



# OAK LEAVES

A PUBLICATION OF FRIENDS OF EL MORO ELFIN FOREST

P.O. BOX 6442, LOS OSOS, CALIFORNIA 93412-6442 ♦ (805) 528-0392 ♦ OCTOBER / NOVEMBER 2020



Nick Franco, County Parks Director. Photo by Yolanda Waddell.

## FEMEF Annual Celebration will be Virtual This Year

By Yolanda Waddell and FEMEF Chair Jan DiLeo

As with all meetings and gatherings this year, Friends of El Moro Elfin Forest (FEMEF/SWAP) will hold its Annual Meeting and Celebration virtually, via Zoom, on Saturday, November 14, from 1 pm to 3 pm. An annual meeting with attendance by members is required by the State and our Bylaws.

The FEMEF Board will email members or send postcards to those for whom we have no email address. Members who receive postcards will be asked to email FEMEF at [femef@elfin-forest.org](mailto:femef@elfin-forest.org) if they wish to join the meeting. Members who notify us that they wish to attend the meeting will receive information on how to use Zoom as well as how to participate in online voting to elect Board members.

County Parks Director Nick Franco will be our speaker this year. He has been Director since 2015, and heads a department with 61 full-time employees and an annual budget of \$13.5 million. He and his staff manage 15,000 acres of regional and community parks, golf courses and natural areas such as the 90-acre Elfin Forest. He will talk about how COVID-19 has affected County Parks operations, and also about exciting projects that can move ahead in spite of the coronavirus. He plans to take questions from participating members after his presentation.

Following Nick Franco's talk, there will be brief reports by three board members. FEMEF Chair Jan DiLeo will report accomplishments during 2020 and projects for 2021. Treasurer Dave Bowlus will give a short review of the Annual Treasurer's Report that appears on page 2 of this issue, and take any questions. Conservation Co-Chair Skip Rotstein will report on how weeding, erosion control and boardwalk maintenance has been accomplished in spite of the COVID-19 limitations.

Sadly, we are not able to celebrate with food and good conversation as in past years. But let's look forward to meeting, greeting and enjoying lunch prepared by FEMEF in future years, as shown in the accompanying photo.



2017 Annual Celebration volunteers.  
Photo by Bob Meyer.

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## BOARD OF DIRECTORS

of the

*Friends of El Moro Elfin Forest (FEMEF)*

*consists of the following members:*

Jan DiLeo, Chair

Skip Rotstein, Vice Chair

Dave Bowlus, Treasurer

Yolanda Waddell, Secretary

Beverly Boyd, Acting Recording Secretary

The FEMEF Board of Directors meets monthly at 2:00 p.m. on the 2nd Tuesday of the month

Meeting via ZOOM

until Covid-19 restrictions are lifted.

The next meetings are

**Tuesday, October 13**  
**and Tuesday, November 10.**

**All Board meetings are open to the public.**

**To attend a Zoom FEMEF Board meeting,**

**e-mail Board Chair Jan DiLeo**

**at [jan@elfin-forest.org/](mailto:jan@elfin-forest.org/)**



## CONTACT FEMEF

If you have questions about FEMEF 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: Lasca Gaylord

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 Lasca Gaylord at 781-1196.

# Annual Financial Report for Fiscal Year July 2019 – June 2020

*By Dave Bowlus, FEMEF Treasurer*

Friends of the El Moro Elfin Forest (FEMEF)

(Our parent non-profit organization is Small Wilderness Area Preservation)

### Total Income:

Includes Memberships, Member donations in excess of basic membership, and donations:

(Total includes a bequest from the estate of Jack Murphy for \$11,012.) \$ 26,909

### Total Expenses:

\$ 21,012

Oakleaves (publication and mailing), Brochures, and other educational activities:

\$6434

Snail monitoring and Conservation supplies

\$1361

Final payment for Biological Assessment

\$1854

Insurance

\$2744

Storage Unit

\$1815

Legal fees and attorney Fees and other government fees

\$3554

Events: Annual Celebration and Oktoberfest booth

\$815

California Sales Tax on merchandise sold

\$117

Professional Memberships

\$675

Telephone, miscellaneous postage,

FEMEF stationery, office supplies

\$1643

### Net Increase

\$ 5,897

Friends of El Moro Elfin Forest finished the fiscal year with an increase in our treasury of almost \$6,000. The total balance of FEMEF funds at the end of the Fiscal Year amounted to \$59,790.

As is usual for our organization, the largest expense was for production and mailing of *Oakleaves*, our bimonthly newsletter, and for publication of other educational materials that we produce.

This year we paid the last installment on the 2018 Biological Assessment, an expert appraisal of our stewardship of the Elfin Forest, fifteen years after the last such study in 2003.

Snail monitoring expenses were for only two months this year, in part due to our Weed Warriors work parties being cancelled for most of spring 2020 to help prevent the spread of the COVID-19 coronavirus.

An unusual expense for attorney fees resulted from complicated court proceedings in Los Angeles involving a bequest of a vacant lot in Cayucos. The outcome is still unknown. Typical expenses of doing business as an organization like insurance, storage for our records, merchandise, exhibits, telephone and office supplies made up the rest of our expenses.

## 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](http://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](mailto:oakleaf@elfin-forest.org) with the subject: Switch me to online.



# Annoying Antics in the Forest

By Yolanda Waddell;

photos and information from Vicky Johnsen and Dean Thompson

It couldn't have been the summer heat because the weather was cool in Los Osos and along the coast. Regardless, strange things happened in the Elfin Forest during August. On Friday, August 7, we received this email from FEMEF member Chuck Soter:

"Somebody dumped a pile of stuff (kids' furniture, a chest of drawers, wicker items, etc) on the 16th Street boardwalk entrance. They taped a large "FREE" sign to the bench, hoping that someone else would dispose of their junk. I'm afraid that other people will see this and get the idea that the entrances to the Elfin Forest will make good dumping grounds. We all appreciate what you do for the forest and for the community."

Early the next morning, Conservation Committee member Dean Thompson sent a photo with the comment, "Apparently the 16th St. entrance has become a SWAP meet/ thrift store/free stuff place." Weed Warrior Alice Wilchert reported the same amazing assemblage to Conservation Co-Chair Vicky Johnsen, and Vicky sent the accompanying photo to Oakleaves.

When notified of the 16th St. entrance "thrift store," County Parks Supervising Ranger Lasca Gaylord commented, "People do the strangest things!" She told me that County Parks staff would bring their truck and haul the discards to the dump, which they did.

Then on Monday, August 10, Dean Thompson sent the accompanying photo of someone's efforts to encourage one-way circulation on the boardwalk, remarking, "...good idea but the execution leaves a little to be desired." Vicky Johnsen attempted to sand off one of the arrows that were painted at 12 different intersections, with no success. She contacted Ranger Lasca Gaylord, who sent County Parks staff with powerful sanders, and the arrows were removed.

Ranger Gaylord would like County Parks to be notified immediately about incidents like this in the Elfin Forest. The County, represented by County Parks, is the owner of the Elfin Forest and is responsible for it. FEMEF, as the volunteer steward of the Forest, in addition to working to maintain the Forest, is also County Parks' eyes and ears. That includes FEMEF's members as well. Ranger Gaylord can be reached at 805-781-1196 or lgaylord@co.slo.ca.us.



## 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](mailto:oakleaf@elfin-forest.org) or leave a message on FEMEF's answering machine, (805) 528-0392.



## OAKLEAVES

is published six times per year beginning in February.

Co-editors are Yolanda Waddell and Jean Wheeler.

Layout is by Katy Budge.

Editing assistance by Pat Grimes.

Contributors to this issue: Dave Bowlus, Petra Clayton, Jan DiLeo, Lasca Gaylord, Heather Graham (Intermountain Bird Observatory), Paul Irving, Vicky Johnsen, Rich Johnson, Ann Kitajima, Betsy Kinter, Bob Meyer, Skip Rotstein, Dean Thompson, 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](mailto:oakleaf@elfin-forest.org).

# Pomona Milkvetch

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

*Editor's Note: Reprinted from Jun/Jul 2015 Oakleaves which also contained a major article about the talented Walters pair and their long and valuable contributions to botanical science and to our Oakleaves.*

The plant profiled in this issue of *Oakleaves* is Pomona milkvetch (*Astragalus pomonensis*). It is a perennial that produces a cluster of weak stems bearing leaves divided into numerous leaflets. I know it from only one location in the Elfin Forest and that is in the Celestial Meadow. It is still relatively common there, although not as common as it once was because the meadow is slowly turning into a shrub land similar to the areas surrounding it.

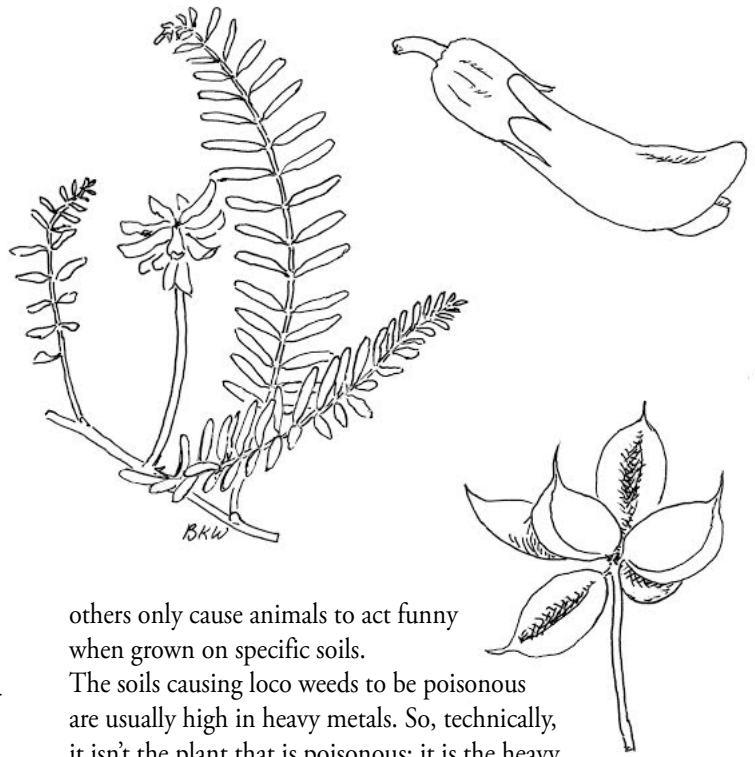
Pomona milkvetch is distributed from San Luis Obispo County south along the coast into northern Baja California. The Elfin Forest population is close to the most north-westerly distribution. It is almost entirely a coastal plant, although it does extend inland through the peninsular ranges.

Nuttall's milkvetch (*A. nuttallii*) is very similar and also grows in and around the Elfin Forest. Both species have many leaflets, elongated whitish flowers and inflated pea-like pods. The main difference is the presence of 'conspicuous' black hairs on the sepals of *A. nuttallii*. (I know, picky, picky.) Also, Pomona milkvetch seems to prefer sandy soils occurring in the Elfin Forest, whereas *A. nuttallii* prefers clay soils. Therefore Pomona milkvetch would be expected in the sand dunes and Nuttall's milk vetch on coastal bluffs and benches.

The genus name, *Astragalus*, is derived from the Greek meaning ankle-bones or dice. This probably refers to the rattle noise produced by loose seeds in the bladdery puffed up fruits of milkvetches. The specific epithet (*pomonensis*) refers to the city Pomona in Southern California, near where the original holotype (herbarium specimen upon which the scientific name is based) was collected. The common name, milkvetch, I think, refers to their superficial resemblance to the true vetches, *Vicia*.

*Astragalus* is native to all continents in the Northern Hemisphere, and many species are relatively common. The genus also contains a significant number of rare or localized species. In our county the genus has many species in eastern states. Most common species of both *Astragalus* and *Vicia* have the leaves bearing many small leaflets but true vetches have their terminal leaflets modified into coiling tendrils while these are lacking in milkvetches. Also, milkvetches tend to grow into compact mounds whereas true vetches tend to be much more vine-like and thus usually crawl over surrounding plants.

As one might expect, milkvetches are known by many other common names, such as locoweed (in North America), as well as goat's-thorn, huang chi, milkvetch root and yellow leader. The last four are used to describe the medicinal names used in Chinese medicine. Locoweed is applied primarily to species that when eaten by livestock cause the animal to stagger and otherwise act funny or 'loco'. Some loco weeds always cause animals to act funny while



others only cause animals to act funny when grown on specific soils.

The soils causing loco weeds to be poisonous are usually high in heavy metals. So, technically, it isn't the plant that is poisonous; it is the heavy metals that some *Astragalus* species are capable of concentrating in their foliage that are the toxins.

If one 'googles' *Astragalus* one will find literally scores of sites selling *Astragalus* herbs of various degrees of refinement. It is significant that *Astragalus* does not appear in any of my books on plants used by Native Californians or in books on California edible, medicinal, or poisonous plants. So why so many web references? Most, if not all, refer to a few Old World species. One California species (*A. lentiginosus*) which grows in the eastern portion of our county was discussed in the book, *Poisonous Plants of United States*. Otherwise, there is nothing. Therefore, I suggest Pomona milkvetch is a great plant to enjoy in its native habitat but otherwise not particularly useful. It probably wouldn't even make a good landscape plant. I certainly do not recommend trying to eat it or experimenting with it medicinally.

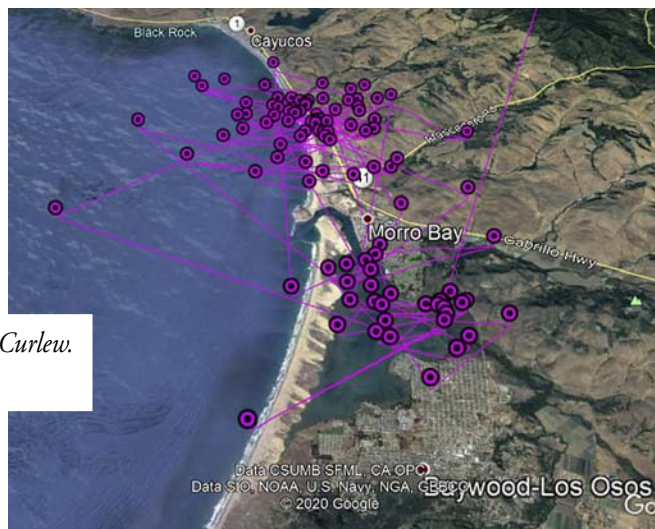


*American White Pelicans, visitors in fall and winter. See page 6.*





*Dozer, a very special Long-billed Curlew.  
Photo by Petra Clayton.*



*Tracking Map by Intermountain Bird Observatory in Idaho,  
showing Dozer's remotely sensed locations around Morro Bay.*

## Long-billed Curlew

*Text by Jean D. Wheeler, Ph. D.*

My thanks to Petra Clayton, our long-time birding friend and concerned advocate for support of birding habitats (like our Elfin Forest and Morro Bay National Estuary) for suggesting the Long-billed Curlew, *Numenius americanus*, as a timely subject for this issue of *Oakleaves*.

Petra took the photo of the Long-billed Curlew known as "Dozer" that appears here. She also included in her emails online maps of tracking of this bird and another named "Neil" also in our area this summer. The map adjoining this article tracks Dozer all over the estuary, including very close to our two boardwalk view-points.

The source of the transmitters these birds carry (the long and slender up-curved antenna can be seen rising from Dozer's back in Petra's photo) and of maps derived from their data is the Intermountain Bird Observatory in Idaho. Their program was described in detail by Heather Graham, their Community Science Coordinator, in an August 17th Zoom program hosted by Morro Coast Audubon Society. More about conservation impacts from the Idaho scientists in the conclusion of this article.

Like so many birds, the sound of their vocal call gives this species their common name, "curlew." The genus name, *Numenius*, refers to the new moon, seen in the long, slender curve of the bill, also often described as looking like a candlestick. The presence of these "candlestick birds" gave the name to Candlestick Park Stadium in San Francisco.

This species of the sandpiper family is the largest of shorebirds occurring in North America, as much as 2 feet long, weighing between 1-2 pounds, and with a wingspan of 2-3 feet. The males and females look a lot alike, brown spotted above with lighter brown heads and chests. The females have slightly longer bills with an even more pronounced downward curve at the tip.

Long-billed Curlews breed in dry high grasslands and intermontane areas of northern U.S. and southern Canada, including northeastern California. In the 1800's, they bred in sizable numbers much farther east (Wisconsin and Illinois) and south (Texas and Arizona), but died off, decimated by hunters and conversion of the grasslands they needed into agriculture. They formerly win-

tered commonly along the Atlantic Coast, but are now rare in those areas. In winter they migrate to estuaries and mud flats mainly on our west coast and south to Mexico and Central America.

When breeding, this species is much less seen around lakes and mudflats than are other shorebird species. Instead, the male scrapes shallow depressions in dry grasslands, one of which is selected by his mate and may be lined with some soft grasses before she lays her usual 4 eggs. In Idaho, Heather Graham reports that the nest is often close to piles of cow manure, and she says the female brooding during the day (male at night) is very still and hard to recognize from the similarly brown piles of manure. Parent birds defend the nest vigorously, remaining still until the intruder is just too close, then screeching their name and running at the intruder, and will do the "broken wing" act to entice predators away from their nest.

Incubation is long, 4-4 ½ weeks, but young hatch covered with down and eyes open, usually leave the nest within 5 hours after hatching, and are already able to feed themselves. Both parents guard the young, with the female leaving 2-3 weeks after hatching, migrating first to winter shorelines. The male follows after young have fledged, at about 5-6 weeks. The young migrate out to winter quarters last, about a month after the adults.

In the summer these curlews use their long bills to sweep grasslands for beetles, grasshoppers, butterflies, other insects and spiders; and dig down to reach earthworms and even into wolf spider burrows. They may also prey on small amphibians as well as eggs and young of smaller birds. In winter they feed in company with other shorebirds such as Willets (*Tringa semipalmata*) and Marbled Godwits (*Limosa fedoa*), using their own spectacularly long and curved bills to catch shrimps, crabs, crayfish, mollusks, and marine worms.

Although much less numerous since the great losses to hunting and agricultural and urban habitat conversion in the nineteenth century, Long-billed Curlew populations have been considered

**Curlew** *continued on page 6*

# Coming Up in the Elfin Forest

*Text and Photos by Jean Wheeler*

Halloween being midway through the two months of this issue of our newsletter, I'm always happy that dead flowers in dark pompoms on black sage and sprays of rust-colored flowers on dune buckwheat provide very appropriate décor to our Elfin Forest just as young fresh flowers become less common than at any other time of year. A few of the species which normally do continue to open some blossoms in October and November are California asters (white to pinkish or lavender petals around yellow central disks), coyote brush (fluffy white flowers), and seaside golden yarrow.

While fresh flowers are at a minimum at this season, we can rejoice that the fall bird migration extravaganza is upon us again!

Water and shore birds migrating through or arriving for their winter vacation can be seen in large numbers on our estuary from our two boardwalk viewpoints. American White Pelicans can usually be seen in fall and winter as a large group swimming together in the main part of the estuary or often, as in my photo on page 4, in the corner between the 4th Street Audubon Lookout and our Bush Lupine Point. Ducks to look for in these months include Mallards, Northern Pintails, Gadwalls, American and Eurasian Wigeons, Northern Shovelers, Teal (Blue-winged, Cinnamon, and Green-winged), Scaup (Lesser and Greater), Ring-Necked, Canvasback, Surf Scoter, Bufflehead, Common Goldeneye, Red-breasted Merganser, and Ruddy Ducks. Canada Geese and Brant come for the winter, although the Brant are not nearly as numerous as in former years.

Horned, Eared, Pied-billed, Western, and Clark's Grebes arrive from September to November and remain until March or April. Shorebirds like Sandpipers, Dowitchers, American Avocets and Long-billed Curlews (see page 5 for my article on the natural history and conservation needs of that species) also reach peak populations in winter with birds arriving from lakes and shorelines farther north that won't support them in winter.

Above the estuary, the Elfin Forest itself plays host to brush or woodland birds also 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 settle in for the winter. American Robins and Hermit Thrushes replace our summer Swainson's Thrushes as those depart southward. Yellow-rumped Warblers peak in these months and Say's Phoebe joins its year-round relative, the Black Phoebe, for a winter visit. A dawn or dusk walker in the Elfin Forest may be lucky enough to see or more likely hear a wintering short-eared owl. Passing through in small flocks are Cedar Waxwings, Western Tanagers, and Pine Siskins.

Returning rains should be greening up the Elfin Forest in preparation for our marvelous midwinter wall-to-wall display of wildflowers. Let's look forward to hopefully having rain showers to dodge while enjoying our Halloween decorated shrubs and the abundant avian winter visitors on those shrubs and covering the waters of our beautiful estuary!



*Black Sage and Dune Buckwheat, with dried flowers in October.*

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## Curlew *cont. from page 5*

fairly steady between 1966 and 2015. The species has not been listed as a species of concern on watch lists.

Nevertheless, Audubon estimates that with climate change, 33 % of range will be gained (entirely in Canada, north of current range limits), 28% of range will be maintained (most in Canada and some areas in the U.S. Intermontane), and 73% of the range will be lost (nearly all of that in the U.S. Intermontane). In addition to climate change, there is also concern about continued agricultural and urban development, especially in our Intermontane.

Intermountain Bird Observatory in Idaho began banding Curlews in 2009. Until this summer, all the Curlews they had fitted with tracking transmitters in addition to leg bands had migrated to Mexico for the winter. This summer, two named Dozer and Neil were banded and fitted with transmitters in May in the West Central Mts. of Idaho. The Idaho scientists were very excited when their tracking data showed both of these birds flew from Idaho to Morro Bay National Estuary, instead of south to Mexico, arriving here within a very few days after they left Idaho, but by quite different routes. Neil looped much farther to the north, then came down the coast to our bay, while Dozer came more directly southwest to arrive here.

Heather made it clear that their scientists need to know where their birds go to settle for their winters and by exactly what routes. Then protective measures can be sought along those routes and in those wintering areas when statistical data make it clear that such conservation measures are needed. Scientists at their Observatory are concerned with reduced numbers of these Curlews in their area in recent years. Heather stated in her August 17 program that they have discovered that some transmitter fitted birds have been found dead in Idaho with evidence they were killed by gunshots. They are now mounting programs teaching people that hunting this species is illegal and why their conservation is necessary.



# Weed Warrior Reports

*Text by Jean Wheeler from Reports*

*by Vicky Johnsen and Skip Rotstein, Conservation Co-Chairs*

With the Coronavirus limitations on gatherings, we can't just advertise for all who wish to join our weed warriors at the specified time. Our work parties have thus been limited to a few veteran warriors working whenever they are able to, at most three at a time, with masks handy.

Vicky reports that she, Alice Welchert, and Pete Sarafian spent nine hours in July removing sprayed Cape Ivy and then doing additional trimming for a total of 20 hours that month. The reported August total was 9 hours of trimming by Vicky, Alice, and James Solum.

With Rich and Prisila Johnson unable to continue their boardwalk maintenance program in their need to shelter from the virus, Skip reports that Jeff Reifel has taken over boardwalk maintenance.

We are very fortunate to have these experienced and dedicated Weed Warriors continuing to do what they can to minimize the advances of alien plants and repair hazardous loosened screws and damaged boards in our board walk.



*Weed Warrior James Solum contemplates how best to trim a Black sage shrub branch, to direct its growth away from the path.  
Photo by Vicky Johnsen.*



## Nightlife in the Elfin Forest

Earlier this year, Conservation Co-chair Skip Rotstein bought a wildlife camera and set it up in his unfenced yard that is close both to the estuary and the Elfin Forest. The camera is set to record videos of whatever passes by, both day and night. The night videos have revealed many different visitors to the Rotstein yard.

Dave Bowlus extracted a still shot from each of three videos for us, showing a passing raccoon, four coyotes busily exploring with their noses, and a coyote with dirty paws, most likely from walking through estuary mud. (See coyote photos on page 8.) Because the Rotsteins live very near the Elfin Forest, we can assume that these animals most likely are from the Forest.



*Vicky Johnsen holds a branch that had been growing over the narrow 11th Street trail. Photo by Rich Johnson.*



## Eelgrass Restoration Update



*Yolanda Waddell; report by Ann Kitajima, MBNEP Assistant Director; photo by Paul Irving*

*Oakleaves* last reported on the status of eelgrass in the Morro Bay Estuary in the June/July issue, 2016. At that time, Morro Bay National Estuary Program (MBNEP) staff and volunteers were trying various re-vegetation methods with disappointing results. It is heartening to learn that they have succeeded in increasing the size of some of the eelgrass beds. MBNEP Assistant Director Ann Kitajima sent the following report to us, after receiving the excellent photo by Paul Irving that was taken during early September.

"We have been involved in mapping and restoration efforts throughout the bay. We can report that we're seeing good success with restoration, with planted areas expanding to approximately five times their original size in only a few years. We're also seeing a good deal of eelgrass recovery in the mid-bay and along the main tidal channels. The 2019 mapping effort by Cal Poly showed 36 acres of eelgrass in the bay, as compared to around 13 acres in 2017. Obviously we're not approaching anywhere near pre-decline numbers (344 acres in 2007), but we're definitely seeing improvement from three years ago."

## Remembering Ron Myers

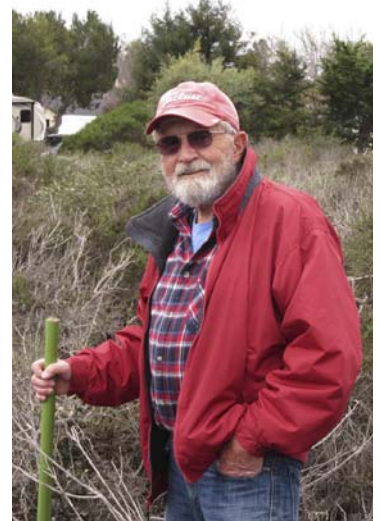
*By Yolanda Waddell with help from Pete Sarafian*

There are as many ways of loving the Elfin Forest as there are people who visit and spend time in it. Ron Myers and his small dog, Peanut, went to the Forest daily. Curmudgeon that he was, he believed that SWAP volunteers were doing erosion control and trail maintenance all wrong, and started doing it his way.

Even after a visit from a County Parks Ranger, Ron persisted in placing small chunks of concrete next to water bars along the trails to control erosion. Finally, past Conservation Chair Pete Sarafian asked Ron to be his assistant, and put him to work filling ad hoc trails with brush to discourage those who like to wander off the boardwalk. Ron's work gave plants and shrubs adjacent to the boardwalk a chance to thrive and fill in the former trails.

On a November morning in 2016, Ron took Peanut for a walk along the Orchid trail, the trail that runs along the ridge above South Bay Boulevard. Lying on the trail ahead of him was a small male coyote apparently hit by a car. When the coyote saw Ron, he stood up, stumbled 20 or 30 feet westward into the brush, and collapsed. After many phone calls, Ron was directed to Pacific Wildlife Care (PCW). While volunteers with coyote rescue experience drove from Atascadero, Ron kept watch, and then guided them to the injured animal. The coyote was taken to the PCW Rehabilitation Center in Morro Bay and, sadly, was found to be paralyzed and had to be euthanized.

Ron never became a member of SWAP, but he loved and cared for the Elfin Forest. Pete Sarafian told me that Ron harvested acorns from Elfin Forest oaks and planted them all over the Forest. Without a doubt, young oak trees planted by Ron will eventually become old oak trees, and continue to carry out his wish for the Elfin Forest to grow and flourish. Ron passed away in September, 2020, a victim of cancer. He will be missed.



*Ron Myers stands where he watched over an injured coyote until it was taken to the wildlife rehabilitation center.*

*Photo by Yolanda Waddell.*

*Coyotes are among the animals caught on Conservation Co-chair Skip Rotstein's wildlife camera set up near the Elfin Forest. (See article page 7.)*







## WALKS in the ELFIN FOREST Saturday Walks

San Luis Obispo County is in Stage 2 of the COVID-19 Reopening phase. The Elfin Forest is in the Outdoor Museum category that limits GUIDED tours to no more than 6 people. Because we can't restrict 3rd Saturday nature walk attendance, WE REGRET THAT THERE WILL BE NO 3RD SATURDAY WALKS OR OTHER GUIDED WALKS IN THE ELFIN FOREST until we are cleared for an attendance of 10 to 20 persons.



*This demonstration QR code attracted attention from passersby immediately after Skip Rotstein fastened it to the boardwalk rail. By the beginning of October, Skip will have laminated and installed the codes for all 19 Boardwalk Guide stops.  
Photo by Skip Rotstein.*

## Boardwalk Guides and QR Codes

*By Yolanda Waddell*

Elfin Forest Guides have been used by visitors in the Forest for almost 20 years. Updated and printed every few years, the Guides are a popular item. On average, 365 visitors each month take a Guide from one of two dispenser boxes and follow numbers on the boardwalk toe rail to learn

about the Forest's plants, habitats and places of interest. However, in March of this year, when COVID-19 began to spread, County Parks asked Pat Brown, Guide Committee Chair, to remove all Guides from the dispensers, as they could be a source of community infection.

Five months later, when this is being written, the coronavirus is still rampant in San Luis Obispo County, and it looks to be some months before it is under control. Many visitors still come to the Forest each day, so we have placed a QR code next to each Guide number on the toe rail. Every visitor who carries a smart phone can point the phone's camera at a QR code like the one shown. At the top of the screen a box will appear that says "Website QR Code" and "Open elfin-forest.org." Touching the box will take users to information they would have read in the Guide.

The letters "QR" stand for Quick Response code. It's a type of two-dimensional barcode that was invented in 1994 by Japanese designer Masahiro Hara for use by the automotive industry. Since then, because of their fast readability and larger storage capacity than standard barcodes provide, QR codes are seen the world over on everything from cereal boxes to banknotes. More information about them can be found on Wikipedia, the source for some of this article.

The COVID-19 Pandemic has been hard on everyone, some more than others. It also has caused us to expand our views and "think out of the box" to overcome the challenges presented to us. FEMEF's Webmaster Bob Meyer produced the set of QR codes with the idea that younger generations would be more likely to learn a little about the Elfin Forest in a medium that they favor. He has also suggested that we can add more information than what is contained in the printed Guide.

Now more visitors will learn about the Elfin Forest, becoming familiar with some of its plants and habitats. And more people will develop an attachment to and respect for this rare and beautiful example of what much of California's Central Coast looked like in past centuries.



# Thank You to Our Generous Members

*Compiled by Betsy Kinter,  
FEMEF Database Coordinator*

## NEW MEMBERS:

Carol Amerio

## RENEWING MEMBERS:

Richard & Brenda Allmann*	Mary Leizear*
Andrea Bersie*	Roger & Claretta Longden*
Kay Blaney*	Marilyn Moore*
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Charles & Cecile Leavell	Dave & Julie Wolter*

## DONATIONS:

Andrea Davis, Life Member  
(in memory of her son, Evan Goodwin)

Carl Gagnon

Gail Johnson – in honor of Yolanda Waddell

*\*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 FEMEF 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.*

# A Salute to Our Life Members

*By Yolanda Waddell and Betsy Kinter, Database Coordinator*

Twenty-one SWAP/FEMEF members are currently life members. That means that each member donated \$1,000, a sign that he or she (or they) place trust in our organization to protect the Elfin Forest for many years to come. Benefits of giving a life membership are that one never again will receive a renewal notice, and Oakleaves newsletter is a lifetime subscription. However, it was recently pointed out to us that, since they don't renew, life members are acknowledged on our New and Renewing page just the one time. From now on, we will list our life members at least once a year, and from time to time during the year will include a short feature about a life member.

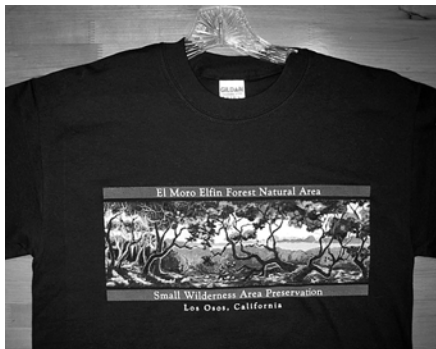
Thank you, Life Members – you are an important part of FEMEF's financial backbone!

Diane Blakeslee, San Luis Obispo  
Jay and Ann Bonestell, Los Osos  
Andrea Davis, Santa Rosa  
Fran and Marsh Harkins, Bakersfield  
Melville Hodge, Saratoga  
Joan Hughes, Fresno  
King David's Lodge #209, F&AM, San Luis Obispo  
Laurence (Bud) and Marci Laurent, Corvallis, OR  
Fred Mednick, Mercer Island, WA  
Susan and Allen Minker, Los Osos  
Frederick G. Novy III, MD, Los Osos  
John and Cheyanne Parker, Lucerne  
Barbara and Robert (Rosey) Rosenthal, Los Osos  
Pete Sarafian, Los Osos  
Shirley Sparling, Pacific Grove  
Ken Volk, San Luis Obispo  
Jay and Yolanda Waddell, Los Osos  
Dirk and Bonnie Walters, San Luis Obispo  
Jean D. Wheeler, Los Osos  
Dr. Corwith C. White, Los Osos  
Mary Lou Wilhelm, Gardnerville, NV

*A society is defined not only by what it creates,  
but by what it refuses to destroy.*

*John Sawhill, The Nature Conservancy*





## Order Mural Shirts ~ for yourself or as holiday gifts!

These beautiful shirts are black with artist Barbara Rosenthal's lovely mural print in color on both the front and back of each shirt. They are available in adult sizes from small to triple extra-large as short-sleeved or long-sleeved T-shirts or as thick, warm sweatshirts.



# FEMEF Shoppers' Order Form

See Photos of All Items at [www.elfin-forest.org](http://www.elfin-forest.org)

All Prices Include Sales Tax

### 1. MURAL SHIRTS

Mural design by artist Barbara Rosenthal on both front and back. Words on shirt: "El Moro Elfin Forest Natural Area" above mural and "Small Wilderness Area Preservation" and "Los Osos, California" below mural.

Circle Sizes:

\_\_\_ Short Slv. T-Shirt (S, M, L, XL) @\$20.00 = \$\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_ Short Slv. T-Shirt (XXL, XXXL) @\$23.00 = \$\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_ Long Slv. T-Shirt (S, M, L, XL) @\$25.00 = \$\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_ Long Slv. T-Shirt (XXL, XXXL) @\$27.00 = \$\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_ Sweatshirt (S, M, L, XL) @\$35.00 = \$\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_ Sweatshirt (XXL, XXXL) @\$37.00 = \$\_\_\_

### 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.

\_\_\_ @ \$3.00 = \$\_\_\_

### 3. ELFIN FOREST MURAL PRINTS

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

\_\_\_ @ \$35.00 = \$\_\_\_

### 4. ALPHABET BIRD BOOK

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

\_\_\_ @ \$20.00 = \$\_\_\_

### 5. MURAL MUG

15- ounce beverage mug with wrap-around mural design. Microwave safe, hand wash suggested.

\_\_\_ @ \$15 = \$\_\_\_

### 6. ELFIN FOREST CAPS

One size fits all caps with adjustable straps in back, 100% cotton. Two colors, forest green and maroon. Specify color when ordering.

\_\_\_ @ \$15 = \$\_\_\_ Color(s) \_\_\_\_\_

### Shipping costs within zip 934 \_\_:

Bird Book, \$2.77 (book rate) per book = \_\_\_

Pocket Guides \$1.50 (book rate) each = \_\_\_

Mural Prints on Foamcore \$5.00= \_\_\_

Shirts & Caps each: \$4.00 = \_\_\_

Mural Mug: \$6.00 \_\_\_ (If more than one mug, call for shipping cost.)

For shipping costs outside 934 \_\_, call (805) 528-0392

### TOTAL OF ORDER

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Make checks payable and mail to:

FEMEF, P.O. Box 6442, Los Osos, CA 93412-6442.

Call-in orders may also be made: (805) 528-0392.




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How did Candlestick Park get its name? Find out on page 5.

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## Holiday Shopping With SWAP!



Mural prints signed by artist Barbara Rosenthal, shirts or coffee mugs decorated with her print, and caps 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 on page 11 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.

## MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

City/State/Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

- |  |   |
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| <input type="checkbox"/> Member \$25           | <input type="checkbox"/> Defender \$100     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Steward \$50          | <input type="checkbox"/> Champion \$250     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Protector \$75        | <input type="checkbox"/> Guardian \$500     |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Seniors/Students \$15 | <input type="checkbox"/> Life Member \$1000 |

Donation only \$ \_\_\_\_\_

☐ I want to help, please call me!

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

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

All donations to FEMEF are tax-deductible.

EVERY membership counts!

Make checks payable to: FEMEF

Mail to: Friends of El Moro Elfin Forest,  
P.O. Box 6442, Los Osos, CA 93412-6442.