



**SAN BERNARDINO
MOUNTAINS
LAND TRUST**

Newsletter

Dedicated to acquisition of forest open space & wildlife habitat on private land in the San Bernardino National Forest to ensure lasting public benefit of the natural mountain environment
Autumn / Winter 2012

Rescuing Lake Arrowhead's Best Forest

Ongoing Restoration of the Eagle Ridge Site

Since buying the 80-acre parcel on Grass Valley Road (across from the Country Club) in April 2011, the *San Bernardino Mountains Land Trust* has devoted extensive effort to the stewardship of this magnificent forest site rescued from a failed subdivision.

With lots of volunteer help, hundreds of hours have been spent to remove 40 truckloads of construction debris and to load a huge drop-off container with dozens of large 20-foot-long degraded plastic pipes left scattered about the site. These were trucked away to be recycled.

The Land Trust has reduced the erosion problem, and the landscape has stabilized itself with remarkable regeneration of tree growth.

A conceptual plan for site restoration has been designed and funding OKed from Natural Resources Conservation Service for slope repair. SBMLT got added help from Boeing Foundation's Employee Community Fund. So far the rescue efforts are a big success.



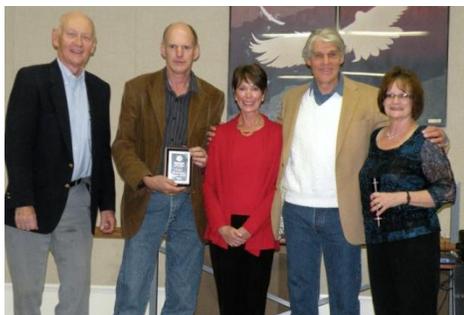
This large fallen Ponderosa Pine was enjoyed as a tree bridge during hikes by children from ALPINE CAMP and CONFERENCE CENTER in the 1970s & 80s, when the site was public land. The ancient tree is still a notable landmark.

Organization of the Year Award for SBMLT

The SAN BERNARDINO MOUNTAINS LAND TRUST was recently privileged to be named as outstanding organization of the year by the Running Springs Area Chamber of Commerce at its October 20 awards ceremony.

This honor marks the first prominent community recognition bestowed on the Land Trust, which for 17 years has been dutifully working mostly in obscurity. "The Land Trust has served our area for a long time; they buy private forest land that they then give back to us, the community, by way of the public national forest," said Terisa Bonito, Board Secretary for the chamber, "they do great work."

SBMLT has been sustained over the years by a small dedicated core of supporters who strongly recognize the incredible uniqueness of our forest in a crowded place like Southern California and how important it is to fully protect it. The Land Trust is most grateful to all its supporters whose contributions have made it possible to save over 12,000 acres of vital forestlands throughout the San Bernardino National Forest.



Walt Ford, Arnie Bean, Polly Sauer and Peter Jorris of SBMLT accept award from Chamber Secretary, Terisa Bonito





Tree squirrels are gradually returning to mountain communities

San Bernardino Mountains Land Trust

is a community-based charitable nonprofit corporation dedicated to buying threatened forest land for greater conservation and long term protection of the San Bernardino Mountains.



For more information visit the Land Trust's new website at

WWW.SBMLT.NET

SAN BERNARDINO MOUNTAINS LAND TRUST

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The SAN BERNARDINO MOUNTAINS LAND TRUST

Use this form to mail your contribution

- or - visit our excellent new website to make an online gift at www.sbmlt.net

Your Membership Is Essential To Success!

The Land Trust is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Your contributions are tax deductible.

My contribution is:

- Forest Supporter (\$35)
- Mountain Guardian (\$50)
- Mountain Sponsor (\$100)
- Forest Protector (\$500)
- Other Donation (\$ _____)

Name: _____

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Join *the* LAND TRUST (or renew your support) with a generous contribution today

San Bernardino Mountains Land Trust PO Box 103 Fawnskin, CA 92333 **-or-**
PO Box 490 Lake Arrowhead, CA 92352

Effort Revived to Save Major Pebble Plain Habitat in Big Bear



Botanists inspect rare miniature plant habitat on the Horseshoe Pebble Plain, a potential acquisition site in Big Bear Valley

The SAN BERNARDINO MOUNTAINS LAND TRUST has revived a major pebble plain protection effort in the Big Bear Valley, a project that previously eluded us in 2002. As seen in the picture above, pebble plains are unique open areas covered with miniature rare plants, which are found only in Big Bear and nowhere else in the world.

The Land Trust began looking for ways to protect pebble plains in 1998, following in the footsteps of the Nature Conservancy, which focused on this rare habitat in the 1980s. Professor Tim Krantz, Ph.D., of the University of Redlands, a biologist and leading pebble plain expert, first introduced SBMLT to what is regarded as the most prime example of this habitat. It is called the Sawmill Complex, a series of ridge plateaus in Moonridge.

Vision for a 714-acre Preserve

The Forest Service owns a 303-acre parcel that lies within the Sawmill Complex but is surrounded by private land. SBMLT is seeking to acquire two properties that sandwich the USFS parcel. One is 166 acres and the other 245 acres. Successful acquisition would not only protect the vulnerable Forest Service parcel, but also establish an overall preserve of 714 acres.

All three properties feature some of the largest and most exceptional pebble plain habitat remaining. The Land Trust is collaborating with 20 other organizations and agencies, including the Forest Service and Department of Fish & Game, in the goal to conserve this area.

The Big Bear Valley Education Trust is spearheading the overall effort to promote greater public awareness, protection, and scientific study of this rare habitat that can only be found in a small part of our mountains.

What is a Pebble Plain?

Pebble plain habitat supports one of the most threatened and biologically rare plant communities in the San Bernardino National Forest. These plant communities are relics of the Pleistocene Age, when glaciers receded. The soil composition of quartzite pebbles (deposited over eons) subsequently prevented conifers from taking seed in certain areas of ridge tops, thus preserving the ancient habitat for many millennia. Three of the eleven primary pebble plain plant species are federally listed as Threatened. Special large sites, such as the 12-acre Horseshoe Pebble Plain, which contain all eleven of these endemic species together, are extremely rare.



A mountain coyote trolls the winter landscape. Prize-winning photo by Billy Corrigan in 2013 SBMLT Calendar

MOU. with RIM OF THE WORLD PARK DISTRICT

SBMLT's mission is to reclaim vital parts of the mountain landscape left out of the protected zone of public land and add them back into the National Forest. However, the Land Trust is not equipped to own and manage land itself.

The former Eagle Ridge site is a temporary exception to the rule, purchased with the goal of finding a future owner whose use of the land would be more sensitive to the site than the once-planned high-density housing development.

Our first hope has been to create the opportunity for a park. Rim of the World Recreation & Park District supports the idea of a wildland nature park, but, lacking the needed funds, it entered into a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) with the Land Trust to write grants together. If this approach does not work out, SBMLT will continue to seek other prospective conservation owners to care for the site.

2013 SBMLT CALENDAR AVAILABLE

Sales of the 2013 *San Bernardino Mountains Land Trust* CALENDAR have been especially good this year, as people seem to be regarding it as one of the more attractive editions produced over the past 10 years of publication.

Each year local photographers capture great scenes of our idyllic mountains (like the handsome coyote to the left on a winter stroll). SBMLT's Calendar is the only one specifically highlighting our unique San Bernardino National Forest.

The Calendar provides visual reminders of how lucky we are to enjoy such a remarkable forest in such a highly urbanized area as Southern California.



Volunteers pause for photo during trail construction in the scenic forest of the impressive 80-acre Eagle Ridge parcel

ACKNOWLEDGMENT of VOLUNTEERS

SAN BERNARDINO MOUNTAINS LAND TRUST wishes to acknowledge all the heroic volunteers who made it possible to manage the Eagle Ridge site during the past year & a half and still carry on the Land Trust's complex operations.

Eagle Ridge-related

- William Abell
- Vivian Allard
- James Asher
- Mike Ayotte
- Dave Barrie
- Arnold Bean
- Linda Brodman
- Lyn Dessaux
- Bill Engs
- Don Fischer
- Barry Foley
- Walt Ford
- Janet Harvey
- Franchesca Hobart
- Dave Hubbard
- Joanne Hubbard
- Andrea Ingham
- Kevin Kellems

- Bob Kinzel
- Carol Kinzel
- Pat Kittle
- Steve Loe
- Ray Manzano
- Jim McGrew
- Keith McGrew
- Larry Philippi
- Dustin Seccombe
- Scott Seccombe
- Jan Smith
- Nancy Taylor
- Ed Wallace

Thrift Shop

- Vivian Allard
- Roy Bush
- Mary Castle
- Bill Engs

- Georgina Costa
- Sandy Ellis
- Peter Jorris
- Lorrie Anne Monson
- Caryn Powell
- Polly Sauer
- Lori Semeniuk
- Jan Smith
- Diane Sunda

Operations

- Caren Cassidy
- Tom Greer
- Tricia Greer
- Pat Huckaby
- Sandi Huckaby
- John Hummel
- Ellie Lytle
- Valerie Wilson

New 2-mile Loop Trail in Lake Arrowhead

Trail Completed in Memory of Will Abell

Completion of a 2-mile loop trail through the classic forest at Eagle Ridge was made possible this fall by generous private donations to the Land Trust in honor and memory of Will Abell.

These funds enabled the Land Trust to utilize trail crews from the San Bernardino Urban Conservation Corps, an organization that recruits inner city youths.

Will Abell, who passed away in August, was one of the Land Trust's outstanding volunteers. In addition to other SBMLT projects, he helped build the first segment of the new trail, which now allows hikers to fully experience one of our local mountain's best forests.

The beauty of Eagle Ridge is recognized as a prime example of a classic southern Sierran native forest. The stature, health and diversity of trees make it the best example of its kind in our mountain range, according to professional foresters.

Hiking through these woods makes it possible to fully appreciate the beauty of the forest landscape that once encircled the entire Lake Arrowhead area. This site is now the last example of that original natural setting.

As a lifetime mountain resident and local artist, Will Abell greatly enjoyed the wildlife and scenic surroundings of our outstanding national forest. Because of his enthusiastic support, we plan to call the new forest path the "Will Abell Nature Trail." It goes through a truly artistic part of our mountain environment.



Members of the Urban Conservation Corps construct a switchback segment of the Eagle Ridge 2-mile nature trail

VISIT SBMLT'S EXCELLENT NEW WEBSITE

With a generous grant from Skye Woods the SAN BERNARDINO MOUNTAINS LAND TRUST was able to redesign its website this year. We also owe tremendous thanks to Joanne Hubbard, whose wonderful artistic input and expert management of hundreds of photographs and new material, allowed this major overhaul to be successfully accomplished.



Kevin Kellems stands atop San Geronio Mountain in this image from the new website's homepage

A new page in the website entitled PROFILES OF PROTECTED PROPERTIES gives a full overview of all the impressive accomplishments of the the past 20 years and consists of brief descriptions of every conservation project during that time. These projects add up to 12,000 acres that have been protected as a result of the combined conservation efforts of everyone who has supported our local land trust movement, which began back around 1992.

As an added feature of our recent upgrade, SBMLT can now be followed on other social media such as Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn in order to enlarge our outreach to more people.

Because there are many important lands still remaining to be protected in the San Bernardino Mountains, the Land Trust will need lots of additional help to carry on the success.

POWERPOINT PROGRAM --How does the Land Trust work?

Not many people know what a land trust is or what it does. To illustrate the kind of forest protection it provides, SBMLT has a PowerPoint program available to community groups. This visual format gives excellent insight into our forest's history and its unique scenic and wildlife assets in context of the potential threats we face. Any interested group or organization is welcome to call or contact us at info@sbmlt.net to schedule a presentation.



First successful Eagle's Nest in the San Bernardino National Forest.

Photo by Barbara Jordan taken in early March 2012



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