



The Newsletter for Land Trust of Napa County  
Summer 2017



# Land Trust Closes Largest Easement Ever— 7,260 Acres!

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Land Trust of Napa County finalizes landmark conservation achievement—an easement over 7,260 acres of a ranch on the shoulders of Mt. St. Helena, one of the largest private properties in Napa County. With this addition, the Land Trust has now protected over 65,000 acres! Story on page 3.



**Make a lasting impact—help preserve Napa  
by including the Land Trust in your estate plan.  
Read about our Legacy Society on page 5.**

## Letter from the CEO

In this newsletter, you will read about conservation projects that protect watersheds, vineyards, forests, and wildlife corridors. It is an exciting year for conservation in Napa. Our efforts over the last few years to increase the pace of conservation are beginning to bear a lot of high-quality fruit.

- It started in January with the closing of our largest conservation easement ever (see cover story)—over 7,200 acres! This land was the largest private property in Napa County and had been on the top of our priority list for many years. It protects thousands of acres of forest, a large number of springs and streams, priority native species, wildlife habitat and wildlife corridors, and connects with thousands of acres of already protected land next to Mt. St. Helena.
- We are now working on Phase 2 of this project to purchase 1,200 acres—part of Mt. St. Helena. This will provide public access and new trails up to the summit. Most of the funds have been raised—we just need \$200,000 more. Any ideas?
- One of our top priorities is to develop a continuous corridor of protected land that will run the length of the county, through the hills along the ridge east of Napa Valley, from Mt. St. Helena to American Canyon. The 7,200-acre easement mentioned above is a key piece of that corridor. We hope to have good news soon on two other easements east of Yountville which will protect several hundred acres in the hills and add to the development of the corridor.
- In addition, near Lake Berryessa, we are working on the second phase of a very large-scale ranch protection project aimed at conserving over 5,000 acres later this year, which will add to the 1,550 acres we protected there last year.



### Support LTNC

- Become a Member
- Become a Corporate Partner
- Join our Legacy Society
- Visit us online at [napalandtrust.org](http://napalandtrust.org)



What does all this add up to? 2017 could be the biggest year ever in the 41-year history of the Land Trust—the most acreage we have ever protected in one year!

And it is an exciting year for Stewardship efforts on land we have already protected, from creekside restoration on Conn Creek, to documentation of native wildlife along the corridors, to the spectacular spring wildflowers reestablished at our Missimer Snell Valley Preserve.

We expect to leverage your support many times over this year by protecting thousands of acres—permanently. Napa is a beautiful place, and with your help, we are making tangible progress toward making sure it stays that way.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Doug Parker". The script is fluid and cursive, with a large "D" and "P".

Doug Parker, President & CEO

To contact Doug, call 707.252.0435 or email [Doug@napalandtrust.org](mailto:Doug@napalandtrust.org).





## COVER STORY ..... Land Trust Closes Largest Easement Ever—Protects 7,260 Acres!

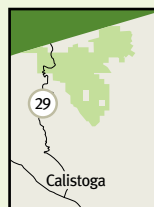
Land Trust of Napa County (LTNC) and The Trust for Public Land are proud to have completed the acquisition of a conservation easement over 7,260 acres of a ranch on the shoulders of Mt. St. Helena, one of the largest private properties in Napa County.

“This ranch ranked as the number one priority for biodiversity conservation in Napa County,” said Doug Parker, CEO of LTNC. “It has one of the highest concentrations of significant native species in a five-county region and it has been identified as a key crossroads for wildlife movement from the San Francisco Bay Area to points north and east.”

The project is notable for its size and location. The ranch shares 14 miles of boundary with Robert Louis Stevenson State Park and other State, federal and Land Trust-protected lands. Its protection consolidates a 34-square-mile unbroken conservation landscape.

The project also protects a vital source of fresh water with dozens of streams and creeks descending from its slopes, including

Putah Creek which feeds Lake Berryessa, a federal reservoir crucial to regional cities and farms.



The conservation easement is now held by the Land Trust. Conservation easements offer landowners the opportunity to permanently protect their land from development, while maintaining private ownership.

We also hope to purchase a portion of the property to improve access to Robert Louis Stevenson State Park and provide new opportunities for public recreation. Until that time, however, the property remains privately owned and is not open to the public.

This remarkable conservation achievement was made possible with critical support from the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, the California Wildlife Conservation Board, the California State Coastal Conservancy, the California Natural Resources Agency, and the California Department of Fish & Wildlife. ■



*Bell Canyon, looking downstream toward Bell Canyon Reservoir with Mayacamas range visible in distance.*

## Land Trust Protects Water Source for St. Helena

The Land Trust of Napa County is pleased to announce the acquisition of a property near Angwin that will protect the local water supply for the City of St. Helena. In addition to forested land with significant natural values, the property includes over 1/4 mile of Bell Creek, the stream that supplies Bell Canyon Reservoir, the main source of water for the city.



*One of the large Ponderosa pines found on the property.*

“The City of St. Helena is delighted with the Land Trust’s acquisition of this important property. The Bell Canyon watershed is of critical importance to the City, and it is wonderful that this property is now in the hands of the Land Trust,” said St. Helena’s mayor, Alan Galbraith.

“This is an example of where the Land Trust had to move quickly,” said Doug Parker, CEO of LTNC. “We were able to structure a deal that allowed for payments over time, so we are still actively working to raise funds for the purchase. I think there are great opportunities to protect key municipal watershed lands like this.”

The Land Trust was able to acquire the property through a “bargain sale.” The landowner sold the property at a price significantly below the appraised value and donated the remaining value.

“Having owned the property for many years without developing it, I am very pleased that the Land Trust acquired it,” said Jens Dimmick, long-time owner of

the property. “It’s a beautiful area and the Land Trust will be able to keep it permanently protected in its natural state.”

“We want to thank Mr. Dimmick, who held off putting the property on the market so that we could put together our offer, and then agreed to sell the property below market value,” said Doug.

Bell Creek begins north of the property on the Land Trust’s 3,000-acre Wildlake Preserve. The new acquisition abuts Wildlake. “We’re very pleased to protect this important property,” said Doug. “With this project, 70% of the creek’s length is now permanently protected by the Land Trust.” The 58-acre property is 90% forested with substantial stands of mixed conifer forest, dominated by Douglas fir and large Ponderosa pines.

It also includes seven different oak species—Oregon White oak, Canyon live oak, coast live oak, blue oak, black oak, scrub oak, interior live oak—and will be managed as part of the Wildlake Preserve.



# Legacy Society Preserves Napa for Generations to Come

## Legacy Society members make an impact by including Land Trust in their estate plans

The Land Trust's Legacy Society honors generous donors who have included the Land Trust in their estate plans, and are playing a key role in preserving the beauty and character of Napa in perpetuity.

### Jim and Cricket Smith

"When we moved here in 1974, we fell in love with the beauty of Napa County," said Jim and Cricket Smith, Land Trust Legacy Society members. "We've been involved as donors and volunteers because it is important to us to play an active role in protecting Napa."



"I've been there, I've watched beautiful places change," added Cricket. "I grew up in small communities in Southern California and it was gorgeous. It changed dramatically over just a few years due to indiscriminant development. It's frightening to think that could happen here in Napa. That's why Jim and I have chosen to donate half of our estate to the Land Trust. We want our legacy to support an important cause, something we feel passionate about."

### Carol Ashby

As a child, Carol Ashby spent many perfect weekends visiting her friend Ann Taylor Schwing at the Taylor family's property in the hills above Napa. Friends since first grade, they also

enjoyed countless summer days together catching crawdads in the creek and playing amongst the majestic redwoods.

"I have a special place in my heart for this spectacular place," said Carol. "I treasure those days. After we grew up, I watched and cheered over the years as my friend Ann donated this land, a parcel at a time, to the Land Trust to permanently protect my childhood playground. And last year, Ann donated the final parcel. She's now donated her family's entire 380 acres to create the Archer Taylor Preserve."

"But I wondered, what about the long-term care and stewardship of this land, far into the future? Inspired by Ann, I decided to contribute, too, by making a gift in my estate plan dedicated to sustaining this Preserve," said Carol.

"Including the Land Trust in my estate plan will ensure the care of the Archer Taylor Preserve for years to come. It's important to me to protect this special place so that upcoming generations can enjoy it. Leaving a legacy gift to the Land Trust is very rewarding and easy to do," Carol added.



Carol Ashby and Ann Taylor Schwing

For more information, or to let us know LTNC is in your estate plan, contact [legacy@napalandtrust.org](mailto:legacy@napalandtrust.org).



**Land Trust Hosts Legacy Reception** • LTNC recently hosted an estate planning reception to inform guests about the tax and income benefits of charitable trusts and other legacy giving options. Our expert speakers were (left to right) Dave Gaw, Esq., managing partner and co-founder of Gaw Van Male; Karen Schuppert, LTNC Legacy Society member; and Mark Richmond, certified financial planner with LPL Financial.



## Restored Wildflowers Flourish on Missimer Preserve

As the LTNC stewardship team continues its efforts to restore serpentine prairie on the Missimer Snell Valley Preserve, this spring's outstanding wildflower displays provided yet another reminder of why this work is well worth the effort!

The Preserve's serpentine plant communities have long been regarded as a botanical gem of Napa County and the Bay Region, but they had been highly degraded by barbed goat-grass and other invasive species before the restoration began.

The restoration, which included prescribed burning, has dramatically reduced the density of invasive species, and the prairie is once again dominated by stunning native wildflowers.

In addition, the native plant diversity in the restoration area has been impressive. Professional botanist Jake Ruygt has now documented 223 native plant species in just 60 acres of prairie. These include several rare species that are found only on serpentine soils in our area and nowhere else on the planet!



*Fence line comparison, top: left area has not been restored and is dominated by barbed goatgrass. Right area lies within the Missimer restoration area—dominated by native wildflowers including Annual Mountain Agoseris, Ithuriel's Spear and native clover species. Below: Last spring's blanketed restored serpentine meadow.*

## Wildlife Monitoring Project Details Mammal Diversity



In June of 2016, the Land Trust launched its first major effort to track the health of wildlife populations within its preserve network.

Land Trust stewardship staff deployed a grid of 20 motion-activated cameras across nearly 5,000 acres in northern Napa County using an internationally recognized scientific protocol referred to as the Wildlife Picture Index (WPI). One year later, camera data from the project has begun to paint a detailed picture of mammal diversity and abundance in this important natural area.

“Preliminary data analyses indicate that we have high levels of overall mammal diversity in the area, and

a high abundance of large mammals, particularly black bear,” said Stewardship Program Manager Mike Palladini. “This first year of the project will serve as a baseline for mammal populations, and we can compare it to future years to understand whether individual species and overall diversity are declining, stable or increasing,” said Mike.

The project will help to inform preserve management strategies, and can be utilized with other WPI projects across the region to identify conservation priorities.

Several other organizations, including Pepperwood Preserve, Audubon Canyon Ranch, Sonoma Land Trust,





Sonoma County Agriculture Preservation and Open Space District, Tamalpais Land Collaborative, and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife have installed WPI camera arrays across the northern Bay Region.

“By placing the Land Trust data in greater context, we can see connectedness and how healthy our ecosystem is overall,” said Susan Townsend, a consulting

wildlife ecologist on the project. In addition to the science-based monitoring component, the Land Trust is capturing some outstanding images of Napa County’s wildlife that can be used to increase awareness and understanding of these species and their habitats.

See <https://www.napalandtrust.org/protecting-land/land-stewardship/wildlife-picture-index-project/> to view a few of these images.

## Volunteer Stewardship Highlight



In late April, LTNC Lands Program Assistant Erin Erickson led a French-broom-pulling work party at the Land Trust’s Dimmick property.

Aimee Wyrick-Brownworth, associate professor and chair of the Biology department at Pacific Union College, brought 16 of her students to help in this continuing battle against French broom.

For those who may not know, French broom is not just a plant with pretty yellow flowers. It is an invasive, non-native plant that, according to the California Invasive Plant council, grows fast and can reach an average height of 4.5 feet in two growing seasons, easily displacing smaller native plants. It also has toxic foliage and seeds that can make some animals sick.

From October 2016 through June 2017, LTNC has held 11 volunteer stewardship events on various preserves. Those nine months have been productive, with 111 volunteers contributing a total of 270 hours to workdays focusing on oak savannah restoration, native seedling planting, and invasive plant removal.

Of the invasive plants the Land Trust continually battles to eradicate, French broom can be particularly difficult. By partnering with students and teachers at Pacific Union College, substantial progress can be made in a short amount of time.

“We needed a big area for the group, and with French broom taking over in certain pockets, this property, with its proximity to the college, was a good choice,” said Erin. “They did a really good job of pulling out the whole patch.”



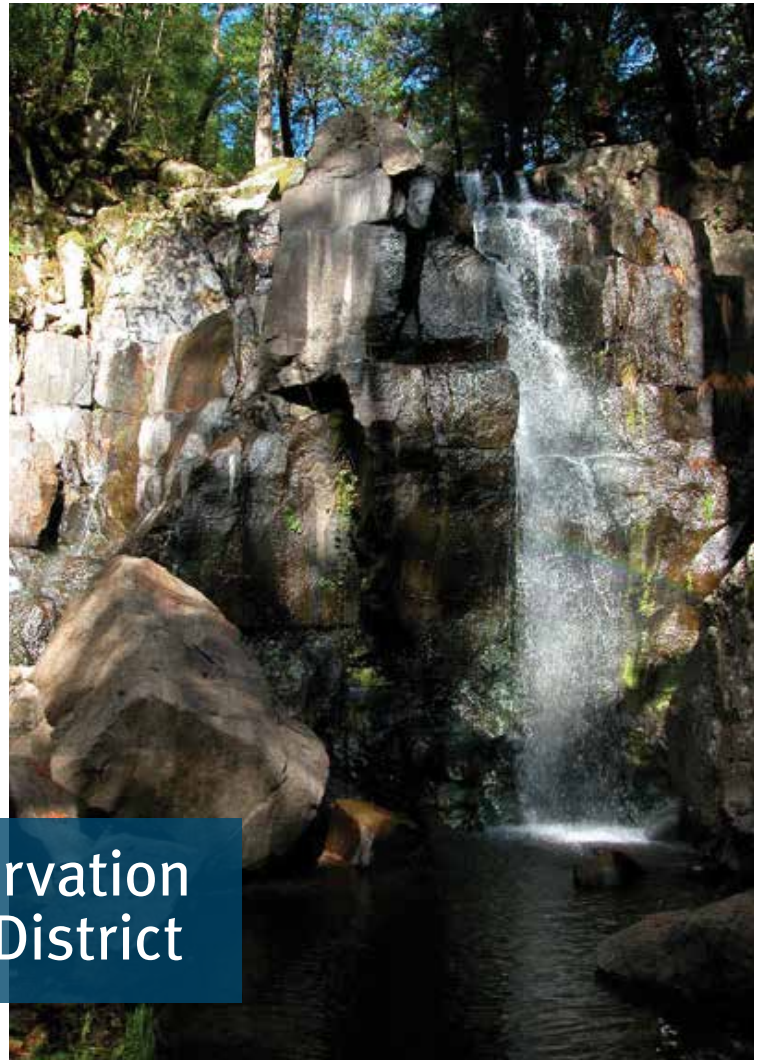
Before



After







## Land Trust Donates Conservation Easement to Open Space District

“The Land Trust donates an easement! That sounds unusual,” said Doug Parker, Land Trust CEO. “We usually receive easement donations from generous landowners in order to permanently protect land. But in this case, it actually makes sense and is aimed at the same purpose—permanent protection.”

The Land Trust owns 175 acres at the Linda Falls Preserve, along Conn Creek. In this transaction the Land Trust donated an easement over the property to the Napa Open Space District. The easement is aimed at further ensuring permanent protection. “This creates a double layer of protection and is actually best conservation practice, which has been successfully implemented elsewhere,” said Doug.

If anything should ever happen to either organization, the property interest owned by the other organization will ensure ongoing protection of the land and its conservation values over the long term.

“This is the beginning of an important new dimension in our partnership,” said John Woodbury, general manager of the Open Space District. “We expect to do a number of similar projects at other sites owned by the Land Trust. And the Open

Space District also plans to donate easements over its land to the Land Trust.”

The Linda Falls Preserve is part of the Conn Creek watershed and includes significant streamside habitat. Conn Creek is a perennial tributary of the Napa River and is one of the primary sources of water for Lake Hennessey, the main source of drinking water for the City of Napa.

Linda Falls Preserve is owned by the Land Trust thanks to the generous donations of Edward Van Egri, Heitz Wine Cellars, and Harmon Frohmuth. Over several transactions and a number of years, the three landowners donated their portions of the Linda Falls property, creating what is now a Land Trust preserve with coniferous forest land, hiking trails, and rare native plants.

“Linda Falls is an exceptional piece of protected land, not only for its natural beauty, but for its resource value as well,” said John. “Ensuring the protection of the Conn Creek watershed protects these values and also ensures the protection of Lake Hennessey’s water supply.”



## Dario Sattui Donates Fifth Conservation Easement to Land Trust

By completing his fifth conservation easement with the Land Trust, Dario Sattui has now protected nearly 600 acres.

“Five conservation easements is a lot,” said Doug Parker, LTNC CEO. “And they have all gone smoothly with Dario. He is giving up significant value in this easement, eliminating the potential for both a winery and a residence, and we very much appreciate his generosity.”

The conservation easement will protect a property that overlooks the City of Napa in the Coombsville hills. By partnering with the Land Trust in creating the conservation easement, Dario preserves the property’s natural and agricultural values forever, while maintaining the land in private ownership.

“Sadly I have seen tremendous development in the 44 years I have lived in Napa County,” said Dario. “I wish to be part of the solution by protecting all our properties with easements with the Land Trust. It gives me great pleasure to continue with my pledge.”

The 40-acre property includes open space, scenic, agriculture, and natural values. At one corner, it abuts Skyline Wilderness

Park. Highlights include the seasonal Kreuse Creek, which runs through the property and is a tributary of Tulocay Creek within the Napa River watershed.

The easement protects a natural zone that includes dense woodland with oak, bay laurel, and buckeye trees near the park. Because the property is visible from parts of the City of Napa, Silverado Trail and Skyline Park, the easement will also preserve significant scenic values into the future.



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## Land Trust Honors Joel and Kathy Tranmer with Lifetime Achievement Award

The Land Trust’s Lifetime Achievement Award was presented to Joel and Kathy Tranmer during the fourth annual Cornerstone Society Gathering, generously hosted by Peter and Delanie Read. This award is not given every year, only when merited by the outstanding contributions of an individual or organization whose lifetime efforts truly exemplify the achievement of significant conservation results. Nominations come from LTNC members across the county.



The recipients are selected by a committee of past Board Chairs.

“It is an honor and a privilege for all of us at the Land Trust to present this award to Joel and Kathy for all of their incredible efforts over the years,” said CEO Doug Parker. “They have been directly involved in some of the organization’s greatest achievements.”

Joel and Kathy have both served the Land Trust in immeasurable ways throughout much of the organization’s 41-year history. They share a great love of the land, nature, and the beauty of Napa County. Joel was born into the Land Trust—his father Harry Tranmer was one of the founders.

“Our family has spent many years in the great outdoors and has learned to respect the land and what Mother Nature

has provided for us. It is important that we protect what we can for future generations,” remarked Joel and Kathy.

Joel served on the Land Trust Board of Trustees for six years and as Board Chair for two years. He later worked on staff as the CEO from 2008 to 2013. During Joel’s time as CEO the Land Trust became a nationally Accredited Land Trust through the Land Trust Accreditation Commission. In the 1970s Joel founded a company that made home insulation out of recycled newspaper, a green product before its time. His commitment to the environment has always guided him.

Kathy also served on the Land Trust Board of Trustees. She volunteered for many years and chaired two of the largest annual fundraising events for the organization.



## Welcome New Board Members: Greg Bennett and Paul Asmuth



Greg Bennett is the managing partner of the CPA firm G & J Seiberlich & Co. LLP, Napa Valley's oldest and largest local CPA firm. "The culture of our firm encourages its members to be active in the community," said Greg. "I have spent the last 35 years of my career doing just that and am excited to bring my skills and energy to the Land Trust."

Greg works extensively with the wine-producing and grapegrowing industries and leads the firm's estate and trust planning division. For more than 30 years, he has specialized in tax and strategic planning services for small- and medium-size businesses and their owners. Greg has comprehensive expertise in integrated tax planning, succession planning, and estate and transfer tax planning.

Paul Asmuth is the general manager of The Napa Valley Reserve in St. Helena. The Napa Valley Reserve is a private winery club with members from around the world who are passionate about wine and the way of life that surrounds it. For 17 years, Paul helped build this club into a one-of-a-kind winery, serving as general manager and owner's representative. He also serves on the Meadowood Napa Valley Executive Committee. Before working at The Napa Valley Reserve, Paul was a general manager at Jaeger Vineyards and a partner and CPA with Pimenti & Brinker, LLP.

In 2016, Paul became a certified California Naturalist. Paul is an avid openwater swimmer who has served as both a coach and advisor to the USA Openwater National Swimming Teams. In 2010, Paul was inducted into the International Swimming Hall of Fame in honor of his marathon swimming career, which includes seven World Championship titles.



## Farewell to Outgoing Board Member: Mike Fisher



Mike Fisher served on the Land Trust Board of Trustees from 2011 to 2017. As chair of the Finance Committee, Mike's expertise helped improve financial reporting while his portfolio management experience strengthened the financial position of LTNC.

During his tenure, total assets have grown from \$22 million to \$47 million and the Land Trust has protected over 12,000 acres throughout Napa County. Mike also played a key role in our Board of Trustee recruitment efforts, helping to

build the board into the dynamic group it now is.

"Over my six year tenure on the Board, the Land Trust saw many positive changes. It was great working with the staff, other Board members, donors and volunteers to accomplish the mission of protecting land throughout Napa. I'm leaving the Land Trust in good hands."

We thank you, Mike, for your commitment and generous support. Your warm smile and friendly manner will be missed.



## Mary Weber Novak

Napa lost a highly respected icon on Sunday, September 25, 2016 when Mary Weber Novak passed away after her brief battle with cancer. She is



survived by her children Lindy, Kelley, Beth, Mike and Matt, as well as her brother Nicholas, sister Katrina, and nine grandchildren.

Mary was well-known as a trailblazer in the wine industry. She was one of the first women to run a major Napa Valley winegrowing estate; she pioneered organic viticulture in 1985 at her Spottswoode Estate Vineyard; and she played an integral role in championing women in the wine industry through her hiring practices, her own success, and by engaging her daughters in the management of the estate. Beth and Lindy worked with Mary to realize her vision of establishing Spottswoode as one of Napa's

esteemed multigenerational family estates. They have demonstrated their love of the land and unwavering commitment to stewardship by adopting solar energy, spearheading the restoration of Spring Creek, and making significant contributions to environmental missions like the Land Trust.

By helping to conserve the Wildlake Preserve and including the Land Trust in her estate plan, Mary has left a legacy that will benefit all who love Napa for generations. From Mary's bulletin board: "Remove nothing from the forest except nourishment for the soul, consolation for the heart, and inspiration for the mind."



## William A. Seavey

Surrounded by his children and the hills that he loved, William Seavey passed away at his St. Helena ranch on September 21, 2016.

Founder of the family-owned and operated Seavey Vineyard, Bill was also an accomplished jazz pianist, a generous philanthropist, and an avid outdoorsman. Bill and his late wife, Mary, were long-time contributors to the Land Trust and stalwart advocates of preserving open space and the

history of their property, which was originally put to vines in the last quarter of the 19th century.

The Seavey land remains 75% open forest, and tastings are held in a stone dairy barn built more than 125 years ago and then carefully restored by the Seaveys in 1981. Bill's dedication to preserving the oak forests and agricultural heritage of his land exemplifies the Land Trust's mission in action.







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#### Upcoming Land Trust Field Trips & Events

##### SEPTEMBER

- 9 Up the River—with a Paddle!
- 13 Linda Falls Workday

##### OCTOBER

- 7 Phelps Vineyard Hike & Tasting
- 11 Wantrup Preserve Workday
- 14 Wildlake Bike-In Workday
- 21 Newell Preserve Raptor Migration
- 28 Hoffnagle Loop at Wildlake
- 29 Know Your Oaks

##### NOVEMBER

- 5 Flat Top Picnic & Old Baldy
- 11 Family-Friendly Hike in Redwoods
- 12 Maggie's Peak
- 19 Henry Road Walk

Note: Some events are Land Trust members  
only—a great reason to join and support us!  
For details, to register or to join as a  
member, visit [napalandtrust.org](http://napalandtrust.org) or call  
707.252.3270.