

CONSERVATION REPORT 2018-2020
SUSANNE TOBEY CHAIR

In the first year our committee focused on familiarizing our members with the GCA position papers. We presented a paper at each meeting, tying the paper to something in the news, particularly at the local level. We also worked to keep our members abreast of national, state and local legislation in the works, as well as educating them on how to contact representatives on initiatives of interest. Our committee attended the lecture by Dr Susan Mazer of UCSB on the California Phenology Project, a citizen scientist project. Dr. Mazer also presented at the January General Meeting on this topic

Our end of year project and next year initiative, Protecting Pollinators, was designed in sync with GCAs current initiative. With our local botanic garden, we developed a set of resources for members on choosing and maintaining native plants. We devised a plan to involve our membership in creating monarch waystations by raising milkweed in home gardens and then moving that out to our community school gardens. We introduced the pollinator project with our May meeting topic, "It's the Little Things that Count" detailing the importance of pollinators and the use of native plants. We then toured Lotusland's insectary garden with Corey Welles and garden designer Eric Nagelman.

Our best activity of 2019 was our December outing to the Dangermond Preserve. Fourteen of us visited "this last perfect place in California" gifted to the Nature Conservancy by Laura and Jack Dangermond. This 25,000 acre nearly untouched property hugs California's most prominent corner at Point Conception, where the lands and seas of the north meet those of the south. The preserve represents the last intact ecosystem for the Southern California Coast, home to many threatened and endangered species. Our tour was led by Mike Bell, Preserve Director for the Nature Conservancy and augmented by botanist Steve Junak. We explored the coast, the beaches, and viewed the Point Conception lighthouse. We learned about the many challenges facing the preserve in preparing for future educational and scientific research. As the preserve is not yet open for visits, we felt very privileged to be able to view this Jewel of the Coast. It would be great if every California club (at least) could take a trip there. That and a stop for Jalama Beach Burgers made for a great day.

Garden Club of Santa Barbara continued our pollinator initiative this year. Our October meeting topic on vanishing bird populations gave tips for creating and maintaining a bird friendly garden. We purchased milkweed starts to be raised for member sale and installation in the community school gardens which we support. Our February meeting featured pollinator friendly plants and incorporating native plants into any garden design.

We closely monitored and kept our members aware of the oil cleanup operations of defunct wells off of our coast. The current administration is trying to expand oil drilling and fracking up and down the central coast.

We asked all of our members and their guests to take the Healthy Garden Pledge at the February General Open Meeting, offering them a depository at meetings for old prescriptions, the alternatives to toxic yard chemicals, and what to look for to avoid purchasing plants treated with neonicotinoids.

April's meeting was scheduled as our designated Conservation meeting including a presentation on NAL, the C Change presentation and the establishment of our Monarch Butterfly sites. We purchased seedlings from the Santa Barbara Botanic Garden last October, nurtured them through winter and planned to distribute them then. Instead we did a club pickup this week for all interested parties