



The Newsletter for Land Trust of Napa County
Winter 2018-2019



Land Trust Protects 1,910 Acres—Creates New Preserve!

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Land Trust of Napa County (LTNC) is pleased to announce the acquisition of nearly 2,000 acres as a new Land Trust preserve. This new property is the largest preserve the Land Trust has added in more than 10 years. Story on page 3.

SPECIAL REPORT : Tracking the Post-Fire Recovery of Native Plant Communities on Land Trust Preserves. Story on page 8.





Letter from the CEO

Thank you so much for your support for the Land Trust’s conservation work. With your help, we are making real progress toward our goal of increasing the pace of conservation across Napa.

In the last two years, we have protected more than 16,000 acres!

This last year continued to see exciting results, including, as you’ll see in this issue, three large closings that permanently protected more than 3,700 acres, comprised of: a ranch easement; an outright purchase, which added to our network of preserves; and a large forest easement. The vast majority of the ranch easement’s and new preserve’s 2,600 acres is dominated by oak woodlands—tens of thousands of trees. The US Fish and Wildlife Service has documented habitat for more than 300 wildlife species that depend on oak woodlands for food and shelter. Protection is a priority because oak woodlands are endemic to our region and only 4% are protected statewide. These large properties are also important wildlife corridors—protecting them ensures that these corridors will remain available for wildlife far into the future.

The forest easement, on the Pacific Union College’s (PUC) property in Angwin, is a project we’ve been working on for four years. It’s a beautiful and heavily stocked forest with Douglas fir, Ponderosa pine and Redwoods. We are very pleased to have permanently protected this highly productive forest. And I want you to know that we’ve been able to greatly magnify the impact of your donations. The value of the easements and real estate protected in the last two years alone is over \$45 million. Your annual support gives us the capacity to work with generous landowners who donate significant value in protecting their land and with institutional funders who have provided millions in grants.

Supporting conservation provides a rare opportunity to accomplish something both tangible and permanent. Working together, we are protecting in perpetuity one of our most precious resources, our county’s land—its forests, streams, watersheds, drinking water supplies, wildlife habitat and corridors, oak woodlands, working ranches, vineyards and scenic hillsides. Everyone at the Land Trust deeply appreciates your generosity and we are very grateful for your partnership in the preservation of Napa.

In total, the Land Trust has now permanently protected more than 73,000 acres—14.6% of Napa County. Thank you again for helping make this possible!

Best,

Doug Parker, President & CEO

To contact Doug, call 707.252.0435 or email Doug@napalandtrust.org.



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COVER
STORY

New Wragg Ridge Preserve Protects 1,910 Acres

An Extraordinary Year for Conservation in Napa—Total Protected Acres Now Top 73,000!

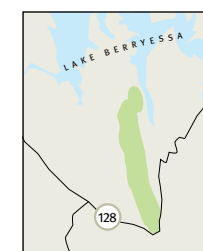
The Land Trust of Napa County (LTNC) is pleased to have acquired almost 2,000 acres that will become a new Land Trust Preserve. This new Wragg Ridge Preserve protects a wide expanse of oak woodlands as well as significant habitat for wildlife and endangered species.

At 1,910 acres, the new preserve is the largest the Land Trust has added to its portfolio in more than 10 years.

“The vast majority of our transactions are conservation easements,” said Doug Parker, LTNC CEO. “But this property was in a strategic location and had a wealth of habitat and wildlife values that we thought could benefit from our ownership and management. The owners sold the property through a bargain sale, below its appraised value. Their generosity was a critical element in protecting this beautiful natural area.”

The property adds to other protected lands near Lake Berryessa, including the Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument and the University of California’s Quail Ridge Wilderness Reserve.

The preserve is dominated by about 1,700 acres of oak woodlands—predominantly blue oaks and interior live oaks, with some black oaks—and also contains priority wetlands, providing habitat for rare species, including the California Red-legged Frog, one of the few federally listed species in Napa County.





Land Trust Helps Protect 864 Acres of Priority Forest with PUC

Land Trust of Napa County is pleased to have completed the protection of 864 acres of priority forest land, working with Pacific Union College (PUC) and the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection (CAL FIRE).

The land is owned by PUC who will continue to own this forest near its Angwin campus in the mountains northeast of St. Helena. The new conservation easement (CE) is held by CAL FIRE and permanently eliminates the potential for residential, commercial and agricultural development on the land.

“This project was a very high priority for the Land Trust,” said Doug Parker, LTNC CEO. “Completing a CE on the PUC forest is an important step toward achieving one of our primary goals: creating a continuous corridor of protected land along the entire length of the eastern ridge above Napa Valley.”

The forest abuts Las Posadas State Forest and an LTNC permanent preserve, creating a continuous area of 1,750+

acres of protected land. It supports significant wildlife habitats such as for black bears and mountain lions traversing the mountains. Rare plant species such as the purple-flowering Napa false indigo are found there, as well as redwoods that are unusually far inland. In addition, the upper reaches of Moore Creek run through the forest—a major water source for Napa’s Lake Hennessey reservoir.

“A very special thanks to the private donors whose generosity capped this fundraising effort ...”

In recent years, PUC had considered selling their forest lands to generate funds to support their primary mission: education. The college changed course when it learned about the option of working with LTNC to sell a conservation easement (CE) on those lands under the state’s Forest Legacy Program managed by CAL FIRE. PUC’s Board of Trustees chose the CE option to generate the much-needed funds while still maintaining the legacy of the forest.

“The PUC forest easement is a critical Forest Legacy project,” said Stewart McMorrow, CAL FIRE deputy chief of forestry assistance. “It protects a forest from the possible conversion to non-forest uses, and that is incredibly important for the college and community—and the local ecosystem.”

“The Wildlife Conservation Board is proud to partner with CAL FIRE, in cooperation with LTNC and PUC, in supporting healthy forest resources while protecting wildlife habitat and corridor integrity,” said John Donnelly, executive director of the Wildlife Conservation Board.

LTNC has been working for more than four years to raise the funds needed to complete the acquisition.

PUC has long allowed the public to hike in the forest and will continue to do so.

“The forest is part of our rich heritage here on Howell Mountain. It provides welcome opportunities for both education and recreation in a pristine forested setting,” said Dr. Robert Cushman, PUC president. “I am pleased to see this forest preserved and managed in perpetuity.”

Funds for the \$7.1 million purchase came from the California Wildlife Conservation Board, CAL FIRE and private donors. PUC accepted \$1.5 million less than appraised value in the sale of the property.

“We thank the California Wildlife Conservation Board and CAL FIRE for their commitments to this project,” said Parker. “And we very much appreciate PUC’s commitment to the permanent conservation of this beautiful forest by accepting a price significantly below appraised value. And a very special thanks to the private donors whose generosity capped this fundraising effort, to protect this beautiful forest permanently.”

Webber Ranch CE Protects 732 Acres Near Lake Berryessa

The Land Trust completed a conservation easement protecting the 732-acre Webber Ranch near Lake Berryessa, an important step in an ongoing effort to ensure the future of ranching, scenic open space, wildlife and oak woodlands near the lake.

In the last two years, working with several landowners and with partners from the California Department of

Conservation (DOC), LTNC has been able to protect 6,700+ contiguous acres on the lake’s east side.

An agricultural easement permanently protects the ranch from future development but allows it to remain privately owned and productive agricultural land. The ranch includes large open grasslands that transition to oak woodlands and forest as it ascends toward the ridge on



the Napa-Yolo county line, forming the lake’s scenic backdrop.

The ranch is in a strategic location for conservation, connecting protected land around the lake with other protected land within the Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument east of the lake, along the Napa-Yolo county line.

Funding for this easement came from the DOC’s Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation (SALC) Program, which aims to protect Ag lands from development, simultaneously supporting California’s food security and reducing future emissions of greenhouse gases.

“We want to thank the owner, Pete Craig, for generously donating significant value in this easement,” said Doug Parker. “This is the third CE we’ve done together, and it’s great to work with someone as committed to sustainable ranching and conservation as Pete.”

Barretts Protect Land Next to Chateau Montelena

Land Trust of Napa County is pleased to announce the donation of a conservation easement by Bo and Heidi Barrett on their property near Calistoga. This donation marks the second time the Barretts have worked with LTNC on an easement. Located just north of Chateau Montelena, this easement eliminates all potential for development on the property, protecting both its natural and scenic values. By partnering with LTNC, the Barretts preserve the property in its natural state forever, while maintaining the land in private ownership.

“Thank you to the Barretts for this generous donation,” said Doug Parker. “The parcel abuts another easement that they previously donated, together creating 100+ acres of permanently protected land next to Calistoga’s 260-acre Kimball Reservoir property.”

“This is the second easement that we’ve done with the Land Trust,” said Bo Barrett. “The process is not complicated. It took just a few weeks and now, the property is protected forever. We are happy to help protect the scenic hillsides of Napa for future generations.”

The CE also contains a ridgeline visible from Highways 128 and 29, protecting a scenic backdrop above the valley.



Land Trust Honors Jake Ruygt with Acre by Acre Award

The Land Trust’s Acre by Acre Award was presented to Jake Ruygt during the fifth annual Cornerstone Society Gathering. The award honors outstanding conservation accomplishments in Napa that embody LTNC’s mission to preserve the character of Napa by permanently protecting land.



“Napa is a hotspot nationally for biodiversity,” said Doug Parker, presenting the award, “and having worked as a botanist in Napa

County for more than 40 years, Jake is the acknowledged expert on our native flora. The botanical surveys he conducts help LTNC determine priorities and are critical to developing our long-term management plans.”

Ruygt has been a member of the Land Trust for more than 30 years, served on its Board of Trustees from 1999 to 2005 and is also a long-time volunteer easement monitor.

“I’m grateful to be a part of the Land Trust’s important work in protecting the environment for our future,” said Ruygt.

Over several decades, Ruygt discovered, in Napa, three plant species that are new to science: Napa Checkerbloom; Mead’s Owl’s Clover, discovered at Mead Ranch, a Land Trust easement; and Napa Blue Curls (*Trichostema ruygtii*), named for Jake Ruygt.

Gasser Grant Brings Solar Power to Archer Taylor Preserve

A generous grant awarded to the Land Trust from the Peter A. and Vernice H. Gasser Foundation recently funded a new solar system at Archer Taylor Preserve that will lower annual costs of the preserve and allow the Land Trust to become more sustainable in our management of the property.

The caretaker house at Archer Taylor now has 11 solar panels thanks to the \$15,000 grant. The system allows the Land Trust to produce power locally and sustainably without generating greenhouse gases. The Foundation’s generous grant will result in significant savings. Per the solar company’s projections, the panels will save an estimated \$15,000 in lower electric bills over the next 15 years.

This is the second grant for solar panels to the Land Trust from the Gasser Foundation. In 2015, it awarded \$40,000 for a solar system at the caretaker house at Wantrup Preserve in Pope Valley, leading to a 95% reduction in electric costs there.

We extend our sincere gratitude to everyone at the Gasser Foundation for this important support and its ongoing benefits.



Cornerstone Society Preserves Napa for Generations to Come

Land Trust Cornerstone Society members gathered for an exceptional evening under the redwoods at Turley Wine Cellars. Larry Turley and Suzanne Chambers Turley generously hosted



a champagne reception on their private property, followed by an intimate dinner in the grove with Turley wines.

Larry and Suzanne have been long-time advocates for preservation.

They and Turley Wine Cellars have donated three conservation easements, permanently protecting almost 60 acres of land in Napa, as well as 150 acres of land in Paso Robles. The Land Trust offers its gratitude to the 52 members of our 2018 Cornerstone Society for their generous support of our ongoing mission to preserve agricultural, biodiverse, scenic and viewshed lands in Napa County in perpetuity.

Thank you again to Larry and Suzanne for a wonderful evening! Land Trust CEO Doug Parker, the Board of Trustees and staff extend our gratitude to all of these far-sighted local families and organizations helping protect Napa for the long term.

LTNC Board of Trustees News



Welcome New Board Members: Kellie Duckhorn and Robin Baggett



Kellie Duckhorn has been the general manager for Baldacci Family Vineyards since 2015.

She grew up around her parents’ Napa Valley winery, Duckhorn Vineyards, working her first harvest when she was 12 years old. She went on to experience the French wine perspective firsthand in Bordeaux before earning a Bachelor of Science degree at UC Berkeley. After studying Agricultural Economics at UC Davis, Kellie joined Duckhorn Vineyards. Afterwards, Kellie was the general manager at Ehlers Estate and director of sales and marketing for Via Pacifica, an import and distribution company in Shanghai.

“As a life-long resident of this beautiful valley, I had no idea what amazing work is being conducted by the Land Trust,” said Kellie. “They and their supporters ensure that Napa will continue to be beautiful far into the future. Everyone should take some time to learn more about this wonderful organization.”

Robin Baggett oversees the Alpha Omega Collective, the umbrella brand for his Alpha Omega, Tolosa and Perinet wineries. He is the sole managing partner of Alpha Omega, a Napa Green-certified winery and vineyard he co-founded on the Rutherford Bench in Napa Valley in 2006, and Tolosa, a winery he co-founded in 1998. Tolosa’s entire estate vineyards in San Luis Obispo’s Edna Valley are sustainably farmed and Sustainability in Practice Certified.

Robin is a graduate of the University of California Hastings College of the Law and Cal Poly. He practiced law for 40 years, including serving as general counsel for the Golden State Warriors for eight years. Robin owns and operates cattle ranches in San Luis Obispo County which are protected with Open Space Easements and before joining the Land Trust board, worked with LTNC to protect a 4,461-acre ranch in Napa County through a conservation easement.

“We need to protect our land and resources for those who will come after us,” he said. “I’m excited to use my experience to help the Land Trust of Napa County preserve our wonderful region.”



Farewell to Outgoing Board Member: Bruce Phillips

Bruce Phillips served two terms on LTNC’s Board of Trustees from 2011 to 2018. Bruce served as Vice Chair from 2013 to 2015 and as Board Chair from 2015 to 2018 as well as serving on the Executive Committee.

While he was Board Chair, he spearheaded an organizational five-year strategic plan, which achieved its goals within three years and saw the launch of a Capital Campaign as well as the formation of the Land Trust’s principal giving circle, the Cornerstone Society, of which he and his wife Heather were charter members.

During his tenure, more than 18,000 acres of land were permanently protected throughout Napa County. Bruce brought excellence in leadership to the organization. We thank you Bruce, for your commitment and for your generous support.



Nature's Resilience: Tracking the Post-Fire Recovery of Native Plant Communities on Land Trust Preserves

Photos and Text by
Mike Palladini, LTNC Stewardship
Program Manager



The North Bay wildfires had a major impact on the Land Trust's preserve network and land stewardship program, with four conservation properties totaling more than 3,300 acres having burned entirely.

In the immediate aftermath of the fires, the Land Trust was focused on addressing concerns such as erosion risk, visitor safety, and damaged infrastructure and equipment.

Afterwards, we shifted our focus toward monitoring the ecological effects of the fires, with a particular emphasis on recovery of our fire-adapted native plant communities.

The following photo essay highlights some of the amazing adaptations our native plants have developed to survive, and even benefit from, wildfire. It also features some of the stunning species that we have observed thriving in recently burned areas.

Right top: The Foote Botanical Preserve on Mount George following the October 2017 Atlas Fire.

Far right: Professional botanist and Napa County flora expert Jake Ruygt establishes a vegetation monitoring plot on the Foote Botanical Preserve.

Right bottom: Land Trust staff member marks post-fire monitoring point on the Foote Botanical Preserve.



Chaparral

Much of our post-fire botanical monitoring has focused on chaparral plant communities, which have been shaped by patterns of fire and contain many fire-dependent species. In contrast with many other plant communities, our chaparral is still dominated by native species as well.

Chaparral plant communities within the Foote Botanical Preserve on Mount George as seen before the October 2017 Atlas Fire.

Plotting Photo Points



Establishing photo points has helped us to visually track the recovery of plant communities in burned areas over time. These photo comparisons from our Foote Botanical Preserve illustrate the dramatic recovery of our native chaparral species in just a few months following the fires.

Top two photos were taken in early November 2017. Bottom two photos were taken in late April 2018 in the same locations.



Adaptations for Surviving Fire

There are two general strategies chaparral species utilize to survive fire, both illustrating how these plants have evolved with and adapted to fire as a source of natural disturbance.

Resprouters have the ability to regenerate from surviving underground root systems following wildfire, even when all of the plant's stems and leaves have been destroyed.

Obligate seeders are killed by fire and rely entirely on regenerating from seed stored in the soil. The seeds of many obligate seeders require either exposure to chemicals in smoke or char, or a heat pulse generated by fire to stimulate germination.



Left and middle: Photo pair of an Eastwood's Manzanita (*Arctostaphylos glandulosa* ssp. *glandulosa*) on the Land Trust's Sutro Preserve showing vigorous resprouting from a large root crown over a five-month period following the Atlas Fire. Right: Brittleleaf Manzanita (*Arctostaphylos crustacea*) resprouting on the Foote Botanical Preserve. The northern-most known population of this species occurs on this Preserve.

Manzanitas (obligate seeder) regenerating from seed on the Land Trust's Sutro Preserve.

Fire Followers

We have also been tracking species that are closely tied to the temporary conditions that exist for only a short period following a wildfire. We call these “fire followers.” Much of the baseline information on these species in Napa County comes from 40 years of careful study and documentation by professional botanist and Napa County flora expert Jake Ruygt. We have placed our fire followers into two general categories:



Fire opportunists are typically present in low numbers in unburned areas. Following a wildfire, they dramatically expand their numbers, flower prolifically and quickly add to their seedbank while conditions are favorable. In some cases, these species have been found to flower only after a fire, even where the vegetative parts of the plant were present for many years before.



A few of the fire opportunists observed on LTNC preserves following the North Bay fires (L to R): Ground Rose (*Rosa spithamea*)—in Napa County, this species has been found to flower only after a wildfire, California helianthella (*Helianthella californica*), Coast Range Tritoleia (*Triteleia lugens*), Two Carpelate Dwarf Flax (*Hesperolinon bicarpellatum*).

Fire obligates are absent from an area for long periods, appearing only after a wildfire. The seeds of fire obligates require either exposure to chemicals in smoke or char, or a heat pulse generated by fire to stimulate germination. In addition, fire produces good conditions for germination of these species by releasing nutrients, clearing a bare mineral soil seedbed, and allowing

light resources to reach the ground. Many fire obligates are observed for only the first year or two following a wildfire. One of our most exciting fire obligate stories is the appearance of a large population of Fire Poppy (*Papaver californicum*) on the Foote Botanical Preserve following the Atlas Fire. Fire Poppy has not been observed in this area since the last time it burned—53 years ago!



Fire Poppies flowering on the Foote Botanical Preserve following the October 2017 Atlas Fire.



Following are other fire obligates found on Land Trust preserves following the North Bay fires (from left to right): Brewer's Calandrinia (*Calandrinia breweri*), Kellogg's Snapdragon (*Antirrhinum kelloggii*), Whispering Bells (*Emmenanthe penduliflora*), Carolina Geranium (*Geranium carolinianum*), Sweet-scented Phacelia (*Phacelia suaveolens*) and Napa Checkerbloom (*Sidalcea hickmanii* ssp. *napensis*).



The Foote Botanical Preserve is also home to the largest known population of the rare, fire-dependent Napa Ceanothus (*Ceanothus pupureus*). This species depends on regenerating from seed following fire, and the seeds require the heat from fire to germinate. Our mature Napa Ceanothus were increasingly being outcompeted by other species as the time since the last wildfire event (in 1964) increased.

Our entire population of Napa Ceanothus burned in October's Atlas fire. As of early March 2018, we began seeing thousands of Napa Ceanothus seedlings. We have established monitoring plots to track their survival.

A Napa Ceanothus (see yellow box outline) struggling to survive under a dense canopy of Hoary Manzanita (*Arctostaphylos crustacea*) on the Foote Botanical Preserve before the Atlas Fire.



Napa Ceanothus seedlings observed on the Foote Botanical Preserve following the Atlas Fire.



We've appreciated the opportunity to share this important and fascinating part of the wildfire story with you, and look forward to providing you with more updates as our post-fire monitoring continues! ■





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Upcoming Field Trips & Events

MARCH

- 9 Long Canyon
- 10 Wildlake Mushroom Hike
- 16 Linda Falls Workday
- 23 Conservation Easement Workday
- 24 Linda Falls Lumber Mill Hike
- 24 Redwood Flat in PUC's Forest
- 30 Dimmick Broom-Pull Workday
- 31 Wragg Ridge

APRIL

- 6 Missimer Snell Valley Wildflowers
- 7 Wantrup Reptiles & Amphibians*
- 12 Birding from Low to High*
(much more at napalandtrust.org!)

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 or call 707.252.3270.

We'd love to see your adventures! Please share your pictures and use #gohikenapa