



OAK LEAVES

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

SWAP Annual Celebration

Date: Saturday, October 20

Time: Noon to 2:30 p.m.

Place: Morro Shores Mobile Home Park

Community Room, 633 Ramona Ave., Los Osos

Speaker: Archaeologist Ethan Bertrando

SWAP members and the public are invited to our annual "SWAP Meet" to hear archaeologist and anthropologist Ethan Bertrando speak about the lives, culture and environment of the Chumash who camped along the south shore of Morro Bay for hundreds of years before the Europeans arrived. His PowerPoint program title is "Prehistory of the Morro Bay Watershed."

Bertrando is a lifetime resident of San Luis Obispo County and participated in his first dig at age four during archaeological excavations at Sweet Springs in Los Osos. Growing up with the San Luis Obispo Archaeological Society, he participated in most excavations and investigations in the area. He obtained degrees from Cal Poly and UC Santa Barbara, and has participated in research projects in the Americas, Europe and the Mediterranean with a general focus on prehistoric hunter-gatherers and the emergence of cultural complexity. He currently splits his time between teaching in the Anthropology Department at Cuesta College and working as the lead archaeologist/anthropologist for the California Army National Guard.

A brief business meeting will take place after Bertrando's talk, followed by a light lunch for all those attending. There is no charge for this event.

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First in a Series

Elfin Forest Neighbors – Lee Markwort



Text and photo by Yolanda Waddell

Lee Markwort has lived next to the Elfin Forest for 26 years. She and her now-deceased husband George moved into their lovely house at the end of 12th Street in 1986. George had retired from his work as a purchasing agent, and Lee retired from 35 years of teaching first grade in the Los Angeles school system.

Lee (whose given name is Leora) grew up in the town of Iron River in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. Her mother was a widow raising three daughters, so Lee and her twin sister, Leona, attended Northern State Teachers College in Marquette, on scholarship. After graduation, they both obtained teaching jobs in Traverse City, on the shore of Lake Michigan.

At that time, in the mid-1940s, there was a U.S. Naval station in Traverse City. Lee and Leona each met and married a handsome sailor. Leona stayed in Michigan, but George Markwort was

Markwort continued on page 2



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

(see Board of Directors Election article, page 8)

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 11,
and Thursday, November 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.

Markwort *continued from page 1*

from a gentler climate in California. The couple settled in the Los Angeles area, found jobs and raised their two children, Mark and Kathy. Daughter Kathy grew up to be a teacher like her mother, and Kathy and her husband Doug live in Orange County. Son Mark and his wife, Beverly, bought a home in Los Osos. After considering the pros and cons of both locations, George and Lee decided to retire to Los Osos. In 1998, Mark and Beverly moved to their current home in Cayucos.

After they were settled in their new home in 1986, Lee and George discovered the joy of walking along the sandy trails of the Elfin Forest. They learned about SWAP's fund-raising campaign to purchase the southern 38 acres of the Forest, and became members. Lee has been a constant member ever since. They also volunteered to help whenever SWAP set up a booth. George, a gregarious person by nature, enjoyed telling booth visitors about the wonderful Elfin Forest, encouraging them to become SWAP members and help with the fund-raising effort.

Tragically, George developed a brain tumor in 1991, and passed away in 1992. Lee remained in the house and became part of SWAP's "eyes and ears of the Elfin Forest." She sees dog owners allowing their dogs to run in the Forest without a leash and reminds them that "This isn't a dog park; it's a forest preserve. Dogs running loose will frighten and might harm the wildlife, and could cause harm to other dogs or people." While walking her toy poodles, Chloe and Meg, Lee has chatted with visitors from as far away as England and Germany. She likes to see children enjoying the Forest, and on occasion has scolded a few for such misdeeds as throwing Boardwalk Trail Guides into the shrubs.

Lee enjoys the Forest's wildlife and puts out seed for quails, doves and other forest birds. The sound of coyote pups yipping in the early morning is a sound she is familiar with, as is the howling that can be heard when fire engines pass. She approves of the presence of coyotes and understands the benefits of a predator in the Forest, but remembers a pair of coyotes following her and the two little poodles down the boardwalk. She said, "I picked up Chloe and Meg and hurried home." One of her favorite memories about the forest creatures was hearing and seeing a crow give warning to the feeding quail when a coyote approached.

Lee has seen many changes in the Elfin Forest. In 1986 there were only sandy trails with many bare areas where off-road vehicles had run over and killed the vegetation. After the purchase of the southern 38 acres was finalized in 1994, she remembers attending a community meeting about the Forest's management plan in 1996. She and her neighbor Tina Van Coops objected to a proposed bicycle trail along Santa Paula Street, a paper street running next to her house. The bicycle trail was never built. She loved seeing CCC crewmembers at work and chatting with them. She says they are a nice group of young people.

In recent years, Lee has enjoyed the benches that were placed along the boardwalk, installation of interpretive panels and Mutt Mitt boxes, and seeing the boardwalk extension built into the Rose Bowker Grove. She was an active SWAP member, trimming shrubs along the 11th Street trail and generously allowing the SWAP Calendar Committee to use her driveway and garage for their annual calendar release parties.

Lee will turn 90 in October, and her home of 26 years is now too much house for her to care for easily, Lee has moved to a much smaller house in Cayucos, next door to her son Mark and daughter-in-law Beverly. She will miss the Elfin Forest, and of course the wildlife that she has been feeding will miss her. Her friends in SWAP hope she will be able to come back to our boardwalk with Chloe and Meg for visits with us. We are grateful to Lee for being such a good neighbor of the Elfin Forest and a friend and member of SWAP as well.

The Chumash: First Users of the Elfin Forest

By Ron Rasmussen, SWAP Chair

Where did they come from? Chumash tradition says that they have always been here, but archaeological and genetic evidence indicate that humans from Eastern Asia reached the New World during the early part of the last ice age (15,000 to 30,000 years ago). Perhaps the earliest archaeological evidence for human habitation along the Central Coast of California is from Santa Rosa Island. Here, and on San Miguel Island and the nearby mainland, artifacts have been found that date to 11,000 to 13,000 years ago at the end of the last ice age.

Based on archaeological evidence, Chumash were in the Los Osos/Morro Bay area at least by about 10,000 years ago. Studies by Archaeologist John Parker (who surveyed the Elfin Forest for the Boardwalk) and others do not show significant evidence of use of the Elfin Forest site before about 700 years ago. Carbon dating of shell fragments from the Elfin Forest site gave a period of 500 to 700 years ago. This suggests that the dunes were then stable enough to use as temporary campsites. A fragment of volcanic obsidian was recovered from a depth of 80-90 cm near Siena's View overlook. Since the source of this obsidian was over 200 miles north at Casa Diablo in the Sierra Nevada mountains, extensive commerce must have been established between the Chumash and neighboring tribal groups.

The Elfin Forest shell deposits extend completely across the western end of the park. They continue southward to at least First Street in the residential area of Los Osos and eastward to near Eto Lake in the Los Osos Creek watershed. The Elfin Forest site is thus part of a much larger area where shell fragments and other artifacts have been found. Though not as old as some of the Morro Bay sites located on solid ground, the 700-year-old site in the Elfin Forest provides a pretty good indication of when the dunes were established. Another correlation to the stabilization of the dunes is that the oldest oaks in the Elfin Forest are around 500-700 years old. This suggests that the trees sprouted around the time that the Chumash were using the Elfin Forest as a temporary campsite. At sampling sites in the Elfin Forest no artifacts were found deeper than 90 cm. However no digs at much deeper levels have been conducted in the Elfin Forest. These bits of information provide us with clues to the geologic history of the Elfin Forest in addition to the cultural history.

The Elfin Forest is considered by the Chumash to be part of their heritage and they strongly supported SWAP's efforts to preserve the site. In 1991 Pilulaw Khush, a Chumash Elder, led a group of local residents and SWAP supporters in a Protection Ceremony in the Elfin Forest. At this time SWAP and its volunteers were attempting to raise funds to purchase the 38 acres of privately owned undeveloped land overlooking Morro Bay and to add it to the 52-acre California State Park parcel adjoining on the north side. The Ceremony asked that the land be blessed and preserved as a sacred part of the Chumash heritage.

In 1994 the funds for purchase of the southern 38 acres were obtained and included State and Federal grants and contributions from the community. This southern section was then combined with the



*Can you see the gopher snake in the tree? Look hard – it blends in.
Photo by Pat Brown.*

Elfin Forest Sightings

Two interesting sightings in the Elfin Forest were recently reported to us along with photos:

From Pat Brown – Can You See the Snake in the Tree?

One of the coolest things that I've ever seen in the Elfin Forest happened this morning. I was about halfway up the 11th Street trail looking for oak galls on the trees for an upcoming school walk. Much to my surprise, a gopher snake (only about 18" long) was cruising through the branches at eye level. It took note of me and continued on its way further away from the trail. My cell phone camera isn't very good, but I did snap a photo.

From Bob Meyer – Poor Pelican!

The Brown Pelican in the photo was on the upper part of the boardwalk about 200 feet east of the Fairchild Monument. I wasn't there when he/she left but there were fresh pelican droppings indicating that it had left heading due east. When I called Pacific Wildlife Care, the volunteer told me that they were over-run with starving juvenile pelicans because the bait fish were slow in arriving this year. Three weeks later the bait fish arrived and the birds and whales went crazy making up for lost time.



This exhausted young Brown Pelican eventually gathered up its strength and flew away. Photo by Bob Meyer.

northern section to form the 90-acre El Moro Elfin Forest Natural Area, resulting in a State-County Park. Today the condition of the Elfin Forest is evidence that the efforts of SWAP and many others toward preservation have been successful. Years of work by volunteers and the California Conservation Corps (CCC) have removed nearly all non-native plants. The plants and animals are now probably very similar to those present at the time that the Chumash were active at this site. It is now the responsibility of current residents, volunteers and visitors to preserve the Elfin Forest Natural Area because it is, in fact, our heritage as well as that of the Chumash who were the first residents.

Brush Rabbits



Text and Photo by Jean D. Wheeler, Ph. D.

Our small bush bunnies, known as Western Brush Rabbits, are a species (*Sylvilagus bachmani*) of cottontail rabbits. This species lives on the west coast from the Columbia River in Oregon southward to the tip of Baja California. On the east, they extend onto the slopes of the Cascade and Sierra Nevada mountain ranges.

Light brown to grey in color, their small grey tails differ from the larger fluffy white tails of most cottontail species. Also smaller than most other cottontails, they are about a foot long and seldom over two pounds in weight. They have slightly pointed long ears, dark eyes, and long whiskers that are mostly black but with white tips.

The Elfin Forest is ideal habitat, with dense shrubby areas in dune scrub, chaparral and oak woodlands. These bunnies make runway networks through the brush. They may dig their own burrows, but often use burrows of other species, such as wood rats. They tend to be wary and secretive, hiding under the dense brush. They can be active either at night or in the daytime, but most often at dawn or dusk.

Brush rabbits can mate and breed at any time of year, but peak breeding season is in spring and early summer. Gestation is just over three weeks and the young remain in the nest for a couple of weeks, reaching maturity in about 4-5 months. On the average about three or four young are born in each of two to four litters, but there can be up to seven per litter and even five litters in a year.

These rabbits are herbivorous. They eat mainly grasses and forbs, especially clover. But they also eat seedlings of brush species and berries. Our Weed Warriors learned to put wire cages around young plants in our revegetation projects after many unprotected seedlings disappeared within a few days of planting!

Predators helping to keep brush rabbits in check include snakes, hawks, coyotes, weasels, and foxes as well as domestic dogs and cats. Rabbits try to escape predation by hiding in dense brush most of the time, and either remaining completely still to escape notice or fleeing in zig-zag fashion when chased. They thump the ground to warn other rabbits when predators approach.

Brush Rabbits are an excellent example of the ecological importance of species interaction. As consumers, they help to keep vegetation from becoming too weedy and congested. Meanwhile, they also provide a rapidly reproducing food supply for a number of attractive and interesting predator species.

SWAP Shares Mutt Mitt Grant with Morro Coast Audubon

Summary of a report by Jan DiLeo, SWAP Treasurer

SWAP has an Adopt-A-Park Agreement with San Luis Obispo County Parks. Under this agreement SWAP assists the County with Elfin Forest education and maintenance. Visitors are permitted to bring their dogs into the forest on designated trails as long as the dogs are leashed, and are expected to pick up after their pets.

The Elfin Forest Boardwalk was completed in October, 1999. During the boardwalk's environmental review the project's biologist noted that the amount of dog feces within the forest was potentially impacting the area's sensitive habitat. Prior to the boardwalk's construction visitors tended to make their own trails through the forest and often brought their dogs unleashed. Very few people picked up after their pets. This was harming the site's sensitive resources and resulting in sediment and dog feces being washed into the bay.

In 2002, through the efforts of SWAP members Sandra and Curt Beebe and with funding from MBNEP, Mutt Mitt dispensers and trash cans were installed. Since then, free Mutt Mitts have been available for Elfin Forest visitors from dispensers at each of the seven Elfin Forest street entrances. County Parks provides trash pick-up at each street end. SWAP volunteers are responsible for maintaining the dispensers. They order and store Mutt Mitts, make sure each dispenser is working, and fill the seven dispensers monthly. Placing Mutt Mitt dispensers at each street end has resulted in the majority of people picking up after their pets and thus a reduction in the amount of dog feces washing into the bay.

In January of this year, SWAP Mutt Mitt Coordinator Danna Weidner and Treasurer Jan DiLeo met with Shari Sullivan, MBNEP Education and Outreach Coordinator, to discuss a grant from MBNEP for purchasing Mutt Mitts and new dispensers. Shari Sullivan suggested that SWAP consider sharing a large Mutt Mitt order with other nonprofits in the Los Osos area to reduce the cost. As a result, Jan DiLeo contacted Morro Coast Audubon Society President Stephanie Little. They determined that if they ordered 80 boxes of Mutt Mitts jointly they could obtain free shipping – a major cost saving for both organizations. Thus, SWAP was able to forge a relationship with Morro Bay Audubon Society, which uses Mutt Mitts at the Sweet Springs Preserve. This new relationship will help both organizations share resources, save money, and still provide the public with free Mutt Mitts.



Thanks to a grant from the MBNEP, the Elfin Forest has new Mutt Mitt boxes like this one.

Photo by Dave Moran.

Lace Lichen

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

The 'plant' chosen for this issue is a pairing of convenience of two organisms neither of which is considered a plant in current thinking. It is a species of lichen made up of an alga and a fungus. It is a partnership of convenience because the partners stay together only under conditions that neither could survive alone. When conditions favor one or the other, the favored partner leaves (alga) or expels its partner (the fungus).

Why isn't it a plant, or more to the point what is a plant? In classical Greek definition, plants were a variable group of organisms held together primarily by not being animals. Once the microscope was invented and biologists saw that the living world was far more complex than anyone could have imagined, the old definition became harder to defend. Especially troubling were unicellular and colonial organisms (now in Kingdom Protista) that formed a continuous series from definitely animals to definitely plants. Groups in the center possessed combined animal and plant characteristics.

They were green--thus photosynthetic--but they moved, and some even captured prey. The difficult organisms to place were those that produced (or captured) chloroplasts when the environment was well-lit and relatively poor in nutrients, and expelled the chloroplasts when light was absent and organic food plentiful. They could be 'animals' or 'plants' depending on conditions. These organisms were claimed by both botanists and zoologists and thus have two legitimate scientific names. Supposedly every known organism has only one correct scientific name. True, if there were a single nomenclatural code. But there are two: one for animals and a second for all organisms once considered plants.

The lichen (a stable, predictable pair of organisms) has a lichen name. The lichen discussed here is lace lichen, *Ramalina menziesii*. Because partners making up lace lichen can live separately, each will also have its own name. I was unable to learn the species of the partners. From the Internet, it appears that the algal partner is a green alga (*Chlorophyta*) and the fungal partner is one of the more primitive members of the sac fungi (*Ascomycota*).

This lichen attaches itself to the surface of twigs of living trees and shrubs. In the Elfin Forest this third partner is usually the pygmy form of coast live oak, *Quercus agrifolia*. Lace lichen does best where humidity and coastal onshore winds are highest, so it is particularly abundant in the lower parts of the Elfin Forest. Look for it in the Rose Bowker Grove, further discussed in the Boardwalk Trail Guide.

Lace lichen attaches itself to the outside of a branch or twig, and is an epiphyte. Epiphytes do not harm their host because they do not take nutrients from the host. My way of describing the relationship is that an epiphyte gets its room from its host, but not its board.

Lace lichen could be a problem for its host only if it got so massive that its weight caused a twig to break -- a very low probability. According to the Internet, lace lichen actually benefits the

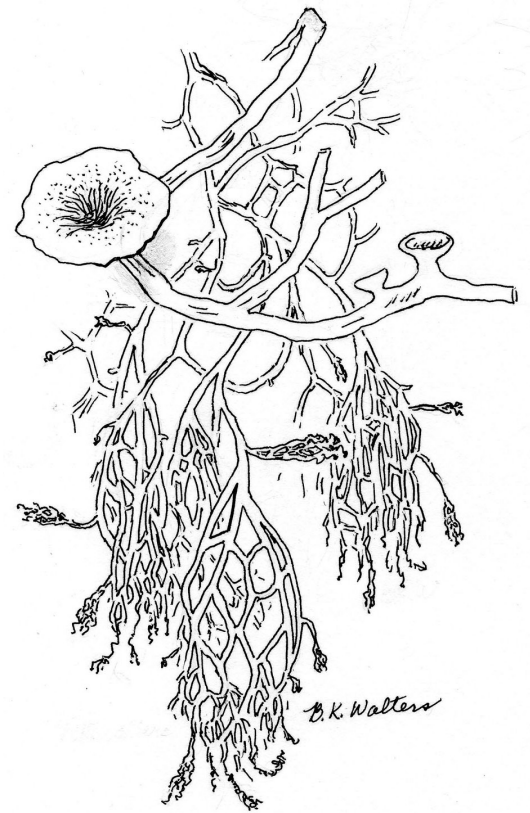
oak because it captures airborne moisture and nutrients. When fragile lichen is broken apart, it adds these nutrients to soil, which helps the host oak.

Another Internet item noted that small herbivores will eat any lichen that falls on the ground and fight others for the privilege. Another environmental value of lichens is that they utilize sulfur in photosynthesis. Lace lichen and other lichens thus remove excess sulfur from the air. Lace lichen is also extremely susceptible to air pollution and can therefore be used to test air quality.

The fungal partner provides most of the actual mass and shape or form of the lichen. Lichens have one of three basic growth forms. These are a flat coating of a surface (crustose), a series of flat plates raised from the surface (foliose) or a 3-D mass of strings (fruticose). Bonnie's drawing illustrates the fruticose characteristics of lace lichen. The top of her drawing, where it would be attached to a twig, shows wider strands. Attached to these strands are the fungal reproductive structures which resemble tiny chalice cups. Fungal spores are produced on the upper surface, inside the cup. The algal partner reproduces on its own. However, the pair can spread together by fragmentation. I suspect that random fragmentation is the most common way lichens spread.

Lace lichen has been called "Spanish moss" but this name is very misleading since it is in no way a moss. It neither resembles any moss nor is related to mosses. Even worse, calling this lichen "Spanish moss" leads to confusion with the Spanish moss from southeastern United States, which is also not a moss. That is a flowering plant in the same family as pineapple. The only things that lace lichen has in common with true Spanish moss are its color (gray-green), basic form, and its epiphytic habit.

The California Lichen Society is pushing the California Legislature to designate lace lichen as the state lichen. This would be good for the lichen and for its host trees. In the interior of California one of the more common hosts is valley oak, which is having trouble reproducing due to pressure from agriculture.





Les Bowker, rear right, leads a Cuesta College Environmental Biology class through the Elfin Forest's diverse plant communities.



Jean Wheeler (3rd from left) talks to a Cuesta College Environmental Biology class about plant succession in the Celestial Meadow.

Education Corner

By Pat Akey, Education Chair; photos by Yolanda Waddell

It was suggested by one of our walk fans that we have weekly walks for anyone interested. This means that we need to find more docents and organize this new project. Would any of our members be interested in helping or taking on one of these walks? Once organized, we will put out press releases about the dates, time and location where the walks will begin.

During the summer two walks were given for Cuesta College Environmental Biology classes, one in July and one in August. In July, Les Bowker guided Cuesta instructor Azalia Contreras' class on an ecology-related walk. Les helped the students to experience the Forest's diverse plant communities by leading them from coastal dune scrub to maritime chaparral and then into the oak and manzanita complex along the lower boardwalk.

In August, docent Jean Wheeler gave a walk for Cuesta instructor Steve Hendricks' class, describing the restoration work that is taking place in the Elfin Forest. She explained how environmental conditions in the Forest affect the plants and animals, and how the plants and animals survive in spite of the sandy soil and lack of rain. The students learned which governmental agencies are involved with the Elfin Forest and how the boardwalk helps to prevent erosion and protect plants and animals.



Loisann Cass with faithful dog Brandy. Photo by Ralph Cass.

From Our Readers

Loisann and Ralph Cass, SWAP Trail Trimmers, sent the following:

One of the very faithful trail trimmer guards has left the Elfin Forest for (believe it or not) a better trail where it might be a little quieter except for angel wings and heavenly dog music. Brandy, the beautiful large Kelpie mix who accompanied Ralph and Loisann Cass during trail trimming on the boardwalk for many years, has left us. She encouraged them to walk every day and stood by on her leash when they stopped to cut back shrubs and plants that were growing over the boardwalk. Many people recognized her and greeted her each day. Brandy was a spectacular companion to animals and humans alike. After years of walking the Elfin Forest Brandy's eyes grew dim, her energy waned and her step slowed, and the life of the best dog in the world came to a close. Now, who will get those two trail trimmers, Ralph and Loisann, to keep going out each day, working on the trail in our beloved Elfin Forest?

Weed Warrior Report

Text and Photos By Yolanda Waddell

Sand and Grass Attacked by Warriors

July 7 - In the Elfin Forest there is grass, such as veldt grass, and there was “grass,” also known as marijuana. In June some anonymous marijuana growers cleared and terraced part of a steep slope at the west end of the Forest in order to set plastic pots with their “weed” plants on the terraces. A Sheriff’s deputy removed the marijuana plants and that left an open area of sand on a twenty-five degree slope that most certainly would wash into the bay when winter rains come.

In July, Ron Rasmussen and his Weed Warriors came to the rescue with wattles. The wattles were donated by Pete Sarafian, who had some left over from his Manzanita restoration project. Four 20-foot wattles were stretched across the slope and fastened to the ground with wood stakes and wire. Then brush and dead wood was placed between and over the wattles to further control erosion. After that, a small patch of veldt grass growing at the 11th Street Elfin Forest entrance was quickly removed, and Ron’s home-baked cookies were enjoyed by all. July Weed Warriors were Jay Bonestell, Dave Bowlus, Lannie Erickson, Prisila and Rich Johnson, Ron Rasmussen and Yolanda Waddell.

August 5 – Because the 13th Street trail slopes down to the boardwalk, sand is always rolling downhill. In a year’s time it collects next to the boardwalk and begins to cover it. Each year, Weed Warriors dig the sand from in front of the boardwalk and haul it up to the top of the hill.

This procedure will probably continue until a boardwalk extension is built over the 13th Street trail, sometime in the distant future. Another project completed by our dedicated Weed Warriors was removal of the last of the veldt grass growing at the end of 16th Street, next to the parking area. Participating in the August work party were Dave Bowlus, Lannie Erickson, Rich and Prisila Johnson, Bob Meyer, Ron Rasmussen and Yolanda Waddell.

Let’s all pull together

By Yolanda Waddell

There’s plenty to do says Ron, the lead Warrior.
He has several jobs and needs some strong carriers.
We’ll dig up some sand and take it uphill.
We’ve done it before, so we know the drill.

And of course there’s more veldt grass to pull.
Let’s make the end of each Street look like a jewel.
So see you on the first Saturday in our forest so green.
Bring hats, gloves and shovels –You know our cuisine –
Ron’s Home-baked Cookies!



Weed Warriors dug sand away from the steps and boardwalk, loaded it into the SWAP wagon, and hauled it up to the top of the slope. The diggers are (L-R) Rich Johnson, Prisila Johnson and Ron Rasmussen.



Ron Rasmussen (center) discusses with Dave Bowlus (left) and Rich Johnson (right) the procedure for installing straw wattles on a disturbed slope in the Elfin Forest.

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. Heavy rain cancels.



Coming Up in the Elfin Forest

Text and Photo By Jean Wheeler

Black sage shrubs now decorate the Elfin Forest for Halloween with black pompom balls on tall stems, the dried autumn version of their white summer flowers. Dune buckwheat blossoms have also darkened from white to their fall colors of pink to rust. California asters will continue to bloom into December in their usual white to pink or lavender rays surrounding yellow centers.

Meanwhile, the annual buildup to our spectacular winter ornithological extravaganza is under way! Some Northern Pintails, Gadwalls, and Northern Shovelers usually arrive in late August and September, but the main arrival month for most ducks is October, especially for Mallards, American Wigeons, 3 species of Teal, and Ruddy Ducks. Canada geese begin showing up in October, while the great flotillas of several thousand black Brant geese are usually here by middle to late November, dining on eelgrass in the bay.

Horned, Eared, Pied-billed, Western, and Clark's Grebes arrive from September to November and remain until March or April. Shorebirds like Sandpipers, Dowitchers, and the American Avocet (*pictured above left*) also reach peak populations in winter with birds arriving from shorelines farther north that won't support them in winter.

Terrestrial species 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 come 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.

Take an autumn walk in Elfin Forest and marvel in appreciation of our vegetation. It is so well adapted to thrive in this most difficult season at the end of months of drought, and October often features some of our hottest days of the year. Enjoy the everyday activities of our year-around resident wildlife as well as all the seasonal birds arriving, departing, or passing through on their way to their tropical winter resorts.

2012 Board of Directors Election

By Ron Rasmussen, SWAP Chair

The current SWAP Board of Directors consists of five members who have been chosen by the membership to serve on the Board with alternating two-year service periods. This year (2012) three members of the Board whose terms expire on October 31, 2012, are standing for renewal of their two-year terms. They are Jeanette (Jan) Di Leo (SWAP Treasurer), Patricia Murray (Property and Records Chair), and Ron Rasmussen (SWAP Board Chair). Board members whose terms continue for one more year are Yolanda Waddell (SWAP Secretary) and Patricia Akey (Education Committee Chair).

Each year at this time SWAP asks its membership to vote on the composition of the Board of Directors. To vote for or against continuation of a Board Member you may:

1. Call the SWAP message phone at 805-528-0392 and request a ballot. It will be mailed to you on October 20, 2012 along with a return envelope.

2. Cast your vote in person by attending SWAP's Annual Celebration to be held Saturday, October 20 at 12 Noon at Morro Shores Community Room, 633 Ramona Avenue, Los Osos, CA.

You may also nominate persons to stand for election to the SWAP Board of Directors. Nominations must be received no later than October 15, 2012 to ensure that their names appear on the Ballot at the October 20 Annual Celebration. Either mail nominations to SWAP at P. O. Box 6442, Los Osos, CA, 93412 or call the SWAP Message Phone at 805-528-0392.

The results of this election will be published in the December 2012-January 2013 *Oakleaves*.

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? Taken a good photo?

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.



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, Loisann and Ralph Cass, Jan DiLeo, Betsy Kinter, Bob Meyer, Dave Moran, Ron Rasmussen, Yolanda Waddell, Dirk and Bonnie Walters, and Jean Wheeler.

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WALKS in the ELFIN FOREST

Third (and Second) Saturday Walks

October 13, 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 20, 9:30 a.m. – Archaeology

Archaeologist Barry Price will take us time traveling into the pre-Spanish past of Central Coast inhabitants, the Chumash and their ancestors. Barry is a vice president and principal archaeologist at Applied Earthworks in San Luis Obispo, and specializes in historical and prehistoric archaeology. Walking along the boardwalk, he will tell us the fascinating story of the ancient peoples who camped in the Elfin Forest 1,000 years or more ago. He will bring artifacts that show the industry and culture of the Chumash and other indigenous tribes on the Central Coast. This walk will reveal a complex world of the Elfin Forest's past inhabitants, one that we would never suspect today.

November 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, as well as 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. Only a heavy rain will cancel this walk.

December 15, 9:30 a.m. – Lichens and Beyond

Join local naturalist Al Normandin for this end-of-the-year walk that will introduce us to the Elfin Forest's lichens and ferns. They are often outshone earlier in the year by the floral display in the Forest. We'll learn fascinating details about the ecology and diversity of the numerous lichens that can be seen along the boardwalk. We'll also take a look at the remaining late-season flowers that are still blooming. Only a heavy rain will cancel this walk.

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, and leave pets at home. The easy paced walks last 1-1/2 to 2 hours. For more information call (805) 528-0392.



In July, historian Robert Pavlik led fascinated participants on a Literary Stroll, reading passages by well-known and not-so-well-known natural history writers at each stop. Photo by Jean Wheeler.



Cal Poly mammalogist Francis Villablanca gave August 3rd Saturday walk participants many fascinating facts about the Dusky-footed Woodrat and other small mammals that inhabit the Elfin Forest.

Photo by Yolanda Waddell.

Make the Switch to Online Oakleaves!

SWAP members continue to opt for the online-only version of Oakleaves. Try this: on your web browser, type in www.elfin-forest.org and click on the "Forest Library" button. Then click on current issue of Oakleaves, with the pictures shown in full color. Back issues are archived there as well, 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 Welcomes New Life Members

Jay and Ann Bonestell recently made the decision to become SWAP Life Members. Ann said that now they don't have to worry about forgetting to renew their membership each year. And Jay just loves the Elfin Forest and wanted to do something for SWAP. He is a Weed Warrior and visits the Elfin Forest almost every day. Ann was a key member of the Calendar Committee during the years that SWAP produced the Elfin Forest calendar. Now she is working hard in the studio and gallery of Bonestell Studios. Both Jay and Ann are pleased to have made a contribution to SWAP and the Elfin Forest.

Thank You to Our New and Renewing Members

Compiled by Betsy Kinter, SWAP Database Coordinator

NEW MEMBERS:

Chris & Jim Van Beveren*
Penny Koines

RENEWING MEMBERS:

Jay & Ann Bonestell* (<i>new Life Members</i>)	Rich & Prisila Johnson*
Wendy Brown*	Jennifer Levine*
R.S. L.H. Cowan	Annette Lindeman*
John Dilworth Jr. & Carole Maurer*	Leora Markwort
Ms. Ileen Doering	Norman MacGillivray
Ms. Dale A. Elliott*	JoAnne Milburn*
Leland & Valerie Endres*	Beth & Sheldon Miller*
Thomas Fowler*	Hector Montenegro
Margaret Fox and Claudette Kolk*	Beverly and Bill Moylan*
Larry & Pat Grimes*	Mike Multari and Denise Fourie*
Bert & Dorothy Harris*	William H. Newman
Bill & Meg Henry*	Paul O'Connor
Pauline High*	Lori Olson
Arylane Hill*	Ron Rasmussen*
Arthur Hubbard	Joanne B. Smalley*
Ginny Irving	Kathleen Spencer*
Marion Irving De Cruz*	The Ungar Family
	Lisa Wallender
	Jacquoline Williams

**Thanks to those listed above who donated more than the \$25 (regular) or \$15 (senior or student) membership dues. The additional donations will be used for special projects in the Elfin Forest.*

Remembering Our Members

By Yolanda Waddell

Claire Goedinghaus, Life Member

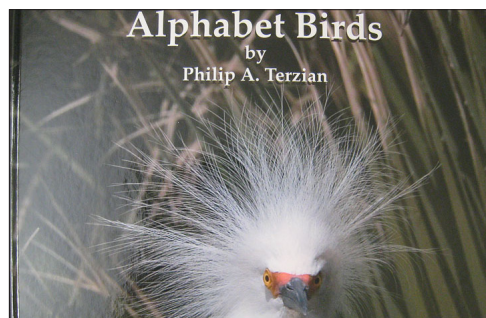
In 1991, SWAP was in the process of raising funds to purchase the Elfin Forest through grants and individual donations. Claire Goedinghaus, a Los Osos resident and realtor, gave us a bay front lot on Third Street in Los Osos.

Our September, 1991 issue of Oakleaves reported the gift as follows: "Claire Goedinghaus, in recognition of our charter to preserve small wildernesses in otherwise urbanized areas, has given the Los Osos/Morro Bay Chapter of SWAP a lot that borders the bay on Third Street near Paso Robles Avenue in Los Osos. SLO County Parks is looking for appropriate sites for public overlooks or bay access. SWAP will investigate the possibility of using SWAP's lot as a public bay overlook." Eventually SWAP deeded the lot over to Morro Coast Audubon because the lot is located close to Audubon's Sweet Springs Preserve.

Since the value of the lot was over \$1,000, Claire Goedinghaus became a Life Member of SWAP, and received each copy of Oakleaves for the next 21 years. Claire died peacefully on July 25th at age 87. We are grateful for her gift and send our condolences to her children, grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Priscilla Graham

Priscilla Graham and her husband Myron, owners of Graham's Art Store in San Luis Obispo, built a house on Pasadena Drive in Los Osos during the early 1980s. When they learned about the formation of the SWAP Los Osos/Morro Bay Chapter and its work to save the Elfin Forest, they became active members. Myron assisted with an "Artists in the Elfin Forest" project, helping us to frame donated paintings of the Elfin Forest, and also helping with displaying our traveling art show. Priscilla hosted many meetings at their bay front home. Eventually they "retired" from their Los Osos home and moved back to San Luis Obispo, but they continued as members from the late 1980s to the present. Priscilla passed away on June 26, at age 97. We send our condolences to our long-time friend, Myron, and to their children and grandson.



Alphabet Birds: Book for Kids

SWAP is selling this wonderful book by Philip A. Terzian with gorgeous pictures of birds, one for each letter of the alphabet. The facing page features a clever little poem for each bird in large-sized text and child-appropriate wording.



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. 2012 CALENDAR *Remainder Sale*

Local photographers featured in SWAP's final calendar.

____ @ only \$2 = \$____

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.)

Name: _____

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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.

SWAP Annual Celebration October 20 ~ Come Join Us!

Los Osos / Morro Bay Chapter
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Booth Workers Needed for Oktoberfest



Los Osos will be celebrating its annual Oktoberfest this year on Sunday, October 28 on Second Street in downtown Baywood Park, from 9 am to 5 pm. SWAP will participate by setting up a booth among other booths featuring many kinds of arts and crafts, as well as ethnic foods. We'll talk to visitors about SWAP, distribute literature, and sell T-shirts, sweatshirts, our beautiful 2012 calendar, guidebooks, notecards, etc. We need volunteers to staff our table. If you can work a two-hour shift between 9:00 am and 4:00 pm on either or both of those days, please call SWAP's message phone at 528-0392. Give your name, shift preference, and phone number. Join us, you'll have fun!

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Email _____

Phone _____

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

☐ I want to help, please call me!

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

☐ **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.