



California Native Plant Society

Quarterly Executive Director Report

September 10-11, 2011

Author: Executive Director and Program Staff

Public Version

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EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR REPORTS

CNPS Staff Acknowledgements

As the Executive Director of the organization, I'm consistently amazed by the incredible contributions to the organization's mission by our volunteers. When visiting chapters, listening in on statewide conservation calls, or reading through the chapter reports, it's inspiring to see how much work is accomplished regionally by volunteers committed to the mission of CNPS. From my personal experience working with volunteers who serve on our state board and in chapter leadership roles throughout the state, I can say that the value of their contribution in expertise and time cannot be understated. CNPS could not begin to achieve all that it does without the contributions of its members and volunteers.

Likewise, CNPS benefits from a highly qualified professional staff. I can proudly say that each member of our staff is an exceptional individual that is deeply committed to the CNPS mission and vision. They work long hours on statewide projects and initiatives for the benefit of the entire organization, including its chapters and volunteers.

During the 46 years of its history, CNPS has grown and evolved into a statewide organization that requires its full time professional staff in addition to its dedicated volunteers to accomplish all that it does. The staff – being fully dedicated to their roles - brings an important added layer of consistency and continuity to the work of CNPS through central coordination of our statewide activities. One example is CNPS's role in the development and acceptance of a state standard for vegetation classification. With a dedicated team of full time staff engaged in agency and privately funded classification and mapping projects around the state and a full time Conservation Director, CNPS has not only been involved in coordinating, producing and making vegetation maps available for management planning efforts, but has also been instrumental in raising the awareness of how important they are in achieving broad conservation objectives.

From the coordination, planning and organization of an enriching event like the upcoming September conservation meeting, to coordinating ongoing taxonomical and status change requests on rare plants, to researching and advocating for a lawsuit in the East Bay, to managing multiple vegetation projects around the state and also raising the money necessary to help fund them, to the planning and coordination of the multiple volunteer committees involved in organizing the statewide conference coming up in January, our program staff does an extraordinary service to the organization. CNPS benefits greatly from the exemplary work contributed by Mack Casterman (East Bay), Julie Evens, Josie Crawford, Greg Suba, Aaron Sims and their direct staff reports.

Likewise, you will read below about some of the important infrastructure projects that have been implemented at the central office to improve our service delivery to members. Our administrative support team of Stacey Flowerdew, Marcy Millett, and Caroline Ficker, led by Finance and Administration Manager Cari Porter, are exceptional individuals who are here to provide vital chapter and membership support and perform the tasks necessary for CNPS to function as a legal non-profit organization. I am consistently surprised by how much work these four individuals can accomplish in a day. The scope of the technology projects they have implemented in the past two years alone is staggering and incredibly important for the future of CNPS.

And while our volunteers contribute portions or all of their available time, energy and expertise, most derive their livelihoods from sources outside of CNPS. Our staff however, depends upon CNPS for their *livelihoods*. Our staff not only contributes their full time energy, passion, and standard of excellence, they contribute their *professional earning capacity* to the mission of CNPS. We are fortunate that such talented individuals have chosen to work for CNPS.

As Executive Director, I'm committed to ensure that our staff continues to provide the support needed for volunteers to actively contribute to the CNPS mission and vision, and that they will do their part to strengthen the important partnership between themselves and our volunteers. I hope volunteers throughout the organization will do their part to likewise support our staff and recognize the value they bring to the organization. As a single organization with both a statewide and regional focus, staff and volunteers working together, there is so much we can accomplish.

CNPS Directory & Other Administrative Infrastructure Projects (Focus Area 4)

Directory Updates: The quarterly updates to the CNPS Directory have been completed and will be available for online downloading and distribution the week of September 5th.

Web Interface: As you know, we upgraded the interface on the statewide website on July 26th. The new interface includes a secure user id and password registration for members and visitors. Over time, we expect to add other features to the new site. Any member or visitor can now access basic information on the site, set up a new membership, make a donation, or register for the 2012 conference immediately upon completing the online site registration. Users will also be asked to view a privacy policy, and can select e-mail preferences in their user profiles. It is important to note that existing members will not be able to renew an existing membership online, or view their donor history until 24-48 hours after they complete the site registration and establish a user id and password.

An announcement about the upgrade and the new features will be included in the fall issue of The Bulletin. A copy of the announcement for insertion in chapter newsletters was distributed to chapter newsletter editors and leadership earlier this summer.

E-Newsletter and other e-mail communications: The new web interface also allows us to distribute specific communications to groups of members that we can define in our database. For example, we recently distributed a flyer and press release to members in the five chapters bordering Senator Noreen Evans district to advise them of the award presentation taking place at a jointly planned event with the Napa Valley Chapter. Our monthly statewide e-newsletter has also been migrated into the web interface and will be distributed directly from our membership database. This month, we are testing the e-mail distribution of renewal notices to members whose membership are up for renewal. Eventually, we hope to replace mailed renewal notices for those members who supply e-mail addresses to us, which will significantly reduce printing and mailing costs for the organization's membership renewal activities.

Native Plant Week – (Focus Area 5)

After a highly successful inaugural Native Plant Week, it's time to start thinking about next year's planning! During the meeting on Sunday I'll be passing around an interest sheet to collect names of delegates who would like to serve on the statewide planning and coordinating committee for CNPW 2012. I have not had a chance to talk to Mike Ross about whether or not he'll be able to serve as chair going forward, but I'm hoping that with a little encouragement he will lead the committee again this go around.

Strategic Plan – Chapter Input Needed

As stated in previous communications, broad engagement is desired and necessary for CNPS to realize the full force and power behind its strategic plan. While we have received some direct feedback on the draft strategic plan, engagement and feedback is still being sought from chapters and advisory committees. As discussed during the June Chapter Council meeting and subsequent communications, input is being sought in three specific areas:

- Does chapter leadership see any gaps in the draft strategies?
- What priorities should be assigned to the strategies in each focus area? In providing feedback, it may be helpful to reference the priorities already established by Chapter Council in identifying the top five goals.
- What are the outcomes desired in each of the focus areas and how will we measure our success?

The strategic plan overview presentation from June's Chapter Council session can be found on the website at the following link: <http://www.cnps.org/cnps/admin/cc/index.php>. If your chapter has not yet weighed in on the draft strategies included in the first draft, we want to hear from you! Your input should be sent to the following e-mail distribution group: strategicplan@cnps.org. This will ensure that your input is simultaneously received by David Magney, Brett Hall, Brian LeNeve, Orchid Black and myself.

Web Template Development (Focus Area 5)

Since the web template project began, a few more chapters have seized on the opportunities afforded by the web template created by the State webmaster and have requested domains. Chapters that have requested a domain or are already using the template are as follows:

Milo Baker	Monterey	Mount Lassen
Napa	No. San Joaquin	Sacramento

There are numerous advantages to using the template site – one includes incorporating the statewide organizational branding in your chapter site to automatically alert visitors that your chapter is part of a much larger statewide entity. Although chapters that have already invested extensive time and energy into their existing websites may not want to migrate their sites to the Joomla template, they can still take advantage of the opportunities afforded by statewide branding by incorporating the new statewide logo and color palette in their existing web designs. Some chapters have already done this – El Dorado, Napa Valley, Santa Clara Valley, and Willis Jepson Chapters already incorporate CNPS statewide branding in their standalone sites.

If your chapter would like to take advantage of the CNPS branded template or incorporate other branding elements, such as the state web banner, the digital files and design guidelines for these elements are located on the state website at www.cnps.org/admin at the bottom of the web page. You can also contact Mark Naftzger directly if you need assistance developing or modifying your chapter web page at mark@stusim.com.

Proceedings Update

With a few last minute details yet remaining, the *2009 Conference Proceedings* publication is at the printer and should be available for sale by mid to late September. The retail price will be set initially at \$65, which appears to be quite competitive after researching the retail price of other recently published conference proceedings. Sincere thanks to Holly Forbes for coordinating the final details necessary to get the book out to print.

Legislator and Legislative Staff Person of the Year Awards

Vern Goehring and I have been working with two of our CNPS chapters to plan events for presenting statewide awards. Our goals in co-hosting the events with chapters are to both honor the recipients and also to help build attendance for the associated chapter events. In Sacramento, we are working with Sabrina Okamura-Johnson from the Sacramento Valley Chapter about scheduling the presentation for Susan Little at the upcoming October chapter meeting. Since Senator Evans district includes Napa, we are working with Henni Cohen of the Napa Chapter on a co-hosted event taking place in Napa on September 27th. The publicity for both events/awards is being handled through the local media and chapter newsletters, and through direct member distribution through the new Razer's Edge web interface.

We sincerely thank both Henni Cohen and Sabrina Okamura-Johnson for their willingness to work with the state office to co-host these award presentations. Going forward, we hope to co-host other events or programs with chapters around the state either for major donor cultivation or for other award presentations as opportunities arise.

CNPS HISTORY PROJECT – by Marie Finn and Tara Hansen

As some of you have heard, I recently posted a position opening for a volunteer coordinator to help with a project to document CNPS historical milestones on the web and build a volunteer recognition page on the state website. About six weeks ago, Marie Finn, a resident of Elk Grove (near Sacramento) contacted me about the project. After talking with Marie and discussing her qualifications, we set up a space for her to work in the K street office and got her started on the project. To date, Marie has been in the office two days a week, and has done an incredible job of creating an inventory of available resources (CNPS Newsletters, *Fremontia*, and other materials), developing a structure for organizing the information related to the project, developing a web menu to display the information that is consistent

with our current web design, and compiling information about Fellows and other award recipients from previously published materials. We are now ready to form an ad hoc committee to help with some aspects of the project.

The goal of the project is to develop a new section of our website which will recognize the state-wide achievements and accomplishments (milestones) the organization has made since its inception in 1965, and highlight the people who've made significant contributions along the way.

The project has two components – the first part involves forming a volunteer committee of CNPS member historians to brainstorm and document major milestones in CNPS history. These could be court cases, significant growth periods, things like digitization of the inventory, the first MCV publication date, legislative victories, etc. A lot of this material is already on the web and may just need to be linked up in a central place with some sort of chronological, clickable listing and introduction. So far, Phyllis Faber, Wilma Follette, and Joan Stewart have indicated interest in serving on the committee.

The second part of the project involves gathering information about statewide award recipients and fellows and building out a section on the state website to display it. This part of the project does not involve committee work but could use additional volunteer support. Much of the information is already in the literature we have and just requires aggregation and reformatting for web display. Charli Danielson of the East Bay Chapter has provided all of the historical summary information on CNPS Fellows. Marie is using that to find photos and build individual web pages that will be linked to a summary landing page with a chronological listing. We'd like to do the same for other statewide awards.

FINANCE, ADMINISTRATION – authored by Cari Porter

Reimbursement Requests (Focus Area 4)

To properly report and budget for expenses throughout the year it is essential for staff, contract staff, Chapter Council delegates and Board members to submit reimbursement requests in a timely manner. A PDF Reimbursement Request Form for volunteers is posted on the Admin page of the CNPS website.

To facilitate more timely reimbursement to individuals and to report expenses in the proper accounting period, completed expense reimbursement forms are requested to be completed within 14 days of the end of the related meeting or activity. Expenses reported more than 30 days after the ending date of the activity will no longer be reimbursed absent extenuating circumstances. Exceptions will be rare, and will not be considered 30 days beyond the close of the fiscal year.

Current Budget Information, CNPS Conference Year to Date:

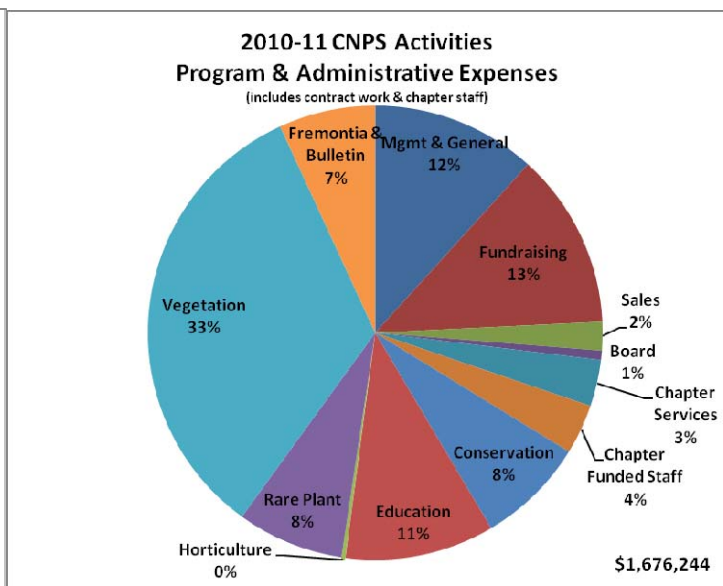
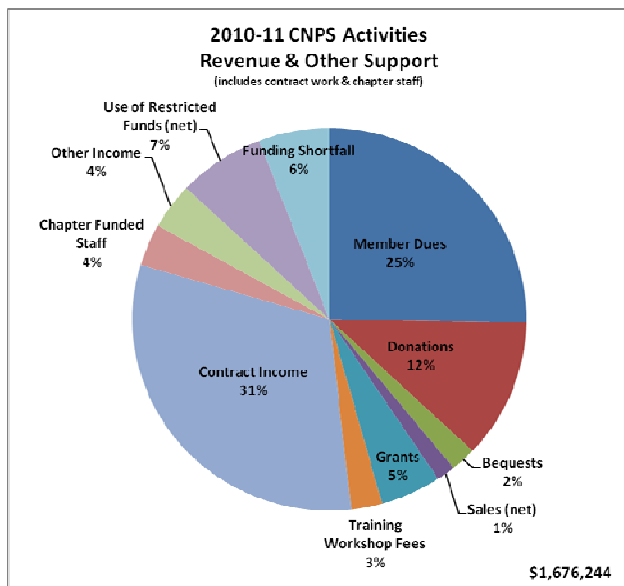
As we head into the final countdown on fundraising for the statewide Conservation Conference coming up in January 2012, we wanted to share information with our chapter leadership about the status of our fundraising for the event.

The time and costs involved in planning and organizing an event of this magnitude are significant. While we succeeded in raising most of the funds needed for our 2009 conference, our sponsorship fundraising goals for the 2012 conference were increased to meet the higher expenses of holding the conference in Southern California. These costs would be yet even higher if not for the substantial contribution of time and expertise offered by volunteers both in San Diego and elsewhere around the state. Nevertheless, actual costs associated with the event require monetary funding and we are still far short of our fundraising goal.

You can read about the substantial benefits of holding a statewide conservation conference in Josie Crawford's report or in upcoming issues of the Bulletin. We are still asking Chapters that are able to contribute to help offset the enormous costs by sponsoring the conference. If you have questions about sponsorship, please contact Josie, Sandy, or myself.

CNPS Financials – 2010-2011

2010 - 2011 CNPS Activities (incl. contracts & chapter staff)		
Statement of Activities		
<i>Revenue & Other Support</i>		
Member Dues		\$423,148
Donations		\$198,440
Bequests		\$35,000
Sales (net)		\$25,897
Grants		\$83,500
Training Workshop Fees		\$42,740
Contract Income		\$525,790
Chapter Funded Staff		\$59,538
Other Income		\$65,064
Use of Restricted Funds (net)		\$119,775
Funding Shortfall		\$97,352
Total Revenue & Other Support		1,676,244
<i>Program & Administrative Expenses</i>		
Mgmt & General		196,489
Fundraising		209,580
Sales		34,117
Board		10,979
Chapter Services		55,531
Chapter Funded Staff		59,538
Conservation		129,252
Education		177,769
Horticulture		4,806
Rare Plant		127,236
Vegetation		555,739
Fremontia & Bulletin		115,208
Total Administrative Expenses		1,676,244



COMMUNICATIONS & SOCIAL MEDIA – authored by Stacey Flowerdew

Facebook and Social Networking (Focus Area 5)

CNPS's activity on Facebook continues to grow. The CNPS Facebook page is up to an all-time high of 2,569 "likes" and the CNPS Facebook group has fallen slightly to 2,273 members as of September 1, 2011. Each Facebook site continues to garner comments and post "likes", proof of the public's positive opinion of native plants and CNPS's programs.

We are exploring creating a specialized landing screen for the Facebook page to provide a short message and links for the public to join/renew or to donate to CNPS. Many other non-profits on Facebook have used available web development apps to create similar landing pages to draw attention to actions, campaigns, or promotions, to increase membership, or to gain a greater audience for newsletters. Any member of the public who searches for California Native Plant Society on Facebook would see this default tab when they visit the CNPS page. With a Facebook membership campaign planned this autumn, a landing page like this would make the process easy for our Facebook "fans" to click through to set up profiles on our new member interface.

We are also planning a Facebook membership appeal that should initiate sometime in late September.

CNPS E-Newsletter (Focus Area 5)

We switched e-newsletter providers as of the August newsletter from iContact to Blackbaud NetCommunity Spark, our new member interface. The August newsletter was sent to 2,211 iContact subscribers and NetCommunity users who have opted-in to receive the e-newsletter, with an open rate of 22% after only 24 hours. We are encouraging those who subscribed through iContact to create user profiles in NetCommunity in order to continue receiving the newsletter. The first newsletter was sent as an email with an imported email contact list and that does not allow us the same measure of functionality as the newsletter. We will send out a specialized email in September asking our iContact subscribers to make the transition to NetCommunity in case they missed the notice to do so in the August newsletter.

DEVELOPMENT – Tara Hansen & Sandy McCoy

Marketing and Communications Sub-Committee (Focus Area 5)

The Marketing Committee has been on hiatus over the summer, but we are looking for a time to meet to ramp up media promotions for the conference and native plant week after the September Chapter Council meeting.

The Marketing Committee is a dynamic group of talented volunteers that contributes expertise in the area of communications, design, branding, and public messaging. If you have skills in any of these areas and are interested in serving on the Marketing Committee, please contact Tara Hansen. Current members include:

Sandy McCoy, East Bay	Brian LeNeve, Monterey Bay	Bob Hass, Bulletin/Fremontia
William Wayland, Marin	Carol Witham, Sacramento Valley	Tara Hansen, staff
Mike Ross, Santa Clara Valley	Arvind Kumar, Santa Clara Valley	

Grants and Program Project Planning (Focus Area 4)

Sandy McCoy, the program staff and I continue to write and submit proposals to various foundations for program funding. The table below provides a summary of our activities.

Sandy and I have spoken with most of the foundations about our proposals and have received very good feedback about the quality and fit of our proposals. We also continue to hear how foundations have drastically reduced available program funding in the past two years, while at the same time receiving substantially more funding requests.

Foundation cultivation is something that takes time and persistence to build. Based on the kind of feedback we've been getting, we expect to be more successful every year we repeat applications. We would welcome also assistance with any foundation connections.

HORTI CULTURE PROGRAM – authored by Tara Hansen

The Horticulture Committee, chaired by Laura Camp, has been on hiatus over the summer.

Sandy McCoy and Tara Hansen submitted a grant request to help fund the horticultural aspects of the 2012 Conference to the Stanley Smith Foundation in August. We expect a response in the near future.

CONSERVATION PROGRAM – authored by Greg Suba & William Hamilton

I. MAJOR INITIATIVES

Listing Petitions

Discussions between Conservation Program Committee and Rare Plant Program Committee members have begun regarding a process for certifying that listing petitions originating from CNPS have been sufficiently vetted by both committees before submittal to appropriate agencies.

THP / NPPA

Greg Suba and Vern Goehring met with staff from the State Assembly Committee on Accountability and Administrative Review to discuss CNPS's perspectives on the status of DFG's fee-based funding of their THP review staff. There will be committee hearings on this issue in late August / early September.

Army Corps' Levee Vegetation Policy

In June 2011, Friends of the River, Defenders of Wildlife, and Center for Biological Diversity filed suit against the Army Corps for violations of both NEPA and ESA related to the Corps' levee vegetation policy. Greg is in communication with plaintiff attorneys to determine whether they feel CNPS joining the suit would be beneficial and is still possible. Greg has prepared a Litigation Summary Report for submittal to the CNPS Litigation Committee.

Southern California Forests Settlement Meetings

During the final settlement meeting, the OHV community intervenor representatives, along with CA State Parks OHV representatives expressed concerns regarding the inclusion of System Routes (legal forest routes) in the prioritized list of routes for closure / restoration. Their opposition to what was otherwise interpreted as the full intent of the settlement agreement language effectively scuttled the settlement agreement talks. All parties have referred the results of the meetings to their attorney representatives for deliberation of the next step.

Walker Ridge

BLM has delayed the issuing of the DEIS until September 30th.

Desert Renewable Energy Conservation Plan - DRECP

Desert vegetation mapping continues and now includes most of the unmapped Western Mojave lands in Antelope Valley, and the unmapped lands along the I-10 corridor between Joshua Tree NP east to Blythe. The DRECP proposed Covered / Planning Species list has been expanded from the initial 13 plant taxa to now include 46 taxa to be considered under the Plan. There remain 28 additional taxa that CNPS has proposed needs to be addressed.

BLM's Solar Programmatic EIS

BLM has announced they will be preparing a Supplemental PEIS to respond to the outpouring of comments - from all stakeholders - critical of the draft PEIS.

II. COMMUNICATIONS AND OUTREACH

CNPS E-News Articles

The August E-News features Conservation initiatives, and includes a short summary of the recent CA visit by journalists writing a special issue of the Center for Plant Conservation's publication, *Plant Conservation*. This California native flora-focused issue will feature interviews with CNPS members from several Chapters, and CNPS-affiliated botanists, as well as several state and federal agency staff. It is due out in December / January this winter.

CEQA Challenge Letter

There is a CEQA Exemption effort underway to exempt some forms of solar PV (photovoltaic) projects on agricultural lands from CEQA review. The effort is coming from the State Office of Policy and Regulation (OPR), and initial drafts indicate an overly-broad reach for this exemption and will be opposed in current form by several environmental groups including CNPS.

Conservation Calls

Monthly calls between state program staff and Chapter Conservation Chairs continue with modest participation. Calls are on the first Tuesday of each month from 10AM until Noon, and often finish before Noon. September's call has been postponed due to the September 10th Conservation Symposium in San Diego. Notes from each call are emailed to the Chapter Conservation Chair listserve for review and edit shortly after every call.

EDUCATION PROGRAM –authored by Josie Crawford

CNPS 2012 Conservation Conference: Conserving and Restoring the Roots of California's Richness

Registration for the conference opened in early August, the conference program has been mailed to over 20,000 people and organizations and we have received over 235 abstracts for oral and poster presentations.

Our fundraising continues with our total, as of Aug 30, hovering around 105K with another 10K probably coming in the next week or so. Forty-two agencies and organizations have pledged sponsorship with new sponsors coming in every week. Our fundraising goal is \$220K.

If we include the 240 oral and poster presenters, there are now over 340 volunteers from all over the state working on making this a great conference!

If you or someone you know would like to help with the conference or if you know of potential sponsors, or if you would like to sponsor the conference, please contact Josie Crawford at jcrawford@cnps.org. Up to date developments and opportunities to contribute will be posted on the conference webpage at www.cnps.org/2012.

Rare Plant Treasure Hunt (Focus Area 5)

The Rare Plant Treasure Hunt has proved an excellent way to engage members and people new to CNPS while collecting important rare plant data. Amber Swanson coordinated and led trips for the desert portion of the Rare Plant Treasure Hunt and Danny Slakey coordinated the rest of the state. Participating groups outside of CNPS include Edison Power, Desert Survivors, Adventurers and Scientists for Conservation, Center for Plant Conservation, Boy Scouts of America, Sierra Club, and the Wildflowers and Trail Running/Hiking Meetup Group. Amber and Danny have given or will give presentations at Cal Poly Pomona Botany Club, Chapter Council, as well as the San Diego, Sacramento, and LA/Santa Monica Mountains Chapters. For continued outreach they have written articles and reports for the *Desert Journal*, CNPS E-news and the *Bulletin*.

The table below shows information we have collected for 2011, as of the end of August, with trip information and occurrence data still at large from many independent treasure hunters. This was a better year for grass than for annuals throughout the state and the numbers below reflect that.

Rare Plant Treasure Hunt Results for 2011

Type	Statewide RPTH (all but deserts)	CA Deserts RPTH
Occurrences reported	155	153
New occurrences	34%	58%
Historical occurrences	32%	26%
Recent occurrences	21%	3%
Negative (not found) occurrences	5%	13%
Status or Identification undetermined	8%	0%
CA Rare Plant Rank (CRPR) 1B	76%	40%
Rank 2	5%	31%
Rank 3	<1%	0%
Rank 4	18%	29%
#of trips reported to date for 2011	20	37
# of chapters involved (with members participating)	11	13
Groups outside of CNPS participating	5	5
Land owners, agencies contributing	26	3 (primarily BLM)

On a recent trip to Loon Lake in the El Dorado National Forest, led by Danny Slakey, Rebecca Crowe, (CNPS staff, volunteering for the day), found a *Botrychium* species that a *Botrychium* expert thinks is *B. paradoxum*, based on photos. That would be the second occurrence of this taxon in California, and could have implications for its taxonomic treatment. A specimen was later collected by the USFS botanist and sent to the *Botrychium* expert for genetic testing. While not yet ranked by CNPS, *B. paradoxum* is currently under status review, and likely to soon become a 1B.1 or 2.1.

Contact Danny or Amber at treasurehunt@cnps.org. Go to <http://cnps.org/cnps/rareplants/treasurehunt/> for more information.

Plant Science Training Workshops (Focus Area 5)

We are wrapping up a successful 2011 workshop season with one remaining workshop in the Mojave in September. We will offer 15 workshops during the 2012 Conference next Jan 10-11. The schedule for conference workshops is available at <http://cnps.org/2012>. We are beginning to plan for the 2012 workshop season now. **Strategic Focus area 5**

Stewardship and Education (Focus Area 5)

Over 485 people and organizations have downloaded the curriculum, *Opening the World through Nature Journaling*, developed by John Muir Laws and Emily Breunig. It may be downloaded from our website for free. John Muir Laws has distributed over 200 hard copies as he gives workshops on using the curriculum throughout the Sierra Nevada this spring and summer to teachers and naturalists through a grant from National Audubon. This summer the California Institute for Biodiversity conducted a thorough evaluation of the curriculum when they hosted a teacher training, taught by Laws. Jack will use this evaluation to improve the curriculum. **Strategic Focus area 5**

RARE PLANT PROGRAM – authored by Aaron Sims

Rare Plant Inventory [Focus Area 1]

The review of CNDDDB data has resulted in dozens of changes to CNPS Rare Plant Inventory data over the past three months. Most of the changes were updates to the threats, phenology, elevation ranges, and habitat of dozens of taxa.

During the June to August time period, a total of 44 rare plant status reviews were completed. The following is an outline of completed reviews:

- Additions: 9 plants

- Rank Changes: 2 plants
- Deletions: 2 plants
- Considered But Rejected: 27 plants
- Postponed: 4 plants
- Name Changes: 0

In addition to the above reviews, taxonomic family names were changed for 6 genera (totaling 23 taxa). For additional information on changes please contact Aaron (asims@cnps.org)

Online Inventory Revision Project [Focus Area 1]

The new Online Inventory was released in early December and is available for use at www.rareplants.cnps.org. The release of the new Inventory was proven to be a great success by reviewing incoming user feedback and the resulting heavy bandwidth use. An independent consultant completed the bulk of the programming and technical revision required, while many other individuals contributed in a number of ways. Although the new Online Inventory is a significant achievement, there are still improvements that can be made. Users have been encouraged to provide comments and feedback, and some minor revisions and increases in functionality have been catalogued and prioritized for future revisions.

The Program has received some additional funding from a CNPS member in order to make these revisions happen. Once the funds are properly allocated to the Program, increases in Online Inventory functionality and some modifications are expected to come.

Rare Plant Program Assistant [Focus Area 4]

The Rare Plant Program is proud to announce Danny Slakey as the new part time Program Assistant! Danny started working for the Program in early June. The Department of Fish and Game is funding the part time position (up to 30 hours a week) for the first half of the year, and Tara Hansen and I are working on securing other agency or private funding to cover the second half of the year. We believe the support provided by this position will allow us to process *at least* 100 additional status reviews and/or name change updates over the next year, significantly reducing our backlog, and we are off to a great start (see status reviews completed under the RP Inventory section of this report).

Danny also works part time as the statewide CNPS Rare Plant Treasure Hunt coordinator, which has gone hand in hand with developing data and writing reports for status reviews in addition to further prioritizing plants in need of having updated records in the CNDDDB. Danny Slakey can be reached at dslakey@cnps.org

Other Activities [Focus Areas 1 & 5]

The past three months have provided several opportunities to inform and educate others about the CNPS Rare Plant Program and the information and tools it provides for tracking and monitoring rare plants for conservation.

In July and August I attended numerous field and classroom workshops including two Jepson Workshops, a workshop on sedges (*Carex* spp.), and a workshop/meeting on buckwheats (*Eriogonum* spp.). At the workshops I networked with professional and amateur botanists, and met many rare plant status reviewers for the very first time. I also obtained immediate data for dozens of taxa in the status review backlog, and assisted in updating existing and new rare plant occurrences for the CNDDDB and CNPS Inventory. Furthermore, many resources for the Program were obtained from the workshops at no extra cost.

I also attended and assisted with three Rare Plant Treasure Hunts led by Danny throughout the month of August, attended the 23rd Annual - Colusa Grass Monitoring at Jepson Prairie, and attended a CNPS field trip led by the Sierra Foothills Chapter. Meeting and working with various CNPS volunteers has proven to be successful in drawing more attention to the Program and for further networking with amateur and professional botanists throughout the state.

VEGETATION PROGRAM – authored by Julie Evens & Vegetation Program Staff

Chapter and Public Vegetation Workshops & Talks (Focus Area 1 & 5)

We are fortunate to have three new Program volunteers, assisting us with data entry of vegetation surveys collected during chapter and public workshops. Melissa DeSiervo, Michael Hardy, and Rachelle Lopez have entered 13 data forms from vegetation workshops that we held this spring in southern California and Sonoma County, including data on desert types of Paloverde-Ironwood Alliance and coastal types of Redwood Alliance.

Julie gave a talk at about the values of vegetation classification and mapping for a regional conservation planning conference, which was hosted by Coachella Valley Association of Governments and ESRI, in southern California. Program staff also has participated in and assisted in organizing rare plant treasure hunts in Sacramento and El Dorado counties, during this spring and summer.

Manual of California Vegetation, Second Edition (MCV2) (Donation and Grant-funded) (Focus Area 1 & 3)

CNPS staff is working actively now on establishing a new database for the MCV2 book information. Brad Jenkins is providing generous database expertise, and Julie and Rebecca Crowe have been entering and quality-controlling data into a database format. The MCV2 database subcommittee met to review the initial structure and content of the database, with information compiled by Brad and Julie. Also, Abigail Genelsa continued volunteering for about a day a week on this project, helping to input vegetation data on life history and fire regime characteristics. The program has established a new MOU with research staff at Princeton and Stanford universities, who will be using our databased lists of species from vegetation types described in the MCV2. They intend to analyze ecological groups of species to evaluate potential climate-related shifts of vegetation over the past 100+ years.

Alluvial Scrub Native Plant Materials Project (Grant-funded) (Focus Area 1 & 3)

The Vegetation Program classified 165 alluvial scrub surveys under a collaborative project with the Riverside-Corona Resource Conservation District (RCRCD) and the Inland Empire Resource Conservation District (IERCD). We combined legacy data from the mid 1990's with new data from six southern California counties to categorize alluvial scrub types, and our classification has resulted in 14 associations within 12 alliances.

Jennifer is currently working to analyze a set of environmental variables and investigate correlations between environmental and species patterns within this rare habitat type. Environmental variables such as soil texture, surface features, and elevation above active channel were recorded in the field while geological substrate, fire history, and climate data were extracted using existing GIS layers.

Carrizo Plain National Monument Project (Grant-funded) (Focus Area 1 & 3)

Three staff members, Danielle, Deborah, and Rebecca, continue to map vegetation within the footprint of the Carrizo Plain National Monument (CPNM). Currently, 161,513 acres (or approximately 65% of the monument) are delineated and attributed with various vegetation and site characteristics including vegetation type and tree/shrub/herb cover.

Grasslands Research Projects (Donation/Grant-funded) (Focus Area 1 & 3)

Jennifer and Julie finalized a report for the first year of our Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) Conservation Innovation Grant. This report reports on the classification of 500+ field surveys, resulting in 16 herbaceous alliances and 49 associations. We have documented 4 new alliances and 38 new associations, which are not described in the Manual of California Vegetation or other sources. Also, Jennifer and Rebecca completed 109 new and revisit relevés this spring and summer on public and private lands in Kern, Madera, and San Luis Obispo counties. Jennifer submitted an abstract to the 2012 CNPS Conference to orally present about our new findings. A brief summary article was written for the July CNPS E-news, and an update and link to the report were posted on the CNPS Grassland Initiative webpage.

Jennifer coordinated with UC Berkeley Range Ecology Lab staff, who shared a new dataset of 48 grassland relevés denoting high quality grasslands on California State Park lands. She is also working with Bob Hass and Glen Holstein on a special edition of *Fremontia* focusing on CA grasslands and prairies.

Central Valley EcoRegion Project (Contract-funded) (Focus Area 1 & 3)

The Vegetation Program was awarded a new contract through the Geographic Information Center (GIC), of Chico State University, to conduct a classification, key and description of natural vegetation in the Central Valley Ecoregion. This project is funded by the Department of Water Resources and the California Strategic Growth Council, and is in collaboration with GIC and the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG). To begin the project, Jennifer worked with DFG staff to assess and combine more than 25 databases containing surveys within the Central Valley footprint.

Southern Sierra Nevada Foothills (SSNF) Project (Donation-funded) (Focus Area 1)

CNPS has submitted a detailed vegetation map of around 11,600 acres, adjacent to Millerton Lake, to the Department of Fish and Game's BIOS (Biogeographic Information & Observation System), so that the map will be available to the public through their data viewer. Also, a report for this project was completed and posted on our website.

National Park Service's Mojave Network Vegetation Mapping Project (Contract-funded) (Focus Area 1 & 3)

Julie, Danielle, and Deborah completed writing and editing approximately 60 association-level vegetation descriptions for an updated version of Joshua Tree National Park (JOTR) vegetation classification and mapping report. Julie and Kendra continued analyzing data for an interim vegetation classification of Death Valley National Park (DEVA), Lake Mead National Recreation Area (LAKE), and Mojave National Preserve (MOJA). We have analyzed approximately 2,000 new and existing data records from DEVA, LAKE, and vicinity, in which we classified over 330 different associations that occur in the Mojave Desert ecoregion and documented at least 20 new types. The data and classification will be used to establish detailed vegetation maps and monitoring plans for the Nat'l Park Service.

Fen Research Project of National Forest Lands (Contract/Grant-funded) (Focus Area 1 & 3)

CNPS finalized a report on our work in the fens of the Lake Tahoe Basin, with funding from Southern Nevada Public Lands Management Act. The report includes a new classification analysis of fen vegetation, adding 10 associations to our previous fen classification. Maps of vegetation types are provided for 14 fen sites surveyed by Kendra, Danielle Roach, and Betsy Harbert, in 2010. The report also provides a Conservation Significance ranking system for all the confirmed fens within the Lake Tahoe Basin, rating and discussing the Conservation Significance of 49 sites. An abstract to present the results of this work has been submitted to the CNPS Conference 2012.

We are also surveying fens and related wet meadows in the Shasta-Trinity (S-T) National Forest (NF). During four weeks of summer fieldwork, staff is verifying fens within large meadow complexes, sampling their vegetation types, and mapping their boundaries. We coordinated with the Rare Plant Program to identify rare plant occurrences that needed updating in our sampling area, collecting data on *Raillardella pringlei* (at two locations) and *Parnassia cirrata* var. *intermedia*. Forest Botanist Julie Nelson, Carex expert Barbara Wilson, and bryologist Martin Lenz, helped identify plants for the first few days of fieldwork. This work is funded by Region 5 and the S-T National Forest of the US Forest Service.

In related work, CNPS received funding to survey fen vegetation areas of Washoe Meadows State Park for the California Department of Parks and Recreation. In August, Kendra and Danielle completed 1-week of sampling, and conducted 13 plots of fen and wet meadow vegetation at 6 separate locations in the park. Kendra and Danielle also participated in a two-day Carex Identification Workshop, provided by the USFS, and taught by Carex experts Barbara Wilson and Peter Zika, in the Plumas NF.

Rare Plant Communities Initiative (Donation-funded) (Focus Area 1 & 5)

Deborah Stout and two volunteers, Michael Hardy and Melissa DeSiervo, have begun mapping cypress vegetation types in California. Michael and Melissa initiated new mapping by delineating stands of MacNab (*Hesperocyperus macnabiana*) and Sargent (*H. sargentii*) cypress in Marin, Sonoma, and Napa Counties, using existing field data and

maps. Vegetation Program staff are currently reaching out to chapters and professionals to obtain additional data on rare cypress throughout the state. With continued volunteer support, we hope to expand current mapping efforts to include all native cypress species, and eventually produce a state-wide map of these endemic, rare vegetation types.

Other Vegetation Program Details (Focus Area 1, 3 & 4)

Staff contributed articles and photos for the CNPS e-news and website in late July, and staff has continued to answer phone calls and emails regarding vegetation mapping and classification. CNPS staff submitted an annual report for our last grant and a new grant request to ESRI for an update to our GIS (geographic information systems) software and to receive training for our staff. ESRI granted us \$13,000 worth of software at 10% cost, and have granted us access to many hours of ArcGIS and related software training for eight CNPS employees. In August, Deborah Stout and Rebecca Crowe attended a three-day intermediate-level class on use of the mapping software.

Jennifer participated in an agency-driven conference call to develop vegetation monitoring protocols which would assess short and long-term effects of meadow restoration. The protocol will become a standard for meadow restoration projects in the Sierras, resulting in consistency in data and analysis of restoration. Three staff participated in a bi-annual CNPS Vegetation Committee meeting in August, which marked the 20th anniversary of the committee. We discussed current projects and reviewed components of the CNPS draft strategic plan, including strategies and actions.

SALES REPORT – authored by Tara Hansen and Stacey Flowerdew (Focus Area 5)

Due to some challenges in moving and correcting sales data from our old accounting system to our new one, the full sales report promised for June will be delayed until the December quarterly report.

MEMBERSHIP REPORT – by Stacey Flowerdew and Tara Hansen (Focus Area 5)

Changes to Membership Reports

After discussing possible changes and chapter reporting needs on statewide membership chair conference calls since the beginning of the year, we have transitioned to a new report format for conveying membership data this month.

Chapters previously received a number of separate excel files that separated out updated records and new member records from general rosters. Starting this month, only one report containing all data for each chapter will be generated. This monthly report will include a full roster of your entire chapter membership, including any records that are lapsed up to 90 days. The reports will be delivered in Excel format with attributes for sorting and segregating membership records by status, membership category, lapse date, new membership date for new members, and **date last changed** to find updated address/phone information for existing members.

The reports will be delivered to you by e-mail temporarily, but will soon be available to you by download from our secure Internet member services portal. If you have not already done so, over the next few weeks **it will be very important for you to access the CNPS statewide web portal** <https://support.cnps.org/sslpage.aspx?pid=290> **and register for a secure logon id and password.** All chapter positions have been set up in the CNPS member services database to facilitate the printing of the 2011 Directory, so completing this registration process will allow you to view membership reports and access other communications specific to your chapter positions in the future.

Since these reports are used for updating your chapter newsletter rosters and other mailing / contact purposes, it is very important that you become comfortable with the new format. If you have not been able to attend a call in the past, we are still here to support you in working through this transition. There is a tutorial on how to sort and use the new report format available on the CNPS statewide website <http://www.cnps.org/cnps/admin>, or you may schedule a time to go over individual concerns or challenges with Stacey Flowerdew (916-447-2677 x204). To provide further support, we will also hold two more training calls on the following dates:

September 14th – 12:00 noon
 September 15th – 12:00 noon
 Call in: 218-844-3360 PC 4472677

CNPS Membership Exchange Program with RSABG and UCSC Arboretum

As announced at the June meeting, CNPS entered into an MOU with Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden to cross sell memberships in our respective organizations to current members at a reduced price. Members in several chapters in the southern half of California recently received an e-mail offer to join RSABG at a reduced initial membership rate. RSABG likewise sent some 2,200 of their members in southern California a similar message, drafted by CNPS staff, offering a reduced initial rate to join CNPS if already a member of RSABG. We plan to follow up on these initial direct messages with an ad in the Bulletin and RSABG’s quarterly newsletter and have set up codes to track results.

We have been asked to establish a similar arrangement with the UC Santa Cruz Arboretum, an exchange that will be available to members in the Monterey, Santa Cruz, and Santa Clara Valley chapters.

The key to assessing success of these partnership exchanges will be not be in the initial number of sign ups, but in the total number that renew after the first year. CNPS loses 50% of its members after the initial sign up year, so having some sort of outreach within the chapters benefiting from these new membership signups will be key to measuring the program’s success. If we assess the results of these trial exchanges with RSABG and UCSC Arboretum and find them to be positive in the coming year, we will want to pursue additional opportunities for similar membership growth exchange relationships around the state. If your chapter works with a membership organization that might be a possible candidate, please contact me.

Membership Trends (Focus Area 5):

As we begin drafting work plans to implement our strategic objectives and goals later this year, Membership Committee members will be talking extensively about membership and asking for your input on ideas that can be employed throughout CNPS to achieve our strategic goals in membership. Table 3 shows the membership trends year to date and annually.

Annual Membership Trends							
Year	Old Count	New Count	New Members	Join Rate	Est Non-Renewals	Attrition Rate	Net Growth
2010- December 31 (2010 activity)	9312	8513	1098	11.8%	860	-9.3%	238
2010 - January (2009 activity)	9294	8275	1087	11.3%	1424	-14.8%	-337
2009 - January (2008 activity)	9631		982	10.9%	345	-3.8%	637
2008 - January (2007 activity)	8994		938	10.2%	1178	-12.8%	-240
2007 - January (2006 activity)	9234		816	8.8%	835	-9.0%	-19
2006 - January (2005 activity)	9253						

*New accounting system as of Jan 1, 2010 counts only current members and not lapsed members out to 90 days or comp members