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It’s Fall! Take a Hike

With the arrival of fall comes cooler days and nights meaning local trails are awash in gold and crimson, providing a wealth of opportunities for families to unplug, get outdoors, take a walk and encounter the wonders of nature.

With community support from volunteers and donations, Bear Yuba Land Trust has built and maintains over 35 miles of local trails for hikers, runners, mountain bicyclists, equestrian riders, wheelchair users and families. Trails Coordinator Bill Haire has built many trails over the years and enjoys seeing people use them.

"Trails provide a link between people and their natural environment. It brings them into close contact with a landscape that is not so highly modified by human use and activities. Trails through open space allow people to get away from the artificial environment they spend most of their lives within," said Trails Coordinator Bill Haire.

Trails also provide an opportunity to exercise outdoors.

"There is no membership or entrance fees. Trails are open from dawn to dusk, so one can show up at any time and use the trail for their fitness activity, be it running, walking or cycling," added Haire.

BYLT trails are built with volunteer labor and financial contributions. No tax dollars are used. One third of local trails are built on private land, where the landowner has donated a trail easement that BYLT holds for public access.

Trails are an asset to the local economy. Studies show that homes located near public trails command a higher price than homes located far from public trails. Sometimes trails are a determining factor when people seek employment or relocating to a community. Many visitors to Nevada County see trails as an important part of their stay in town and reason for return.

By sending your contribution to the annual Trails Appeal this fall, you can maintain the local recreation trails you love and help build two new trails with

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Marty’s Message

Just before my junior year in college I moved from Detroit to the Monterey Peninsula. I took a couple of years off to establish my residency, working odd jobs making pizza and doing data entry. I was about in love with a place as one could be I guess, especially after coming from rust-belt urban landscape. I determined I would hike a new trail in a different location every weekend for an entire year. No duplicates. I mean that’s 52 trails! Tree-line mountain trails, glacial lakes, river canyons, woodland foothills, beach bluff trails, desert, volcanos, urban greenways, historic trails, snowshoe trails. My yearlong commitment stretched to two, then three years. It became harder because life gets in the way sometimes. Four decades later I’m still hiking.

The landscape has remained as wondrous and humbling to me as my first year of hiking. Back then I was a wide-eyed youth, learning about this incredible place I was to call home for the remainder of my life. I marveled at the diversity of trees, plants, wildlife, geology and terrain. I gained a respect for nature’s power to endure, in spite of all we throw at it. Today, when I spend time in nature it’s for a more spiritual purpose. I am there to wring-out the tensions of the work week and to recharge my batteries… to absorb the essence of nature and reflect.

We are very lucky to live in a community with such direct access to nature. Studies show that people move to Nevada County for the environmental quality. Real estate agents advertise the proximity of open space or a trail for the properties they are selling as a feature that increases value. Our community has always had a deep connection to our natural resources.

Someday I hope to really understand that I am a part of nature. I belong here and I need to respect my place in this web of life. It’s one of the reasons I do what I do for the land trust and for our community. Please join me.

Support trails. Support the conservation of our most precious landscapes. And please, get outdoors this fall!

By Marty Coleman-Hunt
BYLT Executive Director

Meet Your Board Members

We are pleased to introduce Bill Stewart and Michael Smiley as our newest members of the Land Trust board. We also enthusiastically welcome back a dear friend, Fran Cole.

Bill Stewart is a Forestry Specialist at University of California, Berkeley. After graduating from college, Bill Stewart lived for five years in small villages in rural Sri Lanka. He worked, talked and walked with villagers.

“I benefited from being immersed in a culture where everyone knew and appreciated every trail, plant and animal. Land trusts with a focus on getting outdoors can bring some of these values to our communities,” Bill said.

Though not a resident of Nevada County, Stewart is a frequent visitor from Berkeley. While here, he likes to hike local trails and looks forward to exploring new ones.

“My favorite trails are the scenic ones along the steep canyons of the Yuba River,” he said.

Bill Stewart sees working more actively with the Land Trust as important work that helps to connect others to the landscape through trails and open space.

Michael Smiley is a land planner, urban designer and landscape architect. Joining the land trust board is a natural fit for him.

Michael grew up in Bend, Oregon when it was a small town of 15,000 people.
It’s Fall! Take a Hike
continued from cover

breathtaking views of the Yuba River - Yuba Narrows and Rice’s Crossing.
Here is a handful of Land Trust favorite trails for the season. Enjoy.

Orene Wetherall
When the dogwood and big leaf maple turn color in fall, the Orene Wetherall trail is striking in reds, bronze, and yellows. A forested, easy side trail with some great views, the Orene Wetherall branches off the popular Cascade Canal trail on Banner Mountain east of Nevada City.

Deer Creek Environ Trail
This forested 1.5 mile loop located just a few minutes from downtown Nevada City on the south side of Deer Creek follows the old Rough and Ready ditch and remnants of the Providence Mine. With the completion of the new “Nisenan Tribute Bridge” spanning Deer Creek, the Environ’s Trail now connects with the Tribute Trail network on the north side of the creek. Interpretive signs along the trail tell the story of the native Nisenan.

Hirschman Trail
Only a mile from the heart of downtown Nevada City, the first 0.4 miles of the trail is wheelchair accessible and perfect for younger children. Named after the Hirschman brothers who were pioneer miners and merchants of the area, the pond is now a picturesque picnic destination for families.

“The Hirschman trail is a delight to hike any time of the year, but in the fall, after we have a few light rains and the foliage begins to turn, is a great time to hike the trail. A stop at Hirschman Pond provides an opportunity to see a variety of waterfowl that are migrating from their summer homes to winter habitat,” said Trails Coordinator Bill Haire.

Black Swan Trail
Your newest community multi-use trail, funded entirely by community support and the 2013 Trails Appeal, is located in far Western Nevada County near the town of Smartsville. The two-mile Black Swan Trail completed this summer passes through the Black Swan Ranch, loops above a pond and climbs onto a hydraulic mine escarpment for spectacular views. At the pond, visitors will be greeted by an abundance of water fowl, otters and pond turtles. Eventually the trail will open public access to the Yuba River through the Yuba Narrows Fish and Wildlife Area.

Support Local Trails

Love local trails? Now is your chance to contribute to the construction and maintenance of family friendly trails in the Bear and Yuba watersheds. Together we can reach this year’s goal to raise $60,000 and build new community trails.

To date, the Land Trust has built and maintains over 35 miles of trails used by all ages and abilities - hikers, runners, mountain bicyclists, equestrian riders, families and folks with all levels of mobility.

Some of your newest trails built with community donations include: Black Swan, Environ’s Trail, Hirschman’s Trail and Orene Wetherall Trail. Upcoming trails include the Bear Yuba Trail - an eight mile trail on PG&E lands around Bear Valley and westward along the Bear River; and Rice’s Crossing – a multi-use trail project commencing this year overlooking the Middle and North Yuba River.
A recent report by Sierra Streams Institute identified a diverse variety of bird species at BYLT’s Woodpecker Preserve including five rare and declining species. Of these, the Hermit Warbler is the only likely breeding species and the remainder are either migrants or post-breeding dispersers to the Woodpecker Preserve.

**Hermit Warbler** – Considered a conservation priority because of their habitat specialization in tall coniferous forests with a well-established canopy. Large-scale logging and “mega” wildfires in the West continue to be a threat.

**Nuttall’s Woodpecker** – A single bird was observed in Woodpecker Preserve in 2013 but not 2014. It is confined primarily to the oak woodlands of California. Its limited range and loss of oak woodland habitat make it vulnerable to encroaching development.

**Oak Titmouse** – A single bird was observed at Woodpecker Preserve in 2013 but not 2014. The Preserve is on the edge of the bird’s elevation range. The Oak Titmouse experienced a 46 percent cumulative decline in California foothills from 1966 to 1996. The decline of this species is linked to the increase in California’s population during the twentieth century (from 1.5 million to more than 30 million).

**Olive-Sided Flycatcher** – Two birds were observed on the same day in 2013. These flycatchers are mostly associated with edges, openings and clearings in otherwise relatively dense forests. Olive-sided flycatchers have declined seriously throughout much of its range. Loss of wintering habitat and removal of snags may be to blame.

**Yellow Warbler** – One bird was sited at Woodpecker Preserve in 2014. Yellow Warblers prefer moist thickets, especially along streams and in swampy areas. One of the most numerous warblers in North America, populations have slowly declined since 1966. Active grazing of rangelands can promote the presence of brown-headed cowbirds which parasitize their nests and have caused the extirpation of yellow warbler in lowland areas of the Central Valley and foothills of the Sierra Nevada.

Source:
Ted Beedy, Co-Author of “Birds of the Sierra Nevada – Their Natural History, Status, and Distribution”

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**Autumn on the Land**

The cool, brisk mornings of autumn are my favorite time of year. Initial much needed rains have assisted the grasses and forbs with early growth and new green shoots are sprouting up everywhere. We have also seen turkeys emerging in large numbers once again. The Lands Team has been out in the field assessing, monitoring and making plans for restoration and enhancement on many of the Preserves that BYLT owns.

John Thomson, the newest addition to the team, is hard at work at Rice’s Crossing. Cathy Shirley and I have been busy in the high country finishing up Baseline Reports on the upcoming PG&E donated Conservation Easements before the snow begins to fall.

Our Adam Ryan Preserve in Alta Sierra is also in the midst of a major restoration project. Preliminary removal of 15 acres of Himalayan blackberry was a success, but as we all know, this plant does not stay gone without a lot of follow up work. Weekly morning visits with volunteers to apply herbicide has been hugely successful. This landscape is an example of where disturbance of the land was necessary in order for proper restoration to be successful. Long term vision is necessary here at Adam Ryan Preserve and we are positive the final outcome will be a beautiful, healthy, thriving forest.

Enjoy autumn on the land and continue to pray for rain.

*By Erin Tarr*

*Stewardship Program Manager*

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**Wildlife Wonders**

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**Stewardship Program Manager Erin Tarr and Stewardship Associate Cathy Shirley surveying the high country**

**Yellow Warble, above. Oak Titmouse, left. Photos by Ted Beedy**
Honoring a Friend

Fourteen friends and colleagues circled around a new bench on the Hirschman Trail where Trails Coordinator Bill Haire worked with a power drill attaching a plaque memorializing Betty Jo “B.J.” Fisher.

Last spring, B.J.’s closest associates at Telestream, Bernie Kringel and Sophia Day joined B.J.’s husband, Gordon Sakaue and approached Bear Yuba Land Trust to find the right place for a memorial bench.

“She would like it. This is a good spot,” said Fisher’s husband, Gordon Sakaue looking around at the surrounding woods. Betty Jo Fisher loved the outdoors. The couple spent a decade backpacking in their earlier years. Drawn by an electronics position at a local tech company, the couple moved to Nevada County in 1985 and started a family.

The new bench can be found on nearly the highest point of the Land Trust trail located on property owned by the City of Nevada City.

“Coming from either direction you’ve climbed to this point and you’ve earned a rest,” Haire said.

Most of the friends gathered on that warm Oct. 7 day knew Fisher as more than just a co-worker at local tech companies, Grass Valley Group, Ensemble Designs, TDK and Telestream. From 1998 to 2012, Fisher worked for Telestream (a major Land Trust sponsor).

“It’s perfect,” said Bernie Kringel after she read the inscription on the plaque, a touching Piglet and Pooh quote from A.A. Milne.

A butterfly flitted through the circle of loved ones and down the path.

Bernie and B.J. were friends for 19 years. Over that time they spent many hours on local trails, especially their favorite, BYLT’s Litton Trail.

“It’s kind of what we did. Later, when she was sick, I would bring her coffee and we’d just sit,” Kringel said.

Betty Jo Fisher’s struggle with blood cancer ended last December. B.J.’s friends say they will all return to visit the bench, again and again and Gordon looks forward to bringing his children.

“We will definitely walk out here when we are all together for the holidays,” said Gordon.

To learn more about Bear Yuba Land Trust’s memorial bench program contact Community Programs Manager Melony Vance at 272-5994 200, melony@bylt.org.

Best Trekking Year Ever!

As the trekking year winds down, mark your calendar for several opportunities to get outdoors, learn and get inspired by the landscape.

Join the Land Trust for “Treks on Tuesday” – highlighting hikes detailed in our Trail Cards and online “Trails Portal.” In November, we’ll visit Rattlesnake Trail and in December we’ll walk the Union Hill Trail system.

Bill Drake, co-founder of the Friends of Sierra Rock Art will lead an Armchair Treks in November. Bill will discuss the Martis Complex (2,000-500AD) and the ancient petroglyph makers who are believed to be the ancestors of the Maidu, Miwok, and Washoe people. We’ll see slide images of rock art sites in Nevada, Placer, Sierra, and El Dorado Counties. Several of the spots are located near the Yuba, Bear, and American rivers.

Joe Medeiros, a former professor at Sierra College will lead December’s Armchair Trek. Joe’s slide-illustrated lecture program will focus on the majesty of the Sierra Nevada. Four hundred miles long and nearly three miles high, the mountain range is a majestic and spectacular place. Home to the highest peak in the lower forty-eight as well as thousands of species of marvelous plants and animals, John Muir’s “Range of Light” captures our hearts and dreams. Joe’s presentation will summarize the many superlative aspects of the Sierra Nevada’s physical, biological and ecological character.

2014 turned out to be our best trekking year ever with a greater amount and variety of outings to choose from and many new programs that had never been offered before! Looking forward to 2015 – we will highlight some of our most popular treks from the past 25 years and continue to bring you new and interesting outings highlighting the special place we call home.

Visit us online for more information at www.BearYubaLandTrust.org or call our office 530-272-5994
Making a Difference

The 2014 Great Sierra River Cleanup was a great success and part of the largest volunteer day in California. BYLT Volunteers collected 500 pounds of trash. Thanks to all of you who participated in the cleanup.

With the help of a great bunch of volunteers, the Land Trust cleaned up a remote location on the Yuba River on Saturday, Sept. 20. The channel - a popular fishing access known as the Yuba Narrows - had collected a considerable amount of litter due to human use. There was also evidence that the site was used for camping.

A total of ten people turned out for the Yuba Narrows cleanup. They hiked in, bagged garbage and hauled it out. It was nothing short of extraordinary. Interesting finds included: A toilet seat, a tire and homemade mining equipment.

The area is home to a unique geologic basalt formation. Basalt is very hard and usually found on the ocean floor. Due to tectonic plate activity the basalt is now on the surface. Another interesting feature found at the site is the evidence of pillowing created when lava was released into the water and cooled rapidly to form “pillows.” This is a somewhat rare occurrence that we have right here in our region.

On the same day, Bear Yuba Land Trust volunteers also cleaned up the Independence Trail. Trails Coordinator Larry Gruver managed the demolition of a wooden platform that had become rotten and unsafe. Six volunteers came out to this location and used hammers and pry bars to remove boards. Material was moved closer to the road for removal and the safety hazard has been remedied.

The cleanup day is a great event but we need to have it every year. Think how wonderful it would be if there was no longer a need to expend all this time, energy and effort picking up litter.

Let’s hear it for our volunteers!

BYLT’s tireless volunteers made a difference Sept. 20 during the 2014 Great Sierra River Cleanup.

Shaun Clarke
Trails Coordinator

Meet Your New Board Members continued from page 2

“I think the Land Trust is a really great way of setting a kind of hierarchy of values. How do we not only protect land but how do we utilize land? If you listen to the land it will tell you what to do.”

Fran Cole is an attorney who spent a career in financial services. She first joined the Land Trust board in 2007. She has served as President and a member of the Land Trust’s Finance, Investments, Board Development, Governance and Salter Fund Committees. She helped start the Land Trust’s popular Equitrek program.

She returns to the board after a busy year running for county supervisor.

“Making a Difference with one chair lift and a rope tow on Mt. Bachelor. “I was out in the woods and in the mountains all the time growing up,” said Michael. His intimate relationship with nature as a boy developed into his strong land ethic today. “I am as much interested in where we don’t build in society, as where we do build,” he said. Through his work, Michael is fascinated by the process of selecting sacred ground and working landscapes.

“That kept me very busy, but I really missed being involved with BYLT, my fellow board members and the wonderful staff. BYLT is a small organization with a “can do” perspective that energizes and inspires me,” she said.

Fran grew up in a small town in Indiana. Her family loved the land and worked to preserve its landscapes.

“My father used to drive me around on Sundays through the rural countryside, visiting working farms and neighbors. My efforts on behalf of BYLT fulfill me and honor the values of my father and my family. I hope my work inspires my own daughters to do the same,” Fran said.
Bear Yuba Land Trust wishes to thank the community for a fun summer season of jazz music with David Benoit, The Sierra 5 and Poncho Sanchez, part of the 12th Annual Concert Benefit series.

Despite moving the final concert indoors to accommodate rainy weather, Poncho Sanchez fans turned out in force at the North Star House Sunday, Sept. 28 to hear and dance to some of the hottest Latin Jazz. It was a memorable house party with good food, award-winning music and friends.

“It was the most spectacular evening,” said BYLT board member Rebecca Coffman.

Thanks to all who bought tickets to the event, became members and donated items to the live and silent auctions. Your contributions help fund ongoing conservation projects, trail building, nature education and a robust year-round trekking program. A special thank you to auctioneers Bo Littig, Jay Cooper and Robert Harris.

Local Chef Antonio Ayestaran won the community salsa contest with his “Corno de Torro” (translation: Bulls Horn) fire roasted salsa – a winning combination of seven varieties of peppers grown at Sweet Roots Farm. Community judges sampled salsa from Diego’s Restaurant, Christopher’s Catering Company and BriarPatch Co-op. Community judges took their jobs seriously and cast their black bean votes.

Thanks to Salsa Sierra for the dance lessons. Everyone loved learning salsa dance in the courtyard.

Thank you Emily’s Catering and Cakes, Horn of the Bull Taqueria, OMG Healthy Hummus, Smiley Guys Barbecue, Mountain Bounty Farm, Sweet Roots Farm, Soil Sisters Farm, Nana’s Artisan Bakery, Sierra Nevada Brewery and Coufos Cellars.

Thank you to our wonderful team of volunteers and especially concert organizer Ellen Persa who worked long hours in the heat of summer and the first chill of fall, flexed their muscles and kept everything running smoothly. The Land Trust couldn’t have done it without you.

Thanks to our local media:
The Union, YubaNet, KVCM, KNCO, Sierra Food Wine Art, GoNevadaCounty.com, Nevada City Advocate, Auburn Journal and Capital Public Radio.

Thank you to our generous sponsors: Meyers Investment Group (Robert W. Baird), BriarPatch Co-op, Caseywood, Coldwell Banker, Fine Line Joinery, KNCO, Star 94 FM, KVCM SPD, Telestream, The Union, Wells Fargo Advisers, and Youngs Carpet One.

We also want to acknowledge: The Holiday Inn Express; Hansen Brothers, Food Bank, Prime Time Entertainment, and Jerianne Van Dijk.

Thank you North Star Historic Conservancy board and docents – especially Peggy Levine - for your ongoing commitment to the restoration of this important architectural gem. This is just the beginning of many years of successful events to come.

Bear Yuba Land Trust wants to hear from the community as we head into our 25th year saving land, building trails and providing nature programming. Let us know how you want to engage with Bear Yuba Land Trust in the coming years.

Contact Outreach Coordinator Laura Petersen at laura@bylt.org; 272-5994 x 211.

Or check us out online: www.bylt.org, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, YouTube and Pinterest.
Join us in our commitment to the land.

Please recycle this newsletter.

We've added five new urban trails with downloadable maps to BYLT’s website! A special thank you to BYLT’s hardworking volunteers, Greg Archbald and Frank Hamlin.

**Condon Park** – Located on 80 acres in Grass Valley, this maze-like trail system includes 3.5 miles of easy to moderate primary trails that weave through mixed conifer and hardwood forest. The Allison Ranch Canal runs through the Western end of the park, both as a ditch and a free-flowing stream.

**Nevada City Airport Trails** - This 109 acre abandoned airport is a little-known and little-used property owned by the City of Nevada City. Though not officially open or managed for public use, it is permissible to visit.

**Nevada County Government Center Trails** – Nevada County Government Center (aka Rood Center) has several nice places to walk, stroll, or ride a bike plus a gem of a little park complete with historic pond, piers and a picnic area. With two important trails along the Hwy 49 corridor, the Government Center Trails also serve to link downtown Nevada City with the Hirschman Pond.

**Osborne Hill Trails** - Osborne Hill Trail Area makes up the southern arm of Empire Mine State Historic Park. This trail system has many loops, making for boundless riding or hiking options through deep woods and some open areas. Visitors will see remnants of mines such as pits and mine tailings.

**Sugarloaf Mountain Trail** – In 2011, the City of Nevada City acquired Sugar Loaf Mountain, the iconic landmark just north of town. Though not officially open or managed for public use, it is permissible to visit.

Learn more at: www.bylt.org