CO-PRESIDENT’S MESSAGE
By Snowdy Dodson

Greetings! It always seems that this is the time when our CA native plant year begins. And my love/hate relationship with gardening begins; or maybe the hate/love? I hate the work but love the results. Much of the work is in getting the plants selected, purchased, in the ground, and then nurtured for their first year. Many CA native plants are lost to neglect – leaving them in a black plastic pot with no water? Putting them in the ground during a heat wave? Forgetting to give them regular water during their first season? After they are established, your mantra should be “let it be” – bugs eating their leaves? Summer die back? “let it be” and resist the urge to overwater. None of my CA native plants died in 2018 after a heat wave of 117 degrees followed by more than a week of triple digit temperatures. Many of my established CA native plants get little or no summer water. Too much water can also lead to nurturing Argentine ants and other pests. So, as we enter this CA native planting season, consider your failures and successes of the past and go forward with plans to “garden as if life depends on it” - because it does. Our Chapter native plant sale is on Oct. 12 & 13 at the Sepulveda Garden Center in Encino, and we need your volunteer help during the sale and for the set-up day on Oct. 11. Please contact me if you can give some hours. I can be reached at snowdy.dodson@csun.edu or 818-782-9346. Thanks for your support and membership.

UPCOMING NATIVE PLANT SALES
Santa Barbara Botanic Garden –
Sept. 28 and the following month - 9 am to 6 pm
See sbbg.org or call 805-682-4726 for details on this event featuring presentations, classes, exhibits and sales.

South Coast CNPS Chapter – Presale to members Oct. 4, 5-7pm; Open to all Oct. 5, 9am-2pm. Madrona Marsh Nature Center, 3201 Plaza del Amo, Torrance (www.sccnps.org)

CNPS LA/SMM Chapter – Oct. 12 & 13 – Sepulveda Garden Center, Encino (see page 3 for details)

Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden –
Oct. 19 & 20 – 10 am to 4:30 pm, Claremont

Theodore Payne Foundation –
Oct. 25 & 26 – 8:30 am to 4:30 pm, Sun Valley

CNPS San Gabriel Mountains Chapter –
Nov. 2 – 9 am to 2 pm – Eaton Canyon Nature Center

UPCOMING PROGRAMS
of the Los Angeles/Santa Monica Mountains Chapter

SEPT. 10, 2019, TUESDAY – 7:30 - 9:30PM
SEPULVEDA GARDEN CENTER
16633 MAGNOLIA BLVD. ENCINO

TRADITIONAL CALIFORNIA INDIAN HEALING
Presenters: Jim Adams & Enrique Villaseñor

Jim Adams is a Professor of Pharmacology at the USC School of Pharmacy. He learned Traditional Healing from a Chumash Indian, has written a book and many articles on the subject. He will teach you how to use California plants as medicines, especially for pain and chronic pain. Enrique Villaseñor is learning Traditional Healing and is an expert on the use of cactus for nutrition and medicine. He designed, built and maintained the award-winning El Oro Way Habitat, a two-acre, outdoor classroom with primarily California native plants and trees.

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OCT. 1, 2019, TUESDAY – 7:30 - 9:00PM
FIRST UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
SANTA MONICA

NATIVE VEGETATION RECOVERY FOLLOWING THE WOOLSEY FIRE
Presenter: Mark Mendelsohn,
National Park Service

In 2019 the NPS Inventory & Monitoring team completed over 200 Terrestrial Native Vegetation Monitoring Plots in the Santa Monica Mountains and Simi Hills (SMM & SH), more than twice the number of plots monitored in a non-fire year. By the time of the presentation, we hope to have analyzed our large dataset to make conclusions about the status of the vegetation communities following last year’s fires. In general, the SMM & SH experienced a rich and widespread green-up in the winter and spring with the substantial rains received, producing a very diverse assemblage of wildflowers (including many fire followers not seen in many years), and a strong recruitment of our native shrubs via resprouting or seedlings. We even documented several populations of the federally endangered Brauntown’s milkvetch and one of the rare Blochman’s dudleya.

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

Beach Restoration Volunteer Days
Malibu State Beaches

Every Sunday - 9am-noon

Beach restoration activities every Sunday at Malibu State Beaches. Come and enjoy a fabulous opportunity to get up close and personal with the pocket beaches. Call 213-481-8522 for info on which beach. (Leave your number S-L-O-W-L-Y and distinctly.) (This is Mike O’Brien’s ongoing war on invasives and coastal sage scrub restoration. Always included is a tour of the amazing diversity that you can find.)

All Restoration and Field Trip Activities - Rain Cancels

Native/Environmental/Xeriscape/Temescal/Garden in Pacific Palisades
The N/E/X/T/ Garden in the City of L.A.3 Temescal Canyon Park

“Last-Saturdays,” Sept. 28 and Oct. 26 – 9am-4pm
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 Michael G. Terry at michaelgterry@hotmail.com.

Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Reserve Plant Group
Tuesdays & Thursdays - Dawn - 9:00am
Van Nuys

Sponsored by LA/SMM CNPS
Help remove non-native plants. To sign up and get meeting place details, contact Steve Hartman at naturebase@aol.com

ANNOUNCEMENTS

DESCANSO GARDENS
OAK WOODLAND ANNIVERSARY
Sept. 14
1418 Descanso Dr., La Canada Flintridge 91011
Talks, seed search, tour, water info to celebrate the 5th anniversary of the 7-acre woodland filled with native plants. For info: www.descansogardens.org or 818-949-4200.

SANTA CLARA RIVER RALLY, CLEAN UP & ENVIRONMENTAL EXPO
Saturday Sept. 21 – 8 am to 11 am
Newhall Community Center, 22421 Market St., Old Town Newhall. For further info and to register to help clean up one of the last free-flowing rivers in SoCal see: http://greensantaclarita.com/calendar/river-rally/

SOAKING UP SUCCESS: A SYMPOSIUM ON THE BENEFITS OF GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE
Thursday, October 3, 2019
Autry Museum of the American West
Presented by Council for Watershed Health

Evolving Management Perspectives in a Changing World – CAL-IPC SYMPOSIUM
Oct. 15-18 – Riverside Convention Center
For details see: https://www.cal-ipc.org/resources/symposium/
Online registration ends Oct. 1. The Calif. Invasive Plant Council has another great round up of workshops and presentations for all of those in the restoration community.

Sepulveda Basin Wildlife Reserve CNPS Weeding Group Featured by Eyewitness News ABC7

Gabriela Milian, community journalist for ABC7, found out about the twice-a-week weeding group led by Steve Hartman and George Waddell and requested an interview. She met with the group that also includes Anne Abramson, Nicole Karvelas, Robert Garstein, and Joey and Becky Farewell. The video shows the group clearing mustard along the west side of Haskell Creek and Steve discusses the importance of removing the mustard if we want native plants. View video at: https://abc7.com/community-events/valley-volunteers-bring-wildlife-back-to-parks/5395501
Native Plant Sale Weekend

Sponsored by the California Native Plant Society (LA/SMM)

OCTOBER 12 & 13, 10AM TO 3:00PM
Sepulveda Garden Center
16633 Magnolia Blvd., Encino (near Hayvenhurst), 91436

MEMBER PRE-SALE AT 9:30am-10am Saturday only
ALL CNPS MEMBERS GET 10% OFF PLANTS & BOOKS*
SUNDAY MORNING PRESENTATION (see below)

We will continue with our expanded selection this year – with a focus on species that can survive in our hot and dry climate – there is a plant that can fill your garden's needs. Many native plants can survive quite well with natural rainfall once they get established. Items for sale include perennial wildflowers, irises, mints, sages, berries, hummingbird and butterfly plants, shrubs, perennials, and trees. A diverse selection of wildflower seeds will be available for purchase. Also for sale are new and used natural history and native gardening books, activity books for children, field guides, and posters. Refreshments and lunch will be available for purchase.

During the sale, experienced CNPSers can assist you in selecting plants that are suitable for your garden! Proceeds from the plant sale help support the activities of the Los Angeles / Santa Monica Mountains chapter of CNPS.

*To receive member discount, CNPS members must show CNPS ID card or show a recent TOYON with their address label.

To volunteer for Friday, Saturday, or Sunday, contact Snowdy at 818-782-9346 or at snowdy.dodson@csun.edu

SUNDAY MORNING PRESENTATION

11am - Climate Reality: Regeneration of the Landscape
by Shawn Maestretti and Leigh Adams

Climate Reality: Regeneration of the Landscape highlights the current endangered state of our landscapes and offers solution-oriented techniques for zero-waste/carbon-neutral garden designs, drawing upon nature’s processes. Shawn and Leigh focus on how nurturing living soil, capturing rainwater, sequestering carbon, and planting climate-appropriate plants for biodiversity are not just aspirational design practices, but real life solutions accessible to homeowners, garden enthusiasts, and landscape professionals alike. It is possible to enjoy beautiful gardens that work towards carbon-neutrality and actively regenerate our environment.

Shawn Maestretti, the principal of SMGA and the creator of the talk series, 'Climate Reality: Regeneration of the Landscape', has been designing lush, vibrant green spaces and environmentally sensible gardens since 2006. Shawn is a designer, plantsman, licensed landscape architect, certified arborist, licensed landscape contractor, and educator.

Leigh Adams is an educator, eco-sensitive designer and horticultural interpreter at the LA County Arboretum and Botanic Gardens.
ANNOUNCEMENTS

CNPS STATEWIDE CONSERVATION MEETING

September 7 (Saturday)
SantaCruz, California
www.cnps.org

COASTAL CLEANUP DAY
SEPULVEDA BASIN WILDLIFE RESERVE
Sept. 21 (Saturday) 9 am to noon

Meet at the Amphitheater – come to the Japanese Gardens entrance off Woodley Avenue and follow the Heal the Bay signs. Supplies will be provided – gloves, grabbers, bags, drinking water. Wear closed toe shoes (for safety); bring a hat and sunscreen. Please visit HealTheBay.org/CCD to register for the event and to download the consent form - anyone under the age of 18 must have a parent/guardian sign. We will have copies at the site also. Additional information is available at SFVAudubon.org as well. For more information, please contact dave.weeshoff@sfvaudubon.org or (818) 618-1652.

Chapter Board Officer
Nominations Requested for LA/SMM Chapter

We are seeking candidates for offices on the chapter board for 2020. The term of office is one year. You may nominate yourself or be nominated by another chapter member (with your permission) for the office of president, vice president, secretary or treasurer of the chapter board of the Los Angeles/Santa Monica Mountains Chapter. Chapter officers are expected to attend bimonthly meetings, held on the first Tuesday of the month.

The qualifications are:

1. Candidates must affirm they are members in good standing of Los Angeles/Santa Monica Mountains Chapter — that their dues are paid up.

2. Candidates must be active or have been active in one or more of LA/SMM Chapter’s recognized or scheduled programs and projects in education, plant science, conservation, field trips, events, publication and outreach.

3. Nomination letters and e-mails must contain your name, address, phone number, e-mail address and a short statement about your CNPS activities and why you want to serve on the LA/SMM Chapter Board.

4. Nomination letters and e-mails must be mailed to the CNPS Nominating Committee, 15811 Leadwell St., Van Nuys, CA 91406 or e-mailed to lcnps@lacnps.org by Sept. 23, 2019.

CALL FOR CHAPTER VOLUNTEERS

Our CNPS Chapter is run by a group of amazing volunteers. These folks do a wonderful job of getting out the newsletter, arranging monthly programs, and organizing special events such as the fall plant sale and the spring wildflower show. However, our current group is maxed out with the amount of volunteer hours they can give. We have a critical need for someone to lead Rare Plant Treasure Hunts in our area — we were able to hold one at Tujunga Wash this spring, but it isn’t just about new locations but following up on old reporting locations that haven’t been visited in decades. Also, we need someone to take the lead and form a committee to organize hikes and field trips for the Chapter.

Our Chapter elected officers have all been serving multiple terms. The duties of the chapter board members and officers include attending 6 board meetings a year. NOW IS THE TIME for those who want to help protect the local flora to step up volunteer for a Board position or to lead hikes, field trips, and rare plant forays.

Contact Snowdy.dodson@csun.edu or 818-782-9346 for further information.
ENDANGERED PLANT BULLDOZED BY LADWP

By David Pluenneke

"After-comers cannot guess the beauty been.”
-Gerard Manley Hopkins

Braunton’s milkvetch (Astragalus brauntonii) is a federally listed endangered species that grows only in southern California. At the time of its listing as an endangered species in the late 1990’s only twenty populations of this rare plant were known to exist. Today, only a dozen populations remain. One of those populations, and the largest, is in the Santa Monica Mountains on a calcareous ridge high above Pacific Palisades. In July of this year, LADWP knowingly bulldozed a portion of this population. The LA Times ran a story about the destruction of these plants on August 1st. You can read the article here:


This is the story behind that story.

I hike a lot in the Santa Monica Mountains. Like Wordsworth with an iPhone I ramble along aimlessly for miles. If you go far enough and high enough you eventually come to a place that is both figuratively and literally above the depressing reality of our current world. I’m interested in the plants and animals I encounter as I hike, so I read a lot of field guides and research the various places I visit. I also use iNaturalist, a smart phone App that helps to identify the natural world. Many of you are probably familiar with it. You take a photo of something, a plant or a snake or a bug, upload it and the app suggests what the thing may be. The app also links you to a community of people who actually know something about the natural world; professional biologists, botanists, ecologists and the like, some of whom make use of the crowd-sourced data. It is also a place for amateur naturalists who gladly share their knowledge and love of the natural world.

About a year ago, I was wandering the mountains when I came across a pea-like plant I’d never seen before. I took a photo, posted it to iNaturalist, and after some back and forth, a local botanist identified the plant as A. brauntonii, the endangered Braunton’s Milkvetch. I’d never come across an endangered species before. It was kind of exciting. I started to use the plant as a reference point. “I’ll go as far as the milkvetch” or “I’ll start at the milkvetch and head to the Backbone Trail.” I watched the plants grow for a full season as they sprouted, matured, flowered and went to seed. It is kind of heartening to see these rare plants making their last stand on this ridge, defiantly waving their middle inflorescences at the suburbs below.

On July 7th of this year, I walked up to where the milkvetch grows to find the trail — which until then was only a footpath, widened a two lane road twenty plus feet wide. The road construction stopped right were the milkvetch began and I assumed (incorrectly) that it had stopped because it had something to do with the endangered species growing there. At the same time, I just happened to be corresponding on iNaturalist with the same botanist who originally identified the Braunton’s Milkvetch and I mentioned the construction that, if it continued, would go right through the population of the endangered species. “Good thing this federally listed endangered species growing on public land is safe,” I commented. “Don’t be so sure,” replied the botanist and suggested that I write LADWP and inform them about the plant.

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When they widened the path and built the road, they simply scraped any oaks, toyon, sumacs, buckwheats, etc., that were in their way and bulldozed them over the ravine. This didn't auger well for the milkvetch, so I reluctantly wrote an email to LADWP explaining my concerns about the endangered species and inquiring about what measures they would be taking to protect this plant. Thinking it would add some weight to my inquiry, I copied a couple of City Council members and CNPS. LADWP acknowledged my email and said that their Environmental Affairs Division would be meeting to discuss it.

Sadly, when I returned to the site on July 15th, I found contractors from LADWP actively running heavy equipment through the area of the milkvetch. As the LA Times describes it, “He was livid and remains angry.” This will likely end up on my tombstone. A number of increasingly cranky emails resulted in CNPS, the California Coastal Commission, the Fish and Wildlife service, State Parks and the LA Times getting involved. We'll see if anything comes of this, but it seems to be a given that endangered plants on public lands should be protected from a public utility.

Fortunately, Brauntun's Milkvetch is a tough plant and only a portion of the population has been bulldozed. But these rare plants are still threatened by habitat loss and the destruction of the chaparral that they depend on. And the issues involved here are larger than this particular plant. The next plant or animal might not be so tough. For example, the LA Times story describes the killing of endangered red legged frogs by the LA Public Works Department by entombing them in cement. It is unclear whether State Parks -- whose land these plants live on -- even knew LADWP was doing work in the area. Clearly there needs to be better oversight and coordination of work being done in this environmentally sensitive area.

The patchwork of government agencies that run the Santa Monica Mountains National Recreation Area are tasked with protecting this fragile area and the plants and animals that call it home. Our task, as native plant advocates -- as citizens -- is to hold them to that.

CONSERVATION UPDATE
April – July 2019
CAL FIRE Vegetation Treatment Program (VTP) and fire policy
The VTP is a proposed Programmatic Environmental Impact Report (PEIR) and plan developed by the State Board of Forestry to address vegetation management throughout the state. This draft document was released almost ten years ago, continues to be revised due to public comment, and is not yet ready to be certified.

The Los Angeles/Santa Monica Mountains Chapter has engaged in the review process since the initial release of the voluminous document. Our main concerns include:
- Proposed use of prescribe fire in chaparral, coastal scrub, and riparian areas, as these ecotypes are not suited to managed fire as are coniferous forests
- Lack of consideration in the PEIR to areas such as the Santa Monica Mountains, which experiences inordinate frequency of wildfire intervals. The increase in fire is contributing to habitat change and more invasive plant species, all of which tend to exacerbate fire
- Lack of consideration in the PEIR of the fuel-loading statewide trend of structural/infrastructural development and encroachment into the wildland-urban interface (WUI). In southern and coastal California, wildfires are primarily started accidentally by human activities. The increase of humans living in the WUI significantly compounds the problem

California Invasive Species Advisory Committee
State legislation passed in 2018 created funding streams and infrastructure to tackle the first pest of concern: invasive shot hole borer (ISHB). Led by California Department of Food and Agriculture, a working group of academics, state agencies, non-profit organizations, and the private sector will unveil the program in the next few months. Components include: Research, Education/outreach, management/treatment, and green waste/firewood handling.

Invasive shot hole borer / Fusarium disease complex infests 64 species of native and non-native trees. About 25% of infested species are vulnerable to being killed. Most susceptible California native trees are typically riparian species.

ISHB is known in all southern California counties from Ventura south, with the exception of Imperial. Current research is focused on biological and chemical treatments, along with life and infestation cycles of the insect/disease complex.

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Santa Monica Mountains Tree Advisory Committee (TAC)

The Resource Conservation District of the Santa Monica Mountains is helming this TAC, which is focused on native tree retention in the coastal range and addressing environmental challenges of climate change and increased wildfire frequency. The integrated group of experts includes local non-profit organizations, federal and state agencies, land managers, planners, and academia. The group is tracking tree mortality, recovery, long-term planning and land use for the Santa Monica Mountains.

The Edge Sweetwater Mesa – Malibu

The decade-long 155-acre proposed project was permanently stymied in June, when the California Supreme Court decided not to hear the matter submitted by legal representatives of the developer. U2 guitarist David Evans, aka The Edge, proposed construction of five 10,000-square-foot mansions, each with large development footprints that included outbuildings and other structures. The property is a private in-holding of the Santa Monica Mountains that is surrounded by national and state parks lands. The geologically unstable mesa where the site is located includes pristine habitat, sensitive plants, and cultural sites that would be permanently altered by construction including new roads, caissons, and revetments.

For more information, go to - http://www.aenv.org/coastal.html

West Village – Calabasas

The Calabasas Planning Commission denied this project in July. Formal recommendation will be given to the Calabasas Mayor and City Council to review and consider in September. The 77-acre mixed-use development is located at the terminus of Agoura and Las Virgenes Roads. This proposed development includes 180 multi-family homes and 150,000 square feet of commercial space.

CNPS challenged the project due to elements that will be lost. They include water features that are rare in the Santa Monica Mountains, hydrological connectivity to Malibu Creek, location within two documented wildlife corridors, special plant species, take of old growth trees protected under the Calabasas Oak Tree Ordinance, improperly conducted and reported vegetation and wildlife surveys, and an existing ancient landslide that will require over 100,000 cubic yards of cut and fill.

Woolsey Fire Recovery

It’s August at the writing of this update. Southern California vegetation this time of year is grey or golden depending on habitat type. The Woolsey burn area in the Santa Monica Mountains rebounded due to well timed periodic and over-average rainfall this year that both helped establish re-sprout and seedlings, along with comparatively minimal sedimentation and erosion after the massive burn. Decker Canyon remained in flower into July. The area was reminiscent of March and April coastal blooms. Latigo Canyon is verdant, with abundant birds, wildlife, and surface water flows. Beauty and life returned to the mountains. May you take time to either drive or hike to experience the awesome rebound of nature!

Garden as if Life Depends on It

Native Plant Sale

Oct. 12 & 13
10-3

Sepulveda Garden Center
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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.

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.