



NEWSLETTER

Dedicated to the acquisition of forest open space and wildlife habitat on private lands within the San Bernardino National Forest in order to ensure lasting public benefit of the natural mountain environment.

Fall 2009



Fly fishing in the Deep Creek stream basin where the Mountains Land Trust is working to protect more land

DEEP CREEK LAND ACQUISITIONS

Five new parcels were recently protected as part of the San Bernardino Mountains Land Trust's long-term conservation project in the Deep Creek watershed between Running Springs and Arrowbear Lake.

Three parcels were acquired as habitat mitigation for the new bridge that the California Department of Transportation (CalTrans) is building at the Big Bear Dam.

Two additional Deep Creek parcels were purchased by the Land Trust at the annual county tax collector's sale of tax-defaulted properties.

Big Bear Bridge

Due to the bridge construction, there is a loss of habitat for the southern rubber boa (a small government-protected snake found only in the San Bernardino National Forest). Since the bridge is on Forest Service land, CalTrans was required to compensate for the loss with replacement habitat for the National Forest.

As local experts on wildland records, maps and property profiles all across the mountain region, the Land Trust directed CalTrans to three ideal replacement parcels in Deep Creek. These were remnant missing pieces that needed to be added to a larger (previous protected) 300-acre site.

\$3 MILLION for SAVE THE SAINTS

Last March Senator Dianne Feinstein was inspired by the *San Bernardino Mountains Land Trust* and the Forest Service (with support from the Wildlands Conservancy and other groups) to obtain \$3 million from the Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF) for recent *Save the Saints* projects.

Save the Saints is a partnership of land trusts working to protect threatened areas in the three National Forests that encircle the greater Los Angeles Basin. These are the most heavily-used public lands in the entire country.

The LWCF program provides acquisition funds to purchase private inholdings inside National Parks and National Forests. The money comes from government royalties on offshore gas and oil leases.

The \$3 million obtained by Senator Feinstein will be used by the Forest Service to purchase Eagle Canyon and Yaeger Mesa in the neighboring Cleveland National Forest.



SBMLT Projects Manager, Kevin Kellems (left), inspects the Yaeger Mesa parcel with volunteers Marc Heins and Walter Farrar. Transfer of the Yaeger Mesa and Eagle Canyon properties to the U.S. Forest Service is a collaborative project of the Land Trust, the Wildlands Conservancy and the Trust for Public Land.

LAND ACQUISITION PROJECTS

Improving Our Forest Surroundings



Fly fishing in Deep Creek near Running Springs

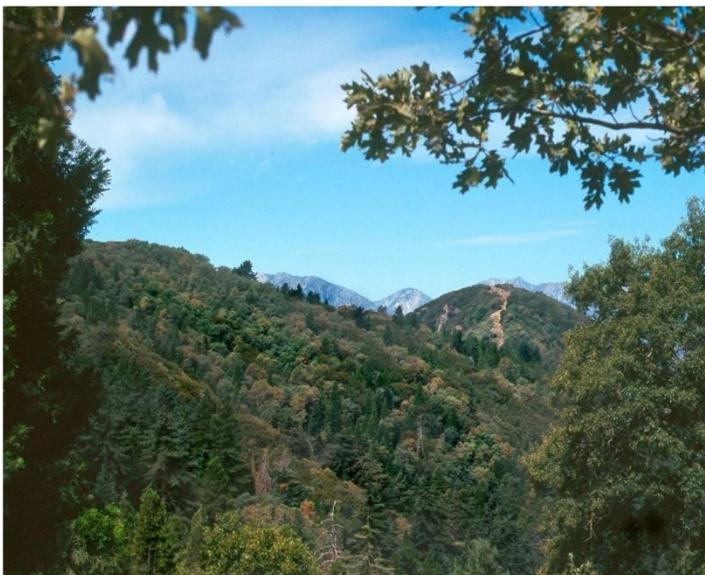
TAYLES HIDDEN RANCH (Coon Creek Area)

In magnificent high country near Onyx Summit (close to the San Geronio Wilderness Area) the Land Trust, U.S. Forest Service and the Pacific Crest Trail Association have made conservation a high priority to protect the natural wildland character of this scenic region.

By joint effort, the latest addition to the National Forest is the **320-acre Tayles Hidden Ranch property**. The famous Pacific Crest Trail passes through the area, where two historic cabins occupy the remote forested site. Eastward are spectacular views of rugged Pipes Canyon and snow-capped San Geronio Mountain.



Tayles Hidden Ranch –320 acres added to the SBNF



Sugar Pine Ridge west of Crestline

DEEP CREEK

The Land Trust helped CalTrans purchase **3 Deep Creek parcels** as conservation mitigation for the new bridge project at the Big Bear Dam. The acquisitions will be added to the National Forest area previously protected in the Deep Creek Basin near Running Springs.

The Land Trust also continues to buy tax-defaulted lots in and adjacent to Deep Creek as part of an on-going stream protection project. In the past year **12 new acquisitions** were completed in this conservation effort. Protecting riparian habitat like Deep Creek is one of the Forest Service's highest priorities.

SUGAR PINE RIDGE

Last year the Land Trust purchased 110 acres on Sugar Pine Ridge as part of SBMLT's **Revolving Acquisition Fund** project. The parcel west of Crestline is identified as one of 40 high-priority sites throughout the National Forest. The revolving fund helps SBMLT buy key properties as they become available on the real estate market.

The Land Trust will sell the 110 acres to the Forest Service when congressional funds become available for this purpose. Proceeds of the sale go back into the Revolving Acquisition Fund to be used for a future land purchase. In this way, the process repeats itself parcel by parcel for on-going land protection.

LAND ACQUISITION PROJECTS

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SBMLT Director Arnie Bean at Timber Gulch waterfall

TIMBER GULCH

In June 2009 the Land Trust purchased a 26-acre private inholding in the Lytle Creek watershed area of the local National Forest. It's one we've had our eye on for the past decade waiting for the right opportunity to appear.

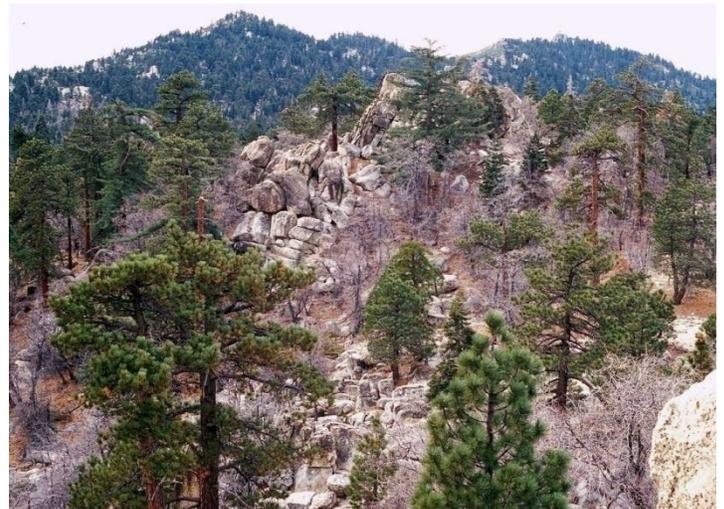
The property is located in a ravine known as Timber Gulch that flows into Lytle Creek at the edge of the Cucamonga Wilderness Area. The acquisition is one of two private inholdings in the area that need to be added to the National Forest to avoid incompatible uses of the land.

The heavily forested area is part of the scenic viewshed of upper Lytle Creek canyon and provides excellent habitat for a wide variety of wildlife

HANNA ROCKS

West of Fawnskin is a stray patch of private land, a 40-acre piece surrounded by miles of National Forest public lands. SBMLT must work to acquire this "Lost 40" in small segments, since it got subdivided into undersized units about 1900. Back then the main route to Big Bear Lake connected to Green Valley Lake behind Butler Ridge.

This isolated private inholding is located on a small dirt road in the rugged terrain near Hanna Rocks, a landmark pinnacle formation. The entire area was burned over in the 2007 Butler II Fire. Because of the multiple ownership subdivision, this is a long-term project that only an organization like the Land Trust is capable of accomplishing.



Hanna Rocks 40-acre parcel west of Fawnskin

YAEGER MESA & EAGLE CANYON

The acquisition of both Yaeger Mesa and Eagle Canyon was first arranged by The Wildlands Conservancy and the Trust for Public Land as part of the *Save the Saints* campaign. The parcels were later deeded to the Land Trust to hold until Forest Service funding became available (a 4-year time lapse).

Sale of these lands to the Forest Service is now underway, which when complete will replenish SBMLT's revolving acquisition fund. The proceeds will enable the Land Trust to make new purchases of critical lands within the San Bernardino National Forest.

Eagle Canyon is a 640-acre parcel in the Santa Ana Mountains, while Yaeger Mesa is 186 acres in the Trabuco Creek watershed, the scenic wildland center of these popular mountains.



Hikers crossing footbridge on the Yaeger Mesa Parcel

SBMLT VOLUNTEER AWARDS



Walter Ford (center) gets special recognition from President Bill Eng for outstanding service that has proved fundamental to the Land Trust's success. Lori Semeniuk (left) commends Ford for his exceptional help.

On June 19 the San Bernardino Mountains Land Trust met in Lake Arrowhead to honor (among others) Walter Ford, a 10-year member of the Land Trust's Board of Directors. Ford's real estate knowledge and expertise has been a major factor in the Land Trust's success. Ford recently retired as vice-president of real estate for Stater Bros Markets.



John Hummel, production designer of the Land Trust's fine CALENDAR (featuring local mountain highlights) receives a commendation award and congratulations from Peter Jorris, Executive Director of the Land Trust.

Local graphic artist, John Hummel, was presented a framed commemorative inscription applauding his excellence in the design production of the annual mountain-area calendar. The calendar celebrates the outstanding beauty and inspiration of our forest.

Recognized with greatest appreciation were Adopt-A-Highway volunteers (Sandy & Pat Huckaby) and Mountain Thrift Shoppe volunteers (Vivian Allard, Georgina Costa, Caryn Powell and Lori Senemiuk).

Each was presented an inscribed copy of John Robinson's *History of the San Bernardinos* -in light of the unfolding history being made by Land Trust.

It was noted by President Eng that each and every volunteer plays a significant role in making the San Bernardino Mountains Land Trust the productive and highly successful organization it has become.



President Bill Eng presents commemorative books to Lori Semeniuk & Vivian Allard for 100+ volunteer hours in the Blue Jay thrift shop (managed by mountain non-profits). Shop proceeds help fund SBMLT operations.

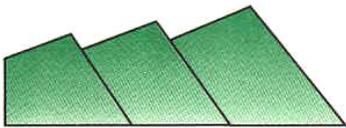
Special acknowledgement went to Lori Semeniuk, whose 260 hours of generous service in the thrift shop were the most outstanding for the past year. Lori's service translates into a \$3,500 individual donation to the overall conservation work of the Land Trust.

Winners of the 2009 photo contest were also announced at the awards ceremony while images of the winning photographs were projected on the screen. The photos will be featured in the 2010 San Bernardino Mountains Calendar.

The Land Trust highlighted a decade of significant progress, in which 9,000 acres have been secured for permanent conservation, as shown to the audience in a colorful PowerPoint presentation.



The scenic Garner Valley of the San Bernardino National Forest was once a 2,000-acre private inholding, which over the years has been largely transferred to the U.S. Forest Service for protection. The San Bernardino Mountains Land Trust is working diligently to save all remaining threatened lands in the National Forest. We greatly appreciate your support.



**SAN BERNARDINO
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LAND TRUST**

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