



OAK LEAVES

A PUBLICATION OF THE LOS OSOS / MORRO BAY CHAPTER OF SMALL WILDERNESS AREA PRESERVATION
P.O. BOX 6442, LOS OSOS, CALIFORNIA 93412-6442 ❖ (805) 528-0392 ❖ OCTOBER / NOVEMBER 2016

Weeds Are Under Control (But Not Eliminated)

By Ron Rasmussen, SWAP Chair

El Niño rains have encouraged the native plants in the Elfin Forest to be especially lush this year. The Chamise and Ceanothus blooms were remarkable. Other native species are also doing very well. There are even a few native species that sometimes don't sprout, but which have done very well this year.

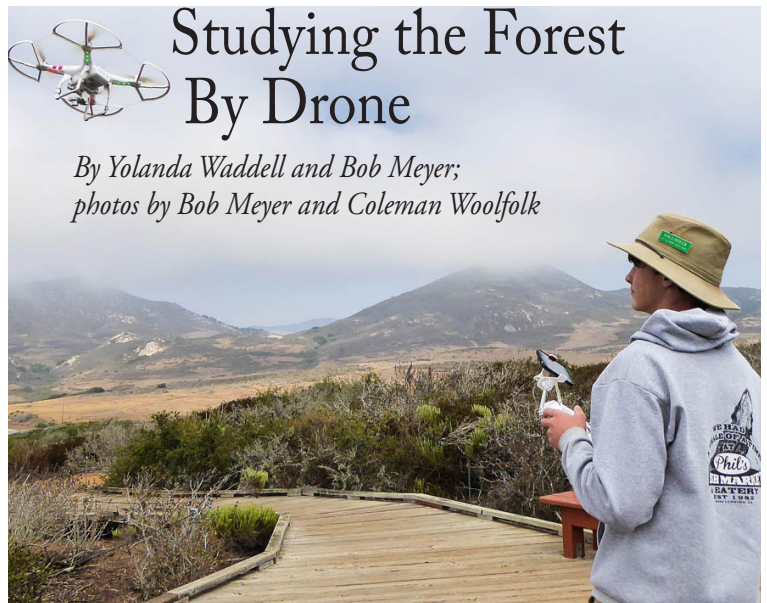
On the other hand, non-native weeds have not shown much growth in the central area of the Forest. Walking around the boardwalk one sees weeds very rarely, and then only a few sprouts. SWAP volunteers keep an eye out for these sprouts and then remove them. This does not mean that we can forget about the weed problem. There are seeds left in the Elfin Forest soil that lie dormant until conditions are favorable for sprouting

Weeds persist in patches around the periphery of the Forest and these can serve as the source of seeds invading the Forest. SWAP Weed Warriors continue to monitor these zones and to reduce the density of the weedy areas as much as possible. There are also places away from the central part of the Forest where weeds are known to have been established. These are monitored for renewed weed growth and measures are taken to remove them. Examples are non-native annual grasses and thistles that grow in some oak groves. When development of these invaders is seen, Weed Warriors work to remove them before they produce more

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Studying the Forest By Drone

By Yolanda Waddell and Bob Meyer;
photos by Bob Meyer and Coleman Woolfolk

Coleman Woolfolk launching the Phantom 2 drone. Photo by Bob Meyer.

SWAP's Webmaster, Bob Meyer, was interested to learn about a mapping project using a drone that was being conducted at Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve (ESNERR) by his daughter, Andrea Woolfolk, Stewardship Coordinator for ESNERR. It has occurred to him that photos taken by a drone would help SWAP and County Parks to study changes in the Elfin Forest more easily than relying on occasional and expensive aerial photos. A drone could also help with preparation and oversight of short-term projects.

When Andrea's 14-year-old son Coleman came to visit grandparents Bob and Sharon this summer, he brought his drone to show to them. He had bought it with Christmas and birthday money from one of Andrea's colleagues, who upgraded to one that was more useful for scientific study. Coleman's drone is a DJI Phantom 2 with a camera that has a 5-millimeter fish eye lens.

Bob felt that this was a good opportunity to fly the Phantom 2 over the Elfin Forest, to see if it would give usable and useful information about the Forest. An inquiry to Larry Iaquinto, Assistant Director of Parks and Recreation, yielded an official permit for Bob to fly a drone over the Forest. On August 17, a rather foggy day, Bob and Coleman took the drone to the Elfin Forest, and Coleman sent it up.

Bob reported, "We learned a lot. Some of that was from mistakes we made and some was about the type of equipment that will

The Forest by Drone *continued on page 2*



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

*of the Los Osos/Morro Bay Chapter of
Small Wilderness Area Preservation (SWAP)*

consists of the following members:

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The SWAP Board of Directors meets monthly at 7 p.m. at the Community Room, Morro Shores Mobile Home Park, 633 Ramona Ave., Los Osos.

The next meetings are

***Wednesday, October 12,
and Wednesday, November 9.***

All Board meetings are open to the public.

To confirm the date, time and location

(which are subject to change),

call (805) 528-0392.



CONTACT SWAP

If you have questions about SWAP activities or want to volunteer, please call

(805) 528-0392 and leave a message.

A recorded message will give information

about our 3rd Saturday Walks,

Work Saturdays, and other events.

If you have questions, concerns or comments about any problems in the Elfin Forest,

call or write: Bob Yetter

SLO County Parks Supervising Ranger

1087 Santa Rosa Street, SLO, CA 93408

(805) 781-1196

Owners of dogs off-leash can be cited. If you

witness dogs off-leash, vandalism or obvious

crimes, call the County Sheriff at 781-4550

or Bob Yetter at 781-1196.

The Forest by Drone *continued from page 1*



do a better job. Also, picking a day without fog and 5 to 10mph winds would be a good idea. But we got some usable pictures. Unfortunately we learned that the Forest is showing stress, probably from the drought. We need to make some field checks (going in on foot) of some of the vegetation.” He noted that one could identify several species of plants by their color in the photos.

The three photos accompanying this article show Coleman launching the Phantom 2 (page 1); a drone’s-eye view of the Highest Point in the Elfin Forest with Coleman, Bob and a visitor with a dog (above); and the drone’s (Coleman’s) photo of the Forest near the boardwalk showing a lot of dead and dying Coastal dune scrub (below). Bob titled this photo “Fuel Load.” That term refers to the total amount of combustible material in a defined space. Bob’s guess about the boards in the “Fuel Load” photo is that they are leftovers from the construction of the boardwalk in 1999, that were missed during post-construction cleanup.

Thanks to Bob and Coleman’s experiment with the Phantom 2, it looks as if a drone would be a useful addition to the tools for scientific study of the Elfin Forest.



Brian Wilder, The Elfin Forest Ranger

Text and photo by Yolanda Waddell

The first time Park Ranger Brian Wilder worked in the Elfin Forest in 1999, the boardwalk was being built. At that time he was a San Luis Obispo County Parks Groundskeeper (now called Park Ranger Aide), working mostly on buildings in San Luis Obispo. In the years since, he has seen vegetation along the boardwalk growing profusely and covering many of the dozens of ad hoc trails that humans and dogs made in previous years.

Brian Wilder is now a Park Ranger III and serves the County Parks Pecho District, which includes the Elfin Forest. He began the road to his career when he moved to Morro Bay with a Bachelor of Science in Environmental Studies from San Jose State. While his fiancée was attending Cal Poly, he worked for landscape companies in south county and Cayucos; then he started his own landscape business. In addition, he worked as a Seasonal Park Aide at Lopez Lake, and eventually was hired permanently as a Park Ranger Aide. Later he was assigned to Santa Margarita Lake in the north county. After advancing to Park Ranger III, he worked both in the Pecho District and the Salinas District (Santa Margarita Lake), later returning to the Pecho District.

In June, 2012, members of SWAP became acquainted with Brian, going on a tour of the Elfin Forest with him. He was familiar with the Elfin Forest but didn't know much about SWAP. He wanted to learn about our organization's goals in regard to the Forest and the problems that we encounter.

We learned that the Pecho District includes many county parks: Cuesta Park in San Luis Obispo, El Chorro Regional Park, the Elfin Forest Natural Area, and parks in Cayucos and Cambria. Park Ranger III is a first level field supervisor who directs projects, daily maintenance, acquisition of supplies, and assists County Parks staff with environmental projects, among a multitude of other tasks. He is the acting supervisor when the Supervising Ranger is away.

Brian thinks of the Elfin Forest as a very special place. He said it is unique to have a natural area in such good condition close to where people live. He admires the six interpretive panels scattered through the Forest, with their emphasis on the lifestyles and culture of the Chumash, who camped there until early in the 19th century. He thinks that SWAP does an excellent job of caring for the Forest, saying that if SWAP wasn't there, the Elfin Forest would become degraded. Either he or a Park Aide visit each of the Forest's seven entrances weekly, and he does a walk-through along the boardwalk every other week. However, if there is a problem such as the illegal campers mentioned in the article "Forest Visited by Graffiti Artists and Illegal Campers," (on page 7) Brian will handle the problem immediately.

I asked Brian what are the fun and difficult parts of his work. He replied that he loves to work outdoors, and to see people enjoy being in the parks, especially families. He congratulates parents who give their children exposure to something different than video games. However, sometimes working with the public can be disappointing, such as dealing with people who are there for the wrong reasons, especially in the campgrounds.



Brian, his wife and two daughters live in Los Osos; all of them pay visits to the Elfin Forest and, like most Los Ososans, consider it their forest. Brian enjoys surfing and golf when he isn't at work, and on his days off is kept busy with the activities of his two daughters. He said that the calendar is always full. He feels lucky to have a job that makes him feel good going to work each day, with good co-workers and dedicated volunteers, and to live in a community that cares so much about a place like the Elfin Forest.

Supervising Ranger Rotation

A member of the County Parks staff with whom we are often in contact is our Supervising Ranger. SWAP gets in touch with him about such things as damage, vandalism, Forest visitors upset with coyotes, illegal campers, etc. For the past five years, since 2011, Mark Wagner has been our very able Supervising Ranger, responding quickly to our requests.

At the end of August Mark e-mailed that he has been reassigned to the County Parks Salinas district, which includes Santa Margarita Lake. He said that Bob Yetter would take over our district, the Pecho district, in mid-September. We wish Mark well in his new assignment, and thank him for always being there for us when there was some kind of problem in the Elfin Forest.

Bob Yetter actually was Supervising Ranger of the Pecho district prior to Mark Wagner. Bob took over Pecho district in January, 2010, after the retirement of longtime Supervising Ranger Chuck Lowe. Then in June, 2011 Bob was reassigned to the Huasna district that includes Lopez Lake and Biddle Regional Park. We welcome Bob back to the Pecho district and the Elfin Forest and hope to meet with him once he is settled in.



Black Fence Lizards

By Jean Wheeler, Yolanda Waddell, and Ron Ruppert.
Photo by Yolanda Waddell.

In the August/September issue of this newsletter in 2012, my nature article for page 4 featured the Western Fence Lizard (*Sceloporus occidentalis*). In that article I described them as “sandy or greenish brown to blackish.” The article covered their appearance, geographic range, diet, and reproductive activities. The article also featured a blood chemical they carry which kills Lyme Disease microbes in ticks that bite them, somewhat reducing the incidence of that terrible disease in areas where these lizards are common despite high populations of the ticks in the same habitats.

Recently Yolanda Waddell, my Co-Editor for this newsletter, saw and took the above photo of two very black lizards on the toe-rail of our boardwalk. She emailed Ron Ruppert, head of the Biology Division at Cuesta College, about the incident. Her email read “Awhile back, while walking along the Elfin forest boardwalk, I saw two black fence lizards. I’ve never seen black ones before, but Wikipedia tells me that black is one of the normal colorations. Is this due to genes, like brown eyes and blue eyes in humans?”

At our first editorial meeting for this issue, Yolanda proposed to use that photo in Elfin Forest Sightings. However, on further discussion she agreed with me this is worth a second article featuring this black color variation and its associated behavior.

Here is Ron Ruppert’s fascinating reply to Yolanda’s email query. “This is due to age and gender. Older males get black as a sign of dominance. In your photo you can see that the rear lizard is posturing and probably getting ready to do push-ups, also a sign of

dominance. Two weeks ago I got some video of two fence lizards in combat. While I have seen combat many times before I had never witnessed the length and number of times they interacted, biting, posturing, twirling, tail slapping, chasing, doing push-ups and displaying. It lasted for about 4 minutes until one finally ran off the board-walk about ten feet into the sand and disappeared under a black sage bush.”

My 2012 article described the “push-ups” as dominance behavior, but I was not then aware that “senior males” among fence lizards may have turned black in color with age. I then wrote “‘push-ups’ are done by the males as they flash their blue throats and undersides [not visible in Yolanda’s photo], attracting females. During the mating season, adult males defend a home territory from interloping males. They mate in the spring from the second year on. Females lay up to a dozen and a half eggs between April and July, which hatch around August.”

Food for the species consists mainly of insects and spiders, so they assist in balancing those populations in our ecosystem.

In the future, as you watch our fence lizards doing their amusing “push-ups” you can check how dark the colors on their backs are as an indication of their youth or seniority within their species!

Weeds Under Control *cont. from page 1*

seed. In some areas, native species may be planted to replace the non-natives.

SWAP Volunteers work to control non-native plants and offer the native species conditions that encourage their continued growth and proliferation. You are welcome to join the Weed Warriors in this effort. Phone us 805-528-0392 or send an email to swap@elfin-forest.org.



Happy that they have finally cleared out the last of the veldt grass and other invasives along South Bay Boulevard, Weed Warriors (L-R) Prisila Johnson, Barrett Holland (snail monitor), Pat Brown and Vicky Johnsen celebrate the moment. Photo by Yolanda Waddell.

Please Report Elfin Forest Sightings

Have you observed any unusual birds in the Elfin Forest? Mammals? Reptiles? Amphibians? Insects? Interesting activities or footprints of wildlife in our Elfin Forest? Unusual plants? Taken a good photo? Please report any interesting sightings to your Oakleaves editors at: oakleaves@elfin-forest.org for inclusion in future issues under “Elfin Forest Sightings.” You can also leave a message on SWAP’s answering machine, (805) 528-0392.

California Goldenrod

By Dirk Walters, Ph.D., Photo by David Chipping, Ph.D.

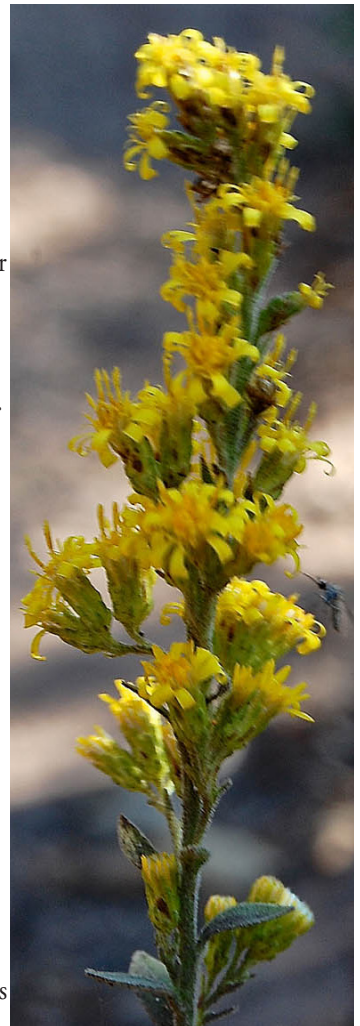
The photo by Dr. David Chipping accompanying this article is of the California goldenrod (*Solidago velutina* ssp. *californica* or *Solidago californica*). According to Dr. Hoover in his **Vascular Plants of San Luis Obispo County**, California goldenrod is found primarily in sandy soils in the western portion of our county. It prefers open grasslands or edges of wood and shrub lands. It never seems to me to be overly abundant. The currently recognized species (*S. velutina*) can be found throughout Western North America from Mexico into southern Canada. As might be expected of a species with this wide a range, it has been subdivided into a number of sub-specific units. Only two of the subspecies are likely to be encountered in California (*S. v. ssp. californica* and *S. v. ssp. sparsiflora*). Subspecies *sparsiflora* need not concern us here as it is found primarily in Eastern California and adjacent states. Subspecies *californica* is found throughout California except the southeastern deserts, but is especially common in the California floristic province that includes essentially all of California west of the Cascade, Sierra Nevada, and Peninsular Range axis. In the Morro Bay area I've seen it in the grasslands around Shark Inlet. I actually haven't seen it myself in the Elfin Forest, but I'd expect to find it in the Celestial Meadow or anywhere the shrubs and trees are widely scattered. It seems to prefer moister soils, so I would not expect it in higher, drier elevations.

In Dr. Hoover's Flora this plant is recognized as *S. californica*. In the most recent Jepson Manual, *S. californica* has been reduced to a subspecies of *S. velutina*. How can this happen? Is it just the whim of the experts? According to the internet, relatively recent numerical taxonomic work on a number of similar, but separately described species of goldenrod has indicated that they are more closely related than previously thought. Until recent advances in communication, taxonomists tended to do plant identification primarily on the plants of their immediate area. They would have had little opportunity to travel and visit reference collections far from home. They would encounter forms of plants that were readily distinguishable from other plants in their area. So why not describe them as a new species? Now, of course, taxonomists have many tools to help find characteristics unknowable to earlier workers as well as mass transit and communication to know what others have done or are doing, and computers to help analyze all these data.

In my limited search of the literature and internet, I found three common names. These are velvety goldenrod in Jepson and California goldenrod or three-nerve goldenrod everywhere else. The name goldenrod I think refers to the observation that most produce unbranched stems ("rods") topped with clusters of bright golden flowers. Most plants of the California goldenrod variety have densely fuzzy or velvet leaves. Three-nerved golden rod refers to the fact that a few of the larger plants produce leaves with 3 major veins running from base to tip. I suggest this is not the best common name. It is misleading as only a few of the largest plants produce 3-veined leaves. California goldenrod is the best name as this subspecies is essentially restricted to our state.

California goldenrod is highly recommended for native plant gardens. It prefers moist soils but is relatively tolerant of drier soils from sandy to light clay. It does best in sunny locations and is attractive to a number of different classes of pollinators, so it is great for those who would like to encourage beautiful, beneficial insects to visit their garden. One internet site showed pictures of yarn dyed a beautiful yellow color by extracts from California goldenrod.

One last thing about goldenrods in general. Where I grew up in the Midwest, there were a large number of species of very common goldenrods and many could even be called 'weedy'. Like a lot of members of the sunflower family, they tended to bloom from late summer into fall when another member of that family bloomed--ragweed (*Ambrosia trifida* among others). Ragweeds are unusual composites in that they produce tiny, wind pollinated flowers. They were nearly as common as goldenrods but because of their tiny flowers many people didn't recognize they were blooming and they produced exceedingly huge amount of wind-borne pollen. Unfortunately, announcers in allergy forecasts would say ragweed and goldenrod pollen counts were high. I had a botany professor who told us goldenrods were included in the forecasts only because they were conspicuous and common. Goldenrods are insect pollinated, pollen is sticky so it would stick to the pollinators, and little pollen would be released into the air.



OAKLEAVES

is published six times per year beginning in February.

Co-editors are Yolanda Waddell and Jean Wheeler;
layout is by Katy Budge.

Editing assistance by Pat Grimes. Contributors to this issue: Dave Chipping, Lannie Erickson, Betsy Kinter, Bob Meyer, Ron Rasmussen, Bob Rice, Ron Ruppert, Jay Waddell, Yolanda Waddell, Dirk Walter, Jean Wheeler and Cameron Woolfolk.

Printed at Hay Printing, Morro Bay on recycled paper.
Labeled and mailed at Achievement House.

Deadline for copy to Oakleaves is the first of the month before issue.
If possible, all copy should be submitted by e-mail to: oakleaves@elfin-forest.org.

Weed Warrior Report

By Yolanda Waddell

July 2nd – Weed Warrior Cut-ups

Trail Trimming Coordinator Dean Thompson had a lively and enthusiastic crew of “cut-ups” working for him on the Saturday before July 4th. Ron and Dean were pleased to have twelve Weed Warriors come to the work party, even though it was a holiday weekend. Joining Dean along the lower boardwalk near the former Celestial Meadow were Sybil Ashley, Dave Bowlus, Cole Engert, Lannie Erickson, Craig Johnsen, Vicky Johnsen, Margot Kandarian, Bob Rice, Pete Sarafian and Yolanda Waddell. They trimmed branches of shrubs that were crowding onto the boardwalk and used the branches to block “ad hoc” trails in that area. Ron Rasmussen replaced broken screws in the boardwalk nearby. It was a good, productive workday.

August 6th - Plethora of Tasks

Only 16th Street has designated parking spots at the end of the street where the Elfin Forest begins. Most other streets end in sandy areas that allow cars to park wherever they can fit. The worst street end was 17th Street, where cars would drive over about 12 feet of sand to park directly in front of the entrance sign. Conservation Chair Skip Rotstein did something about that in August. With County Parks Supervising Ranger Mark Wagner’s OK, Skip bought four concrete parking stops. Skip, Dean Thompson and Barrett Holland placed them near the end of the street to create four parking spaces, pounded steel rods through holes in the concrete to secure them to the ground, and painted the tops yellow so they are visible to everyone.

Elsewhere in the Elfin Forest, Dave Bowlus and Ron Rasmussen checked the boardwalk for loose boards, pulled out rusty screws and installed new stainless steel ones. The other seven of the day’s crew of twelve Weed Warriors did trimming along several trails, with Pete Sarafian as the snail monitor. Working with Pete were Pat Brown, Lannie Erickson, Vicky Johnsen, Prisila Johnson, and Rich Johnson. It was a productive and satisfying morning for all, ending with the enjoyment of Ron Rasmussen’s delicious cookies.



In July, Weed Warriors focused on cutting overhanging shrubs away from the lower boardwalk. Photo by Yolanda Waddell.



The need for parking stops at the 17th Street entrance of the Elfin Forest was met by (L-R) Barrett Holland, Skip Rotstein and Dean Thompson. Photo by Yolanda Waddell.

Let’s all pull together

By Lannie Erickson

The days are getting shorter,
The nights are cool and long,
There’s dust upon the aster
As the thrasher chants its song.
It’s been a busy summer
Full of visitors and fun,
But in our Elfin Forest
There’s still work to be done.
The efforts of Weed Warriors
Will help to turn the trick.
From a plethora of tasks,
You may surely take your pick.

Join SWAP First Saturday Work Parties

We invite you to join us on any first Saturday from 9 a.m. to noon at the north end of 15th Street in Los Osos to enjoy satisfying physical activity in fresh air amid lovely surroundings. Please dress for wind, fog, or sun. Layers work well. Long pants and long shirt sleeves are good. Sturdy shoes are a must. Take care not to park in front of driveways or mailboxes. To request more information, call (805) 528-0392.

Forest Visited by Graffiti Artists and Illegal Campers

By Yolanda Waddell. Photos by Jay and Yolanda Waddell

Until the end of August, summer in the Elfin Forest was fairly serene. There was no graffiti to speak of, no vandalism, no problems with dogs, and no one complaining about the coyotes. Then, on Thursday, August 25th, Pat Murray, our message phone caretaker, received two calls. One person reported lots of graffiti and trash at Bush Lupine Point. Another call was about someone camping under the Siena's View deck.

Pat phoned me about the calls. I grabbed my camera and headed to the Forest with my husband, Jay, and with Conservation Chair Skip Rotstein. Sure enough, there was graffiti at Bush Lupine Point: a red heart on the railing spoke of someone's affection for someone else. Then there was what looked like gang graffiti on the legs of both benches. Someone had already cleared away the trash; the Forest has good neighbors.

At Siena's View, we found backpacks, blankets, pillows, a fry pan and a coffee pot, cups of ramen noodles, shoes, books and many other items under the deck. It looked as if they might have been the belongings of a small group of homeless people. We took photos of everything, and being worried that the group might start a campfire, phoned the Sheriff. The dispatcher who answered said that they had already received two phone calls, and that deputies had been out there twice. At home I e-mailed the photos to Supervising Ranger Mark Wagner, Assistant Director of County Parks Larry Iaquinto, and Elfin Forest Park Ranger Brian Wilder (see article on page 3).

The next afternoon (Friday), we received an e-mail saying that the graffiti was removed at Bush Lupine Point, and that Brian Wilder was able to make contact with the campers from information he found in their belongings under the deck. The campers told Brian that they would collect their camping equipment and remove it from the Elfin Forest. On Sunday, Brian e-mailed us that he had removed all of the items that the campers left behind. He thanked SWAP for informing County Parks about the problems. SWAP thanks Larry Iaquinto, Supervising Ranger Matt Mohle (Mark Wagner was away), and Brian Wilder for their quick action in bringing the Forest back to normal.



Coming Up in the Elfin Forest

Story and Photos By Jean Wheeler

Rejoice Bird Lovers! The annual buildup to our spectacular winter ornithological extravaganza is under way! Thousands of birds arrive to spend the winter on our mild California coast or pass through briefly on their way to hotter climates from Mexico to Tierra del Fuego. See page 9 for a docent walk identifying birds led by Jim Royer on Saturday October 8, the day before the Annual Big Sit! worldwide birding event.

Dabbling ducks float on the surface of the estuary, dipping their heads way down to seek food with their tails pointing up in the air. Those to look for include Mallards, Northern Pintails, Gadwalls, American Wigeons, Northern Shovelers, and Teal (Blue-winged, Cinnamon, and Green-winged). Diving ducks plunge completely below the surface disappearing in search of their food. They include Scaup (Lesser and Greater), Ring-Necked, Canvas-back, Surf Scoter, Bufflehead, Common Goldeneye, Red-breasted Merganser, and Ruddy Ducks.

All five grebe species are at peak from September or October until March or April. Western gulls are year-round residents, but five other species of gulls join them here only in fall through spring. The American Avocet also returns to peak population numbers in October.

We still get some Brant Geese wintering in our estuary but not the three thousand or more typical in earlier years. Apparently with global warming, many more are staying in southern Alaska or coastal Canada throughout the winter instead of flying on south-east to Morro Bay.

The Elfin Forest plays host to brush or woodland birds also migrating through or wintering. Fox, Lincoln's, and Golden-crowned Sparrows join our year-round White-crowned Sparrows from October to March or April. Ruby-crowned Kinglets settle in for the winter. American Robins and Hermit Thrushes replace our summer Swainson's Thrushes as those depart southward. Yellow-rumped Warblers peak in these months and Say's Phoebe joins its year-round relative, the Black Phoebe, for a winter visit.

October and November are minimal in colorful flowers, but some summer-blooming shrubs will finalize their displays during these months. Orange poppies are still in bloom. Dune Buckwheat may show some late opening white flowers, but most will be aging to pink and then rust. California Asters have white to pinkish or even lavender petals around yellow central disks. Coyote Brush has



American Wigeons seen from Siena's View.

yellow male flowers or fluffy white female flowers. Seaside Golden Yarrow may also still show the yellow flowers for which it is named. I even enjoy the dead blossom heads on the Black Sage--now looking like black pompom balls heralding the approach of Halloween!

Red flowers that may also remain in bloom are called "Cardinal Catchfly". Look for the colorful red berries of Hollyleaf Cherry along the lower boardwalk. Coffeeberry bushes have berries changing from yellow to bright red and finally a glossy black, often all together on the same shrub.

This is also an especially good time to study the diminutive Coast Live Oaks for which our Elfin Forest is named. Their acorns usually ripen during the fall and early winter. One grove on the north side of the lower boardwalk a short walk east of the access into Rose's Grove has an especially large number of sizeable round oak galls. Numerous holes in them reveal where the wasp larvae that grew up protected in them emerged for their adult lives. The galls normally do no harm to the oaks. Lovely lace lichens festooning the oaks also normally cause little or no damage.

On an autumn walk in the Elfin Forest, you may take pleasure in green shrubs and flowers opening here just as they are falling and will be gone for months in most of our nation. Enjoy the everyday activities of our year-around resident wildlife as well as all the seasonal arrivals, departures, and passers through on their way to their tropical winter resorts.



Oak galls showing holes where maturing insects emerged.

WALKS in the ELFIN FOREST

Third Saturday Walks

October 8, 8:30 a.m. – *Pre-Big Sit! Bird Walk* (*Second Saturday – Note earlier time*)

Jim Royer will lead us on a bird inventory walk in preparation for the Big Sit! on Sunday, October 9. This international event hosted by Birdwatcher's Digest (www.birdwatchersdigest.com) pits participating groups of birders against one another to identify the most species of birds in one day. Our Big Sit! takes place at Bush Lupine Point. Join Jim on Saturday in finding and identifying 60 or more species of birds throughout the Elfin Forest and in the Morro Bay estuary. Regardless of your birding experience, you'll come away knowing more about birds, their calls, their habits and habitats.

October 15, 9:30 a.m. – *Tuning in to Nature Writers*

Do you enjoy being read to? Here's an opportunity to stroll around the Elfin Forest boardwalk and hear the thoughts and words of famous natural history writers. Historian Robert Pavlik will share selections from the works of Robinson Jeffers, Wallace Stegner, Rachel Carson, Gary Snyder, and other writers and poets from this and past centuries. As you follow Bob along the boardwalk, stopping here and there for a reading, he will provide you with a delightful menu of descriptions and impressions to enjoy in the Elfin Forest environment. He'll also bring a handout of his readings for those who want to read further.

November 19, 9:30 a.m. – *The Importance of Soils to the Elfin Forest*

Have you heard the term "Baywood Fine Sand?" It's the name of the predominant soil in Los Osos, as well as in the Elfin Forest. It's what you walk on when the pavement ends, because all of Los Osos was once a series of sand dunes. Cal Poly soil scientist Chip Appel will describe local soils and talk about their importance in determining what plants will grow in them. We'll learn how sandy soil both benefits and stresses plants. Chip will also explain why the presence of sandy soils in Los Osos reflects climate change and seismic activity over the past couple million years.

Walks in the Elfin Forest begin at times stated above at the north end (1100 block) of 15th Street off Santa Ysabel in Los Osos.

Wear comfortable shoes, long sleeves and pants to avoid poison oak and mosquitoes.

Park carefully, avoiding driveways and mailboxes, and leave pets at home.

The easy paced walks last 1-1/2 to 2 hours.

For more information call (805) 528-0392.



*Photographer Don Quintana giving a tip about good angles to use during his digital photography walk in July.
Photo by Yolanda Waddell.*



*Geologist and Cuesta College instructor Jeff Grover explains uplift during his 3rd Saturday walk in August.
Photo by Jay Waddell.*

Thank You to Our Generous Members

Compiled by Betsy Kinter, SWAP Database Coordinator

NEW MEMBER:

Joan Hughes, New Life Member

RENEWING MEMBERS:

Patty Arnold	Bill Newman*
Bob & Linda Bailey*	Brian Nofziger*
Kathryn Bay*	Mrs. Shirley Palmer
Carolyn Boomer*	Billy R. Pewitt*
Diane Bougher*	Nicholas & Dorothy Pier*
Lois Brown*	Penny Principe
Stephen & Karin Cake*	Skip & Leslie Rotstein
Francesca Fairbrother	Patrick & Dorothy Rygh*
Linda Faust*	Bob & Barbara Schwenoha
Guy Fitzwater & Mary Agran*	Peg Smith*
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Bob & Mary McCorkle	Michael Ward*
Bill & Sue McQuilkin	Norma Wightman*
Pat Murray*	Janice Wolf*

DONATIONS:

K. O'Grady (donation with purchase of pocket guides)
Joan Hughes, in memory of Ann Calhoun
Pat Murray (donation with annual membership)

**Thanks to those listed above who donated more than the \$25 (regular) or \$15 (senior or student) membership dues. The additional donations will be used for special projects in the Elfin Forest.*

If you recently sent a donation to SWAP and don't see your name in this issue's New and Renewing list, be assured that your gift will be acknowledged in the next bimonthly issue. Gifts are processed by two different volunteers before reaching our editors, and newsletter copy deadline is one month before the date of the issue.

Joan Hughes, New Life Member

In August we received a note from Joan Hughes, sister of Ann Calhoun who passed away last year (Aug/Sept 2015 *Oakleaves*, page 10). Joan wrote that she appreciated the concern and help of several SWAP members after Ann's death. She sent a donation in memory of Ann, and also became a life member of SWAP. We appreciate Joan's thoughtfulness and assure her that her donation will be used to take care of the Forest that Ann loved and volunteered in.

Pokemon Go In the Elfin Forest

By Bob Meyer

Editor's Note: In July, Bob Meyer sent the following message to the SWAP Board.



"Hi:

You might have noticed a number of young and "not so young" people walking around Los Osos with their eyes fixed on their cell phones, even when crossing the streets, in the last few days. Chances are 10 to 1 they were playing Pokemon Go. That is because of a new free game released by Nintendo in the U.S. this last week. If you have a recent cell phone (I don't) with the game, you can find locations that allow you to 'capture' Pokemon creatures and items for points on your phone.

My son and his family were visiting this weekend and they were well into the game – the more points the bigger the bragging rights. Even the adults were into it, vying against their siblings (and offspring) for the highest score with enthusiasm.

Anyway, it turns out that every bench and a few other features in the Elfin Forest offer Pokemon Go points. This may increase traffic out there.

In Los Osos proper, at least, every mural and church has a creature to capture and points to offer. I understand that there are multiple hot spots in markets – guess it is something to amuse the kids while ma and pa shop. I have no idea who did all the work to enter all this info into Nintendo's database prior to the game's launch, but it was a massive effort."

Thinking of Switching to Online Oakleaves?

Tired of looking at that pile of newsletters and magazines waiting to be read? If you use your computer a lot, we encourage you to take a look at the online *Oakleaves* at www.elfin-forest.org. Being able to see the 20 or so photos in full color makes it a very attractive alternative to the black-and-white printed copy. If you miss an issue for some reason, it is there, waiting for you. Simply click on "Forest Library," then "Oakleaves Index" and finally the year and month of the issue that you want to read. Just e-mail us at oakleaves@elfin-forest.org with the subject: Switch me to online.



Great Holiday Gifts From SWAP

Mural coffee mugs, elfin oak tree caps, mural T-shirts and sweatshirts, and mural wall prints are wonderful gifts for your loved ones. Note cards, postcards, and pocket guides make good stocking stuffers! A gift donation or life membership in the name of your relative or friend would also be much appreciated.



SWAP Shoppers' Order Form

See Photos of All Items at www.elfin-forest.org

All Prices Include Sales Tax

1. MURAL SHIRTS

Mural design by artist Barbara Rosenthal on both front and back. Words on shirt: "El Moro Elfin Forest Natural Area" above mural and "Small Wilderness Area Preservation" and "Los Osos, California" below mural.

Circle Sizes:

- Short Slv. T-Shirt (S, M, L, XL) @ \$20.00 = \$ _____
 Short Slv. T-Shirt (XXL, XXXL) @ \$23.00 = \$ _____
 Long Slv. T-Shirt (S, M, L, XL) @ \$25.00 = \$ _____
 Long Slv. T-Shirt (XXL, XXXL) @ \$27.00 = \$ _____
 Sweatshirt (S, M, L, XL) @ \$35.00 = \$ _____
 Sweatshirt (XXL, XXXL) @ \$37.00 = \$ _____

2. ELFIN FOREST NOTE CARDS

Original print note cards

_____ @ \$3.00 or _____ set of 5 @ \$14.00 = \$ _____

Indicate No. per View(s):

All 5; Don Klopfer Trail; Ocean View;
 Wild Hyacinth; Horned Lizard; Dudleya

3. POCKET GUIDE

Useful 56-page guide to plants and animals of the Elfin Forest. Lists for mammals, reptiles, amphibians, birds, arthropods including moths and butterflies, gastropods, vascular plants, lichens, and mushrooms. Some with charts for seasonality, color and more.

_____ @ \$3.00 = \$ _____

4. ELFIN FOREST MURAL PRINTS

Signed prints by artist Barbara Rosenthal, image size 4 1/2 x 16 1/2 in; mounted on foamcore

_____ @ \$35.00 = \$ _____

5. ALPHABET BIRD BOOK

With clever verses and superb photos, this book is sure to please young and old.

_____ @ \$20.00 = \$ _____

6. MURAL MUG

15- ounce beverage mug with wrap-around mural design, microwave and dishwasher safe.

_____ @ \$10 = \$ _____

7. ELFIN FOREST CAPS

One size fits all caps with adjustable straps in back, 100% cotton. Two colors, forest green and maroon. Specify color when ordering.

_____ @ \$15 = \$ _____ Color(s) _____

Shipping costs within zip 934 __:

Bird Book, \$2.77 (book rate) per book = _____

Pocket Guides & Note Cards \$1.50 = _____

Mural Prints on Foamcore \$5.00 = _____

Shirts & Caps each: \$4.00 = _____

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For shipping costs outside 934 __, call (805) 528-0392

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(Please print when filling order, and indicate how many of each.)

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Make checks payable and mail to:

SWAP, P.O. Box 6442, Los Osos, CA 93412-6442.

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Pokemon Go In the Elfin Forest? See page 10.

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Booth Workers Needed for Oktoberfest

Los Osos will be celebrating its annual Oktoberfest this year on Sunday, October 30 on Second Street in downtown Baywood Park, from 9 am to 5 pm.

SWAP will participate by setting up a booth among other booths featuring many kinds of arts and crafts, as well as ethnic foods. We'll talk to visitors about SWAP, distribute literature, and sell T-shirts, sweatshirts, coffee mugs, elfin oak tree caps, guidebooks, notecards, etc. We need volunteers to staff our table. If you can work a two-hour shift between 9:00 am and 5:00 pm, please call SWAP's message phone at 528-0392. Give your name, shift preference, and phone number.

Join us, you'll have fun!



MEMBERSHIP FORM

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City/State/Zip _____

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Phone _____

- | | |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Member \$25 | <input type="checkbox"/> Defender \$100 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Steward \$50 | <input type="checkbox"/> Champion \$250 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Protector \$75 | <input type="checkbox"/> Guardian \$500 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Seniors & Students \$15 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Life Member \$1000 | |

I want to help, please call me!

Memberships include a subscription to SWAP's bimonthly newsletter, *Oakleaves*.

Check here to receive the online version only.

All donations to SWAP are tax-deductible.

EVERY membership counts!

Make checks payable to: SWAP

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