SEPTEMBER MEMBERS’ MEETING

Phytophthora-caused Diseases and California’s Native Flora
Speaker: Michael Uhler
Wednesday We will walk through some meadows at the top of the park, where there are sometimes an abundance of fragrant tarplants. Always meadowlarks and bluebirds. Distance will be about 3 miles. Mostly level, some short up and down sections. Bring lunch, since we plan on getting back to the cars about 2pm. Bring water, and be prepared for the forecast temperature. Depending on the wind direction, it may be hot.

September 25, 7:30 pm
Location: Garden Room, Orinda Public Library (location info below)

Four years of sampling California native plants for the presence of pathogens in the genus Phytophthora have given Michael Uhler a new appreciation for the seriousness of these damaging organisms. Once classified as belonging to the kingdom fungi, these microorganisms are more closely related to the brown algae than to true fungi. More than 120 Phytophthora species have been described to date, and virtually all are plant pathogens. “Phytophthora” literally translates to “plant destroyer,” and one species, Phytophthora ramorum, is the causal agent of the disease known as Sudden Oak Death. Most others cause deadly crown and root rot in susceptible hosts. Join Michael to learn about more than 12 species of Phytophthora associated with native plant diseases and fatalities, and then learn what can be done to prevent these insidious organisms from entering your garden or the wildlands as unwanted guests.

For the past fourteen years, Michael Uhler has been the gardener in the Regional Parks Botanic Garden’s Sierra Nevada and Sea Bluff sections. He is responsible for stewarding the largest collection of wild-collected Sierra Nevada plant species to be found anywhere. He has also been intimately involved in the garden’s recent pathogen detections, primarily of the genus Phytophthora. In his spare time he visits the

Lesions caused by Phytophthora cinnamomi on a pear used to detect the pathogen in the soil/root mix of a dead manzanita.

SEPTEMBER FIELD TRIPS

Sunday, September 1, 10 am to 2 pm September Plants in Briones, Sunday, every 12 months on the 1st Sunday.

We will walk through some meadows at the top of the park, where there are sometimes an abundance of fragrant tarplants.

Always meadowlarks and bluebirds. Distance will be about 3 miles. Mostly level, some short up and down sections. Bring lunch, since we plan on getting back to the cars about 2 pm. Bring water, and be prepared for the forecast temperature. Depending on the wind direction, it may be hot.

Click on this link for more information: https://www.meetup.com/ebcnps/events/qrjwgyzmcgb/

Sunday, September 15, 2019, 10:00 am to 1:00 pm. Wonderful Delta and Marsh Plants. Waterfront Road, Martinez, CA.

We will walk about 1 mile toward the bay, and back to the parking area. Elevation gain is about 3 feet. We will see a good diversity of wetland plants, some in flower: spearscale, pickle weed, tules, California sunflower, sneezeweed, saltmarsh fleabane with pink flowers, goldenrod, etc.

Click on this link for more information: https://www.meetup.com/ebcnps/events/dmxdnkyzmbtb/
Fourth Annual
Manzanita Day at Native Here

Saturday, September 28, 2019
10 am – 2 pm

Our new crop of manzanitas will be available!
Five local species will be offered

Talk at 11:00 am – John Danielsen
"How to Take Care of Manzanitas in Your Garden"

Native Here Nursery
101 Golf Course Drive, Tilden Park
Berkeley, CA

Many other species also available as we move into the winter planting season.
Check our online inventory at http://nativeherenursery.org/
Some plants are half price, as noted.
Native Here Nursery Announces

2019-2020 Special Event Saturdays
10 am to 2 pm
Short talk at 11 am

September 28: Manzanitas for Local Gardens

October (Saturday TBD): Favorite Native Plants for East Bay Gardens

November 23: Ferns and Other Shady Friends

February (Saturday TBD): Ground Covers

March (Saturday TBD): Pollinators

April (Saturday TBD): Annuals and Bulbs

RESTORATION IN SEPTEMBER

Sunday, September 1, 10:00 am - 1:00 pm, the monthly North Basin restoration meets at McLaughlin Eastshore State Park in Berkeley, on the bay shoreline south of Tom Bates soccer fields, to remove invasives encroaching on the native plants. A map of the area can be found at https://goo.gl/rqdZQW. For directions to the work site or more information about this project, contact John Kenny (johnkenny54@yahoo.com).

Saturday, September 7, and Saturday, September 21, 9:30 am to 2 pm, Point Isabel at Eastshore State Park. This group starts across from the parking lot at the end of Rydin Road. You can e-mail kyotousa@sbcglobal.net to RSVP.

Saturday, September 7 and Sunday, September 8 we are hosting volunteer French broom pulls. Meet at the Redwood Bowl Staging Area off Skyline Blvd (just before Chabot Space and Science Center) at 9:30 am. Work will continue until approximately 1:30. Be prepared to hike in to the work site, wear long pants and long sleeves, and bring a water bottle. Gloves and tools provided. Email redwood@ebparks.org to RSVP. Join the Garber Park Stewards in our monthly habitat restoration work days. We meet on the 3rd Saturday of every month from 10am until noon. We remove non-native invasive weeds, maintain the Loop Trail, and plant native plants. Everyone welcome!

Garber Park is a 13-acre wildland park owned by the City of Oakland, located behind the Claremont Hotel in Claremont Canyon. Garber Park is home to significant stands of big-leaf maple, California buckeyes and regenerating coast live oak woodland and forest. The Garber Park Stewards vision is to safeguard the native wildland resources of Garber Park while reducing the risk of wildfire and improving the trail system.

Sunday, September 15 at 9:30 am, Huckleberry Regional Botanic Preserve. Meet at the parking lot, where we’ll decide on the work site depending on soil and weather conditions.

Saturday September 28, 9:30-11:30 am, restoration of Albany Hill. For more information email tashorehill@gmail.com
EB CNPS meets with North Orinda Fuel Break managers, contributes to CalFire EIR

Work began in early August on the North Orinda Fuel Break, a vegetation fuel reduction project crossing watershed, park, and private lands from Lafayette to the Tilden Park ridgeline. Governor Newsom authorized the fourteen-mile vegetation fuel reduction project, one of thirty-five such projects across the state. The Governor waived the normal CEQA process that requires a public process to identify and avoid, or otherwise mitigate for significant biological impacts. EB CNPS, along with the Norman LaForce of Sierra Club and Pam Young of Golden Gate Audubon, asked for a meeting with the local project managers, the Moraga-Orinda Fire Department (MOFD) staff, to discuss environmental protections in the project.

Our concerns included measures to prevent the spread of invasive weeds and sudden oak death, how the work would avoid converting fuel break sites to flashy, tall, and dry annual weeds, nest protection, and an easier-to-read project map, such as on Google Earth, for the public. We proposed keeping green, low-growing, low fuel risk native plants, such as the native grasses and forbs, in the oak understory and in grasslands, as well as rarer shrubs such as native currants, coffeeberry, and toyon (environmental regulations do not protect these avian habitat-supporting shrubs).

Sequoia Ecological Consulting, the environmental consultants hired to oversee environmental protections, stated that trucks and other equipment would be cleaned daily. MOFD has been working on a website for the project with a Google Earth overlay map to make it easier to know where the treatment sites are. Water District natural resources staff reported the locations of special status plants to MOFD’s environmental consultants so that the fuel break work avoids these populations. (Botanist and EB CNPS Rare and Unusual Plants of the East Bay author Dianne Lake had previously surveyed the San Pablo Reservoir watershed for special status plants and sensitive natural plant communities.) The route of the fuel break goes through intact oak woodland, shrub areas, and grasslands, much of it on East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD) and East Bay Regional Park land.

Getting out to see what “Vegetation Fuel Treatment” looks like

Earlier in the summer Conservation Committee members Judy Schwartz, Ivy Poisson, Peter Rauch, Christine Schneider, and Jim Hanson toured fuel break work by Regional Parks at the “wildland-urban interface” ridgetop where Tilden Park and an adjacent urban neighborhood meet. The oak trees had been limbed up to disrupt the “continuity” between the ground level plants and oak canopy. At several locations, green shrub and herbaceous native plant understory remained in the oak woodlands understory.

The photos from our tour were put to use recently on CalFire’s Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) for vegetation fuel reduction on over 20 million acres of California’s wildlands. The CalFire PEIR included sample photos of vegetation treatments where every leaf of ground-level vegetation was taken off (photo below). This approach contrasts with the common observation that retaining low-growing native understory plant cover can often help achieve fire risk reduction objectives. If retained, the resident herbaceous native vegetation in the oak woodland and shrubland understory and grasslands will resist weedy, dry annuals from completely taking over. The photos and comments from our site tour became part of the CNPS Conservation program’s official statewide comments on the PEIR.

What Direction for California Wildlands?

CalFire will need to respond to each of the EIR comments. EB-CNPS and other environmental organizations are continuing to participate in this dialogue locally. Gratefully, even though MOFD has a tight project timeframe, they’ve kept an open line to hear from the public. Recently we called about leaving some green leafy growth on a population of Creeping wild rye (Elymus triticoides) and other native perennial bunchgrasses. One of the project’s updates showed a large hill slope of creeping wild rye above Pleasant Hill Road and Highway 24 being sheared right to ground level. Although

(Above, from 2019 CalFire Vegetation Treatment Program, Draft) Example from CalFire Programmatic EIR. (Below) Example from East Bay with limbed oak trees and native herbaceous vegetation remains for long-term erosion control, as an alternative to weeds, and for habitat benefits. Photo by Jim Hanson.
not a protected “rare and endangered” plant, creeping wild rye, as well as native perennial bunchgrasses, are stewards of our natural areas. Among other benefits, they hold soils in place, increase rainwater infiltration and carbon storage deep into the ground. Some are over a hundred years old. There needs to be a continuing dialogue and scientific guidance about how to sustain ecological diversity and reduce some vegetation fuels in natural lands, especially since the two goals often complement each other.

**Strong Local support for TESLA bill** – Senate Bill 767, sponsored by State Senator Steve Glazer (D-Orinda) and co-sponsored five East Bay State Assemblymembers, allows the State’s TESLA property in Livermore to be sold for park use. Currently State Parks has designated the property for an off-road vehicle site due to legislation that takes a portion of our gas taxes to expand off-road vehicle sites in California. Thanks to the support of many local organizations, agencies, and elected officials, the bill again cleared state Senate and Assembly committee hearings and as of this writing, needs to go out of “suspense file” and onto the Assembly Floor for a vote. Conservation Committee member Beth Wurzburg has traveled to Sacramento numerous times to speak in favor of the bill. The bill’s local co-sponsors include Assemblymembers Tim Grayson (14th District – Central Contra Costa and Benecia), Buffy Wicks (15th District – East Bay), Rebecca Bauer-Kahan (16th District – San Ramon), Rob Bonta, (18th District-Oakland), and Bill Quirk (20th District- Hayward). Assemblymember Rebecca Bauer-Kahan expressed her active support for passage of this bill in a recent Environmental Roundtable she organized.

**Groups call for Full EIR on big condo project at Richmond’s Point Molate**

A small footnote in the City of Richmond’s “public scoping notice” brought out speakers to a City Hall hearing to call for a full Environmental Impact Report on Point Molate development plans. The City is proposing to do an amended, or “supplemental,” Environmental Impact Report (SEIR) building on the previous combined casino and condo project EIR. However, the residents noticed that the City was suddenly introducing a very new project by allowing the possible doubling of condo development - to over 2,000 units - on this environmentally sensitive property.

Last summer, residents participated in long-sought community planning meetings to outline a vision for Point Molate. The planning process included tours of Point Molate and follow-up planning sessions. Many residents were able to tour the Point Molate uplands and historic buildings for the first time. In subsequent community planning sessions, residents expressed overwhelming support for keeping the south watershed as a public park and outdoor resources for kids and families with no or limited housing construction in the already disturbed north watershed (site of the historic Winehaven building). The Council adopted both the consultant and the community’s plans. However, in January 2019, Mayor Tom Butt received enough votes from a new City Council to remove any restrictions on building in the environmentally sensitive south watershed.

At the recent hearing and in written comments, EB CNPS commented that adding more than a thousand new housing units, along with dramatic changes to traffic at the one and only single land access road in and out of Pt. Molate, as well as other factors, makes this a new project and requires a new, current Environmental Impact Report.

**In other conservation news:**

**Construction at U.C.’s Richmond Field Station coastal prairie**

Five years ago, the U.C. Regents adopted the Environmental Impact Report for a new Richmond Bay campus at the existing Field Station along the Richmond shoreline and Highway 580. The University proposed a “global campus” but state budget cutbacks put the plans on hold. The Richmond Field Station site supports a large, rare coastal prairie surrounded by a scattering of older buildings. EB CNPS, the Sierra Club, and the California Native Grasslands Association argued for conserving the maximum amount of coastal prairie and incorporating it as a landscape feature of the new development. One of the first building projects at the Field Station, expansion of the Northern Regional Library Facility, began this year. Botanical surveys by AECOM (formerly URS) by Dina Robertson, Casey Stewman, George Strand in 2006 identified twenty-three EB CNPS locally rare species in the field station grasslands, included in the “Big Meadow” where the new construction is encroaching. To mitigate for loss of sensitive native grassland, the Richmond Bay Campus EIR adopted a plan proposed by consultants to excavate 10” deep layers of native grassland, place it around the site, and roll it in with equipment, in the manner manufactured lawn sod is installed.

One of the ongoing concerns of EB CNPS is the lack of ongoing management of the prairie, including mowing and recovering the site from the large invasive Harding grass (*Phalaris aquatica*) populations that have expanded across the prairie over many years. The University has been contacted about plans for native grassland mitigation and maintenance at the Field Station.

**EBCNPS comments on Coyote Hills park**

Conservation Committee member Tri Do appeared before the East Bay Regional Parks Board Executive Committee to ask that the District’s plan be improved so that native bunchgrasses and other native vegetation found on the site remain when the District starts construction for the Coyote Hills expansion. EB CNPS supports the District’s plan to restore large portions of the remaining oak woodlands, disturbed grasslands, and a wetland, but believes that sufficient botanical surveys are required to retain existing native plant resources. The Chapter’s submitted these same comments on the project’s Draft Environmental Impact Report (EIR). Site of the Patterson Ranch, the property was donated to the Park District. The Friends of Coyote Hills, Citizens’ Committee to Complete the Refuge and other local stakeholders worked for
CONSERVATION REPORT (CONT.)

years to oppose urban expansion on this land that adjoins the Coyote Hills Regional Park. The District Board will consider the final EIR on September 3rd.

Jim Hanson, Conservation Chair

POINTER ISABEL AND ENVIRONS OVER THE SUMMER

Beautiful Hoffman Marsh!! July and August are the months when Hoffman Marsh dresses up and displays its breathtaking flora. California sea lavender (Limonium californicum) blooms throughout the marsh casting its colorful hue. The dazzling yellow flowers on coastal gumweed (Grindelia stricta) look as though they were plugged into an electric socket. Marsh jaumea (Jaumea carnosa) and alkali heath (Frankenia salina) play their part displaying their lovely delicate flowers for all who come close enough to see. Shore birds of every kind are enjoying the marsh and we spotted a bat ray (Mylobatis californica) swimming under the bridge taking advantage of the tide flowing in from the Bay.

Multiple work parties during these two months involved dedicated volunteers removing bindweed, pepperweed, fennel seedlings, ice plant, mallow, bristly ox tongue, dandelion, and what we hope is the last of the radish. Stewards and Core Volunteers also mulched a small pathway to provide easier access to the break area, irrigated the new plantings, removed piles of oat grass from around the shrubs and the marsh edge, while Rob removed all the trash. Ivy also collected a small bag of poppy seeds that we distributed along the trail where the poppies were far too sparse.

We spent many hours removing Russian thistle (Salsola soda) all along the channel west of our site and we also ventured onto the shore immediately south of Point Isabel across from Costco (facing the Albany Bulb) to remove an accumulation of Algerian lavender (Limonium ramosissimum) and Russian thistle infesting the precious coastal plants. (At the last work party, we searched Hoffman Marsh for Algerian lavender and found only one plant that Steward Nancy removed.)

In August we had another interesting learning experience when Tom spotted a very unusual plant growing west of our project site next to the railroad tracks. We sent photos of the mature plant, the floral structure, and the leaves to Lech Naumovich who contacted Barbara Erter regarding the ID. Barbara confirmed that it is lizard-tail or velvet weed (Oenothera curtiflora), formerly Gaura parviflora or G. mollis and that it is not native to California. Barbara had collected it at Point Isabel many years ago and when we looked on Calflora, we saw that Barbara’s report on this plant at Point Isabel was the only one for all of Northern California! We reported our sighting at https://www.calflora.org/cgi-bin/noccdetail.cgi?seq_num=po140792&taxon=Oenothera+curtiflora after heading back out and removing the mature plant and its 22 seedlings. It’s always good to acquire a little more knowledge.

Special thanks to all the Stewards and volunteers who work tirelessly to protect the native plants and the marsh. And thanks as always to the EBRPD and to the City of Richmond for their support.

Jane and Tom Kelly
July 20 crew (above), August 3 crew (below). Photos by Jane Kelly.
POINT ISABEL AND ENVIRONS OVER THE SUMMER (CONT.)

July 6 Crew (above), *Oenothera curtiflora* (below left), *Limonium californicum* (below right), Photos by Jane Kelly.
SKYLINE GARDENS REPORT

With a long, cool spring and those late May rains, we’ve had glorious wildflowers all through this month; sticky monkey-flower and farewell-to-spring have just been stunning. We’ve been busy chasing down many invasives, and lately focusing on scattergrass (*Ehrharta*) under the bays along the ridge. On July 12th, we had a big corporate workday with the Ridge Trail and MSCI group, where 23 of us hauled all the logging debris off the Northern Triangle (above Siesta Gate). Once all that brush is chipped up, we’ll be ready to start restoration with the rains.

We’re still going out twice a week: Sunday mornings at 9:30 am and Wednesday afternoons at 4 pm. Please let me know if you can make it.

Our native red thistles, the big, tall silver ones with the candy-apple red flowers have been really great this past month. Botanically, these are *Cirsium occidentale*; common names are cobweb thistle and western thistle. Blooming late in the season, usually in June, these are a keystone species in terms of all the many forms of life they support. Here’s a group of them:

“Oh, that’s where the big, red thistles grow.” They have such a searing beauty.

Here’s a flower up close:

Just look at that red! For me, these are the stars in the crown of the High Ridge area. (Photo thanks to Angela)

Cobweb thistles are basically biennials (grow leaves the first year, flower, seed and die the second year) so the flowers we see this year are actually from second year plants, blooming for the first time. This native species grows on rocky ridges up and down the state, and comes in several varieties and color forms (photo by Mark Kummel):

Here is a female Anna’s Hummingbird nectaring. We’ve actually seen them doing this up at Barberry Peak this year. (Photo thanks to Ken Hickman.)

These flowers are borne on stalks up to three feet tall, and one plant can have up to fifteen flowers. (Photo thanks to Bill Helsel.) They grow in the hottest, rockiest and windiest of places at Skyline, especially along the ridge of Barberry Peak. It’s hard to imagine how such large plants can grow in the toughest and driest of places, but whenever I mention the Barberry Peak area, people respond, almost without fail,
SKYLINE GARDENS REPORT

Any creatures with a long tongues are especially drawn to thistle nectar, especially butterflies:

Here's a double -- two Pale Swallowtails nectaring. (Thanks again to Mark Kummel for this photo) Pale Swallowtails are so called because of the pale, moonlight color of their wings between the black stripes. These lay their eggs on plants in the Buckthorn family (Rhamnaceae), which includes coffeeberry and ceanothus. We see a lot of them up at Barberry. Some sixteen species of butterflies are known to nectar on cobweb thistles.

Besides nourishing the large and showy creatures, native thistles are also food for many smaller ones; like these aphids:

Wildlife is drawn to cobweb thistles for more than the nectar and pollen. Some species of butterflies lay their eggs on thistle leaves, and these become caterpillars:

We have found several kinds of caterpillars on thistles at Skyline. This dark one we believe to be either a Painted Lady or a Mylitta Crescent. These eat the leaves between the mid-rib and the spines, and then roll the leaf over to protect the chrysalis. (Photo Mark Kummel).
In the picture on the previous page, the stem is just covered with aphids. If you look closely, you will see a number of black ants crawling around and over the aphids (there’s even one at the tip of a spine, on the right). These aphids are special aphids, native to North America and Europe, known as Plum-Thistle Aphids (*Brachycaudus cardui*). In early spring they live on trees and shrubs of the genus *Prunus*. Later on in the year the adults fly to thistle stems. The ants are there to tend the aphids. They move them around, cultivate them, with the same purposes as people tend cows. The ants live on the honeydew that the aphids secrete. This seems to be mutually beneficial, as researchers have tried cultivating the aphids without the ants, and they just don’t seem to make it. Any ideas on the species of this ant?

Now, let’s step back and consider the big picture ... thistles, people, hummingbirds, butterflies, bumblebees, caterpillars, aphids, ants, seeds; soil, sun and rain ... it’s all fantastic, isn’t it? It’s our great honor to play a part; to *mingle, merge, and marry* with these many other lives.

Happy Trails,

*Glen Schneider*

Below: thistle seeds, photo by Cynthia.
Manzanita Day at Native Here—September 28

When will the manzanitas be available?” The answer is: Saturday, September 28 at 10 am!

We will have *Arctostaphylos auriculata* (Mount Diablo manzanita), *Arctostaphylos manzanita* ssp. *manzanita* (common manzanita), *Arctostaphylos manzanita* ssp. *laevigata* (Contra Costa manzanita), and *Arctostaphylos glauca* (big-berry manzanita) from the Diablo area, and *Arctostaphylos crustacea* ssp. *crustacea* (brittleleaf manzanita) from the Bay Hills area.

John Danielsen will talk at 11 am about our local manzanitas, identifying them, caring for them and learning to treasure what they can do to enhance your garden. Several hundred plants, representing most of the local manzanita types will be available for sale. John has spent decades growing local native plants at Native Here Nursery and studying them in their natural settings. He will be happy to answer your questions as well as show you many of the plants in the nursery that do well with manzanitas. This is always a special day at the nursery kicking off the fall/winter and spring series of Special Events.

We also will be offering over 200 species of other local native plants for your delight. The nursery opens at 10 am and closes at 2 pm, so be sure to plan your day to include a visit and enjoy our plant selections.

For more information see: [http://nativeherenursery.org](http://nativeherenursery.org)

101 Golf Course Drive
Tilden Park, Berkeley, 94708

ONGOING RESTORATION PROJECTS

Here is a list of projects associated with the Chapter. We give website and contact information when available:

**Albany Hill**
[www.tendancienthill.org](http://www.tendancienthill.org)
Margot Cunningham, leader
tashorehill@gmail.com

**Garber Park Stewards**
garberparkstewards@gmail.com

**Huckleberry Botanic Regional Preserve**
Janet Gawthrop, leader
janetgawthrop47@gmail.com

**John Muir NHS (Martinez)**
Elaine Jackson, leader
925-372-0687
elainejx@att.net

**Marsh Creek**
Heath Bartosh, leader
925-957-0069
hbartosh@nomadecology.com

**Point Isabel**
El Cerrito Recycling Center
Tom and Jane Kelly, leaders
510-704-8628 (w)
510-684-6484 (c)
kyotousa@sbcglobal.net

**McLaughlin Eastshore State Park (Berkeley)**
John Kenny, leader
johnkenny54@yahoo.com

**Sibley Regional Park**
Janet Gawthrop, leader
janetgawthrop47@gmail.com

**Skyline Gardens**
Glen Schneider, leader
[www.skylinegardens.org](http://www.skylinegardens.org)

**Barbara Leitner, leader**
Stinkwort (*Dittrichia graveolens*) Removal

**Walnut Creek Open Space**
Lesley Hunt, leader
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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**Recording Secretary**
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**Treasurer**
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**Committees**

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**CNPS State Chapter Council delegate**
Beth Wurzburg

**Conservation**
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**Funds Development**
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**Native Here Nursery**
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programs@ebcnps.org

**Publicity**
Vacant

**Rare Plants**
Vacant

**Unusual Plants**
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**Nicole Jurjavic, Co-Chair**
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