



Roche Ranch brings connected open space along San Pablo Bay to more than 20,000 acres

Sonoma Land Trust is proud to announce the purchase of 1,665 acres that will complete the protection of a unique habitat corridor stretching from the wetlands of San Pablo Bay to the foothills of Sonoma Mountain. The property known as Roche Ranch is east of Lakeville Highway, north of Highway 37 and adjacent to Sonoma County’s Tolay Lake Regional Park and other protected open space.

Home to rare species like California red-legged frogs and burrowing owls, Roche Ranch includes 3 miles of Tolay Creek. Its acquisition is especially significant because it means 7,500 acres between the Bay and the mountain now will be uninterrupted habitat, and residents could have access to a greatly expanded nature reserve at Tolay Lake. “We’ll hold it for 3-5 years, and at some point in the future, we hope to transfer it to Sonoma County Regional Parks Department, doubling the size of Tolay Lake Regional Park,” says Land Trust Conservation Director Wendy Eliot.

Roche Ranch is a spectacular asset. From its ridge tops, it provides sweeping views of San Francisco Bay, from Mt. Tamalpais to Mt. Diablo. In the winter, its grasslands offer refuge to an array of migratory birds, and in the spring, the landscape puts on a dazzling display of wildflowers. “There are some incredible

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Looking across Roche Ranch to Sears Point (Cougar Mountain) and beyond to the Bay. Photo by Steve Ehret, Sonoma Co. Regional Parks.

Join our matching gift campaign

Carolyn (CJ) Johnson and Rick Theis, are challenging us with a \$150,000 matching gift. **Every new dollar we raise between now and December 31st, up to the challenge, will be matched by CJ and Rick.**



Carolyn Johnson & Rick Theis

“We are excited about creating this matching gift opportunity to encourage others to share their passion for the Land Trust as we have shared ours,” said CJ and Rick. “We support the great work of SLT because they have a long history of effective land protection and stewardship. With all of our help, Sonoma Land Trust will continue to save and protect the natural beauty of our local landscape for future generations to enjoy and love.”

Presented with this wonderful opportunity, we are asking each of our members and friends to make a special year-end tax deductible donation to Sonoma Land Trust. If we meet the match we can sustain our ambitious pace of Sonoma County land conservation into the coming year. There is so much more work to

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Who we are

Board of Directors

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Staff

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Baylands Program Manager:
John Brosnan
Project Associate: Taber Ward

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Stewardship Director: Bob Neale
Easement Program & GIS Manager:
Georgiana Hale
Stewardship Project Manager:
Shanti Wright
Stewardship Project Manager:
Tony Nelson

FINANCE AND ADMINISTRATION TEAM

Finance & Administration Director:
Lois Downy
Office Manager: Dale Carroll

DEVELOPMENT TEAM

Development Director:
Beverly Scottland
Donor Relations Director: Reta Lockert
Membership & Development Manager:
Stacey Kaufman

Things we do

- Develop long term land protection strategies
- Promote private and public funding for land conservation
- Acquire land and conservation easements
- Manage and restore conservation properties
- Foster a sense of place and a land ethic through activities, education and outreach

For information contact:

SONOMA LAND TRUST
(707) 526-6930

e-mail: info@sonomalandtrust.org
www.sonomalandtrust.org



A note from the executive director Into the breach

For many years, in league with conservation-minded landowners, Sonoma Land Trust built up an inventory of conservation easements throughout the County. With the help of scores of volunteers, we monitor those easements, but management responsibility for the properties remains with the landowners. Over time, several very special properties came to us through bequests. Charlie Laufenburg willed us his beautiful ranch in Knights Valley and Joan Cochran left us the historic Glen Oaks Ranch in Glen Ellen. We also came to own a number of other properties that require ongoing stewardship – notably at the Estero Americano, Little Black Mountain near Cazadero and various ranches by the Bay.

The opportunity to vastly expand the amount of protected acreage at the Baylands that came our way several years ago changed our mode of operation. The land was acquired with funds provided by the Open Space District, the California Coastal Conservancy, the Wildlife Conservation Board and others; but for a variety of reasons, none of our public agency partners was in position to take on ownership of the land, so we stepped into the breach. We were able to do so thanks to funding provided by the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, the California Coastal Conservancy and our members and other friends. Eventually, much of the Baylands will be conveyed to one or more public agencies – but only after we have developed a comprehensive stewardship program and restored the land.

This model seems to be becoming the norm, thereby posing big challenges for Sonoma Land Trust. In September we acquired the Pitkin Marsh near Forestville with funds provided by the Open Space District and the Wildlife Conservation Board. We have agreed to hold and manage Pitkin Marsh. Now we are in escrow to acquire the 1,650-acre Roche Ranch adjacent to Tolay Lake Regional Park. Acquisition funding will come again from the California Coastal Conservancy, the Wildlife Conservation Board, the Open Space District, the Moore Foundation and other generous private donors; but Sonoma Land Trust will be holding the property for years.

This, dear reader, means we need your help. These properties cannot be protected without someone or some agency agreeing to manage them. Sonoma Land Trust is stepping into the breach, and needs your support more than ever. This is why we are so excited about the recent challenge gift from Carolyn (CJ) Johnson and Rick Theis. We have larger responsibilities and larger needs as we work to protect the land forever.



Matching gift from Page 1

be done to protect the beautiful places that define Sonoma County.

We cannot do this without you. Please help us meet CJ and Rick's challenge and double the value of your year-end gift. Donate by December 31st to make your gift eligible for matching funds. Thank you!



Tony Nelson

Land management expertise in spades

Tony Nelson hit the ground running when he joined the Land Trust stewardship team in August.

An experienced wildlife biologist and a certified rangeland manager, Tony will have a project portfolio including Pitkin Marsh, Glen Oaks Ranch in Glen Ellen and North Parcel at the Baylands.

His 15 years of conservation experience include the past 6 years as stewardship director at Marin Agricultural Land Trust. Earlier he was a project manager for The Nature Conservancy, working in the Cosumnes River Preserve and on the Carrizo Plain.

Tony holds a BS in environmental and systematic biology from Cal Poly San Luis Obispo and a MS in wildlife and fisheries science from University of Arizona. "He knows the flowers and he knows the cows," says Stewardship

Director Bob Neale. About 1,400 acres of the Land Trust's managed lands are designated for livestock grazing, and once Roche Ranch and the Jenner Headlands are acquired, the rangeland will total 4,600 acres. "Rangelands are complex and fascinating," says Tony.

Tony was a certified burn boss for The Nature Conservancy, working several years on a small team that ran ecological burns throughout the state, often teaming up with federal and state fire agencies to improve habitat for endangered species.

Tony was attracted to our position because of its broad spectrum of challenges. His work at Pitkin Marsh next year, for example, will likely involve botanical surveys to determine how best to preserve native plants on the sensitive property between Sebastopol and Forestville. For the North Parcel in the Sears Point/Baylands project area along Highway 37, he'll continue

environmental reviews on the complex restoration plan. And at historic Glen Oaks, his focus will be on creek restoration and stabilizing and preserving the old structures.

It's a tall order, but the Petaluma resident is eager. "I love managing the land," Tony grins.

Planned gifts are our future

Do you want to ensure that Sonoma Land Trust will always be here to protect the natural beauty and rural landscapes of Sonoma County? Consider a Planned Gift through a bequest in your will or estate plan, a charitable remainder or lead trust, a life insurance policy naming us beneficiary, or a gift of appreciated stock.

And the chance to make a tax-free charitable gift from your IRA assets will end December 31, 2007. Donors over 70 ½ can make tax-free gifts to charity of up to \$100,000 from their individual retirement accounts this year. These gifts are excluded from both federal and California taxable income. Gifts must be processed by IRA account managers and sent to Sonoma Land Trust. For more information on this or other planned gifts, contact Reta Lockert at 707-526-6930, ext. 105 or reta@sonomalandtrust.org.

Pauline's legacy



Connie Menzies, Pauline Gilbert and John Gilbert at Laufenburg Ranch in the late 1980s. Photo by Peeter Vilms.

Last fall we were moved that Pauline Gilbert had left a significant portion of her estate to Sonoma Land Trust. Pauline, a retired teacher and an active member of Seal Watch

and California Native Plant Society, had been a regular on the Land Trust hikes series before moving to Placer County.

Among the assets that were divided among SLT and three other beneficiaries was the note she had carried on the sale of her Sonoma County house. Rather than sell the note at a discount, we opted to receive monthly payments. That way Pauline Gilbert's bequest will provide a modest but predictable income stream helping fund our conservation activities for decades.

Celebrating our volunteers

Sonoma Land Trust hosted our 4th annual Volunteer Appreciation party on the evening of October 18th. We celebrated with more than 80 community members who help us with everything from trail clearing to mapmaking to archiving files. Our Go-to Gang and several Conservation Monitors earned special acknowledgement and thanks for their dedication to field projects. Besides volunteers, landowners of Land Trust conservation easement properties and representatives from partner organizations swelled the crowd.

To date in 2007, SLT has worked with more than 200 volunteers on a wide variety of projects and programs. Most active volunteers include Conservation Monitors, Stewardship Volunteers and the Go to Gang. In 2007 we also worked with several partner groups like Student Conservation Association, Marin Conservation Corps, Marin Academic Center, LandPaths, and Circuit Rider Productions to get students on our properties for workdays. Projects ranged from trail maintenance and debris pick-up to invasive plant removal.

Roche Ranch from Page 1



Looking across the Roche Ranch acquisition to the vineyards on property west of Highway 121 retained by the Roche family. Tolay Creek in the foreground. Photo by John Brosnan.

hiking opportunities here," Eliot said. "We'll certainly be taking the public out for hikes."

The property recently appraised at over \$14 million, and the Land Trust is buying it for a discounted price of \$13 million, using generous contributions from a number of public and private partners. Escrow is expected to close December 14.

It's a day Trust staff members have been working toward for several years. Joe and Genevieve Roche bought the land and surrounding acreage in the 1970s, and have had cattle grazing on it since. But the site has been on the market awhile now, and of course, attracted the attention of developers. At one point, 40 homes were proposed for its hilltops, and a more recent plan called for 14 homes and vineyards. Fortunately, the Roche family was committed to keeping the land in open space if possible.

The ranch's preservation is made possible with contributions of \$5 million from the Gordon and Betty Moore

Foundation, \$3 million from the Wildlife Conservation Board, \$3 million from the State Coastal Conservancy, \$2 million from Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District, \$10,000 from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service Coastal Program at San Francisco Bay and \$250,000 from individual contributors. After the sale is completed, the Land Trust's first priority will be assessing the plant and animal life and the property's cultural significance.

Adjacent Tolay Lake was a busy location for Native Americans, so it is possible that the Roche Ranch land was heavily used as well. In addition, there are two old home sites on the property, including one with a eucalyptus grove where golden eagles nest. And during World War II, a portion of the land was a camp for Army troops ready to respond to a Japanese invasion. After the property's history and wildlife are studied, an interim management plan will be developed. To cover the Land Trust's initial conservation and management costs, the Moore Foundation designated \$250,000 of its \$5 million donation for stewardship.

The ranch's acquisition brings the total amount of connected open space along the bay to 22,000 acres. Other protected properties include Sonoma Land Trust's Sears Point restoration project, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge and California Department of Fish and Game's Napa-Sonoma Marshes.

To make a stock gift, call Reta at (707) 526-6930 ext. 105 or Stacey at ext. 101.

Go-to Gang repairs Little Black Mountain Preserve cabin



Dick Woodman, Bill Daniel, Earle Cummings, Jim McConnell.

This summer, a dedicated Go-to Gang volunteer crew completed an extensive porch repair at our remote Little Black Mountain Preserve in west Sonoma County. The effort was led by Bill Daniel, who assessed the structures on the property and determined that the deck on the caretaker's cabin was weathered to the point of endangering the structural integrity and livability of the cabin. Maintenance of the caretaker's residence is key to the security and management of the preserve. Bill Daniel designed and spearheaded the volunteer project, providing tools and exper-

ise and saving Sonoma Land Trust thousands of dollars. Thanks to his great help, the cabin will survive many more rainy Cazadero winters!

The Go-to Gang is our on-call stewardship crew. The lot now includes Earle Cummings, John Dolinsek, Steve Edelstein, Jerry Green, Bill Haluzak, Bob Higham, Tom Hutchison, Peter Leveque, Marcus Lipton, Don Lollock, Jim McConnell, Tom McFarling, Chuck Quibell, Roger Sanborn, and Dick Woodman. Mia James calls to round them up. In addition to routine maintenance projects on SLT's preserve properties, the Gang also responds to emergency situations like downed trees, blocked roads or fire hazards. To join the crew or refer someone, call (707) 544-5614 ext. 2, or email volunteer@sonoma-landtrust.org.

San Francisco Bay Trail opening

The Sonoma Baylands Bay Trail section of the San Francisco Bay Trail is officially open to the public. This 1.5 mile trail provides views of the Sonoma Baylands tidal marsh restoration project and nearby protected lands, as well as great birding opportunities. Several signs along the trail give information about the restora-

tion project, bird life and the history of this place. To hike or pedal the new section, turn off Highway 37 onto the access road to Port Sonoma and park either in the marked parking spaces immediately on the right or farther on in the Port Sonoma parking area. Follow the public access signs to the levee-top trail.

California State Coastal Conservancy

When you look around the nation, you find the best conservation work is achieved where land trusts and publicly funded organizations work together. In Sonoma County, we are uniquely blessed with local, state and federal agencies partners.

Since its establishment in 1976, the Coastal Conservancy has been committed to Sonoma County. Conservancy staff has provided extraordinary leadership through both its Coastal and Bay Programs. SCC's staff have demonstrated leadership by initiating and funding conservation plans, such as SLT's coastal plans, throughout Sonoma County which have resulted in strategic conservation and public access. Through its Bay Program, it has consistently supported SLT's Sonoma Baylands program, most recently with \$3 million toward the Roche Ranch acquisition, and \$1 million for the Sears Point Restoration Project.

Over the years Coastal Conservancy funding has helped SLT purchase, protect, plan and restore the Baylands, Lower Ranch, Sears Point, Roche Ranch, the Laguna Uplands, the Cedars, and thousands of acres along the spectacular Sonoma County Coast, including the Estero Americano and Red Hill.

When you drive by these lands, please tip your hat to our colleagues and friends at the Coastal Conservancy - we couldn't do our work without them.

Members, look in your mailbox for the invitation to our Holiday Open House at Oak Hill Farm. A favorite event for all ages, this year's gathering will be held the afternoon of Sunday, December 16.

Partners in Conservation

These businesses show their commitment to Sonoma County and contribute each year to Sonoma Land Trust.

Partners in bold have contributed \$1,000 or more in a year

Advent Office Furniture

American AgCredit

Amy's Kitchen Inc.

Carlile Macy

Codding Foundation

Estate Wines Ltd.

Exchange Bank

Michael Friedenberg,
Frank Howard Allen Realtors

Hafner Vineyard

Hanford ARC

HMS Travel

Hohum Conco

Jetronics

Julie Atwood Event Design

Kurt West Design Services

Laurel Glen Vineyard

Leff Construction

Kirsten Lindquist,
Pacific Union/GMAC Real Estate

Oliver's Market

Ray Carlson & Associates, Inc.

Redwood Hill Farm

Sebastopol Hardware Center

Strozzi Ranch

Weeks Drilling and Pump

Westamerica Bank

Wetlands and Water Resources

Wright Contracting, Inc.

Congratulations to Lizanne & Will



When Will Bucklin and Lizanne Pastore planned their wedding in June, they knew they didn't want well-wishers to give them more material goods. Will, the Old Hill Ranch winemaker who made a project of mapping his old vines, and Lizanne, a talented physical therapist practicing in

San Francisco, asked friends and family to contribute to Sonoma Land Trust and other charities. We're deeply grateful to these supporters who understand that the health and beauty of Sonoma County is fundamental to their own happiness.

In Celebration

Since the publication of our last newsletter, Land Trust friends have made gifts to honor these happy events and exceptional people.

Celebrating the wedding of Will

Bucklin & Elizabeth Anne

Pastore: Kyle Bickel; Jim & Margaret Gault; David & Hillary Howarth; Marciel & Vern Klenk; Jim & Cathy Long; Mark Matthews; Christian McIntosh; Nancy Napolitano; John Pastore; Michael Pastore; Erin & Matthew Perry; Elizabeth Pfau; Matthew Plympton & Kristen Techel; Donna & Victor Rodriguez; Anne Teller; Judith Tilt

Celebrating Stephanie

Chiacos: Mark Carter

Celebrating Gangaji:

Stephanie Chalmers

Celebrating Peter & Patty Mattson:

Jim & Mary Alinder

Celebrating Johanna Patri:

Ben Berto

Celebrating the wedding of Erinn

Benziger & Ari Weiswasser:

Charles & Jane Mathewson

Celebrating John T. Brosnan III:

Susan Brosnan

In Memoriam

The singer lasts a season long while the song remains forever.

Honoring **Eual Bailey:** Mike Nelligan

Honoring **Robert M. Carrillo:**

Nancy Konzett

Honoring **Moira Chatton:**

Catherine Chatton Cheney

Honoring **June Davis:** Stephanie

McLoughlin; Richard

& Gayle Sanborn

Honoring **Harriet Warner Kahn:**

Kathleen Mugele

Honoring **Geneva Ruth Sund Karr:**

Terry & Kathi Karr-Province

Honoring **Ruby Nelligan:**

Jack & Deyea Harper

Honoring **Dr. Vince Pedroia:**

Nancy Walters

Honoring **Janet Wentworth**

Smith: Peter Adams Crowell

Honoring **Dolores Snow:**

Laura Graham

Honoring **Mary Thacher:**

Mrs. Alfred Bettman

Honoring **Bill Utzinger:** Leslie

Allyn; Mr. & Mrs. John Anderson;

Exchange Bank; Ronald Fick;

Regena Field; Varley & Linda

Grantham; Jack & Deyea Harper;

Joe & Linda Maloney; Kay

Marquet; Morgan & Dorothy Patch;

Bill & Mary-Louise Reinking;

Natalie Rogers; Jean Schulz; Lauren

Upson; Margaret & Tom Vinson

Honoring **Pete Wilson:** Laura Graham



SONOMA LAND TRUST

966 SONOMA AVE • SANTA ROSA, CA 95404

Return service requested

Mission statement:

The land provides the very foundation of our community. It is vital that we protect and conserve the land and the natural world for future generations. Our mission is to provide permanent protection of Sonoma County land, its natural beauty and its biotic resources, offering stewardship, education, and guidance for the preservation and enhancement of agricultural, natural, scenic, and open lands.

Nonprofit
Organization
PRSR STD
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit #751
Santa Rosa



Little Black Mountain. Photo by Stephen Joseph.

Help SLT tough out the rough road: donate your SUV or truck

SLT needs vehicles to help us steward our wilder properties. We will use them on a regular basis, so they need to be in good shape and well-maintained. Here's what we need:

— A late model, low mileage 4WD SUV that can hold 5 passengers (e.g., a Ford Explorer) for taking staff, volunteers and consultants on rough ranch roads;

— A late model, low mileage 4WD

truck to haul tools and supplies into some of our rougher projects and to haul garbage and debris out (e.g., a Toyota Tundra or Ford F-150—extra points for diesel).

Donations of used vehicles are not only wildly appreciated by SLT staff, but are tax-deductible. Have a vehicle to donate? Please call Stewardship Director Bob Neale at (707) 544-5614 ext. 1.

Celebrating Pitkin Marsh

On Sunday, October 14, neighbors, native plant aficionados, agency representatives and Land Trust friends and partners toasted our purchase of 27 acres between Forestville and Sebastopol where the world's only population of white sedge grows.

Jon Sassin, neighboring landowner and Friends of Pitkin Marsh activist, hosted the festivities, provided the music, and thanked the community for rallying to protect this matchless property.