General Meeting
MAY 2, 2018
Wednesday  7:00 pm
Butte County Library, Chico

Having Diverse
NATIVE BEES in Your Garden

Presented by ROB SCHLISING

Rob Schlising received graduate degrees in botany and entomology at the Universities of Wisconsin and California, and later settled at Chico State University. He taught classes in ecology and botany, mentored a good number of graduate students in botany and biology, and published field research.

After retirement native bees became attractive, and he gambled on drastically modifying conditions on his small property in Chico to attract as many kinds of native bees as possible. This involved total removal of lawns, and building beds for the kinds of plants that provide plenty of nectar and pollen in their flowers. He planted a grand mixture of native and horticultural plants. It worked! Rob’s spot has been surveyed for several years now for information used by the University of California’s urban bee project, and over 40 different kinds of native bees have been observed here.

In this talk, Rob will first mention why this focus on native bees is important. He will illustrate how his new garden came about and also which native bees one sees here. He will describe pleasures and benefits of “hosting” a diversity of these beautiful and interesting little animals, and will also point out unexpected (but actually, good) consequences of having this “native bee garden.” Finally, he will list flowers that are known to be “bee magnets” in urban Chico.
\textbf{Field Trips}

**VINA PLAINS PRESERVE**
May 6
Sunday
Meet at DeGarmo Park in Chico (off the Esplanade, south of Shasta School) at 9:30 am or at the preserve gate at 9:45. Bring hat, water and windbreaker as needed for the day, and wear strong shoes for walking on lumpy soil for about 1 mile round trip in The Nature Conservancy’s Vina Plains Preserve north of Chico. Depending on the weather we may see de-pauperate milk-vetch, Howell’s dodder and possibly seedlings of one of the Orcutt grasses, which are a few of the rare plans found at Via Plains Preserve. Space is limited. Please reserve contact MLMcNairn@aol.com or 530 343-2397. Leaders: Rob Schlising and Marjorie McNairn 530 343-2397

**MAGALIA SERPENTINE**
May 12
Saturday
Meet at Chico Park & Ride west lot (Hwy 32 & 99) at 9 am or at parking area at the intersection of Skyway and Coutolenc Road at 9:45. Bring sturdy shoes, sun/insect protection, lunch and water. This trip is a special request by a member who wanted to see certain plants in bloom such as larkspur, possibly bush poppy and especially Lewis Rose’s ragwort. We will walk down the hill to the head dam on the West Branch of the Feather River for lunch, and climb the hill back to the trailhead. Three miles round trip. Leader: Marjorie McNairn 530 343-2397

**BIG BALD ROCK**
**PLUMAS NATIONAL FOREST**
May 27
Sunday
Meet at Chico Park & Ride west lot (Hwy 32 & 99) at 9 am with lunch, water, sturdy shoes and money for ride sharing. We’ll drive east of Oroville to Big Bald Rock, a large granite outcropping, and enjoy expensive views of the valley and Coast Ranges while exploring for flowering plants. Leader: Marjorie McNairn 530-343-2397

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**DAVID ANDERSON**

It is with deep sadness that we announce the death of one of our long-term members, David Anderson, 95, at home on February 24, 2018. His wife, Carolyn died at home 16 days later. David joined Mount Lassen Chapter CNPS in June of 1988. As an Executive Board member starting in 1991, he was Treasurer, Secretary, Conservation Chair and Legislative Chair. He also led field trips to trails in the Magalia area where he lived. While in his chair positions he wrote monthly “Conservation Reports” and “Legislative Notes” for the Pipevine newsletter. He was the first and last member to occupy the Legislative Chair, from November 1995 to 2016, and after his retirement from that position he continued to write a monthly “Legislative Note” for the Pipevine. His last note was December 2017. There are some CNPS members who will remember his more active years, and his conscientious and consistent support of our chapter. His legal background as a retired attorney gave us invaluable guidance on the critical issues of those years. We remember him with gratitude and honor.
It took Robert, our knowledgeable botanist, to identify a rare plant still in its vegetative state as *Packera eurycephalus var. lewis-rosei*. It is a California endemic with a CNPS Rare Plant Rank of 1B.2, which means it is very rare, and is threatened or endangered in California and elsewhere. It is also a strict endemic to serpentine soil, meaning it will only grow on serpentine.

It attracted our attention first by its interesting highly-divided, ruffled leaf structure. Flower buds were not yet evident, which prompted a request (demand?) right then and there that we must return in one month, or maybe later since it blooms from March through June.

Along the road in the serpentine chaparral we found *Quercus durata var. durata*, a scrub oak, which grows only in California and is a strict serpentine endemic. The acorn cups were hanging on, and occasionally an acorn could be found. The leaves of this small shrubby oak were leathery, hence the name leather oak, with stellate hairs growing on the underside, giving it a paler appearance than the top of the leaf.

MacNab cypress is not a rare plant, and is scattered in many small groves throughout the inner northern California Coast Range and the foothills of the northern Sierra Nevada. It is happy growing in the harsh, dry, low-nutrient soils of serpentine and ultramafic formations. It is a shrub or small tree with leaves in dense, short flat sprays. Most California cypresses do not have flat sprays. We inspected the leaves, and the small white glands that produce the sticky resin with a strong spicy scent.

The last special species is a fern, *Aspidotis densa*, or Indian’s dream. This little fern is quite similar to the *Aspidotis californica* or California lace fern we saw in Bidwell Park along the upper Yahi Trail, but this fern has a strong affinity to serpentine soil, and *A. californica* does not. To tell them apart one must turn the leaf over and look at the false indusium, which consists of the edge of the leaf rolled under to cover the sori. Or if you know you are on serpentine, you will know the little fern is *Aspidotis densa*.
Late March / early April is redbud time. Drive up any of the ridges leading from the valley into the foothills and you can’t help but notice vase-shaped shrubs - or small trees, exploding with magenta pink flowers. There is nothing subtle about them when in bloom. Likewise driving through the streets of Chico the redbuds can’t be missed - blooming after the magnolias, and before the dogwoods they are the standout tree for several weeks. Many of these planted in gardens and as small street trees are not the California native (Cercis occidentalis) but the eastern redbud (Cercis canadensis). Though I’ve not spent time in the company of the eastern redbud, I would imagine the variety of flower visitors is not all that different than those attracted to our native species.

This year the flowering of the redbud that grows alongside my deck coincided with the emergence of the carpenter bees. From my vantage point it was a mutually happy experience for the redbud and the bees. For a week, until the recent storm, the activity was intense. Female and male carpenter bees vying for nectar, the females also busy gathering pollen and the hyperactive males chasing after the females. There is a lot going on in the company of flowers!

Carpenter bees get a bad rap. The people who don’t really care about flowers malign carpenter bees for boring into wood - fences, sheds, telephone poles etc consider them pests. For those interested in flowers and pollinators the carpenter bees are labeled as thieves or robbers of nectar - not doing their fair share when it comes to pollination. And there is probably some fear because of their size - they are California’s largest native bee.

I am a strong defender of carpenter bees and have lived with them harmoniously for thirty plus years on my homestead. The packing shed, from where we shipped plants around the country, has been home to a healthy population of the mountain carpenter bee, Xylocopa californica. Soon after I built the shed using 1 x 12” cedar siding in 1987, they moved in. During the spring months myself, and employees, wrapped and packed plants while listening to the humming buzz of the bees. It was the vibration of the females constructing the nesting tunnels that we could hear, along with the more intense buzzing of the males flying and hovering nearby to protect the nests and keeping an eye on the females. One of my employees called them ‘flying chainsaws’ - they were that noisy. The shed is still standing, despite some of the siding being riddled with see-through holes - mostly due to acorn woodpeckers who expose the tunnels looking for the bee’s larvae.
While some studies show they are not always the most efficient pollinators they are steady workers, demonstrating a high degree of flower constancy (working the same species of flower - which is beneficial to that species) and visit flowers non-stop through the heat of the summer. They are very early risers in the summer and have become familiar early morning companions. When I take my cup of coffee out onto the deck just as the day is breaking I am greeted by their rhythmic buzzing - well before the robin’s daybreak song and early enough that there is not even adequate light to discern the flower color of the salvias they are tending to.

Yes, they can take nectar by biting a hole in the corolla, but this is frequently on non-native plants such as the salvias with tubular flowers. On the redbud they take the straight on approach, landing on the keel of the flower and probing into the corolla for the nectar - their face pressed up against the base of the flower, sometimes with just their big grey eyes showing. The stamens are located in the keel of the flower. When ripe and the bee lands on the flower the stamens become exposed, depositing pollen on the underside of the bee - of any sex. The females will then comb the pollen onto the hairs of her back legs to bring back to the nest to provision for their young.

For a few days in early April the carpenter bee activity was intense with maybe two dozen bees - a mix of males and females. But clearly it was the male energy that dominated the scene. Watching them fly in and out of the redbud branches brings to mind scenes in adventure movies of fighter jets or helicopters flying between buildings in a big city under siege, or in deep canyons with abrupt turns and drops in elevation. The aerial maneuvers of the males are impressive. While they frequently paused for a nectar break, there was a dizzying amount of activity. The females went about their business, seemingly unawares of the antics of the males. Occasionally a male (they are noticeably smaller than the females) would attempt to mate with the female while she was at a flower and at times, the weight of him would cause them to go into free fall before he was dislodged or she readjusted to the added weight and flew to the next flower continuing on with her business.

Usually there is more of a mix of flower visitors to redbuds than what I observed this season. I think that the high energy of the carpenter bees this year inhibited other potential pollinators. Osmias including the Blue Orchard Bee are reliably seen and can be identified by their glossy, blue-green black bodies with the abdomen underside covered with pollen (in females). Redbuds are blooming when the pipevine swallowtails are emerging, so they are often seen nectaring along with bumble bees, honey bees and the occasional syrphid fly stopping for nectar or pollen. Redbuds are excellent plants to attract an array of flower visitors.
STONEGATE DEVELOPMENT and the BUTTE RESOURCE CONSERVATION PLAN RISE AGAIN

The expansive Stonegate development proposal in southeast Chico straddles Bruce Rd between E 20th St and the Skyway. It will impact our area’s diminishing and sensitive vernal pools and wetland sloughs that harbor federal and state protected Butte County meadowfoam (BCM) and a colorful spring blooming landscape. Its DRAFT Environmental Impact Report is available for review at: http://www.chico.ca.us/planning_services/DraftEIRStonegateProject.asp. Written comments on its merits are due by May 24, 2018. Your views can also be expressed at the Stonegate Project Public Meeting scheduled for Thursday, May 3, 2018 from 6:30 to 8:00 pm at Chico City Council Chambers. The project’s extent, in the heart of the range of BCM, has been removed from the next iteration of the Butte Regional Conservation Plan (BRCP) scheduled to commence in a few months by the Butte County Association of Governments. Mount Lassen Chapter will attend stakeholder meetings advocating for a functional plan that conserves the many sensitive plant and animal resources in western Butte Co, especially BCM, the principal rational for developing the BRCP.

PEREGRINE POINT DISC GOLF COURSE

The City of Chico is diminishing ORAI’s (Chico Outsiders) role in maintaining the mitigation and monitoring measures required by the Calif. Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) to protect natural resources at Peregrine Point Disc Golf Course and absorbing this increased cost despite the City’s budget deficiencies. ORAI’s role, prescribed in their Operating Agreement with the City that was signed in 2010 and renewed in 2016 states “Operator (ORAI) shall, at its sole cost and expense, maintain the premises and all disc golf improvements .. in good repair..". This contract implements policy adopted by the City Council in 2009 as recommended by the Bidwell Park & Playground Commission (BPPC) in 2008. The City has not cooperated with ORAI to fulfill this policy for the last several years presumably because ORAI has been unable. The City’s rational for substituting its scarce resources for ORAI’s is an unsubstantiated, significant increased use of the course by hikers and mountain bikers. Regardless, the City (BPPC and Council) is solely legally responsible for maintaining legally required mitigation measures and monitoring their effectiveness at the course. Mount Lassen Chapter will continue to encourage the City to meet its obligations to preserve the natural resources of the course.
Executive Board Meeting

MAY 16, 2018
TBA
ALL CNPS MEMBERS WELCOME!

WORKDAY

NATIVE PLANT GARDEN
CHICO CREEK NATURE CENTER

MAY 17 Thursday 8 - 10 am

Contact ANN ELLIOTT
Annonfire@gmail.com 530-521-4402

MEMBERSHIP MLC
If you have changed your . . .
address, phone number or e-mail
or leave temporarily
please notify Mount Lassen Chapter CNPS
Membership Chair, MERYL BOND at
530 487-7312 or merylbond@sbcglobal.net

This will help eliminate returned Pipevines
from the Post Office. Thank You

Keep up with MLC Activities
on our website and Facebook

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The Pipevine May 2018 7
MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY
I wish to affiliate with the Mount Lassen Chapter

Name __________________________________________________________
Address _________________________________________________________
City ____________________________________________________________
State _______ Zip ___________ Phone _____________________________
Email __________________________________________________________

Send Membership Application to:
CNPS
2707 K STREET, SUITE 1
SACRAMENTO, CA 95816-5113

mountlassen.cnps.org

Phyllis would say
"Join Today!"

Calendar 2018

April
28 - Waters Gulch Trail

May
2 - General Meeting
5 - Endangered Species Faire
6 - Vina Plains
12 - Magalia Hike
16 - Ex Board Meeting
17 - CCNC Garden Workday
27 - Big Bald Rock