



The Newsletter for Land Trust
of Napa County / Winter 2020



Land Trust Closes Third-Largest Easement in Its History—5,384 Acres!

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Land Trust of Napa County is pleased to announce the completion of a conservation easement protecting 5,384 acres of Gunn Ranch on the east side of Lake Berryessa—the third-largest conservation easement in our 44-year history. Story on page 3.



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Letter from the CEO

What a strange and challenging year it has been! I want to thank you for your ongoing support for the Land Trust through these difficult times. And I want you to know that, despite the trials of 2020, your support is having a significant and lasting impact. In fact, in terms of acreage protected, it has been one of the most successful years ever for the Land Trust. Here are just some of the tangible results of your support:

- 5,384 acres protected—the third-largest conservation easement in our 44-year history (cover story).
- 320 acres of heavily forested land acquired near the Oat Hill Mine Trail.
- 482 acres protected in partnership with UC Davis to become part of their Natural Reserve System, providing a site for research and education "to better the understanding and wise stewardship of the Earth and its natural systems ..."
- 1,278 acres acquired in one of the most biodiverse areas of the county, home to 17 rare species—now our newest preserve.
- And next door to that, a 1,900-acre easement completed in partnership with the Napa Open Space District. Together, these properties protect the highest-ranking wildlife corridor in the North Bay.

In addition, we are currently working on 20 more land protection projects and we hope to close two to three more before year-end.

Just as importantly, in this issue we're highlighting some of our stewardship accomplishments. On land we own, we pursue active management and this work is having a measurable impact, restoring native species, eliminating invasives and reducing fuel loads for wildfires—two examples:

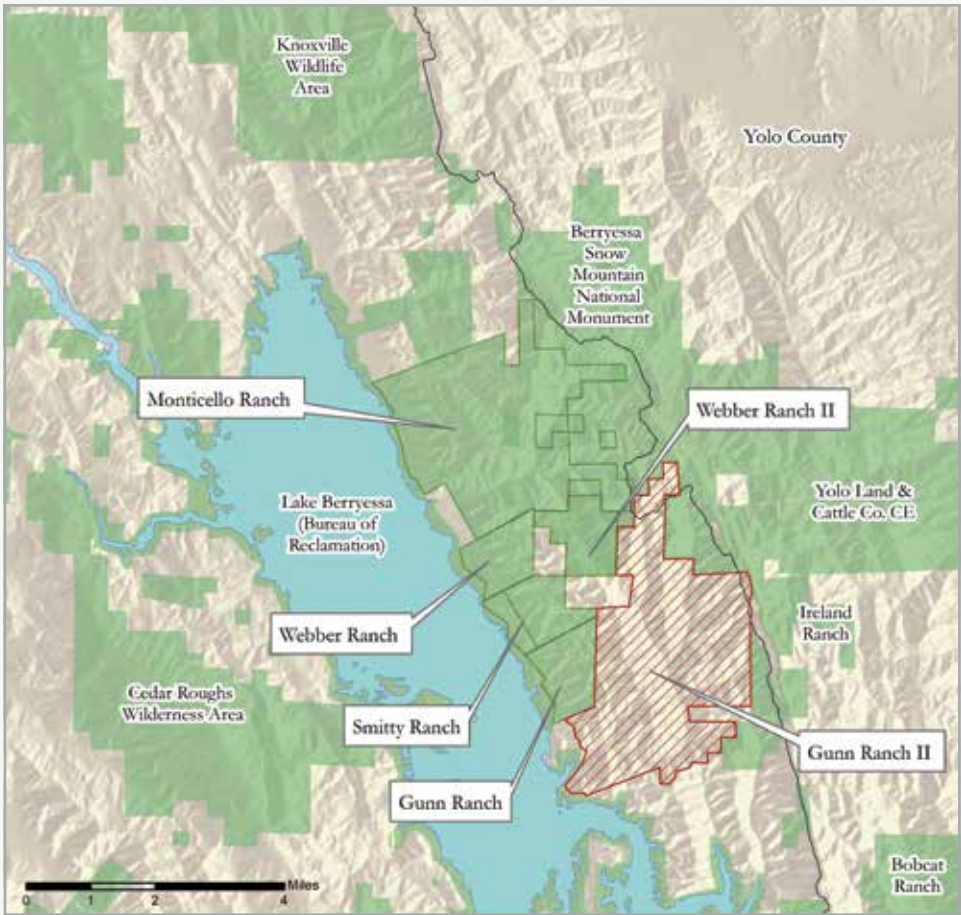
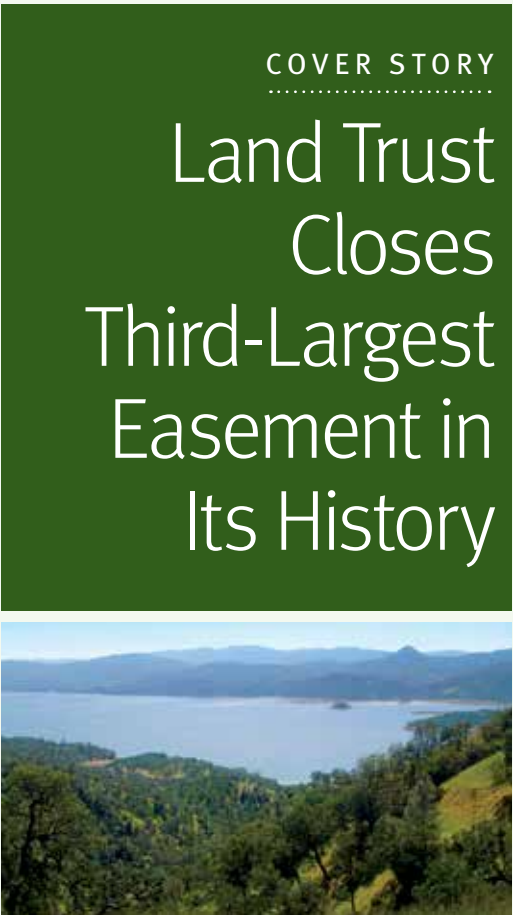
- Grazing – We received a “Conservation Innovation Grant” from the US Department of Agriculture for a dry-season, rotational grazing project using goats and sheep to remove invasive species and the fuel loads they create. The preliminary results, assessed by an outside botanist, are very promising. As an example, during the August fires, a spot fire came from an adjacent property onto ours and ran right up to the grazed area, where, without adequate fuel, it could not advance and was easily put out.
- Controlled burns – We've worked with CAL FIRE to carry out several controlled burns, timed in June so that invasive plant species are burned before dropping their seeds, allowing natives to better compete (natives drop their seeds earlier) and reducing fuel loads as well. We'd planned a 300-acre burn in June, but it was postponed. Then in August, that property burned. It's too bad we couldn't complete the burn beforehand—it could have provided a significant fire break during the wildfire. August fires lead to increased smoke at a vulnerable time of year for Napa agriculture and are not as effective at reducing invasives. We plan to continue this work with CAL FIRE next year.

None of these conservation accomplishments could have been possible without your support. Thank you so much. Stay safe. And best wishes for the New Year.

Best,



Doug Parker, CEO



Land Trust of Napa County (LTNC) has completed a conservation easement (CE) protecting 5,384 acres of Gunn Ranch on the east side of Lake Berryessa—the third-largest CE in LTNC’s 44-year history. In the last five years, LTNC has worked with landowners to complete six separate CE projects along the lake’s eastern shore, protecting more than 12,800 contiguous acres. LTNC thanks the California Strategic Growth Council (SGC), the California Department of Conservation (DOC) and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), without whose funding this project would not have been possible.

Three years ago, the Land Trust acquired an easement over 840 abutting acres of this same ranch, so that now, one of the largest ownerships in Napa County—6,224 acres—is permanently protected from all potential for residential and commercial development, as well as any cultivated agriculture. The landowners can continue cattle ranching, augmented by a sustainable management plan.

“We thank landowners Amy and Roger Gunn for their far-sighted commitment to protecting this beautiful property,” said Doug Parker, LTNC CEO. “The land has been in their family for a long time and I know that protecting it into the future was very important to them.”

“This is so exciting,” said Roger Gunn, “I’ve spent my life in the hills east of Lake Berryessa. They look the same now as they did when I was a kid. The idea that these same hills will be protected forever in their natural state is very heartwarming.”

The CE extends from protected land at Lake Berryessa, the seventh largest reservoir in California, to the Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument, along the Napa-Yolo county line. By protecting the acreage between these federal lands and connecting them together, a protected area of more than 30,000 contiguous acres has been created. This connection preserves wildlife corridors and a very extensive functioning oak woodland system across a large region, while maintaining viable ranching operations.

Congressman Mike Thompson said, “Congratulations to LTNC for permanently protecting this important land for future generations. We are fortunate to have the Land Trust and will benefit greatly from its work.”

Partial funding came from the Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation (SALC) Program—a component of SGC’s Affordable Housing and Sustainable Communities Program, which aims to protect Ag lands from development, promote infill development, support California’s food *(cont’d on page 4)*

security and reduce future emissions of greenhouse gases. SALC is part of the California Climate Investments (CCI) program, putting billions of cap and trade dollars to work reducing GHG emissions, strengthening the economy and improving public health and the environment.

“We congratulate the Gunn family and [LTNC] for closing [this] easement,” said SGC Executive Director Louise Bedsworth. “This suite of projects provides significant carbon storage, habitat and other environmental benefits. We are thrilled that our SALC Program is supporting land conservation on such a large scale.”

The DOC administers the SALC Program on behalf of SGC. “The completion of this project represents tremendous cooperation and dedication [from] all the parties involved,” DOC Director David Shabazian said. “[LTNC] and the Gunn family have been great partners, and I’m very proud of our department’s role in this effort, which has benefits to Californians beyond the permanent conservation of the wonderful landscape.”

“Protecting and enhancing the Gunn Ranch lands provides sustainable benefits for California’s agricultural landscape,” said Carlos Suarez, NRCS California state conservationist. “We continue to support our customers and conservation partners who strive to put good conservation on the ground.” ■



New LTNC Preserve Saves Critical Wildlife Corridors

The acquisition of 1,278 acres of undeveloped land at the northern end of Pope Valley will become the Land Trust’s newest preserve.

A conservation priority in several large-scale planning efforts, the property’s key location augments the North Bay’s wildlife corridor extending from the Marin coast across Sonoma and Napa to Lake Berryessa. “Saving this property is a key step toward developing an unbroken

corridor of protected land from Robert Louis Stevenson State Park and Mount St. Helena to Berryessa,” said CEO Doug Parker, “ensuring that wildlife can move freely across these large open spaces into the future.” The property is also adjacent to more than 5,000 acres of existing protected land.

“Thank you to the landowners for protecting this property that has been in their family for two generations and



more than 70 years,” said Parker. “When they made this important decision to sell, they wanted a conservation solution that would forever protect the property’s natural values. And that is exactly what we will do,” said Parker.

The family’s five siblings and their spouses said, “Pat and Wood Grinsell’s children are pleased to know that the ranch property, where we spent so much time, will be protected for generations to



come under the watch of LTNC.” Parker further thanked the California Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) and the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, without whose funding the purchase would not have been possible.

“WCB is proud to partner with LTNC on the acquisition of the Grinsell Ranch [as its] newest preserve,” said WCB Executive Director John Donnelly. “The preserve protects the serpentine soils supporting numerous rare plants and eliminates the threat of development and fragmentation, protecting a key linkage in the North Bay for wildlife movement.”

“This is a significant conservation acquisition in a very important wildlife

Left: These 1,278 acres are a particular stronghold for Two-carpellate Dwarf Flax, whose entire species range is found within only four counties in California.

Right: Found only in a band from Napa to Humboldt, special-status wildflower Tracy’s Clarkia (*Clarkia gracilia* ssp. *tracyi*) calls LTNC’s new preserve home. Photos by Jake Ruygt.

corridor,” said Dan Winterson, who manages the Bay Area Conservation Program at the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation. “LTNC has been working on this for a long time, and I’m very happy to see their hard work come to fruition.”

The property also ranks at the highest level for priority biodiversity in the region. Napa botanist Jake Ruygt found 17 special-status species during a botanical assessment of the land, which is home to several natural community types, including Sargent Cypress forest and Serpentine Riparian Scrub. Serpentine soils support, by far, the largest number of rare plant species of any soil type statewide. Rare species here include

Green Jewelflower, which occurs only in northern Napa and southern Lake counties. Ruygt says the land “appears to be a particular stronghold for Two-carpellate Dwarf Flax (*Hesperolinon bicarpellatum*),” whose entire range is found within only four California counties.

“LTNC plans to restore native plant communities and protect rare plant species through an integrated invasive species management strategy,” said LTNC Stewardship Program Manager Mike Palladini. Some of the property’s native plants are being threatened by invasives such as barbed goatgrass (*Aegilops triuncialis*). Where appropriate, LTNC will consider active reestablishment of native plant communities by collecting, propagating and planting native species in previously invaded areas. The Land Trust will monitor the ecological recovery of Sargent Cypress forest, serpentine meadow and chaparral, and smaller areas of non-serpentine oak woodland, following wildfires that burned through the property in 2014 and 2020. ■



Looking southwest from LTNC’s newest preserve, across Pope Valley to the Land Trust’s Wildlake Preserve.



Land Trust Creates New 320-Acre Aetna Springs Preserve

Land Trust of Napa County announces a new preserve with the acquisition of 320 acres of undeveloped forest land in the hills between Calistoga and Aetna Springs. The project was completed with funding from CAL FIRE and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW).

“This property has a wide range of significant natural values. It includes upper watershed forest, water resources, high biodiversity, and unusual redwoods, and adds to a priority wildlife corridor,” said Doug Parker.

The property is near the connection between Oat Hill Mine Trail that comes up from Calistoga, and Aetna Springs Road. Its protection adds to more than 22,000 acres of contiguous protected land above Calistoga, including Robert Louis Stevenson State Park, the 7,200-acre Montesol conservation easement completed by the Land Trust three years ago, and the Land Trust’s 4,000-acre Dunn-Wildlake Preserve outside Angwin. Protection of this property will help connect existing protected lands in order to support critical wildlife corridors, a key conservation priority for the region.

“I want to thank CAL FIRE’s Forest Legacy Program and the CDFW Proposition 68 Grant Program, without whose funding this purchase would not have been possible,” said Parker.

“CAL FIRE is pleased to help conserve this property and its unique forests,” said CAL FIRE Director Thom Porter. “This forest adds to a rich network of important wildlife corridors in the area and will help secure open space, carbon sequestration, and clean air and water for future generations.”

“Preserving this property offers significant habitat benefits for wildlife, especially large mammals,” said Matt Wells, of CDFW’s Watershed Restoration Grants Branch. “The area represents an important connectivity point between the Trans Berryessa-Snow-Oregon wildlands complex and the Mayacamas/Coastal wildlands.”

The property is a high conservation priority in several large-scale planning efforts: 1) it’s within CDFW’s 800,000-acre Conceptual Area Protection Plan for the Blue Ridge Berryessa Area, 2) as part of the North Bay’s highest priority wildlife corridor extending from the Marin coast across

Sonoma and Napa to Berryessa, and 3) its location within two CAL FIRE Priority Landscapes for California Climate Investments that use cap and trade funds to reduce atmospheric carbon. The majority of the property is heavily forested with larger species—Douglas Fir, Ponderosa Pine and Redwoods—that sequester substantial amounts of carbon.

The new preserve contains significant water and forest resources. It includes the upper headwaters of a perennial stream, perennial springs and a wet meadow. The riparian area is critical to the survival of coast redwood stands, which are among the interior-most redwoods within the entire range of this species. The property hosts unusual conifer diversity, with seven different species already identified, and three more possible. In addition, a variety of native oak species call this land home.

The property is also a hotspot for biodiversity: 246 plant species were documented in a botanical assessment, including

a number of rare native wildflowers, such as Mt. St. Helena Morning Glory, Green Coyote Mint and Narrow-leaved Daisy. Each of the latter exist only in Napa and two other counties in California.

As for animals, the Land Trust is a participant in the Wildlife Picture Index (WPI) Project, using motion-activated cameras to document the presence of larger mammals and their use of key corridors. Initial data show this area to house a larger number of mammals compared to other areas, and the largest number of bears, a strong indication that the area is functioning as a healthy ecosystem. This area may be an important source population for bears, further confirming the importance of protecting this wildlife corridor.

The Land Trust has worked with CAL FIRE to develop a management plan for the property to ensure a sustainable forest, remove invasives, protect rare species and maintain the habitat diversity needed for the priority wildlife corridor. ■



Left: The new Aetna Springs Preserve is home to Green Coyote Mint (*Monardella viridis*), a wildflower species whose entire range is centered on Napa County.

Below: Arched doorway of old saloon/spa on LTNC’s newest preserve in a photo taken before the 2014 earthquake.



Land Trust of Napa County completed the acquisition of 482 acres of undeveloped land that will become part of the University of California’s Natural Reserve System. Located next to Markley Cove on Lake Berryessa, the property is almost completely surrounded by protected land. It connects to the Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument, the Bureau of Reclamation land surrounding the lake and the UC Natural Reserve System’s 638-acre Stebbins Cold Canyon Natural Reserve.

“We’re pleased to work with the UC Davis Natural Reserves to protect this land,” said Doug Parker. “Connecting protected properties together enhances previous investments in conservation, ensures broad corridors for wildlife movement, and in this case, provides opportunities for scientific research and teaching.”

“We’re excited to see LTNC protecting more natural lands for landscape conservation, scientific research, wildlife habitat and watershed management,” said Associate Director of UC Davis Natural Reserves Jeffrey Clary.

The property includes extensive oak woodlands, dominated by interior live oak, as well as montane chaparral and chamise chaparral. While LTNC will hold the property in the short term, it will turn ownership of the land over to UC Natural Reserves for long-term ownership and management. The UC Natural Reserve System consists of 41 reserves totaling more than 750,000 acres across the state. These reserves provide locations for faculty and students to conduct long-term research and teaching.

The property will be added to the Stebbins Cold Canyon Natural Reserve,

named in honor of UC Davis Professor G. Ledyard Stebbins, who was instrumental in establishing the university’s Department of Genetics. LTNC will retain a CE over the property, to create a double layer of protection, further ensuring that it remains undeveloped.

“LTNC has partnered with UC Davis Natural Reserves on several projects to protect land at their 2,000-acre Quail Ridge Natural Reserve nearby,” said Parker. “This new property is immediately across the cove from that reserve, where LTNC holds nine conservation easements on 880 acres.”

“The multi-partner network of protected lands near Lake Berryessa and Putah Creek is a real conservation success story. Through the years, additional pieces of the landscape puzzle have been protected for future generations,” said Clary. ■



UC Davis & Land Trust Add 482 Acres to Natural Reserve

View looking down across the property to Markley Cove and Lake Berryessa.



LTNC Partners with Napa Open Space District on 1,900 Acres

Photo by John Woodbury—Napa Open Space District

Land Trust of Napa County and the Napa Open Space District are pleased to have completed one of the largest conservation easements (CE) in the county, covering more than 1,900 acres. The CE will be held by the Land Trust on the Spanish Valley property owned by the Open Space District.

“This land abuts the 1,278-acre property purchased by LTNC in October, as well as other lands owned by the District and the Bureau of Land Management,” said Doug Parker. “This area in northern Pope Valley is a high conservation priority because of its key location within the North Bay’s wildlife corridor and because this area, and specifically this property, contains a large number of Napa’s rarest native species.”

“When Spanish Valley was donated to the Napa Open Space District in 2010, the District made a commitment to protect this natural landscape in perpetuity,” according to District General Manager John Woodbury. “The CE strengthens this commitment by providing back-up protection. If anything [ever happens] to the District, LTNC is

empowered to step up and ensure the conservation values of the property remain intact.” As part of this same initiative, LTNC previously transferred an easement to the District over its popular Linda Falls Preserve in Angwin.

Besides extensive oak woodlands and chaparral, the property includes an unusually large open grassland known as “Spanish Valley.” This large meadow is home to several rare native species, including foothill yellow-legged frogs, several bird species and 17 rare plants such as Swamp Larkspur, which exists only in Napa and three other counties, and Bare Monkeyflower, which exists in only five counties.

These rare plants are threatened by invasive species, which crowd out the natives and create thick thatch mats that serve as wildfire fuel. LTNC and the District worked with CAL FIRE to plan a 320-acre controlled burn, one of LTNC’s largest, on the property in June, the most effective time to eliminate invasives before they drop seeds, sparing the natives that have already dropped seeds. However, the burn had

to be postponed. Then in August, the LNU wildfire burned across the property. “It’s too bad we couldn’t complete the controlled burn. It could have provided a significant fire break,” said Parker. “A fire in August leads to increased smoke at a vulnerable time of year for Napa agriculture and it’s not as effective at reducing invasives.”

Established by the voters in 2006, the Napa Open Space District has acquired and manages over 5,000 acres of open space lands throughout the county for resource protection and recreation. It also provides recreational access to 8,000 public acres owned by other agencies. ■



Left: Spanish Valley’s Bare Monkeyflower (*Erythranthe nudata*), a rare native wildflower which exists in only five counties.

Right: Swamp Larkspur (*Delphinium uliginosum*), a rare native wildflower found on the Spanish Valley property which exists in only four counties.



Weed-Whacking Sheep and Goats Reduce Wildfire Risk

Two herds of hungry sheep successfully removed a thick layer of dry, non-native undergrowth on LTNC’s Wantrup Preserve oak woodland in 2020, helping to reduce the risk of wildfire and restore native habitat.

Like many places in Napa County, these 730 acres of oak woodlands had a growing problem—a heavy buildup of invasive weed thatch overwhelming native plants and creating fine fuel loads that can quickly carry a fire. The Land Trust has pursued multiple approaches to deal with these issues across its properties—mowing and hand pulling invasive plants, targeted herbicide applications and working with CAL FIRE to carry out prescribed burns.

“At Wantrup, the size and type of the invasives problem and the remote terrain led us to choose rotational grazing as the best approach,” said LTNC Stewardship Program Manager Mike Palladini. “In particular, we turned to some very efficient weed whackers: sheep and goats, also known as small ruminants. We’re very happy with how these small ruminants have performed.”

Two herds of about 600 sheep from Kaos Sheep Outfit in Lake County did the munching. “Sheep grazed correctly can improve the land,” said Jamie Irwin, Kaos’ co-owner. “They grow a

renewable resource every year—wool, and lamb provides a healthy protein source.”

The herds are kept within one 15 to 20-acre area at a time to make sure they graze the entire project area thoroughly. Per Palladini, “it is a dry season project—grazing after native plant species have already set seed. We are testing the potential restoration benefits of grazing in the dry season, combined with reduction of a heavy buildup of dried weed material, which can act as a barrier to native plant growth and reproduction.”

The project also aims to lower the risk of wildfires by removing fuel loads. This was tested in a very real way in August, during the LNU Lightning Complex fires, when a spot fire started on an abutting property and, carried by a heavy buildup of weed thatch there, burned toward Land Trust property. The fire advanced until it hit the grazed area, which acted as a fire break, and St. Helena firefighters were able to put the fire out. In total, only 3/4 of an acre burned.

“Without tall grass, you don’t have fuel for the fire,” said Wantrup Preserve caretaker Leaf Hayes, who has wildland firefighting experience and assisted in the firefighting efforts that day. “I’m a firm believer in grazing as a wildfire prevention method. It helped a lot with containing that fire.”

The impact on native species can also be dramatic. Paired plots of grazed and ungrazed land are regularly surveyed by professional botanist Jake Ruygt. Preliminary data show that along with fuel load reduction, the number and cover of native plants species are increasing in grazed areas relative to ungrazed areas.

This careful assessment of impacts attracted support from the USDA’s Conservation Innovation Grants program (CIG), which helps fund conservation projects on agricultural lands. The grants are aimed at cultivating innovative and



creative approaches to improve water quality, soil health and wildlife habitat. The award will pay for one-half of the costs of this project over three years.

“The fact that we are carefully evaluating the impacts of this specific type of grazing on native species, while reducing fuel loads at the same time, made the project interesting to the CIG program,” said Palladini. “While the project has been ongoing for four years now, it requires several years of good data in order to demonstrate definitive results because the goal here is to look at longer term trends. Once the project is complete, we look forward to sharing the results with other landowners and land managers.” ■



Opposite page: Sheep graze dry plant material on the LTNC’s Wantrup Preserve 18 days before the LNU Lightning Complex fires started.

Top left: The spread of an LNU Lightning Complex spot fire was stopped when it reached a grazed area on LTNC’s Wantrup Preserve.

Top right: Goats reduce a heavy buildup of invasive weed thatch on LTNC’s Wantrup Preserve.

Bottom right: Comparison of grazed and ungrazed areas on the Wantrup Preserve. At right, ungrazed areas show a heavy accumulation of invasive weeds that can quickly carry a wildfire and inhibit native plant growth.

Preserve Stewardship Update

The 2020 wildfires, which burned through a staggering 42% of Napa County, impacted much of the Land Trust's preserve network and land stewardship program.

In the aftermath of the fires, we have been focused on cleaning up and replacing damaged infrastructure, clearing roads and trails, assessing erosion risk, and rehabilitating areas heavily impacted by fire containment line. We are also working to expand our post-fire monitoring program, initiated after wildfires in 2014, to track the recovery of our fire adapted native plant communities and wildlife species.

In addition, we are working to build on our active fuels reduction and restoration programs, including prescribed burning, rotational grazing, invasive species control and forest management, to increase the resiliency of our lands to climate change and extreme wildfires. Following are some examples of the work we're doing to address the recent fires, and plan for future fires.



Assessing and mitigating post-fire erosion risk

LTNC has been working with CAL FIRE, the Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Napa County Resource Conservation District and others to assess post-fire erosion risk, rehabilitate fire containment lines, and address road drainage issues to help prevent post-fire impacts to watershed health.



Above: CAL FIRE equipment operators repair a fire containment line installed on the Wildlake Preserve during the LNU Lightning Complex fire. **Right:** US Geological Survey research geologist Jeff Prancevic collects soil infiltration data on the Dunn-Wildlake Preserve as part of a project aimed at better predicting flood and debris-flow risk following wildfires. **Far right:** The Napa County Resource Conservation District's Bill Birmingham and Amanda Benton assist LTNC with post-fire erosion risk assessment following the Glass Fire.



Above: One of many trees down across preserve roads and trails following the LNU Complex and Glass Fires. **Right:** Road damage caused by burned tree roots. **Middle:** Burned trailhead sign on the Wragg Ridge Preserve following the LNU Lightning Complex Fire. **Far right:** Remnants of a storage building on the Wildlake Preserve destroyed during the Glass Fire.



Tracking and addressing post-fire exotic plant invasion

Following the 2017 fires, monitoring in burned areas allowed LTNC staff to quickly detect and control new and expanded highly invasive exotic plant species. In this example from LTNC's Foote Botanical Preserve, the 2017 Atlas Fire stimulated a latent French broom seedbank to germinate, greatly exacerbating an existing invasion of this highly flammable invasive. Working with AmeriCorps crews LTNC removed thousands of individual French broom plants before they could set seed and establish a new seedbank, key to effectively controlling the invasion. LTNC is now expanding its post-fire invasive species monitoring work to include areas affected by the 2020 LNU Lightning Complex and Glass Fires.



Left: Heavy French broom invasion on the Foote Botanical Preserve following the 2017 Atlas Fire. **Right:** AmeriCorps crew removes French broom in a burned area on the Foote Botanical Preserve before it produced viable seed.



Monitoring post-fire response of fire-adapted native plant communities

Following the 2014 wildfires, LTNC initiated a monitoring program to track the post-fire response of fire-adapted native plant communities, with a focus on chaparral. Through this work, LTNC has documented a strong recovery of native plants, including fire opportunists, fire followers, fire-dependent species and rare plants not seen in decades (see <https://www.napalandtrust.org/natures-resilience-part-ii/>). Following the 2020 wildfires, we are working to establish additional monitoring plots in oak woodland and coniferous forest that burned at a high severity to track tree survival and changes in habitat structure and composition.



Top: Native wildflowers, grasses and shrubs, including 16 rare plant species, abound on the Missimer Snell Valley Preserve just a few months after the 2014 Butts Fire. **Far left:** Chaparral Pea (*Pickeringia montana*) resprouting from surviving root systems on the Archer Taylor Preserve following the 2017 Nuns Fire. **Left:** An intact madrone (*Arbutus menziesii*) fruit sits on burned ground within the Sutro Ranch preserve following the 2017 Atlas Fire. **Right:** California helianthella (*Helianthella californica*) dramatically increased its numbers and flowered prolifically on the Foote Botanical Preserve following the 2017 Atlas Fire. **Far right:** For the first time in 53 years, a robust population of Fire poppy (*Papaver californicum*), the seeds of which require fire for germination, appeared on the Foote Botanical Preserve following the 2017 Atlas Fire.



Tracking post-fire wildlife response

Our entire 20 sq km Wildlife Picture Index (WPI) project camera grid and large surrounding areas burned in the LNU Complex and Glass Fires, providing a unique opportunity to assess post-fire changes in terrestrial mammal populations.

The WPI project, which uses detection rates to track biodiversity levels and long-term population trends of terrestrial mammals, marks LTNC's first effort to acquire quantitative information on wildlife species within its conservation lands.

Using our four years of pre-fire data, LTNC will be able to look at immediate post-fire changes in terrestrial mammals' presence and abundance, and track the recovery of these species over longer time periods. The Wildlife Picture Index project has been assisted by generous funding contributions from the Schwemm Family and Wayne Grey Wilson Foundations.



Black bear, gray fox and bobcat documented on Land Trust preserves through the Wildlife Picture Index project. **Right:** Stewardship Program Assistant Mackenzie Gilliam replaces a motion-activated wildlife camera monitoring station destroyed during the Glass Fire.

For more wildlife photos, visit <https://napalandtrust.org/land-stewardship/wildlife-picture-index-project/>



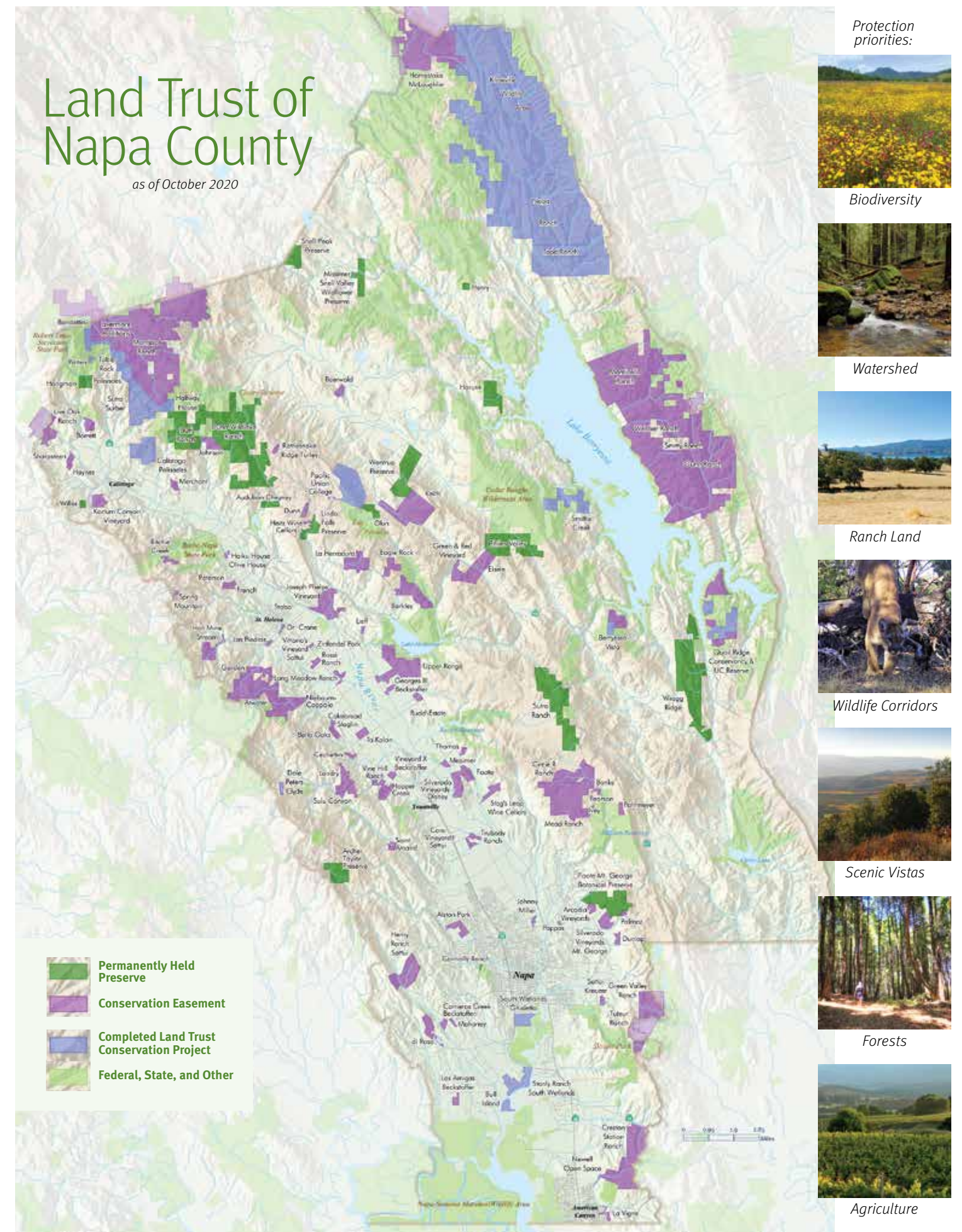
Preserve Stewardship Update (continued)



Above: Goats graze a heavy buildup of dry annual plant material on the Wantrap Preserve. **Right:** CAL FIRE assists LTNC with a 210-acre prescribed burn in Snell Valley, to reduce fine fuel loads and the density of highly invasive barbed goatgrass. **Below:** Dense Douglas fir forest on the Linda Falls Preserve slated for thinning in 2021. This forest management project aims to create more open-stand conditions that break up continuous fuels, and allow for the persistence of tree species such as oaks and ponderosa pines.

Fuels reduction: grazing, prescribed burning, forest management

LTNC has been actively working on projects that have both fuels reduction and restoration benefits. Dry-season grazing using goats and sheep reduces the heavy buildup of fine fuels that quickly carry wildfire and act as a barrier to native plant growth. Prescribed burns, in partnership with CAL FIRE, encourage the same. In addition, LTNC is working on forest management projects on its preserves dominated by coniferous forest in order to reduce fire severity and increase forest resilience to future wildfires within the Wildland Urban Interface. ■





Welcome New Board Members: Les Hausrath, Kathy Tranmer and Herta Peju



Les is a senior partner with Wendel, Rosen LLP in Oakland, where he specializes in real estate (easement, boundary and title disputes), eminent domain and land use law and looks forward to putting his experience to good use for LTNC. Les graduated with honors and Phi Beta Kappa from UC Berkeley, received his law degree from Berkeley Law (formerly Boalt Hall) and started his law career with the legal aid society. Les joined Wendel, Rosen in 1981. Les' wife Linda is a Napa native. They have a family home in

downtown Napa where her father was born. In 2010, Les joined the Land Trust Projects Committee and then the Protection Committee.

Les is active in other nonprofits. He is Secretary of the Board of the Regional Parks Foundation, the 501c3 arm of the East Bay Regional Park District and is a long-standing Board member of Rebuilding Together Oakland/East Bay. Les mentors two college students through Oakland Promise and reviews applications and interviews scholarship applicants for UC Berkeley through the Alumni Association.



The Land Trust is in Kathy's blood—by association. She married Land Trust founder Harry Tranmer's son Joel—51 years ago! Rarely did a family dinner go by without some discussion about Land Trust activities. Kathy graduated from UC Santa Barbara and became a teacher.

She and Joel have two sons and family activities always revolved around the outdoors—backpacking, camping, mountain

climbing, fishing and skiing. She has previously served on the Land Trust board and helped create and twice chaired "The Feast of Eden," LTNC's major annual fundraiser. She has been an active Master Gardener for the last 20 years, including two terms as president, and also served on the Opera House board.

Kathy recently became an artist and is inspired by the awe-inspiring beauty of Napa Valley, and she welcomes the chance to be on LTNC's board to further protect it.



Herta is the owner and co-founder of Peju Province Winery in Rutherford, a family-owned and operated wine business fostering sustainable and environmental consciousness since 1983. After earning a bachelor's degree in science from the University of Southern California, Herta

worked with her husband Tony Peju, expanding floral shops into a nursery business. While searching for a larger farm to continue their business, they came upon a 30-acre parcel in Rutherford that changed the course of their lives. With farming in the family's blood and wine grapes already growing on the land,

they built Peju Province Winery. In 2007, Herta Peju and the Peju Province Winery earned the California Certified Organic (CCOF) designation for the H.B. Rutherford Estate Vineyard, part of the original parcel. In 2009, the winery became Napa Green Winery certified, and in 2019 it completed the California Land Stewardship Institute's Fish Friendly Farming Environmental Certification Program.

"Supporting the Land Trust as a board member allows me to contribute back to the Napa Valley community while working to preserve and protect its stunning views, native plants and wildlife," said Herta.

Farewell Outgoing Board Members: Ann Taylor Schwing and Jack Stuart

Ann Taylor Schwing has served three terms on the Land Trust board: 1995-2001, 2002-2008, and 2013-2019. She served as Vice President in 1995 and as Board President from 1997-2001 as well as Secretary from 2015-2019. Ann's long-held commitment to land conservation included extensive work on the Protection, Project, Monitoring, and Executive committees. Ann and husband Charlie have been donors since 1980, and are land donors as well as Legacy Society members.

During her most recent board tenure more than 23,000 acres of land were permanently protected, including the last 50 acres of the Archer Taylor Preserve that Ann and her sister donated.



Ann is a retired attorney with Best, Best & Krieger and served as Secretary and Commissioner on the Land

Trust Accreditation Commission, an Independent Program of the Land Trust Alliance. She is one of the four original accreditation commissioners chosen in 2006. She writes legal treatises, is the author of numerous publications, including CA Affirmative

Defenses – West Expert Series (3 volumes) and Second Editions (5 volumes) and First Edition (4 volumes). She's authored Open Meeting Laws (several editions) and is the co-author of *The Regulation of Money Managers*. Ann's accomplishments in land conservation are remarkable and her service and dedication are truly appreciated.

Jack Stuart has been involved with the Land Trust for 14 years. He started as a volunteer on the Project Committee in 2006 and has served on the committee since, also serving as the committee's Chair since 2012. Jack has served on LTNC's board of trustees for the past six years, where he has served as Secretary and on the Executive Committee for the last year. Since he has been on the board, Jack has reviewed each Land Trust project a total of four times; the preliminary review at the Project committee and then the board, and the final review at both the committee and the board. Jack and his wife Loraine have been donors since he began volunteering. During his tenure on the board, more than 28,000 acres across Napa were permanently protected. Jack, your service on the board of trustees is greatly appreciated and we thank you for your contributions and all your support.

Thank you both for your ongoing commitment and your generous support.

Cornerstone Society Preserves Napa for Generations to Come

Land Trust Cornerstone Society members gathered virtually (and graciously) over Zoom this year as the event, scheduled for a fall evening at Far Niente, was



cancelled due to the pandemic. Beth Nickel generously hosted the virtual event and the group enjoyed Far Niente and Nickel & Nickel wines paired with artisan cheeses along with a presentation by CEO Doug Parker and a lively game of Land Trust Bingo!

Beth has generously agreed to host the group again next year, when we can gather in person at Far Niente.

The Land Trust thanks the more than 50 members of our 2020 Cornerstone

Society and offers our gratitude for their flexibility and generous support of our ongoing mission to preserve agricultural, biodiverse, scenic and viewshed lands in Napa County in perpetuity.

Thank you again to our host Beth Nickel for a wonderful evening and to all the donors who made the best of an online event! 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.



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Hikes & Workdays

We miss seeing you out on the trails and can't wait to see you again as soon as it is safely possible. Please check for updates at napalandtrust.org/hikesactivities/hikes/

Thank You

We thank you all for your ongoing support and extend our gratitude to the untiring efforts of all first responders.