Saturday
The September Chapter Council meeting is traditionally the Conservation-focused meeting. After an Overview by the Conservation Director Greg Suba, Saturday was taken up with various presentations from State and Federal agencies regarding the listing of species.

A spokesperson for the US Fish and Wildlife Service gave an overview of the Threatened and Endangered species laws and guidelines.

Mary Ann Showers of California Department of Fish and Game talked about rules, regulations, and policies concerning Threatened and Endangered Species in California. There are 220 listed species in California, 134 Endangered, 22 Threatened, and 64 Rare.

Ileene Anderson from the Center for Biological Diversity (CBD) talked about how to consider the political aspect when developing listing petitions for plants. She talked about changes that were being proposed to the Endangered Species Act, and the challenges ahead. Sometimes the CBD has had to sue the agencies to get them to complete the listing review. Also, a criticism she often hears is that species get listed, but never seem to be recovered. She stressed the need to educate the public about the importance of biodiversity, because without the public’s backing, strong policies to protecting species will continue to be eroded. Since the public often thinks of animals when talk of endangered species comes up, conservation groups (us) need to educate the public and policymakers about the need to protect habitat (plants) if we want to save animal species.

Sue Britting a private consultant from the El Dorado Chapter of CNPS related a case study about species listing in El Dorado County in an area known as Pine Hill. She related the difficulties of trying to produce a comprehensive plan with the county to protect endemic species on a particular substrate, in this case a gabro. They were successful in large measure, but lost some land to development. She stressed the importance of having listed species in negotiations, and the benefit of focusing on a special habitat versus a single plant population.

We had a presentation by Angie Evenden of the National Park Service, and Liz Ballenger from UCSB. They talked about the Phenology Project in California. The Phenology Project is just getting started, and will involve citizen scientists in the collection of plant life history data. It is somewhat similar to Project Budburst, if you are familiar with that. Plants will morph and move in response to climate change, and there is a need for baseline data to track those changes.

The plan is to monitor a few common, not rare, species in various parks twice a week. Pictures are taken, and a few simple questions are answered. The information will be gathered by the UCSB Phenology Stewardship Project. Right now they are trying to recruit employees of the Parks to do the monitoring as they are already near populations of those plants. I’d like to see it expanded to include all citizens who wish to participate. For more information the website is www.usanpn.org/cpp

Mary Ann Hawke from San Diego talked about their own Phenology Project where they looked at herbarium specimens and weather data over time from the mid 1800s to compile a plant list and phenology data for all the San Diego plants.
Dave Magney gave a presentation about the use of county general plans to protect species. He told us about the elements required in the general plans that can be used to make sure development is consistent with the conservation and open space elements, and the need for strong, clear language that the plan should include.

Carol Witham gave an overview of the history and current status of wetlands in California.

Josie Crawford gave a talk about the upcoming CNPS Conservation Conference, January 12th-14th. There will be pre-conference workshops on January 10th and 11th. A preliminary program was passed out that I will bring to the next Board Meeting. Early registration goes until October 31st. There are discounts for early registration of students into the hotel for $125/night until December 16th. There will be 220 speakers on 22 topics, student sessions, and art, photo, music, and poetry. Chapters are encouraged to sponsor students and other interested members. Once again there will be a store set up to sell Chapter wares. Chapters and individuals are needed to sponsor various activities such as tickets, fieldtrips, and events.

Sunday
It is time again to fill the board and CC positions. Anyone interested in serving, read and fill out a form located on the CNPS website. Ask me if you need more information.

Brian La Neve is asking to set up a time to meet with each chapter. He is the CC liaison from the board.

Our State organization is running on its reserve funds now. We need to find a way to secure long-term reliable funding.

Jim Bishop directed a policy revision discussion. The policy directs our CNPS advocacy to make clear the connection to native plants, to preserve our CNPS credibility, while allowing advocacy of broader plant and habitat issues. The revised policy was adopted.

Brett Hall, Board President, talked about the Strategic Plan CNPS is currently working on. He is requesting input from chapters. We will be discussing this soon.

Tara Hanson gave the Executive Director’s report. That report in its entirety is available on the website.

To receive the e-newsletter you must register online.