August 2015

CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

San Diego Chapter Newsletter

SUMMER FIELD TRIP

Sunday, August 23, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Late Summer Plant Blooms along the PCT near Mount Laguna

Summer "monsoonal" rainstorms in the mountains of San Diego County bring up an array of beautiful plants that flower in August and September. We will go for a 3-hour walk along a section of the Pacific Crest Trail (PCT) to see those plants.

The PCT skirts the east side of the town of Mount Laguna, including the eastern edge of the US Forest Service (USFS) Burnt Rancheria Campground. Higher rainfall on the ridge supports a mixed conifer forest, while drier conditions on the east side of the mountain ridge support a rich and varied chaparral with junipers. A highlight on the trail on our last field trip was bouquet-sized clusters of magenta blossoms of *Mirabilis multiiflora* (giant four o'clock). *Potentilla gracilis* var. *fastigiata* (slender cinquefoil), was also a beauty, with butter-yellow flowers glowing below the pines.

The walk will ramble up and down, gaining and losing at the most a few hundred feet elevation along the southerly leg of the trail segment. The trail is well maintained but has some rock stairways so wear good hiking shoes with ankle support. Long pants are recommended or gaiters if you want to go off trail into snake territory. We may have time to explore the hill on the south side of the campground where plants not seen along the trail were observed at the field trip three years ago.

Meet at 10 a.m. in the USFS free parking lot off the Sunrise Highway opposite the Mount Laguna Fire Station. The fire station is about ¼ mile south of the small town of Mount Laguna. We will cross the highway and walk north 1/8 mile to Burnt Rancheria, then walk through it to the PCT. If you want to ride-share from central San Diego, meet at 8:30 in the parking lot behind the Denny's on Friar's road just east of State Route 163 or at 8:50 at the Fuerte-Severin park'n'ride on the south side of I-8 east of Grossmont. Bring a brown-bag lunch and water. We'll eat lunch back at the parking lot. If people want to include an optional walk to observe plants on the RedTail Roost Trail that starts at the parking lot, some of the leaders may take a two-hour walk after lunch. This well-maintained single-track trail has an initial ascent of

(con't on pg 2)

September 19, 2015
Native Plant Landscaping Symposium

On September 19 at the Scripps Institute of Oceanography, CNPS will present a daylong event on the use of California native plants in landscaping. We'll cover edible gardens, pollinators, graywater, "Ditch Your Lawn", and more! Stay tuned at http://gardennative.org for more details.

October 17, 2015, Fall Plant Sale

The Fall Plant Sale will be Saturday, October 17, 2015, at the Casa del Prado Courtyard in Balboa Park. The sale will open at 9:00 a.m. for members and 10:00 a.m. for the general public, and closes at 3:00 p.m. Members can pre-order their plants up until September 15 – minimum $100 order and the plants can be picked up on Friday, October 16. Check your September newsletter, the website, or the Listserve for selection and order forms.

We still need volunteers for the Plant Sale. Please consider helping before and/or during the sale. You can sign up at Chapter meetings or by contacting Connie or Mike at plantsale@cnpssd.org .

NO CHAPTER MEETING IN AUGUST

several hundred feet, and thereafter ups and downs through varied forest types, including huge Ponderosa pines and small post-lightning-strike incense cedar thickets. Black oaks should have a good acorn crop starting to ripen and other fruits may be observed on post-bloom plants.

Please do not bring dogs on this walk. Though dogs are permitted on USFS trails, this field trip is for the attendees to enjoy the plant life. Return with your pet on another date and enjoy the trail together.

Before leaving home, please check the National Weather Service zone weather report at: http://forecast.weather.gov/MapClick.php?zoneid=CAZ058 .

If it is raining on the mountains, the trip will be postponed to Sunday, August 30.

Questions? Email fieldtrips@cnpssd.org up to 5 p.m. the day before. Day of trip, call 619-234-2668.

~ Kay Stewart, Field Trip Chair

BOARD MEETING

Wednesday, August 5, 6:30 – 9:00 p.m. 4010 Morena Blvd, Suite 100, San Diego (Thomas Guide 1248 C4). CNPS-SD Executive Board meetings are always the first Wednesday of the month, except when the 1st falls on a holiday. Members are welcome to attend as observers. If you wish to discuss an issue, please email president@cnpssd.org to get your issue on the agenda.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Ann Bowles
Joan Braunstein
Hollace Jones
Wendy MacLean
Anne Morris
Dan Weiss

TECOLOTE CANYON NATURAL PARK

August 2; 8 a.m. to noon. Meet at the Tecolote Nature Center on the first Sunday of the month. Wear sun protection and comfortable walking shoes; bring water. Rain at 8 a.m. cancels. Directions: exit I-5 at Seaworld/Tecolote exit. Go east (away from Mission Bay) on Tecolote, past the ball fields, along the driveway to the very end. Free and open to the public.

NATIVE GARDENING

Native Gardening Committee

August 12. Meets 2nd Wednesday of each month. Contact **Mike Gonzales** at gardening@cnpssd.org for info.

Seed and Bulb Work Group

The Seed and Bulb Work Group will meet at the following times and places (note new location) to clean, package and label seeds and bulbs for the CNPS-SD Fall Plant Sale:

Date: **Sunday, August 23, 2015**
Time: 9 a.m. - noon
Location: Tecolote Canyon Natural Park and Nature Center, 5180 Tecolote Road, San Diego, CA 92111

Date: **Sunday, September 20, 2015**
Time: 9 a.m. - noon
Location: Lakeside's River Park Conservancy, 12108 Industry Road, Lakeside, CA 92040

Date: **Sunday,October 4, 2015**
Time: 9 a.m. - noon
Location: Lakeside's River Park Conservancy, 12108 Industry Road, Lakeside, CA 92040

If you have any questions, please contact **Amy Huie** at akahuie@gmail.com . We welcome new volunteers and look forward to seeing you at a Seed and Bulb Work Group meeting!

Old Town Native Plant Landscape

Come Help Groom the Old Town Native Plant Landscape!

Saturday, August 8: Work Party - 1 to 3 p.m. Join others tending the plants in the Old Town Native Plant Landscape. The landscape is at the west end of Old Town State Historic Park, at the corner of Taylor and Congress Streets, opposite the trolley/train/bus depot. The landscape is full of native plants that grew in this area when the Spanish arrived in 1769 that have been used by Native American people for millennia.

If you come by transit, cross at Taylor Street, enter by the "Welcome to Old Town" sign and look for us under the trees. If you drive, park for free in the shady parking lot at California Dept. of Transportation (Caltrans) offices

on the other side of Taylor Street at Juan Street, and walk a block toward the transit depot.

Bring water, gloves, sun protection, and your favorite weeding tools, or borrow ours.

Questions? Email Kay at fieldtrips@cnpssd.org

~ **Kay Stewart**, Field Trip Chair

CONSERVATION

Conservation Committee

August 4. First Tuesday evening of each month. Contact **Frank Landis** at raresurvey@cnpssd.org for the location.

Cognitive Dissonance

This is something I brought up at the last general meeting, and in talking to some other people, I think it's worth exploring in greater depth.

The Reforestation Program at Cuyamaca Rancho State Park is the context, but the problem isn't limited to the park or the people who are running the program. Rather, it's about how we deal with native plants and with climate change. There's a fundamental conflict about how we deal with them together.

On the one hand, conservation and preservation are based on an idealized view of the past, on the idea that there is a thing called wilderness (there is, but it's probably not what you think it is), that what existed on a spot prior to us messing with things is what is supposed to be there, and our job is to preserve, conserve, or restore as much of that as possible.

What's wrong with this view is that it's eternal, atemporal. We know intellectually that climates and vegetation have changed, but our notion of what's proper is based on what we learned when we first became aware of wilderness. If you're at all like me, you feel that's the way things have always been and the way they're supposed to be, even though you may know better intellectually.

Climate change messes with this notion. It's based on a large amount of hard data that say, unequivocally, that things were very different in the past, on models that say the future will be very different. This is very much a temporal view. It is about eternal change, and it's scary for environmentalists, because it makes it harder for us to say what and how to preserve and conserve. Yes, I'll get back to this too.

When we turn to Cuyamaca, I see a lot of cognitive dissonance. Even though oaks, Coulter pines, and ceanothus did great after the 2003 fire, there's this idea that Jeffrey pines are supposed to be there. That's a very old-fashioned view. Then they got carbon sequestration money to plant those pines. Carbon sequestration is all about climate change. So they're dealing with a changing climate by installing a forest whose design is based explicitly on the past. When I pointed out that the trees they planted might not survive very long, they admitted that they were concerned about it too. They also admit they feel the cognitive dissonance of trying to do a very old-fashioned conservation program in the face of a changing climate that mocks their fundamental assumptions.

CNPS has this dissonance problem too. We're devoted to the preservation of California's native plants, which is an eternal view. Unfortunately, severe climate change poses an existential threat to the Mediterranean climate of the California Floristic Province, for fossil evidence from the last time the Earth was really warm (in the early Eocene), shows that there were rain forests in central Oregon, and climate models suggest that deserts will move north too (Southern California will be desert, Northern California will be tropical). Both of these are summer rainfall climatic regimes, not winter rainfall like we used to experience. Not every native plant species will go extinct if severe climate change happens, but many likely will. If we care about California's native plants, we very much need to help combat climate change.

On the other hand, most proposals for sequestering carbon involve planting huge numbers of trees (using industrial forestry models and methods) and spreading large amounts of compost on rangelands and farmlands (what that does to native plants is unknown). As a result, CNPS is forced to oppose some parts of climate change proposals, simply because they look like they'll kill many native plants.

We need to get our heads around climate change. We've made native plants central in drought-tolerant landscaping, and we need to find more ways to bring more native species into discussions about climate change, make them an answer rather than an irrelevancy.

Here are some ideas to help do it.

First, let's talk about what wild means. First, humans aren't separate from nature. Second, there are ways of calculating how fast evolution happens, and studies of artificial selection (what humans do to domesticated species) show that it's not faster than all natural selection. In either case, selection is about which organisms survive and which ones breed, whether

humans or something like a disease is doing the selecting. Artificial selection is fast, but there are examples of natural selection (the evolution of things like new diseases and resistant pests) that are equally fast if not faster. When humans are doing the "artificial" selecting, the species is coevolving with humans, just as it would coevolve with a new pollinator, pathogen, or predator.

In this context, I'd suggest wildness is what happens when species are not coevolving with humans, nothing more. That doesn't mean that humans aren't present, but it does mean we're doing little or nothing to control which wild individuals breed or survive. Ideally, in wilderness management we're working to make ourselves evolutionarily intangible.

This is a response to those who insist that, because Indians have lived in America for 14,000 years or more, there's no such thing as wilderness and we can do whatever we want, anywhere we want. Even before Columbus came along, the Indians weren't imposing anything like the level of selection pressure that modern managers want to impose. For example, when they grow pines in large nurseries and plant them out, there's a lot of selection pressure there. Only seedlings that survive the treatment and are inoculated with nursery ectomycorrhizae are planted out. They may well survive, but they aren't wild. Planting locally gathered seeds on the site would be more wild.

As for how to be a preservationist in a time of climate change, that's not as hard as it sounds. Basically, we don't know how much the climate will change or when, nor do we know how the vast majority of California native plant species will respond. Therefore, the best option is to try to save everything. We won't succeed, unfortunately, but in the absence of good evidence about which species won't survive, we're safest trying to save everything and letting climate sort them out. In the future, these species will grow in different areas, likely in different communities, with different pollinators, pathogens, and predators. That's life, and California's species survived similarly severe changes multiple times in each ice age. Survival is possible.

Speaking of which, California is thought to have so many species because it has a large number of refugia: mountains, canyons, and outcrops of unusual soils that allowed small populations of species to survive climate changes sweeping back and forth across the state. At the present, many of our refugia are in parks. If we left them wild, at most made it easier for plants to migrate into and out of these refugia, we'd make it easier for more wild species to survive climate change.

This is one reason why I'm not happy with using parks that contain refugia for carbon sequestration. Sequestration projects involve planting trees, making the area less wild, trying to choose climate winners and incidentally leaving a lot less room for anything else that needs that refugium to survive. Cuyamaca is a local refugium, and the reforestation program looks like it's going to impact its availability as a refuge for lowland and Mexican species.

I'm for carbon sequestration, just as I'm for solar power and wind power, but I don't think we should pave the world with any of them. There's a place for everything, and that definitely includes climate change refugia and wilderness. Still, we've got to get our heads around climate change if we're going to work for them.

~ **Frank Landis**, Conservation Chair

IN MEMORY OF BONNIE HOUGH

Bonnie Hough, leader of the Friends of Ruffin Canyon, passed away May 11, 2015. I asked some people who knew Bonnie to share about her. Eric Bowlby wrote that she served as leader for meetings and canyon stewardship events for over 13 years and attended her last work party for Ruffin Canyon on April 4, 2015. She was instrumental in getting Ruffin Canyon dedicated for permanent open space park land and she served on the City's Open Space/Canyons Advisory Committee from 2002 to 2014. She will be dearly missed, but her work to restore and preserve our canyons will serve Serra Mesa residents and San Diegans for generations.

Photo from the rim of Dove Canyon, Hillcrest. March 2002.

Carrie Schneider noted Bonnie was the model of the steadfast volunteer group leader, who persevered because of a fundamental belief in the good being accomplished. CNPS-SD gave her a plant grant in 2005 for

Ruffin Canyon and she supervised the acquisition and installation of those plants, not without some snafus. It's a rare person, though, who will take responsibility for getting it done regardless of snafus. We need dozens more like her.

I knew Bonnie from her good works for Ruffin Canyon and Taft Middle School but more so because of her love of books. She was always stopping by the book table at chapter meetings to see what new book I might have available. If you like that we now carry some books for younger people, you have Bonnie to thank for that. Bonnie was always persistent in asking for what she thought was needed. I learned at her memorial service that her persistence extended to the landscape crew at her church. Bonnie leaves behind her long term companion Steve Bryd and two daughters. She tried to instill her love of nature to her daughters.

Tom Leech wrote about Bonnie for the Serra Mesa Observer and the following are excerpts from his article:

> Mary Johnson: "Bonnie Hough has been the reason we have had the Friends of Ruffin Canyon. It has been her superior leadership and her dedication and passion for the environment that has kept the Friends an active successful community organization. Under her guidance, the Friends partnered with Taft Middle School, wrote grants, and in 2005 formed the Taft Service Club that created the adjacent Natural Habitat Garden." The Garden has many native plants, foot trails and a wooden footbridge to aid the care-taking process. The Friends work with many volunteers on monthly clean-ups, nature rejuvenations, and trail improvements at Ruffin Rd. and Shawn Ave. open spaces, plus the trail to the library from the SM Rec Center.
>
> Bonnie Hough is a long-time Serra Mesan, activist for various causes and a retired physician. Ruffin Friends member Monica Fuentes: "I first met Bonnie way back when she came to my door campaigning for a local candidate. She has literally changed our local landscape with her leadership and native plant promotions. It was her idea to develop the native Butterfly Garden at Taft."
>
> From Jason Allen, Sr. Park Ranger, City of San Diego: "Bonnie has been a great help at Ruffin Canyon. She loves the canyon and is very knowledgeable about the flora and fauna. She taught me a lot when I first started 10 years ago and has been a valuable resource. She has done great things with the after-school kids groups and has created or enhanced a passion for nature in many of the kids."

To honor Bonnie, attend a canyon work party or help a local school set up a native landscape or some type of learning program with their local habitat or follow her example and make a project happen.

~ **Cindy Burrascano**, Board Member

RECEIVE YOUR NEWSLETTER O N L I N E

To receive your newsletter via email, please contact us at:
enewsletter@cnpssd.org
If your email address has changed from what we have on record, please let us know.

NATIVE PLANT SPOTLIGHT

Populus fremontii
(Fremont cottonwood)

San Diego County, existing in the southwest, is not known for a high number of native deciduous trees, especially not near the coast. The exceptions are the riparian species, and one of the most striking trees that does naturally occur here is the Fremont Cottonwood (*Populus fremontii*).

Populus fremontii is a beautiful tree with a rounded form, and rounded branches that are bright green during the spring and summer. The leaves are bright green, somewhat rounded and heart-shaped with fine scalloped edges. The leaves shimmer in the wind and create a rustling sound when a breeze blows. During late fall and early winter, depending on which part of the County you are looking, the leaves turn **a** yellow color before becoming brown and falling from the trees. Some seasons when the nights are cool or cold and the days are

still somewhat warm, the yellow coloration can be quite striking. During winter, the trees are leafless.

The overall range of *Populus fremontii* is from Texas, New Mexico, Nevada, Utah, Arizona and California, as well as northern Mexico. It occurs throughout California (Taylor 2000).

Populus fremontii range map. (map from en.wikipedia.org)

In San Diego County, *Populus fremontii* grows where the groundwater table is shallow in all of the major stream courses and canyon bottoms as well as drainages in the mountains, and the western part of the desert. Cottonwoods in Mission Valley even across from Old Town, and along the Sweetwater River create nice patches of color near the urban portions of San Diego County.

However, the trees are the most picturesque when they grow in otherwise barren desert canyons such as Oriflamme Canyon. Other areas where their fall color is notable includes the riparian woodland around Warner Springs and Buckman Springs where the trees appear to grow out in the grasslands. Of particular note is a population at Morettis Junction, where Highway 79 and 76 come together south of Lake Henshaw. There, a cluster of cottonwoods grows at the edge of a large grassland. However, every year as this grove ages and cattle graze the area heavily so no reproduction takes places, more and more branches fall from the trees and occasionally entire trees fall and are not to be replaced.

The tallest known Fremont cottonwood is 112 feet and the oldest is 130 years (Taylor 2000). The largest Fremont cottonwoods or any cottonwood that I have seen approached four feet in diameter at Indian Gardens on the Bright Angel Trail in the Grand Canyon. The trees there grow at the edge of a spring fed stream. Cottonwood reproduction may occur through root suckering where a young tree sprouts adjacent to another tree as part of a clone, or by seed. Large crops of seeds are released in early spring with each seed supporting a cottony tuft that allows them to float on the air for long distances. Anyone who has been near cottonwood trees during the release of the seeds will understand why they are called cottonwood because they can be quite prolific in the generation of the cottony seeds blowing in the wind. The seeds are short lived and are viable for only 1-5 weeks or less, even just a few days if the seeds become wet. They need to land on moist, exposed soil in order to germinate and grow.

The Genus *Populus* is first known in the fossil record from the Eocene (40 million years ago) while some members of the genus are younger than others. Hybrids are known and *Populus fremontii* will hybridize with *Populus angustifolia* (narrow leaved cottonwood; DiFazio et al. 2011). It is, however, in a different section of the genus from *Populus trichocarpa* (Black cottonwood), which also occurs in San Diego County. Hybrids have also been known to occur between these two, but not where the species overlap in California. *Populus trichocarpa* occurs in cool, moist canyons and is a more northern oriented species. Its major center of distribution is the Pacific Northwest and western Canada to Alaska. In San Diego County, it is found in the northwestern canyons, the Santa Margarita River and parts of the San Luis Rey River.

Populus fremontii is susceptible to burning. I have seen trees consumed in fires even though they are typically moist and grow in moist locations. However, the normal mode of reproduction following a fire is resprouting from a root base. If the adult trees in a location have been burned, they would not be able to generate seed. Seed would have to float in from somewhere else, potentially from a significant distance away. For that reason, resprouting is the most viable means for reproduction following a fire.

Populus fremontii has a historic place in the history of the west. They historically grew in river valleys traversed by the early explorers and settlers, and large animals such as grizzly bears may have been encountered within groves of the trees. *Populus fremontii* grows around the historic Mission Dam in the San Diego River and as mentioned, near San Diego's Old Town. It is sometimes referred to by the Spanish name, Alamo. The Alamo is a name that was applied to Mission San Antonio de Valero in Texas, the site of a famous battle for independence (Young and Tari 2007). However, it is not clear why that old mission began to be referred to as the Alamo, even though a row of *Populus* trees did apparently grow nearby.

The wood from *Populus fremontii* is light weight and lightly colored. However, it is relatively soft and weak. It is harvested in some locations for boxes and pallets and firewood.

There are several different variants of names that were used by the Kumeyaay for *Populus fremontii*. They included ja'a, jei'aa, h'á and jalampuulaamp (Wilken, 2011). They were used for a variety of purposes including using soft parts of bark for the construction of skirts as

clothing. The branches of the trees were used as construction material for framework for their houses. The leaves were also used as infusion treatments for sprains and bruises. As a more modern use, the wood was burned and the ash from the bark was mixed with corn meal used for the production of tortillas.

Populus fremontii is a fine example of a deciduous tree in coastal and central San Diego County. It is always interesting to me to look for them as I drive by urban canyons and on rural roads. Each cottonwood tree is a pleasant surprise in the landscape providing brightness, color and history to the region.

~ **Tom Oberbauer**, Board Member

DiFazio SP, Slavov GT, Joshi CP (2011) Populus: A premier pioneer system for plant genomics. In: Joshi C, Difazio SP, Kole C, editors. Genetics, genomics and breeding of poplar. Enfield, NH: Science Publishers. pp. 1–28.

Taylor, J. I. 2000. Populus fremontii. In: Fire Effects Information System, [on line], U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service, Rocky Mountain Research Station, Fire Science Laboratory (Producer) Available http://www.fs.fed.us/database/feis [2015, July 2].

Wilken, M. A. 2012. An Ethnobotany of Baja California's Kumeyaay Indians. Unpublished Master's Thesis, SDSU. 177p. sdsu-dspace.calstate.edu/bitstream/handle/10211.../Wilken_Michael.pdf?...

Young, K.R. and R. Tari. 2007. How the Alamo got its name. www.tamu.edu/f period/valero/valeroname.html.

RELATED ACTIVITIES

MSCP Annual Workshop

Tuesday, August 11, 2015
9:00 a.m. to Noon

The San Diego Multiple Species Conservation Program (MSCP) Annual Workshop will focus on the County of San Diego's, the City of San Diego's and the City of Chula Vista's 2014 accomplishments, including habitat acquisitions, management and monitoring. The workshop will also include presentations on regional land management and monitoring efforts. The workshop provides an opportunity for the public (everyone is invited) and interested parties to learn more about unique habitats in the San Diego region and the role of the MSCP in preserving open space. Members of the public and other interested parties are invited to attend.

LOCATION: County of San Diego Operations Center, Conference Center Hearing Room, 5520 Overland Ave., San Diego, CA 92123.

Point Loma Native Plant Garden

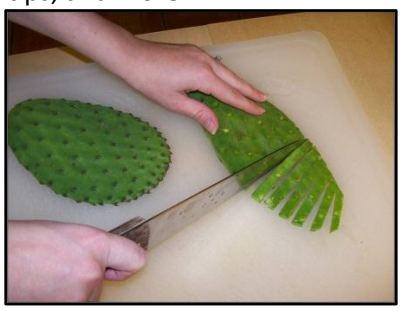
August 1 & 16, 9 – noon. Work Party. Usually the first Saturday and third Sunday of each month. Contact: Richard@sandiegoriver.org for more info.

24th Annual Cal-IPC Symposium

San Diego Convention Center
October 28-31, 2015
plus a special conference on:
Habitat Conservation Planning
October 29, 2015
http://www.cal-ipc.org/symposia/index.php

Rancho Santa Ana Botanic Garden

This first California Native Food Symposium on Saturday, **November 14, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. & Sunday, 15, 2015, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.** will feature traditional & modern recipes, preparation tips, and more.



See http://rsabg.org/garden-events/1055-native-food-symposium or https://canativefood.wordpress.com for speakers, schedule, and registration information.

The CNPS-SD Newsletter is generally published 12 times a year. The newsletter is not peer reviewed and any opinions expressed are those of the author identified at the end of each notice or article. The newsletter editor may edit the submittal to improve accuracy, improve readability, shorten articles to fit the space, and reduce the potential for legal challenges against CNPS. If an article, as edited, is not satisfactory to the author, the author can appeal to the board. The author has the final say on whether the article, as edited, is printed in the newsletter. Submissions are due by the 10th of the month preceding the newsletter; that is, August 10 for the September newsletter, etc. Please submit items to newsletter@cnpssd.org .

CNPS-SD Activities Calendar August 2015

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

___Student or Limited Income $25; ___Individual $45; ___Family $75

___Plant Lover $100; ___Patron $300; ___Benefactor $600; ___Mariposa Lily $1,500

Name(s): _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____ e-mail: _____

Mail check payable to "CNPS" and send to: CNPS, 2707 K Street, Ste 1, Sacramento, CA 95816-5113.

CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

San Diego Chapter

C/o San Diego Natural History Museum

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August 2015 Newsletter

Dedicated to the preservation of the California native flora

CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY – SAN DIEGO

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