



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) 528-0392 ❖ DECEMBER 2003 / JANUARY 2004



Archaeologist John Parker spoke to Grizzly Academy students about prehistoric people who lived near the Elfin Forest.

Photo by Lars Mikkelsen

Grizzly Academy Elfin Forest Walk

By John Parker, Ph.D.

On September 19th, about 100 students from the Grizzly Academy participated in archaeology walks through the Elfin Forest. In groups of 30, the students were led by Dr. John Parker. He introduced them to the prehistoric people who made a home around Morro Bay. The students got a chance to handle many of the ancient artifacts recovered from local archaeological sites and learned about the various plants used by the Forest's ancient Chumash inhabitants. Some even tried eating acorns.

The students visited one of the prehistoric sites in the Forest and learned how the people living at that site were able to trap and gather bay resources such as waterfowl and shell fish.

Every Friday, the Grizzly Academy students take part in field trips. Dr. Parker's Elfin Forest walk was followed by a hike to the top of Black Hill and a stroll along the mud flats at Morro Bay State Park.

State of the Forest

By Pete Sarafian, Conservation Chair

Looking back at 2003, there are both progress and increasing problems in the conservation of the Elfin Forest. SWAP installed a variety of fences and straw wattles for erosion control in the past two years. To date, 100% of the SWAP projects have been vandalized at least once. Veldt grass is under control in all but a few areas around the perimeter of the park. Volunteers and hired workers have kept control over the central areas, but there are still portions of the perimeter that are out of control. Likewise, narrow-leaved iceplant is under control throughout the park. Unfortunately, it will take annual weeding to prevent even the controlled areas of weeds from bursting out again. That will require a continuing outlay of money and time each and every year.

Some of the worst infestations of non-native vines in the oak groves still are uncontrolled, but help is on the way. As soon as U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service approves County Parks' submittal to proceed with native habitat recovery, there will be an active program to attack the invasive species with a variety of methods. Hopefully, there will be money available to do these tasks.

Finally, there are increasing amounts of Italian thistle (*Carduus pycnocephalus*) under some of the oak groves. Most are around the perimeter of the park. These need attention before they completely destroy the habitat of the understory of the trees. And speaking of trees, Sudden Oak Death syndrome is near the northern border of SLO county. It is only a matter of time before it will reach the Elfin Forest. Fortunately, now there is a treatment that could save the trees. Help in the form of money or County Agricultural Commission assistance will be needed to preserve our beautiful pygmy oak trees.

Editor's Note: On the positive side, SWAP is fortunate to have Pete Sarafian and his Conservation Committee members watching over and caring for the Elfin Forest. Were it not for them, little progress would have been made in controlling invasives and erosion, and in replanting some of the most damaged areas. Also, County Parks Supervising Ranger Chuck Lowe has made sure the boardwalk is kept in good repair, and Ranger Lew Texeira patrols, picks up trash and dog droppings, and removes graffiti. Thanks to all for keeping the Elfin Forest a beautiful place to visit, and a refuge for wild animals and birds.

County to Begin Recovery Actions

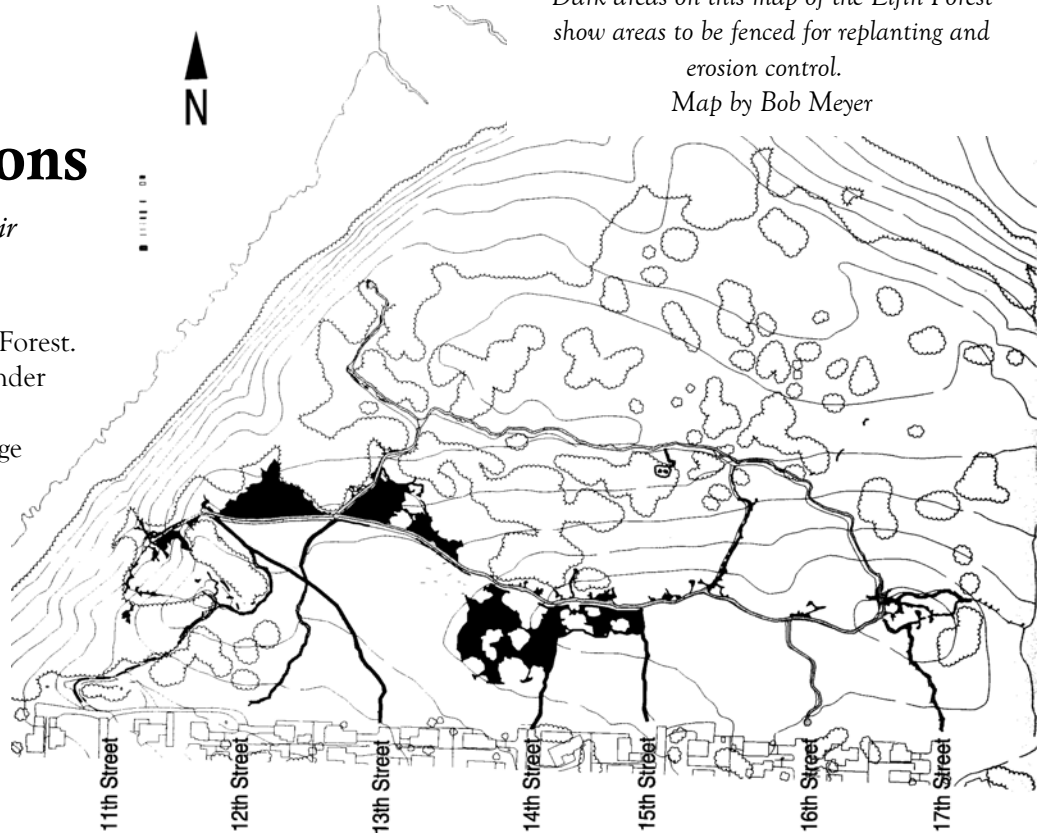
By Pete Sarafian, Conservation Chair

The winter 2003/2004 rainy season will be bringing some obvious changes to the Elfin Forest. SLO County Parks Department, under the watchful eyes of Parks Planner Jan Di Leo, is beginning a long-range plan to restore damaged habitat to native conditions.

This winter, the County will erect fences along the boardwalk ridge trail. These temporary structures will protect native plant seedlings that the County also will plant in degraded areas. Some areas that are subject to erosion will have erosion control structures installed. Largely consisting of straw wattles, they will interrupt the flow of water-borne soil and the formation of deep gullies. Several acres of the Forest are slated for these restoration activities. The physical work will be done by the California Conservation Corps, the Morro Group, and other private restoration consultants, along with SWAP volunteers.

The County also will close some of the sand trails, those that give rise to the worst erosion and plant damage, with fencing. SWAP will install permanent symbolic fencing to delineate parts of the remaining permanent sand trails and clarify where pedestrians should walk. The permanent symbolic fencing will have low visual impact and will consist of narrow metal rods with eyelets through which will run a single horizontal cable. The cable will run about two to three feet above ground level.

Dark areas on this map of the Elfin Forest show areas to be fenced for replanting and erosion control.
Map by Bob Meyer



Interpretive Sign Replaced

In July, one of the Boardwalk interpretive signs, titled "The Flood," was wrenched from its mounting at the Siena's View Overlook, and taken away to satisfy someone's desire for a trophy. The material chosen for fabrication of the boardwalk signs was a fairly low-cost laminate so that a sign could be replaced at a reasonable cost. However, it was hard for members of the SWAP/County Parks Interpretive Sign Committee to imagine that a visitor to the Elfin Forest would actually steal one. When "The Flood" disappeared, Jan Di Leo, County Parks Planner, ordered a replacement sign from the Canadian company which makes them. The new sign arrived in October, and was installed by Eagle Scout Cary Reents, with help from his father, Mark Reents. Thanks to both for their good work..

SWAP BOARD OF DIRECTORS

The Board of Directors of the Los Osos/Morro Bay Chapter of Small Wilderness Area Preservation (SWAP) consists of the following members:

Ron Rasmussen, Chair
 Pete Sarafian, Vice Chair
 Bob McDougle, Treasurer
 Yolanda Waddell, Secretary
 Bob Meyer, Member at Large
 Pat Sarafian, Member at Large

SWAP BOARD MEETINGS

The SWAP Board of Directors meets on the 2nd Monday of each month at 7 p.m. at the Coast National Bank, 1193 Los Osos Valley Road.

The next meetings are Monday, December 8, and Monday, January 12.

All Board meetings are open to the public.

To confirm the date, time and location (which are subject to change), phone 528-0392.

december 8

january 12

SWAP Annual Meeting Celebrates Volunteers

By Yolanda Waddell

On Saturday, October 18, the Los Osos/Morro Bay Chapter of SWAP held its Annual Meeting for its membership and the public. The featured speaker was Mike Multari, Director of the Morro Bay National Estuary Program (MBNEP). He presented a slide talk on the state of the Morro Bay Estuary, and how recent research is helping MBNEP to direct its projects. We also heard a report by Jan Di Leo, County Parks Planner, who described the Elfin Forest Recovery Plan, which is about to be put into action by County Parks, the Morro Group, and SWAP.

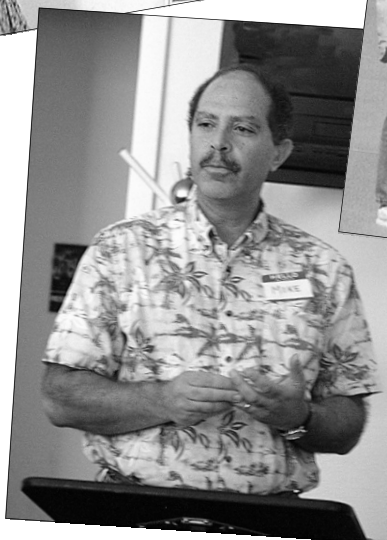
Bob Meyer was named SWAP Volunteer of the Year. During the past year he served as a member of the SWAP Board of Directors and as Chair of the Pocket Guide Revision Committee. He has also given countless hours as a member of the Conservation Committee including weeding, assisting the Conservation Chair in mapping the spread of Veldt grass in our county, and producing a map which will be used for the Elfin Forest Recovery Plan.

Other volunteers receiving special mention were Wendy Brown, SWAP Database Coordinator; Jan Di Leo, County Parks Planner who also donates much volunteer time to SWAP; Mary Mitchell, who helped to develop the Boardwalk Trail Guide, gives school walks, and is currently designing a Teacher Survey for the Education Committee; and Ruth Zank, now retired from several years as Membership Committee Correspondent. The meeting was followed by a picnic lunch, hosted by SWAP.



Above, Jan Di Leo, County Parks Planner, described recovery work to take place in the Elfin Forest in the next few months.

At right, Mike Multari, MBNEP director, spoke at SWAP's Annual Meeting about the importance of research on the future of the Morro Bay Estuary.



Photos by Bob Meyer



Top right, Mary Mitchell holds an Elfin Forest mural print and certificate awarded for her service this year. Photo by Pat Sarafian

Middle right, Bob Meyer (left), receives SWAP's Volunteer of the Year Award for 2003 from SWAP Secretary Yolanda Waddell. Photo by Sharon Meyer

Bottom right, Enjoying a picnic lunch following the Annual Meeting were (L-R): Pat Brown, Pete Sarafian, Mary Mitchell, Dorothy Norwood, Bob McDougle, Mike Multari, Bob Meyer, Sharon Meyer, Pat Sarafian and John Nowak.

Photo by Yolanda Waddell



Weed Warrior Jay Bonestell faithfully shows up every first Saturday to pull Veldt grass and other invasive plants. Photo by Yolanda Waddell

Fall Flattens Weed Warriors

By Pete Sarafian, Conservation Chair

In a monumental show of non support, the annual fall harvest of weeds in the Elfin Forest fell flat. Weed Warriors stayed away in droves, leaving the SWAP Board of Directors to fight practically alone in the trenches. The only outside help was trusty warrior Jay Bonestell who came to our aid in the midst of the volunteerism drought. Kudos to Jay! The October weed crew only consisted of Jay, Bob Meyer and his friend Noel Bertelson, and Yolanda Waddell. They mopped up the bad Veldt grass infestation between the 15th and 16th Street entrances to the Elfin Forest.

The November weed crew included Jay Bonestell again, with Bob Meyer and Pat and Pete Sarafian. They attacked a nasty infestation of English ivy and Cape ivy in the wooded corner of the Forest that is west of the 11th Street entrance. Much more work is needed in these areas to control the weed infestations.



Thistles were the order of the day for this group of Weed Warriors who found lots of them in the lower (Don Klopfer) grove. (L>R): Andy McMeans, Ron Rasmussen, Bob Meyer, Jalign Patterson, Pete Sarafian, Alana Puro, Tania Puro. Photo by Yolanda Waddell

Applause to SWAP Booth Volunteers!

By Pat Sarafian

Good weather, a variety of booths, lively music, and food was enjoyed by all at this year's OKTOBERFEST 2003. Not being too prejudiced, but the best booth of all was our SWAP BOOTH, staffed by our wonderful volunteers. Linda Young not only was there for her first time as a booth worker - but she arrived at 7:30a.m. to help Pat and Pete Sarafian set up and arrange everything.

Our booth location was right at the starting line for the walk/run race from Baywood to the Golf Course and back. That set the pace for Linda and Ann Calhoun, followed by Madeline and husband James (better known as JT) Taylor. JT was the principal CCC crew chief for the building of the Elfin Forest Boardwalk. The sun got warmer when Curt and Sandra Beebe showed up to work their shift, but our yellow canopy kept them in the shade. Another first time booth worker, Clem Jeffrey, arrived to work with Pat Sarafian during the last shift. TWO THUMBS UP for him for offering to stay on and assist the Sarafians in dismantling the booth at the end of the day. SWAP survives because of the enthusiasm and willingness of folks like these, who give of their time.

Our workers pointed out displays with photos of a disturbed area used by motorcycles a decade ago and current photos showing considerable restoration of native vegetation in vibrant yellow and purple colors. Pictures showing the interpretive signs now displayed along the Boardwalk were excellent visual aids, which helped with discussions. The sale of our beautiful Mural shirts, Mural Prints and other items contributed to making this day a very successful one for SWAP.

Second Trail Guide Dispenser Box to be Installed

As a result of installation of Elfin Forest directional signs at the end of each of the seven street entrances to the Elfin Forest, more people are entering the Elfin Forest from the western end rather than just at the main 16th Street entrance. The Trail Guide Committee realized that many visitors would walk almost the complete circuit of the boardwalk before coming upon a trail guide in the box posted at the 16th Street walk. Therefore, an additional box has been built by volunteer Bob Gandy. It will be placed at a wheelchair accessible height next to the Fairbanks Monument, close to Bush Lupine Lookout.

Let's All Pull Together!

SWAP First Saturday work parties are held at 9 a.m. to noon on the first Saturday of each month. Volunteers should meet at the north end of 15th Street. Dress for sun and wind and bring work gloves if you can. Some work gloves, tools and drinking water are provided. Call 528-0392.



WALKS in the ELFIN FOREST

Third Saturday Walks

December 20, 9:30 a.m.

Winter Solstice is upon us! Bob and Joan Field will lead a Solstice walk based on seasonal change and the concept that the diversity, abundance, and distribution of life depend on the interactions of the sun's energy and the earth's matter. The tide will be ebbing rapidly on the morning of December 20, so Bob will point out some changes due to the ebb and flow of tides. He took digital photos of the Elfin Forest in August of this year, and will bring them to show the differences in the Forest between August and December. Joan is familiar with the plants of the Elfin Forest, and will talk about their seasonal changes. If it rains, wear a poncho and join us. However, heavy rain will cancel the walk.

January 17, 9:30 a.m.

Take a journey through time with Jeff Grover, Cuesta College Geology instructor. Jeff will focus on the geologic history of the Morro Bay area from the formation of the ancient morros, or Seven Sisters, to the recent development of the dunes which form the Elfin Forest. He may even give us a glimpse of what the Elfin Forest and Morro Bay will be like in the geologic future. Jeff brings rock samples and draws diagrams of local geologic action. Join us for a lively and informative walk and talk.

February 21, 9:30 a.m.

Assuming that February will be a rainy month, SWAP's annual Fungus Foray will yield many beautiful (and some ugly) species of fungus to discover and look at. Entomologist and fungophile Dennis Sheridan will lead us to where all of the fascinating fungi are, and will help us to find Earthstars, Wood blewits, Yellow staining agaricus, the very poisonous Amanitas, Shaggy parasol mushrooms and dozens of others. Dress for the possibility of getting dirty - mushrooms grow low to the ground. Bring a magnifying lens. Note - this is not a mushroom collecting walk as all plant material in the Elfin Forest is protected by law.

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. Wear comfortable shoes, long sleeves and pants to avoid poison oak. Please park carefully, avoiding driveways and mailboxes. We ask that you not bring dogs or other pets. The easy

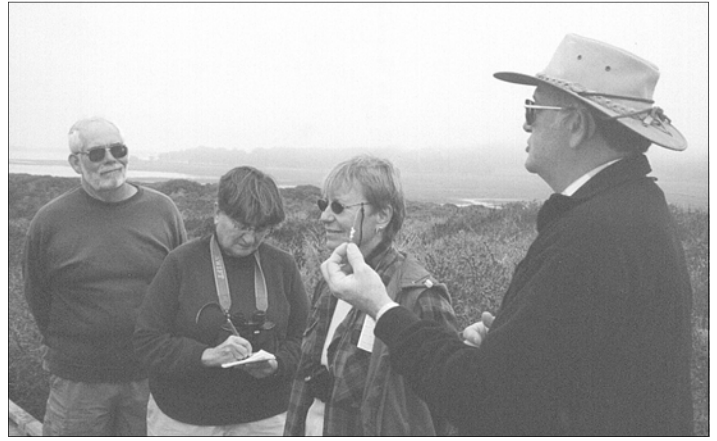
Where To Call, Where To Write

If you have questions about SWAP activities or want to volunteer, please call 528-0392 and leave a message.

A recorded message will have information about our 3rd Saturday Walks, Work Saturdays, and other events.

If you have questions, concerns or comments about any problems in the Elfin Forest, call or write:

Chuck Lowe, SLO County Parks Supervising Ranger,
1087 Santa Rosa Street, SLO, CA 93408, (805) 781-1967.



Above, County entomologist Rich Little points out a type of insect which hides under a cottony covering on the twigs and branches of Elfin Forest plants. Photo by Yolanda Waddell

Below, Plant specialist John Nowak and daughter Rachel demonstrated ways in which the Chumash and early settlers used native plants. Photo by Yolanda Waddell



"That land is a community
is the basic concept of ecology,
but that land is to be loved and respected
is an extension of ethics."

Aldo Leopold 1886--1948



O A K L E A V E S

is published six times per year beginning in February.
Co-editors are Yolanda Waddell and Jean Wheeler; layout is by Katy Budge.
Editing assistance by Pat Grimes.

Contributors to this issue:

Wendy Brown, Bob Meyer, Sharon Meyer, Lars Mikkelson, John Parker,
Emily Polk, Pat Sarafian, Pete Sarafian, Yolanda Waddell, Dirk and Bonnie
Walters.

Printed at Hay Printing, Morro Bay on recycled paper.
Labeled and mailed at Achievement House.

Deadline for copy to Oak Leaves is the 1st Wednesday before the month of

Thirty-Fourth in a Series

Coastal Bush Lupine

By Dirk Walters, Ph.D.;

Drawing by Bonnie Walters

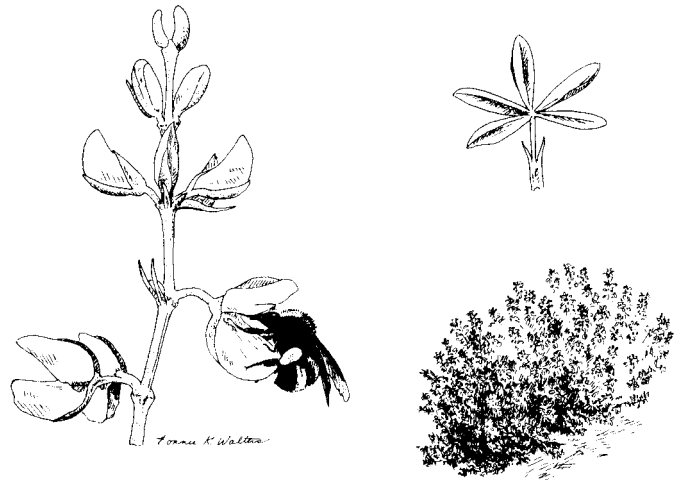
The plant for this issue of *Oak Leaves* is the coastal silver-leaved bush lupine or more simply the coastal bush lupine, *Lupinus chamissonis*, which gives the Elfin Forest's Bush Lupine Lookout its name. In many flower books it is simply called bush lupine, but this name is too general because we have two "bush" lupines recorded for the Elfin Forest and an additional one that could possibly be found there some day. The other recorded bush lupine is commonly called tree lupine (*L. arboreus*). The one that could be found along the inland edge area is one that I call the interior bush lupine (*L. albifrons*). As far as I know the coastal bush lupine only grows around the boardwalk extension to Bush Lupine Lookout and beyond. I have looked for it elsewhere, but have not seen it. It certainly should be elsewhere in the Elfin Forest; but maybe I have just overlooked it.

The genus *Lupinus* contains well over 100 species found on all continents other than Australia and Antarctica. However, most of the species (approximately 70 species in California alone) are found in Western North America. Both of the names, lupine and *Lupinus*, are derived from the Latin name for wolf, *Lupus*. It was given this name due to the wrong interpretation of a readily made observation. The observation is that lupines and other legumes are commonly found on impoverished soils. If these observations were true, then it would logically follow that it was the lupines that were causing the impoverished soil. This ancient conclusion is, of course, totally wrong.

As we know today, lupines and all other members of the pea family (*Fabaceae* or *Leguminosae* or legumes) have bacteria in special growths or nodules on their roots that can convert nitrogen from the air into chemical forms of nitrogen (nitrites and nitrates) that the lupine can use to make nitrogen containing compounds such as proteins and nucleic acids that the plant requires. When the lupine dies, these nitrogenous compounds end up in the soil. In other words, lupines and other legumes did not cause the impoverished soils, but are there because they are able to tolerate the impoverished soils.

Coastal bush lupines are so distinctive that I suspect everyone already is familiar with them. It is the only shrub in the Forest with leaves bearing 5-7 separate silvery blades (leaflets) arising from the end of its leaf stalk (petiole). Such a leaf is said to be palmate compound. Tree lupines also have palmate compound leaves, but their leaflets are bright green on top. The interior bush lupine, when and if it is ever found in the Elfin forest will be told by its longer leaf petioles. They are mostly longer than the leaflets whereas they are shorter in the coastal bush lupine. In the area around the Elfin Forest, all three species have the same pale blue to white flowers.

Bonnie's drawing of the inflorescence with bumblebee was taken from a photograph of a *L. chamissonis* raceme taken in 2001. It illustrates how the fairly large flowers are pollinated. It requires a heavy and powerful insect like the bumblebee to do the job. The bee lands on the horizontal four-petal complex



(horizontal wings and v-shaped joined keel petals). The stamens are totally enclosed within the wing-keel complex. In order to get at the nectar, the bee must push down on the petal complex at the same time as it pushes up on the base of the large single upright petal known as banner or standard. This allows its long proboscis to reach the hidden nectar within the base of the flower. Pushing down on the petal complex also forces pollen out through a pore formed by the keel petals. This pore is appropriately placed so that the pollen is deposited on the underside of the bee's abdomen. Later the stigma will come out of the same pore to receive pollen from a second flower. The bee does scrape off some of the pollen and collect in special "baskets" located on its hind legs. But it never gets all of the bright orange pollen, so some is left to effect pollination.

Elfin Forest Sightings

Pete Sarafian saw a deer in the Elfin Forest on October 7. Sightings of deer in the Forest are rare, although deer tracks are occasionally seen in the lower (Don Klopfer) grove.



"Lean Out"

Lean out
on long imagination
until you touch
the rim
of hidden fancies,
or a bunch of winter blooms
that grow
where no one else could go.
And when you¹'ve picked one
carefully
lean home
and bring it here to me.

by Emily Polk, Atascadero

Thank You to our New and Renewing Members

Compiled by Wendy Brown, SWAP Database Coordinator

New Members:

Irene Annoni	Jim Ross
Paul Crafts	Deborah J. Schreiber*
Robert Miller*	Jack & Shirley Yates

Renewing Members:

Morro Coast Audubon Society*	Betty Daugherty	Heather & Jim Johnson*	Randall & Shirley Palmer*
Michael Barrows	Pauline Dewitt	Katie J. Karikka	Al & Carrie Pardo*
Alese Bell	Margaret Diehl	Heidi Kausch*	Donald S. Parham*
David & Rosemary Bentley	Tim & Kathy Dugan*	Randy & Sally Knight*	John & Elizabeth Pierce*
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Mary Bhuta	Siegrid Fenn*	Ernest & Mary Lauser*	John Severson
Charles E. Blair	Chet & Lee Grimes*	Larry & Jennifer Levine	Lesa Smith*
Jay Bonestell*	Larry & Pat Grimes*	Peggy & Earle Mayfield	Dorothy E. Sylvester*
Ray & Sonya Bracken*	Alta Hall*	Wendy McKeown	Bunty Taylor*
Pat Brown*	Charles W. Hallstrom*	Bob & Sharon Meyer*	Gewynn & George Taylor*
Ann Calhoun	Linda Holman	Liz Miller*	Bonnie & Les Wamsley*
T. J. Carsey*	Herbert & Debra Holt*	Denise Fourie & Mike Multari*	Margaret L. Weiss*
Diana Casey	Shirley Hulin*	Ray O'Dell*	June Wright*

*Thanks to those listed above who donated more than the \$12 membership dues.
The additional donations will be used for special projects in the Elfin Forest.

New or renewing members who donate \$100 or more will receive a Boardwalk T-shirt as SWAP's thank you gift.



SWAP Shoppers' Order Form

Do your holiday shopping with SWAP!!



(Please print when filling order – and indicate HOW MANY)

Name _____ Phone (with Area code) _____

1. MURAL SHIRTS (indicate sizes)

Words on shirt: "El Moro Elfin Forest Natural Area,
Small Wilderness Area Preservation, Los Osos, California"

___ Short Slv. T-Shirt (med., Lg, XLg, XXLg)	@ \$15.00 = _____
___ Long Slv. T-Shirt (med., Lg, XLg, XXLg)	@ \$17.00 = _____
___ Sweatshirt (med., Lg, Xlg, XXLg)	@ \$25.00 = _____

2. BOARDWALK SHIRTS (Only Short Sleeve T-Shirts)

___ Med., Lg, XLg, XXLg, XXXLg	@ \$15.00 = _____
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3. POCKET GUIDES

A very useful 24-page guide listing plants and animals of the Elfin Forest

_____ @ \$1.00 = _____

4. MURAL PRINTS

signed 5 1/2" X 17" prints by artist, Barbara Rosenthal

___ Black matted Mural @ \$20.00 = _____

Shipping cost if outside of Los Osos/Morro Bay \$2.50 = _____

TOTAL OF ORDER _____

Please check renewal date on your label.

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SWAP shirts with their gorgeous mural designs make beautiful gifts for this holiday season. They come in all sizes and as short-sleeved or long-sleeved shirts or warm, comfy sweatshirts. Mural prints 5-1/2 inches by 17 inches signed by the artist Barbara Rosenthal also make excellent gifts your loved one can use to beautify a wall at home or at the office. Pocket guides listing the plants and animals of the Elfin Forest make good stocking stuffers for only \$1. A gift membership to SWAP or a donation in the name of your relative or friend will be sent to them on a special card. Use the order form on page 7 to mail your order, or call 805-528-0392. Your gifts will be mailed promptly, or hand delivered locally.

Consider a Year-end Tax Deductible Donation

Your donation will not only reduce your income tax bite, but will help SWAP with special projects in the Elfin Forest such as weed and soil erosion control, and revegetation with native species. Donating \$1000 would make you a life member. You would receive the *Oakleaves* newsletter for life and would also receive a SWAP mural T-shirt in appreciation of your major contribution to our efforts.

MEMBERSHIP FORM

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- Member \$12 Defender \$100
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- I want to help, please call me!

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Check the label on this newsletter
for your renewal due date.

EVERY membership counts!!

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