



OAK LEAVES

A PUBLICATION OF THE LOS OSOS / MORRO BAY CHAPTER OF SMALL WILDERNESS AREA PRESERVATION
P.O. BOX 6442, LOS OSOS, CALIFORNIA 93412-6442 ❖ (805) 528-0392 ❖ JUNE / JULY 2012



How to Become “Connected” to a Place

By Ron Rasmussen
SWAP Chair and Conservation Committee Chair
[Based on the writings of Wallace Stegner and many others]

“If you don’t know where you are you don’t know who you are”
Wendell Berry

A large part of North American history over the past several hundred years is based on the stories of European immigrants as they moved from the East Coast westward across the continent until they were stopped by the Pacific Ocean. During this migration some put down roots and formed communities reminiscent of their ancestral homes. Others continued on to the coast pursuing the goal of free land and riches in California. Some prospered, but many either perished or turned back to more familiar surroundings. However, as travel became easier and the hospitable climate became well known the movement west resumed.

The West Coast population is now dominated by immigrants, not only from Europe but, via the Pacific Ocean, from Asia as well. Some may question the appellation “immigrant” applied to 2nd, 3rd or even 4th generation families. However, these are newcomers compared to the Native American cultures that were established thousands of years ago along the West Coast.

Many newcomers do not fully appreciate the local environment in the way that the native cultures have done over millennia. But there is a way to connect. The choice to live permanently here along California’s Central Coast offers a path to living “in” the land not just “on” the land. Continuing on this path does not involve reshaping the environment to resemble some idealized version, but rather integrating oneself into the existing environment.

Remember that the existing biota is the result of selective pressure of natural forces acting over thousands of years. Without an understanding of the present environment any attempts to make the environment “better” are often failures or short-lived at best. When we are aware of the advantages and limitations of the existing environment we can choose personal behavior that will best preserve it.

To live “in” the land one needs to accept the environment on its own terms. Here in Los Osos and Morro Bay that means,

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Students Visit Forest

Story & Photo By Pat Akey, Education Chair

In March we had visitors from Steve Hendricks’ (pictured above, standing at far left) Cuesta College Environmental Biology class. The walk was led by SWAP docent, Dr. Les Bowker (standing, 3rd from left). The subjects included the history of the Elfin Forest, the geology of the estuary, how that affects habitats of the Forest, and the plant communities appearing in the Forest.

Deliveries of informational fliers to announce our field trips into the Elfin Forest were made to the Baywood, Monarch and Del Mar Elementary Schools, and Los Osos Middle School. Also, we are hoping for responses from fliers distributed at Cuesta College about the need for additional docents for our school walks program.

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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
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, June 14,
and Thursday, July 12.**

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.

What's Next? An Update on Projects for the Elfin Forest

By Ron Rasmussen

SWAP Chair and Conservation Committee Chair (Photos by Yolanda Waddell)

On April 16 a meeting was held in the Elfin Forest with Shaun Cooper, SLO County Senior Parks Planner; Mark Wagner, County Parks Pecho District Supervising Ranger; and Mike Anderson, California Conservation Corps (CCC) Conservation Supervisor. Bob Meyer, Ron Rasmussen and Yolanda Waddell represented SWAP. Several subjects were discussed and conclusions are summarized below.

Installation for handrails and new steps for the Boardwalk: The CCC will provide specifications for this work. SWAP will contribute funds and volunteer labor. No firm completion date has been set, but we hope this project will be done this fiscal year.

Extension of Boardwalk from 13th Street to main boardwalk: This extension has priority because of an erosion problem at the street end and also where the trail meets the boardwalk. A delay in undertaking this project is caused by the need for funding. No firm cost estimate

has been made, but based on previous experience it will likely be at least \$100,000. SWAP and SLO County funds are not presently available. However, possible grant funds may be available in 2013.

Revegetation at 11th Street damage site and elsewhere: Priority will be given to the 11th street site. SWAP will work with the County and CCC to plan for new planting in the fall of this year prior to the rainy season. No critical sites elsewhere were identified. The green fencing at some sites where plants have previously been placed may be removed. At this time the latter sites have not been specified.

New symbolic fencing: A new section of this fencing has been installed along the east side of the Orchid Trail along South Bay Boulevard. The goal is to discourage erosion caused by foot traffic on the steep slope above the road.



Discussing the need to replace the steps at the 15th Street path and add a handrail are (L – R) Ron Rasmussen, Mike Anderson, Bob Meyer and Shaun Cooper.



Representatives from SWAP, the CCC and County Parks met in the Elfin Forest to plan future projects. From left to right are Mike Anderson, CCC Conservation Supervisor; Ron Rasmussen and Bob Meyer of SWAP's Conservation Committee; Shaun Cooper, Senior Planner for County Parks; and Mike Wagner, Supervising Ranger for County Parks Pecho District.

Additional sections being considered for installation of this fencing are along the Habitat Trail leading to the Klopfer Grove and the short section connecting the Orchid Trail to the Habitat Trail. These trails are much used by frequent visitors. The additional fencing will encourage visitors not to use other less-used trails. Finally, the fencing on the trail leading from High Point to the Orchid Trail would be completed. SWAP funds will be used for materials. Labor will be provided by the CCC and SWAP volunteers. No firm date has been set for completion.

Trail Trimmers Keep the Elfin Forest Accessible

By Yolanda Waddell with notes from Pat Murray
Photos at right by Yolanda Waddell

SWAP's Elfin Forest Trail Trimming Crew was formed in 2001 by Pat Murray. She had recently retired and while doing weeding in the Forest, noticed that plants, shrubs and oak trees were encroaching on the boardwalk, in some places making it difficult to pass. County Parks staff had very little time to deal with the problem, so Pat began clipping and soon was joined by other volunteers. Their objective is to monitor and maintain the vegetation along Elfin Forest designated trails and the boardwalk.

Pat received some instruction in the art of pruning shrubs and trees, and then passed the methods and information on to new Trail Trimmers. They leave all clippings in the Forest, hidden from view for aesthetic reasons. Each Trail Trimmer wears a County Parks Volunteer badge and generally is assigned a specific area of the Elfin Forest to keep trimmed. They provide their own work gloves, clippers and loppers, and whisk broom (to clear the boardwalk of clippings). They are asked to carry a cell phone that is programmed with the phone numbers of the County Sheriff, County Parks Supervising Ranger, Animal Control and SWAP's message phone.

Because they are out in the Elfin Forest regularly, Trail Trimmers are the eyes and ears of SWAP and County Parks. They notify SWAP and/or the proper authority when they see a problem, and contact Pat when something is amiss with the plants that they care for – a tree that is dying, for instance. Periodically Trail Trimmers receive advanced training from the County Parks arborist, Chuck Woodard.

I recently followed a husband and wife trail trimming team, Ralph and Loisann Cass, on their rounds in the Elfin Forest. They joined the Trail Trimming Crew about three years ago when they began walking their dog on the boardwalk and met Pat who was hard at work with her clippers. Following training by Pat, they became dedicated to their volunteer job, visiting the Forest two or three times a week to remove intruding branches from the boardwalk. They enjoy their volunteer work for SWAP and take pride in keeping the Forest accessible for visitors. Other hard-working SWAP trail trimmers are Jerry Ambrose, Otis Carter and Dean Thompson.

Pat Murray has been Trail Trimming Crew Leader for eleven years in addition to her other SWAP duties as: Board member; Chair of Property and Records that includes coordinating production, inventory and distribution of all merchandise including T-shirts; Volunteer Committee Co-Chair; and Outreach Committee member. She wants to pull back a bit from her many activities, and is actively **looking for a new Trail Trimming Crew Leader**. She will be glad to speak with anyone who is interested in either being a crewmember or a crew leader. Just leave a message on SWAP's phone, 528-0392 or e-mail her at patm@elfin-forest.org.



Above: Ralph and Loisann Cass are a SWAP trail trimming team who work to maintain open trails and boardwalk for access by visitors.

Below: Ralph Cass, left, and Ron Rasmussen, kneeling, discuss the best way to trim an oak tree back from the boardwalk without damaging the tree or making it look unsightly.



“Connected” *continued from page 1*

among other things, continuing to maintain areas like the Elfin Forest in their original state. This remnant of the once much more extensive California coastal chaparral allows us to connect with the region where we have chosen to live and hopefully “put down roots.” Look at everything when you visit the Elfin Forest and remember what you have seen. Make that memory part of yourself. This will help you understand the local environment and know where you are and how you are part of this wonderful place. Help SWAP keep the Elfin Forest a way for all of us “newcomers” to connect to the land where we have chosen to make our homes.

Researcher Discovers Rare Insect in the Elfin Forest

By Yolanda Waddell,

based on notes by Frank E. Kurczewski, Ph.D.

Dr. Frank Kurczewski, professor emeritus in entomology from the State University of New York (SUNY), Syracuse, visited the Elfin Forest for the fourth year in a row during March and April. He specializes in the study of wasps, and has been observing three species of digger wasps that inhabit the Elfin Forest and Montana de Oro. They are *Tachysphex miwok*, *T. clarconis* and *T. tarsatus*. See Dr. Kurczewski's article on page 4 of the October /November, 2011 *Oakleaves*. (available on www.elfin-forest.org under Forest Library).

The wasps are small, ranging in size from 6.0 to 10.0 millimeters long (smaller than the diameter of a dime, which is 17 millimeters across). They are adapted to sandy soils in a treeless environment with cool spring temperatures and rainfall-deprived but foggy summers. The males live, on average, only about two weeks and the females three to four weeks under optimal nesting conditions. Therefore, it is necessary to be on hand when the wasps emerge from their nests and begin hunting the tiny grasshoppers that their offspring will feed on. A female digger wasp will dig a burrow, capture and sting several grasshoppers, lay an egg on one of them, and close the burrow.

Dr. Kurczewski found that the *T. miwok* digger wasp emerged more than a month earlier this year (between February 21-25) than in 2011 (between March 28-31). He concluded that *T. miwok's* early emergence this year was connected with moderate January and limited February rainfall; there were only seven rainy and full cloud cover days in January-February, and above normal temperatures during that period. The resulting higher daily sand temperature and warmer soil seems to have caused *T. miwok's* early emergence.

In the process of observing the activities of digger wasps, Dr. Kurczewski found that local robber flies are reducing the populations of digger wasps at an alarming rate. Robber flies are opportunistic predators, feeding on flies, wasps, bees, and flying ants. They, in turn, are preyed upon by birds, spiders, other robber flies and possibly lizards and small snakes.

Common Robber Flies are 10 to 14 millimeters long, much larger than digger wasps. They fly fast and have a long pointed beak that is injected into the neck of their prey, stabbing the thoracic nerve cord area and paralyzing the prey. Then they feed on the juices of the immobilized insect. Robber flies are six times as common as digger wasps at the Elfin Forest. They capture and feed on 10 to 20 insects per day, and lay 30 to 40 eggs. In one hour and 45 minutes, Dr. Kurczewski saw 37 Common Robber Flies (*Machimus occidentalis*) in a 20 square foot area near the 13th Street entrance to the Forest.

Dr. Kurczewski captured several robber flies that he thought might be common and sent them for identification to Dr. Eric M. Fisher, a research associate with the California State Collection of

Rare Insect continued on page 5



Entomologist Dr. Frank Kurczewski was delighted to spot a digger wasp flying near the sand in an area off of the 13th Street trail. Robber flies had severely reduced the digger wasp population.
Photo by Yolanda Waddell.



*Above: A small robber fly, *Cryptopogon princeps*, was collected by Dr. Frank Kurczewski in the Elfin Forest and identified by Dr. Eric Fisher, a robber fly specialist, as being 300-400 miles south of its usual habitat.*

Below: The Common Robber Fly is a fierce predator that, though only 10 to 14 millimeters long, can attack and kill bees, wasps and flying ants.
Photos by Bob Meyer.



Stinging Nettle

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

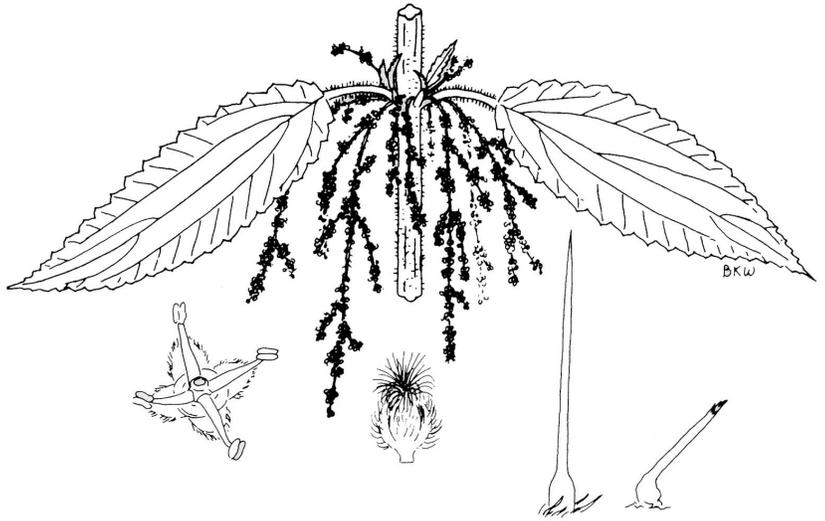
This month's plant is one most of us try to avoid because of the trichomes (hairs) that cover its stem and leaves. The hairs have a bulbous base filled with a fluid that when deposited on unprotected skin causes a burning or stinging sensation. It turns out that the irritating fluid is most effective if deposited in a cut. To insure this cut, the sharp point of the hair breaks off leaving a jagged tip which when dragged along the skin results in a tiny cut. While the cut is being made, lateral and/or downward pressure on the hair's base puts pressure on the fluid-filled bulbous base of the hair. This causes the fluid in the hair to be forced up and out the hollow hair shaft to be deposited in the fine cut caused by the broken tip. Thus the stinging hairs are each tiny hypodermic needles! If you haven't guessed the plant by now, it is the true stinging nettle, *Urtica dioica* ssp. *holosericea*.

Our common stinging nettle is now considered a subspecies of a very wide ranging species that is found throughout the North American and Eurasian continents. The new Jepson Manual indicates that our subspecies is native. However, the Eurasian subspecies, *U. d.* ssp. *dioica*, is an extremely widespread weed as it has been widely introduced in North America. Apparently there is at least one unconfirmed report of the Eurasian subspecies in California.

So what does one do if one runs into a patch of stinging nettle? My professor in college told us "to wash the itchy area well and then douse it with rubbing alcohol which will cause the itch to disappear in one-half hour." He would then add, "If you do nothing the itch will go away in 30 minutes." I'll let each reader decide whether to treat stinging nettle irritation or not. Dr. Rhonda Riggins added one additional stinging nettle story. On field trips, when she would find stinging nettle, she would say that she was so strong, that the nettle didn't bother her. To prove it, she would grab a nettle plant and pull it out. Her students were impressed. However, she had a trick! She was careful to limit her exposure to the palm of her hand where she had thick calluses, as do most of us. The delicate hairs couldn't penetrate the calluses, so they didn't cause any harm.

Stinging nettles are partial to moist soils and are found most often near streams. They can also be found near springs or in hollows in coastal sand dunes that are low enough to approach the water table. There are no stinging nettles in the boardwalk area of the Elfin Forest, but don't go breaking through vegetation immediately upslope from the salt marsh. Remember there is a band of fresh water overlying denser salt water which flows out from under the dune here.

The genus name, *Urtica*, is derived from Latin and means 'to burn'. I have to admit that I prefer to say the genus name reminds us that to come in contact with this plant (h)urtica! Also of note is that stinging nettle pain begins immediately on contact. This is in contrast to poison oak (*Toxicodendron diversiloba*) which usually takes 30 minutes or more to stimulate your auto-immune system



before itching commences. The species epithet, *dioica*, is short for dioecious. Dioecious is a fancy botanical term for stamens and pistils borne on separate plants, i.e., the plant bears either staminate (male) or pistillate (female) flowers but not both.

According to the Jepson Manual, our Western subspecies of stinging nettle is the hoary (stinging) nettle. The common name nettle is used for a lot of plants, not just ones that possess stinging hairs. It's used for any plant that possesses hairs that look like they might sting. Our most common example of this is the totally unrelated mint, hedge nettle, *Stachys bullata*. Hedge nettles are common along streams too.

Having spent all these words telling why people should avoid this plant, I need to point out the Eurasian subspecies of this plant has been widely used as a spinach substitute and rennet. Boiling denatures the irritating fluid and softens the hairs. Boiling the roots can produce a yellow dye. Stems produce a strong fiber which has been favorably compared to another stem fiber, linen.

Rare Insect *continued from page 4*

Arthropods in Sacramento. Dr. Fisher phoned him, quite excited, to say that most of the robber flies were the common *Machimus occidentalis*, but some were *Cryptopogon princeps*, a robber fly that is found in the Cascade Mountain Range from south of Mount Lassen in Northern California to British Columbia. That is, the *Cryptopogon princeps* robber flies collected by Dr. Kurczewski in the Elfin Forest are 300 to 400 miles south of their normal range – the southernmost sighting of this species in North America.

Dr. Fisher indicated that the series of *Cryptopogon princeps* collected at the Elfin Forest is atypical of the species, is a highly rare find, and needs further study. How did the *Cryptopogon princeps* robber flies make their way to the Elfin Forest, and why are they living along the coast instead of in the mountains? These and other questions will challenge current and future entomologists. Now and in years to come, the Elfin Forest is a living laboratory, waiting for researchers to learn its secrets.

Elfin Forest Sightings:

In a way, the Elfin Forest paths and boardwalk can be thought of as thoroughfares for travelers in the Forest. From time to time, as with all thoroughfares, there is “construction” going on. The adjacent three photos show evidence of just such an occasion. Ron Rasmussen (at left, below) and Bob Meyer (below) were stringing fence cable along the 12th Street trail on the first Saturday in April, but what the visitor first saw was a sawhorse with a spool of cable hanging from it. Farther up the trail, Ron and Bob were measuring, pulling cable through the stanchions and attaching clamps.

To get an idea of future “construction” projects, see Ron’s article, “What’s Next? An Update on Projects for the Elfin Forest” on page 2.



Summer Mischief Should Be Reported

Are you one of our many readers who make frequent visits to the Elfin Forest? If you are, we have a favor to ask. During the summer we often see an increase in vandalism and mischievous disturbances. Another problem is dogs off leash.

If you see vandalism or have concerns about problems in the Elfin Forest, please call Mark Wagner, SLO County Parks Supervising Ranger at 781-1196.

If you see dogs off leash, please call County Animal Control at 781-4400. Owners of dogs off-leash can be cited. This has been an increasing problem in recent months. One observer noted that eight out of ten dogs were off leash the morning that he was out there. He also mentioned seeing two different dog owners throwing tennis balls off the boardwalk into the coastal dune scrub for their dogs to chase.

If you witness vandalism in progress or obvious crimes, please call the County Sheriff at 781-4550.

Because SWAP is the Forest steward, we would also like to hear from you after you have called the authorities. Our message phone number is 528-0392. Thank you for your help. It’s a good idea to program the above phone numbers into your cell phone.

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.



Weed Warrior Report

Text and Photos By Yolanda Waddell

Our Weed Warriors had a two-fold assignment during April's first Saturday work party. Bob Meyer and Conservation Chair Ron Rasmussen strung cable through symbolic fence stanchions along the 12th Street trail. It replaced cable that had been borrowed for a larger symbolic fence construction job by the CCC earlier in the year, when they ran out of the black cable.

One half mile to the east, Weed Warriors Lannie Erickson, Prisila and Rich Johnson, and Yolanda Waddell worked along the slope above South Bay Boulevard, pulling young veldt grass plants. Because veldt grass seeds remain viable in the ground for up to 20 years, this annual spring veldt grass pull is likely to continue into future years. However, satisfaction comes from knowing that pulling the current crop prevents thousands of veldt grass plants from sprouting next year.

Weed Warrior turnout has been somewhat low in recent months. There is always work to do in the Elfin Forest, and new volunteers are most welcome. For answers to questions about our First Saturday work parties or to sign up, e-mail Ron Rasmussen at ron@elfin-forest.org or leave a message on SWAP's phone at 805-528-0392.



Weed Warriors Rich and Prisila Johnson had a contest to see who could pull the most veldt grass during the April work party. They were working on the slope above South Bay Boulevard.

Let's all pull together

By Yolanda Waddell

The African Veldt is the home of the grass
that in the Elfin Forest delights to trespass
and hog all the water and space, alas.
So we'll dig and pull veldt grass
and fill our bags full,
then munch Ron's great cookies;
our day won't be dull.

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.



Elfin Forest Visitors:

Many Cuesta College and Cal Poly instructors know that the Elfin Forest is an excellent living laboratory to see native plants, varieties of coastal habitats, birds and other wildlife, and remnants of ancient native campsites. In the adjacent photo, Cuesta College Bio Sciences Chair Ron Ruppert is taking his Natural History class on a field trip in the Forest.

Coming Up in the Elfin Forest

Text and Photos By Jean Wheeler

This is the best time of the year for blue flowers along our coast. A particular favorite of many flower watchers in the Elfin Forest is called wooly star. Look for its low clumps topped with many lovely blue blossoms along the 15th Street sand trail near the boardwalk.

Bush Lupine Point was named for the lush blue flower spikes surrounding it at this time of year. Moro Blue butterflies seek to lay eggs on these plants, hosts for their caterpillars. Urban development has greatly reduced the prevalence of bush lupines along our central coast, causing concern for the survival of these small butterflies.

Many yellow and orange flowers can be seen across the Elfin Forest in summer, including deerweed, California poppies, sticky-monkey flowers and golden yarrow. Coastal dudleya (pictured at left) produces low rosettes of succulent leaves often nearly hidden under the edges of larger shrubs. These give rise to foot-high reddish stems branching near the top with clusters of yellow-orange flowers. Hummingbirds are attracted to the trumpet-shaped openings of these flowers.

Pink flowers are provided by spikes of California hedge nettle and cobwebby thistle. The confusingly-named Indian pinks have red flowers in the understory of the oaks. They get their name from the edges of their flowers appearing to have been cut by pinking shears (see photo at top left).

Shrubs with white flowers blooming around much of the boardwalk in summer are chamise and black sage. In the understory, white flowers decorate pearly everlasting, croton, and horkelia.

June and July continue to be major butterfly months in the Elfin Forest. Our pocket guide (sold on page 11) charts a full dozen species of butterflies and 3 species of moths that may be flying in these two months and indicates their host plants. For example, Acmon Blue and Silvery Blue butterflies are attracted to deerweed, while Variable Checkerspots seek sticky monkey-flowers but Gabb's Checkerspots go for California poppies.

Although winter's huge flotillas of ducks, geese, and shorebirds are long gone, close inspection reveals there are still a lot of water birds around. For many species of ducks and shorebirds, some individuals remain all year or even arrive to nest here after vacationing for the winter farther south. Among waders, willets and killdeer remain very common. Also resident all year are great blue and black-crowned night herons, along with many snowy and greater egrets.

Most of our raptor species are here all year and likely to be actively hunting with fledglings to feed in June and July. Many chaparral and oak woodland birds are also busy raising young—such as hummingbirds, flycatchers, wrens, warblers, sparrows, thrashers, finches, scrub jays, blackbirds, and quail.

Enjoy a colorful and exciting summer outing along the sand trails and boardwalk of our small wilderness area!



OAK LEAVES

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Bob Meyer, Pat Murray, Ron Rasmussen, Yolanda Waddell,
Dirk and Bonnie Walters, and Jean Wheeler

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

WALKS in the ELFIN FOREST

Third Saturday Walks

June 16, 9:30 a.m. – Sketch Walk

Join artist and naturalist Barbara Renshaw for a stroll along the Elfin Forest boardwalk. Take in views of the Morro Bay Estuary, oak groves, expanses of coastal sage scrub and chaparral, and the volcanic Morros beyond. You'll stop in the Rose Bowker Oak Grove to enjoy the ancient gnarled coast live oak trees. Barbara will tell you a bit about the native plants that you see along the way and will choose a few favorite places for sketching. No drawing experience is necessary. Bring a pad of drawing paper, colored pencils or pastels, and some drinking water. Bring a camera too. You'll be pleased to discover the artist hidden inside of you.

July 21, 9:30 a.m. – Literary Stroll

Do you enjoy being read to? Would you enjoy strolling around the Elfin Forest boardwalk and hearing the words of famous natural history writers? Then this walk is meant for you. Cal Trans historian Robert Pavlik will share selections from the works of such authors as Robinson Jeffers, Wallace Stegner, Rachel Carson, Gary Snyder and others from this and past centuries. As you follow Bob along the boardwalk, stopping here and there for a reading, he will provide you with a delightful menu of descriptions and impressions that can be enjoyed in the Elfin Forest environment. He'll also provide us with a list of his readings for those who want to read further.

August 18, 9:30 a.m. – Small Mammals & Rodents

Dr. Francis Villablanca, Curator of Birds and Mammals at Cal Poly, will lead a walk in the Elfin Forest focusing on small mammals that inhabit the Forest, including the Dusky-footed Woodrat. There are about twenty species of small mammals known to live in the Forest, but few are seen because most hunt and feed at night. Dr. Villablanca will point out evidence that they are there, and share stories and information about the part they play in research being done at Cal Poly, and how they survive in a small wilderness like the Elfin Forest.

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.



During her April 3rd Saturday butterfly walk, leader Pat Brown demonstrated containers to enclose a chrysalis or cocoon so the butterfly can be seen when it emerges. It was so foggy on that day that only caterpillars, not butterflies, were seen. Photo by Jean Wheeler.



On Sunday, the day after the 3rd Saturday "butterfly-less" walk, Pat Brown led a group of photographers through the Elfin Forest. A partly sunny sky brought out some butterflies, much to the photographers' delight. Here Pat is talking to them about the stages in the development from caterpillar to butterfly. Photo by Mike Baird.

Calendar Closeout Sale ~ Only \$2!

The last copies of our beautiful 2012 calendar are now being sold off for only \$2 each. Where else can you get 13 nine-inch by twelve-inch pages of full color prints taken in our wonderful Elfin Forest by top nature photographers for only \$2? A gorgeous rainbow over the Elfin Forest and the back bay. The vivid stripes of turkey-tail mushrooms. A closeup view of a gorgeous Gabb's Checkerspot Butterfly. And such a variety of scenic views along and away from the boardwalk. See Shoppers page 11 or call (805)528-0392 to order.



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.

Thank You to Our New and Renewing Members

Compiled by Betsy Kinter, SWAP Database Coordinator

NEW MEMBERS:

Angelina Page Loesch
Jack & Frieda Murphy*

RENEWING MEMBERS:

Florence Appel*	Mimi & Gene Kalland*
Patty Arnold	Roberta Knapp*
Donna & John Banks	W.G. Mcelhinney*
George & Cynthia Boatenhamer	Marilyn Moore*
Susan & Ed Chandler*	Carolyn Pendery*
Thomas & Michele Esser (through PG&E's Campaign for the Community)*	Billy R. Pewitt*
Guy Fitzwater & Libbie Agron*	Barbara & Robert Rosenthal
Gary Giannico*	Monica Rowcliffe*
Charlotte & Richard Gordon	Patrick & Dorothy Rygh*
Herbert & Debra Holt*	Kathleen W. Toscano*
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DONATIONS:

Cameron Mitchell Tucker/Cameron Mitchell Productions
Chevron Humankind Matching Gift Program
(for Kathleen Delzell)
Southern California Hemerocallis and Amaryllis Society

**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.*

Celebrating Our Members

Congratulations to long-time Weed Warrior Steve Cake on his recent marriage to Karin Leonard. They tied the knot on March 24th at St. Benedict's Episcopal Church in Los Osos with a service that included the "Call to the Four Directions" blown on a conch shell by a Chumash elder and the song, "Chumawish, Song of Holding Steady." Steve and Karin now reside in Pismo Beach, which means the Weed Warriors will see him only occasionally. The SWAP Board and Weed Warriors wish them a long and happy life together.



Make the Switch to Online Oakleaves!

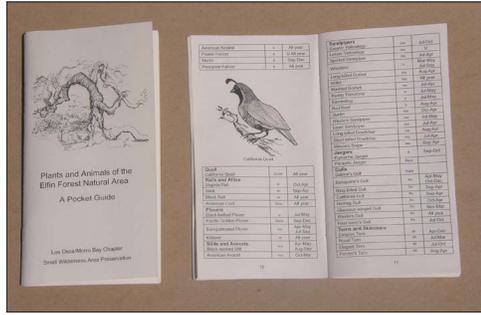
Among the one hundred readers who have opted for the online version, Pat Grimes writes "I have to admit I really enjoy reading Oakleaves online. It's bright, easy to read, and I can always find my copy!" Check out www.elfin-forest.org and click on the "Forest Library" button. Then click on the current issue of Oakleaves, with the pictures shown in full color. Back issues are archived there too and there is a subject index.

If you are comfortable with reading Oakleaves on your computer screen, just send an e-mail to oakleaves@elfin-forest.org with the words "Online version only" in the subject line. We'll email you when each issue goes online. Thank you for switching nearly \$2 per copy in printing and mailing costs to conservation of the Elfin Forest instead!

SWAP was one of five groups invited to participate in a Cuesta College Library "Book of the Year" event at the San Luis Obispo Botanical Garden Oak Glen Pavilion.

Oakleaves Co-editor Jean Wheeler created twenty PowerPoint slides and Ron Rasmussen presented the program at the "Shades of Green" event. The goal of the event was to inform those attending how each group benefits the community.

Photo by Yolanda Waddell.



Useful Pocket Guide Only \$2

About 4 by 8 inches, SWAP's Pocket Guide is packed with fascinating information. Charts for 200 vascular plants include scientific and common names, months in bloom, colors, and habitats. Also listed are lichens, mushrooms, mammals, reptiles, and amphibians. Peak months are given for birds and size, months, color, and host plants for butterflies. Other arthropods listed with interesting comments include spiders, crustaceans, dragonflies, crickets and beetles.



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. Last Chance - 2012 CALENDAR CLOSEOUT

Local photographers featured in this 9"X12" calendar.

___ @ only \$2 = \$___

Shipping costs within zip 934 __:

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

Pocket Guides & Note Cards \$1.50 = ___

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call (805) 528-0392

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

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2012 Calendar Closeout Sale - only \$2! See page 11 to order.

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Things for Kids to do in the Elfin Forest During Summer

Explore with a camera. Come early when bunnies are **hopping** around and quail are foraging. Send "best" photos to *Oakleaves* at the end of the summer and we'll publish them.

Pack a lunch and have a **picnic**.
Look at the flowers and butterflies.

Become a birder. Take binoculars and a bird guide and see how many birds you can identify.



Become a *writer*. Make a journal about your visits to the Forest, and turn that into a story.

Get exercise. **SHAPE UP** by walking or running around the boardwalk.

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name _____

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- New Member
- Member \$25
- Steward \$50
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- Renewing Member
- Defender \$100
- Champion \$250
- Guardian \$500
- Seniors & Students \$15
- Life Member \$1000

I want to help, please call me!

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

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