

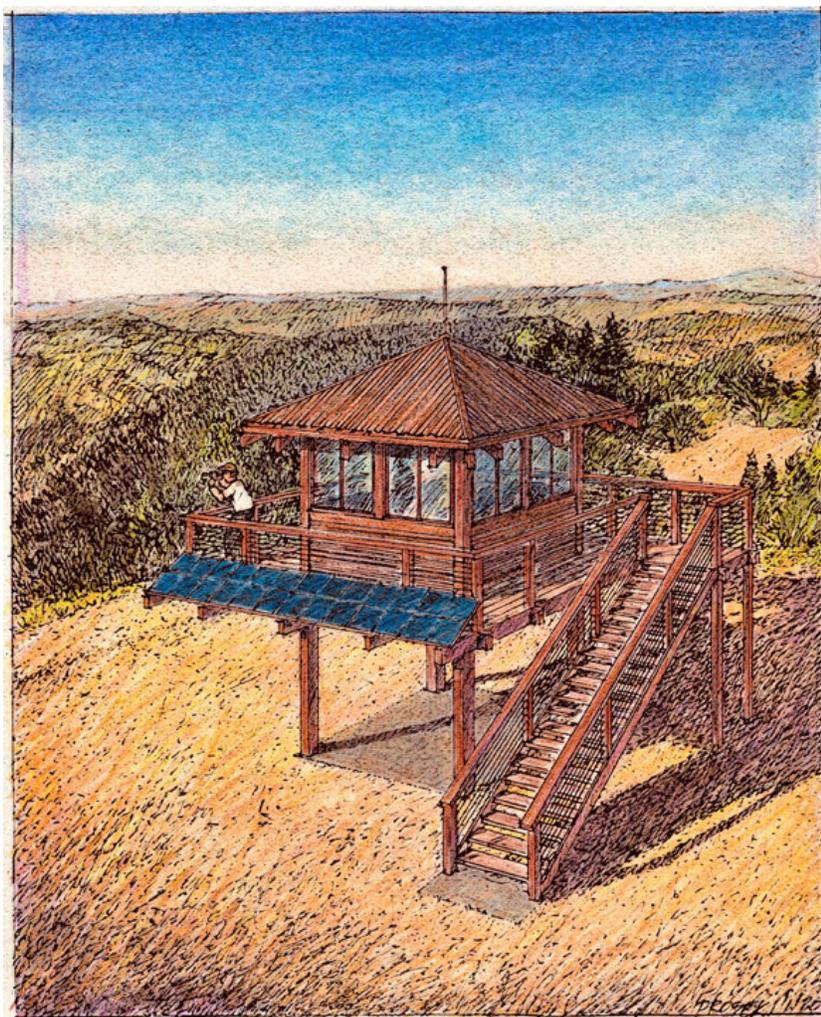


# TODAY

... to protect the land forever | July 2020

## A new era for Pole Mountain Lookout

[DONATE NOW](#)



*New lookout tower illustration by Thomas Prosek.*

As fire danger season approaches, and in order to ensure the continuity of fire detection services along the Sonoma Coast, collaborative efforts are underway to design, fundraise for and construct a replacement fire lookout tower at the summit of Sonoma Land Trust’s Pole Mountain Preserve. The Pole Mountain Fire Lookout has been in operation at Pole Mountain since 1981 as an outpost for the early detection of

### Doing more faster

**SIX PROPERTIES, 1 YEAR**

LAND TRUST AIMS TO PROTECT SIX PROPERTIES IN ONE YEAR THANKS TO CONSERVATION-MINDED FAMILIES

While the entire world is in the throes of an unprecedented (and unpredictable) pandemic, never has our work of conserving land for parks and open spaces seemed more relevant and crucial for the health and well-being of our communities. Sonoma Land Trust is no less to protect as many as six extraordinary places by next spring. That's a record for us by far and speaks to our determination to step up land conservation over the next 10 years to develop greater resiliency to the impacts of climate change.

This is a brief introduction to two recently closed projects and four others still in the works. After reading this, we trust you'll agree that each of these properties is essential and deserves your support. Our immense gratitude to the families who have loved these lands for generations and are committed to their protection... forever.



The highly scenic Two-Horse Ranch outside Healdsburg will be protected by a conservation easement by summer's end.

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[Read here](#)

### Eamon and Doug zoom

Last week's conversation between Eamon O'Byrne and Doug McConnell is not to be missed – and now you can view it online at your

region. The 20 square miles surrounding Pole Mountain is the primary service region and the Lookout is often the first to report wildfires in the area each year. Unfortunately, the old tower has become too unsafe to staff and the nonprofit [Pole Mountain Lookout, Inc.](#) is seeking donations for the construction of a new tower. You can view the [fire cameras](#) on Pole Mountain and see the stunning view from the summit firsthand by hiking the [Sea to Sky Trail!](#)

Doug teamed near and far in this hour-long computer-side chat, from saving foxes at the Channel Islands to the health of nature in Sonoma County to getting kids outdoors.

[Watch it here](#)

## Youth are leading the way

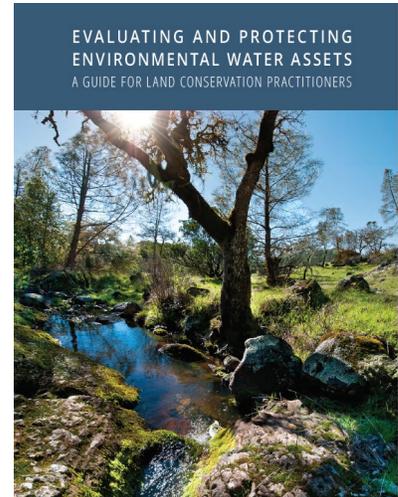


*Council members Jev (left) and Bailey (right) make their way down to a wildlife camera located across Stuart Creek at Glen Oaks Ranch Preserve.*

This summer, nine high school students are advising Land Trust staff on a budding youth program we've named the Conservation Council. Our goal is to cultivate the future generation of conservationists by equipping local youth with experiences that connect them to the beautiful lands of Sonoma County. While exploring our preserves, like Laufenburg Ranch, Glen Oaks Ranch and Pitkin Marsh, the council is helping to develop a youth-driven conservation research and youth development program for underrepresented communities that connects high school science curricula with real-world results.

## Bear-y new residents at Laufenburg Ranch

## Water resources guide



Sonoma Land Trust, The Nature Conservancy, Patagonia Foundation and Alford Environmental have collaborated to produce [Evaluating and Protecting Environmental Water Assets: A Guide for Land Conservation Practitioners](#). This important handbook provides easy-to-understand guidance, resources and tools that California land trusts, open space districts, resource conservation districts and others can use to identify, evaluate and protect water resources.

[Find it here](#)

## Marty Griffin turns 100



*Our thanks to volunteer Ginny Fifield, who has so generously loaned us her wildlife cameras and helps us maintain the cameras across our Russian River preserves.*

Laufenburg Ranch Preserve, on the edge of the Knights Valley wildlife corridor, has attracted a bear or two! After teens participating in Sonoma Land Trust's summer field science program discovered tracks in the mud, scat filled with plum seeds and claw marks on a wild plum tree, our staff installed wildlife cameras near potential food sources and along a well-traveled wildlife trail. Within a few short days, we began capturing footage of one, maybe two, beautiful, healthy black bears eating plums and roaming the conifer forest! As part of our involvement with the [North Bay Bear Collaborative](#), a working group committed to education, outreach and research, we are contributing scat samples for a DNA study of the North Bay bear population to better understand their genetics, dispersal patterns and population size. Our DNA samples from Laufenburg are the first samples collected for this research and, hopefully, are just the first of many more to come from across our preserve system.

[Watch video](#)

## A win for the great outdoors



Happy Birthday to local Rebel With a Cause Marty Griffin, who donated a 44-acre conservation easement to Sonoma Land Trust in 1989 along the Middle Reach of the Russian River next to his Hop Kiln Winery. This lover of fishing ensured that nearby gravel mining wouldn't endanger that land. *Happy 100, Marty!*

[Read more about Marty](#)

## SLT in the news Anne Teller's bequest



Our gratitude to the late Anne and Otto Teller knows no bounds. We wish we had been able to thank Anne for her planned gift during her lifetime because she kept it a sweet surprise. If you have included Sonoma Land Trust in your will or trust, please let us know so we can thank you and include you in special offerings for Legacy League members. When you give us permission to print your name(s), you'll inspire others by your example.

[Read Sonoma I-T article](#)

## "Marsh" through time



The Petaluma Argus-Courier published a beautiful story about visiting and enjoying the Sears Point Wetlands, which, located at the end of Lakeville Highway, beckons to Petalumans.

[Enjoy the article](#)

The passage of the Great American Outdoors Act last week will enable us to protect more land for humans and nature. This bipartisan Act of Congress will ensure that the national Land and Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) will be fully funded permanently. This is an important win for Sonoma County as many projects from the Jenner Headlands to Russian River boat launch ramps have been paid for from the LWCF. Congress’s securing of the this \$900M annual investment in conservation could not be happening at a more important moment in history. “Outdoor recreation matches the times we are in,” said Eamon O’Byrne, Sonoma Land Trust executive director. People can hike, run, bike, fish and kayak “and do it all at a safe distance.”

[Read Press Democrat article](#)

### Connecting with wetlands

Ducks Unlimited’s national magazine features our Sears Point Wetland Restoration project, on which DU partnered with us. Learn how projects close to urban centers, like this one, offer rare opportunities to share the beauty and ecological value of wetlands with the public.

[Read more](#)

## Eagle Scout helps bluebirds at Glen Oaks Ranch



To complete his Eagle Scout training, high school senior Sam Thanassi built and installed five Western bluebird boxes at Glen Oaks Ranch in June. Although Covid-19 delayed this



constructed of redwood and will remain there for many nesting seasons to come. Thank you, Sam!

## Safe and good times at Tolay



*Eric Fessendon, also a Glen Oaks trail crew volunteer, worked on eight of the 10 workdays.*

Thank you to our Tolay Creek volunteers for completing another season of plant maintenance. Over the course of 10 COVID-safe workdays this summer, 17 volunteers maintained several thousand trees planted along Tolay Creek, helping to ensure their long-term survival. Hats off to all for developing safe practices to do this important work!

Questions or comments? Email Sheri Cardo, managing editor.  
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