



Education Committee Produces New School Walks

❖ *Inside This Issue* ❖

The Rose Bowker Grove Needs Protection

Bowker Grove continued on page 2

04/08



SWAP BOARD OF DIRECTORS

*The Board of Directors
of the Los Osos/Morro Bay Chapter of
Small Wilderness Area Preservation (SWAP)
consists of the following members:*

Ron Rasmussen, Chair / Co-Treasurer
Pete Sarafian, Vice Chair
Yolanda Waddell, Secretary
Pat Akey, Member at Large
Debbie Levi, Member at Large
Bob Meyer, Member at Large
Pat Murray, Member at Large
Bob McDougle, Actng Co-Treasurer

The SWAP Board of Directors meets monthly
on the 2nd Monday at 7 p.m. at
the Community Center of
Sea Oaks Mobile Home Park,
1675 Los Osos Valley Road.

The next meetings are
Monday, April 14
and Monday, May 12.

All Board meetings are open to the public.
To confirm the date, time and location
(which are subject to change), call 528-0392.



CONTACT SWAP

If you have questions about SWAP activities
or want to volunteer, please call 528-0392 and
leave a message. A recorded message will have
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:

Chuck Lowe,
SLO County Parks Supervising Ranger,
1087 Santa Rosa Street, SLO, CA 93408,
(805) 781-4417.

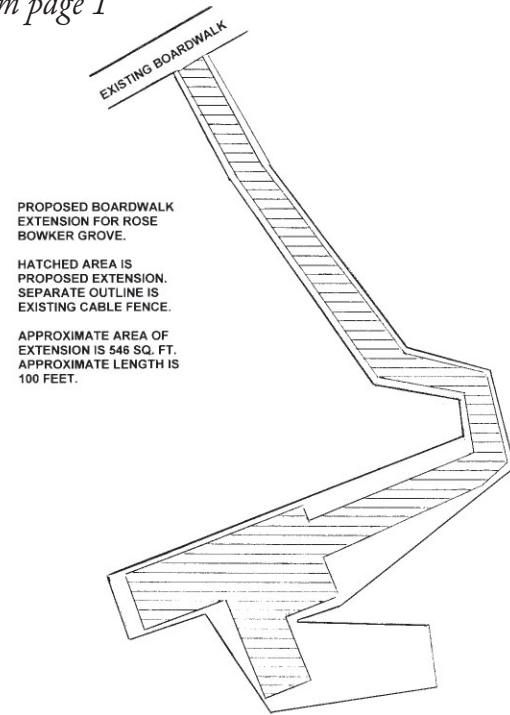
Owners of dogs off-leash can be cited. If you
witness dogs off-leash, vandalism or obvious
crimes, call the County Sheriff at 781-4550
or Chuck Lowe at 781-4417.

Bowker Grove *continued from page 1*

walk following the existing
marked trail into the grove. This
extension will have the dual pur-
pose of protecting the oaks and
will also allow access by disabled
persons who presently are unable
to enter. The total length will
be about 100 feet with a surface
area of about 600 square feet.
In the area shown in the photo
on page 1 the extension will be
widened to accommodate small
groups of visitors and also to
allow persons in wheelchairs to
turn easily. Preliminary discus-
sions with Bruce Bonifas of the
California Conservation Corps
(CCC) indicate that construc-
tion is feasible and would involve
no disturbance of the soil. The
design would also allow small animals to easily pass under or over the extension. The
height above ground would be about a foot.

Because the Elfin Forest is a county park and is also overseen by the California
Coastal Commission, no construction can begin without a thorough review of the plans
by these agencies. This will include reviews by a biologist, an archeologist, designs
and plans by an architect, and review by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. SWAP
would also like to hear the views of neighbors of the Elfin Forest. Once the project is
approved SWAP will seek funds for the project. No other boardwalk extensions are
proposed at this time.

SWAP believes that any construction in the Elfin Forest should be kept to a mini-
mum. However in this case we think action is necessary to preserve the Rose Bowker
grove. Please contact us if you have comments on this proposed action.



MB National Estuary Program Grants \$12,675 to SWAP

By Yolanda Waddell

SWAP, as the Elfin Forest steward organization, is responsible for working with San Luis
Obispo County Parks, California State Parks and other government agencies to restore and main-
tain the native conditions of the Forest. Our activities in the forest include erosion control, weed
control, revegetation, trail maintenance and vandalism repair.

Over the years we have received much financial help from the Morro Bay National Estu-
ary Program (MBNEP). Because the Elfin Forest is a key part of the Morro Bay Watershed
and adjacent to the Morro Bay Estuary, the MBNEP has awarded us several grants to enable
our projects in the Forest. In December, Conservation Chair Pete Sarafian submitted a request
to the MBNEP for a \$12,675 Implementation Grant for erosion control, weed abatement and
revegetation for 2008 and 2009. His goal as chief steward of the Elfin Forest is to reduce sedi-
ment runoff from the Forest into the Bay; to build on previous SWAP efforts at native habitat
restoration, and to continue removing invasive species, i.e. weeds. Over the two years, projects
will include installing erosion controls, spraying the very invasive asparagus vine, collecting seeds
and growing native seedlings, and watering previous plantings.

In February, we received word that the staff and members of the MBNEP Implementation
Committee and Executive Committee unanimously approved the grant request. SWAP's work
on the Elfin Forest can continue.

Beautiful Notecards & Postcards Available from SWAP

Five lovely photos taken by Bob Meyer are available either as color notecards
with envelopes or as color postcards. For either postcards or notecards, you can order
sets of all five views or as many as you want of any one (or more) of them using the
form below.



SWAP Shoppers' Order Form

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 (Sm, Med, Lg, XLg, XXLg,
XXXLg) @ \$15.00 = \$_____

___ Long Slv. T-Shirt (Sm, Med, Lg, XLg, XXLg,
XXXLg) @ \$17.00 = \$_____

___ Sweatshirt (Sm, Med, Lg, XLg, XXLg,
XXXLg) @ \$25.00 = \$_____

2. PHOTOS OF THE ELFIN FOREST

Original photo note cards by Bob Meyer

___ @ \$3.00 or ___ 5 @ \$14.00 = \$_____

Original photo postcards by Bob Meyer

___ @ \$1.00 = \$_____

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. Charts for bloom season, form, color, and habitat for
200 vascular plants plus lists of 56 lichens and 36 mushrooms
known to occur. Habitat and peak months seen are charted
for 187 birds. Also listed: 28 common mammals; 10 reptiles;
4 amphibians; 19 butterflies and moths (charted by size,
months in flight, color, and host plants); 104 other arthro-
pods and 7 gastropods.

___ @ \$2.00 = \$_____

4. ELFIN FOREST MURAL PRINTS

___ signed prints by artist Barbara Rosenthal,
image size 4 1/2 x 16 1/2 in;
mounted on foamcore @ \$20.00 = \$_____

Shipping cost if outside Los Osos/Morro Bay

Pocket Guides & Note Cards: \$1.00 = ____

All other items: \$2.50 = ____

TOTAL OF ORDER \$_____

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

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone (w/area code) : _____

Make checks payable and mail to:

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

Call in orders may also be made: (805) 528-0392.

Puzzle Answers
Across:
2. Dudleya
3. Bracken
4. Ceanothus
6. Ericameria
Down:
1. Adenostoma
2. Dudleya
3. Bracken
4. Ceanothus
6. Ericameria
7. Toxicodendron
8. Salvia
9. sclerophyll
10. Arctostaphylos
11. Chamissonis

Thank You to Our New and Renewing Members

*Compiled by Betsy Kinter,
SWAP Database Coordinator*

NEW MEMBERS:

Patrick Gates*
Heather Lucio

RENEWING MEMBERS:

Florence Appel*
Susan and John Armstrong*
Jay Bonestell
Mary and Allan Conkling*
Paul Crafts
Stephani Denker*
Martha Goldin*
Beverly Hardy
Kirsten Holmquist*
Denise Fourie and Mike Multari*
R.B. and Paula Henderson
Clement H. Jeffrey*
Heather and Jim Johnson*
Al and Carrie Pardo
Florence M. Ross*
Nancy Stephens*
David and Helianthe Stevig*
Kathleen W. Toscano*
Jerri Walsh
James H. Weldon*
Norma and Peter Wightman

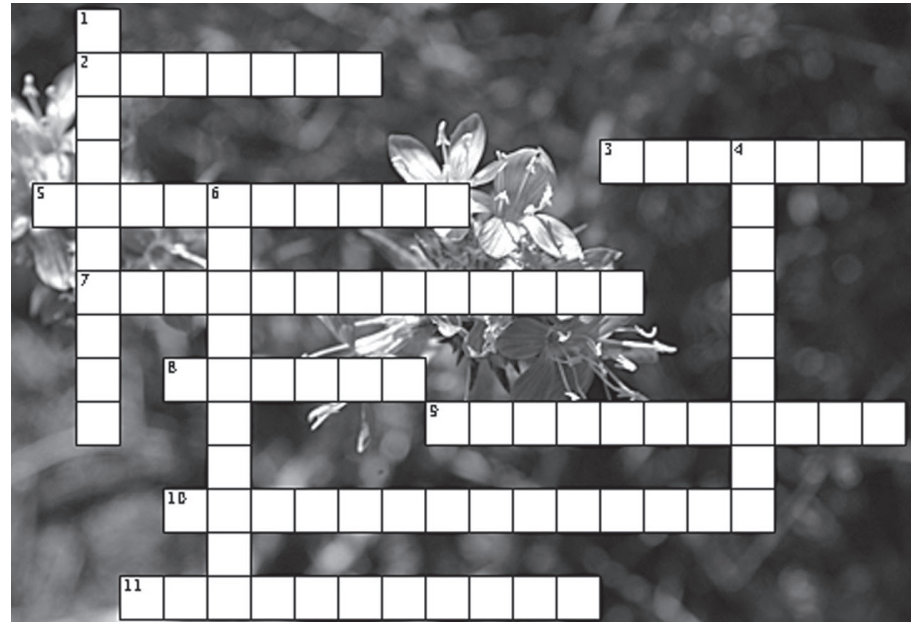
SPECIAL DONATIONS:

C. Dawn Aulenbrock
Mary J. Harrison
Larry and Jennifer Levine
David and Helianthe Stevig

**Thanks to those listed above who donated
more than the \$12 membership dues.
The additional donations will be used
for special projects in the Elfin Forest.*

Puzzle Time!

Morro Bay Museum Docent Jerry Kirkpatrick creates puzzles for fellow docent Barbara Renshaw's plant walks. He kindly sent us this one that relates to the Elfin Forest. Hint if you don't want to peek: Jerry took most of his clues from the Elfin Forest Trail Guide.



Across

2. Succulent plant that has leaves at the base and tall stalks topped with yellow flowers in the spring.
3. Long triangular doubly pinately compound leaves are found on these ferns that have a common name of Brake or _____ ferns.
5. This shrub has red flowers that attract hummingbirds in early spring. The common name is called:
7. This native plant causes allergic reactions including itching and blisters. Leaves of three, let them be. Scientific name:
8. Has flower heads that resemble a stack of pom-poms. The common name is Black Sage. Its scientific name is:
9. A type of vegetation that has hard leaves.

10. Morro Manzanita or "little apple," has the scientific name of:

11. The Silver dune lupine is important food for the Morro Blue Butterfly. Species name:

Down

1. This is a wiry bush with small dark green leaves. Its common name is Chamise. Its scientific name is:
4. Common name for this plant is California Lilac. Scientific name:
6. This plant has many golden flowers in the fall with green spiky leaves at the top of the plant. The genus name is:

Answers to Crossword Puzzle on page 11.

Fourth Annual Cambria Wildflower Show

By Jo Ellen Butler, Executive Director of Friends of the Fiscalini Ranch Preserve

The Friends of the Fiscalini Ranch Preserve (formerly called North Coast SWAP) will again sponsor the Cambria Wildflower Show on Saturday, April 26 from noon to 5 p.m. and Sunday, April 27 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Fresh wildflowers are collected on the day before the show by trained and permitted volunteers. Each flower sample is labeled with its botanical name and family, along with its common name. Admission is free to students of all ages, but others are asked to give a \$2 donation at the door to help cover printing costs.

A bibliography will be provided to everyone attending. A species list of over 400 different plants, plant identification books, wildflower seeds, wildflower photo cards, hand crafted furniture from native sustainably-harvested woods, framed wildflower photographs and t-shirts will be available to purchase. Our Wildflower Café will also sell coffee, water, sweets and other goodies to add to your enjoyment as you walk through the display or sit awhile at a table. Come see what all the excitement is about on the fourth weekend in April and join us for the biggest bouquet on the central coast!



New School Walks *continued from page 1*

other school walks would fit the fourth graders' needs. In addition, Jan Surbey, President of Morro Coast Audubon Society (MCAS), volunteered to set up her birder's scope at Bush Lupine Point so the students could learn to identify birds in the Bay. She also brought ten pairs of good student binoculars and five Sibley bird guides that the MCAS Education Committee has on hand for guiding school groups. It turned out to be the highlight of the walk. Docents for that walk were Jean Wheeler and Yolanda Waddell.

To produce an ecology-based walk for the high school juniors and seniors, Pat called on retired Cal Poly ecologist Les Bowker (also a past SWAP Board member) for help. Pat, Pete Sarafian and Yolanda Waddell met with Les for a crash course in using ecological topics for a walk in the Elfin Forest, including climate adaptation, soil adaptation, interaction of plants and animals in prey and predator relationships, how the ocean tides and estuary affect organisms in the Forest, and finishing with a great discussion of why it is necessary to preserve places like the Elfin Forest and the Morro Bay Estuary. Pete Sarafian wrote an excellent outline from his notes for the two walk docents, Jean Wheeler and Pete, to talk from. The outline will be useful in the future at any school level.

We also received valuable advice and information from Sue Fong, Education Chair for the Morro Bay Natural History Museum, and Carolyn Frank, who directs docent training for the Museum.

The walks were successful and appreciated by both teachers and students. Corly Raitt's fourth graders sent notes to the docents, thanking them for sharing their knowledge. One of the students was especially interested in the raccoon and other animal tracks next to the upper boardwalk. The class from Sacramento was most attentive and interested in the differences between the natural areas near Sacramento and our Central Coast, especially the Elfin Forest.

Pat and the Education Committee are now meeting to develop walk activities for third through six grades that meet California State standards. They will also prepare a training course for new docents. Education Committee members are Dave Bowlus, Wendi Craig, Cheryl Dove, Debbie Levi, Pete Sarafian, Yolanda Waddell and Jean Wheeler. Pat would like to hear from SWAP members who want to join the Education Committee or become docents. She can be reached at pdhakey@sbcglobal.net, or leave a message on the SWAP phone, 528-0392.

Photos at left, top to bottom:

Two very interested fourth graders from Atascadero put the Audubon Society binoculars to use to spot birds in the Bay. Photo by J. Wheeler.

Morro Coast Audubon Society President Jan Surbey brought a spotting scope and ten pairs of binoculars to Bush Lupine Point for a class of fourth graders from Atascadero. Jan is in the background helping with the spotting scope. Photo by Yolanda Waddell.

A group of juniors and seniors from the Christian Brothers High School in Sacramento, touring the Elfin Forest with docents Jean Wheeler and Pete Sarafian, paused for a photo at the Highest Point. Photo by J. Wheeler.

Great Horned Owl in the Elfin Forest

By Jean Wheeler, Ph.D.; Photo by Dave Bowlus

Imagine the excitement of the February Weed Warriors when a Great Horned Owl was discovered roosting in one of the more secluded groves of our pygmy oaks! Dave Bowlus returned later that day to take pictures of this magnificent avian predator, and kindly provided one for this article.

First seen in the Virginia Colonies, this species was scientifically named *Bubo virginianus*. It is one of the most widespread and common owls in North and much of South America. There are a dozen or more recognized subspecies. The California Great Horned Owl, *B. v. pacificus*, occurs in the central and southern parts of the state west of both the Sierra Nevada and the San Joaquin Valley.

These owls are indeed great in size, averaging about two feet long with a wingspan of nearly 50 inches and a weight of about 3-4 pounds. Size and color varies along a cline from largest and pale buff or even whitish at the northern limit, where the habitat is colder and snowy much of the year, to smaller and dark chocolate in color in tropical Central and South America. Our subspecies is brown in color with distinct barred patterns (showing well in Dave’s photo) and dark feet.

The “horns” are tufts of feathers looking like ears but not near the ear openings, which are on the side of the face. The ear openings are offset from each other, helping the owl to triangulate on sounds, also aided by the dish shape of the face. They can strike small rodents unseen under leaves or grass, although they also have remarkable vision. Their eyes, with large pupils for night vision surrounded by a yellow iris, are locked in their eye sockets, unable to move like ours. But they can turn their necks 270 degrees to more than compensate.



Great horned owls have a very diverse diet, perhaps over 200 species of prey from all classes of vertebrates and some insects and crustaceans. They may hunt at dawn and dusk as well as at night. In our area, probably the most likely prey are rabbits and hares, rodents, and birds, such as crows, ducks and coots. Large mobs of crows will dive and yell at these owls for hours, the owls being perhaps the most important predators of adult crows as well as their young. The owls can also take prey several times their own weight, even raccoons and great blue herons.

Great horned owls use nests made by other large birds, or tree cavities, rocky caves, or abandoned buildings. In January or February, the female, larger than her mate, lays and incubates 2-4 eggs, which hatch in about a month. Young hop about near the nest beginning about 6-7 weeks after hatching and start to fly well in another 2-4 weeks. They are weaned gradually, remaining with the parents normally until near the next nesting season, when they disperse as much as 150 miles or more. Adults are solitary outside the nesting season, but remain near the nesting area, resuming courtship around December with much hooting and mutual preening.

SWAP Will Participate in April 26th Earth Day Event (Booth Workers Needed)

This year the Earth Day Alliance has chosen to partner with the City of San Luis Obispo’s 25th annual Arbor Day by celebrating Earth Day on Saturday, April 26. Nationwide, Earth Day falls on April 22nd.

The city’s Arbor Day celebration takes place at Laguna Lake Park from 9:00 am to noon on the 26th. Trees will be planted, and there will be an art display and a prose contest for students. Following the Arbor Day event, Earth Day SLO 2008 will be held from 11 a.m. to 5 pm in the Mission Plaza in San Luis Obispo. The Earth Day Alliance’s Green Living Expo will feature 50 exhibits including SWAP’s booth. Among the exhibits will be earth friendly products, alternative energy sources, clean car options, homemade items, healing arts services, healthy living tools and techniques, life enhancing mini lectures, healthy food, and entertainment by local musicians and dancers. An awarding winning Kid’s Zone sponsored by Cal Poly students will educate and activate young minds.

The SWAP booth will contain displays showing our work with weed removal and erosion control as well as photos of the plant and animal life of the Elfin Forest. Volunteers are needed for our booth. Please let us know if you can help by calling the SWAP message phone (805-528-0392), and we will call you back.

Earth Day was begun in 1969 by Senator Gaylord Nelson (D-Wisconsin). He had for years deplored the problem of environmental concerns being “simply a non-issue in the politics of the country.” He founded Earth Day to focus so much public attention on environmental issues, that they would make their way onto political agendas. On April 22, 1970, 20 million Americans celebrated the first Earth Day. Today, citizens around the world combine efforts to protect our global environment. We believe that everyone at SWAP shares of the vision of keeping a clean and healthy planet.



WALKS in the ELFIN FOREST Third Saturday Walks

April 19, 9:30 a.m. – Butterfly Walk

Join butterfly enthusiast Pat Brown on a tour of the Elfin Forest from a butterfly’s point of view. Pat has taken many photos of butterflies in all stages of development from eggs to mature butterflies, and will share them along with many fascinating butterfly facts. She’ll point out some of the plants that are host to butterflies, and will lead you to hang-outs of Variable Checkerspot, Moro Blue, Swallowtail, Hairstreak and other butterflies that make the Elfin Forest their home. She will also share information about butterfly books, web sites and butterfly-related materials. She recommends that you bring a hand lens and a pair of close-focusing (5-10 ft.) binoculars.



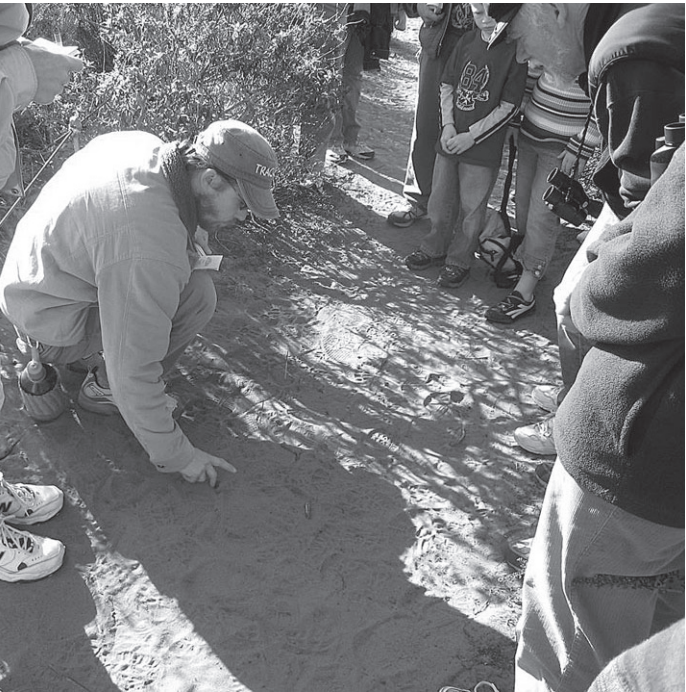
Dennis Sheridan’s Fungus Foray walk in February drew a crowd of 33 walk participants. All were fascinated with his pre-walk display and explanation of the various types of mushroom that can be found in the Elfin Forest. Photo by Dave Bowlus.

May 17, 9:30 a.m. – Wildflower Walk

Regardless of whether there are April showers, the Elfin Forest always has May flowers because the Forest’s hardy native plants are used to doing without water. Horticulturalist John Nowak will take us on a delightful tour of almost everything that’s in bloom in the Elfin Forest. There will be bright yellows of Fiddlenecks, Rush-roses, Deerweed, Golden yarrow and of course California poppies. White Popcorn flowers, Pearly everlasting and Yarrow plants are in abundance too, as well as pink Cobweb-thistles and blue Wild Hyacinths. The Silver dune lupines at Bush Lupine Point should be covered with pale blue blossoms, and alive with honeybees and Morro blue butterflies. Treat yourself to a springtime experience of Nature’s own garden.

June 21, 9:30 a.m. – Marsh Walk

It’s a little-known fact that the El Moro Elfin Forest includes 23 acres of marshland. This month, botanist Dr. Dirk Walters will take us for a tour of the salt marsh at the edge of the Elfin Forest. Mud boots are a must for this one! We’ll begin at the usual meeting place at the north end of 15th Street, and take the boardwalk and some sandy trails down to the marsh. We’ll learn how plants that grow in the marsh manage to survive in both salt water and fresh water environments. Dirk will introduce us to plants that like to get their feet wet: Salt Grass, Frankenia, Bird’s Beak, Marsh Rosemary, and the predominant plant, Pickleweed. It will be a walk that you’ll long remember. This walk will last 2 to 3 hours.



Animal track expert Evan Albright drew examples of types of tracks in the sand for interested onlookers during his January animal track walk. This popular walk has become an annual event in January when the ground is likely to be moist. Photo by Yolanda Waddell.

Walks in the Elfin Forest begin at 9:30 a.m. (unless otherwise noted). Park at the north end of 15th Street off Santa Ysabel in Los Osos and walk up the path at the end of the street to the boardwalk. The walk will begin at that point. Wear comfortable shoes, long sleeves and pants to avoid poison oak and mosquitoes. Please park carefully, avoiding driveways and mailboxes. Please leave pets at home. The easy paced walks last 1-1/2 to 2 hours. For more information call (805) 528-0392.

“If we learn, finally, that what we need to “manage” is not the land so much as ourselves in the land, we will have turned the history of American land-use on its head.”

- Gaylord Nelson, Founder of Earth Day



Coming Up in the Elfin Forest

Text and Photos by Jean Wheeler

With pretty much normal rainfall this winter after several years of drought, wildflowers are already blossoming profusely in our Elfin Forest, so April and May (usually our most prolific months for blooming wildflowers) should be glorious. Whitish sprays of flowers should still be covering large areas of shrubs--Buckbrush, California Sagebrush, Chamise, and Black Sage. Lower growing white blossoms such as Popcorn flowers, Pearly Everlastings, and Yarrow should also be in evidence.

Colors to look for against the white and green backdrop include the bright yellows and oranges of California Poppies, Deerweed, Fiddleneck, Golden Yarrow, and Sticky Monkey-flowers. Less common are the pinks of the California Rose and native Cobwebby Thistle. Blue flowers blooming in these months include Blue Dicks (Wild Hyacinth) and the lovely spikes of blue flowers on the Silver Dune Lupines near Bush Lupine Point.

With so many flowers in bloom, this is the best time of the year to see butterflies and moths. Of 19 species listed in our Pocket Guide (sold on p. 11), all but two fly in April or May. Moro Blue butterflies should be fluttering about the blue flowers of the Silver Dune Lupine. The Variable Checkerspot butterfly can be seen as caterpillars on Sticky Monkey-flower plants, as pupas on or near the boardwalk, or as adult butterflies (all three of these stages are shown in the photos at left). Pat Brown will lead our Annual Butterfly Walk this year on April 19 (see p. 9).

Winter's Hermit Thrush is gone, but should be replaced in May by Swainson's Thrush. Among other arrivals in April or May are the Warbling Vireo, the Hooded Oriole, the Black-headed Grosbeak, and Yellow and Wilson's Warblers. Our year-around Anna's Hummingbirds may have visits from Rufous and Allen's Hummingbirds migrating through, and the Western Tanager should also be among birds on their way back north after wintering in Central and South America.



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 Bowlus, Jo Ellen Butler, Betsy Kinter,
Jerry Kirkpatrick, Debbie Levi, Bob Meyer, Rebecca Rasmussen, Ron Rasmussen,
Pete Sarafian, Yolanda Waddell, Dirk and Bonnie Walters, Jean Wheeler.

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If possible, all copy should be submitted by e-mail to:
ywaddell@kcbx.net AND jeanwheeler@charter.net.

Sixtieth in a Series

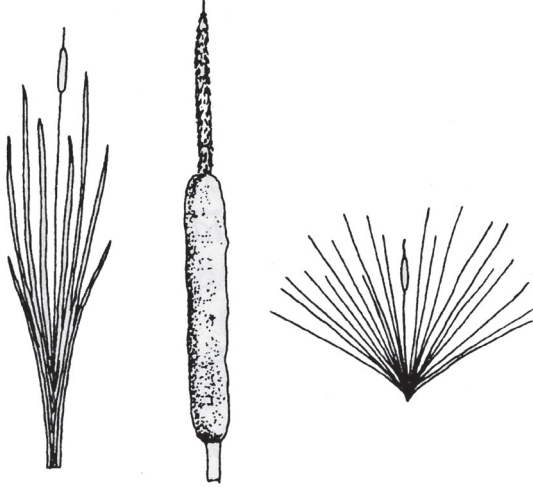
Common Cattail

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

Bonnie's drawing for this issue of the Oakleaves was done many years ago for Dr. David Keil's and my plant taxonomy textbook. It is the common cattail, *Typha latifolia*. It is a plant whose flowers are tiny but are aggregated into very characteristic linear clusters called a spike. The male (staminate) flowers produce 1-8 stamens and are restricted to the upper half of the inflorescence. The staminate inflorescence is separated from the female portion by a clear patch where a short stretch of naked axis is visible.

Staminate flowers are produced in spring and summer, but are relatively short lived. After the pollen is shed, they wither and fall off leaving a naked extension above the developing cattail. When the pollen is produced, it is produced in prodigious amounts. So much pollen is produced that pioneers gathered the pollen to mix with pancake flour (the recipe I found said 50/50, but I found this too strong tasting so I would suggest 25% pollen to 75% flour). They called them sunshine flapjacks because of their bright yellow color. My source also praised them as a source of carotene and protein.

The female or pistillate flowers are what eventually will form the cattail and occupy the bottom half of the inflorescence. Each consists of a single stalked pistil, subtended by a number of bristles. The drawing to the right is of a single flower turned to fruit. However, the flower looks no different, only smaller. When the female flowers were still green, our pioneer ancestors collected, cooked and ate them like corn-on-the-cob. When the fruits are ripe, the bristles serve as a



parachute. The 'fuzz' created when the fruits dry and are ready to be dispersed was collected and used for stuffing for life jackets. In order for a cattail seed to germinate, it must be under water.

And one can't forget the leaves and underground stem (rhizome). The leaves were woven into mats and the starchy rhizome was cooked and eaten like potatoes. The sticky sap was used as a paper paste. In his book, *Stalking the Wild Asparagus*, Euell Gibbons called the cattail "the supermarket in the swamps". With such a name, one would expect to find cattails growing down along the edge of the salt marsh in that transition where fresh water outflows from under the dunes. So if one takes a fancy to eat cattails, one will have to get wet.

There is only one species of cattail in the Elfin Forest species list, *Typha latifolia*. But I suspect there may actually be two species on or near the Elfin Forest. The second species is the narrow-leaf cattail or *Typha angustifolia*. Both species are quite common and look very much alike. The narrow-leaf cattail lacks the space between the staminate portion of the inflorescence and the pistillate portion and has generally narrower leaves. The specific epithet, *latifolia* translates to broad leaf whereas *angustifolia* translates to narrow-leaf. In my experience with the two species, the narrow-leaf species is more tolerant of salt water than the common one and is therefore more commonly associated with coastal salt marshes.

There is one last bit of technical trivia, which I just learned from the *Jepson Manual*. It is so trivial that I'm compelled to inflict it on you. The common cattail sheds its pollen in clusters of four grains whereas the narrow-leaf one shed its pollen singly. Now, that should be a cocktail conversation stopper. Those of you who were biology majors in college or remember studying a cellular division process known as meiosis might see a bit more significance in it.

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? Please report any interesting wildlife activity or plants that you see to Jean Wheeler at jeanwheeler@charter.net for inclusion in future Oakleaves issues under "Elfin Forest Sightings." You can also leave a message on SWAP's answering machine, 528-0392.

Artist Day in the Elfin Forest

By Debbie Levi,
Calendar Committee Chair

On Saturday March 8, the SWAP Calendar Committee hosted an Artist Day event in the Elfin Forest to introduce local painters to the many lovely and interesting aspects of the Forest. Our 2007 and 2008 calendars featured beautiful images from local photographers, and the committee decided to feature images of lovely works by local artists in the 2009 calendar. Thirteen works of art will be selected for the calendar's front cover and each of the twelve months.

A number of artists were able to attend the event; others will also submit artwork by the May 31 deadline. The artists who attended were: Jay Bonestell, Ed Chandler, Ken Christensen, Stuart Denker, Deb Festa, Donald Griffiths, Mimi Whitney Hafft, Heather Johnson, Jean Kirkpatrick, Larry LeBrane, Kathy Miller, Hope Myers, Shirley Pitman, Eileen Pritchard, Barbara Renshaw, Barbara Rosenthal, Rosanne Seitz, and Rachel Yon. Each artist will keep their paintings but will send us a high-resolution digital photograph of the piece that they want to be considered for the calendar.

We would like to thank Julie Galloway of SLO Roast Coffee for donating the coffee for our continental breakfast, served at the end of 12th Street before the artists began their work, and Darren Nichols of Subway for providing the artists with lunches. Generous donations such as these make our events possible.

Artists who have paintings or color drawings relating to the Elfin Forest that they think would be appropriate for our 2009 calendar, should contact either Debbie at 528-1911 or Pat at 528-1861 for submission requirements. Anyone wishing to sponsor the printing of the calendar can call the same numbers to find out how to contribute. All artists and sponsors will have their names listed in the calendar. Income from sale of the Elfin Forest calendars is used for projects in the Elfin Forest.



Barbara Rosenthal went right to work during SWAP's Artist Day and set up her easel in the Celestial Meadow.
Photo by Jean Wheeler.



The SWAP Calendar Committee treated participants in Artist Day to a continental breakfast and a box lunch. Calendar Committee Chair Debbie Levi, seated at the registration table, is discussing the day's program with committee member Jean Wheeler, who later helped Yolanda Waddell lead the artists on a tour of the Elfin Forest.
Photo by Yolanda Waddell.

Special Thanks to
Julie Galloway of SLO Roast Coffee
and Darren Nichols of Subway!

Weed Warriors Updates

by Pete Sarafian, Conservation Chair; Photos by Y. Waddell

Work Washouts

Despite erosion control work at the end of 2007, heavy winter rains before the January conservation work party challenged the Weed Warriors. New erosion bars worked well, but older measures had to be reworked. The Elfin Forest parking lot at 12th Street washed out and down the street. Hardly any wood chips were left. They had to be replaced and spread out again. Several erosion bars were covered with sand so that water overflowed them. They were dug out so that they could dam water again on 12th, 13th and 14th streets. Water channels were dug along the ends of the bars to redirect water into adjacent brushlands. Lots of sand had to be raked back uphill. Our volunteers took on this backbreaking task and included Jay Bonestell, Lannie Erickson, Bob Meyer, Ron Rasmussen and Pete Sarafian. They must have done a superb job, because workers who checked on this effort in February found relatively little to do. Thanks to all who helped.

Weed Work Takes Toll

The February and March conservation work parties concentrated on weeds with some erosion control also occurring in February. The February effort concentrated on Cape ivy (*Delairea odorata*) and Italian thistle (*Carduus pycnocephalus*), and the March volunteers pulled out veldt grass (*Ehrharta calycina*). Both groups worked in the end of the Elfin Forest west of 11th Street. The February Cape ivy workers plunged into dormant poison oak near the shore of the bay and suffered the consequences. Some ended up with itchy rashes on their wrists and arms. It appears that the dormancy wasn't dormant enough to avoid the poison. Our sympathy to all who suffered nature's wrath. Despite the itchy aftermath, a lot of good work was accomplished getting rid of some remaining Cape ivy. The February work crew included Jay Bonestell, Dave Bowlus, Nancy Deming, Lannie Erickson, Marv Gross, Bob and Sharon Meyer, Ron Rasmussen, Dar Reynolds, and Yolanda Waddell. We appreciate your hard work and wish everyone who broke out in a rash to have a speedy recovery.

The March conservation volunteers mostly had an easier time. Good inroads were made into the veldt grass. One of our new volunteers ended up with scratches and bleeding on his hands and arms from the woody shrubs in the area. This is a good reason for wearing long sleeves and gloves. The work party found no endangered snails, unlike earlier efforts last year. With one more good day's effort, we should be able to remove the remaining invasive grass from the western corner of the Elfin Forest. Thank you to all who came out and pulled and dug. They included Jay Bonestell (still itching, what a guy!), Dave Bowlus, Micah Buchman, Steve Cake, Nadia Passanisi, Ron Rasmussen, Pete Sarafian, Yolanda Waddell and Neil Wampler. We are really making inroads into the weed problem in the Forest.

SWAP First Saturday Work Parties

SWAP First Saturday Work Parties are held at 9 a.m. to noon on the first Saturday of each month. Please dress for wind, fog, or sun. Layers work well. Long pants and long-sleeved shirts are best. Sturdy shoes are a must. Meet at the north end of 15th Street at the Elfin Forest entrance. Take care not to park in front of drive-ways or mailboxes. Call 528-0392.



Weed Warrior Lannie Erickson pulled piles of Cape ivy out of a Coast live oak during the January work party, braving the presence of leafless Poison oak branches all around her. She came away unscathed.



Ron Rasmussen (left) and Dave Bowlus spent their 3 hours during the January work party digging sand away from water bars in the 11th and 12th Street trails. Their hard work paid off with very little erosion during heavy storms in February.



SWAP's newest weed warrior, Neil Wampler freed numerous native shrubs from an infestation of veldt grass during the March work party.