



OAK LEAVES

A PUBLICATION OF SMALL WILDERNESS AREA PRESERVATION

P.O. BOX 6442, LOS OSOS, CALIFORNIA 93412-6442 ♦ (805) 528-0392 ♦ OCTOBER / NOVEMBER 2019

Botanist Kristen Nelson to Speak at 2019 Annual Celebration

By Yolanda Waddell

Kristen Nelson, lead botanist for Terra Verde Environmental Consulting, will speak about participating in the firm's biological assessment of the Elfin Forest in 2018. During her illustrated presentation she will show how a biological assessment is conducted, and will give examples of some of the formerly unlisted plant species that she discovered in the Elfin Forest.

A graduate of Cal Poly with a B.S. in Environmental Management and an M.S. in Biology, Kristen has worked locally in environmental consulting for nine years. In 2017, she participated in a biological assessment by Terra Verde Environmental of the Waddell Ranch, a 154-acre area that was purchased by the City of San Luis Obispo, to add to the Irish Hills Natural Reserve.

During the assessment, Kristen discovered a formerly unknown species of spineflower, a very small plant with numerous spines. She and Dr. David Kiel of Cal Poly gave it the name *Chorizanthe aphanantha* or "Irish Hills spineflower". It will soon be recommended for inclusion as one of California's most rare plants.

All SWAP members are encouraged to join us to hear Kristen's very informative presentation. A light lunch will be served at noon, followed by a report on the year's accomplishments by SWAP Chair Jan DiLeo, and a financial report by Treasurer Dave Bowlus. Ballots will be given to all paid-up members to vote for Board of Directors candidates. This year, Vice Chair Skip Rotstein and Secretary Yolanda Waddell are up for re-election.

After Kristen's presentation, there will be time for questions from the audience. This is a talk that you won't want to miss.

SWAP Annual Celebration

Saturday, November 9, Noon to 2:30 p.m.

Morro Shores Mobile Home Park Community Room

633 Ramona Avenue, Los Osos

(across from Sweet Springs Preserve)



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How the Elfin Forest Boardwalk Came to Be

By Robert Pavlik, *Cal Trans Historian (retired)*

Parks are for people, and people require access by highways, roads, and trails. Where these don't exist, people work hard to create them, fitting them into the landscape for maximum enjoyment and minimum impact, a blend of art and science, humanity and technology, nature and nurture.

Boardwalk *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

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

The next meetings are
Tuesday, October 8
and Tuesday, November 12.

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.

Elfin Forest Visitors

By Pete Sarafian; photos by Pete Sarafian and Chris Thomas



SLO Skiers Visit Elfin Forest

On July 20 the local San Luis Obispo ski club, SLO Skiers, visited the Elfin Forest for their monthly hike. It was the first time that Pete Sarafian invited the club to do the hike at the Elfin Forest. Usually Pete organizes the monthly hikes to go from approximately three to five miles somewhere in SLO or adjoining counties. This time the hike was more leisurely and was more of an informational stroll. Two Los Osos residents tagged along as well. Nevertheless the participants all enjoyed themselves, and many said they would be returning to visit again. SLO Skiers has been in our county since the 1970's and is a non-profit, all year sports and social club that organizes snow skiing/boarding trips during the winter with hikes, bike rides, camping and social events the rest of the year.



Coastwalks California Tours Elfin Forest

On July 17 Coastwalks California members toured the Elfin Forest. Coastwalks California is a non-profit organization based in Sebastopol that works toward establishing a coastal hiking trail from the Oregon border down to Mexico. Each year Coastwalks sponsors week-long hiking trips along the California coast. One of those trips is located in San Luis Obispo County. The gentleman on the left in the picture, Mike Minky, is a veteran hiker from Los Angeles who has been leading the San Luis Obispo Coastwalk for the last several years. The Coastwalk in our county starts along the north coast and proceeds in segments along coastal bluffs and beaches south to Avila Beach or this year to the new Pismo Preserve. SWAP member Pete Sarafian, a long time member of Coastwalks and a hike leader as well, showed the 16 hikers around the boardwalk. They were interested in all aspects of the local flora, fauna, geology and history of the Forest. Everyone said that they thoroughly enjoyed the tour.

Boardwalk *continued from page 1*

The boardwalk that wends its way through the Elfin Forest is a work of art in form, function, utility and design. It is deceptive in how it facilitates a minimally impactful passage through a thriving natural setting made all the more vibrant by its presence. This year, SWAP is celebrating the 20th anniversary of our boardwalk. It is the result of numerous individuals, public agencies, and corporations that donated their expertise, skills, and funding to facilitate the boardwalk's creation.

After the natural area was acquired from Shirley Otto in 1994, the SWAP Board wisely determined that a boardwalk would be the most effective method to provide access while protecting the park. Over the years prior to acquisition, the forest's trails had become badly eroded, contributing sediment runoff to the Morro Bay estuary and impacting on the plant and animal species.

The passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 required construction of trails to be accessible to those with limited mobility, people in wheelchairs, and those who rely on arm braces, canes, or walkers, or who are visually impaired. Cal Poly Architecture student Mark Dariz, Professor Emeritus Paul Wolff, and Cal Poly Construction Management student Antoni Artho formed a Boardwalk Design Team. Pat and Larry Grimes mapped the existing trails that would provide access from 11th to 17th Streets to view oak groves and various viewpoints. Cal Poly Biology Professor Les Bowker and senior Biology student James Mathis conducted a study of the soil erosion that supported the proposed construction of the boardwalk, pointing out that the structure would cover the eroded areas and slow runoff, while facilitating movement throughout the park.

Any time a structure is placed in a natural area, impacts can be expected. Completion of an Environmental Impact Report (EIR) was required before construction could begin. Cal Poly Biology Professor Roger Gambs contributed his time and expertise to preparing the EIR at no cost to SWAP. Dr. Gambs had previously completed a report on the terrestrial vertebrates of the Elfin Forest, identifying 214 species (amphibians, reptiles, birds, and mammals) known to, or thought to occur within, the forest. He focused on the 35 species that had been designated as "species of concern" that might have been impacted by the construction, and that required special conservation or protection status. His studies resulted in several mitigation measures to facilitate the construction of the boardwalk and protection and restoration of the forest.

Those measures included avoiding heavy equipment during construction; limiting the zone of construction-related activity; limiting visitor access only to the developed boardwalk and turnouts; preventing visitor access to the shoreline of the bay and any aquatic habitat; and improved erosion control activities. These necessary steps increased the challenges and complexity of the design and construction but resulted in a terrific product much used and appreciated by the public and various agencies responsible for the land and its resources.

The Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) was the successful bidder on the project's construction. Responsibility for the project was ably vested in the hands of County Parks Planner Jan Di Leo.



Boardwalk designer Mark Dariz also made the benches that are on the boardwalk. Archival photo taken in 1999 by Yolanda Waddell.



Volunteers who worked on finishing touches of the boardwalk by installing toe rails were (L-R) then County Parks Planner Jan DiLeo, boardwalk architectural consultant Paul Wolff, neighbor Keith Wimer and then Conservation Chair Pete Sarafian.

Archival photo taken in 1999 by Yolanda Waddell.

Jan oversaw all aspects of the project, and worked with officials to meet myriad requirements of many laws and regulations bearing on this vital parcel of land. She formed a boardwalk committee of the various principals, including CCC Work Supervisor Bruce Bonifas; architects Paul Wolff and Mark Dariz; SWAP members Les Bowker, Gordon Hensley, Bob McDougale, and Yolanda Waddell.

The CCC Crew was led by James (JT) Taylor; oversight was provided by Cal Poly professor and botanist V.L. Holland, Plant Ecologist Stephen Dreher, Archaeologist John Parker, and Morro shoulder band snail expert Ed Reeves. Work began on February 9, 1999. Boardwalk team and resource agency representatives worked cooperatively to make necessary changes while allowing the project to proceed. The CCC completed the work in October 1999, with signs, monuments, and benches installed in the spring of 2000. San Luis Obispo County Parks and SWAP dedicated the boardwalk on March 4, 2000.



Face-on view of *Pulverro laevis* showing compound eyes at each side of its head, antennae and 3 simple eyes on top of the head that are used for light detection.
Photo by Norman Smith.



Pulverro laevis, a 3-mm-long wasp recently discovered in the Elfin Forest.
Photo taken through a dissecting microscope by Norman Smith.

Entomologist Makes a Surprising Find in Elfin Forest

By Norman Smith, Ph.D.,
Retired Entomologist for Fresno County

Earlier this year I was asked to give an insect walk at the Elfin Forest in mid July. After getting permission to collect in the Elfin Forest, I went out a few days prior to the walk to see what was actively flying and get an idea of the diversity of insects that occur there in July. July was probably not the most active month for insects but Dune Buckwheat (*Eriogonum parvifolium*) was blooming and it is often very attractive to many species of insect, especially since it is often blooming when nothing else is. Despite the overcast, cool weather I found a good number of pollinators visiting the buckwheat, from wasps, bees, flies, lycaenid butterflies and many tiny parasitoids probably attracted to its nectar production.

Almost immediately, I noticed a small wasp in my net that I was pretty sure was a species of wasp I do research on. I was excited to find this and anxious to get back home to be able to check it under my dissecting scope. All of the genera and species that I do research on are too small to identify in my net. I can tell they are probably my research wasps by their behavior and general shape, but to see their individual unique characters requires them to be mounted on a point so that I can see them under a 50 power dissecting scope.

After getting the specimens mounted I was able to identify the little wasp as *Pulverro laevis*, a wasp previously known from southern California, most commonly along the coast. Despite their small size, these wasps are not parasitoids, but predators. Many of them take thrips as prey. What this means is that the female must dig a burrow into the ground or sand (they do prefer sandy soil), construct a number of cells off the main tunnel, then supply these cells with the thrips, lay an egg in the cell, then close the cell off and when finished supplying all the cells, close off the entrance to the tunnel. She may do this three or four times in her lifetime. Conveniently, nectar for energy and thrips for prey are collected from the same plant, in this case Dune Buckwheat. Males get the easy part of this. All they have to do is make sure the female gets mated. To make sure this happens, these wasps often produce an abundance of males to increase the chances of a female being mated.

The Elfin Forest locality is a new county record for San Luis Obispo, and a substantial range extension. The previous most northerly locality was in Santa Barbara County. I suspect they probably occur at Montaña de Oro on the buckwheat there too, but I have to get a permit before I can collect that habitat. The accompanying two pictures are of the female wasp. These were taken through the eyepiece of a dissecting scope. Most museums consider these wasps to be rare as they are rarely collected. But I have found that they can be quite abundant especially when I concentrate on collecting them. Because of their small size they are easily overlooked by casual collectors who may catch one serendipitously and, if I'm lucky, mount it. I have often gone back to a site where only one was collected in the past and caught many more when specifically looking for them.

Pickleweed

By Dirk Walters Ph.D.;

drawing by Bonnie Walters and photo by Bud Meyer

Editor's Note: We are revisiting an article that Dirk wrote for our June/July 2000 Oakleaves. During October and November, the plant should be showing the red fall color Dirk describes in this article.

The plant chosen for this article cannot be seen closely from the boardwalk. In order to see it as close as the picture (a scanned slide taken by Henry 'Bud' Meyer many years ago), one must actually enter the marsh and risk getting either wet or muddy or both. We will describe it as it would be viewed at a distance from the overlooks. It is one of the most common plants of the salt marsh. Locally it is most often called pickleweed but it is also known as glasswort, samphire, or chicken claws. Its scientific name is *Salicornia virginica*.

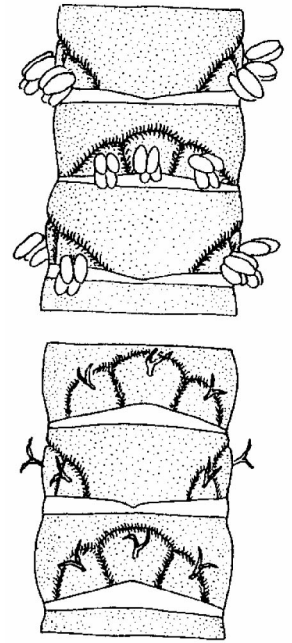
The name glasswort refers to the practice of burning large amounts of it for its high soda ash content. The ash was used in the past for glass making. The name samphire is a corruption of the French name, le herbe de Saint Pierre. I have no idea what the name chicken claws refers to.

The picture and drawings are of the most common pickleweed in the Morro Bay estuary as well as on the West Coast. The species is also common on the East Coast, and generally grows only in coastal salt marshes. Here it is one of the most salt tolerant species.

From one of the overlooks, one can visually divide the salt marsh into three habitats. There are the channels where few rooted plants grow (we will ignore these), and the flat areas can be divided into two types depending on whether they are vegetated. The bare areas where no plants seem to grow, is the more restricted habitat. These very shallow depressions are only a few inches deep. Because of poor drainage, tidewater can only escape from them via evaporation and this leaves the soil too salty for anything to grow.

The plant-covered habitat constitutes the majority of the salt marsh. Pickleweed is the most common plant here. It is the plant species that can tolerate the highest soil salt concentrations (greater than 6%). As a person journeys from the edge of a depression toward the edge of the marsh, s/he climbs in elevation only a few inches at most. However, the amount of salt residing in the soil and the length of time the plants are covered by tidewaters decreases rapidly. Pickleweed is found throughout the entire transect, but as the soil salt concentration begins to approach normal and length of submergence approaches zero, more and more other kinds of plants are able to join the pickleweed.

Bud's photo shows the succulent stem divided into segments, which is characteristic of this herb. Its leaves appear only as a pair of tiny, fleshy triangular scales at the top of each segment. They are shown unshaded in the drawings. This perennial species is most obvious in the early fall when its aerial parts begin to decline. At this time the whole plant can turn crimson red (the only really pretty feature of this plant), giving the estuary a distinc-



tive fall color. Its flowers are exceptionally tiny and inconspicuous. They are hidden by fleshy scale bracts and are borne at the tip of branches.

The plant in the photo is a staminate (or male) plant. The upper drawing is a closer view of the flowers. Flowers occur in threes. They consist of only some tiny fleshy sepals and either one or two stamens or a single pistil bearing two styles that join near the top of the ovary. The two drawings are close-ups of a few flowering segments. The upper one is from a staminate (male) plant and the lower one is of a pistillate (female) plant. Bonnie drew them originally for Dr. David Keil's and my plant taxonomy textbook.

Pickleweed is relished by cattle and was used extensively for cattle grazing in Europe. The name, pickleweed, is a reference to another use of the plant. Pre-industrial peoples of coastal Europe and eastern U.S. would gather the fleshy stems and make a pickle of them. Today we mostly just take a few 'joints' and nibble on them for the crunchy texture and salty taste.



OAKLEAVES

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Co-editors are Yolanda Waddell and Jean Wheeler;

Layout is by Katy Budge.

Contributors to this issue: Petra Clayton, Vicky Johnsen, Prisila Johnson, Betsy Kinter, Bob Meyer, Krusten Nelson, Robert Pavlik, Pete Sarafian, Skip Rotstein, Norman Smith, Chris Thomas, Yolanda Waddell, Dirk and Bonnie Walters, Jean Wheeler.

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Weed Warrior Reports

By Skip Rotstein, Conservation Co-Chair

July 13 – Taking Aim at Veldt Grass and Rusty Screws

Folks who lost a dog near the Elfin Forest posted notices at all the Elfin Forest entrances as well as on nearby streets. No unaccompanied dogs were seen. Veldt grass was the No. 1 target of Weed Warriors Pete Sarafian, Mike Elder, Dave Bowlus, Lannie Erickson and Skip Rotstein working around the 16th Street parking area. We also removed one Slender-leaf ice plant and many small agaves. The six bags of Veldt grass we cleared gave us a sense of how quickly invasive plants can grow in a small area. Rich Johnson took a break from Boardwalk patrol to photograph our efforts.

Prisila and Rich Johnson worked together to replace screws in the Boardwalk. Thanks to their efforts we can report the Boardwalk is in excellent repair. Later in the month, Vicky Johnsen waged a one-woman war against slender-leaved iceplant and pulled two buckets full of the invasive plant from below Bush Lupine Point.

With the weed season winding down, the emphasis will shift to trail trimming, bench painting and plastic fence removal in coming months.

August 3 – Last Weeds of the Season, Boardwalk and Bench Care

The last weeds of the season were pulled by Vicky Johnsen, Dave Bowlus, Lanny Erickson, and Pete Sarafian. Pete also kept a sharp eye out for snails. Cindy Roessler trimmed rapidly growing Ceanothus on the 15th street entrance trail. The Weed Warriors have held back on trail trimming during the long rain-induced flowering period and prioritized pulling rain-induced weeds.

Of course the Boardwalk must be maintained, rain or shine. Rich and Priscila Johnson were once again replacing original rusted screws with long-lasting stainless screws and also replacing boards that broke after 20 years of increasing foot traffic. Jeff Reiffel and Skip Rotstein sanded and painted two benches bringing the total number of benches repaired, sanded and painted or simply sanded and repainted to nine out of 22.

Pete Sarafian and Skip Rotstein returned the following week to prepare for SWAP's Fence Removal Project by spraying fence sections ready for removal with red paint. Dates and times for Fence Removal Volunteers were posted soon at Elfin Forest street entrances.

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.



SWAP volunteer Rich Johnson, who maintains the boardwalk each month with his wife Prisila, replaced a broken board during the August work party. Photo by Prisila Johnson.



Weed Warriors working in an area off of the end of 16th Street in July are (L-R) Lannie Erickson, snail monitor Pete Sarafian, and Mike Elder. Photo by Prisila Johnson.

SWAP Docents Guide Cuesta College Class on Elfin Forest Field Trip



In August, at the request of Cuesta College biology instructor Steve Hendricks (at center of back row in the photo) SWAP docents Vicky Johnsen (kneeling, front) and Pete Sarafian (far left) guided a class of Environmental biology students through the Elfin Forest. The docents were asked to focus on Elfin Forest restoration work, what government agencies oversee the Forest, the four plant communities of the Forest, and environmental constraints on plants and animals and how they overcome the constraints. The docents identified the Forest's native plants and discussed their adaptation strategies. Since some of the students brought binoculars, a bit of birding was done as well.

Celebrating Our Volunteers and the Boardwalk

By Yolanda Waddell; Photos by Bob Meyer

We are very proud that since its beginning, Los Osos/Morro Bay SWAP has been an all-volunteer organization to the tune of several thousand volunteers over the 34 years of our chapter's existence.

On August 4th, the SWAP Board of Directors held a Volunteer Appreciation and 20th Anniversary Elfin Forest Boardwalk Celebration at the Red Barn in Los Osos. All current and past known volunteers were invited. Around sixty volunteers in addition to guests who had been involved in the building of the boardwalk in 1999, attended.

Thanks to: Herb and Diane Filipponi of Filipponi Ranch Cellars serving a variety of wines; guitarist Terry Sanville for superb music during the entire afternoon; and committee member Pat Murray for the photo display of building the boardwalk in 1999.

SWAP Chair Jan DiLeo spoke to the group about the importance of our volunteers, telling about the many ways in which they serve the organization and the Elfin Forest. She presented lifetime SWAP memberships to Barbara and Rosey Rosenthal, and Yolanda and Jay Waddell, and called on committee member Pat Murray to choose door prize tickets from a bowl. The door prizes included four bottles of wine donated by Filipponi Ranch Cellars, two lovely dish gardens filled with a variety of succulent plants created and donated by committee member Leslie Rotstein, and articles of SWAP merchandise such as Elfin Forest caps and mugs.

Bruce Bonifas, who was the California Conservation Corps Supervisor in charge of building the boardwalk in 1999, spoke about the challenges that faced the CCC crews, carrying in all of the equipment, lumber and nails, concrete blocks, screws, etc. each morning; doing exacting work; and carrying everything out of the Forest each evening for security. He heaped praise on the project leader, James, JT Taylor, who adapted the boardwalk specifications to actual conditions and paid attention to every detail that was required to build a sturdy boardwalk. JT's widow, Madeline Taylor, told about visiting San Luis Obispo in 1999, being taken on a tour of the boardwalk, and seeing JT whom she had dated sixteen years before. Six months later, she and JT were married. The boardwalk is a legacy to the hard work of JT and the CCC crews, and also a reminder of a special romance.



(above) Event Committee member Leslie Rotstein (right) greets Sharon Meyer at the sign-in table.

(below) Chair Jan DiLeo (right) presents a SWAP life membership to Robert (Rosey) and Barbara Rosenthal as a thank you for 30 years of service to SWAP and the Elfin Forest.



Coming Up in the Elfin Forest

Text and Photos By Jean Wheeler

While October and November are minimal in colorful flowers, hopefully returning rains will be greening up the Elfin Forest in preparation for wonderful floral displays in winter and spring. A few of the species which normally do continue to show some blossoms in October and November are Dune Buckwheat (summer white flowers have aged to pink or rust), California Asters (white to pinkish or lavender petals and yellow central disks), Coyote Brush (fluffy white flowers), and Seaside Golden Yarrow. Honoring the Halloween season are the formerly white but now dead blossoms of Black Sage, remaining on their stems like black pompoms!

While floral displays are less showy now than during the rest of the year, bird species in many colors become considerably more numerous as the Elfin Forest plays host to brush or woodland birds migrating through or wintering. Fox, Lincoln's, and Golden-crowned Sparrows join our year-round White-crowned Sparrows from October to March or April. Ruby-crowned Kinglets also settle in for the winter. In the same months, our summer Swainson's Thrushes have gone south, but are replaced for the winter by incoming American Robins and Hermit Thrushes. Yellow-rumped Warblers also peak in these months. Say's Phoebe joins its year-round relative, the Black Phoebe, for a winter visit. Birds one may be lucky enough to see passing through in small flocks on their way to the tropics include Cedar Waxwings, Western Tanagers, and Pine Siskins.

Birders are especially attracted to Bush Lupine Point and Siena's View in these months to view bird species floating on the estuary. Hundreds or even thousands can be seen at once. Many are newly arrived to winter here; others are resting and feeding on our bay before continuing their migration to Middle or South American wintering areas.

Several species of ducks begin to arrive on the estuary as early as August and September. By October we can enjoy watching many dabbling ducks floating on the surface of Morro Bay, dipping their heads way down to seek food with their tails pointing up in the air. Those to look for include Mallards, Northern Pintails, Gadwalls, many American and perhaps a few wandering Eurasian Wigeons, Northern Shovelers, and Teal (Blue-winged, Cinnamon, and Green-winged).

Diving ducks plunge completely below the surface disappearing in search of their food. Among those to look for as they pop back up to the surface are Scaup (Lesser and Greater), Ring-Necked, Canvasback, Surf Scoter, Bufflehead, Common Golden-eye, Red-breasted Merganser, and Ruddy Ducks.

Horned, Eared, Pied-billed, Western, and Clark's Grebes also arrive from September to November remaining until March or April. Shorebirds such as Sandpipers, Dowitchers, and the American Avocet reach peak populations in winter with birds arriving from shorelines farther north that won't support them in winter.

Black Brant geese have been famous for wintering on Morro Bay, several thousand at a time when I first moved here in 2000,



Coyote Brush. (above)
American Wigeons from Siena's View (below)



but down to only a few hundred in the last few years. Severe local decline in eel grass, their primary food source while wintering on the bay, and warmer winters at subarctic bays in Alaska allowing greater numbers to winter there instead spending energy flying south, may account for the decline. Google Morro Bay's Black Brant for a fascinating guest post by John Roser on his long term studies of this species in Morro Bay and in Alaska.

Local birders led by Jim Royer will be at Bush Lupine Point participating in The Big Sit! which is an international event hosted by Birdwatcher's Digest on Sunday, October 13. They will count all bird species they can see or hear between dawn and sunset. Join the annual walk Jim will lead around our boardwalk on Saturday, October 12, when he usually identifies at least 60 species in less than two hours (see page 9).

WALKS in the ELFIN FOREST Saturday Walks

October 12, 8:30 a.m. – *Elfin Forest Bird Inventory* (Note the earlier walk time)

Jim Royer will lead us on a bird inventory walk in preparation for the Big Sit! on Sunday, October 13. This international event hosted by Birdwatcher's Digest (www.birdwatchersdigest.com) pits participating groups of birders against one another to identify the most species of birds in one day. Our Big Sit! takes place at Bush Lupine Point. Join Jim on Saturday in finding and identifying 60 or more species of birds throughout the Elfin Forest and in the Morro Bay estuary. Regardless of your birding experience, you'll come away knowing more about birds, their calls, their habits and habitats.

October 19, 9:30 a.m. – *Seeds: Space and Time Travelers*

Enjoy an easy walk around the Elfin Forest, led by Barbara Renshaw and Jeff Reifel to investigate the amazing properties of seeds and the methods plants use to send them traveling. They will bring a variety of seeds, most of them local, but also some very large ones, like a coconut, from other parts of the world. Many seeds present on plants in the Elfin Forest will be discovered, including mature acorns on Coast live oak trees. Barbara and Jeff will also dissect berries to show the fruit, the seed coat and then the embryo inside the seed. Don't miss this unusual and informative walk.

November 16, 9:30 a.m. – *Geology of the Elfin Forest*

Take a journey through time with Jeff Grover, Cuesta College Geology instructor. Jeff will focus on the geologic history of the Morro Bay area from the formation of the ancient Morros, or Seven Sisters, to the recent development of the dunes that form the Elfin Forest. He may even give us a glimpse of what the Elfin Forest and Morro Bay will be like in the geologic future. Of course, he will describe our local earthquake faults and talk a little about earthquakes in general. Jeff brings rock samples and draws diagrams of local geologic action. Join us for a lively and informative walk and talk.

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



Entomologist Norman Smith caught insects in his net and displayed mounted insects to illustrate interesting stories about insect life in the Elfin Forest for his followers during his 3rd Saturday walk in July.



History writer Lynette Tornatsky (left) talked about the history of the Elfin Forest during her 3rd Saturday walk in August.

Photo by Petra Clayton.

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.

Thank You to Our Generous Members

Compiled by Betsy Kinter, SWAP Database Coordinator

NEW MEMBERS:

Christine de Kirby
James Skinner

RENEWING MEMBERS:

Brenda & Richard Allman*	Charles & Cecile Leavell
Karl Appel	Mary Leizear*
Rosemary Baxter*	Don & Liz Maruska
Andrea Bersie*	Bob & Mary McCorkle*
Leslie Bowker*	Bill & Sue McQuilkin*
Dave Bowlus & Beverly Boyd*	Marilyn Moore*
Christine and David Braun*	Marcia Munson*
Carola Bundy*	Lori Olson
Roger E. Carmody*	Mrs. Shirley G. Palmer
Paul Crafts	Carrie Pardo
Thom & Diane Danfield*	Darlene M. Reynolds
Larry Davidson	Bill & Lana Richmond*
Elsie Deitz*	Cindy Roessler*
Lurlie Edgecomb*	Dennis Sheridan*
Tom & Rita Hadjiyane	Shauna Sullivan &
Alta Hall*	Ron Ruppert*
Arylane Hill*	Bonnie & Chuck Thompson*
Herbert & Debra Holt*	Staci & Dean Thompson
William Jankos*	Edward & Marilynn Vilas*
Sally & Randy Knight*	Carol Weisl*

DONATIONS:

Carol Amerio in loving memory of James JT Taylor
Barbara & Robert Rosenthal

**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
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*Gifts are processed by two different volunteers
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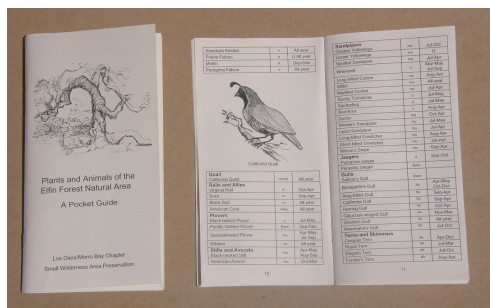
*Jack and Frieda Murphy with their dogs Jessa (white dog)
and Jade (black and white dog) enjoyed sitting on their bench
in Rose's Grove, in 2012. Photo by Yolanda Waddell.*

Jack Murphy – A Remembrance

Jack and Frieda Murphy came to Los Osos in 1982 after retirement from the Southern California Gas Company in the San Gabriel Valley, and moved into a house next to the Elfin Forest that Jack had bought in 1975. They visited the Elfin Forest often, following the sandy paths that existed in the years before the Elfin Forest became the El Moro Elfin Forest Natural Area in 1994, and well before the boardwalk was built in 1999.

Members of SWAP became acquainted with Jack and Frieda in 2009, when they decided to purchase a bench to be placed in Rose's Grove. The plaque on their bench says, "Enjoy Rose's Grove – Jack and Frieda Murphy and their dog Rod." Rod was a small fluffy black and white dog, adopted from the Woods Humane Society Animal Shelter. Every day they took Rod to The Elfin Forest for a walk around the boardwalk. Later, after Rod became very ill and died of heart failure, they adopted two more dogs that looked similar to Rod. In the accompanying photo, the white dog on the left is Jessa and the black and white one is Jade. Jessa and Jade were of course taken on a daily walk in the Elfin Forest, and when they reached Rose's Grove, Frieda would sweep and dust the bench to keep it nice for visitors.

In 2016, Frieda became ill; in spite of her can-do attitude and the best of medical help, she passed away in September of that year. Jack was 91 years old at the time. Though missing her terribly, he continued to take the dogs to the Elfin Forest each day, and also kept himself in good shape by going to the Los Osos Fitness Center three or four times each week. Staff at the fitness center became his friends and kept in touch with him. His life ended on June 22nd of this year at age 93. The SWAP members who knew him were saddened when we learned of his death, but we know that we will think of him each time we visit Rose's Grove and sit on Jack and Frieda's bench. As Jack said about the bench, "It's a legacy."



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This 56-page 8x4-inch paperback is 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. Other lists include mammals, reptiles, amphibians, insects and other arthropods, lichens, and mushrooms.



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Mural prints signed by artist Barbara Rosenthal, shirts or coffee mugs decorated with her print, and hats with our live oak logo make excellent gifts. Or give the Alphabet Bird Book to your child or grandchild. A good stocking stuffer is our Pocket Guide. Use the order form below to either call in or mail your order, and your gifts will promptly be mailed to you.

A gift membership to SWAP or a tax-deductible donation in the name of your relative or friend would also be much appreciated. Your donation can reduce your income tax bite and help with special projects in the Elfin Forest such as soil erosion control, boardwalk repair, and habitat enhancement for native species.

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.

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