



CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY
San Diego Chapter Newsletter

CHAPTER MEETING

**Tuesday, October 21
Room 104, Casa del Prado
Balboa Park**

**A Programmatic Monitoring
Approach for Vernal Pool Restoration
by Christina Schaefer**

With increasing development pressure on Otay Mesa, a landscape that was historically dominated by vernal pool complexes, vernal pool restoration to mitigate for development projects is becoming very frequent on the mesa. To document the progress of vernal pool restoration projects over time, post-restoration monitoring methods compare data collected at the restored vernal pools (treatment) to data collected in natural vernal pool systems (i.e., control or reference sites). To minimize impacts on the remaining natural vernal pool complexes on Otay Mesa from multiple post-restoration monitoring surveys, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service suggested that a programmatic reference site be identified for all vernal pool restoration projects on the mesa. The vernal pool complex J-26 is one of the last remaining relatively intact complexes and was chosen to function as the programmatic reference site. Ms. Schaefer developed a programmatic monitoring program compatible with the data collection needs for vernal pool restoration projects. The data are being submitted to the San Diego Monitoring and Management Program (SDMMP) multi-taxa database to be available for everyone who needs reference data for their vernal pool restoration success monitoring.

6:30-7:00 p.m. – Natives for Novices: Designing Your Garden with Natives: Screens, Walls, Frames and More! Presenter: Kay Stewart, Landscape Designer.

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

7:30 p.m. – presentation.

FALL PLANT SALE

**Saturday, October 18
10:00 – 11:00 a.m. CNPS
Members Only
11:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m. Everyone
Casa Del Prado Courtyard
(across from the west entrance
to the Natural History Museum)
Balboa Park**

VOLUNTEER FOR THE SALE

The plant sale committee is looking for volunteers to help with this year's sale.

- **Publicity:** help distribute flyers, simply download one from our website and post it in a public place.
- **Volunteer the day before the sale:** We need lots of helpers on Friday, October 17, from 9 a.m. to noon to help set up the sale.
- **Volunteer the day of the sale:** We need lots of helpers at the sale from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m.
- **Before the sale:** We need a few volunteers for about 4 hours on Wednesday (October 15) or Thursday (October 16) to help tag plants at nurseries in San Diego County.

For more information: info@cnpsd.org

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.

Chapter Vice President Jonathan Dunn (vicepresident@cnpssd.org), the election coordinator. If you like how things are going, let us know that as well.

Finally, we are looking at ways to compensate for activities and issues that draw on our funds. The major cost for our chapter each year is associated with the paper copies of the newsletter. Electronic copies do not have a cost associated with printing and mailing them, and that cost for paper copies comes up to about a dollar an issue. If we can convert the majority of the copies of the newsletter to electronic versions, it can significantly reduce our costs. I personally like the electronic format because it allows me to save and store newsletter articles in files that I can easily retrieve instead of having them end up in an unorganized pile of paper in a drawer or on a desk. I also enjoy the fact that the electronic newsletter arrives with color images accompanying the articles rather than the black and white versions in the paper copies.

However, the entire purpose of the newsletter is to exchange and distribute information to the members. Reading the newsletter is something that is really enjoyable and informs us about what is happening in our surrounding environment and activities for landscaping. We want to make sure that all have the opportunity to read and enjoy the newsletter in whatever format works for them. However for me, a reduction in the continual stream of paper that comes through the mail box is a good thing, and I can view and search for items in the newsletter more quickly than I can with a paper copy. So, please consider requesting to receive the newsletter electronically, but above all, read it.

Thanks very much.

~ Tom Oberbauer, President

BOARD MEETING

Wednesday, October 1, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. 4010 Morena Blvd, Suite 100, San Diego (Thomas Guide 1248 C4). CNPS-SD Executive Board meetings are always the first Wednesday of the month, except when the 1st falls on a holiday. Members are welcome to attend as observers. If you wish to discuss an issue, please email president@cnpssd.org to get your issue on the agenda.



Christina Schaefer

Christina Schaefer is originally from Germany where she studied landscape ecology and resources management. As a restoration ecologist, she specializes in the restoration of vernal pools. Christina restored her first vernal pool in San Diego in 1992 with Dr. Ellen Bauder, and has planned and installed many vernal pool restoration projects since then. While preparing the Vernal Pool Conservation Strategy for the MSCP North County Plan, she also assisted Dr. Bauder with data collection for the Hydro-geomorphic Model for vernal pools. Recently, she assisted SANDAG as expert advisor on the City of San Diego's Vernal Pool Habitat Conservation Plan.

PREZ SEZ

We are quickly coming up on our plant sale on October 18. As we mentioned before, it is probably the most important activity that we as the San Diego Chapter undertakes each year. It is not just an opportunity to purchase unique plants that are adapted to our dry and apparently drying environment, it is a time and place to learn about how to take care of them and specific details, such as what plants will work in your yard and where to put them. We will have experts at the sale who are available to answer questions on all of those topics. It is also an opportunity to see friends and socialize about native plants in our landscapes. But most of all, it is the major fundraiser for our chapter. So, please consider going down to Balboa Park on October 18 and picking up a few native plants.

We are also coming up on the election for our Chapter Board of Directors in November. If you or someone you know wishes to participate at a higher level in the Chapter, please send your request and a short bio to

CNPS-SD EXECUTIVE BOARD ELECTIONS TO BE HELD NOVEMBER 18

CNPS San Diego has eleven (11) members of the Executive Board whose term of service is two (2) years. Six members are elected in the even numbered years; 5 are elected in odd numbered years. This year, we will elect six members to the Board. The Chapter election will be held at the November 18. Members may bring their ballots to the November Chapter meeting or mail completed ballots to be received by CNPS-SD before November 18. The Nominating Committee will count the ballots at the November Chapter meeting. Ballots received after November 18 will not be counted.

You are invited to consider being a candidate for the Board if your membership in CNPS is current. Submit your request to the Chair of the Nominating Committee, Chapter Vice President Jonathan Dunn (vicepresident@cnpsd.org), along with a short statement of your qualifications and interest no later than **October 15, 2014**. The ballot and candidate statements will be included in the November newsletter.

The six candidates with the most votes will be elected. They will take office at the Executive Board Meeting in January 2015. If you have any questions about serving on the Board, feel free to contact any of the current Board Members for additional information.



Matilija poppy (*Romneya coulteri*)

CONSERVATION

The Limits of Broken Metaphors

Last month, I had a little fun with the metaphor of the world as a mosaic, an "artwork" where pieces are broken, then remade, healed into something new, a world where all the bits are in different parts of various processes, rather than a world of smooth trends and global crises.

I received some compliments, and a few comments along the lines of "dude, the world's changing, and that means old things break. It's progress. Get over it." That wasn't from a CNPS member incidentally, but it's a good reminder that some people follow the ancient Mongol practice of pursuing wealth through moving fast and breaking things, to paraphrase a well-known social media company.

Still, these...nomadic types are right. We have to be careful about extending the mosaic metaphor too far. A good example of this comes from landscape ecology, where the concept of mosaics has been put into practice sometimes with rather more zeal than reality allowed. Landscape ecology, the science of landscapes, has become in part the ecology of Geographic Information Systems (GIS). Landscape ecology maps are often made of polygons, each of which delineates a cell with some supposedly homogeneous characteristic. One polygon may be grassland, another forest, one urban, another suburban, and so forth. Is it any wonder that many landscape ecologists fell early and hard for the metaphor of the landscape being a mosaic? It's how their maps show the world. Tessellated.

Unfortunately, the mosaic metaphor suffers from two shortcomings, the interiors and the edges. The interior issue is obvious: how homogenous is homogeneous enough for each polygon? That's always arbitrary to some degree. Similarly, there are occasionally real, hard edges in the real landscape that can be readily mapped. But sometimes the edges are statistical abstractions, and sometimes the edges are arbitrary. As I've noted in previous articles, I did my PhD in Midwestern oak savannas, which are a type of landscape where the edges are essentially impossible to define, and that made me very aware of how artificial mosaic boundaries can be.

Actually, artificiality isn't necessarily a huge problem, because every good scientist and GIS practitioner is

perfectly aware of the constraints of GIS and other systems, and works around these issues as a matter of course. No, the problem comes when some scientist talks about how a “healthy” landscape is composed of mosaic of vegetation and *inspires* people. Inspiration can be dangerous, because inspired people tend to do things. As my late mentor John Sawyer pointed out pointed out, managers get paid to manage, even if the best thing they could do is to leave something alone. Worse, boldly inspired management programs tend to attract funding, especially if they score an early, experimental success. As a result, we get enthusiastic adoption of things like the mosaic metaphor, with at best mixed results.

A well-known, local example of this phenomenon is the notion that a healthy landscape consists of patches of different ages from different fires. This idea is somewhat controversial, in the sense that reality doesn't necessarily agree with the theory. But the real problem started when some land managers decided they could improve the "health" of the landscapes (whatever that is) they managed by artificially breaking them into mosaics of patches of different ages since last fire. The way they do this, is, of course, to start fires at different times. These are supposed to be planned, controlled fires, of course, but as we all know, it can be very tricky to control fires, especially when they've got a wind inspiring them.

If you've got a long memory, you already know that some of those fires got away from the land managers and destroyed things the managers were trying to save. They've put the best face they can on the situation, dealt with the inevitable lawsuits and so forth, but now they're kind of trapped in their active management model, whether they like it or not.

Here's another way to think of the mosaic metaphor. When mosaicists make mosaics, they take specially made pieces of glass and stone and carefully break them with special hammers to make the pieces, tesserae, with which they make their artworks. It's an ancient technique, perfected in Roman times. It doesn't take much more than that to understand the technique, but it takes thousands of rounds of breaking glass into tesserae for artists to get to the point where they can reliably break the pieces the way they want, to make truly beautiful mosaics. Beginners end up with messes, just as you'd expect. And tesserae are very, very simple in comparison to ecosystems.

When land managers start treating the landscape as something to be broken up into a mosaic, they're basically amateurs. They don't have thousands of broken mistakes from which to learn. If they're lucky, they may have a dozen or two. Of course they have

degrees, and experience, and colleagues, and publications, and expert advice, but the hard truth is that landscapes are massively, perhaps infinitely, more complex than simple tesserae or even the most artistic mosaics. Everyone's an amateur at breaking them, and I'm not being pessimistic or critical when I point out that functional, artificial landscape mosaics work as much by accident as by design. How can it be otherwise? Every attempt to make an ecosystem into a mosaic is going to be at least somewhat experimental. While it would be great to see more humility on the part of the breakers, I know that's a lot to expect. Humility is seldom inspirational.

Still, it's useful to think of the world as a mosaic, as a bunch of different pieces doing their own things, breaking at different times, healing at different rates. Just remember that it's a metaphor, and don't take it too seriously.

~ Frank Landis, Conservation Chair

RARE PLANTS

Musings on the Rare Plant Warner Springs Lessingia

(Lessingia glandulosa var. tomentosa)

On Sunday, September 7, my wife (Carol) and I, and our corgi puppy, Pippin, took a drive up to Lake Henshaw hoping to catch rain, thunder, and lightening in association with moisture dumped into southern California by Hurricane Norbert. We saw only wet highway and a few distant showers falling over the Warner Springs area.

The weather being a bit of a flop, I turned to my main project in the Lake Henshaw area these last two years – reviewing the status of the Warner Springs lessingia (*Lessingia glandulifera var. tomentosa*). We stopped at Barrett Hills Road, an excellent reference site, and saw that plants here were in full bloom.

As we approached the Riverside County line, I persuaded Carol to take a side trip up the Chihuahua Valley Road. The Chihuahua Valley is pretty far from anywhere in San Diego County. It seemed a good opportunity to confirm the plants were up before returning to map them on a future visit. Craig Reiser had first reported this plant at the Chihuahua Valley in 2001 in his *Rare Plants of San Diego County*. Craig's source for the Chihuahua Valley is

not known. This became Element Occurrence 6 in the CNDDDB. There is no voucher for this report and therefore the only way to confirm or disprove the report is to visit the site.

We found a lessingia almost as soon as we entered the valley. Much to my surprise, it was not Warner Springs lessingia that we encountered, rather the more widespread valley lessingia (*L. g. var. glandulosa*). After photographing plants, vouchering a specimen, and driving the length of the valley, we were convinced that Element Occurrence 6 could be scratched. With the Chihuahua Valley occurrence visited, my study is about done with only a single site yet to be examined.

Few of you are likely familiar with this plant. It is a classic example of an obscure wildflower. It occurs in a little visited area of San Diego's backcountry, blooms at a time of year most people are not thinking about wildflowers (summer and early fall), and it has a very narrow distribution in the vicinity of Lake Henshaw and Warner Springs. Warner Springs lessingia has a California Rare Plant Rank (CRPR) of 1B.3 in the online CNPS Rare Plant Inventory. Seven occurrences were known as recently as 2012 but including the Consortium of Herbaria records, at least two more were known.



Warner Springs lessingia (*Lessingia glandulifera* var. *tomentosa*). Photos ©2014 Keir Morse from www.Calflora.org.

It is a very distinctive plant. Simply pull up the California Consortium of Herbaria (Consortium) at <http://ucjeps.berkeley.edu/consortium/> and search *Lessingia glandulifera* on the specimens UC 87920 (Charles Orcutt s.n., 21 Oct 1889) or SD122732 (Hirshberg & Hendrickson, s.n. 28 Sep 1987). You can compare these with the photograph of SD 130900 (*J. Copp* 7), which is a good example of valley lessingia. These specimens have photographs available to examine on line.

Valley lessingia is usually less than a foot high, with wispy branches forming an overall bushy and rounded form. The tiny leaves and stems are green and glandular, especially in older plants. The plant is often smelled as

much as seen. The flowers are yellow and lacking rays (ligules).

Warner Springs lessingia differs strikingly in having stems, leaves, and branches covered with white-felty dense hairs (densely tomentose). The leaves are often broader, somewhat triangular, and longer. In July and August, before Warner Springs lessingia blooms, the boldly gray-white foliage is recognizable with binoculars 300 feet away.

Warner Springs lessingia appears only to occur on certain silty sands associated with Valle de San Jose and Lake Henshaw. Sites reported in the Consortium or CNDDDB outside this area were found either to be mis-identified valley lessingia or plants with intermediate characters. I have not examined the Ranchita area yet but I doubt the record will stand since the soils are not the same as those around the lake area.

While most of our rare plants are sensitive to disturbance, Warner Springs lessingia prefers open successional habitats, even thriving along open roadsides that are scraped annually. In 2012 and 2013, I spent hours walking or driving along roadways looking for this plant and making detailed maps of its distribution. Like a good friend I always looked forward to finding it. The Vista Irrigation District limits access to most of the lands at Lake Henshaw and along S-22, but I examined habitat as far out onto the district lands as I could. The distribution of the plants ends abruptly at the barbed wire fence or with a few lingering individuals beyond, except at a few sites where the plant extends well beyond the fence. Grazing is the one obvious variable that is different on one side of the fence than the other. The Irrigation District lands are heavily grazed and I would guess this is a good tasting plant to cattle.

As the season progresses, binocular scans require a little more attention. Warner Springs lessingia co-occurs with an unusually white-felty hairy form of sand aster (*Corethrogyne filaginifolia*) that also seems to be endemic to the Valle de San Jose and Lake Henshaw area. Early in the season, the two species are difficult to separate except upon close inspection. When the sandaster is absent, so is the lessingia. The similarity in hair coatings suggest it is possible that genes from the sandaster have flowed into the lessingia (or vis a versa). The two genera are closely related and in the last Jepson Manual were even treated under a single genus.

This is a CRPR 1B plant with good reason but I am less confident about assigning it a "3" extension. An extension of 3 is applied to plants that are not very endangered in California. The narrow distribution of this plant, caught between heavy grazing and roadside

maintenance, suggests that it is at least moderately endangered and probably should have an extension of "2". While it tolerates roadside maintenance, if Caltrans were to pursue more aggressive management, for example scraping the roadsides more than once a year, scrapping the roads between June and August, the most of the population could disappear.

I was unable to organize a CNPS field trip to the region prior to this newsletter. However, I anticipate organizing a CNPS/Southern California Botanist trip to this region this fall now that I know we have blooming wildflowers. Keep an eye on the website for updates.

~ **Fred M. Roberts**, Rare Plant Botanist

RECEIVE YOUR NEWSLETTER ONLINE

To receive your newsletter via email, please contact us at:
enewsletter@cnpsd.org

INVASIVE PLANT CONTROL

We are about midway out of the Artesian Creek gorge. We have finished another follow-up in this stretch of our restoration project. We sit on a ledge some ten to fifteen feet above the water to rest (walking in it is hard and climbing out even harder.) Beth and I sit back to appreciate the long ribbon of willows. The trees extend in two directions marking the stream channel as it proceeds through steep basaltic walls. In this peaceful Eden we drink in the calm of nature. Birds sing and dart among the vegetation while others soar above. We also take satisfaction in knowing that this 'new park' is the result of our persistent efforts. Then we look down and see fish. Fish? There are FISH!

Below us the water forms a pool and we are amazed at what we see. It is not like we have not seen fish before but these aren't the minnows or mosquito fish we would see on rare occasion. These appear to be mature, foot long fish and there are several. They appear somewhat reddish through the clear, tea-stained water. This is one more indication of the recovery of our project area. The water itself has become another healthy habitat.

It has been five years since our group began work on this stretch of creek and ten since we began near the headwaters. In the beginning we had little more than disturbed wasteland. The creek was dominated by eucalyptus, fennel, palms, tamarisk, arundo and French

broom (some 5-10 acres of broom). On the hillsides native habitat was largely displaced by non-native grasses, mustard, fennel and artichoke. It was like so many places we all know. They turn dry each summer and burn in the fall. Seemingly abandoned places where both wildlife and interest are absent.

Wildlife has rebounded in the terrestrial habitats but the creek, the aquatic component, was a great unknown. I could tell some of what was there. Weeds to be sure. The creek waters were virtually empty except for silt and introduced bullfrogs, mosquito fish and crayfish. I could also identify some of what wasn't there, most notably the insects and fish.

Today we have a healthy stream, full of native plants – and fish (and presumably that which the fish need.) All we have done is to remove non-native plants in a persistent and methodical manor. The world is seemingly magical in its ability to restore itself with just this bit of help. Getting to see it happen is our reward and why we do it.

Our attention is now focused on Lusardi Creek, the next watershed to the south. It is very much in the 'before' state. Beth has been treating tamarisk - a three year task. We will treat arundo in October and November. Beginning with the rains we will also turn our attention to annual weeds and artichoke. Five years from now, I can't be sure of the results or what we will be doing. I am certain we will once again be amazed at nature's magic.

~ **Arne Johanson**

Invasive Plant Committee Chairperson

WORK PARTIES

Old Town Native Plant Landscape

Saturday, October 11 - Work Party - 1 to 3 p.m.

Come help prune and shape the landscape's native shrubs and small trees. Bring your own bottled water and sun protection. Bring gloves and pruning tools if you have them, or share ours. The Native Plant Landscape is at the west end of Old Town Historic State Park at the corner of Taylor and Congress Streets opposite the Trolley/Bus/Train depot. Park for free in the shade of trees in the CalTrans parking lot on Taylor Street across from the Native Plant Landscape. For more information email Kay at fieldtrips@cnpsd.org

Point Loma Native Plant Garden

October 4 & 18, 9:00 a.m. – noon. Rain cancels; bring

water; no facilities; tools/supplies provided. Usually the first Saturday and third Sunday of each month. Contact: Richard@sandiegoriver.org.

TECOLOTE CANYON NATURAL PARK



October 5; 8 a.m. to noon. Meet at the Tecolote Nature Center on the first Sunday of the month. 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.

40th Annual SCB Symposium “Southern California Plant Communities: Threats and Solutions”

Saturday, Nov. 1, 2014 – Pomona College

Southern California Botanists (SCB) will host this year’s symposium at the North Seaver Auditorium at Pomona College from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. A mixer and banquet will follow at Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden, Claremont, CA. The mixer will feature the musical duo of Antonio Sanchez (RSABG Nursery Production Manager) and Evan Meyer (RSABG Seed Conservation Program manager), aka Sage Against the Machine, and their California native plant songs. Visit <http://www.socalbot.org/symposia.php> for more information and registration.

RELATED ACTIVITIES

2014 Cal-IPC Symposium “Wildland Weeds & Water”

Oct. 8-11, 2014 – CSU Chico

Registration is open for this annual symposium, which features presentations and discussion groups on the latest information in land management in these times of drought. <http://www.cal-ipc.org/symposia/index.php> for more info.

CNPS-SD Calendar for October 2014

- 10/1: **Board Meeting**, p. 3
- 10/4: Point Loma Native Garden Work Party, p.7
- 10/5: Tecolote Canyon Walk, p. 7
- 10/11: Old Town Native Landscape Work Party, p.7
- 10/18: **PLANT SALE**, p.1
- 10/18: Point Loma Native Garden Work Party, p.7
- 10/21: **Chapter Meeting**, p. 1

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January 13-17, 2015
San Jose, CA

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www.cnps.org/2015

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NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

Photography © Nick Jensen

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

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

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ e-mail: _____

Mail check payable to "CNPS" and send to: CNPS, 2707 K Street, Ste 1, Sacramento, CA 95816-5113.

CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

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C/o San Diego Natural History Museum
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October 2014 Newsletter

Dedicated to the preservation of the California native flora

CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY – SAN DIEGO

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RARE PLANT BOTANIST

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GARDEN NATIVE (Native Garden Tour)

Hei-ock Kimdirector@gardennative.org

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