



# OAKLEAVES

A PUBLICATION OF THE LOS OSOS/MORRO BAY CHAPTER SMALL WILDERNESS AREA PRESERVATION  
P.O. BOX 6442 LOS OSOS, CALIFORNIA 93412 (805) 528-2579 DECEMBER 1992

## Your help is needed to save a very special wilderness.

SWAP and the SLO County Parks have received a \$500,000 grant from CalTrans toward the purchase of the remaining 39 acres of the Elfin Forest. This is a very good start toward our goal of being able to purchase the entire parcel -- but it's not enough.

Our grant writers are now working hard on proposals for funds from two additional sources.

The North American Wetlands Conservation Council and the Migratory Bird Conservation Commission oversee funds made available from the North American Wetlands Conservation Act of 1989 for the protection, enhancement, restoration and management of wetland ecosystems and migratory bird habitat. Preservation of the Elfin Forest will serve to enhance the quality of Morro Bay as migratory bird habitat.

Proposition 117, the California Wildlife Protection Act of 1990, provides funds to public agencies for habitat acquisition to protect rare and endangered species (our Morro Manzanita and local lichen), significant natural areas (one thing everyone agrees upon is that the Elfin Forest is a significant natural area) and to protect wetlands



*President Rose Bowker explains the critical connection between SWAP's local fund raising drive and the \$500,000 Cal Trans Grant at the September meeting.*

(the Elfin Forest is a natural buffer between Morro Bay and the residential development of Los Osos).

**Qualification for these funds is dependent upon our ability to raise \$500,000 in matching funds by June of 1993.** Whew. A formidable task but not an impossible task. Especially not with your help.

What can you do? There are several ways you can help us.

- ✓ Make a contribution to the land fund. If each one of us gave certificates of stewardship as stocking stuffers, a significant amount would be raised.

See HELP continued on page 2

### **Designate SWAP for Payroll Deductions.**

*If your employer allows you to make contributions to United Way by means of payroll deductions, designate SWAP! \$8.33 a month will preserve 50 square feet of the Elfin Forest. If 1 out of every 15 people in San Luis Obispo County did so, we would have what we need to purchase the Elfin Forest.*

**LOOKING FORWARD TO 1993**  
**General Membership Meeting**  
**7 pm Monday December 7th**  
**South Bay Community Center**  
**2180 Palisades Avenue, Los Osos**

Join the elves for some holiday fun. We'll be honoring Special Friends of the El Moro Elfin Forest and previewing our new slide show as well. There will be a short election of officers for 1993 with plenty of time for visiting and sharing treats provided by the elves. Bring someone along!

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**BOARD MEMBERS NEEDED**

SWAP has benefitted greatly from the energy and enthusiasm of many people over the years. Having new people fill old jobs has revitalized many facets of the organization, and there are many jobs to be done. If you have talents and time to share, SWAP needs you. Some of the positions available are:

- Walks Coordinator - finds walk leaders and publicizes monthly walks.
- Outreach Coordinator - schedules slideshow presentations.
- Small Change Chair - maintains Small Change Jars in local businesses.
- Membership Chair - welcomes new members; sends out premiums.

Please consider sharing the land preservation workload with a board position. 1993 is going to be another exciting and worthwhile year for SWAP -- be a part of it! With your help we can make more things happen. Call Rose Bowker at 528-2579 to volunteer.

**“HELP” continued from page 1**

- ✓ Have a party. That's right. Have a party and invite us to give our slide show to your friends and neighbors so we can enlist their support for our project.
- ✓ Invite us to talk to your club or service organization. Some of you have had us in the past. Ask us again so we can give an updated status report. We have made progress!
- ✓ Let us know about matching funds and other grant programs that are available through your employer or place of business, through your club or service organization. If you work for a large corporation, they probably have some sort of annual giving program. Help us find the person or persons to whom we should be talking. Give us a name, address and phone number and we'll do the asking.

**We need your help NOW!**

**HARBORFEST &  
OCTOBERFEST  
VOLUNTEERS  
Take A Bow!  
Many Thanks  
You Were Great!**

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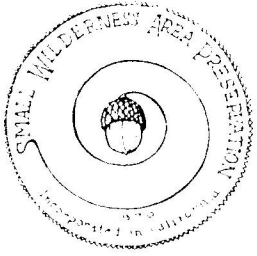
**SWAP Wins Grant To Say Thank You!**

SWAP has received a \$2,700 grant from World Wildlife Funds (WWF) Innovation Grants program to prepare a mural of the Elfin Forest on the side of a public building in Los Osos. Local artist Barbara Rosenthal will work with SWAP and LOCO (Los Osos Community Organization) to locate a site and prepare the mural. The project will serve the dual purpose of raising community awareness about the Elfin Forest and of allowing us to thank each and every one of you who contributed to the Elfin Forest Land Fund by placing your names on the border around the mural.

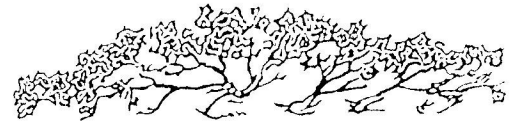
WWF's Innovation Grants program, now in its fourth year, provides grants of up to \$10,000 to local nonprofit organizations to help implement innovative local strategies for the conservation of nature.

SWAP is one of only 32 award recipients for 1992. A committee of land use and conservation experts from around the country selected recipients from a total of 264 applicants from 49 states and Puerto Rico. According to WWF President Kathryn S. Fuller, the projects selected this year represent some of the best grass roots conservation efforts in the United States. WWF supports these local initiatives because they are thoughtful, environmentally sound projects that will serve as models for other communities.

The Innovation Grants program is made possible by the assistance of the Sonoran Institute of Tucson, Arizona, and by the financial support of S. C. Johnson, Inc., makers of Johnson Wax. And thank you to Mary Coffeen who told SWAP about the Innovation Grants Program.



# SWAP's History



At year's end individuals and organizations tend to review the past searching for evidence of time well spent and inspiration for future work. With this in mind, we offer this small history to give you an idea of the remarkably good work accomplished by SWAP.

SWAP began in 1970 when the beauty and magnificence of a grove of oaks just off Los Osos Valley Road inspired one of its explorers, Emily Polk, to consider the need to preserve exquisite natural areas beloved by those living nearby, but not nearly as well known as the redwoods. In discussions with Margaret Owings, Ansel Adams, Edgar Weyburn and others, the idea of an organization dedicated to the preservation of local wilderness areas near urban development was born.

The implications of those discussions came to fruition almost immediately when the oak grove was put up for sale. The landowner's attorney gave Mrs. Polk his two week vacation in which to find the money and a management agency to preserve the forest. Undaunted, she marshalled resources and lobbied people from one end of the state to the other. In a seeming whirlwind, funds were raised everywhere--after services at the Methodist Church in Los Osos one Sunday, from generous private individuals and corporations--and the State Parks agreed to manage the reserve. Visitors to the Los Osos Oaks Reserve know what might have been lost irrevocably.

SWAP became incorporated as a non-profit organization and word of Mrs. Polk's imaginative idea spread. Chapters of SWAP were established to save local "gems" in Oakland, in the Verdugo Hills near Glendale, the Wilderness Gardens in San Diego, and even as far away as Dunsmuir. Those who had contributed money and expertise to save the Los Osos Oaks united officially to form the Estero Chapter of SWAP. They saw a chance to plan ahead before population density swallowed up the wilderness areas characteristic of their bayside community.

The population was mushrooming at the time. By 1973, the area had already exceeded its predicted 1980 population by growing to 5,500 people. It was an explosive time for SWAP as well. Mrs. Polk was nurturing statewide SWAP while the Estero Chapter targeted three properties for possible preservation: the 483 acre Baptista Ranch near Turri Road, the 50-acre Griffin property east of South Bay Boulevard on the banks of Los Osos Creek, and 50 acres of the Otto property to the southwest.

The Baptista and Otto properties were available through estate sales and SWAP approached the Griffin family. Each property was considered essential for the protection of the Morro Bay Estuary. In their brochure they explained how an estuary works, offered slide shows, encouraged land preservation legislation, and sought contributions. Then, as now, people were concerned and they wanted to act.

To handle this multi-faceted agenda a dozen central coast organizations formed the Alliance for the Morro Estuary or the AME. They worked feverishly to secure options on these properties not knowing where they would find the ultimate purchase price funding. The Alliance hoped to secure the three pieces surrounding the bay.

On August 18th the AME planned a picnic to raise public awareness of their project and to raise money to supplement a loan from the National Audubon Society which would secure a two year option on the Baptista property. This would buy time for then State Senator Nimmo to get a bill through the legislature authorizing use of Bagley Conservation funds to purchase the land.

Once again these dedicated and enthusiastic people found themselves under a two week deadline. And once again their perseverance paid off. Money was raised from all sectors of the community with contributions from \$3.91 to \$1000, including four individuals who offered to make up any difference between what was raised and the loan to cover the cost of the option.

The negotiations for the Griffin property illustrate a different method of wilderness preservation. This family considered an exchange with the state for state surplus lands. The woodland sanctuary just above Los Osos Creek east of South Bay Boulevard enhances the estuary and the Griffins have their retirement investment in an RV park, but in a less sensitive location.

Over time, the funding for the purchase of the Baptista property was appropriated and the negotiations concluded which added the entire Baptista watershed to the State Park.

By the time Emily Polk was honored at a farewell dinner before her departure for England in 1979, the perimeter of the bay still had not been preserved. Under her direction, however, SWAP had made history in Los Osos by affecting the physical quality of our community and establishing a legacy of successful community activism.

By 1981 the Estero SWAP chapter ceased operating having done all they could to advance the cause, since negotiations for the Otto property had become exceedingly complicated by a lawsuit. When applications for building permits were filed as part of this process, neighbors who were under the impression the property was part of the state park, became alarmed.

Yolanda Waddell and Carole Larsen alerted the community and led the re-chartering of a local SWAP chapter, our Los Osos/Morro Bay Chapter, in 1985. In the SWAP tradition, members did their homework, watch-dogged the state's attorneys, and lobbied our legislators to see that the state ownership of the Otto property would be an outcome of the suit. It was. Eric Seastrand listened to us and worked to secure funding from the 1974 Parklands Act to purchase the 50 acres.

Times had changed. These were no longer the heady days of environmental activism with initiatives establishing coastal commissions, or celebrations of Earth Day. There were many new realities such as Land Trusts, trading development rights, and skyrocketing land prices. When SWAP celebrated the acquisition of the 50 acres of what we now loved and championed as the El Moro Elfin Forest, we stood in awe of the work and the time land preservation requires.

While waiting for the courts and the legislature and the agencies to grind out their work, SWAP revitalized the support of the old coalition and focused on community awareness of our project. In addition, SWAP had already begun working on a new goal.

We would not be satisfied with only 50 acres. We looked at our community with inadequate parkland, at the disturbed habitat caused by nearby development, and at the deep love of the land we had come to share in our work for the El Moro Elfin Forest, and so we committed ourselves to the purchase of the additional 39.6 acres of the Otto property.

We wanted a buffer zone for the sensitive habitat areas. We wanted a recreational and educational resource for our community. We wanted to preserve a piece of the natural area whose beauty first drew us to this extraordinary place. In short, we wanted to enhance SWAP's contribution to the history of Los Osos.

Our chapter has changed over the years and made some history itself by winning the \$500,000 Cal Trans Mitigation Grant. As we launch our major fund raising drive to attain our goal, it is reassuring to note that the commitment and the energy of SWAP members has remained constant over these many years. And proudly, the work has all been done by volunteers from the professional ranks to school children.

SWAP's accomplishments have made a big contribution to the quality of life for our estuary and for the communities surrounding it. We are carrying on a very proud tradition of devoted, talented and generous people who have made a difference.

*The only thing that makes  
civilization go forward  
is the responsibility of  
individuals . . .  
for the species, for the culture,  
for the larger thing outside ourselves.*

**Wallace Stegner**

## THIRD SATURDAY WALKS

All walks meet at 9:30 am at the north end of 15th Street off Santa Ysabel in Los Osos. Everyone is welcome.

On December 19th Les Bowker will engage us with the Ecology of the Elfin Forest: Bump-bump Plants, Critters and Creatures.

Watch the newspapers for details of our other winter walks. Depending on the rain, we hope to have Dennis Sheridan lead a walk focusing on the fungi of the Elfin Forest.

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### Do People Care? People Do!

SWAP has received a contribution of \$1000 from the people of Chevron -- the local employees of the Chevron Pipe Line Company and the San Luis Obispo County Chevron service station dealers and their employees -- to help fund the purchase of the Elfin Forest. Thank you people of Chevron!

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### THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU

to A. Alexander, S. Ames, S. Andersen, F. Arakawa, S. Armstrong, J. Ashby, P. Ashley, F. Avila, S. Baer, J. Bailey, L. Balent, L. Barber, C. Beigle, B. Bennett, L. Bennett, M. Bhuta, V. Black, C. Bloner, J. Bonestell, J. Boshears, B. Brown, P. Brown, J. Burns, H. Cameron, M. Campagna, S. Chesebro, L. Chipping, J. Colgazier, A. Collins, P. Collins, B. Coppola, E. Dabritz, E. Daniels, K. Davis, A. Delmartini, E. Dickerson, R. Difley, J. DiLeo, D. Duvall, L. Edgecomb, D. Emerson, P. Engle, G. Fleming, J. Frawley, K. Friend, B. George, M. Gooden, C. Greek, N. Hale, P. Hamilton, C. Harms, J. Havlena, N. Hay, B. Henry, V. Holland, L. Holman, A. Hubbard, E. Hutchinson, A. Jacobs, C. Jauregui, A. Jenkins, V. Jennings, R. Jones, K. Kaill, K. Kellett, K. Kimura, C. Kling, M. Lansdon, R. Law, L. Leipziger, K. Lilley, E. Lister, S. Lusko, M. Mackenzie, M. Martin, T. Martin, R. Matchett, M. Mayfield, E. McCracken, J. McLaughlin, S. McLaughlin, M. Mehring, A. Metzger, H. Miller, D. Minnix, W. Moore, H. Morrison, M. Morrissey, R. Mountain, J. Mueller, M. Munson, J. Murphy, V. Newman, R. Newton, M. Nicholson, L. Noel, J. Nowak, M. Nowak, J. Orbison, J. Orvis, C. Parker, M. Parker, J. Pedersen, E. Pritchard, A. Powers, B. Reinhardt, B. Richissin, C. Rose, L. Ruppert, L. Rutland, K. Ryan, V. Sallaz, San Simeon Nursery, D. Sheridan, H. Schuchardt, B. Schwenoha, J. Smalley, S. Sparling, G. Stein, J. Tait, S. Taylor, C. Topp, P. Triggs, W. Tyler, T. VanCoops, W. Vaughan, J. Verity, E. Walter, G. Walter, B. Wamsley, N. Warner, S. Warren, P. Weaver, D. Weir, K. White, and I. Wright. Thanks as well to Don and June Bailey for a gift in memory of Mary Russell Beck



*Sally Knight, Sandy Welby, Mohammad Soleimankhani and Faylla Chapman were among the SWAP Coastal Cleanup Crew. They collected 25 bags of trash along the South Bay Boulevard edge of the estuary.*

*Among their finds: a Coleman stove fuel tank, 4 new golf balls, a car hood, a roll of barbed wire, and a margarita pitcher from Grand Cayman.*

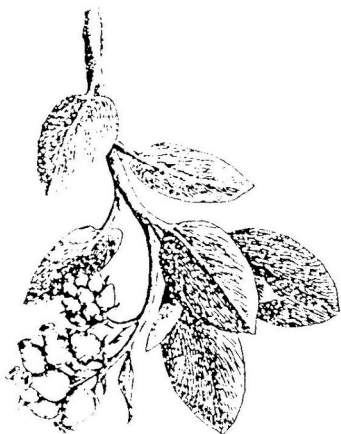
*Thanks to everyone who turned out and made the annual cleanup such a great success!*

### Sweet Springs Nature Preserve

One of the natural public "gems" on the Central Coast is the Sweet Springs Nature Preserve managed by the Morro Coast Audubon Society (MCAS). SWAP and MCAS have had a strong, mutually supportive relationship over many years because of our common interest in the health of the estuary. MCAS is conducting a community fund raising drive to establish a SWEET SPRINGS ENDOWMENT FUND to provide sufficient income for permanent management and maintenance costs of the site. Members of the SWAP Board urge you to help by donating to this fund. If you haven't done so already, send your contribution to P.O. Box 160, Morro Bay, CA 93443-0160.

### Small Change Keeps Coming In

The quarters, dimes, pennies, and even dollars in our "Small Change" jars in local businesses are adding up quickly. Our treasurer had to get a change counter and the fund is inching up. Thanks to Los Osos Auto Parts for joining the other community businesses in Morro Bay and Los Osos who are so generously cooperating with this fund raising project. How are the jars at home doing? When we put all our little bits together we make a lot! Keep up the good work.



Dave Sears, State Parks  
 Aryan Roest, Ph.D., Zoologist  
 Bill Newmann, Friends of the Estuary  
 Bud & Alice Meyer, C.N.P.S.  
 Bud Laurent, SLO County Supervisor  
 David Keil, Ph.D., Botanist  
 Don Hoffman, Natural History Association  
 Jim Havlena, CPA  
 Ray Belknap, SLO Land Conservancy  
 Myron Graham, Audubon  
 Tim Gallagher, SLO County Parks  
 Steve Fabry, Morro Bay Task Force  
 Charles Dills, Archaeologist  
 David Chipping, Ph.D., Geologist  
 Leslie Bowker, Ph.D., Ecologist

**ADVISORS**

Pat Grimes & Katy Budge, Newsletter Editors  
 Dominic Perello, Membership Chair  
 Barbara Machado, Development Coordinator  
 Jerome Deitz, Treasurer  
 Yolanda Waddell, Corresponding Secretary  
 Rosemary Bowker, President

**OFFICERS 1992**

*Address Correction Requested*

Los Osos /Morro Bay Chapter  
**SMALL WILDERNESS AREA PRESERVATION**  
 A Non-Profit Public Benefit Corporation  
 P.O. Box 6442, Los Osos, CA 93412-6442

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**ARE YOU A MEMBER OF SWAP?**

Check your mailing label. If you are, the date that you last paid your dues is in the upper right hand corner of the label. Your membership is a vote of support for preservation of the El Moro Elfin Forest. We are an all-volunteer organization. Your annual dues cover our operating expenses and fund raising expenses. Special memberships go to the Elfin Forest Land Fund after dues and premium costs are covered.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

- \_\_\_\_\_ \$12 Member - Newsletter subscription with membership
- \_\_\_\_\_ \$25 Steward - Newsletter & Elfin Forest Notecards
- \_\_\_\_\_ \$50 Protector - Newsletter & Elfin Forest T-Shirt
- \_\_\_\_\_ \$100 Defender - Newsletter & Elfin Forest Re-Usa Bag
- \_\_\_\_\_ \$250 Champion - Newsletter & Framed Elfin Forest Print
- \_\_\_\_\_ \$1000 Life Member - Newsletter & Bronzed Plaque

\_\_\_\_\_ Send information on how I can help as a volunteer

**Use Your Credit Card to Support SWAP**

As of November 1st, SWAP entered the credit card age and it's easier than ever to support SWAP. Now you can use your VISA or MasterCharge to pay your annual dues, make contributions to the land fund, purchase Certificates of Stewardship, & even to buy gifts of sweatshirts, t-shirts, notecards or re-usa-bags.

It can't get any easier than this: Call our Treasurer, Jerry Deitz, at 528-7136 with your VISA or MASTERCARD number and expiration date in hand. Tell Jerry what you want to do; he'll write up the charge and return your transaction copy in the mail. You can use your credit card at meetings or at our outreach information booths as well.

Our El Moro Elfin Forest items do make great gifts and they "give" in two ways. We have T-shirts for \$12, Sweatshirts for \$18, Notecards for \$4, & our heavy canvas Re-Usa-Bags for \$7.50. And don't forget the Certificates of Stewardship where each \$2 saves a square foot of the Elfin Forest. Jerry doesn't gift wrap, but for a \$1.50 handling charge, he can sure make the shopping by credit card easy.



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