Message from Executive Director Marty Coleman-Hunt

It was a brisk early September morning by the Yuba River. The sun had not yet illuminated the river canyon but rays of light were already spilling over the ridgeline. Our group collected at French Bar, stumbling around the large cobbled mound jutting into the river.

We formed a circle – 20 of us from a variety of conservation and recreation groups and public agencies – U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, California Fish and Game, SYRCL, Gold Country Trails Council, The Sierra Fund, Sierra Nevada Conservancy, California State Resources Agency, Gold Country Flyfishers, Trust for Public Land and Bear Yuba Land Trust. We spoke in turn about why saving this stretch of the Yuba River was so important.

Twenty five years ago the people who founded the Land Trust to save important landscapes would have been gratified to know that our community would amass the needed support to acquire such a beloved Yuba River canyon. Acquiring Rice’s Crossing by Bear Yuba Land Trust for the benefit of our community is the most profound conservation project we have ever accomplished together.

This new river parkway now belongs to our community. You can help. We are looking for volunteer work crews to clear brush and community support to fund the first section of trail at the north end opening on Earth Day.

We thank all the members of the Land Trust for supporting this and our many other accomplishments last year.

Meet the Newest Members of the Land Trust Team

In 2014, BYLT added new members to the team: Stewardship Associate Cathy Shirley, Stewardship Associate John Thomson, Trails Coordinator Shaun Clarke, Conservation Program Associate (Americorps Member) Elias Grant and Board Members Fran Cole, Bill Stewart and Michael Smiley.

“BYLT is a small organization with a ‘can do’ perspective that energizes and inspires me.”
- Fran Cole
Board Member

“This job is the perfect fit for me. I love being outdoors and I love looking at flowers.”
- Cathy Shirley
Stewardship Associate

“I always felt more alive and ‘connected’ when I was outdoors.”
- Shaun Clarke
Trails Coordinator

“If you listen to the land it will tell you what to do.”
- Michael Smiley
Board Member

“My experiences outdoors as a kid drive me to continue my work in the land conservation field to preserve lands for generations to come.”
- Elias Grant, Conservation Program Associate, Americorps Member

Founders established (then) Nevada County Land Trust. A desk was set up for the new Land Trust in the back of the SYRCL office; Sequoya Challenge became the fiscal agent until non-profit status was gained.

1990 Non-profit status granted to Nevada County Land Trust
1991 Mathis Pond in Alta Sierra gifted to NCLT
Clover Valley is Bear Yuba Land Trust’s newest preserve in Alta Sierra.

Bear Yuba Land Trust acquired its largest land holding to date in 2014 – 2,707 acres known as Rice’s Crossing.

In June of 2014, your support led to the permanent protection of 2,706 acres on the Yuba River known as Rice’s Crossing. The largest BYLT landholding to date with nearly seven miles of river frontage in Yuba and Nevada Counties, this community success story means the Land Trust’s conservation footprint has grown from 6,000 acres to nearly 9,000 acres. It’s the biggest acquisition in BYLT’s 25 year history.

Rice’s Crossing links over 8,500 acres of public open space and will provide unprecedented access to the Yuba River. Volunteers and BYLT’s trail team are hard at work now building miles of new trails just below Bullards Bar, some scheduled to open up as soon as this spring. Outdoor recreationists will enjoy outstanding new hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding and fishing opportunities while habitat for threatened and endangered species will be protected and restored.

Today, BYLT holds a total of 22 conservation and agricultural easements and owns 10 preserves in the Bear and Yuba watersheds. Each year, our stewardship team monitors these lands for the purpose of habitat conservation and public benefit.

Look at all the other great things you and the Land Trust did in 2014:

- Acquired 35-acres in Alta Sierra known as Clover Valley - with the promise of new trails and outdoor education
- Large scale restoration at Adam Ryan Preserve – removal of 15 acres of invasive plants to help reduce wildfire risk
- Reduced wildfire fuels to increase safety of surrounding neighborhoods and installed interpretive panels along the trail at Woodpecker Preserve
- Successfully fenced Garden Bar Preserve and began grazing the land with Nevada County Free Range Beef. Completed design for wetland restoration project for threatened species and increased watershed health
- Completed Scotch Broom Challenge and site cleanup at Burton Homestead and worked with volunteer groups to restore riparian habitat along streams and planted native trees and flowers

2015 promises to be another great year for land conservation. Thank you for all your support!
TOGETHER WE BUILT TRAILS

In 2014, this community showed strong support for local trails. Together, we raised $60,000 for trails. With this encouragement, BYLT and volunteers built a two-mile loop trail at the beautiful Black Swan Preserve and a connector trail in front of the Nevada County’s Government Center linking to the popular Nevada City Hirschman Trail. With these recent additions, BYLT has built and continues to maintain 19 trails, extending over 35 miles.

Volunteers are the heart of BYLT’s successful trail building program. Every year, the Land Trust partners with numerous trail user groups to build trails and keep existing ones in good working order.

Besides building new trails, volunteers help maintain miles of existing trails. In 2014, volunteers participated in many trail cleanup days on Hirschmans Trail, Orene-Wetherall Trail, Loma Rica Trail, Independence Trail, Litton Trail, Tribute Trail, Environs Trail and a section of the future Yuba Narrows Trail as part of the 2014 Great River Cleanup.

2015 Yuba River Trails in the Works

- The first segment of the Rice’s Crossing trails overlooking the dramatic Yuba River canyon

Since the New Year, a dedicated band of volunteers armed with loppers, handsaws and Pulaskis have worked hard forging a path through the thick understory from the North Meadow. The goal is to complete the first phase of a ‘there and back’ 2.5 mile trail to a breathtaking river canyon lookout in time for a spring opening ceremony.

- Five miles of new trails at Black Swan Preserve linking to The Narrows on the lower Yuba River

Pending funding from California Fish and Wildlife, this trail has the potential to be one of the best in the area with mining and indigenous history, views, river access and opportunities for recreation such as birding, hiking, bicycling, equestrian riding and fishing.

North Star House and property was donated to NCLT; debate over the evolving mission of the land trust

BYLT wins Linden Lea lawsuit, successfully defending a conservation easement in the face of a legal challenge

Co-founded Northern Foothills Partnership for landscape scale conservation and connectivity
TOGETHER WE WENT OUTDOORS and ENCOUNTERED NATURE

For years, BYLT’s Burton Homestead has been the place for quality nature education programming for kids. Our goal is to get more kids interested in the outdoors and to develop life-long relationships with the natural world.

In 2014, BYLT served 140 kids at Earth Encounters Camp. As a land base for our partners, Burton Homestead also serves hundreds more children for a number of youth programs led by our partners, 4 Elements Earth Education (Foxwalkers) and Sierra Harvest’s educational farm known as the Food Love Project.

Besides our summer programming and occasional plant identification walks at Burton, BYLT:

- Led a successful outing at Black Swan with a group of 75 youth, teachers, parents and special needs teens from Nevada Union High School
- Interacted with students from Bell Hill Academy as part of UCCE’s Family Fun Night
- Led “Dog Poop Project” – youth sign contest to bring awareness to pet waste on trails
- Teamed up with Eagle Scout Mitchell Nickerson on a restoration project at Mathis Pond

BYLT’s guided treks were more robust than ever in 2014. We upped the number of outings with nearly 80 outdoor hikes, a book club and popular educational series known as Armchair Treks. BYLT took 1,150 people on memorable experiences to encounter nature.

In June, BYLT brought together 20 trails organizations, conservation groups, local, state and federal agencies and natural resources experts to produce an all-day free community event with 15 guided hikes throughout the Sierra Nevada foothills known as “Celebration of Trails,” coinciding with American Hiking Society’s “National Trails Day.”

As part of BYLT’s 2014 trekking program, hikers visited new trails at Black Swan.

New business plan expanded the mission and charter of NCLT to include the acquisition of land for public benefit with a focus on the Bear and Yuba watersheds; changed name to Bear Yuba Land Trust
We’re pleased to present our financial statements for 2014. Our Board and staff take our fiduciary responsibilities very seriously. We believe that you who support Bear Yuba Land Trust are entitled to examine and understand our finances and fiscal management at all times.

You’ll notice that a huge part of our operation is funded by your membership dues and additional donations. Sustaining members provide us with constant funding year after year. Many have also upped their annual contributions over the years. We on the Board and staff could not do this work without you. Thank you so much.

But there is another story beyond the dollars and cents of the operation. Last fall, I attended our volunteer appreciation picnic at North Star House. We had a great turn out and there were many more that could not attend. I looked around the crowd and marveled at what generous people these were and how our organization totally depends on our volunteers.

What would your time be worth if we had to pay for all your help? Thank you.

We remain a grass roots organization that is an incredible collection of like-minded citizens from all walks of political, financial, and educational life that love our region’s natural environment so much that we are continually willing to put up our time and money for land conservation, public trails, and environmental education. We have an incredible staff and Board right now. The level of talent, integrity, and commitment is extremely high. But truly, you are Bear Yuba Land Trust. Please continue to invest your time and money in the mission. We’ll work hard to make it count.
In Gratitude…

Bear Yuba Land Trust would like to extend a big Thank You to our community partners and sponsors: 4 Elements Earth Education, Antonio Ayestaran, Auburn Journal, Baird-Meyers Investment Group, Beaucoup Chapeaux, Bicyclists of Nevada County, BriarPatch Co-op, Bureau of Land Management, California Council of Land Trusts, California Fish and Wildlife, Capital Public Radio, Caseywood Corporation, Christopher’s Catering Company, City of Grass Valley, City of Nevada City, Coufos Cellars Winery, Diego's Restaurant, Emily’s Catering and Cakes, Far West Geoscience Foundation, Farm to Table Catering, Fine Line Joinery, Fire Safe Council of Nevada County, Food Bank of Nevada County, Food Love Project, FREED, Friends of Sierra Rock Art, Friends of Spenceville, Gold Country Trails Council, Greater Grass Valley Chamber of Commerce, Hansen Bros., Holiday Inn Express, Horn of the Bull Taqueria, IMBA, KVMR, KNCQ, Land Trust Alliance, Live Healthy Nevada County, Living Wild, Marysville Swan Festival, Matteo's Public, Mendocino Tahoe Conservancy, Mountain Bounty Farm, Mountain Recreation, Movimiento, Nana's Artisan Bakery, NCCC Americorps, Nevada City Advocate, Nevada City Chamber of Commerce, Nevada County Certified Growers Market, Nevada County Fair Grounds, Nevada County Farm Bureau, Nevada County Free Range Beef, Nevada County Planning Department, Nevada County Tourism Board, Nevada County Walkers, Nisenan – Nevada City Rancheria, North Star Historic Conservancy, OLALA Farms, OMG Healthy Hummus, Outside Inn, Pacific Mountain Bike Shop, PG&E, Placer Land Trust, Quest Theaterworks, S.D. Bechtel, Jr. Foundation, Sagehen Creek Field Station, Salsa Sierra, Save Our Bridge Committee, Sierra Academy of Expeditionary Learning, Sierra Club, Sierra College, Sierra Harvest, Sierra Food Wine Art, Sierra Mountain Coffee Roasters, Sierra Nevada Alliance, Sierra Nevada Brewing Company, Sierra Nevada Memorial Hospital, Sierra Streams Institute, Sierra Watch, Smartsville Pioneer Days, Smiley Guys Barbecue, Soil Sisters Farm, South Yuba River Citizens League, South Yuba River Parks Association, SPD, State Parks, Summer Thyme's Bakery, Sutter Buttes Regional Land Trust, Sweet Roots Farm, Szabo Vineyards, Tahoe National Forest, Telesstream, The Center for the Arts, The Earth Store, The Free Range String Band, The Sierra Foothills Audubon Society, The Sierra Fund, The Union, Truckee Donner Land Trust, Trust for Public Land, Tsi-Akim Maidu, University of California Cooperative Extension, Veteran's Organizations, Way Yum Sushi, Wells Fargo Advisors, Wildlife Rehabilitation and Release, YBONC, Youngs Carpet One, YubaNet, Yuba Watershed Institute and more.

Hundreds of individuals donate their time to the Land Trust mission, but some individuals go above and beyond the call of duty. A special thank you to: Joe Byrne, Markley Bavinger, Ellen Persa, Greg Archbald, Frank Hamlin, Brian Bisnett, Rob Shulman, Orval Choate, Ray Bryars, Andy Berg, Gene Haroldsen, Jerry Henderson, Randy Hopkins, Bob Husk, Bill Lawrence, Cathy Anderson-Meyers, Ted Beedy, Rick Berry, Scot Woodland, Brian Bisnett, Julie Carville, Roger Ingram, Fran Cole, Grayson Coney, Sue Graf, Dale Johnson, David Lawler, Joe Maderios, Hank Meals, Clarence Motter, Randy Oliver, Rick Ramos, Susan Sanford, Jim Simmons, Carrie Smith, Alan Stahler, Kristen Hein Strohm and Richard Thomas.

Thanks to the folks in BYLT’s Adopt-a-Trail program for keeping local trails clean: Ray Bryars, Joe Abrell, Mike Haire, Dornn and Lisa Thune, Dr. Brian Evans Family, Fatal Paint, Greater Champion Road Neighborhood Association, Sierra Care Physicians, BONC, Rattlesnake Neighborhood Association, Boots McFarland, ASPOA and SOHC.
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<td>Treks on Tuesday: Independence Trail</td>
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<td>3/21</td>
<td>Sutter Buttes: Shaeffer Ranch</td>
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<td>3/22</td>
<td>Beal AFB EcoTour Trek</td>
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<td>3/28</td>
<td>Black Swan – Grand Opening</td>
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<td>3/31</td>
<td>Armchair: Native Material Culture</td>
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<td>Table Mountain – 2 Falls</td>
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<td>Table Mountain – 5 Falls</td>
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<td>Walk on the Wild Side – Rice’s Crossing North</td>
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<td>Treks on Tuesday: Western Gateway</td>
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<td>Land for Farms: Farm Dinner</td>
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<td>Celebration of Trails</td>
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<td>Dance Party with Pete Escovedo</td>
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