

SIERRASCAPES

The Eastern Sierra Land Trust Newsletter
and 2018 Annual Report Highlights

www.eslt.org

Fall 2019

"In nature, nothing exists alone."

– Rachel Carson



Another Season Turns

Letter from the Executive Director

I love this time of year. The days are warm and sunny, the nights crisp and clear, and the trees range from deep red and purple to orange and gold. Out my window, I see mule deer as they return to their valley homes for the winter.

As nature turns from the vibrancy of summer to the calmness of autumn, I feel my soul doing the same thing. I find myself turning inward – making soups and curries, thinking of family and holidays, and reflecting on what's made this year memorable.

I hope that your world is filled with the beauty of autumn – whether it's the leaves in your yard that are turning or if it's your personal inward turn to a season of reflection.

With gratitude, *Kay Ogden*

Kay Ogden • Executive Director • kay@eslt.org



FRONT COVER:
Sierra Nevada bighorn
sheep overlook the
Owens Valley.

Photo by Steve Yeager

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We partnered with Bureau of Land Management this September for two Stewardship Days near Bodie benefitting mule deer, pronghorn, and sage-grouse.

Let-down fences aren't a letdown

Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is modifying old fences in the Bodie Hills to make them safe for wildlife to migrate through. But mule deer and pronghorn need different things: mule deer jump over fences, and pronghorn dive under fences — often at top speed.

So we had to lower the top fence wire, for deer, and raise the bottom fence wire, for pronghorn. We also placed markers to help sage-grouse see the fence wires.

Finally, we prepared the fence for conversion to a let-down fence. Let-down fences are placed flat on the ground during sage-grouse broodrearing season, to allow the birds free rein to fly through the wet meadows of the Bodie Hills. Then, when grazing season begins and the birds are less concentrated in the wetlands, the fence is assembled. This fence is one of the safest for wildlife and most cost-effective for people.

As we worked, we noticed native flowers, archeological artifacts, hawks overhead, and sage-grouse scat underfoot. On the horizon stood the parade of peaks along the Sierran escarpment and the jumble of the Sweetwater Mountains.

Thank you for supporting this work. And thank you to our hardworking volunteers who wielded fencing tools, loppers, and pliers so deftly in support of Eastern Sierra habitats and wildlife.

We Love Speed Goats

by Sus Danner, Land Conservation Program Director

Bodie State Historic Park is one of the most scenic places in Mono County, and that's saying something, in a county as full of beautiful places as Mono County.

The ghost town of Bodie at dawn is suffused with golden light on the wooden buildings, and the dusty green sagebrush steppe seems to glow. If you're lucky, and you're there right when the park opens, you even have a fair chance of seeing rare wildlife like Bi-State sage-grouse.

Our 2019 Stewardship Days in Bodie focused on improving habitat for wildlife — sage-grouse and pronghorn, known fondly as “speed goats.” (Pronghorn aren't goats, of course, but they look a bit like them as well as a bit like African antelope. That's why their misnomers persist.)

"Speed goats" are the second-fastest land animal in the world. They evolved to run at up to 55 miles per hour probably to outrun the now-extinct American cheetah.



The Hunewill family is one of many in the Eastern Sierra who have been ranching for multiple generations. Families like these keep our region wide open so mule deer, pronghorn, and sage-grouse thrive.

A Wild and Working Mosaic

Executive Director Kay Ogden's journey to our big wide Eastern Sierra

I just couldn't believe the majestic and crazy landscape that was unfolding before me as I rode my bike from Los Angeles to Mono Lake.

It was a hot summer day long ago, and it was my first time in the Eastern Sierra, the first time I smelled rain on

its desert sage, or saw its endless vast landscape dotted with charming small towns and ranchlands. I was hooked. Deeply and permanently.

I know I'm not alone. That's one of the reasons why you're reading this, and why you are with us as we work so

diligently to protect what we all love about this special place: the vast and open wild and working lands.

Once I moved to the Eastside, I got to know my neighbors — the wonderful people, along with the wildlife. I watched seasons of mule deer migrate

through wide valleys and basins, bighorn sheep move along steep mountainsides, and pronghorn journey through the rolling Bodie Hills.

While we might think of wildlife as living in the mountains, we can't forget that many rely on valley flatlands for migration pathways, and for food and water in the wintertime.

Thanks to the rural heritage of the Eastern Sierra, for now, wildlife can still access some of their valley homes. The beautiful fields near Swall Meadows? That's the migration pathway for our local Round Valley mule deer herd. Those open ranchlands in Bridgeport Valley? That's some of

the best land for Bi-State sage-grouse. And the list goes on. Our wildlife habitat is abundant and diverse, supporting fisheries, migrating deer herds, and important bird flyways.

Since the arrival of settlers, private ownership has (so far) protected much critical land. But as pressure mounts to subdivide and develop, what will happen to wildlife and their homes?

I'm proud to be able to say "that's where we come in." Thanks to you, ESLT is working hard alongside willing landowners to protect important Eastern Sierra places — for their scenic, agricultural, natural, recreational, historic, and watershed

values. Our working farms and ranches make up much of these vital, and currently undeveloped, private lands.

As I watch the seasonal patterns of this special region, I remember my feelings of wonder as I first saw its big open vistas comprised of public lands, protected lands, and working lands. They weave together, each playing an important role for wildlife and people.

The Eastern Sierra's strong agricultural tradition is an integral part of our local economy, and it also works hand in hand with our conservation goals.

This majestic landscape is a harmony of many distinct lands. Cooperation and our shared values hold it intact.

“This majestic landscape is a harmony of many distinct lands.”

—Kay Ogden, ESLT Executive Director

Canyon Walls and Waterfalls

A critical piece of Lundy Canyon is now protected

You have made a dream come true. As of this May, a critical piece of the magnificent Lundy Canyon is protected forever.

The story starts in this not-so-hidden gem of the Sierra, nestled between Yosemite National Park and Mono Lake. In Lundy Canyon, spring wildflowers splash bright colors up the forested walls. In fall, these colors grow rich and warm. Impressive year-round waterfalls cascade down from all directions.

But risk of harmful development loomed. A 49-acre private inholding in the Inyo National Forest, and partly in the Hoover Wilderness, framed the upper entrance to the canyon. The land neighbors the popular Lundy Canyon Trail and provides important habitat for bighorn sheep.

When the property recently went up for sale, we teamed up with Mono Lake Committee and The Wilderness Land Trust. Together, and thanks to your support, we secured protection of these beautiful 49 acres. The Wilderness Land Trust is working now to transfer them to Inyo National Forest.

A story of generosity...

Chris Lizza, owner of the Mono Market in Lee Vining, remembered hiking the steep switchbacks above Lundy Canyon as a 14-year-old, backpacking into the 20 Lakes Basin. From that trail, he could see the entire canyon as it opened spectacularly to Mono Lake.

Chris had been following the story of this private inholding. When he heard Eastern Sierra Land Trust was raising funds to help purchase the land, he reached out to our Executive Director Kay Ogden.

"It was simple," Chris says. "I gave Kay a call, and she told me they were close to raising all the funds. I said, 'well, you're all the way there.'"

"That's why I'm in business. It's all about giving back to our community. I want to make sure we protect our landscapes," Chris says.

Thanks to Chris and our generous supporters, Lundy Canyon's bighorn sheep will continue to thrive, the water will stay clean, and Lundy Canyon Trail will remain wild and filled with dreamlike, sublime beauty.



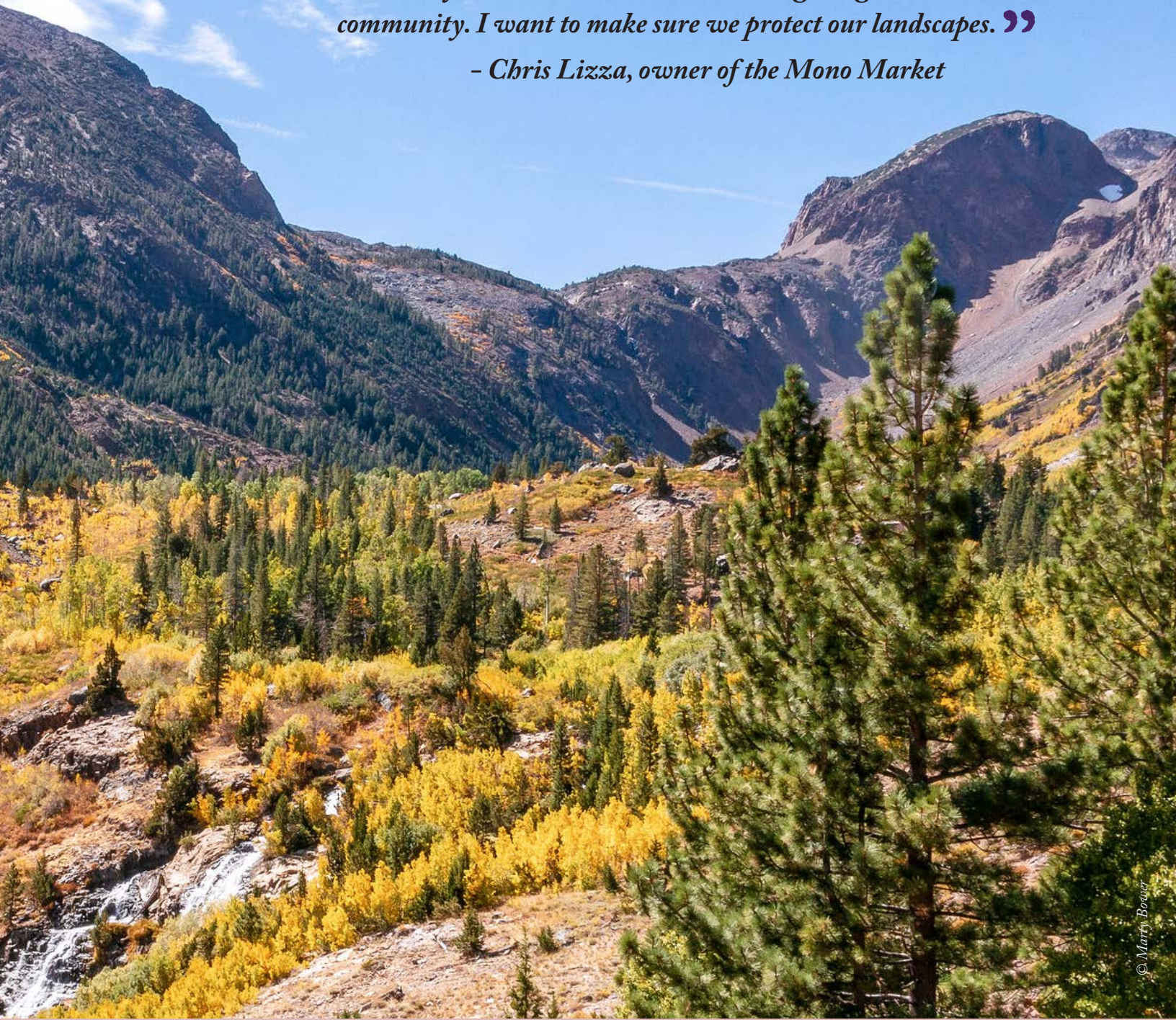
Thanks for lending a hand on the land...

When you volunteer with us, you create more homes for wildlife, cleaner rivers and roadways, and safer recreation areas.

To learn about upcoming volunteer opportunities, please visit us online at eslt.org/events.



“That’s why I’m in business... it’s all about giving back to our community. I want to make sure we protect our landscapes.”
- Chris Lizza, owner of the Mono Market



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© Steve Harmenter



© Randy Kello



© Sara Kokkelenburg

Sierra Stability in a Changing World

Letter from the President of our Board of Directors



This photo is of my twin sister and I in front of our home on North Fowler Street in Bishop. Our home is gone now, but was right next to the current ESLT building.

I spent most of my childhood in Bishop. It was a perfect place to grow up, with creeks within walking distance, numerous opportunities for hiking, fishing, and skiing, and the towering Sierra Nevada mountains in the background. I was fortunate to live in such a spectacular place and still have many memories from those days.

Memories were rampant as my sister and I celebrated our Bishop High School Class of 1969 50th Reunion this fall with over 100 high school classmates and their guests. It was fun being with friends we had not seen for 50 years. What was amazing to me was that most of us still had the same personalities we had in high school. It was as if nothing had changed (well maybe a few things...)

Revisiting memories with my high school friends and being with them made me aware of the valuable connection I had both to them and to Bishop. It's the same awareness I have when I go to certain places in the Eastern Sierra that I experienced as a child. These places never change for me. They are the same streams, rocks, trees, plants, and wildlife that have been there forever. They are important touchstones for me, things that give me joy and peace, as well as stability amidst the rapid change in the rest of my life.

We enable these touchstones for many across the Eastern Sierra as we protect and conserve vital lands. We make sure the landscapes, wildlife, and habitat will always be there. Thank you for your constant support for our work that connects people to the lands of the Eastern Sierra. By doing what we do, we are ensuring there will be plenty of memories and plenty of photos of children in special places in the Eastern Sierra well into the future.

Cheers,

Bob Gardner

President, ESLT Board of Directors



Our 2018 Annual Report

is summarized in the following four pages. For a full online version along with a list of our members, please visit eslt.org/newsroom.

2018: A Year Full of Highlights

Your support led to another phenomenal year for Eastern Sierra conservation



Sceirine Point Ranch

You permanently protected 2,375 acres of working land — ESLT's largest conservation easement yet.

This privately-owned ranch will continue to provide significant economic and environmental benefits. It offers a haven for mule deer, waterfowl, and other wildlife, and it provides some of the best habitat in our region for the iconic Bi-State sage-grouse.

The protection of this open space also prevents emission of harmful greenhouse gases.



Partner of the Year

Our collaborative approach to conservation earned national acclaim when the U.S. Forest Service and Bureau of Land Management recognized us as the 2018 National Conservation Partner of the Year.

Winners of this award are selected for demonstrating outstanding leadership in programs that benefit fish, wildlife, and native plants on public land. The award specifically recognized our innovative and cooperative approach to protecting habitat for Bi-State sage-grouse.



100 Certified Gardens

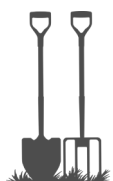
August 30th, 2018 was a great day for birds and bees. We certified the 100th Pollinator Garden that day.

Since the creation of our Eastside Pollinator Garden Project in 2013, we've worked with our neighbors to engage in conservation in home and community gardens.

One third of our food supply and at least 80% of the world's flowering plants rely on pollinators. Together, we're creating havens for at-risk birds, butterflies, and bees, so the Eastside continues to thrive.



*As of 2018,
you protected*
14,612 acres.



*In 2018,
you donated* **294**
volunteer hours.



*In 2018,
you certified* **18**
Pollinator Gardens.



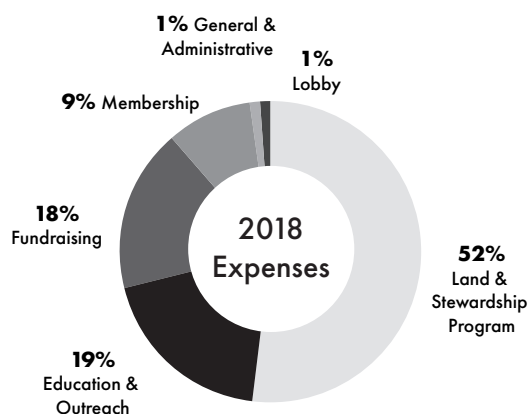
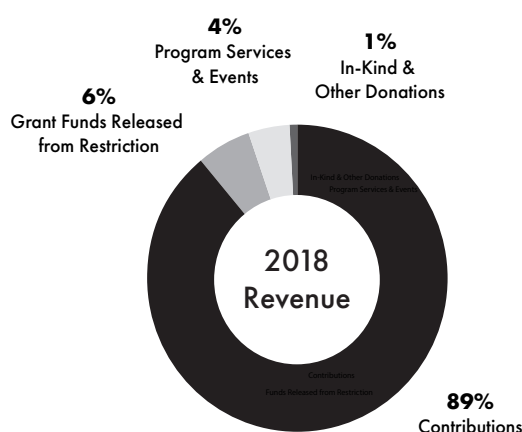
2018 Financial Summary

In the face of challenge, you're protecting the Eastern Sierra forever

2018 brought daunting challenges to the Eastern Sierra. Water worries persisted, pressures rose to develop and subdivide land, and Los Angeles Department of Water and Power drastically reduced water supply in Long Valley where Bi-State sage-grouse live.

You met these challenges head on. Together, we protected more open land for wildlife and for future generations, and strengthened our community involvement and support.

© Thierry Montoya



Unrestricted Revenue

	2017	2018
Contributions (Individual, corporate, and foundations)	\$246,134	\$3,553,019
Program Services & Events	\$103,358	\$167,503
Investment Interest & Gains	\$95,415	\$-49,833
In-Kind and Other Donations	\$25,790	\$32,465
Grant Funds Released from Restriction	\$216,485	\$236,285
Unrestricted Revenue Total	\$687,182	\$3,939,439

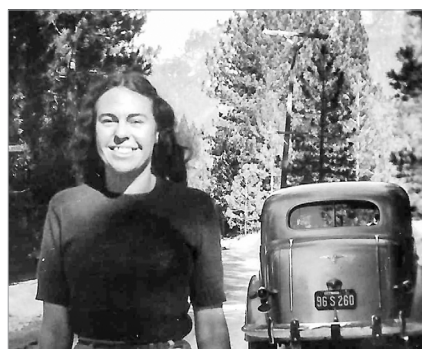
Expenses

	2017	2018
Education & Outreach	\$124,375	\$123,913
Land & Stewardship Program	\$264,610	\$338,855
Membership	\$47,082	\$60,356
Fundraising	\$74,408	\$113,375
General & Administrative	\$25,008	\$7,035
Lobby	\$5,990	\$5,598
Expense Total	\$541,473	\$649,132

Change in Net Assets

(Land and Easement Acquisition, Endowment)	2017	2018
Total Net Assets, end of year	\$3,983,097	\$9,391,409

990 available at www.eslt.org



*Left: Doris Link's special place was her house in June Lake, where she could enjoy nature at its finest.
Center: Jan Simis donated a conservation easement on her beautiful DeChambeau Creek Ranch to ESLT.
Right: Genny Smith stopped a road from being built from Mammoth Lakes to Fresno, through the Sierra.*

Carrying on Legacies

In 2018, three remarkable women trusted us to carry on their legacies by protecting the Eastern Sierra.

We'd like to recognize Doris Link, Jan Simis, and Genny Smith, who each recently left gifts to Eastern Sierra Land Trust in their estates.

Because of their generosity, they are continuing to care for the places and wildlife they loved, for future generations to cherish.

We're honoring these women's specific priorities: Genny's gift helped purchase a safer vehicle for our

Stewardship team, Jan Simis's gift helped us hire more Stewardship staff, and Doris Link's gift helped kids connect with the magic of nature.

For a confidential conversation about how planned giving might fit in your family goals, give our Executive Director Kay Ogden a call, at (760) 873-4554.

Keep following along!

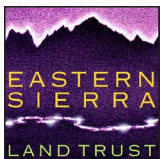
Read more about the land you love in our e-news and on social media

We'll keep you up to date about how your support is making a positive impact on the incredible Eastern Sierra. Visit eslt.org to sign up for our monthly e-news.

Save the date for Giving Tuesday, a global day of giving fueled by social media and collaboration. It's on December 3rd this year, and we have fun plans in store.



#GIVINGTUESDAY



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What's Ahead

With a strong, growing team of Board Members, advisors, staff, volunteers, and members dedicated to carrying out our conservation vision, we're perfectly positioned to ensure the Eastern Sierra's wild and working lands remain wide open.

Because of you, willing landowners are working to protect properties in at-risk places like Bridgeport Valley. While there is still a long road ahead, your support puts us well on the way to conserving thousands more acres in the years to come.

