

SAN DIEGO CHAPTER ANNUAL REPORT – 2009

Prepared by David Flietner, President.

We request a subvention.

Introduction

2009 was a year of growth and change for the San Diego Chapter. Dave Flietner and Peter St. Clair were newly elected as President and Vice-President, respectively, and Kay Stewart joined the Executive Board in mid-year. The Membership, Hospitality, Public Outreach and Vegetation committees were energized with new Chairpersons (Adrienne Heinzelman, Betsy Cory, David Varner, and Anna Bennett) and several new committees were formed to promote member's active involvement with native plants: Native Gardening, Rare Plant Survey (Dave Flietner, acting Chairs), Seed Collection (Jason Sundberg), and Invasive Plants (Arne Johanson). While many activities were led by relative newcomers, the core activities that sustain our chapter continued under the leadership of long-time leaders.

Chapter membership grew by about 5%, to 884, and 32 new volunteers were recognized as taking on significant new responsibilities for the chapter during the year. Overall, chapter members volunteered an estimated 3,870 hours promoting the enjoyment, appreciation, and protection of native plants.

Executive Board

The Executive Board held ten meetings in 2009, eight of which had a quorum allowing business to be conducted. The Board instituted a single annual budget process to fund all activities, including chapter administration and committees (\$23,550), mini-grants (\$2300), sister organizations (\$5000), reserve fund (\$2500), and legal fund (\$3350 + \$3350 matching funds). One mini-grant was awarded, for native plants at the Crestridge Ecological Reserve Visitor Center. Due to imposition of additional costs by the City of San Diego, Board meetings were moved from our long-time meeting facility at Tecolote Nature Center to public library meeting rooms. Board members devoted an estimated 1146 hours to executive functions, as shown in *Table 1*.

Table 1. Executive Board Volunteer Hours

Board Member	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	July	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Total
Beltran, Tom		4	4	4			3		4	4	3		26
Burrascano, Cindy	4	4	4	4		4	3	3					26
Feiock, Sandi (T)	23	23	33	23	20	23	23	20	23	23	20	4	258
Flietner, Dave (P)	20	70	70	70	30	70	60	30	70	70	70	40	670
Green, Diane (S)	2	2	2	6	2	6	5		6	2			33
Kraus, Hank	4	4	4			4	3		4	4	3		30
Martus, Carolyn	4	4	4			4			4	4	3		27
McConnell, Patrick		4		4		4							12
Schneider, Carrie	4	4	4	4		4			4	4	3		31
St. Clair, Peter (VP)	8	8	8			8		8					40
Stewart, Kay									4	4	3		11
Total	69	127	131	120	56	125	97	58	120	92	107	44	1146

(P) = President, (S) = Secretary, (T) = Treasure, (VP) = Vice-President / Months listed in **bold face** had scheduled Board meetings

Field Trips

The chapter sponsored six field trips for members and guests and during 2009 and 15 field trips for the public, as shown in *Table 2*. Member field trips are typically all-day events to sites throughout the county, focused on comprehensive identification of the plants encountered. Field trips for the public are only about 90 minutes long and focus identification and natural history of the common plants in local canyons and open space areas. Volunteers donated an estimated 30 hours for member’s field trips and a minimum of 117 hours for public field trips.

Table 2. Chapter Field Trips

Date	Destination	Leader(s)	Participants
Members Field Trips			
February 22	Torrey Pines State Park	Margaret Filius	13
March 15	Glorietta Canyon, Anza Borrego Desert State Park	Larry Hendrickson	20
March 22	Torrey Pines State Park	Margaret Filius	12
April 5	South Alpine	Kirsten Winter	10
April 26	Santa Ysabel	Jeri Hirshberg	15
Aug 9	Mount Laguna, Cleveland National Forest	Kay Stewart	15
Public Field Trips			
March 7	Crest Canyon	Arne Johanson (AJ), Adrienne Heinzelman (AH)	8
March 14	Manzanita Canyon	David Di Donato (DD), Jason Sundberg (JS)	30
March 21	Florida Canyon	Betsy Cory (BC), Paul Hormick (PH)	10
March 28	La Costa	Frank Landis (FL), Michael Murphy (MM)	NA
April 4	Cedar Ridge	BC, PH	10
April 11	Sweetwater River	DD, JS	1
April 18	Manchester Trails	AJ, AH	8
April 25	Penasquitos Canyon	FL,MM	NA
May 2	Dove Canyon	BC, PH	10
May 9	Marian Bear Park	FL	NA
May 16	Black Mountain	AJ, AH	NA
May 23	Tijuana Slough	DD, JS	12
September 5	Penasquitos Canyon	FL, MM	NA
September 13	Florida Canyon	Dave Flietner	15
September 26	Manchester Preserve	AJ, AH	NA

Programs

Program chairman Hank Kraus donated an estimated 80 hours to organize and present ten programs at chapter meetings during 2009, as shown on the in *Table 3*.

Table 3. Chapter Programs

Month	Speaker	Topic	Est. Attendance	Est. Expenses
Jan	Dan Songster	The Right Plant in the Right Place: California Natives for Particular Landscape Situations	70	\$50
Feb	Jonathan Dunn	San Clemente Island Habitat Recovery	70	\$50
March	Richard W. Halsey	Nature as the Enemy: Proposals to masticate, burn, and graze native plant communities in the name of "fire safety"	70	\$50
April	Nevin Smith	Native Treasures: Plant Encounters in the California Outback	70	\$300
May	Kristie Orosco	Real California Natives; Experience the food, drink and medicine	120	\$600
June	Greg Rubin	Native Landscape Myths and Legends	80	\$50
July	Jack Muir Laws	Finding Connection in Nature	80	\$300
Sept	Mike Evans	Save water...build habitat	100	\$50
Oct	Eric Bowlby	San Diego Canyonlands	70	\$50
Nov	Jared Underwood	Update on San Diego's Multiple Species Conservation Program	70	\$50

Newsletter

Ten issues of the chapter newsletter, typically 8-pages long, were produced and distributed during 2009. In addition, the first "new member's newsletter," describing chapter activities and volunteer opportunities, was produced this year. The two Newsletter committee volunteers, including Committee Chair Julie Janssen, volunteered an estimated 156 hours to produce the newsletter, at a cost of \$7200, including mailing.

Public Outreach

The Chapter participated in three public events this year: Earth Fair, the annual Earth Day celebration at Balboa Park, La Mesa Sustainability Fair, and a Surfrider Event. The committee reformed during the year and has three members, including Committee Chair David Varner, as well as volunteers who table at outreach events. An estimated 126 hours were volunteered at outreach events and in restructuring and organizing the committee.

Education

The Chapter has not been able to identify and education chair. Within the chapter the School Native Garden program has been started to provide design advice to schools. Locally, the Children for Nature Network would like to develop a native plant oriented outdoor curriculum; chapter members have attended these meetings, no one has agreed to take a leadership position.

Conservation

In 2009, the Conservation committee researched and wrote comment letters regarding: MSCP North, Merriam Mountains Master Planned Community, Gillespie Field EIR (*Ambrosia pumila* impacts), County General Plan draft EIR, and County Vegetation Management Report Final Draft (to the County of San Diego) and EIR for wetland deviations, Master Storm Water System Maintenance Program, West Lewis Mini-Park, and Sewer Design Guidelines (to the City of San Diego).

The Conservation Committee initiated a Legal Fund and raised \$3,160 in member donations, for a total fund of \$9,820, including contributions allocated by the Executive Board. The Legal Fund provided \$3,500 financial support to California Chaparral Institute to compel the County to follow CEQA disclosure requirements in its Vegetation Management plan's goal of reducing fire risk. We maintain that the procedures outlined in the plan have the potential to seriously reduce the health of native plant communities and that the plan must be submitted for CEQA review.

We initiated the chapter's support of the San Diego Environmental Report Card at the \$500 level. This project is led by League of Conservation Voters and prepared by Strategic Community Consulting at the UCSD School of International Relations and Pacific Studies. David Varner is the liaison to this group. This cooperative effort allowed the Conservation committee to share our understanding of environmental problems in the City with other environmental leaders.

The Conservation Committee has 6 active members, including Chair Carrie Schneider, who have contributed a total of 351 volunteer hours in 2009.

Work Parties

Volunteers donated an estimated 274 hours to maintain and enhance the Old Town Native Plant Garden, established by the chapter in cooperation with State Parks to showcase native plants to the public, at ten work parties during the course of the year under the leadership of Peter St. Clair and Kay Stewart. An additional 15 hours were donated at the Point Loma Native Plant Garden, where CNPS supports a San Diego River Park project.

Legislation

Peter St. Clair, Legislative Chair, volunteered about 30 hours attending meetings and communicating with staff and lobbyists on fire-related and other issues. In addition, he presented award from State and chapter to Sen. Christine Kehoe at our September meeting. Toward the end of the year, the Legislative committee was subsumed into the Conservation Committee.

Meetings were held with:

- Staff for Assembly Member Saldana re: solar energy initiatives, native plant protections;
- State Sen. Kehoe re: 2009/2010 action agenda. Implemented Kehoe's recommendation to work with CalFIRE staff to rewrite regulations effecting "defensible space" and we are awaiting CalFIRE response;

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- State Sen. Kehoe and staff re: fire, fuel management and protection for native plants.

Public testimony was given at:

- Joint State Senate/Assembly Committee on Emergency Services re: fire safety, defensible space, fuel management and protection for native plants;
- Two San Diego County Board of Supervisors Hearings re: Vegetation Management plan and insufficient evidence to support effectiveness of bulldozing fire breaks;
- City of San Diego blue ribbon commission on fire and brush management

Other contacts via phone or email were made with:

- Staff for State Sen. Ducheny re: Triple Border Fence mitigation;
- Staff for U.S. Sen. Boxer San Diego re: Triple Border Fence, mitigation, City of San Diego flood control issues (Tijuana River Valley and impasse with Army Corps of Engineers on permitting), energy taxation vs. cap and trade and desert solar projects.
- Staff for U.S. Sen. Feinstein re: desert solar permitting;
- former City of San Diego council member and State Assembly candidate Atkins;
- Assembly Member and State Senate candidate Salas re: water policy, groundwater recharge and removal of invasive plants.

Rare Plant Program

Fred Roberts, the chapter's Rare Plant Botanist, donated 78 hours on in 2009. He coordinated with U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and Eternal Hills Cemetery in Oceanside regarding *Brodiaea filifolia*; participated in a peer review of a *Navarretia fossalis* critical habitat proposal for USFWS; commented on proposed critical habitat for *Ambrosia pumila*, and reviewed CNDDDB records for *Navarretia fossalis*, including half of San Diego County's occurrences, for the California Department of Fish and Game. He also provided input on status changes for local sensitive plants for the *Rare Plant Inventory*, including restoring *Selaginella cinerascens* to the inventory and change of status of *Ericameria palmeri* ssp. *palmeri* and *Dieteria asteroides* ssp. *lagunensis*.

The Rare Plant Survey committee was formed in September with the intension of conducting a pilot program verifying old CNDDDB records of occurrences of *Acanthomintha ilicifolia*, a clay soil endemic with limited distribution. On November 18, committee members participated in an interagency meeting regarding monitoring and management of the species. Members volunteered an estimated 30 hours in 2009.

Plant Sale

Our October 17, 2009 Fall Plant Sale sold \$ \$31,746 worth of plants and other items to approximately 200 customers, yielding \$12,404 net profit and 33 new chapter members. Of the roughly 6,000 plants

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sold, about 1/10th were grown by our members at their homes. The Plant Sale also featured volunteers providing advice (“Ask the Experts”) and three presentations on gardening tips (“Natives for Novices”).

The Plant Sale committee relies on the teamwork of a strong and growing committee to make this large event work. We are trying to get more members to grow plants so one thing we started is the Propagation Workshop to teach and encourage new propagators. Member-grown plants has gradually increased as a portion of our sales, with about one new home propagator added each year. We pre-sold almost 20% of our sales. This required additional volunteer effort to pull the pre-orders while we are still setting up, but because space is limited at the venue, this has allowed us increase sales volume.

The Plant Sale Committee has 6 core members, including Carolyn Martus and Mary Kelly, Co-Chairs, and 50 volunteers who worked the day of the sale, who have contributed a total of 1066 volunteer hours in 2009.

Book and Poster Sales

Chair Cindy Burrascano and one committee member of the Book and Poster Sales committee volunteered 91 hours in administrative and sales duties at our monthly meeting and fall Plant Sale. The committee sold \$4,085 worth of books, posters, tee shirts, and plants (including \$3,395 at meetings, \$559 at the Fall Plant Sale, and \$689 at Public Outreach events).

Hospitality

The Hospitality Committee was revitalized under Chair Betsy Cory and 3 volunteers, who donated an estimated 67 hours to supply food and drink at ten monthly meetings. In addition, the Committee hosted a December pot-luck meeting and created banners that identify various chapter functions for tables at the monthly meetings.

Native Gardening

The Native Gardening committee was formed in February 2009. Several projects are in the planning or initial implementation stages. The School Garden program, wherein professionals volunteer to design native plant gardens for schools, has developed and posted an application form and posted it on the chapter website and has identified 5 designers and 1 “garden adopter” to assure long-term success of the garden. A series of 40 one or two page gardening brochures has been outlined and four brochures have been produced for sale at meetings and outreach events. An online gardening forum, the “Flora Fora” has been established on the chapter website, with a moderator and expert advisors responding to questions. “Natives for Novices” mini-seminars have been presented before monthly chapter meetings and at the Fall Plant sale. The committee’s 10 active members, including Chair Dave Flietner volunteered an estimated 207 hours.

Invasive Plants

This committee was revived in July 2009, and six active volunteers have attended monthly training sessions that began in October. There are two locations where training is conducted. Topics covered

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include safety considerations, herbicide labels, drilling techniques for palms, and cut-stump herbicide application. An estimated 67 hours were volunteered by Committee Chair Arne Johanson and weed control volunteers.

Website

Chair Mary Alice Kessler donated approximately 150 hours to maintenance of our chapter website.

Concerns

The chapter is in transition from a relatively tight-knit core group of volunteers who took on most of the responsibility and did most of the work to a more diffuse network of volunteers working as committees. This should provide the long-term benefit of increasing the number of potential future leaders and avoiding “succession crises” when a long-time leader steps down. It should also reduce the sense of “burn-out” among core members who have multiple responsibilities within the organization. This new approach presents communication and organizational challenges to me as President, with new leaders unfamiliar with the workings of the chapter and more experienced leaders resistant to loss of independent agency and increased bureaucratization, from my perspective. In 2010 I hope that new committee chairs and other chapter leaders will settle into their positions, develop their programs, and increase their effectiveness through enhanced communication and cooperation with other leaders.