



# 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 ❖ AUGUST / SEPTEMBER 2017

## John Lindsey to Speak at SWAP Annual Celebration

By Yolanda Waddell; photo by Pat Brown

**This year SWAP's Annual Celebration will be held on Saturday, September 23rd, from noon to 2:30 p.m. at the Morro Shores Mobile Home Park, 633 Ramona Avenue in Los Osos.**



*John Lindsey leading a walk in the Elfin Forest.*

We are fortunate to have PG&E weatherman John Lindsey as our featured speaker. More accurately, John is the PG&E Diablo Canyon marine meteorologist and a media relations representative. His daily weather forecasts appear in The Tribune, can be heard every morning on KVEC radio and can be received by e-mail upon request. He also writes a weekly column for Sunday's edition of The Tribune.

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## SWAP Needs Help to Support the Elfin Forest

By Ron Rasmussen, SWAP Chair



*A group of volunteers with gusto, members of the Tau Sigma Delta Architecture Honor Society and their advisor, Dr. Tom Fowler, came to conquer weeds and help with other projects in May of this year.*

*Photo courtesy of Tom Fowler.*

Currently a visitor's view of the Elfin Forest shows the result of volunteer activity in removing non-native weeds and encouraging the growth of native plants. Volunteers also maintain the boardwalk, pick up trash and notify San Luis Obispo County Parks about any other problems that may arise. As long as this maintenance continues, visitors to the Forest can enjoy its excellent state and expect the conditions to continue. However, with few new volunteers the average age of the current group will increase and active maintenance of the Forest will be greatly reduced. If SWAP volunteers are no longer available to care for the Forest, it will be invaded by weeds and trash, and much of the native forest may largely disappear. The solution to this potential problem is for new volunteers to join SWAP and continue to maintain the uniqueness of the Elfin Forest.

There are several challenges that are routinely controlled by volunteers. For example, more than fifty!! non-native weeds continue to invade the Forest. A common example is Veldt grass which invades from the east and south, and needs regular removal to pre-

**SWAP Needs Help** *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:*

- Ron Rasmussen, Chair
- Vicky Johnsen, Vice Chair
- Jan DiLeo, Treasurer
- Yolanda Waddell, Secretary
- Pat Murray, Member at Large
- Vanessa Nelson, Member at Large
- Skip Rotstein, Member at Large

The SWAP Board of Directors meets monthly at 3 p.m. on the 2nd Monday of the month at the Community Room, Morro Shores Mobile Home Park, 633 Ramona Ave., Los Osos.

The next meetings are  
**Monday, August 14,  
and Monday, September 11.**

**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  
1144 Monterey 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.

## Annual Celebration *cont. from page 1*

John grew up in Santa Rosa, California where he attended Santa Rosa Junior College and then Cal Poly San Luis Obispo before joining the U.S. Navy. While in the Navy he completed the U.S. Naval Aviation Meteorology and Oceanography Program and served in many capacities, including as a search and rescue swimmer, anti-submarine technician and oceanography and weather communications trainer.

Before coming to PG&E, John was a Senior Research Scientist for Tenera Environmental Services. He has forecasted weather and oceanographic conditions along the central coast for over 25 years. John serves the central coast community in many ways, including as president of the board of directors of Point San Luis Lighthouse Keepers, board of directors for United Way of San Luis Obispo, and PG&E Veterans Employee Resource Group. John and his family live in Los Osos.

Please join us for an enjoyable presentation by John Lindsey, as well as good food, a chance to chat with John and fellow SWAP members, and a brief business meeting with election of board members. Candidates this year are incumbents Vicky Johnsen, Ron Rasmussen, Skip Rotstein and Yolanda Waddell, and a new member, Vanessa Nelson. Other candidates for the SWAP Board may be nominated at the meeting or by mailing to SWAP, P.O. Box 6442, Los Osos, 93412-6442.



*Each June, the Central Coast State Parks Association sponsors a Solstice Celebration at Morro Bay State Park. Ron Rasmussen sets up our information table for that event, and talks to visitors about the Elfin Forest.*

*Photo by Yolanda Waddell.*

## SWAP Needs Help *cont. from page 1*

vent it from spreading into the Forest. Another example is Sahara Mustard which also invades from the east and south. Both of these invasive plants spread via the hundreds of seeds that each plant produces.

Volunteers are also needed to maintain the boardwalk. This wooden structure was built in 1999 and the wood and screws that hold it together are now failing. The damage presents a hazard to Elfin Forest visitors. SWAP volunteers replace degraded boards and screws, and do relatively simple repairs that can be done quickly. More complicated work is turned over to San Luis Obispo County Parks, which has limited personnel and time to do repairs. It is important for visitor safety that these problems are fixed by SWAP volunteers as quickly as possible.

An important SWAP activity is providing free education about the Elfin Forest for the general public. For this activity, SWAP needs volunteers who understand the natural history of the Elfin Forest and are capable of communicating this information to specific groups as well as to the general public. It is important to continue this activity because adults and children learn about the importance of areas like the Elfin Forest, and want to keep them as a vital resource for the future.

Help us to help the Elfin Forest by becoming a SWAP volunteer.

# Dog Droppings and the Mutt Mitt Solution

By Yolanda Waddell

An average-size dog dropping produces nearly twice as many bacteria as human waste.

Morro Bay and Los Osos are home to about 5,500 dogs. That's more than 19,000 pounds (or 9.5 tons) of dog poop per week, that can take up to a year to break down, according to the Morro Bay National Estuary Program's web site.

Seventeen years ago, SWAP member Sandra Beebe became completely irritated with the sight of dog droppings almost everywhere she went to take a walk, including the paths of the Elfin Forest, and decided to do something about it. She researched companies that produce dispensable bags for picking up "dog poo," as she called it, and found the company that sells plastic Mutt Mitt bags, dispensers and trashcans. Her husband, Curt, researched the bacteria contained in dog droppings, and found that dog feces can contain E-coli and other bacteria that cause diarrhea or typhoid.

Sandra started in Morro Bay, where she and Curt lived. She raised funds through Morro Bay Beautiful to buy dispensers, trashcans and a supply of Mutt Mitts for each dispenser. Then she and Curt installed them in parks around Morro Bay. Next, she obtained a Mutt Mitt Program grant from the Morro Bay National Estuary Program (MBNEP) to install dispensers and trashcans in other places. She called SWAP and offered to place Mutt Mitt dispensers at the seven entrances to the Elfin Forest. By that time, SWAP volunteers were desperate to find a way to prevent dog poop from lining the trails of the Elfin Forest. The SWAP Board happily accepted and in February 2002, after County Parks provided posts for them, Curt and Sandra installed seven Mutt Mitt dispensers and trashcans at the Elfin Forest entrances from 11th to 17th Street.

The next step for SWAP was to support the Mutt Mitt stations. Board member Pat Murray found caretakers to keep the Mutt Mitt dispensers filled on each street. County Parks agreed to empty the seven trash receptacles. The Mutt Mitt caretakers, called "Captains," became part of the Mutt Mitt Committee with a Chair who stays in contact with the Captains, keeps tabs on the supply of Mutt Mitts and monitors any problems.

It took some years for Elfin Forest users to develop the habit of using the Mutt Mitts, but over time the Forest's trails and boardwalk have become almost free of dog droppings. Neighbors who frequent the Forest often pick up after careless dog walkers. A feeling of pride in the state of the Elfin Forest trails is evident, a result of the efforts of one couple, Sandra and Curt Beebe, who now live in Santa Monica. We are forever grateful to them.

More facts about pet waste and what to do about it can be found at MBNEP's web site, [www.mbnep.org](http://www.mbnep.org) under "Programs" and "Mutts for the Bay."



*In the early 2000s, SWAP volunteer Rosemary Flamion would don a protective apron and "do her doody," picking up many pounds of dog droppings along the trails of the Elfin Forest. She was grateful to be relieved of her task by the Mutt Mitt station next to her.*

*Photo by Pat Murray.*



*In 2008, Sandra Beebe, at right, found funds to purchase a year's supply of Mutt Mitts for the Elfin Forest, which then-Mutt Mitt Committee Chair Dorothy Norwood happily received from her.*

*Photo by Yolanda Waddell.*

# Bushtits

Text and Photo by Jean Wheeler, Ph.D.

Bushtits (*Psaltriparus minimus*) are very likely the most social of all bird species on our central coast, social both within their own species and with other species. When walking around our boardwalk, you're likely to see and hear a mixed flock of small birds of several species flitting rapidly from branch to branch, and shrub to shrub, keeping in contact with each other using soft ticking or wispy calls. Bushtits will often be the tiniest but the core species of the mixed flock, accompanied by a few members of other small species with similar feeding strategies, such as Blue-gray Gnatcatchers (*Poliophtila caerulea*) and Chestnut-backed Chickadees (*Poecile rufescens*).

One of the smallest passerines in North America, Bushtits are scarcely 4 ½ inches long with a 6-inch wingspan. It would take about five of them to weigh a single ounce! They are gray-brown, very light underneath and darker on the wings and tail, and usually look more scruffy than sleek. Our Pacific coast Bushtits have a brownish head. That head is large for the size of the bird, with almost no neck. The eye is dark as is the very short and sharp beak.

All birds in the flock move quickly, agilely hanging even upside down. Their weight bends slender leaflets they hang on while picking from surfaces of leaves and twigs small insects and tiny spiders as well as their eggs and pupae. There can be as many as 50 or 60 small birds in one of these flocks. Their combined movement through the branches stirs up the insects and spiders all the birds feed upon. Their diet includes leafhoppers, aphids, scale insects, caterpillars, beetles, wasps, and ants. The birds in the flock all move so quickly and constantly that it's hard to capture any one of them for a good look through a binocular or a good photo!

Bushtits socialize not only in feeding behavior but throughout their lives, living all year in flocks of ten to thirty or even forty birds, and will huddle close together on branches for shared warmth on cold nights.

Within the flock, two or more mated pairs of bushtits will each build a complex hanging elastic sock-shaped nest as much as a foot long on a branch or tree trunk. It is woven with spider webs blending rootlets, tiny twigs, leaves, lichens and mosses. It is lined with feathers, animal hair, and plant fuzz. A small opening tunnel near the top leads into the nest below. Construction takes from at least two weeks to a month and a half, and understandably the same nest is likely to be used again for the second brood of the year.

The builders have no problem with other bushtits living very close to the nest, and unmated members of the flock often act as helpers at the nest. Bushtit helpers are usually males, which is unusual for cooperatively nesting birds. Both parents incubate about a half dozen eggs, usually sleeping together above the eggs inside the nest and may be joined there by their helpers!

The eggs hatch within two weeks, are fed by both parents and their helpers, and fledge in about another two weeks. Mated pairs often stay together for several years.

Bushtits live in many kinds of brushy or wooded habitats from the Pacific Coast to moderately high altitudes inland, includ-



ing chaparral and oak woodlands like those dominating our Elfin Forest. The species extends southward from Vancouver, Canada, through our Pacific States and Mexico into Guatemala. From California, they occur east from the Pacific Coast inland through the southwest into central Texas. Bushtit populations are relatively stable, with well over 3 million birds in the total population, and they thrive in suburbs as well as in wilderness areas.



## Elfin Forest Visitors

In early April Pat Brown, who gives walks in the Elfin Forest, was invited to give a butterfly walk on the Fiscalini Ranch Preserve in Cambria. Knowing that she is familiar with the Elfin Forest, a few of the Fiscalini Ranch docents asked for a tour. They came on April 22nd, which turned out to be a rainy day. The group came dressed for wet weather, and were pleased to experience the Forest's Coast live oaks and viewing decks overlooking the bay. Friends of the Fiscalini Ranch Preserve was once a chapter of SWAP, and in the early 2000s became an independent organization. Shown from left to right in the adjacent photo are Duffy Burns, Cheri Burns, Gil Eastman, Stephen Beck, Brian Morgan and Valerie Eastman. Photo by Pat Brown.

# California Coffeeberry

By Dirk Walters, Ph.D.; Drawing by Bonnie Walters

(Ed. Note: Revised by Dr. Walters from August, 2002 issue)

Bonnie made the coffeeberry drawings at various times over about forty years. Some were originally made for an early edition of Dr. David Keil's and my plant taxonomy textbook. Coffeeberry is common in the Elfin Forest especially in more mesic sites such as along the boardwalk leading to Siena's View (marker 7 on the boardwalk guide). The term mesic refers to sites with soil moisture neither too much nor too little. Commonly known as coffeeberry, in the Jepson Manual it is called California coffeeberry. Its scientific name is *Frangula* (formerly *Rhamnus californica*).

I have to admit laziness, as I didn't spend a lot of time trying to find out exactly why the genus name was changed. I assume it is the result of relatively recent study of its family (Rhamnaceae or buckthorn) which determined that there were enough serious differences within the old genus (*Rhamnus*) to require it to be split up. Taxonomists must now mirror phylogenetic (evolutionary) findings in their nomenclature. Note, coffeeberry has a change of genus but the species name, *californica*, remained the same. This is because botanical nomenclature requires that a species name follow its scientific name into a new genus unless that name is already present in the new genus.

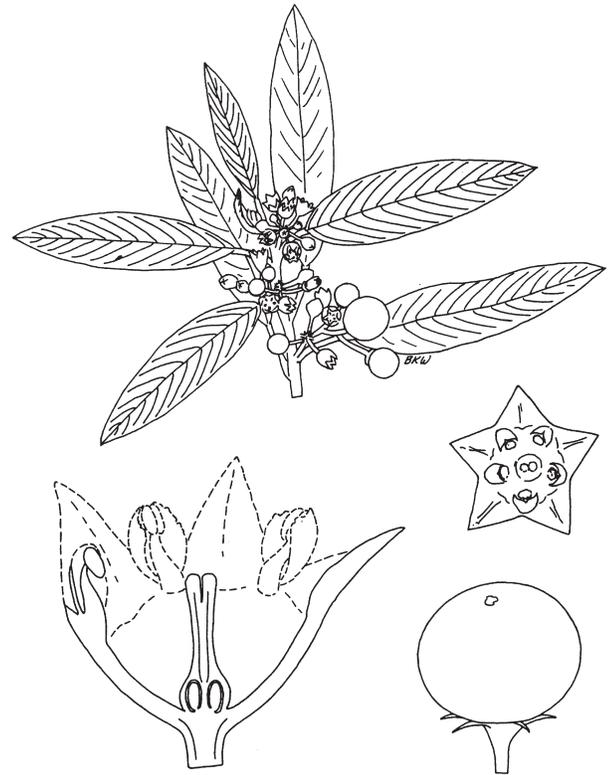
If coffeeberry is no longer in *Rhamnus*, how does one tell the two genera apart? It turns out it is relatively easy. Locally we only have two of the old *Rhamnus* species: the coffeeberry and redberry, which remains in *Rhamnus* (*R. croceus*). They can often be found growing near one another. Redberry has very tiny flowers with only four sepals and no petals. The four stamens are placed alternate (i.e. between the sepals). Coffeeberry petals and stamens are found on the edge of the shallow cup-shaped structure (*hypanthium*) visible in Bonnie's drawing.

Speaking of petals, they are the 'hoods' in the drawing of the longitudinal section of the flower, seen enclosing the stamens. Botanists define flower parts not by their function or appearance but by their position. Not all petals are large and showy and function to attract animal pollinators. The placement of stamens relative to the petals--right in front--is characteristic of the buckthorn family (Rhamnaceae). Such stamen placement is termed opposite (stamens opposite the petals) and is a relatively rare condition.

Coffeeberry is in flower and/or fruit most of the year in the Elfin Forest. However they are most easily noticed from late April through July. Coffeeberry flowers are quite small and greenish. Less than 1/2 inch wide, they are best appreciated with a hand lens. Flowers are replaced first by immature green berries that later change to red or black when mature. Are the berries edible? To be truthful, I don't know. At least one internet source said he had found them less than exciting, but did note that many birds and small mammals eat them.

Early cultures throughout the world have eaten berries of various species of *Rhamnus*. Several native peoples used the twigs and leaves the same way Western North Americans used *R. catharticus*, Africans used *R. frangula*, and Europeans used *R. purshiana* as an extreme laxative or purgative. A book on Poisonous plants of North America indicates that there are reports of poisoning in Europe, but none from North America. So, if you are one to experiment, they may be worth a try. For me, I suggest that the highest use would be as food for birds and other native wild life.

Coffeeberry can be subdivided into several intergrading varieties. Leaves vary in color from bright green to gray-green and in size from relatively small and narrow to long and wide. The height of individual plants varies from only a foot or so on exposed coasts to up to over fifteen feet where it grows with tall coastal scrub, dune scrub and chaparral species. It can be a spreading ground cover or an upright shrub tall enough to placidly hold its own as a background planting. Many horticultural varieties have been selected. Smaller leaved varieties do without summer water in our area whereas larger leaved varieties do best with limited summer watering. Coffeeberries seem not to have any soil preference as they are found on dune sand, clays and even serpentine.



## All Pull Together—Poem

By Lannie Erickson

It's always some thing, sometimes quite a few.  
Weed Warriors need help, an aerial view,  
To scan out some problems, like invasive plants.  
Let's see if some birds can give us new slants.

A crow is talking to a scrub jay and saying  
"Exotics must go, but we must avoid spraying.  
Let those Weed Warriors get out there and yank  
Up the veldt grass and ice plant that make our fields rank."

On Saturday morning along about nine,  
Weed Warriors will gather, no waiting in line.  
Come fog or bright sun, no matter the weather,  
When we're all done we'll eat (Ron's) cookies together.

# Weed Warrior Report

By Yolanda Waddell and Ron Rasmussen

## May 6th – Many Weed Warriors Make Light Work

Cal Poly architecture Dr. Thomas Fowler e-mailed SWAP saying that members of the Architecture Student Cal Poly Honor Society, Tau Sigma Delta, would like to participate in our May 6th work party. On May 6th, Dr. Fowler and 14 Cal Poly students arrived, all wearing their Tau Sigma Delta T-shirts (*see photo on page 1*). Before they left to pull weeds, Barrett Holland (our snail monitor) gave the students an orientation on identifying the Morro Shoulderband snail so they would know to call him to move a snail if they found one, and students working on South Bay Boulevard were given safety vests.

In addition, 10 other volunteers including 3 new Weed Warriors: Kristen Dotter, Allison Lollock and Jeff Reifel; plus regulars Barrett Holland Vicky Johnsen, Prisila and Rich Johnson, Skip Rotstein and Dean Thompson came. Ron was ready with a long “To Do” list, sending a group to the end of 16th Street to pull veldt grass; another group to South Bay Boulevard to pull veldt grass down there; and still others to pull weeds in the Klopfer Grove next to the bay. Dean Thompson led a crew of trail trimmers; Ron and helpers worked on the boardwalk; and Skip Rotstein and Jeff Reifel removed 3 rusty trashcans from Mutt Mitt posts and replaced them with new ones at three street ends.

The day’s “harvest” filled 13 orange trash bags, which were carted away by Skip Rotstein to neighbors who donated greenwaste can space. All work party participants were rewarded with many thank you’s and handfuls of Ron’s delicious cookies. Our heartfelt thanks go to Tom Fowler and his cheerful and energetic team of students.

## June 3rd – Battling Broken Boards and Yanking Weeds

June’s work crew was much smaller than in May. But they tackled Ron’s list of tasks with gusto. Prisila and Rich Johnson trekked down to the Klopfer Grove next to the bay, to remove a burgeoning bunch of Italian thistles, some of which had grown to 5 feet tall. Barrett Holland and Vanessa Nelson joined Ron Rasmussen in doing boardwalk work: fastening loose boards, replacing rusted screws and repairing some toe railing that had come loose. Lannie Erickson hiked over to the Orchid Trail, above South Bay Boulevard, to pull veldt grass; and Frances Leitel and Yolanda Waddell did mop-up weeding at the end of 16th Street. It was a beautiful day, with Black sage and Sticky monkey-flower in full bloom - a great day to be working in the Elfin Forest.

### 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.



Replacing a rusted trashcan with a new one during the May work party were Jeff Reifel (left) and Conservation Chair Skip Rotstein.  
Photo by Yolanda Waddell.



During the June work party, boardwalk care by Ron Rasmussen (left) and Barrett Holland included bracing a broken stringer.  
Photo by Vanessa Nelson.

# Education Reports

The Baywood Elementary School first grade teachers asked our Education Committee to give a docent-led walk about the Chumash Indians on May 24th. Preparing for the walk took a fair amount of research, as we hadn't previously been asked for a walk focusing on the Chumash. Education Chair Pat Akey gave the docents several books about the Chumash from our Education library, including a delightful one called *The Chumash From a Child's Eyes*. Docents Vicky Johnsen and Barbara Renshaw collected samples of seeds and reeds, and other visual aids were prepared. Morro Bay Museum Manager Rouvaishyana lent us examples of Chumash rattles, clap sticks and flutes.

On the appointed morning, fifty first-graders walked to the Elfin Forest from Baywood School and found out what it would be like for Chumash children to go camping in the Forest. Their favorite things seemed to be the Chumash music instruments.

On May 25th, Education Committee advisor Judy Neuhauser gave a very special tour of the Elfin Forest for a small group of medically fragile children. All of the children were in wheelchairs. Each child was accompanied by a parent, and a nurse came along on the field trip. Judy planned to give the children sensory experiences such as feeling and smelling, since one child was blind and one was deaf. Judy reported that after showing and explaining a plant or flower to the parents, each parent would then give the plant or flower to her child. She was told by one of the teachers that the children had never before had a field trip. The parents especially were thrilled to be in the Elfin Forest with their children, and Judy said that it was a very positive and rewarding experience for all, including for her. We extend our thanks to Judy for using her superb teaching skills in sharing the Elfin Forest with these children and their parents.



*In May, Judy Neuhauser, a retired teacher, gave a sensory walk for a group of medically fragile children and their parents.  
Photo by Yolanda Waddell.*



*SWAP docent Pat Brown talks to a group of Baywood School first graders about using willow branches to make everything from a lean-to to a flute. Photo by Vanessa Nelson.*

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## Bush Lupine Erosion Control Project is Underway

*By Yolanda Waddell*

We noted in the June/July issue of *Oakleaves* that a trail and erosion control project at Bush Lupine Point was planned for late summer or early fall. However, CCC (California Conservation Corps) Projects Manager, Mike Anderson, notified us in June that the restoration work would begin on Monday, July 31, to be completed by Friday, August 4th. Barring the possibility that the CCC crew might end up doing fire fighting elsewhere, the work will be going on as this issue reaches you.

The CCC's staging area will be the 11th Street parking area, and that area will be closed to the public. There will be a dumpster, building materials, a portable outhouse and vehicles at the end of the street. CCC Crewmembers will transport materials and tools by wheelbarrow over to the 12th Street path, and then up the path to Bush Lupine Point. There will most likely be a wheelbarrow or two, and tools, wood and fencing at Bush Lupine Point as well, but they will not close the viewing deck to the public.

The 11th Street trail should be available to visitors who are willing to park down the street and walk to the trail entrance. The project will be completed in one week. Crewmembers will be at work between 7:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. They are always polite, and will do their best to work quietly, especially early in the morning. The end result will be better looking fencing and a double fence at Bush Lupine Point, and jute netting controlling erosion on the slope at the left of the viewing deck. The trail leading downhill from Bush Lupine Point will be closed as before, because of severe erosion on that hill.

# Coming Up in the Elfin Forest



*Black Phoebe*

*Text and Photos By Jean Wheeler*

Flowers and fruit both adorn the Elfin Forest in August and September. Along the boardwalk, lizards dart actively in the warm sun, pausing to do their “push-ups.” Resident birds are weaning their young and migrants are already moving in for the winter or passing through on their way to winter homes to the south.

Along the boardwalk between Bush Lupine Point and

Siena’s View, Hollyleaf Cherry shrubs have bright red berries. In the same area are California Coffeeberries (pictured above right). Colors of their berries vary from yellow as they begin to develop turning to red and then shiny ebony black as they fully ripen. Often all colors of berries appear together on the same branches.

Mock Heather, its yellow flowers brightening much of the Elfin Forest for these two months, blooms almost exclusively in August and September. Also providing golden blooms now as they do much of the year are California Poppies. California Goldenrod, another plant with yellow flowers at this season, is pollinated by insects rather than wind, unlike the species known for causing major allergy problems.

California Asters are coming into full bloom with ray petals of white to light pink or lavender around a central yellow disk. They will brighten the Elfin Forest all the way into December. Flowers on dune buckwheat that opened white are now aging to pink, and then rust in color.

Resident birds continue to be active all year, often feeding second broods of fledglings in late summer. Among the larger species easy to spot are California Quail, Western Scrub Jays, and California Thrashers sporting their long down-curved beaks. Among the many year-round medium-sized and smaller resident birds are the Black Phoebe (pictured above), both Towhees, many species of Sparrows and Finches, Bewick’s Wren, Wrentits, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, and four species of Titmice and Nuthatches including Bushtits (featured with photo on page 4). Over a dozen raptors are active in our area all year and may be seen flying or gliding overhead as they search for prey.

Summer or transit-only avian visitors include five species of Swallows, Swainson’s Thrush, the Black-headed Grosbeak, Wilson’s and Yellow Warblers, and the Western Tanager.

By September, year-round resident ducks and shorebirds begin to be joined by aquatic species from the north passing through on their way south and by species arriving to spend the winter in Morro Bay. Look for early arrivals by Pied-billed Grebes, Gadwall Ducks, Northern Shovelers, or Blue-winged Teal, for instance. And rejoice in the anticipation of the thousands more birds that will nearly cover the Bay in the months ahead!



*California Coffeeberry*

## Because of the Rain

In the rare years when we have an abundance of rain, plants that we usually don’t notice come beautifully into bloom. Pictured are the flowers of two of those seldom-blooming plants.

On June 3rd, Vanessa Nelson, one of our First Saturday Weed Warriors, spotted a lovely California wild rose in bloom near the boardwalk. She sent us a photo (at right) of this small but stalwart native rose that is rarely seen in bloom.



*California Wild Rose*



*Rein Orchid*

And on July 1st, while pulling weeds along the slope above South Bay Boulevard, Pat Brown found, to her delight, that the Rein orchids (at left) are blooming this year.

If you are reading a printed copy of *Oak-leaves*, do look at these flowers in our online version.

## WALKS in the ELFIN FOREST

### *August 19, 9:30 a.m. – Reptile Walk*

Join Cal Poly biologist and reptile specialist Tony Frazier as he tours the Elfin Forest in search of the Forest's reptilian residents. We'll be sure to find some Western Fence Lizards sunning themselves on the boardwalk rails. Most of the Forest's reptiles and amphibians are hard to find, so Tony will bring reptile skins and perhaps a live critter or two. Learn how these elfin creatures behave, survive, and protect themselves from predators.

### *September 16, 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. Bob 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.

*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.*



*During his May wildflower walk, botanist Dirk Walters answers questions about the plants that grow in the estuary. Photo by Ron Rasmussen.*



*During her June Solstice walk, Geographer Jean Wheeler, at right, used an "earth" ball and charts to show walk participants how the tilt of the earth results in seasonal differences in sun angle, length of day, and therefore solar heating. Photo by Yolanda Waddell.*

## Elfin Forest Sightings

### Proliferating Pigs

On May 13th, birder and photographer Rich Hansen sent the following e-mail: "This morning while scoping the estuary below the Elfin Forest for the Bald Eagle, Jo and I came up with a local lifer for the two of us: three at least 100-pound pigs along with 6 piglets. I have encountered them in the east county on several occasions but never in my back yard. One of the many delights of birding, the unexpected. Rich & Joann Hansen"

Rich sent us the adjacent photo, commenting that it wasn't sharp due to wind and distance. But it is clear that the pigs have found tasty food in the marsh below Siena's view. Elfin Forest neighbors Mary Wright and Barbara Murray saw and sent photos of at least a dozen wild pigs on the marsh.

We remind our readers that the wild pigs are frequenting the lower (Don Klopfer) grove next to the bay, and can be dangerous if startled. We have been told by State Parks that there is no way to remove them, so they are now "residents" of the Elfin Forest.



*Birder and photographer Rich Hansen and his wife went to the Elfin Forest in May in order to sight a Bald Eagle, and instead saw a family of wild pigs on the marsh. Photo by Rich Hansen.*

# Thank You to Our Generous Members

Compiled by Betsy Kinter, SWAP Database Coordinator

## NEW MEMBERS:

Nina Clark  
Terre Dunivant, Gaia Graphics\*  
Dianna McFarland

## RENEWING MEMBERS:

Andrea Bersie*	Sally & Randy Knight*
Eleanor Brown*	Sheila Montooth*
Roger E. Carmody*	Richard S. Parker*
Tom & Rita Hadjiyane	Monica Rowcliffe
William Jankos*	Daniel Songster

## DONATIONS:

The Hamill Family Foundation,  
recommended by Dr. Corwith C. White  
Joan Hughes

Yolanda and Jay Waddell in memory of Florence Appel

*\*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.*

## 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](http://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](mailto:oakleaves@elfin-forest.org) with the subject: Switch me to online.



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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: Karl Appel, Sandra Beebe, Pat Brown, Petra Clayton, Jan DiLeo, Lannie Erickson, Tom Fowler, Rich Hansen, Vicky Johnsen, Betsy Kinter, Vanessa Nelson, Ron Rasmussen, Yolanda Waddell and Jean Wheeler.

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# Remembering Flo Appel

Text & Photo By Yolanda Waddell



*Karl and Flo Appel were featured in the June/July 2015 issue of Oakleaves, on the occasion of their 90th birthdays.*

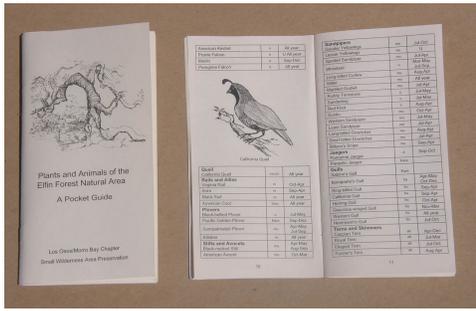
Florence (Flo) Appel and her husband Karl became SWAP members in 1993 when they learned of our effort to raise money to buy the southern 38.7 acres of the Elfin Forest. They loved the Elfin Forest, which they could see from the second story windows of their house on 17th Street, and celebrated along with the rest of the Los Osos community in 1994, when the property was finally purchased and became the El Moro Elfin Forest Natural Area.

In 1997, SWAP was awarded a \$4,000 Coastal Conservancy grant for restoration of the badly eroded slope below Bush Lupine Point. Karl and Flo joined the volunteers who worked for several weekends to make erosion control wattles, spread jute netting and seed the area with native plant seed.

In 1998, Flo joined the SWAP Board as Membership Co-Chair. She and her co-chair maintained SWAP's membership records and sent thank you notes to each person who joined, renewed or donated. When her co-chair resigned from the Board, Flo carried on as Membership Chair until June, 1999, when Katie Davis took over that position.

Flo was a superb hostess, and offered her home for special SWAP events, such as a farewell dinner for outgoing Board members in December, 1998. She also was a talented crafts person. When the SWAP Board voted to participate in a non-profit "Presentation of Trees" holiday event at the Inn at Morro Bay that December, Flo volunteered to make tree decorations for SWAP's holiday tree. She was joined by Beth Wimer and Bethany Griffiths in creating charming nature-themed ornaments. SWAP has kept the ornaments safely in our storage unit, and occasionally we bring them out at Christmas-time to decorate a tree with them.

After Flo became busy with other activities and retired from the Board, she and Karl kept up their SWAP membership. In 2015, SWAP joined in celebrating their 90th birthdays with an article about them in the June/July issue of *Oakleaves*. Then passage of time took its toll, and Flo became very ill. She passed away on May 23rd, 2017, at age 92. With appreciation for all that Flo did for our organization and for the Elfin Forest, SWAP extends our thoughts of sympathy to her husband Karl, and her daughters Lindsey and Joan and their families.



## Our Pocket Guide - A Goldmine of Information

*Plants and Animals of the Elfin Forest Natural Area* is a 56 page, 8x4 inch paperback packed with fascinating facts: charts of plants by bloom season, color and habitat; birds by habitat and peak months; butterflies by size, months in flight, color, and host or nectar plants used. Also lists of mammals, reptiles, amphibians, insects and other arthropods, lichens, and mushrooms.



# SWAP Shoppers' Order Form

See Photos of All Items at [www.elfin-forest.org](http://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.

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

### 2. 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 = \$\_\_\_

### 3. 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 = \$\_\_\_

### 4. ALPHABET BIRD BOOK

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

\_\_\_ @ \$20.00 = \$\_\_\_

### 5. MURAL MUG

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

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### 6. 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 = \_\_\_

Mural Mug: \$6.00 \_\_\_ (If more than one mug, call for shipping cost.)

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Help the Elfin Forest by becoming a SWAP volunteer! See page 1.

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## Don't Miss Our Annual Party!

Our Annual Celebration is coming up from noon to 2:30 p.m. on Saturday, Sept. 23, in the Community Room of Morro Shores Mobile Home Park, at 633 Romona Ave., just across from the Sweet Springs Nature Reserve in Los Osos.

Always a great party with no admission price, this event includes beautiful and fascinating displays of natural history photography, a wonderful illustrated presentation by a leader in local conservation efforts (see page 1 for information about this year's exciting speaker), delicious refreshments, and an excellent opportunity for enjoyable conversation with long-time friends and interesting new acquaintances in a spacious indoor setting.



### MEMBERSHIP FORM

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