MEMBERS MEETING: PHOTO SHARING NIGHT

Photo Sharing Night!
Wednesday, January 25, 7:30 pm
Location: Garden Room, Orinda Public Library (directions below)

East Bay CNPS photo sharing nights are eye-popping, educational, and just plain fun. Everyone is invited to enjoy and/or share photos or videos of hikes, trips and adventures, gardens, landscapes, work parties, flora, fauna, plant art, you name it! Come to share your images or just to enjoy those that others bring. Nonmembers are welcome to present and/or enjoy, and both amateur and pro photographers are invited and appreciated.

GUIDELINES:
1. IMPORTANT: Contact Sue (programs@ebcnps.org) by January 18 if you want to show photos or videos. (This is required.)
2. Each presenter will have time for up to 20 images (or up to 7 minutes of video). Bring photos you think will appeal to native plant and nature lovers.
3. Provide your images in advance so we can save time during the meeting. Here’s how:
   - When you contact Sue (by January 18), you’ll receive a link to an online Dropbox set up especially for this meeting, along with instructions on how to upload your photos or videos. If you haven’t used Dropbox before, rest assured that it’s easy to upload images (and less stressful than trying to do it via flash drive on the night of the meeting). Dropbox can accommodate large file sizes.
   - Upload your PowerPoint, digital images, or videos to the Dropbox by January 23. This will allow more time for showing photos at the meeting by reducing set-up time.
4. Prints are also welcome: We’ll have a table on which you can display them.

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 26 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. Email programs@ebcnps.org or call 510-496-6016 if you have questions.

Directions to Orinda Public Library at 26 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.

Getting ready for the shot, by Rob DeGraff
LETTER FROM THE CHAPTER PRESIDENT

By the time you read this, I will have completed my two-year term as chapter president. It has been a privilege to work with the Board, the committees, and the membership. I feel the chapter is in a good place, so I am pleased to turn the responsibilities over to my esteemed colleague Beth Wurzburg. I doubt you’ll notice much change as I step down. The real work of the chapter is carried out by the committees and projects—Native Here Nursery, the Conservation Committee, Field Trips, Programs, Plant Science, Restoration, Bay Leaf, and the website, to name a few. Most of the dedicated people who work in these areas have served for years before me and will continue to serve in 2017. There will be some new talent, to be sure, and I am looking forward to new developments! My biggest satisfaction has been to affirm and encourage those engaged in the important work of the chapter. And it certainly has been a privilege to work with the intelligent, thoughtful, steady, hardworking people who devote their free time to the preservation and appreciation of our East Bay native plants. The Chapter is in good hands.

I am looking forward to catching up on some personal and professional obligations I’ve put on hold these past two years, but I will continue to work with Clara on fundraising and with the Nursery Committee on phytosanitation in 2017.

Thanks to you, our members, for bringing out the best in all of us these past two years. I hope the next two years brings greater strength and success to this fine organization.

Barbara Leitner

THE NEW RARE PLANT CHAIR: DANNY SLAKEY

After reading departing Rare Plant Chair Heath Bartosh’s farewell article in the December issue of the Bay Leaf, I was left with a deep appreciation of what Heath has done for rare plant science and conservation in the East Bay Chapter. I first met him shortly after I began working as a Rare Plant Treasure Hunt Coordinator for CNPS in 2011, when he attended a field trip I had organized to document a population of big-scale balsamroot (Balsamorhiza macrolepis, CRPR 1B.2) in a preserve near American Canyon. During my nearly five years of working for the statewide CNPS Rare Plant Program, I frequently had the pleasure of working with Heath, both through his role in the East Bay Chapter and the Rare Plant Program Committee at the State CNPS level. Much to my surprise, less than a year after leaving my paid position in downtown Oakland, I received a text from Heath asking if I would be interested in taking over his role as East Bay Chapter Rare Plant Chair at the end of 2016. I was immensely honored to be considered for this role, and at the same time a little terrified, as I wondered if I could adequately serve as a Rare Plant Chair while still finding time for my vegetable and native plant gardening, raising chickens, cycling, and kayaking, among a few other hobbies. Ultimately though, my fond memories of working with CNPS volunteers, the numerous rare plant adventures I’ve had with CNPS, and the ability to contribute to rare plant science and conservation drove me to accept Heath’s offer.

I am excited to begin working as rare plant chair in 2017, in some cases picking up where Heath left off, and in other cases undertaking new projects. On the top of my list is jump-starting a new year of the Adopt a Rare Plant (AARP) program, in which volunteers agree to search for known rare plant occurrences of their adopted rare plant and document their findings. Stay tuned for a kickoff meeting in early spring 2017. I am also in the process of looking into other projects to undertake, through consulting with both the statewide CNPS Rare Plant Program and local volunteers and experts. I’m truly looking forward to working with the East Bay Chapter, continually improving my knowledge of the East Bay flora, and helping to advance rare plant science and conservation in the East Bay.

Danny Slakey,
Incoming East Bay Chapter Rare Plant Chair

RESTORATION PROJECTS IN JANUARY

Saturday, January 14, 9:30 am, Huckleberry Regional Botanic Preserve. Meet us at the parking lot, where we will decide where to work in light of soil conditions and recent weather. November volunteers made tremendous progress in removing sprouts of Italian thistle, poison hemlock and young French broom, which sprang up in the October rains. Park staff will meet us at the lot, where you can pick up loaner gloves, tools, and water.

Sunday, January 15, 9:00 am, Sibley Regional Park We meet at the Oakland-side parking lot, just a few hundred meters on Skyline north of the Huckleberry Park lot. However you may also enter Sibley Park from the Old Tunnel Road staging area, and then walk south to the work site. You may find the Old Tunnel Road entrance more convenient if you come from either north or east of the park. However, this secondoption requires that you bring your tools and gloves, or take your chances with what’s in the toolbox by the notorious wall of broom. If you have questions you can e-mail either sibley@ebparks.org or janetgawthrop47@gmail.com.

Saturday, January 21, 9:30 am, Isabel restoration in McLaughlin Eastshore State 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.
CHANGES AT NATIVE HERE NURSERY

On January 3, Nursery Manager Amy Leonard resigned to pursue other interests. We wish her well, and hope she will continue to develop her knowledge and interest in native plants.

Native Here will not seek a new Nursery Manager immediately. During the past year, nursery leadership has formed a committee that meets regularly and seeks to address the larger issues of nursery operations — how to best meet the mission of the chapter and the goals of the nursery; how to attract customers and volunteers to learn more about growing and protecting locally native plants; how to implement best practices for phytosanitation.

The ongoing work of the nursery will continue as always. Over the past year or two, Native Here has grown stronger. We have more volunteers — and more volunteer hours — than ever before. We have a delightful cadre of high school, college, and millennial volunteers who have contributed admirably, in community service, internships, and drop-in work. These young people have groomed plants, watered, potted, weeded, cleaned pots — and learned about native plants from the very best. We are so happy to have the energy and fresh minds of these new volunteers. They add to the steady, mindful work of more experienced ones.

Sometimes I think the volunteers at Native Here are like an orchestra — Charli is the concertmaster, with John and his band of seed collectors and cuttings propagators; Shirley leading the watering team (and potting sometimes, too!); Gudrun on bulbs; Penny on maintenance; Steve on cages; Marilyn on cuttings; Sara on potting; Sue on inventory; Yona on signage and potting; and many, many more. Lesley Hunt will lead the Nursery Committee, together with Beth, Delia, Steve, Sue, Charli and Barbara. Saige White is our steady Nursery Assistant, helping with sales and stock.

Native Here is a lovely place, with good energy and lots to learn and do. People are relaxed and friendly, and always generous with their knowledge. There is something new to every visit!

We will all be taking on more responsibilities to cover the management functions, and we welcome anyone who would like to help out. We would especially welcome people who could help with:
1. outreach on the website and Facebook;
2. publicizing the nursery and events;
3. sales procedures;
4. regular watering during the dry months;
5. pot cleaning and phytosanitation;
6. bookkeeping;
7. organizing events;
8. special projects and maintenance.
If you are interested, write to nativehere@ebcnps.org and let us know what you would like to do!

Barbara Leitner, Lesley Hunt, and Charli Danielsen

CONSERVATION ANALYST’S REPORT

Over the course of 30 minutes in front of the CNPS Chapter Council representatives at the early December meeting I had the opportunity and pleasure to present about our robust East Bay conservation program. In preparing, I was reminded how far the chapter has come with supporting the position I currently fill. I gained a deeper understanding of why I do this work, namely that CNPS conservation activities are backed by scientific evidence as well as passion. I relayed what my typical week looks like, and quickly described three of our top projects (Knowland Park, Point Molate, Tesla), which have both long histories and current activity, and from which we have learned important lessons. I spoke of the importance of forming alliances in all our conservation work, from personal one on one connections to connections that expand into cooperation with other organizations and with agencies. I also noted that I could not do my work without the dedicated volunteers who surround me. In addition to these important points, I also laid out how we can work hard to prepare effective administrative records and connect with the state office.

In the new year keep a look out on the Conservation blog for viewing a copy of my presentation, and for more detail on a basic CEQA response strategy. https://ebcnps.wordpress.com/

Our role as an organization will continue to rise in importance in coming years. I had heard before, but discovered again that there is tremendous latent demand among our chapters for more conservation representatives. My goal was to inspire attendees with specific and hopeful recommendations for using the tools and lessons we have learned as a chapter, and I believe that I succeeded. Thank you for continuing to put your faith in me. Happy holidays!

Karen Whistestone
We thank our lucky stars for the youngsters among us!! Point Isabel December work parties were extremely well attended – first, by Japanese students (and their chaperone) attending the English Studies Institute (ESI) in Berkeley (http://esi.edu/en_US/) and then, environmental studies students from Berkeley High School. These students – who were a little cautious at the outset – quickly threw themselves into the work with enthusiasm and élan.

On December 3rd the ESI group weeded radish and oat grass, while stopping occasionally to write down all the new English words they heard from our Stewards and volunteers. Once the area was cleared, they learned how to plant buckeye (Aesculus californica) saplings that we had propagated from the two buckeyes on either side of the Hoffman channel. With a tip of our hats to Jeremy Saito of the EBRPD, we presented the students with bandanas from the District as reminders of their work at Point Isabel after they return to Japan.

Berkeley High School students Nina and Ottavia let us know that we were celebrating Saturnalia on December 17th when they and their fellow students came out in force to work with us. Saturn was an agricultural deity and the festival included a public banquet - we shared some delicious snacks - as well as sacrifice - the BHS students “sacrificed” their Saturday to help Mother Nature and her life forms. The crew, along with student mom Heather and Steward Ivy, cleared masses of oat grass and oxalis, wheelbarrowed weeds to the compost piles, and set to work planting. A BHS teacher and his wife rode by on their bikes and stopped to help student Krishna dig a hole (a good deed the students got a kick out of) for one of the shrubs.

By day’s end we had bedded in 6 California sagebrush (Artemisia californica), 4 toyon (Heteromeles arbutifolia) yarrow (Achillea millefolium), 2 lizard tail (Eriophyllum staechadifolium), and 1 bee plant (Scrophularia californica).

Thanks to all our volunteers and to Steward Lewis, Core Volunteers John, Nancy, Luciano and Rob for their unceasing work in weed removal and trash pickup. There are fewer oxalis every day and Hoffman marsh is looking great for the visiting egrets and other birds. Special thanks to Jesus and Gabriel from the City of Richmond for bringing us large rolls of cardboard and a big pile of mulch for the Adopt-a-Spot at Central Avenue and Rydin Road. Many thanks also to EBRPD’s Scott Possin for the plant stipend and to our ranger Bruce Adams for all his help and good cheer.

Happy Holidays Everyone!

Jane and Tom Kelly
Point Isabel restoration. Previous page: work crew. This page: upper left - beginning of the day; upper right – digging a hole for a buckeye; middle left – a new buckeye planting; below – the end of the day. All photos by Jane Kelly.
BERKELEY HIGH SCHOOL STUDENT VOLUNTEERS

Berkeley High School Crew. Photo by Jane Kelly.

Ivy, Heather, and Ethan. Photo by Jane Kelly.
BHS student Krishna and teacher. Photo by Jane Kelly.

BHS student Ezra. Photo by Jane Kelly.

BHS students Ottavia and Nina. Photo by Jane Kelly.
Officers and Committee Chairs serve on the Board.

Committees are formed based on chapter needs and the interests of volunteers. Proposals for committees and projects are welcome and will be considered by the Board.

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**East Bay Chapter News List**
Emailed announcements of upcoming EBC-NPS events
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