



# O A K L E A V E S

A PUBLICATION OF THE LOS OSOS / MORRO BAY CHAPTER of SMALL WILDERNESS AREA PRESERVATION  
P.O. BOX 6442, LOS OSOS, CALIFORNIA 93412-6442 ❖ (805) 528-0392 ❖ OCTOBER / NOVEMBER 2010

## Boardwalk Showing Its Age

By Ron Rasmussen, Chair

The boardwalk that winds through the Elfin Forest has been a solution to the adverse impact of increased use by residents and visitors. The concerns of neighbors that it might lead to hoards of visitors and major traffic and parking problems have not been realized. Overall, the boardwalk has been good for the Forest while making access easy for visitors.

When the boardwalk was built and then dedicated in March of 2000, the projected life span was estimated at between 10 and 15 years. Now it is in its eleventh year and problems signaling the possible end of its useful life are appearing. One most obvious is the rusting away of the screws that hold the deck boards in place. This problem can be corrected by replacing the screws with new galvanized or stainless steel screws. Now, when loose boards or broken screws are found, SWAP volunteers or County Parks personnel install new screws. But there are fifty thousand screws that need replacement, and this is only a temporary fix.

Another potentially more severe problem is the deterioration of the boards themselves. While the wood was pretreated to prevent termite and fungal attack, the treatment only penetrated a fraction of an inch into the wood. Now, in many places on the

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## SWAP ANNUAL MEETING & VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION

Los Osos / Morro Bay Chapter  
Saturday, October 16, 2010  
Noon to 2:00 p.m.

at El Morro Church of the Nazarene  
Corner of Santa Ysabel & South Bay Blvd. in Los Osos  
(1/2 block east of South Bay Blvd.)

*Open to SWAP members AND THE COMMUNITY!*

### GUEST SPEAKERS:

*Anna Halligan, Restoration Ecologist  
and Shari Sullivan,  
Education and Outreach Coordinator for the  
Morro Bay National Estuary Program (MBNEP).*

They will speak about how restoration is planned,  
implemented and monitored,  
and how information about the projects  
is presented to the community.

### We will also:

*Celebrate our Chapter's 25th Anniversary!  
Celebrate our volunteers  
Elect Board Members (SWAP members only)  
Hear reports from  
our Treasurer and Conservation Chair  
Have lunch together after the meeting  
(hosted by SWAP)*

Please RSVP if you plan to stay for lunch, 528-0392

*We look forward to seeing you!*



## SWAP BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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

Ron Rasmussen, Chair  
Pete Sarafian, Vice Chair  
Jan DiLeo, Treasurer  
Yolanda Waddell, Secretary  
Pat Akey, Member at Large  
Debbie Levi, Member at Large  
Pat Murray, Member at Large

The SWAP Board of Directors meets monthly  
at Sea Oaks Mobile Home Park,  
1675 Los Osos Valley Road.

The next meetings are  
**Thursday, October 14  
and Thursday, November 11.**

All Board meetings are open to the public.  
To confirm the date, time and location  
(which are subject to change), call 528-0392.



## CONTACT SWAP

If you have questions about SWAP activities  
or want to volunteer, please call 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  
1087 Santa Rosa Street, SLO, CA 93408  
(805) 781-4417

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 781-4417.

## County Parks, SWAP Meet in the Forest

By Yolanda Waddell

A meeting organized  
by SWAP Treasurer Jan  
DiLeo brought together  
County Parks Senior Plan-  
ner Shaun Cooper and  
Supervising Ranger Bob  
Yetter, SWAP Chair Ron  
Rasmussen, Jan, and chap-  
ter members Pat Brown  
and Yolanda Waddell on  
July 26 in the Elfin Forest.  
The purpose of the meet-  
ing was to address several  
Elfin Forest-related issues  
where they could best be  
discussed - in the Elfin  
Forest.

The SWAP Board  
has long wanted a bul-  
letin board along the

boardwalk to inform Elfin Forest users about events and problems. Pat Brown researched and presented a plan for the "kiosk" and a location was selected. Jan will find out if a Coastal Commission permit is necessary, and coordinate with Shaun Cooper in determining the next step.

Another proposal is to install a handrail next to the steps leading from the 15th Street trail up to the boardwalk, and possibly at other places where one must step up or down from the boardwalk. Jan will check with Coastal Commission staff about the need for permits and Shaun Cooper will contact County Architectural Services.

The condition and repair of the boardwalk was discussed. (See article by Ron Rasmussen in this issue) It is hoped that there may be grant money to pay for some repairs.

Finally, Cooper and Yetter viewed the places where new benches are proposed: the Bowker Memorial Grove and Celestial Meadow. Two benches for the Bowker Grove are complete. Another is being built by bench fabricator Mark Dariz, to be placed in Celestial Meadow. (Update: as of September 10, the two benches in the Bowker Grove have been installed.)

The SWAP members were pleased to meet Shaun Cooper and Bob Yetter, both new to their positions, and to establish a good working relationship with them.



*A small group of SWAP and County Parks representatives met in the Elfin Forest to discuss a few projects. Shown (L-R) are Ron Rasmussen, SWAP Chair; Jan DiLeo, SWAP Treasurer; Pat Brown, Trail Guide Committee Chair; Shaun Cooper, County Parks Senior Planner; and Bob Yetter, County Parks Supervising Ranger. Photo by Yolanda Waddell.*

## Boardwalk continued from page 1

surface of the boardwalk, this layer of treated wood has been worn away. The result has been invasion, not by termites, but by dry rot fungus. Some few boards show penetration of dry rot nearly an inch into the wood. These boards may need replacement within the next year before they fail. As in the case of screw replacement, the replacement of individual boards that are in danger of failing is only a temporary measure. When needed, County Personnel replace broken or damaged boards. It is important that, at this writing, there are no broken boards that would present a possible hazard to visitors.

The third component of the boardwalk to consider is the less visible supporting timbers and concrete piers. Overall, these elements appear to be in fair to good condition. There are small cracks in some locations, but no major problems. However, there may be hidden problems that will only be found when the top deck boards are removed.

What to do? SWAP will be working with County Parks to develop an action plan to address boardwalk rejuvenation. The extent of work to be done will be depend on estimates of required work and the funding available. SWAP expects to have a clearer picture of how the work will proceed within the next year. Meanwhile continue to enjoy the Elfin Forest and the boardwalk.

# The Beebes Have Flown South

By Yolanda Waddell

It was the beauty of the Central Coast and its mild climate that caused Sandra and Curt to “migrate” to the Central Coast and buy a home in Morro Bay in 1998. They had completed successful careers in psychology (Sandra) and psychiatry (Curt), and were ready for something else. They didn't have to look far for volunteer opportunities. By 1999, Sandra was deeply involved in Head Start and the Literacy Council. Curt became a volunteer for Morro Bay State Park. They had also visited the Elfin Forest and became members of SWAP.

I don't recall exactly how Sandra and I met, but the result of our conversation was that Sandra agreed to conduct interviews and write articles for Oakleaves. Her first article, in the June/July 1999 issue, featured Mark Dariz, designer of the Elfin Forest boardwalk. That was followed over the next 1-1/2 years with articles about archaeologist Dr. John Parker, CCC Conservation Supervisor Bruce Bonifas, Emily Polk, Director of County Parks Pete Jenny, County Parks Operations Superintendent Ernie Del Rio, and Vince Cicero, State Parks Ecologist for the San Luis Obispo Coast District.

While Sandra was interviewing and writing (and doing many other things), Curt spent much of his time outdoors, working on trail projects and learning about the problems caused to local flora and fauna by uninformed humans. He wrote a short article for the August/September Oakleaves about the damage that foot traffic was doing to Coast Live Oaks in the Elfin Forest, especially in the Woodrat Hall grove (now called the Rose Bowker Memorial Grove). His trail work led to research on Poison-oak, to which he is very allergic. His research yielded enough information to write a 3-part series, “Poison-oak in the Elfin Forest,” for Oakleaves in 2001.

By the end of 2000, Sandra had become completely irritated with the sight of dog droppings almost everywhere she went to take a walk, including the paths of the Elfin Forest. She said, “Enough already with the dog poo,” and decided to do something about it. She researched companies that produce dispensable bags for picking up “dog poo.” Curt, meanwhile, researched the bacteria contained in dog droppings, and found that dog feces can contain E coli and other bacteria that cause diarrhea or typhoid.



Photo provided by Sandra Beebe.

Sandra settled on the company that sells dispensers, trashcans and plastic bags for “Mutt Mitts.” Then she began raising funds through Morro Bay Beautiful to buy and install the dispensers. She was so successful that she called SWAP and offered to install Mutt Mitt dispensers at the seven entrances to the Elfin Forest. The SWAP Board happily accepted and soon Curt and Sandra had installed seven Mutt Mitt dispensers and trashcans in the Elfin Forest. County Parks agreed to empty the trashcans, and a committee of SWAP volunteers was established to keep the dispensers filled. The result was dramatic: the paths in the Elfin Forest now are almost free of dog droppings.

To date, Curt and Sandra have installed a total of 36 Mutt Mitt dispenser boxes at Morro Rock, the Elfin Forest, and throughout Morro Bay. Other people and organizations have followed their lead and installed dispensers in parks and on trails.

We recently received a shocking bit of news: that Sandra and Curt are going to move (actually have moved as of this issue) to Santa Monica. I paid them a visit and learned that they want to live closer to their son Daniel and his wife Nathacha, and more specifically, their first grandchild who was born in September. Like two wonderful exotic birds, they spent time on the Central Coast and enriched the lives of many, and now have “flown south” to be with family. We wish them a very happy grandparent-hood.

## *In Memoriam – Marie D. Campagna*

*Marie Campagna, a SWAP member for many years, was the mother of Rosemary Bowker (past President of SWAP and now deceased) and mother-in-law of Les Bowker (currently a member of the SWAP Education Committee and a 3rd Saturday walk leader). She passed away after a short illness Thursday, July 29 in New York, at age 93. While living in Los Osos, she gave encouragement and good advice to many of her friends in SWAP, as well as to her daughter and son-in-law. Born in Paterson, New Jersey in 1917, Marie earned a Bachelor's and two Master's degrees, served in the U.S. Army as a WAC for three years during World War II, and taught school for 32 years. In recent years, she lived in a retirement community in Jamesville, New York, near her son Frank and her grandchildren.*



# Mourning Dove

Story and Photo By Jean Wheeler, Ph.D.

Participants in Al Normandin's Third Saturday Walk in August got a nice long look at this Mourning Dove (*Zenaida macroura*) perched close to Siena's View. The scientific name was given in 1838 by Charles L. Bonaparte, a French zoologist, in honor of his wife, Princess Zenaide.

Also known as the Western Turtle Dove or Rain Dove, this light gray-brown dove is medium in size at about a foot long but more slender than other dove species. It is one of the most abundant birds on our continent. Some are resident all year in most of Mexico, the contiguous United States, and larger Caribbean islands. Those of southern Canada are usually summer-only birds, and migrating members of the species get as far south as Panama in the winter.

The Mourning Dove, named for its plaintive cooing cry, is the leading North American game bird. About 40-70 million are shot annually (about 20-25 million in the United States) for sport and for meat, yet the species conservation status is considered "at least risk." California has a split season for dove hunting, September 1-15 and another 45 days beginning the second Saturday in November. The

species can sustain this hunting pressure because it breeds so successfully. Although there are nearly always only two eggs per nest, they are devoted parents and can raise up to six families per year in warmer climates.

Generally monogamous, they may mate again if one partner dies. Males court their ladies with a noisy flight, then approach with a puffed breast, bobbing head, and a loud call. He leads her to potential nest sites and she chooses one--usually in a tree, but sometimes in a shrub or even a flower pot! She builds a fairly large pile of a nest with sticks, leaves, and grass brought by the male. Sometimes they will use unoccupied nests of other doves or squirrels, or even add their two eggs to those of another pair of doves.

The two eggs are incubated by the male in mornings and by the female in afternoons and nights. Nests are almost never left unattended during the two weeks of incubation, and parents will lead predators away with the "broken wing" ploy. Cowbirds rarely lay eggs in Mourning Dove nests, as the doves often reject those eggs and the seed diet of doves will not support young cowbirds.

For the first three or four days after hatching, the parents feed their young pigeon's milk. This is produced in the crop by both parents from their seed diet and is richer in fat and protein than either human or cow's milk. Crop milk is gradually replaced by seeds. The young, called squabs, fledge in about two weeks. They remain near the father, who feeds them for about two more weeks. The rapid breeding is essential as mortality rates can be over half of the adults and two thirds of the young each year. Besides hunting, predators for adults are mainly hawks and falcons. Crows, grackles, snakes, and cats will take eggs from nests.

Mourning doves eat seeds almost exclusively, occasionally adding a snail or insect. They swallow fine sand or gravel to aid in breaking down the seeds in their crops. They eat only seeds readily available on plants or on the ground, not digging or scratching for them. These doves use a wide variety of open habitats, avoiding only swamps and dense forests. Outside breeding season they roost in large numbers in trees, sleeping with their heads resting between their shoulders, not tucked under a wing.

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## Elfin Forest Sightings – Sharks

On August 4th, Bob Meyer noticed that there was a school of sharks swimming in the shallows directly below Bush Lupine Point. At first he thought they were small birds swimming and diving. Then he realized that he was looking at the backs of sharks, with their fins showing. He estimated the length of the sharks at 3 to 4-1/2 feet. It was hard to identify the species, but there are only two shark species in the Morro Bay estuary: Horned Sharks and Leopard Sharks. He concluded that it could have been female Leopard Sharks because they are known to gather in warm shallow waters of bays and estuaries.

Bob also learned from SWAP members Heather and Jim Johnson that they observed some people placing nets in the mudflats at high tide and returning at low tide with a spear gun to shoot the Leopard sharks that were caught in the nets. They learned, after



several phone calls, that the area below Bush Lupine Point is a State Fish and Game preserve, and is a no-take zone. The best phone number to use is the Fish and Game statewide dispatch number (831) 649-2801. This number is probably the fastest way to get a warden on the scene of a hunting or fishing violation. Also, the local Fish and Game Regional Supervisor, Mark Crossland, can be reached at 550-2729.

Photo by Bob Meyer.

# Poison Oak and Poison Ivy

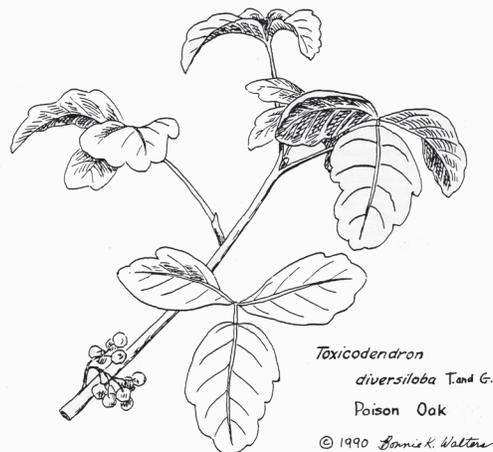
By Dirk Walters, Ph. D.; Drawing by Bonnie Walters

I realize that this is a repeat plant done for *Oakleaves* back in 1998. I also suspect it is a plant that everyone already knows. If you don't know it and you spend any time at all in our local 'wilds,' you had better learn it because poison oak (*Toxicodendron diversilobum*) causes a mild to severe skin rash in approximately 85% of us. This repeat discussion resulted from a question posed recently by a friend. He asked what should have been an easy question, "Is there any poison ivy in our area?" I do not know precisely what prompted the question; I didn't ask. My guess is that he had recently learned of a new way to either get rid of the plant (it grows in profusion around his home) or of a new product to treat its symptoms. My answer was "probably not." I then added, whether or not it's here, any product countering poison ivy will work on poison oak as well, since their biochemistry is identical. I should have simply said, "No," since none of the past and recent state or regional floras lists poison ivy (*Toxicodendron radicans*) either as an introduced or native plant growing in California.

Why might there be a question? First, if I could set up a display of a typical poison ivy plant from the deciduous woodlands of the Eastern U.S. next to a typical poison oak plant from the Elfin Forest, everyone could easily tell the difference because they look so different. Most would also conclude they must be separate species. Most trained plant taxonomists (botanists who specialize in plant identification & relationships) would also agree that they are different species. So what's the problem?

Unfortunately, poison oak and poison ivy are both quite variable. Poison ivy is usually a woody vine with large glossy green leaves (up to 15 inches long) whereas poison oak is commonly a woody shrub with smaller dull green leaves (usually less than 5 inches long). Flowers and fruits of both 'species' are nearly identical. Unfortunately, growth habit and leaf size are subject to local environmental conditions. Poison oak in our shady canyons is clearly a vine with large leaves while poison ivy growing out in pastures back East is shrubby with smaller leaves so there is overlap in their most obvious diagnostic characteristics. This overlap has led a minority of taxonomists to group the two as subspecies of a single species. I admit, I sort of lean toward this interpretation.

How can there be differences in interpretation among experts? Aren't all species equal and readily separable? The problem is two-fold. First, not all experts see the world the same. Some are super sensitive to the slightest variation between species while others require that the variation be undisputable. Secondly, different experts have different definitions for species. The best and most inclusive definition of a species is a group of organisms that is morphologically, evolutionarily and ecologically distinct from all other groups. This simply means that if a plant's appearance is different, it is unable to interbreed with, and lives in a habitat distinct from any other plant it would be a different species. Unfortunately, only appearance is readily discernable in the field and the other two criteria take considerable



*Toxicodendron  
diversiloba* T. & G.  
Poison Oak  
© 1990 Bonnie K. Walters

study. Additionally, some plants look different (i.e. Asiatic & Eastern sycamore) but can still interbreed while some plant individuals appear identical in appearance but can't interbreed (various nightshades).

A second reason for the repeat came out of my informal review of poison oak and ivy. It led me to conclude you need to be careful about accepting what you read. I ran across a story in the introduction to a 1978 Carolina Tips, an informational & advertisement publication designed for high school biology teachers. Here's the story. "...poison ivy hasn't always been a nemesis, but once thrived as an ordinary species of ivy beside a beautiful narcissus. Located next to a brook, the two plants flourished. When a drought struck, the brook dried and the ivy's roots, in search of water, strangled the narcissus. Venus, the goddess of love, became so infuriated that she punished the ivy (and us as well) by making it poisonous." What is wrong with this quaint story? It's not possible, even if you accept Venus as the Goddess of Love. This is because poison ivy and oak are new world plants and Narcissus (daffodil) is old world. And I can't imagine that any person living in the old world would willingly introduce poison ivy (or oak) to a new hemisphere. (While in graduate school, I did see a photo of small poison ivy plant growing in a botanic garden in Sweden accompanied by a large sign telling of the consequences of touching the plant.)

Lastly, I recently read that poison ivy and presumably poison oak grow better and produce more of the dermatitis -- causing oil (urushiol) the warmer the temperature. This is not good news for a world experiencing global warming.



## OAK LEAVES

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.  
Contributions to this issue: Pat Akey, Sandra and Curt Beebe, Betsy Kinter,  
Debbie Levi, Bob Meyer, Ron Rasmussen, Pete Sarafian, Yolanda Waddell,  
Dirk and Bonnie Walters, and Jean Wheeler

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(Above) Someone named “Bob” chose to write his name on an oak tree branch instead of on a check to support maintenance of the Elfin Forest. Photo by Bob Meyer.

(Below) Someone with little sense and nothing better to do torched an Elfin Forest sign and part of the new deck in the Rose Bowker Memorial Grove. Photo by Ron Rasmussen.



## Education Corner

By Pat Akey, Education Committee Chair

After a vacation of two months, the Education Committee is back and ready to review and act on areas of interest to children and adults. New curricula will be developed for grades six to freshmen in college. We will consider advertising to schools by flyers and will discuss and act on recording volunteer hours. The committee hopes to have visits with speakers covering biological topics. The Docent Manual will be reviewed and augmented. Other issues will be reviewed and new subjects introduced. We expect this school year will be one of our best.

## Danna Weidner Leaves SWAP Board

It was with regret that members of the SWAP Board of Directors accepted Danna Weidner’s resignation at the September Board meeting. Danna has been an effective and energetic participant in many of SWAP’s activities. Recently, she realized that attending regular monthly Board meetings limited her and husband Tom’s travel plans. Although no longer a Board member, Danna will continue as Coordinator of the Mutt Mitt program, as a member of the Calendar Committee and as assistant to Web Master Bob Meyer. We thank Danna for her service to SWAP.

# Encounters With Summer Vandalism

*Editor’s Note: The following were e-mails sent to the SWAP Board and County Parks by Conservation Committee member Bob Meyer, Conservation Chair Pete Sarafian and Board Chair Ron Rasmussen. If you witness vandalism or obvious crimes, call the County Sheriff Dispatch at 781-4550 or Bob Yetter, Supervising Ranger, at 781-4417.*

### August 6 – from Bob Meyer

Graffiti 1: My sharp-eyed granddaughter spied that my name was carved on a limb in Rose’s Grove. Honest, it wasn’t me! I returned with my small collection of flat paint spray cans and did a camouflage graffiti-on-graffiti. Not near as noticeable as it was before, but you can still see it.

Graffiti 2: Pete had previously mentioned the graffiti in Ghost Hall so I next proceeded there with my graffiti kit. Ghost Hall has been receiving a considerable amount of traffic leading to the site of the graffiti spot where the oak litter had been beaten to bare dirt in a rectangular shape. I had a suspicion what the attraction is. When I got there my suspicion was confirmed. The site was occupied by a blanket spread on the ground, covering the bare patch. On the blanket stood a couple of older teenagers with a very bare minimum of clothing. I strongly suggested they didn’t belong there and that they ought to put the rest of their clothes back on and depart. They did. The fact that I started preparing my camera to take shots of the graffiti on the trees may have hastened them along.

Final Find: It appears that someone(s) placed a couple of candles on the boardwalk at the 14th St. Trail and left them to burn themselves out. Good way to start a fire.

### August 15 – from Pete Sarafian to Supervising Ranger Bob Yetter

Would you please have someone look at one of the signs at the Bush Lupine Point overlook. It is closest to the 12th Street entrance. Someone has tried to make off with the sign and has damaged the wooden frame and fasteners.

### September 4 – from Ron Rasmussen

An unknown firebug has caused damage to Rose’s Grove Extension. On Saturday, 9/4/10 at approximately 12:30 PM I toured the boardwalk for any problems. On entering Rose’s Grove on the boardwalk extension I noted evidence of destruction of a “Stay On Trails” sign. It appeared to have been partly burned. On further examination, there was evidence of a small fire having been set on the extension. The damage was not severe, and did not penetrate through the wood to the ground below. However, there was also evidence of a small fire on the ground about one yard from the boardwalk extension. To prevent its destruction or theft I removed the burned sign from the Forest and can provide it as necessary. I did not remove anything else or attempt to repair the surface of the extension. Another “Stay On Trails” sign was vandalized at Celestial Meadows.

# Weed Warriors

By Pete Sarafian, Conservation Chairperson

## Weed Warriors Tackle Cape Ivy/Erosion Twice

In August a large crew of Wonderful Weekend Weed Warriors tackled two persistent problems below Bush Lupine Point. This area harbors a thriving infestation of Cape ivy (*Delairea odorata*). It also was the scene of heartbreaking vandalism last year in which someone laid waste to about an acre of federally listed as threatened Morro Manzanita. A result of this incident along with weathering and foot traffic upset most of the erosion-controlling brush boxes in the area. The volunteers on this beautiful Saturday morning included Dave Bowlus, Brittany Frost, Zack Green, Tyler Horton, Prisila and Richard Johnson, Elizabeth Lafica, Alicia Myers, Karen Patton, Ron Rasmussen, and Pete and Oscar Sarafian. They removed a large quantity of the evil ivy from brush and tree groves near the edge of Morro Bay. The result was a trio of large debris piles of vines and greenery that can be sprayed with herbicide to prevent resprouting. Some of the warriors also used wooden stakes and hand labor to reconstruct brush boxes. The boxes help slow water runoff on hillsides to reduce erosion. It was a very successful work party thanks to the hard work and good turnout. Thank you to all who participated. Great job!!

The September work party drew few volunteers over a foggy Labor Day weekend. Nevertheless, Prisila and Rich Johnson, Ron Rasmussen, Pete Sarafian, Joanne Schreck-Morse and Yolanda Waddell tackled the deteriorated erosion controls and invasive ivies growing in the southwestern corner of the Forest. Children had vandalized the ground-stabilizing cloth and removed wooden stakes on a steep hillside along with silt fencing installed to reduce erosion. The work crew replaced ground cloth with jute matting. The volunteers also rebuilt much of the damaged silt fencing and added new fencing in various locations. When this effort was completed, they turned their attention to pulling out a few sprigs of Panic veldt grass (*Ehrharta erecta*) that were spreading to the hillside as well as removing both Cape ivy and English ivy (*Hedera helix*) along the lower edge of the hill. Despite the small number of volunteers, a lot was accomplished, and thanks to all who contributed. The area is looking better and better, with more native plants replacing the invasive weeds that were removed. The rebuilt fencing also will help encourage natives to return.



Visiting Weed Warrior Oscar Sarafian rested for a moment next to a very large pile of Cape ivy that was pulled by an energetic crew during the August work party. Photo by Ron Rasmussen.



During the September work party, new Weed Warrior JoAnne Schreck-Morse worked her way almost all the way down to the bay at the west end of the Elfin Forest in order to remove the evil Cape ivy. Photo by Yolanda Waddell.

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## Let's All Pull Together

This is the time for all to give thanks,

For the harvested bounty of evil seed banks.

We've already removed our share of weeds,

That otherwise would have done awful deeds.

They'd replace the natives in our Elfin park,

And make the place ugly, and foreign, and dark.

We arose to the occasion and plucked them away,

Or shriveled them up with a chemical spray.

Our long vigilance helps save California's past,  
There are fewer invasives that come in and last.  
We couldn't do it without your assist,  
So come on out folks; be sure not to be missed.

*Yours in the cause of conservation,  
Pete Sarafian*

## Become a Weed Warrior!

Join First Saturday Work Parties in the Elfin Forest. Call 528-0392.

# Coming Up in the Elfin Forest

*Story and Photos By Jean Wheeler*

Well, we're coming to the end of our fantastic year of wildflowers based on the abundant and unusually well-spaced rains of last October through May. Even now, at the most stressful driest season of the year, fall-blooming plants continue to display their response to the water and energy they stored during that marvelously beneficial rainy season. They're assisted by recent heavy fogs and misty almost drizzles.

The white flowers of the Dune Buckwheat bush are mostly aging to soft pink or rust and yellow mock heather brightens the Forest. California Sagebrush has white blossoms and California Asters are widespread with white to pinkish petals and yellow central disks. I even enjoy the dead blossom heads on the Black Sage (pictured)--now looking like black pompom balls heralding the approach of Halloween!

Let's hope the new rainy season starts soon and brings sufficient water often enough to take advantage of the good seedbed this past year's bounty has provided.

Meanwhile, the annual buildup to our spectacular winter ornithological extravaganza is under way! Some Pintails, Gadwalls, and Shovelers usually arrive in late August and September, but the main arrival month for most ducks is October, especially for Mallards, Wigeons, Teal, and Ruddy Ducks. Canada geese begin showing up in October, while the great flotillas of several thousand Black Brant geese are usually here by the middle of November, dining on eelgrass in the bay.

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

Terrestrial species will also be settling into the Elfin Forest for the winter or migrating through on their way south. Fox, Lincoln's, and Golden-crowned Sparrows (pictured) 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 after 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.

Take an autumn walk in Elfin Forest. Marvel in appreciation of our vegetation so well adapted to thrive in this most difficult season of a harsh environment. Enjoy the everyday activities of our year-around resident wildlife as well as all the seasonal arrivals, departures, and passers through on their way to their tropical winter resorts.



## A New Look for Elfin Forest Web Site

Bob Meyer, our SWAP webmaster, has "spiffed up" the appearance of our web site at [www.elfin-forest.org](http://www.elfin-forest.org). He has given it a pleasant background color and more photos, and added topic "buttons" with links to information about SWAP and the Elfin Forest. He also placed a copy of the SWAP Shoppers' Order Form at the end of the merchandise descriptions in the Forest Store. Please note: SWAP does NOT sell merchandise online. The Shoppers' Order Form is included for the convenience of those looking at merchandise descriptions on the web site. It must be printed, filled in and mailed.

There is also a link to current and past issues of Oakleaves. Just click the "Library" button and follow the instructions. Some of our members now prefer to read Oakleaves on line rather than receive it by mail. If you would like to be among our "on line only" readers, let us know at [oakleaves@elfin-forest.org](mailto:oakleaves@elfin-forest.org).

Our thanks to Bob for his hard work in improving the appearance of the web site. Former Board member Danna Weidner will assist Bob with maintenance of the site. We encourage you to take a look at our "new look."

## WALKS in the ELFIN FOREST Third (and Second) Saturday Walks

### *October 9, 8:30 a.m. – Pre-Big Sit! Bird Walk (Second Saturday – Note earlier time)*

Jim Royer, coordinator of the Elfin Forest Big Sit! will lead us on a bird inventory walk in preparation for Sunday's Big Sit! This is an international event hosted by Birdwatcher's Digest ([www.birdwatchersdigest.com](http://www.birdwatchersdigest.com)) that pits participating groups of birders against one another to identify the most species in a 24-hour period. Our Big Sit! takes place at Bush Lupine Point. On Saturday, walk participants can join Jim in finding and identifying 60 or more species of birds throughout the Elfin Forest and in the Morro Bay estuary. This walk is for those who just enjoy looking at birds as well as for more experienced birders. You'll come away knowing more about birds, their calls, their habits and habitats.

### *October 16, 9:30 a.m. (Third Saturday) – Archaeology Walk*

Cal Poly anthropologist Dr. Terry L. Jones will help us do some time traveling into the pre-Spanish past of Central Coast inhabitants, the Chumash and their ancestors. Walking along the boardwalk, he will tell us the fascinating story of the ancient peoples who preceded the Chumash and explain how archaeologists can determine changes in the ocean's level by studying human habitations. He'll show us examples of technology development through the ages and will give us a word image of everyday life in the Elfin Forest during the time of the Chumash. We'll learn about Chumash money, economy and trade. This walk will reveal a complex world of the Elfin Forest's past inhabitants, one that we would never suspect while walking along the boardwalk today.

### *November 20, 9:30 a.m. – Literary Stroll*

Would you enjoy strolling around the Elfin Forest boardwalk, hearing the words of famous natural history writers? Then this walk is meant for you. Caltrans historian Robert Pavlik will share selections from the works of such authors as Robinson Jeffers, Wallace Stegner, Rachel Carson, Gary Snyder and others from this and past centuries. As you follow Bob along the boardwalk, stopping here and there for a reading, he will provide you with a delightful menu of descriptions and impressions that can be enjoyed in the Elfin Forest environment. He'll also bring a handout with a list of his readings for those who want to read further.

### *December 18, 9:30 a.m. – Geology Walk*

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. 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. Park at the north end of 15th Street (16th Street for wheelchairs) off Santa Ysabel in Los Osos. Walks begin on the boardwalk at the end of the 15th Street path. Wear comfortable shoes, long sleeves and pants to avoid poison oak and mosquitoes. Please park carefully, avoiding driveways and mailboxes. Please leave pets at home. The easy paced walks last 1-1/2 to 2 hours. For more information call (805) 528-0392.*



*During his 3rd Saturday Insect Walk in August, naturalist Al Normandin (right) "beat a bush" to show walk participants what kinds of insects and spiders made their homes in that particular shrub. A young naturalist studied them with his hand lens.  
Photo by Jean Wheeler.*



*Artist Barbara Renshaw (right) guided a group of artists on a sketch walk in July, and sat for awhile in the Rose Bowker Memorial Grove to draw the gnarled and twisting oak branches. Sketching with her were Kristin Okura (left) and Hannah Fowler (wearing white cap).*

## Please Report Elfin Forest Sightings

Have you observed any unusual birds in the Elfin Forest? Mammals? Reptiles? Amphibians? Insects? Interesting activities or footprints of wildlife in our Elfin Forest? Unusual plants? Please report any interesting sightings to your Oakleaves editors at: [oakleaves@elfin-forest.org](mailto:oakleaves@elfin-forest.org) for inclusion in future issues under "Elfin Forest Sightings." You can also leave a message on SWAP's answering machine, 528-0392.

# Thank You to Our New and Renewing Members

*Compiled by Betsy Kinter,  
SWAP Database Coordinator*

## **NEW MEMBERS:**

Chris and Kyra Kitts\*

## **RENEWING MEMBERS:**

Priscilla Akin

Arthur and Lillian Armstrong\*

Bob and Linda Bailey\*

Alese Bell

George and Cynthia Boatenhamer

Christine and David Braun\*

Carol and Barrie Coate\*

Kathleen Copeland\*

Paul Crafts

Bernard and Fran Deitchman\*

Jan DiLeo

Lurlie Edgecomb\*

Fran Edwards\*

Dale Alden Elliot\*

Linda Faust

Thomas Fowler

John and Joy Gault\*

Sterling and Virginia Gottlieb\*

Susan and Pascal Grimaud\*

Bonnie Heikes\*

Arylane Hill\*

Leora Markwort

Donald and Elizabeth Maruska

Jean and Marlene Mathias

Duke McPherson\*

William H. Newman

Melvin and Mary Norby

Anne Norment and Lawson Schaller

Al Normandin

Ronald E. Rasmussen\*

Florence Ross\*

Mildred Schwab

Bob and Barbara Schwenoha\*

Robert and Mia Simmons

Peg Smith

John and Leslie Steinbeck

Alyce Thorp and Bob Mayberry\*

## **DONATIONS:**

John and Joy Gault

*\*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.*



*Several artists who contributed to the 2011 calendar set up their original paintings as well as other pieces for display and sale. Shown (L-R) are Heather Johnson, Sharon Meyer, Barbara Rosenthal (back to camera), Larry Kappen (in rear), Stuart Denker and Ken Christiansen. Photo by Jean Wheeler.*

## 2011 Elfin Forest Calendar is Here!

*By Debbie Levi, Calendar Committee Chair*

On September 11th SWAP released the 2011 Elfin Forest calendar. The calendar is our annual fundraiser, an opportunity to raise needed monies for continued conservation and education for the Elfin Forest.

The Calendar Release Party was held from 2 – 4:30 p.m. at the end of 12th Street next to the Forest trailhead. Among the many guests were 15 artists whose works were featured in the calendar; they displayed their original calendar pictures and other pieces, and some were sold at the event.

SWAP provided delectable food and drinks to all who came, and extends special thanks to Hamid Keshtgar, Manager at Round Table Pizza in Los Osos for the generous donation of three large pizzas. We also thank Zack Hymas and Troop Leader Mark Olsen from Boy Scout Troop 214, who volunteered time to assist with set-up and parking, and homeowners Lee Markwort and Pete Sarafian for use of their driveways to host this event.

We invite you to contribute to this year's fundraiser by purchasing the 2011 Elfin Forest calendar—a gift of nature for only \$15. Simply fill out the Shoppers' Order Form on page 11 or call the SWAP message phone, 528-0392, or Debbie at 528-1911.

Additionally, there are 12 vendor locations that sell the calendar. They are:

- Miner's Ace Hardware, Los Osos Valley Road, Los Osos
- Coalesce Bookstore, Main Street, Morro Bay
- Los Osos Fitness, Los Osos Valley Road, Los Osos
- Los Osos Flower Market, Los Osos Valley Road, Los Osos
- Los Osos Rexall & Gifts, Los Osos Valley Road, Los Osos
- Morro Bay Chamber of Commerce, Embarcadero, Morro Bay
- Morro Bay Natural History Museum, State Park, Morro Bay
- Otter Bay Gifts, Embarcadero, Morro Bay
- SAGE Eco-Gardens & Nursery, Los Osos Valley Road, Los Osos
- San Luis Obispo Botanical Gardens, Dairy Creek Road, San Luis Obispo
- Sea Pines Golf Resort, Solano St., Los Osos
- Volumes of Pleasure Bookstore, Los Osos Valley Road, Los Osos



Keep track of your appointments and activities with our beautiful SWAP 2011 Elfin Forest Calendar! They also make wonderful gifts for any occasion, especially for the year-end holiday season rapidly approaching. The 9" x 12" calendar features images painted by our talented local artists of scenes, plants, and animals we enjoy every year. There are also fascinating sidebars for each month containing information on human and natural history.

Cover painting (at left) by Stuart Denker.



## SWAP 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) @\$19.00 = \$ \_\_\_  
 \_\_\_ Short Slv. T-Shirt (XXL, XXXL) @\$22.00 = \$ \_\_\_  
 \_\_\_ Long Slv. T-Shirt (S, M, L, XL) @\$23.00 = \$ \_\_\_  
 \_\_\_ Long Slv. T-Shirt (XXL, XXXL) @\$25.00 = \$ \_\_\_  
 \_\_\_ Sweatshirt (S, M, L, XL) @ \$25.00 = \$ \_\_\_  
 \_\_\_ Sweatshirt (XXL, XXXL) @ \$27.00 = \$ \_\_\_

### 2. PHOTOS OF THE ELFIN FOREST

Original print note cards

\_\_\_ @ \$3.00 or \_\_\_ set of 5 @ \$14.00 = \$ \_\_\_

Printed postcards

\_\_\_ @ \$1.00 = \$ \_\_\_

Indicate No. per View(s):

\_\_\_ All 5; \_\_\_ Don Klopfer Trail; \_\_\_ Ocean View;  
 \_\_\_ Wild Hyacinth; \_\_\_ Horned Lizard; \_\_\_ Dudleya

### 3. POCKET GUIDE

Useful 56-page guide to plants and animals of the Elfin Forest. Charts for bloom season, form, color, and habitat for 200 vascular plants plus lists of lichens and mushrooms known to occur. Habitat and peak months seen are charted for 187 birds. Also listed: 28 common mammals; 10 reptiles; 4 amphibians; 19 butterflies and moths (charted by size, months in flight, color, and host plants); 104 other arthropods and 7 gastropods.

\_\_\_ @ \$2.00 = \$ \_\_\_

### 4. ELFIN FOREST MURAL PRINTS

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

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

### 5. ALPHABET BIRD BOOK

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

\_\_\_ @ \$21.65 (including tax) = \_\_\_

### 6. 2011 ELFIN FOREST CALENDAR

Local artists have contributed to this stunning calendar.

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

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

Calendars \$2.50 each: = \_\_\_

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

Pocket Guides & Note Cards \$1.50 = \_\_\_

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

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

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

**TOTAL OF ORDER** \$ \_\_\_\_\_

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

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (w/area code): \_\_\_\_\_

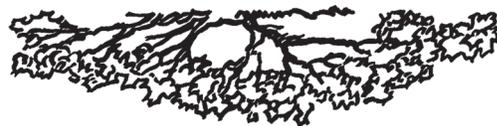
Make checks payable and mail to:

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

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

Join us for SWAP's Annual Meeting on Saturday,  
Oct. 16 from noon to 2:30 p.m. See page 1.

Los Osos / Morro Bay Chapter  
SMALL WILDERNESS AREA PRESERVATION  
A Non-Profit Public Benefit Corporation  
P.O. Box 6442, Los Osos, CA 93412-6442  
(805) 528-0392 www.elm-forest.org



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## Booth Workers Needed for Oktoberfest and Craft Fair

Los Osos will be celebrating its annual Oktoberfest this year on Sunday, October 31 on Second Street in downtown Baywood Park, from 9 am to 5 pm. SWAP will participate by setting up a booth among other booths featuring many kinds of arts and crafts, as well as ethnic foods. We'll talk to visitors about SWAP, distribute literature, and sell T-shirts, sweatshirts, our beautiful 2011 calendar, guidebooks, notecards, etc. We need volunteers to staff our table. If you can work a two-hour shift between 9:00 am and 4:00 pm on either or both of those days, please call SWAP's message phone at 528-0392. Give your name, shift preference, and phone number. Join us, you'll have fun!



Volunteer booth workers are also needed at the SWAP table at the South Bay Community Center Craft Fair in Los Osos on Saturday, November 6 between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. There will be 2-hour shifts. If you'd like to help, call Debbie at 528-1911.

## MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

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

Email \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

- |  |  |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> New Member              | <input type="checkbox"/> Renewing Member |
| <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      |  |

I want to help, please call me!

Memberships include a subscription to SWAP's bimonthly newsletter, *Oakleaves*. All donations to SWAP are tax-deductible.

EVERY membership counts!

Make checks payable to: SWAP.

Mail to: Small Wilderness Area Preservation,  
P.O. Box 6442, Los Osos, CA 93412-6442.