



### PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

By Snowdy Dodson

How much information is too much information? I think we all tend to filter out a lot of important matters simply because of time constraints, information overload or sheer exhaustion. So here are a few items you may have missed as you rushed through your busy lives. Our own Chapter Vice President, **Jo Kitz**, was awarded the California Invasive Pest Council (Cal-IPC) Ryan Jones Catalyst Award at the recent Cal-IPC Symposium this fall. This award is given to those who creatively spearhead actions or create partnerships that make exceptional progress in protecting California from invasive plants. Jo was honored for organizing volunteers to remove invasive plants in the Santa Monica Mountains for over 30 years. Thank you, Jo, for all that you are doing for habitat conservation and improvement.

Did you know that our CNPS Chapter has a way to honor those who help the environment? Each year we plant Commemorative Oaks for those who have made lasting contributions to our community. In 2010, we planted five oaks to honor the contributions of **George and Helen Stevenson** for their many years of service to CNPS; **John Kuiper** for his many years as a weed warrior; **Ronald Schafer** for his efforts to build the partnership between California State Parks and the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area; and **Robert Chandler** for his work to implement the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area as its first superintendent. If you would like to have the Chapter plant an oak to honor a friend or loved one, contact us and we'll give you the details.

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**Wildflower Show,  
Native Plant Symposium,  
Plant Sale  
April 23 (Sat.) 9am-4pm  
see page 3 for details**

## UPCOMING PROGRAMS

of the Los Angeles/Santa Monica Mountains Chapter

March 8, 2011 – 7:30 - 9:30pm  
Sepulveda Garden Center, Encino

### Rare Plant Survey Of Post-Wildfire Griffith Park: Final Report

**Presenter: Dan Cooper**

Dan Cooper, consulting biologist, is head of Cooper Ecological Monitoring, Inc. His group focuses on studying and advising clients on the natural history of the Los Angeles area. His recent projects include Griffith Park, Madrona Marsh, and the Ballona Wetlands.

Dan will present the findings of a recently-completed post-fire rare plant survey of Griffith Park, a 4000+ acre City of Los Angeles recreation area and nature preserve anchoring the eastern end of the Santa Monica Mountains. In 2007 about 20% of Griffith Park burned in an arson-caused wildfire. Cooper and a group of volunteers scoured the park's rugged canyons and ridges in spring 2010 searching for uncommon species. Their work was supported by local groups interested in conservation of the park's resources. Nine plants listed by CNPS as rare were discovered, including California black walnut and Plummer's mariposa lily. Other species, known from herbarium records, were not found, but may yet survive in the park.

There are photos of ecologically-significant areas of the park, unknown even to long-time naturalists and conservationists in Los Angeles. This is a Griffith Park few of us have ever seen!

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April 12, 2011 – 7:30 - 9:00pm  
First United Methodist Church  
Santa Monica

### Gophers Rule the World!

**Presenter: Dr. Polly Schiffman,**  
Department of Biology, California State University, Northridge

In 1579, the British explorer and pirate, Sir Francis Drake, wrote in his diary about the remarkable abundance of burrowing rodents in California. A few centuries later, in 1923, the great vertebrate zoologist, Joseph Grinnell, estimated that 1 billion burrowing rodents lived within California's borders. California's wild lands have suffered greatly since these historical observations were made (development, fragmentation, pollution, disturbance, etc). Nevertheless, burrowing rodents persist in considerable numbers and act as "ecosystem engineers," exerting tremendous control over plant communities and ecosystem processes. This presentation will review fun facts and natural history about gophers and their ilk.

Programs are free to the public. Refreshments will be served. For directions, see Programs on page 3.

HIKES AND RESTORATION

SUN 3/6 8:45am

Topanga State Park

**Lower Topanga Park Restoration:** In 2008, a massive earth-moving project returned Topanga Creek to its historic channel. Volunteers are planting oaks, sycamores and native plants to create habitat. All ages welcome; no experience necessary. Bring, water, snack, sturdy footwear. Credit for community service.

*Reservations required.* 818-591-1701 x203 or online at volunteer@treepeople.org. 3.5hrs\*

SAT 3/12 8:45am

Cold Creek Preserve

**Be a Habitat Restorationist for a Day.** Plant native trees, wildflowers, sages, shrubs and grasses on which the birds and animals depend for food, nesting and safety. Bring snack and water; wear sturdy shoes; gloves and tools provided; receive community service credit. *Reservations required:* 818-591-1701 x203 or online at volunteer@treepeople.org. 4hrs \*

SUN 3/13 8:45am

Santa Monica Mountains

**Weed War is Habitat Restoration.** Warring against (removing) the non-native plants (weeds) is necessary to restore biodiversity, habitat and ecological balance to the parks and preserves in the mountains. Bring water; wear sturdy shoes; tools and gloves provided; credit for community service hours. Please call for site location. *Reservations required:* 818-348-5910 or online at volunteer@treepeople.org. 3.5hrs \*

SAT 3/19 8:30am

Caballero Canyon Lower Trailhead

**Chaparral Chatter Wildflower Hike.** Today is the Spring Equinox. The hike will go up the canyon appreciating the beauty of California chaparral and oak woodlands, viewing the expanse of city and mountains from vistas along Mulholland Dr., and enjoying the trails leading into the interior of Topanga State Park. We will stop for wildflowers, insects, animal tracks and scat. Steep hiking on narrow trail in one section. Elevation gain 800'. Bring hat, water, snack; boots recommended. RSVP 818-881-3706. 3hrs

SAT 3/19 8:45am

Malibu Creek State Park

**Lost Oak Woodland Restoration.** In 1992, a volunteer oak planting program was started to restore wildlife habitat and to add to the beauty of the park. Commemorative Oaks Program is still going strong. Volunteers have added over 3,000 oak and native trees to the park. Volunteers are needed to plant and care for even more trees and to attend the volunteer supervisor's training program offered by TreePeople. Bring water, snack, sturdy shoes; gloves and tools provided; receive community service credit.

*Reservations required:* 818-591-1701 x203 or online at volunteer@treepeople.org. 3.5hrs \*

SUN 3/20 8:45am

Peter Strauss Ranch

**La Sierra Canyon Native Plant Restoration.** In this beautiful area we will "pull (weeds) and plant (native plants)" to create wildlife habitat. Meet in PSR parking lot to caravan to work site. Bring water and snack; wear sturdy shoes; gloves and tools provided; receive community service credit. *Reservations required:* 818-591-1701 x203 or online at volunteer@treepeople.org. 4hrs\*

SUN 3/27 10am

Malibu Bluffs Park

**Bluffs Ramble to the Sea** Spring wildflowers; lapping waves; sandy beach and the hope of seeing a migrating whale migrating or a rollicking sea lion. 310-472-0624. 2hrs

SAT 4/2 8:45am

Topanga State Park

**Lower Topanga Park Restoration:** Help plant, water and weed. Receive credit for community service. Bring water, and snack; wear sturdy footwear. Reservations required: volunteer@treepeople.org or 818-591-1701 x203. 3.5hrs \*

SUN 4/3 8:45am

Cold Creek Preserve

**Habitat Repair.** Help restore oak trees, shrubs and bunch grasses that feed and shelter wildlife. Receive community service credit. Reservations required: 818-591-1701 x203 or volunteer@treepeople.org. 3.5hrs\*

SAT 4/9 8:45am

Santa Monica Mountains

**La Sierra Restoration Day.** After meeting at Peter Strauss Ranch, we caravan to La Sierra Preserve to halt the invasion of weeds in wetlands and along the trails. Bring lunch and water. Receive credit for community service. Reservations required: volunteer@treepeople.org or 818-591-1701 x203. 3.5hrs\*

SUN 4/10 8:45am

Santa Monica Mountains

**Weed War.** Join us at a restoration site. Receive community service credit. Reservations required: 818-591-1701 x203 or volunteer@treepeople.org. 3.5hrs\*

SAT 4/16 8:30am

Caballero Canyon, Lower Trailhead

**Chaparral Chatter Wildflower Hike.** Enjoy the continuing emergence of new flowers, bursts of color and excitement as we explore Caballero Canyon in Tarzana. The seasonal changes in the chaparral and oak woodland are astonishing, and the views from Mulholland Drive of the San Fernando Valley to the north, and the Pacific Ocean to the south – on a clear day! – more than compensate for the 800' elevation gain. Bring water, hat and a curious open mind to take in the splendor of this gem in our city, a small section of the Santa Monica Mountains. Leisurely pace, but steep hiking on narrow trail in one section. 3 hrs. Call for directions 818-782-9346 or 818-881-3706.

SAT 4/16 8:45am

Malibu Creek State Park

**Return of the Lost Oak Woodlands** Help rebuild habitat (community service credit. Reservations required: volunteer@treepeople.org or 818-591-1701 x203. 3.5hrs\*

SUN 4/24 10am

Malibu Bluffs Park

**Springtime Meander on the Bluffs.** Discover native wildflowers and grasses (and the invasion of weeds). Enjoy great views of mountains and sea. Dip your toes into the bay as we walk along the beach and look for dolphins, whales and sea birds. 818-782-9346. 2hrs

**Most Tuesday and Thursdays, 8am  
TWICE-WEEKLY WEED WARS IN THE BASIN**

Meet at the dirt parking lot at the entrance to the Bull Creek Ecosystem Restoration area, just east of Balboa Blvd along the road leading to Lake Balboa and Beilenson Park, on the left (north). Do not park on the paved driveway. Only park on the dirt area. Steve Hartman will lead. Bring either a small sharp shovel or a clipper (either hand held or loppers). Wear a hat, multiple layers, and clothes and shoes you don't mind getting dirty. If you would like to help weeding or get further information, please contact volunteer@sepulvedabasinwildlife.org. Please notify us if you plan to join us, because sometimes we change the meeting location! Or call 818-881-3706.

\* Co-sponsored by LA/SMM CNPS, Mountains Restoration Trust, and TreePeople.

**CNPS PROGRAMS****TUES 3/8 7:30-9:30PM***Sepulveda Garden Center, Encino*

Rare Plant Survey Of  
Post-Wildfire Griffith  
Park: Final Report  
Presenter: Dan Cooper

Directions: the Sepulveda Garden Center, 16633 Magnolia Blvd. in Encino, is on the north side of Magnolia between Balboa & Hayvenhurst. Park in the lighted lot at the east end of the garden, walk west along the path to the garden center building. Native plant and gardening books will be for sale and refreshments are served. A no-host dinner precedes the meeting at 6:00pm at Tony Roma's Restaurant, 16575 Ventura Blvd., Encino. (818-461-8400)

**TUES 4/12 7:30-9:00PM***First United Methodist Church, Santa Monica*

Gophers Rule The World!  
Presenter: Dr. Polly Schiffman

Directions: The First United Methodist Church, 1008 11th Street, Santa Monica CA 90403, is one and a half blocks north of Wilshire Boulevard on 11th Street in Santa Monica. From the 10 freeway, exit at Lincoln. Go right, or north to Wilshire. Turn right. In three blocks turn left on 11th Street. The church is on the left, just past California. Church parking is on the right under an apartment complex. The Fireside Room is at the north end of the church's large patio, next to the Sanctuary. Native plant and gardening books will be for sale and refreshments are served. A no-host dinner precedes the meeting at 6:00pm at El Cholo Mexican Restaurant in Santa Monica at 1025 Wilshire Blvd.

For information about the above programs, please see "Upcoming Programs" on front page.

**BOARD MEETINGS****TUES 3/1 7pm**

LA/SMM Chapter Board Meeting  
at Halli Mason' home in Tarzana. Please call for directions. Chapter members are invited.  
818-345-6749.

**TUES 4/5 7pm**

LA/SMM Chapter Board Meeting  
at Snowdy Dodson's home in Van Nuys  
Chapter members are invited. 15811 Leadwell Street. 818-782-9346

**PICNIC, WILDFLOWER WALK AND FORAY -  
MARCH 26 AT COLD CREEK**

The annual combined CNPS picnic, mushroom foray and wildflower walk will explore the trails of the Cold Creek watershed. Florence Nishida, mycologist extraordinaire, helps us unravel the mystery of the mushroom and its pivotal relationship to native plants. We'll follow Cold Creek along the trail and then turn upwards through meadows, coastal sage and chaparral. Mid-way, we'll stop to investigate the presence or absence of wooly distaff thistle (*Carthamus lanatus*), first reported during the BioBlitz growing along the Stunt High Trail. Then onward to picnic on the grounds of Stunt Ranch Reserve. Meet at 9:45 am in the Stunt Ranch parking area at 1.8 miles from Mulholland Highway on Stunt Road for a car shuttle to trailhead. Info: Jo Kitz, 818-591-1701 x203 (day), jkitz@mountainstrust.org

**NATIVE PLANT WEEK SYMPOSIUM  
WILDFLOWER SHOW & PLANT SALE**

**APRIL 23, 2011 (SATURDAY); 9AM-4PM**  
**Sepulveda Garden Center, 16633 Magnolia Blvd., Encino**

Sponsors:

California Native Plant Society  
Theodore Payne Foundation

The annual Wildflower Show sponsored by the California Native Plant Society (Los Angeles / Santa Monica Mountains Chapter) is scheduled for April 23 (9am-4pm) at the Sepulveda Garden Center (Encino) in conjunction with a simultaneous Native Plant Week Symposium, plant and book sale. The Theodore Payne Foundation is co-sponsoring this event and selling plants.

**Admission is free to the wildflower show and speakers.**

The Symposium will feature the following speakers:

**Lili Singer**, The Joys of Gardening with Native Plants, 9:30-11am  
**James Kenney**, Wildflowers and Landscapes of the Santa Monica Mountains, 11:30-1pm

**Cassy Aoyagi**, Water Conservation Gardening with Natives, 2-3:30pm

Dozens of different native plant flowers will be on display, collected from members' home gardens and the grounds of the Theodore Payne Foundation. If you would like to contribute cuttings, contact Snowdy Dodson via email: [snowdy.dodson@csun.edu](mailto:snowdy.dodson@csun.edu) or phone: 818-782-9346 for details. The cuttings need to be available for set up on Friday, April 22.

Native plants from the Theodore Payne Foundation will be available for purchase. Educational displays from various agencies and docent groups will be set up outdoors. Native plant gardening and natural history books will be available for sale, along with t-shirts, maps, and other gift items.

Refreshments will be available for purchase.

For more information about the California Native Plant Society, visit [www.cnps.org](http://www.cnps.org).

Visit the Los Angeles / Santa Monica Mountains Chapter of CNPS at [www.lacnps.org](http://www.lacnps.org).

The Theodore Payne Foundation is located in Sun Valley at 10459 Tuxford St. 818-768-1802 or visit them at [www.theodorepayne.org](http://www.theodorepayne.org).

NOTE: For more information, contact Steve Hartman ([naturebase@aol.com](mailto:naturebase@aol.com)) or 818-881-3706.

## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

*continued from front page*

In a move to acquire more open space in the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area (SMMNRA), Congressmen Brad Sherman, Howard Berman, and Henry Waxman have sent a letter to Secretary of Interior Ken Salazar and National Park Service Director Jon Jarvis asking that three critical Land and Water Conservation Fund acquisitions within the SMMNRA be included in the President's FY 2012 Budget. The Congressmen are asking that land parcels near Malibu Creek and in Zuma and Trancas Canyons as well as the Mansdorf property (the largest remaining privately owned stretch of coastline in the Santa Monica Mountains) be given a high priority for acquisition in 2012. All of these properties are included in the SMMNRA Land Protection Plan for acquisition due to their scenic, recreational, and natural resource values. Thank you, Congressmen.

In other news of interest to those who love the Santa Monica Mountains, the California Coastal Commission staff have produced an analysis saying that the cluster of five multimillion-dollar estates proposed by U2 musician, The Edge (aka David Evans), would violate state law in that it would ruin a wild area and scar hillsides visible from Pacific Coast Highway. The project would necessitate the removal of nearly 50,000 cubic yards of rock and soil from the 156 acre site high in the Santa Monica Mountains overlooking the Malibu Coast.

And let's not forget the Newhall Ranch project. A coalition of Native American and environmental groups including the California Native Plant Society filed a law suit against the California Dept. of Fish and Game as a result of their certification of the Newhall Ranch development. The suit accuses Fish and Game of violating environmental codes and thereby doing lasting damage to water quality, wildlife and cultural resources. The area under consideration is home to several endangered species: the California condor, the San Fernando Valley spineflower, the unarmed threespine stickleback, least Bell's vireo, southwestern willow flycatcher, coastal California gnatcatcher, and arroyo toads. Also the EPA is concerned that the Army Corps will be in violation of the Clean Water Act if it permits the filling in and concreting over water ways on the property. The bottom line really seems to be, "Does the Santa Clarita Valley need another community of 60,000 residents?" Yes, 60,000 more people drinking the water, watering lawns, filling the landfills and jamming the already crowded freeways.

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### LA/SMM CNPS CHAPTER FACEBOOK VOLUNTEER

Our CNPS Chapter needs a volunteer to create and maintain a Facebook page to promote our events to the social networking community. Please contact Steve Hartman (818-881-3706 email: naturebase@aol.com).

### CONSERVATION CHAIR CALL FOR VOLUNTEER

Can you give time to conservation issues for our Chapter? We need someone to monitor environmental issues, help write letters, and attend hearings and meetings. Currently the entire Chapter Board acts in this capacity, but we need someone to spearhead the effort. Contact Snowdy Dodson (818-782-9346 email: snowdy.dodson@csun.edu) for further details.

## FRIENDS OF THE SANTA CLARA RIVER VOLUNTEER WORK DAYS

**March 5th (Sat.) and April 23 (Sun.)**

The 2010-2011 workdays will be at various locations along the Santa Clara River, including properties owned by The Nature Conservancy at Briggs Road and east of the Hedrick Ranch Nature Area, and other locations.

The locations of future workdays will be posted on the FSCR website ([www.fscr.org/](http://www.fscr.org/)) and emails will be sent out at least two weeks prior to the event. For each workday, plan to meet at 9:00 am and finish by 11:30 or 12:00. Bring water and sun protection; Some tools and gloves will be available onsite, but it's always nice to bring your own. Note: Some locations will not have a porta-pottie or other facilities. Long pants and boots or closed shoes are required. Because of our healthy population of rattlesnakes, this dress code will be strictly enforced! NOTE: Substantial rainfall cancels the workday. See [www.lacnps.org](http://www.lacnps.org) for additional links. Contact Jackie Worden for more information: [jbworden7@gmail.com](mailto:jbworden7@gmail.com).

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## FIELD ECOLOGY WORKSHOP

**April 16-17**

### Malibu Creek State Park

The Topanga Canyon Docents will hold their 28<sup>th</sup> annual workshop featuring class presentations on basic botany (with a wildflower walk), Native American crafts, weather and climate, aboriginal fire-making and edible plants, life and times of the Tongva people, geology of the Santa Monica Mountains, chaparral plants and cold tolerance, soil magic revisited, amphibians and fresh water ecology, the amazing world of flies, astronomy (a look at our April sky) and an early morning bird walk. The two-day event will be at the Park's group campground where attendees have a choice of tent camping or sleeping in their vehicles (or returning home at night). There will be an early Sat. evening potluck supper. The camp site, featuring flush toilets, hot water showers, and barbecue grills, will be available starting Fri. afternoon. This workshop is a bargain at \$45 for adults and children 15 and over; \$25 for children 6-14; and children under 6 free. Contact Don Murchie (310-450-7025; [murciedon@verizon.net](mailto:murciedon@verizon.net)) or Harvey Bjornlie (310-454-3510) for further information and to reserve a slot.

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## CITY OF LONG BEACH LAWN REMOVAL PROGRAM

As a long time member of CNPS, I have appreciated the many well written articles on saving our native California plants and flowers. I recently applied for a valuable program to put in a drought resistant garden with the City of Long Beach Residential Rehabilitation Program through the Neighborhood Improvement Department. Once I receive the Certificate of Eligibility from the City's Historic Officer (I have a 1907 Victorian cottage in the Willmore City Historic District of downtown), I will be able to tear out my water guzzling grass in the front yard and replace it with white sage, California buckwheat and California poppies. Grants of up to \$2,000 can be attained to do drought resistant gardening in yards visible from the street. There are income requirements to qualify for the grants. I look forward to doing my part in beautification of my home and neighborhood by using native water resistant plants. Applications and more information can be obtained by calling 562-570-1010.

**CNPS CHAPTER COUNCIL MEETING****March 12–13****Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden**

Early March is a perfect time of the year to visit Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden and on March 12 and 13th, the local CNPS chapters will be hosting the quarterly Chapter Council meeting at the Garden. Dinner on Saturday the 12th will feature a presentation by Laura Cunningham, author and illustrator of the new Heyday book, *A State of Change: Forgotten Landscapes of California*.

*Forgotten Landscapes of California*.

If you would like to carpool there please leave your name and phone number (or email) at the chapter phone 818-881-3706 or to lacnps@lacnps.org.

**ENVIRONMENTAL EDUCATION FAIR****March 12, LA County Arboretum in Arcadia**

On March 12, at the LA County Arboretum in Arcadia, the annual Environmental Education Fair takes place. If you would like to join Sheila Bjornlie in some hands-on "plant" activities with kids and have time between 8 a.m. and 4 p.m. that day, contact Sheila: slbjornlie@verizon.net. It is a fun networking event put on by the Forestry Division of the LA County Fire Department for the benefit of teachers and youth leaders in the community.

**THEODORE PAYNE****WILDFLOWER HOTLINE****March 4 through May 31, 2011**

Cost: free

(818) 768-3533 or [www.wildflowerhotline.org](http://www.wildflowerhotline.org)

Wildflower Sites Throughout Central and Southern California

Twenty-four hours a day, March 4 through May, anyone can call the Theodore Payne Wildflower Hotline (818-768-3533 or [www.wildflowerhotline.org](http://www.wildflowerhotline.org)) to find the best places to view wildflowers in southern and central California. The hotline message is narrated by Emmy Award-winning actor Joe Spano (Hill Street Blues, Apollo 13, NYPD Blue) and is updated every Thursday evening with new information on more than 90 wildflower sites. The hotline is a public service of the Theodore Payne Foundation for Wild Flowers and Native Plants.

**SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS****SCIENCE FESTIVAL****April 16 11 am to 4 pm****Paramount Ranch, Agoura Hills**

Sponsored by the National Park Service in partnership with the Natural History Museum of L.A. County, the event will provide families the opportunity to learn from working scientists. Attendees will have a chance to explore the natural and cultural resources within the coastal region including the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, Channel Islands National Park, and Cabrillo National Monument while learning about the scientific research that contributes to a better understanding and conservation of these resources. Activities of people of all ages will include nature walks, hands-on demonstrations, family activities, and live animal displays. Food vendors will be on site. 805-370-2301

**EXPERIENCING GUADALUPE ISLAND** - a presentation by Bart O'Brien, Director of Special Projects at Rancho Santa Botanic Garden, will take place on **Thursday, March 10, 2011 at 7:30 p.m.** at Friendship Auditorium near Griffith Park, 3201 Riverside Drive, Los Angeles, CA 90027.

This event is sponsored by the Southern California Horticultural Society and is **free** to members. **Nonmember fee is \$5.00.** Ample onsite free parking is available. For directions to the meeting and more information, visit the society's website at [www.socalhort.org](http://www.socalhort.org) or call (818) 567-1496.

Volcanic Guadalupe Island is the furthest outpost of the California floristic province. The focus of Mr. O'Brien's talk will be on the island's rare, unusual and endemic plants. Since many of these plants are spectacular additions to Southern California gardens, Bart will also discuss how to grow them. Some are familiar - Guadalupe Island cypress, palm and rock daisy, while others are lesser known - Palmer's poppy, snow lupine and Guadalupe Island Tritoleia. Bart's presentation will feature these and many more of the island's flora.

Bart O'Brien is an authority on the native flora of California and northern Baja California, Mexico. Affiliated for many years with Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden in Claremont, he is also an accomplished plant collector, grower, photographer, lecturer and author. He is co-author of two recent books: the award-winning "California Native Plants for the Garden," and the bilingual "Care and Maintenance of Southern California Native Plant Gardens" co-authored with LA/SMM chapter member Betsey Landis. His latest book co-authored with Carol Bornstein and David Fross and published by Cachuma Press, "Reimagining the California Lawn," will debut in April.

**Eight Annual Theodore Payne Native Plant Garden Tour****April 9 and 10, 2011, 10 am to 4 pm**

Tickets: \$20 per person, both days

A self-guided tour of 35 private gardens across the Los Angeles Basin reveals the beauty and practicality of gardening with California native plants.

From Monrovia to Santa Monica, from Long Beach to the San Fernando Valley, Southern California residents will have the chance to experience the beauty and ease of gardening with California native plants at the eighth annual Theodore Payne Native Garden. Admission to all gardens on both days is \$20. To buy tickets or for information, visit [www.theodorepayne.org/Tour/](http://www.theodorepayne.org/Tour/) or call (818) 768-1802.

Learn how to save water, eliminate or reduce pesticides and attract wildlife (birds, hummingbirds, butterflies, etc.) to your garden.

It's a great tour. Seventy-four percent of attendees said they were very likely to attend this year's tour and 88% said they would recommend the tour to someone they know.

You'll learn a lot. Seventy percent of last year's attendees said that they were more favorable to native plants after attending the garden tour.

## California Rangeland and Monitoring Workshop

March 22 &/or 23, 2011

### Bakersfield & Tejon Ranch

Please join the California Native Plant Society (CNPS), Defenders of Wildlife, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) for a one or optional two-day workshop.

**Day 1** - Maintaining grassland biodiversity and field site visit. Half day lecture/ half day field.

**Day 2** - Grassland vegetation sampling using the Relevé method. All day field survey training at **Tejon Ranch**.

**Instructor: Jennifer Buck-Diaz, CNPS, Vegetation Ecologist**

**Course Description:** California grasslands are incredibly rich in herbaceous plant species; however, most areas are labeled and mapped as “non-native grassland.” We know less about this vegetation than any other major California ecosystem. CNPS has launched an initiative to understand and conserve California’s grassland vegetation. This workshop will focus on results of an NRCS-funded project titled: *California Rangeland Monitoring and Mapping, Focusing upon San Joaquin Valley and Carrizo Plain Grassland Habitats*.

Two local field visits will help develop skills in field plant species identification and train participants in the CNPS Relevé sampling protocol.

**Cost: -1st Day:-** \$25, includes coffee/tea, breakfast snacks, and lunch. **2nd Day:** - CNPS Members \$150; Non-members \$175. **Total for both days** CNPS members \$175 ; Non-members \$195

For registration and full details, please go to <http://cnps.org/cnps/education/workshops/index.php>.

Or email or phone Josie Crawford at [jcrawford@cnps.org](mailto:jcrawford@cnps.org) or 916-447-2677 ext 205.



### DESCANSO'S CALIFORNIA GARDEN

Descanso's California Garden volunteer day on February 5th was a great success. With help from CNPS volunteers, Native Horticulturalist Rachel Young hopes to restore a section of the garden to a native meadow, with needlegrasses and melicas, perennials, bulbs, and wildflowers. The garden was invaded by annual grasses, mustard, hemlock and other weeds which were choking out natives such as blue eyed grass and goldenrod.

Thirteen volunteers from the San Gabriel and LA/SMM chapters and Theodore Payne Foundation helped with weeding and reseeding a section of the garden. The group made a huge difference, and also had a great time. This part of the garden is already covered in California poppy seedlings from the first CNPS volunteer day in the fall, so the garden is well on its way to having some lovely blooms in the spring. Future days will be scheduled to work in the same area, so everyone can enjoy the progress that has been made.

Descanso's California Garden was started 50 years ago by volunteers, so it was great to see that tradition return to the garden. Thanks for all of the hard work!

### Key Open Space Acquisition In Santa Monica Mountains

Thanks to Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority (MRCA)—the management arm of the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy—purchased 101 acres of prime Santa Monica Mountains open space that straddles Topanga Canyon and San Fernando Valley watershed divide. Zev dedicated the 3rd District funds to expand the Los Angeles County trail system in the Santa Monicas. Almost \$1 million of the funding was a grant to the MRCA from the 3rd District as part of the County's Proposition A Competitive Natural Land For Trails grant program. The balance came from Proposition 62, utility funds that are allocated to each of the County's five districts according to their unincorporated population.

The principal trail in the purchase is the very significant Summit-to-Summit Motorway, a historic fire road that connects the Calabasas Peak Motorway on the west side of Old Topanga Canyon Road eastward to the Henry Ridge Trail and ultimately to Topanga Canyon Boulevard. The acquisition includes part of the main ridgeline that separates Mulwood from Topanga between Topanga Canyon Boulevard and Old Topanga Canyon Road.

The long-coveted open space and trail network are part of a large habitat area that abuts the southern boundary of the City of Calabasas and descends into Topanga State Park. The oak- and walnut-forested property offers stunning views of the San Fernando Valley and the many rugged peaks and valleys of the more interior Santa Monica Mountains. This new parkland provides optimal habitat for people and the full complement of mammals, reptiles and birds that occupy the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area. In recent years, a group of developers zealously tried to activate some old site plans that would have enabled them to turn a portion of the Calabasas Peak Motorway into a paved road so they could develop ridgeline mansions along its entire length. At one point these developers hired an attorney and sued to force the County to allow them to develop the ridgeline mansions. This group of developers was led by development expediter Don Schmitz and pro-developer attorney Fred Gaines, who is running now as a candidate for Calabasas City Council. Fortunately, the developers were not allowed to deviate from the County's North Area Plan, and the tactics of Schmitz and Gaines to line the ridgeline with unsightly mansions did not come to fruition. Many of the old site plan permits have since expired. With over half the Summit-to-Summit ridgeline now in public ownership, residents of Topanga, Cold Creek and Calabasas hope they can look forward to the day when more of the Summit-to-Summit scenic resource ridgeline can be preserved.

*Excerpted from the newsletter of the Las Virgenes Homeowners Federation, Inc.*

# Weed Survey Report For The Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Reserve

By Steven Hartman

Since the Wildlife Reserve was established in 1986, I have been monitoring the vegetation in the Sepulveda Basin, attending meetings of the Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Areas Steering Committee, advising the City Dept. of Recreation and Parks on weed control and native vegetation management, and actively participating and leading weed wars. In January of this year I took two avid weeders (Kelli Barton and Anne Abramson) on a tour of the Wildlife Reserve, located east of Woodley Ave. and east and south to the Dam wall. (For more information and images of the various sections of the Wildlife Reserve, visit [www.sepulvedabasinwildlife.org](http://www.sepulvedabasinwildlife.org)).

## North Reserve

Horehound is aggressively invading the upland area north of the lake. We surveyed the area that Bill Neill of Riparian Repairs (a contractor for both the City of L.A. and CNPS) sprayed last month and, while we found many dead (or mostly dead) horehound (*Marrubium vulgare*) plants, there were many more that hadn't been sprayed. There are also many small plants coming up in the surrounding vicinity that are hard to see because last year's dry mustard stems have not fallen over yet. Along the east side of the lake there is much horehound growing in shady areas beneath trees and shrubs along the lake and along the trail. Horehound is also prevalent along the trail at the far east side of the north reserve, along the base of the dam. Also widely spread in the upland area east and north of the lake is star thistle or tocalote (*Centaurea melitensis*), easy to see this time of the year as dead thistle-topped stalks. Horehound is also prevalent at the south end of the north reserve, south of the lake and the north-facing slope of Burbank Blvd.

This is also a good time to identify evergreen ash (*Fraxinus uhdei*) in the north reserve, especially along Haskell Creek, where any green-leaved ash tree in January is a non-native. Along Haskell Creek there are numerous evergreen ash trees, some of which have been previously sprayed, but not completely killed. The large palm tree (*Washingtonia robusta*) that was growing on the bank of the lake (treated by Bill last year) is now dead, but there are a couple of other palm trees that need treatment.

## West Reserve (between Haskell Creek and Woodley)

Horehound is scattered throughout the west reserve, but nowhere as dominant as it has become in the north reserve. Poison hemlock (*Conium maculatum*) is still widespread (seen in last year's dead stalks and this year's new sprouts). Having not walked in this area in a while, I was surprised to see the large number of social trails leading into the shrubbery (coyote bush and mule fat), and lots of trash. This area really needs a trash clean-up. I suggest that Bill also walk the trails and spray for horehound.

## South Reserve

Obviously the south reserve has lots of horehound as it has never been weeded (at least by our group), and we did see a few plants along the perimeter road that had been sprayed (probably by the dam operator). Evergreen ash, of course, is throughout Haskell Creek, and a few others have been noted in other areas. The eucalyptus trees still need to be girdled (or



Photo by Steven Hartman

The "pothole" pond in the South Reserve is surrounded by box elder, cottonwoods, willows and cattails.

drilled) and they seem to be increasing. About a dozen small patches of giant reed grass (*Arundo donax*) are visible on the west side of the south reserve. Along the main trail there are numerous non-native evergreen shrubs and trees that are noticeable now as the natives (mostly) have lost their leaves. This would be a good time to do a walk through with Bill Neill and treat them with herbicide.

While we were walking back from our tour of the south reserve, we met Robert (Bob) Eveland, ACOE dam operator. He informed us that walking on top of the dam is now a trespass violation, subject to a fine.

Bob also explained to us that the ACOE is looking at different options regarding the south reserve due to the homeless situation. He noted that the south reserve is an ACOE operations area and not a LA City lease zone. Options he mentioned include closing the south reserve entirely and/or following through with the Fire Dept's request to build two intersecting roads in the south reserve that would divide the area into four parcels, each of which could be used as a practice "controlled burn" area for the fire department; the ancillary benefits to the ACOE would be reduction of biomass (a big concern for Bob) and reducing vegetative cover that now masks the homeless encampments. I suggested that along Haskell Creek, the non-native trees and large shrubs be removed, and that the native trees be trimmed up so that the area is more of a savanna than a shrubland (so that no one can hide in the bushes). He also mentioned that providing habitat for endangered bird species is in contradiction with the main purpose of the dam, and that is to provide a storage facility for water in the case of extreme weather. Given the seeming increase in worldwide storminess (possibly due to global warming), this is a concern that should not be discounted.

Weed control actions I could recommend in the south reserve would be to spray horehound in recently burned (and thus easy accessible areas) and around the vicinity of the pothole pond. I suggest girdling the two large pine trees east of the pothole pond (and also all the eucalyptus trees in the south reserve). There will have to be a follow-up spraying of the giant reed grass at the west end of the south reserve. We did not survey the site of perennial pepperweed (*Lepidium latifolia*).

Although not part of the south reserve, the little swale on the west side of the LA River (that drains the crop fields) should be treated with herbicide to kill the large stand of giant reed grass that still persists.



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