



# 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.*

**MARCH 2011**

## LAND TRUST PURCHASES ROYAL RANGERS PROPERTY

### Acquisition helps protect Strawberry Peak area



*View of the 50-acre former Royal Rangers site above Highway 18 as seen from the old Cliffhanger Restaurant. Higher up is the Strawberry Peak Fire Lookout. This natural forest area adds beauty to the scenic highway.*

### NOW the HARD PART BEGINS

Now that the *SAN BERNARDINO MOUNTAINS LAND TRUST* has purchased the Royal Rangers 50-acre property, the next step is to re-sell the land to the U.S. Forest Service. That is a much more difficult challenge than most people realize.

For many years Congress has shortchanged our National Parks and Forests of money that is properly due them from the Land & Water Conservation Fund (LWCF). Our local National Forest needs these designated funds in order to purchase the Royal Rangers property as a valuable addition to its public lands base. At the same time the Land Trust needs to re-sell the property so that its revolving acquisition fund can be recycled for the protection of additional land.

A prominent letter-writing campaign (directed at both the Forest Service and Congress) is needed to identify this site as a major acquisition priority and to also request the necessary appropriations for purchase. Everyone who cares about this land and our local forest

- see Hard Part - continued on page 4 -

At the end of February the local San Bernardino Mountains Land Trust took title to the 50.31-acre Royal Rangers property that has been the center of controversy for 10 years over a county land use proposal for a large-scale youth camp and conference center.

The land was purchased from the Assemblies of God Church, which owns the Pinecrest camp, of which this property was previously a part, albeit separated by Highway 189 from the rest of their land.

#### Important Wildlife Area

The property lies within a prominent wildlife route, linking Strawberry Creek with the Grass Valley Creek area. The site is also within a critical habitat zone for the southern rubber boa, a small nocturnal snake that exists only in our local National Forest.

The land will be offered to the Forest Service to protect the west flank of Strawberry Peak as an important buffer to the adjoining National Forest lands.



*Small seasonal stream on the land, all of which is excellent wildlife habitat*



2009 prize-winning photo of mountain Steller Jay by Frank Provero

The 2011 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

## SAN BERNARDINO MOUNTAINS LAND TRUST

### 2011 Board of Directors

#### OFFICERS

President	Bill Engs
Vice-President	Walter Ford
Board Secretary	Arnold Bean
Treasurer	Open

#### DIRECTORS

Bob Nida	Peter Jorris
Valerie Wilson	

#### 2011 STAFF

Peter Jorris, Executive Director  
Kevin Kellems, Projects Manager

#### SUPPORT TEAM

Calendar Coordinator	Ellie Lytle
Graphic Design	Tom Greer
Membership	Pat Huckaby
Website	John Hummel
Correspondence	Sandi Huckaby

#### TO CONTACT THE SAN BERNARDINO LAND TRUST

Phone the Executive Director at  
909-867-3536 OR  
E-mail: [info@SBMLT.net](mailto:info@SBMLT.net)  
WEBSITE: [WWW.SBMLT.NET](http://WWW.SBMLT.NET)

Help support  
The **San Bernardino Mountains Land Trust**

Use this form  
to mail your contribution

### Your Membership Is Essential To Success!

The Land Trust is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Your contributions are tax deductible.

My contribution is:

☐ General (\$25)  
☐ Family (\$50)  
☐ Mountain Sponsor (\$100)  
☐ Forest Protector (\$500)  
☐ Other Donation (\$ \_\_\_\_\_)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 City / State / Zip \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone: \_\_\_\_\_  
 E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_

**Join this vital effort (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



# LAND TRUST ACQUIRES 260 ACRES on CAJON RIDGE



*Cajon Ridge, where SBMLT recently bought 260 acres, adding to 110 acres already owned. (San Gabriel Mountains in background)*

## Progress on Ridge Top Project

December 2010 the San Bernardino Mountains Land Trust (SBMLT) completed an acquisition of two adjacent properties totaling 260 acres on Cajon Ridge in the San Bernardino National Forest.

Bill Engs, President of the Land Trust, noted in a SBMLT press release that “These two properties, along with 110 acres on the same ridge by Sugarpine Mountain (acquired by the Land Trust in 2008), are key additions to the Land Trust’s mission of protecting critical forest open space and wildlife habitat in the National Forest.”

Located on the ridge top east of the Cajon Pass, the two properties are about 3.5 miles southwest of Lake Silverwood. The property is accessed by Forest Service Road 2N49, a primitive dirt road that winds through the area from Silverwood Lake to Cedar Pines Park.

## Site of Fire Lookout Tower

Cajon Mountain is the site of a former Forest Service lookout tower, which may someday be restored. Access to the site goes through the Land Trust property.

For at least ten years these lands have been on the Land Trust’s watch list of important acquisition priorities. Our primary goal is to acquire private land inholdings in the local National Forest that help safeguard wildlife, protect significant mountain ecosystems, and improve the overall management integrity of these public lands.

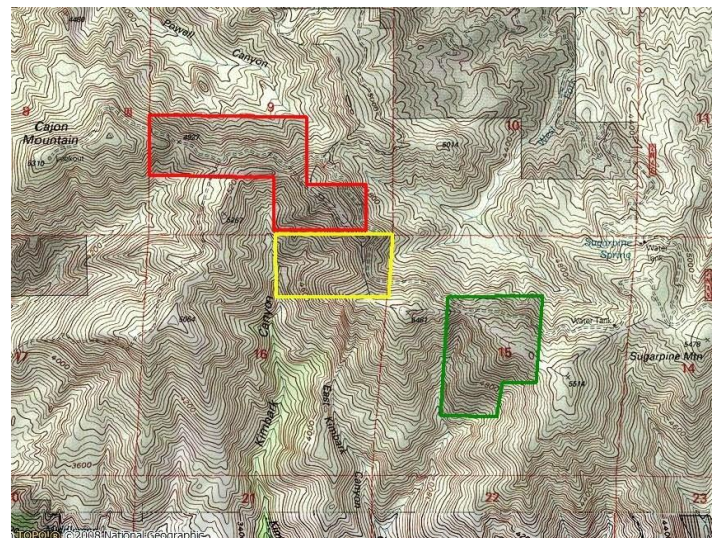
Inholdings are privately-owned lands that are inside the boundary of a public land unit, such as a National Park or Forest –in this case, our local forest. They often are completely surrounded by public lands. In our forest they

are generally subject to county jurisdiction instead of Forest Service oversight.

## Cajon Pass Wildlife Linkage

SBMLT has been working to purchase wildlife open space parcels along Cajon Ridge, which are in unprotected private ownership. These lands are part of a critical wildlife travel route.

Cajon Ridge descends to Cleghorn Creek, which provides the primary wildlife linkage between the San Gabriel Mountains and the San Bernardino Mountains. The creek flows under a large overpass of the Interstate 15 Freeway, at an area that was in private ownership until recently acquired by the Wildlands Conservancy.



**Map of 3 SBMLT Parcels between Cajon Mtn & Sugarpine Mtn**



## Hard Part

- continued from page 1 -

needs to know about this process. The greater the participation by everyone who has followed this issue, the more quickly it can be brought to a final successful conclusion.

### SBMLT is Not Equipped to Hold Land

The *San Bernardino Mountains Land Trust* was never designed to be a land-holding organization, but rather a facilitator of Forest Service acquisitions that improve the overall public benefits of forest watershed and wildlife protections.

SBMLT will temporarily hold the Royal Rangers property, but cannot be expected to do so for any extended period of time. Otherwise that locks up our revolving acquisition fund, which is the primary means we have for future acquisitions.

The Land Trust has identified over 40,000 acres that still require conservation protection throughout the mountain area. The revolving acquisition fund will need to be freed-up within a reasonable timeframe in order to carry on this work.

### Forest Service's Vital Role

The Forest Service has identified the former Royal Rangers property as a prospective acquisition priority during various reviews of optimum land management needs of the overall forest.

However, the local Forest Service is an underfunded and overextended government agency that cannot always keep up with the changing real estate market and various land protection opportunities as they occur. That's why the Land Trust is a valuable partner.

The importance of adding the former Royal Rangers parcel to the National Forest needs to be strongly communicated to the Forest Service by the public to reinforce the major advantages this would achieve.

The Forest Service is sometimes prone to shy away from difficult projects, which this acquisition might prove to be due to current budgetary constraints.

However, an outpouring of communication to the Forest Service (at administrative levels of the agency) demonstrating the large support, concern, and value of this particular acquisition can offset these obstacles.

The Land Trust has learned that the **FRIENDS OF TWIN PEAKS** and other community organizations have committees able to oversee this kind of communication effort. They can be reached by contacting:

**Pam Carver** at 337-6319 ([ptbadger@gmail.com](mailto:ptbadger@gmail.com)) or **Sandy Ellis** at 867-7115 ([fsellis67@gmail.com](mailto:fsellis67@gmail.com)).

The Land Trust has agreed to assist by sharing its experience, knowledge and information on this process.

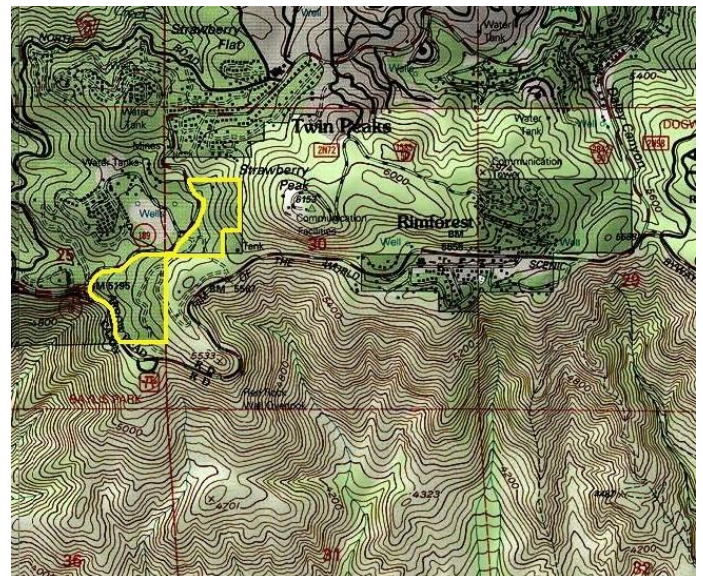
## Role of Elected Officials

Local elected representatives are in key positions to help. Over the years Congressman Jerry Lewis has played a major role in providing critical aid to the San Bernardino National Forest in times of need.

Senator Dianne Feinstein has been a strong supporter of the Save the Saints campaign that focuses on vital land protections like this in our forest.

They will want to hear from their constituents about the importance of this project to the National Forest.

The same kind of groundswell of concern and protectiveness for both the local forest and mountain community (that originally persuaded the Land Trust to jump in and assist) will also equally impress our elected officials.



Map of former Royal Rangers site shows outline of 50-acre wing-shaped parcel between Hwy 189 & Strawberry Peak

### The Hard Part

Elected officials have a tough job right now with large budget deficits and a symbolic freeze on all "earmark" appropriations. (Earmarks are funding provisions inserted into the federal budget by individual legislators for special projects in their own district).

However, the Land & Water Conservation Fund has its own dedicated funding source and should not be mistaken or viewed as a typical earmark. It has already been designated by law specifically for land acquisition in National Parks and Forests, and its source of funds (i.e. a small percentage of royalties paid to the U.S. Government for leases on public oil reserves) does not come out of the pockets of citizen taxpayers.

There is no better place to spend these specially designated funds than on one of the most popular, most heavily-used, most threatened and most needful National Forests in the country —our local San Bernardino National Forest.

# PUBLIC OUTREACH and VOLUNTEERING

**T**he Land Trust needs help in reaching out to potential members who might not know about the organization's existence or the valuable service it performs on behalf of greater forest protection.

SBMLT was recently invited to give its power-point presentation to the Mountains Jewish Community, where many attendees heard about the Land Trust for the first time. We have given talks to senior groups, Rotary Clubs, the Audubon Society and many others.



*Bill Engs & Kevin Kellems show a project area to two volunteers*

SBMLT has an excellent power-point slide show about its many projects, its mission and accomplishments. If you belong to (or know of) an organization that would enjoy learning more about the Land Trust, we would be happy to arrange a presentation. A general overview can be provided in timeframes of 15 - 45 minutes. **CONTACT:** Kevin Kellems at [info@SBMLT.net](mailto:info@SBMLT.net)

## VOLUNTEERING

Building on its 15-year history, the Land Trust is now more productive and busier than ever. It is difficult for our current small team to keep up with all the work and responsibilities of managing a nonprofit land conservancy.

If you would like to help the Land Trust by volunteering in some special way, we can use assistance in general public outreach, fundraising, writing, publicity, helping out in the Blue Jay Thrift Shop or other unique talents you may have. We would be happy to hear from you. Our contact information is listed on page 2. The more help we have the greater will be our overall success will.

SBMLT is a charitable nonprofit organization registered with the State of California since 1996. We work closely with the U.S. Forest Service to acquire private land in our local National Forest for conservation purposes.

# MORE PROGRESS on DEEP CREEK

## LOT CONSOLIDATION PROJECT

Two more small properties have been added to the Land Trust's lot consolidation project in the headwaters area of Deep Creek, where the stream passes by the community of Arrowbear Lake.

The north fork of the stream (out of the Snow Valley area) and the east fork (off Keller Peak) both meet in Arrowbear.

With its healthy forest canopy, Deep Creek features some of the most scenic areas of the San Bernardino Mountains and has also become famous as a premier wild trout stream in Southern California. The rare riparian habitat makes it vital to the survival of local wildlife.

Although most of the creek is protected within the public National Forest, about a half mile still flows through private land in this Arrowbear area. Here the land is subdivided into small roadless parcels inaccessible at the bottom of a steep flood plain. The Land Trust is gradually buying these at county tax sale auctions.

The Land Trust began buying tax sale lots in the Deep Creek flood plain in 1998. Several lots have also been donated. At this stage the Land Trust owns about 70 of these lots –a significant project, even if it only adds up to about seven acres.



*Fly fishing on the Deep Creek wild trout stream*





Mill Creek, site of 2 SBMLT projects. (San Gorgonio Wilderness is on left & Yucaipa Ridge on right) Photo by Lee Reeder

