Monterey Coastal Marshes
The coastal marshes surrounding Monterey Bay once covered thousands of acres in a rich mosaic of fresh, brackish, and salt marsh habitats. These marshes provided numerous ecosystem services to a vibrant community of species that occupy some combination of marine, estuarine, and terrestrial environments. This talk will focus on coastal marsh plants which link vital bio-geo-physical processes with vegetation structures and functions that yield key habitat for marsh wildlife. Coastal marsh plants are surprisingly easy to get to know if you don’t mind getting muddy. We will focus on new restoration and recovery initiatives underway in northern Monterey. We’ll also touch on some lessons learned from the San Francisco Estuary which faces similar challenges to coastal marshes in northern Monterey.

Michael Vasey, PhD
Michael Vasey, PhD, is the former Manager of the SF Bay National Estuarine Research Reserve (Reserve), a sister Reserve to the Elkhorn Slough Reserve. Mike got his PhD at UC Santa Cruz and has long focused on tidal wetland vegetation ecology in the SF Estuary. He is also a long term admirer of the Elkhorn Slough Reserve program. He is currently on the Technical Advisory Committee for the Wetland Regional Monitoring Program in San Francisco Bay.

Because the Chapter is still observing the COVID-19 directives to avoid large gatherings of people, we’ll have a presentation using Zoom in lieu of a regular chapter meeting at the Pacific Grove Museum. You can watch the lecture at home on your computer. The Zoom link will be posted on the website, https://chapters.cnps.org/montereybay/ and sent a day or two in advance in an eblast. The Zoom presentation will start at 7:30 and you’ll need to login to the web link with the instructions that will be available on the Chapter website and sent in the eblast. As there is a waiting room at our Zoom meeting, please come early!

Presentation time Thursday, November 11th at 7:30pm
CONSERVATION UPDATE

1. **Plant Reserve 1 North Update**
   The Chapter hopes to meet before the end of the year to continue mediation with City of Del Rey Oaks leadership. CNPS litigation is still unresolved regarding long-term protection of the 4.63-acre habitat reserve set aside in 1999 as a CEQA mitigation for environmental impacts resulting from the extension and widening of General Jim Moore Blvd to Highway 218. The City and the now defunct agency guiding the reuse of Fort Ord (FORA) were sued by the Chapter in 2020 over proposed improvements to South Boundary Road. The alignment of the new road is planned right through the protected area and would obliterate rare Maritime Chaparral and listed plant species supported in the reserve. (NN)

   **Editor’s note, by Chris Stearns**

   The plant sale for our chapter this Fall was a huge success. This is completely due to our amazing members, and the love of restoring and keeping our area informed and restored ecologically and biologically with native plants.

   For those that are reading this newsletter in print form, I ask that if you have any comments about the sale, please come to the meeting and engage. We want to hear from you about how your experience was, and if there’s anything you’d like to see done differently in the future.

   Those reading this on a device, I’d like to ask you to take a small survey I put together. This survey is there to help communicate what works and what doesn’t as far as reaching people and driving engagement. If you’d like, please navigate to [https://forms.gle/ioWA3zBpMx9zs2nc9](https://forms.gle/ioWA3zBpMx9zs2nc9)

   One last time, I want to thank everyone who logged on, engaged, and helped bring this sale to what it was. Our volunteers worked tirelessly to maintain and curate the plants before, during and after the sale. The store runners in charge of the selection, inventory and processing of sales shone in their work. The people behind the scenes supporting the chapter, whether from a computer here or at the state office, were diligent in making sure that the store functioned correctly.

   But all that would mean nothing if not for you being there and advocating for California Native Plants. Thank you for supporting the chapter with your love of plants, your wallet, and your word-of-mouth that’s made and continues to make a home for restoration and beauty in Monterey County.
The Central Coast is blessed with an amazing diversity of native shrub species suitable for landscaping. Perhaps chief among them are those from the genus Arctostaphylos, which is well represented by about 40 species and subspecies in the San Luis Obispo, Monterey and Santa Cruz Counties. Of those, my vote for the most showy and versatile for gardening is the Pajaro manzanita.

A rare plant found almost exclusively in northern Monterey County in the Pajaro Sand hills, the Pajaro manzanita occupies sunny openings in oak woodlands and ridge tops in maritime Chaparral where its frequent companions include various other manzanita species as well as Ceanothus and Chamise. Particularly large stands can be observed in the aptly named Manzanita Park in Prunedale. The plant grows in many forms from low 3-4 foot mounds up to 15 foot tall tree like specimens with flower colors from pinkish-white to deep pink. The leaf shape is unique and unmistakable being almost heart shaped with rounded lobes of the “heart” appearing to clasp the branch, due to a very short petiole connecting it to the branch. These heart shaped leaves begin life in colors ranging from deep red to bronzy orange and mature in the course of a year to shades of green with a powder blue whitewash top and bottom. This creates an extended period of seasonal change that makes the shrub an especially interesting garden subject. Winter flowering can last for up to 3 months followed by dark red berries that look like miniature apples. (Thus the common name: Manzanita or “little apple”) The new growth in spring appears like flaming flowers at the branch tips and slowly matures over the summer months to the chalky blue green tinge that helps it reflect light and withstand long, hot summer and fall days.

As with most variable and garden worthy plants a number of horticultural selections of Pajaro manzanita have been introduced to the nursery trade and the gardening world. Two most widely available thus far are ‘Paradise’ collected along Paradise road in Prunedale and ‘Warren Roberts’ introduced by the Regional Parks Botanic Garden in Berkeley. Paradise’ is a robust selection, spreading in habit, with brilliant red to bronze new growth and deep rose pink flowers. Possibly even better is ‘Warren Roberts’, introduced by Roger Raiche. It is more upright and densely leafy than ‘Paradise’, with flowers nearly as dark. A new, relatively low-growing selection with very blue leaves and bright pink flowers called ‘Myrtle Wolf” is making its way into nurseries as well. A selection made by Brett Hall (Longtime UCSC Arboretum and Botanic Garden Native plant program director) introduced a particularly deep pink flowering form that can be seen at the Botanic garden (and hopefully in our future plant sales), called ‘Brett’s beauty’ (not his choice for the name!) All should be reasonably quick to naturalize in Monterey Bay region gardens and hardy at least to 15 F.
CNPS Monterey Bay Chapter is seeking a New Program Director!
If interested, please contact Brian LeNeve at the contact info listed below.

Helpful CNPS Information Page
CNPS is dedicated to Preserving and Protecting California Native Plants and Their Habitats

You must register for field trips online at:
www.meetup.com/The-Monterey-Bay-Area-Hiking-Group
Meeting times, locations, and more details are on Meetup.
DUE TO THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND LACK OF A FIELD TRIP CHAIR, MEETUP EVENTS ARE LIMITED.

The Next Publication of The Wallflower
Newsletter: December

Check Out Our Websites
Monterey Bay Chapter: https://chapters.cnps.org/montereybay/
State Organization: www.cnps.org

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