



**SAN BERNARDINO
MOUNTAINS
LAND TRUST**

Forest View

December 2017

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

28+ acres of forestland gifted to SBMLT Natural open-space parcel in Fawnskin protected by private donor



SBMLT President, Jim Asher, thanks land donor, Barbara Finlayson-Pitts, for her very generous, heroic and magnanimous rescue of a prominent piece of forest in the community of Fawnskin.

Profile of Barbara

Barbara Finlayson-Pitts, the hero who rescued a 30-acre parcel of forestland from a future of potential development, has been a long-time member of SBMLT and a great supporter of mountain conservation, wildlife and the rural integrity of the Fawnskin community, where she enjoys a second-home.

In her professional life she's a noted science professor at the University of California, Irvine, where she's renowned for her expertise in the field of atmospheric chemistry. The protection of this property also is in commemoration of her late husband, Jim, and her parents. A special bench is dedicated to their memory at the most scenic and idyllic spot overlooking the lake.

IN T E N T on preventing a popular wildland area on Fawnskin's easterly edge from being sacrificed to more residential expansion in our local Forest (the most over-developed National Forest of all), Barbara Finlayson-Pitts, a part-time mountain resident, personally purchased a 30-acre site of real estate so that the conifers, oak trees and natural open space of the area could be protected.

With the exception of a 1.5-acre segment in a lower corner of the scenic property (a future home site next to existing dwellings), the remaining 28.5 acres of landscape, including a splendid view overlooking Big Bear Lake from the summit, were generously donated to the **SAN BERNARDINO MOUNTAINS LAND TRUST** in October.

This heroic act of forest conservation by a private citizen is a fantastic example of community spirit, ecological philanthropy and generous good will —the kind that inspires the highest appreciation whenever it happens. SBMLT is exceedingly grateful to Barbara for this outstanding gift, which is a tremendous boon for the forest, for all the folks of Fawnskin and to everyone who values the magnificent natural wildlands of our mountain area.

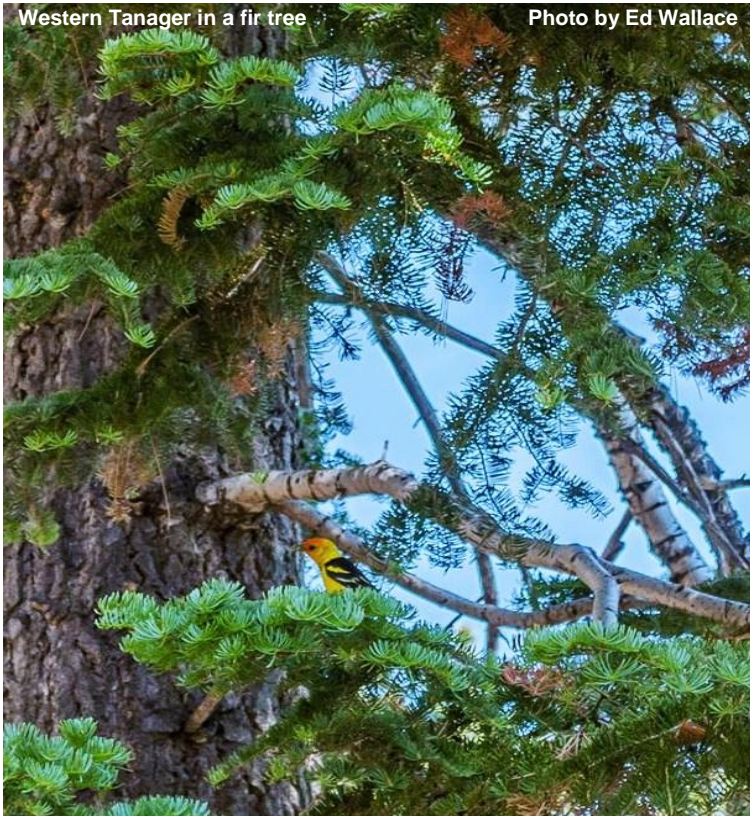


photos by Hallie Willoughby

Some of the 40 celebrants, who gathered November 4th to dedicate the new 28.5-acre conservation site, which features a great view of Big Bear Lake along with lots of natural forest habitat, since the site interconnects with adjoining public lands of the National Forest

Western Tanager in a fir tree

Photo by Ed Wallace



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.

SAN BERNARDINO MOUNTAINS LAND TRUST

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| Website | Polly Sauer |
| Social Media Outreach | Karla Kellems |

SBMLT CONTACT INFORMATION

Phone the Executive Director at
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E-mail: info@SBMLT.net
WEBSITE: www.sbmlt.net

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 103 Fawnskin, CA 92333 **-or-**
PO Box 490 Lake Arrowhead, CA 92352

About 100 acres of Coyote Rock Property now ready for transfer to the San Bernardino National Forest

SBMLT's Coyote Rock Preserve has four distinct land segments: an 80-acre tract, a 40-acre parcel, a 17.5-acre piece and 20 one-acre lots. The LAND TRUST is currently in escrow with the Forest Service to sell the **80-acre** and the **17.5-acre** parcels, which are contiguous to the USFS Deerlick Visitor Center in Running Springs.

These two parcels are all that the USFS can afford right now. So far it's taken a year for preliminary real estate work to be completed, such as a title review, appraisal, Phase I environmental assessment and draft of a purchase and sale agreement.

Progress got halted several months when the USFS fire-fighting budget was depleted. Coyote Rock funds (and others) got temporarily diverted to help pay for fire suppression costs. However, that money is expected to be returned later in January or by February, when the transaction can then be completed.

Anatomy of a Land Deal

SBMLT's main goal of patching up our fragmented SAN BERNARDINO NATIONAL FOREST is a challenge that's gotten more and more difficult over the last 20 years.

Coyote Rock is a good example of the fortitude and perseverance it takes to get important lands added to the National Forest. As **Step 1** SBMLT and the Forest Service must agree on a priority site for acquisition. then for **Step 2** SBMLT has to buy the land –a big step, but

essential, since ordinary landowners don't have the patience to work with the slow and complicated USFS bureaucracy. Sometimes there's no unified agreement within the Forest Service itself in cases where the head Ranger, Forest Supervisor or Regional Forester might not share the same priority. Also, personnel turnovers can change agency objectives . We've dealt with four different rangers and 3 forest supervisors since 2002.

Step 3 involves trips back to Washington DC to persuade our elected representatives to allocate special designated funds so that the local Forest Service can purchase private land inside the National Forest boundary.

On the Coyote Rock acquisition, Peter Jorris and Arnie Bean went to DC in 2013 and Jorris then returned again in 2014 to reinforce our appeal, which luckily was successful in getting \$1 million appropriated.

Nonprofit lobbying is a fairly specialized skill that SBMLT has worked hard to refine over the past two decades.

After funding is allocated, **Step 4** entails the actual transaction itself. In our Coyote Rock deal, two years slipped by as the USFS's real estate division for Southern California temporarily closed for lack of personnel. Meantime land values increased on the mountain, and the allocated funds were no longer enough to acquire the whole site. As noted above it's taken all of 2017 just to partly complete the escrow stage. That's why we're not yet able to report a "done deal" on this sale by year's end.



View of the entrance to SBMLT's 150-acre Coyote Rock Preserve in the Rimwood Ranch area of Running Springs



Peter Jorris (arrow) in Washington DC with LAND TRUST ALLIANCES' ambassadors in 2014 to seek funds to add Coyote Rock to the SBNF

LAND TRUST NOTES and NEWS

Drone camera helps map pebble plain

A grant from Inland Empire Resource Conservation District, directed by the Big Bear Valley Education Trust, is funding Professor **Tim Krantz PhD** (of the University of Redlands and foremost botanist on endemic plant species of Big Bear) to supervise restoration of the Horseshoe Pebble Plain, which



U. of Redlands Professor Nate Strout and student, Torrey Rotellini, launch the drone

has been severely degraded from past ORV abuse. **University of Redlands interns** are assisting on the project with added participation from students at Big Bear High School. Professor of Spatial Studies, Nate Strout, and the interns have made several site visits using a drone to photograph the pebble plain. Maps will be generated from aerial photos for better analysis of specific problem areas to help direct the restoration project.



Ed Wallace photo

University of Redlands Intern preparing to catch a returning drone onsite at the Horseshoe Pebble Plain restoration project

SBMLT staffer attends LTA Rally in Denver

Karla Kellems, SBMLT volunteer for social media outreach, traveled to Colorado in October to attend the LAND TRUST ALLIANCE's national rally. The annual conference attracts land trusts from all over the country on a scale of 2,000 attendees. It's the best place to find information on every facet of land conservation and to interact with colleagues.

Karla focused on aspects of community outreach, such as social media, online crowd funding platforms and themes that resonate with members of the upcoming millennial generation. Each age group needs to form its own connection to natural landscapes in order for the protection of our wildland heritage to carry on. Sending an emissary to the nation-wide rally of land trusts helps SBMLT keep up with new trends.



Concert photo

Mike Jones, Alan Waddington and Mike Finn at the outdoor desert concert in Pioneer Town

Below: Jones and Finn

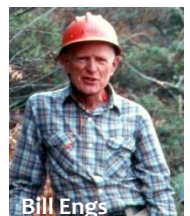


Benefit Concert for SBMLT

Some 15 years ago, SBMLT first connected with Finn & Jones at an Idyllwild environmental fair, where they performed. Everyone enjoyed their anti-sprawl song, **San Bernardino County Blues**. Both grew up near orange groves in Corona and decried the loss of open space. As founding members of a 1980's "guitarmy" band, known as *The Unforgiven*, they traveled many roads and accumulated lots of stories before disbanding. Both became Los Angeles high school teachers. Their August 30 outdoor acoustic concert under brilliant desert stars seated 50 fans (with ticket sales going to SBMLT). Finn's family owns a cabin in Big Bear. We gratefully thank these great musicians for generously donating their \$750 concert proceeds to the Land Trust.

2017 Changes on SBMLT Board of Directors

Bill Engs retired from the SBMLT Board in January after helping to shape the whole organization during 20 years of dedicated service, including 6 years as vice-president, 5 years as president and a final 3 years as secretary. SBMLT's solid operational structure, governing policies, record-keeping, strict legal compliance and administrative model all resulted from Bill's expertise in organizational systems, the topic of his PhD. SBMLT is exceedingly grateful to Bill, who thankfully continues to be available for advice as needed.



Bill Engs

Going forward, SBMLT was pleased to welcome new member, Jim Baugh, onto the Board last summer. For some three years now he's been a mainstay volunteer, overseer and innovator of improvements at the pebble plain preserve in Big Bear. He brings a wealth of talents to the Board.

SBMLT wins state Grant for better Forest Protection at Arrowhead Ridge

The purchase of Arrowhead Ridge in 2011 marked SBMLT's first significant venture into direct ownership and long-term management of prominent land –a big step forward from our initial focus of facilitating USFS acquisitions. The step greatly tested the Land Trust's operational capacity both administratively and financially, while pushing the limits of volunteer and staff time. Also, funds had to be borrowed to cover the purchase.

Now, thanks to a \$1 million grant by the California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection, we'll be able to make better progress on the various restoration projects that have been envisioned for the site.



Arrowhead Ridge as seen from Strawberry Peak

ranging from the Cascade region of Shasta County down to the southern Sierra in Kern County. The site's scenic quality makes it an excellent spot for hiking.

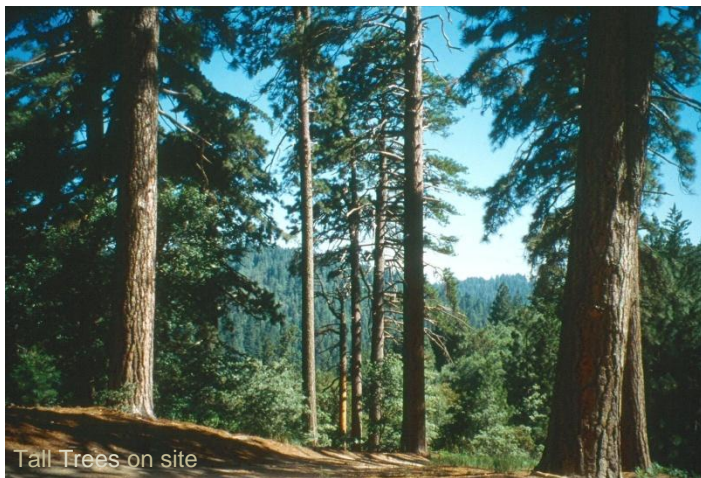
Because so much of Lake Arrowhead is residential, protection of this premium open space becomes more critical. **Magnificent trees, wildlife and watershed** all prompted the Forestry Division of CALFIRE to affirm that Arrowhead Ridge warranted a greater form of safeguard. The state plans to extinguish the site's development rights via a conservation easement purchased from SBMLT. The sale will also enable the Land Trust to retire its loan.

WILDLIFE: Over 150 species occur at Arrowhead Ridge. The San Bernardino flying squirrel and southern rubber boa are two that exist only in the San Bernardino National Forest (nowhere else) and only within a very limited range. The site is also habitat for the California spotted owl.

WILDLIFE CORRIDOR: The property is a key link in a major county-designated wildlife corridor –the main migration route in this sector of the forest for large mammals like deer, bear, and mountain lion between north and south parts of the National Forest.

WATERSHED VALUES: Three seasonal streams shed off of Arrowhead Ridge into the adjacent waters of Grass Valley Creek, which is one of two major tributaries to the Mojave River. About 500,000 acre feet of water flows yearly into the Mojave from the mountain watershed.

SBMLT looks forward to coordinating with CAL FIRE in long-term management of the Arrowhead Ridge site.



Tall Trees on site

Forest Legacy Conservation Easement

Given the exceptional quality of trees at Arrowhead Ridge, SBMLT will be granted funds to establish a conservation easement for the permanent protection of the forest. The grant comes from the Forest Health and California Climate Investments program of the Urban & Community Forestry Division, which draws upon allocations from the state's Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund. By protecting healthy forests, more progress can be made in reducing adverse climatic effects of greenhouse gases.

Excellent Forest Setting

Arrowhead Ridge is the most significant of the last remaining privately-owned natural forest parcels in the resort community of Lake Arrowhead, where about two thousand acres of forestland got eliminated in the last half of the 20th Century by wall-to-wall subdivisions. Meanwhile, the overall SAN BERNARDINO NATIONAL FOREST is among the most heavily-used public lands in America, due to the mega-population surrounding it.

Given the extraordinary stature, health and diversity of trees at Arrowhead Ridge, the site is recognized by professional foresters as the best example of a westside Sierra Nevada mixed-conifer forest in the San Bernardino Mountains. This type of forest is normally only found



Children from Alpine Camp on nature walk in 1980



View of 273-Acre Wildhorse Canyon, protected by SBMLT and the Trust for Public Land in 2007

Photo by Ed Wallace



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