



OAK LEAVES

A PUBLICATION OF SMALL WILDERNESS AREA PRESERVATION

P.O. BOX 6442, LOS OSOS, CALIFORNIA 93412-6442 ♦ (805) 528-0392 ♦ AUGUST / SEPTEMBER 2018

Terra Verde Consulting Chosen for Forest Assessment

By Jan DiLeo, SWAP Chair

The Elfin Forest is a unique resource that supports rare plants, butterflies, snails and birds including the federally endangered Morro Shoulderband Snail. Because the Forest contains sensitive species, its ultimate care is regulated by federal and state agencies such as the United States Fish and Wildlife Service and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife. To care for the Forest consistent with state and federal regulations, County Parks commissioned a Draft Recovery Action Plan for the Elfin Forest in 2003. This plan, prepared by a biologist, served as a tool to enhance existing populations of common and special status plant species within the Forest. The 2003 report provided information about the health of the forest as well as recommendations to protect and preserve the unique plants and animals that live there. This report is now roughly 15 years old.

Just as humans have their health assessed periodically, the health of natural systems (such as the Elfin Forest) is important as well. As you might expect, the health of the Elfin Forest is affected by the number of human visitors (which have increased over the years), domesticated visitors (dogs and cats), and nearby urban influences such as ornamental landscaping which, although pretty, does not necessarily provide food or forage for Elfin Forest wildlife

Consulting Firm *continued on page 2*

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Botanist Ed Bobich Will Speak at Morro Bay Museum

Text and photo by Yolanda Waddell

Professor Ed Bobich, a botanist at Cal Poly Pomona, will give a talk on the effects of drought on coast live oaks and native walnut trees on Saturday, August 4, at the Morro Bay Museum of Natural History, at 2:00 p.m. His talk is sponsored by SWAP.

In 2013 and 2017, Dr. Bobich conducted studies of coast live oaks in the Elfin Forest to determine how the Forest's location on sand dunes next to the ocean affects photosynthesis, water relations and structure of the oaks. During the same period, he took similar measurements for much taller coast live oaks and native walnut trees on and near the Cal Poly Pomona campus. Coast live oaks, *Quercus agrifolia*, can reach over 50 feet inland, but range from only 4-5 feet in exposed areas to 10-12 feet in sheltered parts of the Elfin Forest. Measurements in 2017 were taken to determine if the 2017 winter rains helped the trees to recover from four years of drought. He noted that native walnuts and some of the coast live oaks in the Pomona area suffered substantial dieback from the drought.

Dr. Bobich's analysis of his data showed that, "in terms of their water relations (leaf water) and photosynthesis, the pygmy oaks (in the Elfin Forest) recovered from the drought and appeared to be doing much better than the oaks in Pomona." The title of his talk is "Responses to Extreme Drought of Two Widespread Native Tree Species in Southern California."



Dr. Ed Bobich used the very sensitive LI-6800 Portable Photosynthesis System to take measurements of Coast live oak tree leaves in the Elfin Forest and at Cal Poly Pomona.

Bobich at Museum *continued on page 4*



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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

Jan DiLeo, Chair
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Leslie Rotstein, Member at Large
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The SWAP Board of Directors meets monthly
at 2 p.m. on the 2nd Monday of the month
at the Community Room,
Morro Shores Mobile Home Park,
633 Ramona Ave., Los Osos.

The next meetings are
***Monday, August 13,
and Monday, September 10.***

**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.

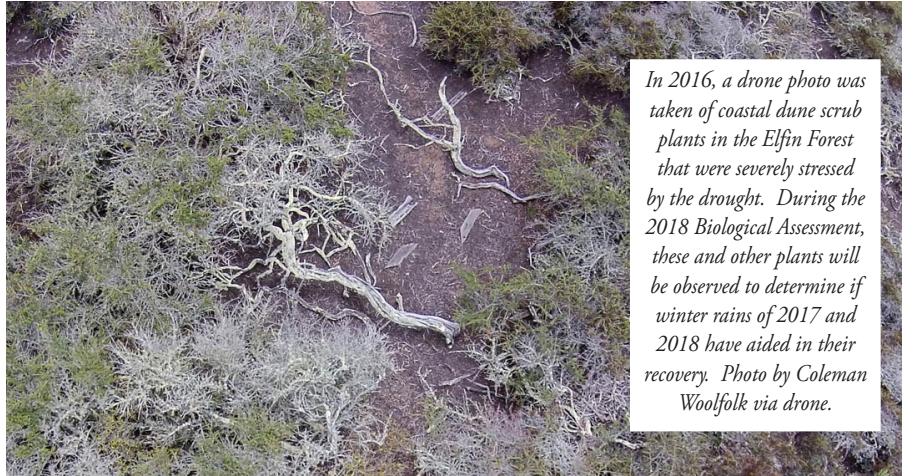
A recorded message will give information
about our 3rd Saturday Walks,
Work Saturdays, and other events.

If you have questions, concerns or comments
about any problems in the Elfin Forest,
call or write: Bob Yetter

SLO County Parks Supervising Ranger
1144 Monterey 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 Bob Yetter at 781-1196.

Consulting Firm *continued from page 1*



*In 2016, a drone photo was
taken of coastal dune scrub
plants in the Elfin Forest
that were severely stressed
by the drought. During the
2018 Biological Assessment,
these and other plants will
be observed to determine if
winter rains of 2017 and
2018 have aided in their
recovery. Photo by Coleman
Woolfolk via drone.*

and sometimes attempts to move into the Forest. As a result, planning documents for the Elfin Forest recommend periodic biological assessments to make sure the Forest is well taken care of and healthy.

SWAP's key role is to maintain the health of the Elfin Forest. To this end, in June 2018 SWAP hired Terra Verde Environmental Consulting to prepare a 2018 Biological Assessment. The proposed project will provide a report reviewing the health of the Forest and recommendations for future care and maintenance of the Elfin Forest. The Biological Assessment should be completed by the fall of 2018. Once completed, the Biological Assessment will assist SWAP and San Luis Obispo County Parks with future care and maintenance of the Elfin Forest.

Terra Verde will have three staff persons working on the project: Brooke Langle, Principal Biologist; Kristen Nelson, Botanist; and Rhett Blanton, Wildlife Biologist. Langle created Terra Verde in 2007. She has led projects for numerous private, public, and nonprofit clients over the last twenty-two years, and for the past eight years she has served on the board of The Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo. Langle will provide overall management of the project. Kristen Nelson has focused on environmental compliance for a wide variety of projects, with an emphasis on habitat analyses, restoration monitoring, and reporting. She has extensive experience in plant identification, including special-status species. Nelson will lead the Elfin Forest Biological Assessment, including conducting fieldwork, mapping and technical report writing. Blanton will conduct wildlife surveys and assist with writing the biological assessment as well as providing recommendation on erosion and sedimentation control within the Forest.

Since SWAP is a nonprofit, Terra Verde has provided a discount for completing the 2018 Biological Assessment. Nonetheless a biological assessment is comprehensive and could cost up to \$20,000. As a result of our dedicated donors and members, SWAP has saved adequate funds to complete the 2018 Biological Assessment. However, as always, we will be looking to other agencies/entities to help fund this effort. Thanks to all of you who have helped SWAP over the years. You have made this project possible.

If you would like to help this effort, donations are always appreciated. In such as case, please send a check made out to "SWAP" with the words "Biological Assessment" in the note line, and mail it to: SWAP, P.O. Box 6442, Los Osos, CA 93412. All donations are tax deductible.

Editor's note: Terra Verde began working on the Biological Assessment on June 26th, with a "Kick-off" meeting. Conservation Committee members Dave Bowlus, Jan Di Leo, Skip Rotstein and Dean Thompson met with Brook Langle and Kristen Nelson from Terra Verde. SWAP Board member Leslie Rotstein also attended. The project is well underway as you read this issue of Oakleaves.



Photos From the Forest

From April through July, the Elfin Forest is awash with the colors of its native plants in full bloom. During those months, Oakleaves received a number of photos of the Forest's floral beauty from SWAP members. Thanks to Petra Clayton, Dave Bowlus, Christina Gillen and Rich Johnson for sharing their photos (clockwise from upper left) with us. (Newsletter subscribers can see them in color at www.elfin-forest.org.)

Petra Clayton took a closeup of the Forest's one and only California Honeysuckle plant (*Lonicera hispidula*) growing along the lower boardwalk.

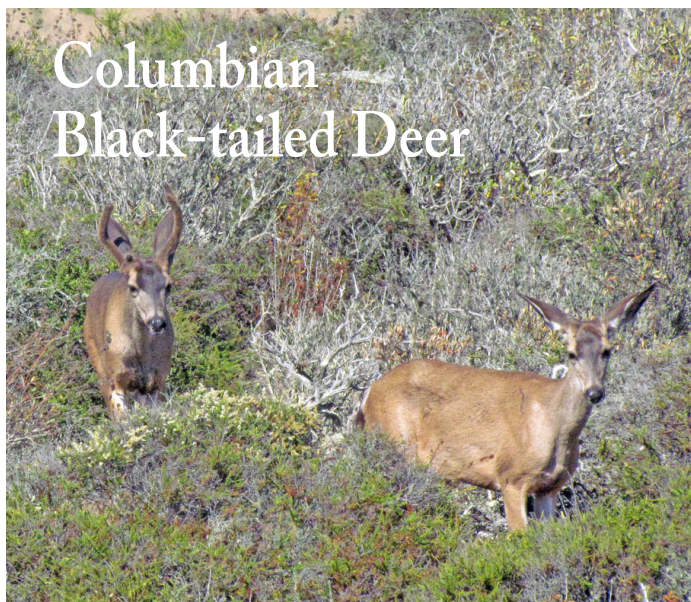
Dave Bowlus was a bit startled to see a "golf ball" sprouting lavender flowers next to the upper boardwalk. *Pholisma arenarium* or Sand plant, is a parasitic plant with no green leaves.

Vicky Johnsen was delighted to see Woolly Star, *Eriastrum densifolium*, displaying its sky-blue flowers. The plant blooms mainly in June. Photo by Christine Gillen.

Sticky monkey-flower, *Mimulus aurantiacus*, blooms throughout the Forest between March and August. Rich Johnson shared a photo of this gorgeous example of the plant.



Columbian Black-tailed Deer



Text and Photo by Jean Wheeler, Ph.D.

Before July 4 of this year, I had never seen deer in the Elfin Forest. Our Pocket Guide lists Black-tailed Deer as “Rarely seen in Elfin Forest,” and I don’t recall hearing anyone mention seeing any.

About 5 pm on the Fourth of July, I came down the boardwalk from the high point nearing the 16th Street junction. Looking to the right down toward the northern boardwalk, I was startled to see a deer head with short antlers just above some shrubs. I thought “Did some nut pose a model there for fun?”

Then the head moved, a body appeared, and soon another whole deer also moved out of the brush! I grabbed my camera and wound up taking 58 images of them. They walked east uphill and stood still watching some people pass just beyond them on the upper boardwalk. Then the two deer moved back toward me again. Finally they disappeared into taller brush in the middle of the boardwalk loop.

The Columbian Black-tailed Deer (*Odocoileus hemionus columbianus*) is found only in a narrow belt, generally within a hundred

miles of the coast, from San Louis Obispo County into British Columbia. North of there is a related subspecies, (*O. h. sitkensis*) known as the Sitka Deer. Both have been considered subspecies of Mule Deer (*Odocoileus hemionus*), which we see inland, including Yosemite Valley. However, recent DNA indicates the inland Mule Deer is descended from the Black-tailed Deer, rather than the reverse as previously believed.

Black-tailed Deer tend to be smaller than other deer in the U.S. Does usually weigh under 130 pounds and bucks often under 150 pounds although some reach 200 pounds, especially here at the southern end of their range. They are reddish brown in summer and brownish grey in winter. Characteristics distinguishing them from other deer are their dark foreheads and their large tails, black or dark brown on top and white underneath. These showed clearly in many of my photos.

Deer are browsers, and this species prefers forest edges, with shrubs and grasses for food (including poison oak!) and taller cover for protection. Being ruminants, with four stomachs, they can swallow fast and regurgitate food for more chewing later. They eat acorns, berries, fungi, grasses, lichens, buckwheat, sagebrush, ceanothus, and other chaparral shrubs. They don’t migrate, like other deer, but may move down in elevation in winter.

Deer have excellent sight, keen hearing with those large ears moving independently, and depend heavily on their sense of smell to detect danger. They can bound quickly into and through dense vegetation to escape. They communicate vocally and by scent from glands on their legs.

Does give birth to 1-3 fawns, typically twins, spotted and with no scent for the first week or so, as they hide while their mother feeds to recover from birth and produce milk. But commonly half to two thirds of fawns born fail to survive to adult status.

Males have antlers, using them in November and December to fight for dominance and mating rights. They shed them between December and March, providing a source of calcium for other animals. New antlers grow back in the spring, larger and with more branches each year.



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Co-editors are Yolanda Waddell and Jean Wheeler;

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Contributors to this issue: George Brown, Petra Clayton, Dave Bowlus, Jan DiLeo, Cheryl Dove, Lannie Erickson, Christine Gillen, Vicky Johnsen, Prisila Johnson, Rich Johnson, Betsy Kinter, Shirley Mednick, Leslie Rotstein, Pete Sarafian, Yolanda Waddell, Dirk and Bonnie Walters, Jean Wheeler.

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

Bobich at Museum *continued from page 1*

Dr. Bobich has taught at Cal Poly Pomona since 2005, and has visited the Elfin Forest many times over the years. He has built his research program on the physiological and structural responses of plants to environmental stresses. He states, “For me, the Elfin Forest is perhaps the ultimate system in which to do research because the plants have completely altered their growth forms in that system.”

After Dr. Bobich’s talk, he will answer questions, and a reception will follow in the museum auditorium. The Morro Bay Natural History Museum is located at 20 State Park Road, across from the entrance of Morro Bay State Park. Admission to the museum is \$3.00; there is no additional cost to attend the talk. For more information, call SWAP at 805-528-0392 or e-mail swap@elfin-forest.org.

Lance-leaf Dudleya

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

(Ed. Note: Revised by Dr. Walters from June/July 1999 issue)

The plant drawn by Bonnie for this issue is the Coastal Dudleya or Lance-leaf live-for-ever (*Dudleya lanceolata*). Generic common names such as “live-for-ever” and “hen and chicks” have also been used but are applied to any of several genera and species in the family Crassulaceae. “Live-for-ever” refers to the long-lived succulent evergreen leaves most members of this family bear. “Hen and chicks” refers to the habit that many members of this family have: when an individual plant (the hen) gets large it sends out short horizontal stems (rhizomes or stolons) which produce small plants (chicks) at their ends. The large central plant is surrounded by several ‘baby’ plants similar in appearance to a hen surrounded by its baby chicks in a barnyard.

Lance-leaf Dudleya is one of the more distinctive and common plants in the Elfin Forest. It consists of several tight spirals of fleshy leaves attached to a very short or often subterranean stem, an arrangement of leaves called a basal rosette. The size and color of the leaves are highly variable depending upon the plant’s state of growth and where it is growing. Leaves tend to be green and large when the plant is actively growing and/or living in relatively moist habitats. For example, look for young plants under a canopy of taller shrubs. This habitat provides a protective micro-environment that is moister and cooler than in the open. Leaves become smaller and grayer as water becomes scarce and light intensifies. Older, gray-leaved plants are often easy to spot after their protective shrub has died. Gray-colored leaves aid in reflecting light thus keeping the interior cooler.

Like a number of other plants with succulent leaves or stems, *Dudleya* has tricks to play in the game of conserving water. Lower leaf temperatures conserve water, so a sheltered or exposed location influences the evaporation rate. The higher the leaf temperature, the more water will evaporate from surfaces of cells and through the pores in the leaf (stomates). In addition, succulents have a special water conserving set of photosynthesis reactions called *Crassullean Acid Metabolism* (CAM photosynthesis).

How does CAM work? The raw materials required for photosynthesis are sunlight, water, and carbon dioxide. In CAM plants water is taken up by the roots and transferred to the leaves where it is broken down by a set of reactions known as light reactions. The end results of the light reactions are hydrogen ions (H⁺) and an energy providing (holding) molecule ATP (adenosine tri-phosphate). These two products are the raw materials for a second set of reactions whereby the H⁺ ions are added to carbon dioxide (CO₂) to form sugars. Since this second set of reactions does not require sunlight they are called the dark reactions. In most plants both reactions occur simultaneously in each chloroplast.

In CAM plants, the light reactions occur during the day and the dark reactions are delayed until night. This delay allows the water wasting and CO₂ acquiring processes to occur when it is cooler and humidity is higher. In order to do this, the H⁺ ions have to be stock piled. This is done by temporarily adding the H⁺ ions to a holding molecule. The holding molecule becomes very acidic, which would harm the cell were it not kept very dilute by all that extra water stored in the leaf cells. Succulence and CAM photosynthesis allow these plants to thrive in habitats such as the Elfin Forest.

Interestingly, leaf variability may not be solely due to variations in habitat. Dr. David Keil’s updated Elfin Forest Plant List (available on www.elfin-forest.org) shows two species of *Dudleya* have been confirmed growing in the Elfin Forest. According to the identification keys in Dr. Hoover’s *Vascular Plants of SLO County* and in the *Jepson Manual*, the characteristics that separate *D. lanceolata* and *D. caespitosa* (Coast dudleya) are based primarily on stem growth and branching patterns as well as leaf color and spacing. The main difference between the two species is visible only in older plants. In older plants, *D. caespitosa* spreads its dried leaves apart enough that tiny stretches of stem are visible between its old dried leaves. *D. lanceolata* stems don’t elongate as much, so their dried, dead leaves hide any glimpse of the stem. Here’s a challenge! Can you locate the two species of *Dudleya* in the Elfin Forest? I believe Lance-leaf Dudleya is the more common. Am I right?

Lastly, I’d like to mention Lance-leaf Dudleya’s use in a succulent garden. A search of the WEB shows many sites selling the plant, so it must have a following. However, I would suggest that the Elfin Forest *Dudleya* species are a little under whelming and could easily be overshadowed by other more spectacular succulents. They should be easy to grow and once established, they should be left alone. Water should never be sprayed directly on the leaves because they are tightly packed together which allows water to seep between the leaves where it can encourage fungi to grow that will destroy the leaves and ultimately kill the plant. Further to protect against fungi growth, *Dudleya* should NOT be planted flat. Planting them at a slight angle allows water to run off before it can be used by the fungi.



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: oakleaf@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.



Assembled at the end of 15th Street and ready to work in the Elfin Forest were June Weed Warriors (L-R) Pete Sarafian, Dave Bowlus, Barbara Rosenthal, Kaelob Reid, Wyatt Morgan, Dean Moye, and Jose Mendez, with work party coordinator Vicky Johnsen in front. Photo by Yolanda Waddell.

Weed Warrior Report

By Vicky Johnsen, Conservation Co-Chair

May 5th – Weeding, Boardwalk Repair

On a lovely May morning in the Elfin Forest, Rich and Prisila Johnson repaired a chipped-out boardwalk plank and then pulled veldt grass that was invading the entrance to 16th street. Pat Brown, Pete Sarafian, Vicky Johnsen and Conservation Co-Chair Skip Rotstein pulled veldt grass along the South Bay Slope. Frances Leitch and three Cal Poly students: Tony Nguyen, Brooke Thompson and Thomas Dillon, joined them a little later. Skip made sure that the students and Frances were outfitted with gloves, vests, bags and trowels. Vicky and Skip collected the bags and hauled them to the end of 15th Street, after which a few of the Warriors took them home to empty into their greenwaste cans. Ron Rasmussen provided a selection of homemade cookies that were enjoyed by all.

June 2nd – Busy and Productive

The June 2nd work party, with 12 Weed Warriors attending, was very successful, although much remains to be done. Rich and Prisila Johnson tackled slender-leaved ice plant along the abandoned trail below Bush Lupine Point. However, most of their time was spent pulling down cape ivy that has infested the entire fresh/brackish water area of the Elfin Forest. Dean Thompson and Pat Brown worked on trimming the narrow sections of the trail out to Sienna's View. Unfortunately, that put them in contact with the ubiquitous poison oak that is growing close in this year.

Dave Bowlus managed to "sister" the rotten post of interpretive sign #1 (that is, attach a second supporting post), where the 16th street ramp meets the boardwalk. Vicky Johnsen and Barb Rosenthal worked the pathway between 16th and 17th streets; they dug out a clump of slender-leaf ice plant and pulled large, mature stands of veldt grass. Barb and Vicky and a high school volunteer, Dean Moye, pulled veldt grass along the lower section of the South Bay Boulevard slope until Dean had to return to his vehicle for his next job. Three other high school volunteers: Kaelob Reid, Wyatt Morgan and Jose Mendez, pulled veldt grass with Pete Sarafian from the upper section of that slope. Craig Johnsen's chocolate chip-oatmeal cookies were enjoyed by all afterwards.



In May, (R-L) Weed Warriors Skip Rotstein, Pat Brown and Vicky Johnsen focused on removing invasive plants and grasses from the steep slope above South Bay Boulevard. Photo by Prisila Johnson.

Let's All Pull Together

By Lannie Erickson

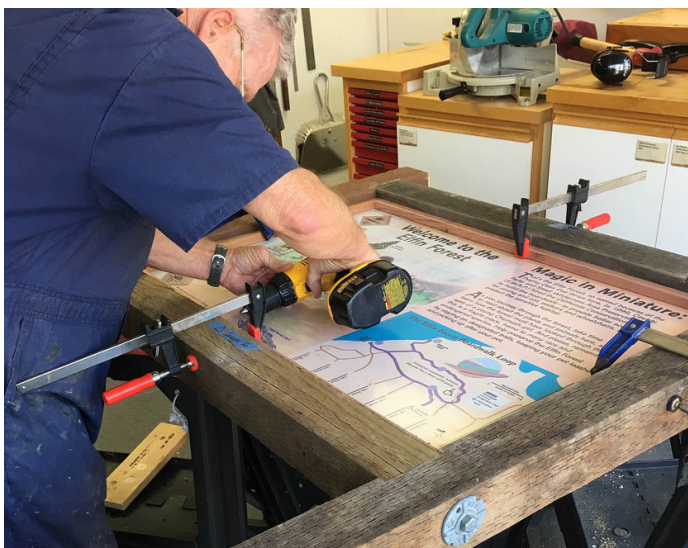
As August and summer now come to an end,
We take time to honor those who labor to blend
Their respect for the forest with the strength of their arms,
Their passion for Nature with their love for its charms.

When that first Saturday of the month rolls around,
We find them like warriors standing their ground
To rout out the weeds that would overgrow.
They allow native plants their glory to show.

They put forth their effort in fair and foul weather.
Such grim tasks are fun when we all work together.
Our splendid Weed Warriors deserve commendation
To honor their hard work and staunch dedication.

Join 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.



Entrance Sign Repaired in the Nick of Time

In May, it was discovered that one of the posts on the 15th Street entrance sign was rotted all the way through, and the sign was about to collapse. SWAP's repair and maintenance team came to the rescue. The sign was hauled in Skip Rotstein's truck to Craig and Vicky Johnsen's house. Repairing the sign was right up Craig's alley, since he is a boat designer and builder. Vicky and Craig took off the rotten post, which was found to be full of termites; Vicky quickly took the termites far away from their house.

Once the damaged post was replaced, Craig framed in the artwork (as shown in photo by Vicky Johnsen). Then the sign was re-installed by Skip and Dave Bowlus. Around the same time, Pat Brown reported that the interpretive sign where the 16th Street access meets the boardwalk also had a rotten post. Dave Bowlus checked and found that he could fasten another post next to the damaged post, to hold the sign up a little longer. Thanks to our willing and capable carpentry crew for taking care of the aging signs in the Elfin Forest.

Don Quintana Wins Audubon Photography Award

A photo of a Red-winged Blackbird by Los Osos photographer Don Quintana was selected by the National Audubon Society for the Professional Runner-up in the society's 2018 Photography contest. The winners were picked from more than 8,000 entries submitted by photographers from all 50 US states and 10 Canadian provinces for the annual contest's ninth year. Winners were chosen based on the image's technical quality, originality, and artistic merit.

Don and three fellow photographers were at the Merced National Wildlife Reserve when they heard the gurgle-dee-dee of a Red-winged Blackbird. Don captured the bird as it puffed up, showing the bright red epaulets on its wings while it serenaded nearby prospective mates. Don recently led a 3rd Saturday photography walk in the Elfin Forest. See photo on page 9.



*Education Co-chair Cheryl Dove, at left,
assisted visiting children in making leaf rubbings with crayons.*

Education Committee Report Fun for All at Solstice Children's Event

*By Education Co-Chair Leslie Rotstein
and Yolanda Waddell;
photo by Leslie Rotstein*

On June 23rd, we joined the annual children's Summer Solstice event at Morro Bay State Park. At the SWAP table was a display titled "Why are leaves in the Elfin Forest so small?" Also at our table was a leaf rubbing activity for children. Leaves of different sizes and shapes were placed under paper. Then participating children rubbed crayons over leaves so that colored images of veins and edges of the leaves would appear on the paper. Older children would often include the leaf images in larger drawings. Education Co-Chair Cheryl Dove enjoyed working with very young children to help them be successful in making leaf images.

Both of us (Leslie and Cheryl) enjoyed talking to parents about the Elfin Forest as well as working with the children. Many families were from elsewhere, camping in the State Park, and had never heard of the Elfin Forest. In all, the Summer Solstice event was a joyful gathering of people, brought together on a day with perfect weather. We appreciated the work of the State Parks Association docents who coordinated the event; they were both cheerful and helpful.



Text and Photos By Jean Wheeler

In these driest two months of the year, white and yellow flowers dominate the shrubs in the Elfin Forest. The signature flower of this season is the bright yellow Mock Heather, widespread in the Elfin Forest and blooming almost exclusively in August and September. Low to the ground is California Croton with pale green leaves and small white flowers.

Dune Buckwheat flowers started out white, but are now aging to pink and ultimately to a dark rust color. California Asters bloom mainly from August to December with ray flowers in white to pink or lavender around yellow central discs. California poppies continue to punctuate the Elfin Forest pallet with their vivid yellow to orange hues.

Colorful fruits add their beauty to the Elfin Forest in late summer and early autumn. California Coffeeberry is especially attractive along the boardwalk between Bush Lupine Point and Siena's View. Its berries appear yellow at first, darken to red and finally turn a richly glowing black. Berries in all three colors are often clustered together on these shrubs in late August and September. Another bright red berry grows on Hollyleaf Cherry shrubs in the same area.

Reptiles are most active in these warm months, so watch for Garter, Gopher, and California King Snakes, none of which is poisonous. Try to spot the elusive California Horned Lizard. Enjoy amusing pushups by Western Fence Lizards along the toe rails of the boardwalk. In early mornings look for tracks of animals in the sand next to the boardwalk; raccoon tracks are very commonly seen.

Resident birds are weaning their young and migrants are already moving in for the winter or passing through on their way to winter homes to the south. Birds likely to be active are White-crowned, Chipping, Lark, Savannah, and Song Sparrows; House and Purple Finches; Lesser and American Goldfinches; Bushtits; Bewick's Wrens; and Anna's Hummingbirds. Fairly common but usually staying low in the bushes are California and Spotted Towhees, California Thrashers, and Wrentits. The blue flash and noisy screams of California Scrub Jays are everywhere, and California Quail can be seen scurrying through the underbrush. Over a dozen raptors are active in our area all year and may be seen flying or gliding overhead as they search for prey.

Also, begin to keep an eye out for the earliest arrivals of birds migrating south for the winter. Several species of ducks and some



*Mock Heather (above)
American White Pelican (above left)*

wading birds begin to arrive as early as August, and more come in September. The accompanying photo of American White Pelicans was taken in a recent year in mid-September. And rejoice in the anticipation of the thousands more birds that will visit the Bay in the months just ahead!

As described in my article on Black-tailed deer on page 4, deer have very rarely been observed in the Elfin Forest. Their hoof prints have been seen but seldom the animals themselves. But you never know what you may see if you keep looking over and into the shrubs around you in our Elfin Forest. Those two deer that prompted my article were clearly visible for at least a half hour inside the boardwalk loop on July 4. Maybe they were just enjoying a special excursion on our national holiday, but who knows? They may decide to visit again now and then. Do let us know if you see them!

Pat Brown Photos Displayed at Art Museums

Pat Brown: SWAP Weed Warrior, docent and Trail Guide Coordinator, is also known to many SWAP members as a butterfly expert. During her April butterfly walks, she shares a notebook with photos that she has taken of all development stages of butterflies that frequent the Elfin Forest. In addition to using photography to illustrate her interest in butterflies, Pat is an accomplished nature photographer. She is active in numerous local photo groups, teaching others and providing information on technical aspects of photography and equipment. She organizes and leads photo field trips throughout California.

Recently, two of Pat's photos were in a Morro Bay Art Association juried show at Art Center, Morro Bay. Another photo that was in a juried show at the San Luis Obispo Museum of Art took second place. Congratulations to Pat for having her photographic excellence recognized by our local art museums. Photos by Pat can be seen at the Sculptured Egg restaurant on 2nd Street in Los Osos.

WALKS in the ELFIN FOREST

August 18, 9:30 a.m. –

Weather & the Elfin Forest

John Lindsey, the PG&E Weather Man based at Diablo Canyon, will give a fascinating walk and talk about weather on the Central Coast. John, an authority on coastal weather, will help us to understand why the geography of San Luis Obispo County plays an important role in where rain falls, and how much or how little. For instance, last winter Los Osos and the Elfin Forest received more rain than most of the rest of the county. This will be an excellent mini course in meteorology, and will give us an edge in discussing that universal topic, the weather.

September 15, 9:30 a.m. –

Autumnal Equinox Walk

Join local naturalist Al Normandin as we stroll around the boardwalk discussing various topics. Special emphasis will be placed on the upcoming equinox one week from the walk and how this affects our climate. The reasons why our climate is among the best climates in the world will be detailed. Late blooming flowers, butterflies, insects, animals, lichens and all of nature's wonders that we pass along the boardwalk will be identified.

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 closed-toe 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.



Don Quintana (standing at left) discussed excellent ways to use our cameras in framing photos to get the best lighting and best visual effects from backgrounds behind the point of focal interest.



During his wildflower walk in May, botanist and retired Cal Poly Professor Dirk Walters, discussed the properties of Purple nightshade, a poisonous plant. Close examination of the photo will show its purple flowers at the left. Photo by Cheryl Dove.

Oakleaves has a new E-mail Address

To make it more convenient for Oakleaves contributors to send an e-mail to both of the co-editors at the same time, our internet/web master, Bob Meyer, set up our oakleaves@elfin-forest.org e-mail address. The address worked well for some years until this February, when e-mails sent to the Oakleaves address stopped going through. Bob learned from our internet provider that e-mail spammers apparently had found the address on our website, and sold it to other spammers. There were so many e-mails going to that address that our provider had to take it down. Therefore, Bob changed the name of our address to oakleaf@elfin-forest.org. So far our new address is working well. If you wish to send photos, a letter to the editor, or interesting or unusual sightings with us, please send it to **oakleaf@elfin-forest.org**.

Thinking of Switching to Online Oakleaves?

If you use your computer a lot, we encourage you to take a look at the online *Oakleaves* 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. Just e-mail us at oakleaf@elfin-forest.org with the subject: Switch me to online.

A Letter to Oakleaves

Thank you for the beautiful tribute to my husband, Sam Mednick, in the recent (June/July, 2018) issue of Oakleaves. We have enjoyed many hours on our walk through the lovely enchanted forest. I hope that I can still enjoy my walks there for many years. We have introduced the Elfin Forest to our children and grandchildren and when they visit we always make time to take our special walk through the Forest. A big thank you to Jean Wheeler for the lovely article and to Carolyn Lemos for the photo. Let us all enjoy the Elfin Forest
- Shirley Mednick

Thank You to Our Generous Members

Compiled by Betsy Kinter, SWAP Database Coordinator

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Fred Mednick*

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| | |
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DONATIONS:

Craig A. Frankel in memory of Sam Mednick
 Charles & Cecile Leavell
 Jean D. Wheeler in memory of Robert D. Wheeler, Ph.D.

**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.

Elfin Forest Visitors

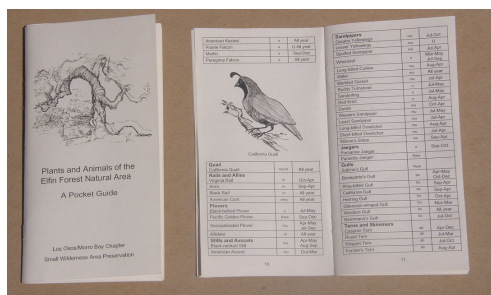


SLO Skiers -- What do people who like to ski do in months when there is no snow? One answer is that they find interesting places to visit. In May, Pete Sarafian, an active member of SLO Skiers, hosted four members of the club to a brunch and tour of the Elfin Forest. They were joined by one of Pete's neighbors on the tour. From left to right at Butterfly Hill are John Long, Linda Tarbell-Messer, Gaye and Ed Peltzman and Sharon Page. Also present was Minnie, the Peltzmans' dog.



Cuesta College Biology Class -- Professor Steve Hendricks contacted us early in the summer, asking for a tour of the Elfin Forest for his Environmental Biology class. It is an interesting class that focuses on "basic concepts of ecology and the importance of human interaction with the natural ecosystem." There are three lectures and three labs in this summer short course. The "labs" include field trips to destinations ranging from the Elfin Forest and Sweet Springs to the San Luis Obispo sewage treatment plant.

SWAP docent Dr. Jean Wheeler led the Elfin Forest walk for Steve Hendricks' class. She discussed the Forest's habitats, plants, and the effects of sun and seasons on Forest plant life. In the accompanying photo, she is displaying a chart showing the effects of the sun's rays on the south slope of the Elfin Forest compared with the less direct rays on the north slope where vegetation is taller and greener. For this college class and many others, the Elfin Forest is a living laboratory.



Our Pocket Guide-- A Gold Mine of Information

Plants and Animals of the Elfin Forest Natural Area is a 56 page 8 by 4 inch paperback packed with fascinating facts: charts of plants by bloom season, color and habitat; birds by habitat and peak months; butterflies by size, months in flight, color, and host or nectar plants used. Also lists of mammals, reptiles, amphibians, insects and other arthropods, lichens, and mushrooms.



SWAP Shoppers' Order Form

See Photos of All Items at www.elfin-forest.org

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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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Don't Miss Ed Bobich Talk! Mark Your Calendars for August 4!

SWAP is sponsoring a talk by Professor Bobich at the Morro Bay Museum of Natural History at 2 pm on August 4. Admission to the museum is \$3, no additional cost for the lecture or reception following.

Dr. Bobich will report on his studies in our Elfin Forest over many years. He has measured photosynthesis, water relations and structure. He'll compare his results here as well as with those of inland trees and before and after the recent four-year severe drought. See details of this major SWAP-sponsored event in the article on page 1.

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

☐ ***Check here to receive the online version only.***

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