

RATIONALE FOR GOING "NATIVE"

Plants are the most accessible means for people to manipulate the biological world. They can't run away and can often be propagated into vast numbers. Besides providing the bulk of food and materials for insects, people, and animals, they process nutrients for rivers and lakes that feed the estuaries that breed so much marine life. The ocean in turn processes 80% of the oxygen in the atmosphere, mostly along coastlines. Learn to manipulate plants and one can indeed hold sway over every bird of the air, fish of the water, and herding animal.

Native plants (especially post-disturbance annuals) provide the energy for their fungal and bacterial symbiotes that process minerals and gases into soil organic matter. **70% of agricultural soils are former native grasslands**, once dominated by annual forbs. Insects and animals need the annual plants to make proteins while **80% of plant species need insects for pollination** and larger animals for soil fertility and disturbance.

Migratory birds not only consume insects and seed, but some require plants to produce the fruits for which they are suited. Many relationships among insects and plants are specific: pollination in return for food or for insects and larvae tolerant of the toxins the host plant produces. **Without the biomass of appropriate plant hosts, the biomass of insects declines.** Soil bacteria and fungi too often have specific relationships with their native plant hosts, and less their exotic counterparts. Hence, if that botanical foundation changes, the insect and microbial bases of the food pyramid changes too, particularly if non-native plants take over after a disturbance such as a flood or fire.

April 2010 – Rove Beetle in Flight (*Callimoxys fuscipennis*). On the right is a male coming in to mate with the female on the left.

This *Ceanothus papillosus* is a fruit-bearing lilac shrub popular with birds. These should be fairly common. When we bought our place, weeds and overcrowded forests had progressed so far that none were left. Thinning the forest and burning the tops in piles induced germination. I transplanted the seedlings to get things going for bugs. Besides, they're pretty and they smell wonderful.



WILDERGARTEN 6.1

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This book was originally produced under the name *The Responsible Party* for which there were two revisions, 1.0 & 2.0. Major revisions are for complete rewrites. Decimal revisions are for revised chapters or navigational changes and are not archived. Back revs are viewable by the numbered links below.

Revision History [1.0](#) [2.0](#) [3.0](#) [3.1](#) [3.2](#) [3.3](#) [3.4](#) [3.5](#) [4.0](#) [4.1](#) [4.2](#) [4.3](#) [4.7](#) [5.2](#) [5.4](#) [5.5](#) [5.7](#) [5.8](#) [6.0](#) [6.1](#)

Vande Pol, Mark Edward, 1954 –

Other writings by Mark Edward Vande Pol:

Natural Process: That Environmental Laws May Serve the Laws of Nature, ©Wildergarten Press, 2001, 454pp, ISBN: 0-9711793-0-1, LOC Control #2001092201.

Shemitta: For the Land is Mine: ©Wildergarten Press, 2009. Contains: 217pp text, 980pp overall, 14 picture books, 2 tables, 963 photographs, 9 maps, 2 drawings, 2 charts, 145 footnotes, 358 citations, and 216 other source references, not including external Internet links. ISBN 978-0-9711793-1-8

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If all there is are trees, is it really a forest?

The **previous chapter** showed that “preserving” the landscape (allowing succession to progress to forest unabated), means that native annuals will then fail to germinate, and **with them go many insects**. Eventually, the annual seed bank slowly dies. With weeds present, disturb that “preserved” forest and the remaining native annuals are overwhelmed. Repeat the cycle enough times and the result is mass extinctions of both the annual plants and their animal and microbial associates. We will have then lost much of the base of the biological food pyramid.

This chapter begins with a series of factual observations:

1. The botanical foundations of the soil system are now rare. Early successional native plant systems are subtle, complex, and not well understood.
2. Native systems of annual plants are not easy to maintain under current regulatory boundary conditions.
3. Systems subjected to exotic invasion are profoundly different on massive scale. Many of these exotics have serious drawbacks.
4. How to restore native post-disturbance annuals is relatively unknown, and can vary radically by site.
5. Seemingly small errors or differences in nativity can have profound consequences for biodiversity.
6. A system of plants missing its associates complicates restoration management choices.
7. A manager must make hard choices quickly re what to propagate and what to cull even among natives.
8. Centralized oversight systems are unsuited for that job.

The chapter then synthesizes the above into the key policy proposal of this project: The needs are so many and so urgent, the challenges are so complex, while so little is known about how to do this, that instead of large scale landscape preservation or hierarchical bureaucracy, what we need is to **inculcate a network of SMALL independent projects developing a wide range of processes to increase specifically local knowledge of native annual systems at reduced cost and risk**. Now.



March 2019 – Makers and takers? Nitrate fixing *Apahanes occidentalis* mixes with likely nitrate sequestering *Psilocharphus tennelus*, an undescribed nitrogen cycle at a tiny scale never before observed. Here, these two are invading the understory of clovers and lotuses. It's cool.

The *Wildergarten* is amazingly varietal for native plants even for this region, and especially for a parcel this small. It is home to five distinct types of habitat: redwood conifer forest, oak and madrone woodland, native meadows of several types, scrub/chaparral, and the unique “Santa Cruz Sand Hill” habitat. Even though it lacks a pond or perennial stream (therefore not a place botanists would rationally call a “biological hot spot”), as of 2019, we manage 354 observed plant species (225 natives) on only 14 acres. It is a wonderful laboratory for observing dynamic behaviors among these plant communities over multiple decades, but only as long as management continues.

This place was inundated with weeds for 200 years. According to at least seven local botanists and restoration experts (three of whom had been presidents of the local chapter of the California Native Plant Society), the Wildergarten is the purest restoration of native plants to be found anywhere on the Central Coast of California and perhaps in the world. Virtually every park, preserve, or “pristine area” in the region is significantly infested with exotic plants by comparison. Yet this place was once FAR from “pristine.” It was a disaster.

Most of this book centers upon how to achieve these results. The previous chapter introduced the challenges we face from weeds and succession. This chapter explains how little is known about how native landscapes once functioned, essentially the scientific “why” or technical rationale for further research. The goal here is to learn how native plants behave in order to maintain them. It has never been with such an emphasis upon annuals on this scale.

What we have learned is that this system is quite different than the usual landscape in California. These plants exhibit complex interactions with each other and soil that are not described in the literature (left). Get it clean enough, and processes such as you see at left begin to appear. Yet it can take a decade before getting enough tissue for analytical work simply because we start out with so few. Yet we are learning how to accelerate control processes so that larger areas can be covered fast enough to keep up with the rates of weed appearance and maturation to allow them to express. In effect, after nearly 30 years, we are only beginning.



WHY NATIVE PLANTS?



Our "Back Yard," June 1997 – The groundcovers were virtually all exotic

When we began in late 1989, the goals were fire-tolerance in healthy forests and getting rid of French broom, most of which had been accomplished by 1997 (above). At the time If anyone had suggested a 100% native landscape, I would have said that was crazy. Not that it wouldn't be desirable, but with the weed history this property had and with as fast as they breed, I thought even controlling a grass impossible (above). The decision to go 100% native came about 4 years later. Little did we know that nobody ever had.



Late June 2019

So if it was "crazy," why embark on such a likely fruitless effort? I had spent four years writing a book proposing a free enterprise approach to environmental management. If it was ever to happen, I felt it hypocritical not to exemplify what private management could accomplish. The background in this area had been graded 3 years prior in 2016. There are fewer trees and less shade. Other than the vegetable garden, **nothing here has been irrigated**. Yet despite the disturbance, weed removals, extra sun, and weed burning early this spring, the observation is unmistakable that everything is greener (including above the leach line pipe). Why?



June 2019

Native plants are the difference. Above are *Verbena lasiostachys*, needle grass (*Stipa pulchra*), blue wild rye (*Elymus glaucus*), skunkweed (*Navarretia atractyloides*), California brome (*Bromus carinatus*), Spanish lotus (*Acmispon americanus*), and slender tarweed (*Madia gracilis*). Weeds removed here were rat tail fescue (*Festuca myuros*), *Oxalis micrantha*, rip gut brome (*B. diandrus*), scarlet pimpernel (*Lysmachia arvensis*), wall bedstraw (*Galium parisiense*), Coast tarweed (*M. sativa*), and horseweed (*Conyza canadensis*). The latter two species are considered “native” plants. That choice to cull them will be addressed later in this chapter.





Thimbleberry – June to July



Cinquefoil – June to July



Blackberry – June to July



French Broom



Strawberry – June to July



Ceanothus – September to November



Toyon – November to December

April 2015 – French broom makes hard seed. It displaces Ceanothus, Manzanita, Coffeeberry, Thimbleberry, Blackberry, Strawberry, Toyon, Gooseberry, Elderberry, and Huckleberry, all of which produce soft fruit for birds, coming north or going south.

But are *native* plants really necessary? After all, things are so degraded or converted everywhere else, there may be no point to this other than as a matter of curiosity. Well, at that point one must ask: Why are deer numbers down? Deer need enough forbs to eat to survive over-predation. Do you want birds? Birds need bugs, whose numbers are **way** down. Other birds eat fruits of shrubs in season. The exotic shrub (center) doesn't make edible fruit. If it takes over, bird migratory pathways will lack food for the trip.

Do you want your food pollinated? Native bees don't make honey, depending instead upon a series of flowering plants.



Annual Agoseris (*A. heterophylla*)
native



Silver Puff Dandelion (*Uropappus lindleyi*)
native



People often ask how we know whether or not a plant really is native. In some cases the determinants are easy: Some, (such as redwoods) occur without human propagation in only one region of the world. Other evidences are more subtle but still definitive, such as fossils or pollen layered in mud found in at the bottom of stable water bodies. A few cases are not much more than educated guesses. In fact, there have been errors in the botanical record that have been disastrous for this project and continue to be a costly challenge. Still, I would hazard that the determination of whether a species is native is probably better than 98% accurate overall. Yet the limits as to what constitutes “native” [here](#) are potentially more subtle than we realize, as examples in this chapter will show.

Beyond explorers’ accounts and archaeological analyses, we know very little of how pre-colonial native plant systems were arranged or managed. The Spanish “first contact” records are thin. More detailed information is in Brewer’s Diary of the [US Geological Survey of California](#) of the 1860’s, but by that time the system had degraded for nearly a century. Yet together, these records combined with the knowledge from restoration work do support valuable inferences (see the [site history](#)). We **do** know which plants we tend to find together today, but that doesn’t tell us how they once worked as systems because the exotics are so dominant and the native seed bank is so depleted. Upon those and similar bases, how *could* we reconstruct whole systems, much less assess their value, given so many unknowns?

We are addressing that latter question. By ridding so much of the property of introduced plants, we not only get to witness how natives congregate, but how they colonize an open niche and work it out with their old friends. In many cases, the native seed bank had been exhausted for so long that we had to wait for birds and animals to bring something in or find it locally. In most cases, those “somethings” had long been known to be local natives. The associations they form are quite different from what you see with exotic plants.

Smooth Cat’s Ear (*Hypochoeris glabrosa*)
exotic



Of these dandelions, only cat’s ear (on this row) is non-native.

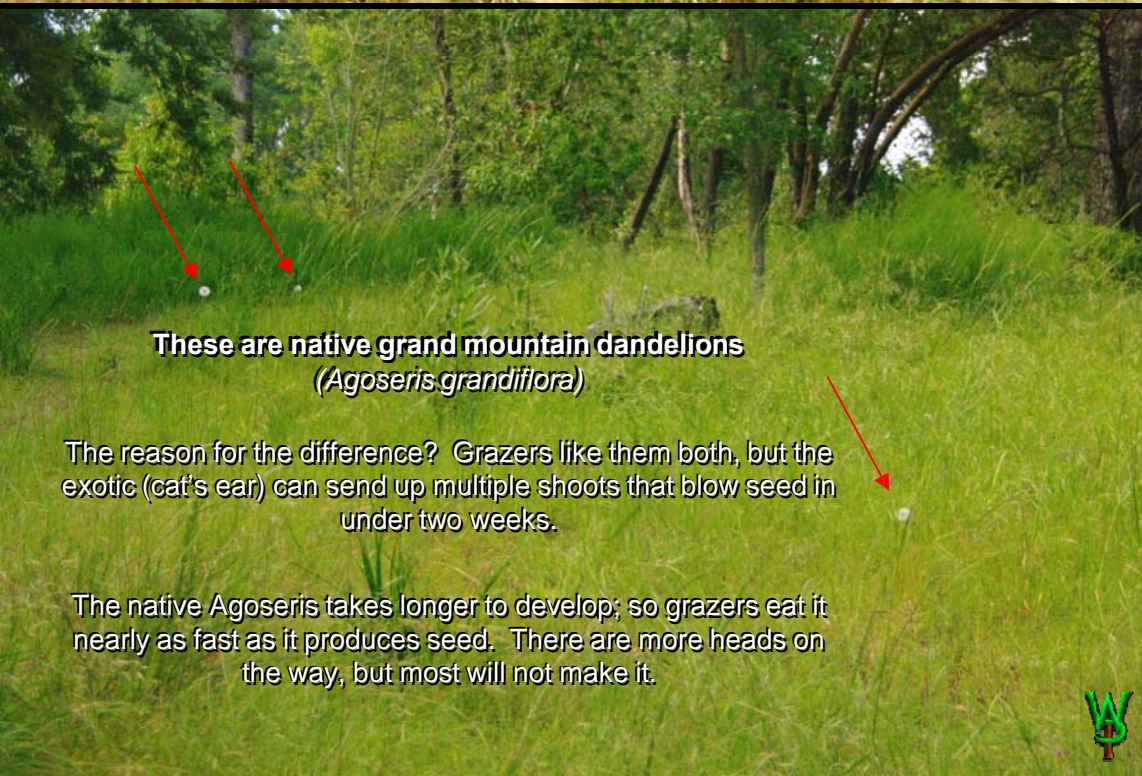
If you think that native v. exotic is a distinction without a difference, please consult the images on the next page

Grand Mountain Dandelion (*Agoseris grandiflora*)
native





This is Cat's Ear
(*Hypochoeris glabrosa*)
non-native



These are native grand mountain dandelions
(*Agoseris grandiflora*)

The reason for the difference? Grazers like them both, but the exotic (cat's ear) can send up multiple shoots that blow seed in under two weeks.

The native *Agoseris* takes longer to develop; so grazers eat it nearly as fast as it produces seed. There are more heads on the way, but most will not make it.



Different animals need different kinds of food. For multiple species to reproduce in one spot, no single native can be too dominant. Native plants 'learned how to get along,' **but ONLY within the aboriginal envelope within which they were managed.** That intentional lack of individual dominance may be one factor that leaves them so open to invasion.

Non-native plants by contrast tend toward monocultures (top) until they are displaced. Most exotics wreck microbial soil productivity because they lack symbiotic relationships with bacteria and fungi with which to feed plant sugars to the soil system.

Relatively little is known about how these plant-and-microflora relationships work. Without having the genetic raw material, soil nutrients, and a process of disturbance against which to observe system behaviors, we never will. That means **somebody has to have a place to do that research with minimal disruption from exotics.** Sadly, this is it.

The ugly truth is that establishing natives here started with killing everything, making open niches (bare soil), waiting for natives to show up, and then killing weeds around them as they colonized the place. Hence, early on, things were pretty sparse here. Even after some reestablished, it is uncertain that their microbial soil symbiotes were still present. In some cases, they were clearly not.

The latter consideration is much more serious than many realize, for microbial associations (familiarity with the neighborhood so to speak) may be one of the reasons why native plants can behave either as invaders or partners to a system (as you will see in this chapter). But before we go there, take a quick look at the differences displayed at left in simple dandelions, native and exotic.



Cat's ear was such a disaster that I wanted you to appreciate this mess. Often confused with the common dandelion, this species is both mildly toxic and allelopathic (it poisons plants that compete with it). 25-50 seeds per head. Imagine acres of it.





Besides, I just like the grand mountain dandelion better.



Verbena lasiostachys



Stachys bullata

Another typical question is if there is anything inherently superior about native plants. To the surprise of many, I would argue that, on an *individual* basis, in most cases the answer is no. However, when one looks at how individuals behave within total *systems*, I would argue natives generally make more productive landscapes. The reasons are subtle and demand some explanation.

There are two ways to obtain the materials to produce the physical products you buy: agriculture and mining. The first is in some respects the second, in that whatever soil minerals leave the site as products are also effectively "mined." Seventy percent of the world's farmed products are grown on former grassland soils. So, any process that renews or increases the productivity of grasslands would seem to be a good thing.

Yet functional grasslands here are much more than just grasses. Consider the verbena at top left. Although it is a perennial, it has the property of dying back every winter, leaving massive amounts of soil organic matter in the form of decaying roots and vegetation. Every spring, annual forbs germinate in that goo and die, leaving processed nitrogen, then to be covered over by the verbena. During the summer, verbena then becomes a fire-tolerant moisture-retaining blanket while providing an important source of pollen to hordes of bees for months.

Consider the hedge nettle (*Stachys bullata*) below. The roots of this genus exude sugars that feed nitrogen-fixing bacteria in the root zone (rhizosphere) similar to nodules on legume roots. These nettles do make beautiful soil and they don't sting. Such relationships may explain why we see so much growth here despite the fact that our sampled nitrate numbers are pitifully low. On the other hand, this book explains why our soils lack trace minerals for nitrogen fixing (diazotrophic) bacteria, possibly because of historic abuse. There is a lot of research to do, yet these and similar plants are in trouble. If you now realize that we do not know much about them, more significant is that we know less about how they interact with each other without weeds and especially in soil, where microbial behavior is poorly understood.





Filago californica
(now *Logfia flaginoides*)



Filago gallica
(now *Logfia gallica*)

So, do I think non-native plants are always bad? No, not when confined to a farm or ornamental landscape. Yet of the 135 exotic species found on this parcel, only ten (10) are classified as "benign," meaning that they do not displace natives and tend to stay put within the system. Most of these are relict ornamental or agricultural plants: an oleander, a mission olive tree, a periwinkle every year or two, a juniper shrub, a patch of "naked ladies" (*Amaryllis belladonna*)... The rest of the exotic plants here **ALL** crowd out natives, in part because they can tolerate a broader range of habitat conditions than natives seem willing to inhabit and because they tend to germinate earlier.

A good example is at left. Obviously, *Filago californica* (native, top) and *Filago gallica* (exotic, below) are related. The native lives only in sand hills. The exotic lives anywhere there is full sun and bare soil. The exotic displaces the native, but it also displaces native clovers, lotuses, and *Navarretias* over a considerably larger range. The exotic once outnumbered the native in its *preferred* habitat, 50:1. After ten years of weeding, literally hundreds of thousands of removals, that ratio now tilts native. There is currently no way to separate the two other than by hand. As an annual job, it sucks.

But, don't we want plants that are widely adaptable?
Well, not necessarily:

- If we do not want to displace other native plants in the wild, the answer is no.
- If we want varietal symbiotic cohort species (such as insects and soil bacteria), the answer is no.
- If we want systems capable of sustaining numerous species of insects and birds, the answer is no.
- If we want the plants to get along with each other such that systems can perform multiple functions in the same spot, the answer is no.
- If we want adaptive systems as a whole, probably not.





Spanish Brome
B. madritensis



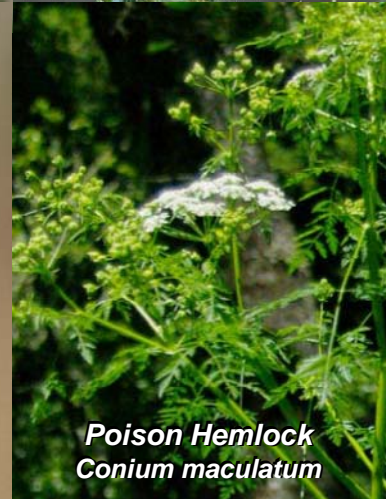
Asthma weed
Erigeron bonariensis



Italian Thistle
Carduus pycnocephalus



Maltese Star Thistle
Centaurea melitensis



Poison Hemlock
Conium maculatum



Fox Tail Barley
Hordeum marinum



Rip Gut Brome
Bromus diandrus

As a final element to this, “Are non-natives always bad?” question, most of the exotic plants we consider to be weeds are plants people have found to be generally undesirable for residential or agricultural use. Most would be considered “bad plants” even where they are native unless nothing else could make it there. They are:

- Largely inedible to humans, beasts, or insects,
- Most have poor forage value,
- Many are toxic,
- Allergenic irritants,
- They displace forbs that produce protein in forage,
- They are very destructive to native soil fungi and bacteria that complex and distribute nutrients,
- Many cause mechanical injury to animals,
- Many produce irritating burs,
- Most are water hogs,
- They are all virtually uncontrollable, and
- Most are fire hazards (at least they are here).

This does not mean that they have no *potential* use, as the examples of various vetches and poison hemlock (to come) demonstrate. One can make honey from star thistle. One can graze rip gut in early season. However, in this region, I really don’t know why anybody would *want* large amounts of them given superior alternatives.


Most people find most exotics undesirable, but seem equally unwilling to do what it takes to bring them under control, which is to... KILL THEM **ALL**, for decades. In general, most people either do not know or care what is native versus exotic or do not possess either the means, the knowledge, or the willingness to make it happen.



July 2010, near Wetumpka, Alabama

There are notable exceptions to the general public indifference to weeds, a special subset of exotics that knock us out of our stupor by invading developed areas, excluding **all** other plants until something worse comes along. These pests are displacing native plants, worldwide. The US Soils Conservation Service introduced kudzu as an erosion control... Well, it certainly worked for that.





Star thistle came to the US from Soviet Azerbaijan in the 1930s in bales of alfalfa.

John D. Byrd, Mississippi State
University, Bugwood.org

UGA1459658

... but other invasive exotics came in accidentally, facilitated at an increasing rate by global trade with neither inspections nor treatment.



September 2008 - Ranch along SR 198 east of San Lucas, CA

Some invasions are subtle because we are so accustomed to their presence. “The Golden Hills of California” may be beautiful, but neither are these grasses native nor are they as productive for forage as others could be. Over 25 million acres of annual grasses, particularly slender wild oat (*Avena barbata*), “poverty grass,” (*Festuca spp.*), and several exotic bromes such as rip-gut and Spanish brome (*B. diandrus* & *B. madritensis*) have displaced the perennials that would do as well or better and the forbs that make protein.



This Seven-Mile Stretch of Coastline
Protected Forever for YOU by
The Coast Dairies Partners



Many invasive weeds are outright poisonous by various degrees. So are many natives, but the problem of toxicity in exotic plants is that the monocultures they form increases the total mass of poison. In this “Protected” area, poison hemlock (*Conium maculatum*) covers whole hillsides for miles with **TONS** of **deadly** poison. There is little food for wildlife but for some birds (quail can tolerate the seed, but not what eats the quail). Little is done because locals are more afraid of herbicides than the poison, because it is a “Natural” poison. Really. So nobody does anything about it and the plant makes ever more seed. Given the number of native plant species this weed displaces, leaving animals to starve and plants to go extinct, to me, this fear of chemicals seems irrational. Yet there are perils to taking action unless one is dedicated to seeing things through. Get rid of this “top layer” weed and the next can then germinate.



June 2019 – Scarlet pimpernel (orange flowers) makes about 25 seeds per flower capsule.

The exotic seed bank expresses in “layers,” with more aggressive species being the few that form the visible top layer. Consider scarlet pimpernel (*Lysmachia arvensis* – used to be *Anagallis*). Cute isn’t it? This common suburban weed is so poisonous it kills horses, cattle, sheep, goats, birds... it even kills bugs! These chemical poisons evolved to be as toxic as possible to **all** animals without the slightest concern about safety, nor has a single herbivore ever developed a tolerance for it. That is one successful poison. But in terms of the weed hierarchy, it’s a wimp that shows up in quantity only when other more dominant plants have been removed. So if there is hemlock, you won’t see much pimpernel. Get rid of hemlock and there’s a good chance pimpernel will be there unless there is something more aggressive present. In fact, I regard this plant as a good sign, indicating that there is not much left of the weed bank.



July 28, 2010, 8:25AM



July 28, 2010, 8:36AM

The plants surrounded with cheat don't look as healthy, do they?



Even if the weeds are non-toxic in themselves, they are usually very damaging to soil microbial relationships with other plants. These two images were taken **¼ mile apart** in the Hamilton Range of Nevada, above Paradise Valley. When we first got there, I wondered what was “Paradise” about Paradise Valley... the soil was **ALL** hard, brown, cracked, and dry with “cheat grass” (*Bromus tectorum*) everywhere. As darkness fell, we drove up a dirt road into the mountains to stay the night at a campground. As we came back down in the morning, a series of varietal and gorgeous native cohorts (left side) was fairly typical until we encountered cheat grass (the invasive brown grass on the right). If you have ever weeded invasive bromes then you know how the soil under them stinks.



July 2010

Paradise Valley, Nevada. It's all cheat grass.

Weeds are poison. And yes, this difference on this scale is enough of a reduction in transpiration to depress precipitation.



July 2010



When you see Great Basin Wild Rye amid wildflowers *above* Paradise Valley, you start to understand why grizzled ranchers get teary about how things used to be. These grasses make fleshy bunches 2-3 feet tall. The soil organic content under them reaches 15%. With cheat grass, it's 2%. Organic matter is largely decayed roots and fungi, which then can host bacteria to retain and process toxins.

IN A BEGINNING...



March 2016 – A vertical rock wall across the road that was once covered with cat's ear.

A native successional system begins with mosses and bryophytes like on this sandstone wall. These plants dissolve the compounds that cement sand particles into stone. The combined material then sluffs into piles, beginning the process of soil formation. The piles are then populated with annual forbs (such as the clovers in this photograph on a step in the wall). These plants prepare the bacterial, fungal, and mechanical soil conditions for the perennials that succeed them. Unfortunately, these early post-disturbance plants are also the most likely to be displaced by exotics. The little tan blobs on the wall (*Asterella palmeri* - inset) are so uncommon today that the University herbarium lacked a specimen until these were collected here.



March 2107 – Weeds here are rat tail fescue (*Festuca myuros*) and wall bedstraw (*Galium parisiense*)

Not long after the forbs establish, the byrophytes give way, but not entirely. We still have mossy patches within a forest only 100m away from the prior image in which these *Asterella californicum* popped up. Yes, this is a different species of *Asterella* from the one above. We have even less of an idea how this system once worked than we do with the native annual forbs.



May 2010

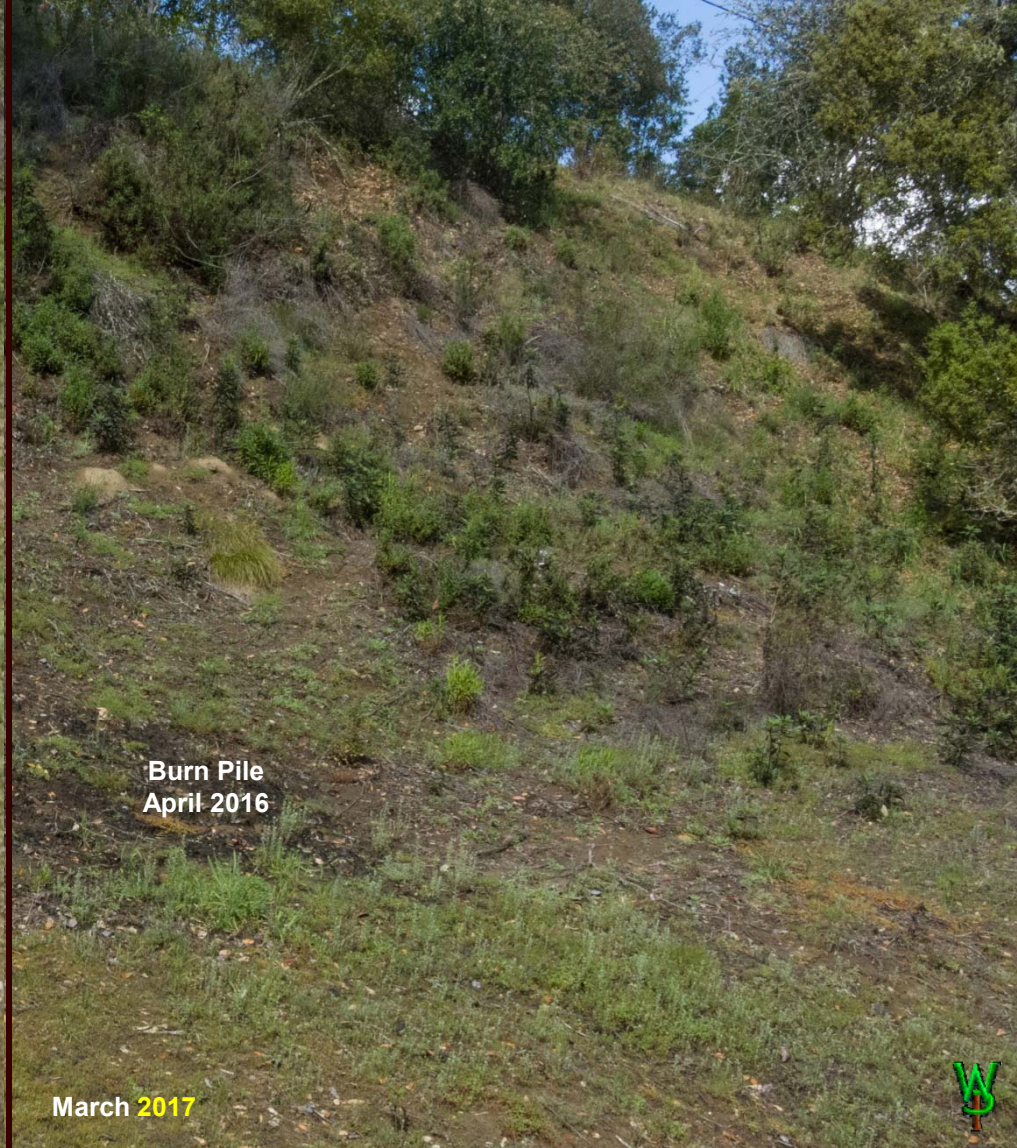
The forbs themselves in turn build spectacularly complicated arrays, here of clover, lotus, tarweed, lupine, skunkweed, and cottonrose. This spot is a sandstone road only thirty feet from the cohort you'll see in the next slide.



March 2017 – In this space of about a square foot are 10 species: *Lupinus bicolor*, *Camissonia micrantha*, *Calandrinia ciliata*, *Navarretia atractyloides*, *Bromus carinatus*, *Pterostegia drymarioides*, *Logfia filaginoïdes*, *Trifolium microdon*, *T. gracilentum*, and *Acmispon parviflorus*.



Forbs here form very different cohorts from place to place. This one has deep sand at the foot of a very soft sandstone ridge. These plants express early in the season, drop their seed, and that's it. Ants do the cleanup and gophers turn it.



What we know about early successional plants is that it is hard to keep them without repeated disturbance. Unless I put a big burn pile here (left), this collection of “sand hill” plants will convert to grassland very quickly, although the species richness is still impressive. Brush, particularly monkey flower (*Diplacus aurantiacus*), yerba santa (*Eriodictyon californicum*) and deerweed (*Acmispon glabra*), also invade this spot very rapidly. Then it’s oak trees. In five years, you wouldn’t recognize it. We’ve gone through several cycles of this here over the years. So far, there is no easy way to forestall succession to higher order plants without expensive removals or importing fuel to get it to burn in winter. I cannot burn in summer with million-dollar houses surrounded with crazy fuel loads nearby. Native Americans obviously didn’t care about that when they burned. So I must do the extra work to keep this system going.



(But not enough)

Madia exigua

Bromus carinatus

Acmispon glabra
(I pull it.)

Navarretia atractylodes

June 2019



So why go to all this trouble? What is wrong with a grassland? Nothing intrinsically, but we have those elsewhere. So far, it seems this type of cover occurs rarely elsewhere on the property, yet it is the most varied overall, making this a good spot for study. Interestingly, its composition is different than another sand area on the other side of a tree only 50 feet away! Yet some of these plants are showing up in grasslands elsewhere on the property. Hence, a source of reproducing seed is essential to colonizing the whole, as many plants spread only when they are eaten. Also worthy of note is that each time I have disturbed it, the pattern has changed substantially. In 2010, this road below the previous page was dominated by clovers (p26). Since graded it, it's been *Navarretia* and a small tarweed.



April 2015 – About 25 square feet



After the burn, this slope above the road that had also been “clover heaven” went to mostly *Camissonia*, *Logfia*, and *Pterostegia*. Why? I have my speculations, but the point is that there is no point in even asking such questions elsewhere because nobody has a landscape where such behaviors can be observed without significant weed influence. But would there be a practical benefit to such knowledge? It was discovered here that one of these native plants is a fantastic dry land forage, with both high protein and water content. They require no irrigation. One could then run animals for fuel control and they might not need as much added food or water.



November 2017 – Santa Rosa, CA

If we learn to manage vegetation to feed animals to help manage other vegetation so that cities don't burn down it would then make insurance more affordable. Spinoffs would include enhancing conditions for wildlife that everybody seems to think desirable, boutique cheeses, clean meats, and property value. The technical key is improving forage conditions for the animals that browse tree seedlings. The political key is learning to use actuarial risk management to account the economic value of vegetation management.

SMALL MISTAKES



June 2015 – This is *Carex divulsa*. To Stanford's credit, this "green roof" has since been replanted but it still has weed problems.

In some cases, identifying an exotic can be tricky enough that even the professionals get it seriously wrong. In 2004, I was in the throes of learning what was native and not. I was also in too much of a hurry. So I bought 200 "*Carex tumulicola*" (foothill sedge) plants from a local native plant nursery specializing in large (and expensive) habitat restoration projects. Impressed with my efforts, I called in some botanists to witness the progress. One got out of his car, looked up the hill, and said (loudly), "There's that sedge (Name Withheld) is selling as *Carex tumulicola*!" I asked him what it was and he said he didn't know, but that it wasn't as advertised, to which the others agreed. I killed them all (the sedges, not the botanists), packaged some samples, and sent them with some known *C. tumulicola* to the Jepson Herbarium at UC Berkeley. After a year goading them to do the ID work (it is tricky), they punted them up to Dr. Eric Roalson at U. of Washington. By then I had guessed and he confirmed what they were: *Carex divulsa*, an exotic European sedge. This plant had been sold all over the State as a native, especially for said very spendy restoration projects such as "green roofs" on government and university buildings (above is atop a parking garage at Stanford University Hospital). The interesting thing is: Although the experts in the native plant nursery business had been fooled by appearances, this exotic species did *not* do very well.



June 2004



This is our *Carex tumulicola*. We already had some. Had I known, I could have done simple divisions for far less trouble. We have lots of it now. In this case, there was no harm because I killed the errant nursery plants before they seeded. We all make mistakes but private research is done individually, necessarily on a much smaller scale. That makes for more reversible mistakes.



W
S

April 2015 – Bitter Cress along with hedge parsley on a site recently exposed by forest thinning

But when the university experts get it wrong, the “subtleties” involved can amount to gross negligence on a grand scale. In 2003, when I first keyed this plant (with the brown pods), the flora books took me to *Cardamine oligosperma*, a native. In fact, it is *Cardamine hirsuta*, an exotic weed that costs the nursery business millions every year **nationwide**. Yet in 2003, *C. hirsuta* was not in the flora books for **California**. To this day, the University of California **Jepson herbarium** says the exotic is not present in most of the State. Yet our seed bank proves it has been here for over **50 years**, with the native (since found elsewhere) every bit as well behaved as the exotic is not. This is indication of CYA covering misplaced institutional priorities in the mundane business of management. There is no excuse.



Jorg Fleig, 2008



Al Keuter, 2014



February 2015

Keir Morse, 2008

The native has five pollen anthers. The exotic has four. The flowers are 1-2mm across, too small for field ID when weeding. I had to develop a vegetative key (the second leaf pair on the end of the rosette). Soon it was obvious that we had only the exotic.



January 2017 – These got hosed, one at a time



This mistake of basic taxonomy has been very expensive to me. Imagine working for 13 years operating on false information without knowing the growing scope of an unknown problem. Fortunately, I did have my suspicions about this plant for many years and treated it accordingly. Even so, when it was identified, I had gobs of natives I didn't want to kill mixed with this exotic (I should have followed my intuitions and killed it ALL earlier). Unfortunately, at that late date, "starting over" was not an option. So, how much of this weed is in the seed bank? Above is a patch of *C. hirsuta* dominating germination in a spot that had been suppressed under *Ceanothus* for some 75 years. This weed can germinate and release seed in only six weeks, making multiple generations possible within one season. It can put up a pod when the base is but 3-4mm across. Sometimes it is dark purple, nearly the same color as the soil. I have to cover about 7 acres at least twice in that 6 weeks and find them all in order to have any hope of a reduction in the seed bank. It can mature in cool weather, which means the hand weeding must be done in the rain in order to have time to spray during the few hours when it is dry and warm enough. I use chemicals when possible because it is impossible to kill them all fast enough any other way. Who is accountable for such obvious negligence in a system run by universities and agencies that get more funding when they fail?



May 2016



Nor was it the only such mistake. When I began our grasslands project in 2002, my 1961 *Flora of the Santa Cruz Mountains* keyed this plant to (1) *Oxalis laxa*, an exotic. There was no web page for it at the Jepson Herbarium at UC Berkeley back then, so a local botanist suggested it might be native (2) *O. pilosa*. Until 2012, if you went to the *O. pilosa* page, it said that *O. pilosa* might be (3) *O. albicans*, another native. If you went to the *O. albicans* page, it said that it might be (4) *O. corniculata*, which is listed as an invasive exotic (and it is). Like *C. hirsuta*, *O. corniculata* is a very troublesome and expensive pest in the nursery business. So, what did I do? I killed it. Why, when it *might* be native? (A) It was invasive as hell once I started killing weeds (above) and (B) the root was too skinny to be any of 2-4 above. In 2014, I was asked by a local botanist at UC Santa Cruz if it might be exotic (5) *O. micrantha*, of which the university didn't have a specimen. Why not? Well, it is so easily dominated by so many other weeds, *you don't see it... until you start killing other weeds* as I had. Like *layers of an onion*, when you finally get down to *O. micrantha*, it forms monocultures over natives just like any other invasive exotic (above). I sent them a sample because a neighbor had LOTS of it where I was still working through *his* onion. So, why am I telling you this story? This is how things really are: The academic information base is in constant flux; the pests are far more extensive than anyone realizes; the natives are far more depleted than anyone realizes; virtually nobody is doing anything about it because experts in the field aren't even aware of the scope of the problem. And this is the system managing endangered species!

BUT DO WE ALWAYS KNOW WHAT IS NATIVE?



June 2019 – Wall bedstraw, exotic (*Galium parisiense*)

Consider this example from the *Galium* genus of the madder tribe to illustrate what I mean by “getting along” as an indicator of nativity. Above is the invasive exotic *G. parisiense*, or “wall bedstraw.” Obviously, it makes a lot of seed. It is also enormously destructive to grasslands, but it does invade forests as well. This little pest can make seed when only a quarter-inch tall, or it can make a wad of 2-foot tendrils as above. It definitely displaces native germination. It is invasive as all hell and it was everywhere in the weed bank as soon as broom and exotic grasses started to subside. But we do have other members of this genus here that are no problem at all.



May 2019 – Sweet bedstraw, *Galium triflorum*.

Above is “sweet bedstraw,” (*Galium triflorum*), a native perennial mixed in with wild pea, strawberry, honeysuckle, and blackberry. This plant prefers only shady locations such as conifer forest. It too makes a lot of seed. All bedstraw species spread by making sticky burs that adhere to animal coats. Yet this native and the two to follow are not invasive or dominant over the other locals at all.



June 2019

This is “hairy bedstraw” (*Galium californicum*). This plant was uncommon enough here that I sort of celebrated when it finally showed up. Two ridges to the south, it is well established in oak woodland and mixes beautifully with same groundcovers as are in this photo. Hence, “it gets along” with other plants and is not at all exclusive in this niche... here. Somewhere else? Don't know.



June 2019



Galium porrigens made this mound six feet across, forming important habitat for ground nesting birds. Ever since we got a cat, we have far more quail, not-so-simply because cats eat ground-squirrels that raided nests for eggs ([story here](#)). If the cat goes after the birds **dual entries** allow for a path of escape. The plant stays put, has established relationships with local wildlife, and is not exclusive. We have only 4 such mounds with a few more starting to build. It takes several years.



April 2015 – Bedstraw, aka cleavers, catchweed, stickwilly...

This is **catchweed bedstraw**, *believed* to be (*Galium aparine*). Although there is proof that there *was* a native *G. aparine*, this plant behaves like an invasive exotic and I have heard reports of individuals in remote locations that did not behave like this plant does. This bedstraw (and/or its look-alikes) is a problem on multiple continents. It is *very* destructive to agricultural crops and machinery. It does compete with known exotics (there's a clue).

There is one record of it in nearby Glenwood in 1931. Yet despite that it is so invasive and supposedly native, **it never appeared here during our first ten years of forestry and grading**. The next record is in 1950 at the County dump. Then, suddenly, 25 years later, it was everywhere. It first showed up next to where the garbage is picked up in about 2004 (another clue). I let it go because the experts said it was native. In only two years, it invaded grasslands and woodlands, burying natives and shading them to death. To my knowledge, nothing eats it. It is mildly toxic.

I kill it. *G. aparine* **"doesn't know how to get along,"** meaning that it is immensely destructive to a diverse native habitat. I believe there are 4 possibilities as to what it really is: (1 - and to me most likely) it is actually exotic *G. spurium*, a very similar plant from Eurasia, (2) it is a *G. aparine* hybrid with *Galium spurium*, (3) it could be native but was so well controlled by aboriginal burning that it never expressed itself as the obviously destructive weed it is now (unlikely), and (4 and least likely) it is a new mutant of *G. aparine*. One must allow this as unknown possibilities may also lie at cause. So, who is doing that DNA work? **Yet a difference in DNA may not determine why or how a plant suddenly becomes destructive**. We have two **identical** forms of an inarguably native clover, one of which is invasive, but **it is not in its usual haunts** (next section). I restrain the invasive flavor to retain other functional systems with which to play.

Hence, **even if a plant is native, that would not stop me from at least restraining it**. There are several reasons why this has been a necessary adaptation to be illustrated in subsequent discussions of other plant species.



June 2019 – **Horseweed** (*Eregion canadensis*, a.k.a *Conyza*) absolutely behaves as a weed. It makes up to 250,000 seeds per plant.



Hence, while the institutional conclusions identifying what is native or not can be legitimately questionable, my guess is that they are probably 99% correct. Yet that means **we may have 4 questionable species here alone!!** Just one can be a huge problem (above). We have questions of identification in which the data we have is old or cursory (such as *Oxalis pilosa* to *corniculata*). Then there are the mistaken calls with major financial implications the system has obviously avoided (*Cardamine oiligosperma* v. *hirusuta*). Worse, just because a plant is native to North America, doesn't mean that if it is here now, then it must have been here under Indian management (above), especially when we have data indicating otherwise. Yet there are other cases (one to follow) wherein the genetic differences can get so subtle that **the analytical technology for identifying the causes of significant behavioral differences does not exist**. Such differences may only matter in a purely native setting (very few exist) but are a big deal once you do get there.

EVEN IF WE KNOW THEY ARE NATIVE,
WE DON'T KNOW THE SYSTEM
COMPONENTS WELL ENOUGH
TO ASSUME IT "KNOWS" BEST;
WE **MUST** MAKE DECISIONS



February 2015 – *T. ciliolatum* v. *ciliolatum* displacing *Acmispon parviflorus* and *Trifolium microdon*



This next example gets ethically murky! This patch of clover is *Trifolium ciliolatum* v. *ciliolatum*, inarguably a California native plant. Yet this **variety** of *T. ciliolatum* has never been recorded this far south. So, is it “native” **here**? It does “get along” with the local soil flora in that it forms profuse nodules of nitrogen-fixing bacteria (**inset**). It is competitive with the native *Stipa* grasses (unlike most of our local clovers). **HOWEVER**, it also tends to form monoculture patches wiping out virtually all other native clovers and even bunch grasses!!! It is invasive as hell, spreading elsewhere very quickly. So, does this new “native plant” belong here or is it alien? It certainly *behaves* like an alien! This will be discussed at greater length in Part III of this book in **the chapter on native colonization behavior**.



April 2010

W

This is our **local** *T. ciliolatum* **v. *discolor*** (**circle**) hanging out as it has for years. This local variety has **never** crowded out other species. The potential "problem" with the non-local *T. ciliolatum* **v. *ciliolatum*** arose simply by observing its behavior well before I knew it had never been seen in this area before. Initially, I was hoping it could compete effectively with the grasses which were crowding out clovers because of the lack of fire. Well, it competed all right, to the exclusion of the grasses and was spreading everywhere rapidly! So I had to cull it until I knew more. This business of 'knowing how to get along,' insofar as "native" plants are concerned, is more important than one might suspect. In several instances, my personal and subjective intuition based upon observations of the behavior of questionably native plants in and among indisputably native plants has been shown to be correct despite supposedly authoritative documentation to the contrary, some of which was later *proven* to be wrong (particularly the case of *C. hirsuta*). Nor am I alone among experts in the field in possessing these opinions. Effectively, one wonders if there is something about **a complex native system humans may have developed** that speaks to human intuition before it can be resolved explicitly. Yet urban people prefer monoculture lawns and patchy yard landscapes to confusing textures of multiple species. Yet in some respects so did the Indians who grew proto-agricultural 'patches' here! Nor do we have any idea how they maintained an array of monoculture patches far from home in a landscape that was otherwise wildly diverse!!! So the limits of ambiguity are not the only problem with "native."



June 2015 – *Sanicula crassicaulis*, seeding



July 2010 – *Sanicula* sp., Ft. Toulouse, Wetumpka, AL



There are also ecological problems among inarguably native species that express the way they do either because of the loss of system components or because of drastic differences in how they *can* be managed today. Some native plants here get “weedy,” in that they invade a variety of habitats, in some cases forming situational monocultures. I suspect this is a symptom of fire suppression, but perhaps it is something else. Above is Pacific Sanicle (*Sanicula crassicaulis*) which has been deemed a pest here. This annoying plant grows about two feet tall covered with burs and seems to show up most anywhere except in redwood forest. Yet I have seen a *Sanicula* in Alabama that didn’t do that (inset)! The flowers smell so amazing they could be used as a spice, but I’ve had zero luck in enticing any chef to experiment in **real** “California nouvelle” out of fear of the USDA (this despite a 10,000 year field trial of Indians eating the roots). Its fecundity here may simply be due to the lack of a biocontrol, in this case a moth (*Greya reticulata*), whose larvae are known to eat much of the seed. However, *Greya* is also known to chew on sweet cicely (*Osmorhiza berteroi*), a nice plant we have here aplenty which gets along fine. Which plant does the bug prefer? How do I get some larvae? How much is enough to start? How would I reverse course if I didn’t like the outcome? Does *anybody* do this kind of research? Research on management of natives is nearly impossible because (1) there are so few places that have them, and (2) the scientific community sees letting “nature” take its course as conservative despite the obviously disastrous consequences. Hence, we don’t learn much about how to manage “nature.”

Some species believed to be native were found to be destructive exotics. Others were situationally destructive natives (below). Yet that such ambiguity exists after 17 years of work on forbs is indicative of serious problems in our environmental management model, one in which academic science responds to political interests at the expense of acquiring and distributing accurate and timely information to its users, for which, effectively, no one is accountable.

When I first identified this plant using the 1993 Jepson Manual, it keyed unambiguously to *Gnaphalium purpureum*, a native. Accordingly, I allowed it to spread because it obviously suppressed weeds (2010 photo). Then, upon observing that it was suppressing *everything* to the point of destroying one of my meadows, *acting on intuition*, I killed it there before the situation got worse, and confined it to a known area, pending learning more through observation over time. I weeded it everywhere else. It sequesters so much nitrate in its tissue that it is toxic as a forage and little else will grow there.

Determining if a plant species is an unidentified exotic involves obtaining and studying foreign plants and botany texts to figure out what belongs where, a study I cannot reasonably perform. Yet I had simply noticed “something wrong” and taken action. Is that really scientifically justified?

A new key by Guy Nesom in the 2012 Jepson e-flora rendered its identification as *Gamochaeta argyrynea* (an exotic South American plant) for which there is no record in this county. Yet in more than one of our more original and undisturbed meadows, this plant is not a problem. So, I sent Dr. Nesom some sample pressings. He came back with *G. ustulata*, the new name for the native.

So the question remains as to why it displaced other natives in one place but not so easily in others that had suffered less when this place was an orchard. The reason may well be microbial or perhaps an insect. Interesting, isn't it? **Now** what do I do? Confine and observe. This is how complicated things get, because science really doesn't know as much as the politicians and activists would have us suppose. It may lack a predator, biocontrol, or fire.

This is not easy work, physically, intellectually, or emotionally. It is a challenge for human beings to protect the land around us while aware of our own ignorance with the knowledge that doing nothing can be worse. It involves persistence, frustration, risk, and an enormous amount of work. Yet is immensely rewarding.





April 2015

And here is our “professional cudweed muncher” *Vanessa virginiensis*, of which the numbers are increasing rapidly! As a butterfly she is also known as The Painted Lady (and is she beautiful)! In this case we want and are getting more, but with Sanicle we are not. How much more is necessary and under which circumstances? This is not simply an aesthetic question (although it can be).



May 2018

So when you first identify something like this *Hyles lineata* larva you nerd-out and get all excited! It's a white-lined sphinx moth, another pollinator, and the adults are as impressive (2-3 inch wingspan) as they are beautiful (inset). But...





May 2018

The **larvae** eat *Clarkia*, which is probably why it is here... but I like *Clarkia* too! What to do? I guess I get to watch, and after seeing what they do I may have to grow more *Clarkia* before I can tolerate more sphinx moths. The two bigger patches we have took 13 years to develop before *Hyles* showed up, but they are spreading.



June 2003 – This has been a very persistent weed here



Then there is horseweed (*Erigeron* (was *Conyza*) *canadensis*). This plant is of a family of weeds that go by the common names “sneeze weed,” “asthma weed,” and “fleabane.” Each plant can produce up to 250,000 seeds that fly on the wind. With bare sandy soils, it makes a forest of stems 4-6 feet high in only a few years. Most scientists hold this to be “native.” As an Asteraceae, its pollen is not distinguishable down to the genus level. There is no description with its resemblance in the Spanish diaries and there are no records of it in this County before 1909, despite ample survey work done in Glenwood back in the 1890s where there was plenty of disturbed sand for it to inhabit. In fact, there are no records of it in Glenwood at all! Accordingly, I have my doubts about its nativity [here](#). I kill it, but if you have a real need you can now find it all over the world.



Madia sativa – Glue, lots of glue



There are also practical limits as to goals in restoring native plants. According to the “authoritative” Jepson Manual, Chilean (aka “Coast”) Tarweed (*Madia sativa*) is native. Upon observing its behavior, I have my doubts, as it readily builds monocultures here. The problem with *M. sativa* is that, after weeding in it, one literally feels as if coated in contact cement. It is such a pain of a plant that I have seen papers from both North and South America each accusing the other of being the source! So, even if it is native (I *still* have my doubts), I kill it for the simple reason that **making the guy who weeds this place miserable is bad for this place** and everything this plant did for soil fungi in this system is accomplished just as well by *Madia gracilis*, which is nowhere near as obnoxious to the weeder.



June 2011 – *Madia gracilis* mixed in with *Navarretia atractylodes*, *Lotus purshianus*, and various native grasses
Tarweeds are a preferred forage for wildlife here.



With the exception of the bedstraw (which is killed without mercy), every one of the plants treated as “native weeds” is still confined to marginal numbers and locations. Each has a superior (to me) alternative in the same niche. They are in no danger of extinction.

February 2018 – Year two of one of our latest entrants: *Gilia achilleifolia* as it spreads into a grassland of needle grass, *Clarkia*, tarweed, and various lotuses and clovers. It is invading, as I had hoped for, but it doesn't seem invasive. We'll see.



There are a host of things we cannot or will not do that then make it impossible to manage native plants here in the same way as Native Americans. We don't eat tons of acorns. We don't harvest bulbs for starch. We don't eat grass seed. We don't collect tiny pods and grind the seeds to make gruel. We don't beat tarweed for seed. We can't legally hunt for food. We can't broadcast burn in the summer with or without the fire department. Nor is the place big enough to support antelope, bears, or elk present to eat the plants without redistributing the weeds. There aren't clouds of native insects laying eggs for larvae to consume them. Therefore, under the constraints of what we **can** do with what is here, it is entirely likely that some native plants **will** run amok and thence we must develop processes to sustain different arrangements of the complex biodiversity we now have. Moreover, every time a native reappears for the first time, the relationships reset as it invades the property and we then get to learn it all, all over again. So much for "Natural." If we can keep these actors within limits it may help us to learn how they work things out over the long run.



August 2017 (for the eclipse)

If you are getting the sense that “Native” may be more complicated than commonly thought, so it appears. But there are yet more complications to the idea. If you read the [site history](#), it said that aboriginal Indians “introduced” plants, with the specific qualification that they could **not** be invasive no matter how valuable they might be. This was not empty speculation. From the distributions of plants we have and how they behave, I estimate perhaps as many as 20% of the “natives” came from elsewhere, possibly not limited to North America. Nor is that unusual. Above you see a patch of common yarrow (*Achillea milleflorum* – white flowers) on Lookout Mountain in central Oregon. There was no other area we saw within 10 miles where there was any yarrow (it stays put). Nor did we see the other herbs in that spot anywhere else either. This location is a good site for a tribe forcing game into a kill zone with a fire. Yarrow was prized by “native” Americans (actually native to Asia) as a digestive medication. Its Chinese name is “*l-chi-kao*.” Yes, it could have been introduced **that** long ago, and from that far away.



Then there is mugwort (*Artemisia douglasiana*). Mugwort's Chinese name is "lou hao"... Could it be? We do know that Clovis people originated in Asia, 'but that was 15,000 years ago.' Correct. And? Aboriginal tribes also considered mugwort a medicinal herb (its pollen is a known allergen). It would be fascinating to see if there was more genetic variability in these plants in Asia than there is here in North America. Such a difference would suggest a deliberate introduction. We REALLY like it on broiled chicken!



June 2019 – Here I am culling supposedly native **horseweed** (*Conyza canadensis*), with less than 25cc of a mixed clopyralid formulation from a special hand squirt bottle discussed in the chapter on tools. The combination of selective chemistry and precise delivery assures there will be no visible harm to any other plant you see here.

So what does all this ambiguity in “native” imply? **Someone must make decisions** how much risk to tolerate in managing an ambiguously identified or troublesome “native” against the sum of such risks as added to the existing commitment to cull known exotics. Each species is an individual case, with behavior that varies by location even on as small a parcel as ours. These commitments vary seasonally and must be reassessed with changing weather. This means that weed management decisions can be hourly because so many control processes are sensitive to temperature, soil moisture (which varies by the foot), target plant maturity, proximity to natives... all of which vary by the seasonal history of solar exposure and precipitation. Go ahead, try to get that kind of data to (and responsiveness from) an unaccountable bureaucracy at what cost v. benefit? The raw data collection alone is impossible and the transmission rates would be overwhelming, even to an AI system enforcing the latest in academic groupthink. Please, we may **never** know enough to go there.

I JUST CAN RESIST



May 2018

There is a special class of native plants here that, while most all are killed, the goal is not eradication, a strategy called “resistance.” This is effected for a wide variety of reasons and to a level that varies with each species and by varying degrees depending upon location. The distinctions underlying these decisions are so many and so complex, not all will be covered here. Most of these plants are very aggressive. Above is nightshade (*Solanum americanum*). It is invasive as hell and shows up in all sorts of inconvenient places. It is also very poisonous. It makes pretty fruit and stays green all summer. It’s here, but when I see it, most often I kill it.



July 2003

This is deerweed (*Acmispon glabra*). It too is aggressive as hell and shows up in all sorts of inconvenient places. It hides other weeds, particularly hedge parsley and small seeded rattlesnake grass. Left alone, it is short-lived and quickly becomes a decadent mat of tinder, a tremendous fire hazard. Early on, I killed it all, but was advised by a biologist that it was an important forage and pollinator. Heeding his advice was a terrible mistake. Nothing eats it. Bees do visit it, but they **love** Verbena too at the same time of year. Verbena is far less obnoxious. So for now, the decision is that I want less deerweed.



Image by Zoya Akulova, Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 3.0 (CC BY-NC 3.0) license.

This is American willow herb (*Epilobium ciliatum*). *Epilobium* is a genus of which there are many species here. Most bloom late in the year, which is desirable. Most make long pods that produce bajillions of airborne seeds. So they can spread very rapidly. Most do not displace other natives aggressively, or convert a habitat type (such as a grassland). *E. ciliolatum* does, or would if I let it.



June 2010

Coyote brush is an Asteraceae, which means that it produces airborne seed similar to a dandelion. Coyote brush drives land managers crazy. So it gets a similar resistive treatment here, but with a twist. Coyote brush is *dioecious*, meaning that there are male and female plants. To keep them from getting out of control, I cull the females. Meanwhile the males can flower all they want, which helps because they are a late season bloom for bees with the added benefit that they smell nice. Keep them away from structures though, because this is the archetypical fuel bomb.



July 2019

This is red-rooted flat-sedge (*Cyperus erythrorhizos*). When it was first identified here, the botanist told me “You don’t want it” (thank you Dylan). Big, aggressive, and capable of choking any drainage, it isn’t hard to see why, but if slowing down water and capturing sediment is what you want, it works pretty well as long as there is enough sun and spreads faster than the usual preferences here.



May 2018

This is wire grass (not a “grass” but a rush, *Juncus patens*). It does many of the same things as the *Cyperus*, but grows in drier places and with less sun. It can make a bumpy mess out of a road too. Again, it has its uses, but it gets murdered here if it misbehaves.



Another native monocot at issue here is *Festuca* (was *Vulpia*) *microstachys*. Interestingly, this is a grass favored by many restoration contractors because it suppresses exotic weeds. The problem with it is that it doesn't suppress two virulent weed grasses of the same genus, *F. bromoides* and *F. myuros* (with the popular names "squirrel tail and rat tail fescue respectively) while it also inhibits native broadleaf annuals. Both of the exotics were once prevalent here. I have seen the native but a VERY few times and it isn't easy to distinguish even with seed (above). I don't have sufficient experience with the native to distinguish it from the virulently invasive exotics **before they seed**; after which one only has a few days to control the weed. So until the appearance of an annual fescue grass becomes a rare occurrence, it would be insane for me to tolerate the risk of letting it mature until the distinction can be made.



May 2009

This is wire lettuce (*Stephanomeria virgata* – the tall spikes from a rosette). This is an obscure asteraceae that can get 7 feet tall. It's not terribly invasive or competitive, but it is annoying. I allow it, but not much.



There are native plants here that suffer from the fact that I cannot distinguish them from ubiquitous exotics until they flower, too late to control individuals amid the labor demands of peak weed season. Until such time as the exotics are no longer numerous, **both** must be controlled. A good example is slender vetch (*Vicia ludoviciana*), which looks very much like some flavors of the exotic common vetch, *V. sativa*. This place was an orchard. Orchardists planted bags of vetch, usually *Vicia sativa*. As weeds, vetches are not terribly obnoxious, so I began controlling them later in the overall effort. So until that process of culling *V. sativa* is nearly complete (there was a LOT of it), *V. ludoviciana* will have to wait unless I learn how to distinguish the two quickly before they flower. The problem is that there is not so much *V. ludoviciana* with which to learn to make that distinction, nor are there many online photos.



May 2018 – Untreated, this poison oak will kill these grasses and shrubs, **one** of which will be transplanted



Our final example (because people ask me about it) is **poison oak**. We have a lot of it, and it has its uses. There are places it grows and places it isn't allowed: around the house, along trails used by visitors (**above**), or where it is choking another desired plant. When woven in other shrubs, it does help make a dandy fence. It is a tremendous erosion control plant for holding slopes. It makes lovely topsoil. For the most part however, it is kept on the ground, away from guests, and from choking other plants that are more desired.

EVEN IF WE DID KNOW ALL ABOUT THE SYSTEM COMPONENTS, WE DON'T EVEN KNOW WHAT WE DON'T KNOW ABOUT HOW SAID COMPONENTS WORKED TOGETHER WELL ENOUGH TO KNOW HOW TO KEEP THEM ALIVE AND REPRODUCING TOGETHER ECONOMICALLY AS FUNCTIONAL SYSTEMS

June 2002, near Felton, CA – There were a great many herbal plants in this immediate area because horses tend to tear up the ground.



That must sound pretty radical but it's true. We know so little about how the system worked because we know even less about the people who survived working it. Worse, we have a lot of academics hustling grants with the premise that what is "Natural" is how it works *without* people at all, as if there had been no selection or genetic adaptation to 10,000 years of aboriginal management!!! Native Americans absolutely depended upon biodiversity for survival: **All of the resource plants they needed had to be grown within walking distance.** They could not afford species that would dominate the area; hence, they had to be very careful about introductions. Yet we do know from the historical record of an introduced species in which this concern was forsaken: horses, which Indians traded over huge distances with Spanish brands from California appearing as far away as the Dakotas. Yet unlike plains Indians, in 1833 Zenas Leonard noted California Indians saw horses more as 'meals on wheels' than useful as transportation, a beast of burden, or in warfare. This is likely because their diet had so long been lacking meat (**despite ample game within the State**) AND because the land yielded sufficient resources near their villages that trading for materials from elsewhere was less important than safely obtaining plentiful meat.



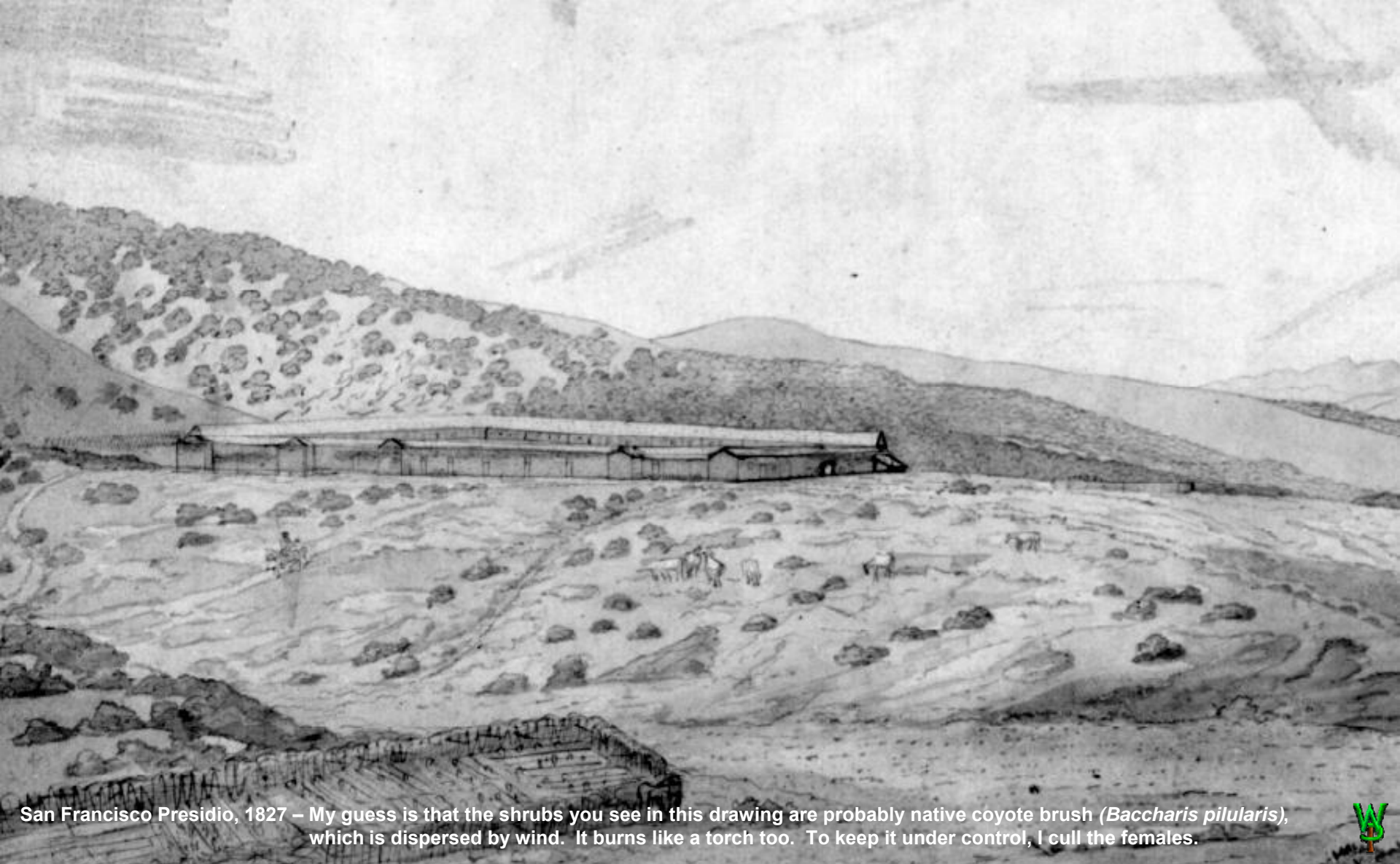
The map at left (by the USDA) supposedly depicts exotic grass coverage in California. In terms of actual area, it is a gross exaggeration, in that urban, crop, forest, and desert scrub lands within these areas are dominated by higher successional-order vegetation, not grasses. Yet what the map *does* mean is that, wherever there are open grasslands within these areas, exotics ARE dominant. In most of this area, one is hard pressed to find native perennial grasses, never mind annual forbs. On the other hand, in terms of where exotic grasses CAN be found, it is a gross understatement, particularly wherever there is irrigation or a road.

Not a lot more needs to be said about the damage weeds have done to the foundations of the wildlife food and soil systems, and we are WAY behind those two curves.

Collectivist solutions have never worked, because a popular collective won't be held accountable for anything, with those in power serving chiefly the interests of those who buy the debt, giving only lip service to the public about how much they "care." Please, don't go there.

Remedial proposals will be mentioned at the end of this book. Detailing those answers started with *Natural Process*, but taking those to the next level will take yet another book or perhaps even a computer game. There is yet another book to complete first, besides maintaining this one.

As to whether Indians imported Spanish annual oat grasses to their home areas, there may have been good reason: Few if any native grasses are especially desirable for grinding into flour, as their seed is small and chaffy. The Spanish introduced two *Avena* annual oat species that came in with hay on ships. These North African grasses make huge amounts of high-protein forage horses would eat and spread. The herds grew so large the Spanish had to run them off cliffs to keep range available for their chief cash export of cattle hides. Weeds spread with the horses. By 1841, Fremont reported the Livermore Valley covered with exotic bur clover. Together with horses, the Spanish ban on Indian burning, and the loss of whole tribes due to diseases, the landscape in this area had to have changed radically and rapidly for nearly a hundred years before botanists in the 1890s finally started to assess what was native and where.



San Francisco Presidio, 1827 – My guess is that the shrubs you see in this drawing are probably native coyote brush (*Baccharis pilularis*), which is dispersed by wind. It burns like a torch too. To keep it under control, I cull the females.



The site history of our property showed that high-disturbance aboriginal management had ceased nearly a century before botanists had arrived. The previous chapter demonstrated the magnitude of species loss due to weeds and succession since then. It also showed that the situation will continue to get worse with successive disturbances because exotics are so dominant. In sum, this once-aboriginal system has been so altered for so long, weeds and succession have taken over so completely and over such a huge area, **there is no possibility we *could* have a detailed understanding of how it used to work** virtually anywhere, much less how it should work today. How then do we learn how to keep a remnant annual system reproducing? By covering it up and calling it “restoration”?



Madrone tree seedlings

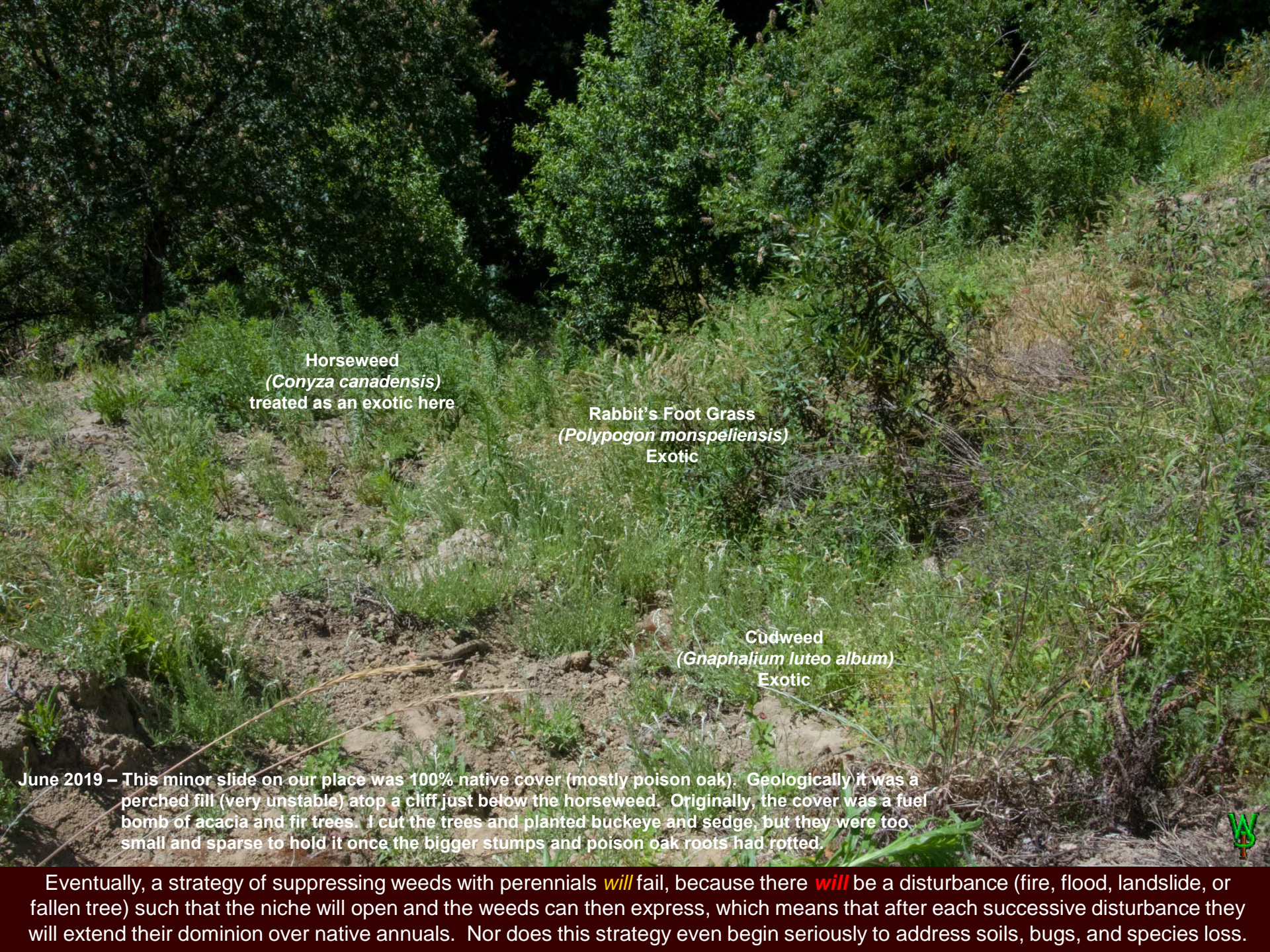
Oak seedling

Native blackberry

June 2015 – This is a suppression strategy in action here: a diverse mix of almost entirely perennial native cover only one year after thinning trees. It has already precluded most native annuals (there are a few tarweeds and sanicle). It will soon be overwhelmed by the native blackberry, then shrubs, then trees...



Even where a total system is the goal, there is nothing intrinsically wrong with this “suppression” strategy (see above) if it is used only temporarily to contain weed expression. Yet without native **annual** plants (our focus for 20 years), the successional system will lose critical source of food for wildlife, breeding habitat for its insect associates, and sugars for its microbial foundations in soil.



Horseweed
(*Conyza canadensis*)
treated as an exotic here

Rabbit's Foot Grass
(*Polypogon monspeliensis*)
Exotic

Cudweed
(*Gnaphalium luteo album*)
Exotic

June 2019 – This minor slide on our place was 100% native cover (mostly poison oak). Geologically it was a perched fill (very unstable) atop a cliff just below the horseweed. Originally, the cover was a fuel bomb of acacia and fir trees. I cut the trees and planted buckeye and sedge, but they were too small and sparse to hold it once the bigger stumps and poison oak roots had rotted.

Eventually, a strategy of suppressing weeds with perennials *will* fail, because there *will* be a disturbance (fire, flood, landslide, or fallen tree) such that the niche will open and the weeds can then express, which means that after each successive disturbance they will extend their dominion over native annuals. Nor does this strategy even begin seriously to address soils, bugs, and species loss.





March 2005 – After this treatment, it took six more years to get to the point that I could keep this area clean by hand-weeding alone.

No matter what, somebody MUST grow native annuals or the system dies. That means that somebody MUST purge the exotic weed bank while somehow recovering what little may be left of the native seed bank. The only problem for me was that no one had ever done that before. I didn't know any better and just dove in, *knowing* what would happen if I did not. The plan was to kill weeds.

June 2003 – **Dog Tail Grass** (*Cynosurus echinatus*) & **Rattlesnake Grass** (*Briza maxima*).

Every year thereafter, we got a few of both. The rattlesnake seed bank was done in about five years. The dog tail have persisted here for 16 years, and so must I. These days, it only takes a few minutes to weed, but one MUST be on time. The trick is to get the tiny ones, and there are always one or two. We call them “squeefs.” Squeefs are mighty, as is discussed in the chapter on weeding.



The challenge of a large scale attack on annual weeds is the simple arithmetic of seed production: They make so many that one must get ALL of the weeds while also preventing reinvasion; else, one is making no progress against that “onion” of weed layers. It’s hard to go fast enough to cover a lot of ground while being thorough enough that one is actually making year to year progress. This is physically impossible to do by hand alone. I mowed, sprayed, weeded, tilled, you name it. It was do it or the system dies.





June 2019 – No harm to these native grasses



Any tool, from a screwdriver to a gun, can be used well or badly. In wildland restoration, pesticides can be a godsend for native habitat or a big mistake depending upon how they are used. The trick is to cull ALL individual weeds while protecting the few natives that enter or remain viable in the seed bank, then to colonize the place. To gain control, I once used herbicides broadly; now I need only a few quarts per year. This is about hard choices and competing risks, or the system dies while people dither.



June 2019 –Eucalyptus works as an almost impervious barrier, until it burns.

The *Wildergarten* has buffers consisting of various land stases selected and managed according to the transmission mechanics of the weeds in those areas coupled to exotic control processes selected specific to the types of weeds invading from those directions: shaded hardwood forest, a County road with a rock embankment, exotic monoculture forest, a vineyard, heavy brush, a high, bare, and windy ridge, and a redwood monoculture. Most useful is that most of the landscapes beyond these “battlements” are dominated by dense forest, which limits inundation with seed from exotic annuals.



McClellan Ranch Preserve, Cupertino CA - Image from Google Earth

This property has excellent prospects for native annual restoration. It is not too big. It is isolated by concrete from weed introduction. They have staff interested in accomplishing a restoration. They have horticultural facilities. The tax base can afford it. There are kids who want to work and learn. It would be easier if they carve it into pieces with vegetative barriers.

Interestingly, a city full of concrete and carefully landscaped yards makes an excellent isolation barrier. There is nothing that intrinsically limits this kind of work exclusively to a remote rural setting. In that respect, for plant restoration, "fragmentation" is our friend.



June 2019 – About 15 years ago, a local botanist chided my lack of deerweed (*Acmispon glabra*) as a needed pollinator. I told him it made weeding a pain. I should have listened to my own instincts.



Meanwhile animals carry in more seed and also the wind. As natives colonize the property one must then detect the weeds in an increasingly complex and intense visual arrangement (above). Even with buffers, no matter what, over the long run, the real keys to long-term solutions are an almost insane level of persistence and site-specific knowledge over a very long period of time. Weeding requires such intimate focus for so long, so repetitively, that it simply cannot be done at large scale with existing technology. Yet the breadth of species loss we are facing, the slow death of dormant seed in the soil under layers of weeds and higher order perennials ([previous chapter](#)), suggests we may not have the time left to wait for genetically specific weed control technologies.

Native grasses invade this patch of native sand species (right). I can't just burn this to take out the grass after the sand plants drop seed. I can import fuel and burn it in winter, thus losing a year's crop of sand species, or I can use herbicides to kill the grass after the sand plants drop theirs and before the grasses drop seed, or I can weed out the native grasses by hand in the peak of the weed season. None of these alternatives is optimal as long as the goal remains to have a place for sand plants to express.



February 2017



March 2019



Even if a fully native development lab (such as ours) can be functionally isolated, we still don't know what the goals "*should*" be in the dynamic sense given the differences in management between aboriginal peoples and an agro-urban industrial economy. We have no intention of subsisting on acorns and blue dicks. There are no grizzlies tilling the soil. There are no elk grazing at will. Nor is any of that a good idea here. I would be delighted if I could burn in June, but in a community of million-dollar properties choking with fuel that's not going to happen. But... **We still have the obligation to keep at least remnants of these systems alive and reproducing.**



June 2019 – The last time this Hall's bent grass (*Agrostis hallii*) seeded was nine years ago when we also had ample May rains.

More complicating is that native colonization, and particularly of perennials, is NOT immediate. Sometimes native plant germination is dependent upon unusual weather, which can delay and extend greatly the amount of time it takes for it to reestablish and find its place in the composition. We don't always wait for that. A lot is also learned with horticultural experimentation here. Getting a few natives established really does get others going too. One learns a lot that way about what belongs where, or not. It does take patience.

TURNING THE CORNER



March 2009 – Forest floor, Phase 1 thinning.

Once control of grasslands was attained, it was back to forests before age rendered me incapable to do it anymore. Above is what I call a “Phase 1” thinning, where dead material and fuels are reduced, but there is not enough light on the forest floor to grow anything. Effectively, this is the state of suspended animation in which the forest was constrained while dealing with grasslands. The problem became that the trees just kept getting taller and skinnier. It was beyond time to thin again.



June 2019 – This is one of the last photos I got of our Dutch Shepherd, Dax, just happy to be doing her job, about a week before she died at 14½ of complications due to osteosarcoma.

As one thins a forest like that, one is left with the legacy of overcrowding. In a sense, for the trees to have decent structure, one must then start over with room for young trees with enough sun. Hence, the land beneath approaches a savannah, where grasslands invade forests and forests invade grasslands while the young trees grow at greater distances. Although this allows existing trees room to broaden and improve their structure as well as for their scions room to grow into decent trees, grass invasion also rapidly increases visual complexity which then risks weed invasion while extra light stimulates what is left of the weed bank within those forests.



May 2017 – An Experiment with Solar Exposure in a Power Line Right of Way



Then, as succession of higher order plants commences, they too spread, they too make gobs of seed. If the goal is native annuals, they too constitute a “weed” bank account. They also can hide exotics. One must then deal with how much one will tolerate and where. This is where the real art of managing natives begins. There are only so many hours in a day.

“Fast” doesn’t stop. And neither can I. If I did, this place would be wrecked in just a few years.



June 2019 – This is what I mean by “visual complexity,” an annual cover of small flowered lotus (*Acmispon parviflorus*), cupcake clover (*Trifolium microdon*) is invading the forest floor.

Hence, making choices about composition goals matters when it comes to the labor input that keeps all this going. While these necessary evils do present an enormous challenge, the resulting beauty is undeniable. The question remains though, **can** it be done? Is it at all possible for one person to do all this? In the end, this is a question of **tools**, labor, and scale and the wisdom to make tough choices all guided by one thing that seems to be missing from virtually any other project: intimate knowledge and a personal stake in successful management, both acquired over a period of decades.

HEADING FOR HOME



February 2015 – *Trifolium microdon* and *bifidum* in *Dichelostemma capitatum* along with *Sanicula crassicaulis*.

At this point in the season, one must check the germination to see what is coming up and what the weed challenges will be.

At the beginning of this chapter, it promised a synthesis, a proposed solution set to the dual problems arrayed in the previous chapter.

Yet unless you had read this disjointed presentation carefully up to this point, and experienced the rational helplessness with how complex and difficult are the challenges they present, as amplified by the scale of those problems, would you have recognized much less accepted this observation seriously: **Perhaps we should start with the humility to realize that the aboriginal approach to land management here always was exercised at small scale.** Maybe that should be a clue: Private plots dedicated to rescuing the vestiges of each local system, sized to the conditions, free to try something different, running experiments to develop processes to manage them in detail efficiently might be more successful at developing the tools and reproducing the knowledge we need to care for the planet than has been a global policy of alienating people from the land, “preserving” disastrous conditions on an unimaginable scale.



June 2019 – This Pacific Reed Grass (*Calamagrostis nutkaensis*) came up from a pile of dirt excavated from beneath the County road. This is a rare grass in this area, and is supposedly only coastal. The pile sat there for years until we had an exceptionally wet and cool rainy season, when grasses, native and exotic, came up all over the property in places I had never seen them before.

The hard thing for people to realize is that the kinds of problems encountered here at the *Wildergarten*: 200 years of weed introductions, topsoil stripped by bulldozers, and 50 years of abandonment to succession... can take DECADES for a family of average means to produce technically significant results toward a set of goals involving so many unknowns. This is particularly because it can take many years before one has the kind of soil conditions and weather the plants need to germinate.



Scientific Name
Clarkia rubicunda

Status (native or not)
any

Start Date
End Date

Observer

OTHER SOURCES
CCH, iNaturalist

include surveys/checklists

Location Description

anywhere
in map area

POLYGON

Photos
any

County
Plumas
Riverside
Sacramento
Santa Barbara
San Bernardino
San Benito
Santa Clara
Santa Cruz

Columns
Basic Data

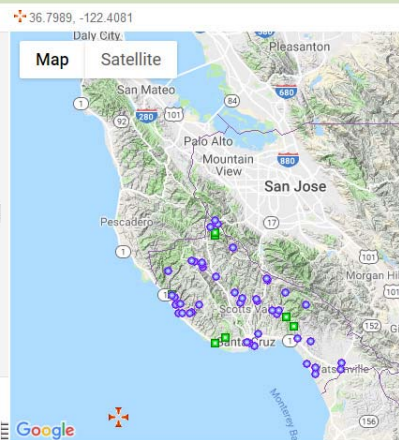
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Click on ID to select a record. Click on column title to sort.

64 records:

ID	Plant	Photo	Observer	Source	Date	County
cch: UC20292	Clarkia rubicunda Farewell to spring	none	F. P. McLean	Consortium of California Herbaria	1873-06-01	Santa Cruz
cch: POM37826	Clarkia rubicunda Farewell to spring	none	Marcus E. Jones	Consortium of California Herbaria		
cch: CAS-BOT-BC165213	Clarkia rubicunda Farewell to spring	none	W. R. Dudley	Consortium of California Herbaria		



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Photo © Joyce Gross

All Abuzz About Bugs!

We are an online community of naturalists who enjoy learning about and sharing our observations of insects, spiders, and other related creatures.

the opportunity to instill in others the love and appreciation that we share for the lives of these oft-maligned



Placed by [Brady Richards](#) 4 minutes ago in
▶ [White oak borer \(Goes tigrinus\)](#)



Placed by [cheins](#) 7 minutes ago in
▶ [Swift Crab Spider \(Mecaphesa celer\)](#)



Placed by [cheins](#) 8 minutes ago in
▶ [Ground Crab Spiders \(Xysticus\)](#)

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MUSHROOM OBSERVER

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Latest

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Create List

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Activity Log

Show: **Everything** ☒ Observations ☒ Names ☒ Locations ☒ Species Lists ☒ Projects ☒ Glossary Terms

1 2 3 4 5 6 ... 29746 Next »



Okay|Useful|Good|Great

[Amanita amerifulva group \(343494\)](#)
Umstead State Park, Raleigh, North Carolina, USA



Okay|Useful|Good|Great

[Cortinarius \(Pers.\) Gray \(67012\)](#)
Brimbin Nature Reserve, Taree, New South Wales, Australia



Okay|Useful

[Coprinosia p](#)

Hunlock Creek, CA

2019-06-17: C

Observat

27 min

The Jepson Herbarium
University of California, Berkeley

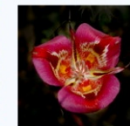
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Phylogenetic index to families

The Jepson eFlora is the foremost authority on the native and naturalized vascular plants of California. For plants occurring in wildlands or otherwise outside of cultivation, the Jepson eFlora contains taxonomic treatments, distribution maps, illustrations, photographs, and identification keys.

Citation: Jepson Flora Project (eds.) 2019. Jepson eFlora, <http://ucjeps.berkeley.edu/eflora/> [accessed on Jun 18, 2019].

Search the eFlora for a name:

Scientific Name

Submit Name Reset

Common Name

Submit Name Reset

Index to accepted names and synonyms:

A B C D E F G H I J K L M N O P Q R S T U V W X Y Z

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Glossary

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Key to families

Keys to genera in families

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Use filtered keys



Some of the challenges and risks we faced have since been mitigated in that online resources are now vastly more useful than the were in 1990. Both element and process knowledge can be more easily shared than ever before. Knowing what I know now and with the resources now available (including this book), we could probably have cut our 30-year timeline at least by half and maybe more.



There are 40 clusters
of burs in this photo
At least.
Each bur has 4-6 seeds.

June 2019 – This is how it looks when weeding hedge parsley (*Torilis arvensis*). Finding lighting conditions for this photo took a very long time. Most of the time they are not so easy to see. Each cluster of **burs** has 16-50 seeds. Find them all or one is going backwards.



None of those benefits will change the fact that truly restoring native annuals is extremely expensive. Were someone to pay for what I do, the cost would exceed \$150,000 per year just in labor. In perpetuity. And that is just expenses, goodness knows how much we paid in capital. Detailed stewardship is a kind of labor which capital cannot replace for a long time to come. Take it from somebody who has succeeded where others have failed: **Somebody has to do this or the native seed bank will slowly die.** The keys to succeeding financially and technically are to confine that work to minimum scale and allow the freedom to try something different. This is not about landscapes but a network of laboratories developing high value functional remnants. Please, help keep the system alive and breeding.



June 2014 – Katherine Vande Pol, Valedictorian, College of Agriculture and Applied Sciences, Utah State University, at barely the age of 20.

But how is all of this to be paid for? Well, we did this 14 acres on a nurse's salary while paying for a house above Silicon Valley, raising two kids, and putting them through college into STEM PhD programs graduating with no debt. Nevertheless, restoration and functionality do both raise property value and reduce risk to fixed assets. Both can be funded against actuarially measured risks over time. Remember too, that as robotics and AI displace traditional jobs, those with capital still value contact with reality (consider the size of the tourism and outdoor recreation industries). The key is to get the public to understand that "Nature" can't care for itself because nature doesn't "care." **What is needed is to cherish the people who do.** This isn't about me, this is about motivating young people into doing something beyond playing with their smart phones. Wouldn't we rather that they were smart instead? "Smart" about life.

Cattle Grazing Area

- Dogs must remain on leash and under control. Cattle perceive dogs as predators.
- Do not allow your dog to chase or harass the cattle.
- Never enter the fenced grazing area.
- Do not feed, pet, or startle the cattle.
- If you see cattle outside of the fences, keep your distance and call 911: The rancher will be notified immediately.
- Report any incidents or aggressive, injured, or sick cattle to the Parks and Recreation Department at 831-420-5270.

In an emergency, call 911.

City of Santa Cruz Parks and Recreation Department
www.cityofsantacruz.com/habitatmanagementatranagulch

Dear Visitor:

I am here to help save the endangered Santa Cruz tarplant.

Non-native grasses are too tall and dense and smother the native wildflowers.

I like to eat the grass which gives the native wildflowers a place to grow.

Yours Truly,

Bo Vine



City of Santa Cruz Parks and Recreation Department
www.cityofsantacruz.com/habitatmanagementatranagulch

It doesn't take a rocket scientist to figure out what the problem for tarplant is here: Slender oat, rat tail fescue, Italian rye, velvet grass, rattlesnake grass, soft brome, cat's ear, wild radish... Weeds, and succession, disturbance and then weeds.

Madia gracilis – Ungrazed in uncompacted fill it is four feet tall and bushy

Madia gracilis – Grazed on a compacted dirt road it's less than a foot tall

June 2019 – This is the 67-acre Arana Gulch Open Space Park in Santa Cruz, CA. Here government agencies have spent over \$1 million to save 1 endangered annual tarplant species (and \$7 million on a bicycle trail to 'mitigate climate change'). 30 years ago they had 100,000 plants. Today less than 20.

June 2019 – This is the 14-acre *Wildergarten* about 9 miles away. Thirty years ago, there were no tarplants here (not the same species). Here, government agencies have spent \$0. Now there are too many to count along with dozens of other returning native annuals. Deer like them (bottom).



This is about results. The \$24 billion in 6 years Californians paid to "preserve land" did little more than fatten the development industry and banking system with an artificial scarcity of developable land. And that by no means is all that is spent for environmental projects having very disappointing outcomes, also producing a lobby for academics and restoration contractors in bed with unaccountable bureaucracies. It certainly hasn't improved the condition of habitat very much. We need to rethink this management system. All we can reasonably afford is to focus on much smaller and more extended projects with much more rigorous goals.

ANNUAL CHALLENGES PERENNIAL LABOR



June 2019 – Just this year, and for the first time, I noticed that most of the globe lilies (*Calochortus albus*) on this property are on north facing slopes. This important aboriginal root crop is just over the crest of a ridge having a large patch of returning blue dicks (*Dichelostemma capitatum*), also an important aboriginal source of dietary starch. The yellow flowers are golden yarrow (*Eriophyllum confertiflorum*), a perennial sub-shrub I would also have to kill to get more globe lilies (don't want to). Only a year later, this patch had been invaded by deerweed and monkey flower shrubs I will have to kill before they seed if I want either of these to express. Yet this spot had been a patch of *Ceanothus cuneatus* I had taken down under a power line, which had to rot down before the lilies came up. Learning these plant preferences and patterns can take decades of both patient and brutal work.

This chapter demonstrated how little is known about how native plant systems work together over time and with differences in management (above). Importantly, the biggest barrier to saving them may be the usual worldview about "Nature." How to achieve that minimal goal of keeping what is left reproducing and do it economically at large scale is therefore also unknown. This book is about how I went about acquiring some of that knowledge at smaller scale. The next chapter presents the macro-level changes wrought here with repeat photos, followed with proof of what is being accomplished documenting native annual germination.

OTHER BOOKS BY MARK EDWARD VANDE POL

Quick Read Picture Books

Range Management

Zion National Park

Canyonlands National Park

Deseret Ranch

Fuels Management, Succession Run Amok

The Cone Fire (the benefits of active forestry)

The Warm Fire (what happens without it)

Fire Aftermath: Mesa Verde National Park (weeds)

The Croy and Summit Fires (the wildland urban interface)

Socio-Ecological Paradigms

Environmental Consequences

Meadow Encroachment in Yosemite Valley

Why we can't accept how the original forest as it once was got that way

Living Sheepishly

Why we need a culture of animal husbandry

Sustained Development

Cities are becoming prisons

Katrina: What Did You Expect?

Environmental bureaucracy can be deadly

Natural Process: That Environmental Laws May Serve the Laws of Nature, ©Wildergarten Press, 2001, 454pp, ISBN: 0-9711793-0-1, LOC Control #2001092201. <http://www.naturalprocess.net>

Shemitta: For the Land is Mine: ©Wildergarten Press, 2009. Contains: 217pp text, 980pp overall, 14 picture books, 2 tables, 963 photographs, 9 maps, 2 drawings, 2 charts, 145 footnotes, 358 citations, and 216 other source references, not including external Internet links. ISBN 978-0-9711793-1-8. <http://www.shemitta.com>

Articles at Wildergarten Press: collected writings on Constitutional history and regulatory racketeering by tax-exempt "charitable" foundations. http://www.wildergarten.com/wp_pages/articles.html

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4. Central Planning
5. Our "Ownerless" Backyard



Each line in the TOC is a link that opens the corresponding chapter in a new file

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