



OAKLEAVES

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 ❖ APRIL / MAY 2007

The Future Is Upon Us!

By Ron Rasmussen, SWAP Chair

As promised in my last Oakleaves article, SWAP has begun planning for the future. On February 24 your SWAP board along with several invited guests held a formal session to evaluate our present situation and to examine options for ensuring that the Elfin Forest will continue to be preserved and maintained in the manner that our members and visitors have come to expect. The meeting was very productive and we will develop detailed plans that will be shared with the membership in our newsletter. In this issue I will review some of the most important conclusions regarding our financial future that were reached at the meeting.

First on the agenda was a review of SWAP's current financial situation and projections for future years. Our financial statements for the past several years show a modest increase in our assets, but we are by no means wealthy. Major sources of income are membership dues and contributions,

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*SWAP's two display elves have been in use for 15 years, and now are freshened up for another 15 years of service.
Photo by Jean Wheeler.*

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Fresh Look for SWAP Display Elves

By Pat Murray

The SWAP display elves were originally designed and created in 1992 by Barbara Rosenthal for a fund raiser and have since been used to decorate our booths and holiday floats. About a year ago, SWAP Chair Ron Rasmussen cut out masonite forms on which to mount our painted paper elves.

Before the 2006 Oktoberfest, Rosemary Baxter noted that these elves were very much in need of freshening. Her friend Jacqueline Bradley, assisted by Rosemary, donated her time, talent, and acrylic painting materials to freshen up the paint jobs on the two elfin figures. Our thanks go to all these people for enlivening our mascot elves.

Future Is Upon Us *continued from page 1*

and grants from the Morro Bay National Estuary Program (MBNEP). This past year our calendar fundraiser brought in a significant addition. Major expenses were for Elfin Forest maintenance, our newsletter, insurance and storage rental.

A very important point was made by Pete Sarafian, our conservation chief, that there are “hidden costs” that do not appear in our financial report. Because preservation of the Elfin Forest is important for reducing erosion of soil into the bay the MBNEP has provided work parties from the California Conservation Corps (CCC) to help in necessary erosion control. For example, in 2006, the value of this work was about \$10,000. From 2001-2005, the value of work funded by the MBNEP and SLO County Parks has exceeded \$100,000! This figure excludes the construction of the boardwalk. If SWAP had paid the bill we would have had a deficit of nearly that amount. In future years the MBNEP and SLO County Parks may not be able to continue support the Elfin Forest at the present level. Even if our members continue their present support it may not be enough to maintain the Elfin Forest as it is now.

The “bottom line” is that if we are forced to rely entirely on our present yearly income and current assets we cannot continue our work at the present level. This financial review has made clear that, if SWAP is to continue to maintain the Elfin Forest, stable sources of additional income must be found. Possibilities include a modest increase in membership dues, investment of a portion of current assets in an endowment, increasing the membership roll, and special fundraising activities.

Many loyal members contribute more than the minimum \$12 membership and we are very grateful. The minimum dues have not changed for 15 years. It was proposed that we raise the minimum dues to \$25, but with provision for a lesser amount for seniors, students and those on a fixed income. This will be considered further at a future Board meeting.

Investment of a portion of our assets in an endowment was considered as a way to provide a stable income. However, to provide support at the currently needed level we

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) 781-4417.

Owners of dogs off-leash can be cited. If you witness dogs off-leash, vandalism or obvious crimes, call the County Sheriff at 781-4550.



Discussing ways to provide for the future of the Elfin Forest at SWAP's retreat in February were Chair Ron Rasmussen, far left, and (clockwise) past board member Elsie Dietz, Pete Sarafian, SLO Botanical Garden Development Consultant Elizabeth Scott-Graham, past board member Les Bowker, Bob Meyer, Pat Murray, Jean Wheeler, Debbie Levi, and Pat Akey. Present but not shown were past board member Jerry Deitz, Trail Guide Chair Pat Brown, County Parks Planner Jan DiLeo, and Yolanda Waddell. Photo by Yolanda Waddell.

would need an endowment of about \$2 million, and that is completely out of reach. Also, the return on an endowment, while offering some stability, is often not significantly greater than a savings account or certificate of deposit (CD). Therefore, the board rejected this option.

When one receives requests in the mail for a contribution to this or that organization the request is often ignored, even though the cause may be very important and praiseworthy. If SWAP is to raise funds, we must make very clear exactly what the funds will be used for and keep contributors informed on how their money is being used. We intend to identify specific projects and work areas in the Elfin Forest for which we may request contributions from the membership or from granting agencies. You can be assured that we will use your contributions for their intended purpose. Only by having adequate funds can we continue as stewards of the wonderful Elfin Forest.



OAK LEAVES

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Yolanda Waddell, Dirk and Bonnie Walters, Jean Wheeler.

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Elfin Forest / South Bay Boulevard Slope Stabilization Project



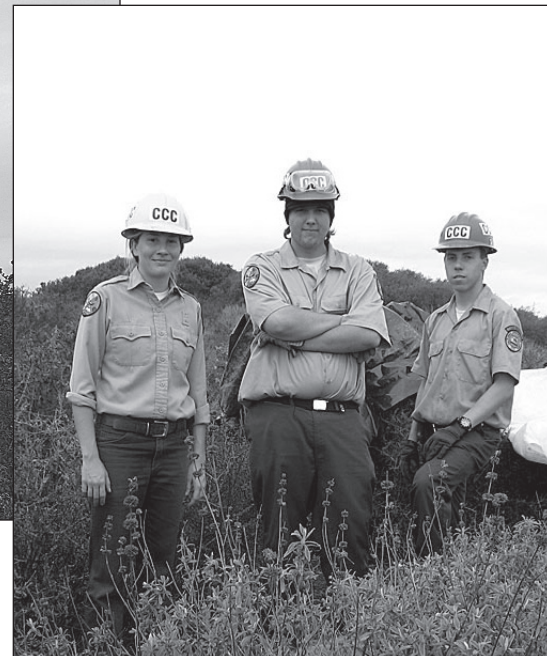
By Pete Sarafian, Conservation Chair
Photos by Yolanda Waddell

On February 6-8, 2007, the Morro Bay National Estuary Program (MBNEP) and California Conservation Corps (CCC) provided financial and labor resources to stabilize a sandy slope adjacent to the El Moro Elfin Forest Natural Area. The slope is a highway embankment along the west side of South Bay Boulevard, a long, narrow corridor of nearly one acre.

In the Spring of 1999, Mark Skinner of The Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo (LCSLO) coordinated a veldt grass suppression project along the South Bay Boulevard embankment. Funded by a \$28,000 grant from the Morro Bay National Estuary Program (MBNEP), the project included removing the veldt grass (*Ehrharta calycina*) and iceplant (*Carpobrotus edulis*) which covered the slope, replanting and seeding with native plants, and covering the slope with a mulch of chips supplied by San Luis Obispo County. SWAP volunteers assisted with watering and mulching. This project was only partially successful because veldt grass seeds remain viable in the soil for a number of years, and each Spring a new crop of veldt grass had to be pulled.

Beginning in 2002, SWAP employed the CCC in a long term weeding effort to eliminate veldt grass along the slope. As soon as a few years of weed control began to reduce the store of veldt grass seeds in the ground, native species began to sprout along the slope. Volunteer seedlings include deerweed (*Lotus scoparius*), mock heather (*Ericameria ericoides*), live oak (*Quercus agrifolia*), and Morro manzanita (*Arctostaphylos morroensis*). However, footsteps of workers tended to push the deep, soft sand down toward the bottom of the hillside, drastically disturbing the slope. Late in 2006, representatives of MBNEP, CCC and SWAP met to discuss this problem.

The solution chosen was installation of natural fiber bio-logs (also known as Coir logs). The CCC installed a total of 40 logs



Above left: CCC crewmembers carrying one of forty 20-foot coconut fiber bio-logs to its destination on the slope above South Bay Boulevard.

Above right: CCC Crew Chief Anna Halligan (left), and crewmembers Jonathan Aguilar and Jacob Owens paused for the photographer during the South Bay Boulevard slope stabilization project.

At right: Jon Hall, MBNEP Watershed Coordinator, and Pete Sarafian, SWAP Conservation Chair, confer about the slope stabilization project which was funded by the MBNEP.



along the slope, each about 20 feet long. The total area stabilized was about half an acre. It is too early in the process to determine whether the bio-logs will stabilize the hillside well enough to allow more effective weed removal and native plant recovery.

SWAP would like to thank the staff of the MBNEP, the CCC and the LCSLO for their support in the past and with this project. SWAP, being a small, all-volunteer organization, could not afford the full costs associated with all of its recovery projects in the Elfin Forest. And since volunteers may not be available in sufficient numbers for all the required tasks, the labor from the CCC has been essential to SWAP's Elfin Forest environmental restoration program.

When Shall We Bloom? (or, The Blossom Clock)

By Barbara Renshaw

Observing The Elfin Forest over a year or two, we notice that we can enjoy flowers most of the year. First the Manzanitas flower, followed by the Gooseberries, Ceanothus, and Peonies. Now the Lupines, Wallflowers, and Black Sage blossom. Finally in late summer and fall the Asters and Mock Heather come out. We could use the flowers in The Elfin Forest to tell us the time of year.

How does the Silver Lupine know it's April in Los Osos? Plants time their cycles to the seasons. We describe this timing or clock as a sense of the length of day and talk about "short day" plants and "long day" plants. In fact, plants sense the length of night for their clocks and thus avoid the uncertainties caused by variation in cloud cover.

Plants have photosensitive leaves and stems in order to make a living by photosynthesis. The pores (stomata) need to open to take in CO₂ when sunshine is available. This oldest of all plant functions requires photosensitivity. Over the geologic ages, as flowering plants evolved, they spread around the planet, varying to fill every possible niche. One variation is the timing of the flowers and fruits either to adjust to weather or improve "fitness" in competition for resources.



Silver dune lupine, *Lupinus chamissonis*.
Sketch by Barbara Renshaw.

Just think about the 70 species of lupines in California. They grow everywhere from the deserts to the sea to the high mountains. We have annuals and perennials, big ones and little ones. Most bloom in "mid-spring." That means April here, but it means July in the mountains.

Other variations complement the blossom clock. In our temperate, summer-dry climate the Fuchsia-flowered Gooseberry, the Peony, and the Ceanothus react to the onset of the rainy season. When significant rain comes early as it did in the 2005/2006 season, the plants bloom early. In this 2006/2007 season rain came late, and the Gooseberry developed leaves and buds before any significant rain, driven entirely by the blossom clock.

Roots, leaf variations, size, and other features may allow a plant to delay blooming until late. The late bloomer, Groundsel, doesn't even wake up until late summer when many of the early bloomers have retired for the year. Mock Heather and Asters bloom at this time too. There must be an advantage in waiting to produce seed just before the next rainy season.



Elfin Forest visitors Linda Milspaugh and Betty Daugherty enjoyed an early Spring walk in the Forest on a cloudy February day.

Photo by Yolanda Waddell.

Visitor Comments

Friends Linda Milspaugh (at left) and Betty Daugherty took a stroll through the Elfin Forest in February. Linda, who lived in Los Osos during the 1980s, visits friends in the area from time to time, and also likes to pay a visit to the Elfin Forest. She is pleased with the progress that SWAP is making in restoring the Forest to its original state. She said, "It seems so natural, peaceful and quiet. It has become a living place again." Betty and her husband John live in Juneau, Alaska, for most of the year and spend part of the winter in Los Osos. Betty was an active member of SWAP during the 1980s and early 1990s, and has continued her membership through the years. When in town, she walks in the Elfin Forest on a regular basis and likes to show the Forest off to visiting friends.

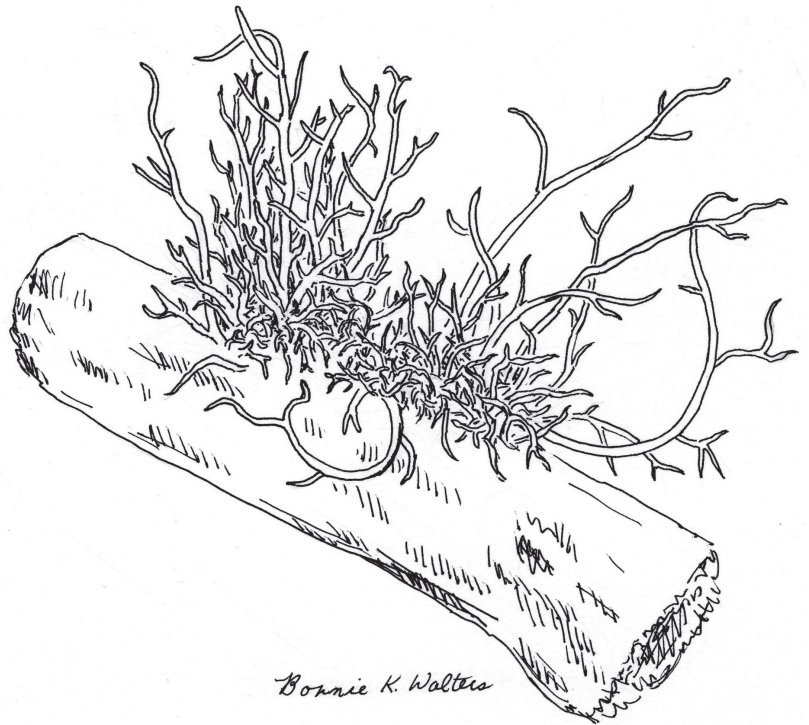
Usnea Lichens

By Dirk Walters, Ph.D.; Drawing by Bonnie Walters

The 'plant' chosen for this article is actually a community of two organisms, neither of which are considered plants in current thinking. It is a lichen which is made up of an alga and a fungus. It is probably the lichen genus, *Usnea*. I say probably because its identification was a community effort with the lichen expert not present. We encountered it on a recent field trip to Coon Creek Canyon in Montaña de Oro State Park. I remembered a genus name out of the blue and David Chipping responded that if it was what I remembered, then he remembered Dennis Sheridan telling him how it could be confirmed. All one had to do was pull gently on the branches and a strong, nearly unbreakable core would be revealed. Well, I followed Dr. Chipping's instruction and the soft covering easily broke away revealing a very strong, but flexible core strand. So, if lichen can be identified by a committee's memory then the pictured lichen is *Usnea* sp. According to the Elfin Forest species list, this lichen genus has the common name of beard lichen. The list also contains seven species of *Usnea*. I'm not even going to try to say which species it is. I assume at least one of them would be expected to grow in the Elfin Forest and on shrubs growing on the drier slopes of Coon Creek Canyon. I have noticed this very distinctive fruticose lichen growing on shrubs in the drier parts of the Elfin Forest. It is especially common along the eastern side of the boardwalk loop.

Most of us might easily accept that a fungus is no longer considered a plant, but why not a photosynthetic alga? It shares many characteristics with organisms still classified as plants. They have cell walls, they're photosynthetic and they're attached to their substrate, which in this case is a shrub branch. Lastly, lichens, algae, and fungi are still all studied in plant biology (botany) classes. The first of the trio to be thrown out of the plant kingdom were the fungi. Although fungi possess cell walls, the cell walls are composed of the very unplant-like substance chitin. Chitin is a primary constituent of the exoskeletons of arthropods such as insects. Fungi are certainly not photosynthetic and they have a very different body construction consisting of long threads called hyphae. To make long story short, fungi can only be considered 'plants', in the sense that they are clearly not animals.

Algae, on the other hand, are harder to explain away. They are photosynthetic and possess cell walls with a matrix of cellulose just like plants. The algae found in lichens are non-motile. So why aren't they plants? The answer gets a



little technical. It has to do primarily with their structure and their reproduction. First, most algae do not possess specialized tissues (groups of cells modified to accomplish specified tasks). All of their cells are basically alike. When essentially all algae go to reproduce, whether by spores or gametes, a single mother cell divides to form them. In contrast, all organisms currently classified as plants have sterile protective cells around their several-to-many mother cells. Because of these differences, algae are now placed in the kingdom Protista.

One last problem of lichens as plants is that they are composed of two independent organisms living together. True, it is a case of mutualism. Mutualism is a type of symbiosis in which both partners benefit from the association. That said, it is still an association of convenience. Except for fragmentation, both partners must reproduce in their own unique way. There is no known mechanism where the two can coordinate their sexual (or asexual) reproduction such that new individual lichen can form some distance from the original. Also, I recall reading once about experiments in which lichens were grown under different environmental conditions. If the environment were changed so that it was particularly favorable for the fungus, the fungus expelled the alga. On the other hand, if conditions favored the alga, then it quit the relationship and set off alone.

“Smilax” Vine Worse Than Originally Feared

By Pete Sarafian, Conservation Chair



*Weed Warrior Charlie Sitton seems to be saying, “Aha, I’ve got you, you vile asparagus vine!” during February’s work party in the Elfin Forest.
Photo by Bob Meyer.*

Several years ago, this author alerted the SWAP Board of Directors to the threat posed by the “smilax” vine (*Asparagus asparagoides*). I read about the vine destroying forests in other countries and worried about its effects in our Elfin Forest. Having this pest plant in my own yard, I attempted to dig it out of the ground. After days of digging in an area that was equivalent to only about 10 feet by 10 feet square, I ended up with five large garbage bags full of vines and roots. The total weight must have been about 150 pounds.

The following year, the Weed Warriors attempted to pull up the vine from the area underneath the oak grove that is located just south of Bush Lupine Point. The effort netted several piles of vine debris. In later years, as the war against veldt grass reached a fever pitch, the effort against smilax took a back seat to the SWAP attack on other invasive weeds. Now we find that the asparagus vine not only has made a

comeback in the last five years, but it is so thick and pervasive in the same oak grove that had been worked, that it is killing it. The oaks appear very stressed and in danger of dying. Hardly any leaves are left on the trees. Before SWAP revisited this oak grove, curtains of vines hung from the trees and made the grove look like a mysterious jungle. Once the vines were removed carefully from the trees and laid on the ground, the grove looks naked. Hardly any shade remains.

SWAP is evaluating three different methods for treating “smilax”. One is to remove the vine gently from its climbing positions, lay it flat on the ground, and then spray it with a relatively non-toxic herbicide. The herbicide being used should translocate to the roots and kill the entire plant. If the herbicide works as hoped, this first method may be fast and effective. A minimum of repeat treatments may be required in future years.

The second method is to pull up or cut the vine off at ground level and keep doing this each time new shoots appear. Eventually the root system is starved of nutrients and should die. Because it may require several years of repeat effort, this second method is manpower intensive and slow.

The third method is to dig out the entire root complex and dispose of it off site. This method may be fast and effective but also is manpower intensive. It also is very disruptive of the top foot of soil under the trees. Where the invasive vines are thick, the disruption of the soil could have a negative impact on the health of the oak trees. This method may be suited best to small, isolated infestations in large oak groves. In such cases, soil disruption should have little effect on the health of the trees.

SWAP will be evaluating all three methods in an effort to save the precious pygmy oak trees that give the Elfin Forest such a unique character and charm.

Calling All Birders. Your Skills Are Needed!

Break out those binoculars and spotting scopes and join other experienced shorebirders for the Morro Bay National Estuary Program’s Volunteer Monitoring Program (VMP) spring shorebirding effort. The VMP is seeking volunteers with shorebird identification experience for a census on Saturday, April 28 from 8:30 am to noon. Birders will be observing from land with spotting scopes, from kayaks or canoes on the water, from the Sandspit, and from Morro Strand between Morro Rock and Rocky Point (Northpoint). If you are interested in participating, please call Annie Gillespie at the MBNEP office at 772-3834. Please respond by April 20 to participate.

Weed Warriors Work Wonders

By Pete Sarafian, Conservation Chair

From January to March, 2007 the Wonderful Weekend Weed Warriors were at it again. The turnout of Elfin Forest volunteers has been gratifying, even stupendous. Over a dozen people have turned out each month to help in SWAP's conservation projects. In March, thanks to a group from the Circle of Spiritual Enlightenment, the work party set a record for turnout with 20 people!

The help came none too soon to combat a deadly South African weed infestation of so-called "smilax" (*Asparagus asparagoides*). This pernicious vine literally is throttling the life out of our precious pygmy oaks. The oak grove just south of Bush Lupine Point appears to be dying.

Fortunately, the Weed Warriors were able to remove all the vines from the trees and lay them on the ground. After three months of effort in this grove and some others nearby, the SWAP Conservation

Committee can now spray the vine with herbicide. Sections of the Bush Lupine Point grove now appear to have had all the vines killed in this way. Since the herbicide can penetrate from the leaves down into the roots of the weed, it is hoped that much of the vine and root system both will die when treated. This means that very little repeat herbicide application may be needed in the future. Hopefully, SWAP can save the oaks.

The real credit goes to the following volunteers who made this effort possible. They include Pat Akey, Jay Bonestell, Dave Bowlus, Margaret Buckles, Randy Buell, Steve Cake, Kacy Caldwell, Ward Caldwell, Lannie Erickson, Richard Fox, John-David and Susan Hughes, Rich and Prisila Johnson, Michele King, Sue Kuykendall, Marty Levi, Tom and Ulla Lipp, Barbara Machado, Bob and Sharon Meyer, Pat Murray, Raven Nasser, Toni Osweiler, Ron Rasmussen, Dar Reynolds, Tim Ross, Pete Sarafian, Art Scott, Charlie Sitton, Tom Stevenson, Dean Thompson, Yolanda Waddell, and Norma Wightman. SWAP can't thank you all enough for your hard work. Without this level of commitment and effort, we couldn't keep the Elfin Forest healthy.

The real credit goes to the ... volunteers who made this effort possible. SWAP can't thank you all enough for your hard work. Without this level of commitment and effort, we couldn't keep the Elfin Forest healthy.



New Weed Warriors, all of them members of the Circle of Spiritual Enlightenment, could finally sit down and relax after three hours of pulling smilax vines out of the trees in an oak grove.

*They are (L-R) Raven Nassar, group leader Tim Ross, Tom Lipp, Ulla Lipp and Michele King.
Photo by Yolanda Waddell.*

Let's All Pull Together

For those who prefer golden verse,
I'll try to keep this very terse.
Our efforts are working,
Less weeds now are lurking.
The Forest looks better, not worse!

In fact, we just pulled down in time,
A horrible, green strangling vine.
That was killing oak trees,
Choking them, if you please.
We sprayed it, and now it is dy'in.

Yours in the bond of restoration,
Pete Sarafian

SWAP First Saturday Work Parties

SWAP First Saturday Work Parties are held at 9 a.m. to noon on the first Saturday of each month. Please dress for wind, fog or sun. Layers work well. Long pants and long shirt sleeves are good. Sturdy shoes are a must. Meet at the north end of 15th Street at the Elfin Forest entrance. Take care not to park in front of driveways or mailboxes. Call 528-0392.

Coming Up in the Elfin Forest

By Jean Wheeler

There may well be more plants flowering in April and May than in any other pair of months. California Sagebrush, Black Sage, Chamise, and Yarrow cover much of the Elfin Forest with white flowers. Several Lupines bloom with blue, white, or yellow flowers. Yellow and orange flowers are contributed by Fiddleneck and Sticky Monkey-flower. Less common are the pink of the California Rose and native Cobwebby Thistle.

With so many flowers in bloom, this is the best time to see butterflies and moths. Of 19 species listed in our Pocket Guide (sold on p. 11), all but two fly in April or May. The Variable Checkerspot Butterfly can be seen as caterpillars on Sticky Monkey-flower plants, as pupas on or near the boardwalk, or as adults in flight. Pat Brown will lead our Annual Butterfly Walk this year on Earth Day, April 21 (see p. 9).

Winter's Hermit Thrush is gone, but should be replaced in May by Swainson's Thrush. Among other arrivals in April or May, are the Warbling Vireo, the Hooded Oriole, the Black-headed Grosbeak, and the Yellow, Townsend's, and Wilson's Warblers. Rufous and Allen's Hummingbirds and the Western Tanager should be among birds passing through on their way back north after wintering in Central or South America.

Calendar Committee Wants Forest Photos

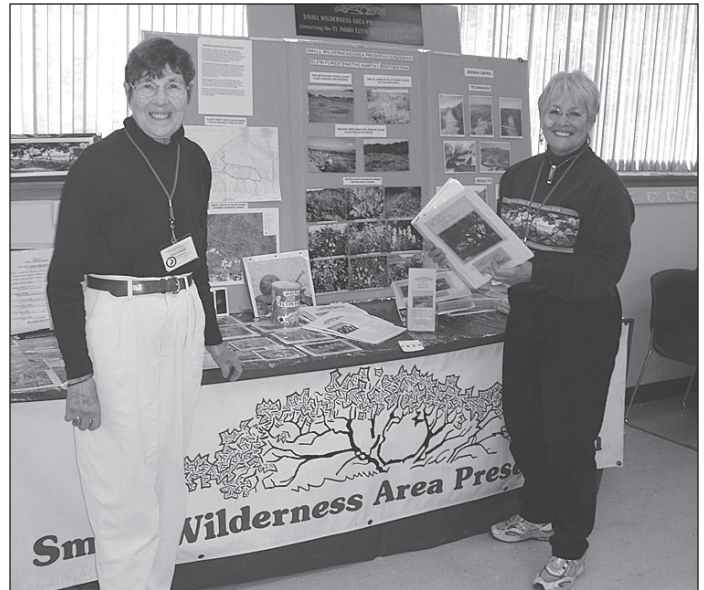
Have you visited the Elfin Forest with your camera during the past few months? Do you have some extra-special shots that you'd like to send to the Calendar Committee for possible inclusion in the 2008 Elfin Forest calendar?

The Committee is looking for images that were taken in the Elfin Forest, or could have been taken there. Possible subjects are countless: wildflowers or interesting plants, birds, butterflies or other insects, animals, reptiles or amphibians, mushrooms, lichens, or lovely vistas. Select three or four of your best images and e-mail them to calendar@elfin-forest.org.

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
Pat Akey, Treasurer
Yolanda Waddell, Secretary
Debbie Levi, Member at Large
Bob Meyer, Member at Large
Pat Murray, Member at Large



*Dorothy Norwood (left) and Booth Coordinator Pat Murray
greeted visitors at SWAP's information table
during the annual 3-day Morro Bay Bird Festival in January.
Photo by Yolanda Waddell.*

SWAP Board Moves to New Meeting Room

During February, the SWAP Board learned that the Community Room of Coast National Bank, where the Board has been meeting for several years, will no longer be available. The bank needs more space and will turn the Community Room into office space beginning in March.

After a brief search for another place to meet, Treasurer Pat Akey obtained permission for the Board to use the Community Center at Sea Oaks Mobile Home Park. Sea Oaks is located at 1675 Los Osos Valley Road, about 1 mile east of the intersection of South Bay Boulevard and Los Osos Valley Road.

The Community Center is close to the entrance of the park. There are parking spaces on the right as one enters, along the road and next to the Community Center. SWAP Board meetings will continue to be on the second Monday of each month from 7:00 to 9:00 p.m. and are open to the public.

SWAP BOARD MEETINGS

The SWAP Board of Directors
meets on the 2nd Monday of each month at 7 p.m.
at the Community Center of Sea Oaks Mobile Home Park,
1675 Los Osos Valley Road.

The next meetings are
Monday, April 9
and Monday, May 14.

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

WALKS in the ELFIN FOREST

Third Saturday Walks

April 21, 9:30 a.m. – Butterfly Walk

Pat Brown will take walk participants on a tour of the Elfin Forest from a butterfly's point of view. Pat has taken many photos of butterflies in all stages of development from eggs to mature butterflies, and will present those images along with many fascinating facts about the butterflies that make the Elfin Forest their home. She'll point out some of the plants that are host to butterflies, and will lead you to the places where you can see Variable Checkerspot caterpillars munching on leaves of the Sticky Monkey-flower plant, the Moro Blue butterflies flitting about among the Silver Dune Lupines, and perhaps a Swallowtail, some Hairstreaks or a Fiery Skipper. Pat will also share information about butterfly books, web sites and butterfly-related materials. She recommends that you bring a hand lens and a pair of close-focusing (5-10 ft.) binoculars.

May 19, 9:30 a.m. – Wildflower Walk

Dr. Dirk Walters, retired Cal Poly botanist and author of a botany text, will take us on a wildflower walk during a perfect month for Spring wildflowers in the Elfin Forest. Come along and enjoy the bright yellows of Fiddleneck and Rush Rose, the blue of Silver Dune Lupine, the whites of Popcorn flower and Pearly Everlasting, and many more. As one of the Central Coast's best plant raconteurs, Dirk will share a choice piece of information about each plant. He writes columns on native plants for SWAP's Oakleaves as well as the California Native Plant Society newsletter.

June 16, 9:30 a.m. –

Historical Plant Uses:

Food, Medicine, or Poison?

Join local naturalist Al Normandin as he identifies many of the native plants found within the Elfin Forest, focusing on whether they were used for food, medicine, or if they were avoided due to toxicity. He will discuss the nature of the foods that the Chumash and other indigenous peoples ate, the quality of their plant medicines, and the toxic plants that they avoided. At the end of this walk, you won't be fed or cured of whatever disease ails you, but you'll be more appreciative of the foods and medicines that our modern society offers, and understand their origins in native plants.

Walks in the Elfin Forest begin at 9:30 a.m. (unless otherwise noted). Park at the north end of 15th Street off Santa Ysabel in Los Osos and walk up the path at the end of the street to the boardwalk. The walk will begin at that point. Wear comfortable shoes, long sleeves and pants to avoid poison oak and mosquitoes. Please park carefully, avoiding driveways and mailboxes. Please leave pets at home. The easy paced walks last 1-1/2 to 2 hours. For more information call (805) 528-0392.



Above: Fungus expert Dennis Sheridan identifies a specimen brought to him by Griffen Dietrich during February's Fungus Foray.

Below: Animal tracker Evan Albright identifies some tracks during his January walk.

Photos by Yolanda Waddell.



Elfin Forest Sightings

Mike Simms, a visiting birder from Lafayette, California, and Jean Wheeler, *Oakleaves* Co-editor, spotted a Hermit Thrush in the Don Klopfer Grove on Friday, January 5. This small brown bird with a spotted breast and a reddish tail is a fairly shy winter visitor to the Elfin Forest from October to March. It was flitting about in the understory of the pygmy oak woodland.

Thank You to Our New and Renewing Members

Compiled by Wendy Brown, SWAP Database Coordinator

NEW MEMBERS:

Marion DeCruz*	Rich & Prisila Johnson*
Guy Fitzwater*	Bonnie Van Rauner*

RENEWING MEMBERS:

Stan Autrey	Vickie Maples
Randy Ball	Duke McPherson*
Karen Beatty & Frank Ausilio*	Donald & Rita Robinson
Jay Bonestell*	The Rochte Family
Frank & Gail Freiler*	Colette Roest
Martha & Leon Goldin*	Barbara & Robert Rosenthal*
Tom & Rita Hadjiyane	Carolyn Schanberger*
Ginny Irving*	Nancy Stephens*
Aya Kimura*	David & Helianthe Stevig*
Howard & Donna Krueger*	Jim Weldon*

Memorial Donation

The Robbins Family in memory of Evan Goodwin*

**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.

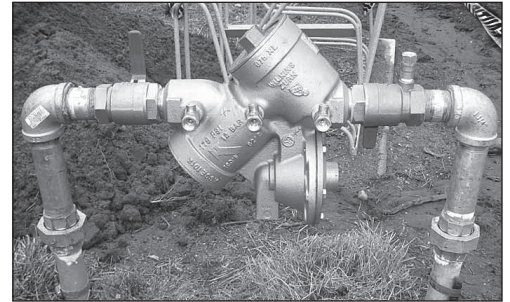
Freeze Flails Forest

By Pete Sarafian, Conservation Chair

This winter's record frost not only wiped out agricultural products, but it also impacted the Elfin Forest. Some of the news was good, and some of the news was bad.

The good news is that the invasive Cape ivy infestation (*Delairea odorata*) was dealt a setback. The curtains of vines that hung from trees, especially along the fresh water zone around the Forest, were knocked out. In the place of green leaves and purple stems are blackened vegetation and dead vines. This is welcome news to SWAP. Due to the difficulty in accessibility, it is difficult if not impossible to attack some of these vines. Several years of growth have been eliminated.

The other side of Mother Nature's wrath was the freezing and splitting of the irrigation line that feeds water to the Elfin Forest. A metal isolation valve and metal pressure reducer housing were split open by the freeze. San Luis Obispo County Parks had to replace the entire supply manifold and fix a downstream plastic piping leak. Their quick response allowed SWAP to complete the planting of 147 native seedlings in February. Thanks to County Parks for their great support.



*Shiny new isolation valve and pressure reducer housing for the Elfin Forest irrigation system were installed by County Parks after freezing temperatures caused the originals to burst.
Photo by Bob Meyer.*

SWAP Invites You to Celebrate Earth Day

By Debbie Levi

Earth Day was initially conceived of in 1969 by Senator Gaylord Nelson (D-Wisconsin). He had for years deplored the fact that environmental concerns were "simply a non-issue in the politics of the country." So he founded Earth Day to focus so much public attention on environmental concerns that such issues would be forced onto political agendas. On April 22, 1970, 20 million Americans celebrated the first Earth Day. Today, citizens around the world combine efforts to protect our global environment. We believe that everyone at SWAP shares the vision of keeping a clean and healthy planet.

We are extremely fortunate to live near the Elfin Forest where we can continually witness many gifts of nature. Our community continues to honor these gifts. Come to SWAP's April 21st Butterfly walk and enjoy the beauty of our small wilderness area (see p. 9). In addition to learning about our native butterfly species, we can demonstrate our appreciation for our environment.

On April 21, 2007, there will be an Earth Day event in downtown San Luis Obispo held at The Mission Plaza from 10 am. to 4 pm. This event is being sponsored by the Earth Day Alliance and ECOSLO (Environmental Center Of San Luis Obispo). SWAP will participate in the celebration by having a booth. Booth volunteers are needed. Please contact the SWAP message phone (805-528-0392) and we will reply.

Let's all pledge our commitment to the environment!





Beautiful Notecards & Postcards Available from SWAP

Five lovely photos taken by Bob Meyer are available either as color notecards with envelopes or as color postcards. For either postcards or notecards, you can order sets of all five views or as many as you want of any one (or more) of them using the form below.



SWAP Shoppers' Order Form

All Prices Include Sales Tax

1. MURAL SHIRTS - Mural design by artist Barbara Rosenthal on both front and back. Words on shirt: "El Moro Elfin Forest Natural Area" above mural and "Small Wilderness Area Preservation" and "Los Osos, California" below mural.

Circle Sizes:

___ Short Slv. T-Shirt (Sm, Med, Lg, XLg, XXLg, XXXLg) @ \$15.00 = \$_____

___ Long Slv. T-Shirt (Sm, Med, Lg, XLg, XXLg, XXXLg) @ \$17.00 = \$_____

___ Sweatshirt (Sm, Med, Lg, XLg, XXLg, XXXLg) @ \$25.00 = \$_____

2. PHOTOS OF THE ELFIN FOREST

Original photo note cards by Bob Meyer

___ @ \$3.00 or ___ 5 @ \$14.00 = \$_____

Original photo postcards by Bob Meyer

___ @ \$1.00 = \$_____

Indicate No. per View(s):

___ All 5; ___ Don Klopfer Trail; ___ Ocean View;

___ Wild Hyacinth; ___ Horned Lizard; ___ Dudleya

3. MURAL PRINTS

___ signed prints by artist Barbara Rosenthal,

image size 4 1/2 x 16 1/2 in;

mounted on foamcore @ \$20.00 = \$_____

4. POCKET GUIDE

Useful 56-page guide to plants and animals of the Elfin Forest. Charts for bloom season, form, color, and habitat for 200 vascular plants plus lists of 56 lichens and 36 mushrooms known to occur. Habitat and peak months seen are charted for 187 birds. Also listed: 28 common mammals; 10 reptiles; 4 amphibians; 19 butterflies and moths (charted by size, months in flight, color, and host plants); 104 other arthropods and 7 gastropods.

___ @ \$2.00 = \$_____

TOTAL OF ORDER \$_____

(Please print when filling order, and indicate how many of each)

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Make checks payable and mail to:

SWAP, P.O. Box 6442, Los Osos, CA 93412-6642.

Call in orders may also be made: (805) 528-0392

Volunteers Needed for Earth Day Booth!

Los Osos / Morro Bay Chapter
 SMALL WILDERNESS AREA PRESERVATION
 A Non-Profit Public Benefit Corporation
 P.O. Box 6442, Los Osos, CA 93412-6442
 (805) 528-0392 www.elmforest.org



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Volunteers Needed for Earth Day Booth

Earth Day will be celebrated in downtown San Luis Obispo at the Mission Plaza from 10 am to 4 pm on April 21, 2007. This event is being sponsored by the Earth Day Alliance and ECOSLO (Environmental Center Of San Luis Obispo). SWAP will participate in the celebration by having a booth.



Would you enjoy a couple of hours talking to people? Our booths are set up to be self-explanatory, and we'll provide you with a question and answer sheet for the most commonly asked questions. We need volunteers to talk with visitors, give out literature, and sell T-shirts, photo note cards and postcards, mural prints, and pocket guides. If you can work a two-hour shift between 10:00 am and 4:00 pm on that day, please call SWAP's message phone at 528-0392. Give your name, shift preference, and phone number. Join us, you'll have fun!

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____

- | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|
| <input type="checkbox"/> New Member | <input type="checkbox"/> Renewing Member |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Member \$12 | <input type="checkbox"/> Defender \$100 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Steward \$25 | <input type="checkbox"/> Champion \$250 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Protector \$50 | <input type="checkbox"/> Guardian \$500 |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Life Member \$1000 | |
| <input type="checkbox"/> I want to help, please call me! | |

Memberships include a subscription to SWAP's bimonthly newsletter, *Oakleaves*. All donations to SWAP are tax-deductible.

EVERY membership counts!

Make checks payable to: SWAP.

Mail to: Small Wilderness Area Preservation,
 P.O. Box 6442, Los Osos, CA 93412-6442.