



CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

San Diego Chapter Newsletter

CHAPTER MEETING

May 14, 2024

In-person

Casa del Prado Rm 101, Balboa Park

7:00 Browsing & Socializing

7:30 Meeting and Presentation

Chapter meetings are free and open to the public.

Presentation

Preserving Wright's Field Ecological Preserve in Alpine

By Jon Greene

Jon Green is a Restoration Ecologist with River Partners managing invasive species removal and habitat restoration projects in San Diego and Imperial Counties, with a focus on riparian habitats, at this time primarily along the Alamo River which flows into the Salton Sea.

Jon also served as the Preserve Manager for Wright's Field Ecological Preserve in Alpine for a decade from 2011-2021. During that time, he worked on threatened and endangered species protection and enhancement efforts within Wright's Field, specifically on San Diego thornmint (*Acanthomintha ilicifolia*) populations found in Alpine.



This talk will cover both efforts, but with CNPS's ongoing work to protect critical habitat at Wright's Field from current development pressure, Jon will focus his talk primarily on the open space areas under threat of being lost in Alpine.



NATIVE GARDENING COMMITTEE

April CNPS San Diego Native Garden Tour Sold Out!

The April 6 & 7 Native Garden Tour was a huge success to a sold-out crowd of over 1,200 visitors! Many Thanks go to our garden docents who greeted the crowds with smiling faces. We were especially thankful the rain ended Friday night and the weekend weather was beautiful and the gardens looked lush.



Photos: **Christine Hoey**

A lot of behind-the-scenes work took place overseen by volunteer coordinator **MJ Brovold**.



The Kumeyaay-Ipai Interpretive Center led guided tours for over 40 visitors, while **Tyden Chinowsky** spent the day at Native Del Mar giving tours of the native garden he planted and now maintains with fellow students and family.



Photo: Kyla Chinowsky



Another beautiful tour garden! Photo: **Christine Hoey**

Garden Tour 2025!

Do you have a garden with 60% or more native plants and would like to be considered for next year's garden tour? Please contact gardentour@cnpsd.org and someone will reach out to you for a visit.

Native Garden Tour Planning Committee: It takes a village to organize and implement a garden tour! We are looking for new team members to take on leadership roles for the 2025 Native Garden Tour. Interested? Contact gardentour@cnpsd.org for more information. Many hands make little work!

Bird Park Native Garden Expansion on Hold

The garden committee purchased all the irrigation lines and equipment for Bird Park, but the project is on hold until the City of San Diego gives us a start date for our next two "feather" plots. In the meantime, there is plenty of maintenance to be done.



Left: Monarch caterpillar on *Asclepias fasciculatum* Photo: **Judie Lincer**.

The good news is the narrow leaf milkweed (*Asclepias fascicularis*) is sending up new sprouts and the Monarch butterflies are very busy and the Monarch caterpillars have arrived! If you would like to join the Balboa Park Workgroup, sign up at this link: <https://forms.gle/7eFFBJHHLG4dxtvZ8>

The garden committee welcomes all novice and experienced native gardeners. A separate monthly email is sent out to committee members with meeting announcements, volunteer activities, workshops and early bird sign-ups that don't always make it into the Chapter newsletter. If you love gardening with California native plants and would like to join the Garden Committee (GC), click on this

link: <https://forms.gle/L356FhDbvrWCWzmd8> We would love to see you!

Christine Hoey & Silke Gathmann
Garden Committee Co-Chairs

MIRAMAR VERNAL POOL FUNDRAISER

Miramar Vernal Pool Fundraiser Exceeds Goal!



Jim Smith, Lee Gordon & Carrie Schneider.

Perfect weather was in store as supporters gathered at the beautiful home of Lyle and Helen Arnold in Poway for a memorable fundraiser. Over 100 guests enjoyed a leisurely afternoon exploring the pristine coastal sage and chaparral habitat with expert guides. Appetizers and beverages generously donated by **Nickel Beer** and **Storum Ranch Winery** greeted guests after their trail hike.



Left: Homeowner **Lyle Arnold** leading a hike. Photo by **Marc Gathmann**.

Below: **Justin Daniel & Christine Hoey** welcome guests. Photo by **Marc Gathmann**.



Dinner featured a chili bar brimming with options, from mild to spicy, meat, vegan and chicken all prepared by CNPS Culinary Chefs **Silke Gathmann, Holly McMillan, Bonnie Nickel, Christine Hoey** and homeowner **Helen Arnold** - totaling an impressive 13 gallons! Sides included homemade cornbread, salad and toppings. Culinary delights included delicious desserts to satisfy everyone's sweet tooth cravings.



Chili bar (left) and guests enjoying the views during dinner (below). Photos by **Marc Gathmann**.



The enchanting melodies of live Irish music performed by **David Mehalko & Mairtin de Cogain** was enjoyed by all. The excitement peaked with a spirited silent auction showcasing over 30 enticing items, from stunning fine art paintings to even a Barn Owl Box! In an exciting finale, an anonymous donor matched donations in the last hour. As bidding closed at 7 pm, many happy winners walked away with their coveted prizes.

A Big Thank You to all our silent auction donors:

- Walter Andersen Gift Certificate by Bonnie Nickel
- Mt Helix Foundation Wine Festival Tickets by Krista Powers
- Barn Owl Box with pole by the Barn Owl Box Company
- "Nature's Best Hope" book autographed by Doug Tallamy donated by Christine Hoey
- San Diego County Native Plants donated by Silke Gathmann
- Half day consultation with Leo Hernandez by California's Own Native Landscape Design
- Design consultation with Greg Rubin by California's Own Native Landscape Design
- Handmade pottery crocks and vase by Carol Gross
- SoloBee House donated by Candace Vanderhoft
- Fine art Dudleya painting by Vanessa Rusczyk
- Torrey Neel preserve guided tour by Neel's Nursery
- California polypodium donated by Lyle Arnold
- Rare California native plants donated by Justin Daniel
- San Miguel landscape painting by Edmund Piffard
- Handmade California Pillow decorated with original watercolors by Ainara Calahorra Romillo



Left: Silent Auction. Photo by **Marc Gathmann**.

Below: **Lee Gordon** chops down one of the "Dirty Dozen" after a generous donation. Photo by **Christine Hoey**.



Thanks to the combined efforts of ticket sales, generous donations, and the success of the silent auction, we easily exceeded our \$10,000 target! We extend our heartfelt gratitude to all who joined us in backing the phase II initiative, "Taking Down the Dirty Dozen," and in our mission to fully restore the Miramar Vernal Pool Habitat!

And a big thank you goes to the following who made this event happen:

- Event Hosts: **Lyle and Helen Arnold**
- Miramar Vernal Pool Fundraiser Committee: **Silke Gathmann, Christine Hoey, Holly McMillan, Bonnie Nickel, Andrea Rae** and the wonderful bartending skills of **Erika Daniel**.
- Trail guides: **Lyle Arnold, Justin Daniel, Lee Gordon, Vince Scheidt, Don Rideout, Karen Parke, and Andria Califf**.
- Clean up: husbands and children of the fundraiser committee!



Boulder Mountain Preserve at sunset. Photo by **Jim Julius**.

CNPS-SD BOARD NEWS

May Board Meeting

Wednesday, May 8, 6:30 – 9:00ish pm via Zoom. To add an item to the agenda, or to get the link to the meeting, please email president@cnpsd.org.

April Board Meeting Summary

The Board meeting was held on April 10 with all board members present. After reviewing and amending the budget prepared by the Treasurer, the Board approved the following:

- The chapter's budget for the 2024-2025 fiscal year.

The Board discussed: the fourth quarter treasury report; results of the chapter's native garden tour on April 6-7; the many other activities the chapter had planned for April, including Native Plant Week; migration of the Chapter's website to WordPress (new website is <https://chapters.cnps.org/sandiego/>); possible location for the Fall Plant Sale; the chapter's annual report to CNPS; having hybrid meetings; training sessions for the Urban

Corps; and SD Botanical Garden Foundation 2024 Updates (reservations for meeting rooms and other facilities in Balboa Park used to go through the foundation but now they go through Forever Balboa Park).

The meeting adjourned at 9:38 pm.

~ **Bobbie Stephenson**, Chapter Secretary

CONSERVATION COMMITTEE

Tuesday, May 7: 6 – 7:30 pm

The committee generally meets the first Tuesday of every month online via Zoom and in person from 6:00 to 7:30 pm. Send a request for the link to conservation@cnpsd.org.

PROPAGATION COMMITTEE

Sign up for updates and Committee announcements by emailing propagation@cnpsd.org and requesting to be added to the contact list. This month's committee dates are:

May 10: Seed Collection Day Training – Early Annuals

May 25: Seed Collection Day – Annuals and Early Perennials

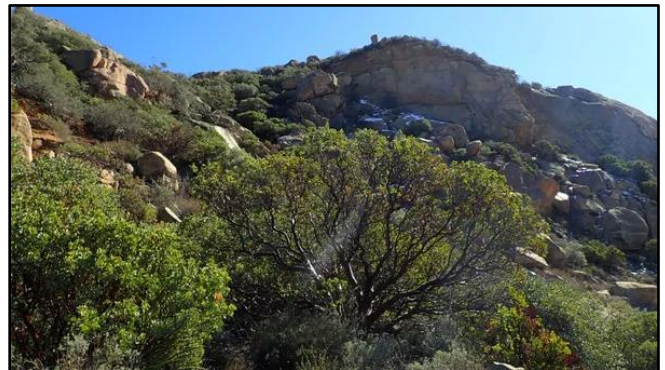
FIELD TRIPS

For information on field trips that may have been scheduled after this newsletter was completed, and to sign up for a field trip, go to:

<https://www.meetup.com/San-Diego-County-Native-Plant-Discoverers-Meetup/>

BIOBLITZ

Corte Madera Mountain Bioblitz Thursday, May 11; 9 am – 4 pm



DIFFICULTY: MODERATE (Rocky trail, may be overgrown; elevation change up to 1,300') 6.4 miles roundtrip (10.3 km)

PLANT KNOWLEDGE: Amateur to Professional

ACCESS: Open to all, no charge for field trip.

REQUIRED FEES: National Forest Adventure Pass on Vehicle Required to park.

AMENITIES: Restrooms (pit toilets) may be available at nearby campgrounds. New restrooms are being installed. Conditions are unknown, so come prepared for any possibility.

DOGS: Allowed, but not recommended due to sensitivity of the nesting location/disturbance chance, and high chance of rattlesnakes. Dogs must be leashed and on-trail in control at all times.

[EXTREME TEMPS above 90°F [32°C] or forecast for Heavy Rain / flash floods Will Cancel]

TRIP DESCRIPTION: This area is adjacent to the Corral Canyon OHV Area and campgrounds in some the thickest, wildest chaparral in all of San Diego County. It's not often travelled except by Forest Service personnel and recreation folks.

Border Bioblitz and Cleveland National Forest (Forest Service) are combined with this trip for a study for rare plants and habitat assessment that's open to anyone interested in the next steps of science. Record taking is with iNaturalist and uses other tech and apps.

We're close enough to the border that those who are taking iNaturalist records will contribute to the 2024 Border BioBlitz in service of the SD Natural History Museum's Community Science efforts and the broader focus on environmental issues at the international border between the US and MX.

The trip itself is fairly slow paced and geared to take records as we slowly make our way up Morena Creek along a portion of the Espinosa Trail to Corte Madera Trail that heads to the peak. We'll walk through many different habitats including mixed chaparral, oak woodlands, small patches of grasslands, pine woodland, and rocky outcrops. Many rare plants are found in the area, including the endemic and extremely rare Morena currant (*Ribes canthariforme*), peninsular spineflower (*Chorizanthe leptotheca*), Dunn's mariposa lily (*Calochortus dunnii*), Cleveland's bush monkeyflower (*Diplacus clevelandii*), and Palomar monkeyflower (*Ehrythranthe diffusa*), and others.

Mid-May is a great time to hike in San Diego, but may be getting hot in the inland areas towards the afternoon. Come prepared for the trail and the weather from morning to early evening. Wear layered clothing and wear sturdy and armored shoes (boots are recommended). Bring plenty of water & sunscreen. We'll be able to provide some very basic support, but if you are concerned about any conditions like overheating on the trail, please take precautions. Bring your own lunch and snacks!

Driving access is paved to the parking areas, though winter storms are taking their toll on rural infrastructure. High clearance and AWD are recommended.

CARPOOL TO BE DETERMINED. For this trip I plan to remain in the area to camp that evening, if possible. Camping groups may be coordinated.

FOR ANYONE WILLING & CAPABLE OF OFFERING CARPOOL, PLEASE MESSAGE THE GROUP TO COORDINATE. I can suggest a few great places to carpool if anyone is amenable and willing to set one up.

<https://www.meetup.com/san-diego-county-native-plant-discoverers-meetup/>

~ Justin Daniel, Chapter President

The Chapter Needs Your Help

The Chapter is run by volunteers and we need more! Please contact Justin Daniel (president@cnpsd.org) if you can help. We especially need:

- One Board Member
- Programs Chairperson (to arrange programs for the chapter meetings)
- Natives for Novices Coordinator
- Volunteer Coordinator
- Archiver
- Education Chairperson
- Publicity/Email Announcements Coordinator (to send out Mailchimp notices)

CNPS On-line Workshop

Review CNPS Organizational Structure & Resources at the State & Chapter Levels Saturday; May 4, 2024 9:00 am - 12:00 pm on Zoom

State leadership volunteers from the Board and Chapter Council, together with CNPS state staff, will be holding an interactive workshop. **Chapter presidents, delegates, alternates, chapter officers and committee chairs are invited to join the workshop, and others members who may be interested in a leadership role.**

What: The Chapter Council, with the support of CNPS staff, will be hosting a workshop to review CNPS organizational structure and resources at the state and chapter levels. The workshop will provide examples of chapter leader roles and methods for leader recruitment. We will delve into successes, challenges, and ideas for chapter leadership.

The workshop will provide an overview of supportive recurring meetings available to chapter level volunteers. Throughout the workshop and as a final section, participants' feedback and suggestions for future workshop topics will be compiled. The workshop will include interactive and listening sections.

Purpose: Do you want to know more about what is available to you or are overwhelmed with the learning curve? Are you unsure about how you can make a difference? Need support but don't know where to turn? You're not alone.

This workshop is for you. The purpose of the workshop is to empower current and encourage future leaders of CNPS. This workshop will clarify how together we can make an organization with 13,000 members in 36 chapters function more effectively.

We are inviting both current chapter leadership and potential leaders/non-member volunteers who have leadership potential to join us.

To register for this meeting, please see the zoom link here: <https://cnps-org.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZErdOGopz8gHNWaGEOdQKW-TmVjm33XTnUPx>

If you have topics you'd like to discuss or questions about the workshop, please email us at chaptercouncil@cnps.org.

We look forward to our discussions!

Judy Fenerty, Chapter Council Chair
Cathy Capone, Director of the Board, Chapter Delegate
Vivian Neou, President of the Board, Chapter Delegate

OUTREACH NEWS

Public Outreach Committee Updates

Saturday, March 16, in the desert seemed unpredictable since we had rain the two previous days and more was in the forecast for that day. We almost escaped rain-free but got a bit wet while moving our packed-up materials to the vehicle. The Ocotillo Blooms event at the Imperial Valley Desert Museum had a very friendly and community-oriented vibe. We were able to enjoy some of the informational talks, met some partner organizations at their vendor booths, and watched the live butterfly release. And the chuparosa was in full bloom but ocotillos were just getting ready to open up. Many thanks to **Don Rideout** who cheerfully led guided botany hikes during the day, as well as staffing our table along with Public Outreach Committee volunteer **Rachel Powers**. Based on our conversations with partners and individuals who showed an interest, we may try to do more events in Imperial County for our chapter members who live there.

Unfortunately, due primarily to windy conditions but also more rain, we did not participate in the Sustainable Scripps Ranch rainwater harvesting home tour on March 24th. We will look to join one of their events again.

On April 4, I attended the Mission Trails Regional Park Users event at the Visitor Center. The event was well attended with energy in the room. Multiple groups that use the park had tables with information and a little bit of swag for attendees. We will be invited to table at their next event, so keep that in mind if that park is one of your local favorites.

In preparation for Native Plant Week 2024, I attended the El Cajon City Council meeting on Tuesday, April 9. I filled out a speaker card and used my 3 minutes to tell the council about CNPS, Native Plant Week, and that our local chapter had activities planned for the week. I would like to take this opportunity to challenge all chapter members to do the same and find ways to talk about why native plants are so important to all of us for so many reasons.

We kicked off Native Plant Week 2024 on Friday, April 12 at the Tecolote Park Nature Center with the Invasives Control

Workshop taught by chapter president **Justin Daniel** and advised by Restoration Committee Co-Chair **Bob Byrnes**. After the classroom discussions, we walked the nearby trails to observe invasives removal in action.

The second day of our Native Plant Week 2024 agenda was hosted by our committee at the Pechanga Indian Reservation Earth Day event. Members of local tribes were invited to attend and meet a variety of vendors dealing with environmental issues. **Justin Daniel** helped me staff our booth, and had brought basket rush as gifts for the Pechanga tribe. The seeds he also brought to give away went fast.

Day three included a simple outreach booth at the Artesian Creek Open Space, hosted by the Habitat Restoration Committee. Public Outreach Committee volunteer **Jessica Lyles** tended the table while Habitat Restoration Committee Co-Chair **Arne Johanson** explained the site and its history to participants who came ready to use iNaturalist on the trails. Board member and Gardening Committee Co-Chair **Silke Gathmann** also stopped by to take photos and walk the trails, too.

I will report on the remainder of our Native Plant Week 2024 activities in the June newsletter.

We currently have two events scheduled in May, so if you can help with either of these, email me at sherry.ashbaugh@cnpsd.org to let me know. On **May 5**, we are giving a talk at Mission Hills Nursery; and, on **May 10** we will be in Oceanside at the Ocean Hills Country Club for a talk on native plants and pollinators.

~ **Sherry Ashbaugh**, Public Outreach Committee Chair



Left: **Rachel** and **Don** at the Ocotillo Blooms outreach table.

Below: **Justin Daniel** showing invasive removal site.



Above: CNPS San Diego booth at Pechanga Earth Day 2024.

Photo Credits: **Sherry Ashbaugh**

HABITAT RESTORATION

Ten Years in San Dieguito River

March 15, 2024, marked the beginning of bird nesting season, ending our work in the San Dieguito River until September. This also marked the completion of our tenth year on our San Dieguito Fire Mitigation and Habitat Restoration project.



Many people thought this would be too hard to do. Permitting, multiple landowners, difficult access, limited funds and a limited workforce were just some of the issues we had to deal with.

The project began with nearby homeowners being concerned about fire risk as the riverbed was dominated by highly flammable *Arundo donax* (Giant reed), Pampas Grass (*Cortaderia selloana*), and *Eucalyptus*, *Acacia* and palm species. Homes were lost when the area burned in 2007 and again in 2014. The weeds grew back quickly after each event, along with residential angst.



Pampas Grass that occupied large areas.

U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) saw the benefit of removing weeds, as did the Rancho Santa Fe Fire Protection District. Based in part on our prior work at Artesian Creek, we (CNPSSD) were approached to tackle the project for fire protection and habitat restoration.

Planning and prerequisites were a joint effort. Our partners, which include both the San Dieguito River Park JPA (Joint

Powers Authority) and the San Dieguito Conservancy, in addition to the aforementioned, helped with required permits. The Fairbanks Ranch Association and the Rancho Santa Fe Association were particularly enthusiastic partners, especially helping with rights-of-entry forms.

We were able to begin once we had six participating properties on the Fairbanks side. We then built on successes there to help convince others. Between the Conservancy, USFW, the associations and a few dedicated homeowners, we ultimately got forty-one owners to sign on.

For biomass removal, we first had American Conservation Corps and then the Urban Corp work with us. These were organized by our partners at the San Dieguito Conservancy, which is the fiscal sponsor for the project. Several wonderful people from the Conservancy have passed through the project over the ten years.

Many CNPSSD volunteers helped as well over the years. Some did a little and some did a lot - all of them made a difference. We are certain that each learned a bit from the experience.

Today, most of the first mile of riverbed is weed-free and growing back with native species, recruited from what was there already. We simply freed up natives to grow back in. On the valley floor, sandbar willow (*Salix exigua*), arroyo willow (*Salix lasiolepis*), are the most dominant while small coast live oaks (*Quercus agrifolia*) have emerged to presage future riparian woodland. Numerous other natives cover much of the understory while reeds and sedges are establishing their own areas. On the valley sides, plants such as coast barberry (*Berberis pinnata*) and chalk dudleya (*Dudleya pulverulenta*) blend in the coastal sage scrub.

We are not done. There is one annoying hard-to-reach island that still needs to be dealt with, along with tiny patches that were passed over for one reason or another. But over ninety percent invasive removal with substantial native recruitment is quite an accomplishment!



Bob Byrnes viewing native regrowth.

We also worked with the Rancho Santa Fe Association on their Arroyo Preserve, which is upstream in the river valley. Funding from NRCS (Natural Resources Conservation Service

of the USDA) helped rid a big area of eucalyptus. And CalFire also came in and removed a good portion while conducting chainsaw training for firefighters. We helped with many of the weeds. The Arroyo has been planted with natives and will be a rich and diverse park as plants establish themselves.

We look forward to working with our partners on the next stage that will tackle the quarter-mile between the Arroyo and the downstream project area. We also have the potential to move further downstream from our ten-year area. In all, we can have some three miles of less fire-prone native vegetation, rich with wildlife.

None of this could have been done without all of the wonderful people who have contributed, thus far. And with these partners, we can continue to accomplish more. We need to give special thanks to the homeowners who have allowed us to cross into the work areas and those who have hosted some of our work crews.

Planning, Partners, Patience, Persistence, along with Knowledge, were all it took to accomplish what many would not dare. In a few more years we expect to call this effort totally done and put this area into maintenance-mode along with prior project areas.

But don't worry about a lack of work. We have several other areas that aren't nearly as far along and that provide opportunities for yet more participants.

~ **Bob Byrnes and Arne Johanson**
Habitat Restoration Committee Co-chairs
habitatrestoration@cnpssd.org

IN THE FIELD

Linanthus maculatus **Confessions of a Native Plant Fanatic** By Tom Oberbauer (Photos by the author)

Over the years, there have been genera that are, to me, very special with definitive and beautiful plants. *Linanthus* is one genus of plants that fits the bill of being very special. I have made an effort to see many of them and the majority of the most impressive ones are right here in San Diego County. However, one was known only from the Joshua Tree area, *Linanthus maculatus* (Little San Bernardino Mtns. *linanthus*). It is a tiny *Linanthus*, really tiny, with white flowers that have maroon spots at the base of the five petals. It had at one time been considered *Gilia* rather than *Linanthus*, but was placed into the genus *Linanthus* many years ago. I had toyed for years with the idea that I could go look for it some spring following a good rainfall season. However, I never matched up my interest with the correct rainfall seasons.

However, one day, in Spring of 2010, **Larry Hendrickson** and **Larry Sward** were surveying in an area near Ocotillo in Imperial

County where wind generators were proposed. While stopped to eat lunch, one or both of them noticed a small flowered plant. It looked like *Linanthus maculatus* but it lacked the maroon spots. Further investigation identified more of it in the general area and it was determined to be a type of *Linanthus maculatus* but without spots. It was decided taxonomically as a new subspecies by Porter, Bell and Patterson in 2015: *Linanthus maculatus* ssp. *emaculatus*, which in scientific language means the spotted *Linanthus* without spots. Additional observations were made by Fred Melgert and Carla Hoegen in 2017 near Agua Caliente in San Diego County.

The plant was now much closer to San Diego than formerly thought. Since it was now so close and it was now a new endemic to our area, and the conditions were right for it in spring 2023 with the good rainfall, I decided near the end of March to go look for it. It was not certain for me if this was the best time of that year because some of the other collections were made in early April and this season had been slow for the flowering of some other wildflowers. I thought that the day I chose was early enough so that if it was early, I would not miss it but late enough that it would likely have at least some flowers.

I watched the weather intently. I was hoping that the temperature would not be too high, but I was also concerned about wind. High winds were projected for the deserts the morning I planned to go. However, as I left, the wind gauges at Agua Caliente indicated calm winds. I was highly anticipating the day as I left in the dark to drive the two hours out I-8 to S2 to get to the place to begin walking. Unfortunately, by the time that I arrived, the wind was howling at 25-35 mph and mostly continuously.

While it is not really comfortable to hike in strong winds, it was not unbearable. It was cool enough that I needed to wear a fleece jacket. One other thing I was worried about was if it was too cool and windy, the flowers might be closed. I had no idea how tiny sand inhabiting flowers would react.

The walk into the area south of Agua Caliente began in a long canyon that winds between rocky hills. Since it had been a wet



winter for at least the western part of the desert, a number of plants were putting on a show. *Justicia californica* (Chuparosa, left) shrubs were brilliant red and covered with the tubular,

hummingbird pollinated flowers. Low growing clusters of the brilliant pink *Diplacus bigelovii* (Bigelow's monkey flowers, right) were in flower, quivering in the wind with the



harsh morning light from the east.

The *Lupinus arizonicus* (Desert flowering lupine, left), grew in scattered locations along the wash into the low mountains.



Mohavia confertiflora (Ghost flower, below) with its yellow cream-colored goblet-shaped flowers grew low to the ground. The flowers have patterns of dark specks and larger arrowhead shaped spots.



The slender stick-like *Euphorbia eriantha* (Beetlespurge) was growing in open sandy soils. *Phacelia pedicellata* (Pedicellate phacelia) with tight clusters of coiled pink-purple flowers was growing in the midst of *Perityle emoryi* (Rock daisy) with yellow centered white flowers was ever present on the sand and rocky hillsides.



Eschscholzia parishii (Parish's poppy, left) was in flower. The yellow flowered *Chlismia cardiophylla* (Heart leaf suncup) was growing there along with the *Chylismia claviformes* (Brown eyed evening primrose), which, as the name implies, has cream-colored flowers with brown centers.



The bright yellow *Eriophyllum wallacei* (Wallace's woolly daisy, right), a small sunflower with felty-gray leaves, was growing in little mounds. These were all in the narrowest part of the canyon through the mountains but it began to

broaden as I passed toward the interior area. The sand was a light gray color and the granitic rocks appear very white in the bright morning sun.

While the vegetation was not dense on the lower slopes, the shrubs and annuals were in prime condition. *Encelia farinosa* (Brittlebush) shrubs were as large, rounded clumps of growth covered with yellow flowers.



Another brightly colored magenta flower, slightly darker than the *Diplacus*, was the nearly prostrate *Nama demissa* (Purplemat, right). These were very densely flowered patches of color with the flowers on stems radiating from the central main stem.

Walking farther along, I came across one of the most unusual plants of the desert, or anywhere for that matter, *Pholisma arenarium* (right). I always thought of *Pholisma* for a common name, but now I see it is called Purple pop-ups and, above all, Desert Christmas Tree. It was a small, purplish gray cone-shaped flower mass with small, round, white edged flowers. It is a root parasite and it often grows in sandy soil by itself with an underground root connection to another plant. It often grows in clusters or lines of flowering bodies. Years ago, it was a plant that I sought very intently because I wanted to see it in person, but I have since had the fortune to see it at a number of locations. Nearby, *Eriogonum inflatum* (Desert trumpet), the annual buckwheat with inflated stems, was also growing.



The canyon slopes were covered with *Cylindropuntia bigelovii*, the beloved Teddy Bear Cactus, *Larrea tridentata* (Creosote bush), *Ferocactus acanthodes* (Barrel cactus) and plenty of the *Encelia farinosa*, though they were not in flower to the extent of those in the wash bottom. *Cylindropuntia ganderi* (Gander's buckhorn cholla) was also present in the lower area. The annual *Eremotheria boothii* (Booth's sun cup) grew with pinkish white flowers in clusters on the end of the inflorescences. There were even tiny cactus seedlings, possibly *Cylindropuntia*, as well as a species with tiny flowers and long, golden spines, potentially *Eremocarya micrantha* (Desert red-root). While the density of flowers was not really high, the diversity was great and patches of *Diplacus bigelovii* were really bright.

Monoptilon bellioides, the bright white floral desert star (right), also grew with scattered individuals on the coarse sand.



Acalypha californica (California copperleaf, left) was an interesting small shrub in the area. After passing between the canyon walls, the area dispersed upstream into broad sandy rivulets. *Agave deserti* (Desert century plant) appeared

on the stable sandy areas, with some in large clusters of more than a dozen of the sharp tipped rosettes of basal leaves. *Psoralea schottii* (Schott's indigobush), *Ambrosia salsola* (Cheesebush), Creosote bush, more chollas, and Chuparosa shrubs, and *Simmondsia chinensis* (Jojoba) were some of the dominants. *Fouquieria splendens* (Ocotillo), green with leaves on the stems at that time, were also present in this broad, open area. *Salvia columbariae* (Chia) grew in patches here and there. However, I was looking for a tiny plant. I squinted my eyes in the bright sun on the white-gray sand. I saw tiny plants, which from my height looked promising, but when I squatted down to get a closer look, they looked like an early phase of *Stylocline*, maybe *S. micropoides*, but it was too early to tell for sure.

I spent almost an hour looking around the area from where the *Linanthus maculatus* had been reported when I finally realized that I had brought my binoculars for the purpose of scanning



the near horizon a few dozen feet ahead up close but had forgotten about them hanging around my neck. As I was finally raising my binoculars to my eyes and began to scan, I saw the plant I was seeking, *Linanthus maculatus* ssp. *emaculatus* (left and below).

The very small white flowers blended with the white grains of quartz- and feldspar-based sand grains. The first plants I



saw only had few flowers and a couple had flowers that had already passed. I stopped to photograph the first ones, kneeling

in the sand and using my Nikon micro lens as well as my cell phone. Overall, the vegetation on the flat area in general seemed farther advanced and drier than the canyon slopes and these plants were in the areas between the rivulets of the braided wash. *Calyptidium monandrum* (Frost mat), the prostrate, semi-succulent level flat plant with green leaves and reddish orange stems and flowers, was here as well but far before being ready to flower.

I kept looking and came across a couple of larger plants, one with what appeared to have had more than 20 flowers with tiny red stems linking them together. A few *Eriophyllum wallacei* and tiny cactus seedlings were near the *Linanthus* plants. How wild is it that a really neat plant was discovered to be growing near so close to home so I don't have to search Joshua Tree National Park to find it, and the fact that it is an endemic form makes it even more special.

As I continued to look around, the apparently bare sand had other tiny plants, with many too early to identify; however, one was *Langloisia setosissima* (Bristly langloisia), a tiny pale-blue flowered, prickly leaved annual of the Phlox family.

As I walked the nearly four miles back, I also noticed a couple of *Mentzelia veatchiana* (Veatch's blazing star) with yellow orange star shaped flowers with an orange center, as well as *Eschscholzia minutiflora* (Coville's poppy), the tiny yellow poppies. Other plants I spotted included *Rafenesquia californica* (Desert chickory), with its white dandelion-like flowers often mixed in the stems of a nurse plant shrub. In the wash, *Psoralea spinosus* (Smoke tree) specimens grew. *Plantago ovata* var. *fastidium* (Desert plantain) was growing there. *Condea emoryi* (Desert lavender) also along with



beautiful peach colored *Mentzelia hirstutissima* (Hairy stickleaf, left) and patches of what appeared to be *Euphorbia polycarpa* (sand mat) and pink flowered shrubs of *Fagonia laevis* (California fagonia), the annual yellow flowered *Physalis crassifolia* (Ground cherry) with fruits that look like tomatillos, were in the

area. Even *Cuscuta californica* (Dodder) was covering a few shrubs partially orange with its fine

filaments of parasitic growth. *Sphaeralcea ambigua* (Apricot mallow, right), with very deep orange flowers, were along the route, as well as the dried spiny fruits of *Datura wrightii* (Jimsonweed).





What was also a treat was *Cylindropuntia fosbergii* (Mason Valley cholla, left) out near the highway. It grows in an upright manner with a central stem and has a pinkish cast to its needles as well as a characteristic growth pattern for the side branching. This interesting cholla is endemic to the area of Anza-Borrego Desert from Shelter Valley south to near

Canebrake and not found anywhere else.

This is another example of the types of microhabitat and environmental areas we have in San Diego County and was especially fruitful following a season with good fall and winter rains.

Porter, J. M. and R. W. Patterson. A fistful of Polemoniaceae: New Names and Combinations. *Aliso* 32(2):55-88

RELATED ACTIVITIES

Center for Plant Conservation (CPC) National Meeting in San Diego Thursday & Friday, May 2-3

The CPC will host the 2024 National Meeting with sessions at both the San Diego Zoo and the Safari Park in collaboration with the San Diego Zoo Wildlife Alliance—a CPC Participating Institution and host institution for CPC’s National Office headquarters. For more information, visit:

[2024 CPC National Meeting - Center for Plant Conservation \(saveplants.org\)](https://saveplants.org/2024-CPC-National-Meeting-Center-for-Plant-Conservation) or https://saveplants.org/national-meeting/?mc_cid=f7f104c8dc&mc_eid=bb2fe8e999

Julian Wildflower Show May 3 & 4; 10 am - 4 pm

The Julian Woman’s Club will be hosting the 98th annual Wildflower Show at the Woman’s Clubhouse (2607 C Street, Julian, CA). **Attendance is free.** Donations and sales are greatly appreciated, with proceeds going to the scholarship fund, and to support our community. For additional information visit <http://www.julianwomansclub.org/>.



The water districts serving San Diego county will select one **residential** WaterSmart landscape for the award. Applications must be submitted by **May 10, 2024**.

See <https://landscapecontest.com/> for information.

San Diego Weed Management Area Summer Symposium

Friday, June 7; 9 am to 3 pm

Meeting to Discuss Updates & Regional Priorities

The San Diego Weed Management Area (SDWMA) is a group of agencies, organizations, and individuals working together to control selected invasive plant species within San Diego County.

This year’s symposium will be held in-person at the County of San Diego Operations Center - Conference Center, 5520 Overland Ave., San Diego, CA 92123. For more information contact: www.SDWMA.org or call (858) 614-7750.

** DPR Continuing education hours will be applied for

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 May 10 for the June newsletter, etc. Please submit items to newsletter@cnpsd.org

CNPS-SD Activities Calendar May 2024

- 5/7: Conservation Committee Mtg, p.4**
- 5/8: Board Meeting, via Zoom, p.4**
- 5/10: Propagation Committee, p.4**
- 5/11: Corte Madera Mountain Bioblitz, p.4**
- 5/21: Chapter Meeting, p.1**
- 5/25: Propagation Committee, p.4**

(<https://www.meetup.com/San-Diego-County-Native-Plant-Discoverers-Meetup/>)

Please check <https://chapters.cnps.org/sandiego/> for activities that may have been scheduled after this newsletter was prepared.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

<https://www.cnps.org/membership>

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May 2024 Newsletter

Dedicated to the preservation of the California native flora
CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY – SAN DIEGO

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