Chapter Council Chair, Marty Foltyn, talked about the Board of Director’s annual review. Thirteen chapters responded to the questionnaire, 11 less than in 2016. Since 2015 all but one parameter showed improvement. There will be a call for an ad hoc committee in September for the next review.

Board of Director’s report, David Pryor and Johanna Kwan the Board representatives related that all the Board members were on committees, and encouraged chapter delegates to join committees as well. The Board members also all participated in the Big Day of Giving, and approved the $3 million budget. The Board has been discussing hiring a Conservation staff position for southern California issues. They earmarked $150,000 as seed money to pay for a half-time position, and are asking southern California chapters to chip in to make it a full-time position. Executive Director, Dan Gluesencamp, reports that the staff is working extra hard with great professionalism doing big strategic things after the November election, especially in the areas of conservation, plant science, and communicating with the public. Below are 2 bills currently under consideration in the State legislature.

–SB 249 – Off-Highway Vehicle Modernization and Reform creates improved transparency and implementation of commonsense measures to protect our sensitive cultural and natural resources.
–SB 49 establishes strong and legally enforceable baseline protections for the environment that could be weakened by the Trump Administration. Measures would, among other things, protect federal lands within the State of California from sale to private developers for the purpose of resource extraction. The new proposed legislation would provide for species that are removed from the federal endangered species list to be listed by California, and that the State gets first refusal when public land is being sold. CNPS is asking chapter members to call their legislators to support both bills.

–The Plant Science Program is hiring 2 new ½ time botanists to assist Aaron Sims with listing species, and the inventory.
–Dan is encouraging chapters to search for plants in their local area thought to be extinct via the Rare Plant Treasure Hunt.
–CNPS needs more capacity to identify the conservation priorities for region-scale plans.
–Calscape has been a great success with 80% of people visiting the CNPS website going to Calscape.
–The CNPS Conference will be February 1-3, 2018. The call for abstracts ended July 10th.
–There will be regular and silent auctions, and chapters are encouraged to donate to both
–All chapters are encouraged to send students, or contribute to a student fund via the State office.
–He emphasizes finding ways of getting new members, perhaps developing new membership categories.

Insurance, Marty says insurance requests from the chapters need to be into the State office at least 6 weeks ahead of the event. CNPS needs a copy of the written agreement. Insurance guidelines are on the website.

Fundraising, Steve Hartman and Dan Gluesencamp talked about asking for money from potential donors. Number one is “don’t be embarrassed”. They say that many potential donors may not have thought about it much, or may be waiting to be asked. There are Chapter best practices guidelines available.

Climate Change Position Statement, Jim Bishop led a discussion about a climate change position statement which has been proposed, by a committee that has been working on it for months. With very little wrangling, the Chapter Council passed it. Now a new committee will work on a full-blow policy.

Bill Waycott gave a Phytophthora update. New materials are being prepared for the chapters. He also said that testing for the pathogen needs to be more affordable, and the State office is being asked for money to support chapters who have growing grounds to help them comply with the guidelines.

–He also talked about the proposed new chapter, the mountain bike chapter. We may be discussing it at the next CC meeting.

Break-out sessions, David Pryor led a discussion we attended about “Chemophobia”. CNPS currently has a policy on the use of pesticides. It is considered another tool for people to use in their battle with invasive species. The policy states that pesticide use should be judicious and application should be done by a licensed applicator. The text of the policy is on the website. There now is a vocal public group who are against all use of chemicals in the environment to protect children from exposure to toxins. CNPS must be ready to respond to questions about our stance on this issue. The group talked about things to keep in mind when discussing it with questioners. For example we must be able to:

-talk about relative risks and benefits
-be sensitive to health issues
-defend biodiversity
-relate that the vast amount of pesticide pollution in the environment comes from untrained homeowner use
-compare the application by CNPS for noxious weeds with much higher use by agriculture

Garden Tour discussion, Many chapters have garden tours. Some helpful hints emerged:

-partnerships with other organizations
-make sure homeowner is present and ready, contact in advance to offer help
-have CNPS member there to help
-make sure there are natives in the garden
-make sure plants are labeled
-have the name or business card available if a professional did the work

The next Chapter Council meeting will be the Conservation-focused meeting hosted by Milo Baker, maybe in Sebastopol.