



SAN BERNARDINO
MOUNTAINS
LAND TRUST

Forest View

December 2024

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

ARROWHEAD RIDGE



Tallest summit above the lake

NEW Long-Term Protection for Arrowhead Ridge

The SAN BERNARDINO MOUNTAINS LAND TRUST was awarded a \$1.5 million grant from the USDA FOREST LEGACY Program in October to extend a Conservation Easement over an extra 95 acres (the *upper* half) of Arrowhead Ridge. Title to the site's expanded easement will be held by the CA Department of Forestry & Fire Protection.

This easement will extinguish all the development rights at this site, guaranteeing that nothing ever gets built there. The entire scenic mountain ridge (with all its original forest and wildlife integrity) will remain intact long beyond the foreseeable future.

SBMLT rescued the first half of the 180-acre site in 2011 from a housing project, after bulldozers already had begun impacting the lower area. The lending bank sold the tract to SBMLT, after the developers missed major payments on their construction loan.

Ten years later, we successfully acquired the 2nd half of the property, and ongoing restoration efforts have steadily mitigated most of the damage. Nature is now rebounding with all her strong powers of regeneration, fertility and vigorous growth that's found in the exceptional micro climate at this site.

Trail re-Dedication Ceremony

SBMLT worked with college interns and volunteers to improve all trails at Arrowhead Ridge in 2023. Key routes were re-aligned and more signage added along with new kiosks. The San Manuel Band of Mission Indians assisted this effort with a \$5,000 grant. In May SBMLT hosted a formal dedication ceremony at the main trailhead to highlight these enhancements. Tribal members attended in honor of the tribe's long ancestral heritage in both the Arrowhead region and the San Bernardino Mountains overall. The trail has become one of the most popular and scenic hiking spots in the entire western "Rim of the World" section of the National Forest.



One of the main trail loops onsite

Native Tree Nursery Project



California's Department of Forestry in 2023 awarded a special grant to start a nursery to raise native tree species of the San Bernardino Mountains for re-forestation projects. Our plan was to assemble a 20x30-foot greenhouse at Metcalf Meadow in Big Bear next to SBMLT's multi-purpose building.

But we later learned that zoning restrictions wouldn't allow a greenhouse of that size onsite. After looking unsuccessfully for other sites and options, we decided to suspend the Grant until this obstacle could be resolved.

Since a tree nursery is a local forest asset, we have continued working with the City of Big Bear Lake to find a way to accommodate this project. Also, SBMLT has been given a \$100,000 contribution from the San Manuel Band of Mission Indians as part of their generous annual "Giving Tuesday" assistance to local nonprofits.

The funding will help us to further coordinate with the city and complete other preparations necessary to facilitate both the greenhouse and nursery. When that's accomplished, SBMLT will renew its grant with the state department of forestry.

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



A colorful rainbow arches over the tiny hamlet of Arrowbear Lake, surrounded by the conifer landscape of the National Forest. 300 acres of this area were saved from a huge subdivision in 1993 by folks who then started the San Bernardino Mountains Land Trust.

BIG BEAR ECOLOGICAL RESERVE

During 2024, SBMLT completed the 1st phase of a hazardous fuels reduction project on the west boundary of the 700-acre Pebble Plains Ecological Reserve in the Moonridge area of Big Bear Lake. Funding came from the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) of the federal government with the aim of helping landowners reduce combustible vegetation that might otherwise add to the wildfire danger in mountain areas.

A sum of \$28,000 was allocated to this underbrush clearance project, which SBMLT performed in-house. Upon completion, NRCS reimbursed the allotted expenses of the project, (which included major trimming, thinning, wood chipping and removal offsite of leftover debris). The sum was based on standard costs calculated for projects of this scale.

SBMLT is now undertaking two smaller fuel reduction projects in other areas of the ecological reserve.

SAN BERNARDINO MOUNTAINS LAND TRUST

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Saving nesting Bald Eagles' foraging habitat

SBMLT continues all efforts to obtain LAND & WATER CONSERVATION FUND help

The SAN BERNARDINO MOUNTAINS LAND TRUST met with local National Forest Supervisor, Danelle Harrison, in July to reaffirm Forest Service support for acquiring the 62-acre Moon Camp site.

The landowner too is set to sell, if funds are obtained. USFS Regional headquarters has twice nominated Moon Camp for *Land & Water Conservation Fund* funding and the Washington DC Office has agreed. But the recent cycle of funding added a restriction against applications over \$4 million that excludes Moon Camp from submitting a request.

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 would likely cause the eagles to abandon the area.

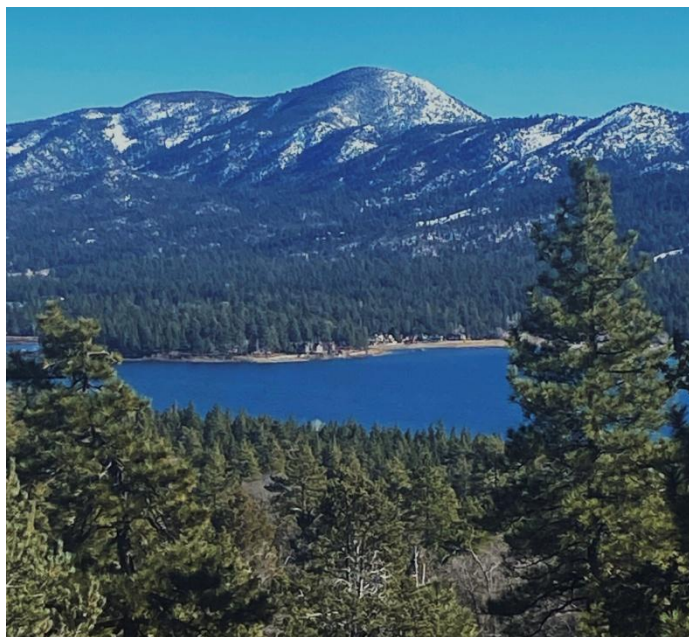


Vigilant and proud, keeping watch over the nest. With your help we can save their shoreline from urban development.

Famous Bald Eagles of the SBNF

Heroic nesting bald eagles on Big Bear Lake's scenic north shore (in the San Bernardino National Forest) are worldwide celebrities with a 24-hour live-streaming video camera focused on their nest. Every winter this faithful pair tirelessly nurtures their tiny frail offspring through rain, wind and freezing snow—not always successfully (as the past two historically extreme winters proved).

Their 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 broker a sale of this 62-acre site to the US Forest Service to save the eagles.



View from above the bald eagle's north shore habitat to the lake's other side where town & ski resorts exist.

SBMLT is a member of *the LWCF COALITION*, a national advocacy group that closely monitors the LAND & WATER CONSERVATION FUND budget in Congress and works with groups like SBMLT in facilitating outstanding LWCF projects nationwide. The capitol-based Land Trust Alliance and other key advocacy groups in Washington DC can also be counted on in helping with Moon Camp as well.



Each year the Fawnskin eagles lay two eggs, and millions watch online as the eaglets hatch and grow. Protection from urban development is vital for the nesting pair's survival.

FIVE BOUNDARY ENCROACHMENTS at SBMLT's FAWNSKIN PARCEL

SBMLT's 28-acre Fawnskin forestland parcel is uphill north of Flicker Road and also right behind cabins along Canyon Road on the easterly side of Fawnskin. A trail leads onto the site, where the street dead ends just a half block up from Flicker Road.

The Land Trust is coordinating with the real estate staff of our local Forest Service about transferring this property into the ownership of the National Forest, since the 28 acres are directly contiguous to large SBNF lands on the east. The site occupies the same slope as Moon Camp, up above a section of Flicker Road in between.

A boundary survey of the 28 acres in 2023 showed 3 home sites along Canyon Road and 2 sites at other locations, where small walls or similar structures encroached beyond their residential lots onto SBMLT property. Because the USFS cannot accept land with encroachments, these infringements all had to be removed.

Contacting homeowners, explaining the conflict and negotiating all the necessary corrective actions was a lengthy and difficult task. We ultimately got permission to remove and/or reconstruct walls, fences, decks and a propane tank mostly at Land Trust expense.

This overall remedial operation finally got accomplished after a protracted time span of nearly two years. SBMLT is now prepared to resume a further dialogue with the local Forest Service about the potential transfer of these 28 acres into the National Forest.



This 2-ft wall was dismantled and rebuilt in-bounds

REMEMBERING PAST SBMLT HEROS, who are NO LONGER WITH US

Every outstanding place that has thus far been rescued by the Land Trust owes its successful protection to the hundreds of inspired activists and donors, who've each participated in some small or greater way in the complex process of rescuing threatened landscapes in our scenic San Bernardino Mountains. These mountains serve the largest population base of any state in the USA, making them the most abundantly visited of all. Saving them from further abuse is indeed an heroic and worthy cause.



Peter Jorris talks with Senator Diane Feinstein in 1994 about preserving Upper Deep Creek

Several key players in this overall endeavor are no longer with us. And we wish to lend heartfelt salutes of gratitude and remembrance to those notable figures, who've been so emblematic of the larger band of all our dedicated friends and champions of the local forest. Former Senator Diane Feinstein in particular was a key mainstay for the Save the Saints campaign that helped rescue a thousand acres on Yucaipa Ridge along with Horsethief Canyon, Coyote Rock, Mission Springs and many others. Before and overlapping her tenure was Congressman Jerry Lewis, helping to secure several hundred acres of pristine riparian habitat in the Deep Creek basin.

Closer to home are several exemplary past presidents of SBMLT, including Jim Asher, Bill Engs, Arnie Bean and Carol Pedder. Others like Doris Bowers, who cherished Arrowhead Ridge, helped with her remarkable photos, memories and prayers. Attorney, Patrick Marley, drafted the original Bylaws and Articles of Incorporation that inaugurated the Land Trust. Each played an essential role in

the lasting legacy of so many magnificent protected places, which current and future generations are now able to enjoy. Also not forgotten are Vivian Null, Harriet Burgess and Pastor Darrel Hert, who each had a functional or inspirational influence upon the origins and achievements of the Land Trust in its very earliest days.

– SUPPORT SBMLT –

Use **FORM** below (or - make an online gift at www.SBMLT.net) **MAIL TODAY**

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: _____

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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

Historic Flagstone Donor Wall

The 80-acre west half of Arrowhead Ridge (bought by SBMLT in 2011) was severely impacted by unfinished road cuts, excavation, erosion damage and huge amounts of construction debris on the lower ten acres, when SBMLT took ownership.

Apart from uphill segments of paved roadway (scheduled for future removal), the major scar on the landscape was a giant 30-foot retaining wall in four distinct tiers. Removal of the huge structure was not a practical option. Instead, it's being transformed into part of the site's *Nature Park* theme as a special commemorative donor wall.

The wall's lower tier was just recently completed with a total of 84 inscriptions of the generous donors, helping to fund many significant restoration projects of the past decade. All this broad community support helped SBMLT to purchase the other 95-acre half of the Ridge, the cost of which is now being offset by the sale of a conservation easement (see page 1).

FUNDING SOURCES FOR SBMLT'S SMALL STAFF

SBMLT has been the leading force for major land conservation in the San Bernardino National Forest for nearly 30 years. We've maximized very difficult accomplishments on the tightest of budgets with a minimum of fully dedicated paid staff, thereby providing the highest possible return on all the charitable donations that generously support our mission.

In addition to the support from all our donors, SBMLT earns \$20,000 a year by providing volunteers to manage the Blue Jay Thrift Shop. We draw added revenue from renting a small office building located on the Land Trust's 30-acre Metcalf Meadow parcel in Big Bear, which also provides lease income from a cell tower onsite. SBMLT further collects on a 5-year mortgage payment from selling a surplus property in Lake Arrowhead. All told this extra revenue stream helps support payroll necessary for a minimal staff to manage SBMLT's forest preserves and to oversee the organization's operations and land acquisitions.





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