

# O A K L E A V E S

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 1995

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## **Making the Elfin Forest Accessible to ALL**



Cal Poly architecture student Mark Dariz has first hand experience with not having access to the Elfin Forest. A nearby resident of 17th Street, Dariz is unable to visit the Elfin Forest on his own as the soft sandy trails will not support his wheelchair.

Dariz has been working with SWAP to apply his architectural skills planning access for persons of all abilities. In July, SWAP borrowed a sand wheel chair from the Morro Bay Park and Recreation Department to take Mark on a tour of the Elfin Forest. Later board members visited the Nature Conservancy's boardwalk access at Oso Flaco Lake with Mark. Dariz introduced Cal Poly Architecture Professor Emeritus Paul Wolff to SWAP. Dr. Wolff has considerable experience with access issues and will oversee Dariz' design of a boardwalk to provide improved access for all visitors that will at the same time be in keeping with the Elfin Forest Natural Area.

Cal Poly construction management student Antoni Artho, will build a pilot segment of the boardwalk as his senior project. He is looking into design issues, costing out materials, and handling the myriad details that must be addressed for such a project.

We will keep you updated on Mark and Toni's progress.

## **SWAP Grant Writers Put Pen to Paper Again**

SWAP and LOCO (the Los Osos Community Organization), in collaboration with SLO County Parks and CA Department of Parks and Recreation, prepared a joint proposal for funding from the federal ISTE A program for a "Los Osos/Elfin Forest Community Access." Funds were requested for an ecological information area at the South Bay Day Use Area north of Los Osos Creek and west of South Bay Boulevard. Panoramic views of the Elfin Forest and Morro Bay would be supplemented by informational interpretive displays. Funds were also requested to build a boardwalk to provide access to persons of all abilities and to improve the existing trails that would connect the ecological interpretive area site with the boardwalk site.

All requests for ISTE A funds were reviewed by the SLOCOG (the San Luis Obispo Council of Governments). SLOCOG recommended ISTE A funding for the interpretive site only and suggested applying for state Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation Funds, under the category of providing for roadside recreation, to fund the boardwalk access. A second proposal, for funding to complete the boardwalk, has been submitted to the California State Resource Agency in November. The Resource Agency will make their recommendations for funding to the California Transportation Commission in April of 1996 and awards will be made July 1, 1996.

### **Local Grant Awarded to SWAP**

Several persons expressed a concern that the Elfin Forest Natural Area is not clearly identified at the end of each of the streets that lead from Santa Ysabel into the Elfin Forest. In response to a call for proposals for county environmental funds, Jerry Deitz penned a request, which has been approved, for a \$500 grant to place identifying signs at each of the street ends. The signs should be up by the end of the year.

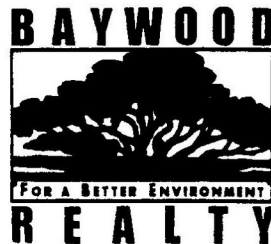
## Management Plan Update

SWAP completed a first draft of the Elfin Forest Resource Management Plan this summer. The plan provides a historical overview of the Elfin Forest Natural Area, identifies existing natural, recreational and cultural resources and those areas needing resource protection and enhancement, describes all allowable uses and activities, and will serve as a working "user's guide" for the ongoing management of the Elfin Forest as a natural area.

The first draft has been reviewed by Tim Gallagher, county parks facilities manager, Sandra Zaida, county parks planner, and Vince Cicero, resource ecologist for California Department of Parks and Recreation. Their comments are being incorporated into a revision of the working draft. Copies of the draft plan will be placed in the South Bay Community Library for public review and two public hearings will be held for community comment. Following public review, the resource management plan will be submitted to the San Luis Obispo County Parks Commission for approval.

## Local Realtors Continue to Support the Elfin Forest Natural Area

The Elfin Forest has once again been the beneficiary of the generosity of Jerri Chadwick, Baywood Realty and Patrick McGibney, Green Earth Realty. Both realtors have an ongoing practice of donating a percentage of all commissions to local environmental projects. Their recent contributions have been placed in the fund to help develop improved access to the Elfin Forest. If you have need of the services of a realtor, an environmental organization will benefit if you work with either Jerri or Patrick.



528-5800

## Local Sixth Graders Adopt Elfin Forest

Andy Brown, Colin Donohoo and Grant Supp are in

Mary Lou Gooden's sixth grade science class at Teach School.

The three friends live in Los Osos and are long-time fans of the Elfin Forest, so they chose to do this year's community action project close to home.

Andy said, "Last year we planted lots of plants in front of the kiosk at Morro Bay State Park. We're tired of planting, and we'd like to work on trails this year."

Yolanda Waddell, SWAP's education coordinator, took the group's proposal for a community action project to Tim Gallagher, Director of County Parks who is in charge of the Elfin Forest Natural Area. Gallagher required the group to sign an Adopt-a-Park Pledge to work on trails for a specific period of time and to stick to a schedule. This done, the boys and their parents spent a Saturday trimming two trails which had become overgrown due to last spring's rains.

The next phase of Andy, Colin and Grant's project will be to earn money by collecting and recycling aluminum cans, plastic and glass bottles. With their earnings they will purchase posts and crosspieces to block off some of the many side trails in the Elfin Forest to promote revegetation. They also plan to install one or two water bars to prevent erosion along the 13th Street trail, with the help of their parents. Their project is set for completion by May 1, 1996 at which time they will turn in a report to their teacher.

SWAP and the Elves take off their hats to this energetic and capable crew of sixth graders!



The Sixth Grade Trail Maintenance Team in Action.



## Want to Help the Elfin Forest? Adopt an Oak



Three hundred acorns gathered from coast live oak trees in the Elfin Forest last fall have become healthy seedlings under the watchful eye of Pete Waldburger. Now they are ready to plant. According to Waldburger, planting time will be after the first good rainfall. The seedlings will be planted near mature oaks in order to take advantage of the subterranean fungi so necessary for the survival of the "pygmy" oaks. Each seedling will need to be watered once a week for about a year except during periods of heavy rain. In the Elfin Forest, this will require carrying water in to the seedlings.

SWAP invites friends of the Elfin Forest of all ages to adopt an oak seedling for a year. Aside from the satisfaction of knowing that surviving seedlings will live to be hundreds of years old, each adoptive "parent" will be given a special badge and will be listed in Oak Leaves. We see this as an opportunity for school groups, service clubs, garden clubs & environmental organizations to participate in the stewardship of the Elfin Forest. To adopt an oak, volunteers can call Yolanda Waddell at 528-4540 or Larry Grimes at 528-3035, or you can simply fill in and mail the coupon in this newsletter, writing in "Adopt an Oak" under "I want to help."

## Cuesta Student Project Helps Elfin Forest

As a project for Ron Ruppert's spring 1995 Natural History class at Cuesta College, student Laurel Minden decided to collect and preserve specimens of some of the more common plants in the Elfin Forest. Her idea was to provide a portable "mini-herbarium" for Cuesta College biology instructors, SWAP walk leaders and docents, and teachers in the community who plan to lead field trips in the Elfin Forest.

In all, Laurel collected samples of 45 plants, bushes and trees during last February and March when most were in bloom. She preserved them in laminating film, clearly labeling each specimen with common and scientific names. The collection will be housed at the Cuesta College Bio Sciences Division and may be reserved by contacting Yolanda Waddell at 528-4540, evenings. Our thanks to Laurel Minden and her instructor, Ron Rupert for providing us with this excellent educational tool.

## SWAP School Program

In response to a request from Kay Schwartz, 3rd and 4th grade teacher at Baywood School, SWAP has developed a slide program on the plants, birds and animals of the Elfin Forest. It is designed for presentation to middle and upper elementary grades. The presentation was given in October by naturalist Theresa Larsen. After Theresa's presentation, the 3rd and 4th graders were able to recognize a number of plants when they visited the Elfin Forest later that week, according to Schwartz. Theresa has agreed to be SWAP's first school docent, and she will be glad to present the program to other school classes. For a school program, contact Yolanda Waddell at 528-4540.

### Third Saturday Walks

- ✓ **Dec. 16** Take a tour of the oak groves in the Elfin Forest with V.L. Holland, plant ecologist and well-known expert on California oak trees. You will learn what makes the forest's gnarled and stunted pygmy oaks different from, yet the same as, standard upright coast live oaks. You will also experience the peacefulness of standing under these ancient moss-and-lichen covered oaks.
- ✓ **Jan. 20** Our annual Fungus Foray with Dennis Sheridan. Dennis will lead us in an exploration of the Elfin Forest floor for the Wood Bluett, Golden Cap and Boletus. A good early January rain will bring out these and dozens more fascinating fungus species. Participants are encouraged to bring interesting fungus specimens for identification. This walk will last 2 to 2 1/2 hours.
- ✓ **Feb. 17** Enjoy a discovery walk in the Elfin Forest with naturalist Susan Rocha. Susan will help us to use sight and sound to identify birds, spot animal tracks, and discover shells left behind by the Chumash Indians. She will show us the roadways and dwellings of the dusky-footed woodrat, and will help us to understand the mysterious web of life in the Elfin Forest. This walk is designed for children of all ages.

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.

## Elfin Forest gets a Place on the Map

Cal Poly faculty Les Bowker, (Biological Sciences), Sara Kocher (Natural Resources Management) and Roland Strohmman (Agricultural Engineering) have been working with students to prepare accurate maps of the Elfin Forest. Stereo photographs taken by air on August 31 will be used to generate a topographical map of the Elfin Forest at the level of resolution needed to plan for access, management and restoration. NRM student Bruce Rawlings digitized the existing trails and plant communities from aerial photographs into ArcInfo data layers. Bio Sci student Jim Mathis is now ground-truthing the digitized information. All of this work is making a significant contribution to SWAP's efforts to develop a natural resource management plan for the Elfin Forest.



## Hooray for Harbor Festival Volunteers!



Janice Verity, our organized and efficient volunteer coordinator, knew she had such a great group working the harbor festival, she just arranged everything and headed for Greece and Israel that weekend. And she was right! It was a fantastic crew who called, hung banners, and sold those sand dollars! This is a great fund raiser for SWAP's general fund and it works because of our wonderful, dependable volunteers. MANY THANKS to Ann Calhoun, Ron Bayhan, Les & Rose Bowker, Peter Ogilvie, Flo Ross, Anne Phillips, Katie Karikka, Don & Chris Rose, Florence & Karl Appel, Katie Davis, Karen Antonel, Elyse Unger, Les Wamsley, Karen Kimura, Yolanda Waddell, Ruth Allen, Wes Hamilton, Barbara Rosenthal, Pat & Larry Grimes, Nancy Conant and Mary Conkling. You're SUPER!

## Rose Bowker's Conservation Work Recognized Again

Our incredible and industrious president, Rose Bowker has once again been honored by a community group for her outstanding environmental work. She was awarded a DAR Conservation Medal at La Cuesta Chapter, National Society Daughters of the American Revolution (NSDAR) meeting in October. This is a national award given to outstanding conservationists. Bowker cited her work with SWAP as an example of how a group of concerned and committed individuals can make something happen. The SWAP band of concerned individuals knows what a difference leadership and direction means to such a group, and we applaud NSDAR for recognizing a woman who has shown extraordinary leadership and commitment in the conservation field.

### THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU

to Baywood Realty, R. Bentley, V. Black, E. Bowen, A. Calhoun, M. Campagna, P. Childers, M. Coffeen, M. Conkling, L. Cunningham, L. Daniel, K. Davis, E. Dickerson, H. Dilts, H. Erickson, J. Ewell, J. Frawley, Green Earth Realty, J. Harrington, M. Hecht, K. Heffemon, W. Jackson, R. Jenkins, V. Jennings, M. Johnson, C. Larsen, L. Laurent, B. Liebscher, B. Machado, L. Markwort, J. McCullagh, R. McDougale, M. Mehring, N. Page, M. Parker, M. Peterson, E. Peter, B. Pewitt, R. Ralston, Rexall Drug, C. Robertson, H. Roden, F. Ross, H. Ross, J. Smalley, L. Steinbeck, B. Stump, R. Strassel, F. Taubert, B. Taylor, F. Villa, Y. Waddell, G. Walter, B. Wilson, and D. Youngman.

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What good looking gift comes in all sizes, fits men, women and children, and benefits the Elfin Forest with each purchase? You guessed it, those extremely attractive, high-quality Elfin Forest T-shirts and sweat shirts with the mural reproduced in a band of color front and back.



SHORT SLEEVE T-SHIRTS are available in large, extra large and extra, extra large at \$14.00 plus \$1.02 tax for a grand total of \$15.02.

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SWEAT SHIRTS are available in medium, large, extra large, and extra extra large for \$32 plus \$2.32 tax totalling \$34.32.

To order through SWAP, call Elsie or Jerry Deitz at 528-7136. Add \$2.75 per shirt for shopping and handling for mail order delivery, or you can save mailing costs by arranging to pick them up.

**MEMBERSHIP FORM**

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- I want to help — please call me.

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