



CNPS RARE PLANT PROGRAM QUARTERLY UPDATE | MAR 2021

As the field season approaches, the Rare Plant Program celebrates the award of a \$20k grant for the Rare Plant Treasure Hunt, purchase of CNPS' first vehicle, and the public release of over 340 comprehensive rare plant documents for US Forest Service potential Species of Conservation Concern analysis. The Program is also finalizing two new databases for Utom/Floristics projects and the Rare Plant Treasure Hunt and released a major upgrade to the Rare Plant Inventory that includes downloads and links to rare plant references directly from Plant Detail pages.

RARE PLANT STAFF

Welcome Assistant Ecologist / Botanist, Nguyen “Savannah” Vu! Savannah joined CNPS as an Assistant Vegetation Ecologist on various vegetation description and classification projects and joined the Rare Plant Program in December, sharing half of her time with Vegetation and Rare Plant programs. Her work has been instrumental to organize Utom field data and provide data updates to the Rare Plant Inventory under very tight time constraints. Savannah graduated from the University of Central Florida with an Environmental Studies degree. At the university, she also worked at the university arboretum and a plant physiology lab, conducting research on sunflower allelopathy. In her free time, Savannah likes to read, hike, and design tiny homes.



RARE PLANT INVENTORY

- [New RPI update released in February!](#) In this release users can access electronically available Status Review documents directly from Plant Detail pages, download/link to Selected References, and link to the **Jepson eFlora** for the first time.
- 61 plants have had their notes updated to the new format along with Species of Conservation Concern and other reference documents uploaded and available to download.
- 140 rare plant microhabitats have been updated.
- In total, 957 rare plants now have photos.
- 49 plant folders in the RPI backlog have been digitized.

STATUS REVIEWS

Rare Plant staff were fully occupied for parts of January and February finalizing Species of Special Concern documents for upload to the Rare Plant Inventory. The following status reviews were sent out for review or completed between December, 2021 and February, 2022.

Additions	Changes	Deletions	Retentions	Rejections	Postponed	Name Changes	Total
4	1	0	0	0	0	1	6

- **Status Review Highlights:** The federally-listed spring-loving centaury (*Zeltnera namophila*) was added to California Rare Plant Rank (CRPR) 1B.1 (very rare and endangered). It is threatened by ground water extraction near the Nevada/California border. This plant was included in the RPI previously (as *Centaurium namophilum*), but it was dropped from the Inventory in 1994 due to taxonomic changes.



- In addition, bunchberry (*Cornus canadensis*, CRPR 2B.2), underwent a name change. This beautiful forest perennial herb (shown at left [photo by Jean Pawek]), is now be called [Cornus unalascenkensis](#). This change brings the Inventory in line with the *Flora North America* and upcoming changes to the *Jepson eFlora*.

- Work is continuing on 21 CRPR 4 plants that have been approved for addition by the CNPS Rare Plant Program Committee; they are being processed for status review.

Cornus canadensis recently underwent a taxonomic name change to *Cornus unalascenkensis* in the RPI. Photo by Jean Pawek.

SPECIES OF CONSERVATION CONCERN (SCC)

Staff have continued to write and finalize SCC accounts and profiles in support of forest planning and other conservation and management decisions on the *Northwest Forest Plan* forests of California. In January and February:



Penstemon personatus is one of the SCC accounts finished this quarter. This plant shows unique adaptations to frequent fire, including below-ground buds, and increased growth and flowering in openings. Photo by Dean Wm. Taylor.

- 342 SCC accounts and profiles were finalized and uploaded to a [new Potential Species of Conservation Concern website](#) and are now available to the public for the first time!
- 22 SCC Accounts were finalized, incorporating reviewer and Forest Service edits and comments.
- 8 SCC Accounts were written and submitted for edits and comments.
- 238 SCC Profiles were finalized, incorporating reviewer and Forest Service edits and comments.

RARE PLANT TREASURE HUNT



A new population of *Delphinium purpusii* discovered in Kern County. Photo by Amy Patten.



Documenting a new roadside stand of *Hesperocyparis nevadensis*. Photo by Amy Patten.

- We are preparing for 4 volunteer trainings in March 2022, including a webinar, two joint field trainings for RPTH and Vegetation, and a workshop with the Wildlife Society on Botany for Wildlife Biologists.
- RPTH was awarded a grant of \$20k from the Harrell Foundation for rare plant surveys and volunteer events in Kern County, focusing on endemics in the Greenhorns, Piute Range, and Southern Sierra Nevada. The first trip to Kern County in February 2021 was a success. In addition to scouting locations for future field trips, staff and volunteers surveyed for *Hesperocyparis nevadensis*, *Delphinium purpusii*, and *Fritillaria striata*. 3 new populations were mapped, historic EOs were rediscovered and updated, 3 recent EOs were monitored, and 2 historic populations were surveyed but not found.



Fritillaria striata was in full bloom. After visiting a reference population, one historic EO was relocated and two historic populations were searched for but not found. Photo by Amy Patten.

CALIFORNIA PLANT RESCUE (CARP)

- Our seed accessioning staff is currently focused on seed processing, data management and reporting, and planning and permitting for the 2022 season.
- We are working on finishing processing the 32 collections we made during the 2021 field season and have trained new staff member, Savannah Vu, to assist.
- We purchased a field vehicle – a 2007 Toyota 4Runner with off-road tires and lift kit, plus a roof rack. This represents the first vehicle CNPS has purchased, funded primarily through the California Biodiversity Initiative for California Plant Rescue from the State of California via the Center for Plant Conservation.



Seeds of *Phacelia phacelioides* collected in Henry Coe State Park in 2021. The black lines repeat at 5mm intervals. Photo by Angela Pai.



Seeds of *Hesperis matronalis* var. *brevifolia* collected in Point Reyes in 2021. Photo by Angela Pai.

BOTANIST CERTIFICATION

- David Magney just held a half-day virtual workshop, with the help of Alyssa Huante, for 35 botanists that want to become Certified. The workshop provided background about certification and the subject areas covered in the four exams.
- The next certification exams will be held in Ventura County at the end of March to serve those in southern California and another set of exams will be held most likely at the UC Davis Arboretum so serve those in northern California, most likely in June.