



# SAN GABRIEL MOUNTAINS

CHAPTER OF THE CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

APRIL, MAY, JUNE 2000

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## DATES TO REMEMBER

- Sat., Apr. 8, 8 am to 11 am:** *Santa Fe Dam Wildlife Area* with Mickey Long
- Sun., Apr. 9, 9 am:** *Eaton Canyon Plant Walk* with Eva Morgan
- Thurs., Apr. 20 at 7:30 pm:** *Africanized Honey Bees* by Kelly Middleton
- Sat., May 6, 9 am -1 pm:** *North Etiwanda Habitat Preserve* with Steve Fischer
- Sun., May 14, 9 am:** *Eaton Canyon Plant Walk* with Gabi & Cliff McLean
- Thurs., May 18 at 7:30 pm:** *California Chaparral: Flowers, Fire & Flood* by Ron Quinn
- Thurs., June 15 at 7:30 pm:** *Madrona Marsh* by Walt Wright
- Sun., June 11, 9 am:** *Eaton Canyon Plant Walk* with Rick Fisher

## WELCOME! New members

- John & Dorothy Chambless  
 Richard Coleman  
 Brack & Elizabeth Duker  
 Liz Glick  
 John C. MacGregor IV  
 Marsha & Harmut Wisch

## WHAT SHALL WE DO? WHERE SHALL WE GO?

*Kathy LaShure*

For years my husband Rich and I have spent nearly all our vacation time at our place just north of Bishop. We've worked on our native plant landscaping, explored the desert, hiked into the Sierra high country. But for the past two Springs we have traveled to the Colorado Plateau—last year for just a few days, this year for a week. It's amazing what a complete change of scenery will do for your soul. Just describing our little town of Sierra Madre to bed-and-breakfast hosts in other small towns, made me realize how precious our foothill communities are with their slower pace and hiking trails leading into the San Gabriel Mountains.



Of course mid-March was too early for any wildflowers. In fact, our last morning included a drive through a nasty snow storm with cars sliding off the highway! But the Anasazi and

Sinagua ruins and the red rock mesas and canyons were spectacularly scenic. At Wupatki National Monument, north of Flagstaff, I noted that the removal of cattle in the late 1980s had allowed at least five native bunch grasses to return. And we had the thrill of seeing pronghorn, perky roadside prairie dogs, orioles returning to their San Juan River cottonwood homes, a surprisingly sleek and swift badger, and a pair of golden eagles snatching a road-kill jackrabbit from a pack of ravens.

Before we left on our trip I received a letter from David Chipping, CNPS Vice President for Conservation. Let me share some of it with you.

“It is hard to find Mother Nature looking her finest these days. Too often she is having a ‘bad hair day’, or is feeling out of sorts. She will be griping about the



*cont. page 2*

noise of machines disturbing her peace, or the pesky farm animals and weeds that are invading her domain. She used to have her house in order, and in a state of peace and balance, but now she has to endure increasing discord. She feels used and even despoiled, although she will usually turn a glad and appreciative eye toward members of CNPS.”

“There are times and place when Mother still looks good, and where the old balances of predator and prey, light and dark, and birth and death still play out their ageless rhythms. Usually these are places that have not been exploited or invaded as much as the rest. These are our traditional wilderness, which is sometimes hard to reach but usually worth the effort. Sometimes it is not as pure as we might expect, as hikers on some cow pie-bespattered trail might observe. Sometimes there are no frogs because fishermen wanted lakes stocked with unnatural fish. Sometimes the pack train camps on the stream orchids. But there will be the quiet. The wildflowers will usually be in their appointed places, and you will be mostly glad of heart.”

Now David’s words were written to encourage CNPS members to attend and/or support the May 5-7, 2000 California Wilderness Conference (remember the inspiring presentation that Bill Ritter gave to us last fall about their work). And you can do that by contacting them at 530-753-0382 or [info@calwild.org](mailto:info@calwild.org).

But it takes more than organizations and money to protect our wild natural heritage. It also takes the passion and commitment that come from knowing Mother up close and personal. So I hope you’ll hit some trails this spring and summer.

## CHAPTER PROGRAMS

*Meetings are held at Eaton Canyon Nature Center (map on back cover) on the third Thursday of the month.*

**Thurs., Apr. 20 at 7:30 pm:** *Africanized Honey Bees* by Kelly Middleton, Education Specialist for the San Gabriel Valley Mosquito & Vector Control District. She will discuss the history of these insects, their introduction and subsequent spread into North America, and their current distribution, as well as the details of their biology and behavior which have made them such a successful invader. We’ll also hear about safety concerns and preventative measures, including information on who to contact under various situations.



**Thurs., May 18 at 7:30 pm:** *California Chaparral: Flowers, Fire & Flood* by Ron Quinn, Professor of Biology, Cal Poly Pomona and author of a forthcoming book on this subject from U. C. Press. California chaparral is one of the most common and conspicuous plant communities of the state. It clothes the steep foothills of southern and northern California with the only natural vegetation capable of preventing catastrophic floods and debris flows. Much of the time, when it is not on fire, chaparral is dismissed by many people as “brush”, dense, dry, impenetrable, and uninteresting. In reality it contains a surprisingly rich and diverse flora, containing many plants that are only seen in the years following fire.

**Thurs., June 15 at 7:30 pm:** *Madrona Marsh* by Walt Wright. Wetlands are increasingly rare throughout California and the surviving wetlands are often threatened. In a “show and tell” format Walt will share his knowledge of this enclosed basin within the El Segundo dune system. We’ll find out what it is, where it came from and where it’s going. This preserve, managed by the Torrance Parks Department, has a good diversity of plants and 219 species of birds have been sighted there.

**NOTE:** The Chapter will take a break from monthly activities over the summer. That means no meetings, outings or Plant Walks in July and August. Look for another newsletter in late August/early September with our Fall activities. But there are plenty of places to seek out California flora on your own. If you’re web-savvy try [calphoto.com](http://calphoto.com) or [theodorepayne.org](http://theodorepayne.org) for the latest on wildflower blooms. Also some National Park and U. S. Forest Service websites have information on native plants. And don’t forget to log onto [cnps.org](http://cnps.org)—the all new website is superb! So have fun on your summer vacation and take some pictures to share at our next members slide show.

## CHAPTER OUTINGS

**Sat., Apr. 8, 8 am to 11 am:** *Santa Fe Dam Wildlife Area* with Mickey Long. The wildlife area, part of the County Regional Park, contains virtually the last remnant of the alluvial scrub habitat in the San Gabriel Valley, with Parry Cholla, Prickly-Pear and some of the largest Yuccas and Laurel Sumacs around. Most years wildflowers, including some uncommon species, cover the open ground between shrubs. Once home to California Gnatcatchers, the area still harbors healthy populations of Cactus Wrens, Roadrunners and Lesser Nighthawks. We'll walk from the Interpretive Center parking area through the native scrub habitat at the north end of the basin.

*Directions:* Take Arrow Hwy. east off the 605 Fwy. Turn left (north) on Azusa Canyon Rd. at the entrance to Santa Fe Dam County Park. Meet at this corner for car pooling into the Park. There may be a per car entrance fee. If you miss us here, enter the Park passing the Entrance Kiosk; turn right (north) a short distance then left into the Interpretive Center parking area. Contact Mickey for further information: 626-398-5420 days; 616-285-8878 eves.

**Sun., Apr. 9 at 9:00 am:** *Eaton Canyon Plant Walk* with Eva Morgan. We've finally had some rain. Come see how the plants responded.

**Sat., May 6, 9 am -1 pm:** *North Etiwanda Habitat Preserve* with Steve Fischer. This preserve, located at the foot of the eastern San Gabriel Mountains, contains rare inland freshwater marsh habitat in the middle of possibly the purest stand of white sage. Day Creek runs nearby, and the upper Day Canyon is quite pristine. The diversity of habitat provides for numerous species from the Sage Scrub; Chaparral; Riparian; and Marsh plant communities. Plummer's Mariposa Lily is likely to be found, and it is possible we may see the uncommon Alaska Rein Orchid. Species from the animal kingdom are plentiful—large mammals to invertebrates (come prepared for snakes and ticks, as well). We will take an easy ½-mile hike to the marsh, and later take the moderately easy 1-mile hike to the mouth of Day Canyon.

*Directions:* Go east on the 10 Fwy to the 15 Fwy north to the Foothill exit; turn right to the In & Out Burger at 12599 Foothill Blvd. We'll meet there and carpool the last 5 min. into the preserve. Contact Steve for further info: (323) 254-0690 days; (323) 280-4829 pager.

**Sun., May 14 at 9:00 am:** *Eaton Canyon Plant Walk* with Gabi & Cliff McLean. Bring your Mother to Eaton Canyon for her special day.

**Sun., June 11 at 9:00 am:** *Eaton Canyon Plant Walk* with Rick Fisher. The last Plant Walk until next fall.



## WILDFLOWER WATERCOLORS

The illustrations in this edition of the Chapter newsletter are by Elizabeth Hallowell Saunders. They come from a slim 1905 volume entitled *California Wildflowers: 12 Reproductions in Natural Colors from Water Color Drawings*. The lovely drawings (which I wish I could reproduce in color) are accompanied by charming descriptions of the flowers and where they can be found. I found a copy of this delightful publication in the *Greene & Greene Library*.

Elizabeth Saunders was the first wife of Charles Francis Saunders. They were Quakers who married in Pennsylvania in 1902 and then moved to Pasadena where they resided on Lake Ave. just north of Colorado Blvd. Their house was surrounded by a garden of California native plants.

Mr. Saunders wrote popular books on Southern California including *Under the Sky in California* and *With the Flowers and Trees in California* (one of the first books I read about our native flora) with illustrations by Elizabeth Saunders.

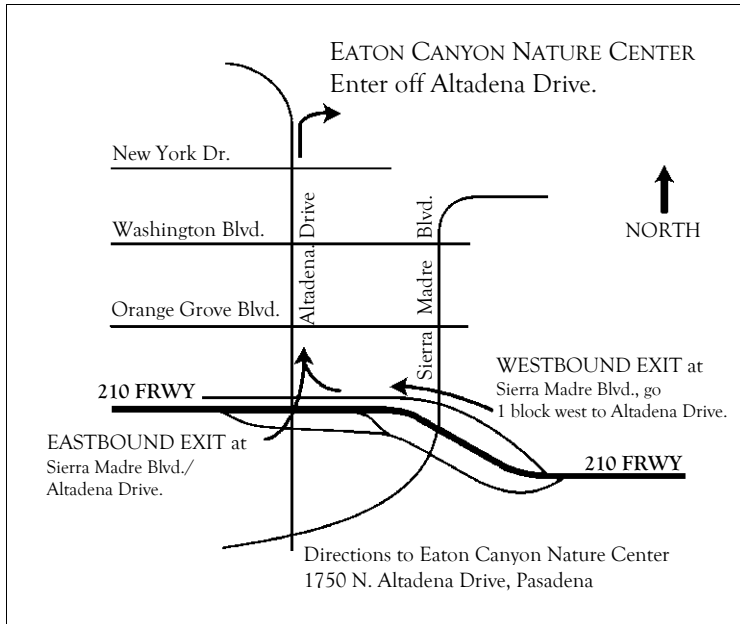
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*The Newsletter of the San Gabriel Mountains Chapter of the California Native Plant Society is published bi-monthly and is free to Chapter members. Non-member subscription is \$5.00.*

*To join the California Native Plant Society, write to CNPS, 909 Twelfth St., Suite 116, Sacramento, CA 95814.*

*Please specify San Gabriel Mountains Chapter. Enclose check payable to CNPS.*

*Membership categories: Individual/Library - \$35; Student/Retired/Limited Income - \$20; Family/Group - \$45; Supporting - \$75; Plant Lover - \$100; Patron - \$250.00; Life - \$1000.*



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**Dedicated to the Preservation of the California Native Flora**

*The California Native Plant Society is a statewide nonprofit organization of amateurs & professionals with a common interest in California's native plants. The mission of the Society is to increase understanding & appreciation of California's native plants & to preserve them in their natural habitat through scientific activities, education, & conservation. Membership is open to all.*

*Membership includes the quarterly journal Fremontia, the quarterly Bulletin which gives statewide news & announcements of Society activities & conservation issues, & the chapter newsletter.*



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