

Expanding our horizons ...



SONOMA LAND TRUST  
*2009 Annual Report*

Dear Friends,

Large landscapes — scenic, agricultural, natural and open — they are what we have been focusing on in recent years. Why? Because they are what define Sonoma County and give us a sense of place; because they are essential to maintaining the health of our natural systems, particularly as the first consequential ripples of our changing climate are felt; and because, in recent years, opportunities to purchase large, key parcels have presented themselves.



Mark Jacobsen and Ralph Benson

The Jenner Headlands project, which this annual report celebrates, was five years in the making. It is the single largest conservation land transaction in Sonoma County history and took many partners to accomplish. This annual report is a thank you note to everyone who helped make the acquisition possible.

All of us who cherish Sonoma County landscapes owe a special debt of thanks to the remarkably civic-minded Jean Schulz. Her thoughtful philanthropy has been a lifeline in these challenging times. With the help of those of you whose names we are proud to list in this annual report, and friends whom we will acknowledge in our 2010 annual report, we are thrilled to have matched Jean Schulz' generous \$2 million gift.

Large landscape protection is incremental. Thus, we also acknowledge the gift of the Drake Family Conservation Easement that starts to protect forever a corridor of wild land between Annadel and Jack London State Parks.

What's next? Stewardship looms large. At Jenner, along with our partners, we have launched an intensive process to get to know the land in detail as we develop access protocols and a comprehensive resource management plan. We are delighted to have linked up with The Wildlands Conservancy in managing the Jenner Headlands. And at the Sonoma Baylands along Highway 37, work continues on our massive Sears Point Restoration Program.

The Board of Directors and Staff of Sonoma Land Trust are grateful for the support of all of the people and organizations acknowledged in this annual report. Thank you.

To protect the land forever,

Mark Jacobsen, Board Chair

Ralph Benson, Executive Director





The Jenner Headlands is biologically rich, with 13 different habitat types, eight watersheds, 3,100 acres of redwood and Douglas fir forest, 1,500 acres of rare coastal prairie, and numerous threatened and endangered species. Photo by Stephen Joseph Photography.

## The Jenner Headlands ... protected forever!

One hundred years from now, the Jenner Headlands will look much like it does today... only better. With a forest managed for ecological values, the redwood trees will be bigger and older, well on their way to gaining the colossal girth of their ancestors. The native plants of the coastal prairie will have been enhanced by a grazing regime designed to mimic that of the herbivores of long ago. The clear-running creeks will continue to provide habitat and refugia for coho salmon and steelhead trout. And we will all be able to wander throughout this land, appreciative of the sacrifices and vision it took to preserve this ecologically invaluable landscape.

This is what it means to protect a land forever. This is what your support of the Sonoma Land Trust has made possible.

Thanks to you, this land will do its part in the global fight against climate change. While we can't predict how, when and which animals and plants will continue to make their homes on the Jenner Headlands, the scale of this protected landscape provides the necessary room for our systems to adapt to the project-

ed changes in our environment. The soils, plants and trees of the forest and prairie will sequester carbon. The uplands and coastal location will provide refuge for species that are no longer able to tolerate higher temperatures. The waterways will run cool and clean in support of all the life forms dependent on them.

Thanks to you, 2009 ended on a very high note — and it's only the beginning...

## HOW MANY PEOPLE DOES IT TAKE TO PROTECT 5,630 ACRES?

Protecting the Jenner Headlands took more than a village — it took a town, county, state, nation, and hundreds of individuals! Nothing was simple, and there were many unexpected hurdles to overcome, and yet the stars did ultimately align on December 17, 2009. After more than four years of complex negotiations and nonstop fundraising, the Sonoma Land Trust closed escrow on this incomparable 5,630-acre property, securing this wild coastal landscape forevermore — and propelling the Sonoma Land Trust to another milestone: more than 25,000 acres protected *forever!*

What a day that was! The Jenner Headlands' many champions were enthusiastically toasted and lauded, from SLT's tenacious acquisitions director, Amy Chesnut, who pursued every possible avenue to save the property, to the elected officials and community leaders who provided their steadfast support, to the numerous funding partners and individual donors who contributed to this \$36 million transaction, and to the three organizations that provided \$16 million in bridge loans when the deal was threatened by California's bond freeze.

Financial support for the purchase was provided through grants from a number of county, state and national agencies and private foundations, including the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District; the State Coastal Conservancy and Wildlife Conservation Board; National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's Coastal and Estuarine Land Conservation Program; USDA Forest

Service, Forest Legacy Program; and the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation. The shortage of readily available state bond funds was filled by short-term loans from The Wildlands Conservancy, Save the Redwoods League, and the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, and we are pleased to report that state funds will soon be released so that the loans can be repaid.

The purchase is only the beginning. Signs are up, hikes are happening, and the property is crawling with experts gathering natural resource data that will be used to develop an Integrated Resource Management Plan to guide long-term stewardship. The Sonoma Land Trust is pleased to be working hand-in-hand with our new partner, The Wildlands Conservancy, to write the plan and co-manage the property. The Wildlands Conservancy is a highly respected land conservation organization based in Southern California with expertise in land stewardship, public access and outdoor educational programming for youth. We ask you to join us in welcoming them to Sonoma County.

Once the plan is finished, title to the Jenner Headlands will be transferred to The Wildlands Conservancy with the intent of ongoing management collaboration. In the meanwhile, the public is enjoying unprecedented opportunities to experience the Jenner Headlands through guided hikes led by the Sonoma Land Trust, The Wildlands Conservancy and our other partners — the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District, Stewards of the Coast and Redwoods, Coastwalk, California Native Plant Society and LandPaths.



Historically, coho salmon made their way through Russian Gulch on the Jenner Headlands — and may do so again. Photo by Stephen Joseph Photography.





Protecting the abundant natural resources on their property was key to the Drake family choosing to donate a conservation easement to the Sonoma Land Trust. Photo by Stephen Joseph Photography.

## A wildlife corridor with a view

One of the many ways to leave a legacy for future generations is by donating to the Sonoma Land Trust a conservation easement on an ecologically significant property, which is just what Peter and Kathy Drake did at the end of 2009.

Their 34 acres on the north flank of Sonoma Mountain in Bennett Valley are situated on an important wildlife habitat corridor between Annadel and Jack London State Parks, and represented a priority for conservation.

Small but significant, the property is a treasure trove of biodiversity. It boasts sweeping views of the Mayacamas Mountains, coastal oak woodlands, perennial and annual grasslands, up to 40 different species of plants and a wide variety of wild animals, thanks to its healthy habitat and adjacent open spaces.

To renew the human spirit as well, the Drakes were pleased to include in their offer an allowance for the Land Trust to conduct member hikes on this stunning landscape. But perhaps no one is more inspired about this gift than their own next generation — teenagers who understand the enduring value of protecting the ecosystems upon which we all depend.





Azaleas in springtime bloom at Pitkin Marsh. Photo by Stephen Joseph Photography.

## Doing our best for the land

**A**t the Sonoma Land Trust, we take great pride in our efforts to care for the land and the natural and cultural splendor with which we have been entrusted. Nature is dynamic — there are many intricate puzzle parts that are constantly moving and interacting.

We often hire scientists and specialists to collect information about the natural systems, plants and animals that inhabit our preserves. We use that information to develop management plans to protect and enhance these important resources. Following are examples of how we are using science to protect our properties and, in turn, how scientists are using our preserves as “living laboratories.”

### **CITIZEN SCIENTISTS AT WORK AT JENNER HEADLANDS**

Jenner Headlands project manager Brook Edwards has formed a team of expert birding volunteers who regularly visit the property and record which birds are using it. With protocols developed by the Point Reyes Bird Observatory, these citizen scientists take specific routes through the grasslands and forest to record the birds they see, hear and observe nesting. The presence of specific birds can indicate the overall health of the habitat and assist us in better managing the natural resources. Over time, species changes may indicate trends associated with climate change.

### **SUPPORTING THE WHITE SEDGE AT PITKIN MARSH**

The white sedge, *Carex albida*, is a small, fairly nondescript plant that lives only at Pitkin Marsh in western Sonoma County. Our goal is to increase the population of this nearly extinct plant and help it be sustainable for generations to come. Stewardship project manager Tony Nelson and his corps of scientists have spent many wet days in the marsh measuring water flow, temperature, conductivity and other important determinants of water quality to establish correlations with the health of the white sedge population.

### **COWS AND PRAIRIE MIX WELL AT ESTERO AMERICANO**

At our Estero Americano Preserve, stewardship project manager Shanti Wright is partnering with Sonoma State University’s Dr. Caroline Christian, innovative rancher Joe Pozzi and teams of students and local native plant society volunteers to evaluate the effectiveness of cattle grazing for improving the health of the native grasslands and wildflowers. Ultimately, the information they gather will help us and others to manage cattle in ways that improve both our natural resources and our local agricultural economy.



## Nurturing a sense of place

*“People need wild places. Whether or not we think we do, we do ... We need to experience a landscape that is timeless, whose agenda moves at the pace of speciation and glaciers ...”*

— Barbara Kingsolver

People need to get out in the wild to hike, to reflect, to breathe deeply, and to connect — physically, emotionally, spiritually — with their natural surroundings. Fostering a land ethic and a sense of place is a vital part of the Sonoma Land Trust’s mission and, increasingly, we are opening up our properties for hiking, volunteer workdays and educational activities, providing many more opportunities for SLT members, the public and children to engage with the land.

Our annual wildflower hike series at Sears Point in the Sonoma Baylands has been so popular that, in 2009, we doubled our offerings, enabling more than 200 people to enjoy the myriad flowers and wide vistas afforded there each spring. Land Trust Facebook fans were treated to a fall hike of

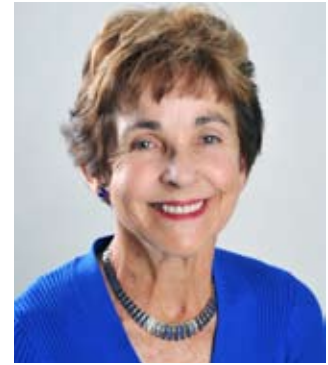
their own on the Bay Trail along San Pablo Bay, protected by the Sonoma Land Trust and now open to the public 365 days a year. The member hike series, a benefit of being a donor to the Land Trust, expanded from four hikes to six hikes per quarter to accommodate our expanding membership. Our workdays, which offer volunteers a hands-on stewardship experience with our unique properties, continue to grow in number as the number of protected properties increases, and we continue to welcome students from LandPaths’ IOOBY (In Our Own Backyard) program and the Student Conservation Association to our properties for restoration and education activities. Our land is hard at work performing many functions for us year round!



SLT’s spring wildflower hikes on Cougar Mountain in the Sonoma Baylands are always popular. Photo by Scott Hess Photography.

## From the *Redwoods to the Bay* — and a key \$2 million donation

Sonoma County has it all: a breathtaking coastline, redwood forests, oak woodlands, grasslands, farmlands, wetlands, vineyards, orchards ... and people who care very deeply about protecting this natural heritage for their descendants. People like you, who donate to the Sonoma Land Trust because you understand the many ways in which saving land contributes to our overall quality of life now and in the future ... people like you, who feel an innate sense of place and awe inspired by our dramatic landscapes ... and people like Jean Schulz, a longtime supporter of the Sonoma Land Trust ...



We are grateful to Jean Schulz for her \$2 million matching gift.

In 2009, Jean pledged an extremely generous \$2 million matching gift to the Land Trust's recently launched \$18 million *Redwoods to the Bay* campaign, saying, "This is not a gift I make lightly. I am frankly worried about the ongoing development pressures on our lands and about our need to preserve large open spaces. I want our grandchildren and their children to be able to enjoy the same stunning vistas that you and I treasure today."

**Thank you, Jean, for kickstarting our *Redwoods to the Bay* campaign and to each of you who helped us meet this match!**

*Redwoods to the Bay* is an ambitious initiative to accelerate the pace of land conservation in Sonoma County and help us protect more of the signature landscapes we love. With the economic climate being what it is, we currently have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to secure a legacy of open space for future generations. Wild and natural lands targeted by the Land Trust for protection over the past few decades are now coming on the market at reasonable prices. At the same time, we are faced with an enormous lack of public funding that would normally be available to purchase these properties. *Redwoods to the Bay* will help to fill that gap and ensure that we can take advantage of these prospects.

Introduced with a liberal lead gift of \$6 million from the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, *Redwoods to the Bay* focuses on purchasing and restoring at-risk natural lands, and engaging people with the land by creating new trails, increasing the number of public outings, and providing environmental education and field research opportunities.

This past year was exceptional — we are already more than two thirds of the way toward meeting our \$18 million campaign goal! Your contributions ensured the Jenner Headlands acquisition, and your continued support will help us save additional properties and redwood forests along the Sonoma Coast, restore the wetlands at the southern tip of the county, and connect critical habitat and wildlife corridors from Sonoma Mountain over to the Mayacamas. Like Jean Schulz, we all want the Sonoma County that our grandchildren and their children experience to be every bit as beautiful and ecologically healthy as what we enjoy today. To ensure this, private donations are more vital than ever.







## Our diversified portfolio of conservation projects

### ANCHOR PRESERVES

|                                    | <i>Acreage</i> |
|------------------------------------|----------------|
| <b>1</b> Baylands: Sears Point     | 2,327          |
| <b>2</b> Estero Americano Preserve | 127            |
| <b>3</b> Glen Oaks Ranch           | 236            |
| <b>4</b> Laufenburg Ranch          | 179            |
| <b>5</b> Little Black Mountain     | 500            |
| <b>6</b> Jenner Headlands          | 5,630          |

### OTHER SLT OWNED LANDS

|                                      |       |
|--------------------------------------|-------|
| <b>7</b> Baylands: Leonard Ranch     | 244   |
| <b>8</b> Baylands: North Parcel      | 279   |
| <b>9</b> Baylands: Tolay Creek Ranch | 1,665 |
| <b>10</b> Cedars: Gateway            | 40    |
| <b>11</b> Freezeout Redwoods         | 89    |
| <b>12</b> Lower Pitkin Marsh         | 27    |
| <b>13</b> Secret Pasture             | 300   |
| <b>14</b> Sonoma Creek               | 2     |
| <b>15</b> White Rock Preserve        | 92    |

### CONSERVATION EASEMENTS

|  |       |
|--|-------|
| <b>16</b> Airport Boulevard              | 50    |
| <b>17</b> Baylands: Lower Ranch          | 528   |
| <b>18</b> Baylands: Tolay Creek Riparian | 36    |
| <b>19</b> Bear Canyon                    | 96    |
| <b>20</b> Blucher Creek                  | 7     |
| <b>21</b> Bohemia Ranch                  | 937   |
| <b>22</b> Canelis Old-Growth Redwoods    | 1     |
| <b>23</b> Cuffeys Cove                   | 1,068 |
| <b>24</b> Drake Family                   | 34    |
| <b>25</b> Elarra                         | 60    |
| <b>26</b> Enchanted Wood                 | 8     |
| <b>27</b> Finley Creek                   | 40    |
| <b>28</b> Fish Rock Ranch                | 7     |
| <b>29</b> Gird Creek                     | 100   |
| <b>30</b> Knaus Forest at Nuns Canyon    | 36    |

|                                       | <i>Acreage</i> |
|---------------------------------------|----------------|
| <b>31</b> Little Creek                | 40             |
| <b>32</b> Mason                       | 18             |
| <b>33</b> Middle Reach                | 44             |
| <b>34</b> Mill Creek Old Growth       | 54             |
| <b>35</b> Morgan's Hill               | 22             |
| <b>36</b> Mother Gardens at OAEC      | 3              |
| <b>37</b> Nefertierra                 | 78             |
| <b>38</b> Oak Hill Farm               | 77             |
| <b>39</b> OGA Little Creek            | 73             |
| <b>40</b> Old Hill Ranch              | 37             |
| <b>41</b> Quail Hill                  | 81             |
| <b>42</b> Rancheria Creek Recesses    | 602            |
| <b>43</b> River Bend                  | 32             |
| <b>44</b> Rock Fall Woods             | 31             |
| <b>45</b> Santa Rosa Creek Headwaters | 162            |
| <b>46</b> Summerfield Waldorf School  | 32             |
| <b>47</b> Sunrise Redwoods            | 20             |
| <b>48</b> Van Winkle Redwoods         | 46             |
| <b>49</b> Ward Creek                  | 240            |
| <b>50</b> Watson Ranch                | 530            |
| <b>51</b> West Ridge Knolls           | 74             |
| <b>52</b> Wild Turkey Hill            | 8              |

### OTHER COMPLETED PROJECTS

|  |       |
|--|-------|
| <b>53</b> Baylands: Halperin Baylands    | 11    |
| <b>54</b> Baylands: Petaluma River Marsh | 49    |
| <b>55</b> Baylands: Sonoma Baylands      | 348   |
| <b>56</b> Bel Marin Keys                 | 1,500 |
| <b>57</b> Cloudy Bend                    | 388   |
| <b>58</b> Harrison Grade Serpentine      | 32    |
| <b>59</b> Laguna de Santa Rosa           | 535   |
| <b>60</b> McCord Ranch                   | 2,786 |
| <b>61</b> Red Hill                       | 910   |
| <b>62</b> Rigler Preserve                | 370   |
| <b>63</b> Sonoma Mountain Ranch          | 283   |

## Financial Statements

The amounts presented here are derived from the Sonoma Land Trust's financial statements for the years ending December 31, 2009 (not yet audited) and December 31, 2008 (audited). Copies of the audited financial statements are available upon request.

### STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION AT DECEMBER 31

| ASSETS                                       | 2009               | 2008              |
|--|--------------------|-------------------|
| Cash and cash equivalents                    | \$ 3,748,926       | \$ 808,072        |
| Investments                                  | 1,885,812          | 6,080,312         |
| Contracts and other receivables <sup>1</sup> | 17,199,857         | 228,494           |
| Pledges receivable                           | 1,935,894          | 2,476,975         |
| Deposits and other assets                    | 61,473             | 208,068           |
| Conservation lands and easements             | 65,751,510         | 29,366,046        |
| Property and equipment, net                  | 885,647            | 910,281           |
| <i>Total Assets</i>                          | <i>91,469,119</i>  | <i>40,078,248</i> |
| LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS                   |                    |                   |
| <u>Liabilities</u>                           |                    |                   |
| Accounts payable and accrued expenses        | 181,273            | 249,137           |
| Deferred income                              | 386,078            | 510,171           |
| Current maturities of long-term debt         | 6,090              | 5,047             |
| Long-term debt <sup>1</sup>                  | 16,005,686         | 9,619             |
| <i>Total Liabilities</i>                     | <i>16,579,128</i>  | <i>773,974</i>    |
| <u>Net Assets</u>                            |                    |                   |
| Unrestricted                                 |                    |                   |
| Available for operations                     | 2,826,886          | 664,108           |
| Board designated — conservation projects     | 681,132            | 681,132           |
| Investment in conservation lands             | 65,751,510         | 29,366,046        |
| Sub-total unrestricted net assets            | 69,259,257         | 30,711,286        |
| Temporarily restricted net assets            | 5,630,464          | 8,592,988         |
| <i>Total Net Assets</i>                      | <i>74,889,992</i>  | <i>39,304,274</i> |
| <i>Total Liabilities and Net Assets</i>      | <i>91,469, 119</i> | <i>40,078,248</i> |

### STATEMENT OF ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEARS ENDED DECEMBER 31

| REVENUE AND SUPPORT                                    |                   |                  |
|--|-------------------|------------------|
| Membership contributions                               | 2,479,343         | 2,995,150        |
| Other contributions and grants                         | 2,269,980         | 541,225          |
| In-kind contributions                                  | 18,282            | 38,994           |
| Project income   | 493,027           | 1,105,837        |
| Investment income                                      | 787,745           | (322,335)        |
| <i>Total Revenue and Support</i>                       | <i>6,048,378</i>  | <i>4,358,871</i> |
| EXPENSES   |                   |                  |
| Projects and stewardship                               | 1,495,020         | 1,952,673        |
| Governance and administrative                          | 596,336           | 515,406          |
| Fundraising  | 371,304           | 346,668          |
| <i>Total Expenses</i>                                  | <i>2,462,660</i>  | <i>2,814,747</i> |
| Net income before land acquisition contributions       | 3,585,718         | 1,544,124        |
| Land acquisition contributions                         | 32,000,000        | 4,512,750        |
| <i>Net income after land acquisition contributions</i> | <i>35,585,718</i> | <i>6,056,874</i> |

<sup>1</sup> Long-term debt includes \$16M in bridge loans for Jenner Headlands acquisition; offset by \$16M in receivables from the State of California.

NOTE: Jenner Headlands property valuation of \$36,000,000 is based on cash purchase price. Book value may be adjusted by annual audit to reflect value after conservation easement and/or value based on pre-sale appraisal rather than purchase price.



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Ralph Benson,  
Executive Director

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Georgiana Hale, Julian Meisler, Bob Neale, Tony Nelson, Shanti Wright, Tenley Wurglitz\*\*

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### *Finance and Administration*

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### *Volunteer Coordinator*

Linda Hale

### *Stewardship Interns*

Kara Doolin, Nadja Quiroz, Connor Ross

\* Joined Staff in 2010

\*\* Former Staff

Editor/Writer: Sheri Cardo

Contributing Writer: Bob Neale

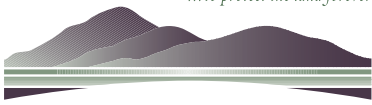
In 2009, more than 220 volunteers contributed more than 2,500 hours  
toward SLT's mission: "*... to protect the land forever.*"  
From botanists and birders to conservation monitors, hike leaders, stewardship volunteers,  
interns and the Go-to Gang, our community of volunteers helps make our work possible.

*Thank you, volunteers!*

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

*...to protect the land forever*



**SONOMA LAND TRUST**

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

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