



**SAN BERNARDINO
MOUNTAINS
LAND TRUST**

Forest View

December 2018

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

Scenic trail up to Coyote Rock

One of the best forest hikes in the San Bernardino Mountains



Photo by Ed Wallace

View from
Coyote Rock



Scott Seccombe

Hikers at the top of Coyote Rock

Hiking up to Coyote Rock was a tradition for six-graders at the Running Springs Elementary School in the 1960s. Their teacher, **Jim Sims**, would lead outings up to the enormous rock on top of the forested mountain behind the school. The hike was a grand opportunity to experience the exceptional beauty of this scenic spot in our local mountains.

A new trail, made in 2014 by the **SAN BERNARDINO MOUNTAINS LAND TRUST**, is named in tribute to Jim and his wife, Kathie. It starts behind the school, where children of today can rediscover this great wilderness backyard. The 140-acre site was rescued from subdivision by the Land Trust, which is working to transfer the land to the National Forest in 2019.



SAN BERNARDINO MOUNTAINS LAND TRUST

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SBMLT CONTACT INFORMATION

Phone the Executive Director at
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WEBSITE: www.sbmlt.net

***SBMLT** is a community-based charitable nonprofit organization dedicated to buying threatened forestland for greater conservation and long-term protection of the San Bernardino Mountains.*

HELP SUPPORT

The SAN BERNARDINO MOUNTAINS LAND TRUST

MAIL your donation TODAY with the FORM below
- or - visit our website to make an online gift at www.sbmlt.net

Your Membership is Key to continued 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 Hero (\$100)
 Forest Champion (\$500)
 Other Donation (\$ _____)

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

San Bernardino Mountains Land Trust PO Box 490 Lake Arrowhead, CA 92352

Progress and Projects Report

Coyote Rock Sale to U.S. Forest Service

Funds for a USFS purchase of Coyote Rock were diverted to fire suppression in 2017, but returned again this year. Then in June the Forest Service amended its sale contract from a phased acquisition to a single purchase of all three parcels (138 acres). The escrow paperwork was revised accordingly. Progress is slow due to agency budget and staff shortages. Two minor title issues are currently delaying completion of the transaction, which will happen sometime in 2019.



Sale of the Coyote Rock property (pictured above) is proceeding through a complicated escrow process with the Forest Service.

SBMLT Lands

After 20 years of being a temporary land-holding service for the National Forest, SBMLT began a major transition in 2015 into assuming greater ownership/ management responsibility itself. Dealing with the multiple stewardship issues has kept us busy throughout the past year.

Our small organization now owns and oversees seven forest preserves, i.e. Arrowhead Ridge, Coyote Rock, Deep Creek Headwaters, Fawnskin Hilltop, the Metcalf Meadow Preserve, a 700-acre Pebble Plain Ecological Reserve and the 50-acre base of Strawberry Peak. This main list does not include smaller land acquisition projects in Deep Creek, Hanna Rocks and Shay Pond.

Metcalf Meadow

This past year SBMLT completed a perimeter fencing project at the Metcalf Meadow preserve, using steel posts and cable to prevent 4WD vehicles from joyriding onto the sensitive plant habitat. (The site is prominently located on Big Bear's main thoroughfare). Funding was provided by the Inland Empire Resource Conservation District, while SBMLT staff performed the work. We also got help from Tim Krantz PhD (a leading local botanist with the University of Redlands) and student interns to conduct biological surveys of endangered plant species onsite during the spring flowering season. Monitoring and mapping the meadowland species is an annual step in the ongoing effort to fully restore the habitat.

Pebble Plain Ecological Reserve



University of Redlands students compiled data from aerial drone photography last fall to draft a special biological study for restoration of degraded sections of pebble plain habitat.

The 700-acre Sawmill Pebble Plain Ecological Reserve is the most challenging of the land management projects that SBMLT is facing due to its large area and location in the middle of a well-populated community of Big Bear. Off-road vehicle trespass, trash dumping and timber theft have been key problems along with the principle duty of securing the unique and rare habitat.

SBMLT is working with a coalition of pebble plain partners to draft a comprehensive Management Plan for the reserve. Neighboring volunteers are pitching in to construct trails and plant trees. New trailhead kiosks were added on the north side of the property this year. Post & cable fencing has been put up to prevent vehicle trespass at critical perimeter points. Biologists along with students are helping with major habitat and restoration projects.

SBMLT Outreach

Karla Kellems is a SBMLT part-time staff member helping with SBMLT's organizational outreach for presentations, for correspondence and events. SBMLT had a booth at the Pine Cone Festival and at several other local venues this year and participated in regional nonprofit conferences. Karla has also begun the updating of SBMLT's membership database and software for greater efficiency in outreach efforts.

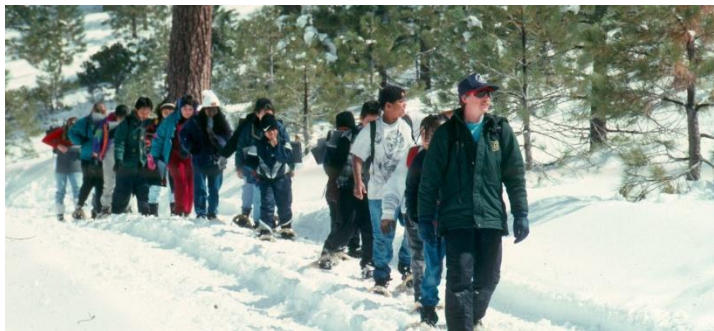


Karla at the start of the county's GiveBIG nonprofit funding drive with former Supervisor James Ramos and Penny Snubnell of Crestline

REFLECTIONS on the SAN BERNARDINO MOUNTAINS



The San Bernardino Mountains provide an uplifting escape from the crowded urbanized society that our modern world has become. In the beautiful natural surroundings of the forest there is a timeless quality captured in the tall trees from their century-old existence. It bestows a healing calm on any over-stressed person's nerves. The wildlife and the sound of mountain streams communicate the same message. Nature is said to be the handmaiden of the divine. And there are few places in Southern California where that quality comes to greater expression than in the SAN BERNARDINO NATIONAL FOREST.



The integrity of our scenic mountains and forest depends on the interconnected parts of unique ecosystems –the watershed, the wildlife, riparian habitat, meadowlands and trees. Too much fragmentation and overdevelopment can destroy the essence of this treasure and extinguish its vitality.

SBMLT was formed 23 years ago as the best way to counter the unbridled urbanizing trends in our local mountains and to focus more on protecting the rare qualities that keep the National Forest healthy. The opportunity to enjoy a true experience of nature is a priceless gift in today's world. Just to walk through a real forest, to breathe the pure air, glance upward through towering pines or watch an eagle in flight can refresh the spirit in ways that we only faintly realize. It puts the soul in touch with a higher reality.

Priceless, irreplaceable and transcendent are all qualities of nature that we should celebrate and safeguard rather than abuse or exploit.

Over the years SBMLT has been privileged to rescue many threatened places, to patch up major gaps in the National Forest and restore fragmented wildlife habitat. Because no forest has as many gaps as the SBNF, our rescue efforts must continue. But budget and staff cuts crippling both the USFS and LWCF have made us more dependent on state funds.



The Land Trust is the last option for pro-actively rescuing the many vulnerable parts of the forest still unprotected. We're grateful for the heritage of past conservation work (bequeathed from our predecessors) as a priceless legacy for us to further improve upon.



Please continue to help us in the effort to save natural lands and forest habitat that supports our rare wildlife.



PROJECT UPDATES at SBMLT's ARROWHEAD RIDGE SITE

CALFIRE CONSERVATION EASEMENT

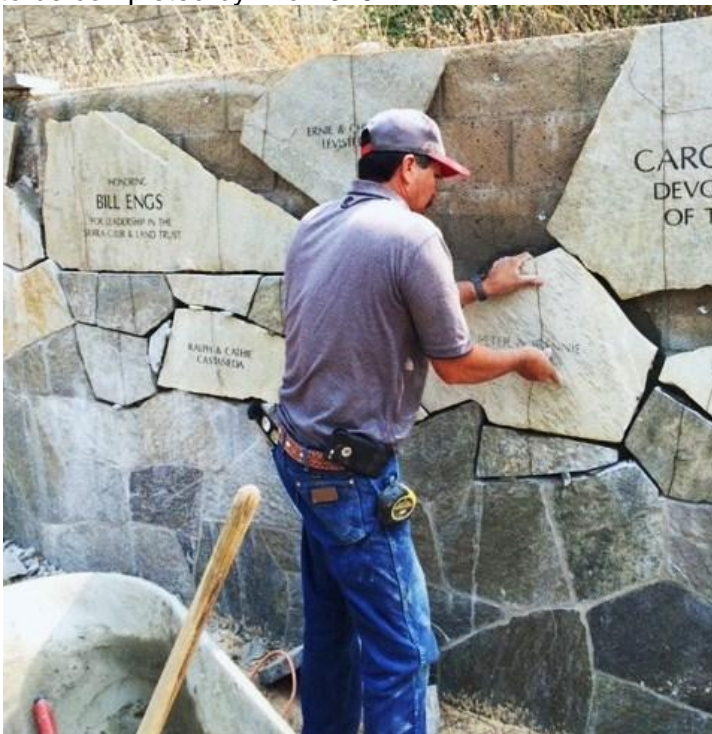
Last year SBMLT qualified for a CALFIRE Forest Legacy grant to create a conservation easement (CE) at Arrowhead Ridge, which confers added protection to the landscape. The easement will extinguish the development rights on the property in order to ensure permanent protection of the onsite forest. During the past year the legal text of the CE has been drafted and agreed upon, then finalized. Baseline conditions have been documented, and a forest management plan is in preparation. SBMLT recently had the property appraised, and the final transaction is being handled by the state's wildlife Conservation Board. Hopefully to be completed by mid 2019.



A military honor guard along with boy scouts prepares to raise the American flag in concert with flags of the separate armed service branches at a Veterans Day celebration held at SBMLT's Arrowhead Ridge Forest Preserve. (The donor wall is just uphill from the flags).

OPENING ACCESS TO THE LOWER ROAD AT ARROWHEAD RIDGE FOR PARKING

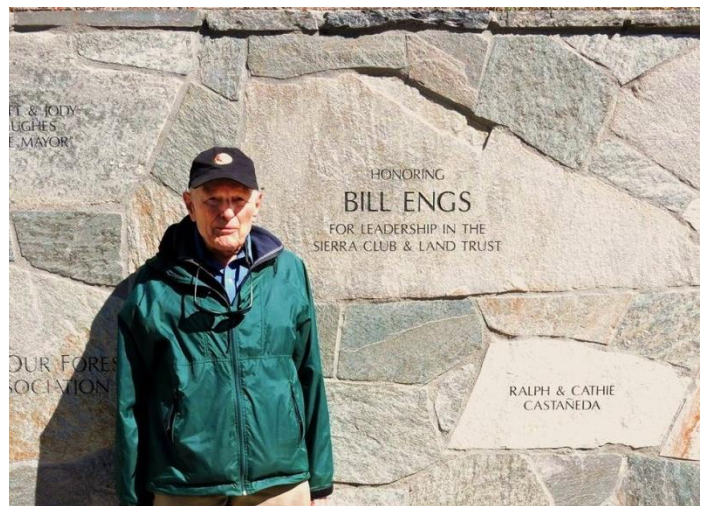
SBMLT is constructing cable fencing around the lower park-like grounds of Arrowhead Ridge's entrance area to prevent vehicle encroachment onto the unpaved natural parts of the landscape. When completed, the chain barriers at the entrance will be opened to allow better onsite parking and access to the flag monument. The upper roads onsite (leftover from an abandoned development project) will gradually be eliminated and replaced with footpaths. Donor wall contributions and proceeds from the new conservation easement will help to fund landscaping improvements between the donor wall and the flag monument.



DONOR WALL

SBMLT added fourteen new flagstones with engraved donor inscriptions to the large commemorative wall onsite. Ordering a personal carved-flagstone plaque is a great way to support the Land Trust and also to honor your family, business or special cause. Contact us (see information on page 2), if you would like more detail about this unique opportunity.

Long range plans include landscaping the donor wall area with stone planters, paths and benches and integrating the site more closely with the adjacent flag monument for military veterans. The flag display first started out as a young boy scout's eagle project, but has become a popular focal point for both personal and public tributes to all the members of the armed services.



Bill Eng stands next to the engraved flagstone plaque that was dedicated in honor of his many years of leadership in the Sierra Club and SAN BERNARDINO MOUNTAINS LAND TRUST

SBMLT Photo



Aerial view of Bluff Mesa with snowy lake & meadow plus tall Keller Peak and Big Bear Lake on the right (San Gabriels in distance)



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Help Support the
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