PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE
By Snowdy Dodson

Our CNPS LA/SMM Chapter and the Theodore Payne Foundation sponsored the first ever Native Plant Week Symposium, Wildflower Show and Plant Sale on April 23, 2011 at the Sepulveda Garden Center. The event was an unqualified success thanks to all of you who came to view the wildflowers, buy plants and books, attend the presentations, and advocate for California native plants. The stunning display of California native flowers reflected the beauty of our local ecology. The wildflower show cuttings came from Theodore Payne Foundation and from the private gardens of Steve & Leslie Hartman, Doug Allan, Betsey Landis, Mary Montes, and Karin Benson. We wish to thank all individuals and institutions that either contributed or gathered flowers for this year's crowd-pleasing display.

Theodore Payne Foundation (TPF) provided a great variety of high quality native plants for sale, and their skilled nursery people were there to provide thoughtful suggestions on plant selection. Our Symposium featured presentations by Lili Singer on “The Joys of Gardening with Native Plants;” Jim Kenney on “Wildflowers and Landscapes of the Santa Monica Mountains;” and Cassy Aoyagi on “Water Conservation Gardening with Natives.” All sessions were attended by enthusiastic crowds. Our Chapter bookstore was also very popular and provided a wide selection of plant related publications for the bibliophile attendees. Our information tables included Tom Hayduk of the Mountains Restoration Trust leading sessions on native plant propagation; the Gourd Society supplying materials and instructions for making gourd jewelry; the Southern California Garden Club promoting gardening in the local area; and FormLA informing the public about drought tolerant and sustainable landscaping.

continued on page 3

UPCOMING PROGRAMS
of the Los Angeles/Santa Monica Mountains Chapter

July 12, 2011 – 7:30 - 9:30PM
Sepulveda Garden Center, Encino

LOWER TOPANGA CREEK RESTORATION

Presenter: Jo Kitz,
CNPS Fellow and Co-Executive Director of the Mountains Restoration Trust

A $3.3 million project removed a mighty berm in lower Topanga that had been built to thwart the creek's determination to do its thing: leave the banks and find new ways to the sea even if houses were in the way.

State Parks purchased the property, removed the houses and berm leaving a barren 12-acre floodplain. Vegetative restoration started on December 13, 2008. The goal of the Resource Conservation District was to install 100 plants. Mountains Restoration Trust joined the project and with MRT and TreePeople volunteers set a goal of 100 coast live oaks.

Will the trees survive? Will the creek seek a new channel? What challenges did the restoration crews encounter? What changes have occurred?

No August Program

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

Save the Dates:
Plant Sale Oct. 29 & 30
HIKES AND RESTORATION - JULY & AUGUST

SAT 7/9  8:45am

Peter Strauss Ranch

La Sierra Restoration Day After meeting at Peter Strauss Ranch, we caravan to La Sierra Preserve. There we may plant, weed, or water newly planted areas or environmentally sensitive areas in wetlands and along the trails in this scenic site that is not open to the public. Bring snack, sunscreen and water. Credit for community service. Reservations required. 818-591-1701 x203 or online at volunteer@treepeople.org. 3.5hrs *

SUN 7/10  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. Call for location. We will go to the weediest spot we can find. Reservations required. 818-348-5910 or online at volunteer@treepeople.org 3.5hrs *

SAT 7/16  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 *

SUN 7/17  8:45am

Topanga State Park

Lower Topanga Creek Restoration: Topanga Creek was returned in 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 at volunteer@treepeople.org 3.5hrs *

SAT 7/23  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 at volunteer@treepeople.org 3.5hrs *

SAT 7/30  9am–4pm

Temescal Canyon Park

Weeding in the City Park at Temescal Canyon Barbara Marinacci leads weeding at the Native Plant Garden in Temescal Canyon Park (the City of L.A. park between PCH and Sunset, NOT MRCA's Temescal Canyon Park). Show up anytime. For more information contact Barbara at barbara.marinacci@verizon.net.

SUN 7/31  10am

Cold Creek Preserve Lower Gate

Canyon Caper Enter a shaded trail through chaparral, wetlands and oak woodlands. Several appreciation stops along the way to enjoy the diversity, cultural history and beauty of the canyon. Bring water, sunscreen, snack. Info: 818-591-1701 x203. 2.5hrs

SAT 8/6  8:45am

Peter Strauss Ranch

La Sierra Restoration Day After meeting at PSR, we caravan to La Sierra Preserve. There we may plant, weed, or water newly planted areas or environmentally sensitive areas in wetlands and along the trails in this scenic site that is not open to the public. Bring snack, sunscreen and water. Credit for community service. Reservations required. 818-591-1701 x203 or online at volunteer@treepeople.org. 3.5hrs *

SAT 8/13  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 8/14  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 *

SAT 8/20  8:45am

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. During 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 *

SUN 8/21  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 at volunteer@treepeople.org 3.5hrs *

SAT 8/27  9am–4pm

Temescal Canyon Park

Weeding in the City Park at Temescal Canyon Barbara Marinacci leads weeding at the Native Plant Garden in Temescal Canyon Park (the City of L.A. park between PCH and Sunset, NOT MRCA's Temescal Canyon Park). Show up anytime. For more information contact Barbara at barbara.marinacci@verizon.net.

SUN 8/28  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 see how native plants recover after a wildfire. 818-782-9346 2hrs

* Co-sponsored by LA/SMM CNPS, Mountains Restoration Trust, and TreePeople.
GORMAN WILDFLOWER WALK, MAY 21, 2011 - ENDANGERED SPECIES DAY

They said that it was too late in the season, and that the rains had not come at the right time for there to be wildflowers at Gorman this year, however…. 

Driving up I-5 to Gorman, I passed the east-facing road cuts just north of the 14 which were ablaze with sticky monkeyflower. Further north, east facing slopes were covered with cleveland sage, buckwheat, and annual sunflower. And, sadly, the Spartium (Spanish broom) has continued its inexorable march northward.

Five people did show up for the wildflower walk lead by Michael O’Brien of CNPS and Ileene Anderson of the Center for Biological Diversity, and there was lots to see. We explained the importance of this part of the state, where the coastal, desert and Sierra Nevada biomes come together right along the San Andreas Fault. And then we started with a dead snake (probably a gopher snake) by the side of the road. Since we had two young children with us, this immediately started off the walk on a high note. We then discovered some small mammal poop and broke it apart to find the bug parts inside. As far as the kids were concerned, this was the best trip ever!

We did find many wildflowers. To see them you just have to watch carefully. We saw and distinguished the three most common invasive grasses (wild oats, red brome and foxtail brome) and were rewarded with foxtails in our shoes and socks. There were the usual California poppies (the official State flower), and lupines. The locoweed (Astragalus) had flowered, but their huge pods were nice and ruddy and fun to pop. The filaree fruits were peeled and we watched them curl up in corkscrew fashion, which they use to drill themselves into the ground to plant themselves. We saw Amsinckia, Coreopsis, Cryptantha, buckwheat, Gilia, bladderpod, purple needlegrass (the official State grass), goldfields, Phacelia, wild rhubarb, london rocket, mustard, stinging nettle, monkeyflower, bee plant and watercress. (Too bad we didn't have white bread and butter!) In a pond near the road, we observed tadpoles and some young frogllets (possibly Pacific tree frogs) and a rodent path down to the water through a field of fescue. Again, the kids were mesmerized.

So, although “there is nothing there,” we found plenty to observe, and had a fun, intimate endangered species day outing.

by Michael O’Brien
SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA BOTANISTS SYMPOSIUM
OCTOBER 15, 2011
Baja ¡Aja! Botanical Diversity of the Peninsula
This symposium will focus on Baja California resources as well as current and potential threats impacting this unique ecosystem. Located at the Ruby Gerontology Center on the campus of California State University, Fullerton. www.scb.org.

JULY ART SHOW: MARK YOUR CALENDARS
The Pastel Society of the Gold Coast (www.pastelsocietyofthegoaldcoast.org) will donate 100 percent of raffle funds to Save Open Space (www.saveopenspace.com) during a reception on Sunday, July 10 from 1:00-3:00pm. Original artworks of beautiful landscapes will be auctioned off. The 2011 “Passion for Pastels” show is July 2-30 at the Thousand Oaks Community Gallery. The Gallery is located south of the 101 Freeway at the Borcard Road exit and is adjacent to the Newbury Park Branch Library. Free admission. Gallery hours are 11:00-5:00 daily except Mondays. Gallery phone 805-498-4390.

LA TUNA CANYON THREATENED
By Snowdy Dodson
The Los Angeles County Flood Control District Sediment Management Strategic Plan is looking at La Tuna Canyon as a site for a future debris basin. On April 18, I (and nearly 100 other concerned citizens) attended a Sediment Management Strategic Plan Task Force meeting at the LA County Dept. of Public Works to seek further information on how debris from flood control basins would be handled. As you probably know, the Arcadia Oaks woodland area was recently turned into a debris basin – a project that resulted in the destruction of 100’s of mature oaks and the obliteration of a thriving ecosystem. La Tuna Canyon is another environmentally significant property that is owned by LA County and is under threat of similar habitat destruction. Although there is no doubt that recent fires followed by heavy rains have left us with a significant debris removal problem, meeting attendees questioned the wisdom of using economically valuable and ecologically diverse open space for this purpose. We need to come up with more creative, sustainable, and less destructive ways to handle flood basin debris. See http://www.dpw.lacounty.gov/wrd/Removal/index.cfm or you may address comments or concerns to: SedimentMgmtPlan@dpw.lacounty.gov.

BABS AND ROBIN KOBALY — DESERT BOTANISTS EXTRAORDINAIRE!
In the early 1990’s, when I served on the Bureau of Land Management's Desert District Advisory Council, I met Robin Kobaly, a botanist who worked for BLM and also managed Big Morongo Wildlife Reserve near Joshua Tree National Monument. I found out that Robin was incredibly knowledgeable about the desert flora and her dedication to the protection of the flora was top-notch. She and I have kept in touch since.
A couple of years ago the LA/SMM Chapter received a donation of used books from one of our member’s collections, and included was a “Guide to Morongo Valley Wildflowers” written by Robin’s mother, Babs Kobaly. As a desert plant fanatic I thought that I already owned every desert flora book that existed, but this was a new find. What made it so great, even though it is only 56 pages of folded letter-size paper stapled on the side, is that it has unique plant lists, such as distinctive leaves or skeletons, odd juices, unusual odors, odd fruits and stems, and edible and drinkable qualities. Want to know which plants can be used for soap? In the back of the guide it has lists of plants by groups (trees, vines, carpet/belly plants, common wash plants, grasses, water-loving plants, common weeds, and yellow (daisy) bushes. You can order this guide ($15) at www.powerofplants.com.

One of Robin's strongest conservation concerns is that desert plants get no respect, and she has published a booklet entitled, “Saving the Ancients: Ancient Plant Profiles” through the SummerTree Institute (www.summertree.org). She is trying to raise public awareness and garner community support for the protection of long-lived southwest native plants. Often unrecognized, these sentinels have endured centuries of change and are a legacy to future generations of humans and wildlife.

Robin is also featured in a DVD video entitled, “Water-Wise Landscaping – Creating Beautiful Drought-Tolerant Landscaping in the High Deserts of the Southwest,” made possible through a grant from the Alliance for Water Awareness and Conservation.
Both “Saving the Ancients” and “Water-Wise Landscaping” can be ordered through the SummerTree Institute website.

Reviewed by Steve Hartman
SERCAL Conference Summary

The California Society for Ecological Restoration (SERCAL) held its 18th annual conference in San Diego, California on May 10-12th with 172 people attending. The conference, titled "An Integration of People and Disciplines," included forty-eight technical sessions held over two days, two field tours to local restoration sites and a day-long workshop. Technical session topics included urban flood channel restoration, wetland engineering, southern steelhead trout restoration, coastal sage scrub restoration on Santa Cruz Island, methods for performance monitoring and many more. Environmental consultancies, landscape contractors, engineering firms, nonprofit organizations and government agencies made up the speaker and attendee list.

The pre-conference workshop, “Developing Site-Specific Revegetation Strategies: Principles and Practices of Revegetation,” was given by UC Davis soil scientist Vic Classen, PhD, Earthworks/NewFields plant ecologist Margot Griswold, PhD, and California Department of Conservation scientists Beth Hendrickson and Leah Gardner. Successful revegetation projects require a reference site or area that models the historic plant palette. Dr. Classen emphasized the importance of soil and hydrologic remediation in reestablishing reference site native plants and suggested using strategies such as amending soil with organic matter, decompacting soil, adding mycorrhizal inoculants and using topographic variation. Creating small hills, valleys and divots in a restoration project may slow water runoff and send overland flow into deeper soil layers to reach plant roots. Also, topographic variation creates microclimates favorable to seed germination and young plant growth.

Dr. Griswold showed a fascinating ecological succession-type coastal scrub revegetation project and discussed the use of mycorrhizal inoculants. Studies have revealed the presence of site-derived mycorrhizae in plant revegetation projects. Dr. Griswold's project showed robust native plant revegetation with both site-derived and commercially applied products. Dr. Classen's project benefited from mycorrhizal “plugs” taken from other sites. Take home message: proper soil and hydrological characteristics are critical to native plant establishment and may enable passive ecological restoration without the use of nursery-placed plants.

The remainder of the conference consisted of half hour technical sessions and a poster session. Philip Williams & Associates hydrological engineer Jeffrey Haltiner, PhD gave a twenty-five year retrospective of ecological restoration, reminding the audience of the field's origins in impact mitigation and future challenges. For their coastal sage scrub restoration on Santa Cruz Island, David Hubbard and Matthew James of Coastal Restoration Consultants showed the success of using plant plugs and the importance of a duff or detritus layer for weed suppression. Many of the urban restoration talks focused on flood channel restoration and surface runoff management. Representatives from The California State Coastal Conservancy and Santa Monica Bay Restoration Commission discussed the status of Ballona Wetlands. The project is in the planning phase with a mix of upland and estuarine habitats designed to accommodate future sea level rise as one of the preferred alternatives. Next year's SERCAL conference will be held May 15-17th at UC Davis.

Reported by Andrew Paden

Save Open Space Seeks Name Change for the SMMNRA

Save Open Space (www.saveopenspace.com) has undertaken as one goal to get a name change for our Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area, elevating the worthy Santa Monica Mountains to national park status and also to get recognition for our seashore resources. The new proposed name is:

Santa Monica Mountains and Seashore National Park.

The SMMNRA qualifies for national park status due to its unique Mediterranean coastal ecosystem which occurs in only 5 places worldwide. Its 35 million annual visitors make this park the most visited of all United States national parks.

Additionally, this request is prompted by the urgent need to 1) protect the integrity of the Santa Monica Mountains which is easily accessible to 22 million urban residents in the greater Los Angeles area, and 2) obtain funding from the oil companies' mitigation (Land and Water) fund to complete the boundaries of this park with acquisition of critical properties from willing sellers.

Due to lack of funding, important coastal properties with unique resource values remain in private hands. One example is the pristine 1,291 acre Mansdorf property (located along the coast between Pt. Mugu State Park and County Line Beach in Ventura County) which needs to be purchased to preserve forever this unique wild rugged coastal Mediterranean ecosystem.

Please contact these federal officials and ask them to support this important name change:

President Obama 202-456-1111
Senator Boxer 202-224-3553
Senator Feinstein 202-224-384
Rep. Sherman 202-225-5879
PHOTOS FROM THE APRIL 23, 2011
NATIVE PLANT WEEK SYMPOSIUM
AND WILDFLOWER SHOW

Clockwise, from top right: Bill and Henrietta Yuan in the kitchen, Tom Hayduk demonstrating plant propagation, Theodore Payne Foundation plant sale, David Hollombe and Halli Mason.
Clockwise, from upper right: Jo Kitz, book store chair, chats with Michael O’Brien while Olga Hammer looks on; Jim Kenney’s inspired the viewers with his presentation about the beauty of the flora of the Santa Monica Mountains; Leslie Hartman and Gwenn Neill greeted the public; Southern California Gardening Club and Gourd Society had outdoor displays; Form LA (and Theodore Payne Foundation president) afternoon speaker Cassy Aoyagi talks to Lili Singer (morning presenter) and Snowdy Dodson.
RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Save the Dates:
Plant Sale
Oct. 29 & 30, 2011

CNPS Conservation Conference
Jan. 12-14, 2012

TIME VALUE

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THANKS

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.

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