

Preserving the splendor ...



SONOMA LAND TRUST
2007 Annual Report



Photo Credit: Sheri Cardo

Pete Mattson and Ralph Benson

Dear Friends,

The year 2007 was a remarkable one for the Sonoma Land Trust and it was made possible by an extraordinary group of generous donors and partners.

With your support over the years, we have protected more than 19,000 acres — an additional 1,800 in 2007 — of Sonoma coastline, natural areas, scenic and agricultural open space, wildlife corridors and watersheds — some of the most awe-inspiring land in the world. These lands complement, extend and overlap with the tens of thousands of acres that our local Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District is protecting. We closely coordinate with the District.

The real payoff from what we did together in 2007 will come years from now, in future generations. We want children today, when they are grandparents, to be able to look around Sonoma County with their grandchildren and take in the same healthy, beautiful, open vistas we are working to preserve right now.

These landscapes include our magnificent coastline, pastureland, green and golden hills, oak woodlands, vineyards and orchards, redwood and fir forests, and the Russian River and its tributaries that harbor abundant fish and clean water. With the emerging threat of climate change, our Sonoma County landscapes are more important than ever — they will serve as a safety valve for the adaptations that may become necessary.

We are far from done. Priorities for this current year include acquisition of the 5,630-acre Jenner Headlands, opportunities to preserve North Coast old-growth forestland and the Cedars Conservation Area, connecting protected land in the Mayacamas and on Sonoma Mountain, expanding local farming opportunities, and our ongoing stewardship and restoration of the Baylands and our historic ranches in Glen Ellen and Knights Valley.

This county is a paradise and we want to preserve forever the land that sustains us.

This annual report conveys our profound thanks to everyone who supported and partnered with us during 2007.

For the land,

Pete Mattson, Board Chair

Ralph Benson, Executive Director



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Tolay Creek Ranch ties the County's new Tolay Lake Regional Park to the Bay and is rich in resources. Along with the creek, the property in the Sonoma Baylands possesses serpentine wildflower areas, oak woodlands, incredible views from the ridgetops of the entire Bay Area, significant wildlife populations, and the strong likelihood of Native American cultural resources, such as have been found on neighboring Tolay Lake Regional Park. Special thanks to Jean Schulz, Sandra Donnell and Justin Faggioli, Nancy and Tony Lilly, David Weed, the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, and an anonymous donor for making this purchase possible with their generous contributions.

A YEAR RICH IN DIVERSE ACQUISITIONS

The only shared characteristic among the four remarkable properties that the Sonoma Land Trust protected in 2007 is that they are all in Sonoma County. Other than that, they each reflect different elements of our large and varied county, and, in some cases, they are the only places in the world to possess certain features.

For example, **Pitkin Marsh** along Highway 116 in the West County harbors the white sedge, a plant that was long believed to be extinct until it was rediscovered there in 1983. The **Gateway Property** is at the edge of a remote and geologically unique region — The Cedars — where, over millions of years, the earth's mantle, usually miles underground, has pushed through the earth's surface to create tall talus barrens of serpentine rocks and soils.

Just as spectacular, 1,700-acre **Tolay Creek Ranch** (formerly part of Roche Ranch) connects the County's Tolay Lake Regional Park with the Sonoma Baylands, providing continuous wildlife corridors, expansive views and future public access opportunities in the Tolay Creek watershed. The result is the protection of one of the last remaining uninterrupted freshwater to saltwater systems in the entire San Francisco-San Pablo Bay!

And thanks to the generosity of Jerry and Toby Levine, a donated conservation easement on the 31-acre **Rock Fall Woods** ensures that a very special forested area along Mark West Creek will be preserved forever.



The 27-acre Lower Pitkin Marsh is the only place in the world where the white sedge (*Carex albida*) still lives and the only site in the Western U.S. where three species of beaked rush coexist. Here, Rebecca Thompson of the Open Space District photographs an unusual plant. Preservation of this completely unique spot located off Highway 116 between Sebastopol and Forestville now protects a tremendous diversity of vegetation and habitats. Thanks to the quick action of agency and private partners, and the “opportunity fund” provided by Warren Watkins, the Sonoma Land Trust was able to move fast to secure this singular property.

LEVERAGE AND LARGE LANDSCAPES

These days, the key themes that describe our work at the Sonoma Land Trust are *leverage* and *large landscapes*.

Leverage because, in Sonoma County, we have the benefit of our incredible, local, voter-approved, sales tax-funded Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District. The District brings local acquisition dollars to the table that the Sonoma Land Trust then works to supplement with funds from private foundations, like the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, and public agencies, such as the California Coastal Conservancy and the California Wildlife Conservation Board.

On the North Coast, we continue to work to protect our spectacular coastline and Sonoma County’s redwood forests. For the last few years, we have been working tirelessly to acquire and protect the Jenner Headlands, which includes more than 1,500 acres of coastal prairie, easily seen from Highway 1 and Sonoma Coast State Park, and more than 3,000 acres of redwood and Douglas fir forest.

With funding from the California Coastal Conservancy, we and several of our partners are developing a conservation plan for the geologically and botanically distinctive Cedars area. And on Sonoma Mountain and in the Sonoma Valley, while working to restore our historic Glen Oaks Ranch, we are also striving to connect wild and natural lands.

TENDING THE LAND

Our work doesn't end with a conservation land acquisition; it just begins. Our expert stewardship team works with a devoted and growing corps of volunteers to monitor conservation easements and help with trail maintenance, invasive plant removal, erosion control and myriad other land management activities.

As our landholdings increase, so does our need for stewardship volunteers. In 2007, we were fortunate to have 300 volunteers contribute a total of more than 2,000 hours. This included visiting 40 properties and monitoring more than 10,000 acres, renovating a cabin on Little Black Mountain, repairing a fence on the Estero Americano Preserve, transplanting native grasses at the Baylands, hand-irrigating oak and buckeye seedlings at Glen Oaks Ranch, completing bird monitoring surveys at the Baylands, and so much more. *Thank you, volunteers!*

Young people are also getting out on our land. Through partnerships with groups that facilitate environmental education and stewardship projects, the Sonoma Land Trust provided frequent opportunities in 2007 for local students to experience, explore and learn about the natural world.

For example, Circuit Rider Productions' Watershed Science Program, which works primarily with disadvantaged youth, brought students to Glen Oaks and Laufenburg Ranches for restoration planting, water quality monitoring and other environmental education activities, and students from the East Bay's Youth Leadership Corps of the Student Conservation Association removed an acre-sized stand of mature French broom from White Rock Preserve. In addition, LandPaths brought elementary students to Glen Oaks Ranch as part of their "In Our Own Backyard" program, and the Marin Conservation Corps' Project ReGeneration students stewarded the Bay Trail and pulled invasive *dittrichia* at the Sonoma Baylands. Classes from Sonoma State University are also using Land Trust preserves as "living laboratories."



Photo credit: Circuit Rider Productions



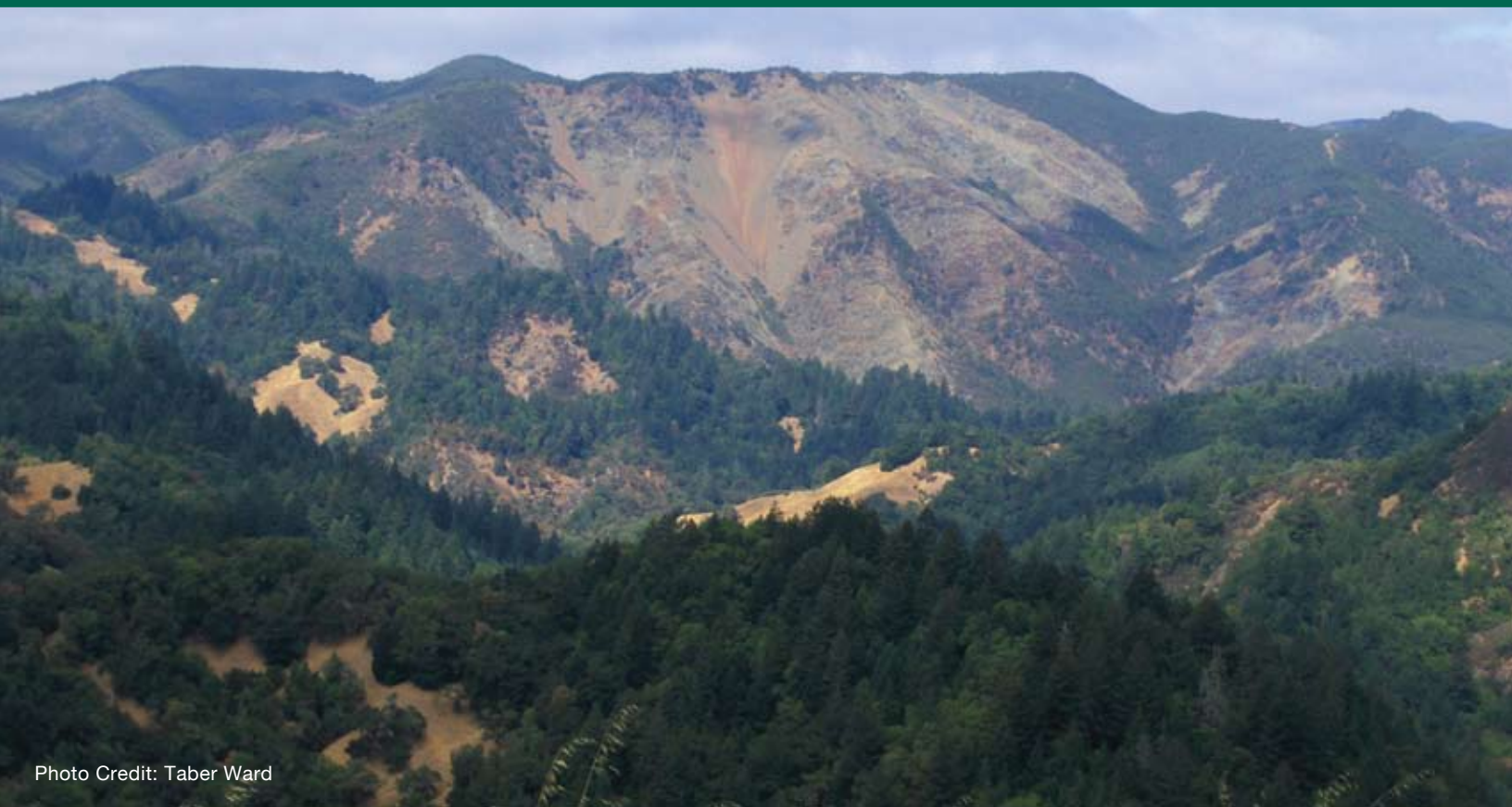
STANDING UP FOR AN AGRICULTURAL CONSERVATION EASEMENT

Conservation easements are forever ... and the Sonoma Land Trust takes seriously our obligation to care for these easements forever. That is why we filed a lawsuit to enforce an agricultural conservation easement on 500 acres of land near San Pablo Bay in southern Sonoma County after several years of negotiations with the landowner failed to assuage our concerns about the impacts of dredge materials on this protected land. Joined by the California Coastal Conservancy and the State Attorney General's office, the Land Trust is committed to seeing this through to a resolution that respects the terms of the conservation easement.

RESTORATION OF THE BAYLANDS MOVES AHEAD

Last year, we wrapped up three years of stakeholder-based restoration planning on the Sears Point Restoration Project and began moving forward with the vision to restore almost 1,000 acres of tidal wetlands. Working with our partners, the California Department of Fish and Game and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, we initiated the project's environmental impact reports, permits and plans to transfer the property into permanent protection with these agencies. We also began planning for expanding public access at the Sears Point Ranch on Highway 37. We launched a Trails Master Plan, which is considering up to six miles of new trails, and the Sears Point Ranch Site Plan. The site plan is focused on coordinating the ranch site's operations with expanded public access, and refining the goals and vision for the future Baylands Education Center, which will serve as our headquarters in the Sonoma Baylands region.

The Cedars' Gateway Property is in a remote region situated northwest of Austin Creek State Recreational Area. The Cedars has highly unusual geology that exists in only a few other places on the planet. The Sonoma Land Trust is focusing on protecting as much of this unique region as possible, and when the 40-acre Gateway Property came on the market last year, we worked with Robert Judd of the Community Foundation Sonoma County to quickly pull together private funding to secure this incomparable place. Special thanks to Henry and Holly Wendt for their generous gift toward this purchase.





LOOKING FORWARD TO 2008 — THE JENNER HEADLANDS

Since 2005, the Sonoma Land Trust has been working toward the purchase of the 5,630-acre Jenner Headlands, recognized nationally as a priority for protection. We have an unparalleled opportunity to protect a vast coastal prairie, secure stunning views, provide a safe and spectacular route for several miles of the California Coastal Trail, protect water resources and manage a landscape rich with wildlife. Projects like this are years in the making and one of the reasons we so depend upon your continuing support. You will be hearing a lot more about the Jenner Headlands in the months ahead.

YOU MAKE IT POSSIBLE

All of our donors and funding partners deserve enormous thanks for making the above purchases achievable. Special thanks goes to Carolyn (CJ) Johnson and Rick Theis for their end-of-year \$150,000 challenge. When all the gifts were counted, this special initiative had garnered an impressive \$800,000 in matching donations! Thank you, CJ and Rick, and all of your friends and Land Trust supporters — your contributions are already making a difference.

The Sonoma Land Trust was also the beneficiary last year of an unexpected bequest from longtime supporter Pauline Gilbert, who had enjoyed numerous Land Trust hikes over the years. Planned estate gifts, like Pauline's, help to ensure that the Sonoma Land Trust will always exist to protect our county's natural beauty and resources. It's a legacy that never ends.



Photo Credit: Georgiana Hale

A conservation easement over **Rock Fall Woods**, donated by Jerry and Toby Levine, protects an intact, mature and diverse forested area, including 1,100 feet of riparian corridor along the steelhead-bearing Mark West Creek, and an unusual volcanic rockfall that gives the property its name.

SPECIAL APPRECIATION

We are honored to work with our public agency and private foundation partners that have provided major funding and support for our acquisitions and programs:

California Coastal Conservancy
California Wildlife Conservation Board
Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation
Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District
San Francisco Bay Trail Project
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

Over the years, the support from these organizations has protected thousands of acres of Sonoma County landscapes. In 2007, their contributions funded Lower Pitkin Marsh, Tolay Creek Ranch, the Cedars Conservation Plan, and Sears Point restoration and public access planning.

We honor the memory of Marcia Grimm, late staff counsel to the California Coastal Conservancy.



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OUR DIVERSIFIED PORTFOLIO OF CONSERVATION PROJECTS

	ACREAGE	MAP #		ACREAGE	MAP #
ANCHOR PRESERVES					
Baylands: Sears Point	2327	1	Mason	18	30
Estero Americano Preserve	127	2	Middle Reach	44	31
Glen Oaks Ranch	236	3	Mill Creek Old Growth	54	32
Laufenburg Ranch	179	4	Morgan's Hill	22	33
Little Black Mountain	500	5	Mother Gardens at OAEC	3	34
OTHER SLT-OWNED LANDS					
Baylands: Leonard Ranch	244	6	Nefertierra	78	35
Baylands: North Parcel	279	7	Oak Hill Farm	677	36
Baylands: Tolay Creek Ranch	1665	8	OGA Little Creek	73	37
Cedars: Gateway	40	9	Old Hill Ranch	37	38
Freezeout Redwoods	89	10	Quail Hill	81	39
Lower Pitkin Marsh	27	11	Rancheria Creek Recesses	602	40
Secret Pasture	300	12	River Bend	32	41
Sonoma Creek	2	13	Rock Fall Woods	31	42
White Rock Preserve	92	14	Santa Rosa Creek Headwaters	162	43
CONSERVATION EASEMENTS					
Airport Boulevard	50	15	Summerfield Waldorf School	32	44
Baylands: Lower Ranch	528	16	Sunrise Redwoods	20	45
Baylands: Tolay Creek Riparian	36	17	Van Winkle Redwoods	46	46
Bear Canyon	96	18	Ward Creek	240	47
Blucher Creek	7	19	Watson Ranch	530	48
Bohemia Ranch	937	20	West Ridge Knolls	74	49
Canelis Old-Growth Redwoods	1	21	OTHER COMPLETED PROJECTS		
Cuffeys Cove	1068	22	Baylands: Halperin Baylands	11	50
Elarra	60	23	Baylands: Petaluma River Marsh	49	51
Enchanted Wood	8	24	Baylands: Sonoma Baylands	348	52
Finley Creek	240	25	Bel Marin Keys	1500	53
Fish Rock Ranch	7	26	Cloudy Bend	388	54
Gird Creek	100	27	Harrison Grade Serpentine	32	55
Knaus Forest at Nuns Canyon	36	28	Laguna de Santa Rosa	535	56
Little Creek	40	29	McCord Ranch	2786	57
			Red Hill	910	58
			Rigler Preserve	370	59
			Wild Turkey Hill	8	60

FINANCIAL STATEMENT

The amounts presented here are derived from the Sonoma Land Trust's financial statements for the years ending December 31, 2007 (not yet audited) and December 31, 2006 (audited). Complete copies of the reports are available upon request.

STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 1, 2007

SUPPORT AND REVENUE	
Membership Contributions	924,451
Other Contributions	155,494
In-Kind Contributions	121,732
Project Revenue and Fees	2,178,849
Other Income	128,041
<i>Total Support and Revenue</i>	<i>3,508,567</i>
EXPENSES	
General and Administrative	489,755
Fundraising	278,415
Projects and Stewardship	1,465,757
<i>Total Expenses</i>	<i>2,233,927</i>
NET ORDINARY INCOME	1,274,640
GRANTS FOR LAND ACQUISITION	14,806,000
CHANGE IN NET ASSETS ¹	16,080,640

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AS OF DECEMBER 31, 2007 AND 2006

ASSETS	2007	2006
Cash and Cash Equivalents	2,673,962	1,909,883
Investments	612,700	559,188
Contracts and Other Receivables	389,748	88,967
Pledges Receivable	58,363	22,500
Conservation Lands and Easements ¹	42,603,053	27,451,515
Property and Equipment, Net	1,028,039	920,756
Deposits	7,879	7,377
<i>Total Assets¹</i>	<i>47,373,744</i>	<i>30,960,186</i>
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS		
<i>Liabilities</i>		
Accounts Payable and Accrued Expenses	157,650	262,286
Current Maturity of Long-Term Debt	—	202,085
Long-Term Debt	19,342	10,882
Deferred Income	631,179	
<i>Total Liabilities</i>	<i>808,171</i>	<i>475,253</i>
Net Assets		
Unrestricted		
Available for Operations	2,107,222	1,447,290
Board Designated: Conservation Projects	583,225	367,685
Board Designated: Conservation Lands and Easements ¹	42,603,053	27,451,515
Temporarily Restricted	1,272,073	1,218,443
<i>Total Net Assets¹</i>	<i>46,565,573</i>	<i>30,484,933</i>
TOTAL LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS ¹	47,373,744	31,314,948

¹ These numbers reflect the \$14,086,000 appraised value of Tolay Creek Ranch and the \$970,000 purchase price for Lower Pitkin Marsh at the end of 2007. For both properties, conservation easements eliminating much of the development potential of the property were granted to the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District on closing, thus diminishing these values substantially. The amount by which the conservation easements reduced the values of these properties has yet to be determined, but will be reflected in the audited financial statement.

THE SONOMA LAND TRUST PROTECTS THE SCENIC, NATURAL, CULTURAL, AGRICULTURAL AND OPEN LANDSCAPES OF SONOMA COUNTY FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE COMMUNITY AND FUTURE GENERATIONS BY:

developing long-term land protection strategies • promoting private and public funding for land conservation • acquiring land and conservation easements • practicing stewardship, including the restoration of conservation properties • promoting a sense of place and a land ethic through activities, education and outreach.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

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David Smith, Vice-Chair
Carol Williams, Secretary
Robert Brent
Hall Cushman
Mary Hafner
Johanna Patri
Harry Richardson
Peter Rogers
Maggie Salenger*
Tom Simone
Kathy Tierney
Denny Van Ness

* Joined Board in 2008

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

STAFF

Ralph Benson, Executive Director

ACQUISITIONS

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STEWARDSHIP

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DEVELOPMENT AND MARKETING

Sheri Cardo*, Stacey Kaufman, Reta Lockert, Beverly Scotland

FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

Dale Carroll, Lois Downy

VOLUNTEER COORDINATOR

Joe Ficarelli

* Joined SLT in 2008

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...to protect the land forever



SONOMA LAND TRUST