Promoting Stewardship of Solano County and Delta Natural Resources Through Fish and Wildlife Conservation Access

Project Description:

Development, Design and Fabrication of eight (8) educational interpretive panels on fish and wildlife resources at the Forrest Deaner Native Plant Botanic Garden, Benicia State Recreation Area, Benicia, CA 94510

Prepared by: Norma Deaner, California Native Plant Society- Willis Linn Jepson Chapter in Collaboration with Delta Protection Commission

Submitted To: Dan Sykes, Manager
County of Solano - Parks Division
675 Texas Street, Suite 2500
Fairfield, California 94533-6336

July 12, 2010
Funding Provided by: County of Solano, California State Parks Foundation, Delta Protection Commission

Project Theme: Native plants provide valuable benefits that enhance our well-being and the community we live in.

Panel Sizes: 36” x 24 x 1/2”, made of exterior high pressure laminates (HPL), mounted on single pedestal aluminum frames.

Installation: All eight panels were installed on June 21, 2010. They are located trailside, along accessible path of travel, ADA compliant.

Panels:
- California Native Plants, A Bounty of Benefits
- A Garden Grows from One Man’s Dream
- Welcome Nature’s Most Delightful Visitors
- A People’s Heritage is Rooted in Plants
- Meadow Grasses Beckon– and Surprise us
- Plants Thrive Along our Waterways
- A Peek into the Past— A Glimpse into the Future
- Environmental Plant Adaptation At Its Best

Location
- Residential Garden
- Memorial Garden
- Hummingbird/Butterfly Garden
- Native American Garden
- Meadow Garden
- Riparian Garden
- Valley Grassland
- Coastal Sage Scrub

Garden Orientation Map

Interpretive Panel Team:
- Norma Deaner, Garden Director, & Co-Chair
- Tim Sullivan, Garden Curator
- Gary Brogan, Garden Co-Chair
- Karen Barrett, Regional Interpretive Specialist, CA State Parks
California Native Plants, A Bounty of Benefits

Cultivate native plants and invite the variety and natural beauty of California into your garden. California’s exciting native plant splendor includes an incredible palette of over 6,000 species; more than 1,200 of these are found in Solano County. These often overlooked treasures contribute to a healthy, ambient environment. They save you time and money as they tell stories of the land and its wildlife.

Benefits of Native Plants

- **Save Water**: Once established, many native plants need minimal irrigation beyond normal rainfall.
- **Reduce Maintenance**: Low maintenance landscaping methods are a natural fit with native plants that are already adapted to the local environment.
- **Eliminate Pesticides**: Native plants have thrived in California without pesticides. Avoiding pesticide use in the garden lets natural pest control take over and keeps chemical toxins out of our creeks and watersheds.
- **View Wildlife**: Native plants, birds, butterflies, beneficial insects, and other interesting critters are “made for each other.” Research shows that native wildlife prefer native plants.

- **Support Local Ecology**: Planting gardens, parks, and roadides with California natives can provide a “bridge” to nearby remaining wildlands fractured by development.

- **Coyote Mint**
- **Monardella villosa**
- **Anise Swallowtail Butterfly**
- **Papilio zelicaon**

- **Showy Flowering One**
- **Western Redbud**
- **Cercis occidentalis**
- **Gray Sage**
- **Salvia leucophylla**
- **Ceanothus “Snow Flurry”**
- **Ceanothus Thyrsiflorus “Snow Flurry”**

- **Sentinel Mariposa**
- **Arctostaphylos chrysocoma**
A Garden Grows From One Man’s Dream

Forrest Deaner wanted to stem the decline of California’s unique and diverse flora. He challenged the odds with passion and determination. Forrest established this native plant botanic garden to increase appreciation, concern for, and use of California native plants.

This garden is named in his honor and is a collaboration between the California Native Plant Society—Willis Linn Jepson Chapter, and California State Parks. His dream continues to inspire grants, donations, and thousands of hours of volunteer work that make the garden thrive.

Blue Oak
Quercus douglasii

Forrest chose this rock as the cornerstone of the garden, and placed it here at our groundbreaking in November, 2000.

A Poem for Forrest
The yellow light of morning
finds me in the garden.
Blue oaks,
young soldiers,
growing promises of endurance.

In these trees
with their youthful branches
raised toward the sky.

I see color
warm as blood coursing through
veins and roots
spanning time.

Your hands
careened this soil,
planned and re-planned
each stone, each plant,
they are your survivors.

And in the years that follow death,
Ceanothus, blue-eyed Grass
and golden poppies
will find solace
in this little space
that calls us ever closer.

This is your garden,
your dream...a testament to the fact
that once in life
you placed your hands
with gentle purpose
upon this earth.

— Sandra Lee Stillwell
Welcome Nature’s Most Delightful Visitors Into Your Garden

Encourage hummingbirds, butterflies and other beneficial insects to visit your garden. You can create a “guest list” for these dynamic wonders by planting their favorite natives. They will reward you by helping to pollinate your plants.

- Fuchsia-flowered Gooseberry
- Ribes speciosum
- Anna’s Hummingbird
- Selasphorus sasin
- Showy Milkweed
- Asclepias speciosa
- Piping Swallowtail Butterfly
- Battus philenor
- Montane Cranothus
- Cranothus maritimus
- Scarlet Columbine
- Aquilegia formosa
- Cowpen Coreopsis
- Darned Dragonfly
- Skaw Jullian
A People’s Heritage is Rooted In Plants

The original people of this land, the Patwin, lived with an intimate connection to their surroundings. Plants were a vital part of their heritage and were used in a harmonious blend of beauty, utility and nature.

Today, the Patwin honor the old ways and use plants for food, medicine, and for domestic and ceremonial purposes.
Meadow Grasses Beckon
And Surprise Us With Bursts of Wildflowers

Meadows are among the best places to discover and learn about spring wildflowers. Colorful, ephemeral blossoms attract pollinators that help ensure seeds for next year’s plants. Notice the open, light-filled, moist characteristics of this area. Grasses, sedges and rushes thrive here, along with flowering plants. In winter, subtle shades and textures provide interest in a quieter landscape.

Coast Iris
Iris laevigata

California Poppy
Eschscholzia californica

Blue-eyed Grass
Sagittaria latifolia

California Buckwheat
Eriogonum terricolum
Plants Thrive Along Our Waterways

Hardy water-loving plants flourish along California’s waterways. These riparian plants withstand winter’s floods and summer’s low moisture levels. Their leafy cover and dense root structures prevent erosion and filter water, thus improving water quality.

Riparian areas are habitat corridors in which abundant wildlife can find food and shelter, and safely travel from one location to another.
A Peek into the Past - A Glimpse into the Future
Valley Grassland Community

Lush native grasses and other grassland plants once accounted for more than 20% of California's landscape and now cover less than a tenth of a percent. This decline is due to extensive cultivation, overgrazing, non-native species encroachment, and expansive urbanization. Among the grass species, bunchgrasses are particularly important to people. They are drought-tolerant with an extended green season, so they require less water and offer some fire protection. Bunchgrasses also provide enhanced habitat for wildlife, and erosion control. Native bunchgrasses are an excellent alternative to conventional turf lawns.

Red Mauis
Calandrinia ciliata

Spike Bentgrass
Agrisbis exarata

California Buttercup
Rumexacalifornia

Purple Needlegrass
Nassella pulchra

Bog Rush, Juncus effusus
Environmental Plant Adaptation At Its Best
Coastal Sage Scrub Community

These low-growing shrubs of the coastal sage scrub adapt well to changing weather patterns. Banks of coastal fog pushed by prevailing winds lead to intriguing plants. Look for their specialized leaves with minute hairs that reflect sunlight, reduced size to conserve water, mid-summer leaf drop, and often aromatic foliage.

Many of these drought-resistant plants are threatened because their habitats are also prime real estate locations.