



The Newsletter for Land Trust of Napa County / Winter 2022



Running Deer Ranch— our 5th-largest conservation easement ever!

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Running Deer Ranch increases the total of protected land along Lake Berryessa's eastern shore to more than 14,200 acres, connecting already preserved acres to the north and south to create over 50,000 acres of contiguously protected land.



Letter from the CEO

Support LTNC

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I want to thank you! It has been a very positive year for conservation across Napa County. We appreciate you for making this possible.

With your support, we were able to make major strides in both of our priority conservation activities: Land Protection and Stewardship.

1. Land Protection: We protected more than 3,000 acres! In this issue, you’ll see some of the highlights of the year, including the protection of a 1,416-acre ranch. This was a key project, building on what we have accomplished in this same area—the east side of Lake Berryessa. With this closing, we’ve now protected more than 14,200 contiguous acres in this area in the last seven years—very large-scale conservation in Napa County. And this latest project also makes the direct connection between 30,000 protected acres south of it and more than 20,000 protected acres to its north, so there are now 50,000 acres of contiguous protected land. This kind of work will become increasingly important as climate change progresses. In these projects, we protect our native wildflowers, mammals, birds and other species where they live today, but we also ensure that if they need to migrate over time, unencumbered corridors will allow their free movement.

2. Stewardship: In Napa County, protected land needs to be actively managed (in fact, so does all land in Napa) and on land we own, we engage in a range of management activities. This is becoming increasingly important as we face the growing challenges presented by climate change, especially wildfires. In the past year, we made some major strides.

We successfully completed fuel reduction/restoration projects in forested systems at both our Aetna Springs Preserve and our Linda Falls Preserve. These projects remove fuel loads (small trees and other vegetation) and ladder fuels that intensify a wildfire’s threats to both communities and to the forest. The projects retain the largest trees and their canopies, increasing the forest’s resilience to wildfires, while removing vegetation that threatens the forest’s native diversity. The forest-thinning project at Linda Falls was on a larger scale than a more narrow fuel break and is meant to slow the spread of a fire and lessen its severity, even under windy conditions that can allow fires to jump fuel breaks.

We also completed our sixth year of a model rotational grazing project using goats and sheep. This project has now been tested and proven successful at both limiting wildfire risks and restoring native species. It was tested in the 2020 fires 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. And to assess the ecological impacts, we have established twin grazed and ungrazed plots across the property. Each year, a botanist counts all the plants within each plot. In the grazed plots, native species are gaining ground. In the ungrazed plots, invasive species still dominate and are still creating significant fuel loads.

Finally, we have begun some new projects to protect some of our most vulnerable species, Monarch Butterflies, which have experienced dramatic declines in the last 20 years, and California Red-legged Frogs—it has disappeared from 70% of its range—the largest native frog in California.

There is much more in this edition. I hope you enjoy it. And again, thank you so much! None of these conservation accomplishments would have been possible without your support.

Best wishes for the Holidays and the New Year.

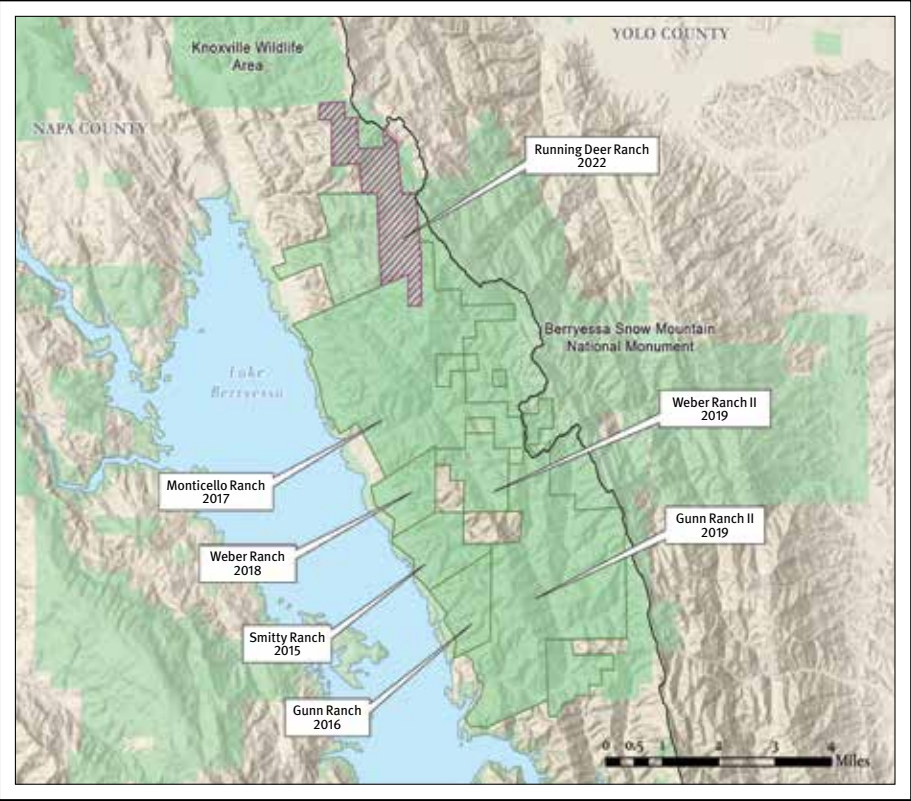
Best,

Doug Parker

Doug Parker, CEO

COVER STORY

Land Trust Protects 1,400-Acre Ranch



The Land Trust of Napa County (LTNC) completed a conservation easement protecting 1,416 acres of Running Deer Ranch on the east side of Lake Berryessa. This is the seventh conservation easement completed by the Land Trust in the last seven years in this area.

Working together with several landowners, the Land Trust has now protected more than 14,200 contiguous acres here, almost all the land along the lake’s 12-mile-long eastern shore.

The easement eliminates the potential for residential and commercial development across the entire property, as well as cultivated agriculture, but ensures that the land can continue to be a working cattle ranch. The easement protects multiple intact habitat communities including oak savanna, extensive meadows, oak woodlands and mixed manzanita/chamise chaparral, as well as a number of seasonal streams. Because the property connects directly with other protected land, the easement ensures contiguous corridors for wildlife.

“I want to thank the landowners, Anna Ahmann Reed, Christina Ahmann Roberts and Erica Ahmann Smithies, 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.”

“Our family has been raising cattle and farming in the Napa Valley for more than 50 years,” said Erica Ahmann Smithies. “This conservation easement not only continues what our parents started through an earlier easement, but continues the family tradition of progressive water conservation, sustainable ranching practices and sheer perseverance that will allow this land to remain in agriculture for generations to come.”

“In order to continue ranching and preserve the land for future generations,” said Anna Ahmann Reed, “you need to work the land and get your family involved in the process. This is what my parents did with us and now our children are learning cattle

(continued on page 4)

ranching as well. The conservation easement will help ensure the use of the property will continue in agriculture.”

The project was completed with partial funding from the Natural Resources Conservation Service’s (NRCS) Agricultural Conservation Easement Program. “I want to thank NRCS for providing funding for this important conservation project,” said Parker. “It would not have happened without their support.”

“This is a very strategic property to protect,” he continued. “Over the last few years, we’ve protected more than 14,000 acres here, including this ranch and others to the south. Those easements abut another 16,000 acres, chiefly federal land in the Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument, creating a contiguous area of more than 30,000 protected acres. Running Deer Ranch provides the direct connection between those 30,000 acres to the south and the 21,000-acre Knoxville

Wildlife Area that abuts the ranch to the north. Connecting these large conservation lands together will preserve wildlife corridors and oak woodland systems across a large-scale landscape of more than 50,000 protected acres.”

California Congressman Mike Thompson, who helped create the National Monument, supported this easement project and said, “Congratulations to the Land Trust of Napa County for permanently protecting this beautiful and important land for future generations. We are fortunate to have the Land Trust and will benefit greatly from their work.”

“This is the fifth-largest conservation easement we’ve completed in our 46-year history,” said Parker. “In total, the Land Trust of Napa County has now protected more than 89,000 acres.” ■



“Connecting these large conservation lands together will preserve wildlife corridors and oak woodland systems across a large-scale landscape of more than 50,000 protected acres.”

Land Trust Helps Reduce Wildfire Risk

In a continuing effort to implement fuels reduction and wildfire risk mitigation projects on conservation land it owns, the Land Trust completed a shaded fuel break on its Aetna Springs Preserve earlier this year. A shaded fuel break reduces the amount of vegetation in a forested area to help reduce fire severity and slow the spread of wildfire.

Located northeast of Calistoga, the Aetna Springs Preserve, acquired by the Land Trust in 2020, contains 320 acres of forestland along with meadow, wetland and streamside habitats. The preserve also includes one of the most heavily forested sections of Aetna Springs Road. This 1.6-mile road runs through the preserve, and served as a key access point and line of defense for firefighters during the 2020 LNU Lightning Complex and Glass Fires. In consultation with CAL FIRE and other partners, it was determined that the Land Trust could enhance emergency access along the road and create a firebreak by conducting a forest thinning project that extended 100 feet on each side of the road along the entire 1.6 miles. The project was planned in 2021 and began in January 2022.

“We’ve worked with CAL FIRE and Napa County Fire toward several similar projects and are pleased that we were able to initiate and complete this project during a window of opportunity in early 2022,” said Mike Palladini, LTNC Stewardship Program Manager.



The shaded fuel break treatment, which included thinning dense stands of small trees, chipping woody debris and climbing larger trees, was also aimed at enhancing overall forest health.

“When we acquired this property in 2020, with the help of CAL FIRE,” said Parker, “one of the key reasons was its biological diversity, including an unusual diversity of conifer species. A sustainable management plan was developed, working with a Registered Professional Forester, with the goal of improving forest management and managing for resilience to wildfire and disease. The tree diversity was being threatened by an increasing density of small Douglas fir trees that were competing with the other trees for resources.”

“Specifically, the Land Trust’s forest health objectives were to decrease fire severity and tree mortality and prevent a crown fire by reducing ladder fuels, to increase the health and growth of the remaining trees by reducing resource competition, and to increase habitat diversity by allowing for the persistence of other native trees, such as oaks and ponderosa pines,” said Palladini.

The project was completed at a cost of \$110,000, with significant help from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS), the main funder of the project.

“After the 2020 fires burned much of the Aetna Springs Preserve, the Land Trust reached out to the USDA NRCS for post-fire assistance through our Environmental Quality Incentives Program,” said Evelyn Denzin, a District Conservationist with the agency.

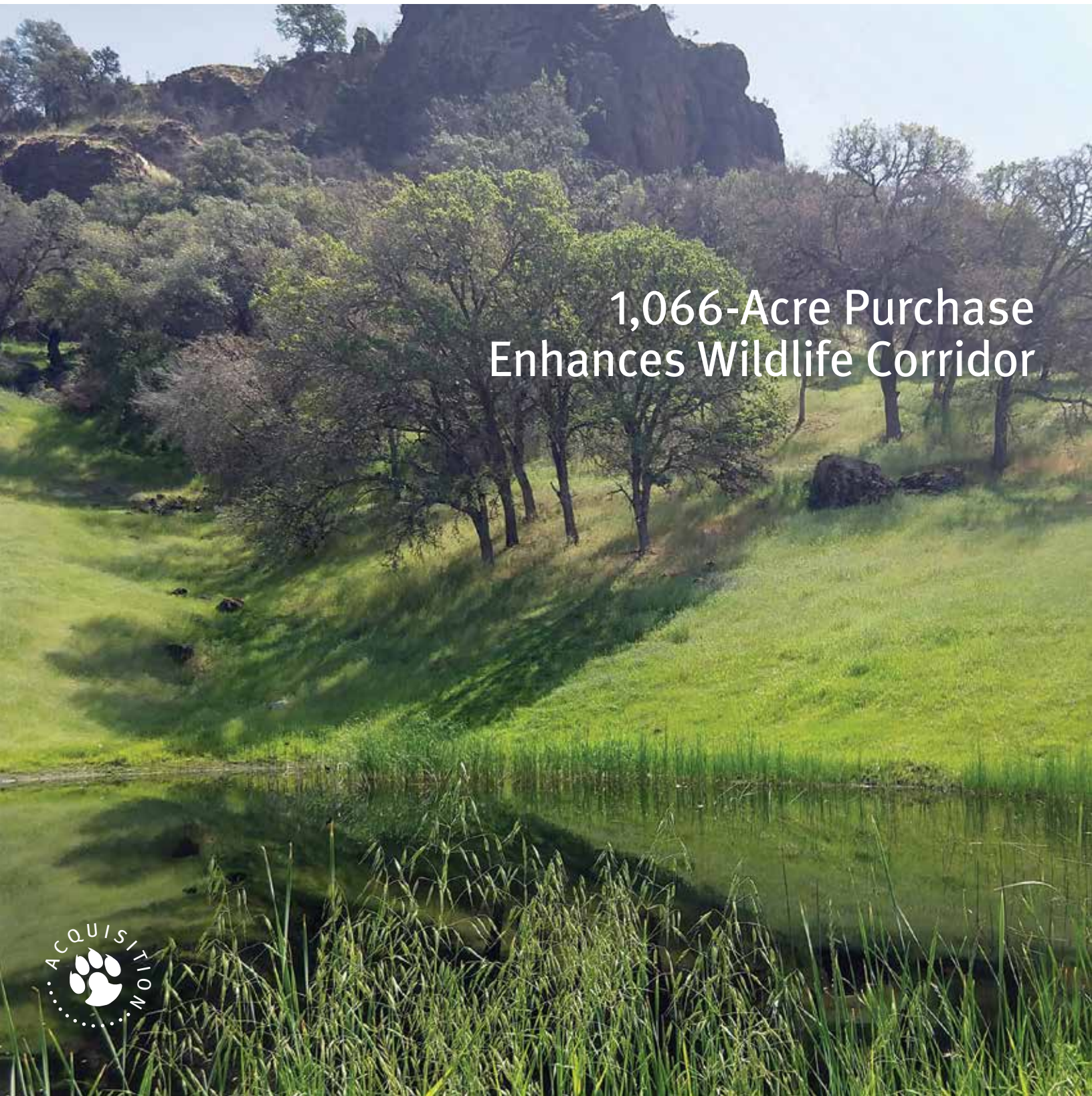
“The Land Trust’s commitment to responsible forest stewardship is clear from the work they accomplished to create a more fire-resilient forest stand structure that maintains large-diameter trees. The low-impact vegetation management methods LTNC used minimized soil disturbance and avoided adverse impacts to wildlife habitat,” she added.

“I want to thank Evelyn and NRCS for all of their technical and financial assistance with this project, as well as CAL FIRE and the Napa County Resource Conservation District for providing their valuable input as well,” said Palladini. ■



Opposite page: Crews begin a fuel break project in dense stands of small Douglas fir on LTNC’s Aetna Springs Preserve.

Above: A completed section of LTNC’s Aetna Springs fuel break.



1,066-Acre Purchase Enhances Wildlife Corridor

The Land Trust completed the purchase of four neighboring properties in 2022, protecting 1,066 acres.

“It’s important for wildlife that we connect protected land together at a large scale,” said Parker, LTNC CEO. “In order to achieve that here, we purchased properties from four different adjacent landowners. These properties not only abut each other, but their protection connected with thousands of acres of existing protected lands as well.”

The properties connect with lands owned by the State of California and managed by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) as well as federal land managed by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the Bureau of Reclamation (BOR).

The properties include varied habitats, such as Blue Oaks, mixed hardwoods and grasslands. The area includes extensive serpentine soils with rare plant species, such as Jepson’s Leptosiphon and Two-carpellate Western Flax. These two native wildflowers exist only in Napa County and three other counties in California. Serpentine soils have the highest concentration of rare species statewide.

“I want to thank the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation for helping with the funding to permanently protect these properties,” said Parker. “These acquisitions would not have been possible without their support.”

“The Land Trust’s ability to move so quickly to protect these properties represents a significant accomplishment for conservation in a priority geography,” said Dan Winterson, who manages the Bay Area Conservation Program at the



Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation. “We’re very pleased to be able to help protect more than 1,000 acres here, conserving important habitat and enhancing the value of the surrounding wildlife corridor.”

The properties also contain notable water resources, including ponds, springs and a significant length of Pope Creek, a priority stream that provides habitat for declining species such as Western Pond Turtle and Foothill Yellow-Legged Frog, a candidate for listing as a state-endangered species.

“These projects complete the protection of lower Pope Creek,” said Parker, “connecting lands managed by CDFW, BLM and BOR in an area that has long been a conservation priority for both the Land Trust and Fish and Wildlife.

In addition, at a much larger scale, this project creates a connection between 8,500 protected acres to the south, including the Cedar Roughs Wilderness Area, and 7,500 protected acres on the north of these properties, including land owned by the Napa Open Space District, BLM and the Land Trust.

We don’t often get a chance to join protected areas together at this scale. But putting together these four transactions was a great opportunity to assemble something that could close a gap between protected lands. And now, there is a contiguous landscape of 17,000 protected acres.” ■

Opposite page, top (left to right): Foothill Yellow-legged frog; Bobcat; Western Pond Turtle.

Opposite page: pond below rock outcropping on one of LTNC’s four newly acquired properties.

Above: Two-carpellate Western Flax is one of two rare native wildflowers found on the properties.

It exists only in Napa County and three other counties in California.

The Perfect Holiday Gift

This upcoming holiday season, connect someone you love with the Land Trust. Great for birthdays and special occasions, as friendship and business gifts, or ... just because! By giving the gift of membership, your broad support will help preserve and steward Napa County for future generations.

With several donation categories to choose from, gift giving is fast and easy. Visit napalandtrust.org today to learn more. ■



Welcome New Board Members Mike Fisher and Diana Zapolski

Mike Fisher is a wine business advisor and founding partner of Global Wine Partners LLC (GWP). GWP is located in St. Helena and provides financial consulting, merger and acquisition advisory and valuation services to the wine industry.

He began his career with Price Waterhouse in San Francisco and held positions as Partner and CPA with Motto Kryla & Fisher and CFO of Joseph Phelps Vineyards. He has lived in Napa Valley since 1978, moving to his current home on Mount



Veeder in 1984 where he, along with his wife, Wendee Walker, tend to Brioso Vineyard. Fisher is a past director of the Napa Valley Grape-growers and past chair of the St. Helena Chamber of Commerce. He holds a BA in Business from the University of Missouri, Columbia, and a BS in Fermentation Science from the University of California, Davis.

“Having been a member of the Land Trust for many years, I’m excited to expand my involvement as a board member. Preservation of undeveloped land in the agriculture watershed is critical to LTNC’s mission but allowing vineyard owners the ability to limit further development through gifts of conservation easements to LTNC is equally important. With my wine industry and financial background, I look forward to helping expand the vineyard acreage subject to these easements. After all, it’s about preserving what we have for future generations.”

Diana Zapolski is a writer and communications strategist. She has volunteered her time in leadership roles with community organizations across the country, including service as a Trustee of the Napa Valley Film Festival, the Blue Oak School in Napa, and the Political Action Committee for Planned Parenthood of Central North Carolina.



She currently serves as a co-president of the Board of Directors of Lunchtime Productions, Inc., a dramatic arts education non-profit known as Cafeteria Kids Theater, serving children and teens across Napa Valley.

She also represents her Napa neighborhood as a member of the Silverado Fire Safe Council, a volunteer group working to help reduce the risk of wildfire damage through education and fire mitigation projects.

Zapolski well remembers the first time she visited Napa Valley, in Fall 1990, when harvest was in full swing and she was struck by the rich agricultural heritage and awesome beauty of the land.

She feels fortunate to raise a family here and welcomes the privilege of serving on the LTNC board to help preserve and protect the unique forests, wildlife corridors, native plants and stunning scenic vistas that make Napa Valley such a special place to explore and call home.



Farewell Outgoing Board Members Linda Cantey, Greg Bennett and David Beckstoffer

Linda Cantey served on LTNC’s Board of Trustees for six years beginning in 2016. She is the founder of Clarus Consulting, a project management and process re-engineering consulting firm for technology-driven industries and government agencies. During her LTNC Board tenure, she served as Treasurer from 2018-19, Vice-Chair from 2019-20 and Chair from 2020-22. Cantey has also been a member of the Legacy Society since 2016 and the Cornerstone Society since 2018.

Greg Bennett is the managing partner of the CPA firm G & J Seiberlich & Co. LLP, Napa Valley’s oldest and largest local CPA firm. During his six-year LTNC Board tenure, which started in 2016, he served on the Finance and Investment Committee in 2016, as Treasurer from 2017-18 and Chair from 2018-22. Bennett has also been a member of the Legacy Society and Cornerstone Society since 2017 and organized volunteer workdays for the Land Trust with employees of G & J Seiberlich & Co.

David Beckstoffer served on LTNC’s Board of Trustees for six years beginning in 2016. David is the President and Chief Operating Officer of Beckstoffer Vineyards, owner and manager of some of Napa County’s most historic vineyards. Beckstoffer brought to the Board not only his business background, but also his previous experience on other local boards such as the Napa County Farm Bureau and the Napa Valley Grapegrowers, where he is a past president. During his tenure, David served on the Finance and Investment Committee.

Thank you all for your commitment and support and for your help in protecting 32,000 acres since 2016!

In Memoriam: Harold Kelly and Jaye Cook

Napa Valley lost a visionary and truly great man. Harold Kelly was one of the Land Trust’s founders back in 1976 and was a steadfast supporter of conservation throughout his life.



He was a slow-growth advocate who wanted to make sure the farms in Napa Valley didn’t meet the same end as those in Silicon Valley and Walnut Creek, and to do that, he got—and stayed—involved.

The list of organizations, non-profits and campaigns Kelly worked with over the years is long and his impact throughout the valley permanent. As a founding Land Trust board member who served for 18 years, with roles as Treasurer and President (twice) during that time, not to mention playing a crucial role in the creation of both the Napa County Regional Park and Open Space District and the Connolly Ranch Education Center, all led to him being awarded our 2013 Acre by Acre Lifetime Achievement Award.

Harold Kelly was always ready to lend a helping hand and he was warm, kind, supportive and simply wonderful to be

around. We will miss his laugh, his passion and his genuinely caring nature.



The Land Trust’s beloved Archer Taylor Preserve (ATP) caretaker, fellow staff member and dear friend Jaye Cook passed away, doing what he loved on the land he cherished. He was the true heart of the preserve for more than 10 years, a kind host, a mentor and a dear friend to so many.

Jaye loved the preserve with all his heart and he was endlessly fascinated by the nature that surrounded him, particularly his feathered friends, as well as the rocks, the plants, the creek and the changes that the seasons bring.

His enthusiasm for this place inspired many of us and made him a marvelous guide to all who visited ATP. Sharing his passion with others was a perk of his position that he cherished immensely.

Jaye’s legacy will live on through all who knew and loved him.

Thank you landowners, donors, members and volunteers

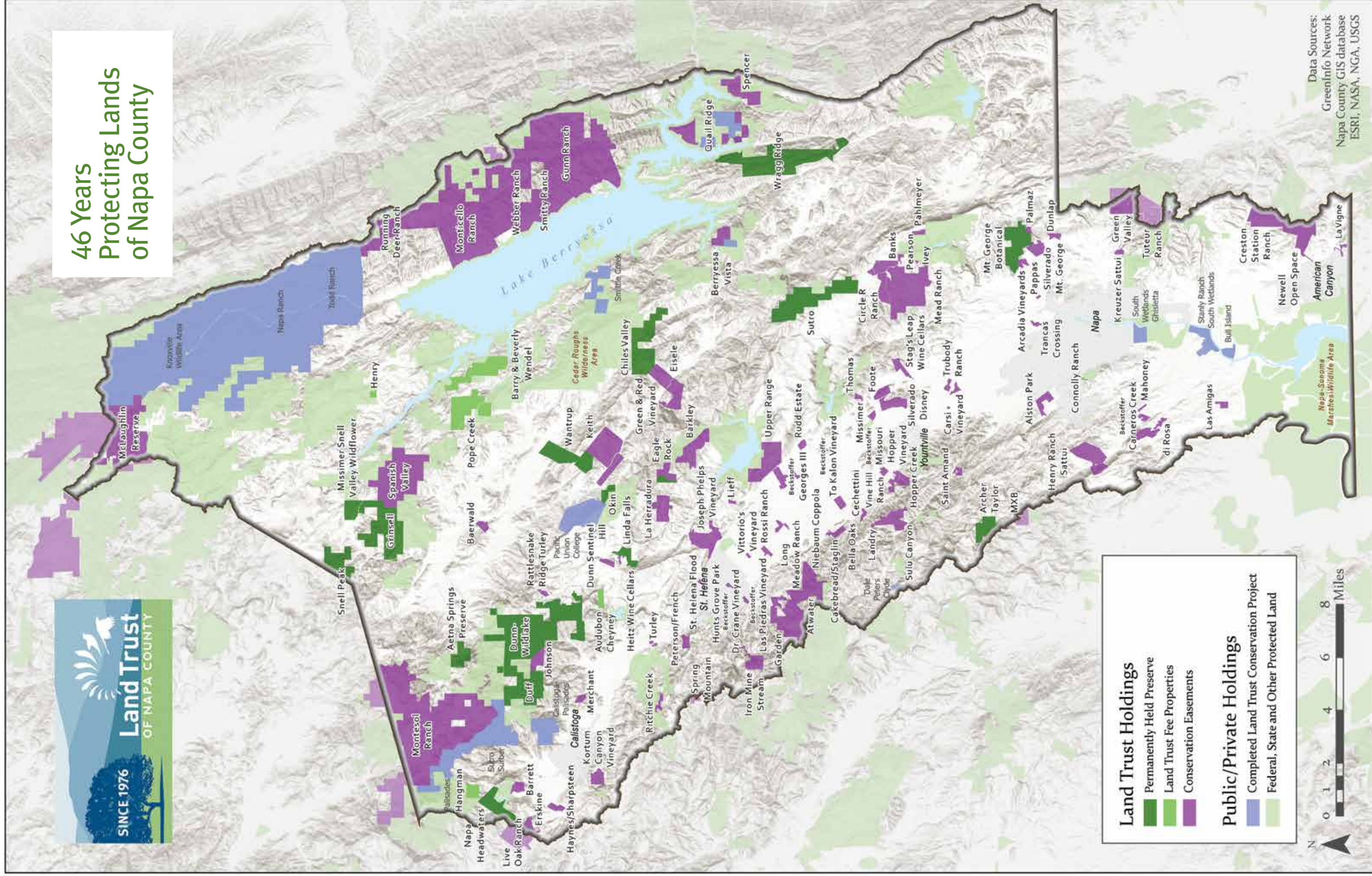
Your contributions and efforts have helped protect:

- 156 Properties through Conservation Easements
- 16,000 acres now owned by the Land Trust
- In total, more than 89,000 acres
- All permanently protected—over 16% of Napa County



Land Trust
OF NAPA COUNTY

SINCE 1976



LTNC helps save endangered red-legged frog



In February of this year, the Land Trust began work on a major endangered species conservation effort within its 1,950-acre Wragg Ridge Preserve. The project is focused on the California Red-Legged Frog (CRLF), a species listed as “Threatened” under the federal Endangered Species Act. CRLF has been extirpated from 70% of its native range, primarily due to habitat loss and the introduction of invasive aquatic species.

The Land Trust has received an Endangered Species Conservation and Recovery Program grant from the US Fish and Wildlife Service (FWS) and California Department of Fish and Wildlife to support this effort. The Wragg Ridge Preserve contains US FWS-designated critical habitat for CRLF, and lies within a recognized Core Recovery Area for the species.

Project activities include translocation of partial egg masses from an approved donor site into high-quality pond habitat on the preserve, invasive predator removal, upland habitat enhancement through the creation of brush pile structures, tagging and tracking of individual frogs, and botanical surveys to track post-fire changes in habitat structure.

Though we are only eight months into this long-term project, we are happy to report some initial successes! Portions of four

egg masses were successfully translocated from the donor site into two of three focal ponds in the project area last February. With the help of specialized enclosures designed to protect eggs and young tadpoles from predators, and thanks to an abundance of food resources, we have had very good survival rates.

We’ve now marked more than 200 young frogs with a specialized tracking device referred to as a Passive Integrated Transponder that will allow us to study movement patterns and habitat utilization.

In addition, we have been preparing the third pond for translocation through invasive predator removal, completed an initial round of habitat pile creation to support upland habitat use, and have completed aerial and ground-based habitat surveys.

Because red-legged frogs can disperse up to more than a mile from the wetland sites where they hatched, and because it can take three to four years for this species to reach sexual maturity, ongoing efforts to track and enhance the newly established CRLF population on the Wragg Ridge Preserve will be important. We look forward to keeping you updated as we take the next steps toward helping with the recovery of this endangered species! ■



Above: A Wragg Ridge Preserve pond

Opposite page, far left: Lead biologist Jeff Alvarez deploys enclosure designed to protect red-legged frog eggs and tadpoles from predators.

Left: Newly hatched California red-legged frog tadpoles are counted before being returned to predator exlosure.

Below: Field crew works in careful coordination to measure, weigh and place a uniquely coded tracking device on young California red-legged frogs.



Left: A healthy California red-legged frog on the Wragg Ridge Preserve. Over 200 frogs have been tagged for tracking across two ponds on the Wragg Ridge Preserve.



Monarch Butterfly conservation effort launched

Land Trust stewardship staff have begun early stage work developing a project centered on a large Heartleaf Milkweed (*Asclepius cordifolia*) population on our Sutro Ranch Preserve. The goal of the project is to assist with conservation and recovery of the Western Monarch Butterfly population.

This butterfly population is estimated to have decreased in size by 90% over the past 10 years. Declines have been attributed to habitat loss and degradation, including the loss of milkweed, along with pesticide use and climate change.

Milkweed is critical to monarch reproduction, and Heartleaf Milkweed could be of particular importance with regard to mitigating climate-change-related shifts in monarch migration and breeding because it emerges early in the growing season.

Stewardship staff have already documented more than 600 individual Heartleaf Milkweed plants on the preserve and confirmed that these plants are being actively utilized by monarchs.

Working in partnership with the US Fish and Wildlife Service and members of the Napa County Monarch Working Group, the project will include mapping and tracking individual milkweed plants, propagating milkweed to restore and enhance western monarch breeding habitat on Land Trust Preserves and around the region, restoring habitat to improve nectar resources for monarchs, and tracking use of the project area by monarchs during different stages of the life cycle.

We look forward to providing updates on our monarch conservation efforts as we take the next steps with this project. ■



Clockwise, from top left: Heartleaf milkweed disperses its seed on the Sutro Preserve. A western monarch caterpillar feeds on a heartleaf milkweed leaf on the Sutro Preserve. A newly emerged western monarch dries its wing next to its chrysalis on the Sutro Preserve. Land Trust Stewardship staff map heartleaf milkweed on the Sutro Preserve (Jennifer/Mackenzie Photo).

Below: Crews reduce heavy fuel loads at the Land Trust of Napa County's Linda Falls Preserve in Angwin, CA. The multi-week project involved thinning forest across 120 acres to both reduce the risks of wildfire along the southeast flank of the community of Angwin and increase the resilience of the forest to fires, drought and other effects of climate change. Photo by Mackenzie Gilliam – Land Trust of Napa County.



Land Trust works with partners to complete forest-thinning project in Angwin

The Land Trust, California State Coastal Conservancy, Napa County Resource Conservation District (Napa RCD) and the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) worked together to complete a large fuels-reduction and forest-health project on the LTNC's Linda Falls Preserve in Angwin. This preserve is open to the public and many visitors come to the property to hike and see Linda Falls, a unique waterfall along Conn Creek.

The project involved thinning the forest across 120 acres. The thinning aims to both reduce the risks of wildfire along the southeast flank of the community of Angwin and increase the resilience of the forest to fires, drought and other effects of climate change.

Angwin is one of the few areas in the hills of Napa County that has not burned in the last five years, so wildfire risk reduction there is a priority for CAL FIRE, Napa Communities Firewise and Napa County Fire.

A dense concentration of small trees and other vegetation resulting from decades of fire exclusion can reduce the native

diversity of the forest and lead to high fuel loads. These were removed along with the lower branches of the remaining trees in order to reduce ladder fuels. The resulting forest retains the largest trees and the canopy, along with a few smaller trees for recruitment, significantly reducing fuel loads while retaining enough complexity in the structure and composition of the forest to retain ecological benefits.

"The goal is to protect both neighborhoods and the forest from high-severity wildfire while maintaining the Linda Falls Preserve's ecological values," said Palladini. "The project's objectives included reducing ladder fuels to decrease fire severity and tree mortality in the event of a future wildfire, increasing the health and growth of remaining trees by reducing resource competition and maintaining the forest's native biodiversity."

The project plan was developed with the Napa RCD and the NCRS. "We very much appreciate the agency participation in both planning and grant funding as well as the generous private donations that made this work possible," said Palladini.

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Funding for the \$360,000 project came from grants through the NRCS and the California State Coastal Conservancy as well as supporters in Angwin. Locally, the project was supported by both the Angwin Fire Safe Council and the Angwin Community Council. The fundraising effort was capped by a challenge grant from Clif Family Winery & Farm that was matched by gifts from residents and businesses in Angwin.



A low density of piles specifically constructed to maximize their wildlife habitat value will be retained in openings created by the forest thinning.

“We are happy to do our part in wildfire prevention,” said Kit Crawford of Clif Family Winery & Farm. “As a neighbor it’s a pleasure to support Firewise and the Land Trust. We are truly stronger and safer working together.”

According to the Coastal Conservancy’s Executive Officer Amy Hutzl, “We are delighted to support this critical intersection of wildfire resilience, community and tribal engagement, and practical workforce development at four locations in the County’s wildland urban interface. Thanks to the partnership

with the Land Trust and the Resource Conservation District, both forest health and the public’s ability to safely recreate have been increased at the Linda Falls Preserve.”

“The grant received from the California State Coastal Conservancy supported a portion of this project as well as three other similar projects,” said Ali Blodorn, Principal Program Manager of Napa RCD’s Forestry Program. “This grant came to fruition following discussions amongst the Napa County Pre-Fire Coordinating Group regarding the critical need to improve forest health and fire resilience in the wildland-urban interface. This speaks to the power of bringing people together to pursue collaborative projects. It has been a pleasure working with Mike Palladini and his team at the Land Trust—the emphasis that they place not only on fuels reduction but also on biodiversity and habitat improvement is invaluable.”

“After seeing the devastation from the 2020 wildfires in many Douglas fir stands, it was inspiring to walk through the forest on the Linda Falls Preserve,” said Evelyn Denzin, District Conservationist for the US Natural Resources Conservation Service in Napa. “NRCS was pleased to be able to provide support through our Environmental Quality Incentives Program for this project. The proactive vegetation management the Land Trust has accomplished here prepares the forest to better withstand future challenges from fire and other forest threats.”

Last year, working with partners and neighbors, the Land Trust completed a shaded fuel break through the western and northern boundaries of the Linda Falls Preserve, connecting with Howell Mountain Road. The project succeeded in creating a 200-foot-wide fuel break across the properties of 11 different landowners, including the Land Trust. ■

“We are happy to do our part in wildfire prevention. As a neighbor it’s a pleasure to support Firewise and the Land Trust. We are truly stronger and safer working together.”

Before (left) & after (right): A dense concentration of small trees and other vegetation were removed from 120 acres of forest at LTNC’s Linda Falls Preserve during a recent multi-week forest thinning project. The resulting forest retains the largest of several tree species and the canopy, along with a few smaller trees for recruitment, significantly reducing fuel loads. Photo by Mike Palladini – LTNC.



ACE crews dedicate 3,446 hours to land stewardship

In 2022, the Land Trust completed numerous successful stewardship projects with the help of hired American Conservation Experience (ACE) crews thanks to the generous funding from the Wayne Grey Wilson Foundation. ACE is a non-profit organization dedicated to providing rewarding environmental service opportunities for youth, young

adults and emerging professionals to explore and improve public lands while gaining practical professional experience. Over the years, these crews have significantly increased LTNC’s capacity for on-the-ground land stewardship across the preserve system on projects related to habitat restoration, wildfire recovery, watershed protection and trail

improvements. This past year, crew members dedicated 3,446 paid hours throughout the Land Trust’s preserve network as they focused on stewardship projects which included habitat restoration and trail maintenance on nine protected preserve properties. ■



LTNC Transfers 482 Acres to UC Davis Natural Reserves

Nearly 500 acres of the California Coast Range’s signature oak woodlands and chaparral communities will be incorporated into the Stebbins Cold Canyon Reserve under a transfer between the Land Trust of Napa County and the University of California, Davis.

Stebbins Cold Canyon Reserve is a premier destination for outdoor enthusiasts. Annually, more than 65,000 visitors enjoy hiking the reserve’s trail system, eagle-eye viewing of Lake Berryessa and immersing in spectacular displays of wildflowers. The addition of these properties complements existing uses by providing a protected area of the reserve dedicated to research and instruction.

The Land Trust purchased the property in 2020 with the intention of adding it to the UC Davis Natural Reserves. “We’re pleased to assist in adding this beautiful property to the Stebbins Cold Canyon Reserve,” said Parker. “With this latest acquisition, the reserve will include more than 1,100 acres, adding to an important site for research into the area’s natural values.”

A long history of partnership between the Land Trust and UC Davis has preserved roughly 7,600 acres of land that have been included in the Quail Ridge and McLaughlin Natural Reserves. “This relationship is a win-win for both of us,” said Shane Waddell, Associate Director of the UC Davis Natural Reserves. “The Land Trust forever protects the land, and the

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University facilitates research, provides hands-on learning opportunities for students and manages the natural resources to enhance native flora and fauna.”

The importance of conservation of California’s lands and biodiversity has been recently highlighted by the state’s 30x30 Initiative committing to protect 30% of California’s lands and coastal waters by 2030. This property protects extensive oak woodlands and chaparral communities, which dominate the California Coast Ranges, and provides habitat corridors for wildlife. “These lands are representative of a large area of California and provide a model ecosystem for researchers to study impacts of climate change, drought and wildfires affecting the entire state,” said Waddell.

The property abuts Stebbins Cold Canyon Reserve and

Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument and is embedded in a larger landscape of protected lands, including the California Department of Fish and Wildlife’s Putah Creek Wildlife Area, the local non-profit Tuleyome, and the Bureau of Reclamation at Lake Berryessa. “The acquisition dovetails nicely with larger area goals for community engagement, enhanced recreational opportunities, education and interpretation that the reserve is coordinating with partner agencies and organizations,” said Paul Havemann, Stebbins Cold Canyon Reserve Manager.

The Land Trust retained a conservation easement over the property. This provides a double layer of protection, further ensuring conservation of the property’s natural values in perpetuity. The Napa Open Space District assisted in this land transfer. ■

About UC Natural Reserve System: *As part of the UC Davis Institute of the Environment, the UC Davis Natural Reserves manage six sites representing a wide variety of regional habitats. These sites are part of the 41 reserves that make up the UC Natural Reserve System, the largest network of university field stations in the world. These reserves provide locations for faculty and students to conduct long-term research and teaching. The Reserve System will manage the property as part of its mission to “contribute to the understanding and wise stewardship of the Earth and its natural systems by supporting university-level teaching, research and public service at protected natural areas throughout California.”*

Richard Seiferheld Honored with 2022 Acre by Acre Award

LTNC was proud to present Richard Seiferheld with the 2022 Acre by Acre Award, presented at the Land Trust’s Cornerstone Society Gathering on September 24.

The Acre by Acre Award honors outstanding conservation accomplishments in Napa County that epitomize the aspirations expressed in the Land Trust’s mission: to preserve the character of Napa by permanently protecting land.

“Richard has made countless efforts over the past four decades to protect the beauty of Napa County,” said Parker. “He has served as a Land Trust volunteer for more than 35 years and has directly helped protect and steward important properties countywide.”

“While it is always gratifying to be recognized for one’s efforts or accomplishments,” said Seiferheld, “the real reward for me is knowing that I have made some contribution to the mission of the Land Trust and the greater good of protecting our environment.”



Since 1982, Seiferheld has served on multiple committees for the Land Trust, from the Project and Protection committees to the Board of Trustees. He has also served as a volunteer monitor of conservation easements, visiting most of the 155 easements held by the Land Trust. ■



Cornerstone Society Preserves Napa for Generations to Come

Land Trust Cornerstone Society members gathered together at Alpha Omega Winery on September 24 for a wonderful evening celebrating another successful year in conservation. The event was generously hosted by the Vice-Chair of the LTNC Board, Robin Baggett and his wife Michelle at their beautiful winery in St. Helena.

At the event, Doug Parker announced the protection of over 3,000 acres since last year’s celebration. Since the Cornerstone Society was formed eight years ago, the Land Trust has been able to permanently protect more than 35,000 acres!

The Baggetts have a longstanding commitment to conservation and to protecting the beauty of Napa County. Before Robin joined the board, they completed a conservation easement that permanently protected more than 4,400 acres of land in Napa.

Their Alpha Omega winery is a family-owned boutique winery in the Rutherford nested appellation. The land and winery are both certified by Napa Green, a comprehensive environmental certification program for vineyards and wineries in the Napa Valley. The Land Trust thanks the members of our 2022 Cornerstone Society and offers our gratitude for their generous support of our ongoing mission to preserve agricultural, biodiverse, scenic and viewshed lands in Napa County. ■



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**Land Trust of Napa County is a
nonprofit dedicated to preserving
the character of Napa by
permanently protecting land.**

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Upcoming Field Trips & Events

JANUARY

- 1 New Year's Day Hike Mt. St. Helena
- 7 Ten Terrible Weeds at ATP
- 14 ATP Cascades & Devil's Well
- 15 Linda Falls Preserve Workparty
- 22 ATP Workday: Meadows
- 26 Linda Falls Hike
- 28 Zem Zem Falls
- 29 ATP Workday: Trails

FEBRUARY

- 4 Wragg Ridge
- 5 Mushroom Exploration in PUC Forest
- 11 Redwood Ramble
- 12 ATP Workday: Meadows
- 18 Birding & Owling at Wantrup Preserve*
- 23 Loop North of Lake Berryessa
- 28 Linda Falls Preserve Workparty

*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

