



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 ♦ APRIL / MAY 2009



SWAP Docent Yvette Billeaudeaux (center, kneeling on boardwalk) showed teacher Cheryl Dove's Baywood School first graders what raccoon tracks look like, and they excitedly found some tracks in the sand, heading off into the bushes. Photo by Yolanda Waddell.

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Education Committee At Work

By Pat Akey, Education Chair

The Education Committee has held two meetings early this year. The members are highly qualified for this committee. Many are teachers and former teachers. They are: Faylla Champion, Wendi Craig, Cheryl Dove, Dave Bowlus, Yvette Billeaudeaux, Pat Akey, Debbi Levi, Jean Wheeler, and Yolanda Waddell. We are in the process of creating a Docent Manual and also are searching for new Docents; Yvette is a new Docent.

Yolanda, Pat Brown, Yvette, and Pat Akey led two groups of 30 and 40 first graders from Baywood School on two successive Fridays in February. At the request of lead teacher Cheryl Dove, we focused on the animal kingdom and the food chain.



Education Committee Chair Pat Akey explains to Baywood School first graders that the word Elfin in Elfin Forest means "small," and not that they will see elves. Photo by Jay Waddell

Thanks To Members And Donors

By Ron Rasmussen, Chair and Acting Treasurer

More than half of SWAP's funds come from memberships and donors. This month I would like to thank you for your support and give you some detailed information on how these funds are used.

The funds are not used for salaries or wages since SWAP has no paid staff. However, they are used together with grant funds to hire outside help, such as the California Conservation Corps (CCC), to perform work that our volunteers cannot complete.

Thanks to Members and Donors continued on page 4



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 / 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

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 13
and Monday, May 11.

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 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:

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.

Thanks to Members and Donors continued from page 3

Our OAKLEAVES is an outstanding example of a newsletter produced by a relatively small organization such as ours. Besides presenting an update on SWAP's volunteers, it provides articles on the natural history and conservation of the Elfin Forest and surrounding area. OAKLEAVES is a large expense for SWAP, but our members tell us that they look forward to receiving every issue.

SWAP provides the Trail Guides that are available along the boardwalk. Last year (2008), SWAP provided over 3000 trail guides for visitors. Also, SWAP distributes brochures describing our organization and the Elfin Forest to, for example, the Natural History Museum and the Chambers of Commerce of Los Osos and Morro Bay. These publications have made the Elfin Forest well known in our area as well as an attraction to tourists visiting the Central Coast.

Conservation is a major activity in the Elfin Forest. Recovery from years of misuse and neglect requires continuous work. SWAP funds are being used in replanting projects now underway. Although SWAP has received a grant from the Morro Bay National Estuary Program (MBNEP), this grant provides only partial support, and SWAP membership funds must contribute as well. SWAP funds provide the plants, equipment, and growth supplements used in new plantings. Examples of the success of SWAP's conservation work can be seen throughout the Forest, most recently along the upper section of the boardwalk.

The Elfin Forest has been recognized as a prime example of California Coastal vegetation. It is unique. In this small area the biota ranges from typical coastal chaparral at the highest point to riparian and salt marsh at the lowest edges. For this reason the Forest is an ideal teaching location to acquaint young people with our fascinating wildlife. SWAP conducts regular nature walks for all ages and also school field trips for all grade levels. For the children this is a rare treat and may be their only formal introduction to the Elfin Forest. SWAP funds are used to provide teaching materials, including descriptive pamphlets and books, magnifying glasses, pencils, crayons and note pads. Students respond enthusiastically and will never forget their field trip to the Elfin Forest.

SWAP's original statement of purpose promised "...to receive, administer and disburse funds for tax exempt, charitable, literary and educational purposes". Members who continue their support and donors who make gifts to SWAP do so with the belief that they can trust SWAP's Board of Directors and our volunteers to use the funds as promised. SWAP's present Board of Directors reaffirms this promise.

Give a SWAP Membership

"A Gift of Nature is a Gift Forever" — Emily Polk, SWAP Founder

Our members are the fundamental source of our support. To build upon this base, we are offering current members the opportunity to give a one-year SWAP membership to a friend or loved one for only \$10. Or give yourself a gift. If you are a current member of SWAP and you give a membership at the basic rate of \$25 or more, then your own membership will be extended for an additional year.

Send the coupon on the back page of this newsletter with your and the new member's name and address along with your check to SWAP, P. O. Box 6442, Los Osos, CA 93412. The new member will receive a letter from SWAP announcing your gift, and will also receive our bimonthly Oakleaves newsletter. This offer will expire on June 30, 2009.

Membership is a gift, just as much as is the time given by a "Weed Warrior" pulling veldt grass. Both insure the survival of the Elfin Forest, and in a sense, are a gift to every visitor to the Forest and to the plants and animals living there.

Elfin Forest Geology

By Jeff Grover, Cuesta College Geology Professor

In the previous two articles I addressed the formation of the Mesozoic Franciscan assemblage “foundation” bedrock and the younger Cenozoic strata and volcanic rocks within and around the Elfin Forest. What remains is to describe the landscape we see and the most recent deposits on which we live and walk as we explore the estuary and our Elfin Forest. This final chapter begins around five million years ago in the Pliocene epoch, prior to the great Pleistocene ice age. Tectonic changes couple with dramatic climate fluctuations, erosion and deposition.

Chapter Three – The late Cenozoic and the formation of Morro Bay

The diatomaceous shale of the Monterey Formation, discussed in the previous article, grades upward into younger, coarser-grained silt and sandstone deposits that reflect a shoaling sea as we move into late Pliocene time. This change was most likely caused by a tectonic uplift related to compressive stresses between the Pacific and North American plates. Additional work by Tanya Atwater and others has shown that this stress began after opening of the Gulf of California and transfer of Baja peninsula to the Pacific Plate. The transfer changed plate motion to produce oblique-compression along the California coastal margin. This stress is ongoing and is the cause of our mountainous coastline and, ultimately, of Morro Bay estuary.

Along the shoreline of Montaña de Oro and in outcrops within the core of the San Luis Range are pre-late Pliocene deposits (Monterey and Pismo Formations) now folded into an east-west trending syncline (down fold) with numerous smaller anticlines (up folds). The folded nature seen today reflects initial ductile response to compression caused by the aforementioned change in plate motion. By Pleistocene time, this ductile style of deformation was replaced by rigid block uplift along a reverse or thrust fault known as the Los Osos Fault. This still active fault runs east-west approximately 35 km. parallel to Los Osos Valley Road. A similar though smaller fault, the Wilmar Avenue Fault, marks the southern edge of the range in Pismo Beach. These faults thus delineate a unique structural block separate from the low-lying areas to the north and south. They are also at least partly responsible for the modern topography. In a simplified view of the geology, the San Luis range has been pushed up and partially over the Morro Bay depression.

Geologists explain the subsidence of the basin in part as a response to thrust loading from the range front. Think of the San Luis Range as a fat man on a diving board. The diving board (the southern edge of the crust below the Morro embayment) is depressed from the weight of the range, and the sea fills in the depression. Numerous marine terraces (ancient shorelines) have been mapped and dated throughout the range and have provided a bench-mark for measurements of crustal uplift within the region. For example, a prominent terrace surface in Montaña de Oro has risen approximately 26 meters in 120,000 years. The average uplift for this



*Plaster cast of the skull of *Hydrodamalis cuestae*, a Pliocene age sea-cow or manatee collected near Avila Beach. Skull is approximately two feet in length.*

Photo by Jeff Grover.

surface is therefore 0.2mm per year. If this continues, and we ignore the effects of weathering, we might expect a towering 5000 meter mountain above Morro Bay in say only 23 million years! Keep in mind that tectonic movements of this sort are typically episodic and associated with earthquakes along the active fault. This fault passes through Los Osos and the southern section of San Luis Obispo. Related and still larger faults lie close offshore. Everyone in the area should be prepared for at least a moderate earthquake at any time.

In this series of articles, I've discussed the rocks, the mountains and the bay, but have ignored perhaps the most obvious feature below our feet in the Elfin Forest. Where did all that sand come from? A simple answer is that the beach sand from the spit blew inland during earlier times as the sea level fluctuated with the advance and retreat of Pleistocene ice sheets. But why here and not, say, in Cayucos? And where did all that sand and the sand spit come from anyway? The sand of course is the winnowed product of mechanical and chemical weathering of rocks within the coastal ranges. Think of the volume of rock required to fill all the valleys

Elfin Forest Geology continued on page 4

Elfin Forest Geology continued from page 3

that cut through the mountains of the Estero Bay watershed and you'll have an idea of the principal source of sand supply. The secondary source is erosion of coastal bluffs by waves during periods of high tide and major storms. Most of the grains are quartz or small chert fragments, all composed of silica, the most stable compound of common rock-forming minerals. The grains accumulate at the foot of the cliffs along narrow beaches or within small deltas at the mouths of the many creeks in the area. The sand is picked up and moved to a more-or-less permanent resting place. In our area, this means the sand spit or inland in Los Osos and the Elfin Forest.

Why here in Los Osos? To address that question it is important to step back a bit and study the shape of the coastline in relation to the prevailing wind. Westerly wind dominates here and generates a wave train that sweeps the coast from north to south. Wherever the coastline bends to lie ninety degrees to the prevailing wind and parallel to the crest of the waves (i.e. here in Los Osos), the longshore current slows down and the sand it carries is deposited in a broad beach or, in our case, as a spit. Wind picks up the sand and blows it inland to produce what are now the stabilized coastal dunes we see in Los Osos. This pattern repeats itself in many areas along the California coast, notably a short distance south, from Pismo Beach to Point Sal. Our sand spit formed, therefore, from southward flowing longshore currents and has grown over time to a large wind-blown ridge similar to the higher portions of the dunes south of Pismo Beach. Rising sea level at the end of the ice age encroached upon the dune and breeched the ridge to flood the low lying area and form the bay.

Life in the Late Pliocene and Pleistocene of the Central Coast in many ways resembled conditions of today, without the complications of human habitation. Marine fossils are dominated by thick shelled invertebrates such as clams and oysters that lived in the shallow coastal waters. Sediments deposited on land in the Pleistocene have yielded large mammal bones including a partial skull fragment, tusk and molar of a Mammoth. Mammal bones from marine deposits are also fairly common. My favorite is the nearly perfect skull of an extinct sea cow or manatee found near Avila beach by my predecessor, John Bowen, at Cuesta College (see photo, page 3). Paleontologists from the University of California determined that the fossil was in fact a new species and named it after our college *Hydrodamalis cuestae*. To my knowledge, Cuesta is the only community college in the world with its very own fossil! However, efforts to change our mascot from a cougar to a sea cow have so far been unsuccessful.

Our little paradise by the sea has had a long and complicated geologic history and of course, the story continues. What will happen in the future? Will that towering mountain really form and if so what will it look like? In those 23 million years, our piece of the Pacific plate will have moved well north of its present position as the sea-floor in the Gulf of California continues to spread and push us towards Alaska. In the shorter term, will warming climate and rising sea enlarge the estuary and flood our community, or will rapid sedimentation fill it in for good? These are all good questions to ponder on your next hike in the Elfin Forest.

Attention Photographers

SWAP is looking for a variety of photos, all featuring the Elfin Forest by local photographers, for our 2010 calendar. We're especially looking for close-ups of birds, reptiles, amphibians, mammals, plants, wildflowers, mushrooms and other fungi, lichens, butterflies, spiders, and other insects—any beautiful or wonderfully ugly vegetative or wildlife inhabitants of the Elfin Forest. We'd also like photos of people enjoying our preserve. We'll need a few scenic views of our small wilderness area—of a lovely grove, a welcoming path, or the Elfin Forest with the bay or the Morros in the background, or a spectacular sunrise in the Elfin Forest signifying the hope we all find from nature.

For ideas, join our 3rd Saturday Walks beginning at 9:30 am where the 15th street path meets the boardwalk. Or call Debbie at 528-1911 or Pat at 528-1861 or email calendar@elfin-forest.org and we'll send you our brochure with a map. Our pocket guide, *Plants and Animals of the Elfin Forest* sells for \$2 on page 11.

Please submit photos for the committee selection process, preferably in horizontal format, in a file size that will print well at 8 X 10 inches. Send on a CD mailed to SWAP Calendar, P.O. Box 6442, Los Osos, CA 93412 or by email to calendar@elfin-forest.org. All photos selected for the calendar will need to be supplied in high resolution, large file size (over 1 MB) on a CD prior to calendar printing.



Volunteers Needed for 2010 Elfin Forest Calendar

By Debbie Levi

The SWAP Calendar Committee is currently planning our 2010 Elfin Forest Calendar. The Calendar serves as a valuable annual fundraiser designed to serve the continued needs of the Forest and its many visitors.

We need volunteers with new ideas to share and work with our Calendar Committee, attend meetings, actively help find interested sponsors and communicate with photographers. If you are interested please contact Debbie at 528-1911 or e-mail us at: calendar@elfin-forest.org

In the past we have invited members of the business community to be calendar sponsors and help to defray printing costs. Since our local businesses are financially stressed in these difficult economic times, we invite our members to help sponsor the 2010 calendar. For each \$50 donated, the sponsor will receive one free 2010 calendar, and the sponsor's name will be listed in the calendar. The SWAP Shopper's Order Form on page 11 has a space for calendar sponsorship. Thanks for your help.

This is also the LAST CALL FOR PHOTOGRAPHER SUBMISSION for the 2010 Elfin Forest calendar. Please submit all entries on a CD (high resolution) to: SWAP P.O. Box 6442, Los Osos, Ca. 93412, ATTN: Calendar Committee or e-mail us at calendar@elfin-forest.org. The deadline is May 1, 2009.

Milkmaids

By Dirk Walters, Ph. D.;

Drawing by Bonnie Walters

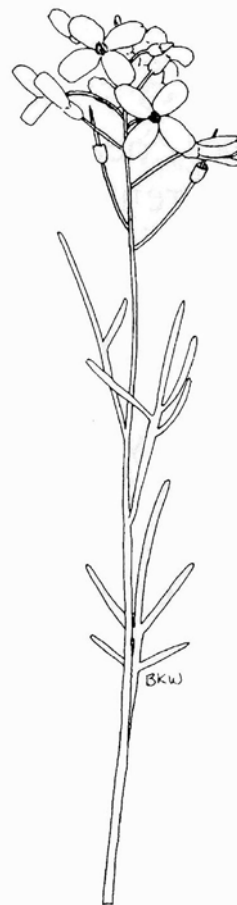
Bonnie's drawing of our featured plant was made for the original edition of Dr. David Keil's and my plant taxonomy textbook completed back in 1975! Many readers will already recognize it as milkmaids (*Cardamine californica*). It belongs to the mustard family, Cruciferae or Brassicaceae. The four petals characteristic of this family are apparent in the drawing.

To make absolutely sure it's a member of the mustard family, get up close and count the stamens: there will be six, and four of them will be longer than the other two. Many species in this family display their four petals as a cross or crucifix. Thus the older, irregular family name Cruciferae which translates as 'to bear' = iferae and 'cross' = cruc. The other name, Brassicaceae, is the one preferred by the current Rules of Nomenclature. It is derived from the genus *Brassica* paired with the family suffix -aceae.

The white to occasionally slightly pinkish flowers are a treat for wildflower lovers. One of our earliest bloomers, it is often found as early as late January or more commonly early February. Occasional flowers can be found as late as April from the coast through the Santa Lucia Mountains. Look for it on moist, wooded slopes. I have not seen this plant from the Elfin Forest boardwalk although it is on the Elfin Forest species list. I suspect it has been seen under the coast live oaks that occupy the steep North-facing slopes just above the bay.

As a newcomer to California and Cal Poly back in 1970, *Cardamine californica* was one of the first wildflowers I identified. I had known a similar species from the eastern U.S called toothwort (*Dentaria lacinata*), which, by the way, was also an early

bloomer. In the past, milkmaids had also been placed into the genus *Dentaria* and I was told back then that both the names *Dentaria* and toothwort referred to the use of its short rhizome as an antidote for tooth ache. I was told by Ralf Baker, one of the early members of the local California Native Plant Society Chapter, that he and his childhood buddies had used the cut surface of the short rhizome as an antidote for tooth ache. I could not find any reference to either genus in any of the books on medicinal or poisonous plants on my shelf. So its use as a toothache antidote must be taken on hearsay for now.



Editors' Note: Dirk's supposition that milkmaids can be found on the north-facing slope by the bay (Don Klopfer Grove) is correct. Many milkmaids were seen blooming there during February's Third Saturday Walk. Join our Fungus Foray in the Don Klopfer Grove next February, and you will see the lovely white milkmaids as well as diverse and colorful fungi.

New Oakleaves E-mail Address

To make it easier for contributors to Oakleaves to send us material, we asked Bob Meyer, SWAP's computer guru, to set up an e-mail address just for *Oakleaves*. He did so with disgusting ease, and you now can reach both of your *Oakleaves* editors at oakleaves@elfin-forest.org.

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 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, 528-0392.



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:

Pat Akey, Dave Bowlus, Beverly Boyd, Calendar Committee, Jeff Grover, Betsy Kinter, Debbie Levi, Pat Murray, Ron Rasmussen, Pete Sarafian, Jay Waddell, Yolanda Waddell, Dirk and Bonnie Walters, and Jean Wheeler.

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

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



In February, SWAP Conservation Chair Pete Sarafian (left), Jay Waddell, and Bob Meyer (in background) planted native seedlings to fill in an Elfin Forest path that has been discontinued.

Photo by Yolanda Waddell.

Celebrate Earth Day

"Each town should have a park, or rather a primitive forest, where a stick would never be cut... a common possession forever for instruction and recreation."

-- Henry David Thoreau



Earth Day is formally celebrated on April 22nd. The Earth Day Alliance of San Luis Obispo County will coordinate a community celebration in Mission Plaza on Saturday, April 18th. Expect to hear of other county events closer to that date. Briefly, 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 public attention on environmental issues, and eventually, they made their way into public and political circles. Today, citizens around the world combine efforts to protect our global environment. We believe that everyone at SWAP shares the vision of keeping a clean and healthy world.

We invite you to honor this special occasion by visiting The Elfin Forest during the next several weeks. Please take advantage of our 3rd Saturday walks and learn more about this natural wonder.

Revegetation Roars On

By Pete Sarafian, Conservation Chairperson

The SWAP revegetation effort continues to renew the Elfin Forest. Years of use and abuse have left linear sand trails all over the park. These erosion zones contribute to sand movement and zones of soil and plant death all over. In an effort to heal the wounds, SWAP and SLO County Parks have revegetated the Forest over the years. Two years ago, SWAP planted 147 native seedlings along the boardwalk between the 14th and 15th Street sand trail intersections. A final plant count revealed that over 71% of the three species that were planted had survived. These consisted of black sage (*Salvia mellifera*), buck brush (*Ceanothus cuneata*) and sagebrush (*Artemisia californica*). Only a small fraction of buck brush survived (a little over 25%). However, almost all black sage (98%) and sagebrush (90%) continue to live. This is a tribute to the hard work and care put in by the SWAP Conservation Committee members who volunteered their time to plant and care for these natives. The survival rate is higher than in the larger projects of the past.

This winter, the revegetation project continues along the old north-south cross trail across the boardwalk loop between 15th and 16th Streets. Another 147 plants are being installed; this time there are some 30 black sage, 49 mock heather (*Ericameria ericoides*), and 66 sagebrush. The same grower, SLO Growers of Los Osos, has provided these plants as well as the ones from two years ago. One obvious difference is the change in the plant mix, deleting the buck brush and substituting mock heather. Hopefully, the survival rate now will be higher. Additionally, Bob Meyer of the SWAP board is designing and installing a drip irrigation system. This should provide a more reliable and deeply penetrating system for watering individual plants. It is hoped that this will enable plants to grow more than in the past. Some past plantings never fully developed and remained small and stunted for several years. So far this year, Bob Meyer, Ron Rasmussen, Pete Sarafian and Jay Waddell have contributed their time to planting new native seedlings. Thanks also go to the Morro Bay National Estuary Program and SLO County Parks for providing funding for this and other projects.



Large gopher holes? No, these are augur holes for planting new plants along an abandoned path in the Elfin Forest. The holes must be deep to allow plant roots to seek sub-surface moisture.

Photo by Yolanda Waddell

Weed Warriors

By Pete Sarafian, Conservation Chairperson

February Work Party Wallops Weeds

The second worst veldt grass (and a few other weeds) infestation in the Elfin Forest is along the South Bay Boulevard highway embankment. This was the scene of a major soil disturbance when the road cut was made through the Los Osos dunes. As a result, veldt grass is a virtual monoculture along much of the roadway. But it is not so at the eastern boundary of the Forest. After years of digging away at the weeds, much of the Elfin Forest hillside now has many more native plants and is becoming more representative of native California. The last of the iceplant (*Carpobrotus edulis* and *chilensis*) are now barely surviving at the curb line. With removal of these weeds and the veldt grass, plants that previously could not germinate are beginning to sprout. Trees, shrubs and smaller native herbs and grasses are proliferating. (A few non-native mustards are coming in also and need extermination.)

The work party in February 2009 dug in and hauled many bags of weeds out of the Forest. Included among the volunteers were Yvette Billeaudeaux, Jay Bonestell, Dave Bowlus, Steve Cake, Rich Johnson, Bob Meyer, Ron Rasmussen, Pete Sarafian, Charlie Sitton, and Yolanda Waddell. Your efforts are making this hillside look like a showcase of California native flora! This is increasingly rare in other parts of Los Osos.



During the February work party, Weed Warrior Yvette Billeaudeaux helped to remove newly-sprouted veldt grass and other weeds from the South Bay Boulevard highway embankment.

Photo by Yolanda Waddell.

Let's All Pull Together

It's spring harvest time in our valley,
Those ripe seeds mean we cannot dally.
The time now is nigh,
Before they're too high,
To get together and have a weed rally.

Please join us and don't be too late,
To meet us for the next date.
If the seeds get too ripe,
They'll sprout the same type.
And repeating next year is our fate.

*Yours in the cause of conservation,
Pete Sarafian*

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 driveways or mailboxes. Call 528-0392.



An 11-member CCC crew under the leadership of Crew Chief Meggan Gehring (4th from right without hat) volunteered four days of work in the Elfin Forest in March. SWAP is very grateful for their good work.

Photo by Yolanda Waddell.

"The ultimate test of man's conscience may be his willingness to sacrifice something today for future generations whose words of thanks will not be heard."

— Gaylord Nelson
former governor of Wisconsin, co-founder of Earth Day

Coming Up in the Elfin Forest

By Jean Wheeler

With rain minimal before February this year, but well distributed throughout that month and early March, we can expect our opportunistic wildflowers to be blooming abundantly in April and well into May. A good background of spring green leaves and white flowers on bushes and shrubs will be provided by California Sagebrush, Black Sage, Chamise, California Coffeeberry, and Toyon.

Silver Dune Lupines should be covered with blue flowers attracting Moro Blue Butterflies. Variable Checkerspot Butterflies and their black caterpillars can be found on their host, orange Sticky Monkey-flowers. Smaller plants, often flowering partly shaded by larger bushes, include white Popcorn flowers, Pearly Everlasting, and Yarrow and yellow to orange California Poppies, Fiddleneck, Rush Roses, and Golden Yarrow. Also in the undergrowth are Blue Dicks (wild hyacinths), California Wild Roses, and pink Cobwebby Thistles.

Most of our year-round resident birds should be actively nesting or raising young in these months. Among arrivals in April or May from winter homes farther south are Warbling Vireos, Hooded Orioles, Black-headed Grosbeaks, and Yellow, Townsend's, and Wilson's Warblers. Rufous and Allen's Hummingbirds and Western Tanagers should be among birds passing through on their way back north after wintering in Central or South America.

Treat yourself to a springtime walk among the birds and flowers of our own little protected piece of Nature's own garden.



Yolanda Waddell admires a collection of fungi that were identified during February's Fungus Foray. Photo by Charlie Sitton.

Coastal Bramble Hairstreak

By Beverly Boyd



What seems a jade-green guitar pick
rests on a buckwheat stem until
verdigris wings, each spotted in white,

open ruffling patinated edges.
Morning light warms her elfin
fine hair. Ivory antennae, brown-tipped,

twitch the tempo while an extended
leg tests air. Alarmed by a curious
lens, she lifts, zigzags over

a trail, circles back above
manzanita, and careens toward
the sea as if drunk on sun.

Fighting a hostile gust, she flits
onto a salvia leaf, green
flashing on green, her tiny white

jewels mounting on celadon scales.
Strumming sage in April's ocean air,
she sings a silent valediction

to her brief season of streaking
through oaks, sipping nectar, soaring
with a mate—

solitary butterfly
now in her penultimate day,
fleeting as an elusive word,

wing dust in mindbreeze.

Editorial note: Beverly Boyd was inspired to write the poem above a couple of years ago after enjoying a butterfly walk led by Pat Brown. Bev kindly sent it to us for use in this issue, which features Pat's butterfly Third Saturday Walk on April 18. The butterfly photo is by Jean Wheeler.

WALKS in the ELFIN FOREST

Third Saturday Walks

April 18, 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 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.

May 16, 9:30 a.m. – Wildflower Walk

Regardless of whether there have been April showers, the Elfin Forest always has May flowers because the Forest's hardy native plants are used to doing without water. Dirk Walters 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 Cobwebby 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 20, 9:30 a.m. – Plant Survival Walk

How do Central Coast native plants survive with no rain between April and October? Dr. Ken Levine, a San Luis Obispo Botanical Garden Docent, has traveled the world to see plants growing in arid Mediterranean climates, and has grown many of them himself. Ken will take us on a "treasure hunt" for various types of plant leaves that adapted to minimal amounts of water, and will explain how they help the plant conserve water. He will also talk about how native plants adapt to fire. With our state in a drought condition, Ken's information about drought-resistant native plants will be most useful for anyone who wants to conserve water by planting native plants.

Walks in the Elfin Forest begin at times stated above. Park at the north end of 15th Street (16th Street for wheelchairs) off Santa Ysabel in Los Osos. Walks begin on the boardwalk at the end of the 15th Street path. 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.



Animal Track expert Evan Albright (kneeling on boardwalk) explained to January 3rd Saturday walk participants how rabbit tracks will overlap when they are running fast. Photo by Dave Bowlus.



Dennis Sheridan delighted February's Fungus Foray participants by keeping a large Black Elfin Saddle mushroom in a tightly closed bag, and then exposing it to the air. The mushroom sent up a smoky cloud of white spores. Photo by Yolanda Waddell.

Thank You to Our New and Renewing Members

Compiled by Betsy Kinter, SWAP Database Coordinator

NEW MEMBERS:

Arthur Hubbard*

Brian Nofziger

Julie Orr*

Paul Wolff

RENEWING MEMBERS:

Susan and John Armstrong

C. Dawn and Joseph Aulenbrock*

Ruby Avelar

Carolyn Boomer

Leslie Bowker*

Lisa Coffman

Mary and Allan Conkling

Alice Dobias

Maryanne deGoede

Guy and Libbie Fitzwater*

Phyllis M. Foulstone*

Joyce Heller

Marsha Houston

Katie Karikka

Aya Kimura

Mary Leizear*

Rebecca Rasmussen*

Kathryn Reid

Carolyn Schanberger

Nancy Stephens*

SWCA Environmental Consultants*

Lisa Wallender

Michael Ward

Jacquoline Williams

Celia Zaentz

DONATIONS:

Mary Leizear in memory of Henrietta Lichtenbaum

Larry and Jennifer Levine

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



June Wright tended the SWAP information table, with its display of bird and plant photos, during the January Morro Bay Bird Festival.

Photo by Jean Wheeler.

SWAP Booth at Morro Bay Winter Bird Festival

By Pat Murray

2009 Morro Bay Winter Bird Festival has come and gone. Folks migrated from as far as the east coast to enjoy this year's three-day festivities. Although it was January, you would have never known by the beautiful warm weather. Familiar faces returned for their third year or more of participation wearing one of SWAP's mural shirts.

SWAP's display table was set up again with all the other environmental organizations. A new item for us to sell was a book quite appropriate for the festival, titled *Alphabet Bird Book*, by Phillip Terzian. Sent to us by a relative of our Conservation Chair, Pete Sarafian, it has wonderful bird photos accompanied by creative alphabet letters and verses on each page. Only a few books are left, available for purchase at \$20.00 plus tax. If interested, please call SWAP at 528-0392 and leave your message. The book is great for children and adults.

Other items on display and for sale were our usual shirts, mural prints, pocket guides, note cards, and brochures. We also featured several bird photos taken by some of our members. Our thanks to the following workers this year: Ron Rasmussen, June Wright, Pete Sarafian, Les Bowker, Heather Lucio, and Pat Murray. Our hats off to Rosemary Baxter, for volunteering for shifts on not just one but two days.



Mural Print

#4 below is a signed full-color print (mounted on black foam core as shown) of the mural by Barbara Rosenthal which is painted on the wall of the Rexall Drug Store in Los Osos. Note the print is now also available already framed.



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 lichens and 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 arthropods 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 = \$_____

or framed size 7 x 20 in

____ @ \$35.00 = \$_____

5. SPONSOR 2010 ELFIN FOREST CALENDAR

Be a sponsor to help with printing costs.

Receive a free calendar for each \$50 donated.

See article on page 4. Donation: \$_____

Shipping cost if outside Los Osos/Morro Bay

Pocket Guides & Note Cards: \$1.50 = ____

Framed Mural Prints: \$12.00 = ____

Calendars & all other items: \$3.00 = ____

TOTAL OF ORDER \$_____

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

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

Give a SWAP Membership!
 See page 2 and back page.

Los Osos / Morro Bay Chapter
 SMALL WILDERNESS AREA PRESERVATION
 A Non-Profit Public Benefit Corporation
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 Mail this form and payment to:
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 P.O. Box 6442, Los Osos, CA 93412-6442
(This offer expires on June 30, 2009)
Thank you!

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| <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*.
 All donations to SWAP are tax-deductible.

EVERY membership counts!

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