



The Newsletter for Land Trust of Napa County / Winter 2021



*Mount George, the first acquisition of the Land Trust,
permanently protected as the Foote Botanical Preserve.*

**Land Trust of Napa County
celebrates 45 years of conservation
in Napa, with more than 86,000 acres
permanently protected.**



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Letter from the CEO



Support LTNC

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Thank you so much for your ongoing support for the Land Trust through these challenging times. Despite today's challenges, I want you to know that your support is having a significant and lasting impact. Over the past year, the Land Trust permanently protected a number of properties and initiated several large-scale land stewardship projects that are restoring native species and reducing the risks of wildfires at the same time.

Land Protection Highlights: We added to our popular Archer Taylor Preserve (ATP), west of the City of Napa—now 400 acres. We also completed a 200-acre easement right next to that preserve. And we protected two properties in the hills above Calistoga, extending protected land south from Robert Louis Stevenson State Park. Our ultimate objective is to connect all these properties together, creating a continuous corridor of protected land running the length of the Mayacamas, protecting this scenic backdrop above the valley and ensuring a functional wildlife corridor from Mount St. Helena to ATP.

We have the same ambitious goal along the eastern side of the valley. For example, we just acquired a property above Lake Hennessey. This helps connect protected lands around Lake Hennessey with Las Posadas State Forest and with the 840 acres at Pacific Union College that we protected three years ago. And this is just one segment within the large-scale goal of a continuous corridor of protected land through the eastern hills from Mount St. Helena to the Newell Preserve east of American Canyon.

Several recent projects also help protect municipal water supplies. Lake Hennessey is the main local source of water for the City of Napa and the Calistoga projects protect the upper reaches of the Napa River as it descends into Kimball Reservoir, the main local source of water for the City of Calistoga.

In addition, we added to our preserves in the eastern end of the county. The Chiles Valley Preserve, purchased in 2019, is now 1,150 acres. The Wragg Ridge Preserve, purchased in 2018, is now 1,950 acres. These properties protect significant natural areas in their own right, but in addition, ensure protected pathways for wildlife that extend across the county.

Stewardship Highlights: Just as importantly, we also accomplished several Stewardship initiatives on protected lands. On land we own, we pursue active management. And with more land to manage, as well as the growing challenges presented by climate change, especially wildfires, the amount of Stewardship work is growing: Controlled Burns—we completed another burn in partnership with CAL FIRE to restore native wildflowers and reduce fuel loads; Rotational Grazing—our dry season grazing program with goats and sheep is restoring native species and its value as a fire break was tested in the fires last year when a spot fire came from an adjacent property onto ours and ran right up to the grazed area, where, without adequate fuel, it lay down; Fuel Breaks in Forested Areas—We completed one at our Linda Falls Preserve in Angwin, working with 10 neighbors, the Angwin Fire Safe Council, Firewise and CAL FIRE, and now we're planning two even larger projects; Erosion Control—We just completed two more projects to reshape old ranch roads and install erosion control devices to reduce erosion and its negative impacts on soils and wetlands. These projects are having measurable impacts: restoring native species, eliminating invasives, protecting wetlands and reducing fuel loads for wildfires.

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



Archer Taylor Preserve Increases to 399 Acres

Land Trust of Napa County announces the acquisition of a property on the ridgeline west of the City of Napa. The property adds to one of LTNC's most popular preserves, the Archer Taylor Preserve, at the end of Redwood Road near the Sonoma County line. This addition will enlarge the preserve to 399 acres.

The preserve is located within a critical wildlife corridor running the length of the Mayacamas range along the ridge between Sonoma and Napa counties. The new addition also connects the preserve to other protected land along this corridor, further ensuring the viability of the corridor over the long term.

"I want to thank the landowners, the Kubler family, for their interest in protecting their property through this important addition to the Archer Taylor Preserve," said Doug Parker, LTNC CEO. "This preserve is one of our key holdings and we're proud to have worked with both families—first the Taylors (Connie, Ann and Ann's husband Charlie Schwing), who initially donated land to create the preserve, and now the Kublers—to permanently protect this land and all of its natural values."

"Our family moved to the end of Redwood in 1957," said Alice Jane Kubler. "My parents, Pat and Warren Kubler, both middle school teachers, were seeking a place where they could raise

a family, have some farm animals and plant a garden. At the time, I don't think they imagined how fortuitous a decision it was to live 'next door' to Archer and Hasseltine Taylor's property, a sanctuary from their urban Berkeley lives as faculty at UC Berkeley. Within two years, the Taylors invited our family to become permanent neighbors and offered to sell my parents 30 acres, the house and cottage."

"Warren and Pat were tenants initially, but my parents always said they took care of the property like owners," said Ann Taylor Schwing, daughter of Archer Taylor. "When Warren and Pat wanted to buy their home and the nearby orchard, it was an easy decision."

The Kubler family has owned the property for over 60 years.

Warren moved to the Meadows senior residence at the age of 91 in 2012 and two of his daughters, Alice Jane and Ann, began actively managing the property and considering its future with the family. "We wanted to honor our parents' legacy within our upper Redwood Road community," said Alice. "We wanted to honor the Kubler-Taylor-Schwing rich history, and we wanted our family, neighbors, wildlife and redwoods to be able to continue to enjoy the land as we had known it. So working with the Land Trust was the logical solution. Consummating the sale was a (continued on page 4)

perfect early birthday present for Warren’s March 3rd 100th birthday.” Sadly, Warren passed away later in the year, but peacefully and with his family present, on Veterans Day, November 11, 2021.

The property not only lies within an important wildlife corridor but is also an important natural area. It includes an impressive redwood grove—the largest stand of redwoods in the county—that is open for use as a picnic area. The forest provides habitat for Northern Spotted Owls.



The preserve includes the upper reaches of Redwood Creek, one of the longest tributaries of the Napa River that descends down

from Mount Veeder and runs through the City of Napa before entering the river. This year-round stream provides habitat for Steelhead, a threatened species under the federal Endangered Species Act, which has been found in the creek as high in the hills as the preserve.

“Growing up among such beauty was a privilege we did not take for granted,” said Margaret Kubler. “It was instructive as a child to watch my father’s and Dr. Taylor’s careful nurturing of the redwood groves. We Kublers worked hard to grow our food and to protect the beautiful orchards from fire. As we took care of the land, it took care of us.”

“I would also like to thank the donors who made this acquisition possible,” said Parker. “All of the funding was contributed by private individuals and we could not have done this without their generous support.”

Beginning over 20 years ago, through a number of transactions, the Taylor family began donating parcel after parcel of their property to create Archer Taylor Preserve. “My sister and I have long been committed to permanent protection of the beautiful land and redwoods now protected forever as the Archer Taylor Preserve,” said Taylor Schwing. “We are pleased as can be that the Kublers have rejoined their land with the preserve. The Land Trust of Napa County has cared well for the original preserve, and I am confident that all the land will be loved and protected into the future. My husband Charlie and I enjoy working at the preserve several days a week, and we welcome others who might like to be outdoors.” ■

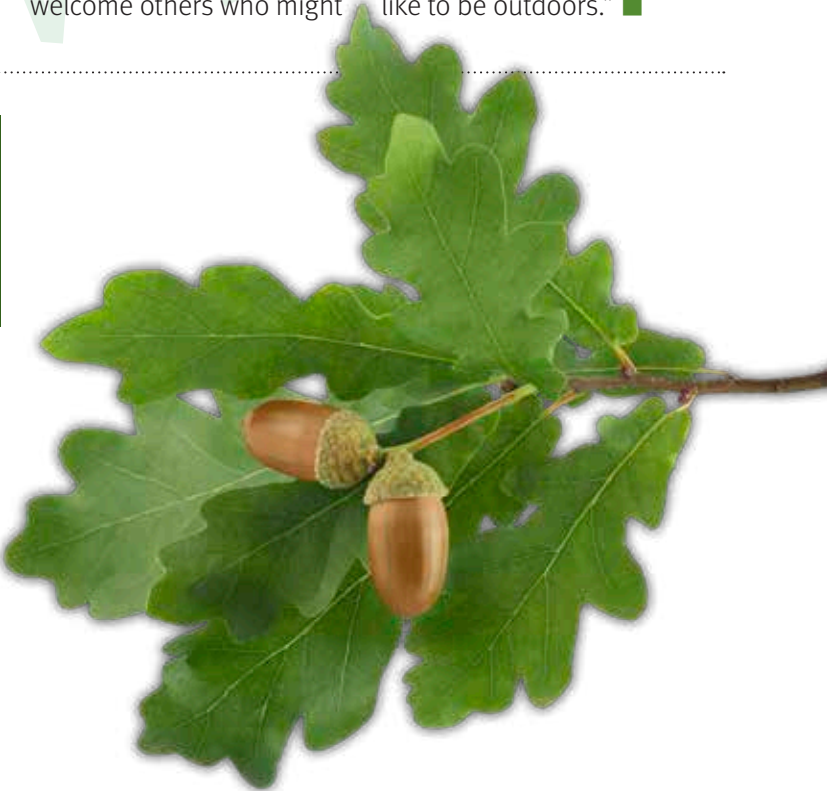
Wragg Ridge Preserve Increased 1,950 Acres

Land Trust completed an addition to the Wragg Ridge Preserve that it purchased in 2018 at the southern end of Lake Berryessa. The new 40-acre addition is surrounded on three sides by the preserve and increases the preserve to a total of 1,950 acres.

The new addition also touches the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR) land that surrounds Lake Berryessa—30,000 acres, including the lake. The BOR land abuts the nearby 2,500-acre Quail Ridge Reserve, part of the University of California’s Natural Reserve System. The latter owns and manages natural areas statewide, providing priority sites for education and research carried out by faculty and students.

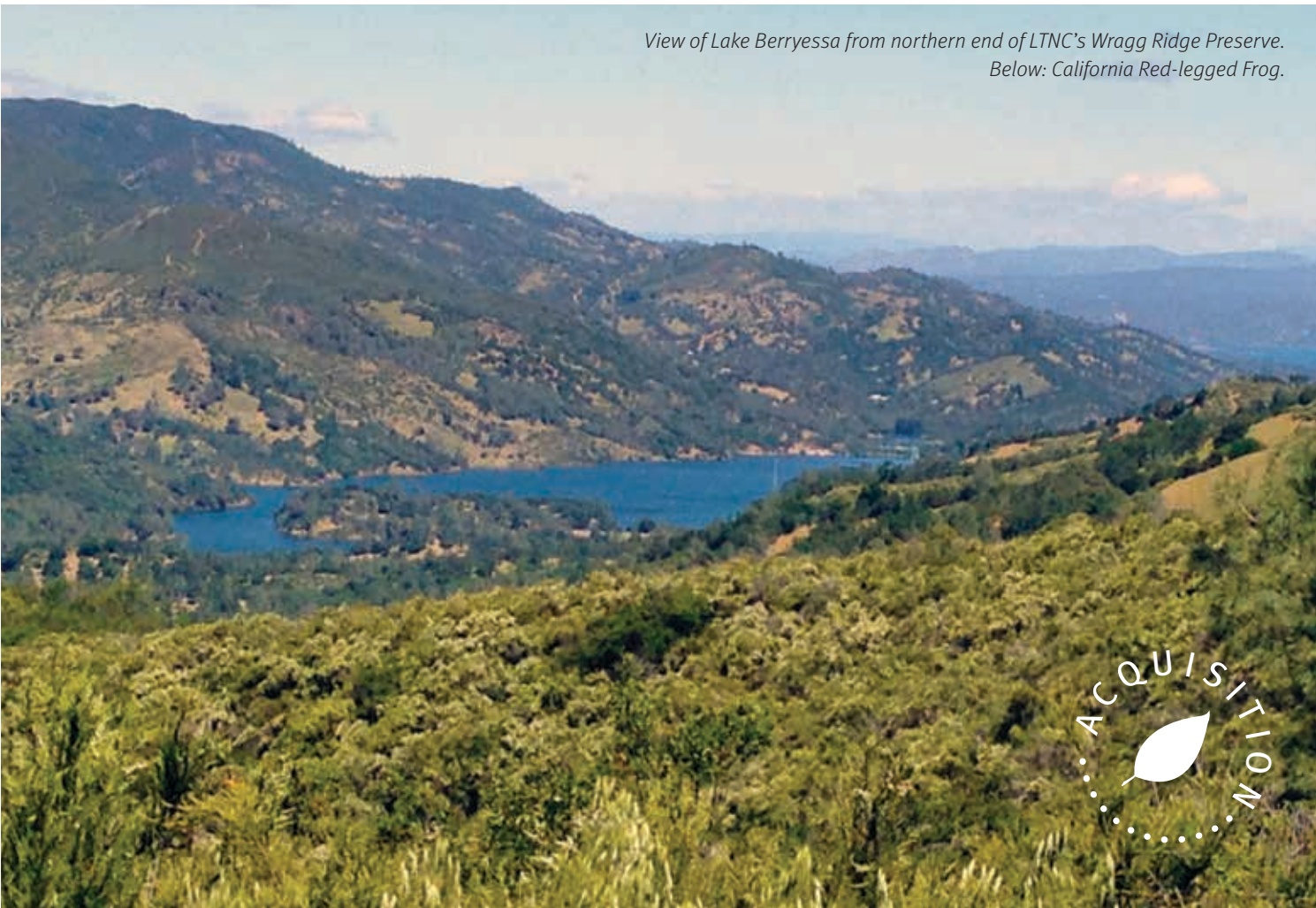
The Quail Ridge Reserve is a partnership between UC, the Bureau of Land Management, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, BOR and the Land Trust of Napa County.

“We’re excited to add this property to protected lands in the area,” said Doug Parker. “This acquisition ensures that an



important gap within protected lands in this area is permanently protected for wildlife and helps to further protect the area’s extensive oak woodlands. The Bay Area Conservation Lands Network identified this property as a high priority for conservation.”

The Wragg Ridge Preserve is dominated by extensive oak woodlands—predominantly blue oaks and interior live oaks,



with some black oaks. 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 as oak woodlands are endemic to the region and only a small percentage are protected statewide.

“I want to thank the Goetze family for agreeing to work with the Land Trust to protect their land,” said Parker. “I know they have been long-time landowners in the area.”

The Goetze family owned thousands of acres in the area for decades, living and ranching there, from the time of Bruno Goetze, the grandfather of the current owners. Bruno Goetze had a ranch in Wragg Canyon, where Pleasure Cove is now. A significant amount of this large landholding was sold by Bruno’s son, Ernie Goetze, to the federal government in 1955 as part of the eminent domain that led to the construction of Monticello Dam and the creation of Lake Berryessa.

Sharon Evensen, one of the siblings who sold to LTNC, remembered her childhood in Monticello, the town that was founded in 1866 and later inundated by the reservoir in 1957 after the dam was completed. “I went to grammar school in the two-room schoolhouse right in the town of Monticello,” she said.

“Our family house was in Steele Canyon and our grandparents’ ranch was in Wragg Canyon. The parcel we just sold was the last of our family’s parcels in the area. We are pleased to know the Land Trust will preserve and keep this land in its natural state for the benefit of future generations.”

Besides extensive oak woodlands, the Wragg Ridge Preserve contains priority wetlands, including a creek, seasonal pools and year-round ponds. The wetlands provide habitat for rare species, including the federally listed California Red-legged Frog, one of the few federally listed species in Napa County. The largest native frog in the western United States, this species is estimated to have lost over 70% of its previous habitat. It was listed under the Federal Endangered Species Act in 1996.



The Land Trust will work with the US Fish and Wildlife Service on habitat enhancement and restoration efforts for this species as well as other wildlife on the preserve. ■



Land Trust Extends Wildlife Corridor in Calistoga Hills

Land Trust is pleased to have completed a 24-acre conservation easement (CE), donated by Dr. John Erskine, the son of prominent Bay Area environmentalist Dorothy Erskine.

The CE protects a forested property of mixed hardwood and conifer trees in the hills northwest of Calistoga. Besides protecting habitat, the easement provides scenic views that can be seen from Highway 128. Dr. Erskine, who passed away in 2019, worked with LTNC to ensure protection of the property and donated it through his estate.

The property shares a boundary with the Land Trust's 571-acre Live Oaks Ranch CE and adds to an important wildlife corridor that stretches south from the 5,272-acre Robert Louis Stevenson State Park to Live Oaks Ranch.

"Protecting these contiguous corridors of land for wildlife is a priority for

conservation," said Doug Parker. "This property adds to a corridor that extends south from Mount St. Helena and the 23,000 contiguous acres protected in that part of the county. Based on our motion-activated camera project, the Wildlife Picture Index, we know this area is significant for wildlife and in fact, has the largest numbers of bears of any place in the Bay Area."

Dr. Erskine was a prominent vascular surgeon who went to Harvard Medical School and was a professor of surgery at UCSF. His family first came to the Bay Area during the Gold Rush. He was the son of Dorothy Erskine, a Bay Area leader over several decades in city planning, smart growth and open space initiatives. She was a founder of key organizations working in these areas today, including the Greenbelt Alliance and the San Francisco Bay Area Planning and Urban Research Association.



Among many projects, she worked with leaders in Napa to help create Napa's Agricultural Preserve in the late 1960s. To honor her many efforts, the City of San Francisco named Dorothy Erskine Park in her honor, dedicated in 1979 by Mayor Dianne Feinstein.

John inherited the Napa property from his parents and it was there that he scattered their ashes. John Erskine had a life-long love of the outdoors and exploring the mountains of the West, beginning from early childhood when, with his parents, he would hike along the Sierra. ■

80 Acres Saved Near EcoCamp Berryessa

Land Trust announces the acquisition of 80 acres of undeveloped land near the Napa Open Space District's EcoCamp Berryessa, at the northern end of Lake Berryessa. This new acquisition connects with other protected lands, ensuring ongoing scenic values and creating new opportunities for camp programs for youth and children.

The property abuts over 400 acres that LTNC purchased in 2019. These properties connect with thousands of acres of existing protected land owned by the federal government, managed by the Bureau of Land Management and the Bureau of Reclamation. The new acquisition extends protected lands south to ensure corridors for wildlife that lead toward the 6,400-acre Cedar Roughs Wilderness Area.

The property has serpentine soils that support rare plants and it lies between two of the main sources of water for Lake Berryessa, Pope Creek and Putah Creek, just before those creeks empty into the lake. The land rises from Pope Creek to a high point above the lake, directly above the site of the Open Space District's outdoor educational programs at EcoCamp Berryessa. Protection of the acreage will allow expansion of these programs to include hiking through the blue oak woodlands on the newly acquired land to the property's summit. Campers can hike to the top and experience striking views back down to their camp below, west to Mount St. Helena, east across Lake Berryessa to the peaks of the Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument and south along the full length of the 10-mile long lake.

"We're excited to protect this property," said Doug Parker. "It's an important natural area and our long-term plan is to transfer these lands, almost 500 acres, to the Napa Open Space District so they can expand their programs for campers and children at EcoCamp Berryessa."

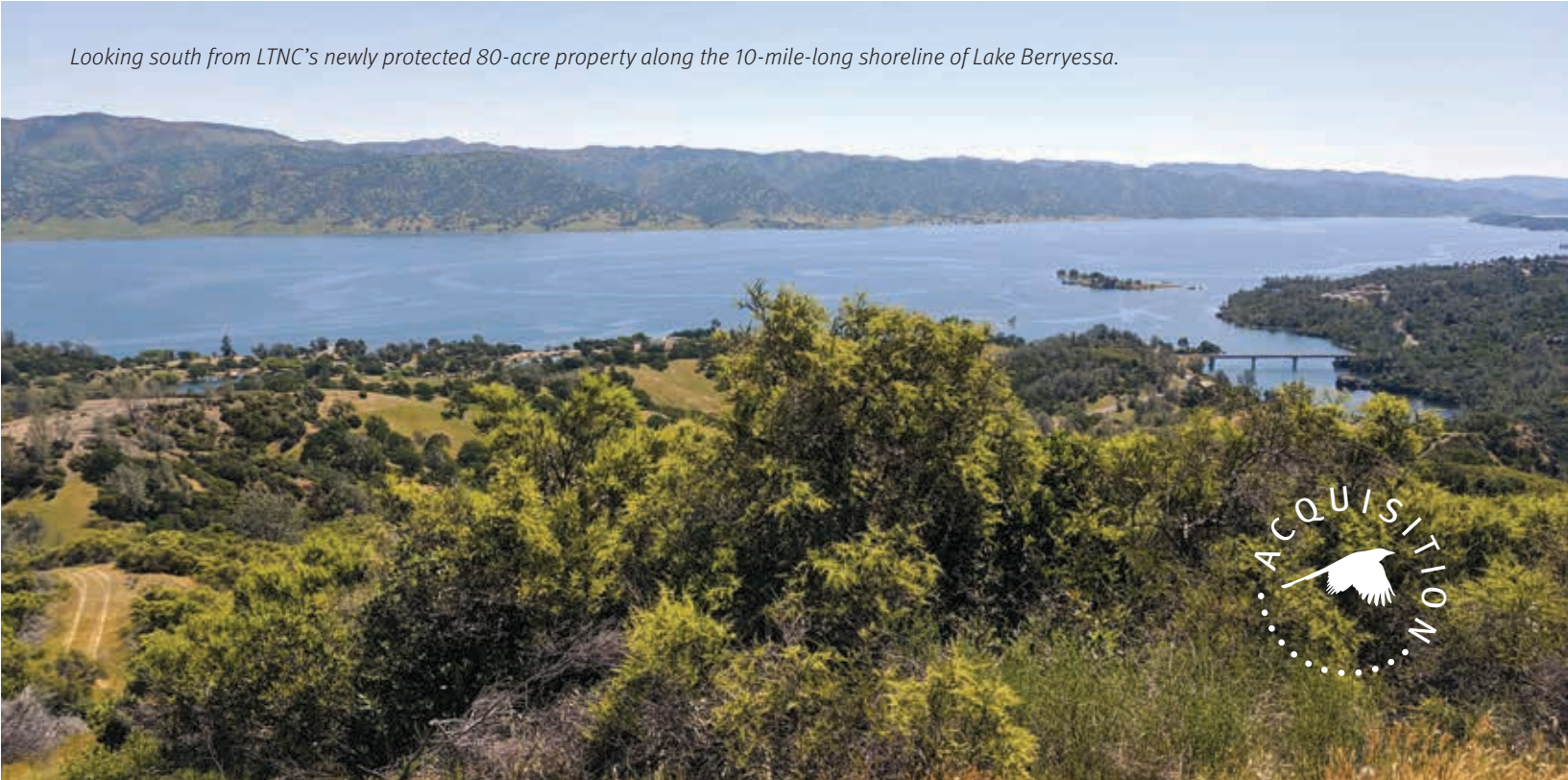


80-acre acquisition (red) near EcoCamp Berryessa will create expanded opportunity for youth recreation.

EcoCamp Berryessa provides outdoor education programs for scouting, educational and community organizations for group gatherings, team building and outdoor events. According to the District's website, "It's a place where children and adults can disconnect and learn to build a fire, paddle a canoe or catch a fish. All in a setting that's clean, comfortable and environmentally friendly."

"The really exciting thing about this land is the opportunity it will provide for kids at the camp to have paddle-in wilderness-style experiences right across from the EcoCamp," said Chris Cahill, General Manager of the Open Space District. "I think it opens up the kind of activities we can host at EcoCamp in a really exciting way." ■

Looking south from LTNC's newly protected 80-acre property along the 10-mile-long shoreline of Lake Berryessa.



Land Trust Completes Conservation Easements Protecting Almost 200 Acres



Donated: 77 Acres of Lake Hennessey Watershed

The Land Trust completed the acquisition of 77 acres of undeveloped land above Lake Hennessey, off of Greenfield Road. Protection of the property ensures ongoing scenic views from the valley as well as guarding significant habitat that is part of an important wildlife corridor.

The property is adjacent to other conservation easements held by LTNC, connecting with Moore Creek Park and the City of Napa's land surrounding Lake Hennessey—in total,

over 4,000 contiguous protected acres.

"We're excited about acquiring this important property," said Doug Parker, CEO. "This project protects an important part of the watershed of Lake Hennessey, the City of Napa's main local source of water, and adds to an important wildlife corridor at the same time.

This is part of our larger-scale objective of creating a continuous corridor of protected land through the hills along the east side of the valley. In this section of that corridor, we are working to connect protected lands around Lake Hennessey with Las Posadas State Forest and the land we worked with Pacific Union College to protect in Angwin."

"This was an outright gift of land and I want to thank the landowners, Richard Howarth and Victoria Slaker, for their generosity," added Parker.

"We're pleased to be able to permanently protect the natural values of this property," said Victoria. "We've owned the land for several years and had originally thought of building there, but after much consideration, we decided to work with the Land Trust to permanently protect it for its forest, meadows and wildlife."

The donated property contains mixed conifer and hardwood forests with patches of grasslands. As part of the larger wildlife corridor, a wide range of wildlife use the property, including bobcats, coyote, deer, mountain lions and bears.

The property used to be part of a larger land holding owned by award-winning screenwriter Bo Goldman and the late Mab Ashforth, who lived there for many years. Mab Ashforth passed away in 2017 and in her obituary, Bo Goldman wrote, "We lived in the natural splendor of those hills above St. Helena for over 30 years. And the community held out its hand to enable us to maintain a professional life, but more importantly, a loving, cherishing atmosphere in which we could grow."

Before they sold their property, Bo and Mab permanently protected much of their land by donating conservation easements to LTNC, conserving over 200 acres adjacent to the newly acquired property. ■

Land Trust has completed two conservation easements (CE's) protecting almost 200 acres near Mount Veeder, along the Napa-Sonoma county line.

"The properties are in a key location," said Doug Parker, "very near each other and adjacent to other protected land. One abuts LTNC's Archer Taylor Preserve, which we just expanded to almost 400 acres, west of the City of Napa along Sonoma-Napa county line. The other abuts 160 acres of Bureau of Land

Management (BLM) land just south of the preserve. Together, these easements help protect scenic views and an important wildlife corridor along the ridge of the Mayacamas Mountains between Napa and Sonoma."

The easements protect scenic vistas above both Napa and Sonoma valleys and can be seen from Highways 12 and 121 in Sonoma and Napa, as well as from the Silverado Trail in Napa. The properties, which include land in both

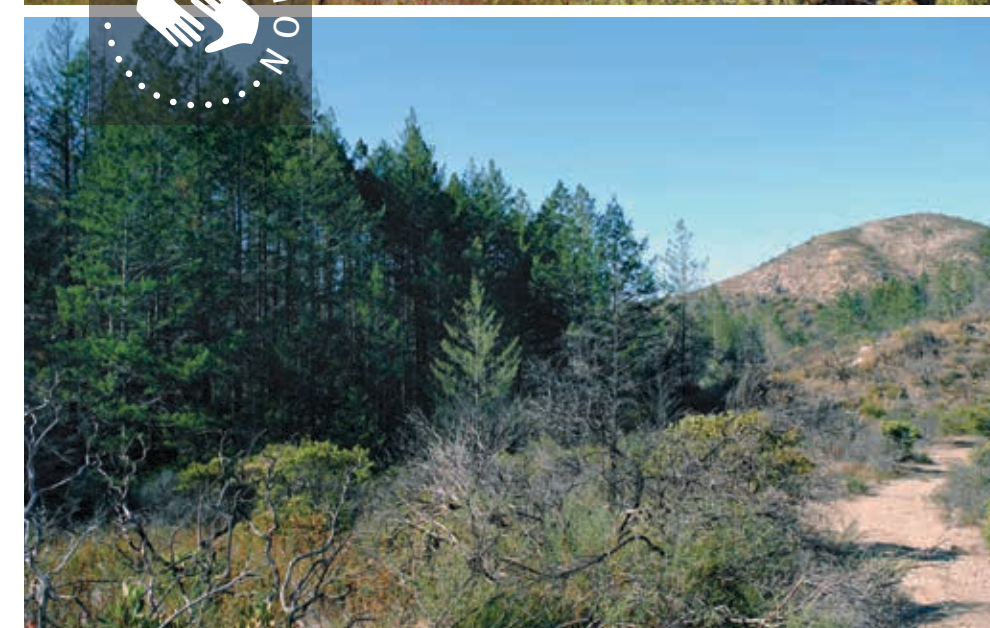
counties, were identified as a region-wide conservation priority by the Bay Area Conservation Lands Network.

Natural values on the land include redwoods, mixed hardwood-conifer forest and chaparral. The easements also contain upper watershed lands for Redwood Creek, one of the longest tributaries of the Napa River that descends from Mount Veeder and then runs through the City of Napa before joining the river. Redwood Creek supports steelhead, rainbow trout and Chinook salmon.

The easements also contain the headwaters for Arroyo Seco and Nathanson Creek, which run through the City of Sonoma. Both streams are tributaries of Schell Creek, which empties into the wetlands above Sears Point and from there into San Pablo Bay. The upper watershed forest provides habitat for Northern Spotted Owls.

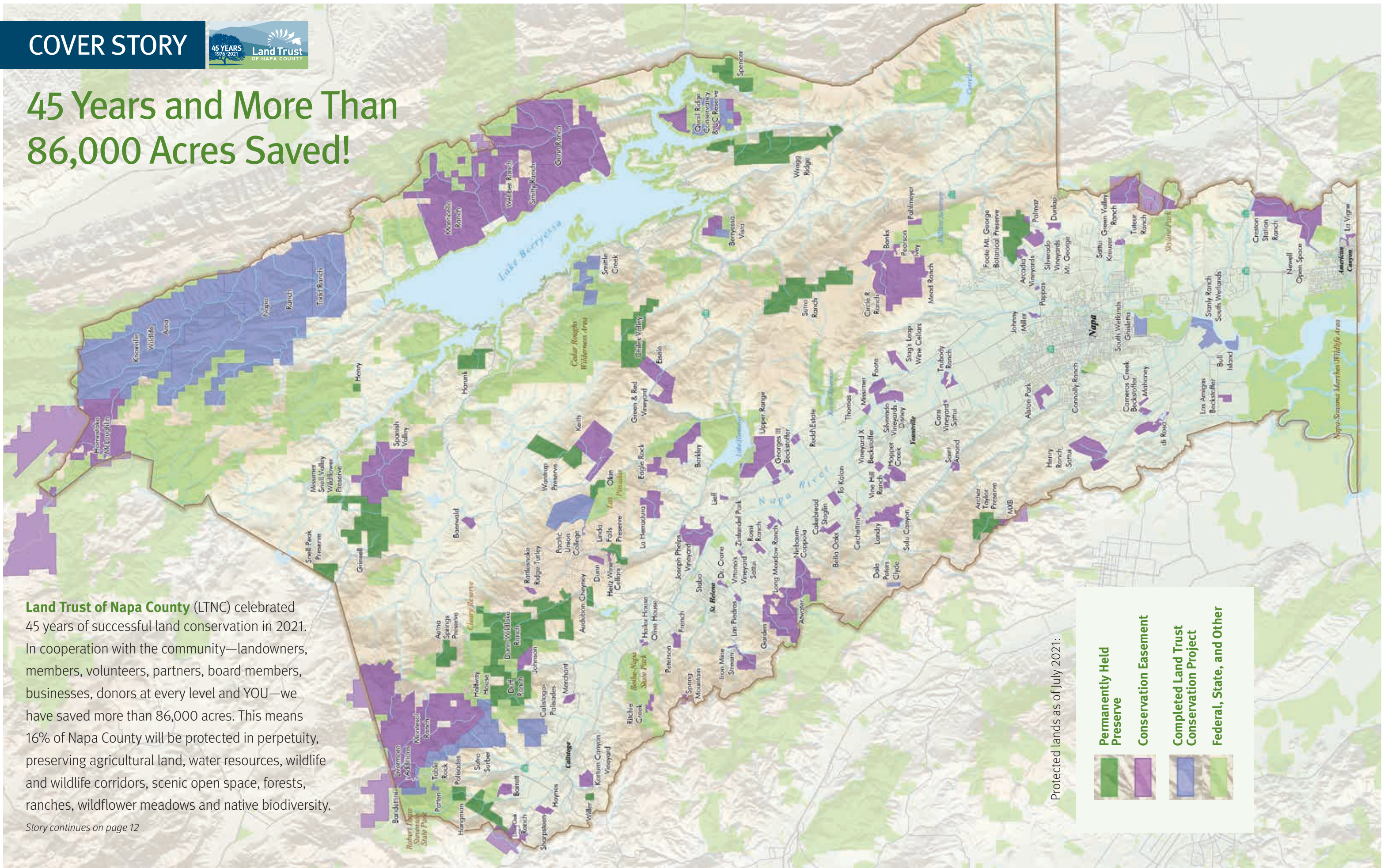
"I want to thank the landowners for their interest in protecting this property and for their generosity in donating these conservation easements," said Parker. "The easements eliminate the potential for residential and commercial development on the property, permanently protecting this land into the future."

"We're pleased to be able to permanently protect our land and leave this long-term legacy," said the landowner, Michael Birch. "We purchased these properties in the last few years. We love the area and besides managing the property sustainably ourselves, we wanted to do something to ensure the land's protection over the long-term. We're pleased that working with LTNC on these easements has allowed us to do that." ■



Land Trust of Napa County (LTNC) celebrated 45 years of successful land conservation in 2021. In cooperation with the community—landowners, members, volunteers, partners, board members, businesses, donors at every level and YOU—we have saved more than 86,000 acres. This means 16% of Napa County will be protected in perpetuity, preserving agricultural land, water resources, wildlife and wildlife corridors, scenic open space, forests, ranches, wildflower meadows and native biodiversity.

Story continues on page 12



Cover Story (continued)

The Land Trust of Napa County (LTNC) was founded in 1976 by a small group of people who strove to keep Napa from becoming another casualty of development.

According to Harold Kelly, one of the founders, “I hated to see what was happening in the San Jose area, where land was being gobbled up and turned over to houses. I didn’t want to see that happen in the Napa Valley.”

The group founded the nonprofit Land Trust and protected their first property, the Foote Botanical Preserve, with 200 acres donated by Si and June Foote on Mount George. Today the Foote Preserve has grown to 770 acres. And from that important seed, the Land Trust has grown exponentially. LTNC has now permanently protected more than 86,000 acres.

LTNC’s conservation transactions include both acquiring land outright and completing conservation easements in partnership with private landowners. Over time, LTNC acquired and now owns more than 14,800 acres, in the process becoming the largest private landowner in the county (the federal government and the State of California are the largest landowners in Napa County).

But the majority of LTNC’s conservation transactions have been conservation easements. LTNC has worked with a large number of landowners across Napa County to ensure permanent protection of their lands by essentially retiring development rights on these properties through conservation easements. The contribution of a conservation easement can provide significant tax benefits for the landowner because they are making a charitable donation to a nonprofit, LTNC. In total, LTNC has now completed and holds 153 conservation easements across the county.

While there is much to celebrate after 45 years, there is much more to do. Efforts to protect and restore ecosystems to adapt to climate change must remain proactive and robust. You can help by donating land, joining our Legacy Society, becoming a Land Trust member, or volunteering.

Equally important is the Land Trust’s ongoing responsibility to monitor and steward protected lands. Monitoring includes annual inspections of each easement to ensure that properties are maintained according to the terms of each easement.

On properties LTNC owns, stewardship involves active management to protect natural values and reduce the risks of wildfire. Projects include removing invasive plants, conducting prescribed burns, pursuing rotational grazing, restoring native species, protecting wildlife corridors, monitoring wildlife, managing forests and restoring streamside habitat.

The Land Trust has dramatically increased the pace of its conservation activities over the last few years. In the last eight years, LTNC has protected more than 33,000 acres—40% of the land protected in our 45-year history. In addition, LTNC’s stewardship activities have been growing in scale in order to address the pressing challenges presented by climate change.

By keeping focused on priorities, LTNC has made significant progress toward creating a network of conservation lands that will continue to provide clean water, scenic vistas, wildlife habitat, forests, wildflower meadows, functioning wildlife corridors, thriving agricultural lands, and access to nature for everyone who lives in and visits Napa, both today and for generations into the future.

While there is much to celebrate in all that has been accomplished so far, there is much more to do.

LTNC thanks its many contributors and welcomes their support—together we are making a lasting impact across Napa!



Protection priorities



Biodiversity



Watersheds



Ranch Lands



Wildlife Corridors



Scenic Vistas



Forests



Agriculture

By the numbers

86,000 acres protected—16% of Napa County—in 45 years and 240 projects

45,169 Acres under Land Conservation Agreements
26,180 Acres transferred to State and Local Agencies
14,812 Acres owned by the Land Trust

153 conservation easements donated by over 95 property owners (properties stay in private ownership, but LTNC holds the land conservation agreement)

21 properties transferred to resource agencies (such as Fish & Wildlife and State Parks)

22 properties protected through Land Trust ownership (land which is eventually transferred or becomes a Land Trust Permanent Preserve)

The Land Trust owns 14,812 acres, including:

Aetna Springs Preserve—320 acres of undeveloped forest land

Archer Taylor Preserve—400 acres with redwoods in Mayacamas Mountains

Audubon Cheyney Preserve—120 acres in Bell Canyon

Chiles Valley Preserve—1,150 acres key to connecting wildlife corridors

Connolly Ranch—12 acres including the Environmental Education Center

Duff Ranch—1,040 acres in the mountains east of St. Helena

Dunn-Wildlake Preserve—3,086 acres of forest in Howell Mountain area

Foote Botanical Preserve—767 acres on Mount George

Linda Falls—175 acres near Angwin

Missimer Snell Valley Preserve—273 acres with rare native wildflowers

Sutro Ranch—1,380 acres including Atlas Peak ridgeline

Wantrup Preserve—730 acres of oak woodlands in Pope Valley

Wragg Ridge Preserve—1,950 acres protecting oak woodlands and wildlife habitat

“Newest” Preserve (unnamed)—1,278 acres home to 17 rare species

Recent accomplishments

The first, third and fourth largest easements in our history all protected in the last 5 years—more than 17,000 acres.

Largest property LTNC has added to its portfolio in more than 10 years—Wragg Ridge Preserve at almost 2,000 acres

864 acres of Pacific Union College (PUC) priority forest land permanently protected—creating a contiguous area of more than 1,750 protected acres



Controlled burn reduces wildfire risk and restores habitat at Missimer Preserve

Completing a prescribed burn on the Land Trust’s Missimer Preserve recently, LTNC hit a wildfire risk mitigation and habitat restoration jackpot.

Lining up all of the proper approvals, submitting all of the right paperwork and then, ultimately, getting weather ideally suited for a controlled burn that went off safely and effectively is no small achievement. Especially considering the planning and preparation involved.

“These projects can be tough to implement, but when they do happen they are so gratifying because of their fuels reduction and restoration benefits,” said Land Trust Stewardship Program Manager Mike Palladini. “It’s always great to partner with CAL FIRE on these important projects, and we very much appreciate their assistance.”

“We had sustained wind up to 3 mph, with gusts up to 8 mph,” said CAL FIRE Battalion Chief Ben Sitter. “Anything over 10 mph and we would not have done it. It worked out just perfect for us.”

The Land Trust completed prescribed burning projects on the Missimer Preserve in 2013 and 2015, and helped facilitate two

others on neighboring properties in 2018 and 2019.

For each of these burns, Palladini needed to work with CAL FIRE and the Bay Area Air Quality Management District, going through a planning and environmental review process, conducting logistics and on-the-ground site planning, creating a burn plan, and then hoping the weather, air quality and availability of CAL FIRE resources all lined up.

Finally, on the day of the scheduled burn, Palladini made one final call to the Bay Area Air Quality Management District at 8:30 am to get the green light. This, after meeting about 40 CAL FIRE firefighters at 7:00 am in Pope Valley, including three engines, a bulldozer, a water tender and a hand crew.

Once Palladini got the final ok, CAL FIRE had to make one more call to get the final green light from their regional headquarters. And on Tuesday, June 22, they were able to make it happen.

Wildfire-risk mitigation is one of the primary benefits the Land Trust counts on when doing land stewardship work like this. One of the primary goals of this project was to reduce a heavy

buildup of fine fuels that can quickly carry a wildfire in an area that has been hard hit by wildfires in recent years.

“The big part is reducing fuels,” said Sitter. “Anytime we can reduce fuels in a controlled manner, it helps keep the surrounding community a little bit safer.”

Controlling the invasive plant species that were actively outcompeting and displacing native serpentine meadow species and impacting an area valued for its outstanding wildflower displays was another major benefit of conducting the prescribed burn.

“The serpentine meadow area on the Missimer Preserve is

one of the most important botanical sites in Napa County,” said Palladini. “77% of all native, non-woody plant species documented in Napa County can be found in this one 60-acre restoration area, including seven rare plant species that only occur on serpentine soils in and around Napa County.”

Prescribed burning has been shown to be an effective step in the process of controlling invasive plants and promoting native species in serpentine meadows like this one. LTNC has seen a strong positive response from native species and some spectacular wildflower displays following a previous prescribed burning, and hopes to see the same response to this recent burn next spring. ■



CAL FIRE crews and equipment assist with a 60-acre prescribed burn on LTNC’s Missimer Preserve.



Land Trust field trip program back in full swing

In early September, the Land Trust was thrilled to resume its well-loved field trip program after a year and a half long, Covid-related hiatus. We have been heartened to see the abundance of interest in our recent events, as registration numbers have been reaching capacity for nearly every outing. It’s been wonderful to be back out on the trails and leading workdays with our enthusiastic hikers and volunteers! The program hosts an array of guided hikes, walks, paddles and talks which serve to connect Napa County and other Bay Area cities with LTNC’s permanently protected lands.

Not only do these outings provide recreational opportunities for the public on these cherished places, but they also provide a means to share the stories of how and why these lands have been protected, while also teaching about the ecological values that they provide. For more info, visit napalandtrust.org/hikesactivities/hikes/. ■

Ecologist and SFSU Professor Tom Parker leads a fire ecology field trip on the Foote Botanical Preserve.

Mile-long fuel break designed to protect Angwin

The Napa Communities Firewise Foundation, Land Trust of Napa County and the Angwin Fire Safe Council collaborated to develop a mile-long Linda Falls fuel break, in partnership with CAL FIRE and Napa County Fire, aimed at protecting the community of Angwin.

“Angwin is one of the few places across Napa that has not burned in the last few years and therefore, wildfire-risk mitigation there is seen as a county-wide priority,” said JC Greenberg, of CAL FIRE and Napa County Fire, who helped plan the project. “It is encouraging to see this partnership develop and lead to real on-the-ground fuels reduction.”



Hand crews reduce a heavy build-up of ladder fuels to reduce the risk of a high-intensity crown fire and improve forest health.

The fuel break project formed a semicircle, connecting at both ends to Howell Mountain Road. To be successful, the fuel break needed to cross land owned by 10 different landowners. The partnership worked to connect with these landowners, and the response was very positive.

“We have been working together to contact the landowners, describe the project and its benefits, and ask for their participation,” said Margo Kennedy, who along with Paula Peterson

is Co-Chair of the Angwin Fire Safe Council. “We have had great enthusiasm from property owners. With their participation this fuel break will help increase defensible space for this neighborhood and the community of Angwin.”

The largest landowner involved is the Land Trust, with its 177-acre Linda Falls Preserve. The fuel break pathway crosses 20 acres of the preserve. Because of the urgency of moving forward with the project before the next red flag days returned, the LTNC was happy to take the lead in piloting the project on their land. The fuel break across the entire stretch through the Land Trust’s property was completed with funding from Napa Firewise and other private donors.

“We’re excited to work with this partnership and to help initiate this project on our property,” said Doug Parker. “The contractor did a very good job and that allowed the other landowners to see exactly what the results would be.”

The project is a 200-foot-wide shaded fuel break in a forested area dominated by Douglas fir. “A shaded fuel break is a wildfire mitigation method used to reduce the amount of vegetation in a forested area in order to reduce fire severity, slow its spread and assist with firefighting efforts,” said Peter Lecourt, PUC Forest Manager, and board member of both Napa Firewise and the Angwin Fire Safe Council. “By thinning dense stands of small diameter trees that have resulted from decades of fire suppression, and pruning larger trees, the fuel break reduces a heavy buildup of ladder fuels that can lead to a crown fire.”

“The project helps reduce the chances of a high-intensity crown fire that could threaten homes and neighborhoods nearby,” said LTNC’s Mike Palladini. “And it is also aimed at improving forest health and resilience by reducing resource competition for the remaining trees, promoting a broader array of tree species including oaks, and decreasing the chances that the largest and oldest trees will be killed during a wildfire event.”

“I want to say a special thanks to the donors who helped make this project possible, from Napa Firewise, to individuals who live in the area,” said Parker. “With their help and the landowners’ participation, we’re pleased we could get this project completed in the spring, long before the threat of wildfire returns.” ■

New project tracks post-fire oak survival

Over the last year, LTNC has been marking and surveying hundreds of oaks that burned during the 2020 wildfires. Our goal is to track the long-term recovery and survival of individual oaks where large areas of oak woodland habitat were affected. The marked trees, which span six species and three preserves, burned at a high severity, meaning



flames fully scorched all of the stems and leaves from the ground up to the highest parts of the canopy. Oaks are highly fire adapted, and have evolved mechanisms for regenerating after a fire. These species have the ability to resprout from surviving root systems, and from buds on the stems after being impacted.

Oak woodlands provide an enormous amount of habitat and ecological value, and tracking the long-term, post-fire oak response is made more important by the added stressors of hotter, drier conditions resulting from climate change. We hope that this work will allow us to gain a better understanding of how oaks respond to high-severity fire, and that it will help to inform future, post-fire oak woodland restoration efforts. We look forward to sharing our results as we begin analyzing the data we’ve collected over the first post-fire year. ■

Burned coast and interior live oaks on LTNC’s Wragg Ridge Preserve vigorously resprout from surviving root systems following the 2020 LNU Lightning Complex Fire.

AmeriCorps crews help steward LTNC’s preserves



LTNC continued to work with AmeriCorps conservation crews across its preserve system on projects related to habitat restoration, wildfire recovery, watershed protection and trail improvements in 2021.

Seasonal conservation crews are an integral part of LTNC’s land stewardship program, dramatically increasing the capacity to get priority on-the-ground land stewardship projects and tasks completed. Working with AmeriCorps crew members through the non-profit American Conservation Experience allows LTNC to greatly leverage staff and volunteer efforts, while providing valuable hands-on experience and educational opportunities to young adults from across the country.

LTNC has successfully partnered with American Conservation Experience and AmeriCorps to further stewardship efforts since 2014. ■

AmeriCorps crews assist with removal of invasive Hairy Vetch on the LTNC’s Aetna Springs Preserve, and with trail maintenance on the Archer Taylor Preserve.



Land Trust furthers watershed restoration efforts through additional erosion prevention

The Land Trust recently partnered with the Napa County Resource Conservation District and Natural Resources Conservation Service to further its watershed restoration efforts. Road-related erosion has been identified as a priority, controllable source of sediment pollution in the Napa River system.

Using well-established erosion control Best Management Practices for forest and ranch roads, LTNC worked with its partners to storm proof approximately three and half miles of actively eroding road length on preserve lands in the Atlas Peak area.

The Land Trust's installation of carefully designed erosion control features is aimed at significantly lowering the risk of catastrophic erosion during major rain events, and at substantially reducing fine sediment delivery to streams.

Storm proofing road systems can have immediate benefits to stream and aquatic habitat, helping to ensure that the biological productivity of the watershed is not impacted by human-caused erosion.

The Land Trust has now treated over 20 miles of hydrologically connected road lengths within its preserves, preventing an estimated 1,200 cubic yards of sediment from being transported to streams and wetlands in local watersheds. ■

Erosion control feature installed on the Dunn-Wildlake Preserve, one of several recent, similar projects.



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- Our Field Trip Guide, a biannual list of hikes and field trips delivered to your door
- Our newsletter for the Land Trust of Napa County, with biannual updates on land donations, stewardship projects, and more
- Special invitations to participate in member-only hike series
- Information about new and ongoing stewardship opportunities through workdays
- Notification of volunteer opportunities as they arise

Please visit napalandtrust.org/get-involved/gift-of-membership.



BOARD UPDATE

Farewell Outgoing Board Member Steve Carlin



Steve Carlin served on LTNC's board of directors for six years beginning in 2016. Steve is the Founder and Managing Partner of Oxbow Public Market and The Carlin Company and is an active and sought-after consultant in the specialty food industry. He is a strong supporter of the "Buy Fresh, Buy Local" farm movement and brought his passion to his involvement with LTNC. During his tenure on the board, the Land Trust protected 32,000 acres. We thank you, Steve, for your commitment and support.

Cornerstone Society Preserves Napa for Generations to Come

Land Trust Cornerstone Society members gathered for a beautiful evening at Far Niente Winery.

Beth Nickel generously hosted the group virtually last year and then hosted the group again in person this year. It was wonderful to be together again and raise a glass to all the accomplishments the Land Trust has achieved in its 45 years.

The Land Trust thanks the over 50 members of our 2021 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.

We wish to once again thank our generous host Beth Nickel for a wonderful evening and for hosting us two years in a row! 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.



A Special Thank You
to board members, volunteers, members, and donors
who have supported the Land Trust during the pandemic.



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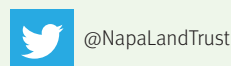
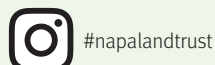
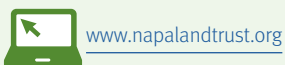
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Upcoming Field Trips & Events since they are back!



JANUARY

- 8 Henry Road Walk
- 15 Aetna Springs Ranch Exploratory Hike
- 22 Devil's Well
- 23 Linda Falls Hike
- 29 Linda Falls Preserve Winter Workday #1
- 30 Archer Taylor Preserve Workday

FEBRUARY

- 13 Linda Falls Lumber Mill
- 20 Owling in the Napa Valley*
- 26 Hoffnagle Loop
- 27 Linda Falls Preserve Winter Workday #2

*For 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

