



**SAN BERNARDINO
MOUNTAINS
LAND TRUST**

Forest View

December 2019

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

Congress restores Land & Water Conservation Fund Great news for the SAN BERNARDINO NATIONAL FOREST



SBMLT Exec. Director, Peter Jorris, in Washington DC on behalf of the LWCF

The U.S. Congress voted earlier this year to restore the popular Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF), a program that's helped National Parks and Forests to buy privately-owned lands within their boundaries for 50 years.

LWCF expired in 2015, ending the best method to protect land in the SBNF. This setback made the Land Trust shift its focus onto state grants. Previously, LWCF had enabled us to rescue over 10,000 acres in our National Forest.

More Land to Rescue

The welcome revival of the LWCF means SBMLT can once again resume a proactive effort with the Forest Service to save key ecological and wildlife sites in our local mountains, which are the most over-urbanized of any forest in the USA. SBMLT was part of a nationwide effort that encouraged congress to reauthorize the LWCF, based on huge public support.

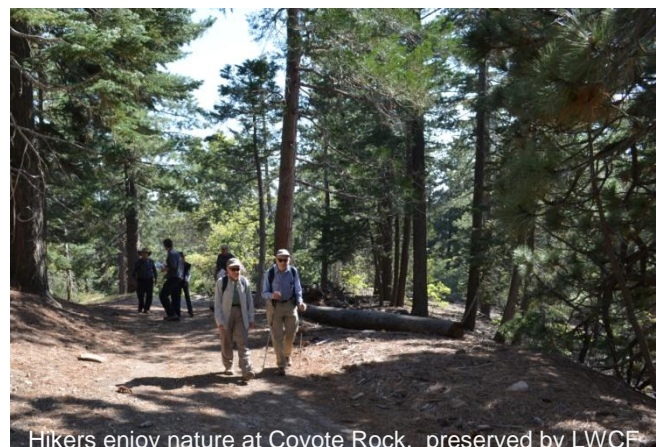
New Grant Funds for Stewardship Projects

SBMLT was granted \$17,000 this year from the Inland Empire Resource Conservation District to install protective fencing around rare pebble plain habitat. This habitat is being restored from off-road vehicle damage that occurred prior to SBMLT's ownership. The restoration work is coordinated by biologists assisted by Big Bear High School students.

SBMLT received a \$1,000 grant from Boeing of California's Employee Community Fund to purchase items for trail work and tree planting projects at Arrowhead Ridge.

SBMLT Projects Manager, Kevin Kellems, is partnering with the U.S. Natural Resource Conservation Service to implement a 4-year \$84,000 matching grant project to remove potentially flammable vegetation on the west side of SBMLT's 700-acre Moonridge Pebble Plain Ecological Reserve. This thinning project will remove underbrush and ladder fuels as a means to reduce the wildfire risk in an area that's close to houses.

It's notable that the vote to restore LWCF was 92 to 7 in the Senate and 363 to 62 in the House of Representatives –a major bipartisan agreement.



Hikers enjoy nature at Coyote Rock, preserved by LWCF

SBMLT Directors inspect Coyote Rock parcel in 2013



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SBMLT is a charitable nonprofit organization dedicated to buying threatened forestland for greater 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:

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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

State acquisition grants boost SBMLT's effectiveness

A state official's visit highlights key projects

Five of SBMLT's major forest protection projects were funded by land-acquisition grants from California's Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB). At the end of May this past spring, WCB Senior Lands Agent, Kurt Weber, paid us a visit to monitor the status of those five sites.

He arrived on a very pristine and spectacular day that showcased our mountains in their fullest grandeur –the kind of day when Catalina is seen from the Rim as sharply as a nearby tree and the snow-capped peaks of Mount Baldy, San Geronio and San Jacinto all appear majestically tall against a stark blue sky.



Trail on ridge above Deep Creek

It's always advantageous per grant applications when state officials from Sacramento get to see firsthand that our mountains in Southern California are much more impressive and magnificent than they previously imagined.

– Seven state funding grants –

Since 2002, SBMLT has successfully received seven different land-acquisition grants from WCB (the state's real estate agency for ecological and wildlife projects). The total of these grants has so far added up to almost \$11 million, which never would have been possible without support from all our Land Trust members, who have sustained the organization over many years.



Deep Creek Headwaters Parcel



120-acre Gregory Property

Our seven WCB grants saved 5 major projects

- 1) 120-acre Gregory Family Property in Twin Peaks, west of Grandview Road above Lake Gregory (2002);
- 2) 42 acres within the Deep Creek headwaters area of Arrowbear (2002);
- 3) Metcalf Meadow and Metcalf Bay in Big Bear Lake (two adjoining properties purchased from separate owners); together they form a 32-acre meadowland and rare plant preserve on the south shore of Big Bear Lake (2015) and (2016);
- 4) Two properties between Moonridge and Sugarloaf of 400 acres that flank a Forest Service parcel to form a 700-acre natural forest preserve (2014) and (2016);



700-acre Sawmill Pebble Plain Ecological Reserve

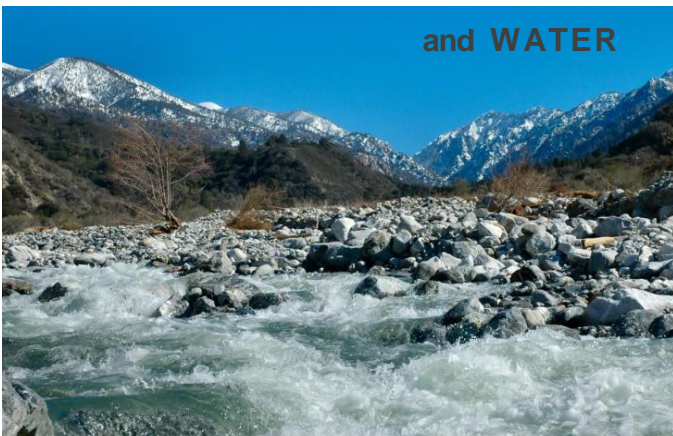
- 5) One-third of the 25-acre Shay Pond Meadowland Reserve northeast of Big Bear, where the Department of Fish & Wildlife is working to protect a rare and endangered species of fish.

All these lands have been secured as an outstanding public benefit and excellent open space legacy for future generations. By their conservation protection, significant ecological harm was avoided, for all of them would have otherwise been converted into more urban development, adding to greater habitat fragmentation and loss of wildlife.

Why is LWCF so vital to the SAN BERNARDINO MOUNTAINS ?



Since the **San Bernardino National Forest** sits next to the huge metropolitan area of LA, extra development pressure is placed on our forest, fueling incompatible urban growth that makes it much harder to protect land. The SBNF is already in more jeopardy than any other Forest, insofar as it has the highest percent of private land inside its boundaries and the highest percent of urban development. It also has the worst fire danger, insofar as its ratio of housing to wildland is so high. Thus, the need to save open space is especially vital.



Despite SBNF's overdevelopment, thousands of acres of private land are still eligible for further urbanization, unless purchased explicitly for conservation. The Land Trust was created to maximize our local use of LWCF. Its reinstatement is therefore cause for full celebration.

LWCF funds are derived from off-shore oil leases, not taxes. Royalties are paid to the government by various corporations for the privilege to extract public mineral resources. In turn, the government uses LWCF's share of the royalties to re-invest in improving National Parks and Forests. Admirably the bill to reinstate LWCF got approved in the Senate by 92 votes and passed in the House by a bipartisan majority of 363 to 62. Few bills in congress receive such overwhelming support.

The **Land & Water Conservation Fund** is the best monetary source for buying critical forestland to patch up major gaps in our local National Forest –the most magnificent natural landscape in Southern California.

LWCF creates a unique opportunity to save the rare ecological integrity, the remarkable wildlife and the natural watershed of our noble forest, which otherwise would become overly fragmented if not protected.

The concept of LWCF originated in Eisenhower's administration, when public use of National Parks and Forests had increased phenomenally after WWII. 1950s families loved nature.

In 1964, when LWCF was enacted, everyone had access to the great outdoors. But America has changed since then from a majority agrarian society to become mostly urban/suburban dwellers. National Forests are now more important than ever as vital natural areas...



SBMLT and the Forest Service have worked together on LWCF projects for 23 years.



as places where all the public can enjoy therapeutic relief from our very hectic and artificial manmade surroundings, since nature is ever shrinking.



Healthy re-growth at ARROWHEAD RIDGE

TEN YEAR PERSPECTIVE

During the past ten years, the badly damaged landscape at the entrance area of Arrowhead Ridge, where bulldozers in 2007 carved out steep road cuts and removed many tall trees, now shows positive signs of remarkable recovery.

BELOW are two photos by Hugh Bialecki that show the difference between 2009 and the present in respect to new growth at the site.



Arrowhead Ridge is acclaimed by professional foresters for its healthy diversity, its resilience against disease and especially for its excellent regenerative forces. Good soil and the sheltered micro-climate in the natural stream basin of Grass Valley Creek help to enhance the area's overall vitality.

Ever since 2011, when SBMLT took ownership of the site, we have watched as tiny conifer seedlings from that time period have steadily grown into healthy young trees. In the 2009 photo, the steep road cut (that looks like a concrete ramp) is now covered in a vibrant miniature forest of abundant trees.



TRAILS

One of the greatest added benefits of SBMLT's successful accomplishments in land conservation over the years has been the opening of several excellent new trails on prime protected lands that otherwise would have become converted into new housing developments. These include:

1. The Ponderosa Trail on 51 acres at the base of Strawberry Peak (adjacent to National Forest), a 1-mile scenic loop trail that's an easy and excellent nature hike.
2. The popular Will Abell Memorial Trail at Arrowhead Ridge, a 2-mile loop that weaves through magnificent sloping forestland.
3. The Jim & Kathie Sims Trail behind Running Springs School, which climbs to the commanding summit of Coyote Rock with links to Mill Peak and the USFS Exploration Trail
4. Multiple inter-linking loop trails through the moderate terrain of the grand 700-acre Moonridge Pebble Plain Ecological Reserve.
5. Trails from both the Arrowbear side and Running Springs side of the Dry Creek valley that descend into the broad riparian stream basin, which merges with scenic Deep Creek.

All these inspirational trails are among the very best of the natural forest surroundings found in our San Bernardino Mountains.



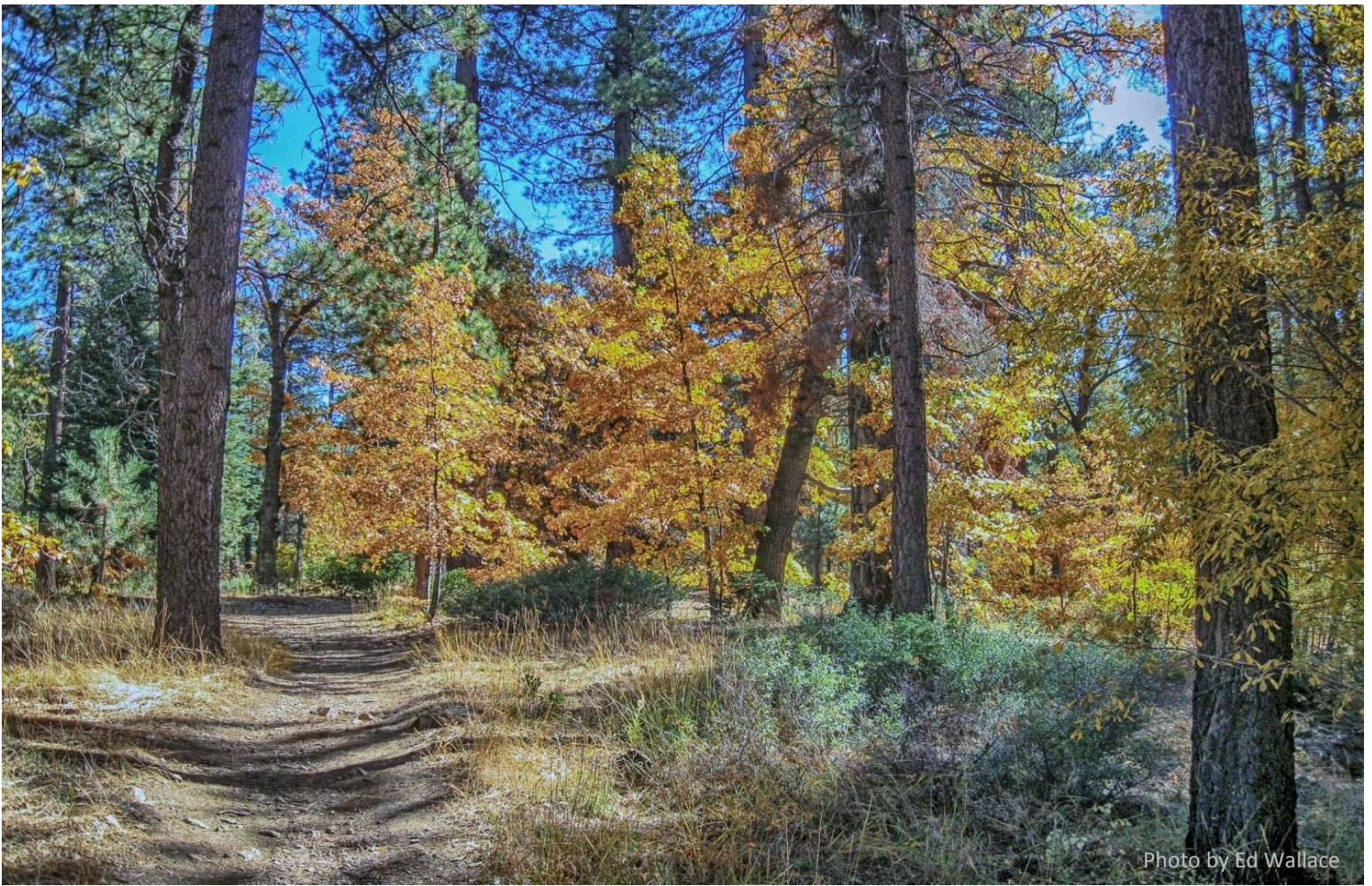


Photo by Ed Wallace



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