

# THE LAND



*Conservation with  
You in Mind*



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## SOWING SEEDS, HONORING THE FUTURE

GREETINGS FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR MEREDITH HENDRICKS

Conservation work is a lot like farming or gardening—it starts with the seed of a project and to bear fruit, needs the right combination of nurturing, investment, intuition, and even a bit of luck. It also takes time and the right climate. With patience, the results can be stunning. We do this work knowing some of the seeds we plant now will not reach maturity in our lifetime. Conservation work is almost never rewarded with instant gratification. It is the slow and thoughtful movement toward a more beautiful, abundant, and just landscape.



As we close 2022, the stage is set for a huge expansion of protected lands in our region. Years of work to craft a bold vision for conservation, based on science and people, is in place and a wave of investment from public funding sources is on the way. There is a shared urgency to ensure the landscapes and agricultural lands we depend on are safe and resilient in the face of a changing climate.

We are pushing even harder to invest the support from people like you into land preservation projects with the most impact and to leverage every dollar to go farther.

Though slow and deliberate, our work is proactive and responsive to change. The investments we are making together to craft a mosaic of habitat, productive agriculture, and recreation areas bolster our quality of life and honor future generations.

In this newsletter, you will read about our Conservation Blueprint, an essential program that is being expanded with new, vital community input to reflect Santa Barbara County's conservation needs to enhance climate resilience and wildlife readiness.

Next year is going to be a big one for the Land Trust, with more opportunities for you to get out on the land and with more acres protected forever because of people like you. I hope we all can create the space to rest and recharge as the days get shorter and the nights get longer because come the new year, we've got work to do. We are planting seeds today that are already growing tall, with their roots running deep throughout Santa Barbara County and the expectant hope that this work will bear fruit for the generations that follow.

Take care,

Meredith Hendricks, Executive Director

### MISSION STATEMENT

The Land Trust for Santa Barbara County conserves natural resources, agricultural land, and open spaces for the benefit of present and future generations.



## OVER AND ABOVE FOR CONSERVATION

THE LAND TRUST has begun our year-end fundraising season. Generous supporters like you fund the work we do throughout Santa Barbara County and this year we have a unique giving opportunity. While Over and Above is tied to our generous year-end match opportunity that recently landed in your mailbox—a match for \$100,000 new dollars raised in this fiscal year—going over and above for conservation means much, much more.

The sheer potential of conservation is possible right now in Santa Barbara County because of a unique confluence of events. Increased public awareness of the importance of nature for mental well-being, to critical fire mitigation, to unprecedented government support such as the 30x30 California Initiative to address climate change, have intersected to create this once-in-a-generation opportunity.

If we were ever to go over and above for conservation, this is the time to do it. Right now, there is the need, the vision, and the willpower to accomplish conservation. The extra effort of going over and above for this challenge is well worth it.

**Please help us meet the Over and Above Challenge by giving generously at [sblandtrust.org](http://sblandtrust.org) today.**

### THIS NEW YEAR, NEW WEBSITE

COMING IN EARLY 2023, the Land Trust is launching a brand-new website with a fresh look and all the fantastic local land conservation resources, news, and information you need to get involved, explore the land, and become part of our mission—all at [www.sblandtrust.org](http://www.sblandtrust.org). **Sign up for The Lowdown to be notified of the launch date at [www.sblandtrust.org/sign-up/](http://www.sblandtrust.org/sign-up/).**

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

### WAYS TO GIVE THIS YEAR-END

- If you're 70 ½ or older, you can join fellow Land Trust supporters who are making tax-free gifts from their IRAs this year. **Making a gift from your IRA** is a tax-savvy way to give.
- Do you own appreciated shares of stock? **Stock gifts** are a great way to support the Land Trust because you can save on taxes and make a larger impact. Gifts of appreciated stock and securities are a win-win.
- Put your **Donor Advised Fund** to good use—join hundreds of other supporters this year end and make a grant to the Land Trust.
- Like appreciated stock, donating long-term held **cryptocurrency** investments is a tax-efficient way to give.
- **Create a legacy:** We know that cash donations might not be right for everyone, but giving a gift in your will is a powerful commitment to our work and mission for generations to come.

Visit <https://www.sblandtrust.org/ways-to-give> for details.





## EMBRACING CONSERVED LAND WITH IDYLL HORSE FARM

IN 1997, **ARRIA BRASSEUR AND ALAN FAY** were looking for land to enjoy and let their horses run. Their search ended near Lompoc with several acres of nearly undeveloped land protected by a Land Trust conservation easement. While Arria didn't know what to expect, she says when the Land Trust sold her the conserved property, "it began as a partnership and that's what it's always been." For her and Alan, enjoying and enhancing the natural beauty of the land was their priority.

That was 25 years ago. Today the land is thriving and abundant with wildlife including bobcats, deer, skunk, and the occasional mountain lion. Arria looks forward to the annual monitoring visit when Land Trust stewardship staff walk the property, documenting changes and ensuring that the terms of the easement are being observed. She said, "we enjoy the monitoring visits to learn about improvements we can make, how the land is doing, and what new or different plants might be showing up... the Land Trust is a resource."

Over the years, Arria and Alan have planted more than 100 trees and a pollinator garden that Arria calls her Pollinator Paradise—teeming with salvias and other native plants loved by bees, hummingbirds, and butterflies. The neighbors lease some of the land to run their cattle and Arria's horses have space to wander while she harvests and processes lavender into the essential oils, balms, and natural care products she sells at local farmers' markets.

When she first opened her Santa Barbara Farmers Market booth 20 years ago, it attracted a cloud of bees her customers would lean through to make their selections. But over the years the

bees have dwindled. She says that "made me think about the importance of protecting pollinators. Now, I'm making space at home for native pollinators...to promote a thriving piece of turf. We don't use poisons of any kind because it's important to us that the pollinators have a chance." This is emblematic of Arria's land ethic—she's all about the dance between wild and domestic life—and like the easement that protects her land forever, her commitment is for the long haul.

*"...we enjoy the monitoring visits to learn about improvements we can make, how the land is doing, and what new or different plants might be showing up...the Land Trust is a resource."*

Every Land Trust conservation easement is unique. They are expertly crafted to balance the needs of landowners while safeguarding important conservation values like wildlife habitat, healthy watersheds, productive land, and more. Our landowner partners are just as unique, with a variety of perspectives on conservation that is integral to each agreement. For Arria, conservation represents "the future. We need to take care of the mother under our feet, not to get too schmaltzy about it," and we at the Land Trust couldn't agree more—conservation is an enduring partnership between people and the land for a healthy future.

**Learn more about how a conservation easement might benefit you, your family, and your land by calling the Conservation Team at 805.966.4520.**



## PLANT YOUR OWN POLLINATOR PARADISE

**PLANTING YOUR OWN POLLINATOR GARDEN** is easier than you might think—native plants not only attract helpful pollinating insects, birds, and animals, but they are also water-wise and drought-resistant. Enjoy this flexible, affordable, and rewarding project with these tips...

- 1. SCOPE YOUR SPOT.** Restore your entire yard, dedicate a corner, or create a small container garden to feed pollinators.
- 2. STAGGERING BEAUTIES.** Plant natives that flower at different times of year to extend pollinator foraging time and to keep things colorful.
- 3. PERFECT PAIRINGS.** Native plants and animals coevolved and coadapted to their local climate and they thrive together—California Native Plant Society has a great native plant locator at [www.cnps.org](http://www.cnps.org).
- 4. LEAVE THE LEAVES.** Be sure to leave some leaf litter in your pollinator garden zone to provide extra foraging and nesting places for pollinating birds and insects, even if you rake and tidy the rest of your outdoor space.
- 5. BUY LOCAL.** Buying from local native nurseries helps ensure the plants will thrive in their new home instead of traveling from one zone (and climate) to another.





## UPCOMING WINTER EVENTS

THE LAND TRUST HAS A FRESH LINEUP of events throughout the county this winter—please visit [sblandtrust.org/events](http://sblandtrust.org/events) to learn more, register, and for the most up-to-date information.

### DECEMBER

**Arts and the Outdoors Trek**, Gaviota Coast  
**Los Flores Family Nature Trek**, Santa Maria (in Spanish and English)

### JANUARY

**Birding on National Bird Day**, location TBD  
**Ennisbrook Nature Trek**, Montecito  
**History with Max Fleischmann Trek**, Carpinteria  
**Ocean Beach Park Birding Trek**, Lompoc (in Spanish and English)

### FEBRUARY

**The Birds & the Bees Pollinator Presentation**, Land Trust Office  
**Lower Oso to Upper Oso Active Trek**, Paradise Road  
**Carpinteria Salt Marsh Tides and Birds Trek**, Carpinteria  
**Rice Ranch Trek**, Orcutt

### MARCH

**Art and San Marcos Open Space Trek**, Goleta  
**Oso Flaco Family Birding Trek**, Guadalupe  
**World Recycling Day Field Trip**, location TBD  
**Geology of Faults at Haskell's Beach**, Goleta

### APRIL

**Earth Day Cleanup**, location TBD  
**Los Flores Family Nature Trek**, Santa Maria (in Spanish and English)

## A BETTER BLUEPRINT FOR COMMUNITY-CENTERED CONSERVATION

IN 2016, THE LAND TRUST partnered with the Cachuma Resource Conservation District with funding from the Santa Barbara Foundation to create the Santa Barbara County Conservation Blueprint. The Blueprint is a regional conservation planning program developed to attract investment of public funds and improve equity within planning for parks, open space, protection of food systems, climate resiliency, and health. Today, the Blueprint is a permanent program of the Land Trust, where it will be

expanded with new community outreach feedback for a clearer picture of the trail ahead.

Work has begun to conduct additional community engagement activities to reach a new and broader stakeholder group reflective of Santa

Barbara County as well as the completion of an impact report summarizing the community benefits generated by the Blueprint from 2016-2022. At its core, the Land Trust is a science-based community conservation organization. When we take on a new project to conserve land, it is with careful consideration of conservation values, data, and the

resulting eco and public benefits. The same goes for our nature education programming, events, and restoration work—it is done at the intersection of science and positive community impact.

The Land Trust is following up with partners who previously completed projects using the Interactive Atlas mapping tool and begin conversations with the community leaders and groups missed during the project's first outreach efforts. These conversations will build new relationships and clarify community needs and priorities that conservation projects and initiatives can support. The California commitment to conserve 30% of the state's agricultural and wild lands and waters, known as 30x30, is a significant initiative that also represents a larger shift in conservation toward the collaborative regional planning necessary to achieve historic conservation gains. The core focuses of the Blueprint emphasize climate readiness, resilience, and adaptation as well as wildfire planning and projects—key issues that residents of Santa Barbara County already face.

This transitional period for the Blueprint is a time for the Land Trust to listen. Seeking out more voices helps ensure our strategies are informed both by science and community priorities and our work benefits the land, people, and wildlife of Santa Barbara County for the long-term.

**Learn more about the Conservation Blueprint at [sbcblueprint.net/](http://sbcblueprint.net/).**

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## KEY BLUEPRINT INSIGHTS

- 1. Incentivize water and habitat conservation** for mutually beneficial solutions.
- 2. Protect wildlife corridors** by preserving riparian areas, ecosystems, and unfragmented land.
- 3. Keep farm and range lands in production**, one of the most effective long-term conservation measures.
- 4. Incentivize the use of agriculture** to improve ecological conditions and scenery by providing economic benefits to participating landowners.
- 5. Improve access to nature**, open space, and trails near urban areas throughout the entire county.

## TAKE A HIKE

Visit these Land Trust conserved preserves, trails, and open spaces across the county. Find more at [www.sblandtrust.org/preserves-properties-visit](http://www.sblandtrust.org/preserves-properties-visit).







## GROWING COMMUNITY FROM COMMON GROUND

WHEN THE LAND TRUST CREATES a nature preserve, it becomes common ground for us to support the community, for us to meet nature and make conservation real and personal. In addition to local schools and the public, community organizations visit Arroyo Hondo to connect to nature and to each other. The Land Trust is proud that the preserve is a place where people of all ages can experience and get invested in caring for the land.

Last fall, members of members of Beyond Incarceration Greater Education (BIGE), a student club from Allan Hancock College, came to the preserve to explore the trails. The student club provides faculty support, mentorship, tutoring, and opportunities for growth and career development. Program graduates may go on to become community advocates, earn advanced degrees, and start new careers. Having a place to unwind is restorative—underscoring the need for more places like this throughout the County, where people can be themselves as they grow toward a better future.

Another local organization working to break down barriers is Hidden Wings. This post-secondary school for high school graduates on the Autism spectrum is innovating society's approach to neurodivergence. By cultivating students' strengths and creating a nurturing environment where visual learning and differences are embraced, Hidden Wings' participants are developing the life skills,

*"...watching the kids climb rocks, and explore the land gave volunteers opportunities to engage with their CASA child, ask questions, get creative, encourage outdoor learning, and observe how their CASA child adapted to this new environment... We can't thank the Land Trust enough."* – Crystal Sullins, Court Appointed Special Advocates

relationships, and career opportunities they need to flourish. As frequent flyers at Arroyo Hondo, their trips are full of possibility and ever-changing sensory experiences.

CASA, or Court Appointed Special Advocates for Santa Barbara County, is a nonprofit that pairs kids navigating the foster care system and difficult circumstances with trusted, trained adult advocates. CASA advocates and kids bond on outings and cultivate a sense of safety. Crystal Sullins, the CASA Public Relations Manager said of the visit, "...watching the kids climb rocks, and explore the land gave volunteers opportunities to engage with their CASA child, ask questions, get creative, encourage outdoor learning, and observe how their CASA child adapted to this new environment. We can't thank the Land Trust enough."

Arroyo Hondo Preserve offers kids and adults of every age, from various backgrounds and life experiences, a place to belong and become people who both care for the land and care for each other through the land. This is what community-centered conservation means. The land is a living and supportive force

that brings us together, it touches our lives from the soles of our feet and invites us to be part of something bigger.



## WESTERN POND TURTLES MAKING RIPPLES

TURTLES ARE CONSIDERED SACRED SYMBOLS representing Earth in many indigenous cultures and it is easy to see why. Freshwater and saltwater turtles play key roles in maintaining healthy rivers, lakes, ponds, wetlands, and oceans. The Western or Pacific pond turtle (*Actinemys marmorata*) is one such hardworking turtle, even if it only weighs two and half pounds at maturity.

The Western pond turtle is the only native freshwater turtle on the West Coast and in California. They are listed as a species of special concern due to 20th-century drainage of wetlands, the release of invasive Red Eared Slider turtles, and former demand as a delicacy. Local conservation of wetlands, riparian zones, and nature preserves goes a long way toward protecting native turtle habitat—especially as the average lifespan of these reptiles is around 50 years.

Their hibernation strategy is impressive. Most bury themselves under mud along creek banks or inside ground squirrel burrows, however, roughly 10% of pond turtles nestle underwater at the bottom of a pond. Breathing via cloacal respiration, a process which simulates having gills by pumping oxygen-rich water through blood vessels, these pond turtles essentially hold their breath all winter!

Come spring, Western pond turtles get to work, nibbling aquatic weeds, frog and salamander eggs, and even decomposing fish and other aquatic organisms. Their diet promotes clean water, native aquatic plant growth, and a thriving riparian zone as seen at the Arroyo Hondo Preserve. Shy, these turtles can be glimpsed sunning on a rock before quietly slipping into the pond or creek. Recently, a hatchling was spotted, bumping along the edge of the pond where, hopefully, it will mature and spend the next 50 years at the preserve, discreetly helping the creek flourish.



## FINDING FALL COLOR



HERE IN SANTA BARBARA COUNTY, fall color can be found if you know where to look. Ribbons of color appear near creeks and even Highway One between Gaviota and Lompoc. And of course, Arroyo Hondo Preserve is a wonderful place to visit with your camera in fall.

**In some years, the giant Western sycamore trees, willows, and cottonwoods**

**along the creek look as though an artist has painted them** gold, yellow, and bright green. While the preserve may not be quite as bold this year due to the Alisal Fire, most of the sycamores survived and are recovering—a worthy sight all their own.

Goldenrod flowers practically shout among the dry grasses, wild roses have shiny red hips, and feathery creek clematis fruits glow with a silvery sheen. Goldenbush is in bloom along with the bright-red tubular flowers of California fuchsia...in short, **there's plenty of fall color now that you know where to look.**

## VISITING THE ARROYO HONDO PRESERVE

The Arroyo Hondo Preserve welcomes visitors on the first and third full weekends of each month to explore the canyon, trails, and ridgeline views. The Preserve changes from gold and orange in the fall to lush green thanks to winter rains—keep your fingers crossed!

**Reservations are FREE and required—make yours online and get the most current visiting information at [sblandtrust.org](http://sblandtrust.org).**

### WINTER HOURS:

The first and third full weekends of the month, Saturdays and Sundays from 10am–3pm.

### OPEN WEEKENDS:

November 5–6, November 19–20, December 3–4, December 17–18, January 7–8, January 21–22, February 4–5, February 18–19, March 4–5, March 18–19.



# 10 Ways to Become Engaged with the Land Trust's Work:

- 1. GO OUTSIDE** by visiting one of our public preserves for a hike or a stroll with a friend.
- 2. RENEW YOUR SUPPORT** for the Land Trust and put your tax-deductible gifts straight to work to protect land in Santa Barbara County.
- 3. DESIGNATE** the Land Trust as the beneficiary of donations through Amazon Smile or other micro-donation projects.
- 4. LEARN** about the unique nature of our County through our Lunch and Learn program or our docent or field expert hikes or walks.
- 5. ATTEND OUR SOCIAL EVENTS** to get to know the Land Trust better and to enjoy time with others who care about this place in the same way you do.
- 6. STOP BY** the farmers and ranchers we support at your local farmers' markets to sample and buy their goods.
- 7. SHARE OUR STORY** and help us make new friends and continue our work by introducing us to new people.
- 8. REMEMBER** the Land Trust in your year-end giving.
- 9. HIT PAUSE** and take notice. The best marketing the Land Trust could hope for happens when people like yourself observe the natural bounty we still have in this county and realize why it is worth protecting.
- 10. GIVE NATURE TO THE NEXT GENERATION** and share the gift of exploration, discovery, and delight in the natural world with the people you love.



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## REMEMBERING WARREN MILLER: A FRIEND AND TRUSTED LEADER



**EARLIER THIS YEAR**, the Land Trust lost a dear friend and leader, Warren Miller. Originally from Illinois, Warren spent his childhood visiting his family's farm and forestland outside of Chicago, shaping his love for nature and the outdoors. His early career was in government management, natural resources administration, and the forest products industry before becoming active on government advisory panels and the boards of many nonprofits. In 1989, he and his late first wife, Nancy, moved to Santa Barbara, importing Warren's love for community service, education, history, and nature conservation to the West Coast. He was an integral trustee on the board of the Santa Barbara Historical Museum—where he met his beloved second wife, Marlene, also a board member—and The Wildling Museum for Art and Nature, and, of course, the Land Trust for Santa Barbara County.

As a longtime Land Trust board member, Warren took on several roles. He was good and wise, with a wry wit and a disarming laugh. He was passionate about art, history, his family, and luckily for the Land Trust, had an abiding commitment to Santa Barbara County land conservation. It is difficult to sum up Warren's legacy and contributions to the Land Trust and our wider community with words alone. His impact on our work runs deep, with his attention to detail and willingness to listen and consider various approaches to problem solving and decision making. Warren helped shape the Land Trust as it continues today, with more than 31,000 acres of conserved land and expanding the Land Trust's local expertise and credibility as a trusted partner and resource.

Warren worked closely with staff through the grueling process of accreditation and renewal from the Land Trust Alliance, a gold standard certification attesting to a land trust's ethics, standards, and commitment to conservation excellence. The approval process requires extensive documentation, and he approached the challenge with undaunted enthusiasm, saying "the sooner

we get started, the better." He had an amazing memory, which he deprecatingly referred to as arcane trivia, but his presence was anything but arcane or trivial. He described his time as president of the Land Trust board as extremely rewarding—he tempered difficulty with intelligence and levity and often mentored new board members with an eye toward encouraging leadership.



Warren and Marlene Miller, Photo by Priscilla

Warren is missed—his warmth and ability to guide and provide sound counsel without commandeering important conversations were treasured. His fingerprints can be seen on everything from board and committee minutes to the Land Trust accreditation status, as well as the strategic decisions that have both advanced and strengthened the Land Trust's mission over decades. For the Land Trust, Warren's legacy is far reaching and goes beyond his board service. He helped steer the organization to where we are today. With sound finances, a strong mission, enduring land conservation, and at a moment of extraordinary opportunity that Warren was excited to see us meet.

Thank you to those who have made gifts to the Land Trust in honor of Warren Miller. As Warren would say, submitted herewith—without reservations—is our tribute to a man whose memory we hold dear.





# The Land Trust For Santa Barbara County

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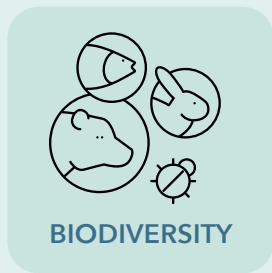
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## CONSERVATION BENEFITS OUR COMMUNITIES

Conserving land for the future feels good but it also delivers real benefits—direct and indirect—to our daily lives and communities of people and wildlife.



**When we take care of the land, the land takes care of us.**