



WONDERS

PLACER LAND TRUST NEWSLETTER *Summer 2026*



Above, clockwise: Trail Crew volunteers; new trails are marked with flags; the Raccoon Creek Overlook platform.

Since 2007, **Placer Land Trust** (PLT) has been preserving land between the Bear River and Raccoon Creek watersheds, protecting those waterways and thousands of acres of open space lands for their excellent conservation values. These lands include rolling oak woodlands, critical wildlife habitat, rangelands grazed by cattle, and a beautiful location for recreation.

Over the past several years, PLT has been working with **Placer County** to open 480 acres at PLT's **Big Hill Preserve** in North Auburn to public access and recreation. We're excited to share that we're now just months away from an anticipated opening in late autumn of this year!

All PLT-managed trail construction at Big Hill Preserve is now complete, a huge milestone accomplishment that is vital to opening the preserve. Thank you to all our volunteers, donors, and grant funders for making this trail work possible over the past several years. We are so grateful for our volunteer **Trail Crew**, led by **Bryan Wright**, for their dedicated work preparing and maintaining 9 miles of beautiful trails for the public. These are multi-use trails for hikers, trail runners, mountain bikers, and equestrians.

We have also completed construction of the Raccoon Creek Overlook, a 16ft by 20ft platform that provides a beautiful view of Raccoon Creek. The overlook is located at the end of "Blue Oak Legacy Way", a trail designed by Placer Land Trust and Placer County to be accessible to adaptable bikes and overland wheelchairs. PLT will

construct an accessible ramp up to the platform this summer. Raccoon Creek itself will be reachable via a steep single-track foot trail that runs from the overlook platform down to the water.

To accommodate visitors for what we expect to be a popular outdoor destination, Placer County has constructed a new dedicated parking lot to access Big Hill Preserve. This lot also offers equestrian trailer parking spaces and bathroom facilities. Placer County is working on completing the remaining trail segments, and once we install signage and put the finishing touches on the trail system, we anticipate that Big Hill Preserve will be open to public access late this autumn.

Public access to the Preserve will be via an online day-permit reservation system similar to the one at Hidden Falls Regional Park. To start, we anticipate the Preserve being open to the public 5 days a week, with a couple of "rest days" during the week to allow us to closely assess impacts to the Preserve's habitat and ecological values as well as to the grazing operation.

Placer County is working on permitting and construction of new trails that will connect Big Hill Preserve with Hidden Falls Regional Park; this process will take another year or so, but PLT and the County are working diligently to see the final connection goals realized. In the meantime, stay tuned for news about the Big Hill Preserve opening — we can't wait to welcome you out there!

Conservation Celebration Week – September 21-27

Conservation Celebration Week is coming! This week is all about celebrating the people who make land conservation in our region possible — Placer Land Trust members, local conservation leaders, and landowners who choose to preserve their land. Together, we accomplish so much!

During the week of **September 21-27**, we will shine a spotlight on the value of protected lands with an **online auction**, the **Placer Conservator Reception**, and **Party on the Preserve**. We'll also honor Sarah Jones with the 2026 Placer Conservator Award. There will be something for everyone!

The funds raised during Conservation Celebration Week are critical to our success as an organization, supporting Placer Land Trust's work of protecting natural and agricultural land, restoring habitat, and enhancing outdoor recreation. Ticket sales will open soon, and sponsorship opportunities are available now; learn more at www.placerlandtrust.org/conservation-week.

About 2026 Placer Conservator Awardee Sarah Jones

Sarah Jones is currently the Executive Director of Placer Resource Conservation District (RCD), but she has been working to protect our lands and natural resources for over two decades. Her work has covered a variety of areas including forestry, water resources, wildlife, agriculture, and climate change. Sarah masterfully brings agencies, landowners, nonprofits, and community partners together, and guides projects that improve the health of lands throughout Placer County.

"Sarah's leadership as the Executive Director of the Placer Resource Conservation District is both inspiring and impactful," says **Cathy Johnson**, a past Board member of Placer RCD. "She brings organization, vision, and a collaborative spirit to every challenge, helping to strengthen and move the RCD forward. She is always approachable, professional, and easy to work with, making complex projects feel manageable. Her dedication and leadership have made a lasting difference, and I am grateful for the opportunity to have worked alongside her."



Poppy Club Members Keep Our Work Growing

Summer is here, and we are about halfway through Placer Land Trust's 35th year! So far, it has been a year of self-reflection for us as an organization as we look back at all we have accomplished and set lofty goals for our next 35 years. One thing is abundantly clear: Our community makes our work possible. YOU are the reason we feel secure enough to dream big and continue to grow!

The **Poppy Club** is our giving circles for members who make recurring monthly or quarterly gifts. This resilient and reliable support allows Placer Land Trust to plan for the future, which is so important when we protect land in perpetuity. But don't just take it from us — our members say it best:

"I moved to Loomis in 1955, and though I live outside of Placer County [now], I will always consider it home. That is why I support PLT's efforts to preserve the land and heritage of Placer County. I am a sustaining member because I know this gives PLT a reliable monthly revenue they can count on."

**– Tad Kitada,
Poppy Club member**



Join Tad in making a difference by scheduling a recurring donation! It's an easy and efficient way to give, your membership never expires, and you can stop it anytime you choose. Plus, you can pick the way to give that fits you best:

- **Checking Account** – the best long-term way to give as it eliminates credit card fees or the need to update your donation when a credit card expires. These can be set up on Placer Land Trust's donation page, or through Bill Pay with your bank.
- **Credit Card** – many of us enjoy benefits associated with using a credit card, so this is still a great way to give.
- **Workplace Giving** – members set up automatic withdrawals from their paycheck that can be sent straight to us, and many employers will even match these donations, **DOUBLING** the impact!
- **Donor Advised Funds** – gifts from these charitable funds can be scheduled too.
- **IRA Accounts** – donors aged 70½ or older can schedule regular qualified charitable distributions directly from your IRA account.

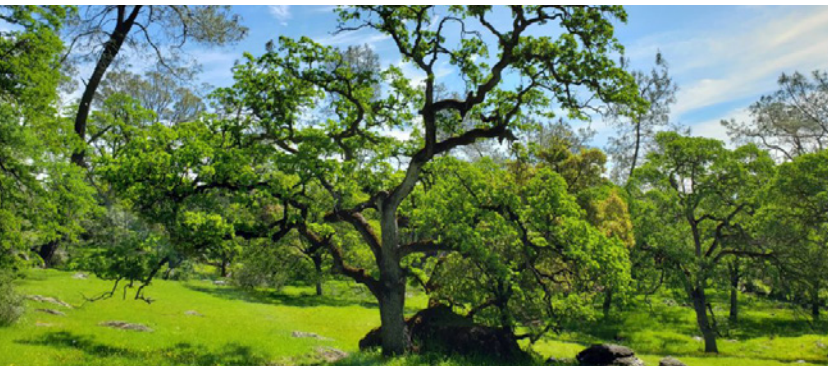
Thank you to the 40 other households who are already a part of our Poppy Club! To start your own recurring donation, just select the "Donate Monthly" option on our donation page at www.placerlandtrust.org/donate.

Twiana Armstrong Joins Board of Directors

We are very pleased to welcome **Twiana Armstrong** to the Placer Land Trust Board of Directors!

Twiana is an accomplished leader, coach, and strategist who believes that real transformation begins within. Over the past 25 years, she has led high-performing teams across multiple industries, specializing in strategic planning, systems thinking, change management, and organizational development. Her work centers on helping organizations move from vision to measurable impact.

"I joined the Placer Land Trust Board because I care deeply about preserving the natural beauty and character of Placer County," says Twiana. "Our open spaces, native plants, wildlife habitats, and agricultural lands are part of what makes this community unique, and I want to help protect these resources for future generations."



Free Planned Giving Workshop

Tuesday, August 18, 12:00-1:00pm

Virtual/online workshop

Join Placer Land Trust for "**How to Use Your Estate Plan for Good,**" a free presentation on how to use your estate plan to protect the causes you care about in our region for future generations.

Whether you're new to estate planning or already have a plan in place, you'll learn helpful tools and tips to support your favorite causes, care for your family, and minimize taxes. Hosted by attorney **Ali Goff**, owner of Goff Legal, this session will empower you to create a legacy that reflects your values for years to come. Visit www.placerlandtrust.org/goff-2026 to learn more and register.

Recent Grants

Placer Land Trust is grateful for a recent \$10,000 grant from **Placer Community Foundation**, and for all the donors to their Community Needs Fund. These funds are already being used to purchase a variety of items that will make our work more efficient and our preserves and events more accessible. Our staff were so excited to receive these funds that we purchased three of the four items within the first week of receipt of this grant! A tool shed has been installed at Canyon View Preserve, a hand-washing station for events has been purchased, as has a new GPS unit which will make surveying lands more cost effective and efficient. Thank you Placer Community Foundation and donors!

Additionally, we are pleased to share that we received a generous \$15,000 grant from the **George W. Bauer Family Foundation**. These unrestricted funds will help us acquire new preserves and/or steward lands already in our care, and where appropriate, share these lands with the public. We are so grateful to the Trustees of this foundation for their continued support of Placer Land Trust's mission.

We were also granted a new bike rack by the **Auburn Trails Alliance**, which was made possible by the generosity of **Mary Ann Flemmer** and **Placer Community Foundation**. **Kelley Davis**, Executive Director of Auburn Trails Alliance, said, "Providing high-quality bike parking is a simple and valuable way for an organization to show its support for active transportation. Adding secure and convenient bike racks to the Auburn School Park Preserve will encourage our active community to consider alternative ways to come enjoy the park for events, picnics, and playing pickleball."

We're so grateful to these funding partners for helping us further Placer Land Trust's mission!





A Dogface butterfly at Shutamul Bear River Preserve, June 2026. Thanks to Jaymee Marty for the beautiful photo!



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Photos: Nature Quest 2026

We had so much fun getting outdoors with our community this spring! For the second year in a row, our Community Council hosted a series of Nature Quest events designed to welcome everyone to explore and enjoy our public preserves. These free events took place from January through May, and included a festive kickoff party, Art Day, and Wildflower Stroll. Thanks to everyone who joined us!

