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CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY  
*San Diego Chapter Newsletter*

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## CHAPTER MEETING

**Tuesday, November 20; 7 p.m.  
Room 104, Casa del Prado  
Balboa Park**

**FROM THE HEADWATERS TO THE RIVER MOUTH,  
CONSERVATION AND STEWARDSHIP OF NATIVE  
PLANT HABITATS IN THE SAN DIEGO RIVER  
WATERSHED- 3 CASE STUDIES**

**by Shannon Quigley-Raymond,  
San Diego River Park Foundation**

Conservation of native plant habitats and connecting the public with their value is one of the highlights of the River Park Foundation's efforts to Create, Connect and Conserve the San Diego River watershed. We do that through three avenues of engaging the public in their stewardship: headwaters conservation, urban open space restoration, and community native plant gardens. This presentation will focus on 3 sites, one from each type; the audience is encouraged and will learn how to participate in an upcoming urban riparian re-vegetation project in December.

Eagle Peak Preserve is a 516 acre nature preserve owned by the San Diego River Park Foundation. While primarily Coastal Sage Scrub, EPP also contains oak woodland (including **Engelmann Oak** (*quercus engelmannii*), native grassland, chaparral, and riparian habitats. In 2007, fire burned approximately 85% of the Preserve. We will share results and photographs from the newly completed 5-year fire recovery photo monitoring completed on November 10, 2012.

Our Friends of the River Mouth group care for and conserve the coastal dune habitat at the River's Mouth and have revived and protect a previously undocumented population of Salt Marsh Bird's Beak (*Chloropyron maritimum ssp. maritimum*).

The Point Loma Native Plant Garden hosts a variety of native plant species as well as our native plant nursery and is the base for our newest effort, Home to

Nature, a program to engage youth in growing native plants for habitat restoration projects in the watershed.

Shannon Quigley-Raymond, Healthy River Healthy Communities Program Coordinator, is a San Diego native with a B.S. Environmental Systems: Ecology, Behavior and Evolution, from UCSD, and has been with the Foundation for 5 years. She is involved in riparian habitat restoration, invasive non-native citizen plant surveys, biological monitoring, and habitat assessments for the Foundation's conservation lands.

**Pre-meeting Gardening with Natives, 6:30 to 7:00 p.m.:** "Native Plants, Soil and Mulch" Soil is the single most important element, besides plants, in your garden. Learn how to remedy disturbed soil with Compost and how to improve sustainability by using Mulch to feed the soil, retain moisture, retard weeds and create an active soil biology that makes for long-term health of both the plant and the environment. Sharon May, from Agri Service Inc., will address why mulch is crucial to native plant success, how to apply mulch and how to select the specific type. Her talk will also include some unique regional programs for homeowners.

**7:00 p.m.** – refreshments, book browsing, socializing.

**7:30 p.m.** – presentation.

Chapter meetings are free and open to the public. They are held in the Casa del Prado, just west of the San Diego Natural History Museum in Balboa Park.

## PLANT SALE THANK-YOU

We had another successful plant sale on Saturday October 13<sup>th</sup>. We raised thousands of dollars for the chapter and local conservation and education projects, recruited many new CNPS members, reached over 500 people and continued to develop the chapter's volunteer base. Thanks to all the volunteers who make the sale possible and the customers who bought all the plants. Special thanks to the following:

- **Amy Huie** & and the seed team for cleaning and packaging all the seed for the sale
- **Callie Mack, Kay Stewart, Beth Mather, Anne Murphy, Don Miller, Susanne Altermann, Carol Manning, Tim Swift,**

**Leslee Newton-Reed, Theresa Acerro,** and **Sandra Hall** for labeling the plants

- **Vince Scheidt, Mel Howe, Beth Mather,** and **Mark Lawless** for growing plants
- **Connie Beck** for leading a group of volunteers (**Jim Wadman, Charlene Kasian, Michelle Pickett,** and **Pat Fishtein**) to propagate plants for the sale
- **Vons, Sprouts, Waters Fine Food & Catering, Sprinkles Cupcakes, Jimbo's,** and **Papa John's Pizza** for donating food to feed all of our volunteers on sale day
- **Walter Anderson's** nursery for donating shopping boxes
- **Recon Native Plants** for plant donations
- **Margaret Fillius** for those beautiful plant informational signs which are available for free download on our website

Volunteers work on the plant sale year-round and we always need help. CNPS members are encouraged to get involved. CNPS will be selling plants at Tree of Life Nursery in March 2013 and then again in Balboa Park in October 2013. Once you're done planting, recycle those pots and help raise money for CNPS, see <http://www.cnpsd.org/recyclepots.html> for details.

**Carolyn Martus & Mary Kelly,** Plant Sale Co-Chairs

## TECOLOTE CANYON NATURAL PARK

**November 4; 9 a.m. to noon.** A relaxed opportunity to learn plant lore of this coastal natural reserve from a CNPS member. Meet at the Tecolote Nature Center. Wear sun protection and comfortable walking shoes, bring water. Rain at 8 a.m. cancels the walk. Directions: exit I-5 at Seaworld/Tecolote exit. Go east (away from Mission Bay) on Tecolote, past the ball fields, along the driveway to the very end. Free and open to the public, and parking is also free. The walk is repeated the first Sunday of each month. Remaining date for 2012 is: Dec. 2.



## BOARD MEETING

**Wednesday, November 7, 6:30 - 8:30 p.m.,** monthly CNPS San Diego Chapter board meeting to be held at 4010 Morena Blvd, Suite 100, San Diego (Thomas Guide 1248 C4). Exit I-5 to Balboa Dr. east and turn north on Morena Drive. Proceed 1/2 mile and make a u-turn at the Avati Street signal and turn into the driveway for 4010. Drive to the parking lot on the west side (away from Morena). Members are welcome to attend as observers. If you want to discuss an issue, please ask to get on the agenda by sending an email to [president@cnpsd.org](mailto:president@cnpsd.org).

## It's Time to Elect Board Members

The Chapter Executive Board consists of 11 members, each selected for a two year term. This year we need to elect six members of the Board, and next year we will elect five. This year we have 6 candidates running for 6 positions, all of whom are currently Board Members. **The ballot is due by the chapter meeting on November 20.** Please mail it so it will arrive before then or bring it to the chapter meeting.

### Tom Beltran

"I currently serve as a board member and the Secretary for the San Diego Chapter. My primary interests are in the desert where my wife, Rose, and I spend much of our time. As a member of the Borrego Springs Sponsor Group, I'm heavily involved in land use decisions affecting our desert community. While the East County Multiple Species Conservation Plan has been on hold due to San Diego County budget constraints, I look forward to continuing participation on important issues that affect vast tracts of land in east county."

### Cindy Burrascano

"Lee Wedberg taught me Plant Taxonomy at SDSU but it has been CNPS that has nurtured my long term interest in native plants from a conservation and horticulture viewpoint. I would like to continue serving on the board to help guide the chapter. Most of my botanical knowledge has been gained from observation, journal reading, attendance at symposia, and picking people's brains although my educational background is in biology and I work at a local biotech company. I am forever grateful to Mr. Hewitson at San Dieguito High School for getting us out into the field to compare plants on north and south facing slopes and to Dr. Wedberg for making taxonomy approachable (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=i6HvZrOMFfa>). I hope to find ways to get the chapter a bit more involved with educational opportunities and would love to have someone step into the Education Chair for the chapter."

### Jonathan Dunn

"I am a San Diego native and have worked in the field of native habitat conservation and restoration for the last twenty years. My interest and respect for California native plants began, in part, from growing up in and around Tecolote Canyon. Through most of my childhood, hiking in the canyon was my primary recreational activity. My interest in native plants is also traceable to my mother, Lucille Dunn. She took care to demonstrate her belief that the natural world has intrinsic beauty and utility through her use of native landscaping and her craft works. My interest in native plants was formalized when

I studied the California flora with Dr. J.R. Haller at UCSB. Through my studies under and subsequent employment by Dr. Haller, I gained an understanding of taxonomy and systematics. I currently work as a plant ecologist for the consulting firm AECOM. Some of my current work includes a collaborative effort with the CDFG to map natural vegetation in western San Diego County on behalf of SANDAG. I currently serve as Vice-president of our Board and would like to continue to be of service to the Chapter.”

### **Susan Krzywicki**

“I am chair of the Gardening Committee. Our committee inaugurated the San Diego Garden Native Tour in April of 2012, which included 27 gardens and over 600 participants throughout the county. I have been responsible for preparing the CNPS SD Gardening fact sheets - the one and two page informational bulletins that are available online and at CNPS SD chapter meetings. Additionally, I work with the Surfrider Foundations’ Ocean Friendly Garden program to introduce native plant gardening to a wiser audience. And I have been helping to co-found Garden Native, a non-profit dedicated to helping professionals and homeowners to use native plants in urban and suburban gardening. I have lived in San Diego off and on since I was five and have a deep interest in the very local nature of plants in our community.”

### **Tom Oberbauer**

“I am a third generation native San Diegan and grew up in the hills east of El Cajon studying coastal sage scrub and chaparral habitats, with a Master's Degree in Biology from SDSU. My thesis was on the vegetation of San Diego County with emphasis on grasslands. I have been involved with the San Diego Chapter of CNPS since 1975, served as Director at Large and chapter President for a combined roughly 10 years. My knowledge of the vegetation of San Diego County, Baja California and the nearby islands led to writing articles, including articles published in Fremontia. I have worked for the County of San Diego, with efforts in the Multiple Species Conservation Program Plan that has preserved more than 40,000 acres of sensitive habitat to date. I am committed to the conservation of the rare and endangered species of San Diego County and the myriad of vegetation communities that occur here.”

### **Bobbie Stephenson**

“Lee Wedberg also taught me Plant Taxonomy at SDSU about a hundred years ago – well, maybe not that long ago, it just seems like it sometimes! I am currently a board member and the Newsletter Editor. I have also served as Secretary, Plant Sale Chairperson, Vice President, President, Treasurer, and Newsletter Editor since I joined the chapter in 1978. I wish to continue on the Board to provide botanical expertise, promote the appreciation and knowledge of California’s diverse native flora, and keep our members up to date on chapter

activities and the botanical world. I’ve been a Botanist in San Diego County since about 1982 and hold a BS Degree in Botany and MS Degree in Biology with an emphasis in Botany, both from SDSU. After working as a consultant for 18 years, I joined the County of San Diego and worked for Tom Oberbauer on the Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP) until he retired from the County. I am currently working on the North County Plan, the second of the County’s MSCP plans.”

## **CONSERVATION**

### **A Few More Words About Climate Change**

At the Southern California Botanist meeting, I saw a poster where someone had mapped the extent of coastal sage scrub, figured out the average precipitation for those map polygons, projected the increased temperature and decreased precipitation from global climate change for those polygons, and declared that coastal sage scrub mostly would not survive in those map polygons.

Next to this poster was a long-time CNPS member with tears in her eyes. She has spent decades fighting to get southern California municipalities to protect coastal sage scrub, to have them plant it around developments, and now this poster was saying it would all be lost anyway.

That made me mad, and this is how I responded to her, slightly expanded.

First, let's look at the rainfall data. Average precipitation is rainfall averaged (if you ask) across 30 or 100 years. Sounds good, right? Well, my mother's been informally been doing the same thing for about 30 years up in LA. While average inches per year sounds exact, here in southern California, most of that rain comes in a few big storms. If those big storms miss you, you get a lot less rain. Rainfall is about probabilities, storm tracks, El Nino, and many other factors, but it is never average here. My mother can construct an average rainfall year for her yard, but none of the 30-odd years she has recorded come close to matching that average pattern. Moreover, plants don't live due to average rain, they die due to water stress. That's a lot harder to determine, because it also depends on how much water the soil can hold, how much runs off, and how long the droughts last. Average precipitation is a poor predictor for this.

Second, let's look at the vegetation maps. One problem with GIS maps is that people start thinking those polygons are real. Every species responds to environmental gradients differently, and mapping of vegetation boundaries are arbitrary, based at best on field data and models.

If this doesn't make sense, let's instead talk about beer and Wisconsin oak savannas, which I studied while getting my PhD. Let us pretend that the beer is the oak forests, and the air in the room is the prairie. Oak savanna is the foam on the beer. Foam is nothing but air

and beer, but the suds have unique properties that neither air nor beer possess. Oh, and good luck drawing a clean polygon around the air and beer edges inside that foam. You can, of course, make a sudsy polygon between your air and beer polygons, but really, how much beer does the foam have to have before it's beer (woodland), and how big do the bubbles have to be before they're air (prairie)? And doesn't that foam change faster than the beer or air, possibly faster than you can map it properly? Wisconsin oak savannas are essentially unmappable, and that's one reason I love them.

If you look at our hills, you'll see similar foam patterns where shrubs invade a grassland, chaparral shrubs invade coastal sage scrub, or where plants recover from a patchy fire. I strongly recommend that anyone who is confused by this, especially the polygonophiles, needs to get a few beers and go out to study patchy hillsides for a while. Bring some glasses.

So if a scientist takes averaged precipitation models and arbitrarily bounded polygons, maps these against one of many climate models, and makes a fear mongering poster, did telling that CNPSer it was problematic make her happy? No, it didn't.

What if the prediction is right, despite its flawed data? Aren't I just whistling past the graveyard?

Not really. The thing to remember is, the coastal sage scrub we see now isn't the same vegetation it was 1,000 years ago, let alone 10,000 years ago. Vegetation composition changes over time, relentlessly, if slowly. Unfortunately, we tend to treat native vegetation as some sort of museum diorama, something that has to be preserved intact and which is broken when it changes. This bad habit gets exacerbated in people who think of vegetation mostly in terms of GIS map polygons, species lists, and percent covers, especially when they want that vegetation to stay the way they mapped it forever. That's a very human desire for stasis, but it's not natural.

Every species reacts to its changing environment in its own way. When we save coastal sage scrub or any natural vegetation, we're not saving a museum diorama for school kids to tour. Instead, we're saving all the possible sources for future vegetation. There's little point in trying to save coastal sage scrub as a typological vegetation, but we can certainly save most coastal sage scrub species and help them grow in the future, wherever and whenever that will be. Ecologists call this resilience, and that's what we really need to preserve.

Besides, it's naïve to think that, with temperatures rising and rains more unpredictable, the neighborhoods that encroach on our wildlands will stay where they currently are. We're too dependent on imported water and increasingly expensive energy for that to work. The maquis of the Mediterranean, their coastal scrub and chaparral, hides the ruins of many 19th century houses, built when more people lived there than do now, and I'm quite sure that our descendents will see the same thing here in a century or two. I've seen suburban yards rewilded in southern California, and while it takes time, it

is very impressive when it happens.

The natives may yet win, especially if we keep being overly exuberant with our water and power. As I told that CNPSer, when she persuades municipalities to adopt native plant landscaping and use less water for maintenance, she's really helping save civilization from climate change.

That made her smile.

~ **Frank Landis**, Conservation Committee Chair

## Fixing Environmental Laws?<sup>1</sup>

As November lurches inexorably towards us, I keep getting distracted from happy thoughts of the upcoming plant sale by politics. This column is, if nothing else, an attempt to exorcise it from my tortured brain, so I can think happy thoughts about plants.

One issue that's slithering around this year is whether we should fix, update, or perhaps junk CEQA, the California Environmental Quality Act. It's, um, fascinating to see how the opposite sides view this issue.

One thing many people forget is that environmental laws set up adversarial relationships: documents are put out for public comment, and the only comments people get back are negative. It's set up so that environmentalists oppose projects. As a result, the opposing sides tend to see each other as enemies: environmentalists see developers as greedy and evil, developers see environmentalists as stupid, out-of-touch obstructionists, while agency people, however they feel personally, are influenced by the politics of their institutions and elected bosses, and the money that flows to those at the top.

This isn't a plea that we should all be friends, although I'll note that it's a heck of a lot cheaper, for everyone, when we can get beyond butting heads. The problem with the stereotypes is that there's a big grain of truth to all of them, and we're working in an arena where conflict is inevitable.

Instead, I want to think about what this means for environmental law. I know I'm not alone in thinking that, if we just enforced CEQA as written, we'd have many fewer problems throughout the state.

So why don't we do that, just follow the law? Let me offer a few guesses:

Some of it's clearly ideological. Some developers think CEQA's a bad law because it stops them from doing what they want to do, and do as little as possible to follow it. On a deeper level, many people in our society see growth as essential, and anything that obstructs growth is therefore bad. Many people who see the world this way

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<sup>1</sup> The editor apologizes for inadvertently truncating the October Conservation article. This is the entire article.

have a real problem dealing with criticisms of growth. If we tell them a development won't work for good economic reasons, they deny our claim, because it collides with their pro-growth ideology on the way to the more rational parts of their brains.

Some of the problem is functional, both in the agencies and the environmental consulting industry. There's little industry-wide quality control, from certifying professional skills to improving techniques. The odd thing is that other fields, such as medicine, have used rigorous quality control and improvement programs to become some of the biggest industries in the world, even though no one really wants to pay for it (you *like* paying your medical bills?). Imagine, if you will, an environmental industry that was aggressive about improving restoration techniques and rigorous about both critiquing and learning from failures. Fantastic, isn't it? I've been told it'll never work. Repeatedly. Many agencies aren't much better. Bureaucrats who have to deal with CEQA paperwork are often overworked and undertrained deliberately, so that CEQA documents don't get the scrutiny they need. This allows their politician bosses to criticize the law as being ineffective, when in fact it has been deliberately crippled.

Then there are ethical problems. I have heard of a developer who bribed the entire planning division in a California city, just so that he wouldn't have to install a 80 foot-long fire lane. So far as I can tell, it would have been cheaper for him to simply comply with the law, but for the developer, it was about the principle of the thing, not the money. Or something. While corruption is certainly a disease of developers and their special friends in the agencies and consultancies, we environmentalists aren't free of it either. Environmental complaints can cover for more unsavory issues, such as keeping people of a different ethnicity or religion out of a particular neighborhood. This kind of thing gives both NIMBYs and environmentalists a bad name (NIMBY stands for "Not In My Back Yard"). We have to make sure that we're honest too.

And finally, there is politics and image. CEQA contains this option called a "Statement of Overriding Considerations." This is a statement where the deciding authority (a City Council, say) approves a project, even though it causes environmental impacts, because there are overriding considerations. The benefit of the project outweighs the cost to the environment. This Statement is not often used. Instead, everyone covers up problems. Consultants will hide impacts, agencies will ignore problems, and in extreme circumstances, legislatures will suspend the law or add a special exemption, rather than issue a Statement of Overriding Considerations. The only reason I can see for doing this is that, in our current, execrable era of gotcha politics, a Statement of Overriding Considerations will be used against politicians as examples of how anti-environmental they are. So they avoid it.

What is to be done? Well, one thing is to fight for CEQA. While it's not perfect, few people now living can imagine how bad developments will be if it goes away. As

environmentalists, we also have to become more honest and thoughtful about environmental impacts. We can't have our fantasy world of no impacts, but we can work towards a world where almost all native plant species survive into the indefinite future, with us around too. Above all, we have to support honesty and ethical behavior wherever we see it, both in our friends and in our opponents. After all, there's a huge difference between a loyal opposition and an enemy.

And I'm going to go think about the plant sale and happy plants.

~ **Frank Landis**, Conservation Committee Chair

## FLAT-TOPPED BUCKWHEAT

### One of Our Most Common Native Plants

Flat-topped buckwheat (*Eriogonum fasciculatum*) is one of the most widespread and common plants in San Diego County. Flat-topped buckwheat is a member of the Polygonaceae, a large temperate family of plants found throughout much of the Northern Hemisphere. It contains about 40 genera and approximately 1,000 species according to the University of the California Museum of Paleontology. In this family, the genus *Fagopyrum* is a commercial source of the buckwheat food crop and *Rheum* is rhubarb. Commercial buckwheat originated in China and was previously produced in extensive amounts in the United States. However, it declined greatly with the advent of other grain crops stimulated by nitrogen fertilizer. It is an alternative to wheat products. Rhubarb, which originated in Asia and Eastern Europe, is still grown for food. The sour tasting stems are cooked with sugar and often made into compote or baked in pies. I have personal familiarity with it since my family grew it regularly and I learned to greatly appreciate my mother's rhubarb custard pies.

Indicators of the family Polygonaceae have been found as far back as the Paleocene (Muller 1981). It is generally recognized that the family is very diverse in western North America because of drying climates. The interplay of dry and moist environments associated with the interglacial and end of the glacial period created new habitats that could be exploited (Reveal 1978).

The subfamily Eriogonoideae is best represented in California, including the genera of *Eriogonum* and *Chorizanthe*. The genus *Eriogonum* is widespread in North America, ranging from Alaska to central Mexico, and contains roughly 250 species (Reveal 1978). California supports 224 species at the time of the writing of the Flora North America but the genus is one where taxonomic numbers seem to occasionally change as new species are found and described or old species and varieties are lumped together. The genus is also quite

diverse in natural history, physical appearance and color. Most have small whitish flowers with a tinge of pink, but there are many with bright colors such as red, yellow, and chartreuse. Some have whitish or silvery leaves that are found and basal, and others like Flat-topped buckwheat have narrow sometimes needle like dark, green leaves. In fact, there are some species that may have more than one color, white and red, depending on the form, variety, and location. Many are annual but shrubs are also a major portion of the species.

*Eriogonum fasciculatum* is generally a dark green shrub with puff shaped inflorescences on the end of branching flowering stalks. Sometimes the flower clusters are large enough to coalesce into a flattened head form of white flowers. This is the source of the common name.

The genetics of the flat-topped buckwheat is interesting because some of the varieties, including those found in San Diego County, are tetraploid, meaning that they have multiple sets of chromosomes that appear to be duplicates (Stebbins 1942). The base number appears to be  $2n=40$  chromosomes, meaning that there are 20 pairs or 40 chromosomes total. That is the total number for *Eriogonum fasciculatum* var. *fasciculatum* and *E. f.* var. *polifolium* but *E. f.* var. *foliolosum* has a number of  $2n=80$  or double the number of chromosomes. In fact, some of the more coastal forms of *E. f.* var. *fasciculatum* that have every small needle like leaves, such as the ones on the coastal side of Point Loma and Torrey Pines State Park, may also be tetraploid with multiple chromosomes (Lee Wedberg pers. comm. 1974).

The three varieties of *Eriogonum fasciculatum* found in San Diego County overlap in distribution but roughly inhabit different parts of southern California and Baja California (USFS, 2012). *E. f.* var. *fasciculatum* are the darkest colored shrubs and grow to 1.2 meters tall. They occur on coastal bluffs, dry slopes and foothills and range from San Luis Obispo County south to Central Baja California. This is the one with which most people are familiar. In San Diego County, it grows inland to the foothills of the mountains, Ramona, El Cajon, Jamul, Alpine and Escondido.

*E. f.* var. *foliolosum* may grow a little larger and occur on interior valley slopes and mesas below 3,000 feet from Monterey County south to northern Baja California. In San Diego County, it grows in Ramona, parts of Jamul, and Alpine up into the lower mountain slopes. The leaves are more gray-green with pubescence above making the plants more of a grayish green color than *E. f.* var. *fasciculatum*.

*E. f.* var. *polifolium* is much more gray colored than the other two and it occurs across the mountains down into the desert and it is somewhat smaller than the other two varieties. It occurs from San Luis Obispo and Fresno Counties south to San Diego County and eastward to the Mojave Desert, southern Nevada, Utah, and Arizona, but south to northwestern Sonora Mexico and central Baja California. It overlaps with *E. f.* var. *foliolosum* in places like Riverside County but it occurs in drier locations.

While many people think of it as a brown bush and it may appear that way during dry periods, the flowers of flat-topped buckwheat following ample winter rainfall can produce lace-like coverings of the sage scrub habitats. The plants may flower well into the summer. Then, when dry and in fruit, they turn a rusty brown color. During extended very dry periods, they will also die back or lose their leaves, appearing to be completely dead. However, successive rainfall will stimulate the plants to produce green leaves and new branchlets quite rapidly.

Ecologically, there are few locations in San Diego County where it would not be found on at least the edge of a meadow, an opening in chaparral growth, the edge of a forest opening, or rocky desert slope. The coastal forms are major components of coastal sage scrub habitat and a wide variety of scrub groupings in the Sawyer, Keeler-Wolf vegetation system. *Eriogonum fasciculatum* is relatively resilient to various types of disturbance. It is an obligate seed reproducer and reestablishes after fires usually quite well. However, overly frequent fires and sites with dense masses of introduced weedy annuals as well as soil disturbance that clears the soil can eliminate it. Still, if the soils are not too fine so that they favor grasses and herbaceous weeds, flat-topped buckwheat is a strong invader of disturbed soils. Abandoned cropland can be reclaimed by buckwheat if it is left undisturbed and the soils are loam, coarse loams or sandy loams. Furthermore, in road cuts and scraped areas, *Eriogonum fasciculatum* is usually one of the first species to colonize the open, eroding soils.

*Eriogonum fasciculatum* is also extremely important for the wildlife that inhabit coastal sage scrub. The coastal sage scrub endemic California gnatcatcher frequently builds its nests in shrubs of flat-topped buckwheat. Sage sparrows inhabit thickets of *Eriogonum*. The local form of the western skink inhabits the leaf litter beneath the buckwheat as well. Harvester ants also collect the seeds of buckwheat and store them around their homes for use as food. The orange-throated whiptail (lizard) is also found beneath this shrub, feeding on termites that in turn feed on the dead buckwheat stems.

Humans have also exploited buckwheat. Parts of San Diego County used to be major sources of honey. Buckwheat flowers do not have large amounts of nectar individually but where thousands of them are visited, nectar can be collected and converted by bees into excellent honey. Harbison Canyon and surrounding valleys were extremely important for honey production according to the definitive book on bees and honey production that has been reprinted over the last century (Pellet 1920).

Buckwheat is often used for revegetation projects. However, care should be taken to insure that the seeds used are genetically similar to the ones that naturally occur there. Introduction of different genetic material through revegetation may have negative effect on the overall genetic mix of the shrubs that occur in an area.

The various forms of flat-topped buckwheat are major components of the landscape and habitats in San Diego



County. I learned to appreciate it long ago when crawling around in it as a child, looking for birds' nests in its branches and simply appreciating the flowers on the hillsides following winters of good rainfall.

~ Tom Oberbauer, Chapter President

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## Native Garden Work Parties

### Plant New Native Plants at the Old Town Native Landscape

**November 10 (Saturday), 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.** Learn the right way to plant a small shrub from a container, and your help will add to the this project, which is an evolving replica of the landscape of the people who lived there before Europeans made contact.

The native plant landscape at Old Town illustrates some of the many plants that provided food, fiber, tools, medicine, and more for the Kumeyaay people for thousands of years. The shrubs and seeds of medicinal, useful, and edible plants such as gooseberry, milkweed, and scrub oak will be added now so cool season rains will provide for their needs. Other plants that respond more keenly to the lengthening days of light after the new year will be planted in February. Those plants will include deergrass, rushes, and wild rye grass.

The Old Town native plant landscape is at the north-west corner of the Park, at Taylor and Congress Streets. If you take the bus or trolley, cross at the corner near the tracks, where the trees and the sign are located. If you drive, you can park for free in the lot by Taylor and Calhoun, or in the CalTrans lot right across Taylor Street - cross at the signal at Juan and walk toward the trees. Have sun protection and bring pruners, your favorite weeding tools, and gloves if you have them, or share the tools and gloves that will be provided.

~ Kay Stewart

**Point Loma Native Plant Garden: November 3 and 18, 9:00 – noon.** Rain cancels; bring water; no facilities; tools/supplies provided. Usually the first Saturday & third Sunday of each month. Contact [Richard@sandiegoriver.org](mailto:Richard@sandiegoriver.org) for more info.

## Opportunity to Help Plant at the California Native Plant Demonstration Garden in Balboa Park

There will be a public memorial planting of native plants at the California Native Plant Demonstration Garden (CNPDG), 2201 Morley Field Drive, immediately west of the Balboa Park Tennis Club courts in the Florida Canyon section of Balboa Park (Thom. Guide p.1249 C-6), on **Sunday, November 11, 2012, starting at 9:00 a.m.** The garden is immediately south of the Upas and Alabama Streets intersection, on the driveway off Morley Drive at the crest of the hill. The CNPDG is across from dog off-leash area parking lot. This is the prettiest parking lot in all of Balboa Park. There is a large picnic/sunbathing grass field on the west side of the parking lot (north of the off-leash dog area). This is the staging area.

Several organizations have come together for this public planting and memorial event. They include the San Diego Canyonlands, Recon Native Plants, Tree of Life Nursery, the City of San Diego Parks & Recreation Department, Balboa Tennis Center, California College San Diego, The Friends of Balboa Park, the North Park Community Association, and the San Diego Veterans Museum and Memorial Center. Alan Bennett [[alanbennett@hotmail.com](mailto:alanbennett@hotmail.com)] (619) 955-3275] is usually at the CNPDG every Monday and Wednesday morning and on the second Saturday of the month. We hope to have the area looking "casual but presentable" for the Veterans' Day mass planting. And always remember: "Slip, Slop, Slap and Wrap (Slip on a long sleeved shirt, Slap on a hat, Slop on sun block, and Wrap on sunglasses)". **BRING WATER!**

The CNPS-SD Newsletter is published 12 times a year. The newsletter is not peer reviewed and any opinions expressed are those of the author identified at the end of each notice or article. The newsletter editor may edit the submittal to improve accuracy, improve readability, shorten articles to fit the space, and reduce the potential for legal challenges against CNPS. If an article, as edited, is not satisfactory to the author, the author can appeal to the board. The author has the final say on whether the article, as edited, is printed in the newsletter. Submissions are due by the 10<sup>th</sup> of the month preceding the newsletter; that is, March 10 for the April newsletter, etc. Please send submittals to [newsletter@cnpsd.org](mailto:newsletter@cnpsd.org).

### CNPS-SD Calendar for Oct. 2012

- 11/2: Board Meeting (p. 2)**
- 11/3: Point Loma Native Garden Work Party (p.5)
- 11/4: Tecolote Canyon Plant Walk (p. 2)
- 11/10: Old Town Work Party (p.5)
- 11/20: Chapter Meeting (p. 1)**
- 11/18: Point Loma Native Garden Work Party (p.5)

**MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

\_\_\_ Student or Limited Income \$25; \_\_\_ Individual \$45; \_\_\_ Family or Library \$75  
\_\_\_ Plant Lover \$100; \_\_\_ Patron \$300; \_\_\_ Benefactor \$600; \_\_\_ Mariposa Lily \$1,500

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_  
Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

Mail check payable to "CNPS" to: CNPS, 2707 K Street, Ste 1, Sacramento, CA 95816.

**CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY**

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November 2012 Newsletter

Dedicated to the preservation of the California native flora

**CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY – SAN DIEGO**

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