

PETITION FOR CREATING A NEW CHAPTER OF CNPS

The purpose of this petition is to request recognition of the G. Ledyard Stebbins Chapter of the California Native Plant Society (CNPS). This new chapter will be organized on a geographic basis, covering the counties of Colusa and Yolo. Programmatically, the chapter will emphasize research, education, and advocacy aimed at promoting natural habitat conservation to protect native plant species, especially rare and endangered taxa, in the region. The chapter will sponsor regular meetings, talks, workshops, and field trips. If establishment of this new chapter is approved, we will abide by all applicable policies and procedures required by the CNPS Board of Directors.

The geographic area covered by the proposed G. Ledyard Stebbins Chapter of CNPS includes a portion of the area currently covered by the Sacramento Valley Chapter. We believe that the establishment of a new chapter in this region is justified due to the great need for, and considerable interest in, plant conservation in this region, as evidenced by a long history of engagement in plant conservation by residents of the area and several recent successes. Nonetheless, per CNPS by-law Article F, Section F-1, comments on this petition were solicited and received from the Sacramento Valley Chapter; those comments may be found in the attached letter appended to the end of this document, and our responses to them are explained below.

We thank the SVCNPS board for reviewing our proposal and for their thoughtful and thorough feedback. We are grateful that the SVCNPS does not object to the establishment of the new chapter described above. We also appreciate and understand the suggestions of alternative mechanisms to achieve our goals, e.g., by establishing a committee or subchapter within the CNPS. However, we still wish to pursue establishment of a new chapter for several reasons. First, given the geographic separation (some Davis-based members of CNPS have indicated that they rarely if ever travel to Sacramento for SVCNPS meetings, due to considerations of both time and environmental impacts of driving) and difference in priorities, we believe that establishment of a new chapter would be cleaner, clearer, and more sustainable than any other option. Second, we think that it will be important for representatives of the Yolo and Colusa Counties group with primary interests in plant conservation to have a voice and vote on the CNPS Chapter Council. Finally, in response to the points raised in the first paragraph on the second page of the SVCNPS letter, we would like to note that there are already opportunities in the Davis area for plant enthusiasts to participate in activities such as plant sales, native plant demonstration gardens, and garden tours through other organizations including the Davis Botanical Society and the UC Davis Arboretum and Public Garden. Moreover, any CNPS member interested in joining both the SVCNPS and the new G. Ledyard Stebbins Chapter would be welcome to do so, since selection of a second chapter is an option available to anyone joining the Society. In summary, we feel there are several good reasons to support establishment of the new chapter and no compelling reasons to oppose it. We hope that the Chapter Council of CNPS will agree.

The names, addresses, and details of CNPS membership of the individuals joining in this petition, all of whom are active members of the Society, are provided on the following page.



CALIFORNIA NATIVE PLANT SOCIETY

Sacramento Valley Chapter

August 26, 2022

Dear Dr. Potter,

Thank you for contacting the Sacramento Valley Chapter Board regarding your petition to establish the G. Ledyard Stebbins Chapter of the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) which is proposed to cover Yolo and Colusa counties and would focus on plant and habitat conservation. As the geographic boundaries of the newly proposed chapter would overlap with the existing Sacramento Valley Chapter (SVCNPS) region, we would like to provide the following comments to be included in the draft petition:

SVCNPS does not object to the establishment of a new chapter with the goals and regional boundary proposed; however, we would like you to consider the following points before proceeding. Instead of separating membership and doubling down on administrative costs and stretching volunteer leadership even further, we would welcome the inclusion of a committee or subchapter within SVCNPS whose focus is natural habitat conservation to protect native plant species. While SVCNPS may be perceived as having limited engagement with the habitat conservation community and advocacy, we do participate in organizations such as the Environmental Council of Sacramento (ECOS), various native plant advocacy efforts throughout the region, and ongoing conservation efforts such as at the Woodland Regional Park Preserve in Yolo County. Native Plant habitat preservation and improvement is an area of strong interest for our chapter. As you know, chapter leadership is comprised entirely of volunteers, and therefore chapter activities and focus are guided by the interests and expertise offered by those individuals. The currently limited conservation focus within SVCNPS is largely due to the fact that several board members who work professionally as environmental consultants or government agency staff are precluded from leading conservation efforts due to potential conflicts of interest. Incorporation of conservation-minded individuals into the SVCNPS would help to fill an existing void and would potentially allow for expansion of conservation efforts to additional SVCNPS counties beyond Yolo and Colusa.

SVCNPS is also able to offer the benefits of an established chapter with board members who would support a committee or subchapter with administrative responsibilities such as financials and record keeping, publications and outreach, volunteer programs, and very importantly - funding. SVCNPS's strong financial position is almost entirely supported by proceeds from our native plant sales which is an area of outreach and revenue source that the proposed chapter seemingly does not intend to undertake. For these reasons, we recommend that individuals proposing to establish a new chapter instead consider adding their expertise to SVCNPS's leadership, so that we may mutually benefit from an expanded pool of candidates willing to lend their time and effort toward the various goals and responsibilities of running a CNPS chapter.



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Additionally, SVCNPS would like to express a concern regarding existing and newly joining members of CNPS who could be impacted by the establishment of a new chapter. As it seems that the proposed G. Ledyard Stebbins Chapter may not plan to focus on some of the topics that SVCNPS does, such as plant sales, native plant demonstration gardens, and garden tours, SVCNPS is concerned that members who join one chapter or the other would miss out on opportunities to explore the variety of goals CNPS as a whole aims to achieve.

Lastly, SVCNPS would like to offer our support in furthering the conservation goals described in your petition by partnering with you in reaching out to potential members in Colusa and Yolo County to inform them of the benefits of joining CNPS.

On behalf of the SVCNPS Executive Board, thank you again for the opportunity to provide comments, and please keep us apprised of any coordination efforts that may be required if the petition moves forward.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'E. Pimentel', is placed above the typed name.

Ellen Pimentel
SVCNPS Chapter President