



# 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) 546-1199 ❖ JUNE/JULY 1998

*From the Chair*

## Renew Your Commitment to the Elfin Forest Today!

*By Gordon Hensley*

Some of you may have heard by now, but at the April Board of Directors meeting Beth Wimer was installed as Secretary and I was installed as Chair. Along with our new Treasurer, Bob McDougle, the transition of SWAP officers and Board of Directors is finally complete. My thanks for the many years of dedicated service by our predecessors, Rosemary Bowker, Jerry Deitz and Les Bowker. You have passed on a legacy of excellence and I am confident the current Board will strive to carry on in that tradition.

In many ways, SWAP has entered a new day. Not only did you elect a new Board in November, but from our 98-99 Planning Meeting, the Board has begun to formulate goals and objectives for the seven years remaining in our leadership role

**The key element in SWAP's success is and always has been our members. That's spelled Y-O-U!**

to preserve, protect and advocate for small wilderness areas throughout the county in general, and the Elfin Forest specifically. Part of that vision includes:

- ✓ Construction of the Elfin Forest Boardwalk by year end
- ✓ Training and recruitment of new/additional SWAP Board members
- ✓ Expanding educational opportunities at the Elfin Forest

If this looks like a lot for our Board to take on, I'd say you're correct. The key element in SWAP's success is and always has been our members. That's spelled Y-O-U! Remember back when you filled out that first membership card? Sent that first check for dues? Made a contribution toward the Los Osos Oaks or Elfin Forest? If you are like me, you were excited about the opportunity to do something positive about protecting and enhancing some incredi-

*From the Chair continued on page 2*

## News of SWAP, Inc. and Other Chapters

*By Yolanda Waddell*

On January 31, officers and representatives from the three currently active SWAP chapters gathered in Santa Barbara for the annual meeting of Small Wilderness Preservation, Inc., the umbrella organization which holds SWAP's 501(C)3 or tax-exempt status and files income tax reports for all of the chapters. Les Bowker, Bob McDougle and Yolanda Waddell attended from the Los Osos/Morro Bay Chapter.

Each chapter shared news of its projects. The Santa Barbara Chapter (President John Schuyler and past-President Sue Higman were present.) has completed its work in acquiring the cliff-top Wilcox Property. The property has been deeded over to Santa Barbara City Parks, and was renamed the Douglas Family Preserve after major donors in the purchase. In addition, Sue Higman announced that Santa Barbara was able to establish an endowment fund which will assist the chapter in working to acquire other irreplaceable small wilderness areas. They have been approached by several organizations for help.

Cile Borman, Co-President of the Verdugo-San Rafael Chapter, and Judith Holland, chapter Treasurer, reported that after their chapter succeeded in purchasing a large portion of the Big Tujunga Wash, a large development firm planned a golf course upstream of the preserve. Thanks to the excellent work of Bill Eick, a real estate attorney and longtime chapter member, the golf course project was stopped. Other recent purchases include a \$1.6 million acquisition in Elyria Canyon which was deeded over to the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy. The V-SR chapter, like the Santa Barbara chapter, is frequently contacted by other organizations wishing to save a beautiful and environmentally sensitive property. Members of the Verdugo-San Rafael chapter live in the Glendale-Pasadena area.

New officers, to begin serving on July 1, were elected.

*SWAP, Inc. continued on page 4*



Susan Rocha (front), co-leader of SWAP's March Discovery walk with Teresa Larson, had a rapt group of "students."

## Are You Current?

Please check your address label on the front of this newsletter for your "anniversary date." If you have not renewed your membership in the last year, your renewal is now due. Please fill out the form on the back page and send it in as soon as possible. Help us to keep our costs down by not having to mail a reminder letter.



All memberships and renewals are tax-deductible.

Your continuing and annual dues help with SWAP's overhead expenses, including the costs of printing and mailing this bi-monthly newsletter. It also helps with costs associated with the reforestation and watering of the seedlings and abatement projects to fight the non-natives threatening the native plants in the Elfin Forest. The size of our membership is one of the factors weighed by foundations who consider our grant applications too.

Your membership is VERY important.

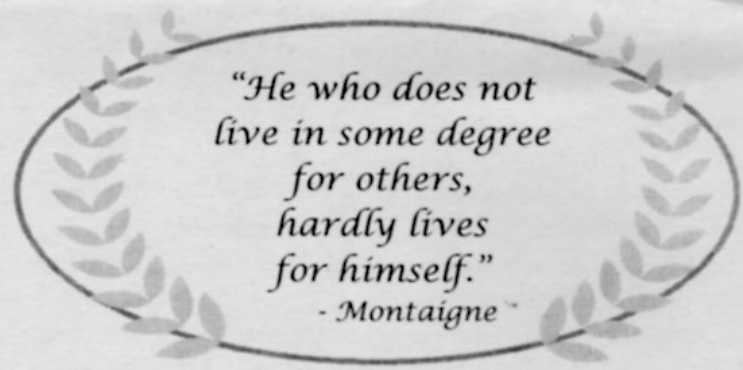
## From the Chair *continued from page 1*

bly beautiful and unique elements of our coast. So valuable that you were willing to invest some hard earned cash and maybe even invest some "sweat equity" to insure that these areas were preserved and restored. It just felt right!

Well, the good fight is not over. SWAP needs your continued investment. In the coming weeks and months, new opportunities will be coming your way: opportunities to help in the installation of the boardwalk; opportunities to lead a walk in the forest, opportunities to help educate our County about SWAP and the Elfin Forest, or perhaps an opportunity to serve on one of our committees. So, before you file this month's issue of *Oak Leaves*, please take a moment to review your personal schedule and give some thought to how, what, and when YOU might be willing to plug in.

I look forward to meeting all of you during my term in office. Please feel free to join us for the regular Board Meeting at 5 pm, the second Sunday of every month at the NEP Office (3rd & El Moro in Baywood Park) and be sure to watch the newsletter for upcoming opportunities to get involved.

Keep up the good fight.



## SWAP BOARD MEETINGS

The regular, second Sunday board meetings for May and June will be held at the NEP Office, at 3rd and El Moro Streets in Baywood Park at 5:00 pm on Sunday, July 12 and Sunday, August 9. Call 528-4540 to see what's on the agenda. See you there!

JULY 12

august 9

## 1998 SWAP Board Members

Yolanda Waddell, Walks and Education Coordinator  
 Bob McDougle, Treasurer  
 Janice Verity, Volunteer Coordinator  
 Pat Grimes, Publications Coordinator  
 Gordon Hensley, Grants Coordinator  
 Beth Wimer, Education Committee  
 Robin Knapp, Education Committee  
 Bethany Griffiths, Membership Co-chair  
 Sherry Lampert, Membership Co-chair  
 Teresa Larson, Education Committee  
 Les Bowker, At Large  
 Ann Doscher, At Large  
 Caroline Gmelin, At Large

## SWAP Participates in Rancho El Chorro Environmental Faire



Bill and Norma Vaughan (left), and Janice Verity (right) enjoyed setting up SWAP's display at the Rancho El Chorro Environmental Faire held March 28. Over the years, the "Faire" has attracted up to 1,600 visitors and the SWAP display has been one of 20 or more open to adults and children alike.



Erika Blecha (middle) won the drawing for a SWAP t-shirt at the Rancho El Chorro Environmental Faire. Handing her the t-shirt is her sister Kristen, who, as luck would have it, drew Erika's name! Education Committee Chair Beth Wimer supervised the drawing, so we know all was on the up and up!

### THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU

to New and Renewing Members:

J. Boyd, L. Barber, S. McGinty, J. Dilworth, C. Maurer, P. Nash-Karner, D. & K. Antonel, E. Brown, M. Gates, W. Kieft, P. Childers, M. Graham, A. Chermak, B. & H. Bennett, S. & S. Ames, D. & I. Hoffman, K. Karikka, H. & G. Groves, V. Thedeker, G. Hensley, R. Bracken, G. & G. Taylor, J. Mottmann, W. Brown, W. Wurster, J. Boyd, A. Calhoun, B. Hood-Bent, J. Bonestell, T. Lidel, M. Barrows, Orr Bookkeeping & Taxes, M. Schwab, H. & D. Krueger,, G. A. DeBolt, M. & H. Sicher, T. Hadjiyone, and to J. Hall and M. Butreene.



### BOOKS FOR YOU . . .

## Mountains of Fire

By Sharon Lewis Dickerson,

Photography by Joseph A. Dickerson, Graphic Illustrations by Marti Fast, Published by EZ Nature Books

One of the delights of a walk on Elfin Forest trails is the view of the Morros, the chain of ancient volcanic peaks dividing the Chorro and Los Osos Valleys. When hikers wonder about these landmarks, their 25 million -year history, their names, their legends, or their contributions to the infrastructure of the county, Sharon Lewis Dickinson's *Mountains of Fire* will answer all the questions.

This comprehensive account of the "nine sisters" stretching from San Luis Obispo to the sea includes geology, history, quarrying and building stories, hiking trails, driving tours, maps, poetry, a glossary, a reading list, historical photos and news accounts. All this insightful detail is enhanced by artfully photographed views of the peaks (including notes) by Joe Dickerson who has led photography walks in the Elfin Forest. His carefully selected vistas connect the specific information with a familiar view.

Reading this enjoyable and informative book deepens one's understanding and appreciation of the "brown pyramids on the emerald plain" which dominate our landscape and define our place on earth.

## SWAP, Inc. *continued from page 1*

Kathleen Modugno, SB Chapter, is the next president; Yolanda Waddell, LO Chapter, will be Vice President; Secretary will be Sue Higman, of the SB chapter; and Judy Holland, V-SR chapter will be Treasurer. In addition to the above officers, the SWAP, Inc. Board of Directors includes presidents or chairs of the three chapters and one other member of each chapter's board. Meetings are held annually, and are open to the public; agendas and minutes are available on request.

After the business meeting, Sue and Jim Higman and Kathleen Modugno led a tour of the Douglas Family Preserve, 200 beautiful acres on cliffs overlooking the ocean at the north end of Santa Barbara. It is a city park now, and open to the public, thanks to SWAP.



(From Left to right) Judy Holland, Cile Borman, Les Bowker, and Yolanda Waddell in the Douglas Family Preserve in Santa Barbara, formerly known as the Wilcox Property.

## Remembering SWAP's Commitment to the Wilcox Property

By Katy Budge

When I moved to the Central Coast several years ago, I already knew what SWAP was about. It meant commitment, tenacity, fighting the odds, and unrelenting optimism. You see, I moved here from Santa Barbara, where a special group called SWAP was trying to preserve a very special place called the Wilcox Property.

I visited the Wilcox Property — located on a high bluff just north of the "Mesa" area of Santa Barbara — many times. It was a magical place. I went there to look for whales migrating north and south off the coast, to see clusters of Monarch butterflies in the eucalyptus, to watch the sunset over the water, to just go somewhere quiet. Each time I went there, I thought it might be the last. Developers had the Wilcox Property set firmly in their sights, and newly placed and replaced survey markers were a constant reminder of the potential loss.

The citizens of Santa Barbara were not immune to the beauty of the Wilcox Property, and when ballot initiatives called for using city funds to help buy the property, the yes votes were huge — enough for a landslide victory in any candidate election. But because this type of initiative needed a *two-thirds* majority to pass (as I recall), it narrowly missed passing on more than one occasion.

Despite setback after setback, the SWAP members I knew were unfazed. Perhaps battles had been lost, but certainly not the war, and most certainly not the cause. I lost track of the details involving the Wilcox Property after moving to the Central Coast, but when I heard SWAP had finally prevailed in preserving the property, it came as no surprise at all. I never doubted the fate of the Elfin Forest either.

## THIRD SATURDAY WALKS

### June 20

Tour the Elfin Forest's "plant neighborhoods" with biologist Steve Mueller. Learn how plants both compete with other species, yet are dependent on them as well. Get a different view of the Elfin Forest along the seldom-used Habitat Trail, as well as a chance to enjoy many late spring and early summer wildflowers still in bloom.

### July 18

Learn the ancient history of the Elfin Forest from archaeologist Dr. John Parker, Cuesta College instructor and archaeological consultant. Dr. Parker will take us back in time to learn about the ancient inhabitants of the Elfin Forest and Central Coast. He will also use Chumash artifacts to demonstrate their culture and processes. A few strong-armed volunteers who can arrive at 9:15 to help carry the artifacts would be appreciated.

### August 15

Join Dr. Dirk Walters, Cal Poly biologist, for a botanical stroll through the Elfin Forest. Oak Leaves readers have seen Dr. Walters' column, "Plants of the Elfin Forest" in the past few issues. His focus on this walk will be the stories plants have to tell. Bring a magnifying glass if you have one. There are many late summer flowers in full bloom during August.

Walks in the Elfin Forest begin at 9:30 a.m. (unless otherwise noted) at the north end of 15th Street off Santa Ysabel in Los Osos. Only the heaviest of El Niño rains will cancel a walk; if rain is light, put on your poncho and join us! Wear comfortable shoes, long sleeves and pants to avoid poison oak and mosquitoes. Please park carefully, avoiding drive-ways and mailboxes. We ask that you not bring dogs or other pets. The easy paced walks last 1-1/2 to 2 hours.

*Call 528-4540 evenings for information.*

# New Exotics, Old Problems: The Displacement of Native Species

By Greg Smith, Associate State Park Resource Ecologist, San Simeon District, California State Parks

From marine invertebrates to avian marauders and from annual grasses to perennial trees, the original resources of the central California coast are being displaced by non-native exotic pests. Take a look at what has happened to the sandy soils of Los Osos and the Nipomo Mesa since veldt grass (*Ehrharta calycina*) first appeared. Where once there was a plant community of variable stature, color and structure, now only homogenous fields of pinkish-orange grass exist.

Non-native plants such as blue gum eucalyptus (*Eucalyptus globulus*), cape ivy (a.k.a. German Ivy) (*Senecio mikanioides*), pampas grass (*Cortaderia jubata*) and veldt grass have one shared growing requirement: disturbed soil. All of these plants are primarily found in areas where the soil is disturbed on a continuous basis. Eucalyptus and pampas grass are found growing along road shoulders where sluffed material creates new opportunities for germination. Cape ivy and eucalyptus are found in riparian zones where floods inundate areas with new soils, while in Los Osos three of

these four species (not including cape ivy) have found the constantly shifting sandy soil to be ideal for colonization.

The ability of these non-natives to become naturalized (a word of caution: "naturalized does not mean "native") in local habitats is creating a patchwork of plant monocultures. For the most part, these four species are capable of saturating areas to the point where native plants can no longer germinate and grow.

This insidious impact to the plant communities of the central coast of California has far reaching implications to all residents. The loss of native plant species has a direct effect on the native wildlife that would normally inhabit these communities. When the species reach the point of extirpation, it is not uncommon for them to be

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listed under the Federal or State Endangered Species Act, which then affects how planning decisions are formulated in our communities and for our agricultural parcels.

**... a word of caution: "naturalized does not mean "native" ...**

The size (in acreage) of the problem in our area has grown to the extent that the manual removal of two of these species (cape ivy and veldt grass) is not possible from an economic or logistic perspective. This brings biological control to the forefront when trying to assess methods for control and removal of these exotic species. Research is being undertaken in South Africa to determine if a biological control is available to help eradicate cape ivy and veldt grass, or at a minimum prevent the further spread of these plants.

Eucalyptus and pampas grass seedlings can be removed by hand or sprayed with herbicide to prevent the expansion of existing colonies. But the size of the largest colonies prevents complete removal by hand. It could be that catastrophic freezes or other natural events could minimize the size of these plots to a size that becomes manageable in the future.

Other non-native naturalized plants that are displacing native species include: European beach grass (*Ammophila arenaria*); giant reed (*Arundo donax*); fennel (*Foeniculum vulgare*); and fountain grass (*Pennisetum setaceum*). To learn more about these invasive exotics, their impacts to native resources and efforts to control their spread check out the following Internet page:  
HYPERLINK [gopher://gopher.igc.apc.org/11/orgs.ceppc](http://gopher.igc.apc.org/11/orgs.ceppc) and click on the database page.

*Ed. Note: If you have trouble linking directly to the site at the above address, try the following steps.*

- 1) Open the Gopher search engine
- 2) Click on Gopher Quick Go
- 3) For the URL address type: [gopher.igc.apc.org/](http://gopher.igc.apc.org/)
- 4) Click on the link to:

Organizations on the IGC Networks Gopher

- 5) Click on the link to:

California Exotic Pest Plant Council (CEPPC)

- 6) Click on the link to: Database

This will connect you with a list of text files for various plants. It will be useful to know their Latin names and well as the common.

*Fourth in a Series*

# Plants of the Elfin Forest: Sticky Monkey Flower

by Dirk Walters, Ph.D.

The plant highlighted in this issue is the sticky monkey flower or bush monkey flower, *Mimulus (Diplacus) aurantiacus*. As I write this (early May), the orange or golden tubes of the shrub monkey flower are competing with the whitish flowers of the black sage (*Salvia melifera*) for top billing as the most prolific bloomer in the Elfin Forest. Although the pairs of 1-2 inch long monkey flower flowers are larger, the relatively tiny, whorled 1/2 inch black sage flowers are much more numerous. Both species dominate drier shrubby areas, although the monkey flowers can also be found as an occasional understory plant around the coast live oaks. In fact, the bush monkey flower is so common and so widespread within the Elfin Forest, that one would have to be blindfolded not to see it.

When you go out to look for the flowers of the shrubby monkey flower, you may get to see a plant move. Most people know plants move their leaves in response to changing light conditions and that seeds and pollen move if wind or insects carry them. However, these types of movements are so slow, most of us will never have actually seen movement in plants. Some of us, who are nature TV junkies, may have seen plant movements in time lapse photography. The monkey flower's stigma (the end of the central bowling pin shaped structure called the pistil or female organ) consists of two small flat plates. When the flower opens, the plates spread apart exposing the lower part of the upper plate and the upper side of the lower plate. These two surfaces are the pollen receptive portions of the stigma. When pollen is deposited on one of these surfaces, the two plates move together relatively rapidly or 'slam' shut. This relatively rapid movement can be seen anytime by simulating a successful pollination. Simply rub the stigmas gently with a pine needle, pencil point, or grass leaf and watch the stigmas close. If you go back to the same flower after a few hours, the stigmas will have reopened, so no permanent damage will have been done.

Monkey flowers belong to a very large genus that is distributed on most of the continents and some islands of the world. However, there are more species in the Western United States, in general, and in California, in particular, than in any other part of the world. In fact, *Mimulus*, is the sixth largest genus in our state. Most of the genus is annual herbs, but there are also a fair number of perennial herbs. However, a couple of species of monkey flowers are shrubby. California's shrubby monkey flowers have been variously



Monkey Flower illustration by Bonnie Walters.

classified over the years. In most older books, they are divided up into anywhere from 4 to 8 different species. Half of the plant identification books separate the woody monkey flowers from the genus *Mimulus*, and place them into a separate genus, *Diplacus*. All books agree, however, that these woody species are extremely variable and prone to hybridize with any other woody monkey flower with which they happen to come in contact. Based on this kind of evidence David M. Thompson, in the recently published "The Jepson Manual" has not only included the woody monkey flowers in *Mimulus*, but also reduced the number of species to only two [*M. aurantiacus* and *M. clevelandii*]. All of the woody monkey flowers in the Elfin Forest would have been identified as the common bush monkey flower, *M. aurantiacus*, or *D. aurantiacus*, by whatever book, old or new, you would happen to be using.

The name Monkey flower comes from the observation that one can recognize the face of monkey in the spot pattern of the fused petals (corolla). I have to admit, since coming to California, I have often looked for this "face" and never been able to see it in any of the species I have observed and this has always bothered me. One possible explanation for my lack of creativity in seeing the "face" was found in *Wild Flowers of the United States*, Vol 4, edited by

*Monkey Flower* continued on page 7

# Garden Festival Was Great

Many thanks to all the "come rain or shine" volunteers who staffed the Ceanothus Scrub activity booth at the 7th Annual Garden Festival in May. Special thanks go to Yolanda Waddell and Janice Verity who organized the booth and to Ann Calhoun, Teresa and Gregory Larsen, Roger Verity and Pat Grimes who helped children of all ages clean up with the amazing natural lather that has been used since the Chumash occupied the area.

Visitors to the booth first put dirt on their hands, then rolled a cluster of ceanothus blossoms and a small amount of water between their hands. Although most visitors knew the plant by sight, nearly everyone was astonished by the cleansing action of the sudsy lather produced by these common and familiar native plant flowers. It has been suggested by Pete Pedersen that the lather might be caused by the presence of fatty acids in the flowers

## Visit Monthly Events at Botanical Garden

The San Luis Obispo Botanical Garden at El Chorro Regional Park has ongoing monthly events the second Saturday of the month from April to November. Stop by and visit their beautiful preview garden and see another example of volunteer power.

## Monkey Flower *continued from page 6*

H. W. Rickett which states, "Both names refer to the "grinning" or "miming" corolla of some species; these are mostly eastern (U.S.) species, and many of the numerous western species have no "monkey face." So, I wasn't really "creatively challenged"; Western U.S. species don't display monkey faces. Our common bush monkey flower surely doesn't.

I also ran into a problem with the origin of the name *Mimulus*. One source said it was derived from a Latin root and a second said it was Greek; both agreed that it meant an ape, oaf, or painted actor. So I looked up the word "mime" in the *Random House Unabridged Dictionary, 2nd edition*, which states that the word is derived from the Greek "mimos" or Latin 'mimus' meaning an oaf, ape, or actor with a comically painted face. In other words, both sources were correct. Since the Greek language is the older of the two, and Romans absorbed many Greek words, I assume the Ancient Greeks coined the word first, which would make the origin of the base word Greek. The name "*aurantiacus*" is derived from New Latin and means the color orange, which is the color of the corolla in the most widespread form of the species. Shrubby monkey flowers vary in color from lemon yellow to orange brownish-yellow. The other color forms were formally recognized as separate species.

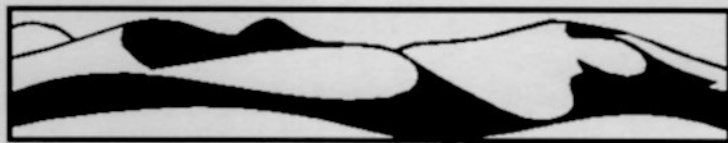
## Mark Your Calendars SLOPE Effort To Benefit NHA

A series of "Paint Out" events conducted by the San Luis Outdoor Painters Enterprise (SLOPE) will culminate in a SLOPE Art Show and Sale in September which will benefit the Central Coast Natural History Association (NHA). Members of SLOPE will be working on paintings of the Morro Bay estuary throughout the summer – the first two Paint Outs were held in April and May, and more are in the works. The artists will then donate the artwork to the NHA for the Art Show to be held on Saturday, September 12 at the Museum of Natural History, and the two-week show and sale immediately following. (The Annual Estuary Day celebration is slated for Sunday, September 13.)

SLOPE is a group of professional artists committed to preserving the plants, animals and natural communities that represent the diversity of life found in San Luis Obispo County. Their ranks include such notable painters as Alfredo Arciniaga, John Barnard, Marguerite Costigan, Dotty Hawthorne, Judy Lyon, LaVerne McDonnell, Libby Tolley, and Jeanette Wolff.

In the past, SLOPE has worked in cooperation with local and national conservation groups and landowners to protect the county's natural communities, including fundraising efforts for the Morros Preservation Fund of the Sierra Club, and SWAP's purchase of the Elfin Forest. All proceeds from the NHA event will go towards renovation of the Museum facility.

For more information about this or upcoming events, contact the Museum of Natural History at (805) 772-2694.



## Correction Regarding Snowy Plover Nesting Area

In the April/May issue of *OakLeaves* it was reported that the Snowy Plover nesting season was between April and June. A representative from California Fish Wildlife Service noted that the Plover nesting season is from March 1 through September 30.

The Western Snowy Plover is listed as threatened under the Federal Endangered Species Act. Please respect the local beach closures and be aware if nearby plovers start acting agitated or disturbed.



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## Elfin Forest Pocket Guide Available



SWAP is proud to have published the comprehensive "Pocket Guide to the Plants and Animals of the Elfin Forest Natural Area."

Edited by Yolanda Waddell, with illustrations by Becky McFarland, the extensive, 25-page guide covers 24 mammals, 13 amphibians and reptiles, 110 birds, 121 arthropods, 150 flowering plants and 35 fungi known to occur in the Elfin Forest. The species lists were compiled by Aryan Roest, Ph.D., Ron Ruppert, Jim Royer, V.L. Holland, Ph.D. and Dennis Sheridan. Funds for printing were provided by a grant from the San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors' Environmental Projects Fund.

Copies of this guide will be available for \$1 on Third Saturday Walks, and is also available at Volumes of Pleasure Bookstore in Los Osos.

## MEMBERSHIP FORM

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- Member \$12     Defender \$100
- Steward \$25     Champion \$250
- Protector \$50     Life Member \$1000
- I want to help, please call me!

Have you renewed your membership on time?  
Check out the label on this newsletter for the date you last sent in your membership.

**EVERY membership counts!!**

Make checks payable to SWAP,  
Mail to Small Wilderness Area Preservation,  
P.O. Box 6442, Los Osos, CA 93412 - 6442