



NEWSLETTER

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

AUTUMN 2011

RECLAIMING EAGLE RIDGE

Last Remaining Open Space in Lake Arrowhead



Large earth-moving machines in 2007 began construction on this former public land, which was traded away by the Forest Service in 1988. The 80-acre site was rescued by the Land Trust last April, after the project went into foreclosure

VOLUNTEERS BEGIN TRAIL WORK

As those who have driven by Eagle Ridge know, about 10 acres of the site were disrupted by the failed development project, leaving an unsightly cleared area and some paved road segments.

In order to better experience the beauty of the best part of the land, volunteers with the San Bernardino Mountains Land Trust have begun creating a new trail that links up remnants of an older trail system.

For two generations, children from the Alpine Camp & Conference Center and local residents (from the Blue Jay and Twin Peaks areas) all enjoyed hiking in this scenic forest. There was a deep sense of loss, when this wonderful opportunity was taken away.

The Land Trust hopes to make the traditional trail route available again to the community. Anyone who would like to join us on trail work projects is welcome -(see contact info for the Land Trust on page 2).

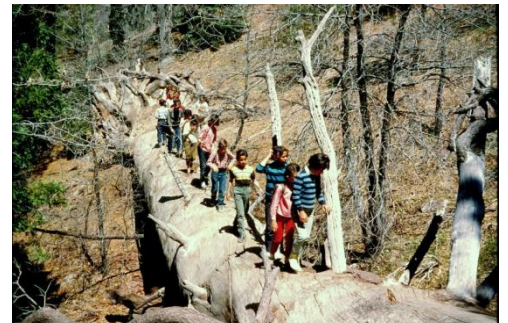
In an unusual turn of events last April the San Bernardino Mountains Land Trust was invited to purchase 80 acres of the Eagle Ridge site in Lake Arrowhead, following a bank foreclosure of the property. The land has been the object of ongoing controversy for 20 years (ever since its unpopular trade to developers by the Forest Service in 1988).

The site is the last remaining open space in the central area of Lake Arrowhead and is recognized to be the most outstanding example of a mixed coniferous forest found in the San Bernardino Mountains.

Major Scenic & Wildlife Area

The property has an eagle's view of Lake Arrowhead, occupying the tallest ridge in the area (apart from Strawberry Peak on the Rim, site of the USFS Fire Lookout).

As a key link in the Grass Valley Creek wildlife corridor and prime habitat for the rare southern rubber boa, it is one of the more significant and scenic parts of the forest. It would be an ideal location for a central wildland nature park in the greater Lake Arrowhead area.



Children hike on fallen tree, when Eagle Ridge was still public land in the 1980s



2011 prize-winning photo of mountain bald eagle by Billy Corrigan

The 2012 Mountain CALENDAR
Of the
San Bernardino Mountains Land Trust

is available at
the Forest Service Discovery Center,
mountain bookstores, and on the website:
WWW.SBMLT.NET

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FOREST SERVICE Buys SUGAR PINE RIDGE PARCEL



North slope of Sugar Pine Ridge, where the Forest Service purchased 110 acres from the SAN BERNARDINO MOUNTAINS LAND TRUST

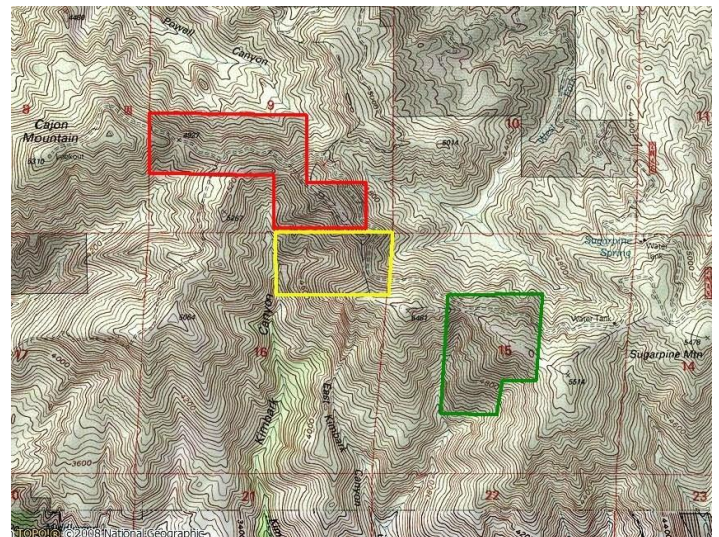
The SAN BERNARDINO MOUNTAINS LAND TRUST completed a sale of a 110-acre parcel on Sugar Pine Ridge to the U.S. Forest Service on *September 29*. The property is located on the scenic western fringe of the San Bernardino Mountains on USFS Road 2N49 (about four miles west of Cedar Pines Park).

The area is a natural refuge for mountain wildlife. Deer, bears and mountain lions are able to traverse the mixed chaparral and forested landscape while keeping a safe distance from nearby communities of Cedar Pines Park and Crestline. The area also funnels into the main wildlife passageway underneath Interstate 15 that links the San Bernardino Mountains with the San Gabriel Mountains, enabling animals to migrate between.

Improving Forest Protection

This property was one of many missing pieces (i.e. private inholdings) intermixed throughout the National Forest. Such inholdings cause gaps in the Forest's wildland integrity and compromise optimum forest management practices. Adding these vital pieces back to the National Forest prevents incompatible development from disrupting the pristine surroundings.

Keeping the natural surroundings intact is the only way to avoid further harmful fragmentation of wildlife habitat and loss of scenic beauty that has already greatly impacted the heavily-developed areas of our smaller-than-average National Forest. Sugar Pine Ridge is just one of many places the Land Trust has been working long years to protect, having earlier managed to acquire the property in May 2008.



Map of Sugar Pine Ridge parcel (in green). The Land Trust also owns the red & yellow parcels in the same area of Cajon Ridge.

The sale and transfer of this land to the Forest Service required three years to complete. Successfully working with private landowners, the Forest Service, congress, state agencies, county government and other land trusts to achieve major forest protection has become SBMLT's special field of expertise.

The challenge of protecting our mountains gains vital momentum from each success that adds another missing piece to the Forest. This is a big step forward. The revenue from the sale of Sugar Pine Ridge will go back into SBMLT's revolving acquisition fund, which will be used to purchase another threatened piece of our remarkable and unique mountain environment.



LAND TRUST NOTES and NEWS



Volunteers at work constructing a loop trail through the tall scenic forest of the impressive 80-acre Eagle Ridge parcel

EAGLE RIDGE STEWARDSHIP PROJECTS

Following acquisition of the Eagle Ridge property in late April, the Land Trust has steadily worked to clean up debris at the site, to inventory leftover construction materials, upgrade erosion controls and construct a trail that allows visitors to properly experience the site.

We are also applying for a restoration grant, which if awarded would help repair hillside areas that were scarred during failed construction activities. Restoring natural slope contours and vegetation will reverse the damage and prevent worse erosion problems.

NEW VOLUNTEERS

As the Land Trust takes on greater responsibilities and challenges, we are grateful for the increasing help of Polly Sauer, Nancy Taylor and Joanne Hubbard, who have signed on as enthusiastic volunteers to improve and revitalize Land Trust outreach activities.

As part of the process, SBMLT will be renovating its website and communicating more frequently with its members and the public. In order to keep pace with vital land protection in the forest, it will be essential to attract more members and to do better fundraising.

SHOW and TELL

The Land Trust and its work are largely unknown to the general public, but very much appreciated when understood. For this reason we have an excellent program to share with any group or organization interested in learning more about the problems facing our National Forest, its history, the expanding role of the Land Trust, its accomplishments and future challenges. If you have any questions or would like to schedule a presentation, you can contact Peter Jorris -(contact info on page 2).

During summer and fall the Land Trust gave six presentations to local groups in the community such as the Lake Arrowhead Rotary Club and Alpine Conference Center as well as a special talk on mountain history to the Southern California Association of Administrative Assessors. For the history discourse, SBMLT was joined by Tom Atchley, noted local historian and president of the Redlands Historical Society.

2012 SBMLT CALENDAR AVAILABLE

The new 2012 edition of the *San Bernardino Mountains Land Trust* CALENDAR is now available. Many great images of our local National Forest are highlighted, such as the evening scene of Green Valley Lake below.

Each year brings more fine examples of the idyllic character of our outstanding local forest.

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

It also helps to inspire appreciation for the vital work that the San Bernardino Mountains Land Trust performs in further protecting this unique National Forest.



Serene sunset over Green Valley Lake. 2012 prize-winning SBMLT Mountain Calendar photo taken by Cathy Garcia

WELCOME NEW BOARD MEMBER

At its October meeting the Land Trust's Board of Directors welcomed new member Jim Asher, a licensed forester, who joins the Board as a longtime Land Trust supporter and advisor on forestry issues.

Asher replaces Bob Nida, who stepped down after six years of service. Nida, an attorney and experienced director of nonprofit organizations, was instrumental in steering the Land Trust onto a solid foundation in all its administrative operations and financial management.

FORESTRY PROJECT at EAGLE RIDGE

FIRE HAZARD FUELS REDUCTION

With Land Trust approval, a brush and tree removal contract for fire safety purposes has been awarded to SCS Timber Resources by the County of San Bernardino. SCS is a local company formerly based in Oregon and now working out of Running Springs.

SBMLT forestry advisor, Jim Asher, with forty years of knowledge of the site, recommended the project, after extensively touring the land with county foresters.

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 on our mountain, according to the foresters.

“As the last remaining open space in the crowded Lake Arrowhead community, it’s important to make sure it is managed for optimum health as well as fire safety,” said Kevin Kellems, Projects Manager for SBMLT.

The project involves removal of dead trees, thickets of underbrush and lower limbs by low-impact small mechanical methods. It is a clearing project that is designed to promote forest health and minimize impact to wildlife, while reducing risk of forest fire.

The project was supposed to start in November, but might be delayed until spring due to weather.

“When people hear chainsaws on the site, we would like them to be aware that this is a well thought-out program designed for the health of the forest and the overall safety of the public,” said Kevin Kellems.



Forestry experts inspect the health and density of trees on the Eagle Ridge site to evaluate any fire hazard conditions

ANNUAL PHOTO CONTEST

Many impressive images of our photogenic mountains have been captured over the past eight years by participants in the *SAN BERNARDINO MOUNTAINS LAND TRUST*'s annual photo contest. Each year the 12 winning photographs are featured in SBMLT's special Mountain Calendar.

If you (or friends you know) would like to enter this year's contest, the entry form and guidelines are posted on the Land Trust website.



*A yellow finch perches in an icy dogwood tree, while visiting our local mountains.
Winning photo by Tom Greer*

Almost everyone has a favorite picture, and we would like to encourage you to share yours with the Land Trust. We especially welcome photos from all parts of our forest and representing each of the four seasons.

THIS YEAR'S WINNERS

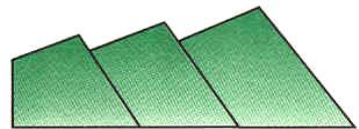
The winners of this year's photo contest included Tom Greer getting the First Place Award and Billy Corrigan with Second Place. Others, whose photos earned a \$25 prize and a featured spot in the 2012 Mountain Calendar, were Tricia Greer, Sharon Skonetski, Francis Zetlmaier, Donny Anastasi, John Hummel, and Kathy Garcia. Everyone is welcome to enter.

The photo contest and calendar both provide a creative way to celebrate and highlight our exceptional mountain environment, while also promoting greater awareness and protection of this remarkable Southern California treasure.

Entries can be submitted any time prior to May 15, 2012.



Three Jeffrey Pine Trees on Keller Peak with the San Geronio Wilderness Area in the background. Photo by Ellie Lytle



SAN BERNARDINO
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