PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE
By Snowy Dodson

Greetings for a happy, prosperous, and healthy 2015. I’ve had 3.2 inches of rain measured in my yard and am waiting another storm in the next few days – it is mid-Dec. Could this be the beginnings of a normal rain year? I didn’t want to jinx us, but after the first inch, I ran out and got three native plants – a manzanita, a white sage and the Allan Chickering sage I’ve wanted for several years. I did not procrastinate but got those puppies into the soil that same day. I was rewarded with another nearly two inches coming from that famous pineapple express. Shall I scatter some wildflower seeds? Probably. This is the new 2015 me. I’m taking care of some long overdue projects in my own garden. The huge clump of bamboo is gone along with some other hot messes, and some native plants are making an appearance. At least I will have made one or two small steps that will make me happier and contribute to the betterment of the little piece of the universe that is my yard.

On the field trip outing scene, I am pleased to announce that the Chapter is sponsoring two wonderful winter-themed outings. On January 25, Florence Nishida will lead us on a hunt for local mushrooms and fungi. The site is yet to be determined, but this promises to be a good year for the foray which has not been on our schedule during these past few drought years. On March 10, Florence will follow up this field trip with an evening program on “Southern California Mushrooms and Fungi.” Her knowledge is phenomenal and is sure to delight you whatever your level of mycological expertise. On February 21, Scott Logan will take us on a birding tour of the Malibu Lagoon State Park which is where Malibu Creek empties into the ocean. The Lagoon has been recently reconfigured with much new vegetation which is starting to take off. Scott indicates that birding at the Lagoon at this time of year is very rewarding and we might expect to see over 30 species including marbled godwit, ruddy turnstone, royal tern, Heermann’s gull, and the threatened western snowy plover.

And on the conservation scene, the Draft Rim of the Valley Corridor Special Resource Study will be available to the public early in 2015 on the study website www.nps.gov/pwro/rimofthevalley. Our CNPS Chapter Conservation Committee will review the document and submit comments during the public review period. The National Park Service expects to submit its final report to Congress in fall 2015. I encourage you to view the document and submit any input you might have. We will post a notice of the document’s availability on the Chapter’s Facebook page.

And finally I would like to announce that our CNPS Chapter has been awarded a grant from the Sidney Stern Memorial Trust to further our restoration efforts in the Santa Monica Mountains. We will report further on this as planning gets underway. We are most thankful to the Stern Trust and its board for honoring the Chapter in this way.

UPCOMING PROGRAMS
of the Los Angeles/Santa Monica Mountains Chapter

JANUARY 13, 2015 – 7:30 - 9:30PM
SEPVULVEDA GARDEN CENTER
16633 Magnolia Blvd. Encino

INSECTS AND NATIVE PLANT GARDENS
Presenter: Jim Hogue

Jim’s presentation will demonstrate how to recognize and encourage beneficial and other multi-legged creatures (spiders, centipedes) into your gardens. Many of these visitors will prey on “problem” pests and enable you to have a pesticide free and healthier ecology in your yard.

Jim is a lifelong insect collector and is interested in anything that has to do with living things, especially insects. He is particularly interested in the systematics and the natural history of flies (especially crane flies and flower flies), beetles, the roles of insects in human culture, photography of arthropods, and the ecology of running water ecosystems.

FEBRUARY 9, 2015 – 7:30 - 9:00PM
FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
SANTA MONICA

RESTORING LOS ANGELES COASTAL DUNES HABITAT
Presenter: Peggy Nguyen

The Los Angeles International Airport Dunes are well known for its endangered inhabitant, the El Segundo Blue Butterfly, but it is also home for over 900 other species, 151 of them arthropod species, and at least 10 species which appear restricted to the El Segundo sand dunes and an additional 25 found only on southern California coastal dunes systems. The plant communities found in the coastal dunes are specialized coastal sage scrub: foredune and backdune, and a highly disturbed coastal sage scrub/coastal prairie/meadow ecotone that is currently being restored. 19 plants of special interest that occur in small numbers in the dunes include Chorizanthe californica var. Sukdorfii, the El Segundo dunes spineflower. Peggy Nguyen will share the successes of past restoration efforts, and discuss current restoration methods, and the important role of community and active environmental citizenship in the long-term sustainability of those efforts.
Hikes and Restoration - January & February 2015

SAT 1/3  8:45am
Cold Creek Preserve
Be a Restorationist for a Day Planting Natives: Join the habitat repair team planting native plants and care for recently planted ones that will energetically displace the invasive weeds. Oak trees, shrubs, penstemons, roses and bunch grasses that feed and shelter wildlife are awaiting your help. Receive community service credit. Reservations required: 818-591-1701x0 or volunteer@treepeople.org. Meet along the first 0.5 mile of Stunt Rd after turning off Mulholland Hwy, Calabasas. 3.5hrs*

SAT 1/10  8:30am
Malibu Creek State Park
Lost Oak Woodlands Emerge Volunteers have planted thousands of oak trees and taken out millions of invasive non-native plants that rob the young trees of water and nutrients and often deposit growth deterrent chemicals (herbicides such as mustard that deters acorn germination). Receive community service credit. Reservations required: 818-348-5910 or volunteer@treepeople.org. Call or email for directions. 3.5hrs*

SAT 1/10  9am-noon
El Segundo Dunes
LAX Dunes Volunteer Day Help remove non-native plants. Free parking is available in the dunes. Enter through the gate across from Trask Triangle Park at the Trask and Waterview Streets intersection in Playa Del Rey, CA 90293. Please bring your own drinking water and snacks, and wear gloves, sun protection, closed-toe shoes, and long pants. Shelter and cold water refills will be provided. Please be on time and plan to stay until the end of the volunteer event as this is a secured area. Info: 818-782-9346. See also January 24 and February 7.

SUN 1/11  8:45am
Santa Monica Mountains
Weed Wars – an unending engagement started by CNPS in the early 1980s to wrestle with non-native invasive species. We clear the land and during the winter we plant native species. We revisit previous planting sites, weed and plant. Receive community service credit. Reservations required: 818-348-5910x0 or volunteer@treepeople.org. Call or email for directions. 3.5hrs*

SAT 1/24  8:30am
La Sierra Preserve
Restoration of a Hidden Gem Newly planted natives need you to help them through their first years. Bring water. Receive community service credit. Reservations required: volunteer@treepeople.org or Jo at 818-591-1701x0. From Kanan Rd, Agoura Hills, turn onto Troutdale, then left on Mulholland Hwy, then right into Peter Strauss parking lot. 3.5hrs*

SAT 1/24  9am-noon
El Segundo Dunes
LAX Dunes Volunteer Day See January 10 write-up.

SUN 1/25  9:00 am – noon
Santa Monica Mountains
Fungus Foray Noted southern California fungi expert, Florence Nishida, will lead the search for local fungi and mushrooms in the Santa Monica Mountains; exact location to be announced; contact Snowdy Dodson at 818-782-9346 or snowdy.dodson@csun.edu to RSVP and get directions. Bring wax paper, a sharp tool such as a metal tent stake, a basket, snack and water. Rain cancels. 3hrs.

SAT 1/31  8:30am
Topanga State Park
Lower Topanga Park Restoration Planting Bring water, a snack, wear sturdy footwear. Receive community service credit. Directions: entrance is a few hundred feet from Pacific Coast Highway on west side of Topanga Canyon Road. Reservations required: volunteer@treepeople.org or 818-348-5910. 3.5hrs*

SAT 1/31  9-11 am
Silver Lake Meadow Native Garden
Restoration Help weed, water, mulch. Bring hat, water, weeding tools. Meet at the Garden at the north end of the Silver Lake Meadow Park near Armstrong Ave. & Silver Lake Blvd. Street parking on Silver Lake Blvd. Info: meadownativergarden@silverlakenc.org.

SAT 1/31  9am-4pm
Temescal Canyon Park
Temescal Canyon Pacific Palisades Native Plant Garden Restoration We're just a few steps east of ~700 Temescal Canyon Road, Pacific Palisades, 90272 (between the PCH and Sunset Blvd., below Bowdoin St.). Community Service Credit. Contact Barbara Marinacci at barbara.marinacci@verizon.net or Michael G. Terry at michaelgterry@hotmail.com.

SUN 2/1  8:30am
Cold Creek Preserve
Be a Restorationist for a Day See January 3 write-up.

SAT 2/7  8:30am
Malibu Creek State Park
Lost Oak Woodlands Emerge See January 10 write-up.

SAT 2/7  9am-noon
El Segundo Dunes
LAX Dunes Volunteer Day See January 10 write-up.

SUN 2/8  8:30am
Santa Monica Mountains
Weed War See January 11 write-up.

SAT 2/21  8:00 – 10:00 am
Malibu Lagoon State Beach
Beach and Wetlands Bird Watching and Botanizing Parking for a fee in the beach lot or for free on PCH. Meet in the parking lot at the corner of PCH and Cross Creek Rd. in Malibu. Noted birder, Scott Logan of Wild Wings Backyard Nature in Sherman Oaks, will lead a birding adventure for all levels. The group will also enjoy the newly planted lagoon vegetation. Bring binoculars, water, snacks, hat, good walking shoes, layers appropriate for the weather. Contact Snowdy Dodson 818-782-9346 or snowdy.dodson@csun.edu for further details.

SAT 2/21  8:30am
La Sierra Preserve
Restoration of a Hidden Gem See Jan. 24 write-up.

SAT 2/28  8:30am
Topanga State Park
Lower Topanga Park Restoration Planting See Jan. 31 write-up.

SAT 2/28  9-11 am
Silver Lake Meadow Native Garden
Restoration See January 31 write-up.

SAT 2/28  9am-4pm
Temescal Canyon Park
Weeding in the City Park at Temescal Cyn See write-up for Jan 24.

* Co-sponsored by LA/SMM CNPS, Mountains Restoration Trust, and TreePeople.

All Field Trips - Rain Cancels
TUES 1/13  7:30-9:30PM
Sepulveda Garden Center, Encino

INSECTS AND NATIVE PLANT GARDENS
Presenter: Peggy Nguyen

Peggy Nguyen is the Preserve Manager for the Coastal Dunes and El Segundo Blue Butterfly Preserve on the westernmost 307 acres of Los Angeles International Airport. She has been involved in environmental education and in restoring Los Angeles natural areas since 1995. Her training is in nonprofit management; environmental science, policy, education, and management; restoration ecology; and psycho-biology.

Directions: The Sepulveda Garden Center, 16633 Magnolia Blvd. in Encino, is on the north side of Magnolia between Balboa & Hayvenhurst. Park in the lighted lot at the east end of the garden, walk west along the path to the garden center building. Refreshments are served. A no-host dinner precedes the meeting at 6:00 pm at Tony Roma’s Restaurant, 16575 Ventura Blvd., Encino. (818-461-8400)

TUES 2/10  7:30-9:00PM
First United Methodist Church, Santa Monica

RESTORING LOS ANGELES COASTAL DUNES HABITAT
Presenter: Peggy Nguyen

Peggy Nguyen is the Preserve Manager for the Coastal Dunes and El Segundo Blue Butterfly Preserve on the westernmost 307 acres of Los Angeles International Airport. She has been involved in environmental education and in restoring Los Angeles natural areas since 1995. Her training is in nonprofit management; environmental science, policy, education, and management; restoration ecology; and psycho-biology.

Directions: The First United Methodist Church, 1008 11th Street, Santa Monica CA 90403, is one and a half blocks north of Wilshire Boulevard on 11th Street in Santa Monica. From the 10 freeway, exit at Lincoln. Go right, or north to Wilshire. Turn right. In three blocks turn left on 11th Street. The church is on the left, just past Magnolia Blvd. in Encino, is on the north side of Magnolia between Balboa & Hayvenhurst. Park in the lighted lot at the east end of the garden, walk west along the path to the garden center building. Refreshments are served. A no-host dinner precedes the meeting at 6:00 pm at Tony Roma’s Restaurant, 16575 Ventura Blvd., Encino. (818-461-8400)

CHAPTER BOARD MEETINGS

February 3, 7pm
6117 Reseda Blvd. Suite H, Tarzana
(north of Oxnard/Topham, on west side of Reseda), one block from the Orange Line Busway on Reseda Blvd. Steve Hartman’s office. Join board members for dinner at 6:00pm at Garden Wok Restaurant at same address. Members welcome!
**Sullivan Canyon Mansions Development**

Brentwood residents of the lower Sullivan Canyon watershed were shocked in early October to witness destruction of over 130 mature and old-growth California bay laurel (*Umbellularia californica*), coast live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*), Southern California black walnut (*Juglans californica var. californica*), western sycamore (*Platanus racemosa*), willow, other shrubs and trees of a functioning riparian woodland. The woodland serves as a key biological anchor. It is located on twelve undeveloped acres that border protected open space owned by the City of Los Angeles and state. The perennial stream is one of very few within the City that remains viable after three drought years. The upland area of the parcel hosts sage scrub and chaparral habitat types. The environmental services this parcel provides are life-giving resources to the 20,000+ acres of the upper watershed locally known as 'the Big Wild' that extends along the Mulholland corridor in all cardinal directions.

The project site was permitted without public notice and in agreement with the developer's Mitigated Negative Declaration request to be exempt from the California Environmental Quality Act. No environmental surveys were conducted. Vegetation reconnaissance, map, and monitoring by a City Forester or qualified biologist were not part of the permit, in violation of the City Ordinance 177404 'Protected Tree Ordinance.'

The two main permitting authorities are the City of Los Angeles Department of Building and US Army Corps of Engineers. The project proponent plans to construct a 12,000-square foot and 14,000-square foot mansion plus outbuildings in the narrow pristine canyon that is home to and nesting/birthing site for several avian and mammal species. The Army Corps permit allows decimation of the riparian area and undergrounding of the perennial stream to the stormwater system.

The builder requested in their building permit application to remove 25 coast live oak. The City issued a permit to take 51 coast live oak. The City authorized extensive earth removal of the steep slopes on the property for a total of 87,000 cubic yards to be hauled offsite. The projected soil removal equals 2,349,000 cubic feet or 8700 large size dump truck loads.

California Department of Fish and Wildlife issued a Cease and Desist order after learning about the taking of the 130+ trees. A community group requested a stay of the grading permit pending environmental review and public comment. Other agencies and groups are currently reviewing permits issued and asking for full CEQA review of this project, including and not limited to geological, biological, hydrological studies and onsite monitoring. Offsite mitigation requirements that are part of the permits may be challenged as the habitat values and services slated for destruction are not replicable elsewhere and necessary to sustain plants and wildlife of Sullivan Canyon and environs.

The undeveloped areas of Sullivan Canyon are documented as being pristine habitat, host beneficial uses for water quality, are biodiverse, function as an important wildlife corridor, and provide a natural sink for airborne pollutants. The area is under consideration for designation by the California Register of Historic Resources. Recreationists frequent the Canyon for its habitat and rural community values. The type of development, activities, architecture, and habitat destruction imposed at this early stage of construction at the site clearly is neither commensurate with the community nor respects the existing environmental integrity of the area. Most important, this proposed development is symptomatic of the need for better land use policy and planning in the Wildland Urban Interface of the Santa Monica Mountains to protect long term biological, recreational, viewscape, physical, and open space resources.
To the editor of Toyon:

I read with some bemusement Halli Mason’s article in the September/October issue, entitled “Plant Sale: Good Old Days?” In fact I was a volunteer at many of those early sales, and though it is indisputable that Halli spent many long, hard hours before, during, and after each sale, my recollection of those times is a bit more rose-colored:

Calamigos Ranch was really a beautiful place for plant enthusiasts to gather, and as my adult hiking career was already in full swing, I was very familiar with the general environs. I seem to recall being booked for a Friday evening, prior to the weekend sale, and gathering with Halli, Jo Kitz, Doris Hoover, and the intrepid crew, awaiting the arrival of Bert Wilson’s rented truck (s). Burt would have driven one of the rigs down from his Las Pilitas Nursery and had spent the day before departing building out the interior of the rental with additional shelves to better cram the space with one gallon pots, leaving a larger opening on the floor for the five gallon specimens. I remember him disembarking from the cab, clutching a coffee and looking happy but somewhat bleary-eyed from the hard work proceeding, and the long trip down the 101. His sense of humor and basic good nature were never suppressed from his labors.

For me, the best moment of the entire weekend was when Bert would roll up the door of the back of the truck and a few of us would clamber up into the cargo space, which had for the entire day been full of aromatic sages, artemesias, bay laurels, etc. The combined exhalation of all of those beautiful healthy plants, having been confined, was now an incredible ambrosia—the distilled essence of what might take hours of hiking to enumerate. Being of sound body and small frame, I was naturally equipped with the requirements for helping disgorge the plants from their jam-packed enclosure and I was always ecstatic to be asked to climb up and help unpack. There was always a happy sort of chaotic mayhem, Bert yelling something along the lines of “there’s more of the Fremontias behind you!” and Halli quickly improvising, then re-improvising the layout of the sale to better display the variety of horticultural wealth available. David Hollombe always had a sharp eye for any pots of uncertain derivation, and all the other volunteers would dispatch the pots to the various picnic tables and adorn them with the handmade signs that Halli described. Hard work (particularly for Halli)? Yes. Haphazard? Perhaps. There was always a happy collegiality to our work, though, and there were lots of smiles to go around.

Clearly, the plant sale I enjoyed visiting once again this past weekend was a well-oiled machine, and the organization, plant descriptive materials, and central location of the Sepulveda Garden Center are all for the best. The purpose of the sale is indeed both as a fundraiser and an outreach to the public, and it’s a wonderful thing to see some relative newcomer to natives smile at the scent of a Salvia clevelandii, or ponder the beauty of a Mimulus cardinalis. I got to “hang” with Jo once again, and the sharpness of Halli’s accumulated experience is apparent in the (slightly) less frenetic pace she needs to keep. Still, I will always remember with great fondness those truly good old days of the plant sales of the past, and with those past days the faces of friends who no longer hike the hills along with us.

Doug Schwartz
October 28, 2014
Chapter Election Results
Thanks to all of you who voted in our recent election and also to those who agreed to run for office. Our 2015 officers are: Snowdy Dodson, President; Jo Kitz, and Halli Mason, Co-Vice Presidents; Henrietta Yuan, Secretary; Steve Hartman, Treasurer; Betsey Landis, Chapter Council Delegate.

TIME VALUE

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CHAPTER RENEWALS & NEW MEMBERSHIPS
Send check to David Hollombe, 6223 San Vicente Boulevard, Los Angeles, CA 90048 or to CNPS, 2707 K Street, Suite 1, Sacramento, CA 95816.

Current CNPS memberships are:
Student, Limited Income $25,
Individual $45,
Family, Group or Library $75.
Make checks payable to CNPS.

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTIONS TO TOYON ONLY. For members of other CNPS chapters, send $5 to David Hollombe.

CHANGE OF ADDRESS: Write or phone David Hollombe (323) 934-0332. Include your e-mail address. Be sure to notify State CNPS Office, 2707 K Street, Suite 1, Sacramento, CA 95816.