



Lake County Land Trust

PO Box 1017, Lakeport, CA 95453 • (707)262-0707 • Fall/Winter 20/21



Rodman Preserve, in winter. One of three properties totaling over 300 acres of protected lakefront.

A sneak peek at future LCLT projects

Since the COVID-19 shutdown, board and staff at the Lake County Land Trust (LCLT) have been maximizing time indoors by solidifying management plans for each LCLT property and identifying priority projects for each one.

A little background...

Roughly one year ago LCLT realized its goal to purchase the 200-acre Wright property along the shore of Clear Lake. This critically important wetland known as the Wright property is part of LCLT's Big Valley Wetlands Preservation Project, a bold proposal designed to protect the remaining tule wetlands and marshlands

along the shore of Clear Lake between Clear Lake State Park and South Lakeport. The Wright purchase was made possible by a grant from the Wildlife Conservation Board and generous donations from local residents.

LCLT now owns three important wetland areas on Clear Lake: the 200-acre Wright Wetland Preserve, the 32-acre Melo Wetland Preserve (both part of the Big Valley Wetlands Project), and its flagship Rodman Preserve. LCLT also owns the quaint nine-acre Rabbit Hill Preserve in Middletown, manages the Boggs Lake Preserve on Mt. Hannah—home to one of the most unique

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President's Message

By
Val
Nixon



Val Meyer Nixon

Every time I drive home to Lake County on Highway 20 from Williams, I look for the Tule Elk. I feel joy when I see these magnificent creatures grazing on the grasses and often pull my car over and watch them watch me. As I observe them, I think about their history and marvel at the fact

that this sub-species is still with us. It is thanks to three individuals, who over an eighty-year period, worked individually to repair their own relationships with nature, that the Tule Elk remain with us today.

In 1874, when cattle baron Henry Miller decided to protect the last small heard of Tule Elk on his ranch near Bakersfield, he kept this endemic subspecies of elk from going extinct. Then in 1933 rancher Walter Dow moved a group of Tule Elk to his acreage in Owens Valley and made the commitment to continue

those efforts. In 1961 Beulah Edminston created *Friends of the Tule Elk*, an organization that lobbied for legislation to protect the Tule Elk herds until they were self-sustaining. A decade later the mission was accomplished. (“Behr Bill (1971) State Legislation. Tule Elk Preservation Act (1976) Federal Legislation. Conservation efforts: Friends of the Tule Elk (Beulah Edminston) citizen’s group.”)

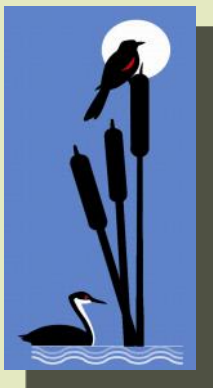
I have great admiration for these three private citizens who saw the value in resurrecting a species on the brink of extinction. It reminds me that movements started by individuals who feel a need to repair their personal relationship with nature can make a huge difference our world.

Lake County Land Trust started with a small group of people who had a vision of restoring one of the most ancient lakes in the world, Clear Lake, and making sure there were connected corridors for wildlife to pass from one side of the County to the other as the County grew. They saw that this County stood on the brink of economic growth and wanted to maintain its relationship with the natural world. Over the years and thanks to supporters like you, we have made strides toward accomplishing this goal with land purchases, easement acquisitions—and plenty of care.

Caring for the land is as critical as acquiring it. Restoring wetlands, wildlife habitat and critical biodiversity is vital to the health and well-being of all creatures. Allowing people to experience wild lands by safely hiking, boating or enjoying a leisurely stroll further enhances health and well-being. And it helps restore one’s connection to the natural world.

Lake County Land Trust is uniquely positioned to create the bridge between economic success and a healthy, scenic and richly diverse natural world. Your support fulfills the goal of procuring land and caring for it. Your commitment allows the natural world to thrive, and provides an opportunity for all to connect and repair our unique relationship with nature.

Just as I am grateful to the individuals who had the foresight and tenacity to save the Tule Elk, I want to thank the founders of the Lake County Land Trust for their vision and perseverance to conserve what’s best about Lake County. And I want to thank you. You support a future where Lake County sets the example of how to grow in a sustainable, healthy manner, and I am grateful.



**You can
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You can opt to receive your newsletter via email, postal mail, or both! Please let us know which you prefer. Contact us at LCLT@lakecountylantrust.org if you would like anything changed in way you receive your newsletter. Thank You!

Some backyard images for your viewing pleasure! Send some of yours please



Juvenile Bald Eagle on pier piling.
Photo by Roberta Lyons



Mariposa Lilly. Photo by Sue Morton

“Share your Backyard” photo activity is fun

We’ve had a great response to our first request for “backyard photos”... thank you! Please enjoy this sampling of our members’ captures, noting the range of interesting subjects as well as the popular themes revealed in these photos. The “Backyard Photos” feature has been very well received, so we ask for your continued participation. Your shared photos are included in LCLT’s monthly email blasts, the “News & Views,” and you may see them on our social media pages, too. Now that we’ve all become accustomed to living life in front of our screens, it’s so important to get out and reconnect with the natural world. Please send your photos of flowers, trees, insects, reptiles, birds, mammals, waters, skies, or whatever inspires you, to melissakin-sel@lakecountylandtrust.org.



A Northern Flicker on deck railing.
Photo by Ruth Stierna



Swallowtail Butterfly. Photo by Sue Morton

More backyard photos pages 4-5

Share Your Backyard

Photos continued from page 3



Swallowtail on flowering Buckeye.
Photo by Roberta Lyons



Hummingbird on finger. Photo by Val Nixon



The Sailboat Tree on Boggs Lake.
Photo by Andrew Belschner



Hummer at the feeder. Photo by Ruth Stierna



Honeybees on a Matilija Poppy.
Photo by Roberta Lyons



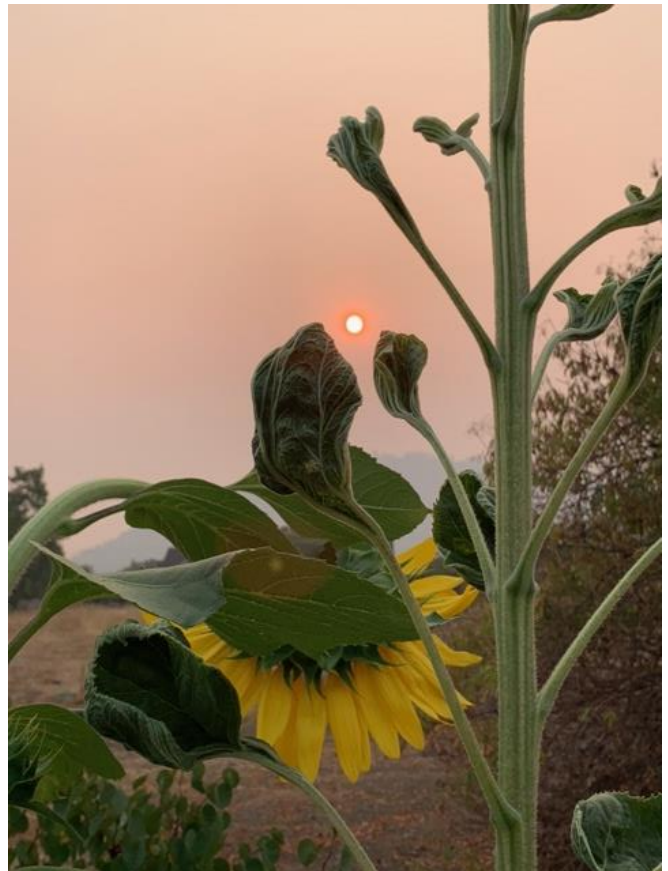
Golden-crowned Sparrows taking a bath.
Photo by Ruth Stierna



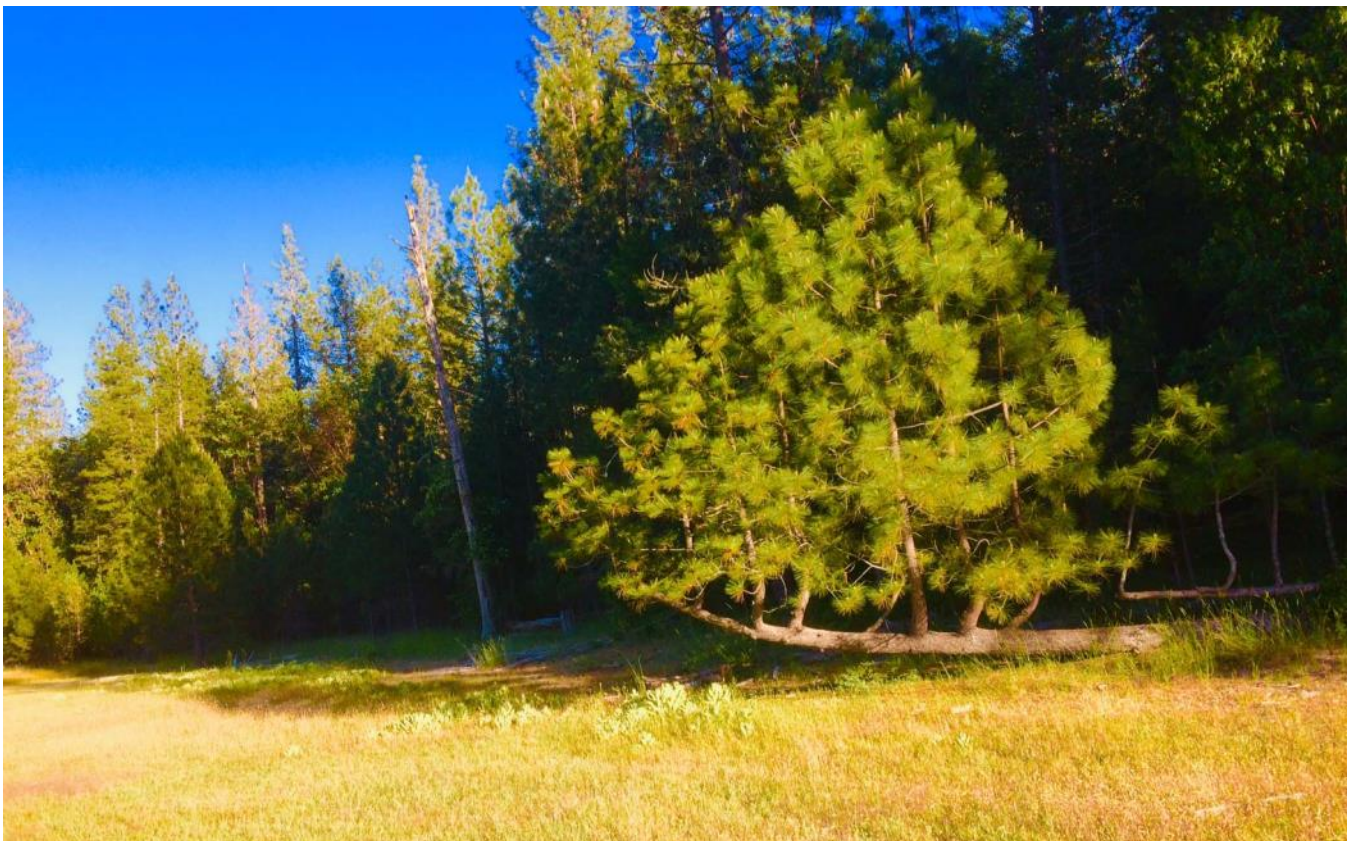
Blue Dasher Dragonfly. Photo by Ruth Stierna



Bees busy in the garden. Photo by Denise Petterson

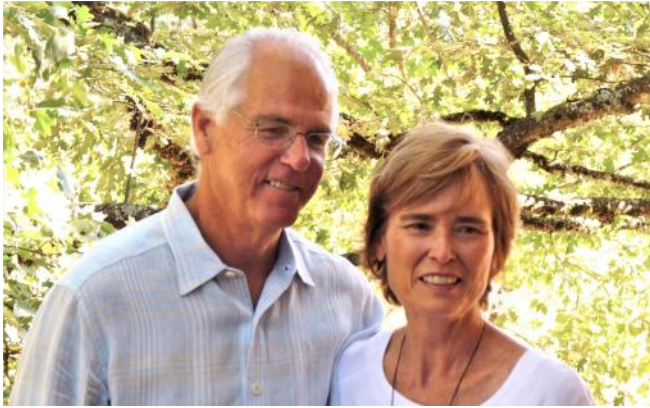


Disheartened Sunflower. Photo by Denise Petterson



The "Magic Sailboat," at Boggs Lake. Photo by Anna Rose Ravenwood

LCLT features “Giving Tree” supporters



Bernie and Lynne Butcher

We’ve become aware of several supporters who have put the Lake County Land Trust (LCLT) in their wills. It is both humbling and inspiring to be entrusted with such a gift! To honor these individuals and perhaps galvanize others to consider LCLT in their planned giving, we’ve created the *Giving Tree*, an official LCLT program to honor legacy gifts.

With their life-affirming qualities and deep, supportive roots that withstand the tests of time, the tree seemed an appropriate symbol to acknowledge gifts of this magnitude. In this newsletter and future editions, we will be featuring individuals who have decided to become a part of LCLT’s *Giving Tree*.

Lynne and Bernie Butcher describe their decision to put LCLT in their will like this: *“Beyond the immediate family, there are lots of worthy causes that could be put into an estate planning document. Our thinking was that it would be best to make a significant long-term impact on one of our priorities as opposed to making a marginal short-term impact on many. And the Land Trust jumped out to us because it’s a well-run, responsible organization and the strategic properties purchased by the Trust are preserved in perpetuity.”*

The Butchers met in San Francisco, when both were working for Bank of America. Although their careers eventually morphed into other arenas and organizations, their work took them around the globe and inspired a love for “architecture, history, global culture, and hospitality”. During this busy time in the Butchers’ lives, they found solace and relaxation at their weekend home on Clear Lake, waterskiing, playing tennis, hiking, and enjoying the scenic beauty found here.

Lynne and Bernie purchased the historic Tallman Hotel and Blue Wing Saloon & Restaurant in 2003 and transformed it into the posh-yet-charming Lake County landmark that it is today. A group of LCLT support-

ers who are frequent guests of the Blue Wing became friends of the Butchers and introduced them to the Land Trust. With their love of the natural world and the joy they have experienced in nature over the years, involvement with LCLT was a perfect fit. In their words, membership in LCLT’s *Giving Tree*, allows them to acknowledge the fact that “critical ecosystems have already been decimated” while creating a legacy of “preserving those that remain.”



Judy and Rick McCann

Rick and Judy McCann, Lake County residents for over 40 years, are proud to be among those leaving a contribution to the Lake County Land Trust’s *Giving Tree*, program through their living trust. Retired educators, Rick and Judy have been a vital part of the educational, sailing, and environmental community here for decades. They support the Land Trust because they see the importance of permanently protecting and stewarding the remaining beautiful natural landscapes and wetlands of our ancient Clear Lake.

“When we are out sailing on Clear Lake, we are always amazed at the beauty of this place. We believe in the mission and goals of the Lake County Land Trust and are extremely happy to know that our contribution will enable the Land Trust to continue its efforts to protect and preserve the wetlands and natural habitat of the lake,” the couple related. Their sailing adventures gave them up-close-and-personal experience with the astounding bird life on Clear Lake. So impressed were they that Rick started volunteering to drive a pontoon boat loaded with passengers to view the heron rookeries on the lake during Audubon’s *Heron Days*. It was during this time that the couple first became acquainted with LCLT, which partnered with Redbud Audubon in presenting the event.

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LCLT features “Giving Tree” supporters

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Although they have sailed all over the world, the McCanns rank Clear Lake among other world treasures as an area of rare natural beauty and importance. “Nature is a respite for our souls,” they concluded.

Thank you to the Butchers and McCanns for their care and dedication to a long-term vision for this beautiful planet.

The Lake County Land Trust also accepts gifts—including legacy gifts—of stock and other financial vehicles. For more information about LCLT’s planned giving program, please visit <https://www.lakecountylandtrust.org/planned-giving>, or give Development Director Melissa Kinsel a call at (707)287-7908.



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Leave a lasting impact with a legacy gift

Some LCLT supporters have chosen to support our mission through planned giving—including LCLT in a will or trust—or making another kind of legacy gift. Their foresight and yours, should you choose to join them, ensures the strength and the sustainability of the Lake County Land Trust.

Your planned gift to LCLT will ensure that conservation efforts continue to preserve and enhance vital biodiversity, improve the health of our ancient lake, allow wildlife to flourish, and encourage sustainable economic growth.

Whether you are taking those first important steps toward planning your estate or are in the process of updating your estate plan, please consider including the Lake County Land Trust in your plans.

If you would like more information about Legacy Giving opportunities, please contact Development Director Melissa Kinsel at 707.287.7908 or melissakinsel@lakecountylandtrust.org.

“Treasure Hunt” proves fruitful!

By Erica Lundquist, LCLT Board Member

Last spring, visiting the Rodman Preserve during the Covid19 shutdown, I had the opportunity to undertake a kind of treasure hunt.

First, a little background: California’s native grasses were largely displaced by non-native annual grasses back when domestic livestock were introduced in the early 1800s. Most of what we see on California’s beautiful green, now golden, hills are annual grass species that came from Europe. Fortunately, the Rodman Preserve retains a wealth of native perennial grasses both in terms of diversity of native grasses, and for having areas with beautiful, solid stands of native perennial grasses. Some of these stands are tended by Board Member Roberta Lyons and volunteers, who weed out the undesirable species every spring.

One of the native species, California oatgrass, *Danthonia californica*, documented at the preserve, had somehow gone missing. It was no longer present by its identifying sign along the visitor trail, and LCLT staff and Board members were not sure where to find California oatgrass on the preserve.

This spring, visiting to check on the preserve during the Covid19 shutdown and complete photo point monitoring, I was on the outlook for *Danthonia*. It is a remarkable grass, highly palatable to livestock and wild herbivores, and this attraction for grazers is paired with an interesting adaptation to grazing: Not only does it produce a seed head at the top of a long stalk, there are also seeds hidden down in the stem that are self-pollinated. These hidden seeds are more likely to survive grazing pressure.

In late March and early April I was looking for bunchgrasses with “eyelashes,” where the leaves join the stem. I turned around and...*Danthonia*! My treasure hunt had proven fruitful.

See map of area on page 9, more photos page 10.



Blue Dicks are common at Rodman Preserve.



Danthonia with “eyelashes,” where the leaves join the stem.



I found other treasures along the trail as well, like these *Lupinus bicolor*.

Rodman Preserve
Danthonia californica Preliminary Survey
June 14 and June 20, 2020



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Feet



“Treasure Hunt” proves fruitful!

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The Blue Oak forest at Rodman Preserve.



Tje Koske helping to write notes about the photo point monitoring at the Rodman Preserve.



Danthonia seedheads rise in front of the flowers and wetland plants in the receding canal.

Thank you to the Clear Lake Rimlanders Coalition!

An organization of Clear Lake waterfront property owners, the Clear Lake Rimlanders Coalition (CLRC), was formed decades ago to address concerns related to policies and plans for use and management of the lake.

The group, though, has been inactive for several years and recently made the decision to disband. With over \$7,000 in their treasury accounts, the CLRC made the unanimous agreement to donate the money to the Lake County Land Trust. Linda Cornett, one of the main administrators of the organization (with her husband Merle), told us that the Clear Lake Rimlanders wanted to give the money to LCLT because they “knew [we] would be able to put it to good use” and that they wanted the money to be used to support the health of Clear Lake. Thank you Rimlanders!

How charitable giving can work for you: The CARES Act

The CARES Act was implemented by Congress to help the nation through the COVID crisis. **A lesser-known benefit of the CARES Act may be helpful in your tax planning for 2020.** *There are two ways the CARES Act might help you help the Land Trust.*

Universal Deduction for Donations Up to \$300

For those who no longer itemize their charitable giving, the CARES Act allows you to deduct charitable donations of up to \$300 on your 2020 federal income tax return, even though you take the standard deduction. If you are married and filing jointly, you receive an above-the-line deduction of up to \$600.

Raising Charitable Giving Deduction Cap

For those who itemize their deductions, you may be able to deduct up to 100% of your adjusted gross income. This higher AGI limit applies to cash contributions made directly to charitable organizations, not to contributions to donor advised funds, supporting organizations or private foundations.

Please consult your tax accountant or financial advisor for guidance on potential benefits of the CARES Act for you.



The Wright Wetlands Preserve is also home to several magnificent Valley Oaks. Pictured here is also the old pole barn that may someday be renovated.



The Melo Wetland Preserve provides beautiful wetland areas for habitat and enjoyment.



White Pelicans off of the shore at the Wright Wetland Preserve.

A sneak peek at future LCLT projects

(Continued from page 1)

vernal pools in California—and holds three conservation easements.

Vision 2021...

On the Wright Preserve we plan to retrofit an old pole barn into an event and education area.

On both the Melo and Wright Preserves we envision:

- small, safe parking areas
- walking trails
- benches
- interpretive panels to inform visitors of the natural and cultural history they are experiencing
- management of vegetation through controlled grazing, mowing, thinning of shrubbery and encouraging and restoring native grasses and other native plants.

The nine-acre Rabbit Hill Preserve in Middletown is a small park with many unique geological and historical features offering educational opportunities to residents, visitors and students. It's already easily accessible and improvements would make this diamond-in-the-rough a real jewel of our community.

We envision:

- educational signage that explains the unique geography of Rabbit Hill, including its serpentine rock formations
- a sturdy shade structure where visitors can sit in comfort and enjoy the fantastic views (made more meaningful by the informational panels)
- additional seating in the form of benches, tables, and possibly even amphitheater-type seating
- access enhancements (grading, improving road and gateway)
- educational programs in partnership with local schools and other organizations

At LCLT's flagship property, the Rodman Preserve, we envision an upgraded Nature Education Center, one that is more “user friendly” and offers hands-on engagement as visitors learn about the birds and animals of the area and their habitats. The new Nature Center will be staffed by volunteers and provide opportunities for both children and adults to learn about native flora and fauna.

LCLT's foremost goal is to protect critical habitats and enhance their biodiversity. The Land Trust also

(Continued on pages 12-13)

A sneak peek at future LCLT projects (Continued from page 11)



An Acorn Woodpecker at Rabbit Hill. These woodpeckers are finding homes in the burned Grey Pines left over from the Valley Fire that burned through the area in 2015.



The Wright Wetlands Preserve in winter.



Tule and willow habitat at the Melo Wetland Preserve.



A twilight view of Cobb Mt. from the top of Rabbit Hill.



School children often enjoy field trips to the top of Rabbit Hill in Middletown.



Rodman Preserve in the Spring. Photo by Ruth Stierna.

A sneak peek at future LCLT projects

(Continued from page 11)

wants to ignite curiosity of the natural world by encouraging people to get out into nature and responsibly enjoy natural places.

We are committed to restoring our connection with the natural world and look forward to working with you in 2021 to make these vital improvements a reality!



A view of the current Nature Center at the Rodman Preserve.



Broc Zoller and his granddaughter Ella enjoyed viewing items through the microscope at the Rodman Preserve Nature Center. The Land Trust has set a goal of improving the Nature Center and opening it to the public on a more regular basis after the Covid 19 issue is resolved.



In cooperation with the Middletown Art Center (MAC), Rabbit Hill has become the site of an art installation titled “Vertical Pathways,” a product of the work and creativity of local artists and sculptors.



A Merging of Art and Nature installed at Rabbit Hill

Last June the Lake County Land Trust partnered with the Middletown Art Center (MAC), and the neighbors of Rabbit Hill worked in community with artist Marcus Maria Jung to install his new work, a large reworked piece of burned tree, called "Invitation", which was installed at the top of the hill.

Demonstrating an act of unity, many people came together in various socially distanced and masked waves to plan, clear, bless, secure, and observe the process and the installation. The project— supported in part by a grant from the National Endowment of the Arts— was part of the MAC’s LOCUS project, tasked with creating a “Sense of Place”. Marcus, former Lake County resident who relocated to Southern California after the Valley Fire, invited anyone interested to participate and “to learn the art of natural wood sculpture and skills related to a site-specific sculptural installation.”

Lisa Kaplan, Creative Director at MAC, described the project in this way: “Remembering who we are and that we are of this Earth as is everything else that is alive around us. We will be working in 'right relationship' and attending with deep respect to nature and all life. As we create with wood and other elements we connect to other landmarks as well - Trailside Park, Cobb Mountain - and in doing so we become more aware of the plants, birds, flowing movement of mountains, expansive skies, and the cosmos surrounding us.”

The structure itself is also a tribute to those who left this piece of land to conservation. The Hamann family lived atop Rabbit Hill and welcomed the neighboring kids, teaching them about the flora and fauna of this serpentine-based location. “Invitation” also calls to mind the shepherd flutes that the Hamanns taught kids to craft out of natural materials. Like the Hamanns, it encourages visitors to come and explore.

Be on the lookout for your annual holiday appeal

The Lake County Land Trust's (LCLT) annual holiday appeal letter will be arriving in your mailbox soon. We hope you find it inspiring and choose to make a year-end gift! You've read in this newsletter about LCLT's recent efforts and plans for the future, it must be emphasized that all of our successes are your successes and made possible because of the support of you, and others like you!

The strain of the COVID-19 pandemic has affected all of us in many different ways. If there is a silver lining it's that now more than ever we realize the importance of nature. Please join us. There is so much to be done to ensure that we create a balance between progress and preservation. We know you are as committed as we are to protecting Lake County's beautiful natural places, and we want you to know that we can't do it without you!

Become a member of The Lake County Land Trust

Membership Benefits include:

Golden Eagle: \$1,000+

Reserved seating at our Annual Dinner • Guided hike and picnic lunch at a specially featured Land Trust property • Invitation to our annual "State of the Land Trust," Coffee • Acknowledgement on our Land Trust website and publication in our Land Trust newsletter, updated annually • Lake County Land Trust newsletter either via email or a mailed paper copy

Osprey: \$500-\$999

Guided hike and picnic lunch at a specially featured Land Trust property • Invitation to our annual "State of the Land Trust," Coffee • Acknowledgement on our Land Trust website and publication in our Land Trust newsletter, updated annually. • Lake County Land Trust newsletter, either via email or a mailed paper copy.

Blue Heron: \$100-\$499

Invitation to our annual "State of the Land Trust," • Coffee and acknowledgement on our Land Trust website and published in our Land Trust newsletter updated annually.

Snowy Egret: \$20-\$99

Acknowledgement on our Land Trust website and published in our Land Trust newsletter updated annually. • Lake County Land Trust newsletter, either via email or a mailed paper copy.

Membership period is for one calendar year.

Yes! I want to become a member of the Lake County Land Trust!

- Yes, I would like to join the LCLT
- Please renew my membership with LCLT
- Please increase my membership support with the below contribution
- Please sign me up as a sustained giving member and bill my credit card on a monthly basis for the amount indicated below.

Amount Enclosed \$ _____

Name _____

Address _____

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**Make checks payable to: LCLT
Mail to: PO Box 1017, Lakeport, CA 95453**

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2020/21 Calendar of Events

We will keep you updated as soon as our walks at the Rodman Preserve and other activities resume.

Who We Are

The Lake County Land Trust is a local, 501 (c) (3) charitable nonprofit organization directly involved in protecting important land resources. These include: wetlands, wildlife habitats, parks, forests, watersheds, riparian stream corridors, lakeside areas, and trails. The trust is also concerned with property that has unique scenic, cultural, agricultural, educational, or historical value.

Officers:

President Val Nixon
Vice-President Bill Lincoln
Treasurer John Stierna
Secretary Erica Lundquist

For info contact:
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CA 95453 • (707)262-0707

Board Members: Roberta Lyons,
Catherine Koehler, and
Merry Jo Velasquez

(email)
lclt@lakecountylandtrust.org

Development Director Melissa Kinsel
Finance Director Anne Martin

www.lakecountylandtrust.org

Executive Director Tom Smythe

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