



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 ♦ OCTOBER / NOVEMBER 2011

Fence Modification Project Is Underway

By Ron Rasmussen, SWAP Chair & Conservation Committee Chair

The first steps in removing some of the green plastic fence and replacing it with the symbolic fencing have begun. The monthly work party on September 3 removed a portion of the green fence where plants were forcing their way through. This part of the project is time consuming because we don't want to damage the plants any more than necessary. With the green fence removed, the plants themselves will serve as natural fences.

The second phase will be the installation of black cable symbolic fence along all parts of the boardwalk. Materials for this work have been ordered, with delivery expected in mid-October. Material costs are being shared between San Luis Obispo County Parks and SWAP. Once the materials have been received, the California Conservation Corps (CCC) will begin work. Completion is expected by November first.

Unfortunately, some of the green fencing will remain. Areas that were severely disturbed in past years have yet to recover. However, progress is being made through SWAP's revegetation projects and the natural recovery process. We look forward to the time when all of the green fencing can be removed, and visitors can then experience the true beauty of the Elfin Forest.

SWAP Annual Meeting Features Talk on Native Plants

Story & Photo By Yolanda Waddell



Matt Bjerk, left, and Sam Bettien will speak about native plants at the SWAP Annual Meeting that will take place at Sage Eco-Garden Nursery.

Mark your calendars and plan to attend a very special Annual Meeting of the Los Osos/Morro Bay Chapter of SWAP:

Date: Saturday, October 15

Time: Noon to 2:30 p.m.

Place: Sage Eco-Garden and Nursery
1188 Los Osos Valley Road, Los Osos
Demonstration Garden

Annual Meeting continued on page 3

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Make the Switch to Online Oakleaves

Have you looked at our web site yet? As soon as you've finished reading this issue of *Oakleaves*, please turn on your computer and type in www.elfin-forest.org. On the home page you'll find a button that will take you to the October/November *Oakleaves*.

Do you like the looks of it with color photos instead of black and white? Are you comfortable with reading text on your computer screen? If your answer is yes, then we ask you to seriously consider giving up your paper newsletter for the online version.

All you need to do is to send an e-mail to oakleaves@elfin-forest.org with the words "Online version only," in the subject line. Add your name and address in the message space, and feel good because you've just saved a piece of a tree. Thank you!



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, October 13,
and Thursday, November 10.**

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.

Help Wanted – Urgently

Publicity Person: someone who has a computer, knows how to send a group e-mail, and can forward information about SWAP work parties, walks and special events to the media.

Web Site Maintenance Person: someone who is acquainted with, though not necessarily expert in, HTML. We will train. This person will work with the other member of the Web Site Maintenance Committee and the Web Master in keeping the information on SWAP's Elfin Forest web site up-to-date.

To apply for either position, please call the SWAP message phone, 528-0392.

Annual Meeting *continued from page 1*

Our theme is two-fold: Why should we use native plants? and What is the conservation news for Los Osos?

Our featured speakers are Sam Bettien, Sage Nursery Manager, and Matt Bjerk, Sage Nursery Assistant Manager. They will talk about the use of native plants to attract birds and butterflies and the plants that are best suited for growing in the Baywood fine sand in Los Osos.

Sam obtained his B.S. in Agriculture and Natural Resources from the University of Maryland, College Park. He worked in Washington, D.C. for a landscaping firm that specializes in "overstructure" or rooftop gardens. He is fascinated with California's native plants as well as other Mediterranean region plants, and likes to find new and interesting ones to showcase in the nursery.

Matt obtained his A.S. in Landscape Horticulture from Cabrillo College and his B.S. in Landscape Architecture from Cal Poly. His passion is bringing people and plants together, and he is very knowledgeable about succulents as well as other types of native plants.

Here is some good news: Sage Nursery will donate 10% of all of their sales for the weekend of October 15-16, to SWAP. Our job as the non-profit organization that they have chosen to support is to publicize this fundraising event. Please tell or e-mail your family and friends whom you think will be interested. In addition to plants, the nursery has a wide selection of gifts and plant-related items.

Don't miss this very interesting Annual Meeting and fundraising event.

SWAP Board Meetings Have Moved

The SWAP Board has changed its meeting place from the Community Room at Sea Oaks Mobile Home Park to the Fireplace Room in the Community Center at Morro Shores Mobile Home Park, 633 Ramona Avenue in Los Osos. Our meetings will continue to be held on the second Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m. However, that is subject to change from time to time. Our meetings are always open to the public. If you wish to attend a meeting about a particular subject, please call our message phone, 528-0392 to confirm the meeting date and time.

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.*

2012 Elfin Forest Calendar is Here!

By Debbie Levi, Calendar Committee Chair; Photos by Jean Wheeler

SWAP's annual calendar release party was held on Saturday, September 10, from 2 – 4:30 p.m. at the end of 15th Street next to the Forest trailhead. The calendar is our annual fundraiser, an opportunity to raise needed monies for continued conservation and education for the Elfin Forest.

We extend special thanks to Heidi Kausch for the generous use of her driveway and home for this event, and also to Boy Scout Troop 214 members Ethan Carroll and Tanner Clark for assisting with set-up and directing the parking.

Among the many guests were several of the 2012 calendar photographers, some of whom displayed their original pieces. SWAP provided delectable food and drinks to all who came. Our thanks to Von's for donating some of the food.

We invite you to contribute to this year's fundraiser. The 2012 Elfin Forest calendar is a gift of nature and can be purchased for only \$15. Simply fill out the Shoppers Guide form on page 11 of this newsletter or call the SWAP message phone, 528-0392.



Boy Scout Ethan Carroll, Los Osos Troop 214, was one of the two efficient Scouts who helped visitors to find places to park along 15th Street.

See
“Where to Buy the Elfin Forest Calendar”
on page 8

*At right, middle:
SWAP Treasurer, front right, and Debbie Levi, at Jan's right,
greeted visitors and sold calendars and T-shirts
at our busy Calendar Release Party.*

*At right, bottom:
Pat Akey, far right, presided over the popular food table
at the Calendar Release Party.*



Artists: Time to Start Painting For the Next Calendar

Now that the 2012 Elfin Forest calendar is printed and being sold, the Calendar Committee is beginning work on the 2013 calendar, featuring works by local artists. The artwork in our 2011 calendar is spectacular, and we hope that artists will outdo themselves for the 2013 calendar.

We want to get the word out early so that artists will have plenty of time to go to the Elfin Forest, select one or more subjects, and begin painting. Whatever the medium: oil, acrylic, watercolor, pastel, or colored pencil, the end products that the Calendar Committee wants are full-color digital images on a CD. The main subject, as always, is the Elfin Forest. Paintings can feature plants, wildflowers, birds, animals, butterflies and other insects, or scenic pictures. For more detailed information, call our SWAP message phone, 528-0392.

Small Sand Wasps Reveal Hidden Secrets at Elfin Forest

By Frank E. Kurczewski, Professor Emeritus, SUNY College of Environmental Science & Forestry



This *Tachysphex* sp. Spider Wasp is very similar to wasps described in the accompanying article. Photo © 2008 by Gary McDonald.

Two small digger wasp species, *Tachysphex miwok* Pulawski and *T. clarconis* Viereck, their small prey grasshoppers, a predatory robber fly, and two tiny cleptoparasitic cuckoo wasp species inhabit Baywood fine sand in the coastal dune scrub plant community at the El Moro Elfin Forest, Los Osos. They live in a closely knit ecological association. *Tachysphex miwok* (named for the Miwok Indians) and *T. clarconis* are 6-7 mm long and all-black with a reddish-orange abdomen, a common color pattern in this genus in western United States. *Tachysphex miwok* is an uncommon species in the pompiliformis species group restricted to hilly and montane areas of southern California. *Tachysphex clarconis* is a common species in the terminatus species group in the United States west of the Rocky Mountains.

Tachysphex miwok emerges in middle to late March in connection with ample rainfall, flush of low growth flowering plants, and appearance of early instar nymphal grasshoppers (Acrididae) of the subfamily Oedipodinae (band-winged grasshoppers). This species has only a single spring generation. The females hunt and nest in the dried plant litter at the bases of low-growing plants. Female wasps excavate a short, shallow one-celled nest, leave the nest entrance open, and hunt tiny (3-6 mm) band-winged grasshoppers in the litter and on the sand near the plants. Prey genera include *Microtes* and *Trimerotropis*, both sand-inhabiting camouflaged grasshoppers. The wasp catches the grasshopper as it leaps, stings it in its ventral thorax near its leg bases, and carries the paralyzed prey in flight to her open nest. After stocking a half dozen or so very small grasshoppers in an ovoid-shaped cell at the end of the burrow, the female lays an egg on a single individual between the bases of its fore- and midlegs. The female then rakes the sand from in front of its entrance backward with its forelegs into the burrow and hammers this sand in place with the bent trowel-shaped end of the abdomen. The wasp moves a short distance away, excavates another burrow, and repeats this nesting cycle. The egg affixed to

Editor's note: My husband and I spotted Dr. Kurczewski in the Elfin Forest this Spring, swishing a butterfly net among some low-growing plants. On being asked, he replied that he lives in New York State but visits his son in Los Osos from time to time, and is doing research on spider wasps. He showed us some glass vials with small dark-colored wasps in them. I asked if he would write something for Oakleaves about these fascinating little wasps, and he obliged with the accompanying article. - Yolanda Waddell

the grasshopper hatches in two days and the resultant larva feeds one by one on the grasshoppers in the cell, the paralyzed grasshoppers providing fresh food for the developing wasp larva. After feeding for five days, the larva constructs a rigid cocoon of silk, saliva, and sand grains and overwinters in a late larval stage.

The life cycle and nesting behavior of *T. clarconis* is similar to that of *T. miwok* except this species has two generations a year in the spring, the 2nd emergence occurring sometime in May. Adults of the 2nd generation live until the end of June. Females live about a month and males have a short-lived two-week-long lifespan. *Tachysphex clarconis* usually nests in bare sand, away from vegetation. This species can "afford" to nest in bare sand because it extensively levels the sand from burrow excavation and then makes a sand-filled temporary closure of its nest entrance, leaving little or no trace of the burrow. *Tachysphex clarconis* excavates a two- or three-celled nest if conditions permit, stocking each cell with 6-15 paralyzed early instar grasshoppers of the subfamilies Gomphocerinae (slant-faced grasshoppers) and Melanoplinae (spur-throated grasshoppers). Species of the large genus *Melanoplus* are frequent prey. The paralyzed (stung) small grasshoppers are carried back to the nest in flight. Larval development is the same as in *T. miwok* except progeny of the 1st generation emerge as adults of the 2nd generation without overwintering. Nearly all grasshoppers in the region are adults by June and much too large to be used as prey by these two wasp species, thereby restricting their flight seasons to the spring.

Machimus occidentalis Hine, a rather large robberfly (Asilidae), 12-13 mm long, preys on small wasps and bees (Hymenoptera) and is a potential predator of the two *Tachysphex* species. It has been observed trailing *T. miwok* in an attempt to capture the females and feed on them. Both *Tachysphex* species are also cleptoparasitized by two species of metallic green cuckoo wasps, *Hedychridium paulum* Bohart and *Argochrysis toralis* Kimsey (Chrysididae), each about 3 mm long. The cuckoo wasps enter or dig into the *Tachysphex* nests and lay their own egg on one of the grasshoppers. The cuckoo wasp larva is fiercely designed with large mandibles. It attacks the digger wasp egg or larva, destroys it, and proceeds to feed on the paralyzed grasshoppers in the cell. The several hours of "work" on the part of the *Tachysphex* female become a "free meal" for the larval cuckoo wasp. All of these insects and associated plants such as narrow-leaf spineflower (*Chorizanthe angustifolia* Nuttall of family Polygonaceae) are restricted to or have peak populations on the coastal sand dunes between Monterey and Santa Barbara Counties.

Wild and Domesticated Oats

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

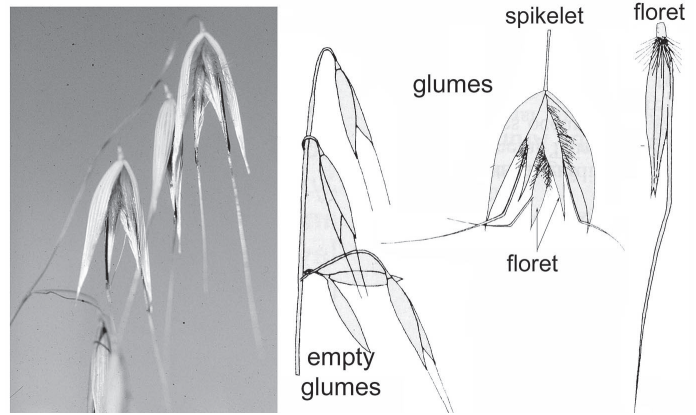
Bonnie and I haven't done a weed for a while so this is it. My guess is that everyone who recognizes the plants represented by Bonnie's drawings and my modification of Dr. David Keil's photograph will not argue that it's truly a weed. One or the other or both wild species, common (*Avena fatua*) or slender (*A. barbata*) are extremely widespread all along the Pacific Coast. Although I don't remember seeing them from the boardwalk, I expect this is due to the hard work of the Weed Warriors. However, I would be very surprised if one or the other species couldn't be readily found around the periphery, especially where the Elfin Forest abuts residential areas.

Wild oats are members of the grass family (Poaceae or Gramineae). Oats have some of the largest flowers in this family of otherwise tiny to minute flowers. They are almost large enough to see their parts with the naked eye. Individual grass flowers are aggregated into tiny clusters called spikelets which are the readily visible units hanging down in the photograph and drawing. Each oat spikelet consists of two large scales (bracts or glumes) surrounding one to three small flowers called florets. The florets contain the three stamens and a single pistil. The stamens and pistils can't be seen in the drawings or photo as they are totally hidden between two additional bracts. The outer (and more massive) is the canoe-shaped lemma and the inner bract is the thin palea. There are no recognizable sepals or petals.

In the wild oat species, a stout bristle arises from the back of the lemma. This bristle is known as an awn. After the pistil is pollinated, its single seed matures and fuses to the inner ovary wall to become a unique fruit produced only by the grasses (caryopsis or grain). The seed coat and ovary walls, when removed from the grain, are the bran we can buy at food stores. In oats, the outside of the developing grain adheres to the inside of the lemma and palea. This means that seed dispersal in oats, as well as most other grasses, is actually floret dispersal.

The awn plays a vital role in this dispersal. The long, stout awns are bent in the middle and they bend or straighten depending on available moisture. When moist, the awns absorb water and straighten at the bend. This causes the floret body (including the enclosed seed) to be pushed forward. When it is dry, the awn flexes at the bend. Why doesn't it pull the floret back? Notice the short, backward oriented 'hairs' at the base of the floret. As the floret dries, these flip out and prevent it from being pulled backwards. Thus the floret is pushed forward until it buries itself under a clod or falls into a crack in the soil. Either way, the process both disperses and plants the oat seed.

There are three species of oats listed in Hoover's SLO County Flora. Two of the species possess a moderate to stout awn: the slender oat (*Avena barbata*) and the common oat (*A. fatua*). The third species is the domesticated oat (*A. sativa*) found occasionally along road sides and in fields where it had been grown. Domesticated



oats produce larger grains and either totally lack an awn or if awns are present, they are weak. The lack of an awn makes domesticated oats much better for animal feed.

The origin of oats is somewhat controversial. They are old world and most likely originated somewhere in the area surrounding the eastern Mediterranean Sea. Oats are rarely mentioned in literature of the early cultures of this area and then only as animal feed. They probably didn't stack up well against the dominant grains, wheat and barley. Oats seem to have had better acceptance north of this region in Central Eastern Europe and adjacent Western Asia where they became quite important, not much as a human food, but as the mainstay of horse diets. It is from this area that the first mounted soldiers arose to readily conquer the surrounding 'horseless' peoples. This conquering of horseless cultures by horse-mounted armies was repeated frequently. It even was a factor in Spain's defeat of the Maya and Inca.

Interestingly, the re-introduction of feral horses into North America apparently caused the then agricultural Great Plains Native Americans to become mobile buffalo hunters. Why all this discussion of the horse? Because it was probably the need to bring grain on ships to feed the horses that caused the introduction of oats into California and beyond. According to Jan Timbrook, the Chumash used the grains of wild oats and Chia (*Salvia columbariae*) seeds in a concoction. Wild oats (along with any native grasses growing with them) were beaten or stripped into baskets. The chaff was beaten off with a mallet against rocks. The grain was separated from the chaff by winnowing and the flour was mixed with water and chia to provide both energy and protein.

There is one more human-wild oat interaction worth mentioning. The July 2, 2011 *Science News* reports that herbicide-resistant wild oats infect at least 4.9 million hectares. This is over 1 million hectares more area than the second place plant (water hemp). Unfortunately many plant species can transfer pollen between different species. Herbicide-resistant genes can be transferred from genetically engineered crops to weeds via ordinary transfer of pollen. When herbicides are applied heavily, weed seedlings that have received the modified gene are the ones more likely to survive. These seedlings grow up and produce more and more herbicide-resistant weed plants at an ever increasing rate. If you remember much about evolution, you can see that farmers are both supplying the source of the gene and applying a strong selection pressure for the spread of the resistance gene.

Education Corner

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

In July, Monarch School 3rd Grade teacher Judy Neuhauser gave a lecture/demonstration in the Elfin Forest for our committee. She described how our docent walks can be more effective by involving the students in observing and experiencing things that we want them to learn about. In addition, Judy said that we need to help the students think about what they have seen and heard, form their own opinions and speak about their impressions. Docent Pat Brown brought a video camera and made a video of Judy's walk, to be shared with docents who weren't able to attend her talk.

In August, the Education Committee coordinated a walk for a Cuesta College Environmental Biology class taught by Steve Hendricks. Ron Rasmussen led the group of twenty students. He covered the history and ecology of the Elfin Forest along with restoration challenges that included controlling soil erosion and removing non-native species. Ron also talked about revegetation of native species and how new plants are watered and protected. He discussed the future of the Elfin Forest, as well.

The Education Committee needs more docents and committee members. If you are interested or have questions, please call 528-0392



*Teacher Judy Neuhauser, left, conducted an interpretive training session in the Elfin Forest for SWAP docents.
Pat Brown, center, videotapes while Pat Akey, right, listens.*



SWAP Conservation Chair Ron Rasmussen (pointing) gave the students of a Cuesta College Environmental Biology class an excellent lesson in how to restore a nature preserve..



Pat Brown, left, smiles approvingly when her husband George Brown finds the new SWAP bulletin board to be absolutely level. Photo by Yolanda Waddell.

Boardwalk Bulletin Board Goes Up

Elfin Forest visitors who came to the Forest on Friday, August 26, saw two people, Pat and George Brown, installing a frame on two posts with a box just west of the 16th Street boardwalk extension. When their job was complete, our new Elfin Forest bulletin board provided visitors with information about upcoming 3rd Saturday walks, Weed Warrior work party dates, photos of flowers currently in bloom, and other useful news items.

Members of our SWAP chapter have wished for a bulletin board along the boardwalk for many years. It will provide a visible place for information that we want Elfin Forest visitors to see. The SWAP Board thanks Pat Brown, Chair of the Trail Guide Committee, for doing the research to find a suitable weatherproof bulletin board, for designing and building the frame with her husband, George, and to both of them for undertaking the installation.

The bulletin board will be maintained by Pat and two or three Board members. Suggestions for information to display can be phoned to 528-0392, our SWAP message phone.

Weed Warriors

Weed Warriors Have Lots of Pull

The assignment for the August 6 work party was to pull veldt grass growing near the houses on the east side of the 16th Street boardwalk. Seven stalwart Weed Warriors tackled the job with energy. By noon, they had pulled twelve bags of the evil weed. Our snail monitor, Bob Meyer, was down with a cold that day, but came to the Elfin Forest to show new workers what a Morro Shoulderband Snail looks like. Then he returned when a Shoulderband Snail was found, and moved the snail to a safe place. In all it was a most productive day. Our thanks to Weed Warriors Lannie Erickson, Prisila and Rich Johnson, Mason Landrum, Ron Rasmussen, Jessica Schulte, and Yolanda Waddell.

Removing green fencing and fastening down an erosion control log were the tasks for the day on Saturday, September 3rd. The SWAP Board felt that it is time to begin removing some of the fence that is no longer needed to protect areas being restored. Conservation Chair Ron Rasmussen did a visual survey of the Forest's green fence and selected sections where the plants are now so dense that they protect the area where they are growing as well as the fence would. The Weed Warriors "harvested" about 12 rolls of fence, snipping very carefully in places where the plants had grown through the fence. The day's work was done by Jay Bonestell, Dave Bowlus, Pat Brown, Prisila and Rich Johnson, Ron Rasmussen, Dean Thompson and Yolanda Waddell.



Weed Warriors Prisila Johnson, Dean Thompson and Pat Brown (L-R) worked to remove fencing that is no longer needed during the September work party.

Let's all pull together

By Yolanda Waddell

(The following can be sung to the melody of "Don't Fence Me In")

Give us a hand, we need hands under foggy skies above
To pull out some fences.
Plus there's sand lots of sand to shovel, rake and move
before the rain commences.

Let us work all together using lots of elbow grease,
Make those old green fences come apart with ease.
When they're gone the Forest's gonna be a showpiece,
De-fencing's grand.



The September 3 work party found Ron Rasmussen, left, and Rich Johnson fastening an erosion control bar into the sand next to the 14th Street trail. Photo by Yolanda Waddell.

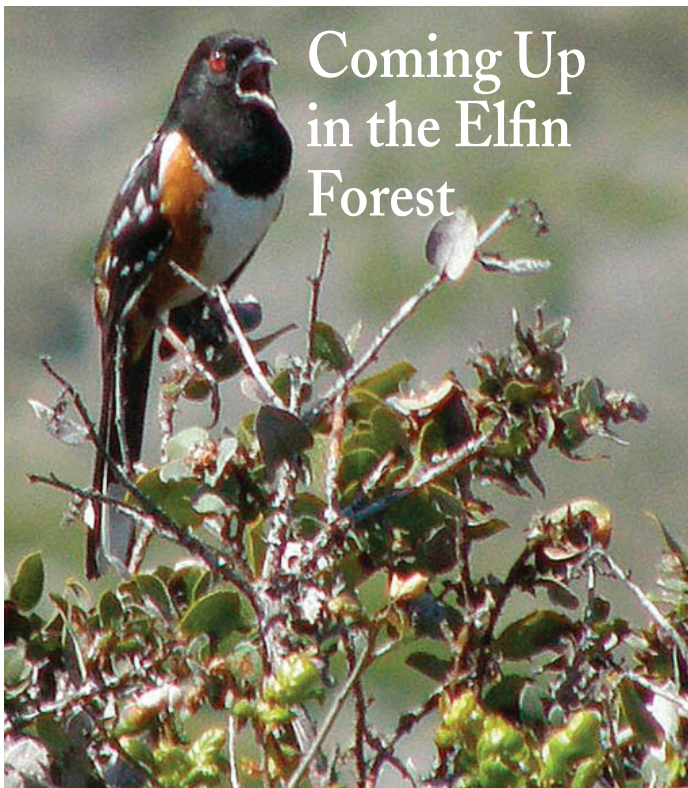
SWAP First Saturday Work Parties

We invite you to join us on any first Saturday from 9 a.m. to noon at the north end of 15th Street in Los Osos to enjoy satisfying physical activity in fresh air amid lovely surroundings. Please dress for wind, fog, or sun. Layers work well. Long pants and long shirt sleeves are good. Sturdy shoes are a must. Take care not to park in front of driveways or mailboxes. To request more information, call (805)528-0392.

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.



Text and Photos By Jean Wheeler

Summer-blooming shrubs will be finalizing their abundant displays during October and November. Dune buckwheat blossoms (pictured) have darkened from brilliant white to the pink and rust colors of early autumn. Formerly white blossoms of black sage have darkened to black pompom balls appropriate for Halloween. White to pink or lavender California asters will continue to bloom through these months into December.

Many winter-blooming shrubs already show swelling buds, with a few early white to lavender blossoms of ceanothus (familiarily known as California lilac or buckbrush) are already open early in September. The boardwalk will continue to be bordered by copiously flowering shrubs, just different species. Check pictures on the new boardwalk bulletin board between 16th and 15h street junctions for my photos with names of plants prominently in bloom.

For bird watchers these can be the most exciting months of the year. Thousands of birds arrive to spend the winter on our mild California coast. Many more visit here briefly for a rest on their way to hotter climates from Mexico to Tierra del Fuego. All seek holidays from the rigors of raising those demanding fledglings on nesting grounds now turning dangerously cold and short of food supplies.

The main arrival month for most ducks is October, especially for Mallards, Wigeons, Teal, and Ruddy Ducks. Canada Geese begin to come in October, while a few thousand Black Brant are usually here by middle to late November, dining on eelgrass in the bay.

Terrestrial birds will also be settling into the Elfin Forest for the winter or migrating through on their way south. 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.

On an autumn walk in the Elfin Forest, you may take pleasure in green shrubs and flowers opening here just as leaves are falling and will be gone for months in most of our nation. Enjoy the everyday activities of our year-around resident wildlife, such as the pictured Spotted Towhee, as well as all the arrivals, departures, and passers through on the great fall bird migrations.

Where to Buy the 2012 Elfin Forest Calendar

The 2012 Elfin Forest calendar makes a great gift. Order it using the form on page 11 or buy it for the same price, \$15.00, from one of the following 15 vendors:

- Ace Hardware, 1080 Los Osos Valley Road, Los Osos, 528-5255
- ASAP Repographics, 495 Morro Bay Blvd., Morro Bay, 772-3540
- Coalesce Bookstore, 845 Main Street, Morro Bay, 772-2880
- Los Osos Chamber of Commerce, 781 Los Osos Valley Rd., LO, 528-4884
- Los Osos Fitness, 1078 Los Osos Valley Road, Los Osos, 528-1190
- Los Osos Flower Market, 1032 Los Osos Valley Road, LO, 528-4990
- Los Osos Rexall & Gifts, 989 Los Osos Valley Road, LO, 528-1017
- Morro Bay Chamber of Commerce, 845 Embarcadero, MB, 772-4467
- Otter Bay Gifts, 875 Embarcadero, Morro Bay, 772-1568
- Perry's Parcel Service, 783 Quintana, Morro Bay, 772-2000
- The Photo Shop, 1027 Marsh St., San Luis Obispo, 543-4025
- SAGE Ecological Nursery, 1188 Los Osos Valley Road, Los Osos, 528-1800
- SLO Botanical Gardens, 3450 Dairy Creek Road, SLO, 541-1400
- Volumes of Pleasure Bookstore, 1016 Los Osos Valley Road, LO, 528-5565

WALKS in the ELFIN FOREST

Third (and Second) Saturday Walks

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. – Archaeology Walk (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 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 the complex world of the Elfin Forest's past inhabitants.

November 19, 9:30 a.m. – Stewarding the Land

We've saved a piece of land; now, what do we do with it? Join Robert Hill, Executive Director of The Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County, for a walk and talk about acquiring land and then repairing broken landscapes that suffered years of abuse. He'll point out several conservation properties that can be seen from the Elfin Forest; almost all were planned for development in the past. We'll learn about methods and costs of restoring land once it has been bought, and gain a greater appreciation of the work of conservation organizations and individuals who work to save land for future generations.

December 17, 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, including in the Elfin Forest. It's what you walk on when the pavement ends because all of Los Osos was once a series of sand dunes. Soil scientist Jim Brownell will describe local soils and talk about how important soils are in determining what plants will grow in them. We'll learn how sandy soil both benefits and stresses plants that grow in Los Osos and the Elfin Forest. This is an excellent walk for gardeners.

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.



Lisa Harper Henderson of the Marine Mammal Center captivated walk participants with her descriptions of sea lion behavior and the lives of coastal marine mammals. Photo by Yolanda Waddell.



A rapt audience listened to Jeff Grover's dynamic descriptions of the movement of tectonic plates, formation of the ancient morros and development of what is now Los Osos and the Elfin Forest.

Photo by Yolanda Waddell.

Publicity Person

Terry Gates Leaves Post

For the past eight years, Terry Gates has been SWAP's media contact person. Each month she e-mails a press release about the first Saturday work party and also the 3rd Saturday walk to local newspapers, radio and TV stations. She has done it without fail and on time, two to three weeks before the notice will appear in print or be announced. In addition she would send out press releases about SWAP special events such as our Calendar Release Party or Annual Meeting. Now she has become too busy to handle that task. We are sorry to lose her as our publicity person, and are most appreciative of her years of service to SWAP and the Elfin Forest. Thank you, Terry.

Thank You to Our New and Renewing Members

Compiled by Betsy Kinter, SWAP Database Coordinator

NEW MEMBERS:

Susanne Altermann
Jim McCoy*

RENEWING MEMBERS:

T. Alden & M. Sinel*	Gaby & Ken Levine*
Susan & John Armstrong	Leora Markwort
C. Dawn Aulenbrock & Joseph Aulenbrock*	Frank R. Martinez
Sandy Baer	Robert McDougle*
Leslie Bowker*	Beth & Sheldon Miller*
David Bowlus & Beverly Boyd*	Bev & Bill Moylan*
Ray Bracken*	Richard S. Parker
Kathleen Copeland*	Robert Pavlik
Scott Danielson*	Ronald E. Rasmussen*
Fran Edwards*	Tom & Susan Richards
Dale Alden Elliott*	Mildred Schwab*
Robert & Marilyn Freiler	Mary C. Topp
Sterling & Virginia Gottlieb*	Elaine Townsend*
Beverly Hardy*	The Ungar Family
Ginny Irving	Bill & Norma Vaughan*
Rich & Prisila Johnson*	Yolanda & Jay Waddell*
Michael & Betsy Kinter*	Jean D. Wheeler*
	Rosemary Wolter*

DONATIONS:

William Johnson (donation for trail guide)

**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, Betsy Kinter, Frank Kurczewski,
Debbie Levi, Gary McDonald, Ron Rasmussen, Dirk and Bonnie Walters,
Yolanda Waddell and Jean Wheeler.

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If possible, all copy should be submitted by e-mail to:
oakleaves@elfin-forest.org.



Some unwelcome squatters built this shelter in an Elfin Forest grove.

Photos by Yolanda Waddell.

Campsite Found in Elfin Forest

Our vigilant member who has found trash, sofas, a stolen laptop and other items in Elfin Forest oak groves during the Spring, recently spotted a structure in the grove where he found the laptop. Oak and Manzanita branches and two tarpaulins were draped over the trunks of an oak tree. Scattered around were old newspapers, flyers, plastic bags, cigarette boxes, soft drink bottles and cans, a Southern Comfort bottle, etc. He reported that the trash filled a large garbage bag. There are two woodrat nests in that grove, and the woodrats had incorporated some of the paper items into their nests.

Ron Rasmussen reported the finding to Mark Wagner, Supervising Ranger for our area. Within a day, park rangers had removed the structure. We ask that if our readers hear sounds or see people in groves off of the boardwalk, please phone our message phone, 528-0392. We'll check it out and notify County Parks if necessary. It's not necessary to speak to the trespassers.





New Item – 2012 Calendar!

Order several beautiful SWAP 2012 Elfin Forest Calendars for yourself and as gifts. 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.

Photo (at left) by Pat Brown.



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. Stunning 2012 ELFIN FOREST CALENDAR

Local photographers featured in this 9"X12" 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: \$2.75 for 1, \$3.75 for 2 = ____

For more calendars or shipping costs outside 934 __,

call (805) 528-0392

TOTAL OF ORDER

\$____

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

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City/State/Zip: _____

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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.

Annual Meeting at Sage Eco-Garden, see page 11

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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Calling All Volunteers!

Booth Staffers

are needed for SWAP's booth at the annual Los Osos Oktoberfest this year on Sunday, October 30 on 2nd St in downtown Baywood Park, from 9 am to 5 pm. We'll inform visitors about SWAP and sell T-shirts, sweatshirts, our beautiful 2012 calendar, guide-books, notecards, etc. If you can work a two-hour shift between 9:00 am and 4:00 pm, please call SWAP's message phone at 528-0392. Give your name, shift preference, and phone number. Join us, you'll have fun!

We also need a new **Publicity Person:** someone who has a computer, knows how to send a group e-mail, and can forward information about SWAP work parties, walks and special events to the media.

A Web Site Maintenance Person

is also needed, to help that committee keep information on SWAP's Elfin Forest web site up-to-date. We will provide training.

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.