



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 2013

Boardwalk Maintenance Continues

By Ron Rasmussen, SWAP Chair; photos by Yolanda Waddell

When the Elfin forest boardwalk was built in 1999, the construction involved using galvanized steel deck screws. With time the corrosive effects of the salt air have caused many of these screws to lose a firm hold on the boards and in some cases to actually break. Until recently, when broken screws have been found, SWAP volunteers have replaced them with stainless steel screws. Because of the very large number of screws expected to fail, this has been only a stop-gap measure. Therefore, some preventive maintenance has



In spite of recent work by the CCC to fasten hundreds of loose boards in the boardwalk, Conservation Chair Ron Rasmussen keeps finding more. Here he inserts a stainless steel screw with his handy portable drill.

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Botanist Concludes Elfin Forest Study

Text and photo by Yolanda Waddell



Botanist Ed Bobich and SWAP Conservation Chair Ron Rasmussen cool off in the Rose Bowker Grove on a hot August day.

During the last week of August, botanist Ed Bobich completed his on-site measurements of Coast Live Oaks in the Elfin Forest for his sabbatical research project (see June/July 2013 Oakleaves, page 3). Dr. Bobich is conducting the study to better understand how this location, on sand dunes that are next to Morro Bay and the ocean, affects the photosynthesis, water relations and structure of coast live oaks. He will use his measurements to compare the effects of the early spring versus the dry summer season. He is also comparing how Elfin Forest Coast Live Oaks differ from inland Coast Live Oaks in regard to the characteristics that he has measured.

The day was warm when I went searching for Dr. Bobich for a last interview, and I found him and SWAP Chair Ron Rasmussen, cooling off in the Rose Bowker Grove. Ron had been fastening loose boards in the boardwalk. On that day Dr. Bobich was using his LICOR 6400 portable photosynthesis machine, the machine at the left in the photo. It measures carbon dioxide uptake, water loss,

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

*of the Los Osos/Morro Bay Chapter of
Small Wilderness Area Preservation (SWAP)*

consists of the following members:

Ron Rasmussen, Chair
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Pat Akey, Member at Large
Erick Amaya, Member at Large
Pat Murray, Member at Large

The SWAP Board of Directors meets monthly at 7 p.m. at the Community Room, Morro Shores Mobile Home Park, 633 Ramona Ave., Los Osos.

The next meetings are

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

Maintenance *continued from page 1*

been done in collaboration with the California Conservation Corps (CCC).

In mid-July of this year SWAP conducted a careful survey of the boardwalk to identify screws that have failed as well as those that would likely fail in the near future. The CCC followed up by replacing the identified galvanized screws with stainless steel ones. This involved several hundred screws being replaced with new ones, but this number is only a fraction of the total number of screws in the

entire boardwalk. SWAP will continue to monitor the condition of the boardwalk, and to either replace any failed screws or to enlist help from the CCC if necessary.

If a problem is noticed on the boardwalk, please call SWAP at 528-0392 and tell us the nature of the problem so that it can be attended to.



Here is an example of a rusted galvanized screw that was in the boardwalk and a stainless screw that will replace it.

Botanist *continued from page 1*

stomatal conductance and water vapor concentration. "Stomatal conductance" is related to the rate of passage of water vapor exiting through the stomata (pores) of a leaf.

To give an example of the Licor 6400's capability, he set it to measure the carbon dioxide content of the air in the Bowker Grove. It was 416 parts per million, well above the 350 parts per million danger point for global warming. He said that in Los Angeles, it would be 15 to 20 parts per million higher, and that the changes in temperature that are taking place are going to affect everything.

I asked Dr. Bobich for any general conclusions that he could give prior to doing the calculations of his measurements and writing a report. He said that the oaks in the Elfin Forest aren't water stressed, which surprised him. Also, the photosynthesis measurements are fairly high.

The Rose Bowker Grove canopy is more open than when Dr. Bobich began his study. He is not sure if the stressor is the wind, or possibly Oak Moth caterpillars. The grove near Bush Lupine Point had lost many leaves due to activity of the caterpillars. He said that he could hear them munching and the sound of their droppings.

At our SWAP Celebration on September 28, Dr. Bobich gave a lecture, "Pygmy Oaks Versus Normal Oaks; How Different are the Oaks in the Elfin Forest?" His talk was videotaped, and any reader who would like to borrow the DVD of the talk may do so by phoning our message phone at 805-528-0392. After Dr. Bobich's report on his study is published, SWAP will post it on our web site. We appreciate his generosity in sharing the knowledge that he has gained from his study of the Elfin Forest oaks.

Thinking of Switching to Online Oakleaves?

If you are more comfortable reading a paper copy of Oakleaves, we understand. However if you use your computer a lot, we encourage you to take a look at the online version at www.elfin-forest.org. Being able to see the 20 or so photos in full color makes it a very attractive alternative to the black-and-white printed copy. If you miss an issue for some reason, it is there, waiting for you. Simply click on "Forest Library", then "Oakleaves Index" and finally the year and month of the issue that you want to read. Try it – you may like it.

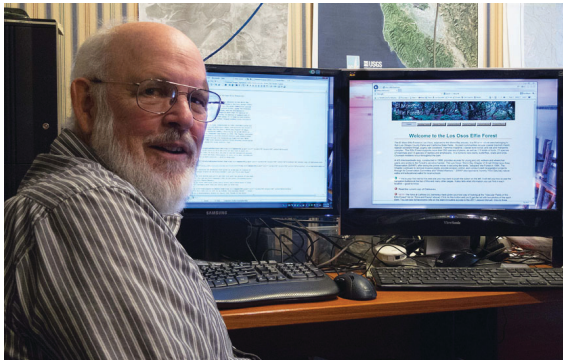
SWAP's Multi-tasking Volunteers

By Yolanda Waddell; photos by Sharon Meyer and Yolanda Waddell

SWAP is proud to be an all-volunteer organization. Over the course of our 28 years as a chapter, hundreds of adults, teenagers and children have given their support to SWAP and to the Elfin Forest. The wheels of our small organization have turned smoothly because of their energy and dedication.

Some of our volunteers are seen in the Elfin Forest, at the Oktoberfest and in the pages of Oakleaves from time to time. Others do all or some of their work behind the scenes, knowing – because we tell them – that their work is important and APPRECIATED.

Here are thumbnail sketches of three remarkable and talented people, whose excellent work behind the scenes makes SWAP the vital organization that it is.



BOB MEYER, SWAP WEBMASTER

Actually, Bob is often seen in the Elfin Forest because he is a member of the Conservation Committee. He is one of our two snail monitors, moving any Morro Shoulderband Snails to safety when the Weed Warriors find them hiding in the veldt grass. But few know that he single-handedly wrote, designed and installed the SWAP web site on the internet.

Bob is retired from Cal Trans as a senior environmental planner, and joined SWAP as a Weed Warrior in 1999 when he and his wife Sharon moved to Los Osos. Since that time, he has been a Board member, editor of our Elfin Forest Pocket Guide, and contributing photographer to the SWAP calendars and Oakleaves. He is also our computer guru. His interest and skills with all things computer go back to the early 1970s

when he was a member of the Microprocessor User's Group at Stanford along with Steve Jobs, then a teenager, and Steve Wosniak, originator of the Apple computer. If you were to step into Bob's study, you would see an array of computers and monitors. And if you want to see his handiwork, go to www.elfin-forest.org. Bob is always working to improve our website and add new information.

PAT MURRAY, PROPERTY AND RECORDS CHAIR

Pat has been a SWAP volunteer since 1999, and a Board of Directors member since 2000. Like Bob, she wears more than one hat. She is the leader of the Trail Trimmers, a crew of five that keeps the vigorous plant life growing next to the boardwalk and trails from blocking the path of Elfin Forest visitors. She has trained each Trail Trimmer, and periodically arranges for Chuck Woodard, the County Parks arborist, to visit the Forest and do some advanced training. Members of the crew are Erick Amaya, Jerry Ambrose, LoisAnn and Ralph Cass, Lannie Erickson and Dean Thompson.

Because SWAP doesn't have an office, almost everything related to the organization's activities is housed in a storage unit in Los Osos. When she became a member of the Board, Pat agreed to be Chair of the Property and Records Committee. To this day she has been a committee of one. She is in charge of ordering, storing, inventorying and selling our mural T-Shirts (see form on page 11), ordering such things as SWAP brochures and stationery, and keeping the storage unit organized. A supply of brochures, newsletters, pocket guides and T-shirts travels around in her car to have on hand "just in case." Periodically, when she does "house cleaning" or organizes a move to a larger storage unit, her committee grows to include members of the Board and other SWAP volunteers.

Pat is also an active member of SWAP's Outreach and Volunteer Committees, contacting volunteers for our Oktoberfest booth as well as setting it up. She is always in the thick of every SWAP special event such as our Annual Celebration. In fact, the Board of Directors meets in the Community Room at Morro Shores Mobile Home Park because Pat, as a resident of the Park, arranges for us to meet there. She takes the word "outreach" seriously, promoting SWAP and the Elfin Forest at every opportunity; many of our Board Members through the years have joined because Pat invited them to attend a Board Meeting, and then followed up the visit with a phone call. Also she is the cheerful voice with information about SWAP on our answering machine. Whatever the task may be, Pat tackles it readily; she is indeed a SWAP treasure.

DANNA WEIDNER, MUTT MITT COMMITTEE CHAIR

Danna and her husband Tom moved to Los Osos in 2009, but had been vacationing in Los Osos and visiting the Elfin Forest for 20 years. A former nurse and co-owner of an in-home medical care company, Danna is as active in retirement as she was during her professional life. She added membership on the



Volunteers continued on page 4

American Wigeon



Text and photo by Jean Wheeler, Ph. D.

Among the species of dabbling ducks arriving for Morro Bay's spectacular display of wintering birds about this time each year is the American Wigeon (*Anas americana*). This medium-sized duck (about 20 inches long) is one of the easiest to identify from Bush Lupine Point or Siena's View among ducks wintering on the estuary. The males are in breeding plumage from October to June, which is virtually their entire annual sojourn on Morro Bay Estuary.

Each male has a vertical white or creamy stripe from his beak to the top of his round head making him easy to spot. Also distinctive are the large iridescent green patch behind his eye, a horizontal white streak on his side, and a white patch on his flank separating his black tail and rump from his pinkish-brown body. The small blue-gray beak has a black tip. The belly is white and a large white wing patch shows clearly in flight on both upper and lower surfaces of each wing.

Only the occasionally visiting and closely related Eurasian Wigeon is likely to cause confusion. It has a more rufous head and buffy rather than white forehead stripe and has a gray rather than white patch on the undersides of the wings.

As usual, the female is much less distinctive--pinkish brown without the white and green patches but with the small blue-gray and black-tipped beak.

Like other dabbling ducks, American Wigeons feed by rocking tail up and head down in shallow areas of mainly freshwater lakes, ponds, rivers, and marshes. Grazing chiefly on grasses, sedges and other aquatic plants, they are sometimes called "poacher" or "robber" ducks for stealing vegetation brought up from the bottom by other species. Although they'll take some insects and mollusks during the breeding season, their diet has a higher proportion of plant material than that of any other species of dabbling duck.

Wigeons are also more likely than other dabbling ducks to leave the water and forage in marshy areas and pastures. However, they are nervous birds, usually seen in large rafts of multiple species while wintering on our estuary and feeding in shallow water mainly around low tide.

Mostly monogamous, pair bonds are usually formed even before they reach wintering grounds. The males stay with their mates through spring migration, nesting, and incubation, then leave to molt. American Wigeons breed in all but the extreme north of Canada and Alaska, farther north than any other dabbling duck except the Northern Pintail. They also nest in the interior northwest of the United States. The females lay about six to a dozen eggs in a depression on the ground under tall grass or shrub cover near water bodies.

The ducklings hatch covered in down and are able to leave the nest soon after hatching. They feed themselves, mostly on insects for a few weeks, then change to the adult pattern of dabbling for aquatic plants. Females protect and guide but don't feed them and leave them even before or soon after fledging. Females then molt.

American Wigeons are one of the earliest waterfowl to migrate south from their breeding grounds. They winter from southern parts of our nation through Middle America and as far south as the northwestern coast of South America. They occur along all four of the major flyways, but nearly half of the population uses the Pacific Flyway. Predation of eggs and birds is by the usual small carnivores and predatory birds. Additionally, they are typically the duck species fifth most commonly shot in the United States during hunting season. Yet they fortunately remain very numerous throughout their range and in terms of conservation are listed as a species of "least concern."

Volunteers *continued from page 3*

SWAP Board of Directors to her other volunteer activities in January, 2010. Eventually it became clear that the need to attend monthly board meetings was standing in the way of the many post-retirement trips that Danna and her husband had promised to themselves.

Danna stayed active in SWAP, however, and is now a key person on the Website Committee, assisting Bob Meyer. She learned the rather complicated process for maintaining a web site and now installs the bimonthly web version of Oakleaves onto the web site. She also updates the 3rd Saturday walk notices on the site and does other housekeeping needs that crop up.

About two years ago Danna took over Pat Murray's job as Coordinator of Mutt Mitts, assisting Mutt Mitt Chair Dorothy Norwood. After Dorothy's passing, Danna became the Mutt Mitt Committee Chair. This very important committee consists of seven Captains who maintain the dispensers of Mutt Mitt dog waste bags at each street-end entrance to the Elfin Forest. The Captains are: Garry Frieberg, 11th St.; Scott Danielson, 12th St.; Susan McTaggart, 13th St.; Beth Wimer, 14th St.; Heidi Kausch, 15th St.; Pat Grimes, 16th St.; and Carolyn Boomer, 17th St. Because Danna and the Captains keep the free Mutt Mitts always available, dog waste in the Elfin Forest is minimal. The bacteria-bearing waste is placed in trash bins and is collected by County Parks rangers to be taken to the landfill instead of washing into the estuary during the rainy season. SWAP is grateful to Danna, a retired nurse, for keeping the Elfin Forest healthy in a very real way.

Coming Up in the Elfin Forest



Male and female Green-winged Teal.



Acorns festooned the Coast Live Oaks in October last year.

By Jean Wheeler

Rejoice, bird lovers—the fall migration season is upon us again! Throughout October and November, Morro Bay National Estuary will be filling with water and shore birds migrating through or arriving for their winter vacation here. Terrestrial species will also be settling into the Elfin Forest for the winter or migrating through on their way to their tropical winter resorts.

Dabbling ducks float on the surface of the estuary, dipping their heads way down to seek food with their tails pointing up in the air. Those to look for include Mallards, Northern Pintails, Gadwalls, many American and perhaps a few interloping Eurasian Wigeons (story on page 4), Northern Shovelers, and Teal (Blue-winged, Cinnamon, and Green-winged). Diving ducks plunge completely below the surface disappearing in search of their food. They include Scaup (Lesser and Greater), Ring-Necked, Canvasback, Surf Scoter, Bufflehead, Common Goldeneye, Red-breasted Merganser, and Ruddy Ducks.

Terrestrial species also arriving for winter include Fox, Lincoln's, and Golden-crowned Sparrows joining our year-round White-crowned Sparrows from October to March or April. Ruby-crowned Kinglets also settle in for the winter. American Robins and Hermit Thrushes replace our summer Swainson's Thrushes after those depart southward. Yellow-rumped Warblers peak in these months and Say's Phoebe joins its year-round relative, the Black Phoebe, for a winter visit. A dawn or dusk walker in the Elfin Forest may be lucky enough to see or more likely hear a wintering short-eared owl. Passing through in small flocks are Cedar Waxwings, Western Tanagers, and Pine Siskins. See page 9 to join Jim Royer as he leads a birding walk Saturday October 12, the day before local birders gather at Bush Lupine Point for their annual participation in the international "Big Sit!"

October and November are minimal in colorful flowers, but a few species normally do continue to show some blossoms in these months. Orange poppies are still in bloom. Dune Buckwheat may show some late opening white flowers, but most have aged to pink or rust and may even look more beautiful in these richer

colors. California Asters have white to pinkish or even lavender petals around yellow central disks. Coyote Brush has yellow flowers on male plants and fluffy white flowers on female plants. Seaside Golden Yarrow may also still show the yellow flowers for which it is named. The black pompom balls on Black Sage are dead flowers that persist on the stems, but they can have a festive look, especially around Halloween! Red flowers that may also remain in bloom are commonly called "Indian Pinks" but better called "Cardinal Catch-fly" (see Dirk Walters article on page 5). Also look for the colorful red berries of Hollyleaf Cherry and red to vibrant black berries on Coffeeberry bushes between Bush Lupine Point and Siena's View.

This is also an especially good time to study the diminutive Coast Live Oaks for which our Elfin Forest is named. Their acorns ripen during the fall and early winter months. One grove on the north side of the lower boardwalk a short walk east of the access into Rose's Grove has an especially large number of sizeable round oak galls. Numerous holes in them reveal where the wasp larvae that grew up protected in them emerged for their adult lives. The galls normally do no harm to the oaks. The lovely lace lichens festooning the oaks also normally cause little or no damage.

So the boardwalk still displays beauty and interest in flowers and fruits even as the 2013 blooming year is ending. And as the forest is waiting for the reviving rains of the coming winter, the estuary is already filling with the annual great winter extravaganza for birders!

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?

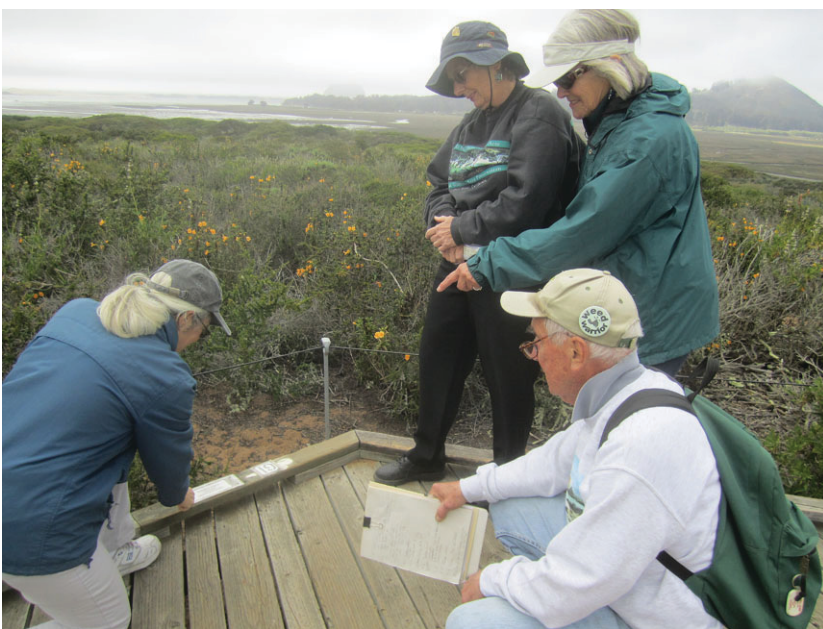
Please report any interesting sightings to your Oakleaves editors at: oakleaves@elfin-forest.org for inclusion in future issues under "Elfin Forest Sightings." You can also leave a message on SWAP's answering machine, (805) 528-0392.



Pete Sarafian shared his extensive knowledge of the Elfin Forest with a Cuesta College Environmental Biology class in July.



Shortly after the Cuesta College Fall semester began in August, Al Normandin led a field trip in the Elfin Forest for the Environmental Biology class of instructor Steve Hendricks (far right).



Education Corner

By Pat Akey, Education Chair; photos by Yolanda Waddell

The Education Committee is sponsoring a new program of general-topic walks in the Elfin Forest for all ages. These new walks will be led by trained docents. Some of the topics will include: the birds and plants particular to the Elfin Forest; the history of the Forest; and Chumash Indians and how they used the Elfin Forest. Three new docents are currently in the process of training to prepare and lead the walks. They are Vicky Johnsen, Frances Meehan and Chris Van Beveren. When the walks are ready to be given, notices will be placed in Oakleaves, in newspapers, on our web site and on the automated board at South Bay Boulevard and Los Osos Valley Road.

In July and August, the Education Committee received requests from Cuesta College Environmental Biology teachers for a field trip in the Elfin Forest. The July walk for the class of Azalia Contreras, was led by Pete Sarafian. In August, Al Normandin conducted the walk for Steve Hendricks' class.

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.

Elfin Forest Trail Guide Updated

The revised El Moro Elfin Forest Natural Area Guide, formerly called the Boardwalk Trail Guide, is now available at our two distribution boxes on the boardwalk. It contains an improved map of the boardwalk as well as text changes that make it more readable and accurate.

Pat Brown, who has been Chair of the Trail Guide Committee since its inception, oversaw each step of the revision, from reviewing all of the numbered stops along the boardwalk to the final printing. Assisting her on the committee were Dave Moran, Pat Murray, Ron Rasmussen, Yolanda Waddell and Jean Wheeler. Dave Moran created a clear and visually attractive map for the Guide, that was reviewed and approved the SWAP Board.

The Guide was produced in cooperation with San Luis Obispo County Parks. Thanks to the Baywood Inn and San Luis Obispo County Parks who donated funds for printing 10,000 copies of the Guide. The printing was very skillfully done by Hay Printing in Morro Bay.

The Elfin Forest Natural Area Guide is available to the public, free of charge, at two locations along the boardwalk: at the 12th/13th Street intersection near the Fairbanks Monument, and at the intersection of the 16th Street boardwalk extension and the main boardwalk loop. About 3,500 copies of the Guide are picked up and used each year.

Trail Guide Committee Chair Pat Brown at left, with help from Jean Wheeler, Pat Murray and Ron Rasmussen, began updating the Guide by making sure all marked stops were in the right place and correct. Photo by Yolanda Waddell.

Weed Warrior Report

By Yolanda Waddell

July – Warriors Mop Up Cheat Grass

On July 6, ten dedicated Weed Warriors made the trek to the lower grove next to the bay to finish removing cheat grass along with as many seeds of the plant as they could snag. While they were there, they pulled the invasive Italian thistle as well. After the rains begin (hopefully), the Warriors will return to pull the new crop before the plants mature and drop their seeds. The process will take several years. The crew also cleaned up some veldt grass on the slope above South Bay Boulevard. Members of the July crew were Jay Bonestell, Lannie Erickson, Jack Fanselow, Prisila and Rich Johnson, Dave McDonald, Bob Meyeer, Ron Rasmussen, Pete Sarafian and Yolanda Waddell.

August – Veldt Grass Battle Continues

August 3rd saw the Warriors tackling the last large infestation of veldt grass in the southern edge of the Elfin Forest, in the area between 15th and 17th Streets. Most of the plants are fairly large and have to be dug up, one at a time. Also, each veldt grass plant must be inspected to make sure it doesn't contain any endangered Shoulder-band Snails. The crew also watered the young native plants at 11th and 16th Streets. Most of the plants are doing well. Coming to the Elfin Forest at the early hour of 9:00 a.m. on a Saturday morning and weeding for three hours takes very special people. This month's crew consisted of Pat Brown, Carolyn Case, Lannie Erickson, Rich Johnson, Aubrey Kommer, Dave McDonald, Bob Meyer, Ron Rasmussen and Pete Sarafian. Thanks to all for caring for the Elfin Forest.

Let's all pull together

By Yolanda Waddell

Oh the rains, they will come
and the sand it will roll
unless we prevent that
with erosion control.

Bring a shovel and gloves
and a good strong back;
We'll reward you with cookies
made by Ron, that's a fact.

See you Saturday at nine.
To 15th Street make a beeline.
If you're late don't despair,
A directional map will be there.

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.



In May, Pat Brown (L) and new Weed Warrior Aubrey Kommer spent some of the August work day working to remove veldt grass from Coastal buckwheat shrubs. If the shrubs could talk they might say "Whew!" Photo by Ron Rasmussen.



Weed Warriors (L-R) Jack Fanselow, Ron Rasmussen, Lannie Erickson, Prisila Johnson and Rich Johnson paused with bags of cheat grass and veldt grass after hiking from the lower grove and the slope above South Bay Boulevard. Photo by Yolanda Waddell.



*Vicky Johnsen (left), Danna Weidner and Pat Murray were some of the cordial and enthusiastic SWAP hosts at our booth at the 2012 Oktoberfest. Photo by Yolanda Waddell.
(Want to volunteer for the 2013 Oktoberfest? See page 12!)*

Cardinal Catchfly

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

Late summer or early fall (more appropriately 'late dry season') in the Elfin Forest is a down time. Little is happening. Even the animals seem to be resting. The only plants blooming are the Mock Heather (yellow – *Ericameria ericoides*) and possibly some coast Dune Buckwheat (white – *Erigonum parvifolium*). But if one looks carefully down by the Rose Bowker Grove one may just see a few bright red flowers. Around here they are most commonly called Indian pink. But I have found a better common name on the internet: cardinal catchfly. Either way it's *Silene laciniata*.

Cardinal catchfly uses other plants for support as its stems are weak. So look for it growing out of relative short plants under the canopies. The paired leaves are broadly joined at their base and appear, at first glance, to be quite grass-like. But no grass has opposite leaves and a close examination of the leaf blades will show a single larger mid-rib. The Elfin Forest is near the northern extent of this species range. It can be found on our coastal dunes and further inland on serpentine outcrops.

An examination of Bonnie's drawing will show what appear to be the five fused petals at the end of a long tube. The tube is formed by the fused sepals (calyx). The petals are actually separate. If one were to make a slit down the side of the calyx tube, the five separate petals would simply fall away from each other. Each petal consists of two quite distinct regions. The showy part is bright red and botanists call it the claw. Each thin basal portion is the length of the tube and basally attaches separately to the receptacle below the ovary. The sepals and stamens also attach to the receptacle. So, in spite of its casual appearance, the ovary is superior.

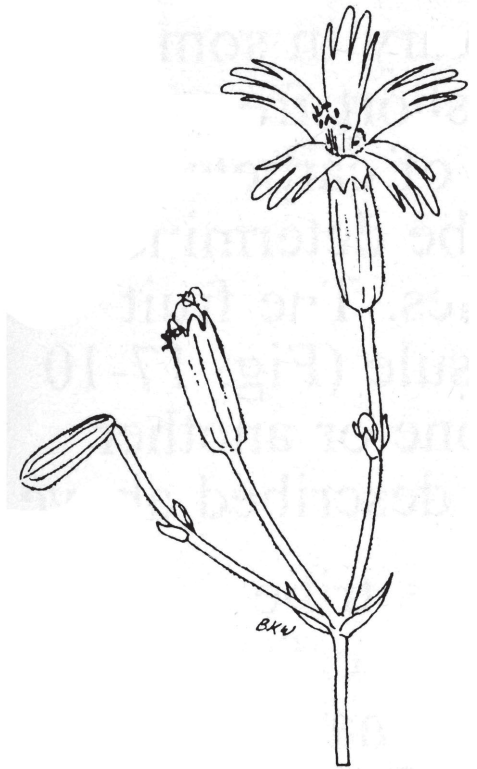
The local common name, Indian pink, I believe to be less desirable because of the use of 'Indian'. The name, Indian, often indicates that the plant in question was used in some way by native North American peoples. I didn't find any reference to their use of this species either on line or in my library. I'm guessing that the use of the word, 'Indian,' here simply refers to it being native to California. The second name, pink, refers to a common trait in the Caryophyllaceae or pink family. Pink, in this case, does not refer to the flower's color which is a bright red, but to the fringed petals. It refers to a way tailors cut edges of fabric with shears that leave the edge saw-toothed. The shears are called pinking shears and they prevent the edges from unraveling.

The name cardinal catchfly is more accurate and helpful. The flowers are bright red like the plumage of a cardinal. The term 'catch-fly' refers to a common trait found in many flowers which ensnare small insects. These plants produce lots of special trichomes (hairs) on their sepals. The individual trichomes resemble colored pins often used to stick into maps; they have short shafts and large round heads. When mature, these 'heads' break down into an acrid, terrible tasting glob sticky enough to ensnare small insects such as flies and bees. Why would this be an advantage to the flower?

Many flower-visiting insects, when prevented from entering the flower the correct way will attempt to steal nectar by biting a hole through the base of the flower or calyx. This is pure thievery as the insect gets the nectar without pollinating the flower.

How might a cardinal catchfly be pollinated? First we need to note that the only possible (legal)

entrance to the deep, relatively narrow floral tube (where the nectar is produced at its base) is via a very tiny hole through which the style and stamen filaments also emerge. So a pollinator would have to either be small enough to enter the hole (not likely) or have a very long, thin proboscis or tongue. That eliminates essentially all flies, bees and beetles which have chewing mouth parts. Three common long-proboscis pollinators remain: butterflies, moths and hummingbirds. Butterflies usually need flowers with a landing platform. The cardinal catchfly is oriented so that the showy parts of the petals are vertical and do not provide a landing platform for butterflies. Cardinal catchflies bloom during the day which should eliminate most moths. Further, I haven't noticed any pronounced floral odors produced by this flower. A day-flying pollinator that hovers in front of flowers, possesses a long, thin beak (and tongue), and with keen eye-sight in the red portion of the spectrum would be the humming bird. It's a conclusion that could have been reached easily from the internet, but not nearly as much fun.



OAKLEAVES

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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 (and Second) Saturday Walks

October 12, 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 the Big Sit! on Sunday, October 13. 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 19, 9:30 a.m. – CCC & the Elfin Forest

It's hard to walk anywhere in the Elfin Forest without being on or near a project of the California Conservation Corps. The boardwalk? They built it. Coastal scrub area near Bush Lupine Point? They planted many of the plants. Fences to protect sensitive habitat? They put them up. Join Mike Anderson, Conservation Supervisor of the Los Padres CCC for an eye-opening walk and talk about the positive impact of the CCC on the Elfin Forest and most of the rest of San Luis Obispo County. Don't miss this rare opportunity to learn how the CCC makes our beautiful Central Coast even better.

November 16, 9:30 a.m. – Reptile Walk

Join Cuesta College biologist Robb Tibstra as he tours the Elfin Forest in search of the Coast Horned Lizard and maybe the Southern Alligator Lizard. We'll be sure to find some Western Fence Lizards sunning themselves on the boardwalk rails. Since most of the Forest's reptiles and amphibians are hard to find, Robb will bring reptile skins and perhaps a live critter or two so walk participants can see what some of those small and retiring Forest inhabitants look like. Learn how these elfin creatures behave, survive, and protect themselves from predators.

December 21, 9:30 a.m. – Solstice Walk

Winter solstice is today, December 21. Will the sun really stand still, as the word "solstice" means? Dr. Jean Wheeler has taught thousands of geography students about the relative wanderings of the sun, moon, and earth and what they mean to us in terms of our climates, tides, and the vegetation and animal life around us. She'll show us how large our seasonal differences in sun angle are. Also, she'll explain how locations of some Elfin Forest plant species reflect in part their need for or ability to tolerate abundant solar energy, yet other species survive only where protected from the heat of high summer sun angles.

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.



Ecologist Les Bowker helped 3rd Saturday walk attendees "Walk Backwards to the Future" in order to follow plant succession in the Elfin Forest from Coastal Dune Scrub to the climax Oak Woodland plant community. Photo by Yolanda Waddell.



During his August 3rd Saturday walk, Cuesta College geology instructor Jeff Grover, at right, displayed rocks that are examples of very ancient layers of rock that have been thrust upward into Central Coast mountains. Photo by Yolanda Waddell.

Volunteer Appreciation Party Nov. 3rd!

The SWAP Board of Directors invites our hard-working, skillful, talented and dedicated volunteers to join us at a Volunteer Appreciation party on Sunday, November 3rd, from 2:00 to 4:00 p.m. It will be held in the Community Room at Morro Shores Mobile Home Park, 633 Ramona Avenue. We'll thank you individually and present an award to the Volunteer of the Year. You are used to thinking of SWAP in terms of the volunteer work that you do, but here is an opportunity to relax, meet and chat with your fellow volunteers.

We also invite all past members of the SWAP Board of Directors to this event. It will be an excellent time to enjoy sharing memories of SWAP and the Elfin Forest with our volunteers and other Board members. There will be appetizers, beverages, wine and desserts -- possibly some cookies made by the best cookie baker SWAP has ever had -- our current Chair, Ron Rasmussen.



Thank You to Our Generous Members

Compiled by Betsy Kinter, SWAP Database Coordinator

RENEWING MEMBERS:

Joan Anderson	Arthur Hubbard
Carolyn Boomer	Ginny Irving*
Ray Bracken*	Jim and Heather Johnson*
Christine and David Braun*	Rich & Prisila Johnson*
David and Linda Chipping*	Penny Koines
Ruth and Les Christiansen*	Dr. Frank Kurczewski
Mary and Allen Conkling*	Keith Kurczewski
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Larry and Pat Grimes*	Carolyn Schanberger
Benjamin and Patricia	Dean Thompson
Hansen*	The Ungar Family
Bill & Meg Henry*	Dave and Julie Wolter
Arylane Hill	

DONATIONS:

Jack and Jennifer Jensen in memory of Mike Jones

**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.*

At left: In 1994, a 3-acre area near Bush Lupine Point (the dip in rear of photo at left) was almost barren due to ATV traffic.

Photo by Larry Grimes.

At right: In 2013, 19 years later, work by SWAP volunteers, the CCC and other contractors doing weed pulling, seeding and planting of native plants and fencing off to prevent foot traffic, has resulted in an almost fully restored Coastal Dune Scrub. Photo by Yolanda Waddell.

Restoring the Forest: Then and Now

By Yolanda Waddell

Nineteen years ago this July, in 1994, escrow closed on SWAP's purchase of nearly 40 acres that constituted the southern portion of the Elfin Forest. SWAP turned the deed over to San Luis Obispo County, and the land became El Moro Elfin Forest Natural Area. It was a relief for all SWAP members and community supporters who had worked very hard for nine years to raise \$1.6 million for the purchase.

Then the work of restoring the Forest began. In 1994, much of the Elfin Forest was badly degraded. The first of the two adjacent photos shows what the area near Bush Lupine Point looked like in that year. All of the vegetation had been removed by constant traffic of ATVs using the area as a racetrack. After the ATVs were banned at former owner Shirley Otto's request, the area filled up with iceplant and veldt grass.

Many years and thousands of hours of weeding and planting later, the same area looks as if it always has been well-developed Coastal Dune Scrub. That is thanks to the efforts of Projects Coordinator Larry Grimes and his volunteers in the 1990s, then Conservation Chair Pete Sarafian and his Weed Warriors beginning in 1998, and most recently Conservation Chair Ron Rasmussen with the Weed Warriors continuing the hard work. Fortunately SWAP has also had the assistance of the California Conservation Corps; CCC crewmembers are good weeders. Making sure that the Forest continues to remain in good shape in the future will depend on whether there are volunteers willing to accept the responsibility of caring for this priceless resource.



Do you enjoy the mural by Barbara Rosenthal painted on the wall of the Rexall Drug Store in Los Osos? Get a signed full-color print (mounted on black foam core as shown) to hang on your wall or give as a holiday gift (#4 below)!



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:

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2. ELFIN FOREST NOTE CARDS

Original print note cards

___ @ \$3.00 or ___ set of 5 @ \$14.00 = \$___

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.

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4. ELFIN FOREST MURAL PRINTS

Signed prints by artist Barbara Rosenthal, image size 4 1/2 x 16 1/2 in; mounted on foamcore

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5. ALPHABET BIRD BOOK

With clever verses and superb photos, this book is sure to please young and old.

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Pocket Guides & Note Cards \$1.50 = ___

Mural Prints on Foamcore \$5.00= ___

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For shipping costs outside 934 __,
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Join Us for our Volunteer Party November 3rd! See page 9

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Booth Volunteers Needed for Oktoberfest



Los Osos will celebrate its annual Oktoberfest on Sunday, October 27 in downtown Baywood Park from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. The Oktoberfest features arts and crafts, food booths, a display of classic cars, music and a fun run. SWAP will participate by setting up our booth at the west end of 2nd Street near the small park that is adjacent to the coffee shop.

We'll talk to visitors about the Elfin Forest and SWAP, distribute literature, and sell T-shirts, sweatshirts, guidebooks, etc. We need volunteers to staff our table. If you can work a two-hour shift between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m. during the Oktoberfest, 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 _____

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- | | |
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| <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.