

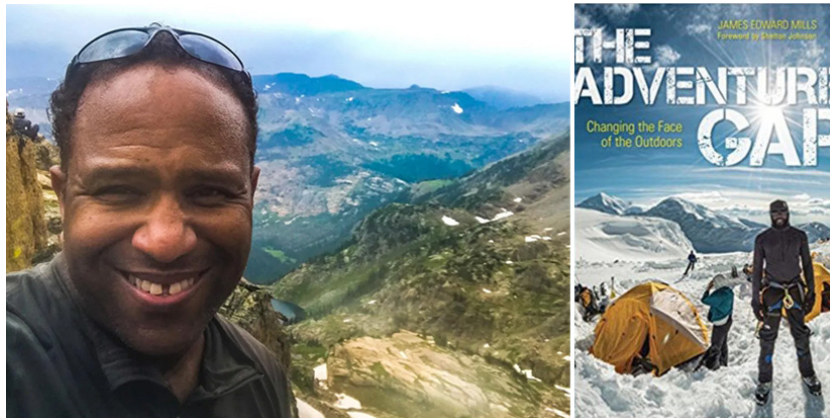


TODAY

... to protect the land forever | January 2021

The Adventure Gap: Changing the Face of the Outdoors

Wednesday, February 24, 7pm on Zoom



Sonoma Land Trust is committed to ensuring more equitable access to the outdoors and is proud to announce a special speaker for Black History Month: James Edward Mills, author of *The Adventure Gap: Changing the Face of the Outdoors*. "The Adventure Gap" refers to the racial, cultural and socioeconomic divide between those who spend time in nature and those who do not. A freelance journalist who specializes in telling stories about outdoor recreation, environmental conservation, acts of charitable giving and practices of sustainable living, James Edward Mills of Madison, Wisconsin has worked in the outdoor industry since 1989 as a guide, outfitter, independent sales representative, writer and photographer. His advocacy work focuses on issues of diversity, equity and inclusion in outdoor recreation. Interweaving stories from his own life, Mills will address what we can do about The Adventure Gap.

[Register now for this free event](#)

Appellate court affirms our right to enforce conservation

DONATE NOW

Pole Mountain guided virtual hikes



By popular demand, our Pole Mountain guided virtual hikes have been extended through February. These hour-long interactive hikes give participants a chance to experience this strenuous hike as though in real life, meet others, ask questions and enjoy the spectacular vistas from the mountain through the seasons, all from the comfort of your couch!

[Register here](#)

There is no charge for these events, which are made possible by the voters of Sonoma County who fund the work of Ag + Open Space with a quarter-cent sales tax.



On January 15, the First District Court of Appeal finalized the 2019 decision upholding Sonoma Land Trust's authority to permanently safeguard natural resources on land protected by conservation easements. In *Sonoma Land Trust v Thompson*, the appeals court emphatically upheld our actions and claims to restore the environmentally sensitive Drake Family Conservation Easement property in Bennett Valley. There, the landowners who purchased the property in 2013 with the easement in place, moved and killed heritage oak trees, severely damaging the protected natural resources.

The trial judge ordered payment of \$586,289 to fund restoration of the damaged ecosystem, compensate for the irreplaceable oak trees and repay enforcement costs. Sonoma Land Trust will manage the restoration. After six years of seeking justice, the Land Trust can finally move forward with the necessary restoration activities thanks to the appellate court's decision.

"Sonoma Land Trust has a commitment to the community to protect the integrity of properties covered by conservation easements," states Eamon O'Byrne, executive director. "Our residents believe strongly in protecting our natural resources and recognize the importance of a healthy natural landscape for themselves and future generations."

For background, read the [Press Democrat](#) article about the 2019 ruling

Thanks for standing up for nature!

for community groups

The Sonoma County Human Services Department asked us to provide a virtual hike experience for their employees at their annual wellness conference this month. These staff have been on the frontlines of the pandemic, helping to ensure residents of our county have continued access to food, health care and economic assistance through these hard times. We were delighted to be able to provide this service to these essential workers. If you are part of a community group that might be interested in scheduling a virtual hike, please email hikes@sonomalandtrust.org.

Welcome, Kirti!



Welcome to Kirti Bavdekar, our new senior accountant, who will be responsible for a range of financial duties essential to our accounting systems. Kirti brings extensive financial experience from her work with nonprofits in the childcare, mental health and health care industries. She has a master's degree in accounting and finance, and a diploma in HR management.

20 years of Bay Nature



We happily announce that, with your support, we met the \$1.2 Million Challenge for Nature at year end! Thank you to the 1,648 donors who, through their continuous generosity, answered the call to stand up for nature. We are in awe of the collective power and impact you have brought to Sonoma Land Trust and our work. You are helping us protect large, connected lands that naturally absorb carbon and help wildlife move safely throughout the county and beyond. Your support also helps to restore thousands of acres of tidal marsh to help protect us all from rising seas, and continues to provide the communities of Sonoma County with greater and easier access to the outdoors.

Thank you to our Alumni Board Council members who jointly issued this challenge – and to all of you who generously joined them. You have shown that, together, we can make real change.

Reducing wildfire risks at Laufenburg Ranch



Congratulations to Bay Nature, which is celebrating its 20th anniversary this year! With a mission to “connect the people of the San Francisco Bay Area to our natural world and motivate people to solve problems with nature in mind,” this popular quarterly magazine is a must for nature lovers.

[Learn more](#)

In the news



Our Familias Al Aire Libre (Families Outdoors), a bilingual program for families to get outside and discover nature together, was featured in the national Land Trust Alliance's Saving Land magazine.

[Read it here](#) on page 9

If you missed the late December feature story in the Press Democrat on the *Russian River and Its Watershed* book and artist



The forest at Laufenburg Ranch. Photo by John Hanses Photography.

Last week, CAL FIRE met with our staff at our Laufenburg Ranch Preserve in Knights Valley to review our forest management plan. Adapting to climate change and more frequent wildfires is a big management challenge at the preserve. The goal of this plan is to decrease fuel loads and manage the forest to promote older, more fire-resistant native oaks and firs. This will help keep wildfires on the ground where they burn more naturally, improve wildlife habitat at the ranch and pose less of a threat to our neighbors and community. The plan review ranged from the best locations for water tanks to the benefits of grazing for fine fuels reduction, to road maintenance, fire lines and using prescribed fire effectively in the forest. We appreciate CAL FIRE's time and the reminder that, by working together, we can create a sustainable and resilient Sonoma County.

If you missed the book launch celebration, [watch it here](#).

Amanda Gorman on climate change



"... to use your unique power to give next generations the planet they deserve." Our national youth poet laureate Amanda Gorman presents her original "Earthrise" poem on climate change from 2018.

[Watch it here](#) (4 min.)

