

*The Twenty Eighth Annual
Spring Outing
Botanical Excursion
Foray, Retreat, and Escape to the Environment*

!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!! SO BE FREE 28 !!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!



Brought to you by the Bryophyte Chapter of the California Native Plant Society!

***Friday to Monday, March 29-April 1st, 2024.
Santa Rita Experimental Range, Green Valley, AZ***

Organized by: Jason Brooks

Founded in 1996, SO BE FREE is a series of West Coast forays started by the Bryolab at UC Berkeley, but open to all botanists. The main focus is on bryophytes, but we also encourage experts on other groups to come along and smell the liverworts. We welcome specialists and generalists, professionals and amateurs, master bryologists and rank beginners. SO BE FREE is held each year, somewhere in the Western US, usually associated with spring break at universities. Evening slide shows and informal talks are presented as well as keying sessions with microscopes. In addition to seeing interesting wild areas and learning new plants, important goals for SO BE FREE include keeping West Coast bryologists (and friends) in touch with each other, and teaching beginners. To see pictures and information from past outings, visit the SO BE FREE website at: <https://chapters.cnps.org/bryophyte/sobefree/>

One important function of SO BE FREE is to serve as the annual meeting of the Bryophyte Chapter of the California Native Plant Society. See: <https://chapters.cnps.org/bryophyte/> for details, and to join!

SO BE FREE 28 – Southern Arizona

The upcoming 2024 SO BE FREE will be held at the Santa Rita Experimental Range (SRER), AZ. Located in the sky island region of Arizona within the Santa Rita Mountains south of Tucson, the SRER is embedded within a 52,000-acre experimental range, and is the longest continuously active rangeland research facility in the United States. The field station will allow opportunities to explore the bryoflora of the varied habitats to be found in the sky islands. The habitats in the immediate vicinity of SRER include mixed conifer forest, streams, grasslands, oak savannah, canyons, as well as Sonoran Desert. And don't forget to bring your binoculars as this area is a birders paradise!



Accommodations at the SRER include 2 bunkhouse-style cabins with a communal bath house and communal kitchen. There is both on-site camping and nearby campgrounds along with several nearby hotels in Madera Canyon and Green Valley, AZ. The Station also has a meeting room where we will enjoy meals, conversation, and some captivating evening presentations by our attendees. A separate lab facility with space for compound and dissecting microscopes will be available for use by our group.



DIRECTIONS

- The **Santa Rita Experimental Range** is located 35 miles south of Tucson in Pima County, Arizona, at the foot of the northwestern edge of the Santa Rita Mountains. The **Florida Station**, located in the Florida Canyon of the Santa Rita Mountains, is the SRER headquarters.

To reach Florida Station, from Exit 63 of the I-19, drive on Continental Road following signs for Madera Canyon. Turn then right on Whitehouse Road and continue past milepost 7 to Road 62. Drive on Road 62 for 0.4 miles to Road 62A, then drive on Road 62A for 2.8 miles to Florida Canyon.

ITINERARY

Check-in on Friday is from 4:00-5:00 pm, followed by dinner and an evening presentation. Saturday and Sunday will comprise field site excursions, with time for socializing and microscope study in the evenings (bring your own scopes) as desired. Monday morning, breakfast will be

provided, with check out and departure to follow—groups can arrange botanical stops on the way out as they wish.

Beginners are very welcome to SO BE FREE, and this year we will again have a workshop session for beginners Saturday morning. Field trip details are to follow.

ACCOMMODATIONS

Lodging will be in rustic dormitory-style bunk rooms or camping. Camping is permitted near the headquarters and a few tent sites are available on site in a small yard area as well as dispersed camping areas nearby in the National Forest and campgrounds in Madera Canyon. There are also two lodging options in nearby Madera Canyon as well as many hotels in Green Valley (you must make your own reservations). For bunkhouse lodging, please bring a sleeping bag or sheets/blanket (twin-size beds mostly) and pillow, as no linens or bedding will be provided at the site. It can be chilly so bring a warm sleeping bag or blankets. Catered meals will be provided by a local restaurant – if you have any dietary restrictions or allergies, please indicate these on your registration form. Part of the magic of SO BE FREE is eating and socializing together—to encourage this, catering is charged for all registration categories. Kitchen refrigerators are available for storage of guests' food and beverages.

Weather can be a wild card. The rainy season should be over. Plan on bringing appropriate rain gear as well as sunscreen and hats. Maps, camp information, and logistical details will be sent via email to registrants. Information on campgrounds will be sent on request.

REGISTRATION

Please proceed to our online registration [HERE](#). **Cancellation requests for refunds must be received by Feb 15 2024 and will incur an extra \$25 charge.** Room assignments will be coordinated by Jordan Collins (jcollins@cnps.org). Once you've registered, we'll send you a waiver to digitally sign.

For questions about the foray itself contact **Jason Brooks** (jbrooks@calacademy.org) or **Bill Thiessen** (thiessen1982@att.net).