

Marlin Harms Receives Hoover Award

Marlin Harms' quiet enthusiasm and his wondrous photographs are vital both to conservation and appreciation of our county's wildflowers. His contribution was recognized as this year's honored recipient of the Hoover Award, presented at our chapter's annual banquet in January.

Marlin takes stunning photographs. His work is featured prominently throughout "Wildflowers of San Luis Obispo" including the cover photograph of a *Calochortus venustus* display at Laguna Lake.

Typical of Marlin's enthusiasm was his effort to locate and photograph, missing subjects for that book. Marlin is never content with just a pedestrian image, he wants to improve and highlight each species with his art.

Marlin is pushing enthusiastically to help germinate the Chapter's next big publication, a guide to the Carrizo wildflowers. He has already spent innumerable hours gathering new images, confessing, "I'm early, but there are some species already in bloom, and I'm getting to see new things and new, really special places, like the Salcito Rocks."

Marlin has played a behind-the-scenes, but vital role in the successful conservation campaigns preserving so much of our county. His photographs of Hollister Peak, the Sur Sur Ranch, the East West Ranch, and the Palisades property in Los Osos presented to foundations, Congress, and the Legislature generated the excitement and support for those conservation victories.

Marlin has contributed plants he has grown from seed to our annual plant sale for more than 15 years, quietly supporting our chapter's centerpiece fund-raiser.

Marlin came to the county in alternative service in Conscientious Objector status during the Vietnam Era. He served at Atascadero State Hospital, and continued in that career for 38 years until retiring in the beginning of 2009. His senior thesis studied brown pelicans in Morro Bay finding that conservation and the undisturbed Back Bay were important to immature birds. He has also volunteered to monitor and photograph sea birds on the Farallons and California gulls at Mono Lake. Marlin was awarded a degree in Biology from Cal Poly while still working at ASH.

Connie, Marlin's wife, recounted a week that began with a dolphin rescue for Marlin's volunteer work with the marine mammal rescue, the next day had him serving as a docent at the Morro Bay Art Center, and the days that followed included photographing flowers at the Chimineas with CNPS member (and fellow Hoover recipient) George Butterworth, elephant seals were shoehorned into his schedule, before ending the week with sunset photographs at Morro Bay.

Our Chapter is fortunate for the energy and commitment of Marlin. We are proud to honor his accomplishments with our 2010 Hoover Award. "

— John Chesnut