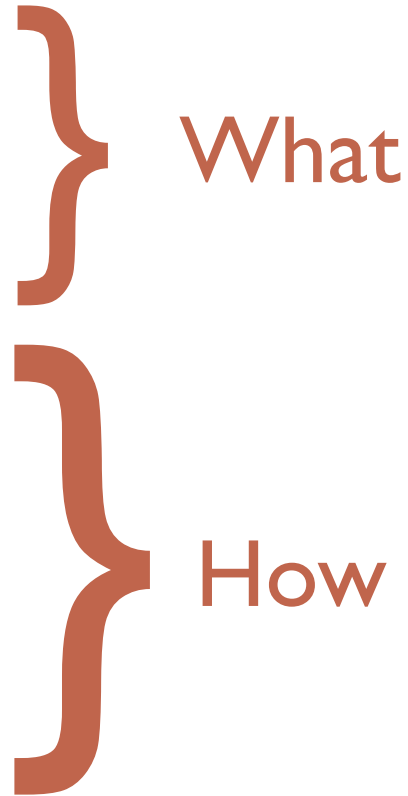


Santa Clara Valley Chapter  
**Outreach Through Libraries**

Arvind Kumar, Vice President, CNPS-SCV  
Chapter Council, September 12, 2009

# Agenda

- Problem Statement
- Solution
- Results
- Constraints
- Tasks
- Success Criteria
- Scalability



# Problem Statement

- Low/dwindling attendance at meetings
- Not many new faces
- Membership stagnant/falling
- Could use more publicity
- Space hard to find/reserve
- Costs of space rental, honorarium
- Small volunteer base overcommitted
- Can't take on new ideas/projects



# Solution: Partner With Libraries

- Ask libraries to “sponsor” CNPS programs by providing:
  - Room reservation 6-12 months in advance
  - Speaker honorarium
  - Library outreach:
    - Flier posted in library
    - Event listed on library website
    - Press releases to local media
  - Podium, PA system, projector, screen
  - Help with room setup/teardown

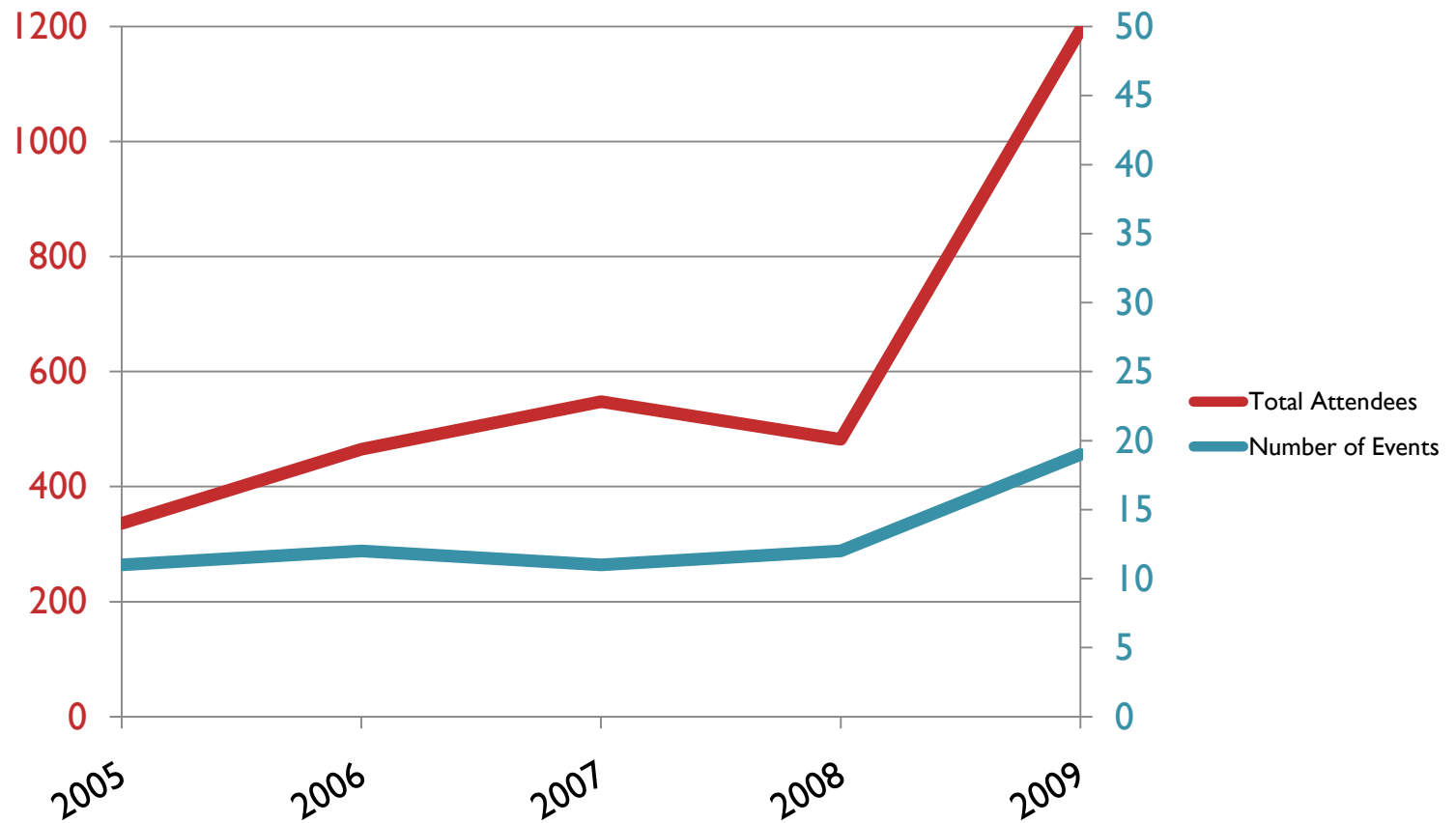
# Benefits to the Library

- Increased attendance
- Diversified programming
- Promote library's collection of books on native plants and the environment
- Leverage CNPS expertise to create content, find qualified speakers
- Low effort/cost, high ROI

“The library is not just about Story Time – it has programs for adults, too.”

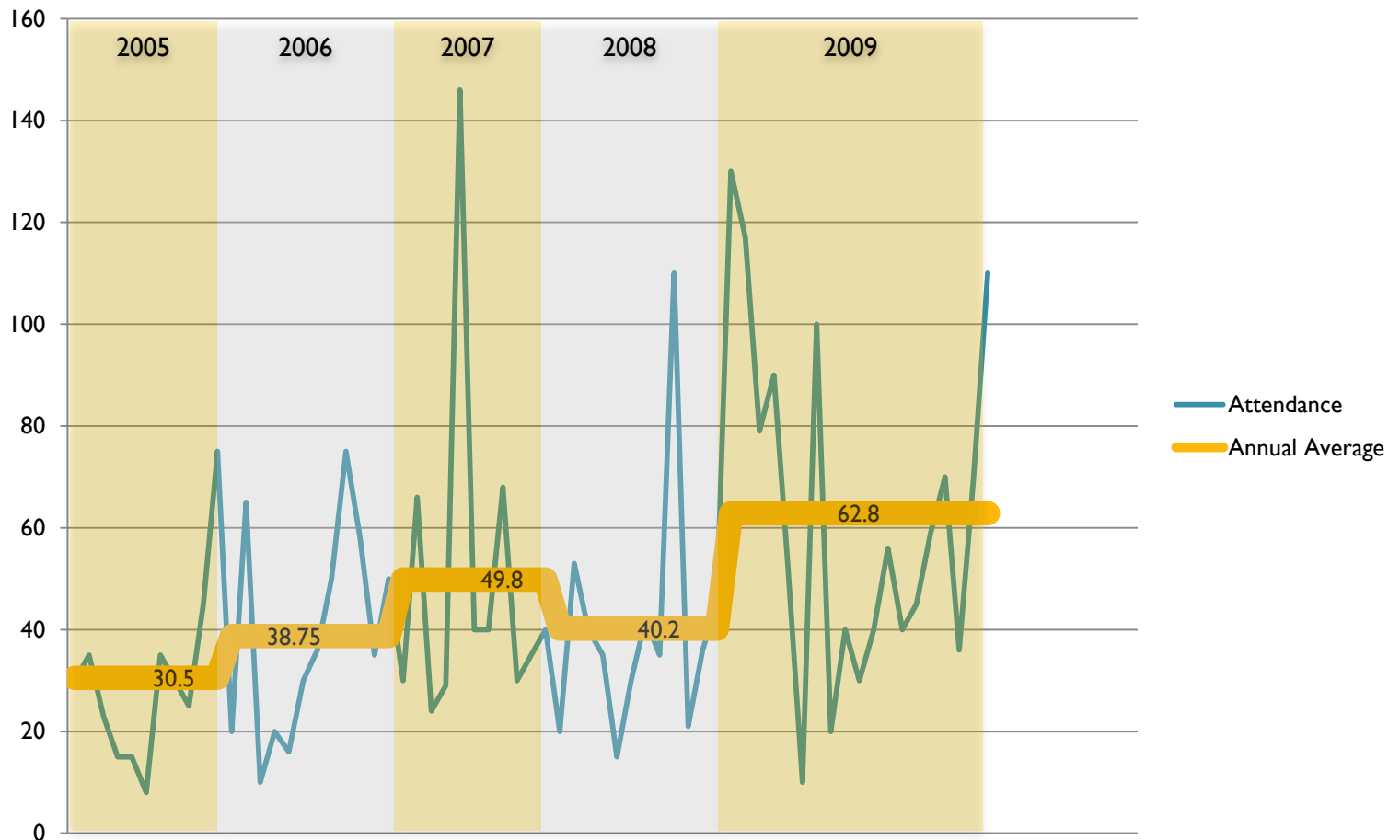
# Results

- Total attendance/year increased



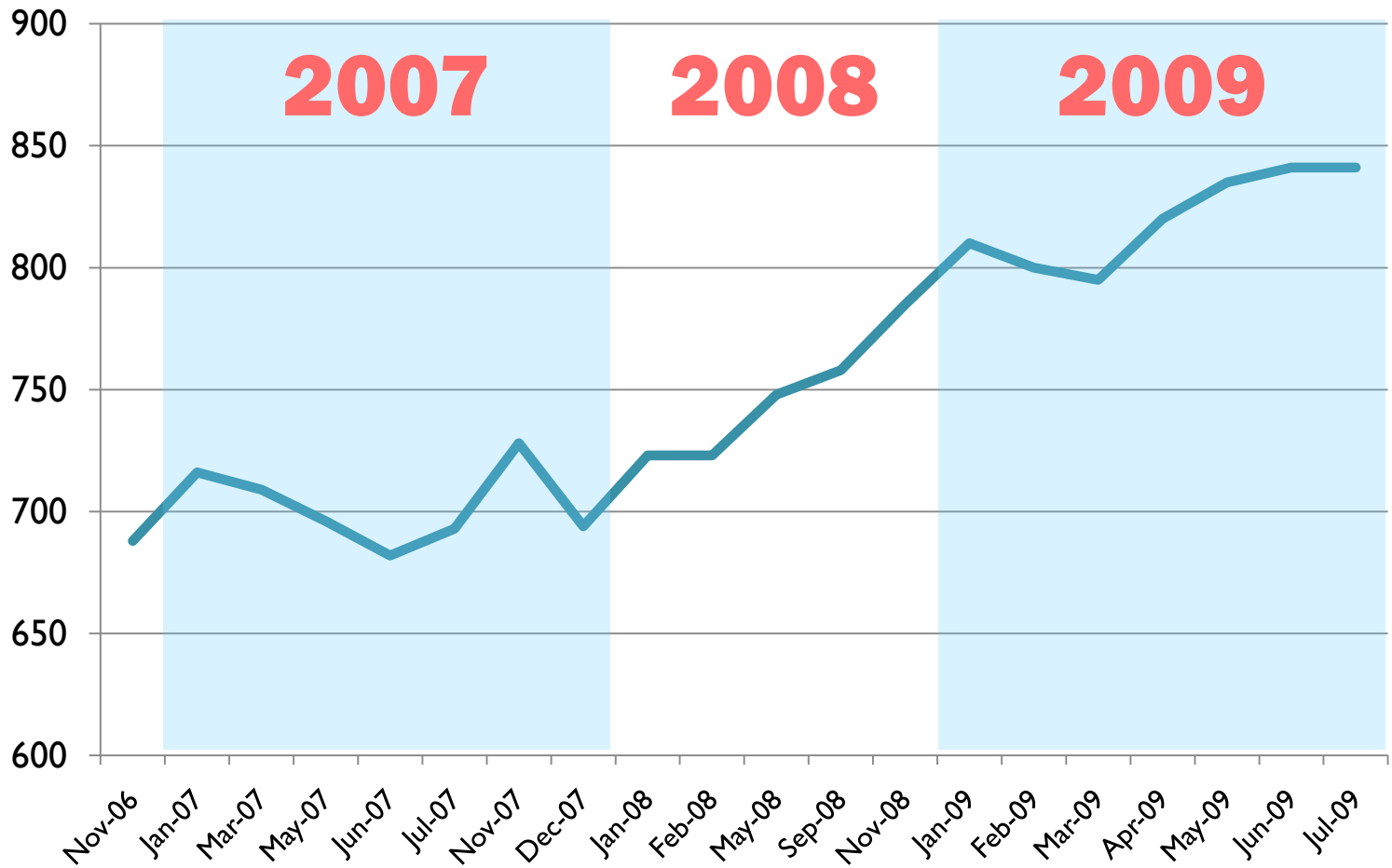
# Results

- Average attendance per event increased



# Results

- Chapter membership trend upward



# Results

- Improved outreach: 10% to 90% of the audience attending a CNPS meeting for the first time
- Invitations from other libraries
- Improved visibility in local community
- Library staff mindshare/goodwill
- Significantly reduced effort >

# Library Constraints

- Topics must be of general interest
- Free admission, open to all
- Nonprofit, non-commercial
- Non-political, non-sectarian
- During library hours
- Planned in advance (6-18 months)
- High cost/penalty for changing plans

>

# Startup Tasks

- Form a Program Committee (2-4 people)
- Sign up 2 volunteers per program:  
a host, a helper/greeter
- Brainstorm/create tentative schedule:  
topic, speaker, venue, date
- Approach and secure library sponsorship:  
you may have to “sell” CNPS to librarian
- Approach and confirm speakers >

# Recurring Tasks

- Prepare a poster for each program
- Ask library to display, publish, release
- Notify local groups (SC, Audubon, MGs, ...)
- Remind speaker a month in advance
  - Ask for handouts, if any
  - Use common names in addition to botanic names
- Visit library and scope out facility
- Ask library to make copies of handouts
- Invite librarian to open the program



# Success Criteria

- Media listings
- Library website listing
- Library poster display, thematic display
- Attendance
- Email signups, memberships
- Volunteers energized, not “burnt out”
- Invitations from other libraries
- Librarian asks CNPS:  
“When can we do this again?”

# Will This Work at My Chapter?

- Are there public libraries in my chapter?
- Will this approach work in less-populated areas or places without a CNPS presence?  
(Morgan Hill, Half Moon Bay, Fremont, Hayward)
- Am I ready to solicit and accept help with outreach?
- Can I find a minimum of 2 volunteers per program?
- Is startup help/handholding available?  
(sample letters, topics/speakers)

**Yes!**