

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) 528-2579 ♦ NOVEMBER 1996

From the President

One of the things that gives me great pleasure is taking someone who has never seen the Elfin Forest out into it for the first time. It serves to remind me why we all worked so hard to preserve it and why it is so important to make it accessible while protecting it.

Recently I had an opportunity to guide a young man and his mother on their first visit to the Elfin Forest. As we stood at the sign at the end of 15th Street, it didn't look like much of a forest. In fact, when people meet me there for the first time, they tend to look askance at the low vegetation and usually ask, "Where is the forest?"

The first surprise is the terrific view revealed at the top of the Ridge Trail. That day it seemed as though we really could see forever: past Morro Rock up the coast, over to the sand spit, the boats at the marina, and the Morros up Los Osos Valley.

And the view is the treat all the way to Bush Lupine Point (which, sad to say, may be Bush Lupine Point in name only unless we can convince folks to walk more gently around this fragile area).

The excitement builds walking down the slope along the fragrant trail to Mayhem Point—it is a forest! My new friends agreed that it really is "habitat for elves." In the Emily Polk Grove, I retold my favorite story of NHA docent Don Klopfer asking a child to touch a sun-dappled, moss-covered oak limb and explaining in all seriousness that it felt warm because an elf had just left!

As we backtracked into the Celestial Meadow, I pointed out that we had just "left" Los Osos (and every day cares) far behind—although just over the hill were our homes and cars. Under the vast blue sky dome we admired the canopy of Wood Rat Hall, and in Ghost Hall the hanging lichen reminded us of the cob-webbed corridors of a deserted castle.

We returned taking the trail that passes by Dudlea Oak, a stout survivor of thoughtless vandalism years ago, and on up through the chaparral. The ten year old was surprised to see how much time had gone by so quickly.

And I came away with a renewed appreciation of the Elfin Forest, of the importance of our efforts to protect it and to share it.

The elves came through once again.

Rose



ENVIRONMENTAL VISIONS:

Los Osos Community Overlook / Nature Books & Toys

General Meeting
Monday, November 18th, 7 pm
South Bay Community Center
2180 Palisades Avenue, Los Osos

Environmental ideas will be on the agenda as members of LOCO (Los Osos Community Organization) present their vision of a new community overlook and gateway to Los Osos and the Elfin Forest in the state park off South Bay Boulevard. Whiz Kids, Volumes of Pleasure, Books & Company and Los Osos Book Exchange will be there with ideas for nature reading and playing which will be available for purchase. Bring your friends to enjoy some unhurried, pre-holiday shopping and inspiration.

OPERATION:

"Friends of the Elves"

We have an easy task for you: try to spend some time in the Elfin Forest in the next month. We need more of our friends walking and just being there.

SWAP is working on replanting and erosion projects in various parts of the forest. We have tried signs and newspaper articles to educate forest users, but unfortunately the work for the good of the forest is being damaged.

If you could make it a point to be there more often, having friends about would deter some of the folks who are careless. We call this experiment "Operation: Friends of the Elves." Your presence will help. Call Janice Verity (528-8151) or Larry Grimes (528-3035) if there are occurrences in the forest about which you feel we might need to know. We hope this pleasant task will bring good results.

HARBOR FESTIVAL HOORAY!



It was warm, it was fun, and people were in a festive mood. The volunteers for the Harbor Festival were busy at the front gate, this year taking money instead of selling sand dollars. Our group makes a fun project out of it, and all went smoothly.

Many thanks go to: Ann Calhoun, Norma and Bill Vaughn, Robin Knapp, Les Wamsley, Bill Jackson, Roger Verity, Yolanda Waddell, Marcia Munson, Karen Kimura, Don and Chris Rose, Nancy Conant, Katie Davis, Elyse Unger, Carolyn Boomer, Les and Rose Bowker, Ruth Allen, Betty Priest, Wes Hamilton, Missy Stine, Rob and Nancy Reid, and Pat and Larry Grimes. Lesa Smith helped in pre-planning.

Good crew! Nice people to work with!

Janice Verity, Volunteer Coordinator

MITIGATE, the dictionary definition: v., to make milder, lessen in severity.

A much broader, current usage applies to the measures SWAP would like to take in helping the Elfin Forest to recover from years of erosion and degradation due to human intrusion, use and misuse of the area. When a natural area is so close to an urban area it requires an ongoing effort to maintain harmony between human uses and preservation efforts. Equally important is the effort to provide access presently denied to a great many people who cannot negotiate the deep, sandy paths in this very special public place.

Both goals will be accomplished with the planned enhanced walkway. This boardwalk would lead able and disabled visitors on a loop trail through the forest, enabling visitors to experience the preserve, while discouraging the present tendency to wander off existing trails, and preventing adverse impacts from such use.

What is so important about reclaiming the trails? Over the years, steady use and wandering off the sides of the paths to avoid the deep sand that makes the going rough has widened some trails to the width of a roadway and caused erosion which has exposed the roots of many plants.

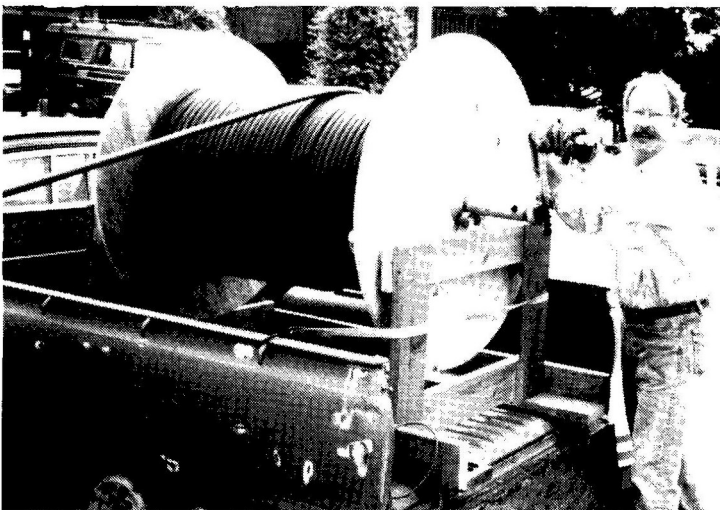
The effort to mitigate this damage by developing a comprehensive, aesthetically pleasing path for people to follow throughout the various plant communities will reclaim and maintain this fragile environment.

Another mitigation project that has taken both funding and the efforts of over 100 volunteers has been planting over 300 seedling oaks and manzanita plants. Now that the plants have taken root and begun to show promise of correcting some of the damage caused by human intrusion, a new and very disturbing development has occurred: a large number of plants have been wantonly pulled out of the ground and their cages strewn about.

It is sad and difficult to imagine why anyone would destroy what their fellow citizens have worked so hard to create for future generations to enjoy.

Your help is needed. Please keep an eye on the new oaks and manzanita plants. We ask that people walking their dogs early in the morning and evening, those just enjoying a stroll through the forest during the day and the young people who make it their special place, do what they can to educate and help prevent further destruction. The elves thank you for helping to mitigate human impact on their habitat.

Elsie Deitz, Special Events Coordinator



French Morgan winds in 1500 feet of hose used to water seedlings in the Elfin Forest on the impressive portable hose reel he designed and built.

In Other News ...

The Morro Bay National Estuary Program (MBNEP) will be the focus of the next **General Meeting of the Friends of the Estuary**, slated for *Wednesday, December 11th, at 7:30 p.m. at the Inn at Morro Bay*. MBNEP Director Dave Paradies and MBNEP Scientific Director Karen Worcester will present a report on the current and future activities of the program. All are welcome to attend. For more information call 528-7874 or 466-3472.

The Morro Bay Winter Bird Festival - January 17-20, 1997 - is fast approaching, as is the *December 31st registration deadline*. The \$25 registration fee includes many of the field trips, as well as a t-shirt, admission to the Museum of Natural History, and more! Call the MB Chamber of Commerce at 772-4467 or 1-800-231-0592 for more information.

"...a new and very disturbing development has occurred: a large number of plants have been wantonly pulled out of the ground and their cages strewn about."

THIRD SATURDAY WALKS

November 16 - Take a journey through time with Jeff Grover, Cuesta College geology instructor. Jeff will focus on the geologic history of the Morro Bay area from the formation of the ancient morros, or Seven Sisters, to the recent development of the dunes which underlie the Elfin Forest. He may even give us a glimpse of what the Elfin Forest and Morro Bay will be like in the geologic future.

December 21 - Peter Waldburger, the official "gardener" of the Elfin Forest will share tips on growing native plants from collecting the seed to starting plants, transplanting them into the correct soil medium, and protecting them from invader plants or weeds. He'll show areas of the Elfin Forest where weed control was necessary and examples of successful plantings.

January 18 - Our annual Fungus Foray with Dennis Sheridan. Dennis will lead us in an exploration of the Elfin Forest floor for the Wood Bluett, Golden Cap and Boletus. A good early January rain will bring out these and dozens more fascinating fungus species. And if it doesn't rain? Well, Dennis is an entomologist so he will improvise with a walk in search of the six and eight-legged creatures of the Elfin Forest.

Walks begin at 9:30 am (unless otherwise noted) at the north end of 15th Street off Santa Ysabel in Los Osos. Wear comfortable shoes, long sleeves and pants to avoid poison oak and mosquitoes. Please park carefully, avoiding driveways and mailboxes. We ask that you not bring dogs or other pets. The easy paced walks last 1-1/2 to 2 hours.

Call 528-4540 evenings for information.



Dr. John Parker explains the ancient history of the Elfin Forest on a Third Saturday Walk.

THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU

to H. Abrams, F. Appel, L. Armstrong, R. Avelar, K. Baldwin, R. H. Ball, R. J. Ball, M. Bates, W. Beeson, R. Belknap, B. Bennett, R. Bentley, E. Berg, V. Black, C. Boomer, R. Bowker, R. Boyer, R. Braun, J. Broshears, W. Buckmaster, B. Burke, J. Burnham, F. Bush, M. Campagna, W. Cappello, D. Casey, J. Chadwick, J. W. Chadwick, V. Cicero, V. Culbert, E. Cunningham, A. Cushing, E. Dabritz, M. Daniel, K. Davis, B. DeWitt-Moylan, B. Deitchman, K. Deizell, I. Doering, R. Easton, L. Edgcomb, A. Elijah, J. Elliot, F. Elswick, V. Endres, F. Fairbrother, L. Farwell, B. Fellows, S. Fenn, Mrs. W. Flynn, P. Foulstone, L. Frank, W. Frey, K. Gorrindo, D. Graves, C. Grimes, J. Grover, C. Hallstrom, M. Harms, D. Harris, J. Havlena, K. Havlena, A. Hill, W.E. Hoagland, V. Hodge, S. Howe, R. Hudson, K. Hurd-Panetta, E. Hutchinson, W. Jackson, H. James, C. Jeffrey, S. Jio, E. Kengel, A. Kimura, P. King, A. Knodel, R. Lane, M. Lauser, H. Lichtenbaum, A. Lindeman, F. Little, J. MacDonald, M. MacGillivray, L. Markwort, M. Mayfield, J.R. McCullagh, W. McKeown, S.C. McLaughlin, M. Mehring, M. Miller, D. Minnix, J. Montooth, M. Moore, W. Moore, R. Mountain, M.C.C. Audubon Society, E. Nelson, W. Newman, R. Newton, M. Norby, D. Norwood, L. Norwood, M. Osherenko, S. Palmer, C. Pardo, J. Parham, D. Patterson, P. Peterson, A. Phillips, L. Phillips, J. Pierce, N. Pier, E. Polk, J. Preihs, K. Ramsland, G. Rathmell, J. Ray, I. Reti, G. Ricard, D. Robinson, M. Rodacker, A. Roest, P. Rygh, S. Schweizer, B. Schwenoha, I. Seal, E. Smith, J. Smith, L. Steinbeck, C. Stephens, M. Stewart, M. Stubson, H. Sturgeon, F. Taubert, C. Taylor, V. Tennant, D. Thomson, D. Tolley, N. Vaughan, J. Verity, L. Wallender, B. Wamsley, C. Ward, R. Ward, J. Whitire, A. Wieman, C. Wilmer, H. Winter, B. Wisberg, J. Wood, D. Youngman, E. Yukelson-Ungar and R. Zeitzeu.



Wow! Our usual Thank You List is *huge* thanks to the efforts of Membership Chair Ruth Allen and her committee. Ruth, Elsie Deitz and Robin Knapp organized a membership drive that brought in over 135 renewals! (If you haven't renewed, check out the label on this newsletter for your anniversary date.) Many thanks to everyone who renewed. Your support is essential.

Membership committee, take a bow!!



MEMORIAL DONATION

Thanks go once again to Jerri Chadwick of Baywood Realty who has made another donation to SWAP as the result of a recent sale. This one is very special to us because Jerri's client, Dick Ewell, chose SWAP as the gift recipient in memory of his wife Kay who was a long-time SWAP supporter. We remember Kay fondly and wish Dick well in his new home.



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☐ I want to help, please call me!

Have you renewed your membership on time?
 Check out the label on this newsletter for the date you
 last sent in your membership.

EVERY membership counts!!

Make checks payable to SWAP,
 Mail to Small Wilderness Area Preservation,
 P.O. Box 6442, Los Osos, CA 93412 - 6442

THE PERFECT GIFT!

ELFIN FOREST

T-SHIRTS & SWEATSHIRTS

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 shirts are great for everyone on your holiday list!

SHORT SLEEVE T-SHIRTS are available in
 L, XL and XXL at \$14 plus \$1.02 tax for a grand
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 S, M, and XL at \$16.50 plus \$1.20 tax for a total
 of \$17.70.

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