



# WONDERS

PLACER LAND TRUST NEWSLETTER

Spring 2026



## Foresthill Ancestral Homelands Return to Local Tribe

### **Placer Land Trust and Colfax-Todds Valley Consolidated Tribe Partner on Owl Creek Land Back Project**

Placer Land Trust is committed to protecting and caring for land in a way that is inclusive and equitable. One way to do that is by working with our local Native American Tribes, who have a long and deep relationship to these lands. We are honored to share the exciting news about the completion of our second Land Back project with the **Colfax-Todds Valley Consolidated Tribe!**

In April, we officially completed the **Owl Creek Project**, a 308-acre forest conservation and Tribal Land Back initiative in rural Placer County. Located near Foresthill, this land – known in Nisenan as ***Hym hym hop'*** – is part of the Colfax-Todds Valley Consolidated Tribe's ancestral homelands, and will now be owned by the Tribe.

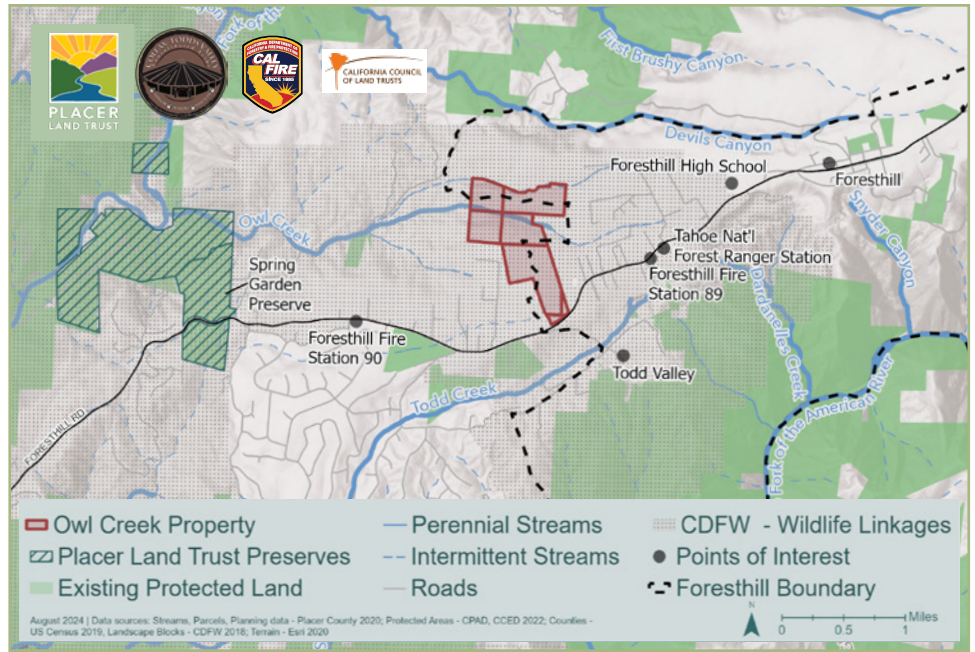
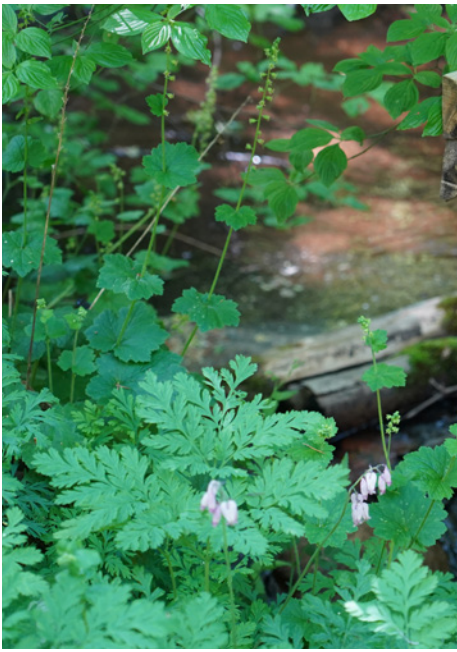
The project was primarily supported by \$1.36 million through **CAL FIRE's Forest Legacy Program**. A perpetual conservation easement is held by Placer Land Trust as a condition of this funding, protecting the land forever from subdivision or development. The property holds deep cultural significance, with Tribal members recalling deep family connections to this land.

"For generations our Tribal members have lived on, traveled, and stewarded these lands along Owl Creek," said **Clyde Prout III**, Chair of the Colfax-Todds Valley Consolidated Tribe. "This land has so much rich history and so many memories. It's a monumental moment to have this land back in the Tribe's hands. Taking Owl Creek back creates a place where past and present meet, a place to preserve our history and educate the next generation."

This effort marks the second – and largest – Land Back project completed in partnership between Placer Land Trust and the Tribe.

"We are honored to continue our partnership with the Colfax-Todds Valley Consolidated Tribe, who for countless generations has had a deep relationship to this land and its care," said Placer Land Trust Executive Director **Jeff Darlington**. "While we can't undo the injustices done to Native American Tribes in the past, we hope our partnership with the Tribe today can help redress these injustices in a meaningful way by

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Above left: Native Pacific bleeding heart and alumroot bloom along Owl Creek. Above right: Vicinity map of the property.

facilitating the repatriation of ancestral land to the Tribe and working together to ensure it is protected forever.”

Without conservation, the Owl Creek property was at risk of being subdivided for rural residential development. This project reflects strong collaboration and strategic timing between partners committed to protecting the land’s ecological and cultural values.

The Tribe has identified six acres as a designated area for a future Tribal headquarters and forest stewardship operations center, noting that land ownership is key to pursuing future federal recognition. Plans include the restoration and maintenance of fuels and forest health on the property, and eventual managed public access for recreation and education.

“This project represents a meaningful investment in both forest conservation and Tribal partnerships,” said CAL FIRE Director **Joe Tyler**. “By protecting this landscape from development and supporting Tribal stewardship, we are advancing California’s commitment to climate resilience, cultural preservation, and healthy forests.”

The Owl Creek Project was made possible through a combination of funding sources, including the CAL FIRE Forest Legacy Program, matching and in-kind contributions from both the Tribe and Placer Land Trust, \$20,000 from the California Council of Land Trusts, and a discounted sale from the landowner exceeding \$200,000 in value.

“Many of our Tribal ancestors were born in a place called Owl Creek; we have learned this through oral and written history,” said **Pam Cubbler**, Tribal Council Vice Chairwoman. “For many generations, our families have been hunting and gathering on this property. Our Tribe’s relationship with the Owl Creek property is not just physical or economic, but spiritual, cultural, and communal. The land represents our identity, heritage, and survival. It holds stories, traditions and sacred places that define our Tribe’s way of life.”

A dedication ceremony for Owl Creek will be held with the Tribe in late April; stay tuned for photos and video as we mark this historic event!

## Clementine Beach Preserve Transferred to State Parks

Protected by Placer Land Trust in 2022, **Clementine Beach Preserve** is important for its strategic location, preserving public access to Lake Clementine and ensuring that a significant stretch of the North Fork American River canyon land will remain accessible and undeveloped. Placer Land Trust purchased the land with the mutual intent with State Parks to sell it to **State Parks** at a later time. Now, we are pleased to announce that we have sold Clementine Beach Preserve to State Parks to own and manage within the Auburn State Recreation Area.

The Clementine Beach property was formerly an inholding within the Auburn State Recreation Area; the only road to the popular Upper Lake Clementine beach passes through the property. “This acquisition protects and expands the park and connects that part of the North Fork of the American River within it,” said **Karen Bearson**, Department of Parks & Recreation.

Placer Land Trust will pay forward the proceeds from this sale to new land conservation projects in Placer County.

A photograph of two children by a river. One child, wearing a pink hat and a light-colored hoodie, is leaning over the grassy bank looking into the water. Another child, wearing a pink backpack and pink pants, is standing nearby. The background shows a calm river and greenery.

# DOUBLE your donation – *and your impact!*

# Big Day of Giving MAY 7

**The first \$100,000 in donations will be DOUBLED!**

**Big Day of Giving** is *the* online giving opportunity of the year that unites and inspires our community to support the hundreds of nonprofits that make the greater Sacramento region an amazing place to call home. It is a critical fundraiser for Placer Land Trust as it helps us raise the funds needed to keep our mission moving forward.

In the last 35 years, Placer Land Trust members have protected over 22,000 acres of land, including thousands of acres of Sierra

forest, foothill oak woodlands, valley grasslands, and agricultural land, as well as miles of trails and streams and rivers. It's an incredible achievement, but it's hard to keep up with the pace of growing threats to our lands, waters, wildlife, and ways of life – especially here in Placer County, one of the fastest growing counties in the State.

*Mark your calendar to help Placer Land Trust continue to protect these essential resources through Big Day of Giving!*

**Exciting News** – some generous Placer Land Trust members have come together to create a **\$100,000 matching fund** that will double donations made between April 23<sup>rd</sup>-May 7<sup>th</sup>, while funds last! A huge thanks to **Emigrant Trails Greenway Trust, Mary Ann Flemmer, The Goat Trail Fund, Christine Pieper & Dennis Grossman, Graeme & Debra Plant, Side Hill Citrus, J.P. Tindell, and several anonymous donors** for making this fund possible!

## Show the region how much you value protected land this Big Day of Giving:

1. **Donate TODAY** through May 7<sup>th</sup> at [www.bigdayofgiving.org/placerlandtrust](http://www.bigdayofgiving.org/placerlandtrust). All major credit cards are accepted, and gifts made through a Golden 1 Credit Union debit/credit card earn additional funds for Placer Land Trust.\*
2. **Share your support!** Please tell your friends! Follow us on Facebook and Instagram @[placerlandtrust](https://www.facebook.com/placerlandtrust) and share our posts. Or introduce a friend to one of Placer Land Trust's public preserves and help us get the word out to protect the land that gives life and makes our future brighter.

\* You can also give to Placer Land Trust directly via **check, cash, stock, donor advised fund, IRA charitable rollover**, etc. Simply mail your donation or drop it off at our office: Placer Land Trust, 922 Lincoln Way, Suite 200, Auburn, CA 95603. We must have it by May 7<sup>th</sup> for it to be included in our Big Day of Giving totals. If you have any questions, please contact Kara at [kara.walker@placerlandtrust.org](mailto:kara.walker@placerlandtrust.org) or 530-887-9222 x109.

**THANK YOU** for being part of our amazing community of supporters!



Scan to donate!

# [www.bigdayofgiving.org/placerlandtrust](http://www.bigdayofgiving.org/placerlandtrust)



## Recent Grants

We are pleased to share that the **Kelly Foundation** has generously awarded Placer Land Trust with a \$30,000 grant for the Raccoon Creek Overlook, which is being constructed at our Big Hill Preserves.

As many know, we have been working with Placer County to open our Big Hill Preserves to the public, connecting miles of trails existing at Big Hill Preserves with those at Placer County's Hidden Falls Regional Park. One important feature will be a new trail that will provide access to this special part of Placer County for those with limited mobility.

The 0.8-mile trail will lead from the entrance parking lot to the Raccoon Creek Overlook, an open viewing deck with a great view of Raccoon Creek only 50 feet below. We believe everyone should have the opportunity to experience the physical and mental benefits of spending time in nature, and we are grateful to the Kelly Foundation for helping us make this vision a reality!

## Save the Date for Conservation Celebration Week

### Now seeking auction items!

The weather is just warming up, but believe it or not, we're already starting to think about Fall! Conservation Celebration Week, which is taking place **September 21-27**, will be here before we know it. We can't wait to shine a spotlight on all the great conservation work our community makes possible, and to honoring a special individual with the 2026 Placer Conservator Award!

We also look forward to hosting our annual Conservation Celebration Auction that week and wanted to invite you to help Placer Land Trust raise critical funds to further our mission with a contribution to the auction. Do you have a vacation home or a unique experience to offer our bidders? If so, please contact Elia Rivas by email at [elia.rivas@placerlandtrust.org](mailto:elia.rivas@placerlandtrust.org) or by phone at 530-887-9222 x110. Auction item donors get recognized as event sponsors for their in-kind contribution. Thank you so much for your consideration, and we hope to see you at one of our events that week!

## Upcoming Events

May 1 - Clover Valley Nocturnal Nightstroll

May 3 - Bird Stroll at Harvego Bear River Preserve

May 15 - Bird Stroll at Clover Valley Preserve

May 16 - Plein Air and Photography Outing at Clover Valley Preserve

May 28 - Nature Quest: Picnic by the River

*More event info and registration:*  
[www.placerlandtrust.org/calendar](http://www.placerlandtrust.org/calendar)

*Follow us on Facebook to hear about upcoming hikes and events:* [www.facebook.com/placerlandtrust](http://www.facebook.com/placerlandtrust)



**Hikers enjoy the wildflowers on a docent-led tour of Clover Valley, April 2026.**  
**Photo credit: Placer Community Foundation**

# Hitting the Trails with Mobility Demo Day



Placer Land Trust seeks partnerships to welcome underrepresented communities who have traditionally been excluded from recreating in the outdoors. These partnerships help us create and promote meaningful opportunities for people to connect with land and each other. But while spending time outdoors is great for mental and physical health, for people living with disabilities or limited mobility, outdoor activities aren't always accessible.

Recently Placer Land Trust held our first-ever **TrailAble Mobility Demo Day**, in collaboration with **Mcllwain Mobility Solutions** and **United Cerebral Palsy of Sacramento**, to give people a chance to get out in nature on their own volition. A variety of mobility devices were made available for participants to try at no charge, and Mcllwain's skilled team helped everyone to get comfortable enough to hit the trails.

"It is easy to take for granted the lack of barriers a lot of people have to accessing the great outdoors with ease and freedom," said Placer Land Trust Recreation Manager **Christy Claes**, one of the event organizers. "We wanted to help remove at least some of the barriers our participants experience when seeking joy, peace and adventure in the great outdoors through this partnership. I saw smiles, mud splashing, fists upraised in triumph. I saw proud families and resilient champions. I left feeling very inspired!"

## Now's a Great Time to Plan Your Legacy

How's your legacy looking? Do you have an estate plan in place that will take care of your loved ones while also making a big impact on the causes you care about?

We know... this is a task that few of us enjoy thinking about, let alone taking care of. But it's truly a gift to your heirs when you provide a road map that will take the guesswork out of honoring your wishes.

We're so grateful for our Forever Society members who have chosen Placer Land Trust as a vehicle to help them leave a meaningful lasting legacy. YOU can become a Forever Society member by including a bequest to Placer Land Trust in your will or trust, or by listing Placer Land Trust as a beneficiary of your

retirement or life insurance plans, as well as several other methods.

And now is a great time to do so! We will be honoring our Forever Society members, as well as other Visionary Circle members, at **A Land Affair on May 21st**. This is a free event on a beautiful preserve where you can get to know other Placer Land Trust supporters, enjoy a meal and drinks, and hear a short presentation where there is no "ask" – just a celebration of the people who help sustain our mission into the future.

If you want to learn more, or if you have already listed Placer Land Trust in your estate plans but haven't let us know yet, please contact Kara Walker at [kara.walker@placerlandtrust.org](mailto:kara.walker@placerlandtrust.org) or 530-887-9222 x109.





Forked-tooth Ookow blooms with a view at Vista Ranch, April 2026



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## Fun in the Sun at the 2026 Pie Party

This year's Pie Party was a delightful day with good food, great company, and beautiful weather! On March 14 (Pi Day!), partygoers enjoyed exploring the Laursen Bear River Preserve trails, spotting wildflowers, flying kites, and playing games in the meadow, while catching up with friends old and new. And of course, the pie selection was as epic as always! Thanks to all who joined us!

