



# IMPACT REPORT

2023-2024

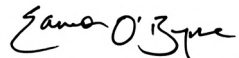
# TOGETHER TODAY FOR **A BETTER TOMORROW**

**2024 has been nothing short of remarkable for the Sonoma Land Trust!** Our strategic acquisitions this year, including McCormick Ranch and 100-Acre Ranch in the Mayacamas, play vital roles in our 30x30 climate goals—to protect 30% of our land and water by 2030. Both properties, totaling over 750 acres, now belong to the park system and link larger open spaces that will offer new recreation opportunities while preserving wildlife corridors and protecting our watersheds.

**As we envision the future, one project stands out among many—the Santa Rosa Southeast Greenway**, which provides a model for integrating nature into our everyday lives. When open to the public, it will offer safe, shaded, and sustainable connectivity to our natural spaces for generations to come.

This Impact Report is focused on celebrating the myriad ways that Sonoma Land Trust, with your support, is rebuilding and restoring the irreplaceable natural systems we all depend on, revitalizing hope for the future.

Thank you for being part of this journey.



**Eamon O'Byrne**, Executive Director



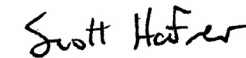
## MESSAGES FROM OUR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR AND BOARD CHAIR

**Twenty years ago, conservation decisions made to support Sonoma County protected the landscapes and parks your families cherish today.**

Every year, individuals, local leaders, and partner organizations make decisions—small and large—that proactively create the conditions for a thriving future. The trees planted today become the old-growth forests of tomorrow. The land acquisition and restoration efforts of today protect future generations from wildfires and the rising tides of climate change. Children who develop a love of nature today will become the conservation leaders of tomorrow.

As we look back on 2024, I'm in awe of all we've been able to accomplish together. It underscores my belief that together, **we can achieve big things when we start with problems we can solve locally.**

We are in this together. Thank you for your role in shaping our prosperous future.



**Scott Hafner**, Board Chair

# TOGETHER FOR NATURE



\$52M+



\$2.5M



\$3M



\$36M



\$500K

PUBLIC FUNDING TO CONSERVE, RESTORE, AND PROTECT SONOMA COUNTY



\$6.6M



\$1M



\$2.5M



\$120K

We are a voice for nature, and coordinating with local and state-wide coalitions, we advocate for consistent funding to conserve, restore, and protect the natural world. During legislator education days in Sacramento and in Washington, D.C., we stressed the need for robust state and federal policy and funding action to advance 30x30 and climate resilience for Sonoma County. **We are grateful to our elected representatives who have supported us in securing millions of dollars in investments for our collective mission to protect what we have left, and to restore the health of our land, water, and community.** Thanks to you, California continues to lead the way in this work!

# TOGETHER IN CULTIVATING THE NEXT GENERATION

Rooted in equity, the curriculum for our youth programs is designed to empower young people—those who will be most affected by climate change—to become **future leaders in conservation and STEM fields**.

## CONSERVATION COUNCIL



**Conservation Council** is an equity-based, teen youth development program made up of Sonoma County high school students.

This year, Conservation Council members conducted **two research studies on our Laufenburg Ranch Preserve**—one examining wildlife biodiversity and the other exploring soil health after a prescribed burn.



Learn More  
Online



I LEARNED A LOT ABOUT OPPORTUNITIES IN SCIENCE  
AND CONSERVATION THAT I NEVER KNEW EXISTED.

— Conservation Council participant Bertha Saucedo

WE CELEBRATED THE FIFTH ANNIVERSARY OF OUR YOUTH PROGRAMS!

81%



81% OF CONSERVATION COUNCIL STUDENTS IDENTIFIED THEMSELVES  
AS BLACK, INDIGENOUS, OR OTHER YOUTH OF COLOR



73%

OF YOUTH PROGRAM STUDENTS ARE FROM TITLE I SCHOOLS

# SLIME

OF CONSERVATION COUNCIL MEMBERS ARE MORE LIKELY TO PURSUE A CONSERVATION CAREER

83%



**Students Learning in Marsh Environments (SLIME)** is an educational program that provides field trips for third and fourth grade classes at the San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge at Sears Point.

Twenty-five public school classes participated in hands-on, immersive nature-based field trips to explore the Bay's tidal marshes. **Our bilingual curriculum was redesigned in 2024 for diverse learning styles**, ensuring classroom content comes to life for all students.

55% OF YOUTH PROGRAM PARTICIPANTS ARE FROM LOW-INCOME HOUSEHOLDS

55%



San Pablo Bay National Wildlife Refuge at Sears Point

SPECIAL THANKS

UC DAVIS

Ellie Fairbairn, Ph.D., Academic Administrator at Bodega Marine Laboratory and William Horwath, Ph.D., Professor of Soil Biogeochemistry and Soil Biogeochemist at Horwath Biogeochemistry and Nutrient Cycling Lab

# TOGETHER FOR CLIMATE RESILIENCE

Climate resilience ensures the land under our care can prepare for, recover from, and adapt to the impacts of climate change. We take our responsibility to the people who have donated or sold land to us very seriously, and commit to restoring the land in ways that meet the accelerating pace of climate change.

## LAKEVILLE CREEK'S STAGE ZERO RESTORATION TURNS ONE

A harsh winter with a series of atmospheric rivers put our Stage Zero creek restoration site to the test, resulting in some soil erosion and plant uprooting from the force of storm surges. Fine-tuning this innovative approach to watershed restoration, we adapted the plan to salvage uprooted plants, refill eroded channels, and strengthen erosion control.

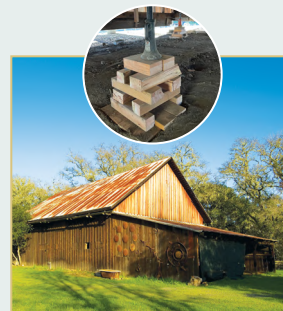
**12,790** SQUARE FEET OF WET MEADOWS STABILIZED AND RESTORED



## PROTECTING A HISTORIC BARN AT LAUFENBURG RANCH

When longtime supporter Charlie Laufenburg donated his 179-acre property to Sonoma Land Trust, his wish was that the property be taken care of—the land and the buildings.

Stewardship Program Manager **Tom Tolliver** and dedicated volunteers, including **Jim Thomason** and expert timberwright **Jason Smith** of Argos Timberworks, lifted the horse barn and installed a new foundation, ensuring the 140-year-old barn would last another 140 years.



HOURS OF LABOR  
**576**



VOLUNTEERS  
**15**

DAYS OF WORK  
**96**

Top left: Jason Smith, top right: Tom Tolliver



## PUTTING GOOD FIRE TO WORK

With the reintroduction of good fire in key locations, we've been improving forest health and increasing safety for our communities.

Working in collaboration with our partners and neighbors, we conducted the first prescribed fire on a strategic section spanning our Pole and Little Black Mountain Preserves on the coast. Inland, we created a nearly mile-long shaded fuel-break, also known as a buffer zone, at Live Oaks Ranch in a critical section of the wildland-urban interface. These actions slow the progression of wildfires and give firefighters time to respond.



### RODGER'S RIDGE SHADED FUEL BREAK

*Native grass seed for restoration*



**Marshall Turbeville, CAL FIRE**  
Battalion Chief, shares the many benefits of prescribed fire.



People trained in support of good fire through workshops with our partners

### SONOMA VALLEY WILDLANDS COLLABORATIVE (SVWC)

We work in collaboration with the SVWC to coordinate the management of our protected natural lands in order to maintain and improve ecosystem health, increase resilience to wildfires and climate change, and reduce future impacts of wildfire to communities in the Sonoma Valley and protected conservation lands.

#### SPECIAL THANKS



TRIBAL PARTNERS



AG + OPEN SPACE  
SONOMA COUNTY



# TOGETHER FOR **BIODIVERSITY**

Our plan is on track to restore a resilient landscape of tidal marsh, seasonal wetlands, streams, and upland habitats in the Sonoma Creek and Petaluma River watersheds. Acquiring Kiser Ranch's 1,460 acres is vital to achieving this goal. We thank the Kiser family for their commitment to stewarding the land and their choice to partner with us in restoring habitat for the many birds that visit and call it home.



## KISER RANCH BENEFITS

Re-establishment of tidal flow & habitat connectivity

Important stopover site for migrating raptors

Community flood protection

Boost San Francisco Bay biodiversity

Expansion of habitat for threatened species



**TIME IS OF THE ESSENCE!**

We must make significant progress in restoring Kiser Ranch before the end of this decade or we risk losing this landscape due to rising sea levels.

### THE KISER FAMILY



Cecile, Carol, & Karen Kiser

We are adding new pieces to the mosaic of restored wetlands





# TOGETHER WE ARE STRONGER

To succeed in our conservation mission requires a team with a broad range of skills and experience, now and in the future. Our versatile and talented staff are from many different backgrounds and identities, and we are committed to their career growth by investing in their technical and professional skills. We are accomplishing today's conservation goals while shaping the next generation of leaders and building a legacy, ensuring the future of conservation is in their capable hands.



*Clockwise from top left: Bianca and Riley; staff retreat; Pride festival; Alayza, Mel, and Camille; Carlos*



## DEI PLAN MID-POINT UPDATE

Sonoma Land Trust's Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Plan, adopted in 2019, underwent a comprehensive evaluation and updating at its five-year mark. The revised plan clarifies language to address systems of power and privilege, strengthens strategy implementation, shifts focus to broader organizational goals, emphasizes reciprocal relationships with tribes, and adds specific accountability measures. These updates aim to refine and enhance the original 10-year framework and guide our work today and tomorrow.

# TOGETHER IN COMMUNITY

The desire to protect Sonoma County's open spaces begins with experiencing the wonder of nature for oneself. Through our community programs, we offered a wide range of bilingual, virtual, and in-person events designed to deepen our community's understanding and connection to the natural world around us.

Our **Familias al Aire Libre** program offered free bilingual outings designed for families to discover and explore nature.



Six college students participated in the **outings internship**, learning how to safely lead group hikes and create meaningful connections to our conservation work.

6

FREE OUTINGS  
63

OUTINGS PARTICIPANTS  
1,792

We offered personalized experiences on our land to numerous **community groups** around the county.



We hosted our annual **multicultural nature-based family event** at Howarth Park.

THANK YOU SONOMA COUNTY POMO DANCERS



**CHILD  
IN THE  
WILD**  
NIÑOS EN LA NATURALEZA  
FREE FUN FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY!

Watch on  
YouTube

Our **monthly webinars** on conservation and social issues built awareness around environmental challenges and solutions.

GRATON  
TOWN  
SQUARE



Transforming a vacant lot into a  
**GATHERING SPACE**

SANTA ROSA  
SOUTHEAST  
GREENWAY



Connecting downtown to  
nearby **PARKLANDS**

MARK WEST  
COMMUNITY  
PARK



Adding cool **SHADE** in an  
urban heat island

100-ACRE  
RANCH



Connecting open spaces  
for **RECREATION**

**SONOMA LAND TRUST IS PROUD TO PLAY A ROLE IN THE OPENING OF SMALL PARKS THAT HAVE A BIG IMPACT**

Sonoma Land Trust has set an ambitious goal of **creating new parks and protected open spaces in areas where residents don't have adequate access to nature**. We are prioritizing the purchase and preservation of land that adds or connects to existing parks as key natural climate solutions to help mitigate weather emergencies such as excessive heat or flooding.

LANGUAGE OF THE  
**LAND**  
A FREE WEBINAR SERIES

1,282  
VIEWERS



SPECIAL THANKS



AG +  
OPEN  
SPACE  
SONOMA COUNTY

COMMUNITY  
EQUITY  
FOUNDATION



# TOGETHER FOR LASTING CHANGE

Individuals, families, and foundations give to Sonoma Land Trust in many ways and at many levels. **Every dollar truly makes a difference, and we're so grateful for the collective impact we were able to make on behalf of nature in 2024.** On March 31, 2024, we officially concluded our six-year comprehensive fundraising campaign, helping us conserve some of the most beautiful and ecologically significant land in the region.



**\$70,132,713**

RAISED & SPENT DURING CAMPAIGN

**\$39,233,295**

PLANNED GIFT FUTURE COMMITMENTS

**\$109,366,008**

TOTAL RAISED DURING CAMPAIGN

TOTAL SUPPORTERS

5,735



8,726

ACRES CONSERVED



14



CONSERVATION PROJECTS COMPLETED

6



YEAR CAMPAIGN



*Ira Yeager and George Hellyer*

## A LEGACY OF LOVE, ADVENTURE, AND PROTECTING NATURE

**Ira Yeager and George Hellyer** were a generous, talented couple who shared a lifetime of love and adventure. They shared a profound desire to preserve the natural beauty and biodiversity of the Napa/Sonoma region, but the full extent of their commitment only became known after their passing, when a transformative donation of \$8,280,000 was received. Their generous donation is the largest single gift received by Sonoma Land Trust and a strong way to conclude our A Force for Nature campaign.

**Their gift helped us close two land acquisitions, McCormick Ranch and Mark West Community Park**, by filling funding gaps during a critical time in the escrow process. We are extraordinarily grateful to them for their foresight and generosity.

## LEAVING A LEGACY



We appreciate the people who have let us know they have included Sonoma Land Trust in their estate plans. To learn more about joining the Legacy League, contact **Camille Mattson**, Planned Giving Manager, at [camille@sonomalandtrust.org](mailto:camille@sonomalandtrust.org) or (707) 582-8950 x 848.



## BECOMING A MEMBER

**Thank you to all those who make meaningful donations to Sonoma Land Trust.** For some people, a meaningful gift is \$10, for others, it's much larger. We know that when added together, donations of all amounts and types, including people's time, have a significant impact. **We are grateful for your support!**

# TOGETHER TO ACHIEVE OUR GOALS

Every action we take—big or small—leads to a better tomorrow. Your donations make our work possible. When combined with local, state, and federal grants, your investment goes even further toward achieving our 30x30 goals to protect 30% of our land from development by 2030. In doing so, we can reduce the impacts of a changing climate for a healthier today and a more resilient tomorrow.

## REVENUE FYE 2024

Contributions/Bequests .....	\$11,539,343
Government Grants .....	\$9,164,821
Foundation Grants .....	\$3,504,927
Program and Other Income .....	\$3,599,493
Investment Income .....	\$1,500,264

**TOTAL REVENUE .....** **\$29,308,848**

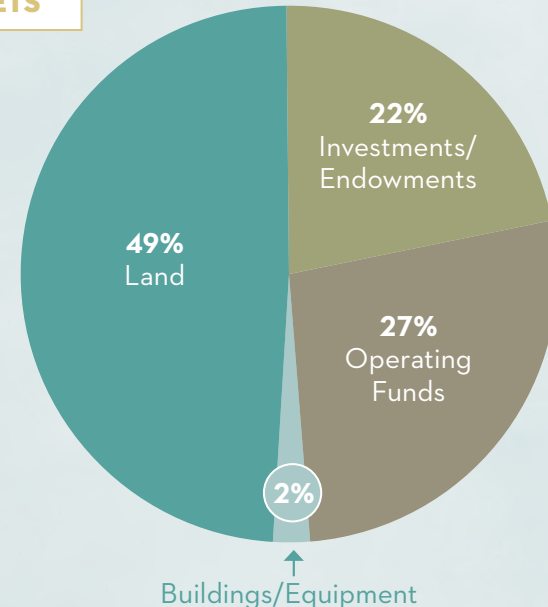
## EXPENSES FYE 2024

Land Acquisition/Stewardship .....	\$5,418,829
Transfers of Land .....	\$10,875,000
Community Programs .....	\$705,762
<b>Total Program Expenses .....</b>	<b>\$16,999,591</b>
Fundraising .....	\$1,795,658
Administration .....	\$1,818,182
<b>Total Fundraising and Administration .....</b>	<b>\$3,613,840</b>

**TOTAL EXPENSES.....** **\$20,613,431**

Complete audited financial statements are available upon request.

## ASSETS



## 3-YEAR ROLLING EXPENSE AVERAGE

76% Programs 24% Administration

**Our Board and leadership committees** are composed of volunteers who contribute their time, expertise, and generous philanthropic commitments to ensure that Sonoma Land Trust is a stable and thriving organization for today and tomorrow.

The Alumni Board Council is an esteemed group of leaders who have previously served on the Board.



Sears Point

## **SONOMA LAND TRUST BOARD OF DIRECTORS**

Scott Hafner, Chair  
Gregory Appling, Vice Chair  
Philip Jensen, Vice Chair  
Ellie Rilla, Secretary  
Marie Andel  
Simon Blattner  
Robert Brent  
Dianne Brinson  
Clay Clement  
Anita Das  
Frank Dean  
Liz Fisher  
Duncan Higgons  
Quincey Tompkins Imhoff  
Nancy Otto  
Tim Portwood  
Allison Sanford  
Judy Scotchmoor  
Lewis Warren

## **NEW MEMBERS OF THE ALUMNI BOARD COUNCIL**

Jennifer Bice  
Steven Hightower (In memoriam)  
Wendy Smit  
Gymmel Trembly

## **A FORCE FOR NATURE CAMPAIGN LEADERSHIP**

### **STEERING COMMITTEE**

Simon and Kimberly Blattner, Co-Chairs  
Tim Portwood and Jim Lauber, Co-Chairs  
Harry and Dee Richardson, Co-Chairs  
Marie Andel  
Scott Hafner  
Steven Hightower (In memoriam)  
Nancy Otto  
Ellie Rilla  
Allison Sanford

### **LEADERSHIP COUNCIL**

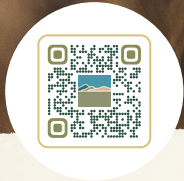
Sue Conley  
Rob Das  
Lynne Deegan-McGraw  
Ken and Akiko Freeman  
Peter and Ginnie Haas  
Dick Hafner (In memoriam)  
Hal Hinkle  
Quincey Tompkins Imhoff  
Mary Love  
Bill Osterland  
Jean Schulz

Board site visit in the Russian River region





To build a better world, we must work together to protect and conserve the planet's precious resources. — **BAN KI-MOON**



SCAN FOR THE REPORT PDF

Front Cover: Pole Mountain Preserve © Jerry Dodrill | Back Cover: Bobcat Kitten © Benedicta Justine



Sonoma Land Trust partners with local communities to protect the open, natural, and working lands and waters of Sonoma County to secure healthy and thriving futures for all.



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