



OAK LEAVES

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 ♦ FEBRUARY / MARCH 2012

More Than 500 Feet of Green Fence Gone

By Ron Rasmussen

SWAP Chair and Conservation Committee Chair

When you read this, the current phase of green plastic fence removal will have been completed. In early January the California Conservation Corps (CCC) along with SWAP volunteers have finished removing more than 500 feet of the plastic fence and installing black cable “symbolic” fencing along both sides of the entire boardwalk. The criterion for removal was the recovery of native plant growth to the extent that it could serve as a barrier itself. The symbolic fence reminds visitors to stay on the boardwalk.

By project’s end, 6200 feet of new symbolic fencing will have been installed, and 3200 feet will have been relocated so all the fencing will be a standard distance from the boardwalk, and a standard height. Around 955 metal stanchions will have been put in place and 9400 feet of cable stretched between the stanchions. SWAP Conservation Committee member Bob Meyer served as the snail monitor, and Ron Rasmussen and Bob Meyer measured and marked the location where each stanchion should be placed.

Sections of the green fence that were removed included that along the south side of the boardwalk from the Fairbanks Monument to Bush Lupine point, and along the downhill section of the boardwalk toward Siena’s view. Also gone are sections at points

Green Fence Gone continued on page 2

Pizza Truck Plows Into Forest

By Ron Rasmussen; photos by Yolanda Waddell & R. Rasmussen



On December 31, 2011 at approximately 10:30 p.m. at the end of 11th street in Los Osos, a pizza delivery truck from Domino’s Pizza crashed through the wooden fence at the end of the street into the Elfin Forest. Approximately 30 feet of the fence together with concrete supports were destroyed. The truck continued into the forest for approximately 60 feet, ending at the 11th Street foot trail where it crashed through the green plastic fence that parallels the trail. The width of the truck’s path was approximately 8 feet.

The California Highway patrol was called and an accident report has been made. No injuries were reported. In its passage the truck destroyed one small oak tree and about 12 plants of various kinds. 11th Street-end neighbor Gary Frieburg stretched a rope across the break, along with a sign to direct visitors to the correct 11th Street entrance. We thank Gary for reporting the incident to SWAP. County Parks staff was notified and will see that the fence is repaired. Removing broken tree limbs and plants, as well as replacing the crushed plants will be done at a later date.



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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
Jan DiLeo, Treasurer
Yolanda Waddell, Secretary
Pat Akey, Member at Large
Pat Murray, Member at Large

The SWAP Board of Directors meets monthly
at the Community Room, Morro Shores
Mobile Home Park, 633 Ramona Ave., Los Osos.

The next meetings are
**Thursday, February 9,
and Thursday, March 8.**

All Board meetings are open to the public.

To confirm the date, time and location
(which are subject to change),
call (805) 528-0392.



CONTACT SWAP

If you have questions about SWAP activities or
want to volunteer, please call

(805) 528-0392 and leave a message.

A recorded message will give information
about our 3rd Saturday Walks,

Work Saturdays, and other events. If you have
questions, concerns or comments about any
problems in the Elfin Forest, call or write:

Mark Wagner

SLO County Parks Supervising Ranger
1087 Santa Rosa 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 Mark Wagner at 781-1196.

Green Fence Gone *continued from page 1*

along the boardwalk where plants
had grown through the green
fence. At the high point on the
boardwalk, the fence is gone, and
now one has an unobstructed pan-
oramic view of the bay, the Elfin
Forest and mountains.

The decision on whether or
not to remove more of the green
fence was based on the recovery
of the native plants and how well
the sandy soil was covered by new
growth. Some areas still have not
recovered from misuse years ago,
and will remain fenced for some
time. Plants in some other areas
are slowly recovering and more
fences will likely be removed in
coming years. These areas are
not being neglected. Plans are
underway for re-vegetation which
has been successful in other areas.
This will augment the natural pro-
cess of recovery.

Materials and labor for this
project were sup-
ported in part
through funds
from the Coastal
Impact Assistance
Program (CIAP)
to San Luis
Obispo County
Parks and in part
by funds from
SWAP. SWAP
thanks our Weed
Warriors and
membership for
their financial
support and
contribution of
in-kind labor for
the success of this
project.



*Ron Rasmussen and Bob Meyer prepared for work
by the CCC crews by measuring and marking where
every symbolic fence stanchion should be installed.*

There were a total of 955 stanchions installed.

Photo by Yolanda Waddell.



*CCC Crewmembers Tarah Balden and Eric Flores work to fasten cable
to a symbolic fence stanchion. Photo by Ron Rasmussen.*

**For more photos of the CCC crews that worked on this project,
please see page 8!**

Bringing the Gifts of Nature – The Elfin Forest Calendar

By Debbie Levi, Calendar Committee Chair; photo by Y. Waddell

I am proud to state that during the past six years, SWAP successfully introduced an annual Elfin Forest calendar and brought much-needed funds to support conservation, preservation and education for SWAP and the Elfin Forest.

The calendar has been accepted by the community and welcomed into many homes throughout our county and beyond. It continues to provide young and old with valuable knowledge.

In addition, artists, photographers and talented writers collectively contributed their positive energies and images of views and inhabitants of the Forest. Many financial donations all added to the success.

Due to personal reasons, I need to resign as Calendar Chair. I thank all those who have devoted so much time, talent and energy in soliciting and securing sponsors; writing and editing; contacting artists and photographers and making selections; producing the calendar; contacting vendors and keeping them supplied with calendars; keeping records of sales; organizing and staffing our calendar release parties; and keeping track of it all.

I appreciate such devoted commitment in my co-workers on the Calendar Committee, and I also appreciate the support of the calendar sponsors and SWAP members who have faithfully purchased the calendars through the years. Let's continue to bring the gifts of nature to others in every way that we can.

Addendum: As of early January, 2012, the 2012 Elfin Forest calendar realized \$3,047 for SWAP with 661 of the 800 copies sold, and 139 remaining to be sold. We have reduced the price of the calendar to \$10.00 each.



Debbie Levi Leaves SWAP Board

By Yolanda Waddell

Within weeks of moving to Los Osos in January, 2006, former elementary school teacher Debbie Levi and her husband Marty, a surgical nurse, became active members of SWAP. In fact, Board member Pat Murray recalls that they walked up to the SWAP information table at the Morro Bay Winter Bird Festival and asked to become volunteers. That is rare in itself; Marty became a Weed Warrior and Debbie accepted the job of SWAP Historian. But more wonderful contributions were yet to be made by the Levis.

Debbie energetically took on the Historian task, organizing 20 years of newspaper clippings into two albums. Then she campaigned to transfer the clippings onto CD for future researchers, and a copy of the CD was given to the Los Osos Public Library. Later in the year, Marty constructed a float for SWAP's entry in the Los Osos Holiday Parade.

As a member of the SWAP Board, Debbie became aware that our treasury wasn't growing because we had numerous expenses and no annual fundraiser. She suggested that we produce a calendar. After doing some research, Debbie and three other SWAP members: Pat Murray, Yolanda Waddell and Jean Wheeler, launched a calendar that featured images of the Elfin Forest by local photographers. The 350 copies of the 2007 Elfin Forest calendar sold like hot cakes, and in fact sold out by the end of December.

After its initial success, the Elfin Forest calendar became our Chapter's annual fundraiser.

In 2009, Debbie and the Calendar Committee increased the size to 9 x 12 inches, added informational sidebars and invited local artists to provide images; the result was magnificent. In 2010 – with photos this time – some of our ever-increasing number of generous printing sponsors anted up to sponsor a calendar page. The Calendar Committee decided to alternate photos and art each year, so 2011 featured well-known local artists and 2012, the current calendar, has many spectacular photo images. The number of committee members increased from four to nine (plus the Treasurer) in 2010 to be more efficient and spread the work. Also, the committee learned that increasing the number of calendar vendors made selling the calendar easier; there are fifteen vendors for the 2012 calendar.

Each year the number of calendars printed increased, and each year the income from calendar sales brought \$3,000 to \$5,000 into our treasury. Debbie, SWAP Chair Ron Rasmussen and Treasurer Jan DiLeo were pleased to see the positive effect of the calendar fundraiser on the balance sheets.

Recently Debbie took to heart the saying from Ecclesiastes, "For everything there is a season." She has decided to retire from the SWAP Board and her positions as Calendar Committee Chair and Historian to devote more time to writing and family. She is pleased and proud of the pleasure, information and support of SWAP that the six calendars, 2007 through 2012, have provided. The SWAP Board is grateful to Debbie for giving six years of hard work and devotion to SWAP and the Elfin Forest. Debbie and Marty's gifts to nature have been fine ones indeed.

Northern Pintail

Text and Photo by Jean Wheeler, Ph. D.

One of the most elegantly beautiful of duck species, the Northern Pintail (*Anas acuta*) is fairly large and conspicuously streamlined on the water or in flight. Males reach 25 to 29 inches in length from the tips of their long and sharp black tails through long necks to their also fairly long and pointed bills. The bills are gray with blue sides and the legs are also gray. Females are about four or five inches shorter with tails shorter but still fairly long and pointed. Those pointed tails sufficiently impressed Carl Linnaeus, founder of the Latin system for naming species, that in 1758 he named them *Anas*, which means duck, and *acuta*, which means sharp.

The males are further distinguished much of the year by their rich chocolate brown heads. A narrow white streak curves down from the back of the head widening forward down the neck to meet the broad white belly. The shoulders and sides are a lovely shade of gray with a triangular black rump. As they spread their wings in flight, they show a black panel (called a speculum) on the back edge of the wings bordered in white. Females are also streamlined with long necks and gray bills and legs but are dappled brown with gray-brown heads. Their shorter tails are gray rather than black, and their speculum is bronze with wide white borders. The white border of the speculum for both sexes is visible from some distance away in flight.

Northern Pintail ducks occur widely in the northern hemisphere, breeding across northern parts of North America and Eurasia. They range very widely in migration flying from the tundra to as far south as the equator, with a few hundred wintering in Hawaii. Birds banded in Asia have been found later even east of the Mississippi River in the United States, and Canadian banded Northern Pintails have been retrieved in Europe.

Their preferred breeding habitat is open wetlands and adjacent grasslands or tundra, avoiding woodlands. In winter they seek sheltered estuaries, brackish marshes and coastal lagoons or shallow inland lakes. Outside the breeding season they associate with many other species of ducks in large mixed flocks. They are known to be among the earliest ducks both to migrate and to nest. Our Pocket Guide (sold on page 11) lists Northern Pintails as the first duck species to arrive and among the first to leave, peaking in Morro Bay National Estuary from August to March.

These ducks breed from April to June in a nest scraped on the ground among grass or brush and usually rather far from water. The female lays up to a dozen eggs and incubates them for about three weeks. The chicks hatch downy and so strong their mother soon leads them to the nearest water body where they feed themselves on dead insects and vegetation floating on the surface. They fly about a month and a half after hatching, but remain with their mother until she finishes molting. Adults dabble at the surface or upend to feed off the bottom in shallow water for plants, aquatic insects, snails, and crustaceans. Their long necks enable them to



feed off bottoms other dabbling ducks cannot reach. They also feed on seeds, leaves, and insects on land.

Nests being shallow scrapes on open ground, the eggs and hatching chicks as well as their incubating mothers are vulnerable to predation by foxes, bobcats, and other mammals as well as crows, gulls, and other predatory birds. Adults are prized by human hunters for their beauty, speed and agility as prey, and excellent flavor at the table. They are also susceptible to many avian parasites and diseases, and are often the most numerous casualties in major events of avian botulism, cholera, or influenza. Habitat losses mainly from farming operations have also contributed to major regional population declines. However, with newer conservation practices and hunting restrictions population numbers appear to be increasing. Given their enormous range and large populations, Northern Pintails are evaluated as a Species of Least Concern.

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 for inclusion in future issues under "Elfin Forest Sightings." You can also leave a message on SWAP'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: Jan DiLeo, James Erbes, Betsy Kinter, Debbie Levi,
Ron Rasmussen, Kiva Vigil, Yolanda Waddell, Dirk and Bonnie Walters,
Danna Weidner and Jean Wheeler.

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Beach Sun Cup

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

Beach sun cup (*Camissonia cheiranthifolia*) is one of the few plants that bloom year round along our coast. It is found most commonly on the unstable, sandy hillocks immediately in-shore from the beach. It is also occasionally found on disturbed sandy soils away from the immediate coast in places such as the Elfin Forest. However, I wouldn't spend a lot of time looking for it from the boardwalk since I suspect its presence in the Elfin Forest is historical.

Before the natural area was set aside there were lots of heavily used, open, unstable sandy patches--habitats in which beach sun cup could establish and grow. After the Elfin Forest became a natural area, volunteers were able to control land use via the establishment of recognized trails. This was a start! But the ground-based trails still became wider and wider which exposed the sandy soils to wind erosion. Although probably diminished, there was still some habitat for beach sun cups to grow. When the boardwalk was built the result was even less disturbance within the Elfin Forest. With the reduced disturbance, the dominant shrubs grew taller and, more importantly, wider. They stabilized the sand and shaded out species like the beach sun cup which requires open, sunny, and unstable sand in which to establish and grow. I haven't seen beach sun cup in the Elfin Forest. If it is to be found, I'd look for it in open sand just above the bay. Thanks to the fine work of the SWAP volunteers, that type of habitat has gotten very rare and none of it can be seen from the boardwalk.

Before 1969, this plant was in the genus, *Oenothera*. At that time the common name applied to this genus was 'evening primrose'. So, *Camissonia cheiranthifolia* would have been called 'beach evening primrose' or simply, beach primrose. However, that common name is quite misleading. First, primrose is a name better applied to a totally different and unrelated group of plants in the true primrose family (Primulaceae) which include the shooting star and the pimpernel. The only trait that sun cups and true primroses share is their general tubular-shaped flowers.

Sun cups share, with other members of its family, Onagraceae, four separate petals instead of the five fused ones found in the primroses. In fact, the flowers of the Onagraceae, including the sun cups have a distinctive set of characteristics: they produce flowers that possess four sepals, four petals, and eight stamens attached to the top of a generally thin, elongated ovary which displays a four-part structure. This can be summarized as CA4 CO4 A8/G 4. CA is short for calyx which is the collective term for the sepals. CO stands for the corolla, the collective term for the petals. A is the abbreviation for andrecium which translates as all the 'male things' which are all the stamens. G stands for Gynoecium or "female things" which represents the four-parted ovary, style and stigma.

Why did Dr. Peter Raven separate the sun cups from the evening primroses when they share so many family characters? First and the most easily observed is the stigma. A look at Bon-



nie's drawing will show it to resemble a single wide cap as opposed to the four hair-like stigma branches found in the true evening primroses. A second trait is harder to determine. True evening primroses produce their flowers at dusk, bloom through the night, and fade in the morning. Sun cup flowers open at dawn and bloom during the day. This means the two genera have different pollinators since their flowers are open at different times of the day. Evening primroses would be expected to be visited by night flying animals such as moths whereas sun cups would be visited by day-flying ones.

While researching tidbits to include about beach sun cups, I came across the discussion of the species in the book by Mary Coffeen entitled *Central Coast Wild Flowers*. In it she reprints part of an article entitled "The Morro Bay Sand Spit, A California Treasure" by my friend and former Cal Poly Professor, Wayne Williams. In it he describes the pollination of beach sun cup as follows:

"The plant's bright yellow flowers cover new sand deposits everywhere along the sand spit, enhancing dune stability. Its blossoms face downwind. The pollinator is an exceptionally large bumblebee (*Bombus* sp.). We have all heard how bumblebees manage to fly despite the aerodynamic engineering theory that would render them land-bound because of their weight and size. These bees deftly approach the beach primrose flowers by flying upwind for greatest flight stability. Their powerful thorax muscles and large size allow them to survive within this niche, gathering food and pollinating, because of the downwind direction of the primrose corollas. Since the primrose is decumbent where wind speed is slowest, the bees can also work over large territories. I have often watched these bees and have never seen any other species pollinating beach primrose at the sand dunes. This symbiosis between plant and insect allows both the plant and the bumblebee to thrive and reproduce. . ."

Just imagine how much observation time was required to allow one to come up with this kind of natural history fact. There are many more yet to be discovered, and that's why natural areas like the Elfin Forest are so important!



From SWAP's Mail Box

I always enjoy my issue of Oakleaves. The article (in the September/October, 2011 issue) by Dirk Walters and Bonnie Walters was of particular interest. I hadn't realized how oats played a part in our history. Thanks to them. Their articles are always of interest.

Sincerely,

Carolyn Pendery ~ Visalia, California

SWAP Calendar is Going on Hiatus

By Yolanda Waddell

In early January, both the SWAP Calendar Committee Chair and Calendar Committee Database Coordinator found it necessary to retire from the committee. Both of those positions are essential for a smooth-running and successful calendar project, and it is difficult to find volunteers to fill those vacancies on short notice.

The Calendar Committee and SWAP Board have found it necessary to place the production of the Elfin Forest calendar on hiatus for a year. During that time we will work to fill the positions, and also will research other methods of raising funds for maintenance of the Elfin Forest.

We apologize for the disappointment that our decision may cause to artists, photographers, vendors, sponsors, and our members who have enjoyed buying and giving the Elfin Forest calendar each year. Also, we thank everyone for your generous support of our six calendars, from 2007 through 2012.

Our graphic designer Katy Budge, and our printers – first Anita Rouse of Hart Impressions and then Tom Hay of Hay Printing – have taken the text and images donated by talented and generous artists and photographers, and created absolutely beautiful calendars. Our jurors, sponsors and vendors have been wonderfully supportive every year. We especially thank County Parks and the Morro Bay National Estuary Program (MBNEP) for their extremely generous financial support. With everyone's help, SWAP has managed to bring in enough each year to keep from reducing our treasury balance. It has been good for the Elfin Forest, our education program, the Morro Bay Watershed, and the community.

The 2012 Elfin Forest Calendar is on sale for just \$10. Buy while the supply lasts. We will deliver to Los Osos and Morro Bay. See page 11 for ordering information.

Mutt Mitt Monitors

By Danna Weidner, Mutt Mitt Coordinator

Providing the bags to pick up dog pooh in the Elfin Forest is hardly a glamorous job. But as the old saying goes, someone has to do it. SWAP has been fortunate to have a dedicated group of Mutt Mitt Caretakers. They, led by their long time Chair and monitor, Dorothy Norwood, check the dispensers on a regular basis and refill them with mutt mitts as needed. They also unofficially monitor our furry friends' etiquette in the Forest. They are not shy about counseling folks who walk their pets off leash and, as a result threaten our habitat.

Our thanks go out to Gary, Mary & Jacob Frieburg, our new monitors on 11th Street, and our "old timers" -- Scott Danielson on 12th Street, Susan McTaggart on 13th Street, Beth Wimer on 14th Street, Heidi Kausch on 15th Street, Dorothy Norwood on 16th Street and Carolyn Boomer on 17th Street. We are also grateful to the Morro Bay National Estuary Program that has provided us over the years with grant monies to purchase both bags and dispensers; and County Parks for providing Mutt Mitts if their employees note a dispenser is low.

While our Mutt Mitt monitors are ever on top of their jobs, if while walking you notice a Mutt Mitt dispenser is getting low, please leave a message at 528-0392. Every bag used helps save the estuary.



Elfin Forest Sightings

James Erbes went for a walk in the Elfin Forest with his dog early one frosty morning in December. Characteristic tracks in the frost on the boardwalk told him that raccoons were not far away. Photo by James Erbes.

Weed Warriors

Many Tasks for Weed Warriors in November and December

By Ron Rasmussen, Conservation Chair and Yolanda Waddell

During the November 5th work party, the Weed Warriors continued work on erosion control. We replaced one more of the broken erosion control boxes on the Klopfer trail. The box supports were eaten away by termites. We also installed new barrier logs on and around the 14th street entrance trail.

Also, the drip watering system and all of the cages were removed from the revegetation project on the downhill trail that starts at the "Lovers' Bench". Plans for new plantings nearer the boardwalk at that site are underway. Bob Meyer is in contact with John Chesnut, who is working with Los Osos Middle School students who are growing native plants as part of their science study. John may be able to provide some seedlings.

November workers were Lori Anderson (new), Lannie Erickson, Rich and Prisila Johnson, Kristof Law (new), Bob Meyer, Ron Rasmussen, Kurt Rightmyer and Laurie Wagner (new).

On December 3rd, more erosion control work was completed on the 13th Street trail with a small crew of Weed Warriors relocating and fastening down water bars that had come loose. They also dug the sand behind the water bars to direct water flow away from the path. Other Weed Warriors continued the removal of veldt grass between 15th and 16th Streets near the edge of the Forest. Weed Warriors Pat Akey, Pat Brown, Lannie Erickson, Rich and Prisila Johnson, Bob Meyer and Yolanda Waddell enjoyed Conservation Chair Ron Rasmussen's excellent cookies at the end of a hard morning's work.

Let's all pull together The Weed Warrior Cheer

By Yolanda Waddell

Grab those shovels and don those gloves.
We're the ones the Elfin Forest loves!
Dig those weeds and pound those nails.
Shovel that sand but be careful of the snails.
Raise our voices and give a cheer,
Watch out weeds, the Warriors are here!
Go, Warriors, Go!

SWAP First Saturday Work Parties

We invite you to join us on any first Saturday from 9 a.m. to noon at the north end of 15th Street in Los Osos to enjoy satisfying physical activity in fresh air amid lovely surroundings. Please dress for wind, fog, or sun. Layers work well. Long pants and long shirt sleeves are good. Sturdy shoes are a must. Take care not to park in front of driveways or mailboxes. To request more information, call (805)528-0392.



*(above) Weed Warrior Pat Brown got to sit down on the job while pulling small veldt grass seedlings near the edge of the Forest.
(below) Some of the December Weed Warriors relaxed after a morning's work and enjoyed Ron Rasmussen's famous home-made cookies.
Shown (L-R) are Rich Johnson, Prisila Johnson, Ron Rasmussen, Bob Meyer and Pat Brown.
Photos by Yolanda Waddell.*



*SWAP always sets up the information booth during the Baywood Oktoberfest at the end of October. Shown here are SWAP Chair Ron Rasmussen (left) and Debbie Levi and June Wright in the booth.
Photo by Yolanda Waddell.*

Coming Up in the Forest

Text and Photos By Jean Wheeler

We've had a few good early rains and lovely results among our early blooming flowers, but we could certainly use more rain well into the spring to continue a good flowering season. The normal blooming time for Morro manzanitas is February and March. Even though some began blooming as early as late November this winter, they should still have some lovely pink and white blossoms at least well into February along the more moist parts of the lower boardwalk. Fuchsia-flowered gooseberries normally bloom from about January into May. They also started early this winter, but their bright red blooms should brighten the greenery around the boardwalk and provide nectar for our flying flowers—Anna's Hummingbirds—well past the end of March.

Also red are the drooping globes of California peonies (pictured). They are less than two inches in diameter on short herbaceous plants that lurk under the protection of taller shrubs and are



best seen on the sand trail leading from 11th Street to the boardwalk or near Siena's View. Buck brush or California lilac shrubs are very abundant all along the boardwalk and will continue to be beautifully covered with lavender and white blossoms.

These months feature wonderful birding opportunities in the Elfin Forest. Basically all of our winter water birds are still here by the thousands at least through February. This includes all Ducks and Geese, all Wading Birds, and all Grebes listed in our Pocket Guide (sold on page 11). American Avocets, and most Sandpipers are also here through March.

Among the shrubs and trees, our year-round birds are here of course. These include California Quail, both species of Towhees, the California Thrasher, Bushtits, Blue-gray Gnatcatchers, and several species of sparrows to name just a few. Winter visitors such as Ruby-crowned Kinglets, American Robins, and several migrating species of sparrows are nearing the end of their winter stays and will soon head north or up into high mountains. They'll be joined by migrants passing through from wintering sites in Middle and South America, which may include Rufous and Allen's Hummingbirds. Some of our summer birds, such as House Wrens and all of our species of swallows, will be returning from their holidays in the tropics to get to work again building nests for this year's family.

What a great time of year to visit the Elfin Forest, whether for a few short strolls or for many hours of fascinating study!

More photos from "Green Fence Gone" *pages 1 & 2*



(above) In December, members of CCC Crew Number 2 finished 2 weeks of work on Elfin Forest fencing and then were sent to Big Sur to remove trees and branches broken in a heavy windstorm. Crewmembers in this photo are: Back Row – Crew Supervisor Kiva Vigil, Keane Morrissey, DeWayne Lewis, Taryn Dixon, Cody Lydy, Charles Miller, Cornelio Medel, Taurean Coles, Robert Thomas; Front Row – Del Boyd, Eliza Keski, Juan Sanchez, Joe Cenicerros.

Photo by Yolanda Waddell



CCC Crew Number 4 completed the Elfin Forest fencing job early in January. Shown in this photo are: Back Row – Josh House, Kyle Mabrey, Stacey Bauer, Denise Zuniga, Juan Ruiz, Ryan Sylva, Vincel Perkins, Irina Fanchon, Brian Feeney, Rachel Dillard; Front Row – Oscar Castillo, Crew Supervisor Kiva Vigil, Sean Colwell, Kyle Martin, Adam Harper.

Photo by Yolanda Waddell.

The CCC motto is "Hard work, low pay, miserable conditions... and more!"

WALKS in the ELFIN FOREST

Third Saturday Walks

February 18, 9:30 a.m. – Fungus Foray

For our annual Fungus Foray in the Elfin Forest, intrepid leader and fungophile Dennis Sheridan will take us on an exploration of the Elfin Forest floor for wood bluetts, black elfin saddles, earth-stars, golden caps, boletes, poisonous amanitas and many other fascinating fungi. Bring a magnifying lens and, if you have a mystery mushroom in your yard, bring a sample for Dennis to identify. This is not a mushroom collecting walk, as all plants in the Elfin Forest are protected by law. Only a very heavy rain will cancel the walk, and if it hasn't rained, Dennis will give us an equally fascinating walk about the lichens that grow abundantly in the Forest.

March 17, 9:30 a.m. – Animal Tracks Walk

Join Evan Albright, an animal track expert, in learning who is "tracking up" the Elfin Forest. Evan will demonstrate how to tell the front feet from the back feet of a raccoon, and what the difference is between coyote tracks and dog tracks. Visitors will learn to look for other signs that a wild resident of the Elfin Forest has passed that way, such as hairs on a fence or "scoot" marks where the animal squeezed through a fence hole. This walk will open up a complex world of the Elfin Forest's inhabitants, one that we would never suspect while walking along the boardwalk.

April 21, 9:30 a.m. – Butterflies and Native Plants

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

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.

We'd Like Mail!

We encourage our readers to submit photos, letters to the editor, or interesting and timely information by e-mailing to oakleaves@elfin-forest.org. We look forward to hearing from you. *The Editors.*



In November, Robert Hill (at right), Executive Director of the Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County, gave a walk and talk on stewarding the land. Photo by Jean Wheeler.



During his December 3rd Saturday walk, soil scientist Jim Brownell, (left) with help from Al Normadin, demonstrated a "perched" layer of water in soil by pouring water into coarse sand at the top of a jar. The water saturated the top layer of soil above a barrier layer of fine quartz sand, leaving another coarse layer below essentially dry unless the layer of fine sand is punctured.

Photo by Yolanda Waddell.

*The tulip and the butterfly
Appear in gayer coats than I:
Let me be dressed fine as I will.
Flies, worms, and flowers exceed me still.
~Isaac Watts*

Thank You to Our New and Renewing Members

Compiled by Betsy Kinter, SWAP Database Coordinator

NEW MEMBERS:

Dale Wold and Kathryn Bay*

RENEWING MEMBERS:

Pat Akey	Jerry and Judith Kirkhart*
Jerry Ambrose*	Chris and Kyra Kitts
Bob and Linda Bailey	Howard and Donna Krueger*
Lois M. Barber	Christine A. Lancellotti*
Karen Beatty*	Susan McTaggart
Alese Bell	Duke McPherson
Andrea Bersie*	Bob and Sharon Meyer*
Christine and David Braun*	Howard and Marlo Miller*
Lois Brown	Jim and Barbara Murray*
Patricia Brown*	Melvin and Mary Norby
Katy Budge*	Dorothy J. Norwood
Steve and Sue Burns*	Alan and Elaine Olson
Lisa Coffman*	Carrie Pardo
Paul Crafts*	Nicholas and Dorothy Pier*
Alice L. Cushing*	Joan V. Powell*
Robert and Gail Davis	Mary Pruitt
Kathleen M. Delzell*	Darlene M. Reynolds
Stuart and Stephani Denker*	Nancy E. Ruhl*
Tim and Kathy Dugan*	Bob and Barbara Schwenoha*
Francesca Fairbrother	Peter and Chalys Stephens
Bruce Gibson*	David and Helianthe Stevig*
Martha and Leon Goldin*	George and Gwynn Taylor*
Mary Harrison*	Michael Walgren
Joan Heaney*	Michael Ward
Catherine Hopson*	Karen West
Kirsten Holmquist*	Keith and Beth Wimer
Clement H. Jeffrey*	June Wright
Heidi Kausch*	

DONATIONS:

Mary Pruitt

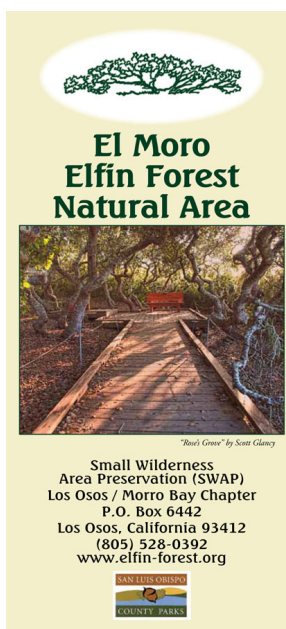
**Thanks to those listed above who donated more than the \$25 (regular) or \$15 (senior or student) membership dues. The additional donations will be used for special projects in the Elfin Forest.*



Members of a VENT (Victor Emanuel Nature Tours) group led by Kent Zimmer of Atascadero (third from right) visited the Elfin Forest as part of their 5-day tour. They came from Colorado, Florida, Wisconsin and San Francisco. Photo by Yolanda Waddell.

SWAP Brochure Gets Makeover

To help visitors and new residents be aware of the importance of the Elfin Forest to our local environment, the SWAP Board decided to produce an all-new color brochure. It features color photos of scenes of the Elfin Forest by local photographers and descriptions of activities available to visitors, with a beautiful layout by Katy Budge and superb printing by Tom Hay of Hay Printing in Morro Bay. The new brochure is available at the Los Osos and Morro Bay Chambers of Commerce and other locations. SWAP thanks the generous sponsors of our printing costs: Steve Dinelli, Broadview Mortgage; Leslie L. Lee of Morro Bay Realty; Jim Marshall Insurance Agency, Inc.; and Andy Wallace, National Property Inspections.



Make the Switch to Online Oakleaves

Check out www.elfin-forest.org and click on the button that will take you to the current online issue of Oakleaves, with the pictures shown in full color. If you are comfortable with reading text on your computer screen, we ask you to seriously consider giving up your paper newsletter for the online version.

Just send an email to oakleaves@elfin-forest.org with the words "Online version only," in the subject line. Add your name and address in the message space, and feel good because you've just cut our cost and saved a piece of a tree. Thank you!



2012 Calendar Now On Sale: 1/3 Off!

We have a small number of our beautiful 2012 calendars remaining, and we're selling them off first come, first served, at \$10 each instead of the original price of \$15 each. Thirteen pages of gorgeous pictures by top local photographers, 12 sidebars with fascinating information about SWAP and the Elfin Forest, many smaller pictures, a map showing the boardwalk with the seven entrances off Santa Ysabel Street—in all 28 pages of beauty and wonderful information at 36 pennies a page!



SWAP Shoppers' Order Form

See Photos of All Items at 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

___ @ \$25.00 = \$____

5. ALPHABET BIRD BOOK

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

___ @ \$21.65 (including tax) = \$____

6. Stunning 2012 ELFIN FOREST CALENDAR

Local photographers featured in this 9"x12" calendar.

___ @ \$10 = \$____

Shipping costs within zip 934 __:

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

Pocket Guides & Note Cards \$1.50 = ____

Mural Prints on Foamcore \$5.00 = ____

Shirts each: \$4.00 = ____

Calendars: \$2.75 for 1, \$3.75 for 2 = ____

For more calendars or shipping costs outside 934 __, call (805) 528-0392

TOTAL OF ORDER

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2012 Elfin Forest Calendar on sale for \$10. See page 11 to order.

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Help Boost SWAP Membership

When we apply for grants to finance our work in the Elfin Forest, agencies want to know how many members SWAP has. The more members we have, the greater is our ability to obtain grants for continuing restoration of the Elfin Forest. One thing you can do to help us keep our numbers up is to check the currency of your own membership. Check the renewal date located next to your name on the address label of this issue. Then urge friends to join SWAP by sharing this newsletter with them and taking them on a walk in our Elfin Forest.



You can use the membership form at the right for your renewal or for new memberships for your friends. Checking the box for "online version only" reduces our printing and mailing costs and you can see newsletter photos in full color. Our basic membership fee covers our operating costs and brings members this bimonthly newsletter, the Oakleaves. Donations above that level provide funds to help us with projects to control weeds, prevent erosion, and restore habitat. Thanks for your help!

MEMBERSHIP FORM

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| <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*.

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

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.