

Ethics for/of the Professional Botanist

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Topics Covered

- **Purpose: Why we should we care about ethics**
- **How plants affected by the professional botanist**
- **No accountability**
- **Reflection on profession**
- **Code of Ethics**
- **Certification**

Why We Should Care

- **Decisions by the professional botanist can determine the fate of species or one or more populations of a species**
- **Data gathered and “published” by the botanist can be valuable for a wide variety of floristic and conservation research**
- **Populations of native plants are rapidly being destroyed to accommodate development (agriculture, energy, housing)**

Problems

- **No accountability**
 - No certification program
 - No formal code of ethics
 - No professional support for the ethical botanist
 - No means to censure an unethical botanist
- **Lack of consistency**
- **Many rare plant populations and plant communities are destroyed without mitigation**

Problems (cont.)

- **Lack of consistency**
- **Botany profession loses the trust of the public**
- **Lack of qualified professional botanists**
- **Lack of perceived need for a professional botanist**
- **Botanical resources not identified or protected**

Code of Ethics

- **A formal Code of Ethics is needed to:**
 - **Provide guidance**
 - **Provide accountability**
 - **Improve the standing of the profession**
 - **Improve the level of professionalism**
 - **Empower the botanist**
- **Best through a formal certification program**

Certification Program

- **CNPS examining developing a certification program for California botanists**
- **Rigorous minimum qualifications**
 - **With flexibility**
- **Require following Code of Ethics**
- **Require continuing education**
- **Provide rewards and empowerment**
- **Provide discipline (even de-certification)**

Questions?

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