



OAKLEAVES

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 ♦ FEBRUARY / MARCH 2011

Elfin Forest Web Site Is Growing!

By Yolanda Waddell

Do take a few moments to browse through the Elfin Forest web site www.elfin-forest.org if you haven't looked at it lately. You are in for a pleasant surprise. Our heartfelt thanks to SWAP Webmaster Bob Meyer for the many hours that he has devoted to creating a good-looking, accessible and informational site.

Beginning with the Home Page (see image on page 2 by Bob Meyer), the viewer is welcomed and is told "what you'll find on our web site" and "how to navigate it." Across the top of the page are six Navigation Buttons titled Home, Visiting Forest, About Forest, Conservation, Flora & Fauna, Forest Library, and Forest Store.

You can click on a button to learn about the information behind each of the Navigation Buttons, or what is new on the web site. Other buttons take you to articles about what's blooming in the Forest and recent sightings, as well as how to contact SWAP with questions, comments or suggestions.

Clicking on "Visiting Forest" takes you to a marvelous map of the Elfin Forest that is hooked up to Google Earth so you can "fly" over the Elfin Forest. You can even learn what the weather forecast is for the Elfin Forest.

Website continued on page 2



Discussing the need for repairing the Elfin Forest Boardwalk were (L-R) SWAP Chair Ron Rasmussen, County Parks Planner Shaun Cooper, SWAP Treasurer Jan DiLeo, and Conservation Committee member Bob Meyer. Photo by Yolanda Waddell.

Boardwalk Repair Plan Update

By Ron Rasmussen, Chair

In the October/November 2010 *Oakleaves* I outlined some of the problems that have appeared as the boardwalk has aged. On December 3, 2010, Jan Di Leo, Bob Meyer, Yolanda Waddell and I met with Shaun Cooper of San Luis Obispo (SLO) Parks on the Elfin Forest boardwalk. The aim was to propose a plan to remedy existing problems and to prevent further deterioration.

A prioritized action plan has been proposed to address current problems as well as to ensure safety for the future. First, any potential hazards, such as loose or broken deck boards will be fixed immediately, either by SWAP or SLO County personnel. Second, to establish the best way to repair or replace parts of the boardwalk for the longer term, a recognized expert will be called in to assist in planning. Third, a schedule will be developed with the California Conservation Corps (CCC) to undertake the work. The timeline is likely to extend through this year. In the meantime, the boardwalk will be monitored to ensure that it remains safe for all visitors.

Other items that were discussed were installation of "symbolic fencing" as needed to encourage visitors to remain on the boardwalk or sand trails. Also, SWAP plans to install handrails at certain boardwalk access points to make it easier for visitors to step up to the boardwalk. Finally, a Bulletin Board has been designed for

Boardwalk continued on page 3

❖ Inside This Issue ❖

- 3 Jan Di Leo: Volunteer of the Year
- 4 Song Sparrow
- 5 Wood Fern by Dirk & Bonnie Walters
- 6 SWAP News
- 7 Weed Warrior News
- 8 Coming Up in the Elfin Forest
- 9 Walks in the Elfin Forest
- 10 Thanks for your Membership!
- 11 SWAP Shoppers' Order Form



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
Pete Sarafian, Vice Chair
Jan DiLeo, Treasurer
Yolanda Waddell, Secretary
Pat Akey, Member at Large
Debbie Levi, Member at Large
Pat Murray, Member at Large

The SWAP Board of Directors meets monthly
at Sea Oaks Mobile Home Park,
1675 Los Osos Valley Road.

The next meetings are
Thursday, February 10
and Thursday, March 10.

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



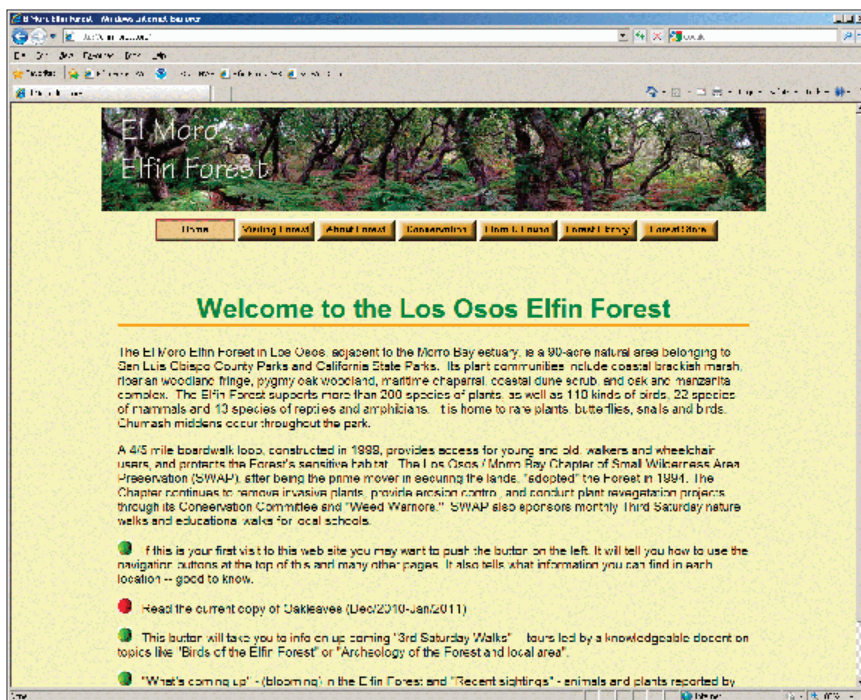
CONTACT SWAP

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:

Bob Yetter

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 Bob Yetter at 781-4417.



Website *continued from page 1*

Under "About Forest" we have sections on the Forest's ecology, natural history, and how the Elfin Forest was saved.

"Conservation" – this is the Weed Warriors section. It contains articles by Pete Sarafian about invasive species in the Elfin Forest and information from many other sources. "Flora and Fauna" contains – Ta Da! – our entire Pocket Guide, "*Plants and Animals of the Elfin Forest Natural Area.*" There are links (more buttons) in each section that take the reader to other species guides written by local State Parks staff. Almost all of our 206 listed plants (six more than in the printed Pocket Guide) are linked to Cal-Photos at UC Berkeley if one wants to see what the plant looks like.

"Forest Library" contains a 23-year index of articles that have appeared in *Oakleaves*, going back to 1987. It also will take the reader to the current issue of *Oakleaves*. The Index is divided into a Subject Index and a guide to individual editions by date. Clicking on a title in the Subject Index will take the reader directly to that article. Our thanks to Ron Rasmussen for creating the index and for scanning every page of all past issues of *Oakleaves* into digital format. Note that the photos in our online newsletter are all in color. We encourage you to change from a "snail mail" newsletter to reading the colorful online version. All you have to do is send your e-mail address to oakleaves@elfin-forest.org, and we will notify you when each new issue is posted on our web site.

Finally, the "Forest Store" provides information about SWAP's merchandise including T-shirts, the Pocket Guide, note cards, and mural prints. The SWAP Board decided not to sell our merchandise on our web site, but an order form can be printed and mailed in. All profit goes directly toward the care of the Elfin Forest.

To help Bob Meyer with maintenance of our delightful and expanded web site, a Website Maintenance Committee has been formed. Bob will provide training in the intricacies of HTML basic codes and how to enter changes in text. The committee currently includes Danna Weidner and Yolanda Waddell. If any of our readers are interested in this kind of volunteer work, please contact Bob Meyer at bob@elfin-forest.org.



Jan DiLeo is Volunteer of the Year 2010

In April, 2010, Jan DiLeo joined the SWAP Board as our Treasurer after leaving her job as Senior County Parks Planner. We couldn't have been more grateful because our Chair, Ron Rasmussen, had been doubling as Treasurer for two years. Then we found that Jan was readily volunteering to help with our booths, our Calendar Preview Event, and with other tasks that needed to be done. We don't know how we got along without her. In gratitude for her service, the SWAP Board named Jan as SWAP Volunteer of the Year for 2010. She received her award, a framed art print of the Elfin Forest, at our November Board meeting. Our thanks to Jan for providing us with clearly written, color-coded Treasurer reports each month, and for giving help wherever there is a need.

SWAP Joins the Los Osos Holiday Parade

Unlike the very stormy December Saturday in 2009 when the Los Osos Holiday Parade had to be canceled, December 11, 2010 sparked with sunshine. The parade theme – “A Wild Wild Western Holiday” was repeated from the previous year, so SWAP was ready with signs made last year by Chair Ron Rasmussen. They depicted a “Wild Lizard,” a “Wild Quail,” and a “Wild Woodrat.” Ron took images from the SWAP Pocket Guide and enlarged them – see the accompanying photo. Eight SWAP stalwarts marched the six-block parade route through downtown Los Osos. They were Pat Akey and Rosemary Baxter carrying the SWAP banner, Danna Weidner carrying the Wild Quail Sign, Ron Rasmussen carrying the Wild Lizard sign, Alon Perlman dressed in Indian regalia, Yolanda Waddell dressed as a Weed Warrior, Dave Akey throwing candy to children along the way, and Dorothy Norwood handing out Mutt Mitts to people who brought their dogs to the parade. We were well received with cheers and hand waves. Thanks to Marisa Waddell for taking photos of our group, including the accompanying one.



Boardwalk *continued from page 1*

installation along the boardwalk between 15th and 16th streets. It will show information on current SWAP and other Community activities.

We at SWAP want to be sure that your visits to the Elfin Forest are enjoyable and without worry. If you have comments about our plans for the boardwalk or if you should notice any problems please call us at 528-0392 or e-mail us at board@elfin-forest.org. We will attend to the problem as soon as we can.

(at right) This worn board in the Elfin Forest Boardwalk is an example of the deteriorating condition of the boardwalk due to age and wear.

Photo by Yolanda Waddell.





Song Sparrow

Text and Photo By Jean Wheeler

Resident in the Elfin Forest all year, the Song Sparrow (*Melospiza melodia*) is the most widely distributed species of sparrows in the U.S. and Canada. Brown and gray with dark streaks, numerous subspecies vary widely in appearance. Yet they merge gradually from one region to another with many individual birds intermediate in appearance between neighboring subspecies.

The population on our central coast is smaller in size and darker in color than most other song sparrows with thick dark streaks all over and brown on the outer wings and tails. They have a fairly long tail for a sparrow, a stout beak, broad dark lateral throat streaks, and dark streaks on the breast tend to converge to a central spot.

Song Sparrows differ from the Savannah Sparrow (*Passerculus sandwichensis*), also resident all year in the Elfin Forest, in that the latter has a short notched tail, a small rather than stout bill, and usu-

ally has yellowish lores. The Lincoln Sparrow (*Melospiza lincolni*) is a winter visitor in the Elfin Forest. It is smaller and more delicate, has a shorter and grayer tail, has a short and slender beak, and has a light brown cheek patch.

The most identifying characteristic of the Song Sparrow, however, is reflected in its common name, the melodious and rather complex songs males sing to mark their territories and attract females. Their clear and distinct single notes alternate with rapidly repeated single notes and trills, varying in pitch, rhythm, and timbre. A single male will know many songs, usually repeating one many times and then switching to another. They learn their songs from neighboring males, and can distinguish neighbors from strangers by their songs. Studies reveal that females are attracted to males using more song components and whose songs better match the songs of nearby adults from whom they were learned.

Song Sparrows live in a great variety of habitats--from marshes and grasslands through shrub lands and open woodlands to edges of deciduous and evergreen forests, as well as farm fields and residential areas. They especially favor brush lands and marshes, so the Elfin Forest is ideal for them. They mainly eat insects and seeds. They stay low and secretive, hopping on the ground or flitting in shrubs except when males move to sing on exposed perches of shrubs or limbs of small trees. They tend to fly only short distances seeking cover quickly, and characteristically pump the tail downward as they fly.

Pairs search jointly for a nest site, usually hiding it in grasses, weeds, or shrubs close to the ground and often near water. The female builds a 4-8 inch diameter nest in several days using grasses, weeds, bark, rootlets, and animal hair. She lays 3-5 eggs and normally raises one clutch per year, but multiple clutches may be laid to replace a clutch lost to predation or in years with abundant resources. The major predators of Song Sparrows are cats, hawks, and owls.

Attention All Photographers

By Debbie Levi

SWAP will print a calendar for 2012 featuring the work of local photographers. We are looking for a variety of subjects taken in the Elfin Forest such as:

- scenic views (a lovely grove, welcoming path, the Elfin Forest with the bay or mountains)
- plants, wildflowers, fungi
- birds, reptiles, mammals, amphibians
- butterflies, spiders, insects
- people enjoying the Elfin Forest

For the cover, we hope to receive a photograph signifying the hope we all find from nature.

This year all entries will be selected by a jury comprised of professional photographers and our Selection Committee. Further details will follow.



The GENERAL SUBMISSION GUIDELINES are:

- Horizontal format
- Files should be at least 2 mb / 300 dpi (.jpg preferred)
- Mail no more than 3 entries on a CD to: SWAP Calendar, P.O. Box 6442, Los Osos, Ca. 93412
- Submission Deadline is May 9, 2011. Photographers will be notified by the end of May.

Anyone needing additional help or ideas please contact us by e-mail: calendar@elfin-forest.org We will be glad to send you our brochure with a map. You may find it helpful to join our 3rd Saturday walks beginning at 9:30 a.m. at the north end of 15th St. in Los Osos or purchase our Pocket Guide, *Plants and Animals of the Elfin Forest* (see page 11).

The Calendar Committee thanks everyone for supporting SWAP's annual fundraiser with purchases of the 2011 Elfin Forest calendar, which sold out in December of 2010. The success of the calendar is not possible without wonderful sponsors and contributors; everybody at SWAP is most appreciative. This enables us to use the proceeds for further expansion of all conservation and education efforts.

Wood Fern

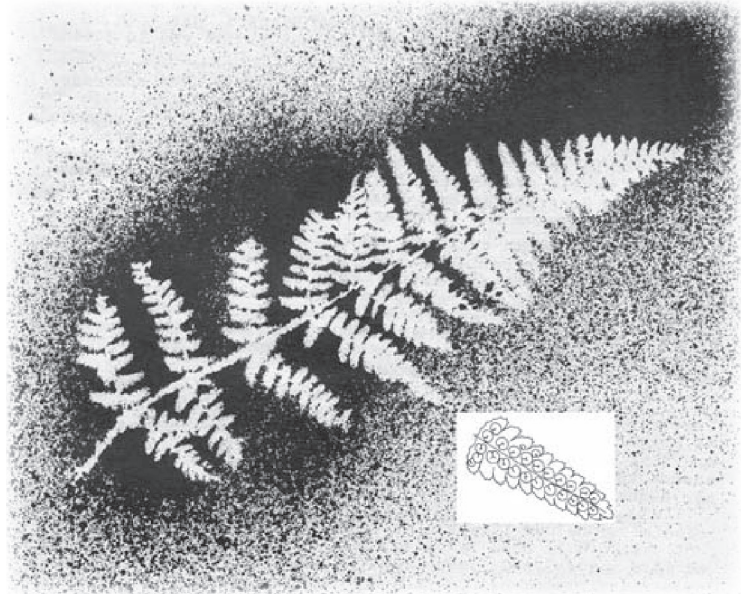
By Dirk Walters, Ph. D.; Drawing by Bonnie Walters

The illustrations accompanying this article were taken from two different sources. The ink splatter of the leaf was done in the 1970's by Alice Meyer for a cover of *The Obispoensis*, the newsletter of the local chapter of the California Native Plant Society. Alice and her Husband, Bud, were Los Osos residents who were very active in local environmental organizations in the 70's and 80's. The inset drawing of a small leaf segment was done by Bonnie for Dr. David Keil and my plant taxonomy textbook.

My guess is that most will recognize the illustrated plant as a fern. It is the wood fern, *Dryopteris arguta*. I know of only one wood fern plant in the Elfin Forest. It is just off the boardwalk near the junction of the spur that leads to Siena's view. This plant was discovered during one of my third Saturday wildflower walks for SWAP in May a few years ago. To my knowledge, no others have been found. Since this fern prefers to grow under a closed canopy, I suspect a rigorous search of the Pygmy Oak Woodland might yield another plant or two. Outside the Elfin Forest, wood ferns are common in wooded areas along the coast and eastward into the Santa Lucia Mountains. They are localized east of the Santa Lucia Mountains. They are particularly conspicuous under oaks on north and east facing slopes especially where other low growing vegetation is scarce.

Wood ferns, like all our native ferns, produce stems that grow horizontally and completely underground. They are called rhizomes. Leaves of native ferns seem to arise directly from the ground. As in all plants, leaves arise from buds produced near the tips of stems. Since the leaves are in tight cluster, the rhizomes must be highly branched and very short. This also means that everything above ground is leaf. The blade is produced on the leaf stalk or petiole. The petiole continues into the blade as a midrib. In wood fern the deeply dissected blades are borne on veins that branch from the midrib. This makes them twice compound. The inset drawing is one of these leaflets.

Ferns do not produce flowers or seeds. Non-vegetative reproduction is done by asexual spores and sexual gametes. The fern plant we see in the wild and in our homes and gardens produces spores. Spores are produced in specialized structures called spo-



rangia. In wood fern, as in many of our other native ferns, the stalked sporangia are borne in clusters on the underside of its leaf blade. These clusters are called sori (singular sorus). Many of the identifying features of ferns revolve around the sorus. In the leaflet drawing, the sori are shown as heart or kidney-shaped features. These features represent the sterile, protective covering of the sori known as an indusium. In wood fern, the roundish sori are each covered by this heart or kidney-shaped indusium. The sporangia would be maturing between the indusium and the underside of the leaf. When the spores are mature and ready to be dispersed, the indusium dries up or falls off.

Wood ferns make an excellent garden plant. They do best in moist well-drained soils. As for almost all ferns a shady or semi-shady location would be best.

*"A nation that destroys its soils destroys itself.
Forests are the lungs of our land, purifying the air
and giving fresh strength to our people."*

~ Franklin Delano Roosevelt ~

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, Betsy Kinter, Debbie Levi, Bob Meyer,
Ron Rasmussen, Pete Sarafian, Marissa Waddell, Yolanda Waddell,
Dirk and Bonnie Walters, and Jean Wheeler.

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oakleaves@elfin-forest.org.



Education Corner

By Pat Akey, Education Committee Chair

Photo by Yolanda Waddell

At the request of Baywood Elementary School first grade teacher Cheryl Dove, the Education Committee designed and led an estuary walk for Baywood's three first-grade classes. Because there are about 60 students in the three classes, the walk was given on two different days in December to 30 students each time. The children learned that the shells in the Elfin Forest's extensive shell middens came from the estuary during the time of the Chumash Indians. They also learned about food chains of the estuary by "becoming" the sun, phytoplankton, eelgrass, fish, sharks, birds and harbor seals, and forming into a chain along a rope. In the accompanying photo, SWAP docent Pat Akey, second from left, watched with satisfaction as the children formed their food chain with the sun at the head of the chain.

We continue to need additional members for the Education Committee, as well as School Walk Docents. An announcement of dates for docent training will come in the next issue of Oakleaves. If you are interested in joining us, contact Pat Akey at 528-4832 or e-mail PatA@elfin-forest.org. Our meetings are the third Friday of the month at 4:00 p.m.



County Parks to Manage Linear Park

By Pete Sarafian, Conservation Chairperson

San Luis Obispo County Parks Department has taken over responsibility from County Engineering for the linear park/bike path along Morro Street in Los Osos. To commence their ownership, County Parks wanted to remove weeds from the native vegetation that had been planted on either side of the bike path. Bob Meyer and Pete Sarafian provided endangered snail monitoring over a total of four days in December 2010. County Parks hired the California Conservation Corps to remove weeds mechanically and by hand (mostly veldt grass) between South Bay Boulevard at the Middle School up to the end of the path at 12th Street. A County Parks ranger sprayed a grass-specific herbicide on the veldt grass along portions of the path as well. Rain and heavy fog interrupted efforts to complete the weeding, but workers were able to finish most of the required work. The presence of numerous endangered Morro shoulderband snails prevented some areas from being cleaned up. However, overall the area looks much better than before the project began.

Top right photo: SWAP Conservation Chair Pete Sarafian volunteered his time as a snail monitor for a weeding project along the El Morro Linear Parkway in Los Osos.

Bottom right photo: For the County Parks weeding project at the El Morro Linear Parkway, CCC crewmembers worked in pairs, one pulling veldt grass and other weeds, and the other checking for Shoulderband Dune Snails.

Photos by Yolanda Waddell.

Weed Warriors

By Pete Sarafian, Conservation Chairperson

Weed Warriors Whip Erosion

The Conservation work party in November 2010 concentrated its efforts on reducing erosion of the sensitive Elfin Forest dunes. Each winter SWAP tries to identify those areas needing adjustment of or additional erosion bars or other measures to stem erosion. Sand has little resistance to water erosion. If all the slopes were allowed to erode, the Elfin Forest would be riddled with gullies. The Warriors added a small number of short erosion bars to the trail above South Bay Boulevard and cleared sand from the up-slope side of erosion bars on the sand trails to all the street entrances. The crew included Dave Bowlus, Pat Brown, Steve Cake, Prisila and Rich Johnson, Karia Leonard, Bob Meyer, Pete Sarafian, Holly Sletteland and Yolanda Waddell. Holly pulled veldt grass and tried to find endangered snails, but none showed their slimy heads this day. Thank you to all who came out and helped in the effort to keep the Forest in top shape.



Dave Bowlus armed for the battle against erosion on sandy slopes in the November action by the Wonderful Weekend Weed Warriors.

Photo by Yolanda Waddell.

Dune Snails Delay Work

The December 2010 conservation work party had to be cancelled. It rained the night before, and on the day of the work party the Elfin Forest plants and the ground were soaking wet. It might have been possible to find an area to work in, but the risk of stepping on an endangered Morro shoulderband snail (*Helminthoglypta walkeriana*) was too high to take chances. In the dry season the snails seal up their shell opening (aperture) with a cement-like substance. In this state they hibernate (aestivate) in dark, cool places in or under plants or other objects like tarps. They can survive for several years without emerging. During the wet, winter season, however, the snails dissolve their cementitious seal and emerge. When the ground and plants are wet, the snails leave cover and start moving about. In search of food or mates, they can move several inches or feet in an hour. The risk of injuring or killing one rises greatly. For this reason, SWAP must be cautious about working in the Elfin Forest in the winter. Generally, on a dry day when the ground is not soaking wet, it is safe to work. However, all workers are cautioned to be vigilant, and a federally permitted snail monitor must survey work sites before and during work. There are potentially expensive fines and loss of work privileges for SWAP and its members in the event that snails are injured or killed.



Our SWAP Chapter was founded in May, 1985. To celebrate the end of the Chapter's 25th year, a toast with sparkling cider was made by Board members Pat Akey, Pat Murray, Ron Rasmussen (Chair), Jan DiLeo (Treasurer) and Debbie Levi. Photo by Yolanda Waddell.

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 shirt sleeves 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.

Let's All Pull Together

Let us march forth and tear up some grass;
Show all the world that we have some class.
It's never too late to punish the veldt,
So now you know how angry I've felt.

This horrible grass invaded my dreams,
And pushed away thoughts of rainbows/sunbeams.
The bunnies may like it, but as you can tell,
I'd just as soon send it to herbaceous hell!

*Yours in the cause of conservation,
Pete Sarafian*

Coming Up in the Elfin Forest

Text and Photos By Jean Wheeler

Winter avian visitors to our chaparral and pygmy oak groves are nearing the end of their visit and will soon head north or up into high mountains. So these are the months to look for Ruby-crowned Kinglets, American Robins, and several species of sparrows. Also migrants will be passing through from wintering sites in Middle and South America. Among them you might be lucky enough to spot Rufous or Allen's Hummingbirds. Some of our summer birds, including House Wrens and all of our species of swallows, will be returning from their holidays in the tropics to get to work again building nests for this year's families.

Of course our year-round birds are here, such as Anna's Hummingbirds, California Quail, both species of towhees, the California Thrasher, and the Western Scrub Jay (pictured). The Wrentit is often heard but seldom seen.

Our winter water birds will still be abundant on the estuary at least through February. This includes all ducks and geese, all wading birds, and all grebes listed in our Pocket Guide (sold on page 11). American Avocets and most species of sandpipers are also here through March.

With the rains we've had frequently since October and heavily over the holidays, we're well into another great year of winter and spring wildflowers. As I write this in early January, buckbrush ceanothus shrubs (a species of California lilac) are covered with their white to light lavender blooms all around the boardwalk. They are also covered with buds still to open and should continue to bloom at least well into March.

Morro manzanitas still have a lot of their pinkish-white bells now, but they began blooming with the rains so early this year—long before the holidays—that they are fading fast and may be nearly gone when you get this issue, even though February and March are normally their best months.

Fuchsia-flowering gooseberries are covered with red floral tubes which hummingbirds are industriously pollinating in exchange for their nectar. Closer to the ground drooping flower balls of California Peonies will also provide red color.

Seaside fiddleneck, Golden yarrow and Seaside golden yarrow, California Poppies, and Sticky monkey-flowers provide yellow and orange flowers at this season.

A native vine with big green leaves and small white blossoms with yellow centers is Wild cucumber (pictured). These vines should be all over the Elfin Forest in February and March as they were last year. But don't confuse them with the nastily invasive Cape ivy, which has a shiny leaf with yellow flowers.

If you enjoyed last year's wonderful winter and spring floral display, be sure to get out on the boardwalk frequently this year for the ongoing repeat performance!



I meant to do my work today
But a brown bird sang in the apple tree
And a butterfly flitted across the field
And all the leaves were calling me.
And the wind went sighing o'er the land
Tossing the grasses to and fro
And a rainbow held out its shining hand
So, what could I do but laugh and go?

Richard le Gallienne (1866 – 1947)

WALKS in the ELFIN FOREST Third Saturday Walks

February 19, 9:30 a.m. – Fungus Foray

For our annual Fungus Foray in the Elfin Forest, intrepid leader and fungophile Dennis Sheridan will take us on an exploration of the Elfin Forest floor for wood blueetts, black elfin saddles, earth-stars, golden caps, boletes, poisonous amanitas and many other fascinating fungi. Bring a magnifying lens and, if you have a mystery mushroom in your yard, bring a sample for Dennis to identify. This is not a mushroom collecting walk, as all plants in the Elfin Forest are protected by law. Only a very heavy rain will cancel the walk, and if it hasn't rained, Dennis will give us an equally fascinating walk examining lichens that grow abundantly in the Forest.

March 19, 9:30 a.m. – Equinox Walk

At the start of spring—the spring equinox—day and night are approximately 12 hours long. This year, spring equinox will be on March 20. Dr. Jean Wheeler has taught thousands of geography students about the relative wanderings of the sun, moon, and earth and what they mean to us in terms of our climates, tides, and the vegetation and animal life around us. She'll show us how large our seasonal differences in sun angle are. Join us to celebrate the beginning of Spring!

April 16, 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.

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.



*Mushrooms such as this Emetic Russula with a pink cap and white stem can be seen during Dennis Sheridan's Fungus Foray on Saturday, February 19.
Photo by Jean Wheeler.*



*On a cloudy November Saturday, Bob Pavlik led a most enjoyable Literary Stroll for an appreciative group of walk participants.
Photo by Yolanda Waddell.*

Remembering a Member – Ceil McDougale

Bob McDougale, past Chair and Treasurer of SWAP, lost his beloved wife Cecelia (Ceil) and we lost a long-time supporter when Ceil passed away on December 10, 2010. Bob and Ceil met when they were both docents at the Morro Bay Museum of Natural History in the early 1990s. They found that in addition to their love of nature, they both enjoyed traveling and music, especially traditional jazz. When Bob was invited to join the SWAP Board and became our Treasurer in 1998 and then SWAP Chair as well in 1999, Ceil good-naturedly supported his additional duties, taking phone messages and joining in SWAP events. Your Oakleaves editors and the SWAP Board send their condolences to Bob.

Thank You to Our New and Renewing Members

*Compiled by Betsy Kinter,
SWAP Database Coordinator*

NEW MEMBERS:

Karen Eskalin

RENEWING MEMBERS:

Donna and John Banks*	Herb and Debby Holt*
Karen Beatty*	Catherine Hopson*
Andrea Bersie*	Jerry Hull*
Charles E. Blair*	Clement H. Jeffrey*
William Bouton*	Laura Kass*
Pat Brown*	Donald and Howard Krueger*
Katy Budge*	Marilyn Moore*
Steve and Sue Burns*	Donna Murphy*
Alice L. Cushing*	Donald S. Parham
Robert and Gail Davis	Darlene Reynolds*
Tim and Kathy Dugan	Lani Steele*
Thomas and Michele Esser*	David and Helianthe Stevig*
Molly and Ted Fainstat*	Gwynn and George Taylor*
Joanna Frawley*	Roy and Junie Wolf*
Chet and Lee Grimes*	June Wright*
Worth Hall	

DONATIONS:

Beth Currier, Rancho de los Animales
Chevron Humankind Matching Gift Program
(matching gift for Kathleen Delzell)
Los Osos Fitness
Scolari's Food and Drug Co. – anonymous donor
through matching gift program
Doug Stinson

**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.*



Debbie Levi, Ron Rasmussen, and Jan DiLeo (L-R) welcomed visitors to SWAP's informative booth at the South Bay Community Center Crafts Fair on November 6. Photo by Yolanda Waddell.

Mind Walk Lectures at Morro Bay Museum

Are you a lifelong learner? Have you always wanted to know more about natural history? The Monday morning Mind Walk Lecture Series at the Morro Bay Museum of Natural History provides a gold mine of interesting topics. Each Monday from 10:15 a.m. to noon, local experts in their fields present a broad range of topics from whales and marine animals to earthquakes. The talks are coordinated by museum docent Paul O'Connor, who is also a member of SWAP's Education Committee.

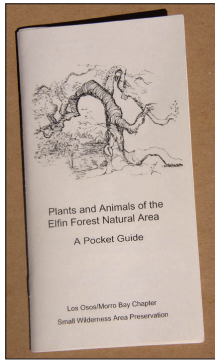
Mind Walk topics for February are: Feb. 7, Have the Marine Protected Areas Affected the Local Populations of Nearshore Fishes?; Feb. 14, Under-Loved but Loveable Seaweeds; Feb. 21, Plastic Pollution in our Oceans; and Feb. 28, Our Hidden Gem – the Historic Pt. San Luis Lighthouse.

In March, three of SWAP's 3rd Saturday walk leaders will speak. On March 7, John Lindsey's talk will be Weather Forecasting 101. Barb Renshaw, our sketch walk leader will discuss Wizardry and Seduction – Lessons from the plants on March 14; and on March 28, Jerry Kirkhard will present the best of the best from our local nature photographers. The March 21 talk will be Fire Ecology in Big Sur by retired professor of geography Les Rowntree.

To learn more about the Mind Walks visit the Central Coast Natural History Association website at www.ccnha.org and click the Mind Walks sign, or call the museum at 772-2694.

We'd Like Mail!

We encourage our readers to submit photos, letters to the editor, or interesting and timely information by e-mailing to oakleaves@elfin-forest.org. We look forward to hearing from you. *The Editors.*



Useful Pocket Guide

Charts in SWAP's Pocket Guide give many details.
Peak months are given for birds.

Months in bloom, color, and more for plants.

Mammals, reptiles, lichens,
and other groups are included.

Vascular Plants (See inside back cover for Keys)					
Scientific Name	Preferred Common Name	Form	Bloom	Color	Habitat
<i>Abronia maritima</i>	Red sand-verbena	Gc	2-10	R	sd
<i>Abronia umbellata</i>	Beach sand-verbena	Gc	5-10	P	sd
<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	Yarrow	H	4-5	W	s
<i>Adenostoma fasciculatum</i>	Chamise	S	3-8	W	c
<i>Alnus rhombifolia</i>	White alder	T	6-8	I	r
<i>Amsinckia spectabilis</i>	Seaside fiddleneck	H	2-6	Y	sd
<i>Anagallis arvensis</i>	Scarlet pimpernel	Sh	3-6	O	d
<i>Anaphalis margaritacea</i>	Pearly everlasting	H	6-8	W	s
<i>Arctostaphylos morroensis</i>	Morro manzanita	T S	2-3	W	z
<i>Artemisia californica</i>	California sagebrush	S	4-12	W	sc
<i>Artemisia dracunculul</i>	Wild tarragon	H	8-10	Y	d



SWAP Shoppers' Order Form

See Photos of All Items at 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 print note cards

___ @ \$3.00 or ___ set of 5 @ \$14.00 = \$___

Printed postcards

___ @ \$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

___ @ \$25.00 = \$___

5. ALPHABET BIRD BOOK

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

___ @ \$21.65 (including tax) = ___

6. 2011 ELFIN FOREST CALENDAR

Local artists have contributed to this calendar.

___ @ \$15 = \$___

SOLD OUT

Shipping costs within zip 934 __:

Bird Book, \$2.77 (book rate) per book = ___

Pocket Guides & Note Cards \$1.50 = ___

Mural Prints on Foamcore \$5.00= ___

Shirts each: \$4.00 = ___

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

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

*Is your membership current?
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Every membership helps us to be more convincing to foundations and government agencies when we ask them for funds. They all want to know "How many members do you have?"

Please look at your mailing label and see if your membership is current. The date on the label shows when your membership expires. After that date, we will not be able to send you our newsletter. Timely renewal of your membership helps us to save on postage and the time needed to send a reminder.

Thank you for supporting SWAP and the Elfin Forest!

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| <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.

☐ Check here to receive the online version only.

All donations to SWAP are tax-deductible.

EVERY membership counts!

Make checks payable to: SWAP.

Mail to: Small Wilderness Area Preservation,
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