



GOLD FIELD NOTES

EL DORADO CHAPTER ☼ CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY ☼ MAY-JUNE 2021

MAY 25 PROGRAM

CALFLORA: INFORMATION ON WILD CALIFORNIA PLANTS

Our speaker on May 25 will be Cynthia Powell, Executive Director of Calflora. If you have ever wondered how or why to use Calflora (www.calflora.org) to inform plant choices for your garden, she will virtually present the new Calflora tools for El Dorado CNPS.



Online Zoom Presentation: This presentation is open to the public and free of charge. It will be available via a Zoom link sent to your email a few days before the talk. If you wish to receive the meeting link [CLICK HERE TO REGISTER](#). Out of respect for the speaker, during the talk please keep your microphone muted, video off, and avoid using the chat feature. We will invite questions at the end. Unfortunately, we will likely not be able to address individual technical difficulties during the talk, but please email web.eldoradocnps@gmail.com if you experience difficulties so that we can address them for next time.

SEQUESTERING CARBON CASE STUDY: THE DOWTY PROPERTY IN HUMBOLDT COUNTY, CALIFORNIA

Preface: We are fortunate to have chapter members with a deep expertise in plants and who are willing to share their knowledge with us. This article features Steve and Valerie Dowty's rehabilitation work on their Humboldt property. In addition, Rich Wade provided the carbon sequestration estimate described at the end of this article.

CALENDAR

May 25 (Tuesday)

Chapter program.
Calflora: Information on Wild California Plants. Details to right.

July 27 (Tuesday)

Chapter program
Phylogeography: the evolution of plants and landscapes in California. Details to come on chapter website and in July-August newsletter.

ANYTIME!

Virtual Hikes.
[Redbud Virtual Hikes - Rare Manzanitas, Fungal Crash Course, and Torreya Rust - Placer County, CA](#)

Due to the requirements of social distancing, many of our events are on hold.



Lilium kelloggii (Kellogg Lily) on the Dowty property in Humboldt County. (Photo: S. and V. Dowty)

EL DORADO CHAPTER'S CARBON NEUTRAL PLEDGE

In 2019, the El Dorado Chapter of the California Native Plant Society adopted a pledge to decarbonize its activities, meaning that the Chapter's activities will, in net, add no greenhouse gases to the atmosphere. We are doing this in phases: For the time being we are focusing on just our transportation carbon footprint, that is, the fuel we use to attend meetings, events, plant sales, etc.

At the beginning of last year we estimated the chapter's annual transportation carbon footprint to be 20 tons per year (CO₂). Because of the various restrictions and social distancing during 2020, the Chapter's carbon footprint was re-estimated to be 7 tons (CO₂). To put these 7 tons in perspective, the average carbon footprint per person in the U.S. is 15 tons per year (CO₂).

FOR THOSE WHO HAVE NOT YET MET THE DOWTYS...

Steve and Valerie Dowty bought their Humboldt property in the early 1970s after they finished attending school there. After that they lived in Texas for

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SEQUESTERING CARBON CASE STUDY

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a couple years and then in the Bay Area. They moved to a 10-acre parcel south of Placerville in 1986, rehabilitating the parcel and encouraging California native plants to reestablish there.

They are founding members of the El Dorado Chapter. Members of this chapter may know the Downtys because they regularly sell local plants at the chapter's plant sales, specializing in local native grasses, sedges and rushes.

Steve presented slides on their land rehabilitation methods at a chapter meeting a couple of years ago. A summary of the techniques he favors would include lots of thinning and weed whipping, taking care of water flows, planting some California natives, but mostly nurturing the natives that grow back by themselves.

HUMBOLDT PROPERTY DETAILS

The Dowty's Humboldt property is 20 acres and is located between Arcata and Eureka in the Jacoby Creek drainage. It is a high quality redwood forest with a little over 75% redwood. Other conifer species present are Douglas fir, grand fir, western hemlock, Sitka spruce, western red cedar. Since the property is up slope and inland from the immediate coast it is above a lot of the fog on the coast and gets more sun. It has a lot of shrub species with salal and evergreen huckleberry being the most dominate and very invasive on the logging roads and disturbed areas. There are also a lot of herbaceous species including many native grasses, sedges and rushes which were components of the prairie vegetation on the inland ridge tops. There are several nice flowering herbaceous species including rhododendron, red Clintonia, Kellogg lily, redwood violet, trillium and many others.

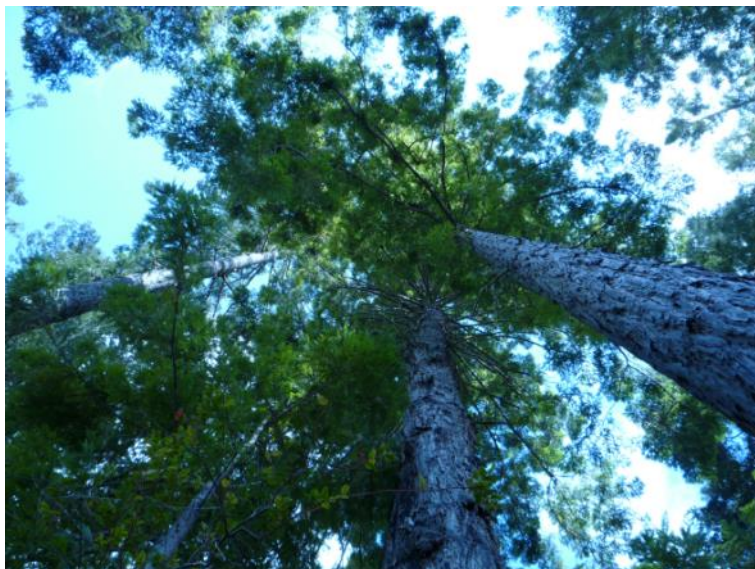
The original clear cut was in the early 1900s by steam donkey. Also a prior owner selectively logged in the 1960s.

The Downtys only visited the property a few times in the first decades after purchasing it, but in the 1997 they decided to have a registered forester visit the property. The forester ran a timber cruise and developed a Non Industrial Timber Management Plan (NTMP) for the property. A second timber cruise was completed by registered foresters in 2007. Steve personally participated in both timber cruises.

(A timber cruise is a survey involving sampling the forest in a grid and at each point recording the height and basal diameter of the trees. The trees are cored a few inches to get the growth rate. After running the sampling numbers in a program, the result is an estimate of merchantable forest products by species and volume, and growth rate. The purpose of the NTMP is to allow California "nonindustrial" landowners; that is, owners with small acreage and are not primarily engaged in the manufacture of forest products, to have a forest management plan for their property that is more flexible than "an industrial strength" Timber Harvest Plan.)

The Downtys have made two selective timber harvests, one in 1997 and one in 2005. Timber volume before both cuts was in the 650 to 750 thousand board foot range. Steve remembers, "Loggers tear around pretty good, but that the land does recover well in a few years." They have more timber on the place now than any time since the original clear cut. Current timber volume should be in the million board foot range with annual growth of more than 36,000 board feet per year.

Steve summarizes his continuing management activities as based on cutting plants he wants to reduce so as to minimize competi-



Sky View of Dowty Property (Photo: S. and V. Dowty)

tion and increase the prairie vegetation. "Initially the main focused was removing salal and evergreen huckleberry from along the roads. After doing that I noticed the prairie vegetation increasing in the cleared areas along the roads, so I expanded my efforts to other areas to increase the prairie vegetation."

ESTIMATE OF ANNUAL CO₂ SEQUESTERED ON HUMBOLDT PROPERTY

The timber cruise calculation results are in units of board feet which are problematic with respect to estimating carbon sequestration. This is because board feet are a timber industry measurement that is designed to be an estimate of yield of lumber and not a total trunk volume. In addition, there is the unmeasured increase in branches, foliage, and root structures which also sequester carbon. Nevertheless, forging ahead, it has been estimated that just based upon 36,000 board feet increase in merchantable forest products per year, the property in sequestering in the range of 30-60 tons of carbon (C) each year.

Converting this carbon (C) that the trees are sequestering to carbon dioxide (CO₂) is a chemistry calculation. Carbon footprints are calculated as carbon dioxide (CO₂) in the air, that is, they are calculated after the carbon is burned and has

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combined with two oxygen atoms from the air. So the Dowty Property is currently estimated to be sequestering very roughly 100-200 tons of carbon dioxide (CO₂) per year.

IN CLOSING

In 2020 (and again in 2021) the Dowtys have donated the carbon sequestered on their Humboldt property to our chapter. Even though the carbon sequestered on the Dowty property is a very rough estimate, it is well in excess of the chapter's transportation carbon footprint estimate of 7 tons per last year (CO₂) and likely around 20 tons in a non-pandemic year.

In January 2021, the Board set in motion a contribution of \$228 to MyClimate for a 7 ton carbon offset for the chapter's

2020-2021 activity year even though we had received this donation from the Dowtys. This is because carbon credits are rigorously documented and monitored to assure that the estimated carbon sequestered actually occurs over a long period of time, up to 100 years for some protocols. A full protocol is not something the chapter wants to invest in at this time.

Nevertheless, we still acknowledge (for the short-term and without a lot of documentation) this generous donation from the Dowtys. We hope that it will inspire others to tend their property carefully and also to reduce carbon emissions both at club events and at home. We can be a part of the solution.

Steve Dowty and Tal Blackburn

JULY 27 PROGRAM: PHYLOGEOGRAPHY: THE EVOLUTION OF PLANTS AND LANDSCAPES IN CALIFORNIA

Prof. Kristina Schierenbeck from CSU Chico will talk about phylogeography in California. This presentation begins at 7 pm on July 27 and will be hosted remotely on Zoom. [Please sign up to receive emails from El Dorado Chapter to receive the information to connect to the Zoom program meeting.](#)

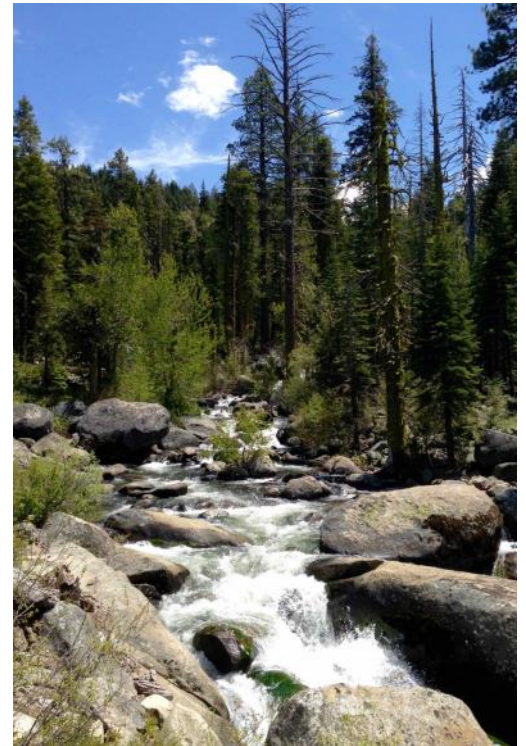
GOOD NEWS: IN-PERSON PLANT WALKS RESUME IN MAY 2021!

We are planning in-person plant walks for late May and June, 2021! Our plant walks are leisurely saunters through natural areas replete with our precious native plants, by which we learn about the plants and admire them along with their pollinators and animals that share their habitats. *To join one or more of the walks, get details about them, including where and when to meet, email **Ginna Meyer** at vcmeyer@mac.com.* Your name will be put on the sign-up list for the walks you'd like to join. We will limit participants to 15 folks. We ask those of you who are not yet "fully vaccinated" for COVID-19 to wear masks when within 6 feet of others on the walk. You will also be asked to sign a waiver on the day of the walk. A copy of the text of the waiver will be emailed when you sign-up for a walk.

On **Friday, May 21st**, we will visit a familiar spot that's easy to get to and surprisingly full of a diversity of mid-elevation, lower montane forest plant life - Bridal Veil Falls Picnic Area off Highway 50 east of Pollock Pines. This spot has a shady overstory of conifers, including Pacific yew, and an understory that includes delightful little ones, such as Pacific star-flower and wild ginger. This Eldorado

National Forest (EDF) day-use area is on the south fork of the American River, so we'll also enjoy the riparian habitats as well.

On **Tuesday, June 29th**, we have a special opportunity for those of you who enjoy taking photos in natural areas, and would like to get more out of your camera work! Our own **Lisa Couper, nature photographer extraordinaire**, will teach us how to take awesome photos with equipment that we already have and use, whether a smart phone, point-and-shoot, or a camera with the bells and whistles. We will hold this "walking workshop" on the EDF Caples Creek Trail off Silver Fork Road. (In the off-chance that this very warm, dry spring season results in this site not offering the best in wildflower display, we'll change the site for this event.) Caples Creek Trail is at elevations of around 6500 ft, the transition elevation from the lower montane forest to upper montane, so we will find a mix of plants from both life zones, and interesting flora including shrubby canyon live oak (golden cup oak). This is also where there was a prescribed fire in 2019, for which volunteer crews (including a number of our chapter members!) prepared by clearing around old-growth pines.



Caples Creek (Photo: CalWild)

You'll be able to see the results of the prescribed burn on our walk on the trail.

*Ginna Meyer
Field Trip Chair*

CNPS VOLUNTEERS JOIN IN TREE PLANTING

A group of volunteers from the El Dorado Chapter CNPS joined other county volunteers in restoring an area of the



Tal and Bill Blackburn planting a Sugar pine seedling. (Photo: L. Lubetkin)

Eldorado National Forest on April 24, 2021. We planted a mixture of different

conifers in an area in the canyon of the Silver Fork American River. This area with fragile granitic soils had been severely damaged by off-highway vehicles illegally creating hill-climbs.

Earlier, Eldorado Forest staff had used heavy equipment to reshape damaged areas and re-establish drainages and then local high school students with Generation Green had spread forest mulch and woody debris to help retain soil moisture and reduce summer soil temperatures. This left the area ready for planting of a mixture of Ponderosa pine, Sugar pine, Incense cedar and even Giant sequoia. On a cool Saturday in late April, about 20 volunteers planted as many as 3,500 trees! Rain and cooler weather was anticipated immediately after the planting, so there is hope that some of the trees will survive.

El Dorado Chapter CNPS is part of a coalition of volunteer groups that are work-



Volunteers getting trained in planting seedlings. (Photo: L. Lubetkin)

ing together to help with restoration projects on the Eldorado Forest. Watch our emails, Facebook pages and website for notices of future restoration projects. Or, if you want to be added to our email notification list, let Lester Lubetkin know at web.eldoradocnps@gmail.com.

WELCOME TO NEW CHAIRS

Thank you to the people who have already stepped up to fill 3 of our 4 vacant chair/board positions!

Debra Ayres (vice president, programs) and Ginna Meyers (field trips) have offered to also co-chair our **INVASIVE EXOTIC** plant removal efforts. We are so fortunate to have their combined talents and knowledge! They will begin with a focus on Pine Hill Preserve where invasive weeds threaten rare plants, and where stinkwort and Italian thistle were recently found. Watch for email alerts about upcoming weed pull events. And a big thank you to the 7 or so members who joined them for the Apr 29 weed pull there!



Photo: A. Cantelow

Cindy Podsiadlo, The Nature Nook co-chair and former treasurer and president, has stepped in to be our **MEMBERSHIP** chair. Her long time knowledge of the organization and its efforts is invaluable. Watch for her friendly face, and contact her if you are having membership issues or any trouble with receiving chapter communications! You can use the main chapter email to contact her or any other board member:

web.eldoradocnps@gmail.com

RARE PLANT efforts are now being headed up by Steve Serkanic. Steve is relatively new to our chapter, but worked at the state CNPS office with rare plants previously. He is a California Certified Consulting botanist with a wealth of knowledge, and we are delighted to have

A Pine Hill Preserve unit (left) that was cleared last year for fire abatement, bursting into bloom recently with Sonoma sage (*Salvia sonomensis*), rare Layne's Butterweed (*Packera layneae*) and even a previously unseen *Fremontodendron decumbens* (the rare Pine Hill flannelbush). The chapter is working to keep stinkwort and other invasives pulled out of these new openings and has thus far spent 50 people-hours on this effort.

him join us. Watch for articles in the newsletter giving us heads up about interesting rare plant info as he works to promote enthusiasm about rare plants in our county. Several members currently conduct their own rare plant treasure hunts, and there is support from the state CNPS office for doing so yourself. For more on the statewide CNPS rare plant program <https://www.cnps.org/rare-plants>

VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR STILL NEEDED

And that brings us to the **VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR** position we still would like to fill. With our many kinds of volunteer events-from plant sales and restoration to weed pulls, native plant gardening and tabling- it would really help to have someone focused again on the volunteers themselves. This person should be well organized, enjoy people, and be ready to coordinate people and tasks, consider snacks etc. The work comes in chunks as projects occur, and is a great way to get to know people. This can be a board position, but does not have to be. Being on the board does help you meet other active volunteers and keep abreast of what the chapter is up to. We'd love to have you! If you are interested or just have questions:

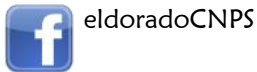
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 California Native Plant Society
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May-June 2021

For Updates Visit Us on the Web
www.eldoradoCNPS.org and



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 to join online.

CHAPTER OFFICERS AND COMMITTEE CHAIRS

Contact Chapter Leadership at web.eldoradocnps@gmail.com

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