



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 2014

SWAP Helps Save Pismo Preserve

By Ron Rasmussen, SWAP Chair



SWAP helped the Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County save the Pismo Preserve, 900-acre natural wilderness area in the hills above Pismo Beach. Photo taken by Kaila Dettman.

SWAP and its members have helped in the successful effort by The Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County (LCSLO) to raise the funds to save a 900-acre ranch in the hills above Pismo Beach from undesirable development. A donation of \$1,000 from SWAP, Inc. was matched by an anonymous donor and further enhanced by contributions from members of the Los Osos/Morro Bay Chapter of SWAP.

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Valuable Painting Given to SWAP

Text and photo by Yolanda Waddell

Twenty years ago, in the Spring of 1994, Bob McDougle bought five raffle tickets from SWAP for a watercolor of the Morro Bay Estuary and Hollister Peak. The painting was donated as a fundraiser by Los Osos resident George Gibson, a very well-known watercolorist. Before he retired to Los Osos, Gibson was a backdrop designer at Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer studios for 35 years. He supervised the painting of huge backdrops for *The Wizard of Oz*, *Brigadoon*, *Oklahoma*, *An American in Paris*, and hundreds of other movies. During those years he also became a recognized watercolorist, focusing on landscapes; he served as president of the California Watercolor Society.

One of Bob McDougle's raffle tickets was the lucky one, drawn at SWAP's general meeting in June, 1994. I had the pleasure of knocking on his door and presenting him with the painting.

Painting continued on page 2



On the day he moved from his home to Casa de Flores, SWAP member Bob McDougle (standing) removed from the wall his George Gibson watercolor of the estuary and Hollister Peak and gave it to SWAP. At his left is his nephew, Mark Frank, who helped Bob to move.

The Gibson painting will be raffled off as a fundraiser for SWAP. See information on page 2.



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, Corresponding Secretary

Carrie Arnold, Recording Secretary

Pat Akey, Member at Large

Vicky Johnsen, 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 9,
and Thursday, November 13.**

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 2nd Wednesday
& 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.

Painting *continued from page 1*

Bob didn't know at that time that he would become very active in the Los Osos/Morro Bay Chapter of SWAP. Beginning in 1998, he was successively Treasurer, Chair of the Board of Directors, and Treasurer of SWAP, Inc., the umbrella organization that held the tax-deductible status for all SWAP chapters. He was also a Weed Warrior, booth worker, member of the Boardwalk Committee, and wearer of whatever hat was necessary to accomplish chapter goals. Bob left the SWAP Board in 2005 to pursue other interests, but has kept up his membership to this day.

In June of this year, Bob found it necessary to move from his home in Los Osos to the Casa de Flores assisted living community. During the process of "sizing down," Bob offered to SWAP the George Gibson painting that he had won in 1994. We gratefully accepted the offer, and got in touch with George's daughter, Jean Gibson-Gorrindo. George Gibson passed away in 2001. As curator of George's many paintings that he left behind, she set the value of the Estuary and Hollister Peak watercolor at \$5,000. The painting has been re-matted and returned to its original oak frame by expert framer Gail Johnson. Jean suggested that we again raise funds with a raffle, this time offering 100 chances at \$50 each.

The raffle began at SWAP's Annual Celebration on September 27th, and will continue until Saturday, November 22nd. At that time, we will hold a drawing at a party limited to the people who have bought chances for the painting and their guests, and of course we'll include Bob McDougle. Chances for the painting can be bought using the form on page 11 of this newsletter or simply by mailing a check with the note "Painting Raffle," to SWAP Treasurer, P.O. Box 6442, Los Osos CA 93412-6442. A ticket for each chance purchased will be mailed to you.

Thank you from the SWAP Board of Directors to Bob McDougle for this generous gift. The funds generated will be used for Elfin Forest projects.

Pismo Preserve *continued from page 1*

Our participation in this effort was justified by the specific and primary purposes of SWAP as stated by the original Board of Directors (Ansel Adams, Margaret Owings, Emily Polk and Edgar Wayburn). These purposes are "to receive, administer and distribute funds for tax exempt, charitable, scientific, literary and educational purposes in order to provide a mechanism by which the people can preserve vitally important natural areas of undeveloped land, or small wilderness areas, through contributions for the use and benefit of the general public".

Our chapter's Board of Directors' primary focus is on preserving the Elfin Forest Natural Area. But the Board may also offer help when other groups, such as LCSLO, are engaged in preserving other "Natural Areas" in our region. We will keep abreast of the activities of other local non-profits in their efforts to preserve open space in our region, and will help when it is consistent with SWAP's commitment to saving "Small Wildernesses."

Your membership in the Los Osos/Morro Bay Chapter of SWAP shows that you support the purposes of SWAP, and the Board thanks you all for your continued contributions.

Editor's Note: On Thursday, August 28, the state Wildlife Conservation Board approved the final \$4 million contribution to complete the purchase of the 900-acre Pismo Preserve. Escrow closed in early September. Another significant area of native grasslands, oak woodlands, coastal scrub and wildlife corridors has been preserved.

From Our Readers

Roger Longden of Citizens' Climate Lobby sent us the following:

On July 19th, John Lindsey, San Luis Obispo's weatherman, gave a very informative talk in the Elfin Forest about our own weather. About a dozen of us experienced what was a beautiful Morro Bay setting while absorbing John's discussion. I plan to become a supporter of the Elfin Forest as a result and share some of the concerns about climate. I will send John's talk on a free mailed DVD to any who might want to see it.

Like many I am concerned about our planet's health. As a Civil Engineer and Land Surveyor with a Cal Poly Masters Degree in Environmental Engineering, I feel it is my responsibility to be involved, and my time is spent with Citizens' Climate Lobby (CCL).

Controlling how human populations use carbon energy never seemed like a necessity in the past. However, past predictions of green house gas effects on our climate have been confirmed to be on track. Citizens' Climate Lobby, founded in 2006, developed a very focused and simple way for citizens of the United States to take control of how much CO2 we are emitting into the atmosphere. We want a national law that will require a carbon dioxide emission fee and will influence the energy market to reduce U.S. carbon emissions.

The essence of a carbon dioxide fee is simple. Tax all carbon based energy sources upon extraction or importation across our borders. The collected funds would be 100% distributed to all households equably. There would be no net cost to the U.S. Government; trust fund interest would cover administrative costs. As always, the "devil" is in the details. We are close but much needs to be done. Studies show that two-thirds of U.S. households would be better off as employment, economy and health improve over the twenty-year planned effort with an expected 50 percent reduction of emissions. Non-carbon forms of energy are encouraged while creating new and better jobs. This is truly the best of all possible approaches to a very dicey situation. Creating a program that has the staying power of Social Security and that really helps the majority of the population must be supported by our Representatives. The electorate must get more involved to make sure it happens.

My hat is off to SWAP and John Lindsey as we all learn to adapt and if necessary make changes to improve our own lives as well as others. Getting involved in CCL's activities is easy. Call me at 805-234-6666 anytime or go to the web site: citizensclimatelobby.org

-- Roger Longden, San Luis Obispo

Butterflies

In July, we received the three delightful butterfly photos accompanying this article, from wildlife biologist Gena Bentall. She has been working for the past two years in San Luis Obispo County with the U.S. Geological Survey, collecting field data on radio-tagged sea otters, and says that she has visited the Elfin Forest many times.

Two of the butterflies, the **Hedgerow Hairstreak** (top) and the **Mormon Metalmark** (below), have been seen in the Elfin Forest before, but the **Brown Elfin** (bottom photo) has never been recorded in this specific area.

The Hedgerow Hairstreak's host plant is Ceanothus. Note the white stripes around the eye and a bluish patch at the base of its wing that is about 1 inch across. In this photo it is "nectaring" on Dune buckwheat. The Mormon Metalmark is also a small butterfly, an inch or less across. A late summer Butterfly, it can be seen nectaring on Dune buckwheat well into September. The Brown Elfin, also 1 inch across, lays its eggs on Madrone and Soap plant, neither of which is present in the Elfin Forest; it may have been just passing through.

Nevertheless, it seems quite appropriate for a Brown Elfin butterfly to be seen in the Elfin Forest. Our thanks to Gena for sharing her photos with us.



Hedgerow Hairstreak



Mormon Metalmark



Brown Elfin

Caterpillars and Drought Defoliate Oaks

Text by Jean Wheeler

My article on page 4 of the August/September issue of *Oakleaves* in 2011 dealt with the life cycle of the California Oak Moth (*Phryganidia californica*). I wrote then that “Populations of these moths and their caterpillars vary widely and unpredictably from year to year” and “have extreme population explosions at about 5-10 year intervals, the most recent on the central coast in 2007-2008.”

I’m returning to this species for this issue because we are now at the peak of such an explosion which has largely defoliated the live oaks all along the lower boardwalk of our Elfin Forest. This article is mainly a photo essay of this year’s population explosion and resulting oak tree defoliation.

Oaks not severely stressed by disease or drought can replace their leaves gradually over several years. But given successive years of drought with the last “rainy season” one of the worst drought years on record, the timing of the current oak leaf moth defoliation is of great concern.

We can only hope that our drought breaks with early and often rains this fall and winter and that most of our oaks will be able to replace enough of their leaves to survive. Surely they have done so before in the hundreds of years we know that many of them have been alive in El Morro Elfin Forest.



Clockwise from top left:

- A) Caterpillar of the Oak Leaf Moth dangling from the silken thread it uses to drop to lower levels in the tree in search of more edible leaves. Photographed by Bob Meyer on August 28, 2014. B) Defoliated oaks in Rose’s Grove photographed by Yolanda Waddell on August 20, 2014. C) Four caterpillars photographed by Jean Wheeler on a rail in Rose’s Grove on August 27, 2014. D) Adult Oak Moth photographed by Jean Wheeler on May 26, 2014.

Spear Oracle or Spear Salt Bush

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

As I write this article in August of California's third most severe recorded drought, there is not much out there in bloom so we have retreated to one of the few places where plants are doing anything--the coastal salt marsh. The plant featured generally doesn't get into wildflower books because its flowers are green or brown and tiny and its fruiting is relatively rare. But some plants of this species produce very distinctive leaves. The plant is *Atriplex patula* sp. *hastata*, or just plain *A. patula* depending on which plant identification book is used.

In some identification keys *Atriplex patula* may have two subspecies which differ primarily by leaf shape. Subspecies *hastata* is more distinctive and is more common in our area. Dr. Robert Hoover in his *The Vascular Plants of San Luis Obispo County* states that *A. p. sp. hastata* is very common around Morro Bay salt marsh but subspecies *A. p. sp. patula* is rare in our area. The only location he cites is nine miles north of Morro Bay.

Subspecies *patula* produces leaves that are narrow, oblong or lanceolate; their bases are smooth and rounded and lack any backward-projecting lobes or acute projecting angles. A look at Bonnie's drawing will show distinctly arrow-head shaped leaf blades with conspicuous backward-projecting lobes on the outer leaf blade base, making the leaf resemble a spear point or arrowhead. This shape is technically termed 'hastate' by botanists and gives the subspecies its name. However, if you look again at Bonnie's drawing, you will see some leaves are NOT hastate but would be at home in *A. p. sp. patula*. I suspect this is why the new *Jepson Manual* does not recognize subspecies within this species. It simply refers to the species as *A. patula*. It is interesting that they retain the common name of spear salt bush or spear oracle for all appearances of the species.

The model for this plant grows along the uppermost edge of Morro Bay salt marsh. To find this plant one must leave the boardwalk and go down into the salt marsh. You probably won't get your feet wet, however, because it grows where it will get inundated only by the highest of tides. It may be a native plant, but its world-wide distribution raises the possibility that it is an extremely early introduction that had become naturalized to our area before the earliest botanical surveys.

How did spear salt bush get to California this early? The simplest hypothesis is that it came in ship ballast. For stability, sailors filled holds with dirt dug from a convenient shore, then sailed to where they would pick up paying cargo. To make room for cargo, they would simply dump the ballast dirt at the new port. That dirt would likely contain seashore and salt marsh plant seeds. Plants arriving by this method would be considered non-native or naturalized. Hopefully this practice is now severely restricted or outlawed. On the other hand, since spear salt bush is a salt marsh plant, it also could have arrived in California on the feet of migrating birds in which case it would be considered "native." The truth remains an open, maybe even an unsolvable, question.

There are two common salt marsh species of salt bushes and both of them can be found in the salt marsh which is part of the SWAP holdings. The other species, *A. watsonii* or Watson's salt bush, was the subject of the December 2011-January 2012 issue of *Oakleaves*. The two salt bushes can be told apart readily with only a casual glance at



their growth pattern. Watson's salt bush grows in a flat mat that can become mounded in the center. Therefore, its branches are horizontal and parallel to the ground while the branches of spear salt-bush are vertical and can reach a height of a foot or more. Watson's salt bush rarely reaches a height of 4-6 inches.

Elfin Forest Sightings: Tussock Moth

In May, a fuzzy gray and brown caterpillar (unfortunately not photographed) was found by the father of a Baywood School first grader during an Elfin Forest school walk. Entomologist Dave Akey identified it as a young larva of a Tussock moth, probably the Western Tussock Moth, *Orgyia vetusta*. Tussock Moths can be destructive to oak trees, but at present only the one caterpillar has been found. Dave warns that fuzzy caterpillars shouldn't be touched as bristles on their backs can irritate the skin. Thanks to Dave for giving us the identification and information about Tussock Moths.

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.



*Les Bowker explains to a Cuesta College class the survival challenge for native plants due to warm summer days and lack of rain.
Photo by Yolanda Waddell.*



Ron Rasmussen shows a map of the Elfin Forest to the Oleson family before they begin their native plant walk. Photo by Yolanda Waddell.

Education Report

By Yolanda Waddell, Acting Education Chair

In July we received a request from Cuesta College environmental biology instructor Azalia Contreras. The environmental biology class is for non-biology majors, and in the class were students majoring in sociology, economics and engineering. The field trips that this class takes provide many different environments, even a sewage treatment plant. Azalia gives a set of questions to the students about each place that they visit. In the Elfin Forest she wanted them to learn about the coast live oaks, lichens, the habitats, dominant plants, soil type, etc.

Les Bowker, retired Cal Poly ecology instructor, kindly agreed to lead the walk. In addition to giving the students the information that could answer Azalia's and their questions, Les provided a graph comparing annual rainfall and temperatures in the Elfin Forest, that made it very clear how stressed Elfin Forest plants are in the summer. He also took them on a plant succession tour, from coastal dune scrub to maritime chaparral to the oak/Manzanita complex.

Also in July, Ron Rasmussen gave a walk for the Oleson family from Fontana. Carolyn Oleson and husband David are both teachers who spend some vacation time in Cambria during the summer. Carolyn helps her four grandchildren, ages 9 to 14, to learn about the natural history of this area each summer. This year the focus was on native plants. I provided a list of plants that are most common in the Elfin Forest, including their scientific and family names. Ron showed the plants to them and told them about characteristics of the plants that help them to survive without rain. We welcome Carolyn and David as new members of SWAP, and look forward to seeing them and their grandchildren next summer.



Heidi Kausch Retires from Mutt Mitt Committee

Until recently, Heidi Kausch lived in a house at the end of 15th Street, right next to the Elfin Forest. She has been a caring neighbor of the Forest, removing trash and dog droppings from around the 15th Street entrance. A few years ago she joined the Mutt Mitt Committee, the group of volunteers that sees to it that the Mutt Mitt dispenser at each of the seven Elfin Forest entrances is kept full, ready for visitors with dogs. The value of Mutt Mitts and the importance of the Mutt Mitt Committee is evident in the near absence of dog droppings in the Elfin Forest. Compare that to pre-Mutt Mitt times, before dispensers were installed in 2002, when volunteers picked up many pounds of dog droppings each month.

Sadly for SWAP, Heidi moved to another part of Los Osos in August, and retired from the Mutt Mitt Committee. However, being a very conscientious volunteer, she found someone to take on her job. Her neighbor, Steve Krupinski, will take over as the 15th Street Mutt Mitt monitor. We thank Heidi for her years of service and welcome Steve to the Mutt Mitt Committee.

Weed Warrior Report

Text and photos by Yolanda Waddell

July 5 – Performing “Tasks as Needed”

Eight dedicated Weed Warriors showed up on the Saturday after July 4th and were sent out to do a variety of tasks. Prisila and Rich Johnson watered the “new” plants at the end of 16th Street; Lannie Erickson, Jay Bonestell, Yolanda Waddell and snail monitor Barrett Holland pulled away at the veldt grass that remains at the southern end of the Forest between 15th and 16th Streets; and Vicky Johnsen collected seeds for a future planting.

Because of a request to label plants that aren't named in the Elfin Forest Guide, Ron Rasmussen made a survey of the locations of those plants along the boardwalk. In the future he will create labels giving the common and scientific name of each plant, and place the labels on the boardwalk rail near the plant. Ron also did some boardwalk repair.

August 2nd – Quenching, Removing, Repairing

The August work party found community volunteer Corrina Hogaboom helping Prisila Johnson with the monthly plant watering. Thanks to this regular watering, a large percentage of the “new” plants continue to survive and grow.

Yolanda Waddell and Lannie Erickson assisted Barrett Holland with veldt grass removal from the last veldt grass bastion in the Elfin Forest, the area near the houses between 15th and 16th Streets.

Out at Bush Lupine Point, Rich Johnson helped Ron Rasmussen to replace a badly damaged board on one of the benches (see photo). It looked as if a skateboarder used the bench as a launching pad and took off a good portion of the board. Around the corner from Bush Lupine Point, Jack Fanselow removed rusted screws from boards that had become “wobbly” and replaced them with stainless steel screws. Thanks to all who faithfully show up and care for the Elfin Forest each month.

Let's all pull together

By Yolanda Waddell

Here is a weeding song (to the tune of Happy Wanderer)

We love to yank those evil weeds,
our shovels in our hands;
And as we weed we sing this song
and care for our woodland.

Let us weed, Let us weed,
Let us weed,
Let us we-he-he-he-he-he-heed,
Let us weed, Let us weed,
and care for our woodland.



Pulling veldt grass isn't always a serious job, as this July photo of snail monitor Barrett Holland and Lannie Erickson shows.

Photo by Yolanda Waddell.



Weed Warrior Jack Fanselow spent the August work day doing boardwalk repair. His task was to remove old rusted screws from boards that had “popped up,” and replace them with stainless steel screws. Photo by Yolanda Waddell.



During the August work party Ron Rasmussen and Rich Johnson replace a mangled bench board (held by Ron) with a new one. The color doesn't quite match, but the bench is now comfortable.

Photo by Yolanda Waddell.

Coming Up in the Elfin Forest

Text and Photos By Jean Wheeler

As I write this article in September, the Elfin Forest is far more stressed than I have seen it in the 14 years I've lived here in Los Osos. Much of this is due to the heavy impact of oak moth caterpillars on our pygmy oaks (see page 4) added to the effects of one of the worst droughts on record. Virtually all of the oak trees bordering the northern side of the boardwalk have hardly a leaf left on them.

Caterpillars were dropping on threads everywhere under the oaks as long-time savior of the Elfin Forest Yolanda Waddell and I walked in Rose's Grove along the lower boardwalk. Individual live oak trees have lived here for hundreds of years. Yolanda reminded me we can expect them to survive and produce new leaves when the rains return, as they have so many times before despite prolonged droughts and oak moth caterpillar onslaughts.

All around the boardwalk, a great many smaller shrubs are showing only bare branches or very desiccated leaves. Yet there are still many shrubs with vibrant green leaves. Mock heather is particularly outstanding. Plants of this species all around the boardwalk are looking very green with many yellow-orange flowers already open and most plants showing green flower buds topping nearly every branch.

Most of the ceanothus, chamise, and California sagebrush shrubs look green and healthy. White dune buckwheat flowers have gone through their pink aging stage rapidly this year into the rust and brown dried flowers of autumn, as in the center of my photo accompanying this article. On either side in that photo are the black pompoms of dried flowers on black sage shrubs, always appropriately decorating the Elfin Forest for Halloween.

California asters are showing their white to lavender flowers around yellow central discs in many places around the boardwalk, although not so abundantly as usual at this time of year. There are also small clusters of yellow, red, and black berries on many California coffeeberry shrubs, again not as abundant as usual but found sparsely nestled among still green slender leaves a couple of inches long.

Birds are still active. I've heard California Quail quirking in the underbrush and Wrentits calling, but as usual unseen hiding deep in the brush. We can expect migrants passing through or arriving to stay for the winter soon. Golden-crowned Sparrows will be coming for the winter to join their White-crowned Sparrow relatives, who are year-round residents. Say's Phoebe should arrive this month to spend the winter. The Black Phoebe is a year-round resident. Ducks will begin to fill Morro Bay as they fly in from their northern breeding waters for a winter respite on our warm estuary.

As we enjoy the abundant and active life displayed by so many plants and animals adapted to our dry climate and sandy dune soils in this, one of the driest years yet officially recorded, let us hope that the drought breaks early this autumn and that we can enjoy a glorious resurgence of green leaves and beautiful flowers this winter and next spring.



Dried floral sprays of rust-colored dune buckwheat bordered on both sides by dark pompoms of black sage decorate the Elfin Forest for autumn and Halloween.



California asters are among the few flowers opening during October and November, often the driest part of the year on the Central Coast and especially so in our current extreme drought.



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Roger Longden, Bob Meyer, Ron Rasmussen, Yolanda Waddell,
Dirk & Bonnie Walters and Jean Wheeler.
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Thinking of Switching to Online Oakleaves?

Tired of looking at that pile of newsletters and magazines waiting to be read? 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. Just e-mail us at oakleaves@elfin-forest.org with the subject: Switch me to online.

WALKS in the ELFIN FOREST

Second Sunday Walks

Editor's Note: SWAP Docent Vicky Johnsen has decided to change the day and time of her walk to Sunday afternoon in order to make it easier for families to participate.

October 12, 1:30–3:00 p.m.

– *Waiting for the Rains*

Vicky Johnsen will guide us in finding out how the plants and animals of the Elfin Forest get through the dry times. AND IF some rain came before October 12, look at what changes it brings!

November 9, 1:30–3:00 p.m.

– *Piece Together the Bird Puzzle*

Join Vicky Johnsen on a Treasure Hunt for clues to “puzzle-out” the identification of each bird that is seen first by voice, next by behavior and finally, by just getting a good, long look at the bird. We'll have fun finding and fitting in the pieces. Bring binoculars if you have them.

Third (and Second) Saturday Walks

October 11, 8:30 a.m. – Pre-Big Sit! Bird Walk (Second Saturday – Note earlier start time)

In preparation for the international Big Sit! birding event on Sunday, October 12, coordinating birder Jim Royer will lead us on a bird inventory walk. 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 from within a 17-foot circle in one day. Our Big Sit! takes place at Bush Lupine Point in the Elfin Forest. Join Jim on Saturday in finding and identifying 60 or more species of birds throughout the Elfin Forest and in the Morro Bay estuary. You'll come away knowing more about birds, their calls, their habits and habitats.

October 18, 9:30 a.m. – Reptile Walk

Join Cal Poly biologist and reptile specialist Tony Frazier 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, Tony 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.

November 15, 9:30 a.m. – Exploring the Elfin Forest Through a New Lens

Join Cal Poly Future Teachers and Anne Marie Bergen on a trek through the Elfin Forest! Explore using your senses and various lenses to “see” the Elfin Forest. Visit learning stations along the boardwalk that will help you explore the mosaic of living and non-living things above the estuary. Tap into your curiosity, join us!



*On a breezy Saturday in August, Cal Poly soil scientist Dr. Lynn Moody's fascinating talk had many walk attendees taking notes.
Photo by Yolanda Waddell.*



*PG&E weather man John Lindsey gave much good information to a large and fascinated crowd on July 19; here he is discussing the causes of fog over the bay.
Photo by Yolanda Waddell.*

SWAP First Saturday Work Parties

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

Walks in the Elfin Forest begin at times stated above at the north end (1100 block) of 15th Street off Santa Ysabel in Los Osos. Wear comfortable shoes, long sleeves and pants to avoid poison oak and mosquitoes. 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.

Thank You to Our Generous Members

Compiled by Betsy Kinter, SWAP Database Coordinator

NEW:

Kate Blickhahn*

(new member in memory of Ms. Dale Elliot)

Penny Principe

RENEWING MEMBERS:

| | |
|--|---------------------------------|
| Joan Anderson | Heather & Jim Johnson* |
| Florence Appel* | Aya Kimura* |
| Pam Bains* | Jerry & Judith Kirkhart* |
| Charles E. Blair | Penny Koines |
| George & Cynthia Boatenhamer | Frank Martinez |
| Carolyn Boomer | Robert McDougle* |
| William Bouton* | W.G. McElhinney* |
| Christine & David Braun* | Wendy McKeown |
| Stephen Cake* | JoAnne Milburn* |
| Susan & Ed Chandler* | Melissa Mooney |
| David & Linda Chipping* | Marcia Munson* |
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*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.

If you recently sent a donation to SWAP and don't see your name in this issue's New and Renewing list, be assured that your gift will be acknowledged in the next bimonthly issue.

Gifts are processed by two different volunteers before reaching our editors, and newsletter copy deadline is one month before the date of the issue.



(left) *Ceanothus Moth caterpillar on Ceanothus bush. Photo by Rich Johnson.*
(right) *White-lined Sphinx Moth caterpillar. Photo by Prisila Johnson.*

Wrong Caterpillar ID

By Yolanda Waddell

In our August/September issue on page 5, I identified a large green caterpillar found by Vicky Johnsen as a *Ceanothus Moth* caterpillar, mainly because it was large and green. Shortly after the August issue came out, I received an e-mail from Bill Bouton, who specializes in taking butterfly and bird photos, saying “I believe the caterpillar is some sort of *Sphinx Moth*, not a *Ceanothus Moth*.”

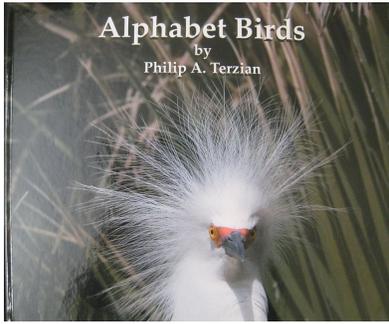
Vicky sent the photo to Marilyn Freiler, who raises butterflies and moths; Marilyn suggested that it is a *White-lined Sphinx Moth* caterpillar. I sent the photo to biologist Gena Bentall (see *Elfin Forest Sightings*), who sent it to Paul Johnson, the biologist at Pinnacles National Park. Paul specializes in sphinx moth species, and confirmed that it is a *White-lined Sphinx Moth* caterpillar.

These caterpillars have a horn or tail on the rear end, and become a large moth that is up to 3-1/2 inches long with a wingspan of 5 inches. The moths are also called hawk moths or hummingbird moths because of their hovering swift flight patterns. They are brown with fairly narrow pointed wings. If you see a large brown moth in the Elfin Forest, please do let us know at sightings@elfin-forest.org.

For comparison, we are including a photo of a *Ceanothus Moth* caterpillar taken by Weed Warrior Rich Johnson during the August 4th work party. The *Ceanothus Moth* is also a large brown moth with wide wings that have tan edges.

SWAP Chair Speaks to Southern California Horticultural Society

Thanks to a talk given SWAP Chair Ron Rasmussen, about 100 Los Angelenos now know a lot about the Elfin Forest. In July, Ron drove to Los Angeles to give a digital slide presentation to members of the Southern California Horticultural Society. The Society's motto is “Where passionate gardeners meet to share knowledge and learn from each other.” Their July newsletter featured a full page of information about Ron and the Elfin Forest. Ron's talk was very well received, with many questions asked afterward. The Society gave him a generous honorarium, which he generously donated to SWAP.



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) @\$20.00 = \$___
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3. POCKET GUIDE

Useful 56-page guide to plants and animals of the Elfin Forest.

Lists for mammals, reptiles, amphibians, birds, arthropods including moths and butterflies, gastropods, vascular plants, lichens, and mushrooms. Some with charts for seasonality, color and more.

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

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

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15- ounce beverage mug with wrap-around mural design, microwave and dishwasher safe.

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Booth Workers Needed for Oktoberfest



Los Osos will be celebrating its annual Oktoberfest this year on Sunday, October 26 on Second Street in downtown Baywood Park, from 9 am to 4 pm. SWAP will participate by setting up a booth among others that feature 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 new SWAP mug, guidebooks, notecards, etc.

We need volunteers to staff our table at this event. If you can work a two-hour shift between 9:00 am and 4:00 pm on this day, 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

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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.

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