



# GOLD FIELD NOTES

EL DORADO CHAPTER ☼ CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY ☼ July-August 2019

## JULY 23 PROGRAM

### CARNIES AND VAMPIRES OR THE ALTERNATIVE LIFESTYLES OF PLANTS

We tend to think of plants as benign organisms but there exist plants that gain resources from animals (carnivorous plants) and other plants (parasitic plants). This talk and slide show by Jamie Kneitel, Professor of Ecology at California State University, Sacramento, will address the evolution, ecology, and conservation of these two groups of plants and highlight examples from California. It will be presented by the El Dorado Chapter of the California Native Plant Society on Tuesday, July 23 at 7pm, at the Planning Commission Room, Building C, 2850 Fairlane Court, Placerville. The program is free to both members and the public.



Darlingtonia californica, California Pitcher Plant.  
Photo: Wiki Commons

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## VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES AT HIGH SIERRA MEADOWS

Come help restore several high Sierra meadows in the Mokelumne watershed near Bear River Reservoir! Historic land use practices have caused degradation of these meadows. Without restoration, these gems of the Sierra are threatened. This work is spearheaded by the Eldorado National Forest, in partnership with the National Fish and Wildlife Foundation, the Amador Calaveras Consensus Group, and the Amador Resource Conservation District. Volunteers have been a huge part of the hands-on restoration success. Last fall, numerous community volunteers, including CNPS members, planted willow stakes to stabilize incised stream channels and monitored meadow vegetation. This July and August, volunteer work will focus on removing lodgepole pine seedlings and saplings that are encroaching into the meadow. Experienced botanists are also needed to help identify grasses, sedges, rushes, and forbs for future monitoring.



Due to the heavy snowfall this winter, the meadows are still very wet. However, we expect field conditions to improve and work to begin in mid-July. If you are interested in helping out these meadows with a good day's work or plant identification, join the project mailing list by providing your name, contact information, and interest (conifer removal and/or plant identification) to Gwen Starrett at [gstarrett@volcano.net](mailto:gstarrett@volcano.net).

#### CALENDAR

##### July 23 (Tuesday)

Chapter program.  
Alternative Lifestyles of Plants with Jamie Kneitel. See article to right for details.

##### July 19 & 20, August 1 & 2

Restoration days.  
See article inside for more details and use this site to sign up: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c044eaca92da6f85-caples>.

##### July 27 (Saturday)

Plant meander.  
Wilson Meadow and South Fork Silver Creek: We will explore a few of the meadow areas and adjoining upland habitats near the intersection of Wrights Road and the Ice House to Wrights Lake Road. This is more a meander than a hike. Meet at the Safeway parking lot in Pollock Pines. We will return by mid-afternoon. Bring hat, sunscreen, insect repellent, water, and lunch, and wear shoes that you don't mind getting wet. Contact: Rich Wade, 530-635-5663 [richwade@att.net](mailto:richwade@att.net).

##### August 3 (Saturday)

Plant hike.  
Join Calflora's Executive Director Cynthia Powell and the Eldorado National Forest Botanist Matt Brown on a hike to Lake Margaret! Details and RSVP: [news@calflora.org](mailto:news@calflora.org)

##### September 24 (Tuesday)

Chapter program.  
The Fairy Moths of El Dorado County presented by with Alvin Ludtke and Lisa Cooper. Details in next newsletter.

*Evening programs are held on the fourth Tuesday of January, March, May, July, September, and November. The program begins at 7 PM at the Planning Commission Room, Building C, 2850 Fairlane Court, Placerville.*



## VOLUNTEERS MEND FENCES AT KANAKA VALLEY TO PROTECT RARE PLANT HABITAT

In early March, El Dorado Chapter CNPS volunteers Steve and Shellie Perry were out walking at Kanaka Valley, part of the Pine Hill Rare Plant Preserve (noted for the gab-



bro soils and associated rare plants), and to their horror, they found off-road vehicle wheel ruts in a number of areas. Steve and Shellie shared this information with the BLM, the land managers of the Pine Hill Preserve. Working with Pine Hill Preserve Manager Graciela Hinshaw, we identified that motorcycles appeared to be entering through a damaged hiker-access point near one of the gates into Kanaka Valley. So, on June 5, 4 volunteers from the El Dorado Chapter CNPS worked with Graciela and another BLM staffer to stop motorcycle access through the damaged gate and reinforce the fenceline at the parking area for Kanaka Valley. Shellie and Steve Perry, Virginia Meyer and Lester Lubetkin spent the morning working on the fence repairs and then helped just before lunch with seed collection for a BLM program called “Seeds



of Success”. This is a National program to collect native seeds for research, conservation and ecological restoration. We hope later in the Fall to help again to strengthen other segments of fencing at Kanaka Valley, so if you are interested in helping, let Lester Lubetkin know by email at [web.eldoradocnps@gmail.com](mailto:web.eldoradocnps@gmail.com).

## VOLUNTEERS BEGIN TO PROTECT OLD-GROWTH PONDEROSA PINES IN CAPLES CREEK ROADLESS AREA

**Caples Creek project begins- chainsaw phase complete- volunteers needed for next phase!**

The protection of large “legacy” trees in the upper reaches of Caples Creek has begun, with volunteers from our CNPS Chapter, Sierra Forest Legacy and a number of other organizations, working together with firefighters from the Eldorado National Forest on June 23 and 24.



Volunteers working to protect one of the legacy pines before the prescribed burn planned for this Fall.

We had 17 volunteers and 10 firefighters working with chainsaws, loppers, pole saws and gloved hands, removing branches and trees, lots of pine needles and chunks of bark. This cutting out of ladder fuels (small trees and limbs) and the removal of the large apron of duff at the base of these majestic trees are expected to protect them from upcoming prescribed burns (managed fire which is lit under controlled conditions to mimic a natural fire).

The guidance we had from Dana Walsh, a Forest Service Silviculturist, was to look for the “WOW” trees - these are the largest and oldest of the pines that lead you to say “WOW, look at that amazing tree!!” When we found a WOW tree, and there are quite a few of them in the Caples Creek area, we would set to isolating their crowns from future ground fire.

Under a normal fire regime, much of the debris at their base and the nearby smaller trees would have burned up on a regular basis. But fire suppression over the last century or so has led to a dangerous condition in which these trees are at risk from having their bark and cambium layer removed by planned prescribed fires. And if the fire doesn't kill them, these old growth seniors are at risk of invasion by beetles

and other pests when the fine roots that have grown up in the duff accumulated at the base of the trees gets burnt up and the tree cannot support the moisture needed to “pitch out” these pests.

Our chapter extends a BIG Thanks to chapter volunteers Marty Oberlander, Kathleen Barco, Tal and Bill Blackburn, Karen Schambach, Becky Estes and Lester Lubetkin, as well as volunteers from Sierra Forest Legacy, the Elegant Ears Mule Club, American River Conservancy, Desolation Wilderness Volunteers, Center for Sierra Nevada Conservation, Alpine Watershed Group, and Tahoe Area Mountain Bike Association.

The next phase of this volunteer effort to protect these grand trees will not be as difficult. We will rake the duff accumulations at the bases of the trees and in general benefit from a slower pace. Volunteer days are scheduled for July 19 and 20, and August 2 and 3. For those that are interested, some of us are planning to camp out between the work days, to enjoy the beauty of this unique area. Volunteers are very much needed to complete this later phase, as our first raking day had to be cancelled due to a lack of people. Please sign up at the website set up for this project: <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10c044eaca92da6f85-caples>. Or send an email to Tal Blackburn at [web.eldoradocnps@gmail.com](mailto:web.eldoradocnps@gmail.com). Remember, you can match your energy level to the pace of work!

## STRIVING FOR A GOOD LAND ETHIC

Lester and I have spent amazing amounts of time over the past year trying to prepare our home for wildland fire. I call it "Death and Destruction Days" as we remove small trees, crowded shrubs, and woody debris. I feel like a plant referee as I decide what can stay (live) and what can not (must die). It's amazing how quickly my loppers can destroy a small cedar or pine that managed to germinate, survive its first dry summer as a tiny seedling, struggle on many more years through deer and rabbit browsing, and make it to a sturdy, healthy tree of my height. But it's under a mature tree, is a potential ladder fuel, and I must cut short its life - to protect my home, and the woodland I live in.

As home owners, we need to be good stewards of our land. The land ethic that Aldo Leopold promoted needs to thrive. So I bravely remove the small trees to reduce fire hazard, but I also remove the rampant torilis and other invasive weeds, plant by hand picked plant. Before I weed-eat within the 100 foot "defensible space"

zone, I look carefully and mark small native plants that I want to avoid. I leave native shrubs in patches as isolated islands where they are not under trees, and are not too crowded. I limb up mature trees to hopefully protect them from ground fires.

And I work to improve the biodiversity of my property. For every baccharis I remove to improve defensible space, I plant either another baccharis, or another shrub native to my area, outside of that 100 ft zone. I have added more than 20 species so far that could live here but did not when we arrived, such as buckeye, blue oak, and deer brush. I place them carefully so they will not be crowded and a fire hazard. I also put cages around a few little toyons and manzanitas I find far from the house, so they have a fighting chance against the deer.

Yes, if we have acreage at all, we can do much to mitigate our own important fire clearing work. We, as well as the birds and butterflies we love to watch, and the woodlands/forest/grasslands we all call home all will benefit from our hard work.

Alice Cantelow  
Chapter President

## CALLING SPECIAL PEOPLE!

Our board is an active, vibrant bunch (see the list on the back of newsletter) and we have room for three more members. Do you love books, people, or hate weeds? Consider joining us!

### Book Chair

We need someone to head up book sales, as long time volunteer Bonnie East needs to pass the duty on. This means choosing books, selecting some to bring to general meetings, and heading up the important book booth at our biannual plant sales. We have a cart to help with hauling. Good old fashioned books can provide so much helpful information on native plants!

### Membership Chair

Do you have a welcoming personality and like to chat with new people? Judith Whiffin is also needing to pass the membership duty on, due to her frequent trips down under. This position includes greeting people at general meetings, sending welcome packets to new members, and running a membership table at plant sales.

It means being as friendly and welcoming as Judith has been!

### Weed Chair

Invasive weed control is such an important aspect of native plant conservation, and we need someone who can give it some attention. This might mean working with the county to see how our chapter might help, perhaps with a donation, or a work party or two. It also might mean monitoring weed work of the El Dorado National Forest or other public land managers. We have a great volunteer coordinator (Tal Blackburn) who can help get weed pull volunteers.

All chairs include board membership. The board meets about ten times a year, and really is a great way to get to know what the chapter is up to, and to get to know our many leaders. (Or, if that part is not appealing, chairs do not **have** to be on the board). If any of these chair positions sound interesting to you, or if you just have questions, please contact Alice Cantelow at [web.eldoradocnps@gmail.com](mailto:web.eldoradocnps@gmail.com) We'd love to have you join us!

## SEPTEMBER 24 PROGRAM THE FAIRY MOTHS OF EL DORADO COUNTY

Presented by with Alvin Ludtke and Lisa Cooper.

## ON THE LOOKOUT FOR WEEDS: ITALIAN THISTLE

**Common names:** Italian thistle

*Carduus pycnocephalus* is a winter annual forb (family Asteraceae) widely distributed in disturbed open sites, roadsides, pastures, annual grasslands, and waste areas in much of California. **Cal-IPC Rating:** Moderate



I think this thistle is more prevalent than is known. I know it is found on American River Conservancy land, and on many trails in El Dorado County. It is limited by elevation somewhat and I haven't seen it above about 3500 feet. CalFlora has it at about 5000 feet.

Around here it is sprouting up in the roadside ditches as it likes seasonal water. It will also come up in seasonal streams in the mud flats left over from the winter rains. In grazed pastures, it appears in rocky places where it may be protected from livestock grazing or trampling.

A little hand weeding or hoeing goes a long way, as just one plant left out there will give you a good crop next spring. Right now is the time to identify it and get rid of it.

The articles below are from dispatch, the Cal-Ipcc newsletter:

More about Italian thistle. Massera, Jack. Dispatch, Vol 09, Issue 2 (<https://www.cal-ipc.org/docs/resources/news/pdf/newsletters875.pdf>)

Italian thistles: an ominous threat. Cowan, B. Dispatch, Vol 08, Issue 1

Annie Walker  
Invasive Plant Chair





El Dorado Chapter  
California Native Plant Society  
P.O. Box 1948  
Placerville, CA 95667

July-August 2019

## GARDEN NOTES: WATERING NEW PLANTS

Even the most drought tolerant plants need supplemental water their first summer, as their roots grow and establish themselves. Most new native plants should be watered about once a week their first summer after planting. Next year, that can often go down to once every 3-4 weeks, and the following year, many may not need water at all. Consult [calscape.org](http://calscape.org) or [laspilitas.com](http://laspilitas.com) (under their plant descriptions) for information on eventual watering needs.

For Updates Visit Us on the Web  
[www.eldoradoCNPS.org](http://www.eldoradoCNPS.org) and



eldoradoCNPS



CALIFORNIA  
NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

### 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 conserve California native plants and their natural habitats, and increase understanding, appreciation, and horticultural use of native plants. Membership is open to all.

Membership includes the journal *Fremontia*, quarterly magazine, *Flora*, 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](http://www.cnps.org) to join online.

## CHAPTER OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Contact Chapter Leadership at [web.eldoradocnps@gmail.com](mailto:web.eldoradocnps@gmail.com)

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