



SAN BERNARDINO
MOUNTAINS
LAND TRUST

Forest View

December 2022

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



Ed Wallace Photo

Two-century-old Pines



SBMLT starts a Native Tree Nursery

The SAN BERNARDINO MOUNTAINS LAND TRUST was awarded a special grant this year to establish a **native tree nursery** for our local mountain area. California's Department of Forestry & Fire Protection provided the funding from its Business & Workforce Development Grant program. SBMLT was first in line.

The grant covers a four year start-up period, allocating \$275,000 for the necessary greenhouses, related equipment and a salary for the nursery's operator. Two greenhouses will be located behind the Land Trust's multi-purpose building in Big Bear.

Statewide there's a significant need for viable and sustainable sources of native trees to meet long term goals of the California's reforestation program. This need is heightened by the greater fire and drought-prone nature of our southern forests.

Planting native trees has been a frequent focus of SBMLT over the years. The grandeur of trees is a big part of the overall inspirational appeal of forests. For everyone who planted a tree in their youth, it's a momentous joy seeing it again twenty years later, when it now reaches 40 feet into the sky.

Prime seed bank at Arrowhead Ridge

Arrowhead Ridge is distinctive for having one of the most vibrant and vigorous growing conditions in all of the San Bernardino Mountains: a favorable topographic layout, ideal micro climate, healthy soils and other qualities that promote the strong regenerative forces onsite.

In 2013 SBMLT had a small grant to replant trees on a badly eroded slope, after it was re-graded. We agreed to

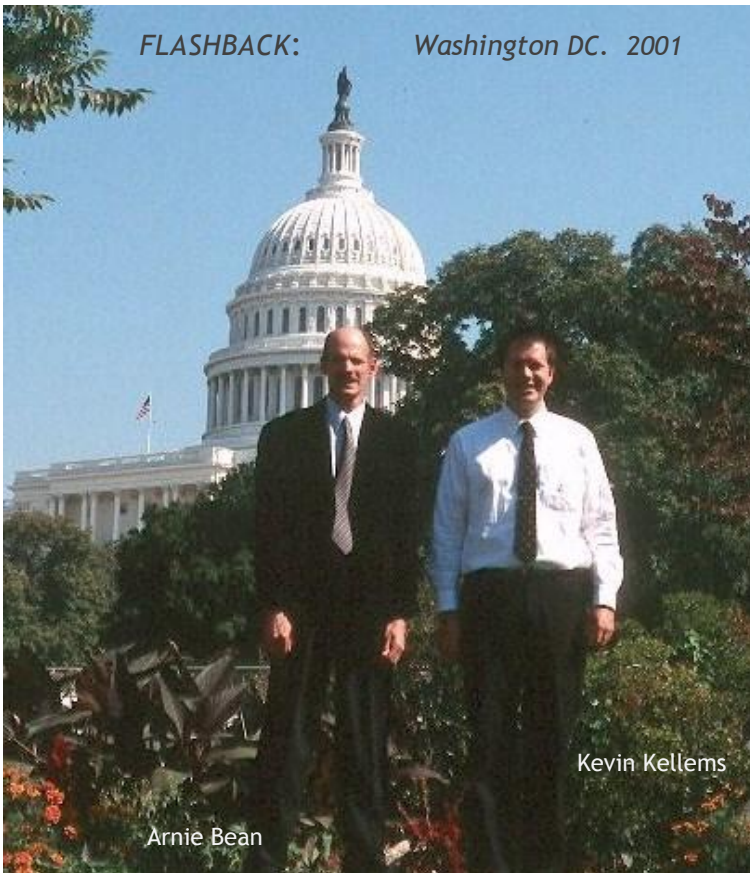


2-year-old Jeffrey pine seedling

transplant 300 trees. One hundred trees were lifted out before grading. Those trees got replanted in the fall. The following spring the slope surprised us, re-sprouting with hundreds of vigorous young conifers (in 2022 they're now 6 feet tall). The need to transplant an additional 200 trees was dispensed with. Given the very strong life forces at Arrowhead Ridge, it will now become an ideal source for future seed stock.

FLASHBACK:

Washington DC. 2001



Arnie Bean

Kevin Kellems

Since 1994 SBMLT has flown to Washington DC when necessary to urge elected officials to support better protection of the San Bernardino National Forest via the Land & Water Conservation Fund. Now in 2023, Moon Camp urgently needs LWCF funding to save Big Bear's north shore *and* nesting bald eagles from harm.

New SBMLT staff position

SBMLT is most grateful to Dr. William Resnick and Michael Stubbs, neighbors to the 700-acre Pebble Plain Ecological Reserve in Big Bear, who've graciously funded a special **Land Steward** position that will enable SBMLT to better manage the large wildland reserve. Dr. Resnick is co-founder of the Big Bear Retreat Center, located next to the eco reserve. The compatibility of both endeavors led to this very welcome and generous expression of support. The role of the Land Steward will primarily focus on upkeep, security and integrity of the forest landscape and wildlife habitat, while working under the supervision of SBMLT's longtime Projects Manager, Kevin Kellems. Kellems' title, in turn, has been upgraded to **Director of Lands & Operations**, reflecting his new role, which now involves greater management responsibility.

After advertising the Land Steward position and interviewing candidates, SBMLT selected Dustin Seccombe, who's previously volunteered for the Land Trust on prior improvement projects. Dustin and Kevin (plus part-time assistant Mircea Forte) are currently working on the first phase of a 3-phase fuels reduction project to remove deadwood at overgrown sections of the reserve. This project is supported by a grant from the federal Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

SBMLT presently manages several nature preserves such as Arrowhead Ridge and the Moonridge Pebble Plain Ecological Reserve as well as lands in Fawnskin, Deep Creek, Metcalf Bay, Shay Pond, Running Springs and various isolated parcels, meant for future transfer to the Forest Service. The total area is about 1,100 acres.



Dustin Seccombe

SAN BERNARDINO MOUNTAINS LAND TRUST

2022 Board of Directors & Staff

OFFICERS

President	Peter Jorris
Vice-President	Polly Sauer
Secretary	Kevin Kellems
Treasurer	Jeri Simpson

DIRECTORS

Randy Buecheler	Craig Carpenter
Sandy Steers	Ed Wallace

STAFF

Peter Jorris, Executive Director
Kevin Kellems, Director of Lands & Operations
Dustin Seccombe, Land Steward
Karla Kellems, Tree Nursery Operator

SUPPORT TEAM

Membership/Outreach	Karla Kellems
Website	Polly Sauer
Trail Coordinator Internship	Anna Buecheler

SBMLT CONTACT INFORMATION

Phone: 909-867-3536 / E-mail: info@SBMLT.net

WEBSITE: www.SBMLT.net

SBMLT is a charitable nonprofit organization formed to buy threatened forest lands for greater protection of the San Bernardino Mountains.

A plan to save Moon Camp & nesting bald eagles

SBMLT is working with the USFS to obtain Land & Water Conservation Fund help

The SAN BERNARDINO MOUNTAINS LAND TRUST is working with our local U.S. Forest Service and the Friends of Big Bear Valley to obtain funds necessary to purchase the 62-acre Moon Camp property.

Tall pines at Moon Camp are used by the famous bald eagles (Jackie & Shadow) for perching and foraging for food. Bulldozing that site for urban development may cause the eagles to abandon the area.

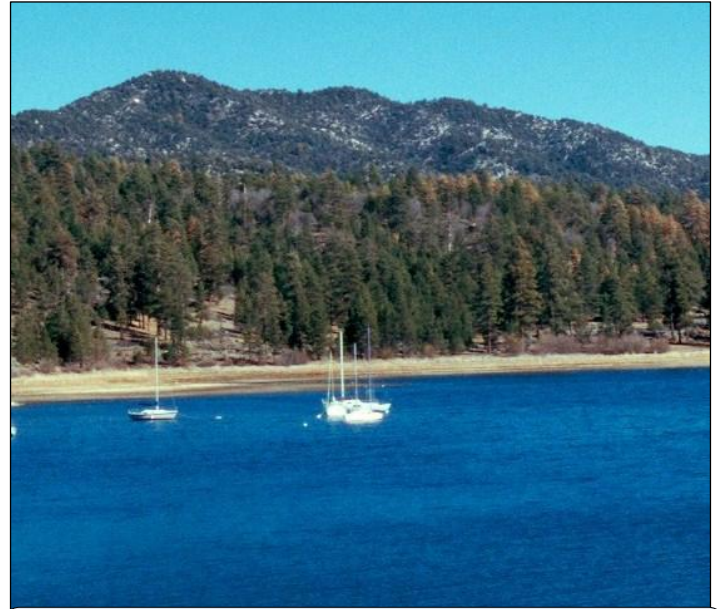
The owner will consider selling, if funds are obtained. USFS Regional headquarters has nominated Moon Camp for a Land & Water Conservation Fund grant, but the Washington DC Office must also approve. To rally support, SBMLT will conduct a letter-writing crusade to all the key elected officials.



Overlooking the secluded Fawnskin area, where the County has Ok'ed converting forest into urban sprawl.

The USFS first tried to acquire Moon Camp in 2001. But the owner opted instead to plan a housing tract, confident the County would increase the land's low-density rural zone limits to make the project feasible. Local residents reacted by forming the FRIENDS OF FAWNSKIN to oppose urban subdivision of the site.

After long years, many studies, redesigns and public hearings, the County did approve the project. Now the next option is to actually purchase the land as the best way to protect the bald eagles, the scenic north shore, the National Forest watershed, Big Bear Lake's integrity and groundwater resources.



62-acre Moon Camp parcel on Big Bear Lake's north shore. An LWCF purchase will avoid a major housing subdivision.

Famous Bald Eagles in Jeopardy

A major celebrated natural wonder in our local National Forest is the popular pair of nesting bald eagles on Big Bear's scenic north shore. Every winter this heroic pair works to feed and shelter its tiny new offspring, while the whole world gets to watch on live-streaming video.

Eagle habitat will be severely disrupted if a major new development is built on the Moon Camp site. SBMLT and partners are making every effort to arrange a sale of this 62-acre site to the U.S. Forest Service instead. That way the scenic north shore and eagles can be saved.



Each year Fawnskin's world famous eagles lay two eggs. Their survival is threatened by new urban development.

Changes on SBMLT's Board of Directors

During the covid years, SBMLT faced difficult projects amid major social restrictions and limited resources. It was not a favorable time to add new Board members, although the loss of key senior colleagues left openings. Bill Engs, PhD in business organization, helped put the Land Trust on solid footing in all its operational practices. He stepped down in 2019. Then, we were saddened to learn of his death in June at age 89. Jim Asher also left for health issues at the end of last year, before he too recently passed away in November at age 91. He was SBMLT's president for the past six years and a longtime champion of Arrowhead Ridge.

New Board Members

In 2022 SBMLT's Board of Directors was glad to welcome Randy Buecheler, Craig Carpenter and Jeri Simpson as new directors during a year of transition. Each one brings exceptional qualities and talents that significantly contribute to the Board's overall effectiveness. Randy grew up on the mountain and is familiar with every aspect of the forest. Craig is a mapping expert employed by the Esri Software Company in Redlands. Jeri has accepted the role of Board Treasurer to manage SBMLT's income, expenses and banking. As the Land Trust becomes better known, it's attracting more support and taking on ever greater projects. A strong Board of Directors is essential to keep up with all the challenges.



Volunteers cleaning up at Arrowhead Ridge for the annual Veterans Day honorary celebration, held every November 11 at the flag monument.

College intern lends youthful vitality to SBMLT projects

This summer, I had an opportunity to work with the San Bernardino Mountains Land Trust as both a trail coordinator and intern. Growing up in the mountains gave me a passion for the environment. And being able to use that passion to help the community I love was a dream come true. SBMLT is an organization that makes such a big difference on our mountain.

Seeing all their preserves and learning about their history of land acquisition and protection showed me how much a grassroots group can really do. I learned so many useful skills like how to work with power



Karla & Anna staff info table at Pebble Plain

tools, to do trail work, to give public presentations and create display boards. I was invited to give PowerPoint presentations about the Land Trust to the local Sierra Club and two Rotary Clubs. All these opportunities allowed me to grow as a student scientist, while learning more about the unique species of our mountain area from Kevin and Karla Kellems, SBMLT's staff.

These insights into the natural world opened my eyes to the importance of preserving wildlife habitats while also allowing access for light recreation. I learned about grants and the work that goes into grant writing. I had the opportunity to do some technical writing myself, creating a trail management plan for Arrowhead Ridge—a place that will always be dear to my heart.

I want to thank SBMLT for allowing me to work with an organization that does so much for our mountain. The people I met and everything I learned will continue to spur me on as I finish my degree as an Environmental Earth and Soil Scientist at Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo.

Thank you, SBMLT, — *Anna Buecheler*

More flagstones for Arrowhead Ridge's Donor Wall

SBMLT's unique Donor Wall at Arrowhead Ridge will have more flagstones added soon. The purchase of stones helps to fund many ongoing restoration projects at this scenic forest site. Progress got stalled during the past couple years. Now SBMLT will again be accepting signups for 25 more flagstones.



If you would like to honor someone or recognize a local organization, merchant, foundation or family member or other similar type of acknowledgment, then the donor wall is a perfect setting. It is a one-of-a-kind form of tribute in our San Bernardino Mountains.

The commemorative donor wall is a lasting bedrock testament of our deep appreciation for the magnificent forest heritage around us. Proceeds will also go toward landscaping the area directly around the donor wall.



Classic flagstone donor wall at Arrowhead Ridge in Lake Arrowhead. The wall commemorates the community support for this scenic forest sanctuary. It's on the hillside opposite the colorful veterans' flag monument at the end of the small entry road.

BIG BEAR & ARROWHEAD RESERVES, a brief history

Rescuing the 700-acre Big Bear pebble plain reserve is SBMLT's most prominent achievement to date –the larger of SBMLT's two main reserves. Next is the 200-acre Arrowhead Ridge reserve, which evolved out of a long-fought battle between forest activists and diehard commercial and business interests (chiefly real estate and construction trades) in Lake Arrowhead's densely over-built community. After 20 years, the site got saved by a surprising twist of fate –a combination of code violations, loan default, and foreclosure –plus having a local Land Trust (SBMLT) at hand to pick up the pieces. However, the Big Bear reserve is a different story, one where a local advocate for child education, Liz Harris, met with the Forest Service to start up a committee to explore outdoor access for school children in nature. Her efforts brought together multiple branches of the community, including Big Bear's city council, mayor, County Supervisor Neil Derry (later James Ramos), many other civic organizations plus the Land Trust. The Big Bear Pebble Plain Ecological Reserve is an example of what a community can achieve (working together). The Land Trust is a great catalyst for forest protection.

Use **FORM** below

SUPPORT SBMLT

MAIL TODAY

- or - 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 (\$50)
- ☐ Mountain Guardian (\$100)
- ☐ Mountain Hero (\$250)
- ☐ Forest Champion (\$500)
- ☐ Other Donation (\$ _____)

Name: _____

Address: _____

City / State / Zip _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

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



Ancient fallen tree at Arrowhead Ridge

Photo by Scott Seccombe



SAN BERNARDINO
MOUNTAINS
LAND TRUST
P.O. Box 490
Lake Arrowhead
California 92352

Help Support the
SAN BERNARDINO
MOUNTAINS LAND TRUST