Spring Field Trips

Stevens Trail
Earth Day Wildflower Hike

April 22 (Saturday)—Meet at the Rood Center at 8:00 AM or at the trailhead at 8:45 AM

The historic Stevens trail follows a road that went from Colfax to Iowa Hill. The North Fork of the American River is about 4 miles from the trailhead parking area. Some portions of this moderately strenuous trail are rocky, narrow, and steep. The long uphill grade coming out is shaded by the mixed conifer forest for half of the distance. The rewards for your climbing effort will be dramatic views of the river canyon and a fantastic array of wildflowers, shrubs, trees, and ferns all along the trail. This is NOT an easy hike, although you are welcome to walk with the group as far as you wish and then turn around or wait for the group to return. We will aim for being back at our cars by 4:00 PM.

We will meet at Rood Center for carpooling. If you wish to meet us at the trailhead, follow I-80 East towards the town of Colfax and exit at North Canyon Way. Travel along North Canyon Way, paralleling I-80, past the Colfax cemetery to the Stevens trailhead.

. . . more field trips on next page

Evening Programs

Pollinators and the Pollinated

June 23 (Wednesday) at 7:00 PM

Redbud Chapter Board member Karen Wiese has a passion for pollination biology, which she will share with us in this evening presentation. Karen’s talk will focus on ten different pollinators, ranging from ants to bats, and the strategies plants use to lure their pollinators. She will also discuss plants that attract pollinators to the home garden.

Guaranteed to make you look at plants in a different light! Suitable for ages 6 and older. The talk will take about 90 minutes, including time for questions.

Karen Wiese, botanist, is currently employed by the Tahoe National Forest, is an avid gardener and hiker who enjoys all things in nature.

This event takes place at the Madelyn Helling Library Community Room in Nevada City. See page 3 for directions and map.

Election of Officers

At our June 23 general meeting, we will have an election to fill three officer positions. People have volunteered to run for Secretary and Vice President, but we are still looking for someone to run for Treasurer. If you wish to volunteer to be Treasurer, please contact Bill at 530-265-8040 or Roger at 530-265-4173.

Save the Date

Spring Plant Sale
Saturday, May 1
See page 7 for more details
Field trips (continued)

Edward’s Crossing
Wildflower Walk
May 17 (Monday)—Meet at the Rood Center at 10:00 AM

This trail stays high above the river, affording good views and a variety of habitats for many wildflowers. The trail is narrow and clifffy in places, but doesn’t change much in altitude. We will identify and enjoy the wildflowers until lunch-time, and then review the wildflowers on the way back. We should be back at our cars by 3:00 PM.

Wildflower Walk
Along Sagehen Creek
June 15 (Tuesday)—Meet at the Rood Center at 8:30 AM or at the trailhead at 10:00 AM

The Sagehen Trail has a wonderful array of wildflowers representing a transition zone between the rich floras of the Sierra Nevada and the Great Basin. This mostly level, 2-mile trail will provide your minds and eyes with a botanical feast! Be prepared for mosquitoes and intense sunlight, as well as the possibility of sudden rain or hail storms. If the Rood Center is out of the way for you, you may drive to the trailhead. Take the Highway 89 North Exit off Interstate 80 in Truckee. Drive approximately 7.4 miles north on Highway 89, until you arrive at the cement-sided “bridge” over Sagehen Creek. Turn right, immediately after the bridge, and drive down into the dirt parking area. The trail leaves from the parking lot and heads east along Sagehen Creek. We’ll be back to our cars by 3 p.m. at the latest. Those who need to leave earlier can do so, since the trail is easy to follow out.

Azalea and Flora Lakes
Wildflower Walk
July 9 (Friday)—Meet at the Rood Center at 9:00 AM or at the trailhead at 9:45 AM

With names like these, there MUST be wildflowers there! And it is only a couple of miles each way. Since we will be close to the summit, be prepared for thunderstorms, wind, cold, sun and mosquitoes. We will start from the Pacific Crest trailhead parking area between Boreal Ridge and the rest areas. From I-80 take the off-ramp for Boreal Ridge and follow the signs to the Pacific Crest trailhead parking. (It is on the South side of I-80.) We should be back to our cars by 3:00 PM.

Wildflower Walk to Salmon and Loch Leven Lakes
July 18 (Sunday)—Meet at the Rood Center at 8:00 AM or at the Yuba Gap exit at 8:30 AM

By driving a few miles on gravel roads we can bypass the long climb from I-80 up to the Loch Leven Lakes. The roads are a little rough, but all but the lowest cars should be able to make it. We will gather on the South side of I-80 at the Yuba Gap exit, at a wide shoulder at the end of the exit. Car-pooling will be necessary at this point, as very little parking is available at the trailhead. The lakes will provide an opportunity for (fast) swimming. Mosquitoes will probably be present and the water will be cold. It is only 2 miles to the first Loch Leven Lake. Depending on how many lakes we want to visit, we will be walking a total of from 4 to 6 miles, and should be back at the cars by 4:00 PM at the latest.
Tree Walk at Rock Creek Nature Trail

August 4 (Wednesday)—Meet at the Rood Center at 9:00 AM or at the trailhead at 9:45 AM

The Rock Creek Nature Trail is a wonderfully cool and diverse area, giving us the opportunity to learn about a variety of trees in an comfortable environment. Plan to have lunch beside the all-year, shady, stream.

To get to the trailhead from I-80, take the Nevada City/Highway 20 exit. About 6 miles before Nevada City, look for a sign for Washington Ridge Conservation Camp and turn north. (If you arrive at The Five Mile House and the Harmony Ridge Store, go back 2 miles.) Follow this paved road for one mile, and turn left onto a gravel road at a sign for Rock Creek Nature Trail. Drive another mile and turn right into the parking lot.

More Field Trip Information . . .

All of our field trips are open to the public and are free of charge. Bring water, lunch/snack, hand lens, wildflower book, and sun protection and/or rain gear, as needed. Children are warmly welcomed, but please arm them with a whistle! No pets are allowed on any of our field trips. We suggest ride sharing, as parking space at most trail heads is limited. We also suggest that you contribute some money to the driver for gas—perhaps $5 for less than 40 miles round-trip, and $10 for more than 40 miles round-trip. Unless stated otherwise, our trips are easy. We travel slowly and stop to view, identify, talk about, and enjoy each plant species. Our trips are often led by more than one botanist.

For most of our trips we will meet at the Rood Center on Highway 49 in Nevada City, in front of the main building—NOT at the library. See map above right. We will then form car pools and drive to the trail head. In many cases you can meet us at the trail head if this is more convenient for you.

Our book Wildflowers of Nevada and Placer Counties, California will be available for purchase at the meeting place before each field trip. Retail price is $29.95 plus tax; Redbud Chapter members (including brand new ones) are entitled to a 15% discount. We can accept cash and checks. This book is very helpful on all of our field trips!

For more information call Roger at 530-265-4173 or email him at rogm@SBCglobal.net. At 7:00 AM in the morning of the trip, you can call his answering machine for updates—especially if the weather looks “iffy.”

Wildflower Workshop at Hells Half Acre

The popular Wildflower Identification Workshop takes place on Saturday, April 17. Professional botanists, Linnea Hanson and Jenny Marr, present the basics of plant anatomy in a fun and interesting class. Twin Cities Church’s community classroom, next to Hell’s Half Acre, near Grass Valley, is the new location for the class. See the Redbud web pages for complete details or contact Karen Callahan, penstemon@nccn.net or 530-272-5532.

Saturday, April 17, 2010—8:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Workshop Fee: $25 for members of California Native Plant Society and $35 for nonmembers. Fee includes beverages, snacks and lunch.

Pre-registration is required. Class limited to twenty-five people.
In April 2009, Susan Nemer of Rocklin wrote an email to the Redbud Chapter’s web site, reporting that she had found what she suspected was a population of stink bells (Fritillaria agrestis) at Johnson Springview Park in Rocklin. She subsequently was able to identify the plants using her new copy of Wildflowers of Nevada and Placer Counties.

On February 25, 2010, Brad Carter, fritillary aficionado, and I met Susan and her family at the Johnson Springview park in Rocklin. It felt like spring in Rocklin at elevation 203 feet. The large valley oaks and blue oaks in the park were still bare, but we found red maids, fiddlenecks, baby blue eyes, and wild radishes in bloom along the park trails. Susan took us to the group of stink bells, which she had discovered near Antelope Creek. We estimated the population consisted of about 100 plants and they were indeed stinky! These charming plants resemble small tulips. However, at this location in the park, where dredging sludge has been dumped, hundreds of tall yellow-flowered plants, field mustard (Brassica rapa) are growing on the super-fertilized soil and towering over the Stink Bells. Also, the stinkbells are unable to produce seed because turf mowing operations begin before their pods ripen and spill.

Brad contacted the City of Rocklin’s Operations Manager, Rick Forstall, and explained that Fritillaria agrestis is a species of concern (CNPS List 4). Rick replied that “it’s great to see the community taking an interest.” Brad later met with Rick, who agreed to chop down the mustard and to delay mowing the Fritillaria agrestis area until the seeds are ripe. CNPS volunteers will collect the seeds and plant them in adjacent sites with more protection from cyclists and foot traffic. Give Brad a call at 530-271-5790 if you would like to help with a few hours of seed collection at the park in early May and seed planting in the fall.

Like most fritillaries, stink bells is an early spring bloomer with nodding flowers. The flower’s bell shape protects the plant’s pollen from rain and snow. It is named for its unpleasant (to most humans!) flower odor. The carrion odor attracts small native flies that facilitate pollination. The plant is usually less than two feet tall with several small flowers and leaves on the single stem. The flower colors range from greenish white to yellow and violet with a variety of petal markings. Fritillaries grow slowly from seeds and form small bulbs. Stink bells, a California endemic, favors heavy clay soil in grassy open areas below 1,500 feet in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada and inner coast ranges.

A few populations of stink bells still grow near Rocklin, Roseville, and North Sacramento. Several years ago, we found them near Dry Creek in Rio Linda by re-visiting an older Natural Diversity Data Base location. Several other reported locations were searched near Lincoln, but no plants were found. Stink bells also grow at the Maidu Regional Park in Roseville. This spring another healthy population was found blooming at Del Paso Park, in Sacramento County.
On the western edge of Grass Valley lies one of the city’s best kept secrets: a hidden wildflower meadow. Hells Half Acre is about 40 acres of lava cap habitat that erupts into bloom each year in mid-April. Local residents may catch a glimpse of the spectacle while driving along Rough & Ready Highway, but you really have to get out of your car and walk through the area to appreciate it.

Hell’s Half Acre is a botanical bonanza with more than 100 species of plants. Because the soil is very shallow and underlain by a cemented layer of ancient lava flow, most plants—especially trees and shrubs—can’t grow there. However, for shallow-rooted annual wildflowers, this is a perfect habit and they take full advantage of it.

Typically the first sign of spring is when the flowers of butter & eggs begin to form yellow carpets on the lava cap in late March. Following in quick succession are white meadowfoam, Ramm’s madia and miniature lupine.

Public knowledge and appreciation of these wildflower meadows has been limited in the past, partly because they are mostly not visible from the roads and also because the spring bloom passes fairly quickly. But several organizations are now working to protect this area permanently and make it more accessible to the public.

During the last few decades the Redbud Chapter of CNPS and Nevada County Land Trust have led walking tours through the wildflower meadows. This spring Karen Callahan will lead a hike at Hells Half Acre on Mother’s Day for the Land Trust’s Treks Through Time program. “I love to share the wonders of Hells Half Acre with people,” says Callahan. “There are beautiful little flowers everywhere—like pansy monkey flower with its two-inch tall magenta and purple flowers. It is an amazing world in miniature out there.”

The Fire Safe Council of Nevada County is also helping to preserve Hell’s Half Acre by removing invasive and highly flammable Scotch broom from the area. “Last year we partnered with Wildflowers Forever, CNPS and Twin Cities Church to remove a large area of broom along Rough & Ready Highway,” says Council Executive Director Joanne Drummond.

“We had about 20 volunteers from the community helping to make this one of our most successful events ever.” This year’s Scotch Broom Challenge will be held on April 10 at Hells Half Acre and on other dates in other locations around the County.

Also this spring, Redbud Chapter of CNPS is hosting a special full-day wildflower identification workshop at the Hells Half Acre on April 17. The workshop will begin indoors at Twin Cities Church with slide shows and lab work focused how to identify wildflowers. After lunch, the class heads out to the lava cap wildflower meadows where participants will use their newfound knowledge to identify plants in the field.

And for those who would rather go for a walk on their own time, last year trail easements through the privately-owned Kenny Ranch property were granted to Nevada County Land Trust. We are working to finish the trail that parallels Ridge Road and Rough & Ready Highway and open it by June,” says Bill Haire, Trails Coordinator for the Land Trust.

“It is encouraging to see all these groups getting involved, says Brad Carter, Vice President of Wildflowers Forever, a local conservation group. “In the long-term, we are all hoping to preserve Hells Half Acre. Our vision at Wildflowers Forever is to create a regional nature preserve within the open space at Kenny Ranch, which will include the wildflower meadows. We want to connect this preserve with non-motorized recreational trails and sidewalks to Grass Valley and Nevada City.”

In the short term Wildflowers Forever and California Native Plant Society are working to better understand the biology of Hells Half Acre’s unusual lava cap habitat and do stewardship projects to keep it healthy. “Last year,” says Carter, “we began a vegetation sampling project that will help us to understand if this lava cap habitat is rare or not. We hosted a continued on next page
The Reality of Restoration and Noxious Weeds

by Luci Wilson

When thinking of restoration projects most of us probably think about replanting a barren area with native vegetation. People show up with shovels and bags of compost, and small plants are lovingly taken out of their nursery containers and set into their new homes. It’s a restoration party.

But unless you’ve worked on an extended restoration project before, you may not realize the work that goes into any restoration site. Any potential restoration site first undergoes an evaluation process for soil type, plant communities, and wildlife habitat needs. In this county, the soils have often been disturbed at some point in the last 150 years, either as a result of mining or development. As a result of soil disturbances and water diversion, plant communities have usually shifted or have noxious weeds present.

I am working on a site plan for the Burton Homestead on Lake Vera Road, a 40-acre parcel owned by the Nevada County Land Trust. Restoration on this site will be complex and long-term, and will probably begin with removal of the Scotch Broom on the property.

Broom comes in three varieties, Scotch, French and Spanish. All are invasive and flammable. The sale of broom has been banned in Nevada County, though it is still available in Placer County. Scotch broom (Cytisus scoparius) is a perennial shrub, often found on disturbed soils, such as roadsides and cleared lands, but can also colonize into grassland, shrubland and open canopy. It can thrive in poor soils and displaces native vegetation. At most lifestages it is unedible to wildlife; even the seeds are toxic to deer.

Worst of all, Scotch broom burns rapidly and acts as a ladder fuel, sending fire into the tree canopy. Spring is a good time to remove Scotch broom from the landscape. It can be wrenched out of the ground using a root jack, or cut off at the base, though the remaining stump must then be treated with an appropriate herbicide to prevent resprouting. Often a site requires three-five years of maintenance to remove new seedlings from the area.
Get our your calendars out and mark off Saturday, May 1. That’s the date of our annual spring plant sale at Sierra College in Rocklin. The sale will be open to the public from 9:30 to 1:30 p.m. Volunteers are needed for a variety of activities ranging from cashiering to acting as plant consultants. It’s always a fun day and best of all, we don’t charge you a thing to take part in the fun. In fact, we reward you for volunteering with one free one-gallon plant. Volunteers helping at the sale can also shop early from 8:30 to 9:00 before the public arrives. Volunteers are also needed to pick up plants at Chet’s house Friday evening before the sale to transport to the sale on Saturday morning.

There are at least two things that make the Redbud Chapter’s annual spring sale unique among plant sales. The first is the number and diversity of plants available. If only for a four-hour period, it’s safe to say that the Redbud Chapter plant sale offers the largest selection of native plant material to be found anywhere in northern California, if not the entire state. Not only will you find the common species usually found at other plant sales, but the chapter always puts in that extra effort to find those popular, hard to find species and even a number of seldom seen species that appeal mainly to specialty collectors.

The second unique thing about our plant sale is the wildflower show associated with it. While wildflower shows, either in association with plant sales or as standalone events, are not uncommon occurrences in California in the spring, ours is the only one exclusively featuring living plants in containers rather than cut flowers. We generally have at least 150 living species in full flower.

Volunteer Needed!

We need someone to “shadow” Chet at the Spring Plant Sale, and then take charge of the Fall Plant Sale on September 18 at the Grass Valley campus of Sierra College. If you might be interested, please contact Bill at 530-265-8040 or Roger at 530-265-4173.
JUNE CNPS CHAPTER COUNCIL MEETING
Sat-Sun, June 5-6, 2010
Butte College, Oroville

The CNPS Chapter Council Meeting will be held on June 5 & 6th at Butte College in Oroville, co-hosted by the Mt. Lassen, Sacramento and Redbud Chapters. Registration is free, and all members are welcome. This is a good opportunity to meet other native plant enthusiasts from around the State.

CNPS chapters and programs send representatives to quarterly council meetings. These meetings promote communication and coordination between groups. Council meetings are often the source and final approval for CNPS policies. At the June meeting, one agenda item will be the “rebranding” of CNPS, based upon input from a design professional.

Volunteers from the Redbud Chapter are needed to assist with (1) providing continental breakfast and snacks to attendees, (2) assisting at the book and tee shirt sales table, (3) leading a field trip locally on Sunday afternoon (4) small day-of tasks, such as sign in, name tags, room set up and clean up, etc.

Contact Joan Jernegan, Redbud Council Delegate to volunteer, Jernegan95602@wildblue.net. Check CNPS website at http://sites.google.com/site/cnpschaptercouncildec2009/home for further information as we get closer to the date of the June Council Meeting.

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Scotch Broom Pull
at Hells Half Acre
Saturday, April 10
Contact: Joanne Drummond
(530) 272-1122 x 4
for more information

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Renew your CNPS membership online. It’s quick and easy and reduces renewal mailing costs. Go to www.cnps.org and click on the JOIN button.
Redbud Board Meetings

Board meetings are scheduled for
Wednesday, May 26 and Wednesday, July 28. If you are not a board member, but wish to attend, please contact Roger at 265-4173 or Bill at 265-8040 for the times and meeting places. All members are welcome to attend!

Join the Redbud Chapter Board

A strong chapter needs a complete board!

The following positions that are vacant on our Board. If you would like to help us achieve the CNPS mission of protecting California’s native plants and one of these jobs appeals to you, please contact Roger McGehee at 530-265-4173 or Bill Wilson at 530-265-8040.

Redbud Chapter, California Native Plant Society
Board of Directors

Officers
Co-President Bill Wilson (wilsonb@mjc.edu) 530-265-8040
Co-President Roger McGehee (rogm@sbcglobal.net) 530-265-4173
Vice President Julie Carville (mngypsy1@SBCglobal.net) 530-265-4741
Treasurer OPEN
Secretary Luci Wilson (Luciw@earthlink.net) 530-574-2046
Newsletter Editor Brad Carter (bradcarter@aol.com) 530-271-5790

Committee Chairs
Membership Co-Chair Joan Jernegan (jernegj@saccourt.com) 916-874-5619
(W)
Membership Co-Chair Sandy Kewman (skewman@theunion.net) 530-272-3736
Program Chair Roger McGehee (rogm@sbcglobal.net) 530-265-4173
Field Trips Chair Chet Blackburn (chetblackburn@yahoo.com) 530-885-0201
Plant Sale/Events Co-Chairs OPEN
-Spring
-Open
-Fall
Publicity Chair Nancy Gilbert (nancyames@accessbee.com) 530-272-4775
Education Chair Karen Callahan (penstemon@nccn.net) 530-272-5532
Plant Science Co-Chairs OPEN
-Rare Plants
-Invasive Plants
Horticulture Chair Dan Lubin (dlubin@parks.ca.gov) 530-272-0298
Conservation Chair David Magney (david@magney.org) 805-646-1545
Restoration Co-Chairs OPEN
Publications Chair DON Harkin (harkindon@yahoo.com) 530-265-4048
Webmaster Karen Wiese (kwildoak@aol.com) 530-346-7131
Chapter Council Delegate Connie Cornell (conniesturm@wildblue.net) 530-292-3039
(W)
Wildflower Book Project Bill Wilson (wilsonb@mjc.edu) 530-265-8040
-Editorial Committee OPEN
-Marketing Committee OPEN
Hospitality Chair Joan Jernegan (jernegj@saccourt.com) 916-874-5619

Open Positions

- **Treasurer** manage chapter finances and oversee cashiers and accounting for plant sale events
- **Program Chair or Co-Chairs** to arrange for 4-6 evening programs throughout the year.
- **Plant Sale/Events Chair or Co-Chairs** to plan and carry-out our plants sales and other fund-raising events.
- **Publicity Chair or Co-Chairs** to publicize all of our events.
- **Horticulture Chair** to work on projects that promote gardening with native plants.
- **Wildflower Book-Marketing** to help us sell our remaining books.
Redbud Chapter Calendar of Coming Events

April 10 (Saturday): Scotch Broom Pull

April 17 (Saturday): Wildflower ID Workshop

April 22 (Thursday): Earth Day Wildflower Hike on Steven’s Trail

April 28 (Wednesday): No meeting...

May 1 (Saturday): Spring Plant Sale at Sierra College, Rocklin campus

May 17 (Monday): Wildflower Walk from Edward’s Crossing

May 26 (Wednesday): Board Meeting in Auburn

June 15 (Tuesday): Wildflower Walk along Sagehen Creek

June 23 (Wednesday): Evening Program: Pollinators and the Pollinated, Karen Weise (Nevada City)

July 9 (Friday): Wildflower Walk to Azalea and Flora Lakes

July 18 (Sunday): Wildflower Walk to Salmon and Loch Leven Lakes

July 28 (Wednesday) Board Meeting in Nevada City

August 4 (Wednesday): Tree Walk at Rock Creek Nature Trail

September 18 (Saturday): Fall Plant Sale at Sierra College, Grass Valley campus