



GOLD FIELD NOTES

EL DORADO CHAPTER ☼ CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY ☼ JULY-AUGUST 2023

CALENDAR

July 19 (Wednesday)

Plant walk.
Gerle Lake and Creek. See inside for details.

July 25 (Tuesday)

Chapter program.
Mini-Conference at Cameron Park Community Services Center. See article to right for details.

September 13 (Wednesday)

Monitoring field day.
Aspen monitoring at Martin Meadow. See flyer at end of newsletter for details and sign up link.

September 26 (Tuesday)

Chapter program.
Details in next newsletter.

October 11 (Wednesday)

Monitoring field day.
Meadow monitoring at Thompson Meadow. See flyer at end of newsletter for details and sign up link.

Available Anytime!

Botanical programs.
View past presentations from the Friends of the Chico Herbarium's "All Things Botanically Related" series. Check this website for program links: <http://friendsofthechicoherbarium.org/presentation-series>

Evening programs are held on the fourth Tuesday of January, March, May, July, September, and November. The program begins at 7 PM and may be in-person or hosted via Zoom. Check the chapter website for details on Zoom link and location (<https://www.eldoradocnps.org/>).

JULY 25 PROGRAM

MINI-CONFERENCE: WHAT WORK DOES THE CHAPTER DO?

This in-person mini-conference will present the many projects and efforts we have undertaken, both solo and in partnership with other agencies. For people who are interested in native plants but aren't sure where or how they could get involved, this will be an informative and helpful meeting.

The Chapter has undertaken a wide variety of projects to protect native plants and educate the public about them. Members of the public are encouraged to come and learn about how they might get involved or to simply learn more about native plants. Experts will be on hand to present about several different chapter projects, including:

- ◆ Developing a Regional Park at Bass Lake
- ◆ Rare plant surveys in the Caldor Fire footprint
- ◆ Genetics of the Pine Hill flannelbush
- ◆ Fire Ecology of Pine Hill
- ◆ Pine Hill—A Biodiversity Hotspot
- ◆ The Nature Nook at the Placerville Library.
- ◆ Making Good on Our Chapter's Carbon Neutral Pledge

Introductory information for these talks is included in this newsletter and more will be presented at the in-person meeting. This is just a sample of the Chapter's projects. We will not be able to present on everything the Chapter does – there is not enough time in one evening – but people will be available to answer questions about other activities.

This general meeting will take place Tuesday, July 25 beginning at 6:45 pm at the Cameron Park Community Services Center, 2502 Country Club Drive, Social Room. The meeting is free and open to the public.

MINI-CONFERENCE

BASS LAKE REGIONAL PARK

Presenter: Madeline Franke

Bass Lake Regional Park in El Dorado Hills at 211 acres has oak groves, chaparral, wetlands, a freshwater lake, and an existing athletic field; it opened December 2020. The El Dorado CNPS chapter has been leading nature walks at the park, assisting in the creation of story maps for various birds and plants in the park, identifying native plants and creating a plant identification tool kit, creating a weed abatement plan for invasive weeds like Starthistle and Stinkwort, and organizing and conducting volunteer events for weed pulling.



Bass Lake and oak woodland (D. Ayres)

MINI-CONFERENCE

CALDOR FIRE: RARE PLANTS AFTER THE WILDFIRE

Presenter: Shellie Perry

After the devastating Caldor Fire in the summer and fall of 2021, members of our chapter volunteered to help the U.S. Forest Service, Eldorado National Forest, survey sensitive and

watch list plants that were affected by the fire. Led by Lester Lubetkin, Annie Walker, and Shellie Perry, the volunteer team conducted over a dozen surveys from mid-May to July 2022, focusing mainly on *Calochortus clavatus* var. *avius* (CA Rank 1B.2), *Lewisia kelloggii* ssp. *hutchisonii*, and *Navarretia prolifera* ssp. *lutea*. They were pleased to find that most of the populations of the sensitive plants not only survived the fire, especially the ones on lava caps, but were growing in record numbers in several locations.



Meiss Road, south of Mormon Emigrant Trail near Brown Rock (S. Perry)



Fleming Meadow area (S. Perry)

MINI-CONFERENCE

PINE HILL FLANNEL BUSH – ONE OF EARTH’S RAREST PLANTS

Presenter: Deb Ayres

Pine Hill Flannel Bush, *Fremontodendron decumbens*, is only found on Pine Hill itself and on a nearby hilltop in Rescue, California. It grows embedded in thickets of chaparral, only appearing after re-sprouting following clearing or fire. There are as many as 800 to fewer than 300 plants in the entire population. The Chapter is working with Prof. Dan Potter at UC Davis on its genetics to determine the best ways to ensure the survival of the species, and to distinguish it from a mysterious relative 30 miles to the north.



Flannel Bush Grass Valley mystery species (D. Ayres)



Pine Hill Flannel Bush (L. Couper)

MINI-CONFERENCE

FIRE ECOLOGY AT PINE HILL: HOW PLANTS AND ANIMALS RESPOND TO CLEARING AND BURNING IN A FIREBREAK

Presenter: Ginna Meyer

Based on studies our chapter conducted along with California Fish and Wildlife's Mario Klip, we'll show how plants that are rare and endemic to Pine Hill have been affected by the clearing of and pile burning in a 60-foot wide firebreak around the base of the Hill. We'll also report what Mario found in his study of the wildlife response to the firebreak using wildlife cameras placed in the firebreak as well as in vegetation left untouched.



Alice Cantelow (left) and Natasha Bartley (right) collect plant data in a study plot in 2019. (V. Meyer)



Pine Hill Flannelbush seedling in a burned plot. (V. Meyer)



Pine Hill Ceanothus seedling (left) in a burned plot. (V. Meyer)

MINI-CONFERENCE

PINE HILL PRESERVE – A BIODIVERSITY HOTSPOT IN EL DORADO COUNTY

Poster Presenters: Debra Ayres and Ginna Meyer

Pine Hill is near the center of a 30,000-acre gabbro soil intrusion in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada in El Dorado County, CA. This gabbro island is a plant biodiversity hotspot that contains over 8% of the flora of the entire State (741 native and non-native plants) while covering a miniscule area (0.024%) of the State. The flora is sorted into chaparral, oak woodland, and grassland plant communities. Eight rare perennials or shrubs occur in the chaparral and oak woodland; five are federally listed. Each species has found a way to deal with summer drought, decades of shrub competition, and fire but are at risk mainly due to development. The Pine Hill Preserves have been established to provide protected habitats for these plants and communities.



Kanaka Valley Unit of the Pine Hill Preserve. (V. Meyer)

MINI-CONFERENCE

THE NATURE NOOK

Presenter: Cindy Podsiadlo

The Nature Nook is a new public garden at the Placerville Library. This lovely haven is designed for pollinators, birds, and people and



Signage at the Nook (C. Podsiadlo)

is open to visitors every day of the year. Starting in spring 2017 the Chapter began to revitalize the former Xeriscape Demonstration Garden to showcase the beauty and benefits of gardening with natives. To demonstrate the possibilities and utility of using California native plants Chapter volunteers created a landscape plan featuring an entryway shrub garden, a pollinator garden outside the windows of the children's library, a meadow garden, and a shade garden using the existing oak canopy for native plants needing shade. The garden was planted in December 2018 and is thriving. Signs are posted and an informational post-card is available.



Cindy Podsiadlo working in the garden.

MINI-CONFERENCE

EL DORADO CHAPTER DOES IT – HOW WE IMPLEMENTED CARBON NEUTRAL

Poster Presenter: Tal Blackburn

By being members of CNPS, we are champions for native plants in our community – not just plants, but pollinators, birds, and other wild creatures that thrive among the plants in the forests, woodlands, chaparral, and in our own backyards. Even as we enjoy and conserve nature, our activities release carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases into the atmosphere.

The chapter members made a carbon neutral pledge in 2019 and the board has pursued ways to become carbon neutral for the 2020-2021 and the 2021-2022 fiscal/activity years. Recently the chapter wrapped up another year, its 3rd year meeting the pledge. Instead of waiting for guidance from CNPS headquarters, we dove right in, believing that doing something toward reducing the effects of climate change was better than waiting. Our method in brief was to...

The poster which will be on view at our general meeting was presented at the CNPS Conference last October. It focuses on the specific work accomplished in the 2021-2022 fiscal/activity year to arrive at our chapter's carbon footprint. Our chapter's carbon footprint comprises the miles people drove to make our projects a success. Our four biggest project areas are shown below.

More details of our path to meet the pledge are presented in the poster. Bring your questions and your opinions to the meeting too. Thank you for your continuing support of the chapter's purchase of carbon credits.



PLANT WALK: GERLE LAKE AND CREEK FIELD TRIP

SEPTEMBER 26 PROGRAM
TO BE DETERMINED

When: Wednesday, July 19

Where: Gerle Lake - Summer Harvest - Trail, and Gerle Creek Interpretive Trail, Gerle Lake Campground, Eldorado National Forest.

What to know: These trails offer easy access to the forest nature, at about 5300 feet in elevation, where we'll enjoy seeing a variety of wildflowers, such as bog orchid, as well as the forest shrubs and trees. The Summer Harvest trail is accessible.

What to bring: Water, lunch/snacks, sunscreen, insect repellent. You'll want a hat, good hiking footwear, your camera or smart phone for photos. You may want to bring a field guide such as Laws' "Field Guide to the Sierra Nevada" or the Redbud Chapter's "Field Guide to the Wildflowers of Placer and Nevada Counties".

To sign up: Contact our Field Trip Coordinator, Ginna Meyer (<https://www.eldoradocnps.org/component/contact/contact/19->

Check for details in next the newsletter or on the website closer to the event.

POLLINATORS AND HOST PLANTS: NATIVE VERSUS NON-NATIVE

Many thanks to Deb Ayres for spotting this exchange between Vicky Cory and Doug Tallamy in the February 2023 issue of *Fine Gardening*. The following the column "Over the Fence" is reprinted with permission © 2023, The Taunton Press, Inc., *Fine Gardening* Issue #209, Feb 2023.

Over the Fence

— | READER COMMENTS AND OPINIONS | —

BUT WHAT IF BIRDS AND BUTTERFLIES LIKE MY NONNATIVES?

I get the idea why native plants are better to plant than nonnatives. But I do see a lot of activity on nonnatives that I have in my garden. For instance, the huge burning bush I have is loaded with birds right now. They appear to be mostly robins, and they're all going for the berries. I also have a butterfly bush. All season it's been loaded with butterflies. Is this food source bad for them? They certainly seem to love it.

—Vicky Cory, Putnam Valley, New York

FG responds: This reader's questions seemed tailor-made for Doug Tallamy, so we asked him for a reply. (For more from Tallamy, check out the audio version of our interview with him on the *Let's Argue About Plants* podcast at FineGardening.com/podcast.)

When evaluating the ecological value of a plant, one needs to look at the net benefit or loss from having this species in the garden. For example, burning bush makes lots of berries that birds do eat. This is what makes them so invasive (because the birds poop their seeds out in our natural areas). So berries are a plus. But birds do not live on berries alone. They rear their young on insects. Burning bush does not support the thousands of caterpillars that birds need to reproduce (a big minus). Burning bush also moves into natural areas, displacing the native plants that do produce the insects that birds need (a huge minus). In this case, the ecological minuses of having burning bush far outweigh the pluses. A landscape full of burning bush has no breeding birds; berries or not, burning bush is a disaster for our bird populations.

The situation with butterfly bush is similar, although not quite as stark. Butterfly bush makes lots of nectar. But butterflies do not exist on nectar alone. Butterfly bush leaves do not support any butterfly caterpillars, so unless you have the native plants that do support butterfly caterpillars, you will have no butterflies to take advantage of all of that nectar. Butterfly bush also has proven to be seriously invasive in Oregon, California, and eastern Pennsylvania (so far).

Aspen Monitoring Field Day Martin Meadows, Amador District Eldorado National Forest

2023

Quaking aspen (*Populus tremuloides*) in the Sierra Nevada exists as only a minor element in our forests (<1%), however they fill a large role in terms of landscape resilience and biodiversity. As aspen are an early successional species they are very dependent on disturbance to trigger a response of the aspen suckers and foster subsequent cohorts. With the lack of disturbance across our Sierra Nevada Forests, conifers are now encroaching upon aspen stands, decreasing their dominance. The Forest Service has been planning restoration of these aspen stands by reducing the number of competing trees and encouraging new cohorts of aspen. Before restoration efforts were completed around Martin Meadows the aspen were affected by both the 2019 Caples Fire and then the 2021 Caldor Fire. Now it is time to revisit the existing monitoring network and evaluate the succession of aspen.

You are invited to join the Amador-Calaveras Consensus Group (ACCG) Monitoring Workgroup and the Forest Service along with partners to help with post treatment aspen monitoring in and adjacent to the 2019 Caples Fire with a focus on the aspen around Martin Meadows along Hwy. 88.

No experience is necessary. Forest Service personnel will be on hand to provide training to volunteers. Background information will be provided on aspen ecology. The work will mainly consist of counting trees and evaluating vegetation changes in the aspen stands. The work will involve some hiking.

Date and Time: 0900 - 1600,
Wednesday, September 13 2023,

Register link: Please register at this [link](#) by August 30th so we have an idea of participation.



Forest
Service



United States Department of Agriculture

For Additional Information Contact:
Becky Estes, Central Sierra province
Ecologist,
becky.estes@usda.gov, 530-642-5161

Full link to register:

<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/martin-meadows-aspen-monitoring-field-day-tickets-665590718757?aff=oddtcreator>

Amador-Calaveras Consensus Group

Meadow Monitoring Field Day Thompson Meadow, Calaveras District Stanislaus National Forest

2023

In the past, Sierra Nevada meadows were more expansive and supported a vast array of wildlife and aquatic species. Conifers are now encroaching upon the meadows, decreasing their water levels. Lower water levels reduce meadow size, health and ecological function. The Forest Service plans to restore these meadows by reducing the number of trees in the meadow, which will raise the water levels and restore the benefits of meadow habitats for the plants and animals that rely on them.

You are invited to join the Amador-Calaveras Consensus Group (ACCG) Monitoring Workgroup, the Forest Service and partners to help monitoring within a meadow restoration project at Thompson Meadow, located off Highway 4, about 20 miles east of Arnold.

No experience is necessary. Forest Service and partner personnel will be on hand to provide training to volunteers. Background information will be provided on meadow ecology and project design. The work will mainly consist of counting trees. May involve short hiking on flat ground.



Date and Time: 0900-1600,
Wednesday, October 11 2023

Register by: Please register at this **link** by September 30th so we have an idea of participation.

For Additional Information Contact:
Becky Estes, becky.estes@usda.gov,
530-642-5161

Full link to register:
<https://www.eventbrite.com/e/meadow-monitoring-field-day-at-thompson-meadow-tickets-665640497647?aff=oddtcreator>



United States Department of Agriculture



Forest Service

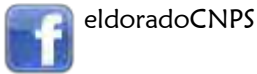
Amador-Calaveras Consensus Group



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

July-August 2023

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



**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 *Artemisia*, 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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VICE PRESIDENT	Debra Ayres
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