



OAK LEAVES

A PUBLICATION OF FRIENDS OF EL MORO ELFIN FOREST
P.O. BOX 6442, LOS OSOS, CALIFORNIA 93412-6442 ♦ (805) 528-0392 ♦ SUMMER 2024

FEMEF and County Parks Work to Preserve our Forest

By Dave Bowlus, Ph.D., FEMEF Secretary

"It's a beautiful day in the neighborhood," sang Mr. Rogers, and nothing could be truer of El Moro Elfin Forest. Whether the day is bright and sunny with a stiff breeze, as I write this in early May, or cool, damp, and misty "June weather" that can last all summer, the life of the Forest goes on. But it's not only the weather. The 90-acre Elfin Forest delights visitors thanks to the smooth operation of the Adopt-A-Park Agreement between Friends of El Moro Elfin Forest (FEMEF) and the San Luis Obispo County Parks and Recreation Department. Last renewed in 2020 for a standard period of five years, the agreement "recognizes the need for and the desirability of public and private participation in keeping our parks and recreation areas litter-free and well maintained."

Our FEMEF work goes well beyond beautification. In the Adopt-A-Park agreement our organization is specifically charged with conducting weed removal, revegetating with native species, trimming vegetation along the boardwalk and designated trails (as well as blocking non-designated trails), and controlling erosion, all while leaders ensure that workers are instructed and equipped to work safely. Additionally, FEMEF has agreed to perform minor repairs to the Boardwalk.

Finally, we are to "promote awareness in the community about problems of littering and vandalism, and the need for protecting our natural resources." Therefore, FEMEF's mission includes

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Ron Ruppert Joins the FEMEF Board of Directors

Text by Ron Ruppert; his own photo.

Ron Ruppert was first introduced to the Elfin Forest by Yolanda Waddell in the late 1970's, a relationship that has lasted for more than 40 years. Ron soon introduced his own students to the Forest during field trips in his Natural History courses at Cuesta College. In those early years, there were no official trails, so most pathways became eroded to 20-foot-wide barren patches of sand and off-road vehicles opened large areas of 'wasteland'. Other places were inundated with ice plant and non-native grasses. Yet it was still a magical place on earth, especially in the lower forests. Impressed by restoration of the barren wastes of the past to near pristine native flora by the impressive efforts of many volunteers, Ron is excited to be joining the FEMEF Board.



In the early '80's, under Yolanda's suggestion, Ron was able to age-date the "Dudleya" oak by counting the tree rings on a large branch sawn-off by juveniles constructing 'forts' among the pygmy oaks. That one branch had 210 rings! By extrapolating to the base diameter Ron estimated that the oak was at least 350 years old.

Ron attended Chaffey College where his favorite professor instilled a knowledge and love for osteology. Many of Ruppert's skeleton preparations are housed at Cuesta College, Morro Bay High School, Morro Bay Museum of Natural History, Alan Hancock College and Piedras Blancas Light Station. One of the most important skeletons is that of a huge male elephant seal. Prepared in 1989, it was at the time one of only three modern records of an elephant seal (dead or alive) found on a central coast beach. The elephant seals of Piedras Blancas did not start returning to that beach until 1991.

Ron attained his biology degrees from Cal State Fullerton, where he studied herpetology, working mostly on chuckwallas and collared lizards. He earned his teaching credential in the sciences, taught

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

of the

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The FEMEF Board of Directors meets monthly. Meeting days and times can vary and will be posted on the home page at www.elfin-forest.org.

FEMEF Board meetings are virtual and are open to the public. To attend a FEMEF Board meeting, leave a message at 805-528-0392.

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 coming activities 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.



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Preserve our Forest *continued from page 1*

informing and educating through publications (like this one) and by offering guided walks and presentations to schools and other groups. Also, FEMEF invites scientific research in the Elfin Forest. You'll read about some of our current activities in the pages of this newsletter. The reason for our dedication is the Elfin Forest itself. Under all conditions those who come to visit the Forest can find pleasure by using the senses, experiencing sweeping views, birdsong and wind whistling through the trees, the smell of sage, and the texture of leaves—but not Poison Oak!

County Parks supports our activities physically by emptying trash containers at each trail entrance and supplying most construction materials we use in repairing and maintaining the boardwalk. County Parks also helps us financially, most recently by paying half of the cost to publish the new-edition Trail Guide (available in dispensers at two locations along the Boardwalk loop).

FEMEF is an all-volunteer organization, but we do incur expenses in our work. Thank you to the many citizens who support us through membership dues and separate donations and by volunteering time and work. We encourage others to join FEMEF. A form can be found on the last page of this newsletter and on our website. Go to our website at elfin-forest.org and hit the "Become a Friend" or the "Donate" button. "Become a Friend" and "Printable form" buttons supply the membership form. Or, select an amount and hit "Continue" to donate online (you can use the comments line to specify membership and/or donation). Thank you for caring about the Elfin Forest.

Ruppert Joins Board *continued from page 1*

for over 45 years, and recently retired as professor and division chair of the biological sciences at Cuesta College. He still occasionally teaches human anatomy classes there.

Ron was a volunteer for the Elfin Forest even before the land became a preserve. He helped compile early lists of flora and fauna in the Elfin Forest that were used in reports submitted for obtaining grants for purchase of the land by SWAP. He helped write early versions of the trail guide and pocket guide for the Elfin Forest. More recently he conducted a trail camera study to document feral pigs in the Forest.

In the mid-1980's Ruppert participated in a study of snowy plovers on the Morro Bay Sand Spit. At that time plovers were protected but not officially listed as a threatened species. It was found that during each of two nesting seasons the plovers established about 100 nests of which about 50% were successful at fledging young. This study was part of an early banding effort that established many important facts about plover biology and led to the listing of the species as threatened a few years later.

In the early 1990's Ruppert was president of the local Audubon Society. This was at a time when the Audubon Overlook and Sweet Springs Nature Preserve were established. He presented an informative talk on the birds of Morro Bay at the first State of the Bay conference. He is also a founding member of the Central Coast Biological Society, an organization dedicated to establishing connections among central coast biologists.

Ron was park naturalist at Lopez Lake in the early 1980's and wrote the resource plan and a trail guide to the many trails there. He collected insects for the U.S. Forest Service out of Nevada City, California, and lived on and worked a 350-head dairy in Templeton, California.

Ron continues helping to raise 4 children (including a niece). All of his children have pursued and are working in either the teaching field or in medicine. He and his wife, Shaunna Sullivan, live with 25 tortoises, 9 lizards, 8 snakes, and Myotis, the French bulldog. They reside at the edge of the Elfin Forest. Ron is pleased to continue to contribute to the success of the El Moro Elfin Forest.

Remembering Three Active SWAP/FEMEF Volunteers

By Yolanda Waddell

The current active members of an organization benefit from the work of those who preceded them. Three volunteers who supported SWAP/FEMEF through their hard work in years past were Katie Davis, Shanda Gibbs, and Leslie Rotstein. Here are remembrances of each of them and what they meant to SWAP/FEMEF and those who knew them.

Katie Davis

Katie worked as a SWAP volunteer over a period of 30 years. In 1989, she made drawings for a children's coloring book about the Elfin Forest. Katie's charming line drawings illustrate pages with information about the Elfin Forest itself and the plants, animals, birds, and insects that live there.

After raising her two daughters, Cece and Julia, and obtaining her teaching credential at Cal Poly, Katie began teaching kindergarten. Busy as she was, she accepted a request to be the SWAP Membership Committee Chair and to be a member of the Board of Directors. She served as Secretary of the Board, but then had to leave her SWAP duties because of her teaching demands.

From 2010 until 2018, Katie was the Publicity Committee member who had the very important task of emailing our press releases to newspapers throughout our county and in Santa Barbara County as well.

In Spring of 2019, Katie worked with Pat Murray to produce an artful display on the Elfin Forest in the entry way to Los Osos Library. It was the last time she was able to help us because she became ill with leukemia. After battling it for five years, she succumbed in April of this year.

I knew Katie as a cheerful, kind, talented, and very capable person who through the years was a constant, dedicated volunteer, giving SWAP her time and energy when she could. She and her husband, Jerry, have been members of SWAP/FEMEF since our effort to save the Elfin Forest began.



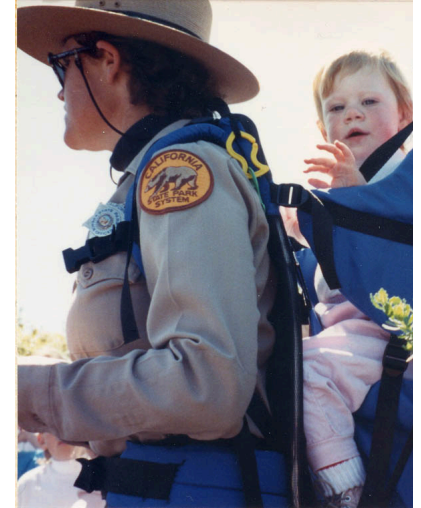
Shanda Gibbs

Shanda and her husband David lived in a very good place for lovers of nature: right next to the Elfin Forest. They could see quail and many other birds, brush rabbits, raccoons, and deer from their living room window, and walked often in the Elfin Forest. I met them while walking my dog and invited Shanda to become involved in SWAP. In the early years of SWAP's efforts to preserve the southern 38.6 acres, the Forest had been used as a garbage dump by some of its lazy neighbors. Shanda and David helped to remove old mattresses, cardboard, concrete blocks, and the remains of kitchen garbage.

Shanda was a State Park Ranger in Montaña de Oro from 1986 to 1990. Later she became a docent there. In the meantime, she became very active in SWAP as Education Committee Chair and then as SWAP Secretary. Her Master's degree in environmental education gave her the knowledge to produce a 60-page Teacher's Guide to El Moro Elfin Forest. With the help of a grant for printing the Guide, it was given free to any teacher who requested it. The Guide contained 15 lesson plans on such topics as endangered species, Chumash use of the Elfin Forest, and the Dusky-footed Wood Rat. She also included lists of Elfin Forest animals, plants, and common insects, and information about the Chumash Indians.

Shanda saw a way to raise some money for SWAP by selling tote bags. She found a tote bag maker in Texas who would print SWAP's name on them and sell them to us at a low price. We sold the Re-USA-Bag, as it was called, for \$7.50, now equivalent to about \$30.00.

After Shanda left SWAP, she joined an effort to raise the money to replace old wooden play equipment in the Los Osos Community Park. After succeeding with that effort, she was invited



Shanda in State Park uniform, carrying her daughter, leading 60 students on an Elfin Forest nature walk.

Remembering *continued on page 4*

Remembering *continued from page 3*

to join the San Luis Obispo County Parks Commission. Later she was Education Chair for Morro Coast Audubon, and then became a docent at Montaña de Oro State Park. Wherever she was active, Shanda applied her education skills and love of natural habitats.

Shanda passed away in March of this year, and during her illness, she enjoyed seeing Elfin Forest wildlife from her living room window. With great appreciation of Shanda's support of the Elfin Forest, we extend our sympathy to her husband, David, and her daughter, Katherine.

Leslie Rotstein

Leslie Rotstein was a teacher, through and through. She taught all grades, K - high school, and ultimately at Morongo Valley Elementary School, a small high-desert K - 6 elementary school with around 257 students. After Leslie retired from teaching in 2000, she volunteered as a docent at Big Morongo Canyon Preserve. She designed activities for children that emphasized observation, questioning, and recording of information.

Leslie and her husband, Skip Rotstein, camped along the California coast while their children were growing up. They especially liked the Morro Bay area and purchased a vacation home in Los Osos, which eventually became their permanent home. Skip saw a notice about SWAP's Saturday workday and other SWAP events and joined the Weed Warriors. SWAP Chair Ron Rasmussen and I invited Skip and Leslie to lunch. Skip agreed to join the SWAP Conservation Committee, eventually becoming Chair of the committee. Leslie became a member of the Education Committee, returning to one of her great loves, helping children to know and understand nature.

Another love Leslie had was to involve the community. In addition to working on the Education Committee, Leslie, who loved to garden with succulent plants, made centerpieces for each



Leslie & Skip Rotstein

of the tables at SWAPs Annual Meetings. She provided beautiful centerpieces each year.

Because of her love for gardening, Leslie joined the Los Osos Garden Club, eventually becoming President. Then she, along with other Los Osos women, saw a need to help low-income people. They formed a nonprofit called Womenade, which after a few years merged with Los Osos Cares, a nonprofit that serves the homeless as well as low-income residents. Leslie became president of the merged groups and produced an online newsletter.

In February of this year, Leslie succumbed to bone cancer. She leaves a legacy of her work with SWAP and in the Los Osos community, which are far better for her having lived among us. We extend our heartfelt sympathy to Skip, who is still very active with SWAP (now FEMEF), and to their family.

Special Event Report: An Evening in Lion Country

Story & Photo By Rebecca Rasmussen

On two consecutive Thursdays in March, FEMEF Board Member Skip Rotstein hosted a very special event at his home that lies on the border of the Elfin Forest. Attendees were treated to a tour of Skip's front yard where he revealed the locations of his many wildlife trail cameras that capture videos of the Elfin Forest inhabitants who happen to wander by. Guests were then invited inside where they were treated to a series of videos featuring the Mountain Lions that have caused so much excitement in recent months. Skip revealed each video as if it was a new clue in the mystery of the Mountain Lions of the area. How many were there? Were they male or female? How large were they? These and many other questions were answered as the videos continued. It was amazing to see how much animals reveal about themselves just by walking past a camera.

If you would like to uncover the mystery of the Elfin Forest Mountain Lions for yourself, please visit Skip's YouTube channel at: <https://www.youtube.com/@skiprotstein3535>. You can also view our Monthly Mammal Report at FEMEF's own YouTube channel: <https://www.youtube.com/@FriendsofElMoroElfinForest>.



Skip indicating his video camera setup at the "Special Event."

Deerweed

Text Revised by Dirk Walters, Ph. D.
from his April, 2006 article; Drawing by Bonnie Walters

The plant profiled today is a bit non-descript, but prefers to grow along paths where we can see it. It is common shrubby deerweed or *Acmispon glaber* (formally *Lotus scoparius*). Why the change in names? I'm not sure, but a search of the two names in the new edition of SLO County Flora might give us a clue. It notes that the genus name, *Lotus*, is now restricted to only two local species (*L. corniculatus* and *L. tenuis*), both non-native species introduced locally for livestock grazing, and genus (*Acmispon*) now contains all native deerweeds formally in *Lotus*.

The list of Elfin Forest species contains two shrubby species of *Acmispon* – *A. glaber* and *A. junceus*, differing only technically. *A. glaber* has calyx (sepal) teeth that are long and pointed and a small but standard shaped (i.e. straight) legume fruit. *A. junceus* has very short, blunt calyx teeth and a fruit that makes a sharp bend just as it leaves the calyx tube. Dr. Hoover, in his original **Vascular Plants of San Luis Obispo County**, states that these two species often grow in close proximity but usually on different soil types. *A. glaber* prefers sandy soils whereas *A. junceus* is almost always restricted to rocky outcrops. Based on Dr. Hoover's observation, I suspect that *A. junceus* is in fact not in the Elfin Forest, certainly not in the fossil sand deposits that underlie the boardwalk.

A glance at Bonnie's drawing will lead most of you to quickly recognize the pea-shaped flower and elongated green-bean shaped fruit characteristic of the Legume family (Fabaceae). Shrubby deerweed is a semi-shrub that produces abundant three-foliate leaves in the spring and a scattering of yellow flowers. It blooms most prolifically in the spring, but some flowers can be found in our area every month of the year. Shrubby deerweed is extremely drought deciduous. That is, early in summer, it loses most of if not all its leaves. After that, all that remains is a tangle of thin wiry green stems.

Common shrubby deerweed is less common than that name suggests. Shrubby deerweed is a pioneer. It is most common immediately after an area of vegetation has been removed or destroyed by some kind of disturbance, such as fire. Immediately after a fire, deerweed germinates and grows rapidly in the bare ground due to the extra high nutrient ash left on the ground after the fire as well as lack of competition from usually resident shrubs that were killed by the fire. However, within a few years, native shrubs have returned and grown tall while the soil fertility has become less, causing deerweed to gradually die out. This is true everywhere except where there is localized disturbance such as along trails. We humans are among the largest land animals with very large feet. When we make a trail, we create wide paths, providing the extra sunshine needed by this pioneer. Thus deerweed gradually becomes rarer as native vegetation returns, but remains quite common right along our paths. This is certainly the case next to the boardwalk in the Elfin Forest. The boardwalk was put in over the top of a heavily used trail, which was becoming quite wide. The boardwalk has stopped the widening of the trail,



but there is still a narrow band of disturbance immediately adjacent to the boardwalk. The only common plant growing in this band is our shrubby deerweed.

A retired Cal Poly professor of wild game management (Dr. Douglas Donaldson) called this plant, "deer ice cream." If asked to assess an area for its ability to support deer and other wildlife, he would simply count the number of individual deerweed plants. The number of deerweed plants is inversely correlated with the time since a fire. Early pioneer plants can incorporate the nutrition freed by the fire and convert it into green plant material that herbivores can digest. In mature shrub communities, like chaparral and dune scrub, most of the energy that plants trap goes into producing woody branches that are indigestible. Since the pioneers are herbaceous or at most semi-woody more of this productivity is available to animals.



OAKLEAVES

is a quarterly FEMEF publication.

Editors are Pam Ouellette, Jean Wheeler and Yolanda Waddell
Layout by Katy Budge

Contributors to this issue: Dave Bowlus, Pat Brown, Vicky Johnsen, Betsy Kinter, Pat Murray, Al Normandin, Pam Ouellette, Patrice Promack, Rebecca Rasmussen, Jeff Reifel, Skip Rotstein, Ron Ruppert, Dennis Sheridan, Mark Skinner, Theo Waddell, Yolanda Waddell, Dirk Walters, Jean Wheeler, Zarah Wyly.

Deadline for copy to *Oakleaves* is the first of the month before issue.
If possible, all copy should be submitted by e-mail to oakleaf@elfin-forest.org.

Correction

In the Spring 2024 *Oakleaves*, the end of the Argentine Ant article on page 4 should have read as follows:

Scientific experiments to feed young horned lizards on Argentine ants discovered that the young horned lizards all quickly lost weight. If Argentine ants replace harvester ants, we may lose our charismatic horned lizards also.

Weed Warrior Reports

By Conservation Co-Chair Vicky Johnsen

On February 11 and 12 Vicky and 5 other volunteers worked about 18 total hours to remove narrow leaf iceplant.

On March 2, 2024, Weed Warrior Day was cancelled due to rain. On another weekend in March, 2-3 people pulled invasives by hand, especially narrow leaf iceplant, for 14 total hours. Also, on March 22, 4 people worked for two and a half hours, a total of 10 hours.

On April 6, 14 volunteers worked two and a half hours, for a total of 44 person-hours.

Lately, there has been more work than can be done on Work Days. One day of weeding per month is not enough. She has reported to the FEMEF Board of Directors that she is recruiting people for extra days, for example to pull cheat grass in the Klopfer Grove.

Another invasive plant now needing a major removal effort is asparagus vine (*Smilax asparagoides*), a very difficult plant to eradicate. An herbicide is needed due to its extensive root structure, but this procedure requires a special permit. When Pete Sarafian, who had a permit, sprayed it, he was careful about what the creepers rested on. Zarah Wyley is a valuable weed hunter, and she used to have a permit. Possibly, she could get one again. Or it is possible Bob Sloan, who guided our weed warriors with his permit for protecting the Morro Shoulderband Snail during weeding efforts (for which a permit is no longer required), may possess a spraying permit and could be contacted for his possible assistance.



*Jan Moore with enormous narrow leaf iceplant; Jeff Reifel behind her.
Photo by Pat Brown.*

Photo from the Forest



Full bay with radiating clouds. Photo from the Forest by Theo Waddell..

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 in layers of clothing with long pants, long shirt sleeves, work gloves, and sturdy shoes with closed toes. Take care not to park in front of driveways or mailboxes. To request more information, call (805) 528-0392.



Cape Ivy smothers native plants and is very difficult to eradicate.

Invasive Species Report: Cape Ivy

By Mark Skinner

Cape Ivy, *Delairea odorata*, is a particularly awful coastal riparian invasive plant that overwhelmingly covers willows and shrubs and carpets flood plains. The vines form dense mats over tree and shrub canopy smothering the plants underneath. This soft, herbaceous perennial vine has a shiny vibrant green leaf that is over two inches wide and ivy shaped. It spreads mainly by easily broken stem and rhizome fragments that sprout easily on the ground in moist, shady environments.

Cape ivy is in the Asteraceae or sunflower family. The name Asteraceae comes from *aster*, the classical Latin word for star, which refers to the appearance of the flower, and came from the ancient Greek for (aster). *Delairea* is named after Eugene Delaire, a French gardener who lived from 1810 to 1856 and *odorata* means malodorous due to the smell of the flowers.

Cape ivy is native to the moist mountain forests of South Africa and was introduced to the United States in the late 1800s as a houseplant.

Getting rid of Cape ivy is no easy thing. I read a report of weeders manually removing Cape ivy in the Elfin Forest that was on poison oak! Manually removing Cape ivy is a stop gap measure that reduces and contains Cape ivy but not permanently. In 2015, I was involved in a Cape Ivy removal project in Morro Bay, where CCC crews ripped down Cape ivy from willows, followed by goat grazing and spraying. That was great at removing almost all the biomass of Cape ivy, but because of the tiny fragments left behind there were resprouts. To be effective, there must be a commitment of several years of spray treatments. Spraying with Glyphosate, Garlon, or Milestone is effective. The timing and application is critical: ideally spraying when the willows are dormant and before Cape ivy flowers in December. Extreme care is required as herbicide overspray will harm desired plants. Because of the threat of Cape ivy to biodiversity it is worthwhile to get rid of it.

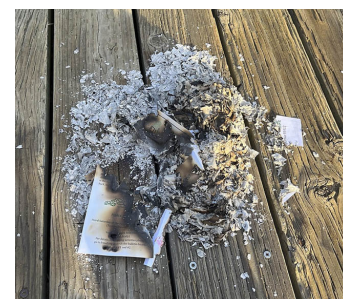
Hooligans in the Forest

By Vicky Johnsen, Zarah Wyly, and Pat Brown;
top two photos by Z. Wyly, bottom photo by P. Brown.

Several bizarre and in some cases dangerous incidents have been reported in the Elfin Forest since our last issue. They were unauthorized and some deliberately illegal and risky to the community.

In one case, someone rode a horse up the sand trail from 12th Street to the Boardwalk. On several occasions, large numbers of trail guides were stolen from our dispensers. At least once, the trail guides and toilet paper were spitefully piled on the wooden boardwalk and set on fire. Fortunately, Zarah Wyly discovered the fire early in the morning and cleaned it up. The wood surface of the boardwalk was scorched, but a wire brush helped to clean up the burn damage.

In another case, an abandoned electric bicycle was found lying in the forest, which was reported to the sheriff. It was later removed. And a bench was found set up in a lower grove away from the boardwalk, presumably placed there by a more respectful visitor, but definitely not authorized.



Friends of El Moro Elfin Forest Mission:

To preserve and maintain El Moro Elfin Forest Natural Area; to inform and educate about the natural history of the Elfin Forest and the Morro Bay Estuary; to promote and support scientific research in the Forest.

Coming Up in Summer

Story and Photos by Jean Wheeler

The rainy season just ended has been calamitous at times. But it has provided more rain at more frequent intervals since late autumn than I can remember in the previous 23 years I've lived here. Sustained water supply from autumn through spring is providing much needed recovery for our vegetation after too many entirely-too-dry winters. We may thank this more even supply of ample rain for the bounty of winter and spring flowers we've been enjoying and look forward to a beautiful summer bloom on very green shrubs as well.

Dune buckwheat begins blooming with flowers that are white. They will change to pink, then to rust by late summer, and remain an attractive brown as autumn approaches. White to pale lavender blossoms in pompoms on sturdy stems of black sage will be black pompoms by Halloween. Wedgeleaf horkelia has white to yellow flowers. Deerweed and peak rush rose show yellow blooms. Spikes of white flowers characterize chamise (pictured) near the inland end of the boardwalk. Among low growth off the boardwalk near South Bay Boulevard, we occasionally see white rein orchards in bloom in June.

Sticky monkey-flower with sticky green leaves and bright orange flowers blooms all around the boardwalk well into August. California poppies are in bloom most of the year. Fiddleneck and golden yarrow also have yellow flowers. Coastal dudleya plants have succulent leaves on the ground and tall reddish green stalks branching with lines of yellow flowers on top. Pink flowers are provided by California wild rose, cobwebby thistle and California hedge nettles. Red flowers with deeply serrated petals brightening the undergrowth are called cardinal catchflies. Blue flowers dominate around and below our two overlooks on the lupines responsible for the name of Bush Lupine Point.

Butterflies, often called "flying flowers," continue to fly in early summer. Moro blue butterflies lay their eggs on bush lupine leaves while acmon blues look to deerweed for their caterpillars. Dune buckwheat attracts green coastal bramble hairstreaks. Variable checkerspots lay eggs on undersides of sticky monkey-flower leaves the caterpillar is pictured on that plant on page 12. Gabb's checkerspots like California poppies for nectar. The California oak moth lays its eggs on our pygmy live oaks.

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 tending to or seeking food for their young. Especially likely to be seen and heard are the bright blue California scrub jays, loudly proclaiming their last name. Orange and black spotted towhees make a loud buzz. The large California quail sports a bobbing head plume and sounds to me like it is calling "quer-CAH-go." The California Thrasher (pictured) is distinctive, with its long, down-curved bill. Then there are busily chattering flocks of tiny fuzzy gray birds, dominated by bushtits and blue-gray gnatcatchers. Talkative little brown birds include several species of sparrows and wrens.



California Thrasher



Chamise

Among other residents busy in summer are bees, damselflies, spittlebugs, western fence lizards (doing their amusing pushups), garter snakes, gopher snakes, brush rabbits, ground squirrels, coyotes, and sometimes even deer.

Enjoy a walk on our wild side this summer!

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 FEMEF's answering machine, (805) 528-0392.

WALKS in the ELFIN FOREST

Docent-Led Third Saturday Walks

Reservations are required; masks are optional. To reserve a spot on the walk, email us at walks@elfin-forest.org and indicate the number in your party in the subject line of your email.

June 15, 9:30 a.m. Insects

Who is afraid of the assassin bug or the robber fly? Join Dennis Sheridan, recovering entomologist and his apprentice, Jeff Reifel, to investigate the insect communities of the Elfin Forest. Bring a hand lens or loop if you have one.

July 20, 9:30 a.m. Geology

Al Normandin is a local naturalist whose walks for us have always been enthusiastically received whether about the lichens we have, why we have some plants and animals but not others, or the role of the equinox or a solstice on our plant and animal life. This time his focus is on the role of the geology supporting and surrounding our Elfin Forest.

August 17, 9:30 a.m. Reptiles and Amphibians

Lizards, snakes, salamanders, frogs, and toads will be the focus of today's walk. What kinds do we have, how big are they, what do they look like, what do they eat, who eats them, where and how may we look for them in our Elfin Forest, why are they important to the ecosystem and us? Trevor Ruppert, instructor of biology at Cuesta College will clue us in about these residents and their roles in our Elfin Forest.

Walks 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.



Skip Rotstein introducing "Roses Walk" leaders Barbara Rosenthal and Jeff Reifel. Photo by Pam Ouellette.



(above) Fungus Foray walk led by Dennis Sheridan (at right). Photo by Vicky Johnsen.



(at left) Pat Brown, beginning her 3rd Saturday butterfly walk. Photo by Vicky Johnsen.

Thank You to Our Generous Members

*Compiled by
Betsy Kinter, FEMEF Database Coordinator*

NEW MEMBERS:

Vickie Baggett*
Sharon Iranpour*
Virginia Jensen
Pam Ouellette
Kim & Murray Randall*
Grace Scheuring*
Sue Shields
Judy West

RENEWING MEMBERS:

Rosemary Baxter*	Melissa Mooney
Wendy Brown*	John Nowak &
Roger E. Carmody*	Suzette Girouard*
Katie & Jerry Davis	Charles & Sally Sitton*
Bernard &	Shaunna Sullivan &
Fran Deitchman*	Ron Ruppert*
Margaret Diehl	Katherine Tennant
L.R. Erickson	Bertram Townsend*
Thomas & Michele Esser*	Janice Verity*
Joni Gardner	Bruce West*
Gail Johnson*	Keith & Beth Wimer*
Jane Johnson*	Catherine Yi &
Penny Koines*	Derek Wicks*
Jennifer & Larry Levine*	

DONATIONS:

Robert Bowlus
Jennifer & Larry Levine
Shelley Nordman
Nancy Ottum – in memory of Larry Ottum,
who loved to walk in the Elfin Forest with
his two sisters, Lynn and Nancy.
It brought him much happiness and peace.

**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 quarterly 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.*

Thanks to Marea Art Studio and Baywood Inn

By Patrice Promack, Property and Records Committee Chair

For the last couple of years, the Baywood Inn in Baywood-Los Osos has had our merchandise for sale and on display in their lovely bed and breakfast on 2nd Street. They have our ball caps and mugs, our handsome new green tee-shirts and hoodies as well as the older style black tee shirts and sweatshirts. In 2023, the sales of our merchandise there totaled almost \$1500! Please stop by to say hello, and also say thank you to their very supportive manager, Curtis Armstrong!

The Marea Art Studio is also on 2nd Street in Baywood-Los Osos. It is an endlessly fascinating shop to explore. They have had our mugs and the ABC Bird Book there for about a year; in January they added our ball caps, which have been selling well. The Art Studio, which displays and sells the work of around 30 local artists, has sold over \$300 of our merchandise! It is wonderful to have the support of these local businesses. We thank them for their support and we hope you will visit them and thank them, too.



Pat Brown (left) led workers for Achievement House on a butterfly walk.

Butterfly Walk for Achievement House

By Pat Brown, Education Committee; Photo by Pat Murray.

The clients at Achievement House have a contract to fold our Oakleaves newsletter for mailing to members. Pat Murray is responsible for bringing the newsletter to Achievement House for folding, then retrieves the extra copies once the workers are done. Pat came up with the wonderful idea to invite those clients to come and enjoy a walk in the Elfin Forest. She asked me if I would do a butterfly walk for the Achievement House workers on the 26th of April.

At the appointed time, a van filled with happy clients and staff arrived at the Elfin Forest. We were both there to show them around the forest; they learned about some of the plants and butterflies that it is known for. The day was mostly sunny and overall, the experience was a good one. The clients and staff are now familiar with and can connect to the work they do assembling the newsletter. We hope to do it again next year, as a way to say thank you and to continue to educate the community about the beauty of the Forest and what it offers to the Central Coast.



Elfin Forest Caps

One size fits all for these caps. They have adjustable straps in the back, are made of 100% cotton, and come in forest green or maroon. Across its front each cap has the image of one of our coast live oaks, elfin-short but with a wide sprawling canopy, and the words "Elfin Forest Natural Area."



FEMEF Shoppers' Order Form

See photos of all items at www.elfin-forest.org

All Prices Include Sales Tax

1. MURAL SHIRTS & SWEAT SHIRTS

Large mural design by artist Barbara Rosenthal on both front and back. Forest green fabric with the words "Friends of the El Moro Elfin Forest" above mural and "Los Osos, California" below mural.

"New" Forest Green T-Shirts (sizes S,M,L,XL,XXL,XXXL)

___ Short Slv. (no XXL) size ___ @\$25.00 = \$ ___

___ Long Slv. T-Shirt size ___ @\$30.00 = \$ ___

___ Hoodies (no XXXL) size ___ @\$40.00 = \$ ___

"Old" Black (limited sizes avail., please circle your choice)

___ Short Slv. T-Shirt (S) @\$15.00 = \$ ___

___ Long Slv. T-Shirt (M, XL, XXXL) @\$15.00 = \$ ___

___ Crew-Neck Sweat Shirt
(S,M,L,XL,XXL, XXXL) @\$20.00 = \$ ___

2. 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 = \$ ___

3. ALPHABET BIRD BOOK

With 26 clever verses and superb photos on facing pages, this book is sure to please young and old.

___ @ \$20.00 = \$ ___

4. MURAL MUG

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

___ @ \$20 = \$ ___

5. ELFIN FOREST CAPS

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

___ @ \$20 = \$ ___ Color(s) ___

6. NOTECARDS

Featuring scenes from the El Moro Elfin Forest

___ @ \$2.50 / each or ___ 5 @ \$10

SUBTOTAL OF ORDER \$ ___

(Please print when filling order, and indicate how many of each.)

SHIPPING COSTS: Within and near Los Osos, free delivery may be possible. Shipping costs otherwise depend on zip code and package weight.
Please call 805-528-0392 to arrange for delivery or shipping.

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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.




FRIENDS OF EL MORO ELFIN FOREST
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Remembering some of our Volunteers ~ pages 3-4

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Woolly Star marks the beginning of Summer. Photo by Vicky Johnsen.

MEMBERSHIP FORM

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Protector \$75 | <input type="checkbox"/> Guardian \$500 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Seniors/Students \$15 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Life Member \$1000 | |

☐ I want to help, please call me!

☐ FEMEF has permission to email me.

All memberships include a year's subscription to FEMEF's quarterly newsletter *Oakleaves*.

- ☐ Check here to receive the online version by email.
- ☐ Check here to receive the print version by U.S. mail.
- ☐ Check here if you do not wish to receive *Oakleaves*.

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.