



O A K L E A V E S

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 ♦ AUGUST / SEPTEMBER 2011

What About Those Fences?



"Why is there barbed wire in the Elfin Forest?"
Photo by John DiNunzio

By Ron Rasmussen,
SWAP Chair and Conservation Committee Chair

In 1994 when SWAP became the steward for the Elfin Forest Natural Area, it was a mess. Veldt grass and iceplant were everywhere, and bare sand was left by motorbikes and other vehicles, and foot trails crisscrossed the Forest. Without drastic action, the Forest could be lost forever. The solution was to close off the most

Fences continued on page 3

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CCC Crewmembers dig into the difficult process of removing old decayed boards and replacing them with new ones.
Photo by Yolanda Waddell

Boardwalk Repair Completed

By Ron Rasmussen,
SWAP Chair and Conservation Committee Chair

In late May and early June regular visitors to the Elfin Forest saw the California Conservation Corps (CCC) at work on the boardwalk to replace or repair the many deck boards that, after more than 11 years, showed signs of age. Work began on May 23 and continued for 2 weeks until June 3. More than 1,200 deck boards were replaced along with several toe rails. We expect this work to ensure that the boardwalk will be safe for visitors for at least a further 10 years.

The project was funded by grants to San Luis Obispo County from the Federal Coastal Impact Assistance Program (CIAP) and to the CCC from California Proposition 84 funds. These funds were partly matched in kind by SWAP volunteer labor in the form of preliminary boardwalk condition evaluation by Ron Rasmussen and monitoring for protection of the Morro Shoulderband snail by Bob Meyer during the repair project.

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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
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 the Community Room, Morro Shores
Mobile Home Park, 633 Ramona Ave., Los Osos.

The next meetings are
**Thursday, August 11,
and Thursday, September 8.**

All Board meetings are open to the public.
To confirm the date, time and location
(which are subject to change),
call (805) 528-0392.



CONTACT SWAP

If you have questions about SWAP activities or
want to volunteer, please call

(805) 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:

Mark Wagner

SLO County Parks Supervising Ranger
1087 Santa Rosa Street, SLO, CA 93408
(805) 781-1196

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 Mark Wagner at 781-1196.



SWAP Mail

The following letter came from the 3rd grade class of Monarch
Grove teacher Judy Neuhauser

May 13, 2011

Dear SWAP,

*Our class had a fabulous time at the Elfin Forest today. It was extraordinary looking
at tiny things through the magnifying glass. We also loved seeing the view of the mountains.
It was amazing looking at Morro Rock from Butterfly Hill. It was epic seeing the wood rat
nests, hearing the quail call, smelling the different plants, and feeling the wind on our faces.*

*Thank you Mr. Otis and Mr. Steve for guiding us through the Elfin Forest. You did a
very good job.*

*Thanks, SWAP, for paying for the bus. It gave us an opportunity to see all those won-
derful things!!!*

This letter came to us from SWAP member Jean Boyd, who lives in Morro Bay

April 27, 2011

*Every morning a small miracle takes place on my Morro Bay ocean view deck. A one-
legged sea gull flies in to "inhale" its dish of hard-boiled egg and cat food. It hasn't missed in
three or more years and its arrival more than triples my pleasure at living here in this heav-
enly locale. Sincerely, Jean Boyd"*

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 for-
ward to hearing from you. *The Editors.*

Consider Switching to Online Oakleaves

This is a special message for our members with computers. Take a moment to
turn on the computer and visit the SWAP web site at www.elfin-forest.org. Click the
button that says "Read the current copy of Oakleaves." You will find an easily readable
version of the current newsletter with color photos that you can read by scrolling from
page to page.

If you like the looks of it and are comfortable reading it on a computer screen, we
suggest that you ditch the mailed version and switch to the online version. You can do
so by sending an e-mail to oakleaves@elfin-forest.org with the words "Online version
only, please" in the subject line; add your name and address below.

Betsy Kinter, our Database Coordinator, will remove your name from her set of
mailing labels and make a note that you want to see the online version only. A few
days BEFORE the mailed newsletters arrive, you will receive an e-mail with a link to
the latest newsletter. You get it earlier because labeling, folding and mailing the printed
copies takes longer. It's easy to be green.

New Supervising Ranger

Bob Yetter, our Pecho District County Parks Supervising Ranger, has been trans-
ferred to Lopez Lake and has been replaced by Mark Wagner. The SWAP Board and
Conservation Committee enjoyed working with Bob and wish him well in his new
position. We welcome Mark Wagner and have already learned that he is attentive to the
needs of the Elfin Forest and SWAP. If you wish to speak with him, you can reach him
at 781-1196.

Boardwalk Repair

continued from page 1

The completion of this repair project does not mean that we can now forget about the boardwalk condition. The original deck boards and screws will continue to slowly deteriorate. SWAP volunteers will routinely monitor the boardwalk for possible problems and either correct them or notify County Parks to address the situation. If you have comments or notice a serious problem please call SWAP at 528-0392.

*At right: CCC Crew leader Miguel Diaz gives work assignments to two crewmembers during the boardwalk repair project.
Photo by Yolanda Waddell*



Fences *continued from page 1*

impacted areas, remove the invasive plants, revegetate with native species and allow the remaining natives to recover. To protect the existing native vegetation and allow new plantings to become established, sturdy fences were erected. The fences do not impact the small animal population, since they can easily crawl underneath or go through small “doors” that have been cut in some places.

Now we can see that in many places, SWAP’s policy has been successful. Because of the poor sandy soil and limited water the plants in the Forest are slow growers, taking years to become established or recover from damage. In some places, the fences have been in place for 4 or more years. When an area is protected from inappropriate use, the natives do recover and flourish. Also, the boardwalk has greatly limited visitors’ impact and trails that were once bare sand are now being filled in by new growth.

Some folks do not want their access to sensitive Forest areas to be limited and climb over or cut the fences. In those areas, including at the Bush Lupine Point overlook, we have had to take extreme measures and add barbed wire to the fence. We dislike using barbed wire, but we are very concerned about disturbance of the plants that have just recently returned to normal conditions for a coastal dune scrub area.

SWAP has received comments about how the fences detract from the experience of visitors to the Forest. We agree and, to answer these comments, SWAP is planning to remove some of the unneeded green plastic fencing and replace it with the black cable “symbolic” fencing. There are several places where plants are growing through the fences. Also, some vegetation has become so dense that the fencing no longer serves any useful purpose. Nevertheless, certain areas will still need protection and some fence will remain.

We hope to begin this work later this year. The work will be shared between the California Conservation Corps (CCC) and SWAP volunteers. We expect that, once a significant part of the fence is gone, visitors’ enjoyment of the Elfin Forest will be enhanced.

15th Street Compost Pile Gone

An Elfin Forest landmark, the compost pile next to the Fifteenth Street entrance, was permanently removed by County Parks staff in May due to a neighbor’s complaint. The pile, composed of veldt grass and other invasive plants, had been in place for over ten years. To some it was an eyesore, but to Weed Warriors it was a visible token of their hours of back-breaking work. The accompanying photos (by Yolanda Waddell) show Weed Warriors replacing its plastic cover (placed over it to raise the temperature inside the pile and increase the composting process); and the place where the pile was, now a level sandy area waiting for native plants to fill it in.



California Oak Moth

Text by Jean Wheeler, Ph.D.
Photos by Pat Brown

Extending in range along the coastal mountains and valleys of California, the most important of the many species of caterpillars that feed on our live oaks is the California Oak Moth (*Phryganidia californica*).

Populations of these moths and their caterpillars vary widely and unpredictably from year to year from seldom seen to very high numbers. Evergreen oaks, mainly our California Live Oak (*Quercus agrifolia*), are the major hosts because the leaves of deciduous trees die and drop to the ground in winter, killing young caterpillars of the over-wintering generation among the two (in southern California, possibly three) generations of oak leaf moths per year.

The adult oak moth is tan or gray to even somewhat silvery in color with obvious dark veins. The body is about half an inch long and the wingspan slightly over an inch. The adult in Pat's photo has the feathery antennae of a male. A female's antennae are plain. The adults live only to breed, and the female lays clusters of tiny whitish eggs, usually on the undersides of oak leaves. These turn reddish to brown as hatching approaches.

The larvae that hatch, although commonly mis-named "oak worms," are true caterpillars. They are tiny at first but reach an inch or slightly more in length and 1/8 inch in diameter by the fifth and last larval stage, or instar. They are green in color with streaky black and yellow to white lines along the back. The round heads, shown very well in Pat's photo, are red to brown in color. They eat green leaves of oaks often leaving skeletal veins of the leaf, and they may dangle by silken threads to branches below. The pellets they excrete, called "frass," may be conspicuous under oaks when the caterpillars are very abundant. The pupa is yellow to white with black spots and about a half inch in length, usually attached to the undersides of leaves, branches, or trunks of the oaks.

Oak leaf moths have extreme population explosions at about 5-10 year intervals, the most recent on the central coast in 2007-2008. Live oaks, which replace only a portion of their leaves each year, may then be largely defoliated in an area. But that defoliation starves out succeeding generations of the "oak worms." Healthy oaks gradually replace their foliage over the next several years. However, oaks suffering from other stresses such as severe drought, fungal or bacterial diseases, or soil compaction or excessive pruning in urban environments, may be unable to recover from simultaneous defoliation in extreme oak leaf moth outbreaks.



Elfin Forest Sightings

In May, Dr. Dirk Walters was leading his 3rd Saturday walk group out of the Rose Bowker Grove when he banged his head against a branch that arched over the boardwalk. The force of the bump knocked him down. SWAP walk hosts Ron Rasmussen and Yolanda Waddell were horrified, and Ron did something about it. He wrapped the offending branch with a spongy material and painted it black and yellow so it could be easily seen. See the adjacent photo by Ron Rasmussen. Our apologies to our 6-foot-plus walk leader, and we hope it never happens again.



Sightings continued on page 5

Hedge Nettle

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

The plant for this issue of *Oakleaves* is found in the moister portions of the Elfin Forest. It can be seen along the north boardwalk, especially around the junction of the boardwalk at Siena's View. Common or California hedge nettle (*Stachys bullata*) is certainly not rare, but it is not overly abundant either. It is widespread but snooty about where it grows.

The flower books and floras state that it is found in our shrub lands (coastal dune scrub and chaparral) as well as in oak forests, which is true. But if one wants to find it, look in these communities where the soils tend to be moist. I think of it occupying the drier edge of the riparian habitat. As surface streams dry, hedge nettles will move into the streambed itself. Although there are no streams or obvious drainages in the Elfin Forest, it does share a trait with the sargent cypress forest found on West Cuesta Ridge. They both contain plant species that are able to condense the frequent and prevalent fog onto their leaves and stems. Leaves and stems, however, are poor absorbers of liquid water, so the water drips off onto the soil surface and sinks to where the plant's roots can absorb it.

I don't have any data for how much soil water is produced from fog drip in the Elfin Forest, but I do have readings from a Cal Poly Biology Department Senior Project done for Dr. Robert Rodin many years ago. They found that rain gauges placed under the trees recorded over 20 inches more water than ones placed in the open. I've always assumed fog moisture mining was why hedge nettles are able to grow on Cuesta Ridge and among the oaks in the Elfin Forest.

The 'hedge' part of the common name, I assume, comes from the habit of these plants to grow in fence rows and along roadsides, especially the old world species. The 'nettle' part of the common name comes from its resemblance to the stinging nettle (*Urtica*). The surfaces of leaves and stems are coated by short stiff hairs. These hairs merely impart a sandpapery feel in contrast to the rash and itching or pain caused by true stinging nettle. I find it rather pleasant to feel and you do have to touch them to get the pleasant citrusy odor that arises from the bruised leaves.



Stachys is a fairly large (about 300 species worldwide; 8 in California and 5 in San Luis Obispo County) genus of the mint family (Lamiaceae or Labiatae). It contains a number of plants used as food or medicine, particularly in the old world. The medicinal plants generally go by the common name of betony while the ones producing edible tubers go by various names: chorogi, Chinese or Japanese Artichoke, and knotroot. I found no reference to any of our California *Stachys* species, including *S. bullata*, possessing either edible or medicinal properties. The closest I came was one suggestion that leaves might to be tried as a poultice (*i.e.*, bruise a few leaves in warm water and apply the mixture to minor wounds and rashes). This is how the various betony species are used around the world and it is the explanation for another common name for the species in this genus, woundwort.

References to hedge nettles are noticeably absent from my California native gardening books. The current Jepson Manual recommends that they be planted in areas where they get occasional water (3-4 times during the dry season). It indicates that native hedge nettles are very hardy and might work in an area that needs stabilization. However, they caution that being hardy, they can become invasive!

Sightings *continued from page 4*

On June 3, SWCA snail monitor Barrett Holland went to the Orchid Trail above South Bay Boulevard to check for Morro Shoulderband Snails. Instead he saw a small **Southern Pacific Rattlesnake** along the trail. He warned Ron Rasmussen who planned to have the Weed Warriors pull veldt grass along the slope above South Bay Boulevard on Saturday, June 4. Ron wondered if it could have been a gopher snake mimicking rattlesnake behavior, but Barrett replied that the snake had a definite triangular head. This is the first rattlesnake sighting in the Elfin Forest that anyone knows of. As Ron wrote to the SWAP Board, we need to be cautious when working on the trails in the brush areas off the boardwalk.

On June 21, Pete Sarafian saw a swarm of **wild bees** gathered in the oak grove just south of Bush Luine Point. Three days later they were gone, having dispersed to parts unknown.

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, (805) 528-0392.

Education Corner

*By Pat Akey, Education Committee Chair and Yolanda Waddell
Photos by Yolanda Waddell*

The month of May saw visits to the Elfin Forest by several elementary school classes. On May 13, Monarch Grove Elementary School teachers Judy Neuhauser and Caroline Rayburn brought 42 second- and third-graders for a discovery walk. They learned about the sounds, appearance, smells and textures of birds and plants. The SWAP docents who led them were Pat Brown, Stephen Mueller, Otis Taylor and Yolanda Waddell. The class traveled to the Elfin Forest in a bus that was paid for from SWAP's education fund.

On May 19 and 20, sixty first-graders walked to the Elfin Forest from Baywood School to learn about insects of the Elfin Forest – where they live, how they survive, and what creatures use them as food. The docents for the classes of teachers Cheryl Dove, Kelli Gang, Cherie Newell and Jennifer Dinelli were Pat Grimes, Yolanda Waddell and Paul O'Connor.

On July 6, retired ecology professor Les Bowker led a class of Cuesta College biology students on a walk that introduced them to some of the principles of ecology in relation to the Elfin Forest. Their instructor, Azailia Contreras, was most appreciative. Docent Yolanda Waddell accompanied the group as well.

In June, Education Committee members Pat Akey, Pat Brown and Jean Wheeler met with Monarch Grove teacher Judy Neuhauser to discuss ideas for improving our school walks. Judy encouraged us to involve the children in observing and describing what they see instead of docents giving them all of the information about a particular object. She also encouraged us to teach children to use tools such as monoculars and thermometers to learn about the environment around them. During the summer, the Education Committee will prepare a grant request to the MBNEP for funds to purchase 40 monoculars for bird observation.



Some of Cheryl Dove's first graders watched ants and other insects scurrying about during an insect walk in May.



Docent Stephen Mueller led a group of Monarch School 3rd graders on a discovery walk in the Elfin Forest.



At left: At the end of their insect walk, teacher Cherie Newell's first graders could hardly wait for a drink of water, being poured by docent Pat Grimes, behind the fence.

Things for Kids to do in the Elfin Forest During Summer

Explore with a camera. Send "best" photos to *Oakleaves* at the end of the summer and we'll publish them.

Become a birder. Take binoculars and a bird guide & see how many birds you can identify. Become a *writer*. Make a journal about your visits to the Forest.

SHAPE UP by walking around the boardwalk.

Warriors on the Slippery Slope

Determined to wipe out the last (well, almost the last) vestiges of veldt grass from the slope above South Bay Boulevard, Conservation Chair Ron Rasmussen and his intrepid Weed Warriors slid, dug and pulled numerous bags of the nasty weed during the May and July First Saturday work parties. The CCC boardwalk repair crew also worked on the slope on May 27, when they temporarily ran out of lumber for the boardwalk repair.

The weeding project would have been finished in June, but on June 4, the First Saturday of the month, it poured rain. Any resulting veldt grass sprouts didn't live to flower and drop their seed because in July they were yanked out. The Elfin Forest slope is now clear of veldt grass all the way from the north end near the Los Osos Creek bridge to the south end of the Forest property.

Weed Warriors who participated in the two work parties were:

May: Jay Bonestell, Bob Meyer, Alon Perlman, Ron Rasmussen, Yolanda Waddell and Corey Walsh.

July: Jay Bonestell, Dave Bowlus, Lannie Erickson, Bob Meyer, Pete Nelson visiting from Gilbert, Arizona, Alon Perlman, Ron Rasmussen and Yolanda Waddell.

The July 2nd work party was Weed Warrior Alon Perlman's last volunteer day with SWAP. He has moved to Oceanside to take a new job. We thank Alon for his regular participation in the First Saturday workdays, and also for keeping the South Bay Boulevard area of the Elfin Forest free of litter. We wish him well.

SWAP is grateful to all who take part in weeding and doing other projects in the Elfin Forest each month. Over the past decade the work of the Weed Warriors has resulted in a beautifully restored natural preserve. There is, and always will be, more work to do. We invite you to join us on a First Saturday at 9 a.m. and enjoy a very satisfying physical activity in fresh air amid lovely surroundings.

Let's all pull together

*The African Veldt is the home of that grass
That in the Elfin Forest delights to trespass
And hog all the water and space, alas.*

*Besides that there's an iceplant weed
That needs to not breed
Anymore seed.*

*Our work in the Forest is a gift to all.
To help it flourish, please answer the call
To be a Weed Warrior, the Forest's cure-all.*

Join us on First Saturdays at 9 a.m. at the north end of 15th Street in Los Osos. ~ Yolanda

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 (805) 528-0392.



New Weed Warrior Corey Walsh looked as if he was enjoying the process of doing in veldt grass plants. Photo by Yolanda Waddell



In May, CCC Crew members helped with veldt grass weeding on the slope above South Bay Boulevard. Photo by Ron Rasmussen.



Meeting for their work assignment on July 2nd were Weed Warriors Pete Nelson (visiting from Arizona), Conservation Chair Ron Rasmussen, Alon Perlman, Lannie Erickson and Bob Meyer. Photo by Yolanda Waddell



This 4-inch stump is all that is left after a vandal cut off a Coast live oak branch arching over the boardwalk. Photo by Yolanda Waddell.

Shenanigans in the Forest

The Elfin Forest might be titled “Natural Preserve of Many Uses.” Most folks take a stroll or go for a run; take their dogs on a leash walk; have a picnic lunch; sit and sketch the oaks or the bay; roll around the boardwalk loop in wheelchairs or push strollers; or go bird watching among many of the possible activities. Others aren’t satisfied with the usual “passive enjoyments” of the Forest. Here are some reports that we received in May and June.

May 10 – A member of our Trail Trimming Committee saw beer cans and bottles in an oak grove. On taking a closer look, he saw a duffel bag that contained a sleeping bag, army canteen, cans of sterno and clothes. Also, partially buried under some leaves was a black briefcase that contained date books and a laptop. He gathered the items up and phoned the owner of the laptop. She said that her car was broken into in the 1100 block of 15th Street and her laptop case was stolen. She was grateful to get it back and notified the Sheriff’s Department that it had been returned.

May 15 – The same member who found the stolen laptop had his tent trailer cover stolen and two of his neighbors’ solar yard lights were taken. He figured it was someone going into the Elfin Forest and went on a search the following day. Sure enough, he found that the thieves had rigged up a tarp/fly over two large couches in a nearby grove. The solar lights were scattered around the grove to provide some nice subtle lighting. He took back the cover and yard lights and cleaned up trash that had been left in the grove. On May 17, County Parks staff removed the couches.

June 27 – Ron Rasmussen, SWAP Chair, found that someone had cut off two fairly large limbs and several smaller ones from a Coast live oak next to the boardwalk as it approaches the junction to Siena’s View. One limb was about 4 inches in diameter and the others were 2 inches and 1 inch across. They were arching above the boardwalk, and may have annoyed a tall person. Coast live oaks grow so slowly that their growth rings have to be counted with a microscope. The 4-inch limb was probably 60 to 80 years old. The cut ends have since been painted over to blend in with the rest of the forest.

The County Parks Arborist must be consulted before cutting any major oak branches in the Elfin Forest.

Coming Up in the Elfin Forest

Text and Photos By Jean Wheeler

In August and September, the driest two months of the year, white and yellow flowers dominate the shrubs in the Elfin Forest. Coyote brush (pictured at right) has both, the yellow flowers being male and the white ones female. This is the middle of a very long blooming season for them and for the white flowers of the California Sagebrush.



California Croton has pale green leaves with small white flowers. Dune Buckwheat flowers start out white, but age to pink and ultimately darken to a rust color.

The signature flower of this season is the bright yellow of Mock Heather, which is widespread in the Elfin Forest and blooms almost exclusively in these two months. California Goldenrod is also in bloom. Pink flowers that may be seen are Pink Everlastings, California Asters, and California Hedge Nettle.

This is also the season to look for fruit. That of the California Coffeeberry (pictured at right) is especially attractive in these months along the boardwalk between Bush Lupine Point and Siena’s View. The colorful berries appear yellow at first, darken to red and finally turn a richly beautiful black. Another bright red berry growing in the same area is Hollyleaf Cherry.



Reptiles are most active in these warmest months, so look for Garter, Gopher, and California King Snakes, but be alert as a rattlesnake has been seen recently for the first time in the Elfin Forest. Enjoy the amusing pushups by the Western Fence Lizards along the toe rails of the boardwalk. And look for tracks of animals in the sand next to the boardwalk, especially in early mornings, when raccoon tracks are very commonly seen.

Among our resident birds active now are White-crowned, Chipping, Lark, Savannah, and Song Sparrows; House and Purple Finches; Lesser and American Goldfinches; Bushtits; Bewick’s Wrens; and Anna’s Hummingbirds. Fairly common but usually staying low in the bushes are California and Spotted Towhees, California Thrashers, and Wrentits. The blue flash and noisy screams of California Scrub Jays are everywhere, and California Quail can be seen scurrying through the underbrush.

Also, begin to keep an eye out for the earliest arrivals of birds migrating south for the winter. Several species of ducks and some wading birds begin to arrive as early as August, and more come in September. And rejoice in the anticipation of the thousands more birds that will nearly cover the Bay in the months ahead!

WALKS in the ELFIN FOREST

Third (and Second) Saturday Walks

August 20, 9:30 a.m. – Geology Walk

Take a journey through time with Jeff Grover, Cuesta College Geology instructor. Jeff will focus on the geologic history of the Morro Bay area from the formation of the ancient morros, or Seven Sisters, to the recent development of the dunes that form the Elfin Forest. He may even give us a glimpse of what the Elfin Forest and Morro Bay will be like in the geologic future. Of course, he will describe our local earthquake faults and talk a little about earthquakes in general. Jeff brings rock samples and draws diagrams of local geologic action. Join us for a lively and informative walk and talk.

September 17, 9:30 a.m. – Insect Walk

Although we generally see just a few kinds of insects and spiders while walking through the Elfin Forest, there are dozens, perhaps hundreds of different species of arthropods living in the Forest. Local naturalist Al Normandin will search every nook and cranny along the boardwalk for the Good, Bad, and Ugly of these creatures, as well as the pretty late summer butterflies. The importance and ecology of our local insects will be discussed during the walk. Bring a hand lens or close-focusing binoculars if you have them.

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

Jim Royer will lead us on a bird inventory walk in preparation for Sunday's Big Sit! This international event hosted by Birdwatcher's Digest (www.birdwatchersdigest.com) pits participating groups of birders against one another to identify the most species of birds in one day. Our Big Sit! takes place at Bush Lupine Point. Join Jim on Saturday in finding and identifying 60 or more species of birds throughout the Elfin Forest and in the Morro Bay estuary. Regardless of your birding experience, you'll come away knowing more about birds, their calls, their habits and habitats.

October 15, 9:30 a.m. (Third Saturday)

Archaeologist Barry Price will help us to do some time traveling into the pre-Spanish past of Central Coast inhabitants, the Chumash and their ancestors. Walking along the boardwalk, he will tell us of the fascinating story of the ancient peoples who camped on Elfin Forest land 1,000 years or more ago. We will see shells on the sand signifying that long ago, shellfish were an important part of the local Chumash diet. We'll learn about Chumash money, economy and trade. This walk will reveal a complex world of the Elfin Forest's past inhabitants, one that we would never suspect today.

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, mosquitoes and ticks. Park carefully; avoid driveways and mailboxes. Please leave pets at home. The easy-paced walks last 1-1/2 to 2 hours. For details call (805) 528-0392.



In May, retired Cal Poly botanist Dirk Walters led his annual wildflower walk in the Elfin Forest. Here he displays a clump of the invasive African asparagus vine, saying "Don't grow this in your garden."

Photo by Yolanda Waddell



3rd Saturday walk leader Dr. Bob Field, his wife Joan, Barbara Renshaw and Al Normandin found that the usual June gloom prevailed in spite of Bob's topic, which was Summer Solstice.

Photo by Ron Rasmussen.

*And this, our life, exempt from
public haunt, finds tongues in trees,
books in the running brooks, sermons
in stones, and good in everything.
~William Shakespeare*



Thank You to Our New and Renewing Members

*Compiled by Betsy Kinter,
SWAP Database Coordinator*

NEW MEMBERS:

Candace Hamill
Pauline High*

RENEWING MEMBERS:

Jay & Ann Bonestell*	Burton & Dorothy Harris*
Jean Boyd	Bill & Meg Henry*
Linda & David Chipping*	Arthur Hubbard*
Margaret Diehl	Mary Leizear*
Ilene Doering	Marty & Debbie Levi*
Lurlie Edgecomb*	Jennifer & Larry Levine*
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Phyllis Foulstone*	Martha MacGillivray
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Margaret Fox &	Rasmussen-Tuffenkian
Claudette Kolk*	

**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.*



OAKLEAVES

is published six times per year beginning in February.

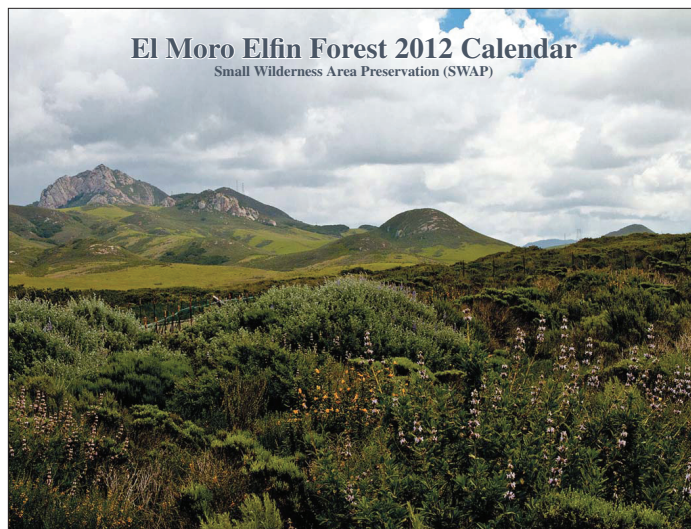
Co-editors are Yolanda Waddell and Jean Wheeler;
layout is by Katy Budge. Editing assistance by Pat Grimes.
Contributors to this issue: Pat Akey, Pat Brown, Betsy Kinter, Debbie Levi,
John DiNunzio, Ron Rasmussen, Pete Sarafian, Yolanda Waddell,
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If possible, all copy should be submitted by e-mail to:
oakleaves@elfin-forest.org.



Front cover photo: "Elfin Forest Looking East" by James Radford

2012 Calendar Sales Begin September 10

By Debbie Levi, Calendar Committee Chair

You are invited to join us at the 2012 Elfin Forest Calendar Release Party on Saturday, September 10, 2011 from 2-4:30 p.m. We have changed the location from previous years to the north end of 15th Street in Los Osos, directly adjacent to the Elfin Forest trailhead. Refreshments will be served and photographers who have contributed to the calendar will display their original images for both show and purchase.

Parking is available at any street-end entrance to the forest and along the streets. Please avoid driveways and mailboxes. Parking attendants will be on hand to guide you to a parking space.

Twenty-one local photographers donated their images for placement in the 2012 calendar. They are: Pat Brown, John Cloninger, Josh Cohen, Scott Glancy, Lee Goyette, Ronnie Goyette, Marlin Harms, Sandy Harris, Gene Kalland, Dave Keeling, K.I.M., Jerry Kirkhart, Dave Lawrence, Abe Perlstein, Chris Pike, James Radford, Dennis Sheridan, Jean Tolman, Erin Leigh Voss, Jean Wheeler, and David Wolfson.

The Calendar Committee thanks Peggy Mesler, owner of The Photo Shop in San Luis Obispo for printing and jurying the photos and guiding us through the selection.

Additionally, we thank our generous sponsors for their financial support in assisting SWAP with printing costs. They are: A.M. Scott Construction, Bonestell Studios, Cash/Weidner Family Trust, Bob Davis, Realtor, Supervisor Bruce Gibson, Good Tides Coffee House, Jerry Gregory, Realtor, Shar Gregory, Mortgage Lender, Jerri Walsh & Richard Margetson, Realtors, Chris & Kyra Kitts, Los Osos Fitness, Los Osos Flower Market, Los Osos Rexall, Mark's Baywood Cyclery, Morro Bay National Estuary Program, Noi's Little Thai Take-out, The Photo Shop, Rabobank, SAGE Ecological Landscape & Nursery, San Luis Obispo County Parks, Douglas Stinson, Rebecca Rasmussen-Tufenkian, Volumes of Pleasure Bookstore, Jay & Yolanda Waddell, and Jean D. Wheeler.

Please purchase your calendar(s) and help SWAP with this yearly fundraiser. Remember, they are gifts of nature. The calendar cost is \$15. You can also order copies of the calendar by using the order form on page 11.



New Item – 2012 Calendar!

Order several beautiful SWAP 2012 Elfin Forest Calendars for yourself and as gifts, available September 10! The 9" by 12" calendar features pictures taken by our talented local artists of scenes, plants, and animals we enjoy all year. There are also fascinating sidebars for each month containing information on human and natural history. November Photo (at left) by Jean Wheeler.



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. PREORDER 2012 ELFIN FOREST CALENDAR

Local artists have contributed to this stunning calendar.

___ @ \$15 = \$____

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 = ____

Calendars each: \$2.00 = ____

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.

Calendars on sale in September! See page 10.

Los Osos / Morro Bay Chapter
 SMALL WILDERNESS AREA PRESERVATION
 A Non-Profit Public Benefit Corporation
 P.O. Box 6442, Los Osos, CA 93412-6442
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Doing One's Part

We wouldn't be SWAP members or volunteers, or both, if we didn't care deeply about our beautiful Central Coast and the Elfin Forest. Some of us have the time and inclination to be Board or committee members, Weed Warriors, trail trimmers, school walk docents or one of the many other behind-the-scenes SWAP people. Those of us whose lives are already very full do our part by being paid members of SWAP, buying Elfin Forest calendars and making donations when we can. Every single contribution in money or time is a gift to nature and the future. Let's keep it up!

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*.

☐ **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,

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