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CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY  
*San Diego Chapter Newsletter*

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## **CHAPTER MEETING**

**Casa del Prado Room 101  
Balboa Park**

**July 17, 2018**

### Schedule

- 6:30 pm – Natives for Novices.**
- 7:00 pm – Refreshments, browsing, & socializing.**
- 7:30 pm - Announcements**
- 7:45 pm – Presentation**

Chapter meetings are free and open to the public.

**Presentation:  
Islas Revillagigedo, Remote  
Pacific Islands - a California  
Connection and Tropical  
Extremes  
by Tom Oberbauer**

The Revillagigedo Islands are a remote group of islands that consist of three islands and a large rock that range from 250 miles to 435 miles south and southwest of Cabo San Lucas. The largest is Socorro which ranges to over 3,300 feet in elevation and is 51 square miles in area. Clarion, the farthest out, is 7.6 square miles and San Benedicto, the closest one is 3.86 square miles. The rock is Roca Partida, a large sea stack far out in the ocean. They are semi-tropical but also have plants that are related to those in California and of course, southern Baja California. They all formed as the result of volcanic activity. San Benedicto violently erupted in 1952 and caused the extinction of an endemic form of rock wren.

All the islands support endemic species of plants and birds, and Socorro and Clarion were subjected to extensive sheep

grazing for approximately 100 years. The impact was extensive but the removal of the sheep by the Grupo de Ecología y Conservación de Islas and their partners including Island Conservation Ecology Group, has allowed the islands to make progress toward recovery.

In February 2017 an expedition was made to the Revillagigedo Islands, stopping at a series of other islands on the way: Acunson, San Roque and Magdalena Islands along the Baja California coast. Tom will provide a visual description of these fascinating, remote and little visited islands. He will describe the vegetation and many of the endemic species that inhabit the islands as well as some of the birds that utilize the islands as breeding areas.



View from the top of Socorro Island.



Tom Oberbauer is a third generation native San Diegan with a life-long passion for Baja California and, in particular, the nearby islands. Beginning while at San Diego State University, Tom worked for the County of San Diego for 35 years while indulging in visits to nearly all of the islands off the coast of Southern California and Baja California. His interests emphasize native and rare plants, but they also include all birds, mammals, and reptiles that inhabit the region.

# BOARD MEETING

**Tuesday, July 3, 6:30 – 9:00 p.m. NOTE: This is a different day because the first Wednesday is July 4, a holiday.** 4010 Morena Blvd, Suite 100, San Diego (Thomas Guide 1248 C4). CNPS-SD Executive Board meetings are always the first Wednesday of the month, except when the 1<sup>st</sup> Wednesday falls on a holiday. Members are welcome to attend as observers. To add an issue to the agenda, please email [president@cnpsd.org](mailto:president@cnpsd.org).

## FIELD TRIPS

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

~ Justin Daniel, Field Trip Chair

## CONSERVATION

### Conservation Committee

Contact Frank Landis at [conservation@cnpsd.org](mailto:conservation@cnpsd.org) for details about July's meeting.

### News from the World of Conservation

Halfway through the year, and no slowdown in sight. I don't really have a theme this month, other than an update on where CNPSSD conservation is at the moment.

- Thank you to those who donated to the CNPSSD legal fund. I'm going to keep begging for donations because, as you'll see below, they're likely to be needed. I don't like writing this any more than you like reading this, but this year is, in bulk, a concerted attempt by moneyed interests to roll back the environmental gains of the last 50 years. We can't assume anything is safe. If you can't donate, come to meetings and speak up. If you can't come to meetings, donate what you can to CNPSSD and other environmental groups.

- Bundling of County General Plan Amendments hasn't gone away, as I'd fondly hoped it might. As I write this, Lilac Hills Ranch is going to the Board of Supervisors, with only trivial alterations to what we voted down in 2016. The County Planning Commission passed it straight through, even though County Planning had counseled that they needed to hear more testimony. If

you haven't contacted your county supervisor about this, please do so. The script is in previous newsletters, or you can contact me at [conservation@cnpsd.org](mailto:conservation@cnpsd.org).

- Newland Sierra is set to be heard by the County Planning Commission June 28 and 29. Presumably by the time you read this, it will be on its way to the County Supervisors, since the majority of the County Planning Board right now approves projects no matter what testimony they get. More than other projects, there is well-organized opposition to this one, but like the others, it is likely to end up in court. It has all the same problems of putting expensive homes in high fire danger areas, degrading wildlife movement corridors and human movement corridors alike (in this case, the human corridors are Deer Springs Road and I-15), and the developer is from out of town.

- This morning I just read Tim Draper's initiative to split California into three states. While I think it's a bad idea, we do have to take this more seriously than most of us took the candidacy of the current President or the British establishment took the Brexit initiative. There's a lot of discontent out there, and powerful people (Draper's reportedly a billionaire) are tapping into that discontent for their own ends.

The fundamental problem with Draper's initiative is that it takes one extremely powerful state and breaks it into three weaker states. Good for those who want power (such as billionaires), bad for those who need strong, lawful governments to protect them. In San Diego's case, we'd be the biggest city in "Southern California" which would consist of us, Orange County, and all the desert and San Joaquin Valley counties. Since we're the most liberal county in the bunch, I suspect that, were the split to happen, CEQA, the California Endangered Species Act, and the California Coast Act would likely be thrown out in "Southern California" and we'd see LA style sprawl, powered by a few wealthy landowners, much as we see in the Central Valley today. So, this initiative is likely NOT good news for us conservationists.

Poor little snowflakes, the secessionists might crow, but I'll point out the more interesting problem that they might care about. The initiative (which you can read online) only specifies which counties are to go to which state—Northern California, California, or Southern California. The state named "California" would consist of "the territory represented by the following six (6) counties: Los Angeles, Monterey, San Benito, San Luis Obispo, Santa Barbara and Ventura." (from the

initiative). The problem with this is two words: water rights.

By my reading, the new capital of California would be Los Angeles, and all the water regulations, interstate agreements, and water rights issues would devolve to— Los Angeles, as the biggest city in the newly shrunk state of California. Yes, all the aqueducts that feed LA would traverse “Southern California,” but it’s not clear if our new state would retain any right to the water in those canals. I predict a long, messy fight over who gets what to drink, made longer and messier because all the other states in the Colorado River Basin would fight to get more water out of the river, leveraging the mess that the senior-most partner (current California) had devolved into. I’m not a water expert, but it’s even possible that little “Southern California” would become the junior-most partner when it comes to getting water from the Colorado River, and we’d also have to fight “Northern California” to get enough water from them. Or we could just send our thirsty surplus people north to settle in the Sacramento Valley.

So if you know anyone who is for this misguided initiative, ask them how they feel about LA running the water system of the tri-state area, with San Diego county at the back of the line. This initiative isn’t a good change, it’s something cooked up by some very powerful people, and it’s worth asking whether it’s to our benefit or only to their benefit.

And yes, take this seriously enough to vote against it in the fall, if it makes it to the ballot.

- To close out the news, I’ll turn from the world of local and state politics to the world of fashion, specifically, dudleya poaching. You may have heard of the case of two Koreans and a Chinese man who were convicted of poaching thousands of *Dudleya farinosa* from a park in Humboldt County, or of the Korean team who was caught poaching *Dudleya pachyphytum* off the sea cliffs of Cedros Island using a helicopter.

What’s going on is that there’s a current fad for succulents among the hipsters of South Korea and Japan, and it’s catching on in China. The fad reportedly started among U.S. hipsters (succulents being easy plants to care for in swanky apartments) and it has caught on in South Korea. Since Korea’s the fashion leader in the region, it’s also catching on in China and Japan.

The problem is that dudleyas are worth \$50-\$1,000 per rosette in South Korea, so people are harvesting and smuggling them. Yes, Korean summers are hot and

muggy, so I have no idea how well dudleyas actually will do there (they prefer hot and dry) or how long they’ll survive there. Yes, dudleyas are easy to germinate and grow in the right conditions, although they take a couple of years to bloom. And that’s the problem, really. It’s a fad, and fads boom and bust. Presumably succulent growers already have trays of dudleya seedlings sprouting in their greenhouses for the market, but who knows if the fad is going to be around when the plants hit maturity?

So that’s the long-term strategy to get rid of the poachers: flood the market with cheap, captive-grown plants. In the meantime, poachers are waking up to the possibility of making easy money by harvesting succulents and airmailing them overseas. All species of *Dudleya* are at risk, and we’re going to have to do something about it if we want these little cuties around.

What you can do. First, if you know a patch of dudleyas, even something as common as *Dudleya pulverulenta* but particularly the rarer species, keep a regular eye on it. If you see someone harvesting illegally, get pictures of them in action, their car, and their car license plate. Send that information to CDFW’s CalTIP: 1-888-334-CalTIP (888-334-2258) or <https://www.wildlife.ca.gov/Enforcement/CalTIP>. Poaching is theft and often trespassing, and people are getting prosecuted successfully when they’re caught. If you’re a succulent expert, feel free to add in your two cents about how well dudleyas will grow in the hot, humid summers on the Korean peninsula, and encourage people to start propagating dudleyas for the Asian market to make poaching less profitable.

~ Frank Landis, Conservation Chair

## GARDENING WITH NATIVES

### Native Gardening Committee Meeting

**July 11.** The Native Gardening Committee meets the 2nd Wednesday of each month at various locations. Contact [gardening@cnpssd.org](mailto:gardening@cnpssd.org) for location and time.

### Seed Sorting Parties Sundays, July 22 and August 5

**9 am – Noon at Tecalote Nature Center**

Mark your calendars for the CNPS-SD Seed and Bulb Team's next sorting parties where we sort and label

seed we sell at the October Plant Sale. No experience necessary. Come join the fun and meet fellow CNPS members while bagging, labeling and cleaning seeds. If you have seeds to donate, please let me know and bring them with you or arrange to drop them off ahead of time. Mark your calendars!

~ **Cindy Hazuka**, Seeds & Bulbs Committee Chair

## California Native Plant Club of San Dieguito Academy Wins Big at the San Diego County Fair.

Led by 14-year old Elizabeth Hazard, San Dieguito Academy's California Native Plant Club's garden entry received five awards. The club's 8-member team planned, designed, constructed and installed the 15' X 20' garden. True to the club's name it is comprised of California's native plants. A diverse garden using 37 different species with 18 species propagated by a club member. The design is very well done with appropriate plants grouped together, paths, seating, native bee nesting area, water feature and of course their California Native Plant Club Headquarters. CNPS San Diego wasn't the only group impressed, they received awards and prize money from San Diego Horticulture Society, San Diego Floral Association, San Diego Botanical Garden and The San Diego County Fair as well. The fair's theme this year is "How Sweet it is" and CNPC used Gumplant (*Grindelia* spp.) as a sub theme. It is a great example of native plants in the garden for the San Diego County Fair's million or so visitors to enjoy and hopefully they will join the growing club of native plant enthusiasts.



Details of the San Dieguito Academy CNPC display.

## San Diego Horticultural Society's County Fair garden entry wins "Best Use of Native Plants" from CNPS-SD

Designed by Terry Chamberlin and installed by SD Horticultural Society's member volunteers. A beautiful mixed garden with well over half being California natives and the rest climate appropriate Mediterranean species. CNPS San Diego chose this garden for "Best Use of Native Plants" in the professional category. Overall using 34 different species of California's native plants. The signage and information avenues for visitors to learn about native plants and how to plug them in is outstanding. A true asset for the native plant community, as a whole, to have such an informative display up for the San Diego County Fair's million or so visitors to enjoy.



San Dieguito Academy's California Native Plant Club's garden entry at the fair received an award from CNPS-SD for "Best Use of Native Plants" and four awards from other organizations.





## CNPS-SD at EcoFair

CNPSSD set up the chapter's exhibit at a mini-EcoFair hosted by the HG Fenton Corporation in April. **Joseph Sochor, Katy Chappaz** and **Kay Stewart** staffed the exhibit. They gave away brochures, answered questions, and met reps from other local environmental groups. Joseph brought a bouquet of native flowers from his garden, and Kay brought a blooming branch of *Ceanothus leucodermis* from Santa Ysabel.



CNPS-SD Display at EcoFair

## Native Plant Landscape in Old Town State Historic Park

### Old Town Native Plant Landscape Needs YOU!

**July 14, Saturday; 9:30 a.m. to noon.** It is seen by more visitors than any other native plant landscape in San Diego. A few die-hard members have tended it for ten years. We hope more CNPS members will come help us and bond with it.

Please come help us grub out unwanted non-native pest plants. Bring your own gloves and hand tools or share ours. Bring water and sun protection. After we hit the

noon hour, some of us will go for a no-host lunch. The landscape is at the corner of Congress and Taylor Streets. Park for free in the lot off Calhoun Street, past the green dumpsters.

Questions? Contact Kay or Peter at [OldTownLandscape@cnpssd.org](mailto:OldTownLandscape@cnpssd.org).

~ Kay Stewart

## BOTANY

### Prehistoric SD County, Part 4

#### Desert

During the Pleistocene, the San Diego County deserts would have looked very different. The coniferous forest would have grown far down slope onto the leeward side of the mountains into the upper deserts. *Acer macrophyllum* (Big leaf maple) grew in stands on the upper slopes. Lower down, *Pinus monophylla* (Single leaf pinyon) grew down to the desert floor near Blair Valley and Oriflamme Canyon.

Granite Mtn and the Pinyon Mtns not far from Earthquake Valley (aka Shelter Valley) as well as the slopes of the San Ysidro Mountains, and the slopes of Rabbit Peak northeast of Borrego near the San Diego/Riverside County Line were covered with coniferous forest of *Pinus jeffreyi* (Jeffrey pines), maybe some *Pinus coulteri* (Coulter pines), *Quercus chrysolepis* (Canyon live oak) and *Juniperus occidentalis* (Western junipers). *Pinus flexilis* (Limber pine) grew on Rabbit Peak. They were predominantly coniferous forest but the deciduous tree *Quercus kelloggii* (California black oak) would have also been found on the western parts.

Juniper woodland grew in Borrego Palm Canyon with 14 inches of precipitation per season. The Junipers occurred in groves around the perimeter of Borrego Valley except for the very sandy areas and the bottom of the Borrego Sink, the low point of the basin in the valley, that held water during winter and spring. Clark Lake was also full of water most of the year and was surrounded by Juniper and Pinyons. South toward Ocotillo and east toward Ocotillo Wells, the vegetation gradually dried and thinned. The Junipers dropped out to the east of Borrego Valley and near what is now the east County Line, the vegetation was semi-desert scrub with *Larrea tridentata* (Creosote bush) and *Fouquieria splendens* (Ocotillo). This vegetation would have existed on the eastern and southern edges of the County where rainfall was roughly 5-6 inches a season. The snow would have occasionally reached the desert floor.

However, during summer, monsoonal moisture still occurred on the floor of the desert, augmenting the winter/spring rainfall.

The Mesquite Bosque near Borrego Sink was large, covering thousands of acres of the floor of the valley and creating a forest of thorny small trees. *Washingtonia filifera* (Desert fan palm) would have extended down farther into the floor of the desert, displaced from the higher elevations by the colder temperatures. They were able to extend farther down due to the increased precipitation and runoff into the valley floors because of increased levels of runoff in the canyon stream courses. However, at the bottom of the valley, cold winter night temperatures would have also limited their growth since cold air flows downhill. Herds of American camels and Zebras moved across the valley in scattered locations, following the open areas among the Junipers. Three of the big cats, the Saber-toothed cat, American lion and Jaguar were also present. Mammoths fed on a variety of the vegetation but favored the riparian woodlands along the drainages much as the one that exists in Coyote Canyon today. Dire wolves were also present, moving over from the outer edges of the 2,200 square mile Lake Cahuilla just east of what is now the County line. The lake just touched the eastern boundary of what is now San Diego County at Ocotillo Wells. In terms of precipitation, the lake existed in the portion of the region that received the least actual rainfall, however, it existed due to the runoff from mountainous areas to the north and east with the exception of the drainages that ended in the Borrego Sink mentioned above.

Desert vegetation surrounded the lake on the west but grassy meadows grew on the edges as well and wetlands with some riparian forests existed in the drainages that approached the lake from the west and east. However, the lake's basin was large enough so that now it holds the Salton Sea, and it would have enhanced vicinity's moisture. Its shores would have generated moist vegetation that served as grazing and browsing food for herbivores, which in turn served as the basis for carnivores. *Yucca brevifolia* (Joshua tree) grew on both sides of the lake especially on the lower hills (Rinehard and McFarlane 1995).

A trip down what is now County Highway S-2 from Borrego Springs over Sweeny Pass and all the way down to Ocotillo would have passed from Junipers to Pinyons over Sweeny Pass to Junipers again in the shadow of forested Laguna Mountains, often white capped from periodic snows. San Felipe Valley, which currently

supports a large riparian area, would have been even more forested, including the terrain surrounding the existing marsh at the intersection of S-2 and State Route 78 and the marsh at the beginning of Sentenac Canyon at Sentenac Cienega. Earthquake, or Shelter, Valley would have been a moist meadow of grasses and browsable shrubs with bands of *Antilocapra americana* (Pronghorn) in various parts. As mentioned, the upper portions of the Pinyon Mountains would have been clothed with forest. Most of the uplands were vegetated with Junipers but the Pinyons were present in the low ridge through which Box Canyon passes, connecting Granite Mountain and Whale Peak. Farther south, the entire Vallecito Valley would have been a marshy, mesquite and riparian woodland area with seeps and standing water created by runoff from the Laguna Mountains to the west. Continuing to the south, the vegetation began to dry more significantly past Agua Caliente Park and Canebrake. Approaching the area of Mountain Palm Springs, the *Washingtonia filifera* grew down past the modern location of the road and crossed it. They had thickly thatched trunks and branches with leaves that glistened and moved in the afternoon breeze. The entire low area affected by Carrizo Creek was vegetated with a Mesquite Bosque and the existing Carrizo Creek marsh near the County Line with Imperial County was vast and held standing water. This far south, the surroundings were no longer Junipers but low desert of *Fouquieria splendens* (Ocotillo) and *Larrea tridentata* (Creosote bush) and it continued down to the town of modern day Ocotillo. Traveling up the Mountain Springs Grade into the area of Jacumba, one would have passed through more *Washingtonia filifera* groves and back into Junipers and Pinyon pines until at the top of the grade around Jacumba, Jeffrey pines would have been mixed in with the Pinyons, Chaparral and Junipers.

The vegetation during the Pleistocene would have been very interesting with the displacement of the various vegetation communities to lower elevations and farther south than they currently grow. The level of vegetative growth must have been phenomenal to support the mass numbers of large mammalian wildlife, particularly the major grazers, browsers and predators. It would have been a fascinating place to visit but the safety of an individual human in the midst of all of these predators would have been easily compromised if one was left alone. The native people would have worked in harmony to keep from having continual losses from predators, though the amount of grazing and browsing animals generated a good food supply for humans as

well as the carnivorous predators.

~ Tom Oberbauer, President

References that support the imagined habitat conditions:

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Oberbauer, T. A. 2013c. Searching for Representatives of Previous Eras; A Mysterious Canyon. San Diego Chapter Newsletter September California Native Plant Society. September

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Oberbauer, T. A. 2013c. Searching for Representatives of Previous Eras; A Mysterious Canyon Part 3 San Diego Chapter Newsletter September California Native Plant Society. December.

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Rinehart, R. B. and D. A. McFarlane. 1995. Early Holocene Vegetation Record from the Salton Basin, California. Quaternary Research 43:259-262.

Stock, C. 1992. Rancho La Brea: A record of Pleistocene life in California. 7th ed. Revised by J.M. Harris. Science Series no.37. Los Angeles: Natural History.

Websites with information on birds and animals, extinct and living:

- [https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Clarks\\_Nutcracker/lifehistory](https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Clarks_Nutcracker/lifehistory)
- [https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Pileated\\_Woodpecker/lifehistory](https://www.allaboutbirds.org/guide/Pileated_Woodpecker/lifehistory)
- <http://www.sdnhm.org/exhibitions/fossil-mysteries/fossil-field-guide-a-z/camel/>
- <http://www.sdnhm.org/exhibitions/fossil-mysteries/fossil-field-guide-a-z/dire-wolf/>
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- <https://www.si.edu/spotlight/passenger-pigeon>
- <https://prehistoric-fauna.com/Euceratherium>
- <https://prehistoric-fauna.com/Homotherium-serum>
- <http://library.sandiegozoo.org/factsheets/ extinct/smilodon/smilodon.htm>
- [http://library.sandiegozoo.org/factsheets/ extinct/cheetah1\\_american/cheetah1\\_american.html](http://library.sandiegozoo.org/factsheets/ extinct/cheetah1_american/cheetah1_american.html)

## Related Activities

### Audubon Society

Silverwood Wildlife Sanctuary is open to the public on Sundays from 9 am to 4 pm, October through July, so July will be the last month to visit before the hot

weather hiatus. Arrange group tours by contacting Phil Lambert, the resident manager, at (619) 443-2998.

## Wetland/Riparian Plant Identification

**Emphasis on Southern California Species & Habitats:** [www.cnps.org/workshops](http://www.cnps.org/workshops)

**Dates:** August 7-9, 2018 (Tuesday - Thursday).

**Location:** Tijuana River National Estuarine Research Reserve, Imperial Beach, CA.

**Instructor:** David Magney, Rare Plant Program Manager, CNPS.

**Registration:** \$375 CNPS Members/\$395 Non-Members.

## Anza Borrego Desert Botany Society

The Botany Society is a volunteer organization that assists Park staff to preserve, document and interpret the Park's flora. New Botany Society members must complete the Botany Certification Course – a 12-week series of classroom sessions and outdoor hands-on field trips on Mondays (usually 9 am to 3 pm) January through March. The next course begins January 7, 2019.

More info is at:

<http://www.anzaborregobotany.org/join-us>

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 10<sup>th</sup> of the month preceding the newsletter; that is, July 10 for the August newsletter, etc. Please submit items to [newsletter@cnpsd.org](mailto:newsletter@cnpsd.org)



## CNPS-SD Activities Calendar

### July 2018

- 7/3: Board Meeting, p.2
- 7/14: Old Town Landscape Workday, p.6
- 7/11: Garden Committee Mtg, p. 6
- 7/17: Chapter Meeting, p.1
- 7/22: Seed Sorting Party, p.3
- 8/1: Board Meeting, p.2
- 8/5: Seed Sorting Party, p.3

**MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION**

\_\_\_ Student or Limited Income \$25; \_\_\_ Individual \$45; \_\_\_ Family \$75  
\_\_\_ Plant Lover \$100; \_\_\_ Patron \$300; \_\_\_ Benefactor \$600; \_\_\_ Mariposa Lily \$1,500

Name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ e-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

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

**CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY**

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July 2018 Newsletter

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

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