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CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY  
LOS ANGELES / SANTA MONICA MOUNTAINS CHAPTER

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MARCH-APRIL 2005

## Water and Fire *By Richard Halsey*

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In southern California's Mediterranean climate the rainy season occurs during the winter. The drought season follows with a dry summer and autumn. The infamous autumn Santa Ana winds typically appear most frequently October through January. Does this mean that the stage is set for "large" fall and winter fires whenever we've had heavy rainfall in prior years?

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The record rainfall thus far has turned everything green earlier than we've seen in years so it's a great time to go out and enjoy a hike into the backcountry. The flower buds are ready to explode and will likely provide one of the best flower displays we've seen in a very long time.

Speaking of rain, there has been some press coverage concerning the rain's impact on the fire season and what it may mean in terms of fire risk. Unfortunately, significant misconceptions about wildland fires continue to influence the conclusions of some researchers and consequently reinforce the public's misunderstanding of the environment in which they live.

On January 15, 2005 a San Diego Union-Tribune headline read, "Wet winter may portend large fires later in the year." This was based on the work by Anthony Westerling and his associates who analyzed the weather conditions surrounding fires in southern California's four national forests (Cleveland, Angeles, San Bernardino, and Los Padres) from 1970 to 2003. They apparently found a correlation between large fires and prior wet years. They stated, "Precipitation tends to be above normal in winter or early spring prior

to the fire season, suggesting that large fall and winter fires are preconditioned two or more seasons in advance. Wet winters enhance the growth of grasses and other fine fuels."

Let's examine this. In southern California's Mediterranean climate the rainy season occurs during the winter. The drought season follows with a dry summer and autumn. The infamous autumn Santa Ana winds typically appear most frequently October through January. Does this mean that the stage is set for "large" fall and winter fires whenever we've had heavy rainfall in prior years? Westerling says yes. A more careful analysis does not support this conclusion.

First of all, there are flaws in Westerling's data set. He only used data from 1970 to 2003. 23 years is not an adequate amount of time to properly determine the type of pattern the investigators were searching for. For one thing, fire rotation interval for all southern California counties is in excess of the study period.

The use such a small data set is especially unfortunate because data is available from CDF (California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection) all the way back to 1930. Westerling should have used all of the data available.

*please see water & fire on page 2*

### WILDFLOWER SHOW

March 26 & 27, 2005 ♦ 10am -4pm

Our CNPS Chapter Annual Wildflower Show 2005 will be at Malibu Bluffs Park on the ocean side of the intersection of Malibu Canyon Rd. and Pacific Coast Hwy. Wildflower walks will be at 1 pm both days. We will have beautiful native flowers on display and plants, books, posters, and art work for sale. Call or email Snowdy Dodson for further information or to volunteer some time at the Show; ph: 818-782-9346 email: [snowdy.dodson@csun.edu](mailto:snowdy.dodson@csun.edu)

You will find our upcoming programs in the Calendar of Events pages 5, 6 & 7

**Water and Fire** continues from page 1

Secondly, the fact that a correlation is found does not mean there is a direct relationship. Correlations have been shown between cricket chirps and the stock market. This is just the beginning of a scientific investigation, the formulation of a hypothesis based on some observations. The next step is to develop a model to explain the correlation and test it, making sure the proper variable is isolated.

**County Fire Rotation Interval**

San Diego 41 years  
 Riverside 38 years  
 San Bernardino 27 years  
 Los Angeles 30 years  
 Santa Barbara 81 years  
 (From Keeley, Fotheringham, and Morais 1999. Reexamining fire suppression impacts on brushland fire regimes. Science 284: 1829-1832.)

The observation that a percentage of fires over a certain size are correlated to climate means very little. What should have been investigated was whether or not the AREA BURNED had anything to do with prior rainfall levels and how much of the variation can be explained by the correlation?

But probably the most serious omission in this investigation was not considering the variable of weather conditions DURING large fire events. A quick look would have shown that in every single case, the one consistent, dominating factor in determining area burned during “catastrophic” fires was the occurrence of Santa Ana winds and extremely low humidity.

It is also difficult to understand how Westerling’s research group could say that prior wet years are important in determining fire size (such as those in October 2003) when southern

California has been suffering a severe drought over the past 8-9 years.

Every winter is wet (to various degrees) and every summer and fall are dry. The growth of plants and accumulated biomass in native plant communities is a long term process, not one that can be radically altered because of a single wet year. Chaparral, the dominate plant community in southern California, goes through various growth cycles based on age and location, not abnormal bursts of rainfall.

Can large amounts of rain have an effect on fire risk? This is may be likely, but only in disturbed areas where weedy fuels are a problem. Westerling was quoted as saying, “More rains means more grasses. A year or so from now, I wouldn’t be surprised if San Diego has more fires.” Time will tell, however, a single season or two are not enough to make general conclusions about fire frequency. But whatever happens, this has nothing to do with the majority of large brushland fires because mature chaparral does not have grass. Suggesting heavy rains create more flashy, weedy fuels is one issue. But it is not logical to conclude they will cause larger fires when the dominate, undisturbed plant community has none.

The main issue at hand is the public’s perception of wildfires and how to protect themselves. There is no question vegetation management is crucial around structures. But if the public continually believes, as this study encourages, that wildfire remains a brushland problem, not one of land planning and personal responsibility, then it will continue to be difficult to make the necessary “fire-safe” changes in how we build and live in our communities.

**ALERT! Invasive Euphorbia**

A few years ago, members of the South Coast Chapter of The California Native Plant Society noticed first a new spurge species coming into open areas on the Peninsula. Since the plant was not included in the Jepson Manual, it took us a while to get it identified. Turns out it is a highly invasive spurge, *Euphorbia terracina*. Just to give you an example, we discovered about 6 plants of this species last November 2002 at White Point and by April 2003 they had spread to a solid stand of probably 100 times as many plants. Since White Point is being restored by the Palos Verdes Peninsula Land Conservancy, that population was immediately sprayed with herbicide and eradicated. *Euphorbia terracina* is a yellowish-green, bushy, upright perennial spurge which grows up to 3 feet tall. The leafy, slender stems branch at the top into 1-4 flower stems. another spurge, *Euphorbia esula*. The plants spread by seeds that are scattered over a distance of several meters when the ripe fruits burst open. *Euphorbia terracina* has become a terrible problem in Australia and it seems to be quickly spreading on the peninsula. It has also been reported in the Santa Monica Mountains, where it was first mistaken for *Euphorbia esula*. The whole plant has a highly caustic milk sap that is irritating to the skin and thus requires special protection for workers trying to eradicate it.

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Watch out for *Euphorbia terracina*.  
 It has highly caustic milk sap



## A Rare Prize *by Michael Collins*

### Gillette property could fill 'donut hole' in Santa Monica Mountains park system

The 588-acre Gillette Ranch, former home of shaving products magnate King Gillette, lies in a serene valley at the intersection of Las Virgenes Canyon and Mulholland Highway, a respite of coastal sage scrub and coast live oak riparian forest. A rare prize in the stretch of the Santa Monica Mountains, this untouched inholding in the far western expanse of unincorporated Los Angeles County has been the object of a long acquisition battle between developers and conservationists. Now, thanks to the efforts of L.A. County Supervisor Zev Yaroslavsky, the tract is apparently close to being acquired as parkland.

The present owners, Soka University, are somewhat surprise sellers, and with an April 15 deadline looming, park advocates are rushing to raise \$35 million toward the purchase, which could rank in significance with the 2003 state acquisition of Ahmanson Ranch. Twenty-five million dollars are already in the kitty with \$10 million yet to be raised. [The LA/Santa Monica Mtns Chapter of CNPS has donated \$1,000 to the cause - Editor]

"Ahmanson expanded the reach of the park system, [but] this property is right in the middle of the park system," said Yaroslavsky, in whose district Soka is situated. "It's the hole in the donut that is the Santa Monica Mountains National Park system. "By acquiring it, we tie down once and for all a piece of property that has been on everybody's radar screen for decades," he adds. "Soka has treated the land well and has not really expanded its use to any significant degree, but somebody else might. There are a number of legal lots on that property right now and somebody else could build a dozen or more legal homes,

which would be a tragedy for the Santa Monica Mountains. It's a very valuable piece of property environmentally, from a natural resources point of view, animal migration point of view, it's got all the bells and whistles that a prized parcel has in the Santa Monica Mountains."

Gillette Ranch contains several sensitive plant communities that are being lost to development throughout southern California, according to state parks ecologist Suzanne Goode. Savannah graces the valley floor with large specimens of Valley Oak, "which is the largest oak species in North America and is experiencing reproductive difficulties throughout its range due to development," says Goode.

**To make a contribution or get involved contact: The Committee to Save Soka - The King Gillette Ranch, c/o The Mountains Restoration Trust, 3815 Old Topanga Canyon Road, Calabasas, CA 91302; (818) 591-1701 x.104 ([www.mountainstrust.org](http://www.mountainstrust.org)).**

The first attempt by the state to buy the ranch failed in 1976, when the California Department of State Parks and Recreation fell short of the funding needed. In 1986, the National Parks Service attempted to buy the ranch for use as public parkland, but was outbid by Soka/Gakkai/Nichiren Shoshu of America. That same year, the National Parks, State Parks, and the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy made a futile attempt to purchase the property - the group couldn't come to terms with Soka's shared use proposal, and Soka rejected the park agencies' land swap proposition. That same year, the Mountains Recreation and Conservation Authority

(MRCA) made two fair market value offers, but were rebuffed. MRCA then received approval to begin eminent domain proceedings in the early '90s when Soka proposed building an extensive new campus for 5,000 students.

In 1994, MRCA and Soka settled a condemnation lawsuit, and Los Angeles County and the State Coastal Commission okayed an application which would allow Soka to build a smaller 650-student campus. The Sierra Club and the environmental group Save Open Space, which was at the forefront in the fight over Ahmanson Ranch, sued over the approval and won.

This set the stage for last year's intervention by Yaroslavsky. "I approached [Soka] in the spring of last year to see if they were interested in selling, because they were at a crossroads," said Yaroslavsky. "They were looking at various options of what they could do with the property. I asked them if they'd be interested in selling and, to my surprise, they said they'd be interested in talking about it."

"Acquisition of the King Gillette Ranch has been a top priority of all the area park agencies for many, many years," said Assemblymember Fran Pavley, whose district includes Gillette Ranch. "Once Soka came to the table as a willing seller, we simply couldn't let the opportunity slip away. Thanks to a broad coalition of funding partners, including the National Park Service, State Parks, the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, the Wildlife Conservation Board, the Coastal Conservancy, the Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission, L.A. County, local cities, plus generous private contributions, the dream is about to be realized."

*please see A Rare Prize on page 4*

Tides Foundation Grant for Weed Removal UPDATE *by Halli Mason*

Photo Credit: Steven L. Hartman



Caballero Canyon

Our chapter applied for a grant to the Tides Foundation in December 2003. Our application was rewarded with a generous grant from the California Wildlands Grassroots Fund of the Tides Foundation for the purpose of removing invasive weeds in Caballero Canyon, a heavily used canyon in the Santa Monica Mountains. Hikers and bikers, birdwatchers, families, school classes and sports enthusiasts frequent this canyon; (I have counted more than fifty cars parked at one trail head alone on any given week end.)

The weed eradication project is taking place on State Park land, specifically the Woodland Trail from a point where it leaves the oak woodland south up to Mulholland, and from the Topanga State Park sign on the old Reseda Fire Road south up to Mulholland. Areas north of these locations are under the stewardship of the Santa Monica Mountains Recreation Authority and not part of this weed removal project.

You might remember that last season, 2003/04, did not bring a lot of rain to Southern California. In fact we were well below average. As a consequence many weeds stayed small, or did not

pop up at all. We started our weed eradication in March 2004. Two very able fellows, recommended by State Park personnel as well as the Mountains Restoration Trust started on this arduous task first concentrating their effort on the removal of 2 clumps of terribly offensive Pampas grass. These two clumps needed to come out quickly before the thousands of wind-borne seeds had a chance to disburse. As of this date - January 2005 - they look dead, no new growth has appeared, and no new clumps have been spotted. But we are keeping an eye on them. The other target plants were - and still are - yellow star thistle, milk thistle and mustard. We made great progress last season and are resuming our work now. No work crews went out during the summer.

The first 2004/2005 winter rains have produced quite a crop of new weeds. We are trying to get them while they are young and easier to remove. As of this writing the same two fellows are again working for CNPS. With the abundance of rain and the great accumulation of seeds in the soil, it will take a few years to get the upper hand on the weed problem.

We have been collecting seeds along the Woodland trail and hope that some of them will germinate. A group of volunteers, mostly hikers, have made it their responsibility and business to cut back the more aggressively growing plants along the trails, thereby helping to keep the trails open for the enjoyment of all.

We are deeply grateful to the Tides Foundation and are looking forward to a gorgeous Wildflower Season. It should be a fabulous spring with all the rain so far. Come on out, join us. Take a look for yourself. Leave your name and phone number at our recorded answering message and I will call you to make arrangements to guide you up the trail - and perhaps you would like to do a little volunteer work removing some weeds and/or cutting back plants - (800' elevation gain, 3+- miles round trip). Or we could meander along Mulholland Drive to get to the work sites. Takes about half an hour each way. Call 818-881-3706

**A Rare Prize** continues from page 3

The Gillette Ranch may soon follow hard on the heels of the Ahmanson acquisition, but the deal is far from done. "People throughout California are competing for the limited bond monies, and are raising funds to help with acquisitions in their communities," said Stephen A. Harris of the Committee to Save Soka - The King Gillette Ranch. We simply have to do our part. It is so important to show a lot of community support to the state agencies to make Soka happen. Every contribution, every letter of support really makes a big difference."

# CALENDAR OF EVENTS | MARCH-APRIL 2005

**TUES 3/1 7pm**

**LA/SMM CNPS Chapter Board Meeting** at the home of Halli Mason. Please RSVP. Call for directions (818) 345-6749

**SAT 3/5 9:30am**

*Cold Creek Valley Preserve*

**First Saturday** Enjoy a walk-about along a streamside trail, through oak woodlands to discover interesting niches in a chaparral basin set below craggy sandstone peaks. Meet at the Lower Stunt High Trailhead. 2hrs Cold Creek Docents (818) 591-1701 X 202

**TUES 3/8 7:30 -9:30pm**

*Sepulveda Garden Center, Encino*

**LA/SMM Chapter Program Meeting  
PLANT I.D. WORKSHOP**

Carl Wishner, volunteer rare plant botanist for our chapter, botanist for Envicom, and member of the Significant Ecological Areas Technical Advisory Council for Los Angeles County, will be our workshop leader with help from all Chapter experts. Bring plants to be identified, even mosses, liverworts and hornworts.

**Directions:** 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 5:30pm at Chevy's Mexican Restaurant in Encino (16705 Ventura Blvd.)

**WED 3/9 9am-5:30pm**

*State Capitol, Sacramento*

**2nd Annual Invasive Weeds Day**

Hosted by the California Invasive Weeds Awareness Coalition, the day will include briefings with state agencies and meetings at the Capitol with California

legislators and staff. Contact Wendy West of the El Dorado County Weed Management Area at (530) 621-5526 or wendyw@co.el-dorado.ca.us

**SAT 3/12 9am**

*Headwater Corners in Calabasas*

**Native Plant Restoration** Restore habitat along Dry Canyon Creek; do native plantings, non-native plant removal, site restoration; credit for community service hours. *Reservations required.* (818) 591-1701 x205. 3hrs Mountains Restoration Trust

**SAT 3/12 9am-4pm**

*Arboretum of Los Angeles County*

*in Arcadia*

**25th Annual Los Angeles  
Environmental Education Fair**

The focus is to encourage action and curiosity about the environment through live entertainment, hands-on activities, interactive programs and a variety of exhibits for young people.

**SUN 3/13 9am-4pm**

*Point Mugu State Park*

**9th Annual Point Mugu State Park  
Whale Festival**

The event includes whale-watching stations, marine conservation information booths, children's activity booths, an educational event passport, food booths, marine artists and live performers. The event is free with the exception of the regular \$10 day-use parking fee. Pacific Coast Hwy (805) 488-1827 [www.parks.ca.gov](http://www.parks.ca.gov)

**THUR 3/17 8am**

**Chaparral Chatter** for four miles follows the trail along Cold Creek under a canopy of oaks, then opens into a grassland dotted with wildflowers before ducking under the protective branches of mountain lilac and red shank. All along the way is a myriad of spring wildflowers

and stunning views. Wear hiking boots or sturdy shoes; bring water and snack. Meet at the Lower Stunt High Trailhead. 4hrs Mountains Restoration Trust/CNPS. Please RSVP. (818) 345-6749

**SAT 3/19 9am**

*Devil's Canyon*

**Wildflower Walk** in Devil's Canyon. Meet at the north end of Topanga Canyon Blvd. Bring water, snack, hiking boots. Call (818)346-7654 for info.

**SAT 3/19 9am**

*Santa Monica Mountains*

**Weed Wars** Non-native invasive noxious weeds are removed to bring back the native wildflowers and to restore habitat to our parklands. Bring lunch, water, and gloves. Call for location. *Reservations required* (818) 348-5910. 4hrs CNPS

**SAT 3/20 10am**

*Site to be determined*

**Fungus Foray** with Florence Nishida and CNPS annual picnic. Site to be determined. Call (818) 348-5910 or (818) 881-3706.

**SAT-SUN 3/26 - 3/27 10am-4pm**

*Malibu Bluffs Park*

**LA/SMM Chapter CNPS Wildflower Show** Wildflowers from botanical and home gardens on display. Native plants, books, posters and more for sale. 6 hrs Charmlee Docents, CNPS. Call Snowdy if you wish to volunteer, help with setup, have wildflowers or need more info at (818) 782-9346.

**SAT-SUN 3/26-27 1pm**

*Malibu Bluffs Park*

**Wildflower Walks** Members of the California Native Plant Society will provide a 2-hour guided walk to look at the spring wildflowers on this coastal bluff. 2 hrs CNPS (818) 782-9346.

# CALENDAR OF EVENTS | MARCH-APRIL 2005

**SAT 4/2 10am**

*Paramount Ranch*

**Wonderful Wildflowers** Discover the wildflowers in this park. Bring snack, water and field guides. Info: (818) 346-7654. 3hrs CNPS

**SUN 4/3 9am**

*Cold Creek Preserve*

**Cold Creek Restoration Day** Water native grasses and walnuts; weed a wetland while enjoying spring wildflowers. *Reservations required.* (818) 591-1701 x203. 3hrs Mountains Restoration Trust

**TUES 4/5 7pm**

**LA/SMM CNPS Chapter Board Meeting** at Snowy Dodson's home, 15811 Leadwell St., Van Nuys. Chapter members are invited! (818) 782-9346

**SAT 4/9 9am**

*Cold Creek Preserve*

**Beautiful Cold Creek** The canyon is alive with the sounds of springs. On this 2-mile guided walk, the trail passes through tunnels of mountain lilacs and red shanks and under heavy canopies of oak trees. *Reservations required.* (818) 591-1701 x203. 3hrs Mountains Restoration Trust

**SUN 4/10 9am**

*State Parks*

**Weed War** Help halt the invasion of invasive non-native species to restore the natural beauty of our unique parklands. Credit for community service. *Reservations required.* (818) 348-5910. 5hrs Calif. Dept. of Parks & Recreation/CNPS

**TUE 4/12 7pm**

*First United Methodist Church,  
Santa Monica*

**LA/SMM Chapter Program Meeting  
PROTECTING PLANTS AND ANIMALS UNDER THE ENDANGERED SPECIES ACT (ESA)**

The Center for Biological Diversity is one of the nation's leading conservation groups focusing on imperiled species and habitat protection. Monica Bond, the Center's southern California staff biologist, will give a brief history and overview of the world's foremost environmental law, and present results from the Center's research projects investigating the ESA's role in preventing extinction and the importance of citizen involvement in ESA enforcement. She will also discuss the current political situation surrounding the law, which is one of the top environmental targets of the Bush Administration.

Program is free to the public. Refreshments will be served.

**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. A no-host dinner precedes the meeting at 5:30pm at El Cholo Mexican Restaurant in Santa Monica at 1025 Wilshire Blvd.

**SAT 4/16 9:30am**

*Santa Monica Mountains*

**Wildflower Wanderings** will search out the "bloomingest" sites to enjoy a spring extravaganza of buds, boughs and blooms. Binoculars, hand lens, camera and field guide are useful but not necessary. Bring lunch and water. Call for meeting place. (818) 348-5910. 4hrs CNPS

**SAT 4/16 10:30am**

*Corral Canyon Park*

**Corral Canyon Flower Hike** Look for spring wildflowers and talk about coastal plant communities. Leisurely-paced 2.5-mile hike but the first mile is uphill. Meet at parking area next to Malibu Seafood Market and Café at 25653 PCH, 2 miles north of Malibu Canyon Road or 4 miles south of Kanan-Dume Road. Bring water/snack. Option for lunch at the Café after hike. Info: (310) 394-2799. 2hrs (Coast Walks)

**SAT 4/16 8:30am-4:30pm**

*Theodore Payne Foundation, Sun Valley*

**POPPY DAY**

Celebrate spring with the Theodore Payne Foundation (TPF) for Wild Flowers and Native Plants at its annual Poppy Day event on Saturday, April 16, 2005 from 8:30 am to 4:30 pm. Browse the nursery's extensive selection of California native plants and enjoy special discounts (15% for TPF members, 10% for non-members). Other event highlights include free propagation and pruning demonstrations, a book signing by Richard W. Halsey, author of *Fire, Chaparral, and Survival in Southern California*, and a display of spectacular wildflower photographs from the new book, *The Best Spring Ever*. For more information, call the Foundation at (818) 768-1802 or visit [www.theodorepayne.org](http://www.theodorepayne.org). The Foundation is located at 10459 Tuxford Street in Sun Valley.

**CALENDAR OF EVENTS**

MARCH-APRIL 2005

**SUN 4/17 9am***Malibu Creek State Park*

**Oak Restoration Day** Young oaks, native grasses and wildflowers will restore beauty and habitat if cared for. *Reservations required.* (818) 591-1701 x203. 3hrs Mountains Restoration Trust

**THUR 4/21 8am***Cold Creek Preserve*

**Chaparral Chatter** for four miles follows the trail along Cold Creek under a canopy of oaks, then opens into a grassland dotted with wildflowers before ducking under the protective branches of mountain lilac and red shank. All along the way is a myriad of spring wildflowers and stunning views. Wear hiking boots or sturdy shoes; bring water and snack. Meet at the Lower Stunt High Trailhead. 4hrs Mountains Restoration Trust/CNPS. Please RSVP. (818) 345-6749

**SUN 4/24 10am***Malibu Bluffs Park*

**Bluffs Ramble to the Sea** Walk 2 miles on trails with great views, dip your toes into the bay, look for dolphins, whales and wildflowers. 2hrs CNPS (310) 472-0624

**FRI-SUN 4/29-5-1 8:30am***Point Mugu State Park*

**24th Annual Santa Monica Mountains Trail Days** Spend Saturday, Sunday, or whole weekend camping at Danielson Ranch under oak trees in the heart of Pt Mugu State Park. New trails will be built; old trails repaired, and habitats restored. There's a job for everyone, not just the burly. No experience needed, just spirit of fun and adventure. Saturday night BBQ and campfire. Sat or Sun, meet 8:30 am at National Park Service "Authorized Vehicle" Entrance Road on Potrero Road east of Pinehill, Newbury Park. Bring trail tools, long pants, gloves, hat, water, lunch and libations for desserts or munchies for Saturday dinner. Tools provided. Take Ventura Fwy to Wendy exit, S to Potrero Road, W to service road, L. to parking area or gate to meet for caravan into park. For camping info and reservations, send self-addressed stamped envelope to Trail Days, 24735 Mulholland Hwy, Calabasas 91302. No fee. Info: (818) 222-4531. CNPS/Sierra Club/Santa Monica Mountains Trail Crew

**CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY**

Los Angeles/Santa Monica Mountains Chapter

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**Biennial Sierra Spring Sojourn**

**T**he Bristlecone Chapter of CNPS will hold their 8<sup>th</sup> Biennial Sierra Spring Sojourn on May 13-15, 2005, at the Bernasconi Center in Big Pine. The Sojourn is a weekend of field trips and evening programs focusing on the flora of the White Mountains, Owens Valley and east side of the Sierra Nevada. Please save the date! If you would like to receive a registration pack by email when they are available in March, contact Sherryl Taylor at [staylor@npgcable.com](mailto:staylor@npgcable.com). To receive the registration pack by mail, send a self-addressed, stamped envelope to Sherryl Taylor at P.O. Box 1638, Mammoth Lakes, CA 93546. For more information, call (760) 924-8742.

## Sepulveda Dam Basin UPDATE

Report provided by Steve Hartman with help from Bill Neill (Riparian Repairs)

**GOOD NEWS!** In the last issue of TOYON, it was reported that the Metropolitan Transit Authority (MTA) was backing off on its promise to use all native plantings along the busway corridor and stations. The good news is that they subsequently agreed to use natives in the basin. We all look forward to another example of how native plants can be successfully utilized for large scale landscaping projects.

The River Project headed by Melanie Winter was awarded a Wetlands Recovery Project (WRP) grant to remove giant reed grass (*Arundo donax*) and non-native trees from the Los Angeles River's half-mile-long, soft-bottom trapezoidal channel west and upstream of Balboa Blvd. Previously, in 2001 the

1.5 mile-long reach east and downstream of Balboa Blvd. was cleared of *Arundo* by contractors for the Army Corps of Engineers using bulldozers.

For the WRP-funded work started in October, Apple Tractor Service of Norwalk operated a rotary "Ammbusher" mower-mulcher mounted on a skid-steer tractor to clear about 0.8 net acres of *Arundo* in 2 days at a cost of \$6800. The tractor moves on rubber treads with a low center of gravity, and is able to climb relatively steep banks and the river channel's sloping concrete sides.

Remaining small *Arundo* clumps along the L.A. River at Sepulveda Dam Basin will be cut in February by a chainsaw crew with the Los Angeles Conservation

Corps, and reduced by hand-feeding stalks to a portable chipper.

In January, chapter members Halli Mason and Steve Hartman volunteered to help The River Project teach high school kids to survey vegetation along the L.A. River, as part of the educational component of the WRP grant.

At the January meeting of the Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Areas Steering Committee, J.K Mukri, the new general manager of L.A. City Recreation and Parks, was very eager to help with weed control and proposed that the City could provide herbicides (but not labor) to help control the weeds in the basin and surrounding watersheds.

## Book Reviews by Snowdy Dodson

**San Diego County Native Plants** by James Lightner. San Diego, CA : San Diego Flora, 2004. Introduction covers the diverse vegetation of the County; plant descriptions are divided into 2 parts: Trees & Shrubs and Herbaceous Plants and then further divided by family. Each plant has 3 color ills. – flower, leaf closeup, whole plant. Mostly natives however, non-natives are included

with CEPPC list designation. Email [sdfloresales@cox.net](mailto:sdfloresales@cox.net) for purchase details; or write: San Diego Flora, 1220 Rosecrans St. # 293, San Diego 92106. Price: \$24 approx.

**Fire, Chaparral and Survival in Southern California** by Richard W. Halsey. El Cajon, CA : Sunbelt Publications, 2004. For excerpts and more details see the

Book Excerpts link from the Southern Calif. Chaparral Field Institute web pages: <http://www.californiachaparral.com/pages/1/index.htm> which in of itself is a great resource. Price: \$19.95 available from <http://www.californiachaparral.com/pages/1/index.htm>

**THURSDAY  
MORNING  
SEMINARS  
SERIES  
WITH LILI  
SINGER  
SPRING 2005  
PROGRAM**

At Los Angeles County Arboretum & Botanic Garden, 301 N. Baldwin Ave., Arcadia

8 Thursdays, Mar. 10 - Apr. 28, 9:30am-Noon/Lecture Hall A

\$100 for the series ~ \$20 per class

To register, contact Jill Berry at 626/821-4624 or [jill.berry@arboretum.org](mailto:jill.berry@arboretum.org)

- 3/10 Soils: What Every Gardener Needs to Know with Gretchen Renshaw
- 3/17 New Roses and Popular Rose Questions with Tom Carruth
- 3/24 Great Plants with Gary Hammer
- 3/31 The Summer Garden with Lili Singer
- 4/07 Ethnobotanical Adventures with Jim Bauml
- 4/14 Field Trip: Two Pasadena Gardens by Chris Rosmini and a Hop to Burkard Nursery
- 4/21 By Trowel and Error with Sharon Lovejoy
- 4/28 Exploring along the Colombia-Ecuador Frontier with Dylan Hannon

## California Native Grassland Association Spring Workshops

Information is available for two workshops CNGA is offering for CNGA members, public agency staff, restoration and ecological professionals and members of the general public involved in ecology, restoration, mitigation, development and landscaping.

**Southern California Restoration and Revegetation Workshop** - March 8 and 9 in the San Diego area. Classes on March 8 will be in Escondido and on March 9 in the District 11 Caltrans office in San Diego. Field experience

on March 8 will be on the Santa Rosa Plateau and on March 9 will be on the Otay Mesa. This workshop will feature local presenters with first-hand knowledge of area-specific species, techniques, and examples of Southern California relict sites and restoration sites. Tuition is \$275 for members and \$310 for nonmembers. This class has a maximum of 60 students.

**Identifying and Appreciating Native and Naturalized Grasses of California** - the southern exposure - will be taught

on April 6 and 7. Wednesday, April 6, is a full day classroom experience taught in Lake Elsinore. Thursday, April 7, is a full day field experience at the Santa Rosa Plateau. Tuition is \$175 for members and \$210 for nonmembers. This class has a maximum of 30 students.

Registration forms in pdf format can be down loaded from the CNGA website - access <http://www.cnga.org/> then select the Spring Workshop heading at the top of the page to go to the workshop explanations and select the file you want.

## Joseph Cornell - Sharing Nature with Children

**A one-day-only workshop in celebration of The Children's Nature Institute's 20th Anniversary**

Saturday, March 12, 9:30am-3:30pm  
Temescal Gateway Park,  
Pacific Palisades

Joseph Cornell is one of the most highly-regarded nature educators in the world today. His first book, *Sharing Nature with Children*, sold 450,000 copies in 19 languages. Joseph Cornell will share his creative ideas for making nature education fun, meaningful, and deeply inspir-

ing. You'll learn about and participate in Flow Learning®, a highly effective technique for outdoor learning. This model shows you how to awaken enthusiasm for learning and to guide others, sensitively, step by step, to more profound and uplifting experiences of nature.

Joseph will also speak on two of his favorite topics: Balancing Science with Love and The Importance of Personal Inspiration in Outdoor Learning. In this session, you'll experience many nature awareness games from Joseph Cornell's *Sharing Nature* books. You'll also do

activities from the earth stewardship program, Journey to the Heart of Nature, and other reflective activities. These activities allow individuals in group settings to have their own profound experiences of nature.

Admission to this special event is \$45 for the general public. There is a \$5 parking fee at the site. Bring a sack lunch. To RSVP, call (310) 998-1151. Space is limited and this event will fill up quickly!

To find out more about Joseph Cornell, visit [www.sharingnature.com](http://www.sharingnature.com)

## Artist-In-The-Park To Teach Botanical Illustration Classes during March & April 2005

This spring, Artist-in-the-Park, Donald Davidson, will teach two adult classes on botanical illustration at the scenic Desert Study Center in Zzyzx. The public, botanists, artists, and nature enthusiasts are encouraged to sign up. As weekend-long college extension courses, they can be taken for credit or non-credit (each weekend is timed to take advantage of different blooming periods). Classes include includes two nights' lodging at the Center (dormitory rooms & some couples rooms), with refreshments starting Friday evening and meals though Sunday lunch. Students will make drawings of minute structures and full-scale renditions of whole specimens both in plein-air and with the aid of dissection scopes. Fieldwork will stress how art and scientific skills work together to augment and enhance each other (full class descriptions on reverse side). Upon enrollment, participants will be sent information about

the Center and what to bring with them, recommended reading and a supply list. Advance registration is required.

**Adult Courses:** For details on fees and registration for the March 11th through 13th class sponsored by the University of California, Riverside, contact Linda Coco at (951) 827-5804, email: [sciences@ucx.ucr.edu](mailto:sciences@ucx.ucr.edu) or go to <http://www.UCRExtension.net>.

For details on fees and registration for the April 15th through 17th class, sponsored by College of Extended Learning, California State University, San Bernardino, contact Sandra Richards at 909-880-5979, email: [cel@CSUSB.edu](mailto:cel@CSUSB.edu) or go to <http://cel.csub.edu>.



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### CHAPTER RENEWALS & NEW MEMBERSHIPS:

Send check to David Hollombe, 6223 San Vicente Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90048 or to CNPS, 2707 K Street, Suite 1, Sacramento, CA 95816. Current CNPS memberships are: Student \$20, Retired \$20, Individual \$35, Library \$35, Family \$45, Group \$45, Supporting \$75, Plant Lover \$100, Patron \$250, Benefactor \$500. *Make checks payable to CNPS.*

**ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS TO TOYON ONLY:** For members of other CNPS chapters, send \$5 to David Hollombe.

**CHANGE OF ADDRESS:** Write or phone David Hollombe (323-934-0332). Include your e-mail address. Be sure to notify State CNPS Office, 2707 K Street, Suite 1, Sacramento, CA 95816.