



WONDERS

Placer Land Trust Newsletter

Natural Wonders Forever

Volume X, Number 3

December 2011

Calendar of Events

Saturday, January 14

Free docent-led TOUR at Harvego Bear River Preserve

February TBA

Volunteer opportunity: wood duck box installation near Auburn

Saturday, February 11

Free docent-led TOUR at Big Hill Preserve

Wednesday, February 22

Volunteer Happy Hour at PLT Office

Saturday, March 10

Free docent-led TOUR at Harvego Bear River Preserve

Saturday, March 24

First 2012 Treasured Landscapes Tour, Codfish Falls Trail Preserve

Contact us at (530) 887-9222 for details about these Placer Land Trust events.

American River Land Protected!

by Jeff Darlington

Placer Land Trust is extremely pleased to announce that we have acquired and protected an additional 40 acres on the North Fork American River above Lake Clementine!

Publication of *Wonders* was put on hold to bring you this important news during the holidays: we closed escrow on the property on December 19th!

This project could not have been completed without the generosity of **Emigrant Trails Greenway Trust (ETGT)**. ETGT facilitated the donation of the property to Placer Land Trust along with a \$50,000 stewardship contribution.

"This is a beautiful riverfront property in one of our strategic conservation focus areas [Lake Clementine]," said Placer Land Trust President **Fred Yeager**, "and we were very fortunate to be able to work with ETGT to see that it is protected for future generations."

The property borders existing public land near Long Point and includes a stretch of river well known and loved by kayakers, fishermen and other outdoor enthusiasts. ETGT and Placer Land Trust stepped in to protect this property in large part to keep the river scenic and free from development within the river corridor.

In addition to its value as recreation land, the protection of this property benefits water quality, wildlife habitat, and the scenic beauty of the American River canyon.

The North Fork American River has long been an area of special interest and continues to be a priority for Placer Land Trust. In particular, the Lake Clementine area has special significance for PLT due to its value as recreation land.

Stay tuned for more details about our American River projects in Spring 2012!

In This Issue ...

- American River Land Protected
- The Hard Work of Building Trails
- Placer Conservator Award
- Photo Contest Winners
- PLT's Burrowing Owls
- 2nd Saturday Hikes Announced
- Thank You to our Supporters
- Carbon Sequestration and Revenue



Photo: Placer Land Trust

Placer Land Trust has now protected over 1,000 acres along the American River and within its canyons. A dedication ceremony is planned for this property in the spring.

From the Board Room

Public Access to Protected Lands: Not as Easy as You Might Think

by Jim Haagen-Smit

As a Placer Land Trust Board member, I have been working with staff and volunteers to develop a trails program so that, gradually, the public will be able to access certain Placer Land Trust lands.

The lands that Placer Land Trust has protected and that will have a trails element on them are so magnificent – they should please every hiker, rider, photographer and birdwatcher out there!

Our Board supported the goal to form a trails team. A vision is in place and team members are tackling issues. When I think of how conscientious the Board and team are regarding trails, I recall this quote by the philanthropist **Laurance Rockefeller**:

“Concern for the environment and access to parks and open space is not frivolous or peripheral, rather, it is central to the welfare of body, mind, and spirit.”

I am honored to be a leader on Placer Land Trust’s trail team. With the help of staff and great volunteers, the trails that get built will be part of an environmentally-sound system that meanders across Placer Land Trust open space, leads the user to highlights such as streams and views, and connects with trails in adjacent counties or trails that are managed by other entities.

For example, a public trail will someday connect Placer County’s Hidden Falls Regional Park, with Bear-Yuba Land Trust land on the northside of the stunning Bear River, across the recently acquired Harvego Bear River Preserve. It will be a stellar experience including approximately 45 miles of trails taking in the beauty of blue oak woodlands



Creating public access to protected lands, including river parkways, is part of Placer Land Trust’s goals and vision.

and stunning views just beyond the hustle and bustle of town. Trail users will understand the history of grazing and hear the bluebirds sing. Stepping along this trail, you may be warmed by the sun and exercise one minute, then cooled by a misty breeze the next.

It will take persistence to get trailheads built and any other infrastructure in place that will allow public access. It seems simple, but the list of challenges is long.

For example, very few of our lands have public roads nearby. We can’t just let the public use narrow private neighborhood roads that are frequently the only access. And then there is the little issue of where to park cars! Sanitation, fire, and public safety are examples of other challenges. So it will all take time.

Currently, members of the public can get a sense of our ultimate trail vision by contacting Placer Land Trust to sign up for one of our **free docent-led hikes**, held the **2nd Saturday** of each month. Additionally, in the spring we host our **Treasured Landscapes** series of monthly **naturalist-led hikes** that are also open to the public.

Thank you for your patience while our trail program evolves!

While we work on the details of the program, please feel free to contact our office – and I’m also available by email at jimwhs@yahoo.com.



Natural Wonders Forever

PLACER LAND TRUST

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MISSION

Placer Land Trust is a private nonprofit organization dedicated to working with willing landowners and conservation partners to permanently preserve natural and agricultural land in Placer County for future generations.

WONDERS is the seasonal paper newsletter of Placer Land Trust. Sign up at www.placerlandtrust.org for our monthly e-newsletter to save paper! All material and photos are property of Placer Land Trust unless otherwise noted.

Vol. X, No. 3, December 2011

Christine Turner, 2011 Placer Conservator

Supporters filled Portuguese Hall in Newcastle last month to celebrate **Christine Turner** being named the 2011 Placer Conservator.

When Christine was appointed the Placer County Agricultural Commissioner, the Board of Supervisors invited her to speak as the voice of the agricultural community; over the next 11 years she became Placer County's best advocate for protecting agricultural land. PLT was proud to award her with the Placer Conservator Award for her work to enrich the quality of life in Placer County through resource conservation.

According to Christine, "the resource is the land itself. I started in land use issues from that perspective. What we have is not just vacant land – we

“The resource is the land itself. When the land is gone it is gone, and agriculture will go with it.”

may not have “prime” land, it may not currently be under cultivation, but that doesn't make it wasteland. When the land resource is gone it is gone, and agriculture will go with it.”



Photo: Jim Haagen-Smit

Christine's Placer Conservator Award was an original piece of art from one of her favorite artists, J. Randall Smith.

Proceeds from this event went to Placer Land Trust's new **Small Farm Program** to help agricultural landowners overcome some of the initial obstacles to land conservation through education, technical assistance, and pre-project funding.

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2012 Calendar Photo Contest Winners

Placer Land Trust hosted a photo contest in 2011 resulting in some very impressive entries. The top 12 photos create a beautiful 2012 wall calendar. **ORDER YOUR CALENDAR TODAY!** If you send us a year-end donation of \$18 or more, we'll send you the calendar with our thanks! You can mail us a check or make a donation on our secure web site and put "2012 Calendar" in the "personal comment" field on the donation page.



Carole Haskell "Swainson's Hawk & King Bird" **1st Place**



Dennis Cavallo "Flicker on Dogwood Tree" **2nd Place**



James Hirschinger "North Fork American River" **3rd Place**



Ronald Jurek "Sierra Dawn"



Phil Robertson "Wood Duck"



Larry Brendan "Winter Reverie"



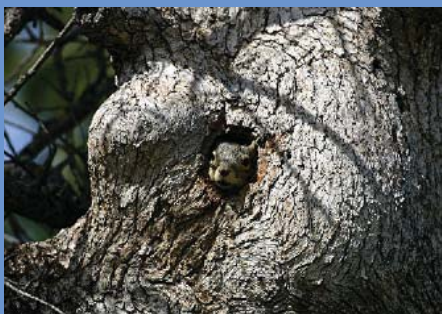
Phil Robertson "Great Egret"



Daniel Gomez "Momma Bear"



Larry Brendan "Hanging On"



Dennis Cavallo "Squirrel Peeking from Tree"



James Hirschinger "Winter Valley Truckee"



Carole Haskell "Female Mallard Preening"

Stewardship Report

Burrowing Owls

by Erin Tarr

During the month of June, Placer Land Trust teamed up with The Burrowing Owl Conservation Network (BOCN) and Defenders of Wildlife (DOW) to install Artificial Burrowing Systems (ABS) on two Lincoln preserves. Burrowing owls, a California Species of Special Concern, have been victims of habitat loss and destruction due to increasing development. Lincoln has been rapidly growing for the past ten years, and much of their grassland habitat has been converted to residential housing and businesses.

Burrowing owls have been sighted on both Swainsons Grassland Preserve and Doty Ravine Preserve. Swainsons even had a year round resident. The presence of owls, even if only temporary, ensured enhanced success for the project.

Volunteers congregated early on two separate hot June mornings, were given an overview of the project, and the plight of western burrowing owls by **Scott Artis** from BOCN. After coffee and donuts we were ready to start digging. Placer Land Trust Board Member, **Rich Ferreira** volunteered his time and the use of his Bobcat to assist in the burrow preparation. Rich dug the holes, volunteers installed the ABS and replaced the soil to cover all but the cinder block entrances and the top of the bucket. The buckets were left accessible so that the burrows could later be inspected for use.

Sixteen artificial nest systems were successfully installed. Placer Land Trust volunteer, **Dennis Cavallo** and Placer Land Trust Land Manager **Justin Wages** have been monitoring them frequently for signs of use and are happy to report that owls are using the burrows on both Swainsons Grassland Preserve and Doty Ravine Preserve. I guess the saying is true "If you build it, they will come."

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Help protect the quality of life that makes Placer County a fabulous place to live, work, and play! For more information see www.placerlandtrust.org/partners, call **Karrie Thomas** at 530-887-9222 or email karrie@placerlandtrust.org.

Volunteer Program Ramping Up

New Opportunities Beginning 2-22-12

by Jessica Pierce

As Placer Land Trust continues to acquire and preserve more land in Placer County, the need for volunteer help has increased. Each property is different and comes with its own stewardship requirements, whether it's removal of invasive species, planting of California native vegetation, trail building, or stream monitoring.

Our recent staff addition **Janet Voris** will be taking over as Volunteer and Outreach Coordinator, a position which was previously filled by our Americorps members, who serve for one year as part of the Sierra Nevada Alliance Partnership program. Having a permanent staff member take over this responsibility will help improve the volunteer program and give it consistency from year to year.

To help meet the needs of stewarding our preserves, we partner with several local organizations and businesses that encourage their members and employees to volunteer in the community. We work with the Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts of America, a partnership that supports local youth in earning merit badges while assisting Placer Land Trust in various restoration projects.

We are currently working on special volunteer days designed for large

groups like Hewlett-Packard, PG&E and REI who offer their employees opportunities to participate in environmental cleanup and restoration activities. Most recently, Placer Land Trust teamed up with the newly formed National Charity League, South Placer County Chapter whose mission is "to foster mother-daughter relationships in a philanthropic organization committed to community service, leadership development and cultural experiences.". Placer Land Trust also offers individual volunteer opportunities throughout the year.

We will officially kick off our 2012 Volunteer Program on February 22 from 5-7pm: everyone is invited to attend. We will announce and awarding our "Volunteer of the Year" and "Land Steward of the Year" recipients for 2011 during that event. We will have a calendar of field work volunteer days available, and our staff will be there to answer questions. From time to time we also need help in our office with mailings and other small projects - if getting dirty and sweaty from field work is not your thing!

We hope you'll join us! To RSVP to the February 22 event or for more information, please e-mail Janet Voris at janet.voris@placerlandtrust.org.

When you invest in Placer Land Trust you support yourself, your family, and your community. Forever.



Natural Wonders Forever



**Clean Air & Water
Trails & Recreation
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Wilderness & Wildlife**



Photo: Jeff Andersen

"Second Saturday" Docent-Led Hikes

Join us for docent-led hikes on the 2nd Saturday of every month.

Currently we are alternating between Harvego Bear River Preserve and Big Hill Preserve. RSVP required.

To RSVP contact **Janet Voris** at (530) 887-9222, janet.voris@placerlandtrust.org, or register online at www.placerlandtrust.org.



Photo: Placer Land Trust

Pond at Harvego Bear River Preserve

**Become a Member or
Renew your Placer Land
Trust Membership today**
Visit www.placerlandtrust.org to
become a member & learn about
other ways you can get involved.

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Thank you for protecting Placer County's Natural Wonders!

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Placer Land Trust: an Innovation Leader

Throughout our work on the 1,773-acre Harvego Bear River Preserve project, Placer Land Trust was mindful that this property provided a unique opportunity for the potential benefits of carbon sequestration.

In 2009, we started working with Sierra Business Council to see if the property could be a candidate for a carbon sequestration and credit sales project. A preliminary survey was conducted and sure enough, due to the property's size and unfragmented nature, and its oak woodland landscape, the initial results looked good.

In September 2011, we received a \$75,000 grant to complete the full inventory through the **NRCS Conservation Innovation Grant** program, which funds organizations developing new methods and technologies to pro-

tect or enhance natural resources in an agricultural setting. Due to the unique nature of an oak woodland property providing carbon offsets, our project was successful. This grant allows us to complete the final inventory and create a methodology to model carbon sequestration on the Preserve over time. The grant also covers the cost of the verification and registration of carbon credits with the Climate Action Reserve, which ensures integrity, transparency, and financial value in the North American carbon market.

PLT Assistant Director **Jessica Pierce** has been the lead on this project. She adds that Placer Land Trust "intends this project to be a model for other oak woodlands landowners – primarily ranchers – to replicate as a means to generate revenue for sustain-

able property management."

Carbon projects can help foster and improve ecosystem services provided by our properties, enhancing the natural resources of the properties. They can also generate revenue for perpetual stewardship, and create a model for economically viable conservation for future generations.

Placer Land Trust has long been a leader among land trusts in innovative conservation practices, and we continue to leverage all support, turn over all stones, and bring all resources to bear in protecting Placer County's natural wonders forever.



JEFF DARLINGTON
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Placer Land Trust protects yet more land!
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