



Bohemia Ranch — take two

by Sheri Cardo



Bohemia Ranch is an 832-acre West County treasure that would make a wonderful regional park. Photo by Stephen Joseph Photography.

Lightning doesn't usually strike twice in the same place and, yet, our community has been offered the rare second chance to protect Bohemia Ranch and create "Waterfall Park." Many will remember the enormous efforts that went into trying to save this scenic property in the late 1990s — and may even have attended the benefit concert headlined by Grateful Dead drummer Mickey Hart — before the land was sold unexpectedly to another party. This time, the landowner, the Sonoma Land Trust and various funding partners are determined to ensure that the property is protected once and for all and opened as a regional park.

Located along Bohemian Highway near Occidental, the 832-acre Bohemia Ranch is covered by a conservation easement, but could still be subdivided into six parcels, each with an estate home. Thankfully, the owner would prefer to sell the land to a conservation agency so that it can become the public park it was meant to be. The Sonoma Land Trust has taken the lead on negotiating a purchase agreement and lining up funding sources, a daunting task in these tough economic times.

(Continued on page 3)

More than views and a waterfall

Well known for its year-round waterfall and stunning vistas, Bohemia Ranch is also rich in natural resources.

Diverse habitats supporting a wide array of plant and animal species include forestlands, serpentine communities (grassland, chaparral and Sargeant cypress forest) and riparian woodlands. The serpentine soils, creeks and varied terrain on the ranch contribute to the presence

(Continued on page 3)



Who we are

Board of Directors

Mark Jacobsen, chair, Robert Brent, Kirsten Lindquist, Pete Mattson, Johanna Patri, Harry Richardson, Allison Sanford, David Smith, Margaret Spaulding, Denny Van Ness, Carol Williams

Staff

Executive Director: Ralph Benson

CONSERVATION PROGRAMS TEAM

Conservation Director: Wendy Eliot

Acquisitions Director: Amy Chesnut

Stewardship Director: Bob Neale

Jenner Headlands Project Manager:

Brook Edwards

Easement Program & GIS Manager:

Georgiana Hale

Baylands Program Manager: Julian Meisler

Stewardship Project Manager: Tony Nelson

Stewardship Project Manager: Shanti Wright

Project Assistant: Kristine Acquino

DEVELOPMENT & COMMUNICATIONS TEAM

Development Director: Beverly Scotland

Donor Relations Director: Reta Lockert

Director of Communications: Sheri Cardo

Membership & Development Manager:

Stacey Kaufman

FINANCE & ADMINISTRATION TEAM

Director of Finance & Administration:

Paul DeMarco

Office Manager: Dale Carroll

SLT Mission

The Sonoma Land Trust protects the scenic, natural, agricultural and open landscapes of Sonoma County for the benefit of the community and future generations by:

- Developing long-term land protection strategies;
- Promoting private and public funding for land and conservation;
- Acquiring land and conservation easements;
- Practicing stewardship, including the restoration of conservation properties; and
- Promoting a sense of place and a land ethic through activities, education and outreach.

Contact

Sheri Cardo, Managing Editor

Sonoma Land Trust

966 Sonoma Avenue, Santa Rosa, CA 95404

(707) 526-6930 Fax (707) 526-3001

info@sonomalandtrust.org

www.sonomalandtrust.org



A note from the Executive Director

La Bohème

This newsletter features the *opportunity* we have to acquire the fabulous Bohemia Ranch near Occidental for a park. It is not yet a done deal, and in times like these a synonym for the word “opportunity” is “challenge.”

One challenge is *who will manage the land?*

Someday, before too many years pass, we hope that our park agencies regain financial health. We can help State Parks regain its former glory by voting “YES” on Proposition 21 in November. (A modest annual \$18 vehicle license fee in exchange for vibrant state parks is a great deal.) For now, the County Regional Parks agency is nearly broke, so we will have to innovate. Fortunately, that’s the long suit of our partners at LandPaths and the Occidental Arts and Ecology Center. Spurred on by Fifth District Supervisor Efrén Carrillo and the Open Space District, a consortium of community groups is brainstorming on how Bohemia Ranch might be managed and opened for public use at minimal cost to the County. LandPaths’ groundbreaking permit system at the Willow Creek unit of Sonoma Coast State Park is one model. There is a lot of creative energy in the West County that is likely to produce a wonderful park like no other.

A second and perennial challenge is *negotiating a workable deal to buy the property and pay for it.* That is one of the essential things we do at the Sonoma Land Trust. Having a locally funded Open Space District contributing to the purchase gives us a tremendous advantage as we compete for State funds. But leveraging the District’s funds by marshalling additional contributions from our multiple public agency and foundation partners takes professionalism and time. We are optimistic that we will be successful over the next year, but we would not have had the opportunity to go forward without our “Land Protection Fund.” Several years ago, Land Trust member Warren Watkins gave us \$400,000 with which we established a revolving fund to make down payments and option payments. The fund has been used to help us purchase land at the Cedars, at Pitkin Marsh (described in this newsletter), at Jenner and on Sonoma Mountain. We plan to use it once again for the Bohemia Ranch acquisition. Growing our Land Protection Fund is one of the objectives of our ongoing **Redwoods to the Bay Campaign**. Contributions enable us to honor our commitment “... to protect the land forever.”

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ralph Benson". The signature is fluid and cursive, written over a white background.

Ralph Benson



While the property is listed for \$6 million, the landowner has indicated a willingness to accept considerably less in order to protect the natural resources on the property and enable it to become a park. Fortunately, a private foundation is interested in making a substantial lead gift that will help us leverage the remaining funds, and a diverse group of public and private funding sources has also expressed a desire to be part of this significant project.

Sonoma County Regional Parks has agreed to take ownership of the property after purchase, but will require assistance initially to manage and fund public access and stewardship activities.

“Because of the current state of the local and state economies, private groups are having to step up to increase the capacity of the

public organizations that have traditionally played these roles, but now need our help,” said Wendy Eliot, SLT conservation director.

This means that, on an interim basis, a consortium of interested community groups that include LandPaths and the Occidental Arts and Ecology Center will work together to provide recreational opportunities on the land while funds are being raised to develop it into a park.

“It’s now or never to save this magnificent property and keep it from being developed,” said Eliot. “If the community steps forward to help finance this endeavor, we have an excellent shot at Bohemia Ranch becoming our next regional park.”

Sheri Cardo is SLT’s communications director.



Bohemia Ranch boasts high-quality examples of rare vegetation communities and several special-status species. Photo by Stephen Joseph Photography.

More than views and a waterfall

(Continued from page 1)



of special-status plant species, including Pennel’s bird’s beak (federally listed endangered), Baker’s manzanita, Crystal Springs lessinga and serpentine reed grass. The habitat types found on the property are known to support a wide range of wildlife, such as osprey, pileated woodpecker, northwestern pond turtle and dusky-footed woodrat. Animal species of special concern found on Bohemia Ranch are the northern spotted owl and steelhead trout, both federally threatened.

The ranch incorporates 10 percent of the Dutch Bill Creek watershed, which is a tributary of the Russian River, and sustains several species of special concern, including coho salmon, steelhead trout and California freshwater shrimp.

“Many species are depending on us to keep this wild land intact, especially as we confront an unpredictable era of climate changes,” said Wendy Eliot, SLT conservation director.

Helping rare plants thrive at Pitkin Marsh

by Kara Doolin



Volunteers monitor the elusive white sedge population. Photo by Tony Nelson.



Stems of white sedge seek the sun. Photo by Tony Nelson.

The Sonoma Land Trust's Pitkin Marsh Preserve near Forestville, purchased in 2007, hosts a rare assemblage of plant species. The complex interaction of soil structure and chemistry, surface water, ground water, and scattered seeps and springs occurring across the property creates unusual conditions that support the only known population of the endangered white sedge (*Carex albida*) and the most diverse grouping of beaked rush (*Rhynchospora spp*) documented in California. Unfortunately, the quality of the marsh's habitats has degraded over the years. With the aid of partner agencies and skilled volunteers, SLT has been working to improve site conditions so that these unique plants and communities can thrive again.

In order to measure our progress and track the status of the rare plants, SLT recently commissioned a vegetation monitoring plan from

plant ecologist Peter Warner. SLT staff and several volunteers have just completed the second year of white sedge monitoring and the first year of beaked rush monitoring, consisting primarily of systematic searching for target species and counting the number of flowering stalks.

It's too early to propose conclusions on the effectiveness of our management activities, especially with only one year of beaked rush data, but there have been some interesting developments. White sedge numbers increased in some locations, but decreased slightly in others, likely a result of the site's complex and variable environment. We were particularly interested to find that at one particular wetland, the white sedge counts increased 164 percent in the area where hand crews had removed aggressive, non-native competitors, while the untreated areas increased by 35 percent. While

not entirely conclusive evidence of a positive interaction between the treatment and white sedge, the response encourages us to continue with what we believe to be a beneficial management strategy.

Monitoring the results of our activities is crucial to good management — and it can also lead to exciting new discoveries. This year, we found a species of sedge (*Carex hassei*) that had never before been seen at Pitkin Marsh or documented in Sonoma County! We also found a new native clover (*Trifolium gracilentum*). Discovering these natives demonstrates that we have more to learn about, and from, this distinctive wetland ecosystem and the importance of monitoring efforts in conservation.

Kara Doolin is an intern in SLT's stewardship department.

Hats off to our conservation landowners

by Georgiana Hale

The Sonoma Land Trust would like to celebrate the people behind the properties that have been protected for all time. Thanks to their long-term vision and willingness to commit to conservation, these individuals and families have voluntarily placed conservation easements on more than 6,000 acres of land in Sonoma County. Though remaining in private ownership, these spectacular properties include important forests, native plant areas, wildlife habitat, and farm and ranch lands that will continue to form the foundation and backdrop of our lovely county in perpetuity.

These important places might be lost if it weren't for the ongoing efforts and collaboration of the landowners, property managers and caretakers that SLT works with each year. These landowners share stories about their land, coordinate site visits with SLT staff and volunteers, and take the extra steps needed to ensure that their projects are planned with the conservation easement in mind. Landowner Earle Cummings is one of many landowners who enjoys hiking with the volunteers during their annual monitoring visit. His specialty is pointing to a remote corner of his 600-acre ranch and saying, "I think we can make it to the bottom of that canyon — let's give it a try!"

Many of SLT's conservation landowners go above and beyond by engaging and supporting their Land Trust outside the routine monitoring, planning and review of the conservation easement. A number of

SLT hikes for members are held on these private properties each year. A favorite is the annual wildflower hike to Nefertierra, hosted by Sue Smith, who knows the locations and Latin names of more than 300 plant species on her 78-acre property. Marc Schwager and Allison Ash, owners of the rugged Elarra property in Sonoma Valley, not only host hikes, they also created a Web site for their property (www.elarra.com) that includes terrific photos of bobcat, fox and cougar taken at night with a motion-activated camera known as a critter cam.

By sharing their conservation vision for their land and committing to those ideas in writing, knowledgeable and generous landowners such as these add greatly to the Sonoma Land Trust's success in Sonoma County — and to preserving the scenic backdrop that we all enjoy.

Georgiana Hale is SLT's conservation easement stewardship and GIS manager.



Landowner Earle Cummings and volunteer easement monitor Penny Porch explore Rancheria Creek Recesses. Photo by Georgiana Hale.



Marc Schwager, Allison Ash and their dog Nysa at Elarra in the Sonoma Valley region. Photo by Georgiana Hale.

Conservation easements

A conservation easement is a voluntary legal agreement between a landowner and a land trust (or government agency) that restricts the use of a particular property in order to protect its important resources. Conservation easements are tailored to each property and used to achieve a variety of goals, including open space preservation, agricultural preservation and natural resource protection. The conservation easement is recorded in the form of a deed and is binding on future owners of the property. In other words, it is forever.

The Sonoma Land Trust is one of several organizations that hold conservation easements in Sonoma County. In addition to drafting the easements with landowners, SLT also monitors each property annually (with the help of dozens of volunteers), works with landowners to review new projects and enforces the terms of the easements when disputes arise.

In celebration

From November, 2009 through August 15, 2010, Land Trust friends made gifts to honor these exceptional people and places.

- Celebrating **Adam, Tricia and Avery Rosenblatt**: Sally and Toby Rosenblatt
Celebrating **Amanda Hamilton**: Tracy Hemmeter
Celebrating **Amy Chesnut**: Scott and Parke Hafner, Michael and Patricia Hayes, Jeremy Olsan and Ann DuBay
Celebrating **Ann and Ron Lorentzen**: Marie Salerno
Celebrating **Anne French and Ren Ordaz**: Susan Smile
Celebrating **Arthur and Jill Dawson**: Margie and Bruce Obendorf
Celebrating **Barbara C. Black**: Nancy Conzett
Celebrating **Bill and Lucy Kortum**: Peter and Olivia Leveque
Celebrating **Cathie and Pitch Johnson**: Henry and Emily Evers
Celebrating **Dan Moylan and Family**: Daniel Needham
Celebrating **Darrin and Dia Jenkins**: Deborah McKay
Celebrating **Davide Maronati and Tim Temple**: Lynn and Dick Carlile
Celebrating **Harry and Dee Richardson**: Dr. and Mrs. Herbert Brosbe
Celebrating **J. Hall Cushman, Jr.**: J. Hall and Marion Cushman
Celebrating **James and Alice Sidbury**: Mercy Sidbury
Celebrating **Jamie, Kerry and Owen Rosenblatt**: Sally and Toby Rosenblatt
Celebrating **Jan Reddick and Byron Schneider**: Judith Prima
Celebrating **Jane S. Ophuls**: Amanda Hamilton and Tim Hemmeter
Celebrating **Jean Mooney**: Marie Salerno
Celebrating **Jean Schulz**: Joni Goshorn, Staff of Charles M. Schulz Museum
Celebrating **Jean L. White**: Linda Burille
Celebrating **John and Mary Field**: Amanda Hamilton and Tim Hemmeter
Celebrating **Kathleen Kraft**: Nikki Louis
Celebrating **Kimberly Hughes and Steve Moazed**: Sara Overton, Bettina Sporkenbach
Celebrating **Lucinda Duim**: Patrick Kincaid
Celebrating **Mary Gladish**: William and Susan Krawetz
Celebrating **Mary Hafner**: Parke and Sarah

- Hafner, Scott Hafner and Bill Glenn, Martha Pogue
Celebrating **Paul W. Harris**: Steve Palmer
Celebrating **Pearl and David Anderson**: Carla Grady
Celebrating **Phyllis and Bill Draper**: Henry and Emily Evers
Celebrating **Richard Woodman**: Mia James
Celebrating **Sonoma Dog Camp Campers**: Sue Simon and James Cribb
Celebrating **Sue Weingarten**: Kathleen Mugele
Celebrating **the Estero Americano**: Susan Starbird and Michael Ryszkiewicz
Celebrating **the Lawrence-Miyasaki Family**: David Lawrence
Celebrating **the Strands**: Linda Strand
Celebrating **the Whitman Family**: Terry and Yale Abrams
Celebrating **William Reilly**: Suzy Tompkins and Mark Buell

In memory

The singer lasts a season long while the song remains forever.

- In memory of **Anthony Kroha**: Elizabeth and George Landreth
In memory of **Art Toms**: Christina Toms
In memory of **Capt. Donald C. Campbell Ret USN**: Thomas Yarish and Laure Campbell
In memory of **Carter Larsen**: Thomas Benet, Flo and John Bryan, Carol Costigan, David and Frances Dibble, Donald Gregory, William Alston Hayne, Blaine and Susan Janin, Mrs. David McDaniel, Rose Noll, Warren W. Perry, Douglas Price, Malcolm and Joan Ross, Ann Stone, Richard and Barbara Tracy, Tri-Valley Vineyard Management, Gladys Thacher, Anne and Putney Westerfield
In memory of **Carter Thacher**: Mr. and Mrs. D.E. Mundell, Ken and Sharon Smith, Dee and Peter Swanhuysen
In memory of **Charlie Cooke**: Stuart Martin and Maris Peach
In memory of **Col. Albert Guffanti**: Marie Meursing
In memory of **David Nelson**: Patricia Nelson
In memory of **David Weed**: Robyn and Michael Muscardini
In memory of **Dee and Verlin Yamamoto**: Keith and Kathleen Yamamoto
In memory of **Donald B. Rice Jr.**: Richard Peters
In memory of **Dottie Stafford**: Laura Graham
In memory of **Ella K. Nelson**: Eric Nelson

- In memory of **Erica Shane**: Dr. and Mrs. Michael Shane, Tina Ghielmetti, Marcia and Ron Johns, Harry and Dee Richardson
In memory of **Frank J. Miller**: Laura and Greg Malone
In memory of **Fred Federico**: Casandra Tompkins
In memory of **George and Phyllis Ellman**: Darrell and Mary Kate Carter, Peter and Olivia Leveque, Jeanne Wirka
In memory of **Gerald Hardy**: Nancy and Dave Charte, Carmen Finley, Bob and Laura Fredson, Patrick Gallagher, Susan Hartz, Joan Mosedale, John and Polly Post, Robert Selberg
In memory of **Ginny Jones**: Lauren Ayers, Sarah Connelly, Joanne Hurley and Eugene Lee
In memory of **Hugh Coddington**: Laura Graham
In memory of **Janet Laursen**: Patricia Wolffe
In memory of **John B. Huckaby, Sr.**: Jason Huckaby and Michael Schoenenberger
In memory of **John C. Cummings**: Kelsey Cummings
In memory of **John Sullins**: Rina Hirai and Marianne Perron
In memory of **June Swan**: Farida Fox
In memory of **Lois Fitzgerald**: Laura Graham
In memory of **Malcolm Scotchmoor**: Judith Scotchmoor and Roland Gangloff
In memory of **Marco Waaland**: Gene Cooley
In memory of **Mary Vossen**: Jane McDonough
In memory of **Pedro Galban**: Anthony Mountain and Cheryl Maynard
In memory of **Reverend Coffee**: Laura Graham
In memory of **Sue Gurries**: Karen d'Or and Bob Pittman
In memory of **Susan Young**: Karen Young
In memory of **Tommy Bronson**: Louis and Jean Sloss
In memory of **Walfrid Saarni**: Oddone Vineyard
In memory of **Warren H. Berl**: Cinda Mast-Gough and Michael Gough

We celebrate the memory of landowner **Albert Slendebroek**. His love of giant trees led him to donate a conservation easement to protect forever the beautiful redwood forest found on his property along Mill Creek.

Donations are key to preserving land throughout Sonoma County

by Beverly Scotland



A photography workshop at the Jenner Headlands. Photo by Steve Miller.

Future generations can experience a Sonoma County that is every bit as beautiful and ecologically healthy as what we enjoy today — even more so. But only with generous donations!

It can take years and often decades to protect large landscapes. Knowing we have the necessary funding available allows us to enter confidently into long-term negotiations. With state and federal funding tightening up around us, donations fill this funding gap.

Right now, we have the opportunity to protect the habitat-rich and highly scenic Bohemia Ranch outside Occidental. Threatened by subdivision that would allow six residential lots, each with an estate home, this critical property can now be saved and turned into a regional park. Charitable donations are critical to fueling this work.

The Sonoma Land Trust serves all of Sonoma County — from Cloverdale to San Pablo Bay, from the Sonoma Coast to the Mayacamas Mountains. Knowing we have adequate funding will ensure that Bohemia Ranch and these other critical programs are completed:

- Adding to the string of protected properties along the Sonoma Coast;
- Preserving forever the corridor of wild land between Annadel and Jack London State Parks;
- Restoring 1,000 acres of wetlands at San Pablo Bay and building the Sonoma Bayland Center at the southern tip of the county; and
- Acquiring a beautiful segment of Bidwell Creek in Knights' Valley.

Together, we will keep our landscapes intact, enjoy miles of new trails, save endangered wildlife, and protect our rivers and creeks. Your 2010 year-end donation is more important than ever, so please donate today by returning your gift in the enclosed envelope or visiting our Web site at sonomalandtrust.org.

For further information or to discuss making a donation of stock, please contact me at beverly@sonomalandtrust.org or (707) 526-6930, ext. 108.

Beverly Scotland is SLT's development director.

IRA rollover update

The Emergency Economic Stabilization Act of 2008 provided an excellent charitable planning opportunity. This act permitted donors age 70.5 or older to make a direct transfer of up to \$100,000 to a charity, such as the Sonoma Land Trust, without increasing the donor's taxable income base and also providing a tax deduction. The provision expired December 31, 2009. The House and Senate have approved extending the provision through December 31, 2010 and President Obama is expected to sign the legislation. Please call us at (707) 526-6930, ext. 108 or check our Web site for updates. IRA distributions can still be used for charitable gifts, but are currently subject to standard income tax rules.

Join the Legacy League

Please remember to include the Sonoma Land Trust in your will or estate plan. A gift of any size helps guarantee that funds will always be available to preserve the beauty, wild habitat and signature landscapes of Sonoma County. Donors who make planned gifts are welcomed into the Legacy League, which celebrates generous future gifts to the Sonoma Land Trust. For more information, please contact Beverly Scotland at (707) 526-6930, ext. 108 or beverly@sonomalandtrust.org.



SONOMA LAND TRUST

966 Sonoma Ave., Santa Rosa, CA 95404
www.SonomaLandTrust.org

Nonprofit
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit #201
Petaluma, CA



See the article on the rare plants of Pitkin Marsh on page 4.



Rhynchospora globularis (beaked rush) fruits. Photo by Kara Doolin.



Rhynchospora capitellata. Photo by Kara Doolin.

T O P R O T E C T T H E L A N D F O R E V E R