



**CALENDAR**

No chapter meetings July and August

- Sep 5 ..... board meeting
- Sep 19 ..... chapter meeting
- Oct 3 ..... board meeting
- Oct 17 ..... chapter meeting

**Holy Fire Botany, Santa Ana Mountains  
Rare Plant Committee**

On August 6, 2018 a wildfire ignited in Trabuco Canyon, in the Santa Ana Mountains. The blaze burned 23,136 acres, destroying 18 buildings and forcing the evacuation of thousands of residents. Botanically, this fire was a significant event, as much of the forest had not burned for 75 years.

Shortly after the blaze was fully contained on September 13, CNPS Orange County’s Rare Plant Committee petitioned the Cleveland National Forest for access permission and collection permits. A research proposal was submitted and numerous emails exchanged. After several weeks, and an unexpected government shutdown, we were granted our permissions.

The OC CNPS Holy Fire botanical team consists of Fred Roberts, Bob Allen and Ron Vanderhoff, the three members of the OC CNPS Rare Plant Committee, as well as Michael Simpson (SDSU), Rebecca Crowe (UCI), James Bailey, and Jonathan Frank. The entire burn area, and much of the adjacent areas, is closed to all entry and very few entry permits have been granted, even for science-based work, such as ours. However, our Rare Plant Committee members are well respected by the USFS and have a long history of assistance and documentation, which helped us gain our permissions.

Our objectives within the burn area were varied:

1. To obtain vouchers (plant collections) in an under-documented region of the Santa Ana Mountains, with specimens to the UC Irvine, Rancho Santa Ana and San Diego State University herbaria.
2. To document often unique post-fire plant species that are otherwise absent.
3. To review the status of *Phacelia keckii* (Santiago Peak phacelia), a rare plant and near Santa Ana Mountains endemic, with only sporadic records and a poorly understood natural history.
4. Review the burn response of several narrowly distributed or rare plant species.
5. Examine the status and response of *Arctostaphylos* (Manzanita) within the burn area.
6. Assess non-native invasive plant intrusion and expansion in the burn area and document occurrences of ecological concern.
7. Conduct general botanical explorations to record important species and assessing general forest recovery.

As of this writing our team has invested a significant effort. We have conducted over 20 trips into the burn area and more than 150 field hours. During this time we have documented over 900 plant records covering 270 unique taxa. Additionally, we have collected over 200 plant specimens for our local herbaria.

Our team, all volunteers, has worked tirelessly surveying numerous canyons, hillsides, ridges, firebreaks and even mountain peaks. These efforts have resulted in several plant records of significance, including one new regional record, two new to the Santa Ana Mountains, and five new to Orange County.

An *Erythranthe* species in the upper reaches of Long Canyon in Orange County is still under review by taxonomists but appears to be *E. acutidens*, essentially a Sierran species. *Erythranthe diffusa* is another monkeyflower species of limited occurrence that has shown up in the burn area. *Phacelia keckii* (Santiago Peak phacelia), a focus of our study, is so common in places that we are having trouble not stepping on it. After being nearly absent in recent years, we are finding thousands at various locations both in and out of the burn scar.

**Botanical Highlights to date:**

<i>Arbutus menziesii</i> (Madrone)	Near southern extreme of range. (Assessed as recovering.)
<i>Arctostaphylos pringlei</i> ssp. drupacea (Manzanita)	Regionally rare. Single Santa Ana Mts. plant. (Basal sprouting.)
<i>Bromus grandis</i> (Grass)	Regionally rare.
<i>Bromus pseudolaevipes</i> (Grass)	3 <sup>rd</sup> Santa Ana Mts. Record.
<i>Calandrinia breweri</i> (Annual)	CRPR 4.2.
<i>Calochortus albus</i> (Lily)	Regionally uncommon.
<i>Calochortus invenustus</i> (Lily)	Regionally rare disjunct population.
<i>Ceanothus papillosus</i> (Ceanothus)	Regionally rare. Southern disjunct population.
<i>Cystopteris fragilis</i> (Fern)	Regionally rare. (3 <sup>rd</sup> OC/Santa Ana Mts. record.)
<i>Diplacus clevelandii</i> (Monkeyflower)	Forest Sensitive Species.
<i>Diplacus rattanii</i> (Monkeyflower)	3 <sup>rd</sup> S. A. Mts. record (prior 1935), Southern extreme.
<i>Epipactus gigantea</i> (Orchid)	Regionally uncommon.
<i>Erythranthe acutidens</i> (Monkeyflower)	CRPR 3. (New regional record.)
<i>Erythranthe diffusa</i> (Monkeyflower)	CRPR 4.2. Forest Service Sensitive, first OC since 1980.

<i>Githopsis diffusa</i> ssp. <i>diffusa</i> (Annual)	OC record, regionally rare.
<i>Lepechinia cardiophylla</i> (Pitcher Sage)	CRPR 1B.2.
<i>Lilium humboldtii</i> ssp. <i>ocellatum</i> (Lily)	CRPR 4.2.
<i>Mentzelia albicaulis</i> (Annual)	OC and Santa Ana Mts. record.
<i>Monardella hypoleuca</i> ssp. <i>intermedia</i> (Perennial)	CRPR 1B.3.
<i>Phacelia imbricata</i> (Perennial)	Regionally uncommon.
<i>Phacelia keckii</i> (Annual)	CRPR 1B.3. (1000's at many locations.)
<i>Piperia cooperi</i> (Orchid)	CRPR 4.2.
<i>Piperia elongata</i> (Orchid)	Regionally rare.
<i>Polystichum imbricans</i> (Fern)	Regionally rare.
<i>Romneya coulteri</i> (Matilija poppy)	CRPR 4.2.
<i>Sidotheca trilobata</i> (Annual)	Regionally uncommon.
<i>Silene lemmonii</i> (Perennial)	Regionally rare.
<i>Viola sheltonii</i> (Violet)	Regionally rare. Southern extreme of range.

(CRPR = California Rare Plant Rank)



King's River monkeyflower (*Erythranthe acutidens*)  
New record for the region.



Rattan's monkeyflower (*Diplacus rattanii*)



Palamor monkeyflower (*Erythranthe diffusa*)

**CONSERVATION REPORT**

**LITIGATION: ESPERANZA, AGAIN!**

CNPS is once again a co-appellant in a new appeal re the proposed Esperanza Hills development. The development plan calls for 340 executive homes to be carved into 470 steeply hilly unincorporated acres between the City of Yorba Linda and Chino Hills State Park.

This appeal is the latest in the ongoing legal battle between Yorba Linda community group Protect Our Homes and Hills (POHAH), *et al*, on one side, and the County of Orange and real party in interest, Yorba Linda Estates LLC, on the other. The basic issue is whether or not the County is compliant with the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) in relation to the proposed development.

CNPS has been among the co-petitioners/appellants on each of the previous suits. Our participation has been due to:

1. The project's proposed impacts to the site's natural habitat:
  - Extirpation of the site's populations of Braunton's Milkvetch (*Astragalus brauntonii*, CRPR 1B.1) and Intermediate Mariposa Lily (*Calochortus weedii intermedius*, CRPR 1B.2).
  - Severe impacts to the site's stands of Walnut Woodland and Oak Woodland.
  - Another bite being taken out of the already-patchy wildlife corridor formed by open spaces in the Chino Hills.
  - The markedly insufficient mitigations proposed for these impacts.
2. The principle that jurisdictions should abide by their own rules, and/or the rules that they're supposed to abide by, such as CEQA. That principle is once again being flouted in the continuing saga of Esperanza. Upholding that principle is at least as important as defending the native plants of a site.

NEWPORT BEACH: DUNE VEGETATION, WESTERN SNOWY PLOVER, SANTA ANA RIVER MOUTH

OCCNPS is one of 11 OC enviro groups that have co-signed a very comprehensive comment letter, written by biological consultant Robb Hamilton, to the City of Newport Beach. The letter analyses in detail the CEQA and Coastal Act inadequacies in the City’s Draft Plan for its shoreline Endangered Species Habitat Area (ESHA).

Newport Beach’s ESHA includes Western Snowy Plover (WSP) resting/nesting habitat at both the southerly end of the Balboa Peninsula and at the Santa Ana River mouth (SAR). WSP, small shore birds, are listed as Threatened, thus fall under the protection of the Endangered Species Act.

The WSP/SAR/ESHA issue is mainly about access to the beach for humans and their dogs, and how to keep that access from overwhelming the ESHA and the WSP. An alphabet soup of jurisdictions and agencies are involved in a complex of legal and social and, ultimately, economic aspects of the situation.

OCCNPS’ interest in the situation is the health of the dune/coastal strand vegetation. A surprising amount is still there despite many years of disturbance by humans and dogs. We are glad that the WSP find a home in the vegetation.

Our interest is also to, again, uphold the principle that agencies and jurisdictions should abide by their own rules, and/or the rules that they’re supposed to abide by, such as CEQA and the Coastal Act. Upholding that principle remains at least as important as defending the native plants of a site.

—Celia Kutcher, Conservation Chair

**Native Gardener’s Corner-Member’s Tips, Tricks, and Techniques**

This column is a regular newsletter feature offering chapter members and local experts a chance to briefly share information on many things related to gardening with natives.

The request for this newsletter is: **“Thinking of the good rains we received this winter—what native wildflowers have been spectacular in your garden this spring?”**

2019. June 22

the green of spring  
 has sprung to tan  
 summer is almost here  
 the super bloom is a fond memory  
 it is time to look harder  
 to savor the remaining bloom:  
 monkey flowers modest orangeness  
 elderberry’s creamy yellows  
 buckwheat’s subtle pinks  
 the showiness of bossy blooms  
 is a fond memory  
 its time to savor the subtle tones of summer  
 there’s no need to shrink at the screams  
 of glorious poppies &  
 blaring phacelias  
 it will be hot  
 so rest a while along the trail &  
 savor the subtleness of summer’s bloom

UCI Ecological Preserve  
 Southern Bush Monkeyflower  
*Diplacus x australis*  
 Blue Elderberry  
*Sambucus nigra ssp caerulea*  
 California Poppy  
*Eschscholzia californica*  
 Parry’s Phacelia  
*Phacelia parryi*  
 Chuck Wright

**Paul & Kathy Hanson:** “In fall of 2017 we scattered a bunch of wildflower seeds we bought along with a few new native plants. Due to the dry winter that year, nothing came up and we sort of forgot about it. With all the rain this past winter, we had a wonderful surprise when our yard filled with flowers. Most notable were the Tidy Tips which covered our hillside where we’ve had trouble getting anything to grow.”

**Ron Vanderhoff:** “I always enjoy the late spring blooming nature of clarkia. When the poppies, lupines and phacelias are gone, the clarkia take over. But this spring, with the abundant late rains, the clarkia blooms were especially spectacular and very long lasting.”

**Leon Baginski:** “Blue eyed grass and cal poppy really hit it big time. Also an unusual explosion of *gilia capitatum*. Coming up in the cracks in the stonework, lots of joy for pollinators.”

**Mark Sugars:** “All of the wildflowers in my yard have done well, but there are two stand-outs. The *Dichelostemma capitatum* that I planted as seeds have flowered for the first time, and the blooms on my *Oenothera elata ssp. hirsutissima* are larger than they have ever been.”

**Brad Jenkins:** “Lacy Phacelia (*Phacelia tanacetifolia*): This year this annual wildflower became robust across the backyard and competed with new 1 gal plantings. Positive: Great for bees and other insects. Caution: If they grow well next year I will be tempted to thin, especially next to new long-term plantings.”

**Celia Kutcher:** “Lupine, Chinese houses, twining brodiaea, *Clarkia unguiculata*, rust-flowered monkey flower, golden yarrow, and gum plant have all been great.”

**Pam Vallot:** “Seemed to me the wildflowers bloomed later than usual and therefore are just finishing up now going into July. The most noticeable for me would be the Clarkia’s. But I was thrilled to have school bells come up from a corm gifted to me by a fellow CNPS member from last year’s garden tour.”

**Dennis Keagy:** “Lots of poppies, sparse lupine, and some blue-buttons. We had tossed out a tablespoon of mixed native flower seeds 15 years ago and have never had to plant another flower. Nature’s random beauty gives the garden new surprises each year.”

**Dan Songster:** “Almost everything did well, and while nothing matched the California poppies, others to note include the Tansy-leaf Phacelia (*Phacelia tanacetifolia*) which was huge; Prickly Poppy (*Argemone munita*)—large and Still going; Golden or Chick Lupine (*Lupinus microcarpus* var. *densiflorus*) was big and bright and also lasted long; and the Bird’s Eye Gilia (*Gilia tricolor*) though delicate looking as an individual flower was certainly impressive in big swaths.”

Our Question for the Next Newsletter: **“What was the saddest loss of a native plant you have experienced in your garden?”**

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July/August 2019

## FIRST CLASS MAIL

### CNPS Membership Application

New member     Renewal

- Student/Limited Income ..... \$25
- Individual ..... \$45
- Family ..... \$75
- Plant Lover..... \$100
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[Organizations, please go to [cnps.org](http://cnps.org)]

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The chapter newsletter, CNPS bulletin **Flora**, and the journal **Fremontia** are included. Membership is tax deductible, minus \$12 for *Fremontia*. Make check payable to CNPS and send to **CNPS, 2707 K Street, Suite 1, Sacramento, CA 95816** or go to [www.cnps.org](http://www.cnps.org) to join or renew online.

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