

OAK LEAVES

A PUBLICATION OF THE LOS OSOS/MORRO BAY CHAPTER SMALL WILDERNESS AREA PRESERVATION
P.O. BOX 6442 LOS OSOS, CALIFORNIA 93412 (805) 528-2579 SEPTEMBER 1994

From the president,

We did it. We ALL did it. We actually really and truly accomplished our goal of finding the funding to complete the purchase of the Elfin Forest. Escrow has closed. The El Moro Elfin Forest is now a permanent ecological reserve.

I find myself drawn back to the mural on the wall of Los Osos Rexall to look at the list of names of all those who made this possible. It's very impressive! And behind the names are so many stories of community spirit and willingness to work to save a very special small wilderness.

But buying the property is just the beginning.

We signed an "Adopt-A-Park" agreement to develop and implement a resource management plan for the Elfin Forest. Where should we establish permanent trails? Where do we need to consider replanting and erosion control? What policies do we need to establish concerning the responsible use of the Elfin Forest? Should we build an overlook or put in benches or build a boardwalk for handicapped access? How can we provide easy access for passive recreational use while at the same time being considerate of the neighbors of the Elfin Forest?

We still need your support. We need your membership. We need your volunteer time to work on projects in the Elfin Forest and to continue our outreach and educational activities.

A membership envelope is enclosed. Won't you please use it?

Rose
Rose Bowker

MURAL DEDICATION AND CELEBRATION

Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, concerned citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever does.

Margaret Mead

Members of SWAP and special guests gathered at the El Moro Elfin Forest Mural at the Los Osos Rexall Drugstore Parking Lot on Sunday, June 5th to dedicate the mural and celebrate the rewards of the hard work of land preservation.

Barbara Rosenthal signed the huge work in which she captured the beauty and essence of the Elfin Forest. Rose Bowker then revealed the plaque naming over 2,000 individuals and businesses who had been captured by the idea of preserving a small wilderness and contributed to the fund raising efforts.

Thanks and recognition for significant contributions to the success of the preservation effort were given to Yolanda Waddell, Pat & Larry Grimes, Elsie & Jerry Deitz, Flo Ross, Barbara Machado, Assemblywoman Andrea Seastrand and her assistant Eric Daniels, Carol Arnold of the California State Coastal Conservancy, Supervisor Bud Laurent and the SLO County Board of Supervisors, Tim Gallagher of SLO County Parks, Maria Singleton and Karen Tackett of Community Relations and Government Affairs at Pacific Gas & Electric Co., the Land Conservancy of SLO County, Santa Lucia Chapter of the Sierra Club, California Native Plant Society, Morro Coast Audubon, North Cuesta Audubon, Natural History Association of San Luis Obispo County, Friends of the Estuary, the Sun Bulletin, Bay News, New Times, Telegram-Tribune, KSBY TV6, KCBX, KVEC, Books and Company and Gary

Celebration continued on page 2

Celebration ... continued

and Judi Tewell, Los Osos Rexall.

Rose and Les Bowker were lauded by the Board of Directors for their outstanding dedication and tireless efforts on behalf of SWAP.

Strawberries and wine highlighted the reception which followed in the Celestial Meadow of the Elfin Forest with music by Spooner's Cove String Band. The celebration culminated nine years of work by the SWAP board as well as the efforts of many organizations, agencies and individuals who contributed energy and expertise to the success of the project.



**THANK YOU
EVERYONE!**



At the dedication reception, Rose and Les Bowker agree with Kathleen Goddard Jones that sometimes, in land preservation work, life is a bowl of strawberries!



With the Spooner's Cove String Band providing the music, Barbara Machado leads us in singing, "This land is your land, this land is my land. The Elfin Forest was saved for you and me."

Raffle Winner

Robert McDougal of Los Osos was the winner of the George Gibson landscape watercolor. Many thanks to George for his generous donation and also to all those who bought tickets.

Plans & Projects

Our management plan planners will have their first organizational meeting in October. Call Rose Bowker at 528-2579 if you want to be involved.

SWAP has submitted a proposal for UNOCAL funds to support the collection of seeds from pygmy oaks, manzanitas, and bush lupine in the Elfin Forest to be used in replanting the eroded areas as part of our management plan efforts.

Enos Flores, the head of the local Civilian Conservation Corps, has requested funding to have the CCC's do trail work and erosion control in the Elfin Forest under the direction of our management plan.

Pat Grimes and Rose Bowker are working on a new brochure to provide information about SWAP and the Elfin Forest. We will place them in Bruce Crawford's boxes at the street ends near the Elfin Forest and distribute them at public events.

SWAP has supported the Los Osos Tree Committee's application for California "RE-LEAF" funds to plant oak trees around County Well #3 in Baywood Park. These funds are available for urban tree plantings on public lands by non-profit organizations.

Elsie Deitz is working on a new t-shirt design, so don't do all your gift shopping yet!

Join Friends of the Estuary on September 11th, Morro Bay Estuary Day, to celebrate passage of AB640/Seastrand, which named Morro Bay a State Estuary. Several events are planned for the day, including a barbecue/potluck, video premiere and special presentations at the Museum of Natural History. Call 772-8657 or 528-1738 for BBQ reservations or more information.



It's Harbor Festival Time Again



Morro Bay's Harbor Festival, planned for October 1-2, is on the horizon. We need volunteers for our booth and to do various festival jobs which earn money for SWAP projects. In the past we have directed traffic within the festival, and this year we hope to have enough people power to cover a few other jobs so we can earn a bigger share in the proceeds of this event.

On October 1st and 2nd we will need people to staff our information booth which is being revised to focus on environmental education. We'll also need people who will be available for shifts during those two days and for set-up and take-down jobs on September 30th and October 2nd.

Thanks to our marvelous volunteers, participation in the Harbor Festival has been an easy and profitable fundraiser for SWAP. The invaluable and indefatigable Flo Ross, who is spearheading this effort for us, will be calling you, or you could surprise her with a volunteer call at 528-1647. Please help us make this our most successful Harbor Festival ever so we can fund our projects in the Elfin Forest.



Neal Royer leading the Early Bird Walkers in April.

Third Saturday Walks

- ⊙ Sept. 17th - Yvette and John Nowak will lead a walk for children, ages 8-12. With hands-on experiments, they will help children to discover how the Chumash used plants in their everyday lives. Children must be accompanied by an adult; other interested adults welcome.
- ⊙ Oct. 15th Early bird walk with Audubon Society member Richard Bock. A long-time neighbor of the Elfin Forest, Richard knows where the forest's feathered inhabitants hang out. Walk starts at 8:30 am.
- ⊙ Nov. 19th Ecologist Les Bowker will tell you about the "bump-bump plant" and other fascinating inhabitants of the Elfin Forest; and SWAP President Rose Bowker will tell you what happens next, now that the Elfin Forest actually has been saved.
- ⊙ Dec. 17th The community's gift to the Elfin Forest: a good "forest cleaning!" Dress in grubbies and bring gloves; be ready to haul out trash or pull up the invading veldt grass. We'll start at 9:30 and finish by noon.

Walks begin at 9:30 am (unless otherwise noted) at the north end of 15th Street off Santa Ysabel in Los Osos. Wear comfortable, shoes, long sleeves and pants to avoid poison oak. Please park carefully, avoiding driveways and mailboxes. Because of insurance restrictions, we ask that you not bring dogs or other pets. The easy paced walks last 1 1/2 to 2 hours. Call 528-4540 for information.

California Coastweeks

September 17 through October 10th are 1994's California Coastweeks which focus attention on citizen responsibility for the health and beauty of the state's beaches as part of the California Coastal Commission's Adopt-a-Beach program. September 17th is the date when Californians up and down the state will be cleaning up their beaches and wetlands together for the tenth time.

Scouring the estuary from Turri Road to Twin Bridges has been SWAP's contribution to the annual Coastal Cleanup and we will be there again looking for unimagined loot and removing wildlife hazards. Prizes and good times have traditionally been included in this important day for making an ecological difference.

If you want to be a part of this huge and important effort, meet the SWAP Gleaners at 9 am on September 17th at Turri Road and South Bay Boulevard. Wear sturdy shoes and bring your gloves. For more information, call Yolanda Waddell at 528-4540.

People interested in joining the canoe and kayak section from the Sierra Club who scour the sandspit should call Jack Beigle at 773-2147.

New Pocket Guide Funded

SWAP has been awarded \$300 from the SLO County Environmental Fund to print a Pocket Guide to the Elfin Forest. The handy 12-page guide, designed to fit into pocket, purse or backpack, will include brief descriptions of five Elfin Forest habitats: coastal brackish marsh, riparian woodland fringe, pygmy oak woodland, chaparral, and coastal sage scrub. Following the habitat descriptions will be checklists of the forest's birds, plants, mammals, amphibians, reptiles and insects.

The El Moro Elfin Forest and the estuary adjacent are host to 156 bird species, 24 mammal species, 13 amphibian and reptile species, over 75 insect species and in excess of 200 plant species. Checklists for the guide were compiled by the following scientists: Ron Ruppert, Aryan Roest, Dennis Sheridan, David Keil, Phil Ashley, and Kathryn Bay. Editor of the Pocket Guide is Yolanda Waddell.

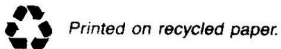
The Pocket Guide will be available in November, 1994, and will generally be distributed during SWAP's monthly walks. In order to generate funds for future printings of the Pocket Guide, there will be a charge of 25 cents per guide. For more information, call 528-4540.

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Memberships needed NOW!

We need your membership urgently. With all the excitement of our land fund drive membership renewals have been forgotten. Our work and our expenses from the general fund for day-to-day operations (xeroxing, mailing, etc.) go on. We anticipate additional expenses to complete the purchase and hope to continue with educational and improvement/revegetation programs in the future. Land preservation is a living responsibility. Check your address label on the front of this newsletter. The date reveals the last time you paid your membership dues. Are you current? Your membership brings you the SWAP quarterly newsletter and it supports our general fund. We're an all-volunteer, non-profit organization so your financial support is critical to our success.

P L E A S E R E N E W N O W !



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

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| <input type="checkbox"/> Member \$12 | <input type="checkbox"/> Defender \$100 |
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Make checks payable to SWAP.
 Mail to Small Wilderness Area Preservation,
 P.O. Box 6442, Los Osos, CA 93412