



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 ❖ AUGUST / SEPTEMBER 2007

SWAP Presents the 2008 Calendar

By Debbie Levi, Calendar Committee Chair

SWAP is pleased to present the 2008 Elfin Forest calendar at a preview event scheduled for Saturday, September 8th, 2007 from 2:00 – 4:00 p.m. It will be located at the end of 12th Street next to the Elfin Forest trailhead. Refreshments will be served. Everyone is invited to attend, meet the calendar photographers and sponsors, and help support SWAP education and conservation efforts by purchasing our 2008 calendar.

See page 11 for purchase information.

Some very talented local photographers as well as generous sponsors contributed to the beauty of this calendar and will be available for signing and networking. The photographers include: Patty Arnold, Pat Brown, Bill Bouton, Dave Bowlus, Dick Boyd, Les Christiansen, Ruth Christiansen, Larry Grimes,

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Shown holding a proclamation honoring SWAP are past Chair Bob McDougle (left) and present Chair Ron Rasmussen (right). At their left: (L-R) Yolanda Waddell, Dorothy Norwood, Debbie Levi, Pat Grimes, and behind Pat, Jay Bonestell. Right front: Jean Wheeler, Rosemary Baxter, and Pat Murray. Behind them: (L-R) Petra Clayton, Sharon Meyer, Ruth Zank, Larry Grimes and Jay Waddell. Standing at the back: (L-R) County Supervisors Bruce Gibson, Katcho Achadjian, Jerry Lenthall, Jim Patterson and Harry Ovit. Photo by Stacey King.

County Parks and Board of Supervisors Honor SWAP

By Yolanda Waddell

On Tuesday morning, May 22, fifteen members of SWAP gathered in the San Luis Obispo County Board of Supervisors meeting chamber to receive a special presentation in honor of SWAP. Supervisor Bruce Gibson read the following proclamation:

*County of San Luis Obispo, California thanking the Los Osos Small Wilderness Area Preservation Group for their outstanding volunteer assistance at the Los Osos Elfin Forest:
Whereas, the Los Osos Elfin Forest is a Natural Area containing coastal shrub habitat that once covered the Los Osos area;
Whereas, the sensitive habitat within the Elfin Forest is found in only a few other places within the United States; and
Whereas, in 1985 Los Osos SWAP was organized for the specific purpose of purchasing and preserving the Elfin Forest; and
Whereas, SWAP is a non-profit organization composed of volunteers; and*

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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

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

The next meetings are
**Monday, August 13
and Monday, September 10.**

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



CONTACT SWAP

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.

SWAP Honored *continued from page 1*

Whereas, SWAP has an Adopt-A-Park agreement with the County to help maintain and restore the Elfin Forest; and

Whereas, SWAP has spent thousands of volunteer hours organizing and conducting forest maintenance, applying for and obtaining grants to weed and restore the forest, providing public education about the importance of this sensitive habitat, and much, much more; and

Whereas, SWAP's fundraising, public education, and overall efforts have protected, preserved and restored a valuable resource over the years; and

Whereas, the Elfin Forest has blossomed under their stewardship;

Now, therefore, be it resolved that the Board of Supervisors of the County of San Luis Obispo, State of California, hereby thanks the Los Osos Small Wilderness Area Preservation for their outstanding volunteer assistance.



The proclamation was signed by Julie Rodewald, County Clerk and the five Supervisors: Harry Ovitt, 1st District; Bruce Gibson, 2nd District; Jerry Lenthall, 3rd District; Katcho Achadjian, 4th District; and James Patterson, 5th District.

SWAP Chair Ron Rasmussen received the proclamation, and gave an acceptance talk. Also making some formal comments was Jan DiLeo, County Parks Planner, who coordinated the event and wrote the text for the proclamation. Jan mentioned to me when I thanked her that tears came to her eyes as she wrote it because she was so moved by all that SWAP has done to save and restore the Elfin Forest.

Attending the event in addition to Ron Rasmussen were SWAP members Rosemary Baxter, Jay Bonestell, Petra Clayton, Larry Grimes, Pat Grimes, Debbie Levi, Bob McDougle, Bob Meyer, Sharon Meyer, Pat Murray, Dorothy Norwood, Jay Waddell, Yolanda Waddell, Jean Wheeler and Ruth Zank.

The proclamation was framed by Ron Rasmussen and was taken by Pat Murray and Debbie Levi to the Los Osos Chamber of Commerce, where it will be displayed for the next few months.

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Marlin Harms, Michael Laverty, Dave Lawrence, Marty Levi, Teddy Llovet, Jack McNeal, R.W (Bob) Meyer, Dennis Sheridan, Sonrisa Photography, Linda Tanner, Yolanda Waddell and Jean Wheeler. Our sponsors include: San Luis Obispo County Parks, Shahin Aminilari, Steve Auslender, Terry Benko, Phyllis Cameron, Todd Davidson, Bob Davis, Jerry Gregory, Shar Gregory, Rozanne Griffiths, Rebecca Rasmussen, Ron Roundy, Peter Starlings, Gary & Judi Tewell, Jim Weldon, Mary Lou Wilhelm, A.J. Wright, and Judi Young.

The Calendar Committee thanks Jim Johnson for scanning a 1994 photo by Larry Grimes for our back cover; photographer Ron Bayhan for providing the Committee with guidelines for photo selection; and entomologist Dennis Sheridan for identifying and providing information about some of the fungi, insects and reptiles. Everyone on the Calendar Committee is confident that the 2008 calendar is a wonderful depiction of life in the Elfin Forest. We invite you to join us for this event.

How Can You Help SWAP In a Long-term Way?

By Ron Rasmussen, SWAP Chair

At our recent Retreat all agreed that our primary goal is to provide for the long-term financial health of SWAP and thus ensure that the Elfin Forest will be preserved forever.

Here is a summary of 10 ways that you can help. All of these ways carry tax advantages for your estate. You can always specify how your contribution will (or will not) be used.

1. You can make a gift of cash in any amount and, if you wish, designate it for a specific use or project. Because SWAP is a non-profit organization all such gifts are tax deductible to the extent of the law.
2. You can establish an endowment and designate how the interest would be used over the years. The principal remains intact.
3. You can make gifts of stock, bonds or other securities, or your unneeded car or boat.
4. You can contribute a life insurance policy that is no longer needed.
5. You can contribute a pension fund, IRA, 401(k) or other pretax funds and in some cases realize substantial tax savings.
6. You can make SWAP a beneficiary in your will.
7. You can make SWAP a beneficiary in a Living Revocable Trust (LRT). If your needs change the trust can be modified.
8. You can contribute your home to SWAP, but reserve a Life Estate so that you can remain in your home as long as you wish.
9. You can establish a Charitable Remainder Trust. This would give you lifetime income (or extend that income to your children for up to 20 years). Under present law you would avoid capital gain and estate taxes, receive a large tax deduction that could be spread over 6 years and be freed of asset management responsibilities.
10. You can donate property such as a second home, rental property or other real estate, including vacant lots.

Before making any large donation you should talk with your financial advisor or lawyer about your options. If you have any questions or wish further information about any of the above please contact us. Your inquiry will be held in strictest confidence.



San Luis Obispo County Parks gave a "Turning the Table" appreciation barbecue dinner to its 500 volunteers in May. About 150 attended the event in Cuesta Park. Shown is County Parks Director Pete Jenny speaking to a group that includes several members of SWAP, some of whom can be identified by their T-shirts. The event was organized by Parks Operations Coordinator Stacey King. Photo by Yolanda Waddell.

Dues Increase Supported by Members

The SWAP Board of Directors extends a thank you to members who sent e-mails and letters regarding our proposed increase in dues to \$25 a year (\$15 for seniors and students). All of the responses sent to dues@elfin-forest.org or mailed to our P.O. Box were heartily in favor of the increase.

One comment read, "Friends: I agree we will need an increase in dues, and with the proviso of possible lower dues for those who need it. I AGREE with the Board. Many thanks to all of you for your continuing dedication to the wonderful escape forest we have to enjoy!"

Another member wrote: "Yes, I fully support increasing dues to \$25. Thank you for the informative article on this topic in Oakleaves (as well as all the other great articles in every issue). Thank you for soliciting our input."

And past SWAP Chair Jim Weldon, now living in Paso Robles, and a master of brevity and generosity, emailed: "Board - Increase is a good idea. I will be happy to increase my annual giving from \$50 to \$100."

At the Board of Directors July 9 meeting, the dues increase was officially approved. It will be effective on January 1, 2008. If you've been postponing acting on that reminder to renew your membership, why not do it now?

Bewick's Wren



Photo by Dave Lawrence.

By Jean Wheeler, Ph. D

A little brown bird very actively flitting among and creeping rapidly along the branches of our Elfin Forest shrubs is likely to be a Bewick's Wren (*Thryomanes bewickii*).

About 5 to 5-1/2 inches long, Bewick's (pronounced like the Buick car) wren is gray-brown above, and pale gray below. It has a rather long tail for a wren, somewhat fan-shaped with whitish tips on the outer tail feathers, and it habitually flicks its tail from side to side. Its most distinctive marking is the long white supercilium, or "eyebrow stripe."

One of nine species of wrens in the United States and Canada, this one was given its common name by John James Audubon, in honor of a well-known English naturalist and engraver of his time, Thomas Bewick (1738-1828). Eastern populations dropped rapidly early in the 20th Century, apparently with range expansion of the house wren, but western populations have remained more stable. Bewick's wren is a year-round resident of the Elfin Forest and much of the West, although northern populations may migrate short distances south in winter.

Wrens are most closely related to gnatcatchers and gnatwrens according to recent DNA and DNA hybridization studies, and are more distantly related to the creepers. We usually see them in the Elfin Forest creeping along branches where they are gleaning insects and spiders, their main food supply. For this, they make excellent use of their long, thin, and slightly down-curving beak, which shows very well in Dave Lawrence's picture of a male singing. They may also scavenge on the ground.

The male Bewick's Wren sings to defend his nesting territory and to attract a mate. He starts one or more nests in various cavities--natural crevices in the Elfin Forest, although elsewhere they may also use old woodpecker holes, nest boxes, or other artificial structures. The female will select one nest and add a soft cup of moss, leaves, hair, and feathers to the foundation of twigs and bark built by the male. The female incubates about 5 or 6 eggs for 14 to 16 days. The male feeds the female while she is on the eggs, and both parents feed the young. The young leave the nest after about two weeks, but stay together and are fed by the parents for another couple of weeks. The pair usually stays together through the first brood, and will often raise a second brood, although sometimes they will find new mates for the second brood.

Watch for these busy little birds actively probing for insects along the branches of our live oaks and other shrubs. See if you can spot a male taking time out from gathering food for himself and his family to sing from a branch top. His song will be a complex of thin, rising buzzes and slow trills, overall descending in pitch.

Please Report Elfin Forest Sightings

Have you observed any unusual birds in the Elfin Forest? Mammals? Reptiles? Amphibians? Insects? Interesting activities or footprints of wildlife in our Elfin forest? Unusual plants? Please report any interesting wildlife activity or plants that you see to Jean Wheeler at jeanwheeler@charter.net for inclusion in future Oakleaves issues under "Elfin Forest Sightings." You can also leave a message on SWAP's answering machine, 528-0392.

Save the Date!

Our chapter Annual Meeting has been set for Saturday, October 20, from noon to 2 p.m. If you own a 2007 Elfin Forest calendar, it's already written in. If not, be sure to save the date.

Our guest will be Cal Poly botanist Dr. Matt Ritter, who is reported to be a superb speaker.

Tree (Yellow Bush) Lupine

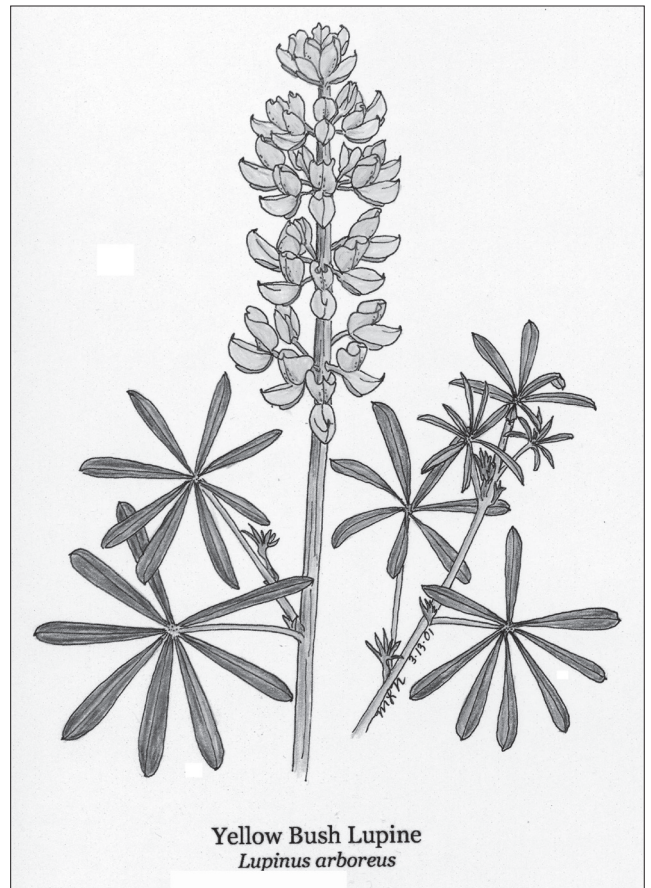
By Dirk Walters, Ph. D.; Drawing by Mardi Niles

The original illustration used for the plant profiled in this issue was drawn by Mardi Niles. The original is a hand-colored ink drawing which has been printed on greeting cards sold at a recent meeting of the local Chapter of the California Native Plant Society. Mardi had colored the plants two different ways. In one, she had colored the flowers yellow and in the other the flowers were pale blue. In both the leaves were colored bright green. Were her colors botanically accurate or was artistic license being used to create variety in her beautiful cards?

The plant is tree lupine (or yellow bush lupine, *Lupinus arboreus*). It is one of three shrubby lupines to be potentially found in the Elfin Forest. The species is listed in the SWAP Pocket Guide, and can be found in areas near the Forest. But I do not know of any plants currently growing in the Forest itself. I suspect this is due to the growth pattern for this plant. It is a short-lived perennial which seems to reproduce in cycles. When conditions are favorable, a large number of seedlings survive to produce many flowering adults. The adults gradually die out to be replaced by few or no immediate offspring. Then, when conditions become favorable again, another surge of plants appears. Another reason they may not currently be in the Forest is that the volunteer revegetation workers have been spectacularly successful in re-establishing a closed canopy of native shrubs. Lupines tend to be pioneers that can only establish in open habitats and grass lands.

In the Los Osos-Morro Bay area tree lupine is the most easily recognized of the three shrubby species. It is the only one with pure green leaves. The other two species, shore shrub lupine (or silver dune lupine, *L. chamissonis*) and interior shrub lupine (*L. albifrons*) both have white or silvery leaves. So Mardi's depiction of leaves is botanically accurate. The flowers of the species are quite variable in color. Along most of the coast, the flowers are bright yellow. But in Morro Bay area, they are pale blue. Mardi's production of two different cards is justified.

I must make at least one caution. There is actually a third form of this species. North of Morro Bay, especially north of Cambria, the individual flowers become what can be described as half blue, half yellow. The blue flower pigments (generally water soluble cyanins) and yellow pigments (fat soluble plastid carotenes) are produced independently and in different parts of the petal cells. In these bluish-yellow or yellow-bluish flowers, it appears that the two pigments types



are being produced in more or less equal amounts. The end result is petals that are neither blue nor yellow but truly blue AND yellow at the same time. By the time one reaches the Monterey area, the blue pigment is totally masked. This is also true of tree lupines south of Avila beach.

Why are the flowers blue in Morro Bay and yellow almost every where else? As far as I know, no actual research has been done on this question. But here's a working hypothesis. Tree lupine usually grows in sandy or rocky soils and only along the immediate coast. Rarely are they found further inland, such as on the Nipomo Mesa. The Dunes south of Avila are isolated from those of Morro Bay by the San Luis Range (Irish Hills) which provide little of no habitat for the species. To the north and east, Morro Bay is separated from the rest of the state by the Santa Lucia Mountains. So the flowers of Morro Bay and Elfin Forest are blue due to local isolation and the 'fixing' of an unusual genetic configuration. North of Cambria, the two pigment systems are equally dominant and seem to be 'fighting' it out. Oh, by the way, the leaves of tree lupines north of Cambria tend to be a bit grayish.

Both the scientific and common names of this species refer to the same trait. That is, the plant tends to begin branching a few inches above the soil line. This means that it has a very short single stem (a trunk?) like a tree. However, the plant must be considered a shrub because it never gets taller than 2 meters (ca. 6 feet) tall.

Baywood School First Graders Study Insects in Elfin Forest

By Yolanda Waddell



After posing for this photo, Erin Faye, top row left, and Cheryl Dove, top row right, walked back to Baywood School with their classes following a morning of exploring the Elfin Forest for insects.

As a help to docents, each child wore a class T-shirt with his or her first name on the front.

Photo by Yolanda Waddell

MBNEP Watershed Crew Weeds Highway Embankment

By Pete Sarafian, Conservation Chair

A small California Conservation Corps (CCC) crew returned in May to the South Bay Boulevard highway embankment. Earlier in the year the crew installed several bio-logs to control erosion and stabilize the hillside. This time they continued the job of removing veldt grass. This is an effort begun several years ago to supplement the work that SWAP volunteers do in other parts of the Elfin Forest. This year's crew for both jobs was one hired by the Morro Bay National Estuary Program (MBNEP). They rove the Morro Bay watershed doing conservation work that helps improve the health of the Bay.

The MBNEP agreed to send the crew back to the Elfin Forest to assist SWAP. The crew did a fine job keeping the veldt grass under control. A total of seventeen bags of grass were removed. SWAP thanks the CCC and MBNEP for all their help in improving the health of the Forest. They help SWAP continue to make progress in the war on erosion and weeds. One only has to look at nearby portions of the roadsides to see how far SWAP's environmental restoration effort has progressed.

Every Spring the Baywood Elementary School first grade classes pay a visit to the Elfin Forest to learn more about insects and the plants and systems that support them. This year we received a call from first grade teacher Cheryl Dove (who is also a member of the SWAP Education Committee), saying that there are three first grade classes instead of two as in the past, or a total of 60 children who would take the insect walk that SWAP has prepared for them.

We scheduled the walks for two Fridays in May, dividing the classes so that no more than 40 children would visit the Forest at one time, or four groups of ten. Because of the narrowness of the Elfin Forest boardwalks, 10 children per docent is the most comfortable number.

Our docents for the walks were Pat Akey, Pat Murray, Pete Sarafian, Yolanda Waddell and Jean Wheeler. Historian Debbie Levi, a retired elementary school teacher, assisted with planning the walks. Erin

Garza, a Cuesta College student, assisted on one of the walks. Board member Pat Murray prepared four docent tote bags with materials for the walk activities, which included a hand lens for each student, Insect Treasure Hunt cards that hang around the neck; canvas squares to place under a bush and catch insects and spiders when the bush is shaken; catch and release containers for looking at flying insects; and numerous visual aid cards.

The classes walked from Baywood School to the Elfin Forest with their teachers Cheryl Dove, Erin Faye and Kelly Gang, who were helped by teacher's aides and some parents. They had learned about the parts of an insect and arachnid in class, using felt boards and colorful flannel parts provided by the SWAP Education Committee. The children were fascinated to see how many little creatures live in a bush or under a log, to look closely at a bumble bee and see the full pollen bags on its legs, and to catch sight of a brush rabbit hopping out of sight.

An envelope full of thank you letters came to SWAP from the Baywood first graders soon after the walks. The children told us what they liked best about the walk. Many appreciated being shown what poison oak looks like; others enjoyed the bumble bees, a woodrat nest, a Jerusalem cricket, and the lizards along the boardwalk rail. A letter from Daniel in Kelly Gang's class pleased the docents a great deal. He said, "Dear S.W.A.P., Thank you for showing me everything. I loved it. I want to go again. Can I? from Daniel."

"Dear S.W.A.P., Thank you for showing me everything. I loved it. I want to go again. Can I? from Daniel."

Conservation Updates

By Pete Sarafian, Conservation Chair

Weed Warriors

Turn Out in Droves

Continuing a 2007 trend, the Weed Warriors provided good support in May, a conservation work party fifteen strong. Weed Warriors were scurrying all over the Elfin Forest in pursuit of bad biota. Italian thistle (*Carduus pycnocephalus*) met its demise in the northern and western corners of the Forest. At the same time veldt grass (*Ehrharta calycina*) perished along the southern boundary of the Forest between 14th and 16th Streets. Several federally endangered Morro Shoulderband Snails (*Helminthoglypta walkeriana*) were discovered and were relocated to safe hiding places.

The May work party included Jay Bonestell, Lannie Erickson, Jan Harper, Rich and Prisila Johnson, Marty Levi, Gail Martin, Bob and Sharon Meyer, Cameron Pierce, Ron Rasmussen, Dar Reynolds, Pete Sarafian, Dean Thompson, and Yolanda Waddell. Thank you so much for the fine job that you have done for the Elfin Forest's continued survival.

June Work Party Almost Forgotten

Pete Sarafian was out of town part of the week before the June conservation work party. An alternate arrangement to notify the Weed Warriors of the event by email and phone failed to materialize. Fortunately, members of the SWAP Board of Directors and some alert Warriors came to the rescue. A total of seven intrepid volunteers showed up despite the lack of a reminder.

The warriors watered the native plant seedlings that were planted last winter. They also pulled weeds in revegetation sites just east and south of Bush Lupine Point and along the 11th Street sand trail. Several bags of veldt grass resulted from the onslaught. The yield was far lower than in past years, showing that good progress is being made in controlling such weeds.

Bob Meyer and Ron Rasmussen did the watering task as they have for the past few months (every two weeks during the dry season). The seedlings are showing good growth and a high survival rate.

The rest of the work party consisted of Pat Akey, Jay Bonestell, Dave Bowlus, Lannie Erickson, and Pete Sarafian. Despite the communication glitch and lighter than usual turnout, a lot of good work was accomplished. Thanks to all for their alert attendance and support.



Above: (L-R) Jay Bonestell, Marty Levi and Lani Erickson yanked veldt grass near the 16th Street entrance to the Elfin Forest during the May work party. Below: Ron Rasmussen (left) and Bob Meyer water new plants every first Saturday as well as every other Wednesday. Photos by Yolanda Waddell.



Let's All Pull Together

We now are enjoying our summer,
But gross lack of rain is a bummer.
The weeds could care less,
They don't seem to stress,
Some grow as high as a Hummer!

We still need your help to survive,
Because the weeds all seem to thrive,
They hardly diminish,
So we need to finish,
(Them off) so natives don't take a dive.

*Yours in the never-ending task of conservation,
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.



*Members of the Santa Clara Valley chapter of the Native Plant Society paused for a photo before heading into the Elfin Forest to check out the May wildflowers.
Photo by Yolanda Waddell.*

Visitor Comments

On May 5th, while Weed Warriors were pulling veldt grass near the 16th Street entrance, a group of about 20 visitors arrived and assembled at the 16th Street onramp. Many carried binoculars or cameras. They turned out to be members of the Santa Clara Valley chapter of the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) on a field trip to San Luis Obispo County. Their first stop was the Elfin Forest, after which they were scheduled to visit Montana de Oro, Los Osos Oaks, and Cuesta Ridge. Several of them commented on the enthusiastic group of Weed Warriors and the excellent appearance of the Forest. Chapter member Joe Cernac later wrote a report for their newsletter, *The Blazing Star*, titling it "Four Gems." The Santa Clara Valley CNPS also cares for a preserve, working to clear it of Yellow starthistle and some species of brooms.

Coming Up in the Elfin Forest

By Jean Wheeler

In this region where drought stress is the key environmental factor, these two months tend to produce the greatest drought stress of the year in the Elfin Forest. There has been no measurable rain for several months, only a few very fine and brief foggy mists. The hot sun remains high in the sky and the days long until nearly the end of September, when we can begin to look for rain again. Yet many of our flowering shrubs and herbs have adapted so well to this aridity that they are still in bloom or even peak in these driest months. And seeds set by earlier bloomers provide food for birds and other animals, including rapidly maturing offspring of this year.

White and yellow flowers tend to dominate the shrubs now. Coyote brush has both, the yellow flowers being male and the white ones female. This is the middle of a very long blooming season for them and for the white flowers of California Sagebrush (March or April clear through to December). California Croton and Dune Buckwheat also carry white flowers (aging to pink, then rust) into October. Perhaps the signature flowers of these months are the yellow of Mock Heather, which blooms almost exclusively in August and September. California Goldenrod is also in bloom. Pink flowers that may still be seen are Pink Everlastings, California Asters, and California Hedge Nettles.

This is a good time of the year to observe closely our year-round resident birds, undistracted by all those winter visitors and spring and fall transients. Covies of quail scratch and scurry through the underbrush with males occasionally laboring to a shrub top to boast their dominance. The blue flash and noisy screams of California Scrub Jays are everywhere. Plentiful and easy to see are White-crowned and some other Sparrows, nearly all of our Finches, also Bushtits, Bewick's Wrens and Anna's



California Croton has pale green leaves with white flowers.

Hummingbirds. Fairly common but harder to catch sight of are California and Spotted Towhees, California Thrashers, and Wrentits. Also keep an eye out for possible sightings of our summer-only visitors, such as most of our Swallows, Swainson's Thrush, the Black-headed Grosbeak, Wilson's Warbler, and the Western Tanager.

Reptiles are especially active in the warmth of summer. Western Fence Lizards dart along the boardwalk, and you may be lucky enough to see one of our snakes, none of which is poisonous. Coyotes have been seen at least once or twice between each printing of this bimonthly newsletter for about the last year. On morning walks, look for tracks in the sand of our nocturnal visitors; raccoon tracks are especially common.

Come out to the Elfin Forest on a misty morning or sunny afternoon during our late summer drought, and marvel at evidence of abundant and active life displayed by our marvelously adapted plants and animals. For detailed charts of colors, habitats, and peak seasons for hundreds of plants and animals, see our Pocket Guide, sold on page 11.

WALKS in the ELFIN FOREST

Third Saturday Walks

August 18, 9:30 a.m. – Geology Walk

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.

September 15, 9:30 a.m. – Literary Stroll

Cal Trans historian Robert Pavlik has an excellent collection of books by natural history writers and poets. For his Elfin Forest literary stroll, he'll bring along a notebook with selections from the works of such authors as Robinson Jeffers, Wallace Stegner, Rachel Carson, Gary Snyder, John Steinbeck and others from this and past centuries. As you follow Bob along the boardwalk, stopping here and there for a reading, he will provide you with a delightful menu of descriptions, impressions and thoughts that can be enjoyed in the Elfin Forest environment. Bob also brings along a handout with a list of his readings for those who want to read further.

October 13, 8:30 a.m. – Pre-Big Sit! Walk

(Second Saturday – Note earlier time)

This Second Saturday walk, beginning at 8:30 a.m., will be a pre-Big Sit! walk. The actual Big Sit! is an international event hosted by the Birdwatchers Digest (www.birdwatchersdigest.com) and founded by the New Haven (Connecticut) Bird Club. It will take place on Sunday, October 14. Birder Jim Royer, who coordinates the Elfin Forest Big Sit! at Bush Lupine Point, will lead the Saturday walk. Join Jim in finding and identifying 40 to 60 species of birds throughout the Elfin Forest. This walk is for those who just enjoy looking at birds as well as for more experience birders. You'll come away knowing more about birds, their calls, their habits and habitats.

October 20, 9:30 a.m. – Reptile Walk

Join herpetologist and Cuesta College biology instructor Ron Ruppert as he tours the Elfin Forest in search of the Coast Horned Lizard and the Forest's resident reptiles and amphibians. Since it is often difficult to find the real thing, Ron will bring some reptile skins and perhaps a live critter or two so walk participants can see what some of those small and retiring Forest inhabitants look like. Learn how these elfin creatures survive and protect themselves from predators and, yes – boys! By the way, there are no rattlesnakes in the Elfin Forest.

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.



A rapt audience listened as archaeologist Dr. John Parker explained that changes in climate and increases in population caused technology development among the California Indians. Parker displayed numerous artifacts and examples of what the ancient peoples used for hunting, fishing, processing food, and producing music.

Photo by Yolanda Waddell.

Elfin Forest Sightings

Pete Sarafian reported the following: Early one morning in mid-June a young coyote made its way along the driveway/sand trail between the 11th and 12th Street entrances to the Elfin Forest. It turned off the trail and headed north into the Elfin Forest.

Bob Meyer spotted a Western Fence Lizard in the act of eating a bee, and froze the moment with this excellent photo. Now we know for sure that lizards have very tough tongues.



Thank You to Our New and Renewing Members

Compiled by Wendy Brown, SWAP Database Coordinator

NEW MEMBERS:

Jennifer Hutchings
Cindy Konrad*

Lawson Schaller
& Anne Norment*

RENEWING MEMBERS:

Priscilla Akin
Katherine R. Baker
Andrea Bersie*
Gordon Black
William Bouton*
Les Bowker*
Christine, David, & Ben Braun*
Pat Brown*
Richard Burke
Ann Calhoun
David & Linda Chipping*
Mark Cohen*
Vic, George, & Doris Croy*
Alice L. Cushing*
Stephani & Stuart Denker*
Leland & Valerie Endres*
Francesca Fairbrother*
Siegrid Fenn
Guy & Libby Fitzwater*
Margaret Fox & Claudette Kolk*

Nada Fuller*
John & Joy Gault*
Richard & Charlotte Gordon*
Myron & Priscilla Graham*
Lois Green
Bethany & Don Griffiths*
Alta Hall*
Burton & Dorothy Harris*
Mary Harrison*
Susan Howe
Dr. Steve Jio & Family*
Robert Judd
Sally & Randy Knight*
Mike & Melissa Leahy
Martin & Deborah Levi*
Henrietta Lichtenbaum
Annette Lindeman*
Norman MacGillivray*
Chuck & Moe McGee*
Tom & JoAnne Milburn*

Beth & Sheldon Miller*
Sheila C. Montooth*
Roy Moss*
Kelley & Eric Nelson
Melvin & Mary Norby*
Barbara Renshaw & Skip Shaw*
Florence M. Ross*
Jim Ross*
Santa Barbara SWAP*
H.E. & A.R. Schuchardt*
Mildred Schwab*
John Severson*
Robert & Mia Simmons*
Lani Steele
Jane Swanson
Yolanda & Jay Waddell*
CA Native Plant Society*
Michael Ward
Jacquoline Williams
James & Jeane Wood*

**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.*

Ask and You Shall Receive!

In the June/July issue of *Oakleaves* we published a small item asking for help in meeting a few of our needs: web site work; refrigerator storage for seeds; trail trimming; and sponsors for our calendar. Within a few weeks we had offers of: help with our web site; a refrigerator to store seeds; assistance to Pat Murray in maintaining trails; and two sponsors for the printing of our 2008 calendar. Thanks to all who saw the need and then generously responded with some help. Our SWAP members are the greatest!



OAKLEAVES

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, Stacey King, Dave Lawrence, Debbie Levi, Bob Meyer,
Mardi Niles, Ron Rasmussen, Pete Sarafian,
Yolanda Waddell, Dirk Walters, Jean Wheeler

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If possible, all copy should be submitted by e-mail to:
ywaddell@kcbx.net AND jeanwheeler@charter.net.

New Item!

Call 528-1911 or 528-1861 to pre-order your SWAP 2008 Elfin Forest Calendar, available in early September (see article page 1). Last year's calendar sold out in just a few weeks! The calendar is filled with scenes of the Elfin Forest as well as full-page and smaller photos of birds, wildflowers, butterflies, and other inhabitants of the Elfin Forest. Your \$15 donation (partially tax-deductible) will help with SWAP projects. Get one for yourself and give some as gifts.

Cover photo for 2008 Calendar: Oak Grove with Ferns © Bill Bouton



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. 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 = \$ _____

4. ELFIN FOREST MURAL PRINTS

___ signed prints by artist Barbara Rosenthal, image size 4 1/2 x 16 1/2 in; mounted on foamcore @ \$20.00 = \$ _____

5. 2008 ELFIN FOREST CALENDAR

Enjoy all year round these wonderful pictures of the Elfin Forest by outstanding photographers!

___ @\$15.00= \$ _____

Shipping cost if outside Los Osos/Morro Bay

Pocket Guides & Note Cards: \$1.00 = ___

Calendars & all other items: \$2.50 = ___

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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.

(See phone numbers in box above for calendar pre-orders.)

SWAP Honored by County Supervisors & County Parks!

Los Osos / Morro Bay Chapter
 SMALL WILDERNESS AREA PRESERVATION
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Help Boost SWAP Membership

When we apply for grants to finance our work in the Elfin Forest, agencies ask how many members SWAP has. The more



members we have, the greater is our ability to obtain grants for continuing restoration of the Elfin Forest. One thing you can do to help keep our numbers up is to check the renewal date next to your name on the address label of this issue. Also, urge friends to join SWAP by sharing this newsletter with them and taking them on a walk in our Elfin Forest.

Use the membership form at the right for your renewal or for new memberships for your friends. Our basic membership fee of \$12 covers our operating costs and brings members this bimonthly newsletter. Donations above that level provide funds to help us to control weeds, prevent erosion, and restore habitat. Thanks for your help!

MEMBERSHIP FORM

Name _____

Address _____

City/State/Zip _____

Phone _____

New Member Renewing Member

Member \$12 Defender \$100

Steward \$25 Champion \$250

Protector \$50 Guardian \$500

Life Member \$1000

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.