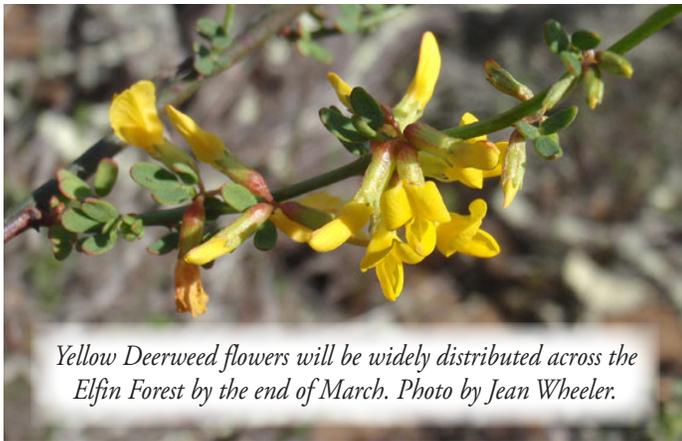




OAK LEAVES

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 2015



Yellow Deerweed flowers will be widely distributed across the Elfin Forest by the end of March. Photo by Jean Wheeler.

Rain Came to the Elfin Forest

By Ron Rasmussen, SWAP Chair

In November and December last year, the Elfin Forest received a good soaking to begin what we hope will be a good rainy season. The rain has had a marked effect in the Elfin Forest.

The positive effect of the rain on the plant community is obvious by just looking at the color of the vegetation. **IT IS GREEN.** Before the rain, most plants were effectively dormant, and the overall color was sort of greenish brown. Almost all plants have begun to grow new leaves and, if it's their turn, to begin to blossom. Last year the *Ceanothus* (Buck Brush or Wild Lilac) bushes had few blossoms, and produced few seeds. This year they

Rain continued on page 2

George Gibson Painting Has a New Owner

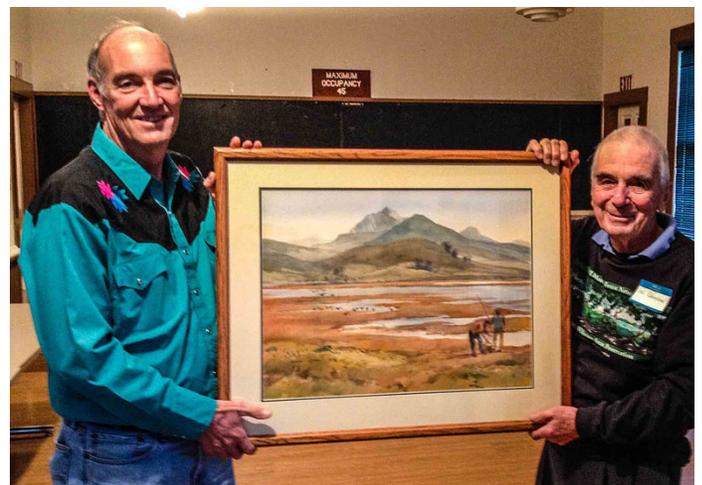
By Yolanda Waddell;

photos by Bob Meyer and Lucille Norwood

George Gibson led a dual career as a motion picture set designer and watercolor artist. In 1994, after he retired to Los Osos, he donated a lovely watercolor of the Morro Bay Estuary and the mountains beyond to SWAP for a fundraiser. At that time, SWAP was in the final year of raising money to buy the southern 38.7 acres of the Elfin Forest. Money raised from raffling the painting took us up another notch toward our goal. Twenty years later, the winner of the painting, Bob McDougle, donated the painting back to SWAP when he moved to smaller quarters. The funds raised from the second raffle will help SWAP with projects to maintain the Elfin Forest.

On December 14 last year, SWAP held a raffle ticket drawing party at the Old Schoolhouse in Los Osos Community Park. Guitarist Jeff Peters provided background music and the raffle ticket buyers who attended enjoyed good food and hot apple cider. Longtime SWAP member and nature walk leader Al Normandin

Painting Has New Owner continued on page 3



Raffle winner Kevin Norwood received the Gibson Painting from SWAP Chair, Ron Rasmussen.

Photo by Lucille Norwood.

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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, Corresponding Secretary

Carrie Arnold, Recording Secretary

Pat Akey, Member at Large

Vicky Johnsen, Member at Large

Pat Murray, Member at Large

The SWAP Board of Directors meets monthly at 7 p.m. at the Community Room, Morro Shores Mobile Home Park, 633 Ramona Ave., Los Osos.

The next meetings are

***Thursday, February 12,
and Thursday, March 12.***

All Board meetings are open to the public.

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



CONTACT SWAP

If you have questions about SWAP activities or want to volunteer, please call (805) 528-0392 and leave a message.

A recorded message will give information about our 3rd Saturday Walks, Work Saturdays, and other events.

If you have questions, concerns or comments about any problems in the Elfin Forest, call or write: 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.

Rain *continued from page 1*

are loaded with flower buds and will put on a great show for visitors. At this writing (December 22nd) the Fuchsia-flowered Gooseberry and California Peony are already in bloom. Black Sage and Deerweed are not far behind. It's going to be a great year for the plants of the Elfin Forest.

On the other hand, the non-native invaders have come back to life as well. Some seeds of Iceplant have sprouted and the dormant roots of Veldt Grass have begun to grow again. The volunteer Weed Warriors have been called to duty to attack these new sprouts before they go to seed.

A possible negative effect has been the erosion caused by periods of heavy rain. The Forest sits atop a big sand dune, and sand is rather easily moved by flowing water. Visitors can see the results of this action along the sand trails that lead from the street end entrances to the boardwalk. An especially sensitive area is the steep grade at the eastern end of the Forest that slopes down to South Bay Boulevard. In past wet years, gullies have formed that threatened to wash away the vegetation on that incline and even destroy the Orchid Trail that runs along the top of the slope. Over recent years the growth of new native vegetation has reduced the risk of severe erosion, and maintenance of the Orchid Trail has provided more effective drainage for any rain.

What can we expect in the future? Most reports around California and the Central Coast show rain amounts above average for the winter months. This is good news and, if it comes to pass, there may be some water reserves for the next year or two. If there is no significant rain this winter and the drought continues, the Elfin Forest will again go dormant as we have seen over the past few years. But remember, the plant community we see in the Elfin Forest has developed over thousands of years, and will respond to future rains or drought as it has before.



Black Sage shrubs will soon be producing pompoms of white or lavender blossoms along their stems.

Photo by Jean Wheeler.



Ceanothus has responded to the rain, and we can expect scenes like this in February and March.

Photo by Jean Wheeler.



Oak Galls

Text and Photos by Victoria Johnsen

Have you ever wondered about those knobby, bulbous lumps seen on the branches of our Coast Live Oaks? Or, perhaps one of the bright red “oak apples” caught your eye (see photo) and you were puzzled as to how an oak could bear red fruit?

You might be surprised to learn that these tumor-like growths are a tiny wasp’s way of providing both room and board for its offspring. The strange bloated stem sections and round bumps riddled with holes that give the oak limbs their gnarly appearance, as well as those occasional red spheres are all the result of a small Cynipid Wasp depositing her eggs on the stem and leaf buds of the oak trees. Once inside the oak’s tissue, the eggs secrete various chemicals causing the tree to form a “chamber” around them. Inside this chamber, the growing larvae tap into the tree’s vascular system for nutrition. Outside, a hard layer forms that becomes the outer “shell” of the gall protecting the larvae until they pupate.

As if this wasn’t marvelous enough, these oak gall wasps (*Callirhytis quercuspomiformis*) have an unusual “alternating-generation” life cycle. The bulging stem galls are created by the female wasp’s egg she formed asexually (with no help from a male!). Sexual reproduction consists of the female wasp depositing her egg on a leaf bud. The stem galls release both male and female wasps whereas the leaf galls only release females.

“Life isn’t all fun and galls for the Cynipid Wasps”, as an article states in the “Left Coast Naturalist” blog. Some parasitoid wasps invade and lay their eggs in existing galls where their larvae dine upon the original occupants. Many bird species probe newly-formed galls searching for food. Nevertheless, judging by the number of galls visible on the oaks in the Elfin Forest, Oak Gall Wasps seem to be doing quite well!

Painting Has New Owner *continued from page 1*

was asked to draw the winning raffle ticket. The winners were Kevin and Lucy Norwood of Los Osos.

Kevin Norwood had purchased a raffle ticket at SWAP’s Annual Celebration last September. All he could say when we phoned him was, “Wow!” He later stated that he bought the ticket as a donation to SWAP, since he “never wins anything.” His wife Lucy told us that they have hung the painting in their home and are enjoying it. There was a second prize, an Elfin Forest mural print, won by Barbara Machado of Morro Bay; and a third prize mural mug was won by Bobbye Thompson of Los Osos.

SWAP is grateful to Volumes of Pleasure bookstore owner Carroll Leslie and her staff for displaying the painting in the store and for selling raffle tickets for us. We thank SWAP Board member Pat Murray for assistance in organizing the raffle and party, and Rosemary Baxter, Vicky Johnsen, SWAP Chair Ron Rasmussen, and Jay Waddell for setting up and decorating for the raffle party. Bob Meyer very kindly took photos at the party. Finally, we are deeply grateful to the SWAP members and other friends of the Elfin Forest for making donations to SWAP and supporting the Elfin Forest by purchasing raffle tickets.



Attendees of the Raffle Ticket Drawing Party on December 14, 2014, enjoyed good food and hot apple cider with background music by guitarist Jeff Peters. Photo by Bob Meyer.

Say's Phoebe

Text and Photo by Jean D. Wheeler, Ph. D.

Of the two phoebes listed in our *Plants and Animals of the Elfin Forest Natural Area* (sold on page 11), Say's Phoebe (*Sayornis saya*) is migratory. It may arrive in the Elfin Forest as early as September to join our year-round resident Black Phoebe (*Sayornis nigricans*) for the winter, usually leaving for the summer in March. Both are flycatchers and known for dipping their tails habitually while perched on the top branches of shrubs, like this one photographed here in mid February last year.

Say's Phoebe is small to medium in size for flycatchers, about 7-½ inches long with a 13-inch wingspan. It has a slender body and a smaller head than most flycatchers with a short, thin and pointed bill. Rather drab in color, it is mostly gray with a somewhat brownish tinge, darker on the head and wings. The pale gray breast darkens to a buffy orange wash on the belly.

These flycatchers live almost exclusively on insects such as bees, wasps, grasshoppers, moths, and dragonflies, but may occasionally eat a few berries. They perch on high twigs, looking to dart out to snatch any flying insects. They may also scavenge for insects, beetles, and spiders on shrubs or on the ground.

Preferring open country with brushlands, their range extends into the edges of deserts and well north of tree line on the arctic tundra. In fact, Cornell Lab reports that this species may be following the Alaska pipeline even farther north than their previous northern limit in North America.

This species breeds in western United States and Canada farther north than any other flycatchers and as far south as the western mountains of Mexico. In southern Arizona, New Mexico, and Mexico they can be year-round residents. During migration, Say's Phoebes wander widely with fairly frequent sightings in most eastern states although they breed only well west of the Mississippi River.

Unlike other phoebes, Say's are not attracted to water bodies for nesting and do not use mud in constructing their nests. The male sings in breeding season to attract a mate, a song heard only in breeding areas, not in wintering areas like ours. The nest is an open cup on a rocky ledge on cliffs, in caves, in abandoned mines, or on buildings or bridges. It is lined with grasses, weeds, hair, paper, or feathers secured with spider webs. The female usually lays about 4 or 5 eggs and does all the incubating for about two weeks, but both parents feed the young, who leave the nest in about another two weeks. They have one or two broods a year, and non-migrating southern residents may have three.

This is a species we may fortunately have little concern about in conservation. Their breeding range is very wide. They prefer open terrain in dry and tundra habitats not over-populated by humans. In addition, they adapt well to human presence, even nesting on buildings and bridges. So we may fairly safely expect those breeding north of us and in deserts to the east to join us in the Elfin Forest regularly in winters to come.



*If the sight of the blue skies fills you with joy,
if a blade of grass springing up in the fields
has power to move you,
if the simple things of nature
have a message that you understand
rejoice, for your soul is alive.*

~ Eleanor Duse ~

O A K L E A V E S



is published six times per year beginning in February.

Co-editors are Yolanda Waddell and Jean Wheeler;
layout is by Katy Budge. Editing assistance by Pat Grimes.

Contributors to this issue: Dave Bowlus, Jan DiLeo, Vicky Johnsen, Betsy Kinter,
Bob Meyer, Barbara Murray, Lucille Norwood, Ron Rasmussen,
Chris Van Beveren, Yolanda Waddell, Dirk & Bonnie Walters, and Jean Wheeler.

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Revisited and updated from August/September, 2000

California Peony

By Dirk Walters, Ph.D.; Drawing by Bonnie Walters; Photo by Jean Wheeler

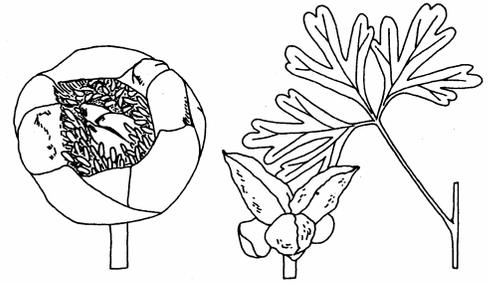
The plant featured in this article is the California Peony (*Paeonia californica*). I've seen this plant in bloom as early as mid-December and would not be surprised to find it in late November. California peonies are very difficult to photograph in flower because the blood red flowers always hang down. In fact, it is often more entertaining to watch photographers trying to capture the peony's face than it is to find the plant itself. California peony plant individuals are quite common throughout the Elfin Forest but are generally widely scattered. They do not seem to form clusters.

Thirty-one of the 33 or so species of *Paeonia* are Eurasian. Only the last two species are found in the Western United States. One is the more widespread, *P. brownii*, which can be found growing in Northern California, north and east. The last species, *P. californica*, is restricted (endemic) to coastal Southern California from Monterey to San Diego counties. In plant books published before 1950, the California Peony was not recognized as a separate species; all the California peony plants, north and south, were called *P. brownii*. Today, all elfin Forest peonies are recognized as being *P. californica*. The large flowered garden peonies are all of hybrid origin, mostly from Asian species. The primary parent of the common garden perennials is *P. lactiflora*.

Linnaeus, who is the father of botany, named the genus *Paeonia* after Paeon, physician to the Greek Gods. The genus was named after him because Paeon prescribed it (*Paeonia officinalis*, the common peony of Southern Europe) for several ailments.

Mary Elizabeth Parsons, in her 3rd edition (1907) of *The Wild Flowers of California*, mentioned that the early Spanish Californians used the thick root as a remedy for dyspepsia (indigestion). My guess is they were simply using similar California species for the same purpose as the one they used in Spain. She also stated that the Southern California Indian tribes made it into a powder used in decoctions for colds and sore throat. On the other hand, Ms. Parson also records that the Northern California Indian tribes considered it poisonous to the touch.

If you look up the genus of peony in one of the older flower books, you will find it placed in the Buttercup Family, Ranunculaceae. In the newest Jepson manual, peonies have been moved to their own family, the Paeoniaceae. Peonies and buttercups do share many superficial characteristics. They can even be hybridized if you remove the embryo from the endosperm and culture it separately. Then why are they placed in separate families? The most obvious characteristic is the fleshy ring that subtends the stamens and later the developing fruits. This ring is unique to the peonies. Peonies also have very large back seeds that often have a fleshy growth (aril) attached to them. Also important is the way the many stamens initiate. In buttercups and most other plants, stamens begin growth from near the petals and mature inward toward the pistils. But in peonies they initiate first nearest the pistils and then mature outward toward the petals. You say, picky, picky. I agree, but sometimes it takes less than this to indicate botanical relationships.



Nick Franco is New County Parks Director

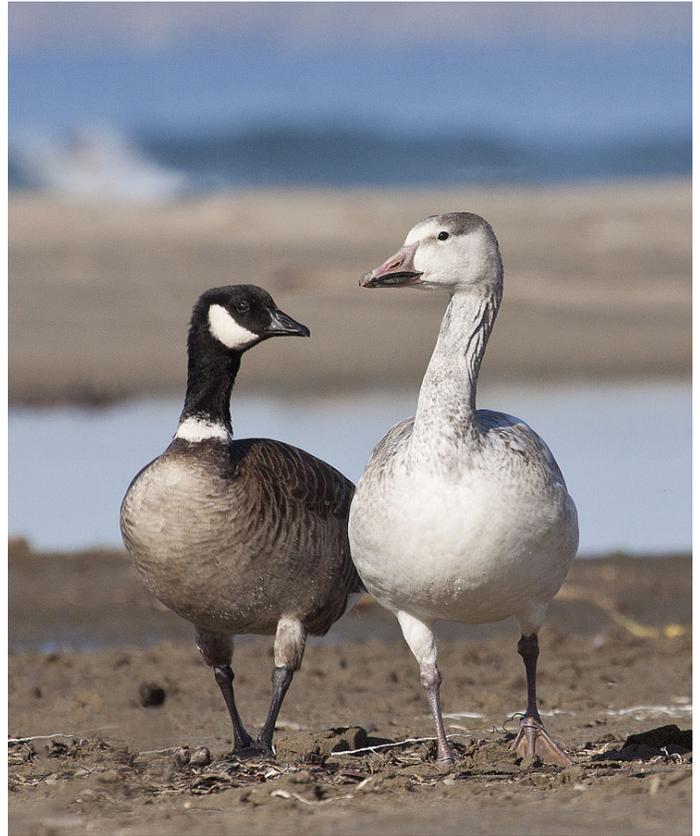
By Yolanda Waddell

On January 6, the County Board of Supervisors announced the hiring of longtime State Parks San Luis Obispo Coast District Superintendent Nick Franco as the new Director of County Parks and Recreation. Franco's first day on the job is February 2, 2015. He will replace Interim County Parks Director Curtis Black, who extended his retirement in order to assist with the search for a new Parks Director, and to draft the 2015 County Parks budget.

San Luis Obispo County Parks has 55 employees and an annual budget of \$10.5 million. Nick Franco will be leading a stand-alone department, created last summer by County Administrative Officer Dan Buckshi who separated County Parks and the San Luis Obispo Airport from the County General Services Agency. SWAP welcomes Nick Franco and thanks Curtis Black for his excellent service to County Parks and support of SWAP and the El Moro Elfin Forest Natural Area.



At least one California Thrasher (photo by Jean Wheeler) was among birds seen in shrubs around the boardwalk..



A Snow Goose (right) goes for a stroll on the mudflats with a Cackling Goose. Photo by Marlin Harms.

Elfin Forest Sightings

In November, docents Vicky Johnsen and Chris Van Beveren led a bird identification walk in the Elfin Forest. Chris sent the following report:

We had a Snow Goose visible from Bush Lupine Point in the Elfin Forest on Sunday afternoon, November 9th. I was co-leading a bird walk with Vicky Johnsen for eight enthusiastic participants with beginning bird skills. One of them called, "What is that big white duck?" It was a nice teaching moment when we identified the Snow Goose.

The Snow Goose was feeding with several dozen ducks - Northern Pintails, American Wigeons, Northern Shovelers, Mal-

lards, and I saw one Gadwall. There was a small flock of American Avocets nearby, which wowed the group.

We also had the usual suspects for this area: White-crowned Sparrows, Golden-crowned Sparrows, House Finches, California Quail, Turkey Vultures, Western Scrub-Jays, at least one California Thrasher, and a low altitude flyover of a Red-tailed Hawk, clearly showing his black leading edges. Vicky found a Northern Harrier buzzing the hillside between the ducks and us.

Weed Management and the California Invasive Plant Council

By Yolanda Waddell

Across California, invasive plants damage wildlands, displace native plants and wildlife, increase wildfire and flood danger. They consume valuable water, degrade recreational opportunities, and destroy productive range and timber lands. There is an organization that is dedicated to controlling invasive plants: the California Invasive Plant Council. Formed in 1992, Cal-IPC works with state and county agencies, industry and other nonprofit organizations such as SWAP.

Last March, at the request of Cal-IPC Director Doug Johnson, Ron Rasmussen wrote a letter on behalf of SWAP in support of Assembly Bill, AB 2402. The bill provided \$2.5 million for the state's network of Weed Management Areas (WMAs). Weed Management Areas are local stakeholder groups working on weed projects; generally they are organized through county Agricultural Commissioners' offices. Each WMA identifies the most serious weed infestations in the Management Area and sets about eradicating those infestations. Funding for the projects comes through the California Department of Food and Agriculture (CDFA).

In August, we received a message from Doug Johnson that a revised version of AB 2401 was passed by the State legislature and signed into law by Governor Brown. Unfortunately the section that would have appropriated \$2.5 million for support of statewide Weed Management Areas was deleted, "given this year's budget reality." However, the bill does allow some funds for biocontrol work, strategic mapping and prioritization. Johnson was satisfied that the bill did keep the issue of invasive plants in front of legislators and the Governor, and stated that he will continue to push for WMA funding.

Weed Warrior Report

By Yolanda Waddell

November 1 – Brushing Trails

A small group of five Weed Warriors braved a rainy morning to work on blocking unwanted trails with brush. Thanks to the presence of our snail monitor, Barrett Holland of SWCA Environmental Consultants, we were able to gather dead branches and pile them at the beginnings and ends of some “ad hoc” trails that branched off of the Orchid Trail, above South Bay Boulevard. At the end of the work morning, a group of very wet Weed Warriors, including Dave Bowlus, Barrett Holland, Vicky Johnsen, Ron Rasmussen and Yolanda Waddell, munched on Ron’s great cookies and took a “selfie” photo that was set up by Dave Bowlus.

December 6 – Panic at the end of 10th Street

In the Elfin Forest there are two kinds of veldt grass: *Ehrharta calycina*, a tallish grass with red tops, found mainly in the eastern part of the Forest; and *Ehrharta erecta* or Panic veldt grass, that is now infesting the area near the end of 10th Street. December’s crew of Weed Warriors tackled the Panic veldt grass along the 10th Street right-of-way with gusto, gathering about six bags full in three hours. Participating in the Panic pull were Jay Bonestell, Dave Bowlus, Pat Brown, Lannie Erickson, Jack Fanselow, SWCA snail monitor Barrett Holland, Rich and Prisila Johnson, Barbara Murray, Yolanda Waddell and SWAP Conservation Chair Ron Rasmussen. At the east end of the Forest Pete Sarafian with helpers Vicky Johnsen and Charlie Sitton did erosion control along the Orchid Trail and South Bay Boulevard.

Let’s all pull together

By Yolanda Waddell

The rain has come, flowing around each seed.
Up pops veldt grass, that dastardly weed.
What ho! Here come SWAP’s Weed Warriors
Bearing shovels to do battle with those terrors.

Three hours they’ll work, from nine to noon.
Those weeds will think they’ve been hit by a typhoon.
Back go the Weed Warriors with their bags full of booty.
They’ll be feted with cookies for doing their duty.

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.



A group of wet but cheerful Weed Warriors returned from their morning’s work on a rainy Saturday morning in November. Shown (L-R) are Ron Rasmussen, SWAP Conservation Chair, Yolanda Waddell, Vicky Johnsen, Barrett Holland and Dave Bowlus. Photo by Dave Bowlus.



This Weed Warrior crew pulled many bags of Panic veldt grass in December. Shown (L-R) are Pat Brown, Lannie Erickson, Jay Bonestell, Jack Fanselow, Barrett Holland, Yolanda Waddell and SWAP Conservation Chair Ron Rasmussen. Photo by Barbara Murray.

Coming Up in the Elfin Forest

Story and Photos By Jean Wheeler



Northern Shovelers



Suffrutescent Wallflower

It is such a relief to see our elfin-sized oak trees and our chaparral and coastal shrubs recovering rapidly and even beginning to bloom almost on schedule after the drought years. The 5 inches of rain we received before Christmas exceeds the 3 inches total we got all of last winter, and the plants are responding quickly to their much improved environment. The oaks are covered with the tassels of their male flowers; the female flowers are too small to see but will be replaced by the acorns into which they develop.

Ceanothus shrubs (aka California Lilac) are showing many lavender and white blossoms, and a lot of the shrubs are covered with swelling buds assuring us of our usual wall of blossoms all around the boardwalk through mid to late winter of 2015.

Morro manzanitas were especially hard hit by the drought; but many that had only brown leaves and looked dead are now showing some branches where green leaves have replaced the brown. Although larger amounts of many of these shrubs are still brown with dead leaves, the plants are surviving. As these evergreens customarily replace only some of their leaves in any given year, we cannot expect them to be fully green again in the first year after such a major drought breaks. Yet some of these shrubs are even in bloom!

Fuchsia-flowered gooseberries are looking especially healthy with new bright green leaves and many of their tubular red flowers open, surely a relief for the Anna's Hummingbirds that depend upon them for food to fuel the early start their breeding season.

California Peonies were already sprouting leaves above ground from their buried tubers on our third Saturday walk Dec. 20. Their drooping red flower globes (subject of Dirk Walters' botanical article on page 5) should be blooming into February, and Suffrutescent Wallflowers should come into bloom copiously by March.

Brant geese have returned to the estuary, but in smaller numbers than usual. We hear that with global warming, many are remaining in southern Alaskan waters rather than coming farther south as they used to. Canada geese have been here for a couple of months and a snow goose has been seen among the ducks wintering on the estuary (see Elfin Forest Sightings, page 6).

As usual, large numbers of both dabbling and diving ducks in many species have settled in for the winter. These include (but are certainly not limited to!) American Wigeons, Teal (Green-winged, Blue-winged, and Cinnamon), Northern Shovelers, Northern Pintails, Buffleheads, and Ruddy ducks. Groups of American White Pelicans can usually be seen well out on the bay, and at high tide some may swim close to the foot of the sandy cliffs below the two viewpoints. One or two ospreys can often be seen perching on a branch sticking out of the water or flying over the estuary in search of prey.

The shrubs around the boardwalk are hosting resident and wintering finches, sparrows, warblers, wrens, phoebes (my article on Say's Phoebe is on page 4), chickadees, titmice, nuthatches, and many other little brown and little grey birds. Among the larger birds of the brush are thrashers, towhees, scrub jays, quail, blackbirds, and doves.

Take a balmy mid-winter walk in the Elfin Forest and enjoy this year's winter blooming pageant of wildflowers, thankful that the returning rains are rewarding our vegetation for its drought-tolerant tenacity.

Thinking of Switching to Online Oakleaves?

Tired of looking at that pile of newsletters and magazines waiting to be read? If you use your computer a lot, we encourage you to take a look at the online *Oakleaves* at www.elfin-forest.org. Being able to see the 20 or so photos in full color makes it a very attractive alternative to the black-and-white printed copy. If you miss an issue for some reason, it is there, waiting for you. Simply click on "Forest Library," then "Oakleaves Index" and finally the year and month of the issue that you want to read. Just e-mail us at oakleaves@elfin-forest.org with the subject: Switch me to online.

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? Taken a good photo? 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.

WALKS in the ELFIN FOREST

Third Saturday Walks

February 21, 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 fascinating mushrooms such as wood bluetts, black elfin saddles, earthstars, golden caps, boletes, and poisonous amanitas. 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. All plants in the Elfin Forest are protected by law. Only a very heavy rain will cancel the walk. If it hasn't rained, Dennis will give us an equally enjoyable walk about the lichens that grow abundantly in the Forest.

March 21, 9:30 a.m. – Animal Tracks Walk

Join Evan Albright, an animal track expert, in learning who is "tracking up" the Elfin Forest. Visitors will learn how to tell the front feet from the back feet of a raccoon, and how coyote and dog tracks differ. Evan will also demonstrate how to find other signs that a wild resident of the Elfin Forest has passed that way. Attend this walk and develop an awareness of the comings and goings of the Forest's animal, bird and reptile inhabitants – something we wouldn't readily see while walking along the boardwalk.

Walks in the Elfin Forest begin at times stated above at the north end (1100 block) of 15th Street off Santa Ysabel in Los Osos. Wear comfortable 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 call (805) 528-0392.



November's Third Saturday walk featured Cal Poly Future Teachers led by Anne Marie Bergen to "see" living things and their environment via human senses and various lenses. Photo by Vicky Johnsen.



Professor Jean Wheeler has the "whole world in her hands" as she explains seasons and earth sun relations on the day before the December Solstice. Photo by Vicky Johnsen.

Rose's Grove and Ron Rasmussen Featured in Travel Video



SWAP Chair Ron Rasmussen and Host Joanna Wemple being photographed in Rose's Grove by Camera Operator Robert Solari and Director Kerrigan Mahan for a Travel Video about California Highway 1.

Story & Photo By Yolanda Waddell

In November, SWAP Chair Ron Rasmussen was contacted by Diane Strachan of San Luis Obispo's Stewardship Program. Diane asked if Ron would agree to be interviewed in the Elfin Forest for an episode of the "California Highway 1 Discovery Route Travel Show." Ron agreed and on the appointed day he met a film crew consisting of director Kerrigan Mahan, assisted by his wife, Melanie; camera operator Robert Solari; host and producer Joanna Wemple; and hair and makeup specialist Anna Lent.

Ron and the filming crew decided that Rose's Grove would provide a good setting. After a few practice shoots, Joanna interviewed Ron about SWAP and the Elfin Forest. The crew was very professional, and the interview went well. Ron was told that the finished video will be released sometime in February. We will publish information on how to view the video in the April/May *Oakleaves*.

Thank You to Our Generous Members

Compiled by Betsy Kinter, SWAP Database Coordinator

RENEWING MEMBERS:

Randy Ball	Rich & Prisila Johnson*
Lois Barber	William Johnson
David & Rosemary Bentley	Gaby & Ken Levine*
Andrea Bersie*	Sabra Scott Lodge*
Leslie Bowker*	Hector Montenegro
Wendy Brown*	Bill & Beverley Moylan*
R.S. & L.H. Cowan*	Jerry Mullins*
Marguerite Crown*	Jack & Frieda Murphy*
Marion Irving de Cruz*	Paul O'Connor
Alice Cushing*	Mary Pruitt*
Diane Dalenberg*	Ron Rasmussen*
Dr. Ellen Davies*	Rebecca Rasmussen*
Jan DiLeo	Tim & Melissa Rochte*
Ileen Doering	Nancy Ruhl*
Molly & Ted Fainstat*	Dean Thompson
Woody & Adele Frey*	Bert & Elaine Townsend*
Mary Harrison*	Bernitta Wheelock
Pauline High*	June Wright*

DONATIONS:

Andrea Davis in memory of her son, Evan Goodwin

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

If you recently sent a donation to SWAP and don't see your name in this issue's New and Renewing list, be assured that your gift will be acknowledged in the next bimonthly issue. Gifts are processed by two different volunteers before reaching our editors, and newsletter copy deadline is one month before the date of the issue.



Ron Rasmussen was in charge of SWAP's information table during the Morro Bay Bird Festival in January.
Photo by Yolanda Waddell.

Editor's Note: Following is the Annual Treasurer's Report for fiscal year 2013-2014, prepared by SWAP Treasurer Jan DiLeo.

SWAP TREASURER'S REPORT FOR 07/01/2013-06/30/2014

REVENUE	
MEMBERSHIPS AND DONATIONS	\$11,482
MERCHANDISE SALES	1,600
SPONSORS AND REIMBURSEMENTS	5,994
SAVINGS INTEREST (CDs)	384
TOTAL REVENUE	\$19,460

EXPENSES	
PUBLICATIONS (OAKLEAVES)	\$6,465
OFFICE (PHONE, STORAGE, MAILING)	2,079
MEMBERSHIPS, DONATIONS, EVENTS	3,098
MERCHANDISE FOR SALE	1,064
LIABILITY INSURANCE	2,303
CONSERVATION PROJECTS	4,386
TAXES	72
SWAP, INC. SUPPORT	2,000
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$21,467
NET EXCESS (DEFICIT)	\$2,007

ACCOUNT DATA

AS OF 07/01/2013:

BANK ACCOUNT	\$8,059
CDs (Incl. estimated interest)	\$56,182
PETTY CASH	\$50
TOTAL	\$64,291

AS OF 6/30/2014:

BANK ACCOUNT	\$5,669
CDs (Incl. estimated interest)	\$56,566
PETTY CASH	\$50
TOTAL	\$62,285

NET EXCESS (DEFICIT) (\$2,007)

Note From a Member

Besides the Elfin Forest, SWAP members are our greatest treasure. Year after year we receive annual donations exceeding our requested dues along with notes of encouragement. The ongoing support of our members is a continuation of the time, energy and donations of a community that willed the Elfin Forest into existence – that believes the Forest's ever-changing natural beauty must continue.

Last summer we received a note from a long-time member that is a good example of this dedication. Aya Kimura, who now lives in Fresno, wrote, "I was among the first group to contribute towards SWAP and will continue as long as I'm around – will be 90 in August." We thank Aya for her support over more than twenty years – it means so much to us.



Do you enjoy the mural by Barbara Rosenthal painted on the wall of the Rexall Drug Store in Los Osos? Get a signed full-color print (4 1/2 by 16 1/2 inches mounted on black foam core as shown) to hang on your wall or give to a friend or family member (#4 below)!



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

2. ELFIN FOREST NOTE CARDS

Original print note cards

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

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. Lists for mammals, reptiles, amphibians, birds, arthropods including moths and butterflies, gastropods, vascular plants, lichens, and mushrooms. Some with charts for seasonality, color and more.

___ @ \$3.00 = \$ ___

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 = \$ ___

6. MURAL MUG

15- ounce beverage mug with wrap-around mural design, microwave and dishwasher safe.

___ @ \$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 = ___

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

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

TOTAL OF ORDER

\$ ___

(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.



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.elfin-forest.org

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Address Service Requested

New SLO County Parks Director! See page 5

Please check renewal date on your label.

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Website Helper Urgently Needed

Do you enjoy working with web sites?
 Are you able to manipulate HTML and
 other web-related applications?

We need a volunteer to assist our web-
 master in maintaining SWAP's web site.
 The principal activity will be to add the
 new issue of our bimonthly *Oakleaves* news-
 letter to the website. Once you have had an
 orientation, it will only require two or three
 hours of your time per month, or less.

If you're interested, please contact bob@
 elfin-forest.org. Check out our web site at
 www.elfin-forest.org.

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*.

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.