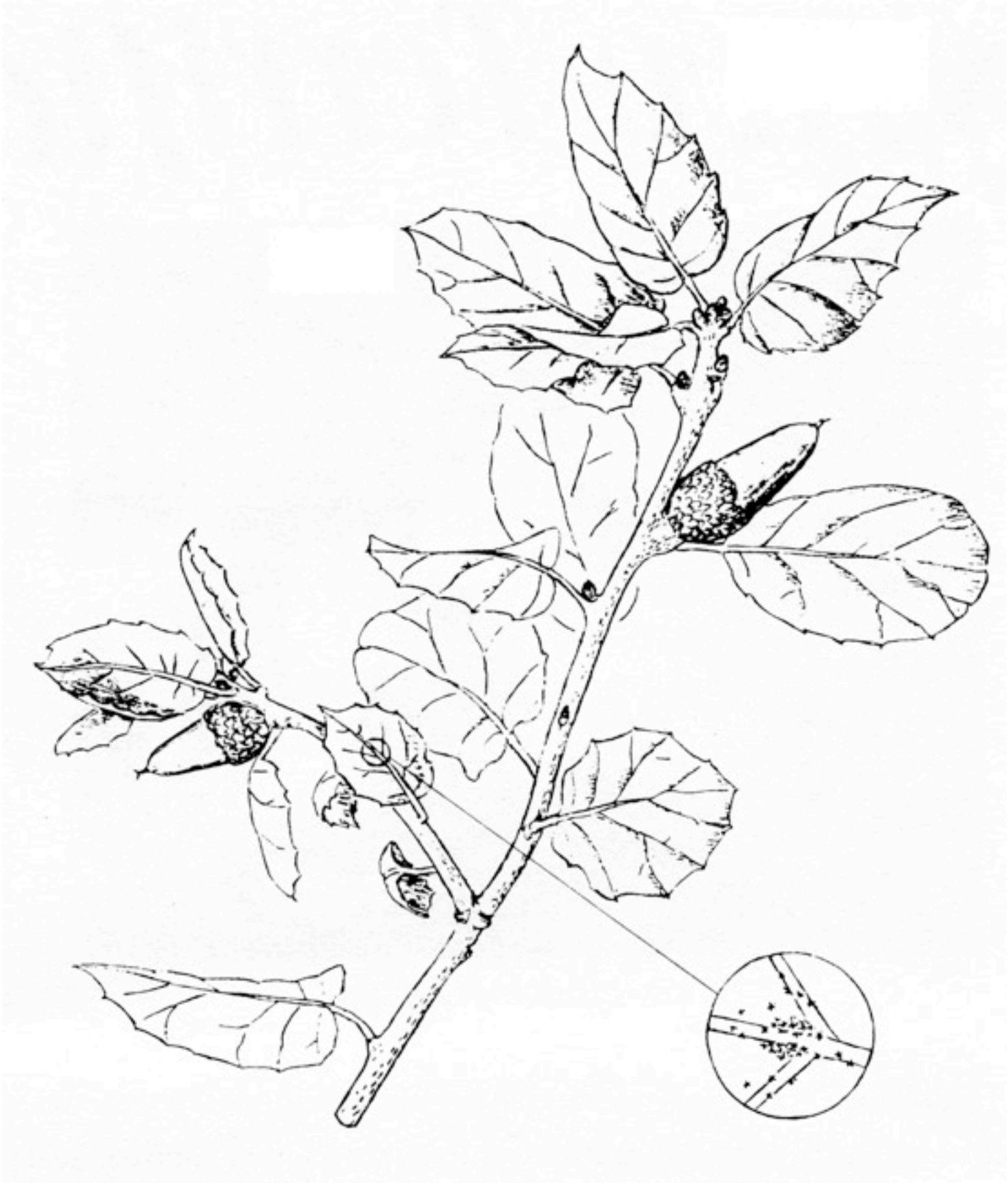


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# *Obispoensis*

Newsletter of the San Luis Obispo Chapter of the California Native Plant Society

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March 2017

## Coast Live Oak (cover by Bonnie Walters)

Oaks have been in the news a lot recently. Essentially all of it has been bad from the Oak's point of view. First, there was the clearing of valley (Quercus lobata) and blue (Q. douglasii) oaks in the Paso Robles area. and then the spread of Sudden Oak Death (SOD) into our county. The notes along with Bonnie's drawing were the Obispoensis cover back in 1998. Does anyone remember them? You might notice that Bonnie's drawing is not as crisp as usual. This is because we were experimenting. For many years now, the pencil sketches Bonnie makes of the plants in preparation for the final inking had intrigued me. Of course they are looser and maybe even a bit sketchy. But, they have a charm all their own. Up until then, these sketches could not be used because the duplication process we used for our newsletters simply did not have the sensitivity to pick up the subtle detail of a pencil sketch. We thought they did by then.

Why is it that people always tend to go elsewhere to find something interesting and/or exciting. I had done a "plant of the issue" for the Obispoensis for a very long time. But, I've never written about the most common tree in the whole of coastal San Luis Obispo County. Many of you will probably already know it from Bonnie's picture. It is our common coast live oak (Quercus agrifolia). The early Spanish settlers in Southern California called this species, Encino after a similar oak native to Spain.

Donald Peattie in his 1953 book entitled, A Natural History of Western Trees, states, "in our own time the Coast Live Oak is the American tree best known around the world". He makes this claim because it is the tree that is also the most common native tree in and around Hollywood, California. Thus it would be seen as a backdrop in all those outside shots in all those movies, especially 'western' movies done in Southern California. It is also a very picturesque tree. It is not that tall (rarely over 50 feet; the record is 75 feet), but it tends to be very wide, (up to 120 feet in diameter). It tends to branch from the base creating a number of horizontal trunks, which then bend up toward their tips. Each branch trunk can produce huge girths. In coastal habitats, such as our coastal dunes, the species tends to take on a more shrubby form. Leaves and branches are mostly out away from the center, so that if one can get inside the canopy, one finds a large empty, room-like center.

The tree's leaves are evergreen and minutely hairy all over when young. As the leaves get older, they gradually lose the hairs over the approximately 2 year live span of its leaves. A character that is often cited as the one to use when identifying this species of oak is the "hairy armpits". The 'armpits' in this case are the angles between the midrib and the primary lateral veins of the leaf. In this spot, the fragile hairs are protected, and thus tend to remain longer than the hairs on the top of the veins and on the flat areas of

the leaf. Thus the leaves of intermediate age will tend to have what appears to be a small tuft of hairs in these vein angles or "arm pits". As we discovered while collecting specimens to draw, don't look at the youngest leaves; they're sort of hairy all over, and don't look at the very old leaves, they are essentially devoid of hairs (glabrous) everywhere. Besides being variable as to hairiness, coast live oak leaves are also extremely variable in size and shape from tree to tree and even from different parts of the same tree. Leaves on the shady north side or from within the canopy tend to be much larger than leaves on the exposed outside of the tree, especially from the hot south side. I once had one group of students collect randomly 25 leaves from the north side of a single coast live oak while a second group collected leaves from the south side of this same tree. We then measured the length of all the leaves and calculated their averages. We then did a simple statistical test to determine what was the chance that these two sets of leaves were representative of the same population or group. The statistical test indicated that there was much less than 1 in 100 chance that the two samples represented the same group. This means, that if we had not known the circumstances of their collection, we might reasonably conclude that the two samples had come from different trees or even different species of trees.

Coast live oaks are members of the black oak group which means they mature acorns every two years and they have the ends of their leaf veins protruding beyond the leaf margin to form harsh bristles. Other black oaks, with which you might be familiar, include the Sierra black oak (Quercus kelloggii), and the interior live oak (Quercus wislizenii). Black oaks tend to produce more tanins in their acorns than do other groups of oaks, e.g. the white oaks which include the valley oak (Quercus lobata), canyon live oak (Quercus chrysolepis) and the blue oak (Quercus douglasii). Tanins are complex compounds that are very bitter to the taste and tend to create extreme digestive blockage in animals that eat it, especially insects. Tanins are water soluble and can be leached out of a batch of pulverized acorns. Native Californians would put the pulverized acorn meal into their spectacularly tight baskets and then place the baskets in a stream and let the stream leach out the tanins. I doubt if we could find a stream clean enough to do this today, or would want to incur the expense of using tap water to leach them. Yes, I think acorn meal is something we can only read about and not actually experience. Besides, many of our local native mammals, such as deer & ground squirrels, depend on acorns as a major food source. Of course, at least one acorn out of the thousands produced by a single tree has to germinate and avoid being eaten long to produce the next generation of acorns. Like many of California oaks, the coast live oak is having a harder and harder time doing just that.

Dirk Walters

# CHAPTER MEETING

March 2, 2017- Thursday - 7pm

OAK WORKSHOP 6pm

Atascadero Library



## Richard Standiford

Richard is responsible for developing a program focused on sound management of California's forests, rangelands, and other natural resources utilizing education, outreach, research, and a broad spectrum of working relationships. He provides leadership to county Cooperative Extension programs in development of forestry programs and conservation of oak woodlands. The clientele includes professional foresters and natural resource managers, forest and rangeland organizations, owners and managers, policy makers, and individuals concerned with natural resource management.

**THIS IS OUR ANNUAL NORTH COUNTY MEETING**

*Obispoensis* is published October through June except January. Items for submittal to *Obispoensis* should be sent to [dchippin@calpoly.edu](mailto:dchippin@calpoly.edu). The deadline is the 10th of each month. Botanical articles, news items, illustrations, photos, events and tidbits are welcome! Visit the websites [www.cnps.org](http://www.cnps.org) and [www.cnpsslo.org](http://www.cnpsslo.org)

### MEMBERSHIP CORNER

It's time for another round of applause for our new and renewing members. We have a number of people to thank this month:

Grace Crittenden  
Nancy & Ron Farrell-Rose  
Robert Hotaling  
Elizabeth Johnson  
Charlotte Kelley  
Peter Kinkade  
Steve & Marilyn Mullaney

John Nowak  
Joan O'Keefe  
John Schmitz  
Paul Townsend  
Donald Waller  
Peter Worley

It's going to be a challenging time in the legislative arena, at least at the local and federal levels, in 2017. We're going to need to work with our parent organization to mount a strong defense against federal actions that would weaken protections for native plants, such as allowing energy extraction in national parks, giving away our public lands or defunding agencies and programs that protect our native flora. We will also need to be active on a local level to push through protections for oak woodlands, slow the spread of Sudden Oak Death in the County and oppose ill-conceived development projects that would obliterate rare plants. We're glad to have you standing with us.

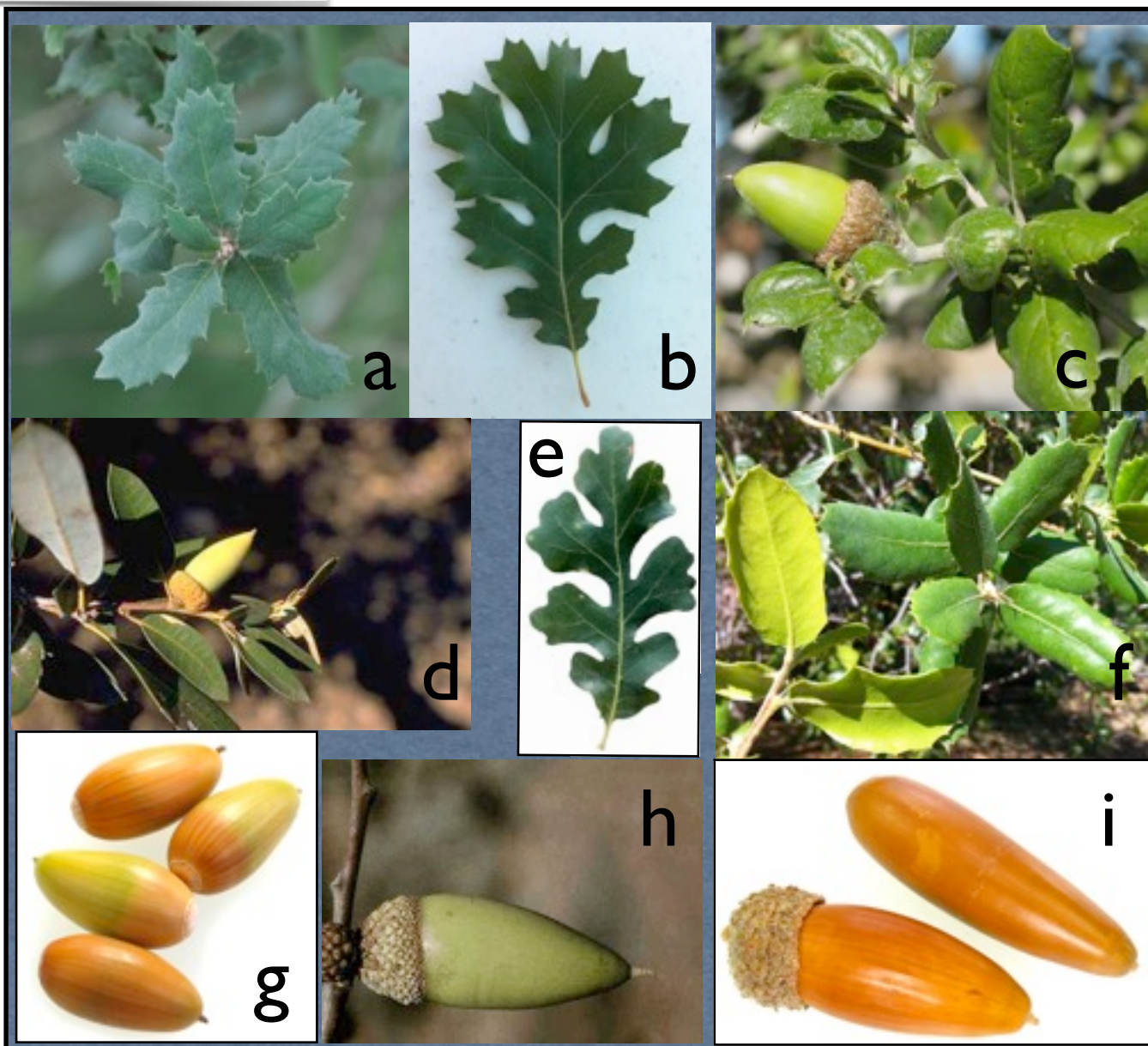
Holly Slettland ([hslettel@calpoly.edu](mailto:hslettel@calpoly.edu))



### Take The Oak ID Test on the Five Oaks Covered by the Draft Oak Ordinance

These are, in alphabetical order, Blue Oak, Black Oak, Coast Live Oak, Interior Live Oak, and Valley Oak

**Answers**  
(a) Blue Oak (b) Black Oak (c) Coast Live Oak (d) Interior Live Oak (e) Valley Oak (f) Interior Live Oak (g) Coast Live Oak (h) Blue Oak (i) Valley Oak





**CONSERVATION: PERMANENT OAK ORDINANCE  
TO PLANNING COMMISSION, THURSDAY,  
FEBRUARY 23 (Item PLC 14/2017)**

A LITTLE HISTORY, When Justin Wineries clear cut oak woodlands near Adelaida, public outcry resulted in the creation of a Emergency Ordinance to prevent clear cutting of oak. County staff were instructed to come up with permanent ordinance, and the first hearing of this will be at the Planning Commission, Feb. 23. It would move to the Board of Supervisors, probably sometime in April. There has been a change in the Board of Supervisors, which has taken an anti-regulation tilt, and the Planning Commission needs to be told that we really need some sort of oak protection on place. If you can, please attend this meeting, or at least write the Planning Commission in support of an ordinance. Here follows the two main clauses in the ordinance, which covers 5 species of oaks. **We have no idea if the current language will be the version brought to the Commission, which won't be published for public eyes until much closer to the meeting. Please seek it out at <http://www.slocounty.ca.gov/planning/meetings.htm>**

**22.58.050 – Permit Requirements**

A. Clear-cutting of one to three acres of Oak Woodland. Minor Use Permit approval is required to clear-cut between one (1) and three (3) acres of a Site's Oak Woodland over a ten year period. Clear-cutting shall be cumulative where clear-cutting may not exceed the maximum allowable by this section during one event or multiple events occurring over a ten year period.

B. Clear-cutting of more than three acres of Oak Woodland. Conditional Use Permit approval is required to clear-cut more than three (3) acres of a Site's Oak Woodland over a ten year period. Clear-cutting shall be cumulative where the clear-cutting may not exceed the permitted amount during one event or multiple events occurring over a ten year period.

**22.58.070 – Oak Woodland Management Plan**

An Oak Woodland Management Plan may be used to allow clear-cutting of Oak Woodland. Plans shall be administered by the landowner or land manager. The cumulative amount of clear-cutting allowed in an Oak Woodland Management Plan, as defined by this ordinance, shall not exceed 5 percent of a Site's total Oak Woodland Canopy, or result in the conversion of the Oak Woodland for an allowed use as identified in Table 2-2, without an approved land use permit pursuant to Section 22.58.050.



Before-and-after Google Earth pictures of oak clearances in the Adelaida area. This clearance took place earlier than the infamous Justin Vineyards event that generated the recent public outcry, Jomo Kincade, New Times, created the montage

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**Invasive Species of the Month  
Spiny emex (*Emex spinosa*)**

Spiny emex is in the Buckwheat family (*Polygonaceae*) and is an up and coming invasive species in California's south coast. It's from the Mediterranean region of Africa infesting disturbed areas especially coastal areas with sandy soils. Spiny emex spreads rapidly crowding out native species. It has simple lime green or yellowish bronze leaves which looks like dock (which is relative) or spinach. The plant is usually two to twelve inches in diameter and produces seeds with a hard, prickly casing and spines that project from the corners. It is easy to dig out of the ground with a fork. Older plant with lots of seeds can easily shred plastic bags. Handle gingerly with tough gloves. For large monotypic infestations Telar is an effective herbicide.

Mark Skinner ([mkskinner@coastalrccd.org](mailto:mkskinner@coastalrccd.org))



photo Mark Skinner



## President's Notes – March 2017 Obispoensis

At CNPS, we are involved in our communities!! Here are a good few examples. (Make sure to link to our calendar for the latest updates at [www.CNPSSLO.org/calendar](http://www.CNPSSLO.org/calendar).)

CNPS volunteers participated in the Los Osos Middle School landscape planting day, in mid-January. All 7th and 8th Grade science classes took turns pulling weeds, preparing soil, and transplanting CA native plants into the landscape they had prepared at the school. The very significant thing about this ongoing project is that the plants used in this exercise were all started by the students from seed and then propagated to mature, one gallon plants in the school's garden greenhouses. John Chesnut and Susi Bernstein are the masterminds of this work, along with the two dynamic science teachers, Mrs. Stoneman and Mr. Hopkins. There is interest to spread this hands-on learning to other schools in the county, so stay tuned!

Forty-five volunteers participated in the SLO Creek restoration workday at the Mission Plaza in San Luis Obispo in late January. Invasive weeds were removed and CA native plants were added to slopes on either side of the creek. This is an on-going project with the goal of returning this riparian corridor to its once majestic splendor. The next workday will be Sunday, Feb. 26th at 10:00 am.

Over two hundred volunteers spent the morning working on the trails of Montaña de Oro State Park, recently during Super Bowl Sunday. This work has become a tradition on this Sunday, sponsored by the Central Coast Concerned Mountain Bikers (CCCMB). People came to clear trails, open up drains and water bars, and set things right for the next six months. Trails change and need re-work throughout the year. Through the efforts of CCCMB, CNPS and other user groups, we all give some love back to the community on these workdays, to support the extensive network of trails available to us in this county. We are fortunate to have a strong trail alliance that maintains this critical means of access into the back country for all trail users!

On a Saturday in mid-February, 25 passionate botanists met at Cal Poly Canyon to hunt for bryophytes, the small, non-vascular plants such as mosses and liverworts growing in damp places. With the good rainfall we have received in San Luis Obispo this year, the outing was successful in finding more than 20 species. During the walk, samples were collected for viewing under magnification in the botany lab at the end of the outing. We are grateful to Paul Wilson and Joe Flynn for preparing the field trip so that we neophytes could get a solid grasp of these tiny, nearly microscopic plants. This is where the phenomenon of “belly botany” is often performed and where an appreciation for the diminutive plant world really comes to light!



Students at Los Osos Middle School listening to John Chesnut discuss planting technique.



Volunteers at the SLO Creek restoration workday at the Mission Plaza.



Volunteers receiving instructions before being deployed to work on trails at Montaña de Oro State Park.



Bryophyte enthusiasts combing the hillside for mosses and liverworts in the verdant landscape.

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## Report on the 2017 Annual Banquet and Awards

This year we were delighted to hear an excellent presentation by Dr. Glen Holstein, Chapter Botanist for the Sacramento Valley Chapter of CNPS. In his talk, Rediscovering and Conserving California's Prairie Landscapes, Glen spoke of how California's grassland landscapes in the Central Valley are actually heavily dominated by native wildflower species as opposed to perennial grass species. Glen went through some of the history behind the definitions of grasslands in California and elsewhere, noting that Munz' 1959 "Valley Grassland," and "Coastal Prairie" were really the first detailed definitions put forward for these areas in California. He spoke of John Muir's travels across the central valley in 1868 on his way to his beloved Yosemite, and Mr. Muir's noting of the abundance of wildflowers and lack of grasses. However, somewhere along the way, these valley grassland areas became "non-native grasslands." Glen described how calling these areas "Non-native grasslands" due to the lack of native grass species really does them a disservice. He noted Richard Minnich's book entitled "California's Fading

Wildflowers," and how that author too, makes the case for wildflowers as dominants in the plant communities of the Central Valley. And, he spent quite a bit of time discussing our own Carrizo Plain!

Glen's writings about wildflowers and his excellent photographs can be found in the CNPS Journal Fremontia, specifically the May and September 2011 issue focusing on California's Prairies and Grasslands.

So, let's start calling our high-quality native grasslands California prairies! (Note that Holland and Keil's 1995 book "California Vegetation" describes the Arroyo de la Cruz area in San Luis Obispo County as "coastal prairie," or a "northern coastal grassland community.")

### Hoover Award To Bill Waycott

Neil Havlik presented this year's Hoover award to Bill Waycott, our President, for his noteworthy contributions to CNPS, both the local chapter and the statewide organization. Neil told stories of Bill dating back to their shared time at UC Santa Barbara, and, Neil shared his unique story of their reconnection right here in San Luis Obispo after several years. We thank you Bill, and Congratulations to you!

Prior Hoover award recipients select the recipient of this award based on their accomplishments in education, conservation, and chapter support. The award is named for Dr. Robert Hoover, a Cal Poly professor of botany. Recent awardees include: Neil Havlik (2015), Judi Young (2014), and Suzette Girouard (2013).

### Community Award To One Cool Earth

John Chesnut presented a Community Award to One Cool Earth, represented by Executive Director Greg Ellis. Recipients of the Community Award are selected because of the significant contribution they've made toward promoting native plants outside of the CNPS organization. The Sinton Family was the first recipient of this award in the 1970s, honored for the family's generous allowance of public access to Shell Creek for wildflower viewing.

### Other Special Acknowledgement To Allie Watts

A special recognition was also given at this year's banquet to Allie Watts. For the past couple of years, Allie has been the team leader for Region II District D of the Watershed Stewards Program (WSP), part of the California Conservation Corps, in collaboration with the City of San Luis Obispo. Allie has been the key organizer for the SLO Creek restoration project at the Mission Plaza in San Luis Obispo. She recently termed out of her position at WSP, and has continued to coordinate the project in a volunteer capacity. Allie has worked hand in hand with CNPS to procure the native plants and organize volunteers for several workdays at the Plaza. Her enthusiasm and many hours of work have kept this project going for the past year and a half. Congratulations Allie! You can learn more about WSP at: <http://www.ccc.ca.gov/go/wsp>. \_



Glen Holstein: Photo by Marlin Harms



Bill (left) receives award from Neil  
Photo: Marlin Harms



Greg Ellis from One Cool Earth  
Photo: Marlin Harms



Allie Watts and Bill  
Photo: Marlin Harms



**Saturday 4 March 2017 9 AM, Late Winter BMC Chaparral CNPS Fieldtrip at the La Purisima Mission:** The California Native Plant Society (CNPS)/ Lompoc Valley Botanic and Horticultural Society (LVBHS) will hold their annual winter fieldtrip to the Burton Mesa Chaparral (BMC) on the La Purisima Mission grounds Saturday the 4th. Meet at the east end of Burton Mesa Blvd.(1550 E) in Mission Hills at 9 AM for a chance to see the early bloomers and interesting scenery. To reach Burton Mesa Blvd., Get to SR 1 north of Lompoc. At the signal where SR 1 turns down hill towards Lompoc, take Harris Grade Rd. north to Burton Mesa Blvd., and turn right (east). For more information call Charlie Blair at 733-3189.

**Sunday, March 19, 2017, 1:00 pm, Reservoir Canyon Wildflower Hike with Jenn Yost and Matt Ritter of Cal Poly.** Come explore the hills of Reservoir canyon on the strenuous loop hike to the summit and along this ridge of serpentine derived soils. Bring water, snacks, sunscreen, sturdy shoes, layered clothing for warmth as needed, hiking poles if desired, and the desire to learn new things with great views of the Morros, SLO, and the surrounding valleys. This hike may be strenuous for those who do not regularly walk for exercise. Total length: 5.2 miles, total elevation gain 1,000 ft. Meet at the Reservoir Canyon Trailhead off Highway 101. Call (805) 781-7302 for more information. (This field trip is sponsored by the City of SLO Ranger Service)

**Sunday March 19, 2017 2-4 PM LVBHS Program at Valley of the Flowers UCC Church:** The Importance of Collecting and Preserving Plant Specimens in the Herbarium. Please bring in a plant or flower that has a special meaning or even just tell us about such a plant or flower. The public is invited at no charge. The Church is at the corner of Constellation Rd and Jupiter St. (3346 Constellation Rd) For details, contact Charlie Blair 733-3189.

**Date Being Finalized Mid-March, 2017, 8:45 am, Coreopsis Hill (in the Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes).** This is a casual walk through the dunes to the top of Coreopsis Hill (one of the northern most populations of this amazing plant, *Leptosyne gigantea*). This is a moderate hike, about 3 hours round-trip. Dress in layers, bring water and snacks, and have your “Dune Mother’s Wildflower Guide” (copies will be for sale at the beginning of the walk). Long pants and closed shoes are recommended as the habitat is coastal dune scrub and there is the possibility of poison oak and ticks in the natural dune. To reach the trailhead, turn west on Oso Flaco Lake Road, off of Hwy 1 and proceed west 2.5 miles to Beigle Road. DETAILS LATER-SEE WEB SITE

**Saturday, April 1, 2017, 8:00 am, Malcolm McLeod Annual Field Trip Meeting at Carrizo Plain.** Join us to explore and appreciate the remarkable and unique display of annual and perennial spring wildflowers in eastern San Luis Obispo County. This could be the BIG YEAR in this giant swath of undisturbed California Prairie. Remember, this is a remote area, so make sure you have plenty of gas, water, as well as food. Meet at the Santa Margarita park-and-ride (freeway exit, State Route 58 at Hwy 101) at 8:00 am. We will caravan from there with a brief stop at Shell Creek. You may be able to carpool with someone, so it is recommended to arrange your ride ahead of time, or jump in with others at the meeting place. Be sure to wear sturdy shoes, bring sunscreen, a hat, and layered clothing for warmth, as needed. For more information contact: George Butterworth, (805) 438-3641, [gbutterworth8@gmail.com](mailto:gbutterworth8@gmail.com) or Bill Waycott, (805) 459-2103, [bill.waycott@gmail.com](mailto:bill.waycott@gmail.com). Rain cancels.

**Sunday 2 April 2017 9 AM, CNPS, LVBHS, and Sierra Club Spring La Purisima Burton Mesa Wildflower Walk:** Meet at the La Purisima Mission Parking Lot, corner of Purisima and Mission Gate Rds. (2295 Purisima Rd. Lompoc) at 9 AM for this annual California Native Plant Society and Sierra Club spring tour of the beauties of the Burton Mesa Chaparral. This should be a great year for wildflowers, annuals as well as shrubs; Optional afternoon tour. Sturdy shoes, lunch & liquids, camera and binoculars advised. For more information, call Charlie at 733-3189

**Saturday, April 8, 2017, 9:00 am, Pecho Ranch, (PG&E property) near Montaña de Oro State Park.** This is an RSVP only field trip open to 40 CNPS members. Details will be available in the April *Obispoensis* and via e-mail announcements. To place your name on the list, contact Bill Waycott, (805) 459-2103, [bill.waycott@gmail.com](mailto:bill.waycott@gmail.com).

**Sunday, April 9, 2017, 9:00 am, Wind Wolves Preserve,** 16019 Maricopa Highway (State Route 166), between Maricopa, CA and Interstate 5. Join us for a daylong visit to Wind Wolves Preserve, part of the Wildlands Conservancy, located on the north slope of the Transverse Ranges, east of Maricopa, CA. This area has spectacular open spaces with carpets of wildflowers that stretch up into pine forests. We will meet outside the administration building at 9:00 am. Be sure to bring water, food, sturdy shoes, sunscreen, a hat, and layered clothing for warmth, as needed. Carpooling is available. RSVP if you plan to participate: Bill Waycott, (805) 459-2103, [bill.waycott@gmail.com](mailto:bill.waycott@gmail.com). Rain cancels.

**Editor’s Note:** Readers of the paper version of *Obispoensis* will miss the color photos that you can see in our downloadable web site version.

*Dedicated to the Preservation of the California Native Flora*

The California Native Plant Society is a statewide non-profit organization of amateurs and professionals with a common interest in California's 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 journal, *Fremontia*, the quarterly Bulletin, which gives statewide news and announcements of the activities and conservation issues, and the chapter newsletter, *Obispoensis*.



*San Luis Obispo Chapter of the  
California Native Plant Society*  
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