



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 ♦ FEBRUARY / MARCH 2013



CCC crew members Jaime Allen (L) and Amy de León install new steps from the 11th Street sand trail to the boardwalk near Bush Lupine Point. Photo by Ron Rasmussen.

New Steps Improve Boardwalk Access

By Ron Rasmussen, SWAP Chair

Access to the boardwalk is now made easier by some new steps that have been installed. The most used location is near Bush Lupine point where the 11th street spur trail meets the boardwalk. In addition to improving boardwalk access, these steps will accommodate re-positioning of some of the black cable fencing to allow the vegetation bordering the trail more room to expand.

Boardwalk Access continued on page 2

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Manzanita Revegetation Proceeding on Schedule

By Pete Sarafian, Manzanita Project Coordinator

As you may or may not remember, a miscreant vandalized an acre or so of native plants in a western section of the Elfin Forest in mid-2009. Many, if not most of the plants, were the federally listed as threatened Morro manzanitas (*Arctostaphylos morroensis*). A year and a half later in the winter of 2010-2011 the Goodwins, Les and Marylou, began a manzanita replanting effort with assistance from SWAP. Also known as L&L Builders, they needed to mitigate for manzanitas being removed from a personal home property they were building in the heights above Los Osos. The revegetation project placed 100 manzanita seedlings on the steep slope to the west of Bush Lupine Point. The project was to be maintained for a total of three years. Pete Sarafian, a life member of SWAP, agreed to be the project biological monitor. So far, the project has proceeded for two years, and 100 Morro manzanita seedlings remain.

In the first month all the plants had to be surrounded with poultry wire cages to protect them from apparent browsing by animals such as rabbits and deer. In the first year eight plants withered away and died. Fortunately, the Goodwins had spares with which they could replace the failed plants. In 2012 no more plants

Manzanita Project continued on page 2



Young Morro manzanita plants, in chicken wire cages with flags, are slowly beginning to fill in the area devastated by a vandal in 2009.

Photo by Pete Sarafian.



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, February 14,
and Thursday, March 14.**

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.

Manzanita Project *continued from page 1*

died. A few look weak and spindly, but they have survived the second dry season intact. Of the remaining 100 plants, ten have had Dri-water hydrated gel packs installed. These plants were the worst looking of the lot. The gel packs release a controlled amount of moisture to the plants that will last up to three months. The Goodwins (pictured at right) have had the manzanitas watered by hand by the hauling of large buckets of water up and down the hillside every few weeks during dry periods. Needless to say, such an activity has been a challenge.

Maintaining the project has been a challenge in more ways than one.

First, the hillside is steep. Second, the ground is comprised of Baywood fine sand. Third, the sand is "hydrophobic." This may not be the correct geological term, but is meant to refer to the ability of the sand in Los Osos to hold water without allowing it to drain into the ground. When watering the plants, the laborers and monitor were dismayed to see much of the water run downhill without soaking into the plants. The first fix was to berm up the sand on the downhill side of the manzanitas. This had limited effect. It was hard to maintain sand berms high enough to do well. The slightest disturbance caused them to collapse. The second fix was to dig a shallow uphill trench or divot and fill it with manzanita chips that, when soaked, would allow a slow release of moisture down to the plants. This appeared to have limited effect. The third and final fix has been to install sheet metal coffer dams downhill of about half of the plants. These allow the water to be retained around the plants until it soaks into the ground and roots.

With all 100 plants still in the ground and surviving it appears that the project will be a success and meet the goals specified by San Luis Obispo County. It will be decades before the hillside that was vandalized returns to a normally vegetated state, but this revegetation project will help.



Heading home from a hard morning's work of watering 100 manzanita plants are Les & Marylou Goodwin, donors and caretakers of the plants along with Pete Sarafian.

Photo by Yolanda Waddell.

Boardwalk Access *continued from page 1*

The second location is on the lower boardwalk where the Habitat Trail begins. That site especially needed better access as it is a two-foot step-off to reach the trail. The Habitat Trail is used almost daily by visitors and residents. Organized school groups and SWAP's Third Saturday Walks use the Habitat Trail because it gives access to kinds of Elfin Forest vegetation not readily seen from the boardwalk. Some participants in these events have difficulty in reaching the trail from the boardwalk. With steps and handrails, access is now much easier. SWAP contracted with SLO County Parks and the California Conservation Corps (CCC) to install the steps.

Because use of the Habitat Trail may be increased with the installation of the new steps, additional black cable "Symbolic" fence will be installed along the Habitat Trail. This is necessary because the area traversed by the trail is especially fragile and access should be restricted to the trail while still allowing visitors to enjoy this special area. This project will be financed in part by SWAP and SLO County Parks. Work will be done by the CCC with participation of SWAP volunteers.

Farewell to the Elfin Forest Calendar – and Thanks To All

Story & photo by Yolanda Waddell

In 2006, SWAP was feeling a bit pinched for funds. Board member Debbie Levi suggested that we publish an Elfin Forest calendar. She had seen calendars used successfully as fundraisers by the PTA at the school where she had taught. The Board approved the idea, and a four-member Calendar Committee was formed. Joining Debbie on the committee were Pat Murray, Jean Wheeler and Yolanda Waddell. They were helped greatly by SWAP's computer expert and superb photographer, Bob Meyer.

The Committee contacted local photographers, asking them to snap images of the Elfin Forest and submit their photos for our 2007 Elfin Forest calendar. Photos by seventeen photographers were chosen, the committee planned the calendar format and wrote the text, and graphic designer Katy Budge did the layout. Since it was a first effort, the committee was grateful to Anita Rouse of Hart Impressions Printing for her help and advice. To defray publishing costs, we solicited and received donations from fourteen generous sponsors. The calendar was beautiful, and our conservative printing of 250 copies sold out before the end of December. It earned SWAP about \$2500 that helped our end-of-the year balance to show a net gain instead of a net loss.

In the following years, almost every one of our calendars sold out. The 2009 Elfin Forest calendar increased in size and added sidebar text. For that calendar, the committee contacted local artists, taking them on an orientation walk through the Elfin Forest. Twenty-two artists enthusiastically contributed their stunning images. It was decided to alternate photos and artwork each year, so the 2010 calendar featured marvelous photos by twenty-one photographers.

The original committee of four members increased to nine members for the 2011 calendar to make production more efficient and less exhausting. Ann Bonestell, Beverly Boyd, Sharon Meyer, Ron Rasmussen and Danna Weidner became members of the Image Selection, Writing and Editing, and Promotion subcommittees. Bob Meyer continued his assistance while insisting that he really wasn't a committee member. Kyra Kitts replaced Beverly Boyd for the 2012 calendar. The number of calendars printed increased to 600 copies, and the number of sponsors kept increasing to support the added printing and layout cost.

Our 2012 calendar, produced in 2011 and printed by Hay Printing, is still being used by many SWAP members. After the calendar release party in September of 2011, Debbie Levi realized that she really wanted to spend more of her time writing and enjoying her new little grandson. Chairing the production of a calendar is a yearlong job and at times is nearly a full time job. No other member of the Calendar Committee was able to take on the job.

SWAP is grateful to Debbie Levi for originating the idea, and for giving so much of her time, talent and energy to the produc-



Debbie Levi, in a photo from our December 2006 Oakleaves is shown holding a copy of the 2007 Elfin Forest calendar, SWAP's first calendar.

tion of six calendars filled with beautiful images of the Elfin Forest. We give our heartfelt thanks to calendar photographers, artists and sponsors, as well as the skills of Katy Budge and our printers. Thanks to their generosity, SWAP has benefitted greatly. All can look back on their combined accomplishment with pride.

Note: We still have some 2012 calendars left. If you want one for sentimental reasons, see the order form on page 11.

"It is our task in our time and in our generation, to hand down undiminished to those who come after us, as was handed down to us by those who went before, the natural wealth and beauty which is ours."

~ John F. Kennedy



SWAP works to fulfill Kennedy's charge. Milkmaids thrive in March in the Don Klopfer Grove, visited via the Habitat Trail.

Photo by Jean Wheeler.

White-crowned Sparrow

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

Named for the white stripe that runs back from its beak for the length of its crown, the White-crowned Sparrow (*Zonotrichia leucophrys*) could perhaps even be called the “seven-striped sparrow” or “black-and-white headed sparrow.” That white stripe on the crown is bordered on both sides by black stripes in turn bordered by another white stripe on each side of the head from the beak across the top of each eye. Below that is another black stripe on each side usually thinner and extending back from the eye.

With four black and 3 white parallel stripes running back from the beak and eyes, adults of this species are among the most recognizable of about three dozen species of sparrows that can be seen in our nation. White-crowned Sparrows occur all over the U.S. and most of Canada and Alaska. Most subspecies are strongly migratory.

Although adults are easily recognized, females similar to males, the juveniles are much harder to distinguish from other young sparrows as their brown and beige stripes resemble those of adults and young of other species of sparrows.

There are five generally recognized subspecies of *Z. leucophrys*, one of which (*Z. l. nutalli*) is resident all year on our coast including the Elfin Forest. Two migrate south to winter in central and southern California. Of these, the Puget Sound subspecies (*Z. l. pugetensis*) tends to winter very close to the coast and the Gambel’s (*Z. l. gambelii*) tends to concentrate in interior valleys, but may stray to the coast as well.

I’m pretty sure the bird in my adjoining photograph is a Puget Sound migrant, visiting the Elfin Forest on its winter migration.



They tend to have the lightest gray color on the breast and side of the neck, whereas our resident Nutall’s and migrant Gambel’s subspecies tend to have a darker, more beige-brown look to the neck and breast.

White-crowned Sparrows feed on seeds, other plant parts, and insects on the ground and in low bushes. In winter they forage in large flocks, often with other species of sparrows, such as Golden-crowned Sparrows (*Z. atricapilla*). I saw this one and the golden-crowned relative in a large mixed flock in late December, and also photographed the latter (see Coming Up in the Elfin Forest, page 8).

Female White-crowned Sparrows build their nests either on the ground or (more common with our resident subspecies) in low bushes within a few feet of the ground. The low cup is made of sticks, grass, and bark and lined with grass, feathers, and hair. It holds 3 to 7 eggs, bluish-green with brownish red spots. They hatch in about two weeks, are fed by both parents, leave the nest in a week or two and fly in another week or so. Most subspecies raise one brood a year, but the Puget Sound subspecies may raise two or even three.

Carla Grindle Leaves a Bequest to SWAP

By Yolanda Waddell

Carla Grindle, 57, of Los Osos, lost a long battle with cancer on January 2nd, 2012. She grew up in Poway, California, and lived in San Diego most of her adult life until she moved to Los Osos in 1999. Her varied careers included teaching tap and modern dance, acting as a professional clown, writing abstracts for professional journals and being a career counselor. After moving to Los Osos, she taught adult education classes to senior citizens at several different assisted living establishments.

Carla loved animals and nature, which was evident in her magnificent garden with chickens scurrying around. As would be expected, she discovered the Elfin Forest after moving to Los Osos, and became a member of SWAP. Her commitment to protecting the earth led her to include Small Wilderness Area Preservation (SWAP) in her living trust. Other environmental organizations that she supported included the Morro Bay National Estuary Program (MBNEP) and The Nature Conservancy.

In November, 2012, SWAP received a check for \$5,000 from the Carla Grindle Living Trust. We are truly grateful for Carla’s generosity, knowing that it was her love for the Elfin Forest that prompted her generous gift. The funds are being used to purchase plants and materials for symbolic fencing. We think that Carla would be pleased.

Common Polypody or California Polypody

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

Bonnie's drawing represents a fern recently found in the Elfin Forest. The Common or California Polypody (*Polypodium californicum*) was found by Al Normandin while scouting for his recent "Third Saturday Walk" in the Elfin Forest. It is actually common and widespread on the Central Coast, but not expected in the Elfin Forest because it generally requires consistently available soil moisture.

The sandy soils found commonly in the Elfin Forest lose surface moisture quickly. With six or more rainless months, one would not expect to find a diversity of ferns in the Elfin Forest. The ferns that occur there do so where shrubs or the pygmy oak over-story provide shade and extra moisture. Pygmy oaks condense water on their leaves and twigs from common coastal fogs. This fog drip can add over 20 inches of extra water annually to rain that falls from the clouds.

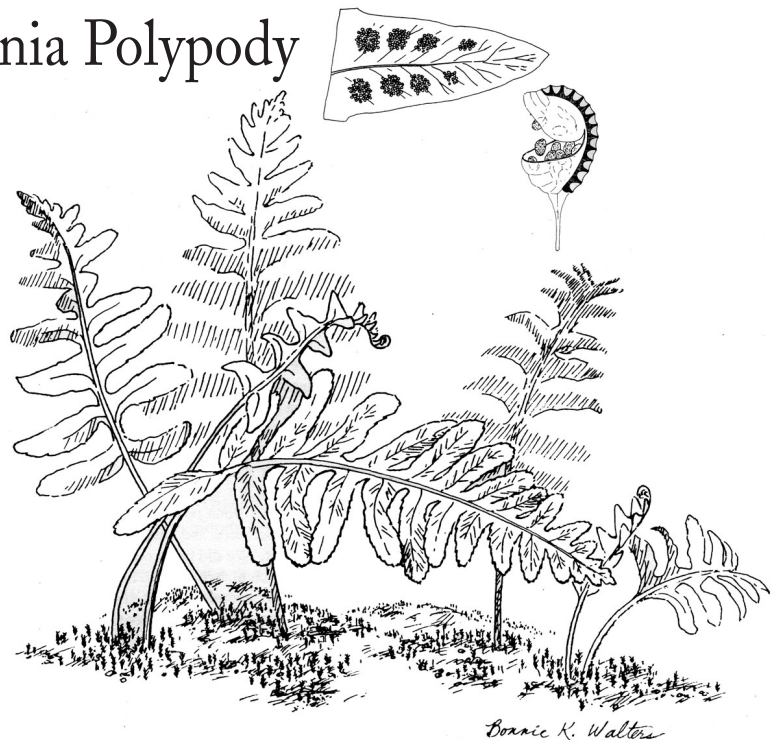
Even the extra moisture from fog drip might not be enough to support California Polypody were it not for this fern's ability to go into an extended period of dormancy. That is, the living green leaves simply die back to the underground stem (rhizome) and decompose during the dry months. The fern actually disappears from view several months out of the year. When moisture returns to the soil, buds on the rhizome produce new leaves. The disappearance probably explains how it could be present, yet not observed. Also, it grows under oaks, in the thickest, most inaccessible parts of the Elfin Forest. The only visible vegetative structures one can observe on any of our native ferns without digging are the leaves while the stems and roots are all below ground.

Bonnie's main drawing actually shows two groups of non-seed producing plants. The larger one is the common California Polypody or *Polypodium californicum* and the smaller, but more numerous plant is some kind of moss. I have no idea what kind. Mosses and closely related liverworts and hornworts are usually neglected in nature books.

Neither mosses nor ferns produce seeds. Seeds are complex multi-cellular reproductive structures consisting of at least three parts. These include the outer, protective seed coat whose cells contain DNA identical to the mother, a food supply (endosperm) often consisting of cells controlled by 2/3 mother and 1/3 father DNA, and an embryo whose DNA is 1/2 from each parent. Seeds allow land plants to disperse over a land environment.

Mosses and ferns do not produce seeds, yet they too are land plants. So how do they disperse over land? They use spores. Spores are simple, unicellular structures enclosed in a thick wall. Like seeds, spores usually are capable of a period of dormancy before they germinate and grow. In true plants (Kingdom Plantae, including mosses, ferns and seed plants) all spores contain a single set of chromosomes (haploid). Spores are produced in capsule-like structures, sporangia, each of whose cells contains two sets of chromosomes (diploid).

Since the cells of the sporangium are diploid and the spores produced inside are haploid, something special must happen to at



least some of the cells inside the sporangium. This special type of cell division called meiosis occurs when a single diploid cell (spore mother cell) divides its chromosome number in half producing four haploid spores. All sexual organisms do this some time in their life cycle. The stalked sporangia in Common Polypody are produced in clusters on the underside of leaves termed sori (plural) or sorus (singular). Bonnie has drawn a portion of the underside of a leaf lobe showing several sori. A typical single tiny, stalked fern open sporangium is also shown.

Each cluster (sorus) contains possibly 60 sporangia. Each sporangium produces approximately 60 spores, so a single sorus could produce 3,600 spores. Each leaf produces about 20 sori, spores produced per leaf could number 72,000. Each fern plant produces at least 10 leaves so the number of spores per plant could be 720,000. But California Polypody is a perennial and produces spores almost every year of its life. Even if a given individual lives only five years, then during its five-year life, it could produce 3,600,000 spores. Only two must be successful in order to produce a stable population of fern plants! If three or more are successful, the fern population increases, if only one or none is successful, then the fern population decreases.

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.

Education Corner

By Pat Akey, Education Chair; photo by Yolanda Waddell

In November and December of 2012 the Education Committee sponsored three docent training walks through the Elfin Forest. Three new docents attended: Chris Van Beveren, Frances Meehan, and Vicky Johnsen. These three women are dedicated to provide and support walks for children and adults.

The three walks covered the history of the Elfin Forest, the studies of plants, birds, and insects of the Forest. Also, we studied teaching suggestions for adults and children.

The goal of this phase of training is to give the docents a basic knowledge of the most common Elfin Forest plants and birds as well the Forest's habitats and ecology. After learning to identify plants by their leaves, flowers and seeds and identifying birds by their songs, the docents give practice walks for experienced docents, and then will be ready to lead their own walks.

If you are interested in becoming an Elfin Forest docent, contact me at pata@elfin-forest.org or leave a message on the SWAP phone, 805-528-0392.



Education Chair Pat Akey, second from right, and Yolanda Waddell (not shown) gave three new docents: (L-R) Frances Meehan, Chris Van Beveren and Vicky Johnsen, an orientation walk in the Elfin Forest in December to learn to identify the Forest's plants and birds.

Elfin Forest Visitors

Story & photos by Yolanda Waddell

Visitors come to the Elfin Forest from near and far. On December 1st, 2012 the Weed Warriors, who were working that day, met up with three ladies who were obviously birders, walking toward the Bush Lupine Point overlook. We learned that they traveled from Grand Junction, Colorado, to do birding on the Central Coast. Rebecca Frank, at left in the adjacent top photo, told me that there are amazing birds and thousands of acres of wilderness in the Grand Junction area which is in western Colorado near the border with Utah. Helen Traylor, at the right, is still an enthusiastic birder at age 89. Not shown in the photo was the third member of the trio, Kathleen McGinley, who had gone ahead to set up her spotting scope. Their goal for the day was to see a California Thrasher. I saw them two days later in the Elfin Forest, and learned that they had sighted five California Thrashers – a good addition to their life lists.

On December 3rd, retired Cuesta College Bio sciences Chair Pete Pedersen (at right in bottom photo) brought his friends George and Lynn Janeway for a tour of the Elfin Forest. George is a Los Osos dentist who said that SWAP founder Emily Polk and her husband Ben were his patients in the 1980s and 1990s. George and Lynn had not visited the Forest for many years and were pleased to learn about some of the plants and birds. They were impressed with the boardwalk and the good condition of the Forest.

If you, like Pete Pedersen, know someone who lives in the area and hasn't visited the Elfin Forest recently, please follow Pete's example and take your friend for a walk around the boardwalk. If you would like a guided tour, call the SWAP message phone at 805-528-0392.

See "Introduce A Friend to the Elfin Forest" on page 12 for more information.



Weed Warrior Report

Text and photos by Yolanda Waddell

Warriors Take Shoveling Seriously

November 3 – A crew of 13 did a lot of moving and digging during the November work party. They replaced some 4x4 water bars with round peeler logs on the 13th Street trail because of complaints that the square bars were a tripping hazard. Charlie Sitton trimmed back some sharp edges on newly installed handrails at the boardwalk steps. Then all tackled the last remaining patch of dense veldt grass near the houses between 15th and 16th Streets. They filled many bags and kept our snail monitor, Bob Meyer, busy moving endangered Shoulderband snails from their veldt grass hiding places to new shelters in the duff under mock heather plants. The energetic crew included Steve and Nate Adamski, Joey Bloom, Dave Bowlus, Justin Carlson, Lannie Erickson, Prisila and Rich Johnson, Bob Meyer, Conservation Chair Ron Rasmussen, and Yolanda Waddell.

December 1 – Some predicted rain did fall during the December work party, making the assigned task of our intrepid Weed Warriors – shoveling sand away from the water bars on all of the paths leading into the Elfin Forest – even more important. Removing sand from behind the uphill side of each water bar and creating a trough to drain the water off to the side of the path prevents the sand from being washed downhill and onto the street.

The wet and soggy but determined crew included Dave Bowlus, Vicky Johnsen, Prisila and Rich Johnson, Deborah Marzetta, Ron Rasmussen and Yolanda Waddell.

Let's all pull together

By Yolanda Waddell

If it doesn't rain, native plants can't grow,
But the Veldt Grass doesn't care.
It grows and spreads and sends out seeds
That scatter everywhere.

It takes a weed to succeed
In every kind of weather.

But we can make that Grass recede
By yanking it out together.

So bring your shovel and your gloves;
The battle begins at nine.
We'll dig and we'll pull those weeds in droves
And their numbers will decline.

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.



Deborah Marzetta, a new Weed Warrior, bravely showed up on a very rainy work day in December to do erosion control.



A rain-soaked but satisfied trio of Weed Warriors (L-R): Prisila Johnson, Rich Johnson and Bob Meyer, paused on the way to the Orchid Trail after digging sand away from water bars on other trails.



An energetic crew of Weed Warriors tackled the last bastion of invasive veldt grass in the Elfin Forest in November.

Coming Up in the Elfin Forest



Text and Photos By Jean Wheeler

February and March feature some of the most beautiful wildflowers in the Elfin Forest year. All around the boardwalk and sand paths buckbrush ceanothus shrubs are covered with their pale lavender to white blossoms. They are pictured along the upper boardwalk fronting the view of the estuary, sandspit, and Morro Rock. Brilliant red flower tubes of fuchsia-flowering gooseberries provide nectar for the long bills of hovering hummingbirds.

Also red are the drooping globes of California peonies. These dark red globes are less than two inches in diameter. The leaves are unusually large for Elfin Forest plants, and the peonies grow only a foot or so high as they lurk under the shady protection of taller shrubs. They are best seen on the sand trail leading from 11th Street to the boardwalk near Bush Lupine Point or from the boardwalk close to Siena's View.

February and March provide some of the best birding opportunities in the Elfin Forest year. Our winter water birds are still here by the thousands at least through February. They include all Ducks and Geese, all Wading Birds, and all Grebes listed in our Pocket Guide (sold on page 11). American Avocets, Marbled Godwits, Willets, and many other shorebird species will also be here into at least March.

Winter visitors to our chaparral and pygmy oak groves include Ruby-crowned Kinglets, American Robins, some warblers, and



several species of sparrows, including the Golden-crowned Sparrow pictured here and the subspecies of White-crowned Sparrow pictured on page 4. Of course our year-round birds are here, such as Anna's Hummingbirds, California Quail, both species of towhees, the California Thrasher, and Western Scrub Jays. Wrentits are more often heard than seen.

Males give a series of increasingly fast clear piping whistles descending at the end, while females give a shorter and slower series not descending.

What a great time of year to visit the Elfin Forest, whether for a short stroll or for many hours of fascinating study!

Loss of a Benefactor, Greg Hind

Story & photo by Yolanda Waddell

In 2008, Calendar Committee Chair Debbie Levi was searching for funds to defray the costs of printing the 2009 calendar. She came across the name of the Hind Foundation, applied for funds and received a courteous reply from Greg Hind. He said that he didn't do calendars but would be glad to help SWAP in other ways.

In 2009, SWAP needed financial assistance in building a proposed boardwalk extension into the Rose Bowker Memorial Grove. SWAP Chair Ron Rasmussen wrote a letter of application to the Hind Foundation, explaining



Hind Foundation Director Greg Hind, shown with his daughter Kirsten at the dedication of the Rose Bowker Grove boardwalk extension, was pleased with the excellent work done by the CCC and paid for by the Hind Foundation.

that a boardwalk and deck in the Bowker Grove would protect the roots of the Coast live oak trees from foot traffic. Greg Hind and his Foundation gave SWAP a grant for \$21,260, and in August, 2009, the California Conservation Corps built the extension and deck in the Bowker Grove. It turned out that the actual cost of building was much less, so SWAP happily returned \$11,400 to the Hind Foundation.

Greg Hind attended our formal opening of the Bowker Grove extension and deck in September of that year, and cut the yellow caution tape, our version of a ribbon. His daughter Kirsten was with him, and both looked very happy, as can be seen in the adjacent photo.

Greg Hind and his foundation gave financial aid to countless large and small projects in San Luis Obispo County that include the Performing Art Center at Cal Poly, Friends of Wild Cherry Canyon, the Cambria Historical Society, Harmony Headlands, and many more, including SWAP and the Elfin Forest. He died after a short illness on November 1st, 2012, at age 66. His survivors include his wife, Jane, and daughters Meegan and Kirsten. Along with the rest of San Luis Obispo County, SWAP extends our deepest sympathy to them.

WALKS in the ELFIN FOREST

Third Saturday Walks

February 16, 9:30 a.m. – Fungus Foray

For our annual Fungus Foray in the Elfin Forest, intrepid leader and fungophile Dennis Sheridan will take us on an exploration of the Elfin Forest floor for wood bluetts, black elfin saddles, earthstars, golden caps, boletes, poisonous amanitas and many other fascinating fungi. Bring a magnifying lens and, if you have a mystery mushroom in your yard, bring a sample for Dennis to identify. This is not a mushroom collecting walk, as all plants in the Elfin Forest are protected by law. Only a very heavy rain will cancel the walk.

March 16, 9:30 a.m. – Animal Tracks Walk

Join Evan Albright, an animal track expert, in learning who is “tracking up” the Elfin Forest. Evan will demonstrate how to tell the front feet from the back feet of a raccoon, and what the difference is between coyote tracks and dog tracks. Visitors will learn to look for other signs that a wild resident of the Elfin Forest has passed that way, such as hairs on a fence or “scoot” marks where the animal squeezed through a fence hole. This walk will open up a complex world of the Elfin Forest’s inhabitants, one that we would never suspect while walking along the boardwalk.

April 20, 9:30 a.m. – Butterflies & Native Plants

In honor of California Native Plant Week, butterfly enthusiast Pat Brown will lead a walk from the point of view of a hungry butterfly. As you tour the Elfin Forest with her, Pat will introduce you to several native plants and talk about the butterflies that sip their nectar and the caterpillars that eat their leaves. Pat has taken many photos of butterflies in all stages of development from eggs to mature butterflies, and will share them along with fascinating butterfly facts. She’ll lead you to hangouts of Variable Checkerspot, Moro Blue, Swallowtail, Hairstreak and other butterflies that make the Elfin Forest their home. She will also share information about butterfly books, web sites and butterfly-related materials. She recommends that you bring a hand lens and a pair of close-focusing (5-10 ft.) binoculars.

Walks in the Elfin Forest begin at times stated above. Park at the north end of 15th Street (16th Street for wheelchairs) off Santa Ysabel in Los Osos. Walks begin on the boardwalk at the end of the 15th Street path. Wear comfortable shoes, long sleeves and pants to avoid poison oak and mosquitoes. Please park carefully, avoiding driveways and mailboxes. Please leave pets at home. The easy paced walks last 1-1/2 to 2 hours. For more information call (805) 528-0392.



Naturalist Al Normandin prepared a fascinating 3rd Saturday walk about lichens and ferns in December. Here he displays samples of a variety of lichens prior to the walk. Photo by Yolanda Waddell.



Soil scientist Dr. Jim Brownell (center) showed walk participants the improvement in water absorption capability when sandy soil, such as the soil in Rose’s Grove, contains organic matter. 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.

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Thank You to Our New and Renewing Members

Compiled by Betsy Kinter, SWAP Database Coordinator

NEW MEMBERS:

Shirley Stroup

RENEWING MEMBERS:

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Jerry and Elsie Deitz*	Norment
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Mary Harrison*	Peg Smith
Los Osos Fitness*	John and Leslie Steinbeck
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Kirsten Holmquist*	Rick and Laura Vopatek
Clement H. Jeffrey*	Marisa Waddell*
Dr. Steve Jio and family	Michael Ward
Heidi Kausch*	Roy Wolf*

DONATIONS:

Estate of Carla Grindle

**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, Ron Rasmussen, Pete Sarafian,
Yolanda Waddell, Dirk and Bonnie Walters, and Jean Wheeler.

Printed at Hay Printing, Morro Bay on recycled paper.

Labeled and mailed at Achievement House.

Deadline for copy to Oakleaves is the first Wednesday before the month of issue.

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

Remembering Dorothy Norwood

By Yolanda Waddell

SWAP and the Elfin Forest lost a dear friend and champion when Dorothy Norwood, our long-time Mutt Mitt Coordinator, passed away suddenly on December 19, 2012. At age 89, Dorothy was still keeping track of the Forest's seven Mutt Mitt stations. She would walk ten blocks each way from her home to fill her self-assigned Mutt Mitt dispenser at the 16th Street entrance, and stayed in touch with the other members of the Mutt Mitt Committee.

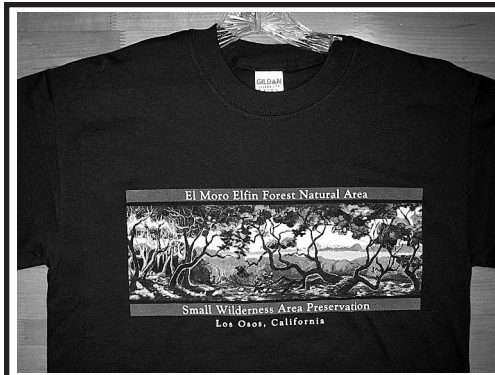
Dorothy was born in Fresno, California, in 1923, and after marrying Ken Norwood, raised her family in Burbank. She was employed by the Walt Disney Company at the Burbanks studios from 1970 until 1990, when she moved to Los Osos. Not a person to let the grass grow under her feet, Dorothy became a docent for the State Park. She also volunteered for People Helping People in Los Osos, the Los Osos library, Morro Coast Audubon, and of course, SWAP.

I met Dorothy over the phone early in 2001, when I was getting background information for an Oakleaves "bench story." A bench dedicated to an early SWAP Board member, Virginia Black, was bought by a group of friends who called themselves the North Coast Explorers. Dorothy, along with Virginia Black and the rest of the group would select an interesting place to go for what Dorothy called "an exciting hike." The following year, in 2002, Sandra and Curt Beebe installed the seven Elfin Forest Mutt Mitt stations, and a short while after that Dorothy became the Mutt Mitt Committee Chair. In October, 2007, SWAP chose her as Volunteer of the Year for her years of dedicated service.

Dorothy felt strongly about the need to pick up pet waste and prevent bacteria from being washed into the Morro Bay estuary. Each December, when SWAP participated in the Los Osos Holiday Parade, Dorothy would walk the length of the parade on both sides of the street, handing Mutt Mitts to all parade-goers who had dogs with them. In her own way she was a protector and guardian of the Elfin Forest, loving the beautiful place where she lived and passing that love on to others. SWAP sends condolences to Dorothy's family; we will dearly miss a wonderful lady who lived a long life, yet died too soon for those who knew and loved her.



Dorothy Norwood, Mutt Mitt Committee Chair, kept track of the supply of Mutt Mitts and committee volunteers. Photo by Yolanda Waddell.



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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.

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Combat Alien Plants—Join Weed Warriors (see page 7)

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Wildflowers are coming into bloom with winter rains, many birds can be seen, and animal tracks in the sand testify to passing nocturnal residents.



How about introducing a friend to the late winter/early spring beauty of our small wilderness preserve?

Pick up a trail guide where the 16th Street Entrance meets the boardwalk or where the Bush Lupine Point spur leaves the boardwalk loop. Encourage your friend to enjoy the information in the trail guide and on the beautifully-illustrated Interpretive Signs.

Report your friend's reactions and especially wonderful or unusual sightings to the editors for "Visitor Comments" or "Elfin Forest Sightings" in a future issue of Oakleaves.

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