIR BIRTHDAY, NATIVE PLANT TRAIL
With the success of the California native garden that was origi- nally designed and executed by Greg Woldorf in 2006/2007 at the John Muir National Historic Site Visitor Center in Martinez and the desire to draw more visitors, there was talk of some kind of trail/tie-in between the Amtrak station and the John Muir site. In 2010 a few of us from Friends of Alhambra Creek (FOAC) and CNPS-East Bay started scouting for other poten- tial garden plots with the idea of a creek botanical trail, adding a native plant corridor for birds, bees, and butterflies and other beneficial insects between sites. We identified an area that needed a bit of a spill-up in front of the Martinez Chamber office located at one end of the Amtrak station, got permis- sion from the city, solicited help from New Leaf Leadership Academy (an alternative high school program in Martinez) and funding from FOAC, and off we went. We then got staff support from NPS (National Park Service) to help us identify and plan other gardens. We caught the eye of some residents and were invited to create native garden plots and plots on their property. Funding from Fish and Wildlife, FOAC, and private donations has made it possible for our “Alhambra Native Plant Trail” team to do matching purchases of native plants from our wonderful local native nurseries along with other garden needs. We now have fourteen gardens planted, five in progress and we maintain one. We are always looking for more opportunities.
Our partners, FOAC, NPS, the New Leaf Leadership Academy, CNPS-East Bay, the City of Martinez, and the community of Martinez have made this project possible.
We were honored this year with the completion of a wayside sign designed in part by trail volunteers and NPS personnel and beautifully made by an NPS graphic designer. There are two and we hope to place one at the Muir garden and one at the beginning of the trail. See photo below.
We will be celebrating the 100th anniversary of our National Parks at this year’s John Muir Birthday/Earth Day free event on April 23rd, at the John Muir National Historic Site, 4202 Alhambra Ave., Martinez, http://www.johnmuirassociation.org/php/bday-earthday/bday-earthday.php
Come by and visit our CNPS-EB table and learn more about our local projects and partners.
Elsewhere, you will find information about the National Parks BioBlitz at the John Muir site on May 20-21.
Elaine Jackson
Elaine Jackson and John Muir New Leaf students
RESTORATION PROJECTS

Saturdays, April 2 and April 16, 9:30 am to 2 pm, Pt. Isabel, on the Bay Trail next to the dog park. Just off I-580 (take Central to the bottom of the I-580 overpass). At the stop sign (Rydin Road) turn right and come down to the end of the street. If you pass Costco on your right, you’ve gone too far. You’ll find us on the trail.

RSVP - it will help us coordinate tools with the East Bay Regional Park District. And remember to bring good energy, hats, sunscreen, water, and family and friends. We’ll supply refreshments.

Tom Kelly (510) 704-8628 (work), (510) 684-6484 (cell) or tkelly@kyotousa.org

Saturday, April 2, Sabercat Creek restoration
http://www.meetup.com/ebcnps/events/172215472/
http://www.eventbrite.ca/o/city-of-fremont-environmental-services-
division-6863572027?s=28268809

Saturday, April 9, 9:30 am, Huckleberry Regional Park
Meet with park staff at the main parking lot, where you can pick up loaner tools, gloves and snacks while we look at soil conditions and figure out where best to work. Weeding usually goes on until about 1 pm, so please let us know if you need to leave early.

Janet Gawthrop

There are also ongoing, monthly volunteer dates to rip out French broom at Redwood Regional Park—e-mail redwood@ebparks.org for specific dates.

SOS!! A special request for help at Sibley Regional Park where we have made great progress fighting Genista but are now looking at large areas of 2nd and 3rd growth with flowers. The ground is soft right now, and we could really use help pulling the blooming bushes before they seed. The native grasses come in nicely in areas we clear, as well as a host of wild flowers.

Wendy Tokuda

Saturday, April 30, 9:30-11:30 am, join Friends of Albany Hill for the last Saturday of the month work party. Location to be determined. Gloves and tools provided but bring a favorite weeding tool if you like. Wear closed-toed shoes with good traction and clothes that can get dirty. Long pants and long sleeves recommended. We’ll work in a light rain, but moderate rain cancels. For more info: friendsalbanyhill@gmail.com.

Margot Cunningham

SUDDEN OAK DEATH BIOBLITZ APRIL 9-10

Help track—and slow—the fungus-like water mold that is killing our beautiful coast live oaks. Two one-hour training sessions will be held:

Saturday, April 9 at 10:00 am in the Garden Room, Orinda Public Library. Contact Beth Ginshman, willbhb@gmail.com, 925 254 2184 X 15 for information.

Saturday, April 9 at 1:30 pm in room 150, 2060 Valley Life Sciences Building, UC Berkeley Campus. Info at f5creeks@gmail.com.

After the training or on Sunday, April 10 you’ll take an easy walk or vigorous hike to look for suspect trees—or map in your own back yard! We’ll suggest sites if you want. Return samples to the Berkeley campus by Monday morning. Results will be public by fall. Sign up at www.sodblitz2016.eventzilla.net (especially if you want guidance on sites). More information on Sudden Oak Death, locations and dates of other surveys around the Bay, and results of past surveys can be found at www.sodblitz.org.

Susan Schwartz; President
Friends of Five Creeks
510 848 9358
f5creeks@gmail.com
www.fivecreeks.org
A Bay Trail user stopped next to the section we were working on at our March 20 work party and asked Jane the following question: With so many weeds out there, how do you know which ones to pull first? Jane thinks that the question was really about the point of trying to bring the weed population under control when there are so many weeds. We think this way of thinking is at the heart of why, when we look around us, so many open spaces are covered in weeds and only a few local governments, park districts, and others put any real effort into controlling burgeoning weed populations. In the long run, ignoring this problem is only going to put more pressure on the diversity of our open spaces. We’ll return to this bigger question at a later date, but for the moment Jane’s response to the trail user is that we work in a sequence, going after those that mature first so that we can reduce the seed bank and minimize the number of weeds that appear in the years to come. We’ve managed to get the fennel and vinca under control, eliminated the ice plant, broom, and cape ivy, and are now working on oat grass, radish, and thistle.

To that end, at our work party in March our tried and true volunteers worked tirelessly to remove blooming radish and the oat grass that was just going to seed. Our youngest steward, Oliver, who came out on the day of his birthday party (he is turning 11 years old), weeded and wheelbarrowed them up to our weed pile by the entrance to the dog park. Steward Sue and core volunteers Nancy and Jacob cleaned an entire area of oat grass and radish in steward Nina’s spot and Nina’s beautiful and blooming purple needlegrass (Stipa pulchra) can now breathe freely.

We are encountering quite a number of newly emerging radish sprouts. Luckily, the one-inch radish seedlings are confined to just a few areas that we had recently cleared of radish plants. We know that our wonderful rains this winter are helping all the plants to grow and we’re hoping that by removing this second set of radish seedlings, we will encounter far fewer radish seedlings next winter.

If you have a chance please take a peek at Steward Margot’s Adopt-a-Spot area at the corner of Central Avenue and Rydin Road. It is covered in blooming California poppies (Eschscholzia californica) and tansy leaved phacelia (Phacelia tanacetifolia). Margot’s purple needlegrass (Stipa pulchra) is also in full bloom, her lizard tail (Eriophyllum staechadifolium) is just starting to show its yellow flowers and the two coast live oaks (Quercus agrifolia) from Native Here that we planted there this winter are thriving. Steward Rob keeps that area, and the trail, free of trash and we receive many expressions of appreciation for the transformation of a trash and weed covered corner to a place of beauty. In turn, we sincerely thank the City of Richmond (Greg Hardesty and crew) for the fantastic support they provide for us at this spot.

Our thanks also go to Bruce, our EBRPD ranger, who enthusiastically supports the project and all its volunteers.

Jane and Tom Kelly

Dear Colleague,

In celebration of the National Park Service (NPS) Centennial (1916-2016), the NPS is partnering with the National Geographic Society, local communities, and other partners to conduct a BioBlitz at national parks across the country. We are recruiting scientists, field biologists and naturalists to participate in the National Parks BioBlitz – John Muir at John Muir National Historic Site, 4202 Alhambra Ave, Martinez, CA, May 20-21, 2016 (Friday 10am Through Saturday 2pm).

A BioBlitz is a biodiversity celebration that engages and educates communities in science, conservation and biological exploration. The center piece of this event is a biological inventory, where teams of volunteers - each led by a subject matter expert - find and identify as many species as possible of a given area within a 24-hour period. To learn more about BioBlitz and how you can help, please view this video: “Find Your Niche in BioBlitz.”

If you are interested, please fill out the Scientist Registration Form. Scientist registration will close April 4, 2016. The sooner you register, the better we will be able to accommodate you. If you are pressed for time or are uncertain about your availability, but would like to stay informed, please sign up on our scientist contact list. If you’d like to be involved but the distance to Martinez, CA would be barrier for you or (925) 838-0249 ext. 6341. please contact our Science Lead, Fernando Villalba, if you have questions at Fernando_Villalba@nps.gov.

We will be in touch to follow up with more details in the weeks and months ahead. In the meantime, please visit our website at www.nps.gov/biolloblitz or (925) 838-0249 ext. 6341. to participate, go to www.nps.gov/biollobbyaloblitz. If you’d like to be involved but the distance to Martinez, CA would be barrier for you or (925) 838-0249 ext. 6341. please contact our Science Lead, Fernando Villalba, if you have questions at Fernando_Villalba@nps.gov.

If you are pressed for time or are uncertain about your availability, but would like to stay informed, please sign up on our scientist contact list. If you’d like to be involved but the distance to Martinez, CA would be barrier for you or (925) 838-0249 ext. 6341. please contact our Science Lead, Fernando Villalba, if you have questions at Fernando_Villalba@nps.gov.

Sincerely,

Tom Leatherman
Superintendent, John Muir National Historic Site