To Members of the Willis Linn Jepson Chapter

As you may recall, last October our members with internet access received a survey from your Board of Directors asking five questions about why you are a member of the California Native Plant Society and how the Jepson Chapter can serve you better. We have 70 members and 30 responded. Thank you for your responses.

The attached report summarizes your responses to the survey. I hope you take some time to review the results, but here is a brief summary of how the survey participants’ responded.

- 64% have been member of CNPS for over five years;
- 97% are most concerned about native plant and habitat conservation activities;
- Hiking was the chapter activity that interested you the most;
- When asked what the Chapter was doing well, the most frequent response was plant propagation and plant sales; and
- When asked for suggestions on what the Chapter should be doing, one third of you though the Chapter should increase the quality, frequency and range of outreach for Chapter activities.

The survey had been very helpful to your Board. For 2015, we will continue to pursue native plant conservation issues in Solano County. We are planning a speaker program on oak woodland conservation issues to be held in Vacaville this fall. And with the profits from our plant sales we will continue to invest in upgrading our nursery at the Vallejo Sanitation and Flood Control District corporation yard to produce disease and pathogen-free native plants.

We are always looking for hiking opportunities. It really helps when one of our members volunteers to schedule and lead a hike.

Your Board will do its best to improve outreach to the CNPS members in Solano County. Our limited resources require us to rely heavily on our website, emails and social media to let you know what we are doing. For those members without internet access, we issue periodic postcards with brief announcements. We don’t have a newsletter editor so, until we do, we won’t be able to provide periodic newsletters as we have done in the past.

We are likely to issue another survey to our members in the next year or so. Meanwhile, please feel free to contact me by email or phone if you have suggestions or concerns regarding the activities of the Jepson Chapter.

Sincerely,

Steven Goetz, President
Willis Linn Jepson Chapter
California Native Plant Society

Sgoet@sbcglobal.net, 925-525-5527 (cell)
EVALUATION OF 2014 JEPSON CHAPTER MEMBERSHIP SURVEY

The survey questions and responses are included in the Appendix to this report. 30 members responded to the five-question survey, which represents 43% of the Chapter membership. The survey was administered through the Surveymonkey web-based service, so members that did not have internet service were not able to participate.

Question 1 asked “How long have you been a member of the Chapter? The range of responses was similar to the data available from the CNPS State Office as shown in Table 1. These responses suggest that the membership that participated in the survey was representative of the total Chapter membership, although it should be acknowledged Board members represented 25% of the survey participants (Board members represents about 12% of Chapter membership).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Membership Tenure</th>
<th>2014 Survey</th>
<th>Chapter Membership¹</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Under 2 years</td>
<td>13%</td>
<td>16%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 to 5 years</td>
<td>17%</td>
<td>20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Over 5 years</td>
<td>70%</td>
<td>64%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Question 2 asked participants to give a high, medium or low priority to a set of native plant related activities.

More participants ranked plant and habitat conservation activities higher than any other activity by a very wide margin (97%). The next highest priority was given to the advocacy and legislation activity at 48%. Botany and plant identification was given a high or medium priority by most all participants except for one. Photography and professional support were the activities most often given a low priority by the participants, and were rarely selected as a high priority by them. Responses to the horticulture and rare plants activities were evenly distributed among the high, medium and low priority ratings.

These results suggest our members want CNPS should focus on conservation issues and advocate on behalf of native plant conservation issues. The 2015 Conservation Conference should resonate with our membership. Members might also get engaged in local conservation issues if their relevance is apparent to them.

Question 3 asked participants to indicate which Chapter activities they would most likely participate in during a 12-month period. The most popular activities were hikes and talks/demonstration programs (76% and 69%, respectively). While we have had some relative success with talks/demonstration programs, our hikes have not been well attended by Chapter members.

¹ CNPS State Office membership data for the Jepson Chapter as of September 2014.
There was moderate interest in participating in garden tours, plant propagation, plant care workshops, and rare plant surveys. Surprisingly, our regularly-scheduled plant propagation activities are not well attended, but our workshop on planting wildflowers in December 2012 was very successful. Participation has been better for the periodic work days that have been scheduled on Saturday mornings at the Val San native plant nursery. Garden tours and rare plant surveys are beyond the resources of the current board and committees. The have been two Rare Plant Treasure Hunts in Solano County during in the recent past, but we are not notified of their schedule far enough in advance to publicize them to our members.

Kid’s activities or fund raising were the least popular, each receiving one or two responses. Three survey participants were actually interested in serving on the Board, although perhaps those members already are serving on the Board.

Question 4 asked participants what the Jepson Chapter was doing well. While the question was open-ended, the 31 responses could be grouped into five subject areas as shown in Table 2.

### Table 2

**WHAT ACTIVITY IS THE CHAPTER DOING WELL?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Don’t Know</td>
<td>7 (23%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing the Botanic Garden</td>
<td>7 (23%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plant Propagation and Sales</td>
<td>12 (39%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Outreach</td>
<td>4 (13%)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hikes</td>
<td>1 (3%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Not surprisingly, most survey participants acknowledged the Chapter’s work in native plant propagation and sales, which is an activity that consumes the bulk of the Chapter’s resources.

Managing the Forrest Deaner Native Plant Botanic Garden was the second most appreciated activity of the Chapter. Prior to 2014, this activity consumed much of the Chapter’s resources, but the Chapter had to transition into a minor role for the Garden because most Board members wished to allocate our limited resources to plant conservation issues.

A significant number of participants were not aware of the Chapter’s activities, indicating that Chapter outreach activities may be lacking, even though 13% of the participants thought the Chapter’s outreach efforts were significant.

Question 5 asked participants to give specific suggestions on what the Chapter could do better. Again, this was an open-ended question, but these responses were grouped into six subject areas as shown in Table 3. Note that some participants gave several suggestions and some gave no suggestions, so the responses don’t add up to 30.
TABLE 3

WHAT COULD THE CHAPTER DO BETTER?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Outreach</th>
<th>Talks &amp; Programs</th>
<th>Field Trips</th>
<th>Plant Care Information</th>
<th>Collaborate with Others</th>
<th>Misc.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Responses</td>
<td>10 (33%)</td>
<td>7 (23%)</td>
<td>5 (17%)</td>
<td>2 (7%)</td>
<td>2 (7%)</td>
<td>4 (13%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

One third of the participants thought the Chapter should increase the quality, frequency and range of outreach for Chapter activities. These suggestions puts the Board in somewhat of a dilemma since it has not been able to recruit a chairperson for outreach/newsletter activities. Even so, last year the Board recognized the importance of outreach to Chapter members and the public and two Board members agreed to co-chair the Outreach Committee. Their activities have relied upon brief and periodic email blasts to members with email addresses the typically refer members to information recently added to the Chapter website, and brief announcements on post cards to members without email addresses.

Nearly a quarter of the suggestions related to providing more meetings that featured guest speakers or information on native plant topics. These suggestions again are difficult to follow-up on because there have not been enough volunteers available to produce more than one or two programs a year – members want more than that. Last year the State Office produced a Speakers Bureau booklet which lists native plant experts who are available to give talks at Chapter meetings, which can reduce the level of effort required to produce events for members.

Field trips were also a popular suggestion. One member specifically volunteered to lead a field trip. The Board should follow up on these opportunities since we don’t have volunteers who can regularly commit to organizing hikes.

**FINDINGS**

In future surveys, board member responses should be separated from the rest of the responses in order to isolate the opinions of members not involved in Chapter leadership.

Outreach activities should be a high priority for the Jepson Board. Expanded use of social media and other electronic outreach methods may help conserve volunteer hours. Outreach activities might also include announcements to members on easy tasks for the Chapter that need a volunteer.

Offering talks and programs to Chapter membership should also be a high priority for the Jepson Board. Topics of potential high interest to members include native plant conservation issues (e.g. Bay Delta Conservation Plan), interesting places to hike, and how to grow and care for native plants. The Board should review the CNPS Speaker’s Bureau booklet for ideas. Such activities need to be supported by attractive and timely outreach materials to members and the public.

The Board should ask the CNPS State Office to assist with arranging a Rare Plant Treasure Hunt in an interesting area to hike in Solano County.
Q1 How long (approximately) have you been a member of the Willis Jepson Chapter?

Answered: 30  Skipped: 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1 to 2 years</td>
<td>13.33%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 to 5 years</td>
<td>16.67%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>More than 5 years</td>
<td>70.00%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Respondents: 30
Q2 Of the following native plant related activities, identify your priorities from the list as High, Medium or Low.

Answered: 30  Skipped: 1

- Horticulture
- Professional Support
- Rare plants
- Advocacy / Legislation
- Botany and plant...
- Plant and habitat...
## Photography

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>HIGH</th>
<th>MEDIUM</th>
<th>LOW</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10.34%</td>
<td>41.38%</td>
<td>48.28%</td>
<td>29</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Q3 Which of the following chapter activities would you be most likely to participate in? Check as many as you are interested in doing at least once a year.

Answered: 29  Skipped: 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Answer Choices</th>
<th>Responses</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Nature hikes</td>
<td>75.86%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Garden tours</td>
<td>44.83%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lectures, speakers, demonstrations</td>
<td>68.97%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plant propagation at the ValSan Nursery</td>
<td>31.03%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workshops on native plant care</td>
<td>37.93%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rare plant treasure hunt / Native plant surveys</td>
<td>34.48%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activities for kids</td>
<td>6.90%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fund raising</td>
<td>3.45%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Activity</td>
<td>Percentage</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Serving on board or committee</td>
<td>10.34%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Monitoring local (Solano County &amp; City) native plant issues</td>
<td>27.59%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total Respondents: 29
APPENDIX

QUESTION: In your opinion, what is the Jepson Chapter doing well? Open-Ended Response

1. I'm sorry, I'm not active enough to know- I still work full time and have other obligations in the evenings
2. Don't know as I have not attended any meetings
3. yes
4. We are barely hanging on. We need more active members. Limiting the activities of the chapter to what people are willing and able to work on has helped.
5. hard to say
7. I like the native plant garden in the state park.
8. plant sales and nursery
9. plant sales
10. outreach to the community
11. The native plant garden at Benicia State Park is a gem
12. Horticulture and native plant gardening activities.
13. I'm not sure.
14. Forest Deaner Native Plant Garden and the Chapter's Native Plant Sales
15. The plant sales.
16. Newsletters, plant propagation and sales, information on hikes and other chapter related activities.
17. The general issue of providing information to local residents regarding native plants in Solano County.
18. Native Plant Sales; FD botanical garden in State Park. I have not been active participant but am now semi-retired with a bit more time.
19. I am still evaluating what I can and can no longer do. I don't drive at night or can take long walks but I can still manage propagation in the nursery.
20. The garden is the only thing I know about.
21. Propagation for sales
22. I love the garden in BSP! You have done such a great job. I also enjoy Dan's weekly reports on the garden work.
23. Plant sales
24. plant sales
25. The newsletters help identify issues of interest to the chapter.
26. Water conservation through plant sales and garden help.
27. Propagation and plant sales, public event tables
28. I have no opinion
29. Haven't been a member long enough to form an opinion.
30. Staying alive!
31. Staying afloat with such little participation in this region, which is why I too have become inactive.
32. People are interested in their cell phones and pets, not plants or conservation.

QUESTION: In your opinion, what could the chapter do better? One or two concrete suggestions would be very helpful.

1. I'm sorry, I'm not active enough to know since I still work full time and have other obligations in the evenings
2. I do activities with the Napa Chapter because the Solano Chapter did not exist. I helped with plant propagation to raise monies for that chapter as they have helped donate monies for litigation in Napa and Solano Counties. I have helped maintaining the garden at Benicia State Recreation Area.

3. Since I have moved out-of-state, I will be affiliating with the Oregon Native Plant Society. Emily

4. We need a speaker series again. We need to help other organizations with their native plant activities (e.g. RCD).

5. Sell only disease-free stock at plant sales and produce disease free material at the nursery. We are not there yet.


7. Some very practical workshops on plant care would be good.

8. Needs to communicate better with the membership and the general public.

9. Talks relating to native plant gardening.

10. Find a way to show non plant lovers the importance of conserving native plant communities.

11. Perhaps interact with other Chapters and pool resources for fungi hikes in winter, etc.


13. I'm not sure.

14. Membership chair should e-mail members a reminder for chapter meetings a couple of days in advance, like other organizations do.

15. Retired biology instructor Robin Wood volunteers to lead one to BLM's Red Hills Area of Critical Environmental Concern in April.

16. No face to face = no membership. Seasonally appropriate field trips to pant diversity rich places.

17. I don't know how to get more people involved.

18. Create a process to observe, identify and share the flora in Solano County with our members and the public. Perhaps a website to post observations as the seasonal bloom progresses.

19. Providing information to folks about the impact on native plants due to development, climate change and other factors here in Solano County and actions people can take to protect native plants.

20. Hold Systematic Botany-Plant identification workshops for beginners and those who have forgotten that stuff. Field trips to ID plants and plant communities.

21. Guest Speakers-various subjects including taxonomy, plant ecology, conservation, etc.

22. I do believe that kid's activities are important to the chapter and the environment. That and we could always use more volunteers!

23. Work with county to create Oak Tree Preservation laws.

24. More help at the BSRA garden on a continuing basis. Work days as we do at ValSan better promoted.

25. Perhaps send volunteer opportunity information (like the Sat. work parties) on a regular basis to capture more volunteers. Maybe as a separate email from the newsletter.

26. I tend to read it quickly and might miss it, but if there were email notifications of upcoming activities, I might then participate.

27. This is tough one. Ignite local interest; third drought is a good opportunity to align with Solano Water and various cities to continue participating in homeowner classes and trainings.


29. Send newsletters and other via email, hold occasional chapter meetings.

30. More member outreach for local conservation and plant issues.

31. More speaker presentations (my first contact with CNPS), native plant articles in local publications.

32. I have no opinion.
33. Haven't been a member long enough to form an opinion.
34. Develop the next generation of membership and leadership.
35. The chapter is doing the best it can considering all the deadbeats of society. I am losing my will and patience with the modern society and their fixation on themselves and pets.