

## ANNUAL REPORT

August 1988

Yoland Waddell, President

The events of 1987-1988 have been exciting and satisfying for all concerned with saving the El Moro Elfin Forest (Otto Property) in Los Osos. With the dedication of 51.6 acres of the Elfin Forest to the people of California as part of the Morro Estuary Natural Preserve, we dedicate our energies to acquiring the remaining 38.6 acres. Highlights of the year's activities follow.

**DEDICATION OF THE 51.6** On June 5, SWAP members and representatives of the State Department of Parks and Recreation gathered at the South Bay Day Use Area to celebrate the addition of 51.6 acres of the El Moro Elfin Forest to Morro Bay State Park. Assemblyman Eric Seastrand, instrumental in procuring the land, spoke on "Public Parkland Acquisition." Dave Sears, State Park District Supervisor, discussed "Community Involvement in the State Park System," and received a symbolic oak tree from Patricia Grimes, SWAP secretary. Marylou Gooden, President of the Natural History Association which oversees volunteer activities in the San Luis Obispo Coast State Parks, talked about the need to understand what is in the parks and why we preserve them. Following the ceremony, SWAP Historian Dennis Sheridan led about 30 visitors, including representatives from Audubon, Sierra Club, and People For the Nipomo Dunes National Seashore, on a nature walk through the new State Park addition.

**MORRO ESTUARY NATURAL PRESERVE** The 6-member California Parks and Recreation Commission voted unanimously on June 10th. to establish the Morro Estuary Natural Preserve. This 420 acre portion of Morro Bay State Park consisting mainly of Morro Bay estuary marshland includes 51.6 acres of the Elfin Forest. Designation as a natural preserve limits park improvements to trails and interpretative signs. Visitors must come on foot only without dogs or cats. Docents of the Morro Bay Museum of Natural History will lead walks in the Elfin Forest and other parts of the Morro Estuary Natural Preserve.

**PARKS AND WILDLIFE INITIATIVE** SWAP worked energetically to support the passage of the \$776 million California Parks and Wildlife Bond Act. This initiative, overwhelmingly approved by voters on June 7th., will fund the acquisition of thousands of acres of endangered lands for parks and preserves. \$14 million will come to San Luis Obispo County to support the Nipomo Dunes National Seashore Project. SWAP will ask the Coastal Conservancy for funding from the \$30 million in undesignated funds.

**CENTRAL COAST ENVIRONMENTAL NETWORK** Eight of the county's environmental groups, including SWAP, have formed an informal organizational network. Spearheaded by Phil Persons of Morro Coast Audubon, the network will maintain communication among member organizations, share environmental news and information, and act together in matters of mutual concern. The first combined effort will be the county-wide "Coast Weeks," September 17 through October 10. The CCEN is sending a representative to the San Luis Obispo County Growth Management Advisory Committee.

**OUTREACH** SWAP speakers continue to give slide talks to local groups interested in our efforts. Our booth attracted attention at the Baywood Oktoberfest and the County Environmental Education Faire. Our "Artists in the Elfin Forest" art exhibit has been on display at Linnaea's Cafe in San Luis Obispo, La Patisserie on Second Street in Los Osos, and the South County Regional Library in Arroyo Grande. Currently, it can be seen at the Baywood Inn in Los Osos. A reception was held while the exhibit was at Linnaea's during which donations were accepted for four of the paintings. All monies donated for paintings/photos in the show are placed in our land fund.

**FINANCIAL REPORT** Treasurer Larry Grimes reports an end-of-fiscal year balance of \$3862.20 for June 1988 representing a gain of \$1265.88 from July 1, 1987. \$1165 of our net worth is in our Land Fund being held serve as the core of a fund to purchase an option on the remaining 38.6 acres of the Elfin Forest (if that is required) and to install a memorial plaque when our project is completed. The bulk of our \$1244 in disbursement for the year went toward insurance payments and membership in the Land Trust which provides the very necessary liability insurance.

**THE REMAINING 38.6** The coming year will bring many hours of work toward acquiring the remainder of the Elfin Forest for the people of California. With its lovely ridge trail from which estuary, ocean, and mountains can be seen, with oak groves, fascinating chaparral areas harboring horned toads, California thrashers, and a myriad of blooming plants, and with its Chumash middens hiding the secret of a nearly extinct civilization, it is well worth the effort. We are waiting for the results of an appraisal of the land's value. Mrs. Otto's lawyer, Tom Dankert, tells us that a developer is also interested in the land. Once we know the asking price, we will approach the California Coastal Conservancy for funds. We will also ask the State Parks Commission, which received \$4 million from the Parks and Wildlife Bond Act, for help. Here's hoping that there is good news to report to you in August of 1989!

## *A GIFT OF NATURE*

Text from Presentation of Symbolic Oak to Dave Sears, State Park District Supervisor  
by Patrica Grimes June 5, 1988

On behalf of SWAP, I want to present State Parks and Recreation with this oak tree as a living symbol of our celebration of the gift the people of California have recently given themselves with the purchase of part of the El Moro Elfin Forest. We chose an oak tree because it reminds us of SWAP's original land preservation project, the Los Osos Oaks Reserve, also because oak trees are considered a sensitive resource in our part of California, and finally because it is a living thing which will endure beyond our place in time for posterity.

We also wanted to emphasize today the aspect of giving a gift to ourselves. The addition of tidelands, the stands of oak and manzanita, and the riparian belt to the state park represents a triumph for the politics of preservation. We can celebrate the fact that interests have been served and benefits reaped in the private, political, preservation, and public sectors. It is a remarkable, if complicated process. We want to pay attention today to this remarkable process through which people can give themselves a gift of land.

It begins with the acorn of an idea to preserve a special and unique plot of land. And, like the branching oak, the concept and its facilitation expands in many directions. The growth of this idea depends on the fertile soil of public support in the form of individual people's time, enthusiasm

and contributions, and also upon the wisdom of passing far-reaching bond acts such as the 1974 Parklands Act which funded this project. And, like the pygmy oaks of the Elfin Forest which have adapted so dramatically to the specific climate conditions of wind, sea spray, and sand dunes, the idea of preserving land must adapt to a political climate and depend on sustenance from those in government and politics to make the struggle to secure the fruition of this idea. Assemblyman Seastrand and his staff and many people in the state park system have done just that for this project.

Please accept this oak tree on behalf of those of us here and all the people of California who have reason to celebrate today as we accept and begin to enjoy this bounteous gift of nature. Like the oaks which sustained the Chumash, greeted the Spanish, and now enrich our lives, we hope this symbolic oak and the preserved section of the El Moro Elfin Forest will endure to sustain and enrich the lives of all those who will follow us.

*There are a few special times in life when all six senses combine to explode into revelation. These are mystical experiences that cannot be defined in words. But they result in appreciation of all creation without the restrictions of conventional doctrines.*

*A peak experience might come while standing on the crest of a mountain or on a seacliff above the crashing surf. It might be akin to what an astronaut feels when he looks out the window of his spacecraft and sees the whole earth.*

*Such an experience can also come in the stillness of an elfin forest.*

*Many of the great revelations have come to persons who wander in the wilderness. So in preserving this little bit of wilderness we are protecting a source of inspiration for ourselves and for future generations.*

*And for those who have helped bring about this preservation this moment must be a peak experience.*

Harold Wieman  
Theme Reading for the Celebration and Dedication  
of the Morro Bay State Park Addition  
June 5, 1988

General Meeting  
Monday, September 12, 1988 7:30 pm  
South Bay Community Center

Guest Speaker: Aryan Roest, PhD

## **Common Animals of the Elfin Forest**

Dr. Roest is a local resident who has taught in the Biological Sciences Department at California Polytechnic State University since 1955. One of his current projects is a study of the Morro Bay Kangaroo Rat.

### SWAP CALENDAR

October 10	Board Meeting 7:45 *
November 14	Board Meeting 7:45 *
December 5	General Meeting 7:30 South Bay Community Center

\* Call Yolanda Waddell, 528-4540 for location of Board Meeting. All members are welcome to attend the Board Meetings.

## **HIKE-A-THON**

Sunday, October 2, 1988 10 am - 4pm

SWAP has been invited to participate in a fund raising "Hike-A-Thon" sponsored by the SLO County Land Conservancy. The event will help to raise funds to support the Land Conservancy and environmental education in San Luis Obispo County.

The Hike-A-Thon is a walking event designed to take place at several trail locations throughout the county. Trails will vary in difficulty in length, from 2 to 6 miles, with a least one trail that is wheel chair accessible. Participants will raise money by securing pledges based on their completed distances along the marked trails.

The SLO Land Conservancy is asking SWAP to get as many hikers and sponsors as possible to help make this event a success. Ten percent of the proceeds will be donated to the SLO County Schools for programs at Rancho El Chorro Environmental Education Center. As a participating organization, 20% of the remaining net receipts from SWAP walkers will be rebated to SWAP. All other funds, after expenses, will go to the non-

profit SLO Land Conservancy and their work to preserve natural beauty and open space.

If you don't want to walk, volunteers are needed to help on the day of the Hike-A-Thon to assist at the trails and/or barbeque which will follow at 3pm.

Contact SWAP representative Shanda Grunkemeyer-Gibbs at 528-3936 or phone the Land Conservancy at 544-9096 for additional information, pledge forms, maps, or anything else you might need.

Rosemary Bowker, Newsletter Editor

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Return to: Larry Grimes, Treasurer,  
S.W.A.P., P. O. Box 6442, Los Osos, CA 93402

- I can give my time and energy to this effort
- Enclosed is my \$10 membership fee
- Additional donation of \_\_\_\_\_ to help with operating expenses.

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

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## Small Wilderness Area Preservation

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