

With a lot of help from our friends...



SONOMA LAND TRUST

2004 Annual Report

Dear Friends:

2004 was the year of the Baylands, and this annual report features the year's major achievement with thanks to all who helped protect forever the landscape where Sonoma County meets the Bay.



In 2004 we had an unprecedented opportunity to protect a huge expanse of the Baylands along Highway 37, and we ran with it. The opportunity came about in late 2003 when the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria turned their rights to purchase 1,679 acres at the intersection of Lakeville Road and Highway 37 over to the Land Trust, and the Dickson Family agreed to sell their adjacent 648-acre ranch. All we needed to do was come up with about \$20 million.

Private philanthropy was the key to leveraging the needed public dollars. We launched our Baylands Campaign and generated more than \$1.7 million in individual contributions—helping us secure the needed capital from our public agency partners: Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District, the California Coastal Conservancy, the National Oceanic & Atmospheric Administration and the California Wildlife Conservation Board. A generous and important grant from the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation put us over the top. The acquisitions were completed in January 2005, and we now

are managing the properties we own and planning for the integration of agriculture, recreation and environmental restoration.

Sonoma County is recognized nationally for having created the

Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District. A valuable partner to the Land Trust, the district has protected more than 65,000 acres since it was created by the voters of Sonoma County and funded in 1990. The district's funding (a quarter-cent sales tax) will expire sometime after 2006 and must be reauthorized by the voters by a two-thirds majority. We urge everyone who supports Sonoma Land Trust to be a champion of the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District and to work for the reauthorization of its funding when the time comes. Sonoma County needs both the Open Space District and Sonoma Land Trust.

Recently, the Land Trust turned its attention to Sonoma Mountain, Sonoma Valley, the Mayacamas and the North Coast. Conservation opportunities abound and cry out for action. We are in a race to protect treasured landscapes throughout Sonoma County. We appreciate and need your continued support and encouragement.

It is wonderful work. 2004 was a banner year. We have a lot more to do.

Sincerely,

Peter Mattson
Chairman of the Board

Ralph Benson
Executive Director

The practice of conservation must spring from a conviction of what is ethically and aesthetically right, as well as what is economically expedient. A thing is right only when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the community, and the community includes the soil, waters, fauna, and flora, as well as people.

—Aldo Leopold



Sonoma County's beautiful landscapes can take your breath away. The coast; the redwoods; rolling gold and green hills studded with oak woodlands; vineyards, orchards and pastureland; a filigree of creeks; the Russian and Gualala Rivers; the Petaluma River marshes; the Baylands. Sonoma Land Trust is here to protect all these treasured landscapes...with the help of our friends.

The Sonoma Baylands are an undiscovered treasure trove of salt marsh plants, abundant waterbirds, raptors galore and unsurpassed vistas.

Michael Ellis, Naturalist



Baylands past, present and future

Opportunities to protect a large swath of cherished open landscape in one fell swoop are rare. Yet in 2004 Sonoma Land Trust had an opportunity to do just that. Much of our focus last year was on the Sonoma Baylands, the beautiful, expansive landscape where Sonoma County meets the Bay.

To report: we raised more than \$20 million and purchased both the 1,679 acres of open land at the intersection of Highway 37 and Lakeville Road, which had been proposed as a casino resort, and the adjacent 648-acre Dickson Ranch, which connects with Tolay Creek and San Pablo Bay. In normal times we might have passed on these acquisitions to the California Department of Fish and Game and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service to manage. But these are lean times for our public agency partners and, for now, Sonoma Land Trust has taken on the challenge of restoring and managing these lands. We are able to do so, initially at least, thanks to a generous restoration planning grant from the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation.

These land purchases are the latest chapter in one of the great environmental success stories of our era—restoration of the shore-

line of San Pablo Bay. A few centuries ago, in the time of the Ohlone and Miwok people, vast marshes extended over thousands of acres to the foot of what we now call Sears Point. Where Highway 37 now runs was under water. The Gold Rush and settlement changed the landscape dramatically, and for a century land around the Bay was diked, filled, farmed and commercialized. Fortunately, the Sonoma

Baylands were spared most industrial excesses and hosted a century of hay farming. Farming and grazing will continue on much of the land around Sears Point, but more than 1,000 acres will be restored as tidal wetlands. When you have a chance to drive along Highway 37 (or, in time, to walk the four-mile segment of the Bay Trail to be constructed on the property), savor the beautiful landscape that so many have helped preserve and watch the restoration take hold.



Above, left: Pickleweed thrives in salt marshes. Photo by R. P. Olowin/St. Mary's College. Right: The Baylands are home to species including the endangered salt marsh harvest mouse. Photo by Michael Sewell/Visual Pursuit.



WITH A LOT OF HELP FROM OUR FRIENDS

The latest Baylands success was a true community effort. Everyone named in this annual report and many more played a part. The opportunity came about thanks to the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria, who assisted Sonoma Land Trust with a gift of their rights to purchase the property. The Dickson family demonstrated its strong land ethic. Those who advocated “Cows Not Casinos” galvanized public support. In 1990 the voters of Sonoma County elected to fund the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District through a quarter-cent sales tax, and the voters of California have consistently voted to approve conservation bond measures disbursed by the California Coastal Conservancy and the California Wildlife Conservation Board.

These public funding sources, together with so many generous private contributions, made these land purchases possible. Our role at Sonoma Land Trust is to hold the vision—in this case, permanent protection of the entire landscape where Sonoma

County meets the Bay—and to bring everyone together to make it happen. We are a catalyst, working to leverage and amplify everyone’s efforts.



Top of page: Sonoma Baylands looking north toward Cougar Mountain at Sears Point. Above: The Dickson Ranch looking south over San Pablo Bay and Hamilton Field to Mt. Tamalpais. Photos by Stephen Joseph.

Working on a landscape scale

Among other things, the Baylands project gave us the opportunity to work on a landscape scale. The entire stretch of land from Sears Point to the Petaluma River will never see the intrusion of an auto mall or industrial park, as had been planned at one time.

Building on more than 28 years of work, the Land Trust is increasingly able to make conservation connections linking together single, previously protected properties to protect entire watersheds, ridgelines and viewsheds. We are in a race to stay a step ahead of sprawl and inappropriate development in the scenic, natural and agricultural areas of the county. We believe that by looking ahead, building support for conservation easements, and strategically acquiring land with partners such as the Open Space District, we can win the race.

Looking ahead is precisely what we did in our 2002 land analysis of the North Coast, from the mouth of the Russian River to the mouth of the Gualala River, and in our 2003 Resource Atlas and Protection Plan for the Laguna de Santa Rosa, prepared in cooperation with the Laguna de Santa Rosa Foundation. In 2004 we initiated an effort, sparked by a grant from Community Foundation Sonoma County and building on the work of the Sonoma Ecology Center, to protect Sonoma Mountain, Sonoma Valley and the Mayacamas Range. Opportunities abound for trails, wildlife corridors, creek restoration, and the preservation of vineyards, woodlands and viewsheds.

In time we will be developing long-term land conservation strategies for all of Sonoma County.

STEWARDSHIP AND VOLUNTEERS

“To protect the land forever.” That’s our tagline, and it implies that we need staying power and capacity. Meeting our responsibilities and taking care of what we own requires many hands. Our volunteers make our stewardship of the land possible.

We appreciate the time and energy of our 60-plus volunteer monitors, whose site visits are coordinated by Joe Ficarelli. Our “Go-To Gang,” under the leadership of Jim McConnell, helps maintain many of the properties we protect.

Sonoma Land Trust holds more than a dozen preserves and more than 30 conservation easements—voluntary agreements with private landowners who permanently give up development rights to their property because they want to know their land will always remain undeveloped. By precluding development, conservation easements sometimes can

provide tax benefits to landowners. Accepting a conservation easement is a permanent responsibility for the Land Trust.

In every season the Land Trust gets people out on the land. We are grateful to our many inspired and expert hike leaders. We also thank our nonprofit partners, Circuit Rider Productions, Inc., and LandPaths. Under their direction school kids helped restore native vegetation along Stuarts Creek, which flows through the Land Trust’s Glen Oaks Ranch in Glen Ellen, and at Bidwell Creek, which runs through the Land Trust’s Laufenburg Ranch in Knights Valley.



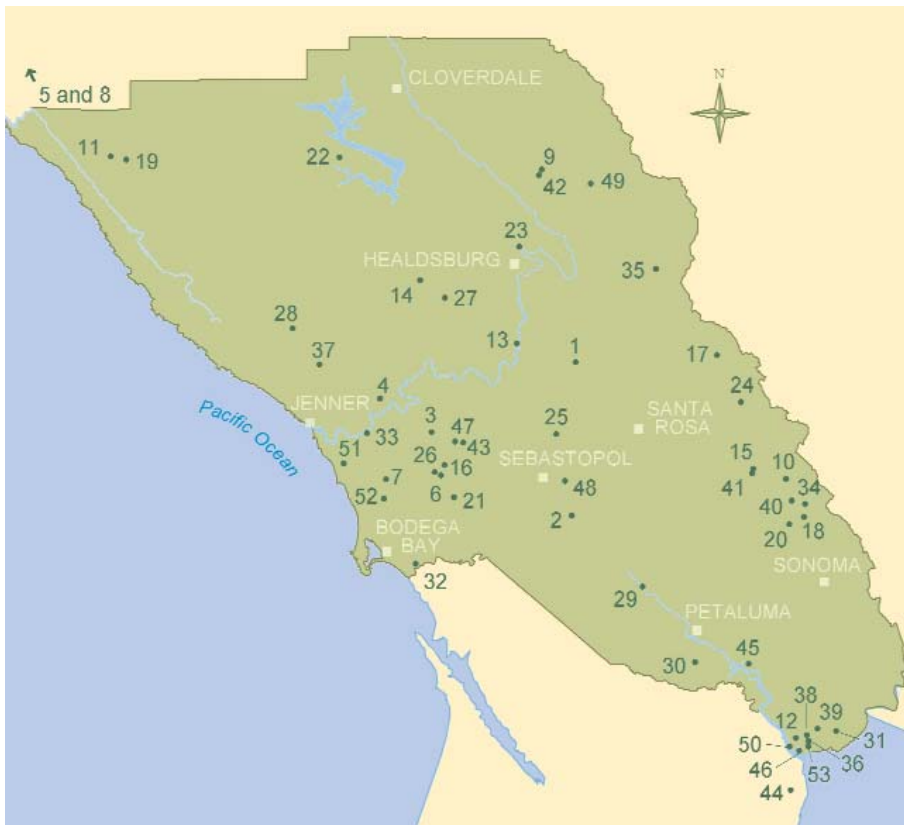
*Students at Glen Oaks Ranch, Glen Ellen.
Photo by Nathan Boone.*



*The Land Trust’s historic Glen Oaks Ranch on Highway 12 near Arnold Drive sits in the center of the vineyards and woodlands of the Sonoma Valley.
Photo by Stephen Joseph.*

Protected lands

Since 1976 Sonoma Land Trust has completed more than 50 projects throughout Sonoma County. Sonoma Land Trust holds two easements in Mendocino County and has managed property on San Pablo Bay in Marin County.



CONSERVATION EASEMENTS

Conservation easements are voluntary agreements with landowners who give up specified rights (such as the right to subdivide or develop) in perpetuity. Sonoma Land Trust volunteer monitors visit each easement property at least once a year.

1	Airport Boulevard	51 acres
2	Blucher Creek	7 acres
3	Bohemia Ranch	960 acres
4	Canelis Old-Growth Redwoods	1 acre
5	Cuffeys Cove	1067 acres
6	Enchanted Wood	9 acres
7	Finley Creek	214 acres
8	Fish Rock Ranch	15 acres
9	Gird Creek	96 acres
10	Knaus Redwoods	38 acres
11	Little Creek	39 acres
12	Lower Ranch (Baylands)	543 acres
13	Middle Reach	46 acres
14	Mill Creek Old Growth	54 acres
15	Morgan Hill	21 acres
16	Mother Gardens at OAEC	2 acres
17	Nefertierra	72 acres
18	Oak Hill Farm	694 acres

19	OGA Little Creek	67 acres
20	Old Hill Ranch	44 acres
21	Quail Hill	81 acres
22	Rancheria Creek Recesses	602 acres
23	River Bend	34 acres
24	Santa Rosa Creek Headwaters	195 acres
25	Summerfield Waldorf School	32 acres
26	Sunrise Redwoods	19 acres
27	Van Winkle Redwoods	56 acres
28	Ward Creek	240 acres
29	Watson Ranch	534 acres
30	West Ridge Knolls	78 acres

OWNED LAND

These properties are owned and managed by Sonoma Land Trust. Most are preserves. Some are farmed.

31	Dickson Ranch (Baylands)	648 acres
32	Estero Americano Preserve	147 acres
33	Freezeout Redwoods	89 acres
34	Glen Oaks Ranch	236 acres
35	Laufenburg Ranch	179 acres

36	Leonard Ranch (Baylands)	236 acres
37	Little Black Mountain	504 acres
38	North Parcel (Baylands)	286 acres
39	North Point Joint Venture (Baylands)	1679 acres
40	Secret Pasture	301 acres
41	Sonoma Creek	2 acres
42	White Rock Preserve	85 acres

REMAINDER INTEREST

43	Wild Turkey Hill	8 acres
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TRANSFER AND/OR TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

Sonoma Land Trust has played a significant role in conserving these properties.

44	Bel Marin Keys (Baylands)	1500 acres
45	Cloudy Bend	388 acres
46	Halperin (Baylands)	11 acres
47	Harrison Grade Serpentine	32 acres
48	Laguna de Santa Rosa	535 acres
49	McCord Ranch	2786 acres
50	Petaluma River Marsh (Baylands)	49 acres
51	Red Hill	1000 acres
52	Rigler Preserve	373 acres
53	SCC Restoration (Baylands)	370 acres



Russian River from Freezeout Redwoods. Photo by Stephen Joseph.

Financial statements

The amounts presented here are derived from Sonoma Land Trust's audited financial statements for the year ending December 31, 2004. A complete copy of the audit report is available on request.



Enchanted Wood, Occidental. Photo by Stephen Joseph.

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2004

SUPPORT AND REVENUE	
Membership	237,179
Contributions	11,951,425
Project Revenue and Fees	294,581
Other Income	117,243
<i>Total Support and Revenue</i>	12,600,428
EXPENSES	
General and Administrative	268,626
Fundraising	131,867
Projects and Stewardship	1,001,458
Interest Expense	6,575
<i>Total Expenses</i>	1,408,526
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	11,191,902

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2004 AND 2003

ASSETS	2004	2003
Cash and Cash Equivalents	417,518	620,343
Investments, Unrestricted	112,550	283,153
Investments, Restricted	7,398,597	380,140
Contracts Receivable	34,552	67,199
Pledges Receivable, Unrestricted	31,184	10,407
Pledges Receivable, Restricted	107,532	-
Property and Equipment, net	38,456	21,358
Deposits and Other Current Assets	504,464	203,544
Conservation Lands and Easements	14,536,145	10,332,153
<i>Total Assets</i>	23,180,998	11,918,297
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	2004	2003
<i>Liabilities</i>		
Accounts Payable and Accrued Expenses	180,504	59,705
Long-Term Debt	300,000	350,000
<i>Total Liabilities</i>	480,504	409,705
<i>Net Assets</i>		
Unrestricted		
Undesignated	454,656	324,298
Board Designated - Other	203,563	472,001
Board Designated - Conservation Lands and Easements	14,536,145	10,332,153
Temporarily Restricted	7,506,130	380,140
<i>Total Net Assets</i>	22,700,494	11,508,592
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	23,180,998	11,918,297

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Peter Mattson, Chairman (2005)

David Smith, Chairman (2004)

Robert Brent

Johanna Patri

Hall Cushman

E. Lewis Reid

Susan Gilliland

Caryn Sachs

Burt Fohrman

Kathy Tierney*

Mary Hafner

Carol Williams

Mark Jacobsen

Michael Wright*

Doug Lipton

*Joined Board in 2005

Special thanks to former Board members Laura Martin and Lynn Schiek. Each served as treasurer of Sonoma Land Trust and contributed a great deal to our success in 2004.

SONOMA LAND TRUST STAFF

Ralph Benson, Executive Director

Projects and Stewardship

Nathan Boone

John Brosnan

Amy Chesnut

Wendy Eliot

Georgiana Hale

Bob Neale

Development and Communications

Michael Hayes

Reta Lockert

Stacey Waltenspiel

Finance and Administration

Lois Downy

Shanti Wright

Volunteer Coordinators

Joe Ficarelli

Jim McConnell

Sonoma Land Trust is a member of the Land Trust Alliance and subscribes to the Standards and Practices promulgated by that organization. Sonoma Land Trust is also a founding member of the California Land Trust Council.

“The Sonoma Land Trust orchestrated a great success in the Baylands.”

Jeffrey Kahane, Musical Director, Santa Rosa Symphony

*“I am grateful for the work of the Sonoma Land Trust and its partners.
We need to continue to drum up support for land conservation.”*

Mickey Hart, Percussionist Extraordinaire

“2004 was a vintage year for the Sonoma Land Trust.”

Dick and Mary Hafner, Hafner Vineyard



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