



SAN BERNARDINO
MOUNTAINS
LAND TRUST

Forest View

June 2023

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

Conservation vs. Bulldozers



All grading work at this Lake Arrowhead site (above) got halted for code violations. The 80 acres were later rescued for conservation.

Land Protection to Enhance our Forest's Future

There's no conservation protection for any privately-owned parcels of forestland in our local San Bernardino National Forest. The County of San Bernardino has predetermined these private lands for development, which also raises their value and promotes purchase by speculators for investment. Unless bulldozers or chainsaws one day appear at any of these sites, most of them remain indistinguishable from the surrounding National Forest and are mistakenly assumed to be already protected. That's why the Land Trust exists. Only a unique conservation buyer is able to rescue these otherwise unknown but inspirational private forestlands from suburban development.

A steadfast team of friends and advocates of the forest, who care about its future, have helped make the SAN BERNARDINO MOUNTAINS LAND TRUST the best organization for rescuing large threatened forest landscapes. There's no other agency, system or incentive for saving those various unprotected private parcels in the forest, which often are among of the most outstanding areas of all. The Land Trust has a strong track record of working with both the U.S. Forest Service and the California Department of Fish & Wildlife (as well as with other larger conservancies) to rescue thousands of privately-owned acres within this local National Forest. These ongoing efforts are especially important at this time, because no other forest has so many natural resources or faces so many complex problems, while also serving the largest metropolitan population in the USA.



SAN BERNARDINO MOUNTAINS LAND TRUST

2023

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One parent of Fawnskin's famous nesting pair of bald eagles vigilantly keeps a lookout. Moon Camp's forested shore is in the background. Congress will consider granting LWCF funds this summer for the U.S. Forest Service to acquire Moon Camp in order to better protect the nesting eagles. (See more detail page 3).

SBMLT is a charitable nonprofit organization rescuing threatened forest lands to better protect our San Bernardino Mountains



SBMLT starts a Native Tree Nursery

The SAN BERNARDINO MOUNTAINS LAND TRUST was awarded a special grant in 2022 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 for the grant, which covers a 4-year start-up period, allocating \$275,000 for the necessary greenhouses plus related equipment and a salary for the nursery operator. Two greenhouses will be located behind the Land Trust's multi-purpose building in Big Bear.

Statewide there's significant need for viable and sustainable sources of native trees to meet the long-term goals of California's reforestation program. This need is heightened by the greater fire and drought-prone nature of southern forests. Planting native trees has been a frequent focus of SBMLT over the years. The grandeur of trees is a major part of the full inspirational appeal of forests.

For everyone who has planted a tree in their youth, it's a momentous joy to see it again 20 years later, when the once tiny tree now reaches 40 feet high. 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, intended for a future transfer to the Forest Service. The total landholdings add up to over 1,100 acres.



Growing a future forest

Efforts 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.

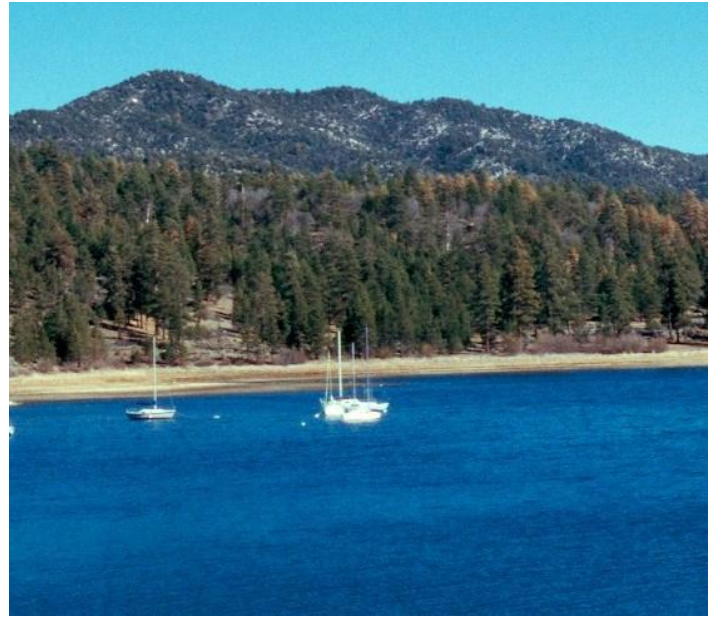
The owner's willing to sell, if funds can be obtained. The USFS Regional headquarters selected Moon Camp for a Land & Water Conservation Fund grant, and the Washington DC Office included the project on its priority list. Lots of support letters have been sent to key elected officials like Senator Dianne Feinstein.



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 save *the* bald eagles, *the* scenic north shore, *the* National Forest watershed, *the* integrity of Big Bear Lake *and* vital 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 widely-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 both scenic north shore and eagles could be protected.



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

LWCF, the U.S. CONGRESS & our LOCAL FOREST



Arnie Bean (past SBMLT Director) is behind the U.S. Capitol building on his way between the House of Representatives' offices on the south and the Senate offices to the north.

LAND & WATER CONSERVATION FUND

The U.S. Congress directs the LAND & WATER CONSERVATION FUND program (LWCF), a special budget for National Parks and Forests to buy missing sections of land inside their boundaries. SBMLT Directors last traveled to Washington DC in 2014 to confer with local congressional representatives about the Coyote Rock LWCF project in our mountains.

It's vital to remind elected officials how beneficial this program is to our local National Forest. SBMLT's successful rescue of 15,000 acres of key forestland over 25 years (including Coyote Rock) was made possible by the LWCF.

The LWCF's budget comes out of U.S. Government royalties from offshore oil leases –not income taxes. Each year \$900 million goes into the LWCF account. The original 50-year LWCF program expired in 2015, but was again re-authorized and fully funded in 2020 by major bi-partisan support in Congress. Moon Camp is now on this year's proposal list.



Arnie Bean is greeted by Senator Dianne Feinstein

At the same time our forest is one of the most heavily used of all public lands, having a huge population of 25 million people in Southern California –all within a close drive to these mountains.

MEETING with KEY REPRESENTATIVES

Legislative staff of Senator Dianne Feinstein and former Congressman Paul Cook (like Rep. Jerry Lewis before him) plus Inland Empire's Senior Congressman Ken Calvert have often responded to the land acquisition needs of our local National Forest. After SBMLT Directors met with those offices in 2014, the SBNF received funds to purchase the 150-acre Coyote Rock property in Running Springs.

As a strong **voice for the Forest**, SBMLT can highlight issues, which USFS officials (who aren't permitted to *lobby*) can only convey through limited internal agency channels. Since the experts themselves cannot directly present all the details to decision-makers, SBMLT is able to fill that role instead to help rescue vital forestlands.



SBMLT Directors, Peter Jorris & Arnie Bean, pose on the Capitol grounds in 2014 after meetings with congressional staff about LWCF help for the San Bernardino National Forest

Letters

Letters from organizations like SBMLT or Audubon and civic leaders help to remind elected officials how much LWCF's aid is needed by San Bernardino National Forest.

A high percentage of SBNF land is in private ownership, causing management gaps inside the overall boundary (much more than any other National Forest in the USA).

Your Help makes a Difference

The Land & Water Conservation Fund is a prime example of how SBMLT (and its supporters) play a key role in the future of our National Forest. The SAN BERNARDINO MOUNTAINS LAND TRUST is a vital link between our forest and the funds in Congress, waiting to be used for acquisition. Having a knowledgeable team to advocate on behalf of the SBNF makes all the difference between conserving forestland or losing it to bulldozers. Support from our members enables us to tap into these funds designated specifically for land protection. Each dollar donated to SBMLT becomes multiplied by the huge benefits that result from the LWCF program.

Our 2014 visit to Congress resulted in full funding for the Forest Service to buy Coyote Rock, a spectacular 150-acre site in Running Springs. We hope Moon Camp can be saved too.

SBMLT & USFS 700-acre Big Bear Ecological Reserve

The 700-acre forest reserve (with unique *pebble plain habitat*) in Big Bear is SBMLT's most notable land protection project to date and our largest nature sanctuary. The rare miniature plants found on pebble plains thrive on treeless ridge-tops, where the soil is a mixture of heavy clay and quartzite pebbles. These miniature plant species exist only in the Big Bear Valley and nowhere else.

The large forest site was overrun by dirt bikes, off-roaders and terrible trash dumping before its purchase by SBMLT from real estate developers. Years of major cleanup and strategic fencing have slowly restored the natural beauty. Although fences got damaged by heavy snow this winter, they are swiftly being repaired.



This scenic reserve is located *north* of the upper Moonridge area, *west* of Sugarloaf and *south* of Bear City. Pebble plains were first identified by biologists in the 1970s. The *Sawmill Pebble Plain Complex* (in this reserve) is the largest. Visitors are welcome.



Scenic southeast area of the large pebble plain reserve, where volunteers take a break following a cleanup project. The Klamath Road trailhead starts near this site, identified by an SBMLT kiosk.

A COMMUNITY EFFORT

The Big Bear ecological reserve is the best example of pebble plain habitat in the world. Protecting this site was made possible by multiple segments of the community all working together, including Big Bear Lake's city council and mayor, the county's Third District Supervisor, the Forest Service, the Big Bear Education Trust, the Sierra Club, the San Manual Band of Mission Indians, university biology departments and several other civic organizations plus the Land Trust. The creation of a pebble plain ecological reserve evolved out of this full community cooperation. SBMLT was the catalyst for the actual purchase of this forestland, supported by a conservation grant from the state Wildlife Conservation Board and matching funds from the Inland Empire Resource Conservation District.

USE FORM below

SUPPORT SBMLT

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- or - make an online gift at www.SBMLT.net

Your Membership Rescues Vital Forestland!

501(c)(3) charitable nonprofit organization. Donations are tax deductible.

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Join (or renew your support) today

San Bernardino Mountains Land Trust PO Box 490 Lake Arrowhead, CA 92352



Fawnskin Nesting Bald Eagles, Jackie & Shadow



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