



O A K L E A V E S

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 ❖ OCTOBER / NOVEMBER 2008

You are invited to the
**SWAP ANNUAL MEETING &
VOLUNTEER APPRECIATION**

Los Osos / Morro Bay Chapter

Saturday, October 18, 2008

Noon to 2:00 p.m. El Morro Church of the Nazarene
1480 Santa Ysabel at South Bay Blvd. in Los Osos
(1/2 block east of South Bay Blvd.)

Open to SWAP members AND THE COMMUNITY!

Guest Speaker Lisa Andreano, California State Parks Environmental Scientist, will present a program on lichen diversity and conservation on the San Luis Obispo coast. Her fascinating PowerPoint program and discussion will feature many species of lichens that are also found in the Elfin Forest.

We will also:

Celebrate our volunteers

Elect Board Members (SWAP members only)

Hear reports from our Treasurer and Conservation Chair

Have lunch together after the meeting (hosted by SWAP)

Please RSVP if you plan to stay for lunch, 528-0392

We look forward to seeing you!

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We Remember: Emily Polk, Margaret Mehring, Linda Hansen, and Jim Weldon

By Yolanda Waddell

This past summer, in a period of just six weeks, SWAP lost three very special active members to cancer, and one, our founder, Emily Polk, to the many complications of old age. Following are remembrances of each of them.

Emily Polk's Legacy

Emily Polk was born in Aberdeen, Washington, in 1910. She grew up on a ranch in Oregon, studied art in Portland, Oregon and San Francisco, and became a designer. After she married architect

Benjamin Polk, they lived in England and then India, where Ben had a very successful architectural firm. While providing interior designs for some of Ben's buildings,

Emily began writing poetry and painting. She also was an activist, working in support of Mother Teresa and becoming President of the National Indian Association of Women.

After returning to the United States, Ben was hired by Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo, to teach architecture. The Polks bought a house in Los Osos, and in exploring their neighborhood, they discovered what is now the Los Osos Oaks State Preserve. Emily was captivated by the gnarled, lichen-draped trunks of those ancient



*SWAP founder Emily Polk with architect husband Benjamin Polk.
Photo by Yolanda Waddell*

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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 / Treasurer
Pete Sarafian, Vice Chair
Yolanda Waddell, Secretary
Pat Akey, Member at Large
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, October 13
and Monday, November 10.**

All Board meetings are open to the public.

To confirm the date, time and location (which are subject to change), call 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 or Chuck Lowe at 781-4417.

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oak trees. She had a vision of an organization that would make sure such lovely places are preserved, and named it Small Wilderness Area Preserves (later changed to Preservation). The acronym, of course, was SWAP. To Emily, this meant that individuals and families could give up some luxuries and donate the money, that is "swap" the luxuries for a share in saving a wild area that is in danger of being developed.

Emily got help in forming her organization from Big Sur conservationist Margaret Owings, photographer Ansel Adams, Sierra Club President Edgar Wayburn, and attorney Mark Larkin. Larkin did the paperwork to incorporate the organization, wrote the bylaws, and obtained the 501c(3) non-profit status.

Shortly after SWAP was formed in 1970, Emily learned that the very oak groves that caused her to form SWAP, were to be sold and turned into a mobile home park. She sprang into action and, with the help of Margaret Owings, obtained a large donation from Justin Dart, owner of Dart Industries. She persuaded the State to match it with money from the Federal Land and Water Trust Fund, and finally got a commitment from State Parks to accept the land and manage it. The 90-acre property was named Los Osos Oaks State Preserve.

News of Emily's organizational success flew around California, and numerous groups approached her for help in saving special small wilderness areas. For ten years, she drove all over the State, writing and speaking to raise consciousness about the need to save fast-disappearing wild areas. She helped a local group form the Estero Chapter of SWAP, and then to buy an option on the Baptista Ranch at the eastern end of Morro Bay, thus giving State Parks the opportunity to add it to Morro Bay State Park.

In 1980, Emily and Ben retired from their activities and moved to England, where they remained for ten years. They wrote a book about their time in India, and Emily lectured, wrote poetry and painted. When they returned to Los Osos, Ben became ill and had to move into a care home in Los Angeles. After he passed away, Emily came back to Los Osos, and remained there until it was necessary for her to be in a care home. Though her body failed her, her mind and memory were sharp to the end. Whenever members of SWAP visited her, she would regale them with stories and recite her poems from memory. She passed away at age 98, on August 16, 2008.

There have been thirteen incorporated chapters of Small Wilderness Area Preservation over the years, and together we have helped acquire thousands of acres of California's natural landscapes from the San Francisco Bay area to Southern California. These special places are now safe from the threat of development and open to the public as preserve, park and open space. Those wild areas that continue to be wild, are the legacy of Emily Polk, who wrote, "A gift of nature is an imperishable gift, never broken, torn, lost, worn; the gift that given once is given forever."

Margaret Mehring, Friend of the Elfin Forest

Dr. Margaret Mehring was best known as a producer of documentary films, screenwriting teacher and founder of the Filmic Writing Program at the USC Film School, and as a political activist who was deeply dedicated to democratic values. However, she also had a great love for all that was wild and beautiful around her. Toward the end of her life, she declared that she felt she was connected to everything.

In 1999, while the Elfin Forest Boardwalk was under construction, Margaret learned that part of the plan was to have benches along the boardwalk. Her brother, ornithologist Bob Jones, had died in 1998, and she wanted a way to continue his memory. Jones was internationally known for almost single-handedly saving the Aleutian Canada Goose from extinction, and also was an authority on the Black Brant.

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Margaret Mehring, shown with her faithful friend Mally, continued her brother Bob's work and influence with a bench and interpretive panel. Photo by Yolanda Waddell.

When he visited Margaret in Los Osos, he often stood at Bush Lupine Point to survey the population of Black Brant wintering in Morro Bay. Margaret decided, "to place a bench there, to beckon others to visit the Brant. We also erected the interpretive display to provide information about the Brant and, in this way, continue Bob's work and influence."



Margaret's love for the Elfin Forest, for teaching and for the memory of her brother Bob have resulted in a lasting tribute that will inform Elfin Forest visitors for countless years to come. We are grateful to have had her friendship. She died of leukemia at age 82, on July 3, 2008.

Linda Hansen, Faithful SWAP Member

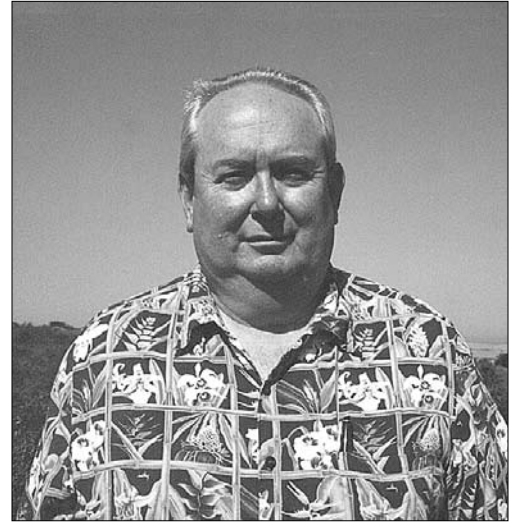
Linda Hansen had a way with plants. Her gardens were always full of blooms, and she knew exactly how to keep each species of plant healthy. She loved the Elfin Forest, so like a very large garden with

Linda Hansen, shown with her dog Rita, loved the Elfin Forest and was dedicated to SWAP.

something different in bloom each month. She also loved SWAP and what it stood for. Whenever she was asked, she would take on the task of trail trimming or stocking boardwalk trail guides in the dispenser box.

In her professional life, Linda had been a hair stylist with her own beauty shop. She also was an accomplished artist and had operated an art gallery, ZuZu's, in Los Osos. In recent years, she worked as a job coach for Achievement House and as a caregiver for the elderly. To each of her undertakings, she brought an air of good cheer and calm that can only come from a person who knew how to see beauty in the world around her. One of the last things that Linda did, just a few weeks before she died, was to renew her SWAP membership. She passed away from cancer on July 29, 2008, at age 63.

Jim Weldon was on the SWAP Board for four years, three of them as Chair, and helped to bring about positive changes in the Elfin Forest, including the interpretive panels. Photo by Yolanda Waddell.



Jim Weldon, Past Chair of SWAP

Jim Weldon was a superb insurance agent. His motto was, "Be lucky or be insured." He also was a great lover of the out-of-doors. When he moved to Los Osos in 1986, he became a member of SWAP during the time that we were raising funds to save the Elfin Forest, and contributed to that effort. In the years that followed, he became President of the South Bay Community Center Board of Directors, and was very successful in raising funds for the Center.

When members of Los Osos/Morro Bay SWAP invited him to join our Board of Directors, he agreed, even though he was still a member of the Community Center Board. SWAP benefited from his previous experience as a board member, and in January, 2000, Jim became Chair of the SWAP board. Under his leadership, our board became more efficient than ever in accomplishing its tasks. He believed in keeping meetings short. His "From the Chair" messages in Oakleaves were brief and to the point. One memorable message began, "Take a hike! – in the Elfin Forest."

Eventually, Jim moved to Paso Robles, but his dedication to SWAP continued, and whenever he could, he worked at our booths and attended our Annual Meetings. Jim died of complications due to cancer on August 10, 2008, at age 64. He asked that donations in his memory be made to the Los Osos/Morro Bay Chapter of SWAP.



This coast live oak branch is host to at least five species of lichens. Photo by Jean Wheeler.



Lichens

By Jean Wheeler

Lichens are symbiotic associations of a fungus and its photosynthetic partner, usually an alga or a cyanobacterium or both. The body form of the resulting lichen is very different from that of either the fungi or algae growing independently, and often resembles those of simple forms of higher (vascular) plants.

Algae and fungi that are parts of lichens cannot normally survive independently in nature, doing so only in experimental laboratory conditions. In lichens fungi surround the algae, but the cells remain separate; that is, alga cells are not inside fungus cells, merely surrounded by them. The fungus provides the alga with water and minerals absorbed from the surface on which they are growing, and the alga uses these to make food for both.

Lichens are able to survive extremely low levels of water. When exposed to water after drought, metabolites from fungi and algae leak into spaces between the cells and are available to both parts of the lichen in a process requiring at least several minutes. In fact, an experiment by the European Space Agency has shown that lichens can even survive unprotected in space. In May of 2005, lichens sealed in capsules and launched on a Soyuz rocket were opened to space with its airless desiccation and widely fluctuating temperatures and radiation for 15 days. Brought back to earth and watered, they were healthy, with no apparent damage.

Because of this ability, lichens can grow on surfaces higher plants find extremely difficult or impossible to colonize, such as bare rock or extreme desert sands. In such places, higher plant seeds can only become established where lichen crusts have helped weather rock or stabilize sand and provide water and organic nutrients.

Lichens have a wide variety of plant forms. Some are crustose, looking like crusts of paint on rocks. Others are filamentous (hairy), foliose (leafy), fruticose (shrubby), leprose (powdery), squamulose (scaly), or gelatinous (jelly-like). Most lichens are very sensitive to manufactured pollutants, and they have been commonly used as pollution indicators.

Charis Bratt, a Research Associate of the Santa Barbara Botanical Garden, kindly made several trips to the Elfin Forest to identify lichen species for our *Pocket Guide* (sold on page 11). Her list includes 56 kinds of lichens she found. Oak trees support 23 kinds and 37 kinds are found on shrubs. Of these, 9 occur on both oaks and shrubs. Four kinds of lichen are found on soil and one on dead wood.

Lichen Expert Lisa Andreano to Speak at Annual Meeting

Lisa Andreano, State Parks Ecologist and co-author of three books and a State Parks resource inventory, will be the speaker at our Chapter Annual Meeting at noon on Saturday, October 18. She will present a PowerPoint slide program of many of the lichens that she inventoried and photographed while preparing her book, *Common Lichens of Estero Bay*. She is co-author with Mike Walgren and Jeremy Beaulieu of *Native Flora of Estero Bay* and *Butterflies of Estero Bay*. The books and the State Parks resource inventory that she has produced are all available online at slo-stateparks.com (free download) or www.lulu.com (for purchase).

Lisa is a graduate from the Ecology and Systematic Biology Program at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo. She studied botany under renowned botanist Dr. David Keil and was a Teaching Assistant in Field Botany for five years. She currently works as an Ecologist for California State Parks, San Luis Obispo Coast District. She is also finishing her Master's thesis, *Lichen, Flora and Ecology of the Estero Coast* at Cal Poly. Please see the Annual Meeting notice on page 1.



Lisa Andreano, in spite of being on crutches, led a walk for SWAP members on State Park property across South Bay Boulevard from the Elfin Forest. Here she is describing and naming several lichens that grow in that area. Photo by Yolanda Wadell.

Cape Ivy

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

Bonnie's drawing for this issue of the *Oak Leaves* shows the tip of a plant that is definitely not welcome in the Elfin Forest or anywhere else in the county. It seems to have two common names as well as two scientific names. The almost universal common name in all but one of my bookshelf references is German ivy. At least one reference gave 'parlor ivy' as an alternative. Parlor ivy refers to the plant's common use as a house plant. Weed abatement people in the California Native Plant Society are using another common name, 'Cape ivy,' which appears to be a more correct name as the plant is native to the Cape Region of South Africa. I have no idea how the name 'German' got associated with the plant other than it occurred a very long time ago.

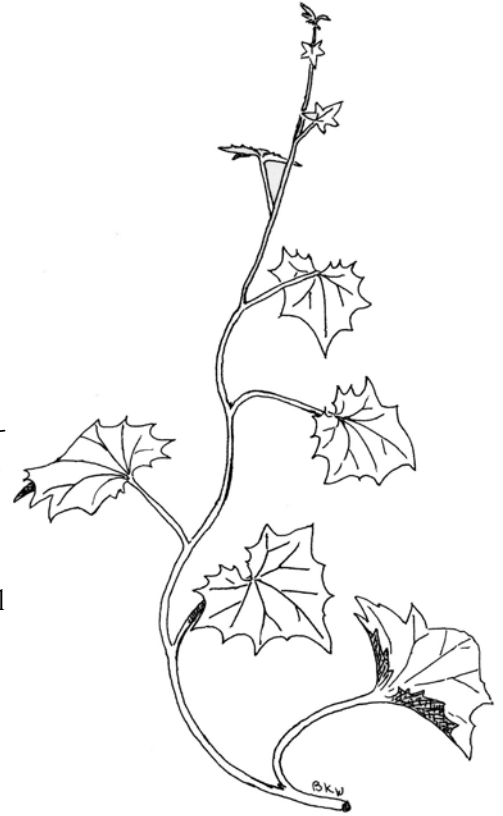
The two scientific names are *Senecio mikanioides* and *Delairea odorata*. All of my older references, including the current *Jepson Manual: Higher Plants of California*, list the species in the genus *Senecio*. My only reference to the plant as *Delairea odorata* is *The New Royal Horticultural Society Dictionary of Gardening* (1992). I had remembered hearing Cape ivy referred to by a different scientific name at a recent meeting, but I found it very hard to track down. If you want to look up anything about the plant in most available books, my guess is you will have to use the names German ivy and *Senecio mikanioides*. By the way, removing Cape ivy from the genus, *Senecio*, drops the number of species in that genus from around 1,000 to a mere 999. If Cape ivy is moved to the genus *Delairea*, that genus will contain but a single species. Many consider *Senecio* to be one of, if not, the largest genus of plants in the world.

The name *Senecio* is derived from the Latin word *senex* which means old man. It refers to the copious number of snow white 'hairs' of the pappus on top of the fruits produced by almost all of members of the genus. The only other characteristic that holds this diverse genus together is the bracts around its heads of tiny flowers. They consist of a single row subtended by a few tiny scale-like bractlets. The most diverse characteristic of this genus is its habit. It contains everything from tiny annual herbs to large trees. In deserts and alpine habitats, especially African ones, the members of the genus take on bizarre, almost unworldly forms. Those of you into natural history might want to look for some illustrations of these. Cape ivy, itself, is somewhat succulent.

Cape ivy has been grown for years (under the name German ivy) as an easy to grow house plant. The 1910 edition of L.H.

Bailey's *Cyclopedia of American Horticulture* reports that this species is a "very common conservatory and window-garden plant, easily propagated by cuttings". I suspect it is the 'easily propagated cuttings' that is the source material for the Cape ivy infestations visible along our coastal creeks. When I arrived in the county back in the early 1970's it was not uncommon to see piles of garden waste along our roadsides. Luckily, this practice seems to have become rare. *The New Royal Horticultural Society Dictionary of Gardening* mentions in passing that Cape ivy has become naturalized in California. This is an extreme understatement, especially here on the Central Coast.

Cape Ivy has become a smothering weed in streamside (riparian) habitats. It is commonly found growing into and over willows bordering streams flowing into Morro Bay. Pete Sarafian reports that a bad infestation has been found in the Elfin Forest far away from the board walk. The weed warriors who went to eliminate it not only had a hard time getting to it but came in contact with a common native riparian plant competitor known as poison oak. We owe the dedicated weed warriors a vote of appreciation as well as maybe some hints on getting rid of poison oak rashes. If they hadn't gone through the trouble of attacking the Cape ivy, it would probably take over all the willow groves along the bay. Unfortunately, I suspect the whackers will have to return to spray the plant a number of times. The many layers of succulent leaves prevent spray from reaching all the leaves. The outer layers die, only to be replaced by those underneath this tenacious plant.



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 jean-wheeler@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.



Sharon Meyer (center) was very pleased that a visitor bought her painting of Monkeyflowers that appeared on the February page of the calendar.

2009 Calendar Party Best Yet!

By Calendar Committee; photo by Jean Wheeler

The fog lifted and the sun shone on the 2009 Elfin Forest Calendar Preview Party and Sale, held Saturday afternoon, September 6. Nineteen outstanding local artists attended, some set up easels displaying their original works featured in this year's calendar, and artists autographed their images in our calendar for purchasers. The festivities were held next to the 12th Street entrance to the Elfin Forest, where artists and visitors enjoyed refreshments while chatting and viewing works of art on the easels and in the calendar. The new calendar format—larger and containing sidebars with informative natural history text, was well received.

Community support was strong. Staples Copy Center on Madonna Road in San Luis Obispo printed at a discounted rate the majority of our advertising flyers, which were designed by Katy Budge and Ken Christiansen. Arts Obispo's newsletter and local newspapers gave information about the event and about sales of the calendar. Boy Scout Troop 214 directed parking, and many members of SWAP provided vital and much appreciated help with setup and decoration, food preparation and service, welcoming of visitors, and cleanup after the event.

SWAP members were delighted to find we had earned the highest single day's income ever for our small organization. Calendars remain available for purchase for \$15 from the Shoppers Guide in this Oakleaves (page 11) or call 528-1911 or 528-1861. Calendars will also be offered at the SWAP Annual Meeting on Saturday October 18 (see page 1), and at our booth at Oktoberfest on Sunday, October 26 (see page 12). They can also be purchased in Los Osos at Volumes of Pleasure Bookstore, the Chamber of Commerce, the Rexall Drug Store, the Flower Market, and Art is for Everyone Gallery. All proceeds will be used for Elfin Forest maintenance, revegetation and education projects.

Happy Trails to John and Cheyanne Parker

By Yolanda Waddell

Every July or August since 1997, archaeologist Dr. John Parker has shared his extensive knowledge of the ancient peoples of the Central Coast with Third Saturday Walk participants. With the help of his wife and assistant, Cheyanne, he demonstrated examples of technological development over 10,000 years. They brought arrowheads, spear points, fish hooks, manos and metates (mortars and pestles), fish weights, shell beads and examples of plants used by the Chumash and their predecessors. John also talked about the culture, social structure and environment of the Native Americans who lived in the area of Morro Bay, sharing stories about Chumash money, economy, trade and community structure. Much to peoples' delight, he would beat time on a split-wood clapper and sing along with it. Everyone left John's walk with a greater appreciation of the complex world of the Elfin Forest's past inhabitants.



John Parker not only gives yearly archaeological walks in the Elfin Forest, he is the Elfin Forest archaeologist. In 1999, when the boardwalk was being built, John was on hand as the archaeological consultant and monitor. He and Cheyanne excavated the places where posts for the observation decks were to be buried, unearthing artifacts that turned out to be about 1,000 years old. His report on those excavations makes fascinating reading. He was also on hand when a large revegetation and fencing project (1650 plants) was carried out in 2004, and this year a letter from John cleared the way for planning for a boardwalk extension into the Rose Bowker Grove.

Now the time has come for John and Cheyanne to move north to Clear Lake in Lake County, where they have a ranch and are building a house. John lived in that area for a number of years while working on his Ph.D. research of the history of the Pomo Indians. Their ranch, which they named Wolf Creek Ranch, is near the lake, and adjoins a national forest. Cheyanne is pleased to have seen bear and mountain lion tracks along trails near their home. As a long-time taxidermist, using and developing skills that she learned from her Lakota grandfather, she has an affinity for all kinds of wildlife. Their home contains quite a zoo of wild animal mounts standing in corners and on perches throughout the house.

While he was working on the boardwalk, John learned about the benches that were to be added after construction was complete. He decided to purchase one with a very nice view, as an expression of his love for Cheyanne as well as a nod to their mutual love of the outdoors. He titled it the "Lovers' Bench," and presented it to Cheyanne on her birthday. The bench will be a reminder of John and Cheyanne in years to come. They are life members of SWAP, so will be able to keep informed about us through Oakleaves newsletter. We can keep in touch with their activities by visiting their web site, www.WolfCreekArcheology.com. We hope that they will pay a visit to the Elfin Forest and SWAP once in awhile. They will be greatly missed, but SWAP appreciates their wonderful generosity and dedication to the Elfin Forest.

Climate Change and the Elfin Forest

By Ron Rasmussen, SWAP Chair

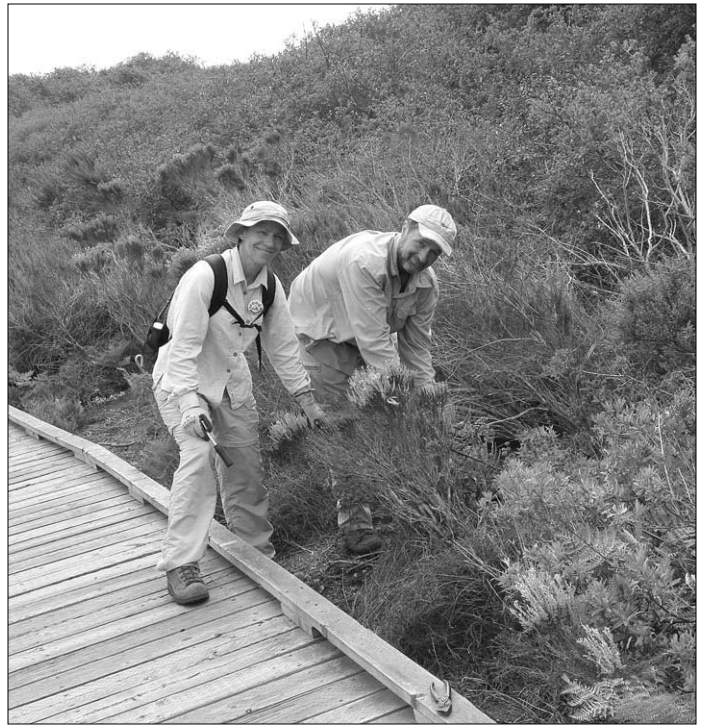
It's been a dry year for the Elfin Forest. But this is not unusual either for our area or for California. Long time residents of the Central Coast may recall the "wet" years of 1983 and 1997, which roughly corresponded to the el niño cycle seen in the southern Pacific Ocean. From this one could conclude that the present drought is a temporary problem that will be solved when the next wet cycle returns. However, this conclusion does not account for possible effects of global warming.

Predictions for California and the Central Coast are that long-term rainfall may not change significantly. But because of increased temperatures, snow will not accumulate in the Sierra Nevada. This will result in water shortages for agriculture and communities that depend on the melting snow for water during the dry season. Along with rising temperatures, sea level is also expected to rise, perhaps as much as 3 feet by 2100.

How will climate change alter the character of the Elfin Forest? If, as expected, rainfall amounts and patterns do not change significantly, the Elfin Forest will survive. However, the rising temperatures are likely to accentuate the pattern of vegetation growth that we see today. At the highest elevation and along the upper boardwalk the plants are smaller and more widely spaced than lower down the slope. For example, along the lower boardwalk and toward Siena's View Black Sage and Sticky Monkey Flower were still in bloom in July and August. At higher elevations, these plants were dormant by the end of June. This is due to the availability of underground water. Rain falling on the Elfin Forest (which is really a big sand dune) percolates rapidly down through the sand until it reaches a less permeable layer of compacted soil or rock. The water then flows underground until it reaches the bay. With higher air temperatures, rain will evaporate more quickly and plants at the upper elevations will have less time to absorb the water. The likely result is a loss of plants and more barren areas at the upper elevations of the Forest.

What about rising sea levels? The expected maximum rise by 2100 is about three feet. This will have significant effects on the Forest. A rise of only a few feet would mean that the north and west edges of the Elfin Forest would be under water at high tide. The oaks in these areas are now close to the high tide level. The likely result is that more salt-tolerant plants would replace the oaks and other vegetation that depend on fresh water. However, most of the Forest oaks and the boardwalk would be out of danger. If predictions of an ultimate sea level rise of more than 100 feet come true, then the entire Elfin Forest would be under water at high tide. Because the Forest is just a big sand dune, it would likely be washed away long before the highest sea level was reached.

The conclusion from these estimates and predictions is that little change can be expected for the Elfin Forest, at least for the next 100 years or so. Please continue to visit and enjoy our Forest with the confidence that it will be here well into the future.



Prisila and Rich Johnson were on hand for the September 6th work party, led by Bob Meyer in Pete Sarafian's absence. The task was to install symbolic fencing along the south side of the boardwalk in the Celestial Meadow. Photo by Jean Wheeler.

Weed Warriors

August Work Party is Tiny

By Pete Sarafian, Chapter Vice-Chair & Conservation Chairperson

Chapter Chairperson, Ron Rasmussen, and Chapter Vice-Chair, Pete Sarafian, were the only volunteers who showed up on time for the conservation work party at 9 am on the first Saturday of August. With that in mind, they set off into the furthest reaches of the Elfin Forest to pull down Cape ivy (*Delairea odorata*) vines from oak groves. This time-consuming step is needed before spraying herbicide to rid the Forest of this invasive plant from South Africa. Only a small number of people can perform this task at one time. A galloping herd of volunteers probably would do too much vegetation damage to be practical. In the process of going to a couple of remote oak groves, they managed to elude a later volunteer, Lannie Erickson. Poor Lannie spent hours looking for the elusive pair, but never quite found them. Hopefully, next time there will be enough volunteers so that they are easier to find.

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-sleeved shirts are best. 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

If you “must go where the wild goose goes,” then Morro Bay National Estuary should be your target at this time of year. All four species of geese listed in our *Pocket Guide* (sold on page 11) begin arriving in October, if not before. Our famous Brant Geese typically fly in from Alaska in late October, and as many as two to three thousand of this species are feeding in the eel-grass beds by the end of November.

All ten species of dabbling ducks and at least seven of nine species of diving ducks have reached peak populations by October or November. All five grebe species are at peak from September or October until March or April. Western Gulls are year-round residents, but five other species join them here only in fall through spring. The American Avocet also returns to peak population numbers in October. In summer, vast expanses of open water are seen between clusters of resident waterbirds from Bush Lupine Point and Siena’s View. But by the end of November, the estuary has become crowded with the thousands of birds arriving to spend the winter or passing through in migration to tropical regions.

On land, the Elfin Forest also plays host to brush or woodland birds migrating through or wintering. Fox, Lincoln’s, and Golden-crowned Sparrows join our year-round White-crowned Sparrows from October to March or April. Ruby-crowned Kinglets also settle in for the winter. In the same months, our summer Swainson’s Thrushes have gone, but are replaced for the winter by American Robins and Hermit Thrushes. Yellow-rumped Warblers also peak in these months. Say’s Phoebe joins its year-round relative, the Black Phoebe, for a winter visit. A dawn or dusk walker in the Elfin Forest may be lucky enough to see or more likely hear a wintering Short-eared Owl. Birds one may be lucky enough to see passing through in small flocks include Cedar Waxwings, Western Tanager, and Pine Siskins.

While October and November are minimal in colorful flowers, returning rains should be greening up the Elfin Forest in preparation for wonderful floral displays in the winter and spring months to come. A few of the species which normally do continue to show some blossoms in October and November are California Sagebrush (white), Dune Buckwheat Bush (white flowers aging to pink or rust), California Asters (pinkish petals and yellow central disks), Coyote Brush (white male and yellow female flowers), and Seaside Golden Yarrow.

MB Winter Bird Fest Registration Opens

The 13th Annual Morro Bay Winter Bird Festival being held January 16-19, 2009, and registration is open now through January 5, 2009; however, space is limited for the festival itself and for many of the more popular events, so you are encouraged to make your reservations as soon as possible. Festival program brochures are available by calling the Morro Bay Chamber of Commerce at 805-772-4467 or 1-800-231-0592, or you can download a brochure from the Morro Bay Winter Bird Festival web site at www.morrobaybirdfestival.org. Online registration is also available.

The weekend vendor show at the Morro Bay Community Center is open to festival attendees and the general public at no charge.



Black Brant are rather small dark geese, white around the tail, with the distinctive white “necklace” around the neck, which shows well in this photo by John Roser.



One of our largest sparrows, the Golden-crowned Sparrow summers in mountains of Washington, Canada, and Alaska. Adults have a light yellow to gold color on their foreheads. Photo by Jean Wheeler.



OAKLEAVES

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Co-editors are Yolanda Waddell and Jean Wheeler;

layout is by Katy Budge. Editing assistance by Pat Grimes and Jim Johnson.

Contributors to this issue: Betsy Kinter, Debbie Levi, Ron Rasmussen, Pete Sarafian, Yolanda Waddell, Dirk and Bonnie Walters, and Jean Wheeler.

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ywaddell@kcbx.net AND jeanwheeler@charter.net.

WALKS in the ELFIN FOREST

Third (and Second) Saturday Walks

October 11, 8:30 a.m. – Pre-Big Sit! Bird Walk Second Saturday – Note earlier time

The Big Sit!, an annual birding event, will be held on Sunday, October 12, at Bush Lupine Point in the Elfin Forest. Jim Royer, coordinator of the local team of birders participating in this event, will lead us on a Saturday walk beginning at 8:30 a.m. to identify the birds that the expert birders can watch out for the next day. With Jim's help, we will see or hear at least sixty species of land and water birds. He'll bring along his spotting scope so we can see some of them close up, and we'll learn the calls of the Wrentit, Bewick's Wren and Scrub Jay as well as many others. This walk is for those who just enjoy looking at birds as well as for more experienced birders. Bring binoculars if you have them.

October 18, 9:30 a.m. –

Exploring Evolution in the Elfin Forest

Bob Field, Cal Poly adjunct physics professor, will lead us through the Elfin Forest on a search for the signs of five kingdoms of life and five billion years of global natural history. Bob says, "The rugged beauty of our evolving coast reveals the powers of the sea, sky, land, and life itself. Everything you see around the Elfin Forest changes over time - the land, sea, atmosphere, and-biosphere. From daily and seasonal cycles to billions of years of physical and biological evolution, it's all about relationships and energy flows."

November 15, 9:30 a.m. –

Sketch and Plant Walk

Artist Barbara Renshaw not only draws and paints native plants, but knows them by their common and scientific names as well. Join her for a stroll along the Elfin Forest boardwalk to enjoy views of the Morro Bay Estuary, sandspit and volcanic Morros, and marvel at the ancient gnarled oak trees in the Rose Bowker Grove. Barbara will tell you a bit about the native plants along the way, and has planned interesting places to stop and do some sketching. No drawing experience is necessary. Bring a pad of drawing paper, colored pencils or pastels, and some drinking water. Consider bringing a camera too. You'll be pleased to discover that, with Barbara's help, there is an artist hidden inside of you.

December 20, 9:30 a.m. –

Geographer's View of the Solstice

December 21 is Winter Solstice, so named in ancient times because it seemed as if the sun was "standing still." Geographer Dr. Jean Wheeler will explain this phenomenon and what the relative wanderings of the sun, moon and earth mean to us in terms of our climates, tides, and the vegetation and animal life around us. She'll use charts to explain how seasons are caused by differences in sun angle, and how some plants grow well on the shaded northern slopes of the Elfin Forest, while others require more sunshine and thrive along the ridge tops and gentle southern slopes of the Forest dunes. Join us for this energetic and "enlightening" walk and talk!



Photographers Mike Baird (second from left) and Kevin Cole (in wheel chair) filled their July digital photo walk with many useful pointers for walk participants. Photo by Yolanda Waddell.



John Parker gave his last archaeology walk in the Elfin Forest in July, prior to moving to Northern California. Here he is demonstrating a Chumash-type clapper stick, used to accompany dances and songs.

Photo by Jean Wheeler.

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.

Thank You to Our New and Renewing Members

Compiled by Betsy Kinter, SWAP Database Coordinator

NEW MEMBERS:

Judy Alvarez Susan Calla and Rich Hiser*

RENEWING MEMBERS:

Katherin R. Baker	Martin and Deborah Levi*
Mary Baker	Norman MacGillivray*
Andrea Bersie	Leora Markwort
Charles E. Blair	Betty McElhill
Leslie Bowker*	Chuck and Moe McGee*
Jean P. Boyd*	Tom and JoAnne Milburn
Pat Brown*	Howard and Marlo Miller*
Ann Calhoun	William H. Newman
Andrew Chermak & Aura Mantilla*	Al Normandin
Kathleen Copeland*	Anne Norment and Lawson Schaller
David and Evelyn Dabritz*	Dorothy J. Norwood
Lurlie Edgecomb*	Al and Carrie Pardo
Francesca Fairbrother	Donald S. Parham
Siegfried Fenn	Ronald Rasmussen*
Robert and Marilyn Freiler	Barbara Renshaw*
Woody Frey	Barbara and Robert Rosenthal*
Gary Giannico*	Nancy E. Ruhl*
Joris and Barbara Gieskes*	Mildred Schwab*
Sterling and Virginia Gottlieb*	Tomoko Sugano
Susan and Pascal Grimaud	Terry Tennant
Mary Harrison*	Mary C. Topp
Linda Hansen*	Yolanda and Jay Waddell*
Jerry Hull*	Roy and Junie Wolf
Gene and Mimi Kalland*	Ruth L. Zank*
Charles and Laura Kass*	

SPECIAL DONATIONS:

Susan Calla and Rich Hiser - in memory of Margaret Mehring
Scott and Jane Robinson – in memory of James H. Weldon

**Thanks to those listed above who donated more than the \$25 membership dues. The additional donations will be used for special projects in the Elfin Forest.*



Walking with Wolves in the Forest

By Jean Wheeler

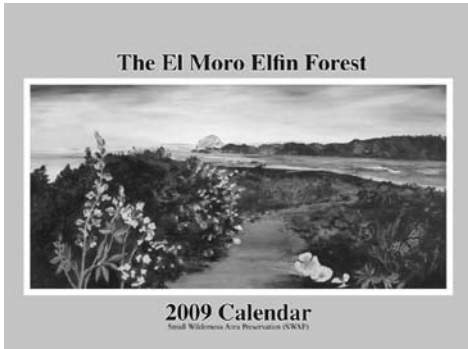
On August 9, several SWAP members joined a most unusual scheduled walk in the Elfin Forest. For the second year, W.H.A.R., a wolf rescue organization, contacted SWAP in advance and arranged to lead one of W.H.A.R.'s second Saturday "Walks with Wolves" on the Elfin Forest Boardwalk.

W.H.A.R. is Wolf Hybrid Adoption and Rescue, Inc., a grass-roots organization run by an unpaid group of volunteers including a 7-member Board of Directors. Mark and Kristi Krutsinger founded the organization ten years ago upon adopting two animals, a purebred Alaskan Malamute named Chinook and wolf/Alaskan Malamute mix named Tundra. W.H.A.R. currently houses up to 22 rescued animals at a time at their facility on Estrella Road off Hwy 46, in Paso Robles. Most of the full-blood and hybrid wolves they care for have been turned over to them by former owners who found it too difficult to meet the special needs of these beautiful animals. The wolf genetic background of these animals predisposes them to behavior appropriate to pack animals living in the wild rather than the docile and dependent behavior of dogs bred for domestication for thousands of years.

In addition to caring for the wolves they rescue, W.H.A.R. focuses on providing practical education on such subjects as proper containment, quality diets, humane treatment, discouragement of breeding practices, proper exercise, body language communication (wolf speak), U.S. wild wolf reintroduction programs, and ownership realities for current owners or adopters-to-be. W.H.A.R. fosters a "no wolves as pets" philosophy. They never release full blood wolves to the public as pets, release hybrid dog-wolf mixes only to recipients who have passed a thorough screening process, and all adoptees are sterilized, no exception.

As part of their education process, W.H.A.R. volunteers invite the public to join them as they lead a few of their rescued hybrids on walks in beautiful natural places along the Central Coast such as the Salinas River Walk in Paso Robles, Mission Trail in Carmel, Pfeiffer Beach in Big Sur, the boardwalk in the Elfin Forest, and Santa Barbara Botanic Garden. On our walk, Kristi and her fellow volunteers emphasized the behavioral differences between dogs and these hybrid wolves and the constant need to monitor communication with these magnificent animals.

On October 11, at 11 am, W.H.A.R. will be walking their wolves on the Bluff Trail at the Fiscalini Ranch in Cambria, a property protected by our sister chapter of SWAP. We look forward to walking with wolves again next summer on the Elfin Forest Boardwalk. For more information about W.H.A.R., touring their facility, or donating cash or needed materials, see their website at www.whar.org.



New Item!

Call 528-1911 or 528-1861 to order your SWAP 2009 Elfin Forest Calendar, now available. The 9 X 12 inch calendar features artistic paintings of scenes in the Elfin Forest and of some of the beautiful flowers we enjoy every year. These calendars make wonderful gifts for your family and friends, reminding them of you and of our lovely Elfin Forest all year long.

Cover photo for 2009 Calendar by Deb Festa.



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 lichens and 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. 2009 ELFIN FOREST CALENDAR

Enjoy the Elfin Forest all year round with these creative views by outstanding local artists!

___ @\$15.00 = \$_____

Shipping cost if outside Los Osos/Morro Bay

Pocket Guides & Note Cards: \$1.50 = _____

All other items: \$3.00 = _____

TOTAL OF ORDER \$_____

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

Name: _____

Address: _____

City/State/Zip: _____

Phone (w/area code) : _____

Make checks payable and mail to:

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

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

SWAP's Annual Meeting is Saturday, October 18!
See pages 1 and 4.

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.elm-forest.org



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Volunteers Needed for Oktoberfest



Los Osos will be celebrating its annual Oktoberfest this year on Sunday, October 26 on Second Street in downtown Baywood Park, from 9 am to 4 pm. SWAP will participate in the celebration by setting up our booth, stocked with our gorgeous new 2009 calendar, T-shirts, mural prints and more.

Would you enjoy a couple of hours talking to people? Our booth is 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 information, and sell our merchandise.

If you can work a two-hour shift between 9 am and 4 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 _____

- New Member
- Renewing Member
- Member \$25
- Defender \$100
- Steward \$50
- Champion \$250
- Protector \$75
- Guardian \$500
- Seniors & Students \$15
- 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.