

## Linden Lea Ranch: 440-Acre Easement Donated!

As 2001 came to a close, Bill Trabucco and Anna Reynolds Trabucco donated a conservation easement on 320 acres of their Linden Lea Ranch to the Nevada County Land Trust. The purpose of their agricultural easement was to ensure that the land would remain in productive agricultural use and be permanently protected from development. Then, in December 2004, Bill's mother, Mary Trabucco, donated an agricultural easement on her adjacent 440 acres to the Land Trust. Protecting this land with an easement was Mary's longtime wish, and it was completed just a few months before this wonderful nonagenarian passed away from this earth.

The ranch borders the Yuba River, and is one of four important biological corridors in NCLT's Bear-Yuba Foothills Project, which will conserve oak woodlands, working ranches, and streams (see the Bear-Yuba article in this issue). The foothill agricultural easements provide multiple benefits, creating win-win projects. The blue, valley, and interior live oak communities on the west slope of the Sierra hold some of the richest plant and animal diversity in the state—more than 2,000 species of native plants and 140 terrestrial species. Wildlife coexists with the cattle that graze the ranch. The easement also allows for a variety of agricultural uses, including sustainable timber harvests from the ponderosa pine plantations that were replanted after the 49er Fire. Actually, this is a win-win project, due to the amazing viewshed that is now protected forever by this easement.

Located 10 miles west of

Grass Valley, the ranch has had an intriguing history. Mining, timber, cattle grazing, and poultry production have all been part of the ranch's background. In the 1980s the (then) owners planned for a gated community with a golf course. Inadequate road and other local infrastructure, neighbors' resistance, and mounting debt halted these plans. In the early 1990s, the Trabucco family acquired the ranch, and have managed it for ranching and wildlife ever since. The ranch also conserves an important perennial side stream, the Kentucky Ravine. Large mammals, such as deer and mountain lion common to the area, require large ranging space, especially in winter months when they move downslope from higher elevations to avoid harsh weather.

NCLT will lead a hike on the ranch in March (free to members). Check your *Spring Treks Through Time* brochure for details or call the office to reserve your place. It is really worth seeing! ☘



*The Trabuccos' Linden Lea Ranch offers a diversity of natural beauty.*

## President's Message

*The Nevada County Land Trust begins 2005 with a strengthened commitment to voluntarily conserve agricultural and natural resources. I am proud to serve as its President.*

*As a fourth generation California farmer, I deeply respect the hard work and sacrifice that my family has had to endure to keep our ranch together. This respect naturally extends to every farmer and rancher. My degree in Agricultural Economics and Business Management has helped us to market our products throughout the United States and Canada. As a Peace Corps volunteer in Costa Rica and Venezuela, I became fluent in Spanish and learned how to work with everyone, regardless of their personal views and background.*

*For 12 years, I managed Shaw's Antiques in Nevada City, which was a fabulous experience with great people. Mila and I have just celebrated our 25th wedding anniversary. We have a bright-eyed and wonderful daughter, Olivia, who is 'almost 11' years old. Olivia already is learning to be a good steward of the land, which she will inevitably pass on to the next generation.*

*I am beginning my fourth year as a Land Trust Director. Part of the Land Trust's mission is to build trails and to develop parks that are available for use by the public. This program is very successful with hundreds and hundreds of people using them. And it will only get better.*

*My primary focus is with the main priority of the Land Trust and that is the voluntary conservation of agricultural and natural resources. Nevada County is blessed in many ways. At the top of our blessings are how responsible our farmers and ranchers are as stewards of the land. For free, they provide Nevada County with world-class wildlife habitat, riparian areas, pastoral view sheds, and community sized firebreaks. For a fee, we can all enjoy the great food and wines they produce.*

*Conservation Easements (CE) recognize that land has a bundle of private property rights associated with it. The property owner can voluntarily keep, sell, trade, or gift any of these rights as they see fit. While CEs may not be the end-all, be-all, but if funding can be developed, they can be one tool in the tool box that can pay the farmer and rancher for providing all of these free services. If you have an interest in CEs and in anything else related to what the Land Trust offers, call me.*

*Sincerely, Rich Johansen*

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## Nevada County Land Trust

175R Joerschke Drive  
Grass Valley, CA 95945  
530-272-5994

FAX: 530-272-5997

[www.NevadaCountyLandTrust.org](http://www.NevadaCountyLandTrust.org)

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### Mission:

The Nevada County Land Trust promotes voluntary conservation of our natural, historical and agricultural resources through protection and enhancement of trails, parks, and open space to provide a lasting community heritage.

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### LandNews

Published quarterly for Nevada County Land Trust members.

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## Executive Notes

### A Statewide Voice for Local Conservation - Part I

by Cheryl Belcher, Executive Director

**I**n October 2003, Land Trust Alliance (LTA) held their annual conference in Sacramento. While this conference brought experts, trainers, and land trust representatives from all over our nation, it also provided a special venue for Californian land trusts to meet and begin to share information that affects just our State.

The Sierra Cascade Land Trust Council had already been formed to provide such a regional forum for our 15 grass-roots organizations, but in 2003 the only other regional council in the State was the Bay Area Open Space Council. The rest of the state's land trusts were not connected. After the conference, with support from several national organizations, Darla Guenzler from the Bay Area Open Space Council led a California-wide needs assessment. Six regional meetings were held to gather information. The surprise finding of the resulting report was the overwhelming support at the local level, for a state-wide land trust council.

The call went out for interested volunteers and a Steering Committee made up of representatives from all regions of the State proceeded to explore if and how such an organization might be formed. The Nevada County Land Trust was a proud participant on this Steering Committee. The California Council of Land Trusts (CCLT) was born. Late in 2004 the first Board of Directors was selected, and Doctor

Darla Guenzler agreed to become our first Executive Director.

The formation of CCLT closed the last information and support gap for our land trusts. The Land Trust Alliance exists at a national level, CCLT at a state level, and our Sierra Cascade Land Trust Council at the regional level. Each has a different focus and activities, and deliver discrete but complementary value to land trusts. Together they address the spectrum of land trust needs.

CCLT will work to create regular two-way communication with the regional associations and LTA. Regional associations will be particularly important avenues for identifying issues and informing statewide activities. Without a voice for local land conservation in Sacramento, local land trusts are not realizing their potential to shape funding measures or policy. ♣

*Part II of this article, Launching CCLT, will appear in the May issue of the LandNews.*

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### Trustworthy News

**T**hanks go to two local property owners for their community spirit in donating trail easements across their parcels this past month. The Luhmans donated a connecting trail easement for the Banner/Cascade Trail and Phil Oyung donated a very strategic easement across his property to connect to our under construction Empire Mine State Park.

#### *NEW Memorial Park to Empire Trail*

We completed brushing the Memorial Park - Empire Mine Trail in December; a grant from Northern Sierra Air Quality Management District paid for the brushing using a masticator. Rain has delayed start of trail construction; however, work should resume in March, weather permitting. State Parks is providing an excavator and equipment operator to construct the trail from the tennis courts in Memorial Park through rough terrain on State Park land, a distance of about 1,000 feet. From that point east to Empire Cross Road, we plan to construct most of the trail by hand by volunteers. The ground is gently sloping and construction will be relatively easy.

If you are interested in helping with the trail

*(continued on page 4)*

### A New Look for NCLT!

When NCLT was formed, a simple and elegant logo was created consisting of our name, a pine bough and a pine cone. This suited our organizational infancy. Conserving land was the goal, and we were imbued with all the possibilities and potential of this work.

Now, over a decade later, we have delivered on that potential by conserving more than 5,600 acres or in partnership with other groups. It was time for our logo to reflect this new reality. Our new logo says something about NCLT and represents our new project focus. ♣

*(See Bear-Yuba Foothills Project article in this issue.)*

(continued from page 3)

construction, call the Land Trust Office. Work days will be announced soon, tentatively scheduled for Wednesday and Saturday mornings, 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m., only on dry days. Work cannot be accomplished when the ground is muddy. Call Stephanie in the office (272-5994), if you would like to be notified about future work parties.

### **Upcoming Land Trust Work Parties:**

#### **Salter Park**

The next work party will be March 19. Need to work on more brushing, chipping, and filling dumpster with debris and other garbage. We can use lots of help. This is a future dog park.

#### **North Star**

Saturday work parties at the North Star from 8:00 a.m. to 12 noon, if no rain or snow! Grounds work, clean up, pruning, and vegetation control is ongoing .

#### **Julia Morgan's Berkeley City Club**

In an on-going effort to raise funds and support for our North Star house project Susan Kane attended an event at Julia Morgan's Berkeley City Club. She talked briefly to Mary Bruhnig, president of the Landmark Heritage Foundation, an organization dedicated to the preservation and maintenance of the Berkeley City Club. Since Brunig was in great demand that evening we scheduled a meeting in early March to explore ways to generate interest for our project. There are more than 50 Julia Morgan designed buildings in Berkeley. ♣



*More than two-hundred blue and valley oak tree sites were prepared and planted with acorns by hard working Land Trust volunteers, friends, and Pioneer Ranch family members. The planting process had tasks for all energy levels—skinning off the grass, loosening the first foot of soil, seeding, mulching the area, and protecting the acorn with a greenhouse grow tube. A sense of satisfaction pervaded all of us at the end of each work day. We were establishing a new generation of oaks and the accompanying habitat for fox, black rail and vole. Thanks to all our volunteers for a job well done. ♣*

## **Opportunity Knocks! Please Help Us Answer the Door: The Bear-Yuba Foothills Project**

**T**his year the Land Trust is introducing our Bear-Yuba Foothills Project, which will direct our conservation efforts in this area. It is a vital, timely project and will need your support to succeed.

Why here? The foothills of the Bear and Yuba rivers are an area of rapid population growth, landscape fragmentation, stream degradation, and diminishing wildlife habitat due to development. Regional Metropolitan sprawl, immigration of urban retirees, and poor planning policies threaten the landscape with continued parcelization. Nevada County has 56,000 parcels under ten acres.

Valley and blue oaks are in decline, and California black rail, Swainson's hawk, Central Valley steelhead, and ringtail cats are species of concern due to degraded habitat. The Sierra's streams

### **Welcome to New Members**

Robert Anderson and Terry McFeely  
Richard Burton  
Patricia and Carl Green  
Glenn Hovemann and Muffy Weaver  
– Dawn Publications  
Dieter and Martha Juli  
Mary Ellen Mahoney and John Post  
Don McIntyre  
Charlotte and Larry Starn  
Anne Wallace  
Welcome Wagon Club Men's Group  
Rod and Sue Wille  
Mary and Jerrell Wood

provide 65% of California's developed water, yet the Yuba and Bear River watersheds are impaired in both quantity and quality.

Exacerbating these concerns is the fact that the average age of ranchers in the Sierra is 60 years old. In the next 5 to 7 years, as ranch lands are sold or passed to new generations, our foothills community could undergo dramatic changes. Agricultural land costs have increased 700% over the past 30 years, threatening agricultural viability here. When the ranches are sold, not only do we lose productive land, but with development comes loss of habitat and water quality degradation.

We have been very fortunate in Nevada County that so many landowners have voluntarily agreed to conserve their lands through conservation agreements with NCLT. (See front page article on Trabucco Ranch in this issue). However, even when an easement is donated, we have legal, transaction, and stewardship costs that run between \$15,000 and \$35,000 for each property. As State and Federal deficits soar, farm and ranch land conservation programs now have little or no funding. We are now facing budgetary realities where we may not be able to conserve hundreds of acres of land and habitat, for the lack of \$15,000.

NCLT has started working with conservation partners in a focused planning process to conserve the foothills. Working only with willing land owners, our goal is to create land conservation agreements on priority areas, which will protect multiple conservation values of the land. By conserving working ranches and natural areas, wildlife movement and migration will be enhanced as we help to ensure our nation's food supply security and agricultural way of life. Conserving Valley and blue oak habitat will conserve wildlife homes for more than 86 species of birds, 36 species of mammals, 18 species of reptiles, and 5 species of amphibians. Two-thirds breed in this habitat. This area is also rich in native plants with more than 2,000 species found throughout the foothills. Conserving the foothills is probably the biggest win-win situation you can imagine.

Your support is critical to safeguard working ranches, foothill streams, and blue oak habitat. How can you help?

- Contact us at 530-272-5994, if you own land in the Bear-Yuba Foothills, and would like to learn more.

- Please pass this newsletter along to friends or family members who might be interested in our project.
- Send in a donation to our new "Opportunity Fund."

This fund was started by a gift from an enterprising 10-year-old, (see November 2004 Land News), Olivia Johansen. With two of her friends, she raised and donated more than \$80 to start our "Opportunity Fund". ♣

### Honor Someone Special

To honor a special person, consider a donation to the Nevada County Land Trust. We accept donations in honor of birthdays, graduations, marriages, anniversaries, and other holidays as well as donations in memory of loved ones.

The honoree and her/his family will be notified of your contribution. ♣

### Welcome to Shari Barley, NCLT's Newest Board Member

**S**hari Barley is a "make-it-happen" type of person. For the past two years, as a member of our Stars at the Ridgetop Concert Committee, she has secured the needed underwriting support for the concert. This allowed us to bring in top talents and present first-class events for our sellout crowds. She will continue to lend her considerable talents to our Fund Development Committee, now that she has joined the Board.

Shari is deeply committed to the conservation of land and historical sites in Nevada County, and wants to work with NCLT because she finds that our work really makes a difference in the community. In addition to her volunteer work with the Nevada County Land Trust, Shari also supports the Make A Wish Foundation, Celebration of Life, Relay for Life, Team Survivor and Friends of Hospice.

For the past 8 years, Shari has worked as a Realtor in Nevada City. We don't know when she finds time to sleep. ♣



*Unseasonably warm weather has allowed our Burton Park volunteers to clear Scotch Broom, and improve habitat late last year. Many thanks to our friends from Audubon and Sierra Club for all your hard work at the property. ♻️*

## Special Gifts

*We would like to thank the following people for giving special gifts to the Land Trust.*

Arnold & Ruth Adicoff • Becky Anderson • Ann Armstrong • Charlie Aron & Al Devico • Cathy & Todd Asher • Charles Atthill & Jeanne Powell • David & Chris Babitz • Jim Bailey • F. Mervin & Patricia Baker • Don Baker • Gail Bakker & Bob Husk • Barbara Barr • Art & Anne Barta • Edward Beedy & Susan Sanders • David & Louise Beesley • Cheryl Belcher • Geri Vanderveer Bergen • Robert Berman & Jane Ginsburg • Elizabeth & Ray Boedecker • Joe & Sharon Boivin • Charles & Mary Brock • Jeff & Sara Brownwood - Yuba Docs • Sue & Willie Brusin • Jim & Robyn Buciak • Marc Burgraff - Admiral Electric & Alarm • Desh & Nancy Cameron • Don Carlson & Sally Smith-Carlson • Carole & Dick Carson • Phil Carville • Mark & Kirsten Casey • Andy & Kathy Cassano • Annice Cassano • Michael & Patti Castelli • Chicago Park Garden Club • Joan Clappier • Steve & Diana Cobbe • Karen Colwell • Ron & Bobbie Cook • Henry Coufos & Janet Wheeling • Allen & Robin

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### Leaving A Legacy

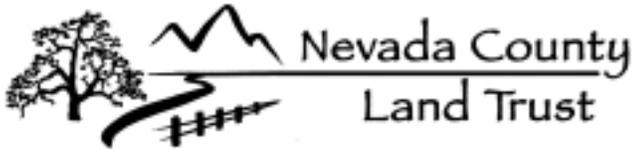
Most of us have been touched personally by the work of nonprofit organizations, such as the Nevada County Land Trust, which depend on the generosity of the community for their existence. Approximately 75% of Americans donate money and time to charitable organizations during their lifetimes. However, only 8% of us remember to include a gift to a social benefit organization in our estate plans or wills. Just think of the impact we could have if a significant number of people made provisions to include their favorite local nonprofit in their will or trust. The Nevada County Land Trust is a member of Leave a Legacy, a nationwide program to promote interest in charitable giving through a will or from an estate.

For more information on this program, call Cheryl Belcher at 530.272.5994. ☘

### Thanks to Our Dedicated Volunteers Who Have Helped Us Get the Mail out, Build Trails, Cut Bush, Lead Treks, and So Much More.

Joan Armer • Jim Bailey • Ruth Bailey • Gail Bakker • David & Louise Beesley • Cheryl Belcher • Frank Bendrick • Pattie Bendrick • Dona Bergthold • Roger Bergthold • Lawrence Black • Sherry Brooks • Gary Brown • Ray Bryars • Everett Butts • Julie Byrne • Jeff Carroll • Andy Cassano • Carole Clark • Cathy Cochran • Gaylene & Kevin Collins • Catalina Collins • Grayson Coney • Bruce Conklin • Karen Cox • Penelope Curtis • Don Denton • Joan Denzler • Olivia Diaz • Bill Dise • Pat Dow • Deane Dvoracek •

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## Annual Membership Luncheon at Miners Foundry. March 10 – Mark Your Calendar!

**T**his year's Membership Luncheon will be held on Thursday, March 10, from 11:00 a.m. until 1:30 p.m. And we are back at the Miners Foundry this year.

In addition to our annual projects presentation, we will have a special video presentation by Janaia Donaldson entitled:

*37 Views from Lone Bobcat Woods—An Artist's View of Her Surroundings.* This is a particularly timely presentation as the Land Trust's first conservation easements were put on



Janaia's beautiful property 10 years ago.

Please come and join us for good food and conversation with our community of Land Trust supporters. Just \$22 for all that!

Do you have a friend who might be interested in our work? This is a great opportunity for our

member supporter to introduce a friend or acquaintance to the important work we do in the Sierra Foothill community. ♻️