



Vegetation Rapid Assessment Workshop
Todd Keeler-Wolf, Jennifer Buck & Rachelle Boul
Donner Summit
August 11 -13, 2009



This course combines an introductory, evening lecture (Aug 11) and two field-days (Aug 12 & 13) of exercises in fine-scale vegetation sampling

TARGET AUDIENCE: Professional botanists, ecologists, resource managers, and conservationists. Participants should have an initial understanding of the subject matter and basic plant identification skills. This course focuses on sampling plant communities using the CNPS vegetation rapid assessment method.

LOCATION: Clair Tappaan Lodge and Onion Creek Watershed

COURSE DESCRIPTION: The California Native Plant Society (CNPS) and the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) present a Vegetation Rapid Assessment workshop near Donner Summit. The course will be a combination of lecture and field exercises in vegetation sampling with a focus on collecting data using the CNPS Rapid Assessment protocol. We will discuss applications of fine-scale vegetation sampling, classification and mapping, how to document rare natural communities, and how vegetation information fits into planning documents.

PRIMARY INSTRUCTORS:

Todd Keeler-Wolf, CDFG Senior Vegetation Ecologist
Jennifer Buck CNPS Vegetation Ecologist
Rachelle Boul, CDFG Environmental Scientist

Cost: Members \$365
Non-members \$390
Optional lodging and meals \$55 per day at Clair Tappaan Lodge

REDUCED OR WAIVED FEES: One or more spaces are available through our



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[Work Exchange Program](#) for this workshop. These are awarded on a first come/first serve basis to CNPS members who earn less than \$30,000 per year.

PARTICIPANTS WILL LEARN THE FOLLOWING:

- Applications of fine-scale vegetation sampling, classification and mapping
- How vegetation sampling is used for mapping projects
- How to collect data using the CNPS Rapid Assessment protocol
- How to document the rare natural communities occurring at Donner Summit
- How vegetation types and attributes can be mapped
- How vegetation information fits into County General Management Plans, CEQA, HCP's, NCCPs, etc.

RAPID ASSESSMENT IS USED TO ASSESS OR IDENTIFY:

- A large area in a short amount of time
- Type, location, and distribution of vegetation types (Alliance level and below)
- Composition and abundance information on the dominant, characteristic, rare, and exotic plant species
- General site environmental factors
- Wildlife Habitat Relationships (WHR)
- Validation of vegetation mapping delineations (Alliance level and below)
- Site quality and intensity of disturbances

See below for Agenda (page 4), Equipment list, Materials and Resources provided, and Location (page 5).

INSTRUCTOR BIOGRAPHIES:

Dr. Todd Keeler-Wolf is an ecologist who has worked in California for over 30 years. In this time, he has had the pleasure of studying the vegetation and flora of virtually every terrestrial ecosystem in the state. Currently, he is the Senior Vegetation Ecologist at the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) and leads their Vegetation Classification and Mapping Program. He is also the Senior Advisor of the California Native Plant Society's Vegetation Program. He is co-author of the upcoming Second Edition of *The Manual of California Vegetation* with John Sawyer and Julie Evens, and has authored several other books and publications. Todd received his undergraduate and graduate degrees at the University of California, Santa Cruz.

Jennifer Buck is a vegetation ecologist and botanist with the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) where she works to survey, classify, and map vegetation in



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California. She currently focuses upon the classification and surveying of grassland vegetation types but has extensive experience with different plant communities across the western United States. Prior to joining CNPS, Jennifer worked as an ecologist with The Nature Conservancy at the Cosumnes River Preserve. She earned both a B.S. and a M.S. degree in Plant Biology from the University of California, Davis.

Rachelle Boul has worked as a field ecologist for the last five years, throughout California. During the last three years she has worked for the Department of Fish and Game with the Vegetation, Classification, and Mapping program (VegCamp) where she has used the rapid assessment protocol during multiple projects. Within this time she has also worked closely with CNPS and has assisted with previous Rapid Assessment workshops. Rachelle has a BS in Biology with an emphasis in botany from CSU, Chico.

LOCATIONS:

Clair Tappaan Lodge

The Aug 11 evening lecture will be after dinner at the Clair Tappaan Lodge.

Dorm style lodging and meals (3 per day) are also available at the [Sierra Club's Clair Tappaan Lodge](#) for only \$55 per day.



Clair Tappaan Lodge is a rustic mountain lodge nestled in the Sierra Nevada of California at the top of Donner Pass. Built by Sierra Club volunteers in the 1930s, the lodge is an excellent home base for year-round recreation. The friendly, casual atmosphere and affordable nightly rates (including family-style meals) make the Lodge the perfect rustic getaway to the Tahoe/Donner area.

Onion Creek Watershed is a USFS research forest. It has unlogged upper montane forests, meadows with heavy and moderate grazing evidence, riparian areas, alder-willow carrs, alpine cliffs and fell fields.



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PROPOSED AGENDA:

Tues, August 11

7:00 pm Introductions and Overview of vegetation sampling, analysis, classification, and mapping

9:00 pm adjourn for night

Wed, August 12

8:30 a.m. Field Exercise in morning: Whole group

- Introduction to the Vegetation Rapid Assessment method
- Estimating percent cover of vegetation layers

Noon: Lunch in field - Please bring a bag lunch and drinking water for afternoon in the field

1:00 p.m. Field Exercise in afternoon: Smaller group exercise

- Conduct a field survey using Vegetation Rapid Assessment method

4:30 p.m. Regroup for questions and answers

Thurs, August 13

Meet at designated field location (TBA)

Field Exercise all day: Break into groups of 2-3 people

8:30 a.m. Meet at field location for review of the protocol

9:30 a.m. Select vegetation types for sampling. Complete 1st rapid assessment

Noon: Lunch -Bring your bag-lunch and drinking water for the afternoon

1:00 p.m. Complete 2nd rapid assessment in different vegetation type

3:30 p.m. Q & A, Turn in Vegetation Rapid Assessment field forms for Certificate of Completion; fill out evaluation forms

4:00 p.m. End of the workshop



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**EQUIPMENT LIST, MATERIALS / RESOURCES PROVIDED,
LOCATIONS:**

Please Bring the Following Equipment/Supplies:

- Clipboard
- Notebook and pencils
- Sturdy boots and field clothes appropriate for conditions
- Water for 2 field days
- Bag lunch (if you did not pay for meals and lodging), for 2 field days
- Snacks



Optional Items:

- Compass and/or clinometer
- Binoculars
- Digital camera
- GPS unit

Photograph: Julie Evens

Materials / Resources Provided:

- Course materials for lecture on a CD (e.g., slides and reference material)
- Data sheets, maps, and references for all field exercises.
- Certificate of completion for all whom successfully complete the course including completing two Vegetation Rapid Assessment field forms on the third day.