



OAK LEAVES

A PUBLICATION OF SMALL WILDERNESS AREA PRESERVATION
P.O. BOX 6442, LOS OSOS, CALIFORNIA 93412-6442 ❖ (805) 528-0392 ❖ APRIL / MAY 2019

SWAP's Projects for 2019

By Jan DiLeo, SWAP Chair

SWAP has an Adopt-a-Park agreement with San Luis Obispo County Parks. One of SWAP's key roles under this agreement is routine care and maintenance of the Elfin Forest. Routine care involves removing invasive plants such as veldt grass and ice plants; trimming vegetation along designated trails to maintain public access; picking up litter; and replacing screws and rotting boards on the boardwalk.

Thanks to the financial support of our membership, each year, in addition to routine maintenance, SWAP is able to undertake some major maintenance projects within the Elfin Forest. In 2018, SWAP hired Terra Verde, an environmental consulting company, to conduct an Elfin Forest Biological Assessment. This assessment reviewed the health of the Forest as well as providing SWAP and County Parks with recommendations regarding how we all can best protect the Forest and its sensitive resources.

In February 2019, County Parks and SWAP's Board established a list of major maintenance projects SWAP will pursue during this calendar year. Many of these projects are recommendations from the 2018 Biological Assessment.

The 2019 Elfin Forest major maintenance projects are as follows:

1 – Remove Temporary Green Plastic Fencing

Under this project County Parks and SWAP will prepare a fencing plan to allow for removal of green plastic fencing and to

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Meet Our Docents

By Yolanda Waddell



SWAP's docents are (L-R) Pat Brown, Vicky Johnsen (in front), Cheryl Dove (Education Co-chair), Barbara Renshaw, Wendi Craig and Leslie Rotstein (Education Co-chair). Photo by Yolanda Waddell.

In her Education Committee report in this issue (page 10), Cheryl Dove told about the problem that faced our docents when it rained on the second day of their walk. There are two first grade classes at Baywood Elementary School, and one class per day, on February 26 and 27, was scheduled to visit the Elfin Forest and learn about the Big-eared Woodrat (formerly called the Dusky-footed Woodrat – but that's another story). The problem of not being able to lead a walk in the Elfin Forest was solved when Cheryl and two other docents: Barbara Renshaw and Chris Van Beveren, gave a classroom woodrat nest building experience to the first graders.

Such a creative and joyful way of helping the first graders "learn by doing" is an example of the knowledge and skills of our fine group of SWAP docents. Each one brings a different specialty to the group, and all share what they know with each other. SWAP Co-Chair Leslie Rotstein admires the "total collegiality that enriches the whole group." She called our docent group "a perfect

Docents *continued on page 3*



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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

Jan DiLeo, Chair
Skip Rotstein, Vice Chair
Dave Bowlus, Treasurer
Yolanda Waddell, Secretary
Beverly Boyd, Recording Secretary
Pat Murray, Member at Large

The SWAP Board of Directors meets monthly
at 2 p.m. on the 2nd Tuesday of the month
at the Community Room,
Morro Shores Mobile Home Park,
633 Ramona Ave., Los Osos.

The next meetings are
Tuesday, April 9
and Tuesday, May 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: 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.

SWAP's Projects *continued from page 1*

determine what fencing and/or instructional signs should replace the plastic fencing that is removed. Once the fencing plan is completed, removal of green plastic fencing will be scheduled throughout 2019. Determining priorities for plastic fencing removal and replacement will be done by County Parks and SWAP's Conservation Committee. This project was identified in the 2018 Biological Assessment.

2 – Erosion Control Related Items

a. Replace Old/Outdated Erosion Materials. The 2018 Biological Assessment indicated that some of the old wrapped fiber rolls, silt fencing, and sand bags located within the Forest should be removed and/or altered. The report indicates that since their initial placement, erosion control items have become more environmentally friendly. This project would review the old erosion control items and replace or alter them to be eco-friendly.

b. Erosion Control. The Biological Assessment identifies areas within the Elfin Forest that are having erosion problems. These areas include portions of the Orchid Trail, an unstable slope near Bush Lupine Point, and some rutting along an informal trail near 11th Street. As appropriate, the projects would stabilize these areas, providing erosion control materials and/or vegetation as needed. SWAP will work with County Parks and the project's biologist (Terra Verde) to determine what needs to be done in these areas.

3 – Butterfly Hill Overlook

The Biological Assessment noted that many people are visiting Butterfly Hill. This area of the Elfin Forest provides beautiful views of the bay as well as a good area to spot wildlife. As with most popular areas, Butterfly Hill is getting a little trampled with overuse. The Assessment recommended providing a small viewing platform and benches at the top of Butterfly Hill within an area that is already disturbed. In 2019, SWAP will hire an architect to design the viewing platform. This design will possibly include items such as benches (on the platform), perhaps an interpretive display, and split rail fencing to dissuade people from trampling the native vegetation located adjacent to Butterfly Hill. The public and County Parks will provide input on the draft design for this overlook. Once the design has been properly vetted, County Parks will obtain permits so the project can be constructed. SWAP will apply for grants to fund the project's construction.

In addition to the projects noted above, SWAP will also be:

- Working with volunteers to mend the Elfin Forest benches (getting them repaired and stained),
- Providing input to County Public Works regarding the future replacement of the South Bay Bridge so that its future design complements the Forest, and
- Looking into changing our name.

It will be a busy year. If you wish to help with one or more of these projects please call the SWAP phone at (805) 528-0392. Please leave your name, phone number, and how you would like to help. We'll contact you as soon as possible. Once again we would like to thank our membership and volunteers - we could not do these projects without you.

Please Report 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 or leave a message on SWAP's answering machine, (805) 528-0392.

Meet Our Docents *cont. from page 1*

stew” and said that they should be celebrated.”

Pat Brown, retired from teaching nutrition at Cuesta College, is a past Education Committee Chair and currently chairs our Boardwalk Guide Committee. She is a butterfly enthusiast, leading annual April butterfly walks in the Elfin Forest, and is a superb photographer.

Wendi Craig is a retired fifth grade Baywood Elementary School teacher and has recently become a SWAP docent. She brings her valuable knowledge of working with upper elementary students to the group.

Cheryl Dove, Education Committee Co-chair, is a retired first-grade teacher from Baywood Elementary School. For many years she sent her first-grade classes for school walks in the Elfin Forest, and now she is a SWAP docent with special gifts in communicating with children.

Vicky Johnsen became a SWAP docent in 2012. She joined us as a skilled interpreter, having been a docent for the Birch Aquarium at Scripps Institute of Oceanography in San Diego, and at an animal sanctuary in the Coachella Valley. She has a broad knowledge of plants, birds and ecology.

Barbara Renshaw is a well-known artist with extensive knowledge of California native plants. She is the docents’ “go-to” person when they need to have a plant identified. She also leads walks for both children and adults with ease.

Leslie Rotstein, Education Co-chair, joined the Education Committee in 2014. She has taught all grades and spent her last years before retirement at Morongo Valley Elementary School in the California desert. Before Leslie and her husband Skip moved to Los Osos, she was a docent for children visiting Big Morongo Canyon Preserve, emphasizing observation, questioning and recording of information.

Celebrate Earth Day Throughout April!

By Jean Wheeler

With SWAP:

Take a walk in the Elfin Forest any day between sunrise and sunset to enjoy our natural piece of our earth with its native plants and wildlife, and contemplate the value of preserving it for the enjoyment of future generations.

On Saturday, April 20, our butterfly expert Pat Brown will lead her “Butterflies and Native Plants” walk in the Elfin Forest to honor California’s Native Plant Week (see page 9).

With Earth Day Alliance:

The Earth Day Alliance will host its 29th Annual admission-free San Luis Obispo County Earth Day Fair and Music Festival on Saturday April 27th at Laguna Lake Park from 11 am to 5 pm. The fair will feature a Kid’s Zone, Transportation Hub, Market Place, Health Center, Food Court and a Beer Garden.

With Friends of the Fiscalini Ranch Preserve:

The 14th Annual Cambria Wildflower Show will be presented on Saturday and Sunday, April 27-28, at Cambria’s Veteran’s Memorial Building, 1000 Main Street in Cambria, from 12 noon to 5 pm each day. Admission is free for students of all ages, with a donation of \$3 per person for others requested at the door.

How Do You Wash a Mural?

By Yolanda Waddell



Delighted that the mural that she painted in 1993 was being washed, Barbara Rosenthal hosed off the suds from the scrubbing given by volunteers (L-R) Pat Murray, Rosey Rosenthal, Laurie Wright and Mike Elder (far right). Not shown is Steve Brown who was in charge of drying the wall after it was hosed off. Photo by Yolanda Waddell.

How do you wash a mural? Carefully, of course. On Sunday, February 24, Barbara and Rosey Rosenthal assembled buckets, detergent, brushes on long poles and a hose next to the Elfin Forest mural on the Rexall Pharmacy wall in Los Osos. Barbara knew that the mural would look brighter and show more detail when twelve years of dust was washed off of it.

Requests were sent out for help beforehand, asking volunteers to bring a bucket and a stiff-bristle brush. Four stalwart volunteers: Steve Brown, Mike Elder, Pat Murray and Laurie Wright joined Rosey in scrubbing the wall with soapy water, which was then dried by Steve Brown. Barbara followed along with a hose and rinsed the wall. It took the six workers just about forty minutes to clean the entire length of the mural. The effect was as if a painting had been restored: a new-looking mural that hopefully will be pleasing to the eye for several years to come.

Pat Murray and Yolanda Waddell brought fruit, cookies and water for the mural washers, who munched and admired their work afterward. Sadly, two more volunteers: Frances Leitch and Lee Sullivan arrived after the project was done, as it had been expected to take longer. Thanks to them for making time in their day. Hopefully they will be able to help Barbara when she applies a weather-proof clear coat to the wall on a sunny day in the future.



Dark-eyed Junco

Text and Photo by Jean Wheeler, Ph.D.

One of the most common species in North America, the Dark-eyed Junco (*Junco hyemalis*) numbers in hundreds of millions. This species can be seen at some time of the year from the Atlantic to the Pacific Ocean and from about the Arctic Circle in Alaska and Canada to southern Mexico. Over most of eastern United States they are referred to as “snowbirds” appearing with winter and retreating northward for summer breeding. In fact, the species name *hyemalis* translates as “of the winter.”

In the Appalachians and western mountain ranges, juncos usually migrate upslope for summer breeding and down to foothills or plains in winter. In the west south of the Canadian border, observations indicate some members of the species don't migrate at all. Our Pocket Guide (sold on page 11) lists Dark-eyed Juncos as present in the Elfin Forest all year.

A medium-sized sparrow about 5.5-6.5 inches long, having a long tail with white outer tail feathers flashing in flight, a rounded head, and a sturdy short bill, these birds are so variable in appearance they've long been considered a nightmare to classify. Designated in five different species until the 1970's, they have since been recognized as a single species with five “groups” and about 12-15 different “races,” such as slate-colored, white-winged, pink-sided, yellow-eyed, and red-backed. Ours is among the “Oregon Juncos” group common in much of western United States, featuring a black or dark grey hood, brown to reddish-brown back and sides, and white to grayish breast.

For habitat, juncos tend to favor conifer and mixed woodlands, extending outside the breeding season to include more open areas like woodland edges, brushlands, and suburban regions. They feed on seeds and insects while hopping or running on the ground, scratching in leaf litter, and under bird feeders in winter. Adult diet is about half insects and caterpillars in the summer, mostly seeds in the winter.

Nesting is nearly always in a cup scratched on the ground and well hidden under vegetation, with the female incubating 3-5 eggs about 10-13 days. Young leave the nest less than two weeks after hatching and are initially fed mostly insects by both parents. Two broods per year are common, occasionally three.

Their large numbers, widespread distribution, ease of recapture, and tolerance of experimental manipulation have led to juncos becoming very important in ecological research, including resource and habitat use, social structure, physiology, and neurology. Research initiated with juncos nearly a century ago led to much of our understanding today of the relationship between length of day (photoperiod) and migration behavior.



Pat Murray (left) and Katie Davis created an interesting and informative display at the Los Osos Public Library.

Exhibit at Los Osos Library Informs Community

Story and Photo by Yolanda Waddell

Board member Pat Murray has long been a fan of informing children and adults using a tri-fold display with our information table. Last year Pat and Leslie Rotstein set up a display on the tri-fold for SWAP's Mural Painting Auction Kickoff. It was such a good display that Pat felt it could be used for a wider audience, and asked Los Osos Library Branch Manager Kristin Nibbe for use of the display case in the library lobby. Pat and SWAP volunteer Katie Davis produced a delightful presentation that informed library visitors about the Elfin Forest and SWAP. Thanks to Katie and Antoinette Padgett of the library staff for their assistance with this project.

Dudleya

Text By Dirk Walters, Ph.D.;
painting by Heather Johnson

The plant profiled in this issue of *Oakleaves* is in the genus of a very recently discussed plant (Aug-Sept 2018). I think I should apologize for repeating so soon, but two events took place recently that make a discussion of the genus *Dudleya* in the Crassulaceae family timely. The first is the permission from SWAP and CNPS member, Heather Johnson, to use another of her beautiful paintings for my ramblings. The second concerns reports of poachings of this genus in our state.

Heather's beautiful illustration is of a species in the genus *Dudleya*; I actually don't know which species of *Dudleya* it is. I'm going to use the genus name as the common name which according to the rules, shouldn't ever begin with a capital letter or be italicized so I'll be writing it simply as dudleya.

The Crassulaceae is one of the most easily recognized families in the Elfin Forest. All members of this Elfin Forest family produce succulent leaves in a tight basal cluster or rosette. The Elfin Forest has two species of dudleya: the common *D. lanceolata*, and the rarer, *D. caespitosa* but neither of them looks anything like Heather's painting. That said, Heather's painting is definitely a dudleya because it has the succulent leaves in a basal rosette, but the clincher is the origin of the flower stalk (inflorescence).

In Heather's painting the young inflorescence appears to come from the underside of the leaf rosette. It comes out horizontally and then curves upward before branching and producing the first flower buds. It is actually arising from a bud in the angle between the stem and the upper base of a leaf (axil). All of our other Elfin Forest succulents either don't have basal leaf rosettes or their inflorescences arise out of the top and center of the plant (apical). So it's definitely a dudleya!

Why not take it to the species level? There are at least two very good reasons for being cautious about trying to identify plants from illustrations or photos no matter how great and accurate the representation. In most cases, the actual characteristics required to distinguish species in a relatively large genus like *Dudleya* are often missing. I'm relatively certain that the pictured dudleya is not a local plant even though it's very likely a California native dudleya because California hosts most of the species of *Dudleya*.

The second reason for not attempting to identify the species of this particular dudleya is that it appears to be a garden plant. It's very large and healthy, the kind of traits associated with garden grown plants. If it is a garden dudleya, then another problem in its identification to species can come into play. We humans don't like to leave our domestic plants and animals as they are found in nature; we want to 'improve' them. We selectively breed them for



the traits we deem worthy of us. We do this not only by being selective of breeding pairs within a species but we will also do our best to mate individuals of different species. So, garden plants can often hide their original species (singular or plural) easily.

The second event that led me to feature a dudleya again so soon is a series of news articles which caused a flurry of web activity among members of the local and state California Native Plant Society. Many of us have memberships in both SWAP and CNPS. The story that set them off was the arrest of a couple of people who were traveling down the west coast POACHING dudleyas. The poachers were particularly interested in *Dudleya farinosa* which does occur in our county north of Morro Bay. Since they were caught in Northern California there is no evidence that any of our local dudleyas were taken. Many local CNPS members went out and checked.

Why were they stealing dudleyas? It turns out that China has a growing middle class and being a member of the middle class entitles one to 'better' everything. One of the 'betters' is to have enough space for a succulent garden and dudleyas would be a great addition to any garden. **It turns out the poachers were ultimately discovered not by police work. It was every day people like most of us just observing changes in our environment.** They noticed holes in the cliffs and a dearth of dudleya plants. One person in a long line at a post office complained about the large number of poorly sealed cardboard boxes that was taking excessive time to process. Credit also must be given to postal inspectors who noticed poorly wrapped packages leaking soil. Ultimately this was reported to California Fish and Wildlife and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service who were able to track the poachers down. So, I hope I've given everyone a reason to be observant when visiting our wild lands. Recently, I heard a commentator on TV report that it's not the authorities who catch wrong doers (in that case a potential shooter) but ordinary people noticing even minor changes in our surroundings and reporting them.

Weed Warrior Reports

By Skip Rotstein, Conservation Co-Chair

January 5: Dave Bowlus filled in for Vicky Johnsen as Weed Warrior organizer for January. That included coming up with a plan of action and bringing some excellent cookies.

Thanks to Dave for recruiting Jay Waddell and two other bench restorers: Gerald Clare and Bill Richmond for the McBench-bottom project. Dave and I hauled out the three benches to be delivered to the restorers. One bench came from the Fairbanks Monument, the second came from Celestial Meadow, and the third bench was from the Highest Point (17th Street), all laboriously carried out to the 16th Street entrance of the Elfin Forest.

Pete Sarafian, accompanied by Lannie Erickson, new Weed Warrior Mike Elder and two other new folks, removed ivy below Bush Lupine Point.

Dean Thompson trimmed brush on the lower boardwalk. All eight of us were able to work two hours before rain brought an end to the workday.

By Vicky Johnsen Conservation Co-Chair

February 6: Nine volunteers arrived at the end of 15th street, bundled against the cold on a clear, brisk but sunny day. We divided up into 3 teams.

Rich and Prisila Johnson filled their wagon with their tools and headed up to survey and repair the boardwalk.

Skip Rotstein, Pat Brown, Mike Elder and Cindy Roessler hiked down to the bottom of the slope at South Bay Boulevard and did battle with invasive plants sprouting profusely due to the copious amount of rainfall these past 2+ months. Very little evidence of Sahara Mustard was seen, but quite a carpet of young veldt grasses as well as some heavily infested areas of slender leaf ice plants were removed.

Dave Bowlus gave a brief demonstration of the proper remediation of eroded sand bars and water bars along the trails to Annette Kennedy and Vicky Johnsen. All three worked up 11th, 12th, 13th, 14th, and 15th street trails successfully shoveling and raking sand so that the trails would be ready for the next onslaught of precipitation.

Everyone enjoyed Craig Johnsen's "special" oatmeal cookies. Quite a productive work party, indeed!

Let's All Pull Together—Poem

By Lannie Erickson

The hummingbird sits on her sweet little nest.
Mockingbirds give some new songs a test.
Bunnies are munching tender new greens.
Sparkling April meadows are stealing some scenes.

When Nature's so busy, who are we to rest?
We must gather our tools and give it our best.
When Saturday comes we'll be picking and fixing,
Some light-hearted talk with work we'll be mixing.



Weed Warrior Rich Johnson appears pleased to have won his battle with a large and deep-rooted slender-leaved iceplant. Photo by Prisila Johnson.



At the end of the February work party, Weed Warriors (L-R) Cindy Roessler, Skip Rotstein, Pat Brown and Mike Elder returned from diminishing the numbers of a profusion of invasive plants on the slope above South Bay Boulevard. Photo by Rich Johnson.

Photos From the Forest

In February Dennis Sheridan led his annual Fungus Foray down in the Don Klopfer Grove, the large grove of ancient oaks adjacent to the bay. Walk participant Joey Rector, a long-time mushroom enthusiast, sent us the delightful and fascinating mushroom photos seen on this page.

Shown clockwise on this page from upper right are: Brown Witch's Butter, *Tremella foliacea*; Witch's Butter, *Tremella aurantia*; Lackluster Laccaria, *Laccaria laccata*



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Layout is by Katy Budge. Editing assistance by Pat Grimes.

Contributors to this issue: Dave Bowlus, Petra Clayton, Wendi Craig, Jan DiLeo, Cheryl Dove, Lannie Erickson, Vicky Johnsen, Heather Johnson, Rich Johnson, Prisila Johnson, Betsy Kinter, Bob Pavlik, Joey Rector, Jeff Reifel, Barbara Renshaw, Skip Rotstein, Yolanda Waddell, Dirk Walters, Jean Wheeler.

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

Coming Up in the Elfin Forest

Story and Photos by Jean Wheeler

April and May are the two best months to look for “flying flowers.” Two orange and black butterfly species commonly seen in the Elfin Forest are Gabb’s Checkerspots and the Variable Checkerspots. In most years, the bristly black caterpillars with orange dots of the Variable Checkerspots (pictured) have been seen grazing on sticky green leaves of almost their only host plant, the sticky monkey-flower. The bright orange flowers of that plant supposedly resemble the faces of small primates. Gabb’s Checkerspot butterflies are checkered with much more of the orange and cream colored rectangles and less of the brown-black and the white squares than are the Variable Checkerspots.



Other butterflies to look for include small green Coastal Bramble Hairstreaks and Silvery Blues, large yellow and black Anise Swallowtails, black and cream Pale Swallowtails, brownish Common Buckeyes, and colorful Painted Ladies. A Moro Blue Butterfly is pictured on a just-opening blue flower spike of its host plant, silver dune lupine. Both that lupine and its dependent butterfly have been severely reduced along our coast in recent decades because of coastal housing development. The stands of this lupine supported along the border of the estuary in our Elfin Forest are therefore assisting their survival.

For assistance in finding and learning more about our butterflies, don’t miss Pat Brown’s 3rd Saturday walk on April 20 (see page 9). She’ll even lead you to the “Singles Bar for Butterflies” in the Elfin Forest!

The wildflowers attracting all these butterflies come in many colors. Besides sticky monkey-flowers, yellow to orange flowers include California poppies, deerweed, fiddleneck, golden yarrow, and suffrutescent wallflowers. Cobbwebby thistles and California hedge nettles have pink flowers. Red fuchsia-flowered gooseberries are nearing the end of their long blooming season but cardinal catchflies (red flowers in the undergrowth appearing to have been cut by pink shears) should continue to bloom all summer.

Purple nightshade plants add that color, while Pomona milk vetch has creamy flowers on low plants. White to lavender flowers abound on ceanothus (buck brush or California lilac) or are clustered like pompoms on black sage. Also white-flowered are California croton, chamise, and wedgeleaf horkelia. California blackberry and poison oak each have white flowers with green leaves in threes now, but the blackberry plants have thorny stems while poison oak stems are smooth.

While admiring butterflies and flowers from the boardwalk and sand trails, your eyes will no doubt also be attracted by the flight of avian residents. Especially likely to be seen and heard are the bright blue California Scrub Jays, orange and black Spotted Towhees, chattering flocks of tiny fuzzy gray Bushtits and Blue-



Moro Blue Butterfly

gray Gnatcatchers, and similarly talkative little brown birds including several species of sparrows and wrens. Among avian migrants passing through in April or May from winter homes farther south are Warbling Vireos, Hooded Orioles, Black-headed Grosbeaks, and Yellow, Townsend’s, and Wilson’s Warblers.

Among other residents especially active as summer approaches are Western Fence Lizards, Brush Rabbits, Ground Squirrels, and Coyotes.

What a colorful and exciting time to visit the sand trails and boardwalk of our small wilderness area!

Readers’ Response to Name Change

By Yolanda Waddell

In the February/March issue of *Oakleaves*, we asked our readers to share their reaction to the idea of changing our organization’s name from Small Wilderness Area Preservation (SWAP) to Friends of the Elfin Forest. We received quite a few replies, all of them in favor of changing SWAP’s name to Friends of the Elfin Forest.

Danna Weidner e-mailed, “I think it makes a lot of sense.”

Charlotte Gordon said, “I agree about the name change.”

We receive this from Jan Simek: “Changing the name from SWAP to Friends of the Elfin Forest makes perfect sense. The only alternative that I can think of is Protectors of the Elfin Forest, but I’m not sure that Protectors is an improvement over Friends. Thanks for the important job that you do.”

And Tim and Melissa Rochte e-mailed: “We’d like to vote for “Friends of the Elfin Forest.”

Encouraged by your positive response, the SWAP Board of Directors will begin the process of making a name change. Judging from the comment of another organization’s board member, the formal process will take some months; but that organization went ahead and did the name change on their website and on all of their literature and stationery. Thank you all for your input.

WALKS in the ELFIN FOREST

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

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

May 18, 9:30 a.m. – Wildflower Walk

Dirk Walters will take us on a delightful tour of every blooming plant that is visible from the boardwalk in the Elfin Forest. There will be bright yellows of Rush-roses, Deerweed, Golden Yarrow and of course California Poppies. White Popcorn flowers, Pearly everlasting and Yarrow plants are in abundance too, as well as pink Cobwebby Thistles and blue Wild Hyacinths. The Silver Dune Lupines at Bush Lupine Point should be covered with pale blue blossoms, and alive with honeybees and Moro Blue butterflies. Treat yourself to a springtime experience in Nature's own garden.

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 or if you use a wheelchair call (805) 528-0392



During her 3rd Saturday sketch and native plant walk in January, Barbara Renshaw (standing) gave a few pointers to Cheryl Dove about the California peony plant with that they were sketching. Photo by Jean Wheeler.



In February, Dennis Sheridan's annual Fungus Foray drew 54 walk participants. Dennis divided the walk attendees into three groups, with Richard Neidhardt (left) and Al Normandin, each taking a group. In this photo Al explains the characteristic of a Candy Cap (Lactarius rubidus) mushroom. Photo by Bob Pavlik.



Elfin Forest Visitors

Just arrived from snowy Spokane, Washington, Joey Rektor and Amy Klate very much enjoyed the abundant and beautiful wildflowers around the boardwalk, led by Joey's mother, Jean Wheeler.

Photo by Yolanda Waddell.



*Docent Vicky Johnsen helps first graders to spot a woodrat nest during their field trip to the Elfin Forest, to learn about the Big-eared Woodrat.
Photo by Wendy Craig.*



Docent Cheryl Dove leads a class of Baywood School first graders in singing "Ring around the Woodrat Nest" to celebrate their own completed model woodrat nest. Photo by Barbara Renshaw.

Thank You to Our Generous Members

Compiled by Betsy Kinter, SWAP Database Coordinator

NEW MEMBER:

Katherine Tennant

RENEWING MEMBERS:

Patty Arnold	Kirsten Holmquist*
Ray Bracken*	Penny Koines*
Steve & Sue Burns*	Roger & Claretta Longden*
Stephen & Karin L. Cake*	Bob & Sharon Meyer*
Ruth & Les Christiansen*	Karen O'Grady
John Cosner*	Sharon Rooney*
Katie & Jerry Davis*	Carolyn Schanberger*
Bernard & Fran Deitchman*	Jim Schwarz & Deborah Warren*
Margaret Diehl	Max & Helen Sicher*
Larry & Pat Grimes*	Rachael Yon
Bonnie Heikes*	

**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.

Education Committee Report

By Cheryl Dove, Education Committee Co-chair

The education committee, along with our talented and committed docents have been planning guided walks for Baywood School first grade classes. The focus of instruction was to make students aware of ways that the big-eared woodrat makes its home and survives in the Elfin Forest. On Tuesday, February 26th, docents Pat Brown and Vicky Johnsen led 20 students from Mrs. Dallas's class along paths where they were able to observe woodrat nests of various sizes. The students became very adept at spotting other nests and asking questions relating to the particular ways that the Elfin Forest supports the survival of the woodrat.

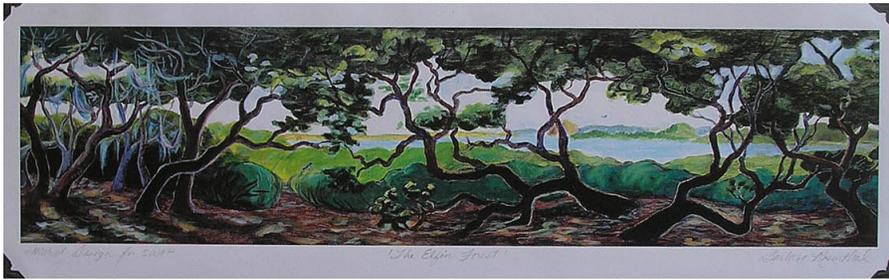
The field trip planned for Wednesday, February 27th was cancelled due to rain. However, docents Barbara Renshaw, Chris Van Beveren and Cheryl Dove presented a lesson to Mrs. Taylor's first grade students in which they constructed a model of a woodrat nest in the classroom. Barbara Renshaw got their attention right away when she went down on all fours and demonstrated the way a woodrat would pick up a stick to put in its nest. She also guided small groups of students through the nest constructing activity while Cheryl and Chris provided more insight into the woodrat's life in the Elfin Forest. The students will be well prepared when they actually take their walk to observe real woodrat nests! (Note: no materials for this lesson were taken from the Elfin Forest.)

The Education Committee is planning an insect walk coming up in May for 2nd grade students from Baywood School.

Committee Co-chair Leslie Rotstein, the SWAP docents and I welcome our new docent, Wendi Craig. Wendi recently retired as the fifth grade teacher at Baywood Elementary School.

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 drive-ways or mailboxes. To request more information, call (805) 528-0392.



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 gift (#3 below)!



SWAP Shoppers' Order Form

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

All Prices Include Sales Tax

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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.

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2. 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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3. 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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4. ALPHABET BIRD BOOK

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

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A Busy Year Ahead for SWAP! – see page 1

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Wanted: A Few Good People

You could help SWAP support the Elfin Forest with just a few hours a month of your time.

Our Webmaster, Bob Meyer, needs help regularly updating our website, www.elfin-forest.org. To volunteer, please email: bob@elfin-forest.org.

Our Education and School Walks Committee needs school walk docents and people to help improve our docent training program. Please call Leslie at 805-534-1951.

Become a Weed Warrior on the first Saturday of any month from 9 a.m. to noon (see page 7).

Service to the community is a way to spread happiness and to be happy.

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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.

All donations to SWAP are tax-deductible.

EVERY membership counts!

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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.