



IMPACT REPORT

2020-2021



A MESSAGE FROM EAMON AND MARIE

Dear Land Trust Supporters,

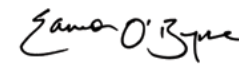
Like many of you, we were profoundly grateful for the sudden and dramatic beginning to the rainy season in October. It was a moment not just to breathe a collective sigh of relief at the reprieve from seemingly annual wildfires, but also a poignant reminder of just how beautiful fall can be in our county. Almost as colorful as spring—lush greens, warm ochres and the fruiting reds of our native Toyon created a picture-perfect autumnal pageant. It was a timely reminder of what fall once was for our communities and could be again if we unleash the power of nature to heal itself.

As welcome as October's atmospheric river was to a parched California, climate scientists are already warning that such powerful events are likely to become the norm in a much shorter rainy season. We must prepare now to slow, sink and spread the tremendous amounts of water they release to

prevent flooding and to ensure we capture enough to meet our needs. Thankfully, the solution, as we say at the Land Trust, lies under our feet. Our work to protect and restore river floodplains, estuaries, wetlands and open space are aimed at strengthening our natural water infrastructure and protecting the many humans, animals and plants that call them home.

Accelerating this work to meet the challenges ahead is crucial. We have made great strides this year in advancing our vision of a climate-ready Sonoma, with boisterous biodiversity and healthy, thriving communities by the end of the decade. We've begun to implement the first of a series of strategic plans to focus our acquisition, restoration, science and policy work on the most critical opportunities to achieve landscape-scale conservation success. Counting on your extraordinary generosity, we've also launched a comprehensive campaign to fund these ambitious goals.

The timing of our all-out effort to adapt to climate change couldn't be better. With the Governor's recent Executive Order committing California to protect 30 percent of land and coastal waters by 2030, we are at the forefront of a new era of conservation. *Thank you for being a force for nature!*



Eamon O'Byrne
Executive Director



Marie Andel
Chair, Board of Directors



Almost as colorful as spring—lush greens, warm ochres and the fruiting reds of our native Toyon created a picture-perfect autumnal pageant. It was a timely reminder of what fall once was for our communities and could be again if we unleash the power of nature to heal itself.

THE YEAR AT A GLANCE

Despite the many challenges posed by the pandemic and drought, your land trust accomplished a great deal over the past year. Whether tackling sea level rise in the Baylands or working to prevent catastrophic wildfire around the county or ensuring the protection of the Sonoma Valley Wildlife Corridor or providing a bevy of topical virtual programs—we've been advancing our nature-based strategies to make Sonoma County a more resilient place.

Our Strategic Plan is built on the premise that the best solution we have to the many challenges we face is nature itself. Decades of science-driven conservation have made it abundantly clear that natural climate solutions provide long-term, more equitable and cost-effective solutions that directly address the impacts of climate change and yield multiple benefits to people and nature.

Closely aligned with the State's 30x30 California plan (conserving 30 percent of the state's remaining open spaces by 2030 to achieve climate resilience goals), we also engaged closely with

our peer land trusts to successfully ensure that the 30x30 California plan received major funding in the State budget. Among the highlights are \$780 million for land acquisition—and the Land Trust will be working to make certain that some of that investment comes home to Sonoma County.

Our "A Force for Nature" campaign, launched in May, is an \$80 million investment in land conservation for climate adaptation and resilience for both human and non-human communities in Sonoma County. Born out of the recognition that we are living through the most consequential

decade for our planet, as humanity's last opportunity to tackle climate change before the changes spiral out of our control, this campaign is designed to highlight the many ways your contributions really can achieve powerfully effective responses to the crisis, right here in our own communities.

Your campaign contributions support investments in proven, large, nature-based solutions, like wetland restoration and prescribed fire, at a scale that matters for protecting our communities and preserving the quality of our landscapes and ecosystems for generations to come.



We launched our 2021-2023 Strategic Plan, featuring science-driven, innovative solutions to address our most pressing challenges.

We received **\$2 million in grants** from CAL FIRE and Resilient Communities to continue “fighting fire” in Sonoma Valley.

We touched the lives of **thousands** with our **community programs**, helping people learn about and get access to nature.

With our partners, we brought attention/funding (**\$7 million+** from state/federal sources) to the **Highway 37 rebuild project**, including land acquisition for wetland restoration.

We added over **1,000 acres** to **parks and protected land** so that the land can do its important work for us all.

We **educated County stakeholders** about **wildlife corridors/linkages** and the importance of keeping them open.

We launched “A Force for Nature” in May. An **\$80 million** campaign to invest in **natural solutions**. We are currently at \$69.2M committed to date.



AMONG THIS YEAR'S HIGHLIGHTS

BIODIVERSITY

Healthy biological diversity is nature's immune system and is vital for maintaining the natural infrastructure that supports both human and non-human life with clean air, clean water and pollinators.

Among our 2021 acquisitions was a conservation easement for the 758-acre Walter and Jean Foppiano Ranch along the Russian River where vineyard development risk is high. The ranch's meadows, woodlands and three miles of river frontage will remain undeveloped for perpetuity.

We purchased the 200-acre Fitzsimmons Ranch in the Mayacamas and immediately conveyed it to Regional Parks to be added to Hood Mountain Regional Park. This inholding within the park possesses rare plant communities and plentiful,

year-round water resources. It not only offers stunning views, but is also part of the Blue Ridge wildlife corridor connecting Point Reyes to Lake and Napa counties. It will be open to the public sometime over the next few years.

Given its crucial importance, we continue to advocate for and ensure that the deal we helped strike with the State on the disposition of the Sonoma Development Center (SDC) stays focused on the goals set out in the SDC Land and Water Protection Proposal. This vital link connect-

ing Marin and Sonoma to the regionally important Blue Ridge Corridor along the Mayacamas runs through the SDC property in a fragile chokepoint. We've completed studies that show that the three development alternatives published by the County could risk damaging the entire Sonoma Valley ecosystem and its ability to rebound from climate shocks. We firmly believe that the right kind of development (especially affordable housing) in the right parts of the property can create a vibrant community while still protecting the corridor.



We purchased the 200-acre Fitzsimmons Ranch in the Mayacamas and immediately conveyed it to Regional Parks to be added to Hood Mountain Regional Park.



58,000
acres

17
preserves

47
conservation
easements

CLIMATE RESILIENCE

Drought, flooding, wildfires, sea level rise, extreme heat ... Sonoma County is ground zero for climate change impacts. And yet, there is hope: Conserving and restoring the undeveloped lands of our large county are some of the best tools available for sequestering carbon, increasing biodiversity and fighting climate change on the local level.

LIVING WITH FIRE

The Sonoma Valley Wildlands Collaborative made excellent progress this year on reducing unhealthy understory, extending the network of shaded fuel breaks, maintaining firefighter access, and using prescribed fire to reduce wildfire risk and foster a healthier forest.

The success of this innovative project was highlighted by CAL FIRE providing renewed and additional funding through its Fire Prevention Grants program of \$934,286 through 2025. This includes 500 more acres of treatment, as well as the purchase of excavator/masticator equipment to increase treatment scale. In addition, we received a National Fish and Wildlife Foundation grant of \$319,364 to fund treatment on 720 acres, as well

as a cache of pumps, hoses and firefighting gear to support prescribed burning. We also received an additional budget allocation from the State of \$500,000 thanks to Senator Bill Dodd.

SEA LEVEL RISE

This fall, a Wildlife Conservation Board grant of \$1 million allowed us to install a nature-based solution to prevent shoreline erosion at the Sears Point Wetlands Restoration. This will ensure that the 1,000 acres we have restored to tidal marsh will continue to buffer Highway 37 and other infrastructure from flooding and storm surges—while enhancing levee habitat and remaining hospitable to marsh animals and plants. Stay tuned as we hope to share news soon of coming acquisitions in the Baylands.

DROUGHT

As the beating heart of Sonoma County, the Russian River supplies more than 600,000 North Bay residents with drinking water, as well as being one of the most important wildlife passages and habitats in the county. Over the past few years, the Land Trust has been increasingly turning to a state-of-the-art science—called geospatial analysis—to determine how best we can help solve the many challenges the Russian River faces. Working in five of the key subwatersheds that feed the main stem of the river, this year we completed an analysis and technical report (generously funded by the Resources Legacy Fund and Patagonia Inc.) to determine critical acquisition, restoration and forbearance targets to maintain long-term healthy flows for people and salmon.





65

acres of shaded fuel
break completed

220

acres of understory
thinned

64

acres of right-of-way
roadway cleared

60

approx. acres of
prescribed fire*

** Jack London State Historic Park, Sonoma Mountain Ranch and Bouverie Preserve*

PEOPLE

As outlined in our DEI plan, the Land Trust has embarked on a journey of learning about the role of Indigenous peoples in stewardship of the lands of Sonoma County, the impacts of colonization on their communities and what we can do to foster their cultural ties to the land today. To mark the start of this journey, we developed a Land Acknowledgment Statement.

Despite the pandemic, we've maintained close connections with our supporters through 25 "Language of the Land" seminars. From the California Serengeti to The Adventure Gap: Changing the Face of the Outdoors to the Fall Hawk Migration (and a tremendous amount in between), these fascinating talks have captivated nearly 3,500 people since April 2020, and more recently, we've been able to provide simultaneous Spanish translation.

We were also able to develop innovative new programming, such as the 37 virtual hikes of some of our lesser-known properties, which reached

670 participants. Not only did these online activities enable people to get to know lands that are difficult or impossible to access for recreation, but they also enabled the less physically able to enjoy and learn about these special places, too. Happily, we've just been able to resume in-person hikes this fall and hope to see our many friends in person!

While schools were on Zoom, so was our Students Learning in Marsh Environments (SLIME) program for 3rd and 4th graders in Marin, Napa, Solano and Sonoma counties. Since spring of 2020, we will have taken students from more than 105 classes on virtual visits of the restored Sears Point

wetlands. Of the 45 individual schools that took part, 75 percent are Title 1 with a student population that is, on average, 54 percent socioeconomically disadvantaged and 35 percent English-language learners.

And with the help of masks and social distancing, 34 high school teens have been part of the Conservation Council, which has continued to meet to conduct conservation research. So far, 79 percent of all teens who have participated in the Conservation Council are BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Color).



So far, 79 percent of all teens who have participated in the Conservation Council are BIPOC (Black, Indigenous and People of Color).



WE HONOR THE ORIGINAL STEWARDS OF THIS LAND

As we pursue our mission of conserving land in Sonoma County, we recognize that we stand upon the unceded ancestral lands of many Indigenous peoples. We honor their knowledge, care and stewardship of this special place across the ages and acknowledge the deep and lasting damage that colonization has inflicted on them. We embrace our responsibility to learn from and protect their cultural and traditional connections to the land.

Pole Mountain and the Jenner Headlands are within the ancestral homeland of the Kashia Band of Pomo Indians of the Stewarts Point Rancheria.

PARKS

Expanding parks and open space is at the core of our mission. For example, over the years, Sonoma Land Trust has doubled the size of Tolay Lake Regional Park by contributing our former Tolay Creek Ranch, purchased the 5,630-acre Jenner Headlands for public access, added 2.5 miles to the Bay Trail along the Sears Point Wetland Restoration, opened our Pole Mountain Preserve to hardy hikers braving the Sea to Sky Trail, and much more.

As noted earlier, in just the last year we've protected Fitzsimmons Ranch to expand Hood Mountain Regional Park, as well as Cooper Creek, which will become part of Taylor Mountain Regional Park—and coming up is the acquisition of 654-acre McCormick Ranch, which will be added to Hood Mountain Regional Park as well. That's a lot of new places for healthy public recreation.

But it's not enough. Some county residents—particularly in lower-income communities—don't have

access to such great spaces; many don't even have neighborhood parks. This year, we completed the funding to acquire the Santa Rosa Southeast Greenway, which will be transferred to the City of Santa Rosa to provide thousands of city residents with access to a park within a 10-minute walk from their homes. In Petaluma, we have just completed an innovative and inclusive community engagement plan for the eventual design and use of the proposed Petaluma River Park in the heart of downtown—thanks to a generous gift from the

Ginnie and Peter Haas Jr. Fund. And while we have secured the transfer of Sonoma Developmental Center's 700 acres of undeveloped land to State and County park agencies, the wildlife corridor on the northern side of the campus remains in the balance—and we are contributing data and research to ensure that it remains the critical lifeline for plants and animals crossing the Sonoma Valley.



We completed the funding to acquire the Santa Rosa Southeast Greenway, which will provide thousands of city residents with access to a park within a 10-minute walk from their homes.



**EXPANDING OPEN SPACES (AND
ACCESS TO THEM) IS CRUCIAL TO
A HEALTHY ENVIRONMENT.**

SINCE 1976, WE'VE ADDED

10,000+

acres to county
parklands

AND COMING SOON

654

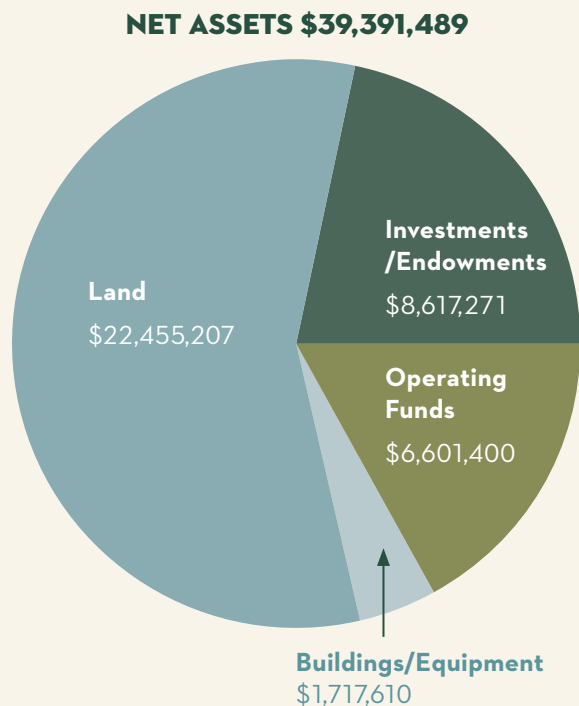
acre McCormick
Ranch

47

acre Santa
Rosa Southeast
Greenway

FINANCIALS

We take pride in our strong financial management practices. The amounts presented here are derived from Sonoma Land Trust's financial statement for the fiscal year ending March 31, 2021. A copy of the audited report of the financial statement is available upon request.



REVENUE FYE 2021

Contributions/Bequests	\$6,690,756
Government Grants	\$1,398,709
Foundation Grants.....	\$242,366
Program and Other Income	\$760,487
Investment Income	\$1,753,602
In-Kind Contribution of Land/CEs.....	\$1,600,000

TOTAL REVENUE \$12,445,921

EXPENSES FYE 2021

Land Acquisition/Stewardship.....	\$3,017,326
Community Programs	\$443,398
Transfers of Land.....	\$1,850,000
Fundraising	\$1,460,472
Administration	\$1,178,528

TOTAL EXPENSES \$7,949,724

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

BOARD CHAIR

Marie Andel

Sonoma

EMERITUS BOARD CHAIR

Allison Sanford

Santa Rosa

VICE CHAIR

Tim Portwood

Monte Rio

VICE CHAIR

Scott Hafner

Santa Rosa

SECRETARY

Judy Scotchmoor

Sonoma

Gregory Appling

Sebastopol

Jennifer Bice

Sebastopol

Simon Blattner

Sonoma

Robert Brent

Sebastopol

Dianne Brinson

Santa Rosa

Clay Clement

Santa Rosa

Duncan Higgons

Sonoma

Steven Hightower

Glen Ellen

Quincey Tompkins Imhoff

Healdsburg

Philip Jensen

Sonoma

Nancy Otto

Bodega Bay

Ellie Rilla

Sebastopol

Wendy Smit

Healdsburg

Mike Valdovinos

Sebastopol

Peter Van Alyea

Healdsburg

Lewis Warren

Santa Rosa

OUR MISSION

Sonoma Land Trust protects the scenic, natural, agricultural and open landscapes of Sonoma County for the benefit of the community and future generations.



WE HOPE YOU WILL JOIN US AND BE



a FORCE for NATURE

We thank our supporters and dedicated
volunteers who are working alongside staff to
ensure A Force for Nature: The Sonoma Land
Trust Campaign is a success.

CAMPAIGN CO-CHAIRS

Simon and Kimberly Blattner, Sonoma
Tim Portwood and Jim Lauber, Monte Rio
Harry and Dee Richardson, Santa Rosa

CAMPAIGN STEERING COMMITTEE

Marie Andel, Sonoma
Scott Hafner, Santa Rosa
Steven Hightower, Glen Ellen
Nancy Otto, Bodega Bay
Ellie Rilla, Sebastopol
Allison Sanford, Santa Rosa

CAMPAIGN LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

Sue Conley, Petaluma
Rob Das and Beth Berkson, Healdsburg
Lynne Deegan-McGraw, Glen Ellen
Ken and Akiko Freeman, Sebastopol
Peter and Ginnie Haas, Petaluma
Dick Hafner, Alexander Valley
Hal Hinkle, Geyserville
Mary Love, San Rafael
Bill and Jeanne Osterland, Santa Rosa
Jean Schulz, Santa Rosa