

CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY MARIN CHAPTER



Cardamine californica - milkmaids, by Vernon Smith

February 2021 Newsletter

FERN, a Collaboration to Protect Natural Resources in Wildfire Risk Reduction Projects

Marin CNPS has joined with [Marin Audubon Society](#) and the [Environmental Action Committee of West Marin](#) to form FERN, the Fire and Environment Resilience Network.

Through FERN we are working together to protect Marin's natural resources as the [Marin Wildfire Prevention Authority \(MWPA\)](#) and its 17 member agencies ramp up their vegetation removal, education, and other work to reduce fire risk. MWPA was created and funded last March by the passage of Measure C. FERN is meant to complement MWPA's Ecologically Sound Practices (ESP) Partnership committees which are working on the development of best practices for MWPA's vegetation management and defensible space projects.



Marin Audubon Society, Environmental Action Committee of West Marin,
California Native Plant Society (Marin Chapter) & friends
Integrating environment with fire protection

- FERN members meet regularly and attend and participate in Board of Directors and various committee meetings of the MWPA.
- FERN's early input intends to influence MWPA's new organizational structure, goals, and norms. This could help MWPA effectively and legally accomplish its mission to: "develop and implement a comprehensive wildfire prevention and emergency preparedness plan" consistent with protection of Marin's rich and diverse native plant communities.
- FERN encourages agency staff to follow the legally binding provisions of the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) and advocates for adequate environmental review of individual projects including consideration of their cumulative impacts.

- FERN will research and present relevant information that protects plant communities and the wildlife that depend on them to enlighten fire agencies' project planning and implementation.
- FERN will review wildfire prevention projects and CEQA environmental review documents of the MWPA and its participating agencies. The result will be critical and constructive recommendations

based on identified best management practices and requirements for CEQA review and mitigation.

As an example, this past summer, FERN wrote to the [Southern Marin Fire Department](#), objecting to the mowing of over an acre within threatened plant habitat on Marin County's Ring Mountain Preserve. Approximately 1,000 feet was mowed beyond what was needed to create defensible space for residences. Ring Mountain is renowned for its rare serpentine soil and sensitive plants. According to the California Center for Natural History (2018), "Ring Mountain is a geological, botanical, and conservation wonder." ** Two extremely rare plants, the threatened Marin dwarf flax (*Hesperolinon congestum*) and the rare Tiburon buckwheat (*Eriogonum luteolum* var. *caninum*), both annual species, were along the roadside growing with the flammable grassland and flowering and/or in fruit/seed at the time. Continued destruction of these reproductive structures



Hesperolinon congestum - Marin western dwarf flax (Vernon Smith)



Eriogonum luteolum var. *caninum* - Tiburon buckwheat (Vernon Smith)

threatens population densities and the viability of local populations. This mowing also opened up the area, leaving it vulnerable to invasion by non-native species.

Marin CNPS will continue to collaborate with its FERN partners to ensure that natural resources are protected as the MWPA, its participating agencies, and [FIRESafe Marin](#) work to reduce fire risk in Marin's Wildland Urban Interface (WUI).

** <https://calnature.org/blog/2018/6/4/serpentine-sunsets-ring-mountain>

Marin Chapter Meeting: "Wildfire in California Landscapes"

Guest Speaker: Jim Bishop

February 8 @ 7:30 pm via Zoom

Zoom link to attend will be emailed that morning.

The behavior of wildfires is determined by the "fire environment": terrain, fuels, and weather. It can vary from smoldering to raging, from benign to destructive. Understanding how wildfires behave is basic to understanding fire control, fire effects, the beneficial use of fire, and the nature of threats to property such as homes. Fire behavior is a key to understanding and addressing the "fire problem".



Crown Fire in Timber
by Jim Bishop



Results of Hot Crown Burn - Storrie Fire
by Jim Bishop

This overview will introduce you to how the fire environment affects fire behavior...the key roles of humidity, fuel type, seasonal drying, slope and wind. We'll consider typical fire rates-of-spread, firebrands, how fire will respond to changing conditions, and some common fire-weather processes. We'll take a look at the role of fire behavior in such things as presumed "natural" fire, fire's effects on fuel levels, current fire regimes, and structure loss.

Jim Bishop retired from a career in Cal Fire, much of

which was spent in wildland fire control and training. He is trained as a Fire Behavior Analyst (FBAN) and has filled that position on major fires and prescribed burns, has taught in several national fire-behavior courses, served on the FBAN national steering committee, and has developed materials used in those courses. He developed and taught a simplified method for applying the standard fire-behavior model for use by firefighters on the fire line.



Fire in Maritime Chaparral by Jim Bishop

Volunteer Spotlight: Jane Medley

When Jane Medley graduated from Cal, she went on a backpacking trip to Yosemite. She stayed over 40 years! In retirement, Jane returned to her native Marin and began exploring many local areas she had not visited in her early days, joining both Marin CNPS and Marin Audubon Society (MAS). As field trip coordinator for MAS and Book Sale Chair for Marin CNPS, Jane is a gem in the jewel string of women environmentalists in Marin.



Jane Medley

While in Yosemite National Park, Jane wore a number of hats, from radio dispatcher to ranger in Yosemite Valley, Tioga Road, and Big Oaks. She enjoyed living in such scenic areas as Yosemite Valley, Wawona, El Portal, Foresta, and Hodgdon Meadow. On her days off she found plenty of fun things to do outdoors! Sometime during her long and various careers, Jane managed to get married and raise three sons!

After her retirement from the National Park Service, Jane returned to her roots in San Rafael. Besides exploring Marin natural areas, she renewed her passion for books. Eventually she pursued her educational interests further, becoming a Reading Specialist. When Marin CNPS advertised for a book salesperson in 2014, Jane responded amiably. She followed in the footsteps of environmental pioneer Phyllis Faber.

During the Covid-19 pandemic, book sales at Chapter Meetings have come to an abrupt halt, but Jane is currently filling online orders for both the updated Plant Checklist for Point Reyes National Seashore and Marin Flora.



Ann Linder and Brad Kelly display Point Reyes National Seashore Plant Checklists recently purchased from Marin CNPS through Jane Medley (middle)

In the spring of 2015, she enrolled in a College of Marin Field Botany class taught by Paul da Silva. She was promptly intimidated by botanical terminology but absorbed knowledge and skills and loved the class. Jane still considers herself a beginner botanist and seeks the help of experts when the identity of a specimen remains elusive to her. Stay-at-home orders during the pandemic made botanizing with

others impossible, so Jane created her own plant ID project. She is identifying trees, shrubs, wildflowers, and grasses at McNears Beach County Park (within walking distance from her home). In the process, Jane has become better acquainted with many of Marin's non-native species! She even bought a microscope for viewing specimens (yet admits she still has not entirely mastered its use).

Jane insists that through her volunteering with Marin CNPS and MAS she gets much more than she gives, such as meeting many interesting people, making new friends, and learning from Marin's finest botanists. Needless to say, Jane looks forward to the resumption of birding fieldtrips and botanizing with others on CNPS field trips.

Remembering Jolie Egert Elan 1969-2020

Jolie brought her great energy and love of nature to Marin CNPS in 2010 when she joined our board, and in 2011 served as Chapter President. She instigated and helped to facilitate our first strategic planning meetings, now conducted annually.

Jolie was principal at Go Wild! Consulting, later the Go Wild Institute, through which she taught field classes and workshops on California ethnobotany, and led field trips as part of CNPS Marin's Native Plant Week activities. Jolie left our world all too soon, on Nov 30, at her residence in Ashland, Oregon.



Jolie Egert Elan

Read her obituary at: <https://www.litwillersimonsen.com/obituaries/Jolie-Elan/#!/Obituary>

Be Fire-Smart; Borrow a Weed Wrench!

It's that time again; the rain has softened the ground, making broom and other invasive shrubs easy to pull out by their roots. In view of recent wildfires in and north of Marin County, it is especially important to consider removing fire-prone shrubs from your property and adjacent land (with landowner permission). Preventing wildfires that start along the wildland urban interface (WUI) by creating "defensible space" is presently a focus of land managers and fire agencies in the county.



Broom Pulled with Weed Wrench



Cytisus scoparius - Scotch broom



Genista monspessulana - French broom

Marin County is overrun with French broom (*Genista monspessulana*) and, to a lesser extent, Scotch broom (*Cytisus scoparius*), invasive shrubs native to the Mediterranean region. Broom and other fire-prone horticultural shrubs pose a fire danger by acting as "ladder fuels" from a ground fire to the tree canopy.

With the help of a broom wrench you can create fire-smart landscaping and defensible space. The wrenches will work on virtually all woody plants, even on previously cut plants if a section of the original stem is accessible. Borrow as many as six broom wrenches for two weeks at a time from CNPS Marin Chapter.

The Chapter owns six wrenches in two different sizes:

- Two light – jaw capacity up to 1.5 inches, weight 11.5 lbs.
- Four mini - jaw capacity up to 1 inch, weight 5.25 lbs.
-

Please contact Eva Buxton (Conservation & Invasive Species Chair) at evabuxton@sbcglobal.net to borrow a weed wrench from CNPS Marin Chapter.



Bay Visions 2021 Video

This free virtual symposium was an inspiring look at adaption, regeneration, and the powerful role plants play in mitigating the challenges facing San Francisco Bay. Although the symposium was on January 13, 2021, it was recorded.



Bay Visions 2021

The Power of Plants will
Protect the Bay

The [Bay Visions 2021 video](https://www.lastlink.us/content/bayvisions2021symposium) (<https://www.lastlink.us/content/bayvisions2021symposium>) contains the talks listed below and links to further resources related to Bay restoration:

- Slide show of Bay restoration projects (min 0)

- Karina Nielsen, professor and director of the Estuary & Ocean Science Center, San Francisco State University, **Why Policy Matters** (min. 30)
- Dr. Katharyn Boyer, professor of Biology-Wetlands, Community and Restoration Ecology, **mitigation and restoration efforts using plants as buffers, filters and habitat for the Bay Area** (min. 43)
- Josie Iselin, author of The Curious World of Seaweed, **The Vital Role of Seaweed** in maintaining our Bay ecosystem (min. 1:04)
- Diana Benner and Laura Hanson, co-owners of The Watershed Nursery in Richmond, give an up-close look at the native plants they grow, the nursery's involvement in **large wetlands restoration projects**, and the **use of local wetland species in Bay Area gardens**. (min. 1:28 and 1:48)

Bay Visions is a cooperative project of six Northern California Garden Clubs of America to support the diverse, ongoing conservation and improvement efforts on San Francisco bays and estuaries.

Stop Illegal Poaching of *Dudleya*: Support [Assembly Bill 223](#)



Dudleya farinosa - bluff lettuce
by Amy Patten

Most of us know the heartbreaking stories and consequences of animal poaching: shark fins, rhinoceros horns, elephant tusks... But fewer realize that **plants** are also the target of poaching. Here in Marin and throughout California, native succulents known as *Dudleya* are being ripped from the wild to feed an international demand. *Dudleya* are beautiful in our gardens and succulent collections, but they can easily be grown or purchased from nurseries for this purpose. Wild *Dudleya* belong in the wild; not in the hands of poachers.

California native plants have a new friend in the legislature. Congratulations to newly elected Assemblymember Christopher Ward of San Diego who has introduced a bill that makes *Dudleya* poaching illegal. #StopPlantPoaching

[Read more. . . https://www.cnps.org/conservation/dudleya-protection](https://www.cnps.org/conservation/dudleya-protection)

Check out [CNPSMarin.org](https://www.cnps.org/conservation/dudleya-protection)

- [Plant Replacement List](#) - Ideas for Replacing Fire-Prone Plants
- Planting season continues. [Check out these planting tips](#) for native plants.
- Spring Wildflowers are bursting. See the new **Plants of the Season Gallery** which joins the **Marin Rare Plants Gallery** on our [main page](#).
- See Marin Chapter's [Field Trip Archive](#) to find the best places and times to find those special spring blooms.



Cynoglossum grande - pacific hounds tongue
by Vernon Smith

Upcoming Marin Chapter Events - 2021

- **Board Meeting - Feb. 1 @ 7 pm.** Anyone who is not a member of the board and would like to attend please contact David Long at sfdlong@ix.netcom.com.
- **Chapter Meeting "[Wildfire in California Landscapes](#)" Guest Speaker: Jim Bishop - Feb. 8 @ 7:30 pm.** Zoom link to attend will be emailed that morning. ([See description above.](#))
- **Board Meeting - March 1 @ 7 pm.** Anyone who is not a member of the board and would like to attend please contact David Long at sfdlong@ix.netcom.com

- Chapter Meeting "Mycorrhizae" Guest Speaker: Thomas D. Bruns - Mar. 8 @ 7:30 pm. via Zoom
- Online Plant Sales
 - Sale: March 17 to 24, Pickup date March 27- We will focus on offering a variety of shrubs to plant before the weather warms up, including many on the [Plant Replacement List](#).
 - Sale: April 14 to 21, Pickup date April 24 - This sale will focus on flowering perennials, bulbs, and annuals for spring and summer color and to support our pollinators.



native plant orders ready for pickup
by Laura Lovett

CNPS Events: Statewide and Sponsored by Other Chapters

- [Maintaining Your Native Plant Garden](#), a panel talk from Santa Clara Valley Chapter via Zoom and YouTube, Jan. 27 @ 7:30 pm
- [Urban Gardening | Seasonal Aesthetics for the Native Garden](#) - Monthly Hort Webinar, Feb. 4 @ 5:30 pm (first Thursdays)
- [Protect Walker Ridge](#) - Sign the petition to help defend this fragile ecosystem.
- [Upcoming and Recorded Virtual Native Plant Events and Webinars](#)

Kids' Corner

- [Pollinator Party](#) - Check out this article and fun activities for the young at heart. <https://www.cnps.org/flora-magazine/kids-corner-pollinator-party-20159>
- [Butterflies](#) - Science @ Home from California Academy of Sciences <https://www.calacademy.org/science-at-home/butterflies>



Please click on the "[Read more...](#)" links for detailed information on the topics. Contact me to submit articles and ideas for improving this new endeavor.

Add cnps@cnps.org to your email contacts to avoid news from the Chapter going to promotions, spam, or junk.

Ann Elliott, Newsletter Editor

annonfire@gmail.com



Garrya elliptica - coast silk tassel
by Ann Elliott