

Winter
2014



... to protect the land forever



p3

Learn about our
\$1 Million Challenge



If you were flying east over Sears Point Ranch today, this is what you would see and, no, those aren't crop circles. They're some of the 500 marsh mounds that have been dug out of six miles of channels five-feet deep and 200-feet wide as part of our wetlands restoration project. Next November, this plain will be underwater and tidal marsh will begin to grow. Photo by Robert Janover.

A tidal marsh in the (re)making — Sears Point transformed

We've witnessed wholesale land transformation over the last six months and, next year, it will all disappear under the tides, until it rises again as marshland.

— Julian Meisler, Baylands Program Manager

Our construction crew at Sears Point has been digging and moving earth nonstop since we broke ground on the 1,000-acre Sears Point Wetlands Restoration Project in June. The photo above reflects their labors during this first phase of construction. The marsh mounds are designed as barriers to waves that would otherwise hinder marsh development. These topographic oases will be among the first areas colonized by marsh plants. Once connected to San Pablo Bay, the channels will help distribute needed sediment from the bay and the Petaluma River, and the 2.5-mile levee that extends the width of the property will also serve as a public trail.

We hope you will join us next November when we breach the old levee and let in the bay waters to flood this sculpted basin. *Stay tuned!*



A NOTE FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Transformations and transitions

This is the second newsletter in a row that features a photo of bare dirt on the cover. Our restoration team is down and dirty. It may not be visible from Highway 37, but our massive Sears Point Restoration Project, being carried out in partnership with Ducks Unlimited, is well on the way to reshaping the shoreline of San Pablo Bay. Check back in 10 or 20 years and the disturbed dirt shown on our cover photo will be alive with marsh vegetation and the life it sustains.

We are also highlighting a number of the landscape-scale conservation projects that have been accomplished over the years during which I have been privileged to serve as your executive director. These were team efforts and I'd like to give a special shout out to my colleagues Wendy Eliot and Julian Meisler for their leadership at the Baylands; to Wendy, John McCaull and Tony Nelson for their work in the Sonoma Valley; to Amy Chesnut for her leadership on the Sonoma Coast and all matters related to forestry and working landscapes; and to Bob Neale for his leadership of our stewardship team.

We've had an excellent slate of candidates from around the country apply to be our next executive director. Our board, under the leadership of chair Denny Van Ness and search committee chair Neal Fishman, expects to make the final selection later this month. So there will be a new face here for our spring newsletter. By then, I expect to have much more time with my family and friends to be out hiking on the gorgeous Sonoma County landscapes that have been protected through your volunteer work and contributions over the years. Thank you!

Please remember to make your year-end, tax-deductible contribution to propel Sonoma Land Trust into 2015 with our sails full.

Ralph Benson

OUR MISSION

The Sonoma Land Trust protects the scenic, natural, 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 and conservation;
- Acquiring land and conservation easements;
- Practicing stewardship, including the restoration of conservation properties; and
- Promoting a sense of place and a land ethic through activities, education and outreach.

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Who we are



A \$1 million challenge

Help Sonoma Land Trust raise
\$1 million by the end of the year!

BY DEIRDRE HOLBROOK



\$1 Million Challenge donors Mirka Knaster and Larry Jacobs. Photo by Lance Kuehne Photography.

Why? There are a million reasons why in this spectacular million-acre county, but we'll start with just a few very special ones. As 2014 comes to a close, we are working hard to take advantage of the following now-or-never opportunities to protect and restore four iconic landscapes from one end of Sonoma County to the other:

- 1) A spectacular redwood forest in the Gualala River watershed;
- 2) Hundreds of acres of coastal prairie along the Sonoma Coast;
- 3) The 1,000-acre Sonoma Developmental Center property in the heart of Glen Ellen; and
- 4) Completing the restoration of 1,000 acres of tidal marsh at Sears Point.

Raising \$1 million now will help us continue to work on the scale that makes a difference in a million-acre county, enabling us to preserve the land that makes it so extraordinary. This work is not possible without your support!

Two very generous supporters, Mirka Knaster and Larry Jacobs, launched our million-dollar campaign with a spectacular \$200,000 gift. It came with a challenge: If we can raise \$600,000 more, Mirka and Larry will "top off" the campaign with a second \$200,000 gift. That will get us to \$1 million. It's a stretch, but we're confident we can meet the challenge with your support.

Mirka and Larry are making this commitment because land conservation "is so tangible and is something lasting."

"Once land is protected, it's something that many generations will be able to access," says Larry. "We want to do what we can to protect this place for the next generation of kids and families."

"Many of us are here because of the natural environment," says Mirka of the county's North Coast, where she and Larry live. "If we didn't work to preserve it, this place could have looked like Southern California. Instead, it's still a rugged, wild coast. The redwoods practically come

down to the ocean here."

This appreciation of the land was driven home this year, Mirka recalls, when she flew over the coast. "It was so stunning I had tears in my eyes. I felt so emotional, so privileged, to live in a place like this with its forests and wildlife — fox, mountain lion, coyote and even bear. I love the fact that it's still as wild as it is. If we can help preserve the land rather than see it developed, we would like to do that."

Thank you, Larry and Mirka, for your support!

To make a year-end gift today, please use the enclosed envelope or go to www.sonomalandtrust.org/donate. If you have any questions about this challenge or making a legacy gift, please contact me at deirdre@sonomalandtrust.org or 526-6930 ext. 122.

Deirdre Holbrook is SLT's interim development director/major gifts officer.

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Celebrating Ralph

Benson

BY RETA LOCKERT



As Ralph Benson prepares to retire by the end of this year, and the rest of us get ready to welcome a new executive director onto the land, we take a few moments to recognize the sea change that has occurred since Ralph joined us in 2003.

Sonoma Land Trust has made a quantum leap in terms of lands conserved and partnerships forged during the past 12 years with Ralph Benson as executive director. Having ridden his horse along the Russian River as a teen, his abiding affection for the extraordinary places of Sonoma County drove his decision to return to land conservation after a brief

retirement after 24 years at the Trust for Public Land.

“Working on a landscape scale” was effected with the first major project of his tenure, the Sears Point/Dickson Ranch acquisition, where a major casino had been proposed along the bay. “Sonoma Land Trust should be a premier civic institution in Sonoma County,” he said often in the early days, and the growth of membership, donations and impact bespeak our moving into that role.

But don’t take our word for it. Here are accolades from conservation allies who join us in celebrating Ralph:

“Ralph’s magic to bring private and government sectors together to save our rural landscape will leave a beautiful monument to his love of our Sonoma County.”

— **Bill Kortum**, Longtime SLT board member and former 2nd District Sonoma County Supervisor

“I don’t remember when it was that I first met Ralph, but it always seemed as though I had known him forever. I loved the fact that we could hike along and talk about any sort of land issues and I always

felt more enlightened. To me, that is a perfect day!”

— **Jeannie Schulz**, Community leader

“Ralph inspires with quiet authority that preserving lands is the right thing to do.”
— **Anne Teller**, Owner of Oak Hill Farm in Glen Ellen

“No landscape has been too small, no landscape too large for Ralph’s highly effective, low-key, inclusive efforts on behalf of Sonoma County’s natural

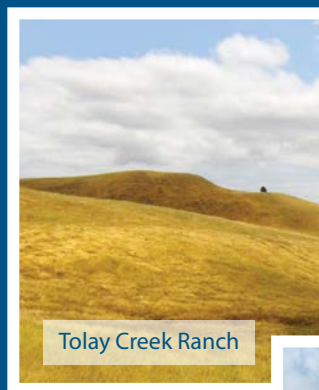


beauty. During a crucial decade in the Bay Area’s great growth, his subtle, inspired leadership brought together hundreds of citizens’ dreams with millions of public and private funds to save thousands of acres of Sonoma County’s age-old treasures of coastline, mountains, oak woodlands and meadows. Ralph won our deep admiration and affection

Making a difference — conservation on a landscape scale

Under Ralph Benson’s leadership over the last 12 years, thanks to our members and volunteers, and with able partners, such as the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District, California Coastal Conservancy, Wildlife Conservation Board, The Wildlands Conservancy, The Conservation Fund, Save the Redwoods League, and the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, large iconic landscapes throughout Sonoma County will remain intact for all of us to enjoy today and for the pleasure and health of the generations that follow.

Nearly the entire southern tip of Sonoma County has been protected as permanent open space, including the 1,665-acre Tolay Creek Ranch (formerly Roche Ranch), now sporting thousands of willows along the creek. It will be turned over to Sonoma County Regional Parks in 2015 to be added to Tolay Lake Regional Park, which will become the largest regional park in the county.



Tolay Creek Ranch

Sonoma Land Trust’s purchase of the 5,630-acre Jenner Headlands in 2009 was augmented in 2013 with the purchase of the 238-acre Pole Mountain property, connecting the Headlands with Sonoma Land Trust’s 500-acre Little Black Mountain Preserve for a 6,368-acre swath of protected land from the coast to Cazadero. Here, one sees from the top of Pole Mountain over the Jenner Headlands to the coast.

Photo by Stephen Joseph Photography.



for the great good work he has done for our wonderful county, and we give him our best wishes for his future.”

— **Mary and Dick Hafner**, *Community leaders and longtime board member (Mary)*

“Ralph is the face of Sonoma Land Trust, exemplifying the thoughtfulness, earnestness and dedication we expect from it. But because of his leadership, we have reason to celebrate the wonder and beauty of the land we have preserved in Sonoma County for all time.”

— **Susan Gorin**, *1st District Sonoma County Supervisor*

“Going to Rally [national land trust conference] with Ralph as your executive director is like going to the prom with the hottest date.”

— **Aimee Carroll Crawford**, *Former acquisitions staffperson*

“Guided by Ralph’s bold vision and effective leadership, the Sonoma Land Trust has become one of the Bay Area’s most consequential conservation organizations, permanently protecting a wide range of Sonoma’s beautiful landscapes and advancing environmen-

tal stewardship from the tidal marshes of the baylands to the redwood forests on the North Coast.”

— **David Loeb**, *Bay Nature editor*

“Ralph’s prior decades of national conservation experience proved invaluable in expanding North Bay protected lands during his 12 years at Sonoma Land Trust, enabling the local organization to complete projects of national significance, such as the acquisition of the Jenner Headlands and the restoration of Sears Point tidal marsh.”

— **Jared Huffman**, *U.S. House of Representatives*

“Ralph Benson is that rare practical man who is also a game-changing visionary. A century from now, when people step outside and marvel at the Bay Area’s natural wonders, Ralph’s achievements will still be everywhere in view.”

— **Ralph Jake Warner**, *Nolo Press founder and former Save the Bay board member*

“Ralph Benson brought vision, integrity and a deep understanding of conservation to the Sonoma Land Trust. He helped it become one of the best regional land

trusts in California and, together, we did great things for Sonoma County.”

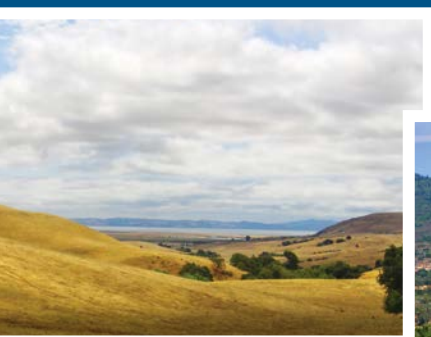
— **Sam Schuchat**, *Executive Officer, California State Coastal Conservancy*

“Ralph Benson has had a transformative effect on Sonoma County’s landscape. We will miss his grace and his broad support for anything that involves saving land for future generations.”

— **Caryl Hart**, *Director, Sonoma County Regional Parks*

And now, a tribute of my own as the Land Trust’s longest-tenured employee at 31 years and counting. It’s been such a privilege to serve SLT’s mission during this time with Ralph, to see the high regard in which he is held by donors and partners, and to observe his unfailing kindness and humor throughout the years. Ralph’s vision, commitment and practicality have brought Sonoma Land Trust to a secure and celebrated position that I couldn’t have imagined in earlier days. So I’ve decided to do some naming in his honor: The Ralph years are Sonoma Land Trust’s “Golden Age.” *Happy retirement, Ralph.*

Reta Lockert is SLT’s donor relations director.



Through a series of strategic land purchases over the past several years, Sonoma Land Trust has extended the protected land in and around our National Register-listed Glen Oaks Ranch in Glen Ellen to more than 1,000 acres

— forming the northern edge of what we hope will be a much larger protected wildlife corridor that will also include the Sonoma Developmental Center land. Photos by John Hanses Photography (Glen Oaks) and Scott Hess Photography (SDC).

Celebrating, honoring and remembering

From November 1, 2013 through October 31, 2014, the following supporters of Sonoma Land Trust made gifts honoring or commemorating exceptional friends and family members, and in celebration of special events. As always, we are grateful that our work of protecting the land forever is chosen as a symbol of appreciation and continuity.

- Lulu and Jimmy Abernathy** in honor of Web and Elizabeth Marquez
- Stephen Abrams** honoring the Sonoma Land Trust staff for protecting Pole Mountain and Jenner Headlands
- Terry and Yale Abrams** honoring Jennifer Laaback on her birthday
- Stuart P. Pivnick, PhD and Alice L. Akawie** in honor of Shirley Akawie
- Mr. and Mrs. Ronald C. Allan** in honor of Matt Allan
- Mr. and Mrs. Jack S. Allison** in honor of Elizabeth and Web Marquez
- Katie Alvord** in memory of Pat Wiggins
- Menahem and Jennifer Anderman** in honor of Sonoma's land and animals
- Pete and Barbara Anderson** in memory of Paul W. Purdom
- Ivan Andreassen** in memory of Barbara Iverson
- Marge Anthony** in memory of Janann Strand
- Peter E. Babcock** in honor of Ralph Benson
- Chris and Phyllis Baldenhofer** in memory of Barbara Iverson
- Corry Barr** in memory of Norah Barr
- Frank and Carolyn Batchelor** in honor of Dean and Nancy Hanson
- Dick and Nancy Batson** in memory of Dr. Lois M. Roberts
- Barbara and Hugo Bauer** in memory of Barbara Iverson
- Meg Beeler and Tom von Tersch** in memory of Irving and Hela Norman
- Joyce and Brian Bender** in honor of burrowing owls of Sonoma County
- Eloise and David Bennett** in honor of Elizabeth and Web Marquez
- Walter and Lu Benson** in memory of Remo Patri, John Beckman and Bernice Roth Spalding
- Gordon and Tamara Boulton** in memory of Ms. Beatrice Volpone
- Paul and Karen Bowles** in memory of Joel Hornstein
- Jane and Bernie Brenner** in celebration of Ralph Benson
- Dr. and Mrs. Herbert Brosbe** in honor of Harry and Dee Richardson
- Bree Ellen Brostko and D. Cabell Vest** in honor of Elizabeth Murray and Webster Marquez in celebration of their March 2014 wedding
- Kent Brown** in honor of Bob Hasenick's birthday
- Charles and Barbara Bugg** in honor of Elizabeth and Web Marquez
- Ann Butler** in honor of Greg Hayes
- Lucie and Stanley Bynum** in honor of Elizabeth and Web Marquez's marriage
- Grant Campbell** in memory of Paul Purdom
- Martha Campbell** in memory of Rae Hudspeth and Janann Strand
- Lynne and Dick Carlile** in honor of Tim Temple and Davide Maronati
- Robert Cerniglia** in celebration of our 55th wedding anniversary
- Barbara Chapman** in honor of Vanessa Nicole Chapman
- Theodore and Lynda Chenoweth** in memory of Barbara K. McLaucln, a scholar of Roman and Greek history and a great birder
- Marie G. Clark** in memory of Janann Strand
- Connie Coddling** in memory of Pat Wiggins
- Nancy Cohrs** in memory of Janann Fleming Strand
- Community Foundation Sonoma County** in memory of David Smith
- Dolores Conklin** in memory of Barbara Iverson
- Christina and Jamey Courtney** in memory of Janann Fleming Strand
- Elizabeth and Martin Covington** given in memory of Charles Schulz
- Diane Cox** in memory of Thomas E. Cox and the 60 years we spent together
- Kelsey Cummings** in memory of John Cummings
- Michael and Lynn Davis** in honor of Harry and Dee Richardson
- Suzanne L. Dibble and Jeanne F. DeJoseph** in celebration of the marriage of Kat Himmel and Rochia Holmquist
- Rita Dempsey** in memory of Derek Covert
- Jeff Diamond and Amy Zimmer** in honor of Berta Kaliski
- David Donnenfield** in memory of Debby Hahn
- G.M. and J.B. Dorame** in memory of Pat Wiggins
- George and Cynthia Doubleday** in honor of David Smith
- Kay and Thomas Douglas** in memory of Janann Strand
- Mary Alice Drumm** in honor of the Purcell Family
- Steve and Pat Edelstein** thanking Tony and John for giving their valuable time and providing information about projects and walking a portion of the ranch
- Ken Egel** in memory of Leo and Pauline Egel
- Bettina A. Eichel** in memory of Barbara Iverson
- Pat and Ted Eliot** in honor of Wendy Eliot, in memory of Mickey Cooke's Flora (beloved horse of a lifetime), in memory of Pat Wiggins
- Wendy Eliot and Michael Fitzgibbon** in honor of Claire Russell
- Marion and Merritt Elmore** in memory of Edith Beach
- Trudy Evans** in honor of Web and Elizabeth Marquez
- Emily Evers** honoring Cathie and Pitch Johnson, and Mr. and Mrs. William Draper III
- Lynette Feeny-Burns** tribute to Alden Gilchrist
- Ellin and Robert Firth** in memory of Paul Purdom
- Ronald and Tracey Fitzgerald** in memory of Janann Fleming Strand
- Jack Fitzsimmons** in memory of Gladys Bokamper Fitzsimmons
- Avalyn Taylor and Tarn Fox** in honor of Elizabeth and Web Marquez
- Charles and Perry Freeman** honoring Amanda and Chris Peiffer
- Thomas and Betty Freitag** in memory of Janann Fleming Strand
- Anne French** in honor of Susan Smile, MD, on her birthday
- David Friedland** in memory of Waldo C. Friedland
- Mr. and Mrs. Stephen M. Friedman** in honor of Lauren and Scott Dixon
- Carol Friis** in honor of Cameron Evangelho
- Jo Anne and A.H. Gaede, Jr.** in honor of the marriage of Elizabeth and Web Marquez
- Joe and Shawna Gannon** in honor of Tyler Gannon
- Joan Geary** in memory of Paul Purdom
- Therese Geary** in memory of Jack Taylor
- Maria Bernadette Gibb** in memory of Janann Strand from Hutch, Bernie and Eddie
- Pete and Suzy Gilbert** in honor of Elizabeth and Web Marquez
- Christina Ginsburg** in honor of Mark Ginsburg on his birthday
- Alexander and Judith Glass** in honor of Wendy Zukas
- Dohn and Beryl Glitz** in celebration of the marriage of Shiloh and Liz Strong
- Paul Goguen and Melissa Dowling** in honor of Julie Atwood
- Hubert and Alpha Goings** in honor of Elizabeth and Web Marquez
- Rusty and Carolyn Goldsmith** in honor of Elizabeth and Web Marquez
- Mark Goldstein** in celebration of the matching grant from Bill Jasper
- Joe and Susan Gorin** in honor of Pat and Ted Eliot
- Laura Graham** in memory of Pat Wiggins and Guy Shappy
- Patrick G. Grattan and Karen White** in honor of Lloyd Harwood
- Graystone Consulting** in memory of Barbara Iverson
- Jennifer and Shane Greenwood** in honor of James Nelson on his 70th birthday
- Bill and Betsy Gresham** in honor of Elizabeth and Web Marquez
- Parke and Sarah Hafner** in honor of Mary Hafner
- Karen Hales** in honor of Stan and Diane Hales on their 47th wedding anniversary
- Dorothy Hansen** in memory of Niels Hansen
- Beth Harper** in honor of Larry Barnett
- Jack and Deyea Harper** in memory of Joel Hornstein
- Ellis Harris** in memory of Barbara Iverson
- Elisabeth Hawthorne** in memory of Barbara Iverson
- Healdsburg Senior Center** in memory of Barbara Iverson
- Scott and Claudia Hein** in memory of Rich Stallcup

Justin and Sonya Heltshe celebrating the wedding of Elizabeth Murray and Webster Marquez

Jo Anne Hewitt in memory of Roz Sandler

Kate Hill in honor of my mother, Jean Hurd

Susan Hirsch and Susan Leal in honor of Joshua Rymer and Tim Frazier

Mr. and Mrs. Robert M. Howard in honor of Elizabeth and Web Marquez

Millie and Billy Hulsey in honor of Elizabeth and Web Marquez

Ljubica Ilovic in memory of Janann Strand

Betty Jackson in honor of Web and Elizabeth Marquez

Kathy Jelin in honor of Karl and Linda Moldrem

Angelica Jochim in honor of Penelope Carys

Michael and Martha Kahn in memory of David Sullivan Smith

Margaret E. Kaplan in honor of Anne Fitzgerald's birthday

Nancy Karl in honor of Kristine Acquino

Carol and Don Kenyon in memory of David Sullivan Smith

Grace Kietzmann in memory of David Smith

Charlotte King in honor of Web and Elizabeth Marquez

Mary Kay and John Klyce in honor of Elizabeth and Web Marquez

Mirka Knaster and Larry Jacobs in memory of Martha and Sidney Jacobs, in honor of David Moulton and Laura Martinez

Rosamond Lagomarsino honoring Pam and Bill Pabst, and Bill and Carol Gadbois

Chuck and Marcia Lavine in memory of Barbara Iverson

Anthony B. Lier, DDS, MS in memory of Janann Strand

Shelley and Frank Lindstrom, Jr. in honor of Elizabeth and Web Marquez

Patricia L. List in memory of Phyllis Lindberg

David Loeb for Ralph Benson's 10th anniversary

Ruth Lombard and Trymon Hunter honoring Kathleen Mugele on her birthday

Steve Long in honor of Linda Long

Mary Lyons in memory of Patricia Leahy

Melania Mahoney honoring Jon and Kathy Scheiblich

David L. Smith and Yvonne Martin honoring Ben and Thomas for earning their Eagle Scout badges

Carol and Clifford Marvel in memory of Noel Christian

Kate and Zach Mather in honor of the marriage of Elizabeth Murray and Webster Marquez

Andy and Sophie Mattson in honor of Pete Mattson (2)

Elizabeth McCarthy and Marko Castor in memory of Pat Wiggins

Lawrence McCune in memory of Paul Purdom

Molly McDermott in memory of Janann Fleming Strand who celebrated life in joy and land in conservation

Jane McDonough in memory of Cheryl Spector

Winton and Margaret McKibben in honor of John Lehman

Jean McWhorter in memory of Barbara Iverson

Major Eugene Meade, USA-Retired in memory of EMI Meade

Wayne and Helen Mehl in memory of David S. Smith

Dianne Metzger in memory of Barbara Iverson

Erin Miller in honor of the wedding of Elizabeth Murray and Webster Marquez and for generations to come

Gerald Missey in memory of Agnes S. McTernan

Cecilia Moelter in memory of John Moelter

Kathleen Mugele celebrating the birthdays of Sunflower and Iris, in celebration of the marriage of Marty McDonald and Sybel Murray, in celebration of the marriage of Susanne Otteman and Myrna Goodman, in honor of Sue Weingarten

Andrew Munchbach in honor of Dick and Mary Hafner

Robert and Patricia Myers in memory of Barbara Iverson

Dr. and Mrs. Alex M. Nading, Jr. in honor of Elizabeth and Web Marquez

Daniel Needham in honor of the Moylan Family

Elizabeth Newton and Tong Lai Ginn in honor of Annie Wolfine Newton

Bill and Pat Nichols in memory of Barbara Iverson

Anne and Sam Oliver in honor of Web and Elizabeth Marquez

Maurine Olson in celebration of Maury Lapp and April King and their lives together

Sylvia Park in memory of Norah Kennedy Barr

Ellen Gill Pastore in honor of Will Bucklin and Lizanne Pastore

Johanna Patri in honor of John McCaull and "A Place to Roam: Protecting the Sonoma Valley Wildlife Corridor"

Mr. and Mrs. William C. Patterson in honor of Elizabeth and Web Marquez

Elke and Douglas Paul in memory of Janann Strand

Ilene and Don Paul in honor of the marriage of Angel Garganta and Michael Schwarz

James and Sherian Piper in memory of Sunny Bristol

Judith Prima in honor of Jan Reddick and Byron Schneider

Ellin and Ned Purdom in honor of Paul Wakefield Purdom

Chuck and Kati Quibell in memory of Charles and Mary E. Fox Quibell and Susan Quibell Simmons

Taylor and Daniel Rechtschaffen celebrating our marriage

Scott and Marta Rich in memory of Evelyn Berger

Harry and Dee Richardson in memory of Pat Wiggins

Craig and Kathryn Ritchey in memory of David Smith

Regina and Richard Roney in memory of David Smith

David E. Root and Marilyn Wolf in honor of Helen Fellenbaum on her 90th birthday

David E. Root in honor of Marilyn Wolf

Richard and Anne Ruben in memory of Jonathan Ruben

Helen Rudee in memory of Pat Wiggins

Robin Doerr Russell in memory of John George Doerr

Arnold and Vida Santucci in memory of Barbara Iverson

Kate Sater in memory of Rex H. Sater

Scott Sauer in memory of Pat Wiggins

Ellen Scarr and Roberta Acker in memory of Lois M. Acker

Bonnie and Jim Schmidt in memory of Judy Tilt

Oren and Michelle Schumaker in honor of Elizabeth Murray and Webster Marquez wedding

Dr. and Mrs. Michael Shane in memory of Erica Demarest Shane

Elizabeth Sher and Philip Schnayerson in memory of Suzanne Girot

Leslie Shipnuck and Janet Wood in memory of Ethel and Bernard Shipnuck

Gary Simpson in memory of Paul Purdon

Nancy Skinner in honor of Web and Elizabeth Marquez

Gary J. Smith and Jamiene Studley In honor of Martha Kanter

David Solem in honor of Matthew D. Solem

Beverly Spencer in memory of Joel Hornstein

Irma F. St. John in honor of Mr. and Mrs. Web Marquez

Rebecca Stamey-White and Nick Lanza in celebration of the marriage of Webster Marquez and Elizabeth Murray

Susan and Arnold Steinman in honor of Suzanne Girot

Helen Stevens in honor of Lise Stevens

Linda Strand in memory of Janann Strand

John P. Strebel in memory of Ralph Benson, Sr. "Chief of the Fire" (2)

Bradford Taylor in honor of Taylor and Daniel Rechtschaffen

Andrea and Jeff Tobias in honor of Malcolm Lubliner

Christina Toms in memory of Art Toms

Kathleen Truax in celebration of Ralph Benson's tenure at Sonoma Land Trust

Sally Vella in memory of Ig Vella

Eric Walstad in honor of the San Francisco Randonneurs

Peter Warner in memory of Steve Norwick

Nancy Warren in memory of Barbara Iverson

Marilyn Watkins in memory of Joanna and Frank Huston

Nelson and Jane Weller in memory of David Smith

Sarah Whiting and Derek Graham celebrating the wedding of Elizabeth Murray and Webster Marquez

Lawrence A. Wilcox in honor of Rebecca Guarda's milestone birth celebration

Donald Williams in memory of Duncan Williams

Elizabeth Witchey in memory of Barbara Iverson

Wendy Wollish in memory of Nancy Helmers

Mr. and Mrs. Peter T. Worthen in honor of the marriage of Elizabeth and Web Marquez

Thomas Yarish and Laure Campbell in memory of Capt. Donald C. Campbell, USN-Retired

Stephen and Jaqui Zwick in honor of Tom and Shirley Simone's 50th wedding anniversary



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Season's greetings!

“For my family, this is a legacy issue,” says Paul Curreri, who rambled over the property as a child. “Our land is really more valuable as a place where children can connect with nature and wildlife can continue to roam.”

Key corridor parcel acquired for parkland and wildlife

Children have played on the oak-studded Curreri Family property for decades, the most recent generation on this swing shaped like a bull. And kids will continue to enjoy this beautiful landscape as it soon becomes part of neighboring Sonoma Valley Regional Park.

Located right in the “pinchpoint” of the Sonoma Valley Wildlife Corridor, Sonoma Land Trust purchased the 29-acre parcel for \$1.1 million on October 30 with funding from the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation, the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District, and the Sonoma County Regional Parks Foundation. Immediately upon closing escrow, we transferred the title to Regional Parks.

“The Curreri property will be a sweet addition to Sonoma Valley Regional Park,” says Ralph Benson, Land Trust executive



Photo by Scott Hess Photography.

director. “We hope people will enjoy it forever.”

“We are thrilled to be able to add such a crucial piece of land to Sonoma Valley Regional Park, with its importance to wildlife movement, the viewshed and its significant beauty,” says Regional Parks

director Caryl Hart.

Along with its value for wildlife, the Curreri property offers panoramic views of the Sonoma Valley, Sonoma Mountain, the Mayacamas Range, and San Pablo and San Francisco Bays. It also harbors iconic oak woodlands, as well as grasslands, a seasonal wetland and a year-round spring-fed pond.

The threat to this landscape being developed was real. Because the 29 acres have been maintained in their natural state, this property was highly vulnerable to estate and vineyard development, the dominant land uses in the area. Offering additional protection, the District will hold an innovative conservation easement, developed in partnership with the Land Trust, that will protect the property’s natural resources and its essential function as part of the wildlife corridor.

“For my family, this is a legacy issue,” says Paul Curreri, who rambled over the property as a child. “Our land is really more valuable as a place where children can connect with nature and wildlife can continue to roam.”