PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE
By Snowdy Dodson
As we head into summer I trust that you have been out botanizing and enjoying the breathtaking blooms produced by our rainy winter and spring. Have you noticed that the weeds are out in force and attempting to choke out those flowering natives? The good news is that there are wonderful, dedicated souls out there doing something about those weeds. Jo Kitz, who heads up our Chapter's weed wars, has organized numerous weeding and restoration opportunities which are co-sponsored with TreePeople and the Mountains Restoration Trust. Thanks to those efforts, real progress has been made at Malibu Creek State Park, Lower Topanga Creek, La Sierra Preserve, and Cold Creek. The calendar section on page 3 inside lists numerous volunteer opportunities for weeding and restoration.

In Caballero Canyon, Halli Mason and her Tuesday morning hiking group have been doing an incredible job chopping thistle, mustard, tecolote and other weeds from along the trails. Throughout the spring, Steve Hartman, Bill Neill, and I have worked at eradicating horehound and smilo grass along the lower main trail at Caballero. We are also hoping to make the lower Caballero Canyon entrance into a California native plant show piece to welcome hikers and bikers.

In the Sepulveda Dam Basin, Steve Hartman has organized a small but intrepid group of volunteers who are weeding in the Wildlife Area and at the Bull Creek restoration area. Thanks to Steve, Julie Takayama, Anne Abramson, and Kerri Barton for all their hard work which is described in greater detail in the article on pages 4 and 5.

In the Pacific Palisades, Barbara Marinacci has been recruiting volunteers to revive the native garden at Temescal Canyon Park. Twenty-three people participated in the clean up she organized on May 29. Barbara has also been active with weeding and restoration at Los Liones Gateway Park where another native plant garden had been allowed to languish.

Eradicating invasive, non-natives from our landscapes can seem to be a daunting task; however, even a handful of volunteers can make a difference and have a significant impact on what our wildlands and parks will look like in the future. You can help by donating your time to these projects or by making a donation to the Chapter weed war efforts.

UPCOMING PROGRAM
of the Los Angeles/Santa Monica Mountains Chapter

JULY 13, 2009 - 7:30 - 9:30 pm
Sepulveda Garden Center
16633 Magnolia Blvd. Encino

Patterns of Wildfire in the
Santa Monica Mountains
Presenter: Robert Taylor

Robert Taylor, biogeographer and Fire GIS Specialist (Coast Mediterranean Network, National Park Service, Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area) will discuss patterns of fire in the Santa Monica Mountains: where it burns lots and where it burns not at all, why that is, and what it means for the future of plants and people around here. Wildfire has been a natural part of the Santa Monica Mountains since their formation about 2 million years ago. Large, intense wildfires have occurred semi-regularly during every era of human habitation (Chumash, Spanish, Mexican, and American). Predictions of climate change suggest that big wildfires will become even more common in the future. Human activities cause most of our wildfires. But our landscape is not evenly over-burned. We have fire corridors that burn again and again while other areas seldom burn. Where are these extremes located and why? What are the plants doing about it? What can we do about it?

Programs are free to the public. Refreshments will be served. For directions, see Calendar of Events on page 3.

NO AUGUST PROGRAM

I also want to let you know that our chapter's Fall Plant Sale will be held on October 2 and 3, once again at the Sepulveda Garden Center in Encino. Noted gardening author Bob Perry will give a talk on Saturday and sign copies of his new book, and L.A. Times contributor and blogger Emily Green will give a gardening talk on Sunday. We will need volunteers Friday through Sunday.

Last, I want to give heartfelt thanks to Sheila Braden, who served on our chapter board as vice-president from January 1998 to May 2010. She has provided valuable insight (especially on National Recreation Area issues) and made our participation in the BioBlitz a great success. Thank you Sheila!
ILEENE ANDERSON WINS AWARD
Long-time chapter member, former CNPS employee, and current biologist and public lands deserts director for the Center for Biological Diversity, received the prestigious Walking Stick award from the Desert Tortoise Preserve Committee. According to the Committee’s newsletter, Ileen “is an individual that fits conservation causes with elegance and grace. She spearheads the greatest challenges and controversy relating to biodiversity of the desert and our precious desert tortoise.” Ileen also is focused on many conservation projects including Tejon Ranch and the Santa Clara River Watershed. “She is in the public eye and actively in the media focusing on the importance of species survival and protecting the ecosystems in which they live. She understands the importance of biodiversity, the impact of greenhouse gas emissions, and urbanization. Her dedication to be the voice of the public’s land and so many threatened species is admirable.” Keep up the great work, Ileen!

HUGH HEFNER IS FINAL DONOR, LAND AROUND HOLLYWOOD SIGN SAVED
On April 26, the Trust for Public Land (TPL) announced it has raised enough money to buy and protect the 138 acres behind the world-famous Hollywood Sign, as Playboy magazine founder Hugh Hefner stepped forward to close the gap with a $900,000 donation toward the $12.5 million needed. “Today, we have the Hollywood ending we hoped for and now Cahuenga Peak will be forever protected by adding it to Griffith Park,” said Will Rogers, TPL President.

John Donnelly, Executive Director of the Wildlife Conservation Board, said, “The permanent protection of Cahuenga Peak is a significant addition to Griffith Park that will greatly enhance recreation opportunities for visitors and residents of Los Angeles and enhance wildlife corridors throughout the region.”

TPL is a national, nonprofit land conservation organization that conserves land for people to enjoy as parks, gardens, historic sites, rural lands, and other natural places. Since 1972, TPL has completed 4,500 projects in 47 states, historic sites, rural lands, and other natural places. Since 1972, TPL has completed 4,500 projects in 47 states, protecting 2.8 million acres. Visit www.tpl.org

CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT WEEK PROPOSED FOR CALIFORNIA
Assemblywoman Noreen Evans has introduced ACR 173, a resolution sponsored by CNPS, that would create a Native Plant Week to be celebrated each year during the third week in April. For the full text of the resolution see the following web address:

You can support the passing of this bill by calling or writing your State Assembly Member or by writing a letter of support to Assemblywoman Evans care of the State Capitol, PO Box 942849, Sacramento, CA 94249-0007.

TONY VALOIS NAMED PARK SERVICE’S TOP VOLUNTEER
Tony Valois, a volunteer at the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreational Area (and LA/SMM chapter member), won the national George B. Hartzog Jr award for Outstanding Volunteer Service by an individual, presented by the National Park Service. Valois won the award for his dedicated service to SMMNRA. His most notable accomplishment was an innovative wildflower identification database that he worked on for six years. The database is accessible for free on the Internet and allows the public to easily identify wildflowers in the Santa Monica Mountains based on a few characteristics like color and size. See www.researchlearningcenter.com/bloom/bloom.htm

NEW LICHEN REFERENCE AVAILABLE AS PDF
Lichens, Lichenicolous and A lied Fungi of the Santa Monica Mountains, Part 5: A editions and Corrections to the Annotated Checklist, by Kerry Knudsen & Jana Kocourková, is now available on the chapter website (www.lacnps.org) home page, along with previous parts.

UPCOMING EVENTS
SO CAL BOTANIST SYMPOSIUM OCT. 9
Southern California Botanists 36th Annual Symposium, Sat. Oct. 9, will be held at the Ruby Gerontology Center, Calif. State University, Fullerton. The theme will be California Mountains: Resources and Threats. See http://www.socalbot.org/ for registration details.

2010 CAL-IPC SYMPOSIUM – OCT. 14-16 IN VENTURA
The 19th annual California Invasive Plant Council conference that will be held on Oct. 14-16 in Ventura, at the Crowne Plaza Ventura Beach Hotel. A pre-Symposium Field Course will be held October 13. This year’s Symposium will feature several sessions examining the challenge of balancing invasive plant management with the needs of wildlife species, organized in conjunction with the Western Section of The Wildlife Society as a follow-up to Cal-IPC’s 2007 Invasive Plants and Wildlife meeting. For registration information see http://www.cal-ipc.org/symposia/index.php

VISIT NATIONAL PARKS
The National Park System has just announced some FREE Admission Days to commemorate the 40th Anniversary of Earth Day. It is also celebrate the America’s Great Outdoors initiative that has been created by President Obama’s administration. NPS is offering free admission in 2010 on the following dates: Aug. 14-15th; Sept. 25th; Nov. 11th. Check the NPS website for details: http://act.npca.org
TUES 7/13 7:30-9:30pm
Sepulveda Garden Center, Encino

Patterns of Wildfire in the Santa Monica Mountains
Presenter: Robert Taylor
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. Native plant and gardening books will be for sale and refreshments are served. A no-host dinner precedes the meeting at 6:00pm at Tony Roma’s Restaurant, 16575 Ventura Blvd., Encino. (818-461-8400)

NO AUGUST PROGRAM
For information about the above program, please see “Upcoming Programs” on front page.

BOARD MEETINGS
NO JULY BOARD MEETING

TUES 8/3 7pm
LA/SMO Chapter Board Meeting
at the home of Jo Kitz, 6223 Lubao Ave., Woodland Hills. Chapter members are invited! 818-348-5910

FALL PLANT SALE
OCT. 2 & 3

WHITE MOUNTAINS FIELD TRIP
FRI-MON 7/16-7/19
Botany/Geology/Ecology Workshop, Crooked Creek/White Mountains Field Research Station (U.C. Reserve facility). Botany, geology and bird field sessions. Evening programs, campfires and astronomy sessions. Key field leaders - Dr. Tanya Atwater (UCSB geology emeritus professor) and Steve Junak, botanist and herbarium director at Santa Barbara Botanic Garden. $375 includes indoor accommodations, 8 meals, naturalists, field guides, syllabus, Registration/Information: Carolyn Greene, 805-376-3036, or www.channelislandsrestoration.org/whites

HIKES AND RESTORATION

SAT 7/10 8:45am
Topanga State Park
Lower Topanga Creek Restoration:
Topanga Creek was returned to its historic channel in 2008 and since then, volunteers have planted oaks, sycamores and native plants to restore the park’s critical natural habitat. During the summer, volunteers are needed to water these young plants until the winter rains come. Bring, water, snack, sturdy footwear. Credit for community service. Reservations required. 818-591-1701 x203 or online at volunteer@treepeople.org 3.5hrs *

SAT 7/11 8:45am
Santa Monica Mountains
Weed Wars Restore Habitat. A weed warrior gets the ripgut and thistles out so native grasses, plants, and oak seedlings will again provide food and shelter for the animals of the mountains. Credit for community service. Reservations required. 818-348-5910 or online at volunteer@treepeople.org 3.5hrs *

SAT 7/17 8:45am
Malibu Creek State Park
Oak Savannah Restoration/
Commemorative Oaks
Young oak trees need summer water to become the stately oaks that restore life, beauty and habitat to the park. Community service credit. Reservations required. 818-591-1701 x203 or online at volunteer@treepeople.org 3.5hrs *

SAT 7/24 8:45am
Cold Creek Preserve
Gardening in Cold Creek Preserve
Work in a natural garden restoring native plants and California bunch grasses while enjoying the summer wildflowers. Credit for community service. Reservations required. 818-591-1701 x203 or online at volunteer@treepeople.org 3.5hrs *

SAT 8/14 8:45am
Topanga State Park
Lower Topanga Creek Restoration:
Topanga Creek was returned to its historic channel in 2008. In 2009-2010, volunteers planted, watered and weeded coast live oaks and other native plants to replace habitat destroying weeds. Come and help keep these young plants growing. Bring, water, snack, sturdy footwear. Credit for community service. Reservations required. 818-591-1701 x203 or online at volunteer@treepeople.org 3.5hrs *

SUN 8/15 8:45am
Malibu Creek State Park, Tapia Unit
Weed Wars Restore Habitat. We work in the shade of majestic oak trees removing vinca and English ivy so native grasses, plants, and oak seedlings will again form the understory of the riparian corridor. Credit for community service. Reservations required. 818-348-5910 or online at volunteer@treepeople.org 3.5hrs *

SUN 8/22 8:45am
Malibu Creek State Park
Oak Woodland Restoration Young oak trees planted in January will provide shade along a favorite trail. They are awaiting volunteers to give them a good soaking during this hot dry season so they will restore life, beauty and habitat to the park. Credit for community service. Reservations required. 818-591-1701 x203 or online at volunteer@treepeople.org 3.5hrs *

SUN 8/29 10am
Malibu Creek State Park
Return of Lost Oak Woodlands Volunteers have planted thousands of young oak trees to restore life, beauty and habitat to the park. Duriing the summer, volunteers water the trees to keep them alive during our dry season. Receive community service credit. Reservations required. 818-591-1701 x203 or online at volunteer@treepeople.org 3.5hrs *

SAT 8/28 8:45am
Cold Creek Preserve
Cold Creek Habitat Restoration Day Volunteers are restoring oak and willow woodlands along creeks to create riparian habitat from weedy fields. Hundreds of young plants need watering. Credit for community service. Reservations required. 818-591-1701 x203 or online at volunteer@treepeople.org 3.5hrs *

SUN 9/5 10am
Malibu Bluffs Park
Bluffs Ramble to the Sea Walk 2-miles on trails with great views, dip your toes into the bay, look for dolphins sea lions and observe the native plant recovery after the 2007 wildfire. 818-762-9346 2hrs

* co-sponsored by LA/SMO CNPS, Mountains Restoration Trust, and the Tree people
Bull Creek Ecosystem Restoration Project Report
Photos and text by Steve Hartman

Just east of Balboa Blvd. and south of Victory Blvd. in the Sepulveda Basin, the Bull Creek Ecosystem Restoration Project has now been established for a year. This project developed 28 acres of aquatic, riparian and native upland habitat to enhance and restore wildlife resources along Bull Creek. Features include an island, low hills, and connecting bridges. Plantings include thousands of native cuttings and acres of hydroseed. Parking is available on the barren dirt areas adjacent to a “bus parking only” circular drive. There is no signage indicating you are there.

While the project may be viewed as a success so far, there have been some interesting developments and setbacks. Everything was looking very good until the heavy winter rains deposited tons of silt in the oxbow that surrounds the island, and erosion cut back the east bank of Bull Creek so much that the trail had to be diverted. While the City of L.A. and the Army Corps of Engineers are still pondering what went wrong to cause the erosion and silt-up the oxbow that surrounds the former island, I believe that part of the problem may have been caused by the tremendous amount of dust that was blown all over the valley as a result of the Station Fire last fall, that denuded many square miles of the San Gabriel Mountains. In looking at a map, most of the water running down from the areas where this fire occurred end up draining into Bull Creek. It could be that all that silt ended up in Bull Creek, changing the expected hydrological dynamics and resulting in the problems.

In terms of the vegetation, things are going OK so far, but not without much intervention by myself and other members of the Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Areas Steering Committee, and a cadre of dedicated weeders who have made a big difference this spring. Despite requesting three years’ of weed control after construction, the project went over budget and only one year of vegetation maintenance was included. That meant that as of April 1 this year, there would be no weed control in the project, and we all know that the first three years are most crucial when it comes to a restoration project: either you control the weeds in the first years after the huge amount of disturbance that a project like this creates (i.e. widening channel of Bull Creek and using the soil to create the new hills), or be deluged with non-natives swamping out the natives.

Even during the one-year maintenance period, where a dedicated crew was available for weeding, there were problems. First, the hydromulch seed mixture that was sprayed over much of the area unfortunately included a number of very invasive non-native plants (perhaps because the containers used to hold the hydromulch solution weren’t cleaned out thoroughly) including gazanias and Cape-marigold. Second, even though I volunteered to teach the landscape crew which plants were weeds and which ones were natives, there were some that the workers were confused about; for example, I surmise that horehound was not controlled because it looked too much like purple sage. Another issue related to irrigation: the project managers didn’t understand that native plants don’t need late spring and summer irrigation, and that if irrigation is applied, all it does is promote the weeds; I finally got them to turn off the water.

But these are just typical challenges when trying (as a volunteer) to help manage these revegetation projects in the Sepulveda Basin, especially when the City of L.A. Dept. of Recreation and Parks is the runt of all the City’s departments and always getting its budget cut first. Because of the budget crises, managers are changing every two years, staff is being cut, and the hard reality is that if we want these areas to look good volunteers are going to have to pitch in.

So, starting early this year, a volunteer named Julie Takayama and myself started doing weed control in the Basin. First we started in the Wildlife Reserve east of Woodley, tackling large stands of horehound. Apparently the lack of rain during the past few years prior to 2009-2010 suppressed the horehound, many dying back, so it was hard to find them to apply herbicide. With the regular and substantial rains this past season, the horehound took off like crazy, and many were in places that couldn’t be sprayed, as horehound likes to germinate at the base of larger shrubs such as mule fat and coyote bush.

Fields of mostly native perennial grasses surround an island of wildflowers featuring golden yarrow, deerweed, annual poppies, etc.
In March, it was announced by the City that maintenance on the Bull Creek project would terminate on March 31. After much discussion, Jeremy Thomas (now former park maintenance supervisor) arranged to have Bill Neill of Riparian Repairs, who has been applying herbicide in the Basin and other areas as both a part-time employee of the City of L.A. and a recipient of funds from both LA/ SMM CNPS and the Consortium of the Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Areas Steering Committee, work on the Bull Creek project. Bill and I toured the area and decided that the two south hills, where there is an incredible concentration of native plants that were the result of hydromulching and planting, would be weeded by hand, as the plants were too close together to be able to use herbicide. Bill would use herbicide where spraying was appropriate, in the riparian areas and along the trails.

So in March Julie and I started weeding twice a week, at first targeting the gazanias and Cape-marigold, as they were very obvious and going to seed early. Later we targeted horehound, tecolote, mustard, Russian thistle and giant reed grass. Oddball non-natives such as tamarisk and black locust were killed. Soon we were joined by two other volunteers, Kerri Barton and Anne Abramson, who found out about our project due to their participation in a group called “Friends of Lake Balboa.” Up through mid-June having devoted dozens of hours to this project, the wildflower hills look very good.

The hills are surrounded by impressive fields of native grasses that were introduced as part of the hydromulch spraying. These species include *Nasella lepida*, *N. pulchra*, *N. lepida*, and *Elymus glaucus*. In these fields that are adjacent to a highly used trail, I felt it was appropriate to kill the weedy-looking species that, if left to prosper, would give the area an unkept look. So we have also cut prickly lettuce and horseweed throughout the area.

The area that is least managed is the existing hill that bounds the project area on the north and west. While natives such as walnuts, toyon, sumacs, mallow sages and others have been planted on that hill, the mustard and tecolote covers much of the area. At the base of the hill was a couple acre stand of nearly solid tecolote; I pointed this out to supervisor Jeremy Thomas and he arranged to have the area mowed. Thank you, Jeremy, that was a big save.

One of the last projects we will tackle for this year is to go up on the hill and try to clear the weeds from around the native plants.

If you want to volunteer to do weeding in the Sepulveda Basin, please email volunteer@sepulvedabasinwildlife.org. For more information about the wildlife areas in the Basin visit www.sepulvedabasinwildlife.org

A couple of weeks ago as Julie and I were weeding in the native grassland, we heard what sounded like the high-pitched whine of a cicada. Cicadas in L.A.? Using triangulation, we stealthily crept toward where each of us thought the sound was emanating. As we got closer, a big bug flew out of the grasses and our suspicions were confirmed: cicada. When I got home I looked up cicadas in the book *Los Angeles Insects* and discovered that cicadas are rare here in Los Angeles and that they are restricted to certain habitats. Well, it looks like this “Ecosystem Restoration” project is already working!

Please take some time to visit the Bull Creek Restoration Project in the Sepulveda Dam Basin soon.
PLANT SALE
OCT. 2 & 3