



SAN BERNARDINO  
MOUNTAINS  
LAND TRUST

# Forest View

December 2021

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



Coyote Rock trail

## 140-ac Coyote Rock transferred to National Forest

The SAN BERNARDINO MOUNTAINS LAND TRUST rescued 140 acres of Coyote Rock forestland back in 2013 from a planned housing development. This magnificent site is located behind Running Springs Elementary School (next to the 8,000-foot Keller Peak area).

SBMLT added a great hiking trail in 2014, winding through the tall forest past monumental boulders up to the summit, where a large outcropping called **Coyote Rock** provides an inspirational vista point. This great wildlife habitat and grand hiking area is one the most scenic parts of the National Forest.

This past April, Coyote Rock became part of our local National Forest, when SBMLT successfully finalized a previously delayed sale (one that took nearly 7 years to complete). In that time, there were staff reductions and budget cutbacks in the Forest Service plus a 5-year shutdown of the congressional program that funds land purchases by the USFS. But at long last, this sale refilled SBMLT's revolving acquisition fund, thus making it possible for another key land purchase by SBMLT last June. (see pg. 3)

### LAND DEDICATED for PUBLIC USE

By selling the idyllic Coyote Rock lands to the National Forest, SBMLT ensures lasting conservation protection for this prized site (once threatened by development), while also recovering funds that will be re-used again to rescue other lands vulnerable to subdivision.

Both our local community and the visiting public now benefit by having full access to this outstanding forest setting —one of the best in the San Bernardino Mountains.



Hikers stand on the great boulder outcropping of Coyote Rock

Trail work



## SAN BERNARDINO MOUNTAINS LAND TRUST

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Peter Jorris, Executive Director  
Kevin Kellems, Projects Manager

#### SUPPORT TEAM

Membership	Karla Kellems
Website	Polly Sauer
Social Media Outreach	Karla Kellems

#### SBMLT CONTACT INFORMATION

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WEBSITE: www.SBMLT.net

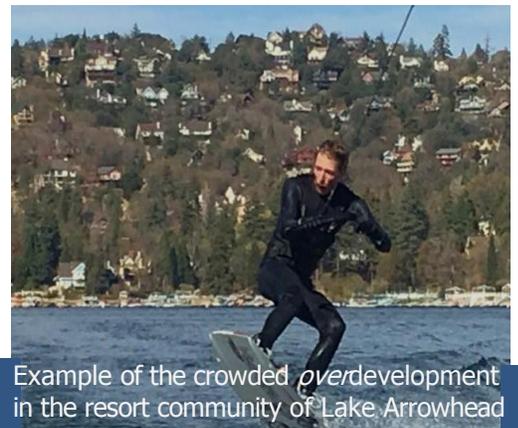
***SBMLT is a charitable nonprofit organization dedicated to buying threatened forestland for greater protection of the San Bernardino Mountains.***

## \$3 Million Revolving Land Acquisition Fund

Back in 2005 SBMLT set up a special revolving acquisition fund specifically to help rescue outstanding forestlands in the San Bernardino Mountains that are threatened by detrimental urban development. Too many privately-owned *unprotected* lands exist in our forest, which visually are indistinguishable from the already *protected* lands of the National Forest. However, all of those private lands are simply waiting for the right time to be developed. SBMLT exists to help avoid that from happening.

Unless purchased for conservation, all those private lands will be developed. Buying land (one-parcel at-a-time) is what SBMLT does best. So far we've protected 15,000 acres in the prior 25 years. Our **REVOLVING ACQUISITION FUND** currently holds \$3 million, which we continually use over and over to buy forest land. (Tremendous thanks goes to *The Wildlands Conservancy* and the *Trust for Public Land*, which together made this fund possible).

SBMLT focuses on scenic wildlife habitat that is eligible to be added to the National Forest for permanent conservation. Upon selling a property to the Forest Service, the recovered funds are then recycled to buy another property that is also eligible to be added to the National Forest. In this way the fund gets re-used to continually rescue (and preserve) an ever increasing number of threatened parts of the forest for better overall public benefit.



Example of the crowded *over*development in the resort community of Lake Arrowhead

# SBMLT Buys remaining 94 Acres of EAGLE RIDGE

## Purchased at \$1.65 million using our Revolving Acquisition Fund

The SAN BERNARDINO MOUNTAINS LAND TRUST on June 9th this year purchased the 2nd half of a onetime major subdivision site formerly known as Eagle Ridge.

The added 94 acres creates a grand “central park” (172 acres of forestland) for all of Lake Arrowhead and its visitor-based economy –a monumental gift to a mountain community that otherwise would have lost the last vestige of its original magnificent forest surroundings.

SBMLT Executive Director, Peter Jorris, applauded this acquisition as “a fulfillment of an incredible conservation rescue operation –an achievement that 20 years ago was written off as unimaginable... as a lost cause that’s completely out of reach.”



Jim Asher and Peter Jorris (2nd and 3rd from left) lead a group of local foresters in admiring this superlative site



The 172 acres include the whole scenic ridge top and several vista points like this view of Lake Arrowhead

SBMLT bought the first 80-acre Eagle Ridge parcel 10 years ago in 2011 at a bank foreclosure sale, after the owners defaulted on a construction loan.

That sale undercut the feasibility of developing any part of the entire 8-phase 200-unit subdivision plan without a complete new redesign. As a result, the possibility came about that the remaining acreage might someday also become available for purchase, which it eventually did as of this year.

## More parking space available at Arrowhead Ridge

The small road at the base of Arrowhead Ridge (as of last spring) is now open for expanded parking allowing a lot more visitors to park safely during times of heavy usage. A new gate was added that closes off upper road segments leftover from the old failed subdivision.

A symbolic ribbon-cutting ceremony was held June 3rd when the old chain barriers at the turnout off of Grass Valley Road were eliminated. Expanded access now allows disabled veterans to drive directly to the circular flag monument onsite. The flag display is dedicated to all veterans of the five branches of the military.

Commanders Bill Wright of VFW Post 9624 and Nick Nerio of American Legion Post 360 officiated at the ribbon-cutting. Each year on Veterans Day November 11 the VFW and American Legion together host a large commemorative event at the flag circle in honor of all veterans who served our country.

Arrowhead Ridge is open to the public daily dawn to dusk. Excellent hiking trails exist onsite.



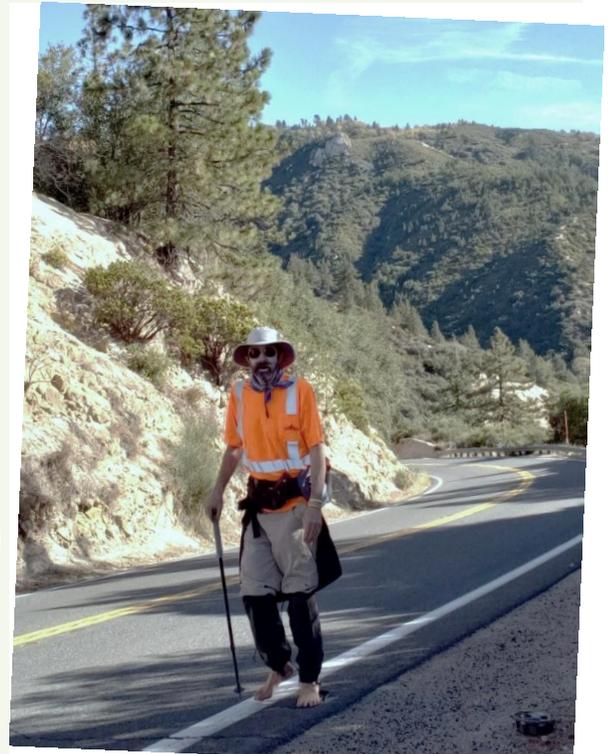
# One individual's walkathon raises \$3,000 for SBMLT

Scott Seccombe, an intrepid long-distance pedestrian and dedicated SBMLT supporter and volunteer, initiated his own independent and unique fundraising campaign in September centered on a personal endurance challenge. His ambitious goal was to walk barefoot 16 miles from the foothill town of Highland up the San Bernardino Mountains to the Rim of the World ridgeline summit for an overall elevation gain of 5,000 feet.

In dedicating his walkathon to the Mountains Land Trust, he challenged his friends, neighbors, family and SBMLT supporters to help him raise funds in support of the organization's mission. He set up a Go-Fund-Me site to accept donations and publicized his undertaking on Facebook and by word of mouth.

With encouragement from friends along the way and a few stops for water and nourishment, he successfully completed his remarkable exploit in 14 hours, starting at 4:15 in the morning and finishing at 6:00 PM in the evening. Scott's wife, Melodee, led his support team.

SBMLT plans to use the funds to install a proper entrance gate at the Land Trust's Metcalf Meadow preserve at Big Bear Lake. The 32-acre wetland and endangered native plant habitat is the former site of a onetime drive-in movie theatre from nearly 50 years ago.

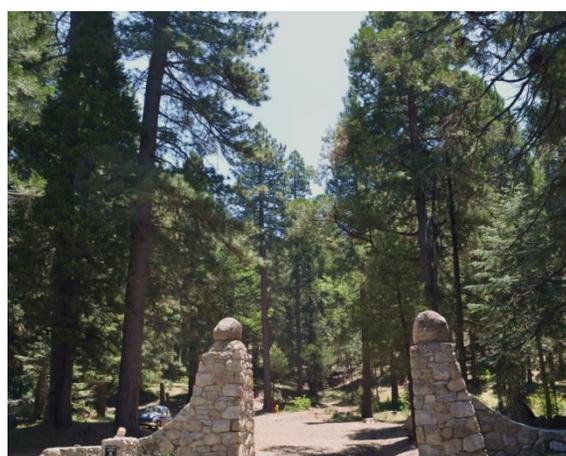


Scott Seccombe hikes barefoot up Highway 330

## SBMLT sells 52-acre Strawberry Peak Parcel

After owning the scenic 52-acre Strawberry Peak parcel for ten years, SBMLT recently sold this site to BETTER PLACE FORESTS on September 29. Better Place Forests is a relatively new concept, a cemetery-like business model, which provides forested memorial sites for cremated remains of deceased family members.

SBMLT first took ownership back in January 2011 to prevent this site from turning into an excessively over-developed recreational complex with big structures and parking facilities for up to 1,200 occupants.



52-acre Strawberry Peak Property

SBMLT drew upon its revolving acquisition fund to pay for the purchase. We originally hoped the land would be added to the adjacent National Forest. But for many reasons, that couldn't be done. Even at this point in time, there is no prospect for that to happen within the foreseeable future.

For full effectiveness, SBMLT's revolving acquisition fund must be able to revolve more frequently than just once in 10 years.

With the Forest Service out of the picture, Better Place Forests became the next best option, since 90 percent of the natural forest and wildlife habitat will be retained. That high level of conservation is further reinforced by a special *Conservation Easement* (a legal withdrawal of development rights from the property) to preserve its natural open space. Title to this special easement is held by a third party, in this case an established

land conservancy. Only a small office/visitor center will be situated near the entrance of the 52-acre site.

# Repairs begin on old building at Metcalf Bay

**SBMLT's** 32-acre meadowland and native plant preserve at Metcalf Bay includes a rundown building, which our Board of Directors recently voted to restore instead of tearing down. Work just began in mid-October on upgrading the building's interior as the first stage of the new restoration project.



Because the basic structure of the building is solid, the main repair work will chiefly involve improving and refurbishing the overall weather-proofing and interior accommodations.

The original structure was built in 1949 as a concessionair's stand, projection room and office of a primitive drive-in movie theater that lasted until 1977. Afterwards the building became a real estate office. The upstairs features residential living space for a possible caretaker or a business operator. Large rooms downstairs are suitable as rental space for a small business or nonprofit organization.



SBMLT Metcalf Meadow Preserve

SBMLT purchased the Metcalf Bay property in 2015 with support from both the U.S. and state wildlife agencies. The acquisition was funded by a grant from the state Wildlife Conservation Board specifically for the protection of the wetlands and the endangered plant species onsite.

## News of the BIG BEAR PEBBLE PLAIN RESERVE

The large 700-acre Pebble Plain Ecological Reserve between Moonridge, Bear City and Sugarloaf is SBMLT's most prominent rescue project of forest wildlife habitat. On-going monitoring, stewardship and restoration are still necessary to curtail off-road vehicle trespass, timber theft and illegal dumping, but these are all decreasing each year as we improve the boundary control. Meanwhile motion-cameras show lots of bear, deer, bobcats and coyotes as evidence that the reserve is a highly favorable habitat for mega wildlife as well as plants.

As a likely consequence of saving this large landscape from major subdivisions of 500 home sites, it's notable that an adjacent 213 acres (north of Sugarloaf) got donated last year to the local school district by developers. Perhaps they'd been counting on those 500 homes to make their land more feasible to develop. Did the large pebble plain reserve cause in them a change of heart?. We're glad to see another 213 acres given up for forest open space. That's much better than more houses.

**HELP SUPPORT SBMLT MAIL your donation TODAY** with the **FORM** below  
- **or** - visit our website to make an online gift at [www.SBMLT.net](http://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 (\$50)
- Mountain Guardian (\$100)
- Mountain Hero (\$250)
- Forest Champion (\$500)
- Other Donation (\$ \_\_\_\_\_)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

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Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

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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

Big Horn Sheep



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