



California Native Grasslands Association

Mission, Goals, History Timeline 1991-2023

CNGA Mission Statement

The mission of the California Native Grasslands Association (CNGA) is to promote, preserve, and restore the diversity of California's native grasses and grassland ecosystems through education, advocacy, research, and stewardship.

Who we are

CNGA is a non-profit membership organization that brings together diverse interests to promote, preserve, and restore the diversity of California's native grasses and grassland ecosystems through education, advocacy, research, and stewardship. Members include conservationists, restoration practitioners, naturalists, botanists, resource managers, horticulturalists, agency representatives, farmers, ranchers, homeowners, seed producers, scientists, consultants, students, and native plant enthusiasts.

What we do

Founded in 1991, CNGA continues to develop comprehensive and innovative programs of education, training, and field experience for its members and the general public. Through our publications, workshops, field trips, and our Annual Conference, CNGA is the primary network among people with an interest in California's native grasses and grasslands. We believe this peer-to-peer contact and technical transfer of information is the most effective way to develop and promote the "art" of native grass restoration and conservation.

CNGA Organizational Goals

1. Appropriate practices and techniques are used to evaluate, prepare and plant native grasses and grasslands.
2. Members of the public understand the value of native grasses and grasslands and support the goals of CNGA.
3. Grasslands and other communities of which native grasses are a component are managed to benefit native grasses and associated species.
4. Native grasslands are protected from conversion or degradation.

5. Growers, wholesalers, and consumers of native grass seed and live plants have a clear set of purity, quality, and seed source standards that guide their actions.
6. Scientific research and the results of management are readily available to guide restoration and management of native grasses and grasslands.
7. Sites with restoration potential are planted with native grasses and associated species.
8. Native grasses are used as appropriate in the urban landscape to benefit habitat, aesthetics, and educational values.
9. CNGA has the resources including staffing, volunteers, and budget needed to effectively advance its mission.

A Short History of CNGA

- 1991 In April, the first issue of *Grasslands* is published. President Robert Delzell provides information on the origin of the organization. Featured article is “Working with Native Perennial Grasses,” by David Amme.
- 1992 Featured article in *Grasslands* is “Mycorrhizae and Restoration of Native Grasslands,” by T.V. St. John. CNGA offers two workshops in Southern California: “Revegetation after Fire” and “Native Grass Identification.” President Ted Adams chairs the First Conference, “Restoring the Land: The Native Grass Connection,” held in Moss Landing in May. The second conference, “Using Native Grasses: A Genetic Perspective” is held in Sacramento.
- 1993 The first CNGA Field Day is held, “Bringing Grasses to Market.” Seed collection and transfer guidelines are being established. The 3rd Conference, “Native Grasses and Restoration,” is held in Sacramento.
- 1994 Patricia Gouveia is elected President of CNGA. The fourth (now labeled “Annual”) Conference is held: “Knowledge is Power: Advances in Research and Restoration.” A featured article in the *Grasslands*, “Native Grass Database,” by Mark Stromberg, elicits much interest.
- 1995 Dan Strait serves as President. Life Membership in CNGA has grown to 17. The 5th Annual Conference, “Statewide Policies and Trends in the Management and Restoration of Native Vegetation,” is held jointly with the Society for Range Management. Members begin seeking and reporting relict stands of native grasses. CNGA hires an administrator.
- 1996 President of CNGA is Mark Stromberg. The 6th Annual Conference, held in Monterey, considers two topics: “Limits to Success of Native Grass Planting

- Projects,” and “Weed Control in Restoring or Maintaining Native Grasses.” A *Grasslands* featured article, “Suppressive Effects of Zorro Fescue (*Vulpia myuros*) on California Native Perennial Grasses,” by Cynthia Brown and Kevin Rice, is of great interest. Mary Kate McKenna becomes the CNGA Administrative Director.
- 1997 John Menke leads CNGA as President. The 7th Annual Conference is held in San Luis Obispo in conjunction with the SERCAL conference. CNGA’s topic: “The Importance of Localized Genetics in Native Plant Restoration.”
- 1998 Frank Chan begins his term as President of CNGA. Native Seed Certification is under way. “Californians want to restore the landscape to ‘what was before.’ Often we don’t know what came ‘before,’ and we are just now figuring out what’s ‘what.’” CNGA is now accessible on the Web, and e-mail addresses begin to show up as contact information. The 8th Annual Conference, held in Sacramento, “Grasslands Restoration: What Works and What Doesn’t?” examines the practical side of native grass restoration. The CNGA Board has 11 members.
- 1999 Following the resignation of Jeff Hart as President, John Anderson begins his term of service. The 9th Annual Conference is held in Napa Valley. Theme: “Native Grasses in Watershed Management and Restoration.” CNGA counts 24 Life Members and 7 Corporate Members.
- 2000 John Anderson continues service as CNGA President. The CNGA membership is saddened by the death of Ledyard Stebbins, “widely considered the founding father of evolutionary botany.” The CNGA 10th Annual Conference is co-sponsored by the Department of Biological Sciences, Cal Poly San Luis Obispo, and titled “Grassland Ecosystems of California: Diversity, Preservation, and Management.” The 11-member Board of Directors includes Sheila Barry, Mike Conner, Mary McClanahan, and Richard Nichols. Associate memberships are created.
- 2001 Mike Conner assumes service as CNGA President. The Board of Directors expands to 15 members. Joining the Board are F. Thomas Biglione, Peter Boffey, Ann Francis, Chris Rose, Robert Snyder, Jeanne Wirka, and Robin Wills. Mary Rodgers contracts with CNGA as the Managing Editor of *Grasslands*. The 11th Annual Conference is held in Arcata, exploring a wide range of topics, including the relationship of grasslands to wildlife and a “Tour of Native Coast Grasslands.” CNGA has 47 Life Members and 30 Corporate Members.
- 2002 Richard Nichols serves as President of CNGA. Mary Kate McKenna resigns CNGA, and Janice Bridge is contracted to provide administration. The 12th Annual Conference is held jointly with the Society for Range Management in Santa Nella: “Restoring and Managing Central Valley Native Grasslands.” CNGA has 520 individual members, 42 Corporate Members, and 51 Life Members.
- 2003 Jeanne Wirka leads CNGA as President. David Amme, David Kelley, Kent Reeves, and Richard Reiner join the board. David Amme and Richard Reiner had served the Board in the early 1990s. The 13th Annual Conference is held in Monterey: “Grasslands Are for Everyone: Getting the Public Involved in the Conservation and

Restoration of Native Grassland.” This conference includes half-day tuition-based workshops for the first time.

- 2004 Mary McClanahan is President of CNGA. John DiGregoria, Erik Gantenbein, Jaymee Marty, and Stephen Winter are elected to the Board of Directors. The 14th Annual Conference is held in Modesto: “Native Grasses and Graminoids: Tools for Protecting Water Quality.” CNGA contracts Cynthia Harrington as the first Education Coordinator/Program Development person. *Nassella pulchra* is named the official state grass of California. CNGA has 600 individual members, 31 Corporate Members, and 58 Life Members.
- 2005 By overwhelming vote of the membership, the California Native Grass Association becomes the California Native Grasslands Association. President of CNGA is Chris Rose, and Sean Kenady, Steve Nawrath, Bea Olsen, Randi Paris, and Bryan Young are elected to the Board of Directors. The 15th Annual Conference is held at the Heidrick Ag History Center in Woodland: “Successes, Failures, and Lessons Learned: 15 Years of Native Grassland Restoration in California.” CNGA has 725 individual members, 37 Corporate Members, and 60 Life Members.
- 2006 President of CNGA is Erik Gantenbein; President-elect is John DiGregoria. Linnea Hanson, Jaymee Marty, Melissa Mooney, and Steve Nawrath are elected to the Board of Directors. Sara Sweet agrees to serve as Alternate Member to the Board. The 16th Annual Conference “Grassland management and restoration: It’s not just about grasses anymore...” is held in Chico.
- 2007 The Executive Committee recommends Erik Gantenbein as Acting President after John DiGregoria resigns. Tom Annese, Jim Hanson, and Richard King are elected to the Board of Directors. JP Marié agrees to serve as Alternate Member. The 17th Annual Conference is co-sponsored by the Society for Range Management in Santa Barbara. Title: “Restoring and Managing California’s Native Grassland Landscapes: the science and applications.” Administrative Director Janice Bridge resigns in the fall of 2007, and CNGA contracts with Suzanne Ullensvang as her replacement beginning October 1.
- 2008 Randi Paris is President of CNGA. Wade Belew, Andrew Fulks, JP Marié, Melissa Mooney, Kellie Morgantini, Zachary Principe, Kent Reeves, and Sara Sweet are elected to the Board of Directors. The 18th Annual Conference is held in Santa Rosa at the Glasner Center. Entitled “Conserving California Grasslands: Policies and Practices.”
- Cynthia Ficenic, Education Coordinator resigns in October and moves out of state. Administrative Director Suzanne Ullensvang resigns October 1, and CNGA contracts with Judy Grumstrup-Scott as Administrator beginning November 1. The CNGA office moves to the Scott Ranch “Tack Room” on County Road 19 west of Woodland.
- 2009 David Amme is President of CNGA. Clare Golec, Richard King, Sarah Hoskinson, David Kaplow, and Bryan Young are elected to the Board of Directors. Alternate Erik

- Gantenbein replaces David Kaplow mid-year as Board Member at Large, and David Kaplow continues to serve as Alternate. The 19th Annual Conference, co-sponsored with the Society for Ecological Restoration, is held in Folsom at the Lake Natoma Inn. Entitled "A Confluence of Perspectives and Experience: Habitat Restoration in California's Central Valley," the 2-day conference includes presentations and optional workshops and fieldtrips. A very successful 2nd Annual CNGA Field Day at Hedgerow Farms is held with over 120 attendees. The Advocacy & Collaboration Committee is particularly active, signing on to support letters from other organizations and originating several of our own.
- 2010 Wade Belew is President of CNGA. Andrew Fulks, Elizabeth Goebel, JP Marié, Jon O'Brien, Zachary Principe, and Christina Smith are elected to the Board of Directors. David Kaplow agrees to continue as Board Alternate. The President-Elect position is vacant, as the Board is discussing a By-Laws change for this position to Vice-President. In lieu of an Annual Conference, CNGA offered a 2-day Symposium on the North Coast. Entitled "Grasslands of the North Coast – A Symposium," the event drew 52 attendees and included presentations, panel, Q&A's, networking, afternoon field trips to the Lanphere Dunes and the Bald Hills, and an appetizer & beverages social followed by a presentation by David Amme on "Creating a Native Meadow." Two Grass ID workshops were offered in the spring, one in the South at the Santa Rosa Plateau and one at Point Reyes. CNGA and Hedgerow Farms also offered the 3rd Annual Field Day at Hedgerow Farms. There were 5 sponsors. A "Using CA Native Grasses in the Water-Conserving Landscape" workshop was offered twice, once in February at the Sonoma County Water Agency in Santa Rosa, and once in the fall at the East Bay Municipal Utility District in Oakland.
- 2011 Wade Belew serves second term as president.
- 2012 Jim Hanson serves as president. June 1, Judy G-Scott retires as AD, and Diane Crumley is hired as her replacement.
- 2013 Jon O'Brien serves as president. CNGA offers five workshops including a new workshop "Creating Captivating Images for California's Grasslands." Diane Crumley departs the organization and Rebecca Green is hired as her replacement.
- 2014 Jon O'Brien serves a second term as president. CNGA offers six workshops including a new workshop "California's New Front Yard: Creating a Low-Water Landscape" funded by the Department of Water Resources. The Executive Committee solidifies its role as the governing board of the organization.
- 2015 Jon O'Brien serves a third term as president. Rebecca Green heads the New Front Yard Workshops; Liz Cieslak takes over as administrative director; Diana Jeffery resigns from the board when she is hired as workshop specialist contractor for New Front Yard Programs. Two New Front Yard workshops are held, one in Fairfield and the other in Sacramento. Jon O'Brien, Andrew Fulks, Ingrid Morkin, Megan Skaer Thomas and Chad Aakre do not seek re-election for 2016.

- 2016 JP Marié serves first term as president for this 25th anniversary year of CNGA. The New Front Yard program completes the DWR grant with two workshops: Santa Cruz and Merced. Liz Cieslak moves to Texas, but continues as administrative director until July, when Diana Jeffery accepts the position. Sheri Spiegel, Drew Rayburn move out-of-state mid-year. Drew continues as long-distance editor of Grasslands. Emily Allen fulfills her term, but is moving out of state at the end of the year and will resign from the board. Zach Principe also leaves the board.
- 2017 JP Marié serves second term as president. The board begins the year with 14 board members, one member short. New board members include Elise Gornish, Kristina Wolf and Jaymee Marty. Kristina Wolf takes over for Drew Rayburn as editor of Grasslands. Bryan Young leads the 10th Annual Field Day at Hedgerow Farms for the last time. Patrick Reynolds and Cathy Little are appointed to the board to fill in vacancies after Elise Gornish moves out of state.
- 2018 Andrea Williams serves a first term as president. The board begins the year with 15 directors and 2 alternates. Christopher Gardner and Felix Ratcliff join the board as directors; Bobby Evans and Cathy Little are alternates. Michelle Cooper and Cathy Little resign mid-year and Emily Allen rejoins the board. Billy Krimmel, Patrick Reynolds, and Jodie Sheffield lead a new workshop, “Landscaping with Nature” in March. Patrick Reynolds takes over for Bryan Young to lead the 11th Annual Field Day at Hedgerow Farms. Emily Allen and JP Marié lead CNGA’s first stand-alone soils workshops in Sonoma and Yolo Counties. The Board initiates a new program, Grassland Research Awards for Student Scholarship (GRASS) with Jennifer Buck-Diaz as chair. Jaymee Marty resigns. Four new candidates run for the open seats.
- 2019 Andrea Williams serves second term as president. Kendra Mosely and Dina Robertson are newly elected to the board. The board is full with 15 directors and 2 alternates. Five student researchers are awarded GRASS scholarships. Whitney Brim-DeForest is hired as a contract editor for Grasslands, taking over for Kristina Wolf in September 2019 for the Fall issue. This is the last year for long-term board members Jim Hanson and Jennifer Buck-Diaz who resign along with Jeffery Wilcox, Christopher Gardner, and Felix Ratcliff.
- 2020 Andrea Williams begins her third term as president. Jodie Sheffield takes over for Jennifer Buck-Diaz as treasurer and Michele Hammond steps into the secretary role. JP Marié continues a VP. Four new board members are elected: returning member, Chad Aakre, Sarah Gaffney (one of our first GRASS scholarship recipients), Haven Kiers, and Leticia Morris. Field Day and the Landscaping with Nature workshops are both postponed because of the COVID-19 pandemic and shelter-in-place orders beginning in March. Board meetings are moved to an online Zoom platform. Field Day was rescheduled for June 12 but had to be postponed again. The Field Day Team exerted tremendous effort filming the tours and moving the entire event to an online Zoom webinar offered on July 10. Andrea Williams, Director since 2014 and President for 2 ½ terms, resigned from the board on June 1, because it conflicted with her new employment at CNPS. JP Marié took over as President; Kendra Moseley was elected by the Board to fill the VP position. Fires raged in California and the west beginning with a dry thunder storms in August. Heavy smoke enveloped most of the

- state driving everyone indoors for several weeks. John Anderson, CNGA Founder, passes away on August 19, 2020. The Landscaping with Nature workshop was eventually offered online on August 27. Monetary shortfalls from COVID-19-cancelled workshops were bolstered by a Small Business Payroll Protection Loan forgiveness and a surprise stock donation of \$30,000 from a CNGA member. Kristina Wolf and Dina Robinson resign from the Board.
- 2021 CNGA's 30th Anniversary. COVID-19 restrictions are still in place. JP Marié is re-elected President along with Kendra Mosely, VP; Michele Hammond, Secretary; and Jodie Sheffield, Treasurer. Michele Halbur and Justin Luong join the Board as new Directors. The Field Day Team put together a very successful second on-line Field Day at Hedgerow Farms focusing on what we have learned in the past 30 years and featuring video tours from around the state. No additional workshops are offered this year. Instead, the 2020 Landscaping with Nature Workshop and 2021 Field Day are offered on-demand. The *Grasslands* journal published two special issues: John Anderson Commemorative Issue and the 30th Anniversary Issue. We awarded twelve GRASS (Grassland Research Awards for Student Scholarship) \$500 scholarships in 2021 to students doing research in California grasslands.
- 2022 JP Marié is re-elected President along with Kendra Mosely, VP; and Jodie Sheffield, Treasurer. Michele Hammond stepped down as Secretary and no one ran in her place. Emily Allen, Diana Jeffery, and Sarah Gaffney alternated taking minutes for the year. CNGA's workshop programs continue to be impacted by COVID-19. Field Day did not happen (on-line or in-person) as Victor Schaff prepared for retirement by selling Hedgerow Farms. The workshop committee dropped initial plans for a proposed 3-day symposium at Pepperwood in favor of multiple members-only outdoor field trips across the state. The Field Trip Series included Dos Rios Ranch (River Partners), Pepperwood Preserve, and Mitsui Ranch, Sonoma Mountain. We returned to Putah Creek Lodge on the UC Davis Campus in September for Landscaping with Nature, our first in-person workshop since 2019. Justin Luong, Director and former GRASS recipient, initiated and conducted the first CNGA GRASS Award Speaker Series featuring 10 students from GRASS Class of 2021. The series presentations ran Tuesday evenings from September through December. The GRASS program received a record of sixteen applications, all of which are funded. Julia Michaels, newly hired Restoration Ecologist at Hedgerow Farms, joined the Board at the end of the year. Victor Schaff generously provided a matching donation of \$10,000 for our Giving Tuesday/End of Year Donation Drive.
- 2023 JP Marié is again re-elected President along with Kendra Mosely, VP; and Jodie Sheffield, Treasurer. Sarah Gaffney takes office as Secretary. CNGA's 15th Annual Field Day marked our in-person return to Hedgerow Farms after a 3-year hiatus (2020 and 2021 Field Day's were virtual events) and we held our first in-person Grass Identification Workshop since 2019 at Bodega Marine Lab in May; Andrea Williams taught the class and Emily Allen was the CNGA lead. Leticia "TC" Morris resigned from the board on April 17, 2023; Billy Krimmel offered his resignation in May. Twelve students applied for GRASS funding; eleven students were awarded \$500 each.

2024 We start the year with a full Board of Directors as four new people join the Board: Ernesto Chavez-Velasco, Scott Dunbar, Brian Person, and Brooke Wainwright. Ernesto and Brooke are both previous GRASS scholarship awardees. JP Marié is elected to his fourth term as president. Julia Michaels takes over as Vice-President. Sarah Gaffney and Jodie Sheffield are re-elected as Secretary and Treasurer, respectively.

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