



CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY BULLETIN

CNPS 2009 State Conservation Conference Emphasizes "Making Science Matter Again!"

Action agenda urges Obama administration to use science to guide national policy decisions

"It's time we once again put science at the top of our agenda...Promoting science is about ensuring that facts and evidence are never twisted or obscured by politics or ideology. It's about listening to what our scientists have to say...especially when it's inconvenient. Because the highest purpose of science is the search for knowledge, truth, and a greater understanding of the world around us."

(December 20, 2008) —President Elect Barack Obama

BY BOB HASS

This past January over 850 professional practitioners from throughout California and beyond—including agency officials, environmental consultants, and land managers, as well as students, academics, conservation advocates, and amateur botanists—converged on Sacramento to attend the historic statewide CNPS 2009 Conservation Conference: Strategies and Solutions. Held at Sacramento's Convention Center and Sheraton Grand Hotel, the three-day conference was cosponsored by 50 agencies, organizations, and consulting firms, prominent among them being the California Bureau of Land Management and the California Department of Fish and Game.

The timing of the conference was serendipitous, given that the inauguration of President Obama occurred the day immediately following the event. As CNPS's outgoing executive director Amanda Jorgenson told those assembled in her opening remarks:

"The need for a statewide plant conserva-

tion conference has never been so critical. After eight long years of an administration that constantly sought to ignore the importance of science; weaken environmental policies and practice; and give priority to short-term economic demands over nature, we are ready for a change of direction. In this new era of change and with a nationwide feeling of 'Yes, we can!' it is critical that all of us take advantage of this historic opportunity to work together to make science and nature matter again."

Since its formation in 1965, CNPS has only held one other statewide conservation

conference, which took place in 1986. Ann Howald, who attended that conference, recalled what it meant to its participants, when she addressed this year's opening plenary session. "For many of us, it was a turning point. We came away from that conference with a much clearer sense of California's conservation challenges, and with the resolve and the means to tackle them." Organizers of the 2009 conference planned it with the same intention.

Each day of the conference from 8 a.m. to 10 p.m. was filled with a multitude of

(continued on page 6)



The east lobby of the Sacramento Convention Center served as a gathering point for conference participants.

[Editor's Note: Additional coverage of the conference appears on pages 4, 5, and 6. All photos on pages 1, 4, 5, and 6 by Davis Stewart.]

From the Executive Director

Many of you are already aware that Amanda Jorgenson, who led CNPS as executive director for the past three years, will be moving to Washington, D.C. with her family. I was fortunate to have a full month to observe and learn from Amanda before she left CNPS, and was impressed by what she had accomplished with the organization, as well as her genuinely warm approach to members and staff. Our successful 2009 Conservation Conference was a fitting culmination to Amanda's incredible tenure with CNPS. As I mentioned in my closing comments at the conference, Amanda will be a tough act to follow!

While sad that my new friend and colleague will be moving away, I am very enthused about having an opportunity to work with an organization as dynamic as CNPS. As your new executive director, I

bring many years of business management expertise to the organization, as well as several years of experience working with local conservation and land-use issues. I am familiar with many of the challenges we face as an organization dedicated to conserving California's native flora by helping Californians understand the value of native plants and plant communities.

One of the most important foundations for achieving this conservation effort is our investment in science. As your new executive director, I will work to strengthen our scientific foundation through our rare plant and vegetation programs, which are the core of our knowledge base for conservation efforts.

In addition, I will work to expand our education mission through the CNPS Conservation, Education, and Horticulture Programs, by working with other like-minded organizations, schools, and public



Davis Stewart

Outgoing CNPS Executive Director Amanda Jorgenson (left) with Tara Hansen, the Society's new Executive Director.

agencies to inform more Californians about the fundamental role of native plants in sustaining our natural world.

I am looking forward to meeting and working with you as our organization embarks on an exciting year in a new era of change. 🌱

Tara Hansen
CNPS Executive Director

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Linnea Hanson Named Agency Staff Person of Year

Linnea Hanson of the Mount Lassen Chapter has received the CNPS Agency Staff Person of the Year Award. Recipients demonstrate extraordinary commitment within their agency to the conservation of native plants and their habitats.



Jim Bishop

Linnea Hanson

Since 1979, Linnea has worked at the Feather River Ranger District of the Plumas National Forest, where she is widely known for her innovative and creative approaches to achieving resource management goals. For instance, she helped define Forest Service responsibilities for managing native plants when there was no formal program, and developed a Rare Plant Handbook, Sensitive Plant List, and Interim Management Guide.

Linnea also initiated rare plant pollination studies, the Sierra seed zone study, weed mapping, a forest-wide survey of montane peatlands, and aspen tree restoration via cooperative agreements with the Civilian Conservation Corps. In addition, she has collaborated with California Indian Basketweavers to enhance culturally significant plants, and with Hugh Safford, region ecologist, to use fire to maintain healthy serpentine plant communities. 🌱

Catie Bishop
Mount Lassen Chapter

Volunteer Service Awards

CNPS regularly recognizes members for outstanding contributions to the preservation and appreciation of California's native flora



Gary Hundt

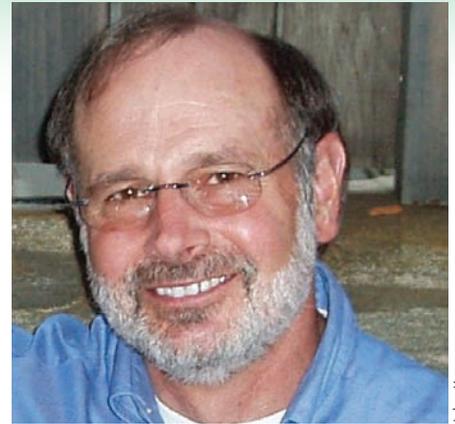
John Herrick (far left)

through its Volunteer Recognition Award. CNPS is grateful for all they have done.

John Herrick's dedicated service on behalf of native plants and CNPS has

generated a new level of enthusiasm in the Milo Baker Chapter by bringing together those with shared interests to work toward a common solution. For many years he has worked actively for conservation in various capacities: as conservation chair, coordinating surveys of rare plants and vegetation, and promoting preserve stewardship. John has worked effectively with agencies, municipalities, and other organizations on policy issues, and has documented all his work for the chapter so that the role of conservation chair can be better defined and maybe even funded.

David Krause's 26 years of participation in the San Luis Obispo County Chapter have included service as recording secretary, chapter president, delegate to the CNPS Board of Directors, treasurer, plant sale worker, and field trip leader. He is one of those consistent workers whose efforts



Julie Krause

David Krause

benefit the Society as a whole as well as his own chapter. For about the past 15 years he has also organized and led the chapter's popular mid-winter Fungal Foray.

CNPS members are encouraged to submit award nominations to blairce@verizon.net through—or with the concurrence of—their chapter presidents. 🌿

Charles Blair, Chair
Volunteer Recognition Committee

CNPS Now Has Presence on Facebook

Taking Our Show on the Web

The CNPS website, www.cnps.org, contains a wealth of information about CNPS programs, individual chapters, books and other publications, as well as an impressive number of resources related to native plants. Our website is a tremendous asset, and we've long searched for a way to attract more people to it, including younger folks.

One strategy we're now exploring is Facebook, a social networking website that is widely used by young people. CNPS recently joined Facebook as a group. There's a link to the CNPS Facebook Group at www.cnps.org (on the right).

There you'll find information about CNPS events, and once you join the group, you can view or post pictures, ask questions, voice opinions, and get help identifying plants. We're also encouraging chapters to start using Facebook by posting local events there, as well as on their own websites.

To join the CNPS Facebook Group, go to the CNPS website (www.cnps.org) and click on the link "Visit us on Facebook" located on the right side directly below the orange poppy. Once on the Facebook site, click on "Sign Up."

For more information on using Facebook, please contact Jack Tracey at 916-447-2677, ext. 202, or jtracey@cnps.org. 🌿

Jack Tracey
CNPS Development Director



Vegetation Program Impacted by State Financial Crisis

The State of California's financial crisis has directly affected the CNPS Vegetation Program, along with programs of hundreds of other conservation organizations and agencies. In December, the State froze bond-funded projects, including grants and contracts that were well under way.

Since our Northern Sierra Nevada Foothills Vegetation Mapping Project is state funded, we have had to let go some of the project's trained and dedicated field staff. We still hope to produce a map for at least half of the original Northern Sierra Nevada Foothills area, which will lead towards better land-use planning and further protection of native plant habitats.

We are now seeking additional funding to continue this project and to keep on at least some of our high-quality staff who have been involved in the Vegetation Program this past year. 🌿

Julie Evens
CNPS Senior Vegetation Ecologist

Special Sessions at Conservation Conference Cover Broad Range of Topics

The concurrent sessions at the CNPS 2009 Conservation Conference covered a broad range of topics, so there was literally something for

on five areas of the state, including the Great Basin and Desert Provinces, Central Coast and Valley, California Floristic Province (in Baja, California), Southern

covered were preparing for meetings with elected officials and their staff, building relationships with legislative and committee staff, planning a grassroots public relations campaign, monitoring language used in communications, and effective communications methods.

A session on equal protection for plants, facilitated by Keith Wagner, CNPS Litigation Chair, also featured a panel of experts. Attendees learned about the history behind protection of “the commons” and about the various federal and state regulations that impact wildlife and habitat. In California, one positive sign is that the state Bureau of Land Management automatically recognizes CNPS 1B species as “sensitive.” In addition, some states are now working to include plants in their wildlife action plans. All panel-



Some of the entries in the botanical illustration contest took one’s breath away.

everyone. Many were scheduled in two or three blocks of time that ran back-to-back for a cumulative period of three to five hours to allow more depth, as well as offer an overview of current research.

There were regional sessions focused

California, and Northwestern California. Other sessions addressed conservation planning tools, the impact of climate change on native flora, rare plants, restoring rare plant populations, assessing and mitigating impacts to sensitive plants and communities, land management, invasive plants, vegetation classification and mapping (which ran for 6.5 hours), and land acquisition for plant conservation.

In addition, CNPS Legislative Consultant Vern Goehring facilitated a very pragmatic two-hour legislative action workshop. It featured a four-person panel of experts with two state legislative staffers and two experts from the nonprofit sector. Among the topics



Jerome Ringo gave the first keynote address at the conference. He challenged CNPS to increase the diversity of its membership by discussing green issues, which impact all people.

ists were in agreement that current law offers little to no protection for native plants, and that the public perception of the value of plants needs to be changed. The more that individuals and groups become involved in land-use decisions, the greater the chance that plants will be protected. 🌱

Bob Hass
Editor, CNPS Bulletin



Government agencies were well-represented as exhibitors at the conference.

Conference Well Attended By Students

Thanks to the generosity of CNPS members and chapters, students were well represented at the CNPS 2009 Conservation Conference. “Fully 15% of conference attendees were students, most of whom might not have been able to attend without scholarships,” said Josie Crawford, conference co-coordinator. “We’re extremely grateful to our members who made this possible.”

One goal of the conference was to inspire a new generation of researchers, conservationists, and environmental advocates, as they are the ones who will have to confront



Lunch breaks provided an opportunity to continue discussions from the morning’s sessions, as well as to make new friends and network.

unprecedented environmental challenges in the years to come. CNPS received numerous letters of appreciation from students who attended the conference. Below are excerpts from one such letter:

“I want to thank you and the Sacramento Valley CNPS chapter for sponsoring my attendance at the CNPS Conservation Conference. I attended the conference all three days and thought the experience was more than fantastic in many ways.

“This opportunity came at an important stage of my soon-to-be career. Since I am a senior at UC Davis and this is my last quarter, I am preparing to begin my career as a botanist, and the conference solidified that determination for me. I was really glad to hear many people say that more young botanists are needed in the profession; it gives hope in these troubling times.

“Every aspect of the conference was fascinating to me and there wasn’t one talk that I did not enjoy. It left me motivated and encouraged to move ahead in my career knowing that so many others share the same passion.” —Jill Poloske

Bob Hass

Editor, CNPS Bulletin



John Muir Laws, keynote speaker at the conference banquet, proved both entertaining and inspiring. His message: Spend time out in nature. It’s beauty will nourish your spirit and help you keep fighting to protect it.

Were You Able to Identify the Wildflowers?

A number of people wrote saying they enjoyed trying to identify the California native wildflowers pictured on page 6 of this year’s CNPS Annual Report, which came as a centerfold in the last issue of the *CNPS Bulletin*. For those of you who want to check how you did, the answers are posted on the state website (www.cnps.org) under Horticulture Program/Gardening Links. The list is titled, “Annual Report Wildflower ID List.”

In Appreciation: Helen Camp

Helping others identify wildflowers

Helen Camp, a long-time CNPS member, was active in the Orange County Chapter. Kind, gentle, and cheerful, she yearned to learn and share discoveries. She served as a treasurer in the early days of the chapter. On field trips her knowledge and enthusiasm proved infectious.

Her favorite exploration area was Caspers Wilderness Park (CWP), a preserve nestled within the western coastal Santa Ana Mountains, where she attempted to identify and catalog every plant inside its 8,000 acres. She would

examine wildflowers, return home and type up a list of what was in bloom, and then post her list all around the park. Orange County’s best botanists would consult her lists with confidence before entering the park. The site on which she found the small-flowered morning glory (*Convolvulus simulans*) is known locally as Helen Camp Clay Hill.

In planning their estate, Helen (who predeceased her husband) and Ortho showed the family’s commitment to plant conservation by including both the state office and the Orange County Chapter in their



Helen Camp

living trust. A total of \$24,300 was recently donated from the Camp estate.

Jack Tracey

CNPS Development Director

Conference (from page 1)

addresses, concurrent sessions featuring 264 presenters, meetings of special interest groups, and social activities (including a banquet Sunday evening attended by over 400 people!). There were also 25 poster presentations by CNPS chapters, 31 exhibitors, a large CNPS sales booth with books and clothing, a live and silent auction, botanical art and photo contests, a poetry reading, and a showing of the film, "Nature's Refuge." Sandwiched in between all of this were opportunities for networking. The energy at the event was electric, and the enthusiasm of participants self-evident.

INSPIRATIONAL SPEAKERS

Leading off the conference was keynote speaker Jerome Ringo, president of the Apollo Alliance, past chair of the National Wildlife Federation, and the first African American to head a major U.S. conservation organization. His message was clear and unequivocal: just as Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. used civil rights issues to engage a cross section of Americans, today we must use green issues (clean air, soil, drinking water, and renewable energy) to do the same thing because they impact all of us, regardless of income, ethnicity, or ideology. He noted that the ethnic composition of conference attendees was nearly 100% white and did not reflect that of the U.S. He then challenged CNPS to change that by conducting educational outreach to diverse groups that makes clear how environmental issues impact their daily lives.

Stephen Hopper, the conference's second keynote speaker, is an internationally known plant conservation biologist and the 14th director of the Royal Botanic Gardens, Kew, England. In his address he called for a change in values so that need—not greed—drives how we care for the planet. We know how to clean up the environment, he said, but solutions must be worldwide. To that end, Kew is

leading the way through its science-based plant conservation program, the Breathing Planet Programme (<http://www.kew.org/aboutus/annual-review-2008.pdf>), which addresses the loss of plant diversity and the detrimental effects of global warming.

During Sunday night's banquet, conference participants were treated to an animated address by the multitalented John Muir Laws. An inspirational speaker, environmental educator, naturalist, artist, and author-illustrator of two California field guides, Laws is a researcher at the California Academy of Sciences. He reminded us of the value in getting out into nature, of looking more deeply at animals and rocks as well as plants and flowers, and also of listening to nature's sounds. "If a wolverine could travel all the way from the Rocky Mountains to repopulate the Sierras," he admonished, "then we are not alone in our conservation work." Renewing ourselves in nature is what will "keep our fire stoked" so that we have the strength to continue fighting for the survival of the planet, he said.

ACTION AGENDA

The conference closed with a plenary session at which participants contributed their input to an action agenda for the federal, state, and local levels. Among the top suggestions was the recommendation that CNPS partner with other nongovernmental organizations, agencies, and community groups to press for policies and programs that increase protections for native plants, plant communities, and wildlife, and that promote sustainable solutions to global warming and the decrease in biodiversity. Another strong recommendation was the hiring of a CNPS Conservation Director and a Staff Attorney. Other key points included strengthening the Society's education programs and support for botanists, increasing outreach to kids and non-English speaking groups, and strengthening legal protections for plants.

Conference participants and all 50 partnering organizations were asked to sign a letter to President Obama. The letter cites the concern that conservation has been neglected and environmental protections have eroded over the past eight years. It urges the new administration to work with Congress and appropriate federal agencies to develop strategies and implement solutions to reverse this trend, and to make science matter again by using it to steer national policy in critical areas such as sustainability, climate change, and resource conservation.

As part of CNPS's intention to strengthen its partnerships with other groups and institutions in order to increase the impact of conservation efforts, the letter also endorses the Society for Conservation Biology's recommendations for actions by the Obama administration and Congress to conserve biological diversity. Finally, it states that CNPS plans to forward its own additional recommendations to the Obama administration once it has synthesized strategies and solutions from the 2009 conference—recommendations that will likely be applicable to plant conservation issues nationwide.

Proceedings of the CNPS 2009 Conservation Conference will be available early in 2010, and the feasibility of holding similar conferences every two to three years is also being discussed. 🌿

Bob Hass is editor of the *CNPS Bulletin* and former conservation cochair for the Milo Baker Chapter.

Correction

In the donor listing of the 2007–2008 CNPS Annual Report (the centerfold of the last CNPS Bulletin, Vol. 39, No. 1), Halli Mason should have been listed as a Major Donor under Mariposa Lily, and in the Donor and Legacy Circles.

Gardening With Natives

Judicious Mulching

BY BARBARA EISENSTEIN

Most people do not realize that gardeners are a contentious bunch. They discuss, banter, argue, and almost come to blows about which plants, amendments, and gardening practices are best. There is one thing, though, that most agree on, and that is the wonders of mulch.

Mulch is a top-dress for soil. It can be organic, such as woodchips, bark, or partially decomposed compost. Inorganic mulch can consist of rocks, pebbles, or decomposed granite. Mulch is even made from shredded tires.

A few of the many benefits attributed to mulch are moderation of soil temperature, water conservation, weed and erosion control, and improved soil structure. All of this, while providing the garden with a look that is neat and cared for.

When selecting mulch for native plant gardens, if possible try to observe your plants in their natural settings, or check with a knowledgeable landscaper or person at a local nursery. Most undisturbed sites have some kind of soil covering. Woodland soils are usually covered by a deep layer of organic material. Chaparral and scrubland have little organics on the soil, though some do collect, along with pebbles and inorganic debris. Sandy desert soils are covered with a thin green layer called a cryptogamic crust. This crust—composed of cyanobacteria, algae, moss, and lichens—is critically important for the maintenance of a healthy desert ecosystem.

Using organic mulch in gardens that feature desert, chaparral, or scrub plants can produce some undesirable results. If the mulch remains too moist, these plants are more likely to rot. Furthermore, in time organic mulch enriches soil. Dry plants are adapted to lean soil. In enriched soil they may respond with lush growth that

dehydrates during hot weather, resulting in extreme stress or even death.

On the other hand, plants adapted to wetter, more verdant regions appreciate a layer of organic material. Inorganic mulch can get too hot in summer, too cold in winter, and does not hold water nearly as well as organic mulch.

With regard to using shredded tires as mulch, Linda Chalker-Scott of Washington State University concludes in her review of scientific studies that this is an inappropriate material for the following reasons: 1) it is not as effective in controlling weeds; 2) it is highly flammable and difficult to extinguish once it begins burning; and 3) it contains a number of metal and organic contaminants with known environmental and/or human health effects.

In addition to matching the mulch to the plants, here are a few other advisories. Always start with clean mulch. Keep mulch away from trunks or stems of plants. This area, called the crown, is susceptible to pathogenic organisms and should be kept clean and dry. If using a thick layer of organic mulch, make sure you water enough to soak the soil below the mulch, and then give the soil a chance to dry out. Avoid mulch that may contain weed seed and pesticides or other toxins. A thin layer of organic mulch can encourage weed growth, so be sure to keep the organic mulch three to six inches thick.

And finally, don't forget the bees! Mulch in gardens and parks reduces habitat for native solitary bees, since many of these



Lupine (center), brittlebush (*Encelia farinosa*, front left), and chalk dudleya (*Dudleya pulverulenta*, front right), mulched appropriately with decomposed granite and river rocks in a Claremont garden.

insects nest in bare soil. With the decline of European honey bees, and studies indicating that solitary bees make a significant contribution to the pollination of both crops and native plants, it may be prudent to leave some soil undisturbed and unmulched. 🐝

Barbara Eisenstein is the horticulture outreach coordinator at Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden. Since arriving in California 12 years ago, her yard has been morphing from a turf-dominated garden into a wild native landscape.

[Note: Plant California natives wisely. Protect rare and endangered species and prevent gene pool contamination by using locally grown species. Avoid using invasive plants, whether native or introduced. [<http://www.cnps.org/cnps/archive/landscaping.php>]



Leaving some garden areas unmulched supports native solitary bee populations. Pictured left-to-right: Solitary bee (*Halictus tripartitus*) in early morning; pollen-laden female of same species; and female bee (*Diadasia* sp.) excavating burrow.

New CNPS Horticulture/Native Gardens Committee Chair

Christina Lewis, of the Sacramento Valley Chapter, has been named the new CNPS Horticulture and Native Gardens Committee Chair. Chris says she actually jumped at the chance to fill the position. “I see this as a tremendous opportunity to build a wider audience for CNPS through native plant gardens, to give chapters much needed support, and to establish partnerships with other conservation organizations.”

Chris brings to the job broad experience in CNPS. She has served as plant sale co-chair with the El Dorado Chapter, and as program chair, conservation cochair, Wildflower Weekend chair, and president of the Sacramento Valley Chapter. Currently she heads up the chapter’s new native plant nursery.

The addition of the words “Native Gardens” to the position now makes explicit what most CNPS members already knew—that gardening is at the heart of horticulture. It also signals an intention to reach out to a broader audience of Californians who love gardening, but may not yet have cultivated an appreciation and love of native plants. For many, gardening is their “entry point” into becoming members of CNPS.

Partnering with other organizations that have a statewide presence is one of the ways Chris hopes to spread the word about the value of natives. For example, Chris and the Sacramento Audubon education chair have developed a program that incorporates elements of the Audubon-at-Home program. Called Smart Gardening, the practice encourages garden choices that welcome



Andy Anderson

Chris Lewis

birds, bees, butterflies, and people.

Chris looks forward to working with CNPS members statewide, and is currently seeking additional members to help CNPS with horticulture and native garden issues. If you are available to help, or would like updates, contact her at Gardening@cnps.org.

Next Chapter Council Meeting

(Details available at: <http://cnps.org/cnps/admin/cc/>)

SAT., JUNE 6, 2009

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