



# OAK LEAVES

A PUBLICATION OF THE LOS OSOS / MORRO BAY CHAPTER of SMALL WILDERNESS AREA PRESERVATION  
P.O. BOX 6442, LOS OSOS, CALIFORNIA 93412-6442 ❖ (805) 528-0392 ❖ OCTOBER / NOVEMBER 2009

## Boardwalk Access to Rose Bowker Grove is Complete

By Ron Rasmussen, SWAP Chairperson

The oak groves in the Elfin Forest are very attractive to visit, especially by children and young people as places to “hang out.” Older folks too like them as places just to relax, enjoy the quiet and consider the history of the ancient trees. But problems can arise from overuse.

In spite of their massive appearance the oaks are fragile. The branches are brittle and easily broken and only slowly regenerated. Branches two or three inches across may be a hundred years old and, if broken, need a like period to recover. The oak’s shallow roots also can be damaged simply by stepping on them. Normally a thick layer of leaf litter protects the roots and holds in moisture through the dry summers. Repeated foot traffic destroys this protection, and the roots are at risk for damage. For these reasons, most oak groves have been placed “Off Limits” to all with the exception of naturalist-guided tours.

The one grove that has remained open is the Rose Bowker memorial grove (formerly Wood Rat Hall). Because it is important that visitors to the Elfin Forest be allowed to appreciate the uniqueness of the oaks, SWAP and County Parks decided to keep

*Boardwalk Access continued on page 3*

## Richard Halsey Featured Speaker At S.W.A.P. Annual Meeting

S.W.A.P. will hold its Annual Meeting Saturday October 17, 12 noon to 3:00, at the San Luis Obispo Botanical Garden’s Oak Glen Pavillion, located in El Chorro Regional Park across from Cuesta College.

Our guest speaker is Richard W. Halsey, Director of the California Chaparral Institute ([www.californiachaparral.org](http://www.californiachaparral.org)), a non-profit research and educational organization

based in San Diego. The title of Mr. Halsey’s presentation is “THE CHAPARRAL, A NEW WAY TO LOOK AT LIFE”. It will be a fascinating description of the California chaparral ecosystem, its myths and mysteries, and its relationship with fire. Rick Halsey is well-known for his efforts to help Californians learn to appreciate the state’s beautiful shrubland ecosystems, including the Central Coast’s dune scrub community. He promotes a comprehensive approach to protecting homes from wildfire by using ember-resistant building materials, creating appropriate defensible space, and developing community-wide fire education programs.

The presentation will appeal to all of us who live in the beautiful but flammable Central Coast.

Conservation Chair Pete Sarafian will give a slide-illustrated report on the past year’s projects in the Elfin Forest. In addition, we will celebrate our volunteers and vote for Board members.

The meeting and presentation are open to the public as well as to SWAP members. Invite your friends! Light refreshments will be served.

*Annual Meeting Saturday October 17,  
12 noon to 3:00, at the San Luis Obispo  
Botanical Garden’s Oak Glen Pavillion*



*Richard Halsey,  
© California Chaparral Institute*

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## 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, October 12**  
**and Monday, November 9.**

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.

# The 2010 Elfin Forest Calendar Has Arrived!

*By Debbie Levi*

The annual  
SWAP calendar fund-  
raiser has begun! On  
Saturday, September  
12th, 2009, the SWAP  
Calendar Committee  
unveiled the 2010 cal-  
endar. Throughout this  
upcoming year, read-  
ers can expect to see  
quality photographic  
images accompanied  
by informative text.  
We have also featured  
a flower of the month  
to look for when visit-  
ing the Elfin Forest.

Many featured  
photographers as well  
as some sponsors and  
members of the com-  
munity enjoyed our  
calendar debut. Spe-  
cial thanks to Hamid  
Keshtgar, manager at  
Round Table Pizza  
in Los Osos for his  
generous donation of  
delicious pizzas for the  
event. Our thanks also  
to Lee Markwort and  
Pete Sarafian for again  
allowing us to use their  
driveways for the Cal-  
endar Preview Event.

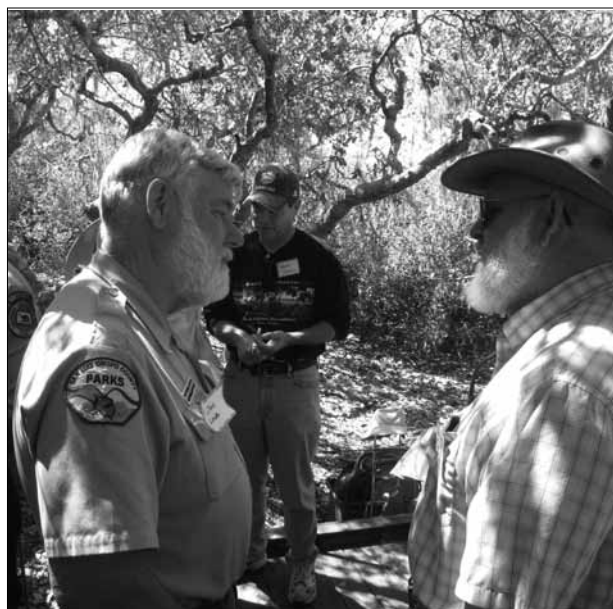
There are sev-  
eral ways to purchase  
the \$15.00 calendar.  
Either fill out the  
Shopper page at the  
back of this newsletter,  
purchase one at the  
SWAP Annual Meeting (see page 1), or look for the SWAP booth on October 25th at the Octoberfest in Baywood or find us selling about town. You can also buy the calendar at Los Osos Rexall, Volumes of Pleasure Bookstore, Los Osos Flower Market, Miners Ace Hardware in Los Osos, Los Osos Chamber of Commerce, San Luis Obispo Botanical Garden, The Photo Shop on Marsh Street in San Luis Obispo, or call 528-1911 or 528-0392. Every calendar purchased helps to protect the Elfin Forest.



*A foursome of 2010 calendar photographers: (L-R rear) Marlin Harms, Jerry Kirkpatrick, Bill Bouton and Dave Bowlus, talked shop at the Calendar Preview Event. In the foreground are community member Dawn Beatty and SWAP member Susan Chandler. Photo by Yolanda Waddell.*



*Enjoying the 2010 Calendar Preview Event were: (L-R, foreground) SWAP Chair Ron Rasmussen, calendar photographers Bill Bouton, Marlin Harms and Teddy Llovet (signing a calendar), and two community members. (L-R background): poets Kay Blaney and Beverly Boyd, 2009 calendar artist Ed Chandler, 2010 calendar photographer Dave Bowlus and SWAP volunteer Dave Akey. Photo by Yolanda Waddell.*



*(Above) Hind Foundation Director Greg Hind prepares to cut the caution tape “ribbon”, thus formally opening the Rose Bowker Memorial Grove boardwalk extension. SWAP Chair Ron Rasmussen is at left; from left, behind Greg Hind are CCC Corpsmembers Mathew Bartley, Matthew Thornton, and Kyle Marbery; SWAP member Marisa Waddell, and CCC Boardwalk Construction Supervisor James JT Taylor. Not seen and in back of Greg Hind was Corpsmember Nathan Kelly. Photo by Yolanda Waddell and Bob Meyer.*

*(Top right) County Parks Supervising Ranger Chuck Lowe discusses some of the particulars of the boardwalk extension construction with SWAP construction monitor Bob Meyer. In background is retired County Parks Deputy Director Pete Jenny, who helped SWAP through the process of getting the boardwalk extension approved. Photo by Yolanda Waddell.*

*(Right) Long-time Los Osos resident and community supporter Sylvia Smith, in wheel chair, was pleased to be able to enter the Rose Bowker Grove at last. Photo by Yolanda Waddell.*

*(Below right) Susan Chandler, in wheel chair, thanked Greg Hind and his daughter Kirsten (with their dog Chloe) for providing Hind Foundation funds to build the boardwalk extension into the Rose Bowker Grove. Photo by Yolanda Waddell.*

**- See more photos regarding the Boardwalk Extension on page 6 -**



## Boardwalk Access continued from page 1

this grove open, in spite of the risks to the oaks. As the numbers of visitors to the Forest have increased over the years, the potential for damage to the oaks in this grove has also increased. Rather than close the grove another approach was needed.

In September 2007 SWAP decided that a partial solution would be to construct an extension of the main boardwalk into the grove. With the extension visitors could enjoy the special environment with minimal harm to the oaks. The extension would also allow disabled persons to easily enter the grove. After a thorough review by consultants including an archaeologist, botanists and a biologist, and by the California Coastal Commission and San Luis Obispo County Parks, SWAP was granted permission in July of this year to undertake construction of the extension.

Funds for construction of the extension were obtained from the Hind Foundation of San Luis Obispo and from Pacific Gas and Electric Co. On August 18 of this year the California Conservation Corps (CCC) began construction and completed their work on August 31, 2009. The extension was formally opened on September 5, 2009. The extension design, by architect Mark Dariz of Design Solutions, followed that of the sturdy main boardwalk design – also by Mark Dariz. It is expected to give many years of service. Most importantly, it will protect the oaks while allowing free access for visitors to the grove.



# Elfin Forest Serenade

Pete Sarafian reports, "The coyote family singers are back and accompanying the passing emergency vehicles. There are at least two or three individuals in the family this year. It has been a while since their serenades have been heard."

## Coyote

By Jean Wheeler, Ph. D.

Coyotes have been seen as well as heard in the Elfin Forest occasionally over the years. On receiving Pete's message above, I realized we've never run a feature article about this species, and decided to follow my article in our last issue about a top avian predator, the peregrine falcon, with a profile in this issue about *Canis latrans*. After all, the coyote is one of the largest mammals and one of the top predators in our Elfin Forest ecosystem.

The genus *Canis* evolved in North America over five million years ago during the late Miocene epoch. An ancestral canid spread to Eurasia via Beringia, a broad land connection between Alaska and Asia now flooded by the Bering Straits. The gray wolf evolved in Eurasia from that ancestor and spread back to North America during the Pleistocene, when Beringia again connected the continents as sea level fell with so much water locked up in vast continental ice sheets. The coyote then evolved in North America from the gray wolf. It has spread over virtually the entire continent from Panama to all but the most northern part of Alaska and Canada.

The Aztecs called this small canid "coyotl," which the Spanish conquerors changed to coyote. Coyotes are typically a bit under three feet long plus a tail over a foot long; and they stand about two feet tall at the shoulder, weighing from 15 to about 45 pounds. Northern coyotes tend to be the largest, and those of our western area are smaller than those of the Midwest or Eastern U.S. Coyotes range in color from grayish brown to yellowish gray above, the latter more common here in the west, with darker guard hairs on the shoulders, and they are buff to rather whitish on the throat and belly. The ears are larger in relation to the size of the head than for wolves, while the feet are small, unlike the large paws of wolves. They have acute senses of hearing and smell, but much less sharp vision, which they use mainly to detect movement. Life span is from about ten years in the wild to about 18 years in captivity.

After a gestation of two months, female coyotes give birth to large litters, averaging six pups but nine are not uncommon. Pups are fed regurgitated food by both parents, and are fully weaned at a little more than a month. They emerge from the den at three to four weeks, are introduced to hunting at about six to ten weeks, and young males disperse at about six to ten months. Survivors are sexually mature by the end of the first year and can be parents in their second year, but mortality of young coyotes is very high, usually over 80 per cent.

Coyotes have been a very successful species. Opportunistic and versatile as well as prolific, they thrive from swamps to grasslands



Coyote, © Richard Herrmann, San Diego Natural History Museum website.

and deserts, from tropical savannas to subarctic forests, and in close proximity to humans, including cities. In fact, they have expanded their range and populations with expansion of agriculture and urbanization. Their diet is 90 per cent mammalian, mostly rodents and rabbits, but they also eat lizards, ground-nesting birds, and fruits and vegetables. I've seen remains of grapes in coyote scat in a vineyard. They commonly hunt alone or in mated pairs, or sometimes as a small pack of parents, pups, and yearling offspring, but not large packs like wolves.

Coyotes are seen as both good and bad members of our natural ecosystems. They contribute a great deal to keeping rodent and rabbit populations in check. But they also prey on pet cats, dogs, and livestock, and they have occasionally attacked small children. They've been hunted, trapped, and poisoned heavily. Yet they thrive abundantly, and their howls and barks bring a thrill of "the wild" even within our cities, and in El Moro Elfin Forest.

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## 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](mailto: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.



# Rein Orchid

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

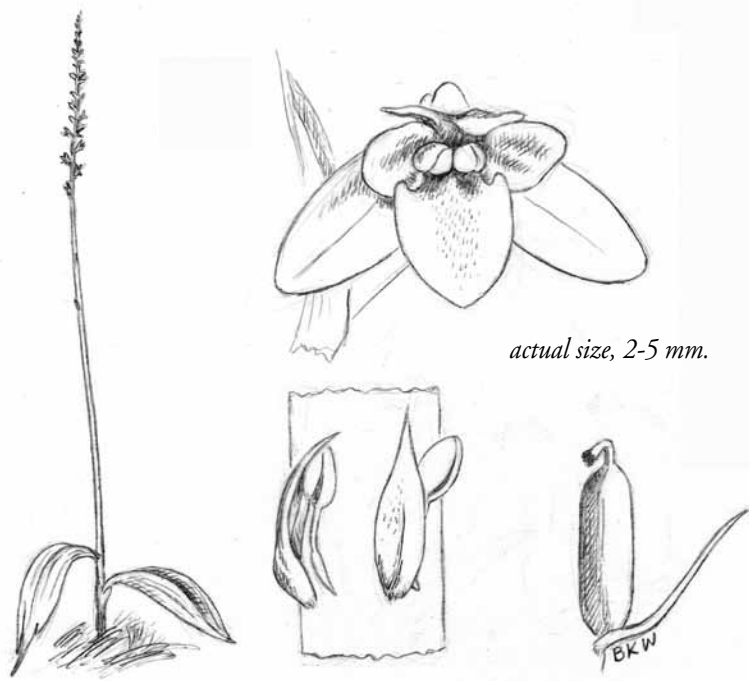
This is going to be a different kind of article because Bonnie's drawings and my article are derived from photographs and not actual plants. Half of the photographs were provided by the good people of SWAP, and were taken in the Elfin Forest, while the rest are from slides taken by me back in 1977-78 in the dunes at Montaña de Oro. Because I'm not sure whether all of the pictures are of the same species, I'm going to be somewhat general in the identification of the featured plant. Having said that, I can say that our subject is definitely what is commonly known as a rein orchid or rein orchis.

This common name has been applied to a number of species of tall, slender orchids possessing relatively small flowers borne in an elongate cluster, defined as a raceme or a spike. The only difference between these two types of flower clusters (inflorescences) is whether or not the individual flowers bear a stalk or pedicel. Flowers in a spike lack one, while those of a raceme exhibit one. In orchids, these two types of inflorescence are almost impossible to distinguish in a photo because the orchid ovary is borne below the flower (inferior) and is usually long and thin and therefore resembles a flower stalk.

Further, none of the photos includes a scale, so it is impossible to know exactly the sizes of the various parts. This is significant because the most important distinguishing characteristic between two of the more likely species is the length the spur. Is it 0.5mm to 6mm or is it 6 to 12mm? The only photo with a definite spur showing is the one of the bud and it shows what looks like a fairly long spur. A spur in this group of orchids is a projection of the lowermost petal which forms a tube that sticks out behind the flower just below the ovary. Spurs usually have a nectar producing gland (nectary) at their tip.

If identifying a plant from a photo is not tricky enough, there is also the problem with inconsistency in the treatment of this group of orchids in the various identification books available for our area. Older works place our plants in the genus *Habenaria*. The current *Jepson Manual* places our plants in the genus *Piperia*. Dr. Hoover's, *The Vascular Plants of San Luis Obispo County, California*, recognizes only one species of rein orchid – *Habenaria unalascensis*. Mary Coffeen places her only species in *Habenaria elegans*. In the *Jepson Manual*, both of these species have been moved to the genus *Piperia*. In the soon to be available, *A Pocket Guide to the Wildflowers of San Luis Obispo*, a very similar plant (in a photo) is placed in the species *Piperia elongata*.

All of these species occupy identical dry shrubby or woodland habitats, so there is no help there. At the end of the description of the genus, *Piperia*, in the *Jepson Manual*, it states that the several green flowered species are difficult to separate and of doubtful validity. Unfortunately, all our 'species' have green flowers. There



Rein orchid, *Habenaria elegans*. Drawings by Bonnie Walters

is a revision of the *Jepson Manual* due out soon and an update for Hoover's book in the works. We can be hopeful that when these books come out, all our identification problems will be solved!

The orchid family (*Orchidaceae*) is probably the second largest family of flowering plants in the world. There are only 11 genera and at most 31 species in California, and Dr. Hoover recognized only 3 genera and 7 species in SLO County. How can these numbers be reconciled? Almost all orchid species are found in the tropics where they tend to occupy very restrictive habitats such as rain forest tree branches (epiphytes) and where they are each associated with a specific fungal species. Many of them have very exacting, low probability pollination systems as well.

One study I heard about at a botanical meeting is of particular interest. The researcher searched a small forest tract in Ecuador where he counted 100 plants in flower of a particular orchid species. He then determined how many of these plants produced fruit. Of the 100 plants, only 10 were actually visited by its pollinator. Of the 10 visited, only one actually matured fruit. This is a success rate of only 1%! However, the orchid had an ace up its petals: each orchid fruit contains one hundred thousand to one million seeds and the pollen is bundled in packets (called pollinia) each containing even a greater number of pollen grains. Consequently, that single fruit potentially produced over one hundred thousand seeds. Many orchids play a high stakes game of chance but, unfortunately, many are losing. Of all the families of flowering plants, orchids have the largest percentage of species listed as rare and/or endangered. So even if I don't know of any sexy, specialized features of our local rein orchid, it is so localized in its distribution that it is still a real treat to find it. And I say this even though its flowers are small in size and mostly green in color.

# Arborist Visits Elfin Forest

Story and Photo By Yolanda Waddell

Trimming a few oak limbs was part of the process to prepare for building a boardwalk extension into the Rose Bowker Memorial Grove (see article by Ron Rasmussen, pp.1 & 3). An arborist approved by the County was needed to oversee or do the trimming. When SWAP asked for the list of approved arborists, County Parks Planner Jan DiLeo mentioned that County Parks has an arborist, Chuck Woodard (pictured at right), on staff. Permission was granted for Chuck to visit the Elfin Forest on County Parks time, and within less than an hour he had done the required trimming, examined numerous tree limbs for general health, and had given tree- and bush-trimming instruction to members of the Conservation Committee.

Chuck also noticed that SWAP's trail trimmers had created an oak tree hedge effect along part of the boardwalk, and offered to return and instruct members of the Trail Trimming Committee how to trim the oaks in a more natural way. When he returned, he spent almost two hours giving pointers such as "always trim at a node," and "trim to a branch that points upward, not out across the boardwalk. The goal is to create an arch over the boardwalk instead of a hedge. Attending the training session were Jerry Ambrose, Marilyn Fentress, Pat Murray, Ron Rasmussen, and Dean Thompson. Our thanks to Chuck, who certainly has a way with trees.



## CCC Labor Crucial to Boardwalk Extension

*(At right) CCC crewmembers Aaron Harvey (left) and Fernando Juarez prepare one more board for the extension into the Rose Bowker Grove. Crew Chief Meagahn Gehring observes in the background. Photo by Bob Meyer.*



*(Below left) The CCC boardwalk construction crew arrived at the Elfin Forest on August 18, and unloaded the equipment and materials that they would carry and wheel down to the Bowker Grove. Shown (left to right) are: Corpsmembers Brad Ratliff, Nate Kelly, Aaron Harvey, Matt Bartley, Gabe Rosas, SWAP Conservation Chair Pete Sarafian, Conservation Committee member Bob Meyer and boardwalk architect Paul Wolff. Photo by Yolanda Waddell.*



## OAK LEAVES

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, Pat Brown, California Chaparral Institute, Richard Herrmann, Betsy Kinter, Debbie Levi, Bob Meyer, Ron Rasmussen, Jim Royer, Pete Sarafian, Dennis Sheridan, Jay Waddell, Yolanda Waddell, Dirk and Bonnie Walters, and Jean Wheeler.

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oakleaves@elfin-forest.org.



# Weed Warriors

By Pete Sarafian, Conservation Chairperson

## July Work Party Fixes Hillside

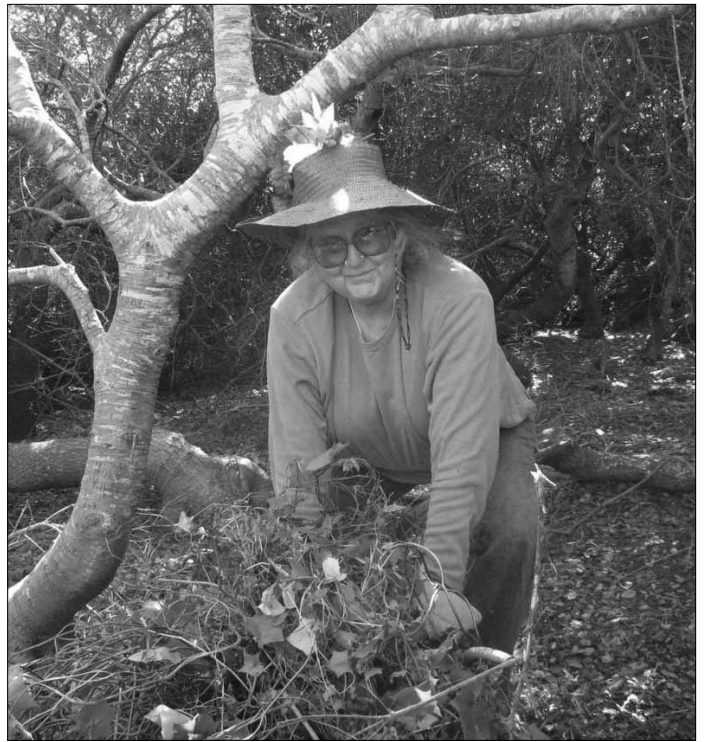
July took the Wonderful Weekend Weed Warriors through the woods to the extreme western end of the Elfin Forest. This section of property is owned by the State Lands Commission and leased to SLO County Parks. It used to be covered by carpets of English ivy (*Hedera helix*) and Cape ivy (*Delairea odorata*). These nasty vines are now pushed back to the freshwater zone that borders the Forest, thanks to the efforts of the Warriors and California Conservation Corps. The area had not been worked in over a year, and Cape ivy was slowly crawling back into the oak groves and up a hillside that slopes up from Morro Bay. The silt fencing and ground matting that the Warriors installed a few years ago were in a sad state. The intrepid warriors installed more sturdy steel fence posts and staked up the fence cloth as well as replaced some of the ground matting. They pulled up Cape ivy wherever it was coming back up the hill. The crew also braved the poison oak in the area and included Jay Bonestell, Dave Bowlus, Lannie Erickson, Rich and Prisila Johnson, Ron Rasmussen, Pete Sarafian and Yolanda Waddell. My goodness but we do good work. Thanks to all for a hard job done well.

## Warriors Continue War on Veldt Grass

The August work party tackled the old reliable Veldt grass (*Ehrharta calycina*) again. This is one of the last months of the year that Veldt still has most of its seeds intact on the stalk, and it is a good time for harvesting. Volunteers have removed nearly all of this pest from the Elfin Forest. It is found concentrated only along the South Bay Boulevard highway embankment (and is being pushed down hill there) and along the southern border of the park between the 16th Street entrance and down to the area between the 14th and 15th Street entrances. We now have pushed the southern border infestation back into the area of the old water line right of way. It is nearly gone from the Forest proper. Let us all give a hand to our crew who grubbed in the dirt to achieve this feat. This month's crew included Jay Bonestell, Pat Brown, Lannie Erickson, Rich Johnson, Bob Meyer, Paul O'Conner, Alon Perlman, Ron Rasmussen, Dar Reynolds, Pete Sarafian and Yolanda Waddell. Thanks to our volunteer efforts, the Elfin Forest is looking better and better.

### SWAP First Saturday Work Parties

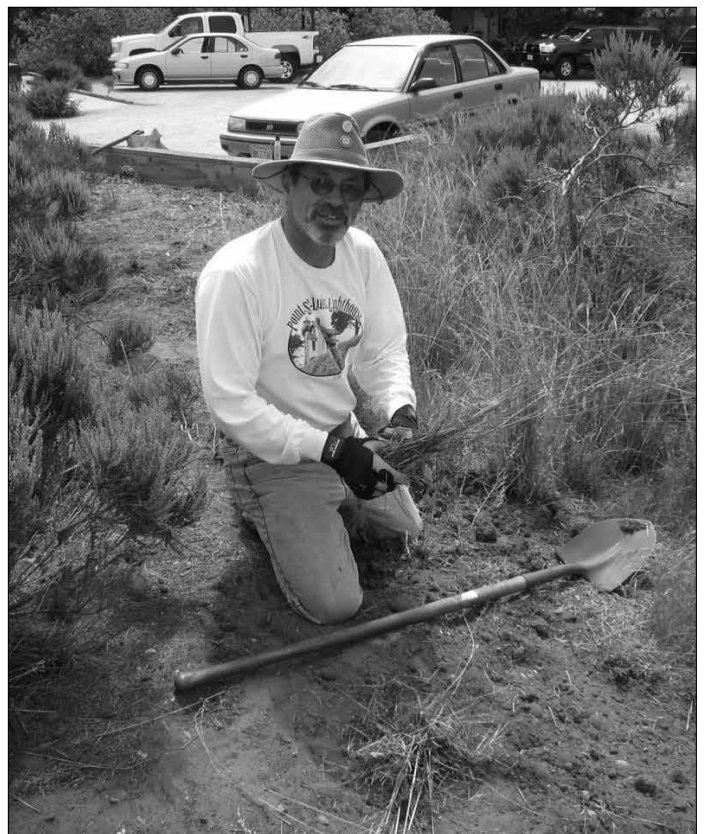
SWAP First Saturday Work Parties are held at 9 a.m. to noon on the first Saturday of each month. Please dress for wind, fog, or sun. Layers work well. Long pants and long-sleeved shirts are good. Sturdy shoes are a must. Meet at the north end of 15th Street at the Elfin Forest entrance. Take care not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



(Above) Dedicated Weed Warrior Lannie Erickson pulled Cape ivy out of oak trees and shrubs in the western end of the Elfin Forest during the July work party, in spite of the presence of Poison oak all around her.

Photo by Yolanda Waddell.

(Below) Weed Warrior Paul O'Connor, who is also a docent for the Natural History Association, joined the crew in August to clear veldt grass near the end of 16th Street. Photo by Yolanda Waddell.



# Coming Up in the Elfin Forest

By Jean Wheeler

Rejoice, bird lovers—the fall migration season is upon us again! Throughout the two months of this *Oakleaves* issue, Morro Bay National Estuary will be filling with water bird and shore birds migrating through or arriving for their winter vacation here. Terrestrial species will also be settling into the Elfin Forest for the winter or migrating through on their way to their tropical winter resorts.

Ducks to look for in these months include Mallards, Northern Pintails, Gadwalls, American and Eurasian Wigeons, Northern Shovelers, Teal (Blue-winged, Cinnamon, and Green-winged), Scaup (Lesser and Greater), Ring-Necked, Canvasback, Surf Scoter, Bufflehead, Common Goldeneye, Red-breasted Merganser, and Ruddy Duck.

Horned, Eared, Pied-billed, Western, and Clark's Grebes arrive from September to November and remain until March or April. Three thousand or so Brant Geese arrive from October to December, some en route farther south and many to spend the winter feeding on the eel grass in the bay. White pelicans may look bizarre closeup, but synchronize beautifully both swimming in the bay and wheeling through the sky. Shorebirds like Sandpipers, Dowitchers, and the American Avocet also reach peak populations in winter with birds arriving from shorelines farther north that won't support them in winter.

The Elfin Forest plays host to brush or woodland birds also migrating through or wintering. Fox, Lincoln's, and Golden-crowned Sparrows join our year-round White-crowned Sparrows from October to March or April. Ruby-crowned Kinglets settle in for the winter. American Robins and Hermit Thrushes replace our summer Swainson's Thrushes after those depart southward. Yellow-rumped Warblers peak in these months and Say's Phoebe joins its year-round relative, the Black Phoebe, for a winter visit. A dawn or dusk walker in the Elfin Forest may be lucky enough to see or more likely hear a wintering short-eared owl. Passing through in small flocks are Cedar Waxwings, Western Tanagers, and Pine Siskins.

October and November are minimal in colorful flowers, but a few of the species which normally do continue to show some blossoms in October and November are California Sagebrush (white), Dune Buckwheat Bush (initially white flowers aged to pink or rust), the pictured California Asters (pinkish to white petals and yellow central disks), Coyote Brush (white male and yellow female flowers), and Seaside Golden Yarrow.

Returning rains should be greening up the Elfin Forest soon. With predictions that we may have a mild to moderate El Niño this winter, we can hope for an even better than usual display of spring wildflowers in months ahead.



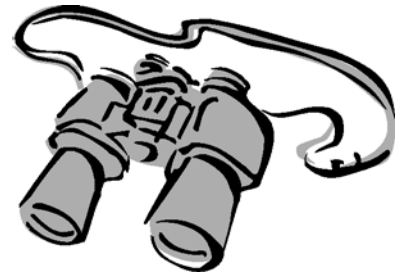
## Big Sit Event in October

By Jim Royer

The Elfin Forest Big Sit is part of an international one-day event, held annually on the second Sunday of October, where people count all species of birds they hear or see from their chosen seventeen-foot-diameter circle. Our local circle is located at Bush Lupine Point. We have had as many as 122 species from this location on the day of the Big Sit, and we have had unusual species in the past such as Sabines Gull, Palm Warbler, Eurasian Wigeon, Blackpoll Warbler, White-faced Ibis, Pectoral Sandpiper, Black Rail, and Red-throated Pipit.

We count in one-hour shifts and welcome any experienced birders to sign up for a shift or two. Call Jim Royer at 748-7895 or e-mail [jcadroyer@aol.com](mailto:jcadroyer@aol.com) and indicate your preferred times. Less experienced birders can just come out to the overlook at any time after 8:00 AM. Participants, and anyone else who comes out, are welcome to bring delicious food and beverages for everyone to share!

This has been a very fun event in the past with as many as 8 scopes and a dozen birders at a time looking, listening, eating, and not doing much sitting (the event should be called "The Big Stand"). It is also a beautiful location with a grand view. Contact Jim if you have any questions regarding the event or if you would like to pledge money per species as a fund raiser for SWAP (Small Wilderness Area Preservation), the group that acquired, and maintains, the Elfin Forest. Check out <http://www.birdwatchersdigest.com/site/funbirds/bigsit/bigsit.aspx> for more details on the Big Sit, including all of the rules and prior years' results. Thanks to our prior counters for their continued participation, which has made our count consistently one of the best in the world!





## WALKS in the ELFIN FOREST

### Third (and Second) Saturday Walks

#### *October 10, 8:30 a.m. – Pre-Big Sit! Bird Walk (Second Saturday – Note earlier time)*

Jim Royer, coordinator of the Elfin Forest Big Sit! will lead us on a bird inventory walk in preparation for Sunday's Big Sit! This is an international event hosted by Birdwatcher's Digest ([www.birdwatchersdigest.com](http://www.birdwatchersdigest.com)), that pits participating groups of birders against one another to identify the most species in a 24-hour period. Our Big Sit! takes place at Bush Lupine Point. On Saturday, walk participants can join Jim in finding and identifying 60 or more species of birds throughout the Elfin Forest and in the Morro Bay estuary. This walk is for those who just enjoy looking at birds as well as for more experienced birders. You'll come away knowing more about birds, their calls, their habits and habitats.

#### *October 17, 9:30 a.m. – Chaparral Wisdom Walk*

As he tours the boardwalk, chaparral biologist Rick Halsey will talk about the differences between chaparral and coastal dune scrub, the plants that are characteristic of each, and the forces that influence them, including fire. Author, of the book, *Fire, Chaparral and Survival in Southern California*, Rick is Director of the California Chaparral Institute based in San Diego. A teacher for 30 years, he encourages everyone to learn about the plants, animals, birds and other inhabitants of this extremely important California plant community. Prepare for a dynamic walk, filled with information. Rick will be joined by SWAP members who will provide specific information about the Elfin Forest.

#### *November 21, 9:30 a.m. – What's Underfoot? Soils!*

Have you ever heard the term "Baywood Fine Sand?" It's the name of the predominant soil in Los Osos, as well as in the Elfin Forest. Soil scientist Jim Brownell will describe local soils and talk about the influence of soils on the plants that grow in them - how sandy soil both benefits and stresses Elfin Forest plants. This is an excellent walk for gardeners.

#### *December 19, 9:30 a.m. –*

#### *Land and Water, Estuary and Forest*

The Morro Bay Estuary is one of the last relatively undisturbed wetlands in the southern portion of California. 48,000 acres of land make up the estuary's watershed and every square foot has an impact on the estuary. Walk the Elfin Forest and learn how estuary and forest coexist and how the Morro Bay National Estuary Program works with stakeholders to preserve the estuary. Find out about threats facing this natural resource and how you can be part of the solution. Shari Sullivan, Education and Outreach Coordinator for the Morro Bay National Estuary Program (MBNEP), leads this walk and will simplify the complex web of issues that affect estuary health and answer questions regarding this precious resource.



*In July, Al Normandin (5th from right) paused in the Rose Bowker Grove during his Summer in the Elfin Forest walk, to talk about Coast live oak trees and their ability to survive the summer drought period.*



*California State Parks Archaeologist Elise Wheeler (arm outstretched) described the history of the Chumash and other ancient peoples of the Central Coast for those attending her 3rd Saturday walk in August.*

*Photo by Bob Meyer.*

*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.*

#### **Oakleaves E-mail Address**

At the request of your editors, the SWAP computer guru, Bob Meyer, set up an e-mail address for Oakleaves to make it easier for you, our readers, to submit photos, letters to the editor, or interesting information. You can reach us at [oakleaves@elfin-forest.net](mailto:oakleaves@elfin-forest.net). We encourage you contribute to what is really *your* newsletter.

# Thank You to Our New and Renewing Members

*Compiled by Betsy Kinter, SWAP Database Coordinator*

## NEW MEMBERS:

Lois Brown	Thomas Fowler*
J. Michael and Elfie Duncan*	Gaby and Ken Levine*
Ms. Dale Elliot	Hector Montenegro

## RENEWING MEMBERS:

Thomas H. Alden and Marjorie Sinel*	Jerry Hull*
Patty Arnold	Laura Kass*
Mary Baker	Leora Markwort
Lois Barber	Howard and Marlo Miller*
Bill Bouton*	Betty McElhill
Jean P. Boyd	Susan McTaggart
Pat Brown*	Marie Moore and Carmen Fojo
Ann Calhoun	Bill Newman
Andrew Chermak and Aura Mantilla*	Al Normandin
Kathleen Copeland*	Anne Norment and Lawson Schaller
Marguerite Crown*	Joan V. Powell
Katie and Jerry Davis*	Ronald E. Rasmussen*
Kathleen Delzell*	Melissa and Tim Rochte
Cheryl Dove	Nancy Ruhl*
Ernest and Barbara Eddy	Mildred Schwab*
Lurlie Edgecomb*	Joanne Smalley*
Fran Edwards*	Barbar Spiegelman*
Francesca Fairbrother	Dean Thompson
Sterling and Virginia Gottlieb*	Rick and Laura Vopatex
Susan and Pascal Grimaud*	Roy and Junie Wolf*
Freeman and Worth Hall*	James and Jeane Wood
Mary Harrison*	

## NEW LIFE MEMBER:

Pete Sarafian

## SPECIAL DONATION:

Anonymous (donated through the Scolari's Friendship Fund)

Linda Bailey

*\*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.*

## Remembering our Members

*By Yolanda Waddell*

Our SWAP chapter has wonderful members, and we feel a loss when we learn of any of them passing away. In the past few months, two long-time supporters of SWAP and one who joined us as a life member only a year ago, have left this earth. They were:

### Judith Burcher,

67, a chapter Life Member, died at her home in Sea Oaks Mobile Home Park in May. Judith moved from Denver, Colorado to the Central Coast in 2005 and on learning about SWAP and the Elfin Forest, donated \$1,000 to our chapter to help with projects in the Forest.

### George Clucas,

retired professor of Public Administration, and formerly a dean at Cal Poly, actively supported environmental causes with his wife Jan. They have been members of our SWAP chapter for many years. George was 88 when he passed away in July of this year.

### Robert (Bob) Gandy,

was a neighbor of Trail Guide Committee Chair Pat Brown. Pat knew that Bob enjoyed working with wood, and asked him to build a dispenser box for our new trail guides in 2002. The trail guides proved popular, so Bob made a second box. When the lids were torn off by mischief makers, Bob replaced them. Sadly, Bob lost a battle with cancer in October, 2008, at age 79. His trail guide boxes remain as testimony to his woodworking skills and love of the Elfin Forest.

## Scolari's Friendship Fund

Do you shop at Scolari's Grocery Store in San Luis Obispo? If so, please consider enrolling in their Friendship Fund. We learned about the Fund when we received a check from Scolari's and discovered that we are on their list of non-profit organizations. One of their customers filled in an enrollment form, and a percentage of the customer's purchases over the course of a year was sent to SWAP. The enrollment form can be found at Scolari's web site, <http://www.scolaristores.com/community/friendship/>



## New Item – 2010 Calendar!

Call 528-1911 or 528-1861 or use the form below to order your SWAP Elfin Forest Calendar for 2010. The 9" x 12" calendar features artistic photos of scenes in the Elfin Forest and wonderful close-ups of plants and animals we enjoy every year as well as fascinating natural history information in the sidebars on each page. Shown here is the photo by Bill Bouton chosen for the October page of this beautiful calendar.



## 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.

Circle Sizes:

- ☐ Short Slv. T-Shirt (S, M, L, XL) @\$19.00 = \$\_\_\_\_  
☐ Short Slv. T-Shirt (XXL, XXXL) @\$22.00 = \$\_\_\_\_  
☐ Long Slv. T-Shirt (S, M, L, XL) @\$23.00 = \$\_\_\_\_  
☐ Long Slv. T-Shirt (XXL, XXXL) @\$25.00 = \$\_\_\_\_  
☐ Sweatshirt (S, M, L, XL) @ \$25.00 = \$\_\_\_\_  
☐ Sweatshirt (XXL, XXXL) @ \$27.00 = \$\_\_\_\_

### 2. PHOTOS OF THE ELFIN FOREST

Original photo note cards by Bob Meyer

\_\_\_\_ @ \$3.00 or \_\_\_\_ set of 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

\_\_\_\_ @ \$45.00 = \$\_\_\_\_

### 5. 2010 ELFIN FOREST CALENDAR

Enjoy these views by gifted local photographers all year around!

\_\_\_\_ @ \$15 = \$\_\_\_\_

Shipping costs within zip 934 \_\_:

Calendars, \$2 each \_\_\_\_

Pocket Guides & Note Cards \$1.50 = \_\_\_\_

Mural Prints on Foamcore \$5.00= \_\_\_\_

Framed Mural Prints: \$12.00 = \_\_\_\_

Shirts (per shirt): \$4.00 = \_\_\_\_

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

**TOTAL OF ORDER** \$\_\_\_\_

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

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip: \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

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.

*New: Check our website, [www.elfin-forest.org](http://www.elfin-forest.org), for Bob Meyer's boardwalk photo album!*

Los Osos / Morro Bay Chapter  
SMALL WILDERNESS AREA PRESERVATION  
A Non-Profit Public Benefit Corporation  
P.O. Box 6442, Los Osos, CA 93412-6442  
(805) 528-0392 [www.elfin-forest.org](http://www.elfin-forest.org)



*Address Service Requested  
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Non-Profit Org.  
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San Luis Obispo, CA 93402  
Permit No. 112

## Booth Workers Needed for Oktoberfest and Craft Fair

Los Osos will be celebrating its annual Oktoberfest this year on Sunday, October 25 on Second Street in downtown Baywood Park, from 9 am to 4 pm. SWAP will participate by setting up a booth among others featuring many kinds of arts and crafts, as well as ethnic foods. We'll talk to visitors about SWAP, distribute literature, and sell T-shirts, sweatshirts, our beautiful 2010 calendar, guidebooks, notecards, etc.



On November 7, there will be a Craft, Arts, Hobbies and Collectibles Sale at South Bay Community Center. Again, SWAP will have a booth, informing customers about SWAP's preservation work in the Elfin Forest and selling such items as our calendars and mural prints.

We need volunteers to staff our table at each of these events. If you can work a two-hour shift between 9:00 am and 4:00 pm on either or both of those days, please call SWAP's message phone at 528-0392. Give your name, shift preference, and phone number. Join us, you'll have fun!

## MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
Email \_\_\_\_\_  
Phone \_\_\_\_\_

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

☐ I want to help, please call me!

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