

June 2014



The Bay Leaf

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

www.ebcnps.org

www.groups.google.com/group/ebcnps

Please take a look at the new Web version of the *Bay Leaf* at <http://bayleafnewsletter.org/wp/>. It has all the same articles in a convenient and easy to read html format.

KNOWLAND PARK REPORT

Let's Make a Deal: How the Zoo and City and State Bureaucrats are Dividing Up Knowland Park Behind Our Backs

Last month we wrote about the ways in which the Oakland Zoo is wiggling out of any real mitigation for its impacts to Alameda whipsnake habitat (which also doubles as top quality rare maritime chaparral and rare native bunchgrass prairie). By insisting on siting its mega-development on the most sensitive resources in the park the zoo incurs a huge mitigation debt. They're attempting to pay off that debt with the public's land by proposing to place conservation easements on another 21 acres outside its proposed development footprint. That action requires an approval by the Oakland City Council to alter the Deed of Transfer.

The deed contains a reverter clause that essentially allows the land to be re-conveyed to the state if the purpose of the covenant is violated. The deed (executed between the California Department of State Parks and the City of Oakland) states that Knowland Park is to be used as a public park in perpetuity. The zoo and city's freewheeling and dealing with public parkland in the mitigation proposal raised an issue with the California Department of Fish and Wildlife as to whether these actions might trigger the reverter clause. Just how far can the city go in allowing the zoo to take land out of public use before that lever gets pulled?

This concern surfaced when the California Native Plant Society-East Bay Chapter's Conservation Analyst, Mack Casterman, submitted a Public Records Act request to California Department of Fish and Wildlife to capture the latest negotiations between the Department, the City, and the Zoo. He discovered that the Zoo's land use attorney was busy conferring with the legal departments at the California Department of State Parks and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and with Oakland's Department of Parks and Recreation. At issue is whether the deed's requirements can be sufficiently twisted in order to nominally meet the lowest

common denominator for public parks—namely that the public has access. Since the zoo's mitigation proposal closes another 21 acres of parkland to public access, what to do?

The zoo attorney's proposal bends reality beyond the absurd. While currently we the public have unlimited access to the park per our deeded right, the zoo's proposal would allow the public mere glimpses of maritime chaparral as they ride in the aerial gondolas over the land. We also might be allowed to view the chaparral from an observation point somewhere within the California Trails exhibit (note that the public would have to pay zoo admission plus the fee for a gondola ride for the privilege of even viewing what was formerly fully



accessible park land). Would these types of privileges qualify as public access? That is the essence of what is being debated behind closed doors by the City, the Zoo, the California Department of State Parks, and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. Not only is the public left out of the discussion altogether, but absent the Public Records Act, we

would not even be aware that this type of perversion of due process is taking place—all to enable the Zoo's expansion to move forward. Should this ploy succeed, attorneys for all parties concerned should share an award for developing the winning (and precedent-setting) playbook for how to steal public parkland and betray the public trust.

What you can do: go to www.saveknowland.org and download and sign a letter to the Oakland City Council—there's one for city residents and one for non-residents—and add your own comments if you wish. Sign the change.org online petitions. Download our on-line questions for candidates on this issue to raise awareness among politicians running for city council and mayor. Enjoy the park's grasslands and wildflowers now before the annual goat grazing in early June.

The Knowland Park Team

MEMBERSHIP MEETING: ON BREAK UNTIL SEPTEMBER 24

Membership meetings will be on summer recess for the months of June, July, and August. But mark your calendars now and watch the *Bay Leaf* for the announcement of a great program when we resume or regular meetings in September:

EASY HIKE AT SHELL RIDGE

Sutherland Drive entrance to Shell Ridge Open Space

This easy walk of about one mile provides a view of two different habitats: grassland with plants such as buttercups, blue-eyed grass, yarrow and a very sunny and dry quarried area having plants like foothill penstemon, California fuschia, deerweed, buckwheat and telegraph weed.

When to go: Buttercups start to bloom in late February. Zigadene are a week or two later. Foothill penstemon blooms from April through the end of June. Elegant clarkia, deerweed and harvest brodiaea are in bloom in May into June. California fuschia blooms from late July or August through October.

Driving directions: This walk starts at the Sutherland Drive entrance to Walnut Creek's Shell Ridge Open Space. (For directions visit <http://wcosf.org/enjoy/entrances.html>.) Park in the small parking lot at the end of Sutherland Drive or along Sutherland Drive. (Don't block residents' driveways.)

Walking directions: Walk through the gate at the back of the parking lot into the Open Space. The slope on the left has some poppies and many small buckwheat plants. Take the left fork of the dirt service road and walk for 100-200 yards until you see a broad path to the left. Walk up this path into the old gravel quarry area. There are several levels in this quarry, with different vegetation in each level. The rocky spine of a ridge runs next to the quarry. After the quarrying ended, plants from the rocky spine colonized the surface of the quarry. The very shallow soil and sunny dry conditions in the quarry was suitable for plants such as poppies, California sage, deerweed, foothill penstemon and nodding needlegrass (*Stipa cernua*).

Look for the blue and sometimes pink of foothill penstemon (*Penstemon heterophylla*), note the flower buds are yellow), the red tubular flowers of California fuschia and the yellow of deerweed and telegraph weed. You will pass close to gray-green California sage bushes. Brush your hand gently over the leaves and then smell the sage scent on your hand.

After you finish exploring the quarry area, return to the service road and turn left (away from the parking lot.) You'll be walking downhill toward Indian Creek. Take the right path at each fork in the road. Look for wavy-leaved soap plant and the blue-purple flowers of lupine.

Just after you see a trail sign on the left side of the road and a four foot steel post on the right, turn right on a narrow trail.

Wednesday, September 24, 7:30 pm, Orinda
Heath Bartosh and Chris Thayer – Imperiled East Bay Ecosystem: The Oakley Sand Mounds.

You'll be walking through a grassland with Indian Creek downhill to your left. This area has buttercups in numbers as well as blue-eyed grass, zigadene and yarrow.

The trail takes you to another dirt service road with a pond beyond it. Turn right onto the service road. Look for elegant clarkia and colorful lichens on the rock wall to the right. The service road goes uphill and then curves to the right, taking you back to the parking lot where you entered. (Keep right when the road splits.)

Conservation notes: In the early 1970s, residents of Walnut Creek defeated a proposal to level Shell Ridge to build a very large housing development. Then in 1974, voters in Walnut Creek and Concord passed a bond measure to pay for acquiring land along several ridges. In 1991, Walnut Creek's City Council voted to acquire additional open space land in Lime Ridge.

Walnut Creek's 2700 acres of open space are a resource used daily by many people who live close to it and at frequent intervals by many more residents. Having natural areas close to where people live complements preservation of natural habitats in larger but more distant wilderness areas.

The Walnut Creek Open Space Foundation has worked on several restoration projects in this area including planting native oak trees, native grasses and wildflowers and removing invasive plants such as mustard and non-native thistles.

The plants in the quarry area are threatened by mountain bike riders who view the quarry as a place to cut new bike trails down the steep quarry walls. Enforcement of existing rules and fostering understanding and appreciation of the value of Walnut Creek's Open Space areas continues to be needed even in a community where many residents value that open space.

Useful links:

City of Walnut Creek Open Space web page:
<http://tinyurl.com/ln2t8dz> Click on a link on this page to get a map of Walnut Creek's Open Space areas in PDF file format.

Walnut Creek Open Space Foundation web site:
<http://wcosf.org/index.html>

Jerry Fritzke's Fossil Hill walk description
<http://wcosf.org/enjoy/fossilhillwalk.html>
This walk is similar to the one described in this article.

SHELL RIDGE FLOWERS

These photos are by Bill Hunt and are taken at Shell Ridge, on the hike Bill described on the previous page. Clockwise from top left: California fuchsia (*Epilobium canum*), foothill penstemon (*Penstemon heterophyllus*), elegant clarkia (*Clarkia unguiculata*), deerweed (*Acemison glaber*), blue-eyed grass (*Sisyrinchium bellum*).



POINT ISABEL RESTORATION, MAY 3

Point Isabel volunteers focused entirely on weeding the southern stretch of the project site that is stewarded by Tyson. The fast emerging radish, thistle and oat grass looked like a sea of weeds as it swayed in the westerly breezes that kept the temperature comfortable. Fortunately, a few weeks before the work party occurred, East Bay Regional Park District Park Supervisor Scott Possin put us in touch with Nathan Van Schmidt of the Berkeley Chapter of the Society for Conservation Biology who was looking for a local project that his group could support. The Society's crew, including Nathan, Laurie, Aline, Abbey and Meagan, along with new volunteer Nina (who we recruited during the Botanic Garden sale), joined our regular team and the 20 volunteers set to work removing all the weeds while working carefully around the young sagebrush (*Artemisia californica*), lizard tail (*Eriophyllum staechadifolium*), quail bush aka big saltbush (*Atriplex lentiformis*), and purple needle grass (*Stipa pulchra*). At the end of the day the targeted area had been cleared of weeds leaving only the young shrubs and grasses we planted last fall and winter. Creature sightings for the day included a beautiful 5-foot long gopher snake that had been warming up close to some on-site concrete debris that obviously has some habitat value. And long-term volunteer Lewis took a stunning photo of one of the myriad of bumblebees that collect pollen from Pt. Isabel poppies and lacy phacelia.

We are pleased to report that regular volunteers Sue and her 9-year old grandson, Oliver have adopted the re-vegetated section across from the Hoffman Channel. Sue and Oliver have been regular caretakers of that part of the restoration project—a stretch that is greatly admired by trail and dog park users

for its profusion of California poppies (*Eschscholzia californica*) and large stands of lacy phacelia (*Phacelia tanacetifolia*) interspersed among the sagebrush, toyon and bunch grasses. We heartily welcome Sue and Oliver as Point Isabel Stewards extraordinaires! (Photos: bee on California poppy by Lewis Payne; the team by Jane Kelly.)

Jane and Tom Kelly

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CONSERVATION ANALYST REPORT

Richmond Field Station

Since last month's Conservation Analyst update, the Final Environmental Impact Report (FEIR) for the Richmond Bay Campus development at the Richmond Field station was released and certified by the University of California Regents. The East Bay Chapter of the California Native Plant Society (EBCNPS) submitted a letter on May 12th in response to the FEIR, citing inadequate protection for several areas of the site that contain coastal prairie grassland, including a three acre section of remnant prairie that was classified by the University's own consultants as "high quality" prairie, but which is designated in the plan as an area for development. Our letter also questioned the feasibility of the new prairie management plan that was prepared for the FEIR. These questions were based on the lack of funding for any of the prairie management and the uncertain effectiveness of the mitigation actions laid out in the plan. You can view our comment letter and access a link to the environmental review documents for this project here: <http://tinyurl.com/pznchqp>.

In spite of our concerns the University of California regents approved the FEIR along with the Long Range Development Plan for this project at their meeting on May 14th.

EBCNPS is disappointed by the project planners' continued disregard for several acres of prairie habitat at the site. In the coming months we will continue to build relationships with the staff at the Field Station as well as the managers for the Richmond Bay Campus project in the hopes of educating them about how to adopt effective management techniques to prevent the spread of invasive species and enhance the prairie in advance of this project. We will also continue ef-

forts to preserve the large section of contiguous prairie in the western portion of the site as a unified prairie ecosystem that is not broken up by this development.

Dublin Urban Limit Line

On May 22nd the initiative to create permanent east and west urban limit lines in Dublin was officially certified by the Registrar of Voters, thereby qualifying for the November ballot. The final count put the initiative at 139% of the signatures needed to qualify for the ballot.

The fact that so many signatures were gathered during a volunteer effort in such a short period of time illustrates the strong voter support throughout Dublin for protection of open space.

Stay tuned for more information as this ballot initiative effort moves forward this summer.

Volunteering: The Conservation Committee is always looking for volunteers to get involved in our many projects. If you are interested in working with me on any of the projects that you have read about on our blog or in past Conservation Analyst Updates please feel free to contact me by phone at 510-734-0335 or by email at conservation@ebcnps.org. And as always, for more detailed updates on all of our conservation projects please visit the Conservation Blog at <http://ebcnps.wordpress.com/>.

Mack Casterman



Spring bloom at Point Isabel. Photo by Jane Kelly.

RESTORATION PROJECTS

Saturday, June 14, 10 am, Point Isabel

Meet at the end of Rydin Road just off the I-580 next to Hoffman Marsh. Contact e-mail: kyotousa@sbcglobal.net cell: 510-684-6484. (Note: this month only, the second Saturday. Normally the first Saturday of the month.)

Saturday, June 14, 9:30 am, Huckleberry Regional Park

Meet at the parking lot, where you can pick up tools, loaner gloves and water as needed. We will decide where to work, but most likely at a shady location further into the park and downhill. Thanks to the St. Joseph High's students who helped last month with removing Italian thistle. *Vinca* and cape ivy pullers take note: stinging nettle has sprouted on the slope below the parking lot. Several species of butterfly larva will benefit from this switch, but if you check out the downhill area you should bring water to flood any skin slapped by a stinging nettle.

Directions: Exit Highway 13 at Park, turn left onto Mountain. Follow Mountain to the stoplight with Snake, and turn uphill, the only direction possible. One short block later, make a hard left (more than 90 degrees) to stay on Snake; if you keep going straight, then you'll be on Shepherd Canyon Road. You can turn around in the small lot at Shepherd Canyon Park if you need to. Follow Snake to its other end at Skyline, where you'll turn left and follow Skyline a few hundred meters to the Huckleberry lot.

Sunday, June 15, 9:00 am, Sibley Regional Park

This work date is back-to-back with Huckleberry, but it is the third Sunday as usual. The clay soil is already drying out, so we will offer a less strenuous choice to pulling broom. There are several other invasive species in this park that are annuals and can be removed by cutting, including poison hemlock and several species of thistle.

Directions: Meet at the main parking lot off Skyline, about a half mile north of the Huckleberry parking lot. If you want to

park at the Old Tunnel Road staging area (Orinda side) and meet the broom bashers at the regular place, be sure to e-mail either janetgawthrop47@gmail.com or sibley@ebparks.org.

Garber Park Habitat Restoration

Tuesday, June 3, volunteer workday

Weed abatement continues with a focus on removing ivy in Fern Glade, veldt grass (*Ehrharta erecta*) along Harwood Creek, and Himalayan blackberry and poison hemlock from below Bridge 1 on the Lower Loop Trail. Please join us, a special reward awaits you – Garber's many buckeyes are in bloom.

Meet at the Evergreen Lane Entrance at 10 am. We work until noon.

Wear long sleeves and pants, and shoes with good traction. We provide tools, gloves, water and snacks but bring your own gloves and water bottle if you have them.

Directions: From Ashby Avenue go .4 mile up Claremont Avenue to the Claremont Avenue Entrance. It's a short but steep climb up Sylvan Path to the Evergreen Lane entrance. A map and directions can be found at www.garberparkstewards.blogspot.com/p/directions.html

Saturday, June 21, volunteer workday

We will continue removing invasive weeds and performing trail maintenance. For details see the Tuesday, June 3 description.

Shelagh Brodersen

Volunteer Coordinator, Garber Park Stewards

Email: garberparkstewards@gmail.com

Tel: 510-540-1918

Blog: www.garberparkstewards.org

CONSERVATION ANALYST FUND COMPLETED!

2014 Conservation Analyst Fund Appeal Successful!

We are thrilled that we have met our goal of \$40,000 to fund our Conservation Analyst, Mack Casterman, for the rest of the year.

We would like to thank the following generous donors for their contributions to the Chapter and the 2014 Conservation Analyst Fund.

John Alcorn
Mary Alderson
Lisa Anich
Eleanor Bade

Laura Baker and Lewis Lubin
James Barse
Heath Bartosh
Laura Beckett
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David Bigham and Howard Arendtson
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Roberta Zorzynski

We would like to thank the following businesses: Earthly Delights, Oaktown Native Plant Nursery, PG&E Campaign for the Community, and Chevron Humankind.

Many thanks also to the Berkeley Garden Club and the Hillside Gardeners of Montclair.

And finally, we thank the East Bay Community Foundation (and their anonymous donors) for their generous donation to the East Bay Chapter for conservation work.

Please contact me if you have any questions or concerns.

Delia Taylor, Funds Development Chair

FIELD TRIPS

Inspiration Point

Wednesday, June 4, 5:30-7:30 pm, Tilden Park, Wildcat Canyon Road, Orinda

This walk is sponsored by SPAWNERS Join Bob Flasher as he leads us on a hike along Inspiration Trail. Catch amazing views of the San Pablo Creek watershed while learning what makes up a healthy watershed. The first part of the hike has gentle ups and downs. The trail ends with a slightly steeper section as we walk downhill to several ponds, where we may be lucky enough to see frogs. We will then hike back the same way we came in. Bring binoculars to view wildlife and an EBMUD hiking permit if you have one. Apologies to your canine friends, but please leave dogs at home. RSVP to 510-665-3538 or Courtney Marshall email courtney@thewatershedproject.org.

Program Coordinator
SPAWNERS

<https://sites.google.com/site/spawnersofelsobrante>

Mount Diablo Blackhawk Ridge

Sunday, June 8, Curry Point, Mount Diablo

Anyone who wants to carpool, meet at Orinda Bart at 9:15. Gregg Weber, the walk leader, will be there, and maybe others.

We will take Knobcone Point road, and Blackhawk Ridge Road.

This walk goes through a variety of vegetation: woodland, grassland, and chaparral.

We may see Oakland star tulip, *Calochortus umbellatus* in flower, and look for *Clarkia rubicunda*. The length of the walk is about 6 miles, with continuous grade.

This road is designed for trucks, not hikers. They chose to route the road with a drop down 480 feet to Sycamore creek, then back up a grueling 700 feet to Blackhawk Ridge. (A great hiking trail route would go by Knobcone point, which is pretty. That would have been 100 ft down, and 350 feet up.) So, if June 8th is on the hot end of the spring weather oscillation, I will cancel this to prevent heat exhaustion.

We should arrive back at the parking lot around 3-4 pm.

Directions: Take 680 to the Diablo Road exit, and go east on Diablo Road. At Green Valley Road, only one lane goes straight ahead. After Green Valley Road, go past and do not turn at the Diablo Country Club sign. In about a mile, turn left at the Mt. Diablo State Park sign. Continue to the end of Mt. Diablo Scenic Boulevard, which becomes South Gate Road as it enters the park. Be prepared to pay the fee (now \$10?) at the main entrance station, or have your state parks pass ready. Continue for about a mile, and park at the large

parking area at Curry Point, where we will meet. Remember to factor in about 20 minutes driving time from the base of the mountain to Curry point. Dogs are not permitted in Mount Diablo State Park.

Sunday, June 15, 2014, 9:45 am to 2:15 pm, Redwood Regional Park, Chabot Space & Science Center

10000 Skyline Boulevard, Oakland

We will see about 5 species of sedge and learn some basics of sedge ID. A copy of *Field Guide to Intermountain Sedges*, and the key from the 2012 *Jepson Manual* will be available for reference.

We will take Redwood Peak Trail, French Trail, Starflower Trail, Tres Sendas Trail, and Stream Trail. There will be plenty of redwood violets and stream violets, both of which are yellow.

Directions: Get onto Skyline Drive in the Hills above Oakland. Go to the Chabot Space Center, which is about a mile north of Joaquin Miller Road. Turn into the driveway for the Space Center and park either in the lot or in the parking garage, which is free. Ignore the signs saying private property; they do not apply to Park or Chabot Space Center visitors. Leader is Gregg Weber.



The fire poppy (*Papaver californica*) springs up after fires. There are many in the areas of Mt. Diablo burnt in last September's fire. Photo by Kevin Hintska.

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EBCNPS Sponsored Activities

East Bay Chapter News list Emailed announcements of upcoming EBCNPS events

List manager--Martha Booz
mlbooz@calnatives.com

Native Here Nursery

510-549-0211
Manager—Theo Fitanides
nativehere@ebcnps.org

Native Here inventory specialist
Adam Huggins

Plant Fair

vacant

Restoration Huckleberry Regional Preserve

Janet Gawthrop, leader
janetgawthrop47@gmail.com

Point Isabel

Tom and Jane Kelly, leaders
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510-684-6484 (c)
kyotousa@sbcglobal.net

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hbartosh@nomadecology.com

John Muir NHS (Martinez)

Elaine Jackson, leader
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elaiejx@att.net

Walnut Creek

Lesley Hunt, leader
925-937-6791
ldhunt@astound.net

Membership Application and Renewal Form

Name _____

Address _____

Zip _____ Telephone _____

Email _____

I wish to affiliate with:

East Bay Chapter (Alameda and Contra Costa Counties)

Other _____

Membership category:

Individual, \$45

Family, Library, Group or International, \$75

Plant lover, \$100

Patron, \$300

Benefactor, \$600

Mariposa Lily, \$1500

Limited Income or student, \$25.00

Other _____

Mail application and check to: California Native Plant Society, 2707 K Street, Suite 1,
Sacramento CA 95816