



GOLD FIELD NOTES

EL DORADO CHAPTER ☉ CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY ☉ NOVEMBER-DECEMBER 2007

EL DORADO COUNTY'S OAK WOODLAND MANAGEMENT PLAN — A PLAN FOR FRAGMENTATION

CALENDAR

November 20

Monthly program.
Oak Woodlands in El Dorado County: Today's Management Challenges. Details inside. Placerville Library, 7 PM.

January 11-13

Film Festival
Located in Nevada City and benefiting SYRCL. Details inside.

January 14-15

Symposium
Northern California Plant Life: Celebrating What We Have With an Eye to the Future, California State University, Chico. For details see: <http://rce.csuchico.edu/norcalbotany/>

January 15

Monthly program.
Scott Hoffman Black, Executive Director of the Xerces Society.

REMINDER

No monthly program in December. Monthly programs to resume January 15, 2008.



Monthly programs are held on the third Tuesday of each month with the exception of August and December. Programs begin at 7 PM and are held at the Placerville Library, 345 Fair Lane Placerville, California.

The El Dorado County General Plan requires that the Board of Supervisors adopt an oak woodland management plan (OWMP). According to the General Plan policies that guide the creation of such a plan, mitigation for future developments must “fully compensate for the impact to oak woodland habitat.” (General Plan Policy 7.4.4.4) The mitigation measures also must address both habitat loss and habitat fragmentation.

Back in 2004 when CNPS reviewed the General Plan, we thought the language used was very clear about how to conserve oak woodlands. We told that the County that we supported their adoption of this specific language. Sadly, the plan the Board of Supervisors now proposes to adopt abandons the commitment made in the General Plan to “fully compensate” for the loss and fragmentation of oak woodland habitat.

Fragmentation of Oak Woodlands

The environmental analysis (Draft EIR) for the General Plan identified significant effects from development on the loss of oak woodland habitat and the fragmentation of habitat. One big concern raised was the fragmentation of oak woodlands that would occur as a result of new development proposed in the Highway 50 corridor. The County's environmental analysis noted that “connectivity between northern and southern wildlands was raised as a particular concern because increased urbanization along the corridor threatens to create a separation between large areas of contiguous habitat in the northwest and southwest portions of the county” and found that “through the 2025 planning horizon, it is likely that wildlife habitat below the 2,000-foot contour line and closest to the highway corridor would be most affected.” The bottom line — development in the County would fragment oak woodland habitat in the Highway 50 corridor area, and this would have significant effects.

A Plan to Address North-South Connectivity

In August 2007, the Planning Department presented a draft oak woodland plan to the Board of Supervisors that included actions to maintain connectivity between oak woodlands in the northern and southern parts of the county. This plan included a habitat acquisition program for areas defined as “Corridors” as well as larger blocks of woodlands called “Priority Conservation Areas.” Both of these were proposed as the areas to invest mitigation funds that would be collected to conserve oak woodlands. While not a perfect design, CNPS thought that this first proposal was an excellent start at defining a management plan — especially since it addressed linking oak woodlands in the north from to those in the south.

Draft Plan From August Rejected By the Board of Supervisors (BOS)

The BOS rejected this proposal from the Planning Department. The BOS directed staff to gut the proposal and remove all reference to “corridors” as areas for conservation. The draft plan that the BOS finally issued for public review in October, 2007, no longer supports the conservation areas for oak woodlands in the Highway 50 corridor. The new design also fails to provide for linkage of oak woodland conservation areas — they are merely scattered areas that remain unconnected.

Public Comment Period for the Draft OWMP Ends December 11, 2007

The BOS has invited comments on the draft OWMP. The Chapter is working with other conservation groups to review and comment on the plan. More information on the plan and planning process is located at: <http://www.co.el-dorado.ca.us/Planning/GeneralPlanOakWoodlands.html>

*Sue Britting
Conservation Chair*

PLEASE COMMENT: We encourage you submit comments citing your concerns about fragmentation and the need to plan for connected oak woodlands. Check the chapter website (www.eldoradocnps.org) after November 25, 2007 for suggestions on issues to raise to the Board of Supervisors. The comment deadline is December 11, 2007.

*For updates between newsletters
www.eldoradocnps.org*

UPDATE ON THE CONGREGATE LAWSUIT AND PROTECTION FOR THE PINE HILL PLANTS

On August 16, 2007, Judge Proud ruled against us in the lawsuit we filed in opposition to the County's approval of the Congregate project. This was an extremely disappointing outcome and we believe the Judge ruled in error on several points.

Because we disagree with Judge Proud's ruling, and still feel we have a very strong case we decided to appeal his decision to the Third District Court of Appeal. We filed a notice of appeal on October 3, 2007. The case will be briefed and considered by the Court of Appeal sometime in the next 4-6 months.

The issues that we are raising to El Dorado County regarding the management of the Pine Hill plants and the preserves are important ones that need to be resolved to ensure the protection of the plants. We are finding that several other projects being proposed in the county suffer from the same problems.

Recently, the Chapter commented on the Thousand Oaks project near Meder Road. This project proposed to transplant a few El Dorado bedstraw plants and provided no protection for a majority of the bedstraw plants on site. The bedstraw is among the rarest of the species we are trying to protect and is not well represented in the existing preserve design. The US Fish and Wildlife Service in the recovery plan recommends the creation of a 60 acre specialty preserve to provide additional protection for this species. The habitat and rare plants found in the Thou-

sand Oaks project if undeveloped could provide a basis for the creation this preserve. We wrote to the County objecting to the mitigation measure to transplant the bedstraw and told them that the rare plant fee program was not adequate for a number of reasons. Ultimately, the County denied this project based on conflicts with the proposed location of a septic system and a stream course.

The Chapter also commented on a project called Cameron Park Bowl. This project is adjacent to the northern boundary of the Cameron Park Unit of the preserve. The project covers about 10 acres and as reported in the environmental documents would remove "20,000 Red Hills soaproot, 4,039 El Dorado County mule ears, 3,591 Pine Hill ceanothus, 165 Layne's butterweed, and nine Bisbee Peak rush-rose plants." The County found that simply paying a mitigation fee was adequate to reduce impacts to less than significant. We disagreed with this conclusion and sent the County a letter stating this. The Bureau of Land Management and the US fish and Wildlife Service also wrote letters on this project and stated their objections. The Board of Supervisors is scheduled to have a hearing on this project on December 11, 2007.

The Congregate lawsuit and our review and comment on development projects are two steps that the Chapter has taken to protect the Pine Hill plants. Other chapter activities to increase awareness and conservation of the plants include educational hikes that we lead to the plant preserve, and the programs and talks we offer on the Pine Hill plants. It is critical that the chapter, along with your support, do all that we can to ensure the long term protection of the Pine Hill plants.

*Sue Britting
Conservation Chair*

FALL PLANT SALE A WINNER

The weather was balmy, the volunteers were inspired, the plants were blooming, the stars were all in alignment. Or maybe it was just good karma. Whatever the reason, our October native plant sale went really well. We renewed old friendships, made some new ones, traded gardening "war stories" and helped people learn to appreciate and landscape with California's native flora.

Our offerings included trees, shrubs, perennial and annual plants and seeds, as well as books, posters, note cards, and even a slide show. And people responded by buying almost every plant we brought. Our gross sales were over five thousand dollars. The profits will fund lots of CNPS activities, in-

cluding (but not limited to) field trips, the Clark Youth Fund and actions to protect rare and endangered plants.

As always, this project required dozens of volunteers. Our CNPS members showed their spirit by growing, transporting and labeling plants, publicizing the event, bagging seeds, creating a slide show, making refreshments, taking money, talking to customers, setting up and cleaning up, and so much more. Thank you all for creating this wonderful event. CNPS rocks!

*Shellie Perry
Plant Sale Chair*

IN APPRECIATION SHELLIE PERRY— PLANT SALE COORDINATOR EXTRAORDINAIRE

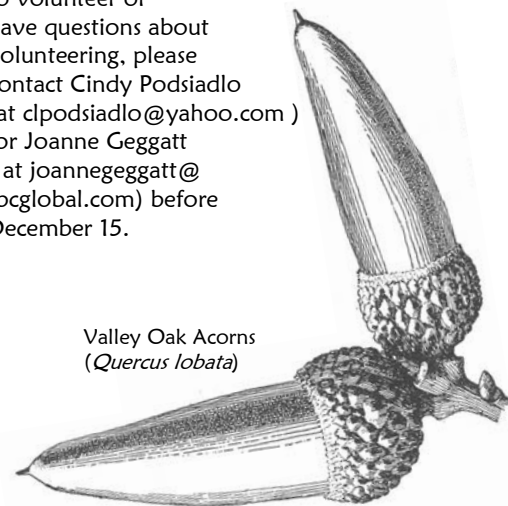
It all happens twice each year — site arrangements are made, plants selected, plants picked up, volunteers organized, and then ... WHOOSH! The plants are all sold and the sale is over. Certainly it takes many volunteers to pull off a successful sale, but the Grand Master Coordinator is Shellie Perry. Although Shellie is not one to draw attention to her own accomplishments, preferring to direct thanks instead to the plant sale volunteers, the recent fall sale was the 14th time that Shellie has worked her magic. During the past seven years, neither rain or hail, nor building painters and missing labels, nor zillions of questions and a new sale location, have fazed her. Shellie's cool, calm approach to decision making and organizing has been key to the success in holding plant sales.

We all owe Shellie a hearty pat on the back and a warm thank you for all her contributions to the chapter. Please tell her so the next time you see her!

CHAPTER ELECTIONS ARE COMING UP!

At the January chapter meeting, we will vote for the chapter officers. The proposed slate is President – Amy Hoffman, Vice President – Armond Chase, Treasurer – Cindy Podsiadlo, and Secretary – Joanne Geggatt. We are always looking for more chapter members to help with officer and board positions, and we even can provide training! If you would like to volunteer or have questions about volunteering, please contact Cindy Podsiadlo (at cpodsiadlo@yahoo.com) or Joanne Geggatt (at joannegeggatt@sbcglobal.com) before December 15.

Valley Oak Acorns
(*Quercus lobata*)





Heading into its sixth year, the Wild and Scenic Environmental Film Festival is now the largest festival of its kind in the United States. For many filmmakers, it is a favorite of the circuit and has quickly become a must on the list for entering their environmental and adventure films. Bay Area filmmaker Christopher Beaver has even remarked that "Wild and Scenic is the next Sundance." Also new this year will be a music event in the Great Hall of the Miners Foundry on Saturday evening. At press time the name of the act had not been announced, but according to the organizers, it will be a crowd pleaser.

and VIP parties.

The Wild and Scenic Film Festival is unique in that all of the funds raised through the event go right back into protecting the local Yuba watershed. The 2008 event is also the kickoff for SYRCL's 25th anniversary year. As always, the goal of the film festival is to inspire change in the lives of those attending. The films screened, as according to program committee member Terra Nyssa, "are ones with haunting beauty, giving me time to pause and inspire me to become proactive."

Nevada City's downtown will again transform into a hub of activity, with special events throughout the weekend, including Yuba River-inspired art shows, chats with the filmmakers, a wine stroll, and receptions

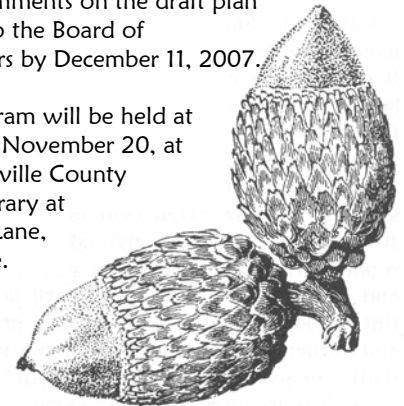
TICKETS and the SCHEDULE will be available ONLINE beginning Monday, December 3. For more information, contact the SYRCL office: (530)265-5961 or check the website: <http://www.wildandscenicfilmfestival.org/>

NOVEMBER PROGRAM OAK WOODLANDS IN EL DORADO COUNTY: TODAY'S MANAGEMENT CHALLENGES

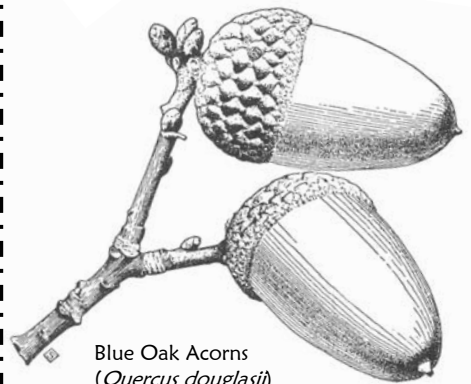
Sue Britting, consulting biologist, will give a presentation on the development of El Dorado County's Oak Woodland Management Plan. The General Plan for El Dorado County requires the County to create an oak woodland management plan that identifies specific measures to be taken to protect local oak woodlands. A public review draft of this plan has just been released by the County. The presentation will give an overview of the Public Review Draft Oak Woodland Management Plan and will identify issues that remain a concern to the El Dorado Chapter.

A copy of the public review draft plan can be viewed at: <http://www.co.el-dorado.ca.us/Planning/OakWoodlandsDraftOctober2007.html>. Public comments on the draft plan are due to the Board of Supervisors by December 11, 2007.

This program will be held at 7:00 pm, November 20, at the Placerville County Public Library at 345 Fair Lane, Placerville.



Black Oak Acorns
(*Quercus kelloggii*)



Blue Oak Acorns
(*Quercus douglasii*)

FAREWELL TO A CHAMPION OF THE ENVIRONMENT

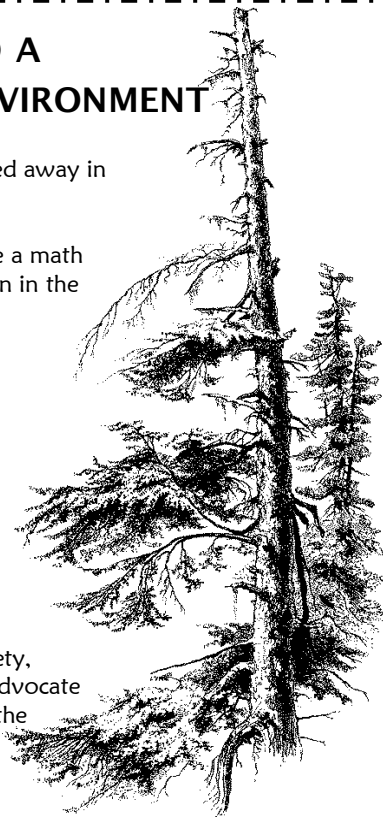
Virginia Jane Harris, known to her friends as V.J., passed away in late July, just a few days shy of her 90th birthday.

She worked as a chemist for Shell Oil, and later became a math Teacher. She was a strong role model for many women in the years to follow. She had a lifetime membership in the Sierra Club and was an activist in the Loma Prieta chapter in the early years.

V.J. was a "giant the Motherlode Chapter" of the Sierra Club, says admirer Ted Cobb. "She and I were both delegates to the 1986 convention in San Luis Obispo that created Sierra Club California." She was heavily involved in the Maidu Group, Sierra Club, in El Dorado County, in the 1980s. In 1986, she was given the Motherlode Chapter Service Award.

V..J. was also active in the California Native Plant Society, and League of Women Voters. She was also a strong advocate of reigning in population growth in both the U.S. and the world.

She was a beautiful soul. We who knew her will truly miss her.



Karen Gaia Pitts
Reprinted from the Maidu Messages



El Dorado Chapter
 California Native Plant Society
 P.O. Box 1948
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November-December 2007

Learn more about State CNPS at: www.cnps.org



DEDICATED TO THE PRESERVATION OF CALIFORNIA'S NATIVE FLORA

The California Native Plant Society is a statewide nonprofit organization of amateurs and professionals with a common interest in California's native plants. The mission of the Society is to increase understanding and appreciation of California's native plants and to preserve them in their natural habitat through scientific activities, education, and conservation. Membership is open to all.

Membership includes the quarterly journal, *Fremontia*, the quarterly *Bulletin*, which gives statewide news and announcements of Society activities and conservation issues, and the chapter newsletter *Gold Field Notes*. To join, call our main office in Sacramento, (916) 447-2677, or visit www.cnps.org to join online.

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