

30 years singing the lay of this land...



SONOMA LAND TRUST

2005 Annual Report

Dear Friends,

The redwood outside the window at Bolton House is an old tree. It's hard to tell how old exactly, but two people couldn't reach around it and touch fingers at the base. From the second floor it's apparent that there are cones at the ends of some branches, but on far more others are the light green fingers of new growth reaching beyond where that tree was last year.



SHANTI WRIGHT



SHANTI WRIGHT

Bolton House

Sonoma Land Trust, gaining strength from being rooted in Sonoma County soil 30 years, continues to show new growth, to surprise and delight us with new possibilities. So long as the growth is right and true, the larger and stronger the tree, the better it serves the community.

While the Land Trust has grown steadily since its founding 30 years ago, every now and then a year brings an exceptional burst of growth, just as to a tree or a child. Our thirtieth was such a year.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in white ink, appearing to read "Peter Mattson".

Peter Mattson

Chairman of the Board

A handwritten signature in white ink, appearing to read "Ralph Benson".

Ralph Benson

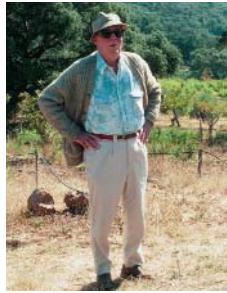
Executive Director



The 2005 Annual Report is offered as tribute to this place we love and to the people who have brought their talents and passion—this past year and through the last three decades—to protecting it. Here we acknowledge three who aided new growth.

Otto Teller was a founding board member who farmed in Glen Ellen and bankrolled the Trust early on. When SLT was formed by a group of Sonoma Valley conservationists 30 years ago, Otto steered them to the Trust for Public Land, run by his friend Huey Johnson (later Jerry Brown’s Secretary of Resources), for guidance on saving treasured local lands. Sometimes opinionated and impatient (he thought detailed financial reports, for example, amounted to “gilding the lily”), Otto had a clear vision of the importance of permanently protected private lands and the leadership he could provide. He made the first outright gift of land to Sonoma Land Trust by donating Secret Pasture Wildlife Preserve, 300 acres on the western slope of the Mayacamas above Glen Ellen. He and his wife Anne subsequently donated conservation easements over the adjacent 700-acre Oak Hill Farm and the 44-acre Old Hill Ranch.

Charlie Laufenburg was a bachelor farmer born on his family’s ranch in Knight’s Valley. Except for a brief stint as a farmworker in Fresno, he lived on the family property for 90 years. Charlie liked having the Sierra Club’s San Francisco chapter come for orienteering sessions on his ranch. There would be potlucks, and “Charlie would eat high on the hog” for days after, a neighbor reported. In 1987, as he approached 90 and learned he had cancer, Charlie wondered what to do with his 179-acre ranch. Maybe give it to the Sierra Club? He learned the group would sell the ranch to fund its mission. A friend called SLT, and we went to a



PEETER VILMS

Otto Teller



Charlie Laufenburg



MARK ADAMS/JUICEBOX PHOTOGRAPHY

Daphne Smith

meeting on his front porch with a stunning view of Mt. St. Helena. What did he want to do with his place, land consultant Joan Vilms asked. “Give it to an outfit that won’t sell it,” he replied. Joan described SLT conservation scenarios and said, “Any more questions?” “Yes,” said Charlie. “Are you married?” Charlie soon deeded Laufenburg Ranch to us, reserving a life estate that enabled him to live there or collect rent until he died.

Daphne Smith, on the other hand, is still very much with us. As a volunteer, invaluable in planning the members’ hikes series because of her birding knowledge and connections, she visited our outgrown nearby office regularly. One day in 2001 she said, “I wonder if you’d be interested in Bolton House,” referring to her landmark Queen Anne at the corner of Brookwood and Sonoma. We walked down the street, entered through the back gate, and fell in love with the grounds. Before long, Daphne had renovated the interior beautifully and was leasing it to us at a fraction of what we’d paid before for much less space. Nearly half of 2005 Bolton House was surrounded by scaffolding, as our landlady had the grand old Victorian’s exterior prepped and painted, as well as repairing extensively the damaged front porch. Shortly after undertaking the work she announced, “I think it’s time to cut my losses,” her typically low-key way of telling us she was planning to give us the building. And that’s just what she did at the end of the year, providing the Land Trust a permanent home in one of Santa Rosa’s most notable—and now even more handsome—historic buildings.



STEPHEN JOSEPH

Secret Pasture Wildlife Preserve east of Glen Ellen was the first property donated outright to Sonoma Land Trust.

Our 30th year protecting Sonoma County's signature landscapes

THAT LAND BY THE BAY

In January we closed escrow on another 1,679 acres where Sonoma County meets San Francisco Bay, adjacent to our earlier protected lands for a total of 4,000 acres by the Bay. We spent much of 2003 and 2004 raising the money to buy this land and the adjacent Dickson Ranch.

The newest baylands property, within a Trust target area identified 25 years ago, includes the only undeveloped complete transition zone from alluvial fan to historic salt marsh in the entire Bay Area, running from the shore of San Pablo Bay to 400' above sea level. Species-rich, the land supports saline clover, golden eagle, long-eared and burrowing owls, and a viola that will host the endangered Calippe silverspot butterfly after uplands enhancement compatible with continued cattle grazing. California red-legged frogs are another uplands species



Above left: Burrowing owl. Right: Owl's clover and lupine.

identified on site, while clapper rail and salt marsh harvest mice will gain from salt marsh restoration planned along the Bay. Eagles and owls lifted our spirits in the field as planning activities forged ahead in the office, and construction

began on the 1.5-mile portion of the Bay Trail between the Petaluma River and Reclamation Road.

A TRIBUTE TO THE BOTANISTS

The Trust's newest conservation easement has a venerable native plant lineage. Milo Baker, whose cataloguing of Sonoma County flora as a Santa Rosa Junior College professor made him one of California's most respected botanists in the early 20th century, sold property in Adobe Canyon to UC Berkeley professor and Berkeley Herbarium Director Herbert Mason in the 1940s. In 2005,



Gwen Dhese enjoys the view from the Mason property.

Mason's son David donated an easement to SLT, protecting both diverse upland canyon-side and riparian habitat in perpetuity.

STEWARDING OUR LANDS

As we added to our protected lands list, upgrading both volunteer training and tech infrastructure improved our ability to safeguard and manage conservation properties. Generous individuals made specific contributions to build our capacity. An anonymous donor suggested and funded our first in-depth monitoring workshop at Glen Oaks Ranch; Jack and Marilyn Jones helped us purchase new Sonoma County geographical information system (GIS) data at a bargain price; and the Tukman family enabled us to hook up a more powerful network server for smoother and safer electronic communication. The combination of intelligence, muscle and tech will pay



Restoration of salt marsh and enhancement of seasonal wetlands at Sonoma Baylands will improve waterfowl habitat.

TOM GREER

JOHN BROSNAN

GEORGIANA HALE

STEPHEN JOSEPH



STEPHEN JOSEPH

Anchor preserve Glen Oaks Ranch was originally named Glen Ellen in the 1860s for owner Ellen Stuart.

stewardship dividends, especially to our Invasive Plant Control Program on Trust anchor preserves. We took an inventive approach to vegetation management by arranging to graze Marin Sun Farms' light grass-fed beef on our new seasonal wetlands at North Parcel, keeping plants at an optimal height for migrating waterfowl and simultaneously furthering local agriculture. Dozens of volunteers were key to our progress in 2005, monitoring more properties than ever and contributing hundreds of hours on projects from architectural design to erosion control.

EDUCATION – OUTDOOR AND IN

We continued and expanded our work with partners such as LandPaths and Circuit Rider Productions to bring students to anchor preserves like Glen Oaks Ranch and Laufenburg Ranch for recreation and restoration activities. Kids met California natives like newts and lizards and learned the word “riparian” as they planted seedlings along Bidwell and Stuarts Creeks. We began reworking our website to show more people what Sonoma Land Trust is undertaking and has already achieved; have a look at www.sonomalandtrust.org. And through our

hikes series we brought scores of Trust members and friends to explore protected lands and hear experts on subjects from medicinal uses of native plants to niche markets for local ag producers.

Continued on next page



Riparian planting at Glen Oaks.



STEPHEN JOSEPH

Sonoma Land Trust is working with landowners to establish natural wildlife corridors in harmony with vineyards.

THE NEXT BIG THINGS

With the momentum of successful complex land transactions at the Baylands, we refocused our acquisition expertise on other regions of the county, especially the Mill Creek watershed in the North County, the Jenner Headlands north of the Russian River, and a corridor leading from Jack London to Annadel State Park. Acknowledging that all of these purchases will require substantial public funding, we look eagerly toward 2006 bond and reauthorization campaigns.



STEPHEN JOSEPH

The Jenner Headlands offer magnificent views to the ocean.

THE GIFT OF BOLTON HOUSE

The magnificent 1903 building where we have had our office since 2002 is a wonderful place to hold meetings and receptions. Working out of stately Bolton House, designed by Petaluma architect Brainerd Jones, we have been able to share our good fortune with other environmental groups in the community, holding gatherings in the space we have enjoyed so much. When Daphne Smith deeded us the building at the end of 2005, we accepted the gift gratefully, acknowledging both the trust Daphne placed in us and the importance of this landmark to the area. For an organization boldly committed “to protect the land forever,” having our headquarters in a historic building that has survived three major earthquakes is just right.

THE REASON

That our landscapes contribute immeasurably to our quality of life in Sonoma County is more than a metaphor, it is a demonstrable truth. Our air, soils, water and sun have a direct impact on the health of our bodies and spirits. They flavor the grapes and the greens we put into our mouths; they shape our children for good or ill; they show us, when we scale a hill or rocky outcrop, where we are in relation to others. Our work comes from our deep connection to this place, and we offer the new growth to our community.

Our diversified portfolio of conservation projects

For more project information, see www.sonomalandtrust.org

ANCHOR PRESERVES

1 Baylands: Sears Point	2,327
2 Estero Americano Preserve	147
3 Glen Oaks Ranch	236
4 Laufenburg Ranch	179
5 Little Black Mountain	500

OTHER SLT OWNED LANDS

6 Baylands: Leonard Ranch	244
7 Baylands: North Parcel	279
8 Freezeout Redwoods	89
9 Secret Pasture	300
10 Sonoma Creek	2
11 White Rock Preserve	92

CONSERVATION EASEMENTS AND OTHER PROJECTS

12 Airport Boulevard	50
13 Baylands: Lower Ranch	528
14 Bear Canyon	96
15 Blucher Creek	7
16 Bohemia Ranch	937
17 Canelis Old-Growth Redwoods	1
18 Cuffeys Cove	1068
19 Enchanted Wood	8
20 Finley Creek	240
21 Fish Rock Ranch	7
22 Gird Creek	100
23 Knaus Forest at Nunns Canyon	36
24 Little Creek	40
25 Mason/Adobe Canyon	18
26 Middle Reach	44
27 Mill Creek Old Growth	54
28 Morgan's Hill	22



29 Mother Gardens at OAEC	3	42 Watson Ranch	530
30 Nefertierra	78	43 West Ridge Knolls	74
31 Oak Hill Farm	677	44 Baylands: Halperin Baylands	11
32 OGA Little Creek	73	45 Baylands: Petaluma River Marsh	49
33 Old Hill Ranch	37	46 Baylands: Sonoma Baylands	348
34 Quail Hill	81	47 Bel Marin Keys	1500
35 Rancheria Creek Recesses	602	48 Cloudy Bend	388
36 River Bend	32	49 Harrison Grade Serpentine	32
37 Santa Rosa Creek Headwaters	162	50 Laguna de Santa Rosa	535
38 Summerfield Waldorf School	32	51 McCord Ranch	2786
39 Sunrise Redwoods	20	52 Red Hill Ranch	910
40 Van Winkle Redwoods	46	53 Rigler Preserve	370
41 Ward Creek	240	54 Wild Turkey Hill	8



The forest at Red Hill Ranch was slated for logging before SLT negotiated the purchase of 910 acres next to Pomo Canyon.

Financial statements

The amounts presented here are derived from Sonoma Land Trust's audited financial statements for the years ending December 31, 2005 and December 31, 2004. Complete copies of the audited reports are available on request.



View from the Freezout Redwoods west of Duncans Mills.

STEPHEN JOSEPH

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 31, 2005

SUPPORT AND REVENUE	
Membership	377,382
Contributions	9,180,393
In-kind Contributions	993,600
Project Revenue and Fees	819,194
Other Income	101,428
<i>Total Support and Revenue</i>	11,471,997
EXPENSES	
General and Administrative	438,563
Fundraising	157,711
Projects and Stewardship	2,261,269
<i>Total Expenses</i>	2,857,543
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS	8,614,454

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2005 AND 2004

ASSETS	2005	2004
Cash and Cash Equivalents	2,439,666	417,518
Investments	509,404	7,511,147
Contracts and Other Receivables	342,569	34,552
Pledges Receivable	66,000	138,716
Conservation Lands and Easements	27,474,697	14,536,145
Property and Equipment, Net	914,858	38,456
Deposits	1,500	504,464
<i>Total Assets</i>	31,748,694	23,180,998
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	2005	2004
<i>Liabilities</i>		
Accounts Payable and Accrued Expenses	233,746	180,504
Long Term Debt	200,000	300,000
<i>Total Liabilities</i>	433,746	480,504
<i>Net Assets</i>		
Unrestricted		
Available for Operations	1,357,841	454,656
Board Designated: Conservation Projects	417,736	203,563
Board Designated: Conservation Lands and Easements	27,474,697	14,536,145
Temporarily Restricted	2,064,674	7,506,130
<i>Total Net Assets</i>	31,314,948	22,700,494
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS	31,748,694	23,180,998

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Peter Mattson, Chair	Mary Hafner
Mark Jacobsen, Vice-chair	Johanna Patri
David Smith, Vice-chair	Lew Reid
Carol Williams, Secretary	Harry Richardson
Robert Brent	Kathy Tierney
Hall Cushman	Denny Van Ness*

*Joined Board in 2006

We appreciate the service of former directors who served in 2005:

Burt Fohrman	Caryn Sachs
Doug Lipton	Michael Wright

2006 LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

John Ash	Peter Leveque
Ted Eliot	Jean Schulz
Peggy Elliott	Daphne Smith
Michael Ellis	Anne Teller
Carolyn Johnson	Rick Theis
Bill Kortum	Michael Wright

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.

Sonoma Land Trust protects the beautiful, natural, agricultural and open landscapes of Sonoma County for present and future generations.



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