



WONDERS

PLACER LAND TRUST NEWSLETTER

Autumn 2021



Big Hill Preserves. Photo by Keith Sutter

CALIFORNIA
RANGELAND
Trust



TRUCKEE DONNER
LAND TRUST



We're not in this alone...

Partnering with our Land Trust neighbors toward a shared vision

*Placer Land Trust is proud to have protected nearly 12,000 acres of natural and agricultural lands in Placer County over our 30-year history. But we're not doing this work alone. In the world of land conservation, we benefit from partnering with our land trust neighbors who share resources and information, and partner with us, rather than competing over donations or projects. In fact, four local land trusts have helped make a difference right here in Placer County through direct land conservation. Our executive director, **Jeff Darlington**, reflects on the leadership transitions at these four land trusts and shared their impact on Placer County...*

California Rangeland Trust (CRT) is the largest land trust in California and has protected over 300,000 acres of working rangelands since

1998, 469 acres of which are in Placer County. Their retired CEO, **Nita Vail**, was an inspiration to me and many others, making a huge impact protecting the often underfunded agricultural lands of California. Their current CEO, straight-talking **Michael Delbar**, is carrying that success forward.

Wildlife Heritage Foundation (WHF) protects, enhances and restores wildlife habitat across the state. With their office located in Lincoln, they have completed most of their projects here in Placer County with over 4,763 acres protected. Their retired executive director **Pat Shea** was a great mentor and advisor to me regarding our interest and ability to get involved in mitigation projects. Partly as a result of what I learned from Pat, Placer Land Trust only gets involved in mitigation projects if we can add

value – and if the property contains special public benefit. WHF's current executive director, **Darla Guenzler**, is one of the pioneers in helping lands trusts secure adequate legal and financial protections in their conservation easement projects.

Since 1989, the **American River Conservancy (ARC)** has focused on conserving lands in the Upper American and Upper Consumnes River Watersheds, including over 10,000 acres in Placer County. Their retired executive director **Alan Ehgott** was a self-taught land trust leader who generously shared his expertise with me and other lands trust leaders. Under his guidance, and continued by current executive director **Elena DeLacy**, ARC has done incredible work with public funders and agencies to protect land in the American River watershed. I'm pleased that Placer Land Trust

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holds the conservation easement on and helps ARC protect one of their special properties, the historic site of the Wakamatsu Tea and Silk Colony Farm, the first permanent Japanese settlement in North America, established in 1869.

Truckee Donner Land Trust (TDLT) has been protecting land and building trails in the Truckee Donner area since 1990. They focus on land mainly east of the Sierra crest while Placer Land Trust protects land west of it in Placer County. TDLT has completed several conservation projects in Placer

County, including 3,000 acres in Royal Gorge. TDLT's recently retired executive director **Perry Norris** forged strong partnerships with private foundations, public entities, and other nonprofits to create an extremely effective coalition protecting tens of thousands of acres in the Sierra Nevada. TDLT's new executive director **John Svahn** is a great asset to the field of land conservation, and he's continuing TDLT's legacy of partnership.

I also greatly appreciate the knowledge, collaboration and benefit we get from our neighbors

at **Bear Yuba Land Trust** where **Erin Tarr** has taken the reins from **Marty Coleman-Hunt**, and at **Sacramento Valley Conservancy** where **Kelly Hopkins** has taken the reins from **Aimee Rutledge**.

Along with Placer Land Trust, all of these land trusts and their leaders – past and present – are making an impact on the natural and agricultural lands of Placer County. I've learned so much working with our neighbors over the years, and I look forward to sharing my insights with new and upcoming land trust leaders for years to come!

Supporter Spotlight: Phil and Kathy Weber

Phil and Kathy Weber are great examples of people who choose to invest in a cause that has meaning to them now, and in the future. Phil grew up in the Bay Area and Kathy grew up all over the world due to her father's career in the U.S. Department of State. Their experiences led them to appreciate the many beautiful places the natural world has to offer.

Phil and Kathy met in high school in San Mateo and became high school sweethearts. They moved to Fair Oaks in the 90s to be closer to family who lived in Auburn. They remember being socked in with fog each winter and would drive up the hill to visit Kathy's parents, to be greeted by sunshine and gorgeous countryside. They made the decision to move to Meadow Vista to enjoy this beauty more often.

Phil and Kathy first became Placer Land Trust members back in 2009. When asked why they decided to join, Kathy shared, "My first job

in the area was in Roseville and I used to drive down Sierra College to work. In a short period of time, I watched the area go from beautiful countryside to developed sprawl. Strip malls sprang up and farmland was disappearing. I heard about Placer Land Trust on CapRadio on one of my morning drives and decided we need to do something to protect the countryside we love."

Phil and Kathy have donated every year since without fail. In fact, just a few years later, they became **Sustaining Members** via monthly giving, and have even increased their monthly investment several times since. Phil says, "Kathy is great about doing her research when deciding where to donate. And when Kathy decides something is worth her support, she sticks with it!"

Phil and Kathy enjoyed meeting other Placer Land Trust members at our last annual Pie Party and hope to meet other members who care about the same things they do in



the near future. They also hope others will join them in becoming Sustaining Members, as they feel that people united make a bigger impact possible.

We are so grateful to Phil and Kathy, and all of our Sustaining Members, for their vision to invest wisely in a gift that will continue giving back for generations to come!



The season of giving kicks off on Giving Tuesday, November 30th!

We hope Placer Land Trust will be on your list of organizations to support. We're wrapping up our 30th Anniversary year and are excited to see what we can accomplish together the next 30 years! Please help us reach our "30 for 30" goals by...

- Joining Phil and Kathy, and so many others, by becoming sustaining members
- Becoming Forever Society members by leaving Placer Land Trust in your will or estate plans
- Or simply making an investment in the future with a one-time gift

We have our work cut out for us, but together, we know we can more than double our conserved lands in the coming decades. Visit placerlandtrust.org/donate to learn more and join us in this work!

Welcoming Our New Board Members

We are delighted to welcome **Maggie Tides** and **Achini Bandara** as the newest members of our Board of Directors!

Maggie Tides is an attorney with Sher Edling LLP, a law firm specializing in environmental litigation on behalf of public



Maggie Tides

entities across the country. She's also a talented artist and graphic designer. Maggie lives in Loomis with her husband and daughter and enjoys biking, hiking, and especially running. She has completed several ultramarathons, including two 100-mile races, two 100km races, and several 50 mile and 50km races.

Achini Bandara serves as Development Director for Sierra Nevada Journeys, a nonprofit based in Northern Nevada and California that delivers outdoor, science-based education programs for youth. Prior to her career in education and environmental advocacy, Achini held Project Management and Project Development Scientist positions at the University of Southern California's Keck School of Medicine and the City of Hope Comprehensive Cancer Center. Achini also brings extensive experience with managing large



Achini Bandara

grants and grant-funded projects. She lives in Auburn with her husband, son, and their Boxer mix, Calypso.

We're glad to have Maggie and Achini on our Board, and we're looking forward to learning from the fresh perspectives they will bring!



The "30 Years of Conservation Auction" is a wrap, and we couldn't be more thrilled with the results!

Whether you sponsored the auction, contributed auction items, bid on auction items, and/or invested directly in land conservation, we are SO grateful for your support! You helped us raise over \$76,000, which will be invested right back into the community in the form of newly protected land. Together, we are playing our part to increase quality of life for all who live, work, and play in Placer County.

If you didn't get to donate before the end of the auction, it's not too late! Please make your wise investment in the future at placerlandtrust.org/donate.

We hope all our members are staying healthy and safe, and that by this time next year, we can celebrate land conservation once again in person and make up for our lost time together!



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For the full list of sponsors, please visit placerlandtrust.org/auction.

Join Our Community Council!

Now accepting applications

Interested in sharing your passion for conservation with others who will benefit? Please consider applying to be part of Placer Land Trust's Community Council! This is a small group of committed members who help raise awareness and support for protecting the natural and agricultural lands that are so important to our region.

To learn more and apply, visit: www.placerlandtrust.org/join-community-council

Calendar

November 21: Docent-led Hike at Big Hill Preserves

More hikes coming soon – for info and registration, please visit placerlandtrust.org/calendar

Follow us on Facebook to stay in the loop about upcoming events!

Partnering on Auburn Shaded Fuel Break at Canyon View Preserve

If you have been out to Canyon View Preserve lately, you may have noticed some tree and brush work happening. This work is part of the Auburn Shaded Fuel Break project, a fuels reduction effort managed by the Placer County Resource Conservation District (RCD) in cooperation with the Auburn Fire Department, CA State Parks, US Bureau of Reclamation, and private landowners like Placer Land Trust. The project strategically reduces fuels along 353 acres of the American River canyon rim, bordering the City of Auburn, and aims to protect it in the event of a wildfire. The Fuel Break includes a 34-acre swath of Canyon View Preserve, running from the steep southeast corner of the Preserve across to the north side.

To form a shaded fuel break, crews clear out understory vegetation – also known as “ladder fuels” – which can raise a fire into the upper tree canopy. This modifies the behavior of the fire by keeping it slow-moving and low to the ground, reducing severity and providing crews an opportunity to suppress the fire before it can cause further damage.

“Canyon View Preserve is a special place to both Placer Land Trust and to the local community,” says Land and Recreation Manager Christy Claes. “It has remained accessible and relatively quiet even through the pandemic, as people are seeking natural respites with added urgency. Canyon View Preserve has a high diversity of micro-ecosystems, ephemeral streams, steep shady canyons, open meadows, and oak woodlands. It was important to us to work closely



with RCD to best meet the conservation goals of the preserve, while maximizing the benefits of the fuel break.”

Placer Land Trust would like to thank the staff at Placer County RCD for their close management and professionalism in carrying out this project in accordance with the added goals and concerns of our beloved preserve. We are excited about this project and the opportunity it provides to build upon our other management goals, such as reaching more invasive species for removal and opening the canopy for greater diversity of species in the understory, as well as the overall community benefits of preventing catastrophic wildlife and assisting in fighting wildfire.



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