



# OAKLEAVES

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 ❖ JUNE/JULY 2015

## Volunteers Saved and Now Maintain the Elfin Forest



SWAP is fortunate to have talented and knowledgeable 3rd Saturday walk leaders like Anne Marie Bergen (standing at left), an award-winning educator and Science Teaching Specialist for the Cal Poly Liberal Studies Department.

By Ron Rasmussen, SWAP Chair, and Yolanda Waddell;  
photos by Yolanda Waddell

SWAP members are well aware that more than 20 years ago the Elfin Forest was saved by the efforts of volunteers. What is often not recognized is the role of volunteers in maintaining the Elfin Forest and conducting associated activities. For example, you are now reading an issue of SWAP's newsletter, *Oakleaves*. Bimonthly publication of this newsletter requires work by volunteers who collect, write and edit the material for printing and publication on our website. Our Database Coordinator prepares a set of mailing labels for the print

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## Dirk & Bonnie Walters' 100th Article for Oakleaves in this issue!



Text by Jean Wheeler and Yolanda Waddell;  
photo by Yolanda Waddell

In 1997 Rose Bowker, then President of SWAP, asked Dirk Walters, a Botany Professor at Cal Poly, to contribute plant articles to the *Oakleaves* similar to his articles already appearing in newsletters of the California Native Plant Society. He agreed, and his first article in our publication appeared in the December 1997/January 1998 issue on page 7. It was about the Purple or Blue Nightshade (*Solanum xanthii*).

On page 5 of this June/July issue in 2015, we are proud to present Dirk's article about the 100th plant species he has described for us, the Pomona Milk-vetch (*Astragalus pomonensis*). For each plant he has provided fascinating information about its appearance, taxonomy, and role in our local ecology. Nearly all of these articles are illustrated by beautiful drawings of the featured plant by Dirk's talented wife Bonnie Walters. Bonnie is well known for her artistry and precision in illustrations for scientific publications.

Dirk grew up in Milan (pronounced MY-lan), Illinois while Bonnie comes from Wabash, Indiana. They both went to graduate school at the University of Indiana, Bloomington. Dirk was working on his Ph.D. in Plant Taxonomy while Bonnie was going for a Master's in Zoology. Bonnie says it's lucky the ecology class they were both required to take covers both plants and animals, or she never would have met Dirk! They were married in 1967, and Dirk received his

*The Walters continued on page 4*



## 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

Skip Rotstein, 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, June 11,  
and Thursday, July 9.**

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.

## Volunteers *continued from page 1*



*Dedicated volunteers like Vicky Johnsen pick up trash and dog droppings whenever they are in the Elfin Forest, even in wet weather.*

**Estimated  
SWAP volunteer  
hours in 2014 =  
2,355.**

copies and our Webmaster posts the web version. This is only one example of SWAP volunteer activity. Other examples are conducting educational field trips for students from elementary school through college, and regularly scheduled monthly nature walks.

The Elfin Forest itself requires continuous monitoring and maintenance. For example, the Boardwalk is now almost 15 years old, and is showing its age. Loose or broken boards must be repaired or replaced. Simple repairs are done by SWAP volunteers, and, after notification by SWAP, major work is done by San Luis Obispo County Parks.

Invasive weed control is also a continuous activity. Windblown seeds from Veldt grass and other weeds enter the Elfin Forest where they sprout. Without continuous monitoring and removal, these weeds would overgrow the native plants.

Another group of volunteers is responsible for trash pickup and ensuring that a supply of Mutt Mitts is always available. Since our region is visited by tourists from outside our area, including from Europe and Asia, brochures are available at several locations, as well as trail guides that are useful when visiting the Elfin Forest. When necessary, a new supply of brochures and trail guides is prepared by volunteers who review and edit the new materials.

Keeping track of all this activity requires an "Office Staff," but SWAP has no paid office staff. All of the work described above is planned, monitored, and recorded by volunteers and reviewed by the SWAP Board of Directors, all of whom are volunteers.

The number of volunteers involved in activities related to the Elfin Forest is variable, but is between 75 and 100. The time commitment is also variable and depends on the nature of the activity. For example, 2,355 hours were reported to San Luis Obispo County Parks in 2014. This is likely an underestimate because some volunteers may not report all of their time contributions.

This year we were asked by the Morro Bay National Estuary Program to send them the total number of SWAP volunteer hours between 2011 and 2014 for a grant that they were applying for. They were able to use those hours, which were given a dollar value, as matching funds. Our total hours between October, 2011 and December, 2014 were 8,357. In this way, our volunteer time did double duty.

To learn more about how an organization of volunteers works to preserve the Elfin Forest, you are welcome to attend a SWAP Board Meeting. The meetings are held monthly on the second Thursday at 7 PM in the Community Room at Morro Shores Mobile Home Park, 633 Ramona Ave., Los Osos. (The park is across the road from Sweet Springs Nature Preserve).

# Karl and Flo Appel: Long-lived and Long-time SWAP Members

*Text and photo by Yolanda Waddell*

This spring, SWAP members Karl and Florence (Flo) Appel both turned 90 years. They've lived in many places, but for the last 35 years they have lived in Los Osos in a house that they built. From their second floor living room, they can see the Elfin Forest, and the bay and ocean beyond.

Karl and Flo met at Brentwood High School near Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. By the time Flo graduated in 1943, they knew they wanted to get married. However, in July of 1943, Karl was drafted. He volunteered to go into the Marines and was sent to boot camp, then to combat training, and finally was assigned to the Pacific War Zone.

During a leave back home in Brentwood, Karl bought an engagement ring and left it with his dad. He expected to have a final leave before being shipped overseas, but was sent to Camp Pendleton in California, the departure point, without a leave. In his stead, his father, mother and 9-year-old sister went to see Flo, and his sister gave Flo the engagement ring. Flo sent a telegram to Karl, saying, "Yes."

Karl was wounded at Iwo Jima, made it to an aid station, was put aboard a hospital ship and taken to a hospital in Guam. Returning home, Karl finished high school with a federal grant, and began working. He and Flo were married in 1946. Because war-time rationing was still in effect, Flo had to supply sugar to the bakery that baked their wedding cake.

Having experienced California's balmy weather at Camp Pendleton, Karl wanted to relocate to California. He and Flo moved to Fullerton in 1951. That year was a very difficult one for them because they lost their one-month-old son and Karl's father had a stroke. On being assured that his father would recover, Karl and Flo set off with their 9-month-old daughter, Lindsay. Their furniture went by moving van, but on arriving in Fullerton they learned that the van had caught fire, and their furniture had burned.

In Fullerton, Karl found jobs with a commercial laundry, and then for Fender Electric Guitars. Finally, he worked for Fullerton Fire Department, first as a fire fighter and then in fire prevention, investigation and education for the rest of his career. Flo worked for Western Union, then as an assistant buyer for a band instrument company. Finally she became a buyer for an engineering and architectural firm, ordering supplies for air force bases, a U.S. research station in Antarctica, and other large projects. They both retired in 1980.

The year they retired, Karl and Flo visited a friend in Los Osos. Their friend showed them around, and by the end of the visit they decided to retire to Los Osos. They bought a lot from their friend and lived in a trailer for two years while their house was being built. Flo worked in real estate for seven years, and retired again.

In 1993, The Appels became SWAP members and have continued their membership to this day. Both joined the restoration crew helping to weed, do erosion control and perform other tasks in the Elfin Forest. In 1998 Flo became co-chair of the SWAP Membership Committee, continuing as Chair when her co-chair retired. Karl and Flo were celebrated as a "Terrific Twosome" in the October/November 1998 issue of *Oakleaves*, and they are still a terrific twosome. The time, energy and skill that they have given in support of the Elfin Forest has helped to make the Elfin Forest, and our community, a better place. Thank you, Karl and Flo!



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## Thinking of Switching to Online Oakleaves?

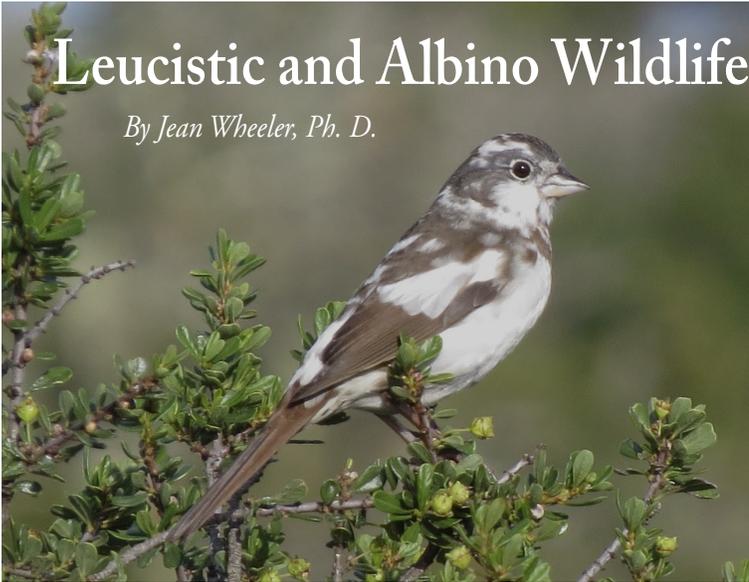
Tired of looking at that pile of newsletters and magazines waiting to be read? If you use your computer a lot, we encourage you to take a look at the online *Oakleaves* at [www.elfin-forest.org](http://www.elfin-forest.org). Being able to see the 20 or so photos in full color makes it a very attractive alternative to the black-and-white printed copy. If you miss an issue for some reason, it is there, waiting for you. Simply click on "Forest Library," then "Oakleaves Index" and finally the year and month of the issue that you want to read. Just e-mail us at [oakleaves@elfin-forest.org](mailto: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](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, (805) 528-0392.

# Leucistic and Albino Wildlife

By Jean Wheeler, Ph. D.



*Leucistic Fox Sparrow. Photo by Kaaran Perry.*



*Fox Sparrow with normal coloration. Photo by Marlin Harms.*

On March 18, Kaaren Perry joined Jim Royer for a birding trip in the Elfin Forest. Among many birds observed, Kaaren took the above photo of a leucistic fox sparrow (*Passerella iliaca*). A leucistic red-tailed hawk (*Buteo jamaicensis*) has also been photographed this spring on nearby Turri Road and may have visited the Elfin Forest as well.

My co-editor Yolanda Waddell suggested, and I concurred, that an article on this abnormal coloration would be a good natural history subject for this issue. On researching the condition, I decided to include albinism, a closely-related condition.

Leucism is a defect in pigment producing cells. Such cells normally migrate to the skin, hair, or feathers during the animal's development to produce genetically-inherited color pigments in those places. With leucistic cells, this results in a reduction, or absence, of all colors.

In extreme cases, all pigment-producing cells of the body may be affected, but far more often the defect is localized. Typically only one group, or a few groups of cells, migrate to certain areas of the body leaving the affected areas without pigment, thus looking

white. In the fox sparrow photographed by Kaaren Perry, many areas of feathers were affected, producing a few large and many small white patches. Such partial leucism is often called "pied" or "piebald" in horses and other species. Resulting patterns can vary among offspring of the same parents or between generations.

Albinism differs from leucism in that it causes reduction of only melanin, the pigment producing dark color tones of brown or black, rather than all color pigments. Some animals affected by albinism, may display unaffected pigments other than melanin and are, for example, pale yellow in color where dark brown or black is expected. Leucistic animals usually have normally-colored eyes while albinos lack eye color, appearing red-eyed, as only the color of blood shows. This is because pigment cells for eyes come from a different source than for skin, hair, or feathers, and are affected by albinism but not by leucism.

Pigment loss from leucism or albinism can weaken feathers, may hinder flight, make birds more conspicuous and subject to predation, and reduce acceptance by prospective mates.

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## The Walters *continued from page 1*

Ph.D. in 1969. They moved to California that same year, with Dirk beginning his distinguished career as a botany professor at Cal Poly in the fall quarter, 1969. Bonnie finished her Master's degree in 1974.

Dirk taught botany at Cal Poly from 1969-2004, when he retired as Professor Emeritus. He co-authored several editions of *Vascular Plant Taxonomy* with Dr. David Keil, also now a Cal Poly Professor Emeritus. Many of Bonnie's excellent drawings illustrate those texts.

On arriving in 1969 to teach at Cal Poly, Dirk joined and became an active member of the newly formed San Luis Obispo Chapter of the California Native Plant Society. He has served in leadership positions at the state as well as the chapter level. He has participated in both planning and botanical monitoring in CNPS conservation programs in various county locations, including the Hearst Ranch. Dirk has led numerous field trips for the society over the years, produced many plant lists for different areas of the

county, and was a major contributor to the society's *Wildflowers of San Luis Obispo, California*, a book featuring photos of over 290 flowering plants growing in or close to the city.

In 2012 Dirk Walters was named a Fellow of the California Native Plant Society in honor and appreciation of his outstanding contributions to the success of the Society in conserving the state's native plants.

Dirk has also led a number of informative walks for SWAP in our Elfin Forest, usually while spring wildflowers are in bloom, the most recent one in May of this year. Your editors well remember everyone's excitement one year when Dirk spotted a fern he knew was not one of those on our list of plants known to occur in the Elfin Forest, which could then be added to the list!

SWAP takes this opportunity to thank Dirk and Bonnie Walters very much for their expert assistance in our mission to inform *Oakleaves* readers and visitors to the Elfin Forest about the wonderful characteristics of our native vegetation and the need to conserve it.

100th in a series!

## Pomona Milkvetch

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

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

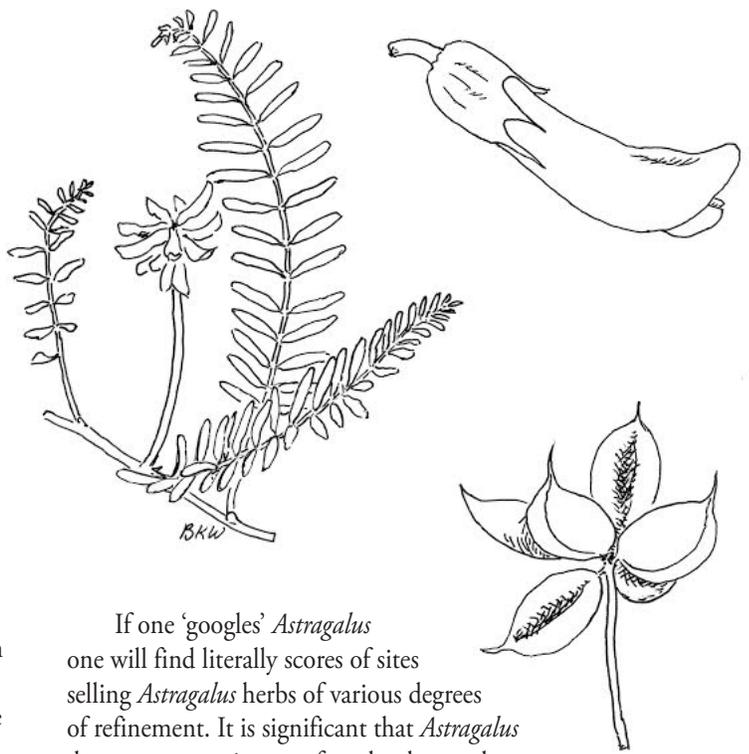
Pomona milkvetch is distributed from San Luis Obispo County south along the coast into northern Baja California. The Elfin Forest population is close to the most north-westerly distribution. It is almost entirely a coastal plant, although it does extend inland through the peninsular ranges.

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

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

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

As one might expect, milkvetches are known by many other common names, such as locoweed (in North America), as well as goat's-thorn, huang chi, milkvetch root and yellow leader. The last four are used to describe the medicinal names used in Chinese medicine. Locoweed is applied primarily to species that when eaten by livestock cause the animal to stagger and otherwise act funny or 'loco'. Some loco weeds always cause animals to act funny while others only cause animals to act funny when grown on specific soils. The soils causing loco weeds to be poisonous are usually high in heavy metals. So, technically, it isn't the plant that is poisonous; it is the heavy metals that some *Astragalus* species are capable of concentrating in their foliage that are the toxins.



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

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### Looking back ... from March, 1995 *Oakleaves*

Ken Volk, winemaker and owner of Wild Horse Winery and Vineyards in Templeton, has blended and aged a wine "good for the heart and the environment" that will be released on Earth Day 1995. Rain Forest Red is a quaffable, spicy, multi-vintage cuvee of Merlot, Pinot Noir, Napa Gamay, Zinfandel, Cabernet Sauvignon and Syrah.

An unprecedented one dollar per bottle from the \$7 retail price will be donated and shared equally between the Nature Conservancy's Guarequecaba Environmental Protection Area...and Small Wilderness Area Preservation representing a cause in Volk's own backyard, the El Moro Elfin Forest Ecological Reserve in Los Osos. Volk's concept was to provide an opportunity for private industry to work hand in hand with local and international efforts to help raise awareness and funds for the world's vanishing forests.

*In August, 1995, Oakleaves reported that sales of Rain Forest Red raised \$8700 for SWAP, which was earmarked for developing access for differently abled people to the Elfin Forest (the boardwalk). Ken Volk became one of our first life members.*

# Weed Warrior Report

Text by Yolanda Waddell

## March 7th – Pulling & Pounding

A good-sized crew of fourteen Weed Warriors showed up on Saturday the 7th, making it possible for two projects to be tackled. Ten agile warriors made the trek to the lower Don Klopfer Grove to finish off the invasive grasses down there. They were Pat Brown, Ed Ellingen, Lannie Erickson, Jack Fanselow, snail monitor Barrett Holland, Vicky Johnsen, Prisila Johnson, Rich Johnson, Andrea Larsen and Vicki Marchenko. Thanks to their combined energies and knowledge of what to pull, the Klopfer Grove was pretty well cleared of invasives.

Meanwhile, up on the boardwalk Matt Ellingen, Craig Johnsen, Weed Warrior captain Ron Rasmussen and Conservation Chair Skip Rotstein tackled the repair of a broken stringer near the Siena's View overlook. Thanks to their carpentry skill, the boardwalk no longer sags at that point.

## April 4th – More Weed Wars & More Carpentry

On this day, nine Weed Warriors helped to carry carpentry supplies to the lower boardwalk and then split up into four groups. Jack Fanselow, Prisila Johson and Rich Johnson descended to the Don Klopfer Grove to do some final weed cleanup. Vicky Johnsen and Lannie Erickson went to the slope above South Bay Boulevard to pull veldt grass that seemed to have sprung up overnight. Bob Meyer worked to remove chicken wire from about 40 plants at the end of 16th Street that are now large enough to be uninteresting to rabbits.

Barrett Holland, Ron Rasmussen and Skip Rotstein worked to replace a broken stringer on the lower boardwalk. A stringer is a long heavy timber used as a support or connector. When a stringer under the boardwalk fails, the boardwalk will sag and become dangerous to walk on. The adjacent photos show Barrett and Skip hard at work bridging the break with a 4-foot piece of 2" x 6" Douglas fir, and the new stringer after the repair work was done.

Toward the end of the morning, Jack, Prisila, Rich, Bob, Barrett, Ron and Skip all joined Vicky and Lannie in pulling veldt grass – that Vicky said was as high as an elephant's eye - from the slope above South Bay Boulevard. If you live in the Los Osos/Morro Bay area, you will be able to see the effects of the Weed Warriors' hard work along that slope. Notice the peach-colored Sticky monkey-flower blossoms and many healthy native plants. Just past the Elfin Forest's part of the slope, there is nothing to see but tall veldt grass.

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## 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.



*In March, some skilled carpentry was done to replace a broken boardwalk stringer by (L-R) Craig Johnsen, Skip Rotstein, Matt Ellingen and Ron Rasmussen.*



*As the boardwalk ages, more things break. Working in April to replace a broken stringer, a board that holds up the boardwalk, were Barrett Holland (left) and Conservation Chair Skip Rotstein.*

*Photo by Ron Rasmussen.*



*Shown is a replacement stringer board with clamps to hold it while glue dries. The boards are both nailed and glued to keep them firmly in place. Photo by Barrett Holland.*

## Elfin Forest Sightings

April was a busy month for sightings in the Elfin Forest.

At the end of April, **Pat Brown** reported: During April, I saw and photographed five butterflies that I had not previously seen in the Elfin Forest. They were seen on Butterfly Hill and along the boardwalk between Bush Lupine Point and Siena's View: Cloudless Sulfur, Common Buckeye, Funereal Duskywing, Marine Blue and Painted Lady. [Pictured is] ...a female Funereal Duskywing, *Erynnis funeralis*, on Butterfly Hill. It spent a lot of time nectaring on Deerweed. This is a spread-wing skipper with 1.5-inch wings in the typical butterfly shape, as opposed to the Umber Skipper which is a grass skipper with what I call the "jet plane" wings.

*Editor's note: Pat also sent excellent photos of the other four butterflies that we will include in future issues of Oakleaves.*

Also in April, **Charlie Sitton** reported that the Elfin Forest's only California honeysuckle was displaying lovely pink flowers. He sent the adjacent photo. The honeysuckle is a vine that can be seen, if one looks carefully, near the boardwalk just west of the intersection of the lower boardwalk loop and the extension to Siena's View. It has been there for more than ten years. We've been told that California honeysuckle is more plentiful in Los Osos Oaks State Reserve.

One morning when Charlie was out for an early walk, he saw and photographed a Wrenit enjoying a grub for its breakfast. It was unusual to see a Wrenit out in the open, and very unusual to see one devouring a grub. We thank him for sharing his photo.

**Pete Sarafian** reported the following: The current drought is making wildlife desperate for food and water. Last year rodents (and deer?) attacked several of the Morro manzanita seedlings in the revegetation project in the western portion of the Forest. A young buck has been sighted several times in April on Santa Paula Street between 11th and 12th Streets. It has been browsing in yards, especially on rose bushes.



*In April, Pat Brown sighted and photographed this Funereal Duskywing butterfly.*



*Charlie Sitton caught the Elfin Forest's only California Honeysuckle plant in full bloom.*



*During an early morning walk, Charlie Sitton spotted this Wrenit about to eat a grub. Photo by Charlie Sitton.*

Let's all pull together  
(at the 1st Saturday Work Parties)

*By Yolanda Waddell*

That awful grass that comes from the veldt  
Is still invading our lovely greenbelt.  
The slope by South Bay is where we will work  
so veldt on that slope no longer does lurk.

There's also a bit of watering to do;  
those new little plants are depending on you.  
At noon we'll repair to fifteenth street  
and eat yummy cookies, the reward for our feat.

# Coming Up in the Elfin Forest

*Text and photos by Jean Wheeler*

This is a busy time of the year for many birds of the oak woodlands, maritime chaparral, and coastal dune scrub in the Elfin Forest. They are likely to be feeding young in these early summer months. Listen for a loud buzz to locate the Spotted Towhee. He's very distinctive with his black head, rust-colored flanks and rump, and white-spotted wings. His drabber cousin, the grey-brown California Towhee, may be seen darting between shrubs or on the ground between them.

Other birds to be observed over or among the shrubs or oak trees are flycatchers such as the Black Phoebe and the Western Kingbird; wrens including Bewick's Wren and the noisy but elusive Wrentit; and Chipping, Lark, Savannah, Song, and White-crowned Sparrows. Brightly-colored birds that may be flitting around include Orange-crowned, Yellow, and Wilson's Warblers; House and Purple Finches; and the Lesser and American Goldfinches. Most of our raptor species are here all year, and likely to be actively hunting with fledglings to feed in June and July. The ever-present Quail and raucous Scrub Jays will, of course, also be much in evidence.

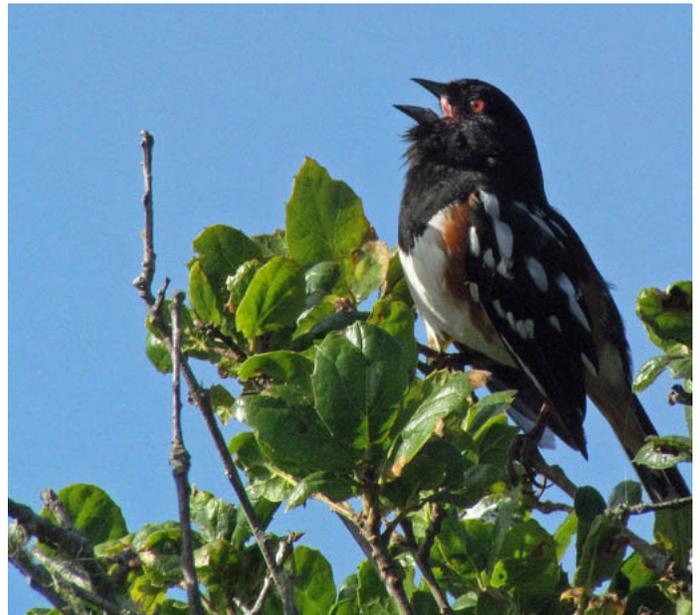
Bright floral colors adorn the Elfin Forest in these months, as they do nearly any time of year. For blue flowers, this is the best time of the year with tall blue spikes of bush lupines conspicuous on the bluffs overlooking the estuary. A shorter plant called wooly star features bunches of flat blue flowers atop short erect stems sheathed in wooly gray leaves rising from a woody root crown. They are best seen along the 15th Street sand trail and the nearby boardwalk.

Yellow and orange flowering plants tend to dominate the Elfin Forest in early summer, including sticky monkey-flower, deerweed, California poppies, and flowers rising on stalks from the succulent rosettes of coastal dudleya.

Pink flowers show in spikes of California hedge nettle as well as in balls of cobwebby thistle. An understory plant with red flowers that look like they've been cut with pinking shears was therefore known as Indian pink, but with pinking shears less recognized these days now it is more likely to be called cardinal catchfly.

June and July remain good months to look for butterflies. Most of the butterfly species known to visit the Elfin Forest do so in these two months. These are also good months to watch fence lizards doing pushups on the boardwalk and to search for other reptiles.

Despite the continuing drought, with the limited rains we did get there will still be lots of flowers, birds, and other wildlife such as reptiles, bees, and butterflies to enjoy on a summer stroll around the boardwalk.



*Spotted Towhee singing.*



*Wooly Star.*

## 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 and Leslie Rotstein. Contributors to this issue: Pat Brown, Marlin Harms, Barrett Holland, Betsy Kinter, Bob Meyer, Kaaren Perry, Ron Rasmussen, Pete Sarafian, Charlie Sitton, Yolanda Waddell, Dirk and Bonnie Walters, and Jean Wheeler. Printed at Hay Printing, Morro Bay on recycled paper. Labeled and mailed at Achievement House.

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

*"In June as many as a dozen species  
may burst their buds on a single day.  
No man can heed all of these anniversaries;  
no man can ignore all of them."  
~ Aldo Leopold ~*

# WALKS in the ELFIN FOREST

## Third Saturday Walks

June 20, 9:30 a.m. –

### *Digital Photography and Birding Walk*

Join nature and wildlife photographer Donald Quintana on a photographic journey to capture the natural world of Los Osos Elfin Forest. Using whatever camera you have at hand, we will explore the many photographic opportunities that present themselves from birds and butterflies to plants and flowers. We will look at the greater landscape as well as the world of macro photography. The use of light and how to best capture its influence on your subject will be discussed. All levels of experience and skill are welcome. Have your binoculars ready for bird identification. Also pack water and wear layers in case it is windy.

July 18, 9:30 a.m. – *Archaeology Walk*

Archaeologist Barry Price will take us time traveling into the pre-Spanish past of Central Coast inhabitants, the Chumash and their ancestors. Barry is a vice president and principal archaeologist at Applied Earthworks in San Luis Obispo, and specializes in historical and prehistoric archaeology. Walking along the boardwalk, he will tell us the fascinating story of the ancient peoples who camped in the Elfin Forest 1,000 years or more ago. He will bring artifacts that show the industry and culture of the Chumash and other indigenous tribes on the Central Coast. This walk will reveal the complex world of the Elfin Forest's past inhabitants.

*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.*



*During his March animal tracks walk, Evan Albright spotted a red fox track just off of the 15th Street trail. Photo by Yolanda Waddell.*



*Pat Brown is shown on her Butterfly Walk holding a box of the sort participants could use to raise caterpillars until they pupate and metamorphose into flying adults. Photo by Jean Wheeler.*

## Elfin Forest Plant List Update

*By Bob Meyer and Yolanda Waddell*

In April, the SWAP Board of Directors and Conservation Committee members received the following good news from our web master, Bob Meyer:

Our vascular plant list has been extensively updated. See: [elfin-forest.org/flora-fauna/flora/Vascular Plants.htm](http://elfin-forest.org/flora-fauna/flora/Vascular%20Plants.htm). This list was first published in our 2005 Pocket Guide and then placed on our web site in about 2009. Since then the list has had a few sporadic additions and corrections.

Dr. David J. Keil, Curator of the Robert F. Hoover Herbarium at CalPoly, spent considerable time and effort during summer of 2013 going through the Forest checking for vascular plants and came up with a new list. David by the way is a long time supporter of the Elfin Forest and was a major contributor to the original list. He was able to confirm in the field or by voucher 138 plants. 22 new plants were added to the list and 12 were removed as being definitely not present. Integrating this information into our current list gives a total of 220 species. David flagged 6 plants as probable miss-IDs of other listed plants. Dr. Keil notes that 23 of the original scientific names have changed in the intervening 10 years.

Over the next several cycles of seasons, SWAP volunteers will be

working to establish the presence or absence of the plants that Dr. Keil was not able to confirm. Al Normandin and I have started looking for the “unconfirmed” 82 species. So far we’ve found 8; only 74 more to go. We need help! If you’d like to join in, contact [bob@elfin-forest.org](mailto:bob@elfin-forest.org). The list will be updated as plants are confirmed as “present” or “not present” in the Elfin Forest. You’ll be credited with the “find”.

Our heartfelt thanks to Dr. Keil for the many hours he spent in making this update possible.

If you look at the vascular plant list in the SWAP web site, [www.elfin-forest.org](http://www.elfin-forest.org) under Flora and Fauna, you will see that the plants are listed under scientific name and common name. Also listed are the form (such as tree, shrub or herb), bloom time, color, and habitat. Under the heading “photo,” each plant is linked to color photos in the Calphoto archives – just click the triangle and you will see several photos of that plant. Also there is a column for plants that are confirmed as being in the Elfin Forest, and a space for notes about a particular plant.

SWAP is grateful to Bob Meyer for the large task of revising the previous plant list on our web site, and then connecting each plant with its Calphoto link. This list will benefit Elfin Forest visitors as well as local botanists.

# More Trouble in the Elfin Forest

Reports and photos by Pat Brown and Pete Sarafian



A large collection of beer bottles was retrieved from the other side of this fence at Butterfly Hill by Pete Sarafian. Photo by Pete Sarafian.

The Elfin Forest is open to anyone who wishes to enjoy it. Unfortunately, a few visitors don't seem to understand two principal conventions: 1) There should be no smoking and absolutely no fires; and 2) If you pack it in, you should pack it out. Following are two examples of visitor carelessness.

## April 11, from Pat Brown

Someone brought a bundle of mostly split firewood into the Elfin Forest and it appears they tried to start a fire as some of the wood was scorched (see photo). I first noticed the wood scattered below the Michael Bowker Bench on Friday morning.

## April 12, from Pete Sarafian

Turns out that the wood was burned over a week ago, and I saw it first on April 2nd during a school walk in the Elfin Forest. It appears that kids took the wood from a felled, dead pine tree at the house on the corner of 14th Street and the Elfin Forest. I didn't report it to the fire department or sheriff this time. There is little that anyone can do unless we identify the perpetrators.

# Thank You to Our Generous Members

Compiled by Betsy Kinter, SWAP Database Coordinator

## NEW:

Bill & Sue McQuilkin  
Louise Noel  
Deanna Richards\*

## RENEWING MEMBERS:

Lois Brown*	Alyce Thorp
Beth Currier	& Robert Mayberry*
Mary Agran & Guy Fitzwater*	George Tirman
Sandra Mason*	Marisa Waddell*
James McCoy*	Gary & Marianne Wallace*
Robert McDougle*	Mary Whelen*
Skip & Leslie Rotstein*	Junia Wolf*

## DONATIONS:

Nona Lee Chaffin

*\*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.*



Some non-thinking and probably young Elfin Forest visitors tried to make a bonfire near the boardwalk. Photo by Pat Brown.

## April 13, Pete Sarafian ...

sent the photo (above left) of about sixty or seventy beer bottles that he cleared out after some partiers threw them over the fence at Butterfly Hill. He didn't have time to remove them from the Forest, so on April 14, Pat Brown reported:

I have removed the bottles from Butterfly Hill. Five-gallon buckets worked really well. It's interesting that this is not exactly bargain basement beer.



## Beautiful Notecards & Postcards Available from SWAP

Five lovely photos taken by Bob Meyer are available either as color notecards with envelopes or as color postcards. For either postcards or notecards, you can order sets of all five views or as many as you want of any one (or more) of them using the form below.



# SWAP Shoppers' Order Form

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

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### 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.

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Help Us Update Our Plant List! ~ see page 9

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## Things for Kids to do in the Elfin Forest During Summer

**Explore** with a camera. Come early when bunnies are **hopping** around and quail are foraging. Send “best” photos to *Oakleaves* at the end of the summer and we’ll publish them.

Pack a lunch and have a **picnic**.  
 Look at the flowers and butterflies.

Become a birder. Take binoculars and a bird guide and see how many birds you can identify.



Become a *writer*. Make a journal about your visits to the Forest, and turn that into a story.

Get exercise. **SHAPE UP** by walking or running around the boardwalk.

## MEMBERSHIP FORM

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