

OAK LEAVES

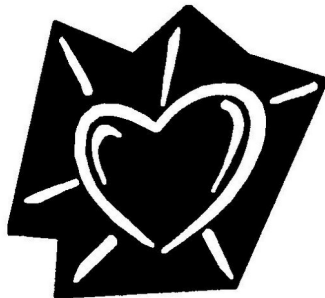
A PUBLICATION OF THE LOS OSOS / MORRO BAY CHAPTER OF SMALL WILDERNESS AREA PRESERVATION
P.O. BOX 6442, LOS OSOS, CALIFORNIA 93412-6442 ♦ (805) 528-2579 ♦ APRIL 1996

VOLUNTEERS FETED *Calhoun and Clayton Honored*

SWAP celebrated its faithful and fabulous volunteers at a special dinner given at the home of Janice and Roger Verity on February 16th. Board members prepared homemade soups, salad and bread to thank volunteers for all the hard work that keeps SWAP going. Over 50 people enjoyed the dinner where volunteer coordinator, Janice Verity presented volunteers with scrolls recognizing them for the specific ways they have personally volunteered for SWAP.

In announcing the "Volunteers of the Year," President Rosemary Bowker remarked that SWAP is an unusual non-profit organization in that there is not a single paid staff person. Volunteers are the life-blood of non-profits, but in SWAP's case they are everything, and consequently very deserving of a special "R and R" evening in their honor.

Ann Calhoun and Petra Clayton were honored as "Volunteers of the Year" for sustained and numerous contributions of time and talent over the years. Calhoun, who



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From the President

Just recently I had the opportunity to talk about the Elfin Forest to a group of people who have never gone there: all of them had some sort of mobility problem. Some could get around with canes or walkers; others were forced to use chairs - some self-powered; some motorized.

As I was talking, one gentleman spoke up and told me that he was not a nature lover because *nature did not let him go there*. And he had a point: how could he appreciate what he cannot experience? It made me realize how much richer my life has been simply because I can go out along the Ridge Trail and down into the Celestial Meadow, I can sit under a tree in Wood Rat Hall, I can watch the sun go down from Bush Lupine Point.

A few weeks ago, Jenny Langford of the Nature Conservancy gave me copies of three sets of aerial photos of the Elfin Forest - 1954, 1973, and 1995. Much to my surprise, the lower Elfin Forest had many more trails crisscrossing through it in 1954 than it does today. The Elfin Forest of 1996 with the almost impenetrable groves of manzanitas is much more of a "small wilderness" than it was 40 years ago. Which shows that people are not necessarily bad for special places such as the Elfin Forest.

Let us continue to use it wisely. To use it well. To use it with love. Let us leave it better than we found it.

Rose

Do you know...

- ...what percentage of the people in San Luis Obispo County have a mobility impairment and/or self care limitation?
- ...what percentage of the county's population is over 65?
- ...where people with a mobility impairment have access to natural areas?

The fact is that...

- ... one out of every ten persons in San Luis Obispo County has some type of mobility impairment that would prevent them from being able to visit the Elfin Forest.
- ... over fourteen percent of the county's population is over 65 years of age.
- ... there are just three areas in San Luis Obispo County that provide disabled access to a natural area: the board walk at Oso Flaco Lake, the board walk at Montana De Oro, & the decomposed granite trails at San Simeon State Park.



REVEGETATION PROJECT LAUNCHED

Saturday, December 30th was an extraordinary day for SWAP. People of all ages from all over the county came to the Elfin Forest to plant oak and manzanita seedlings as part of a revegetation project planned to restore damaged areas. The seedlings were grown from acorns collected in the Elfin Forest then nurtured for over a year before transplanting just prior to the rainy season. Many who planted also agreed to "adopt an oak" by promising to sustain their plant with regular watering.

A second arm of the project involved temporarily closing the area near bush lupine point to restrict human impact while the new plants are getting established so that the ongoing destabilization of the soil can be limited. Stabilizing the soil will reduce sedimentation in the estuary.

A standing ovation goes to Peter Waldburger, Larry Grimes and Les Bowker who organized and prepared the site for the mass volunteer planting. And the success of the day would not have been possible without the exceptional generosity and support of Mark & Mary Reentz and their sons. They donated all the water for the initial planting and provided a temporary nursery site for the forest of the future.

As always, the project could not have been accomplished without our great volunteers and the many caring people who turned out to continue their investment in their Elfin Forest. Thanks to all who participated and especially to those who chose to "adopt an oak." So far, we have been blessed with perfect weather to help the seedlings get firmly established, but we look forward to a great level of commitment we saw at the first "watering" before the rains began. Even while an organized group of terrific SWAP volunteers were tending the transplants, two young men arrived carrying 5-gallon bottles of water for their oaks. The level of participation in the revegetation project seems to confirm a deep ongoing interest and devotion by of all of us who enjoy and preserve the Elfin Forest.

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says "yes" whenever SWAP calls no matter what the job, was given a miniature cannon and cited especially for her work organizing the volunteer columnists for the "View from the Elfin Forest" columns in the Morro Bay SUN BULLETIN which first brought the project to public awareness.

Clayton was singled out for her years of work recruiting walk leaders and organizing the "Third Saturday Walks" which contributes significantly to SWAP's public education effort. Both honorees were presented with framed etchings of the Elfin Forest donated by Ybi Van Ekeren. Many thanks go to the Veritys for their generous hospitality and also to all the volunteers who were unable to join the celebration. ***You are all appreciated.***



The Asilomar boardwalk helps protect vegetation from human intrusion.

Update on the Management Plan

We want to thank all of you who have taken the time to send your comments on the first draft of the management plan to Sandra Zaida, San Luis Obispo County Parks Planner. SLO Parks will host a public workshop at which you will have the opportunity to address the issues that have been raised. Once a time and place has been set, we will make every effort to make the public aware of that workshop. Many of you have questions about the boardwalk so this newsletter features some related items.

To All the Elvish Minions,

I want to extend my deepest thanks for being honored as Employee of the Week, ... no, wait, ... uh ... Well, it can't be Volunteer of the Year, not in SWAP, a group filled with so many dedicated volunteerish overachievers that my paltry efforts pale in comparison.

Well, whatever it is, I won't quibble. Ybi Van Ekeren's lovely etching of our beloved Elfin Forest will be a beautiful reminder of how far we've come and just how much work is left to do to preserve what we've acquired.

As for the cannon, fully operational, wheels and all, well that was inspired. Now, I know there's some who know just where I should put that cannon, but I won't listen to them. It's now where the sun shines, on the mantlepiece, with a cranky-looking ceramic frog in a pink shift acting as gunnery sergeant. And there it will stay to serve as inspiration to keep firing away. Or to buy a pink shift.

Thank you all again. I'm honored. I'm touched. But, above all, I'm blessed. Where else could you get to work with such an amazing bunch of Wonderful Elves, get some great loot besides, plus SOUP?

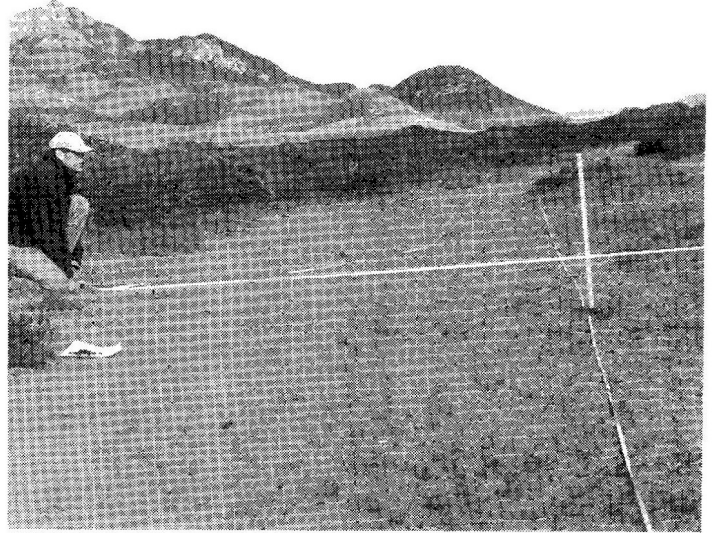
As ever,

THIRD SATURDAY WALKS

April 20th - Get a different view of the Elfin Forest through the lens of your camera. Pat Walsh, professional photographer and instructor in photography for Cal Poly, Cuesta College and SLO Adult Education, will guide photography enthusiasts through the chaparral and pygmy oak groves of the forest, providing pointers on composition and lighting. There will be opportunities for close-up shots of the many wildflowers. Bring your camera with fresh batteries and a roll of your favorite color or black & white film.

May 18th - Follow Steve Mueller, Cuesta College biology instructor and plant specialist, on a stroll through the Elfin Forest's plant "neighborhoods," or plant communities. Steve will explain how plants compete with each other for light, water and food, and also how they support each other. You will come away from this walk with a greater understanding of why the Elfin Forest is so special.

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 and mosquitoes. Please park carefully, avoiding driveways and mailboxes. We ask that you not bring dogs or other pets. The easy paced walks last 1 1/2 to 2 hours.



Cal Poly student Jim Mathis takes a soil depth measurement near Bush Lupine Point.

CHEERS TO THE SANTA BARBARA SWAP CHAPTER

Our sister SWAP chapter in Santa Barbara has just successfully concluded a very complex preservation project by preserving the \$3.5 million Wilcox Property with the assistance of the Trust for Public Land.

A great outpouring of public support included grant awards, penny jars, bake sales, runs, and as always, lots of help from committed volunteers.

CONGRATULATIONS SANTA BARBARA SWAP!

THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU

to M. Adamson, W.S. Autrey, K. Baker, Bank of America Foundation, G. Beigle, A. Bersie, R. Bowker, W. Butts, S. Charette, L. Cleworth, M. Coffeen, A. Crawford, D. Emerson, D. Fourie, L. Frank, N. Firedman, E. Frye, D. Funk, J. Garrett, S. Gottlieb, P. Grange, H. Graves, B. Griffiths, W. Hamilton, J. Harrington, M.J. Harrison, K. Heffernon, J. Heller, G. Hensley, H. Hileman, J. Hughes, W. Jackson, R. Jenkins, M. Johnson, R. Judd, C. Lancellotti, R. Lane, B. Laurent, A. Lindeman, B. Machado, M. McAulay, L. McCombs, E. McCracken, S. McLeod, M. Mehring, K. Miller, G. Moreno, L. Peck, H. Philpot, J. Pickett, J. Radabaugh, J. Ray, Rexall Drug, F. Ross, H. Ross, B. Schaeffer, M. Schwab, D. Sheridan, G. Sibbach, F.J. Simkins, S. Sparling, B. Taylor, M. D. Tittle, J. Verity, Y. Waddell, M. Weiss, J. Wood, D. Youngman.

Erosion in the Elfin Forest

Jim Mathis, a senior in the Biological Sciences Department at Cal Poly, is working with Dr. Les Bowker to determine the amount of soil that has been lost from the main trails of the Elfin Forest due to the impact of "people feet." The Elfin Forest covers a large sand dune. The roots of the plants keep the sand from blowing away. Unfortunately, as people walk along the trails, the trails are becoming wider. And the middens are being adversely impacted.

The Nature Conservancy found that after the boardwalk was built through the dunes at Osos Flaco Lake, people stopped taking "short cuts." The vegetation is regrowing in areas once criss-crossed by trails.

Gary Nichols of the California Conservation Corps visited the Elfin Forest to determine what options are available for mitigating the effect of "people feet." Unfortunately, materials such as decomposed granite are not effective in a sandy environment. Covering the trails with asphalt would have a more negative impact than a boardwalk.



LET'S HEAR IT ONCE MORE FOR OUR VOLUNTEERS

One more thanks to our great volunteers. We've written before to thank those who worked at the Morro Bay Harbor Festival, but this time it's to let you know their hard work brought our treasury \$550!! We'll be needing people to staff booths, water and work some events this spring, so please keep saying yes when you get a call from Janice Verity, our volunteer coordinator.



Dave Sears, California State Parks
 Aryan Roeser, Ph.D., Zoologist
 Bill Newman, Friends of the Estuary
 Bud & Alice Meyer, C.N.P.S.
 Bud Laurent, SLO County Supervisor
 David Keil, Ph.D., Botanist
 Don Hoffman, Central Coast Natural History Assn.
 Jim Havelera, CPA
 Ray Belknap, SLO Land Conservancy
 Myron Graham, Morro Coast Audubon
 Tim Gallagher, SLO County Parks
 Steve Eabry, Morro Bay Task Force
 Mark Dariz & Antoni Arho, Boardwalk Design
 Charles Dills, Archaeologist
 David Chipping, Ph.D., Geologist
 Leslie Bowker, Ph.D., Ecologist

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NEW MEMBERSHIP CHAIR

Welcome to Ruth Allen who has accepted the position of Membership Chair. Ruth will be following up on memberships which have lapsed and encouraging folks who have taken Third Saturday Walks or visited booths to join SWAP.

Have you renewed your membership on time? Check out the label on this newsletter for the date you last sent in your membership. We need to strengthen our membership rolls!!

***T-SHIRTS & SWEATSHIRTS
READY FOR SPRING***

Have you been meaning to get one of the beautiful El Moro Elfin Forest Mural shirts? Here's your chance:

SHORT SLEEVE T-SHIRTS are available in L, XL and XXL at \$14 plus \$1.02 tax for a grand total of \$15.02.

LONG SLEEVE T-SHIRTS are available in S, M, and XL at \$16.50 plus \$1.20 tax for a total of \$17.70.

SWEAT SHIRTS are available in M, L, XL, and XXL 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 shipping and handling for mail delivery, or you can save mailing costs by arranging to pick them up.

MEMBERSHIP FORM

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- Member \$12 Defender \$100
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