General Meeting

Feb. 5th 2020
Wednesday 7 PM
Butte County Library,
Chico

The Pacific Crest Trail in the News:
Two short programs about the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT)

The Trinity Divide: A Partnership to Protect the Pacific Crest Trail
This is the story of an extraordinary partnership. Non-profits, federal agencies, local communities and a timber company found common ground to protect more than 10,000 acres of land and 17 miles of the PCT that was previously on private property. It is now in public ownership and permanently protected. The Trinity Divide is a unique area with 35 rare plants west of Mt. Shasta and Weed.

Walking with Wildflowers: Monitoring Pacific Crest Trail Communities as Climate Changes
This is another program of cooperation between the American Phenology Association, National Park Service, professors from the University of California Berkeley, the University of Florida and citizen scientists. Using observations by citizen scientist hikers and backpackers the goal is to monitor plant phenology along the PCT in order to determine the responses of plant species to changing climate conditions. It will further the understanding of how plants use seasonal cues to time flowering.

Before the presentation begins we'll have a short discussion about the topics that interest you, our members and friends.

Marjorie has hiked the PCT from Rock Creek six miles south of Mt. Whitney to Canada and maintains an active interest in its welfare. She has held a number of Executive Board Positions for Mount Lassen Chapter since 1985, and after 35 years has retired from teaching nutrition for Butte College.
Officers & Chairs for 2020

OFFICERS

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NOTES ON OFFICERS

Note from the editor:
Appropriate perhaps that as we enter a new year and a new decade the Mt. Lassen Chapter is making a bold move in experimenting with our first color issue of The Pipevine. The intention of having the newsletter printed in color is to better highlight the photography and to create a more dynamic newsletter. Change is not easy and while we will miss seeing the folded green paper in our mailboxes we believe the new colorful Pipevine will be equally welcome. We owe Robert Fischer our collective thanks for fronting the cost for this first newsletter which provides the opportunity for members to see how they like it. The MLC board will make the decision for future issues from here on out. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Denise Devine for all her years at creating an always attractive, creatively designed newsletter month after month, year after year - an impressive legacy.

John Whittlesey
Dear members and friends of Mount Lassen Chapter,

As the new President of the Mount Lassen Chapter of CNPS I am honored to lead your local organization and follow in the footsteps of past presidents. They have done a marvelous job putting on events like garden tours, leading hikes, managing native gardens, and more. As we begin a new year I look forward to meeting many of you and ask for your ideas about how we can be relevant to you in the coming year. We are a local group serving the communities of Butte, Glenn, Tehama, and Plumas Counties. Please feel free to send your ideas and suggestions to us at npraiglier2020@gmail.com or by mail to P.O. Box 4067, Chico, 95927. Thank you.

We have ambitious plans and would love to have you actively join our fine group. Woody and Ann Elliott have done so many jobs in our chapter and are transitioning to a new locale. As we wish them well we need volunteers to fill their positions. Woody has managed our beautiful website and now it is time to relieve him with a new person who would like to take on that interesting task. There are other opportunities to become an active member. I’d like to interact with a nice group of people and our local environs in a new way, join us. Send us an email or letter and let’s talk!

I want to thank our most recent past president, Paul Moore, and his predecessors Woody Elliott, Catie Bishop and many others who have guided this group over the years. We are fortunate to have had these and other dedicated people serve on our board, chair committees, and volunteer. Their energy seems boundless and I’m amazed at what a group of people can do. They’ve led hikes, put on garden tours, managed a native plant garden, presented and provided snacks at general meetings, reached out to you via information tables at community events, prepared our newsletter, managed our website, publicized our events and created stunning handouts, kept us up to date on local environmental issues, judged at the Chico Science Fair, put on the Wildflower Show, and more. Wow!

As you can see you are part of an active organization and as we enter this year we have new members taking on new roles. I welcome our new board members and look forward to working with them. They are Vice-President Deb Halfpenny, Secretary Karen Smith, Treasurer Anne Perry, members-at-large Hesh Kaplan, Marjorie McNairn, and David Popp. Some of our members wear more than one hat and also chair a specialty. Our new and continuing chairs are Justine DeOvo - Education, Nancy Groshong - Events, Marjorie McNairn – Field Trips and Volunteer Recognition, Deb Halfpenny – Horticulture and chair of the Alice B. Heckler Native Plant Garden, Roxane Canfield – Hospitality, Christine Mueller – Membership, John Whittlesey – Newsletter/Pipevine Editor, Cindy Weiner – Publicity. The next time you see them, let them know you appreciate what they do.

I joined Mount Lassen Chapter 6 years ago and because I took that step I’ve made new friends and met interesting people. They’ve provided me with opportunities to challenge myself and taught me much. Because of this group I’ve learned about native plants, replaced a lawn with native plant landscaping, taken on new roles and have been inspired. I started gardening with a small patch of Nasturtiums when I was 16. Now I have a yard certified by our friends at the Audubon society as a neighborhood habitat. The Native Plant Society has taken me on this journey. It’s been enjoyable. I hope you’ll join us and grow too.

Best wishes,
Nancy Praizler
For years my mother used to ask me “Don’t you want to visit Europe?” And I always answered “But I haven’t finished exploring California yet.” I still haven’t finished.

Rich and I started exploring California’s rich diversity of landscapes on hiking trails in the mid-1980’s. For many years we hiked and camped in Southern and Eastern California’s deserts and mountains. There were a few trips up the coast as far as Mendocino County and one fantastic week-long trip to Mt. Lassen National Park in 1989. But mostly we tramped trails in SoCal’s Transverse Ranges, mostly the San Gabriel Mountains and the Eastern Sierra. At first we were drawn by the scenery but after I joined CNPS in 1991 I started paying attention to the flora. Our pace got slower as I stopped for more and more flowers photos. I purchased used copies of Philip Munz’ two big floras, followed by the 1993 *The Jepson Manual* and later *Jepson II*. We wore out several hiking guidebooks and paper maps in those pre-internet/app days.

Then in Jan. 2017 we moved to Chico, ready in retirement to explore more of Northern California. Once the boxes were unpacked I started collecting guidebooks and maps and searching interesting websites, blogs and Instagram accounts for potential locations.

Of course, we’ve gone on excellent CNPS Chapter field trips here (thank you Marjorie!) but we’ve also been out on day-trips on our own, both hiking and driving, and we’ve done multi-day explorations too, either with our little travel trailer or staying in rental houses. It’s been great fun to be out and about and learning new flora. Here are some of my favorites.

North Table Mountain had been on my “must-see” list for years and I’m sure it’s a favorite for many of you. We visited it four times over our first spring. But how many of you have been to Hog Lake, another vernal pool, east of Red Bluff? I learned of its existence from one of Vern Oswald’s Florulae that are downloadable from CSUCHico Herbarium’s website ([https://www.csuchico.edu/herbarium/studies/vern-oswald/index.shtml](https://www.csuchico.edu/herbarium/studies/vern-oswald/index.shtml)). Its 5300 acres are part of the BLM’s Sacramento River Bend Outstanding Natural Area. I almost hesitate to write about Hog Lake because it’s very little visited. We’ve been there multiple times the past three springs, each time exploring a bit more and finding more interesting plants.

Sometimes we do some off-season exploring just to get better acquainted with roads. Such was the case with Hwy 162/FH7 that leads into Mendocino National Forest. Late May was perfect for exploring the lower elevations with some surprising blooms like a patch of *Iris fernaldii* hiding under roadside shrubs. By July we could drive all the way to Plaskett Meadows, spending hours poking around the several habitats and listening to the very audible murmur of thousands of bumblebees working the sea of Meadow penstemon (*Penstemon rydbergii v. oreocharis*). I’ve shared just a tiny sample of the wonderful places we’ve been. Expect to read about other adventures in future newsletters. December’s rainy weather has meant unfolding some maps again. I’m researching Mt Diablo and BLM Red Hills ACEC for spring 2020 visits. There’s no chance of getting bored with California flora!
STEER’S HEAD

Dicentra uniflora – longhorn steer’s-head. In California, under the Jepson Authority, this genus is lumped in with Papaveraceae (Poppy Family), but visually this is difficult to relate to. Other authorities break it out as a Poppy Sub-Family called Fumarioideae (Bleedingheart Family). Here the irregular flowers with 4 petals and 2 sepals have a similar appearance throughout the included genera. The name Dicentra derives from a Greek word that means twice spurred. Note the inflated pouch at the base of the outer 2 petals. The inner 2 petals are adherent at their tips and create the nose-looking portion of the flower. This 4-inch-tall plant grows from a tuber in gravelly, higher elevation soils of the Western U.S., flowering as the snow melts back. It arises, flowers, sets fruit, and disappears in a very short period. Several far larger native species are used as common horticultural plantings i.e. western bleeding-heart (D. formosa) and golden eardrops. (D. chrysantha) This picture was taken along Humboldt Road a few miles west of Butte Meadows.

“To see a World in a Grain of Sand  
And a Heaven in a Wild Flower  
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand  
And Eternity in an hour....”

William Blake

© Robert D. Fischer

Photo by Robert Fischer
NEW YEAR at the MAIDU SHELTER

It was overcast on the first day of the new decade, though that did not dampen the enthusiasm of the 18 who went to view the Maidu shelter and nearly 70 (I counted them!) rock mortars in the bedrock floor. Some mortars were worn out at the edge of the rock where part of the wall was eroded. They must have been used for a very long time, and new, shallow ones were in the process of being formed. During lunch break at the shelter the discussion turned to Maidu talk and how the Maidu tended the land. An anthropologist from Sacramento told us in 1955 documentation, a tribal elder explained to Forest Service personnel the forests were being managed in a way that would result in large fires in the future. A retired Chico attorney added that recently the Bureau of Indian Affairs and the U.S. National Forest had entered into an agreement with the Plumas National Forest for the Mechoopda Maidu to manage the tribal lands in a more traditional manner. The purpose of the agreement is to allow the cooperation between the parties and to complete fuel assessments and treatments across the tribal lands.

Only two blooming plants were observed on the sunny hillside. Gumweed (Grindelia camporum) and rosinweed (Calycadenia truncata). We returned along the Yahi trail and in the riparian woodland we found no flowers, not manzanita (Arctostaphylos sp.), California bay laurel (Umbellularia californica) nor even the early milkmaids (Cardamine californica), which are usually blooming by late January. We identified leafless redbud (Cercis occidentalis) by many dark red seed pods still hanging on the branches, and the bare stalks of mock orange (Philadelphus lewisii) by its unique growth habit. Greenbriar (Smilax californica), was identified without leaves by their prickly spines, and the vines of pipevine (Aristolochia californica) by its seed pods. By now everyone could identify dormant poison oak (Toxicodendron diversilobum). We identified blue oak (Quercus douglasii), valley oak (Quercus lobata), interior live oak (Quercus wislizenii) and one lone canyon live oak (Quercus chrysolepis). The two conifers on our side of the creek were gray pine (Pinus sabiniana) and yellow pine (Pinus ponderosa). We could see those same conifers on the creek’s south bank, and also incense cedar (Calocedrus decurrens). As we headed for the cars, the sun emerged from the clouds and promised a good year ahead.
February Field Trips

Fern Cliff and Beyond
Middle Bidwell Park
February 8 Saturday

Meet at 10 am at the Middle Bidwell Park trailhead where Centennial Ave and Chico Canyon Road join at their east ends. Wear sturdy shoes and cool weather gear. We will walk for about a mile along the south side of Big Chico Creek and a ways further upstream looking at ferns and allies alongside the cliffs. We hope to see many of the ferns of Bidwell Park. Ends at noon. Rain cancels. Leader Marjorie 530-343-2397

Doon Grade
East Magalia Area
February 22, Saturday

Meet at Park & Ride Chico at 9 am with lunch, water, sturdy shoes, a flashlight, and trekking poles if you use them. Doon Grade, named after Mike Doon, who built a sawmill in the area in 1869, is the old railroad line to Stirling City. We will be walking about 3 miles round trip far above the Little West Fork of the West Branch of the Feather River at least as far as a collapsed tunnel, and perhaps a half mile further to see large old growth logs abandoned beside what had been the old track. See banks of woodwardia ferns still growing despite some burned areas. Canceled by rain or recent rains. Leader: Marjorie 530 343-2397

Chico Creek Nature Center
California Naturalist Certification Course

Outdoor enthusiasts, ecology buffs and student scientists alike are encouraged to register for the 2020 California Naturalist Certification Course at the Chico Creek Nature Center. Classes will be held Wednesdays from March 25 through May 13 from 6:30 PM to 9:00 PM in the Chico Creek Nature Center classroom located at 1968 East Eighth Street in Chico. Four required field days will be held Saturdays from 8:30 AM to 3:00PM in Bidwell Park at the Big Chico Creek Ecological reserve and the neighboring areas.

Early registration period ends Feb. 6 and the final registration deadline is March 12. A limited number of scholarships are available. For more on the California Naturalist Certification Course, please visit Chico Area Recreation and Park District’s Website at Chicorec.com/california-naturalist-certification or call the Chico Creek Nature Center at 530-895-4711
Part 4 - The Human Factor

Continuing with our discussion about designing your native garden, we are now at a phase that can be a challenge for many people, and that we can jokingly refer to as the "self evaluation" phase: honestly knowing your garden needs from wants, your budget, your available time, and your physical abilities.

Typical urban & suburban lots can be small and your native garden will likely have to simultaneously serve several functions for you. For example, my newly planted native garden, currently relegated to a large corner of my lot, must also function as my dog's frisbee zone. Yours may have to function as an eating, cooking, and entertainment area, or surround an active swimming pool or play area. Combinations of functions are often doable and fun, if culturally compatible, but there comes a point where an over-abundance of wants will not combine successfully or fit into small lots. Tempting garden ideas abound in books, magazines, TV shows, and websites, but I recommend that you avoid those. Your garden style will develop according to your unique personal tastes, your needs, the architecture of your house, and the character of your land. Whether you design your garden yourself, or have it done professionally, listing your dreams and the needs you have for your garden will help you incorporate or exclude them from your final design.

The quickest way to pare your dream list is to learn how much each item will cost to construct or purchase. Always works for me! Having a budget for your garden project will help you decide whether to delete elements, to build them in phases as money is available, or if your budget is ample, to hire professionals to do the work for you. Your budget should also take into account the cost of maintaining your garden over time (water, pool & garden services, tree trimming, etc.).

Budgeting also applies to your time. If your time is limited, perhaps you will want to hire some help installing and maintaining your landscape, or if you have patience, to do the work yourself slowly over time. If you choose to do all of the work yourself, how is your strength and endurance? Do you feel adequately informed to do some construction, build an irrigation system, and the like?

These are important things to keep in mind while planning your garden. An often overlooked factor is your partner, if you have one. Are you in agreement about all of the above factors? More than once, I've had a design project stall because partners had not really talked. Now it is one of the first questions I ask homeowner clients.

So, dream big, but be reflective and honest with yourself, and understand that money does not make a beautiful garden. (Ok, it helps a lot!) It's the creativity and uniqueness you bring to your outdoor living space that will make it special and functional for you.
‘The Berms’ as we call them were planted in the fall of 2018. The motivation behind their construction was the abundance of 4 species (and one other occasional visitor) of bumble bees in the garden that summer. It felt very crowded in the garden. So in the open land below the house towards the creek where the nursery once thrived, we constructed 8 interlocking crescent shaped raised beds ranging in size from 25’ x 10’ to 15’ x 6’. Plant selection was with 75% native plants, the caveat being, they needed to survive with little water and cohabit the land with roaming deer. The berms have been a wonderful addition to the homestead – providing much pleasure and a space to observe and enjoy a wide variety of flower visitors.

Here are a few some highlights from 2019:

Flies (Diptera)– As usual when you observe flowers closely, the diverse world of flies becomes apparent. There are far more than we realize spending time on flowers. They are often very photogenic and on occasion can look like something else. Such as a bumble bee mimic - *Eristalis flavipes* looking very much like a bumble bee, even buzzing like one. But when one looks closely, the big eyes and short antennae are features that indicate it is a fly and not a bee. I’d never seen the small fly with a plump orange abdomen in the garden before, *Gymnosoma*, is one of the tachinid flies that are parasitic on stink bugs. *Cylindromyia*, another of the parasitic *Tachinidae* was ubiquitous this year, often seen on the native mint, *Pychnanthemum californica* and the buckwheat *Eriogonum fasciculatum*, with its red spiky abdomen often pointed straight up. It is also parasitic on stink bugs and some moths.

There were a couple of magical highlights in this first season of the berms. And as is often the case in pleasant surprises, they were very unexpected. Of course discovering a nesting colony of Van Dyke’s bumble bee, which I wrote about in the October issue of The Pipevine was the big highlight for me. Another was seeing, identifying and photographing the Queen butterfly in late August. Apparently the most northern recorded observation of this southwestern US resident. And such a beautiful butterfly it is with the white spots on the copper colored wings like constellations.

And one August evening at dusk just strolling though the berms I caught a glimpse of a hawkmoth on the native *Salvia ‘Winnifred Gilman’*. Once my eyes adjusted to the dimming crepuscular light, I kept seeing more, five, then seven and soon there were well over a dozen. As it grew darker the moths silently kept appearing, seemingly out of nowhere visiting a number of salvia flowers. It was magical.

There is always something to see in the community of critters attracted to flowers. To amble around the berms is to be immersed in life and all its connections. To stop and watch wasps, flies, bugs, beetles, bees, butterflies, moths, predators and prey, all in the company of flowers provides me with endless pleasure and an abundance of learning opportunities.
**Pipevine**

Paintbrush along the PCT  photo by Marjorie McNairn

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**Membership Form**

CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

*I wish to affiliate with the Mount Lassen Chapter*

- new ____
- renew ____

Name ____________________________________________

Address __________________________________________

City ______________________________________________

State _____ Zip _________ Phone ____________________

Email _____________________________________________

Send Membership Application to:

California Native Plant Society  Student / Fixed Income ….. $25

Attn: Membership  Individual …………………. $50

2707 K Street, Suite 1  Plant Lover ……………… $120

Sacramento, CA 95816-5130  Supporter ……………….. $500

For memberships for organizations or to become a perennial monthly sustainer contact CNPS.org

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**Calendar for February 2020**

- **5th**: General Meeting
- **8th**: Hike - Fern Bank and Beyond
- **19th**: MLC Board Meeting
- **22nd**: Hike - Doon Grade Magalia