

From the Conference Chair:

Hello SERCAL,

Question 1: You come across a man in a snow covered meadow catching snowflakes on his tongue. How do you know he is a restoration practitioner?

Answer 1: You hear him say out loud to one of the unfortunate snowflakes, “Ha, you’ll never make it out of watershed!”

Question 2: How do you know when a restoration practitioner needs a vacation?

Answer 2: See Answer 1.

These are the things that ran through my mind while enjoying the fresh snowfall in Yosemite Valley a few weeks ago — scary isn’t it? I was afraid that winter had forgotten California this year, but getting up to the mountains reminded me that although the rain had been avoiding us here in the Central Valley, winter is definitely lurking. I have my fingers crossed for a lot of late spring rain that will fill up the vernal pools and push up the grasses just in time for the upcoming 2009 conference.

Yes, the 2009 SERCAL and California Native Grasslands Association joint conference is just around the corner (April 29–May 3). The new spring conference time frame has everyone on the planning end hopping and the conference line-up is nearly set. A description of the session topics with abstract lists, workshops, field trips, and activities has been posted on the website. Session topics are varied to reflect California and the Central Valley’s ecological diversity and the opportunities and constraints we face in restoring and enhancing native landscapes and working with agricultural landscapes to provide wildlife habitat.

Session topics include the Sacramento–San Joaquin Delta, restoration opportunities on agricultural and ranch land, the use of high-tech gadgetry and engineering in restoration, climate change, vernal pools, plant and seed material selection and application, grazing for diversity, and grassland ecology and restoration.

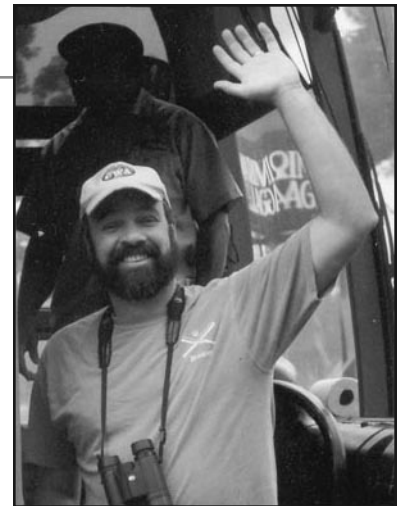
Add to these sessions a sprinkle of great workshops and field trips, live music, and a chance to catch up with old colleagues and friends, *et voilà!* — a fabulous conference! We need each other to keep the restoration field alive and thriving in these tough economic times and we can get a great start by participating in this year’s conference, which brings CNGA and SERCAL together in one venue. A joint conference allows an opportunity to combine your personal schedule and your financial resources to attend and sponsor one conference instead of two. It also provides an opportunity to cross-pollinate with grassland practitioners and others in different disciplines that you might not have an opportunity to meet otherwise.

We encourage you to forward the registration brochure to your colleagues, clients, friends, and your second-cousin twice-removed. The 2009 conference gives us the opportunity to bring ourselves and others into the mix — let’s make the most of a great situation! Current SERCAL members have received registration brochures by mail and the information is also on the website so you can forward it easily to others!

In closing, remember what Al Capone would say, “Register early and register often!” I look forward to seeing you all in Folsom!

Harry Oakes

SERCAL President, Conference Program Co-Chair



If Harry knew we were using this photo (from his SERCAL 2007 fieldtrip departure), he would probably also recommend you further stimulate the restoration economy with one of our very affordable and enjoyable fieldtrips.