PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE

Spring is in the air. All around me I see native plants blooming. Our chapter has continued to have meetings and activities through the pandemic. We have excellent programs lined up for the first Monday of each month. Many past programs are available on our YouTube channel.

We have several opportunities for outreach. March 12th will be a virtual milkweed day followed by an in person activity at Willow Springs on March 19. On April 9th we will have a table at Whale of a Day. Members and friends are welcome to join us. No experience is necessary. Table volunteers meet people interested in native plants and learn about CNPS. We also have ongoing volunteer events at White Point or Pt. Vicente native plant gardens.

On April 3rd and 10th from 1-4, there is an open house at the Prisk elementary school in Long Beach. In June, the CNPS chapter council meeting will be in Pt. Reyes. CNPS delegates from all around the state will get together. There is a business meeting plus field trips and social events. All members and their guests are welcome to attend. In October, the triennial conservation conference will be in San Jose. Our chapter will sponsor student poster presentations with paid conference registration and a stipend.

With so many activities available, get involved. Attend a PVPLC nature walk, plant a native plant, or just get out and appreciate the beauty of nature.

APRIL 4TH 2022
Tentative: Mountains and Rivers Conservancy – Compton Creek

MAY 2ND 2022
Tentative: Speaker Jorge Ochoa, Horticulture Professor at Long Beach City College
CONSERVATION EFFORTS

CNPS is involved in a number of conservation efforts both at the local level and statewide. At the state level CNPS’ recent Defend Rooftop Solar campaign seems to have been a success. CNPS, along with many other organizations, pushed back against the California Public Utilities Commision’s attempt to slash incentives for homeowners to install rooftop solar. Current rooftop solar owners would have also had the credit they receive for generating excess energy reduced along with paying a new monthly fee.

Along with the financial toll this proposition would’ve had on Californians, we stood lose invaluable desert and grasslands. California officials delayed the vote in part due to lobbying on behalf of the solar industry and the push back from residents who wanted to protect their rooftop solar and the remaining intact habitats. This isn’t a full victory as there have been huge solar farms green lit by the biden administration, according to the LA Times. There are disheartening videos of Mojave Yucca and other native plants being mowed down. As this is an ongoing issue we will continue to monitor the and update as things unfold.

At the local level, the South Coast chapter has sent letters of support for the Malag Dunes restoration project. Our board members are monitoring properties and new constructions that could have a possible negative impact on the habitats around them.

It was brought to our attention in October of 2021 that the Rancho Palos Verdes City Council had voted allow class 1 E-Bikes on the preserve. While electric bikes may be a better commuting alternative than cars, their use on the preserve would worsen the erosion of trails and hillsides. Our chapter voiced its concern to the city. Recently, a new bill in the California legislature, AB 1909, was brought up raising concerns about the impact electric bikes could have on natural habitats again. We recognize that electric bikes are a fantastic alternative to automobile less when ridden on streets but allowing them in natural areas could damage sensitive habitats. Brent Morgan, board member of our South Coast Chater has compiled following information so you can inform yourself and voice your concerns.

The proposed bill, AB-1909, would require that all Classes of electric bicycles be allowed on a bicycle path or trail, bikeway, bicycle lane, equestrian trail, or hiking or recreational trail. This circumvents locally-decided protection of natural areas from e-bikes and appears to run counter to state protections afforded sensitive areas as well. Primer on E-bike Classes: https://currentebikes.com/ebike-classes-california/

Phone calls and letters are needed to your Assemblymember and to Assemblymember Laura Friedman to urge them to modify AB-1909. If you contact them, please identify yourself as an individual who is interested in the environment.

Part (1) of AB-1909 states,

(1) Existing law prohibits the operation of a motorized bicycle or a class 3 electric bicycle on a bicycle path or trail, bikeway, bicycle lane, equestrian trail, or hiking or recreational trail, as specified. Existing law authorizes a local authority to additionally prohibit the operation of class 1 and class 2 electric bicycles on these facilities. This bill would remove the prohibition of class 3 electric bicycles on these facilities and would remove the authority of a local jurisdiction to prohibit class 1 and class 2 electric bicycles on these facilities. The bill would instead authorize a local authority to prohibit the operation of a class 3 electric bicycle at a motor-assisted speed greater than 20 miles per hour.

The author, Assemblymember Laura Friedman, has been excellent on environmental issues, including authoring bills to regulate plastics. However, in section (1) of this bill, she is favoring E-Bikes over protection of natural habitat. When ridden on streets, E-Bikes are showing themselves to be a good alternative to automobiles, reducing use of fossil fuels reducing production of CO2. But they may not be well-suited in many natural areas due to the potential for accelerated environmental degradation. Local jurisdictions and State environmental policy should not be prohibited from regulating them.

Please call Assemblymember Friedman and politely tell her staff your concerns about E-Bikes in natural areas.
Assemblymember Laura Friedman phone numbers: (916) 319-2043  (818) 558-3043
Her office addresses, if you would like to send a letter:
Capitol Office, 1021 O Street, Suite 6310
P.O. Box 942849, Sacramento, CA 94249-0043;
The numbers are in and the western monarch butterfly population had a dramatic increase during the 2021 overwintering months. There were promising reports since the start of the migrating season from sites who were reporting thousands of monarchs a year after zero butterflies were spotted. The final sum of the 25th annual Thanksgiving Count and 6th annual New Year’s count was nearly 250,000 monarchs sighted.

While a 100-fold increase is cause for celebration many experts are cautiously optimistic. Despite such a dramatic increase, this year’s total pales in comparison to the totals from the 1980’s and experts like Cheryl Schultz points out that the monarch butterfly population naturally fluctuates. Furthermore, the ambiguity behind the rise makes it difficult to say whether this is a positive trend or a one-time fluke.

All of these possibilities along with the observations made this past year will be studied for years to come. Unfortunately, that means there is no definitive ruling on what the best approach is to help the monarch population improve. For instance, while many groups and organizations recommend planting milkweed, there is a debate whether it should be local milkweed or any variety. Some suggest that any milkweed plant is beneficial to the monarch population given that tropical milkweed can host monarch caterpillars year round. Others like the Justin Wheeler of the Xerces Society are against non-native milkweeds because they state that the protozoan parasite *Ophryocystis elektroscirrha* builds up on the evergreen milkweed species that are then eaten by monarch caterpillars leading to reduced life spans along lower migration and mating success. Native milkweed dies back after blooming and the parasite dies with it. As the milkweed begins to regrow monarchs are able to lay their eggs on new parasite free leaves that caterpillars can safely eat.

There are many groups studying the possible reasons behind the sudden increase but there are many variables to account for. Some possible explanations include warmer weather in previous years reducing the amount of monarchs flying south for the winter while possibly increasing the supply of milkweed this past year. Our California fires were devastating to many communities and natural areas but they could’ve sparked an increase in blooms. Lastly, the pandemic that affected so many lives could’ve also contributed to the monarch population. According to the California Agricultural Production Statistics, agricultural activity dropped during the pandemic which may have reduced pesticides and other activities that harm monarchs.
Nonnative milkweed plants and where they are planted has also been debated recently. James et al. published the First Population Study on Winter Breeding Monarch Butterflies, Danaus plexippus (Lepidoptera: Nymphalidae) in the Urban South Bay of San Francisco, California just a few months ago.

Their study observed and tracked monarch butterflies at all stages of life from January through June. They claimed that despite consistently high levels of Ophryocystis elektroscirrha they recovered tagged butterflies at distances and directions that suggest spring migration to join the large western monarch population. Andrew K. Davis commented on this study in disagreement. He asserts that too much was inferred from the observed data and flawed conclusions were made. Most importantly he contends that the wing span of the recovered monarchs bred during the winter were too small to migrate successfully. Moreover, he points out that the average 2 km distance some of the tagged monarchs were observed traveling falls short of the 1-12 km movements displayed by non migratory monarchs in other studies. While the authors of these two previous studies are in disagreement and back up their theories with opposing facts and interpretations Davis acknowledges that all interested parties share the same desire to help the monarch population.

If you would like to learn more about monarch butterflies and support the efforts to increase their population there are many ways you can get involved. Our chapter’s winter edition of Artemisia had recommendations by Richard Rachman on what native plants and trees you can incorporate into your garden. Xereces Society also has a great guide on nectar rich plants, just be sure to check that the plants suggested are compatible with your location. There are also upcoming online and in person events taking place at four different sites: Indigenous Garden, Willow Springs, Starr King Elementary, DeForest Park, and Abalone Cove.
Want to see a native garden that’s sure to attract all kinds of pollinators, including monarchs? Then be sure to visit Prisk Native Garden during its open house!

**SAVE THE DATES**

October 20-22 2022 Double Tree by Hilton San Jose

CNPS will be hosting a native plant conference to connect the cnps community with various other organizations, communities and all those interested in conserving and restoring our California natives. Conference organizers are accepting proposals for sessions, presentations, and posters. Speakers from all areas and disciplines are invited to share their knowledge and love of native plants by submitting an application by the March 31st deadline.

For more information visit conference.cnps.org
PVIC Native Garden Volunteer Day

Sundays Jan 16, Feb 20, Mar 20, Apr 10, May 22, June 12, July 17, Aug 21, Sept 18, Oct 16, Nov 20, Dec 18
10am-12pm

Volunteers will learn about California native gardening while gazing out at the Pacific Ocean at the Point Vicente Interpretive Center. The garden provides important habitat for endangered species and inspires people to plant local. The volunteer maintenance of the garden is critical to its success.

Volunteers will be pruning, weeding, watering, spreading or collecting native seeds, planting, and mulching the oceanside garden. Volunteers receive training on proper garden techniques that they can use at home and enjoy an enriching educational experience in a beautiful oceanside setting.
Rome wasn’t built in a day and neither is a garden. One local gardener put off landscaping for years because they felt that a project like this needed to be completed in one go and they simply didn’t have the time to do so much. While admiring a neighbor’s established garden they learned that their neighbor, like many other gardeners, never really feel like their garden is complete. There is always something to be done from weeding to pruning and adding new plants. Not wanting to lose more time to indecision they took their first step to transforming their landscape by taking on small sections of their yard at a time.

Prior to moving into their new house they didn’t have a garden so their plant knowledge was limited mostly to house plants and container friendly plants. Now that they had a yard they felt it was time to give their container plants a permanent home and set about making a flower bed for them. When it came down to filling the bare spots in between they weren’t sure what plant but they knew they wanted something drought tolerant and good for their environment. They spent some time looking online and in books for appropriate plants for their location. Through this research they learned about native plants.

Despite the seemingly obvious reasons native plants should be incorporated into our gardens these new gardeners said that finding native plants proved to be a challenge. Many of the big box stores and local nurseries carried drought tolerant plants but not a single one was native. CNPS is aware of the lack of native plants readily available to consumers and this is where the Bloom! California campaign originated from. CNPS in partnership with over 100 nurseries is aiming to increase the sale of native plants from 3% to over 20% over the course of the next few years.

Once they were able to find the plants they were looking for they set about planting a small portion of their yard that was previously covered in non-native fauna. Looking back at this first section, they admit that they were neither prepared nor knowledgeable enough to begin their project. They began by covering the planting area in thick black plastic weed barriers that they are still pulling up. It made adding in plants later on difficult and they soon learned that the mulch they added would do little good as it decomposed if it broke down above an impenetrable barrier. As time passed and some of their plants didn’t do so well they learned that just because a plant is suited for a certain location doesn’t mean it can grow anywhere. They learned about plants’ sun exposure requirements and that not all California native plants have the same watering needs. After a less than successful first attempt, they took a step back and did some better planning and preparation by taking advantage of the resources CNPS has to offer.

GARDEN SPOTLIGHT

Transforming your current lawn or non-native landscape into a native garden may seem like a daunting endeavor but with the right knowledge and approach it can be a fun and worthwhile project. The push for more ecological landscapes has never been greater and South Coast CNPS encourages individuals to plant natives and help restore our environment. To show our appreciation and admiration of the work individuals are doing within our chapter, we will be highlighting native gardens within our chapter. We hope these gardens and their story will inspire you and those around you to plant native!
They began by downloading the design templates and planting guides available. They used the Calscape garden planner to find more plants and see which were suited for their garden sun exposure. They found that the garden planner’s simplicity of use coupled with the extensive knowledge for each plant provided by Calscape was perfect for narrowing down plants needed to create a pollinator friendly garden they could enjoy. They started once again with one section and every few months they tackle another section and will continue to do so until their garden is “complete”.

They were overjoyed to share that they’ve been getting compliments since they began their project and take every opportunity they can to recommend native plants they think would fit in their neighbors yards. Their Romneya coulteri (Matilija poppy) that they have in the back as a privacy for a street facing window gets lots compliments when in bloom. They recently added a couple of California Fuchsia (Epilobium canum) for winter color and they bloomed their first year attracting lots of pollinators. They added a couple buckwheat seedlings a few months ago to go with the single buckwheat they planted last year.

Currently their garden is a mostly native garden because they initially included plants like concertina iris and a geranium plant they had potted. They are slowly replacing the non native plants with native cultivars. The iris’ for example will be replaced with a native variety in with a week. They admit that they have been dragging their heels because they are not looking forward to the day when they won’t have room to put in a new plant.

While they feel proud of their garden and enjoy sitting in the bench they added to watch the plethora of birds and insects that visit their garden they do have advice for anyone considering starting a native garden so they can avoid some pitfalls and create an even more impressive garden.

They highly recommend taking full advantage of the more recent resources to CNPS has to offer such as the garden vignettes on the Bloom website. They are thrilled with their garden and say it gets more blooms each year but if they had blank canvas to work on they would definitely take advantage of the opportunity to design a perfect garden. Not only are the designs aesthetically pleasing but they’ll help you avoid common mistakes. Overcrowding is a common mistake that significantly impact growth. Designs will prevent you from going out and choosing one of each plant you can find, group planting looks better and insects are more attracted to groups of plants. Finally, while they were successful in establishing their garden like this, they advise that by spreading out their work throughout the year they had to plant during the summer months and a lot more attention and care was needed to ensure the plants established well. Luckily, they found our Suggestions for Summer Watering. We’d like to thank our local gardeners for taking the time and effort to help restore our environment one step at a time.

If you’d like to have your garden featured or know someone whose native garden deserves a spotlight you can contact Angel Garcia, newsletter editor, to have your story featured in an upcoming issue of Artemisia or on our social media accounts.
Artemisia

*Artemisia* is the membership newsletter of the South Coast Chapter of the California Native Plant Society, a nonprofit organization.

South Coast Chapter CNPS, 23600 Telo Ave, Suite 130, Torrance CA 90505. Website [www.sccnps.org](http://www.sccnps.org) Our chapter encompasses South Los Angeles County, ranging from LAX in the north, Long Beach in the south, and to Whittier in the east. We have members in more than 30 cities.

If you wish to be removed from our mailing list, please email [membership@sccnps.org](mailto:membership@sccnps.org)

The mission of CNPS is to conserve California native plants and their natural habitats and increase understanding, appreciation, and horticultural use of native plants.

**California Native Plant Society, 2701 K St., Suite 1, Sacramento CA 95816-5113. Phone 916-447-2677**

Email [cnps@cnps.org](mailto:cnps@cnps.org) Website [www.cnps.org](http://www.cnps.org)

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**Have something to share?**

If you have questions, comments, or would like to submit an article, announcement, or event to the newsletter please email Angel Garcia at angel.garcia.144@my.csun.edu

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**Check out the [South Coast CNPS YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/channel/SouthCoastCNPS) channel for recordings of our general meetings and other chapter related events.**

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Stay up to date and connect with us on our [Instagram](https://www.instagram.com) and [Facebook](https://www.facebook.com) accounts.

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**CNPS Membership**

For Credit cards: Renew your CNPS membership online. As an option, set it up to renew automatically year after year. It is quick, easy, convenient, and reduces renewal mailing costs. [www.cnps.org](http://www.cnps.org).

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Go Perrenial! Skip the hassle of renewal deadlines and set up an automated monthly donation starting at $5/month. Sign up at [CNPS.org/perennial-membership](http://www.cnps.org/perennial-membership). Make your check out to “CNPS” and mail with this form to: CNPS, 2707 K St, Suite 1, Sacramento CA 95816-5113.

**Affiliation: South Coast Chapter**

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