

# SIERRASCAPES

The Eastern Sierra Land Trust Newsletter  
and 2019 Annual Report Highlights

[www.eslt.org](http://www.eslt.org)

Fall 2020

*"Together we've preserved these  
views, meadows, agricultural uses,  
and diverse habitats for livestock  
and wildlife, as it is, forever."*

– Jeff Hunewill

*Inside this issue:*

**Hunewill Ranch,  
Protected Forever!**



## We Did It!

### From the Executive Director/CEO

The leaves turn glorious shades of orange, burgundy, and yellow as fall settles in. Still, in the midst of fires, smoke, national discourse, and the pandemic, I often feel unsettled.

Perhaps you feel the same. That's why I'm honored to bring you great news: thanks to the persistent and patient Hunewill family, Hunewill Ranch is protected forever with a conservation easement!

This project has been in the works for years, and your incredible support brought it across the finish line. It protects 4,100 acres of critical wildlife habitat and marks our largest conservation easement to date.

We've dedicated the following pages to this success story. I hope it brings you joy!

With gratitude,

Kay Ogden, Executive Director/CEO



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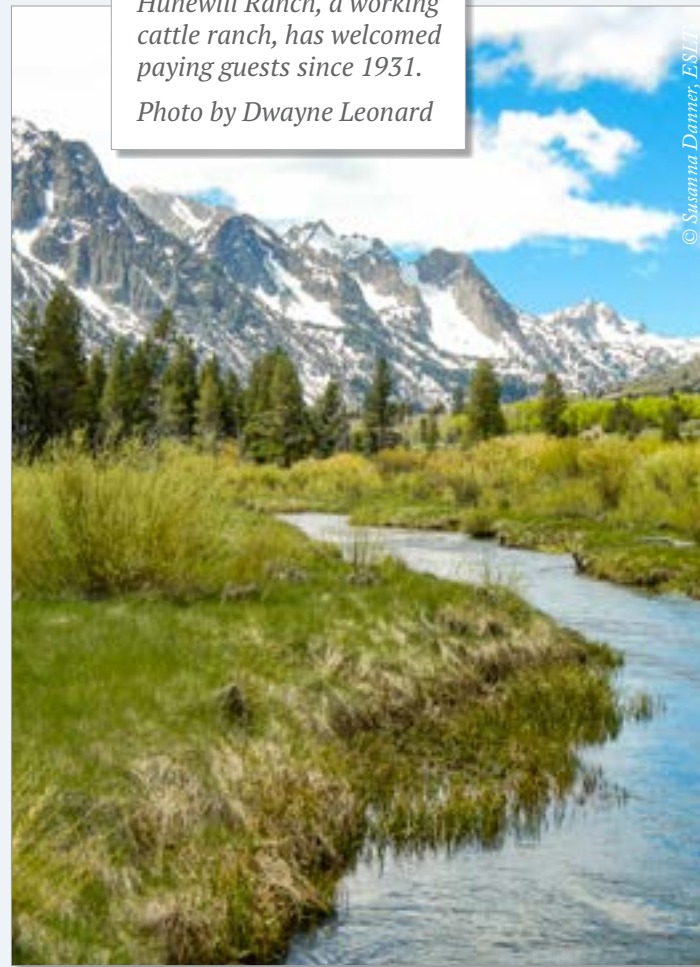
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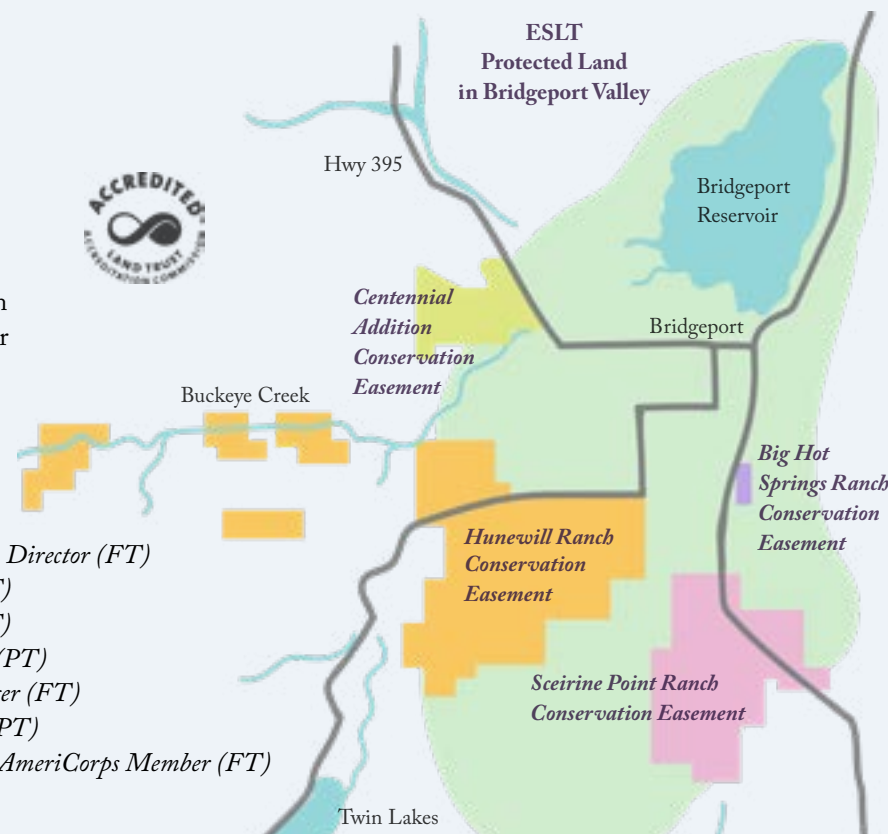
**FRONT COVER:**  
Hunewill Ranch, a working cattle ranch, has welcomed paying guests since 1931.

Photo by Dwayne Leonard



© Susanna Danner, ESLT

The Hunewill Ranch conservation easement protects wildlife habitat both in the green meadows of Bridgeport Valley and in scenic Buckeye Canyon, pictured above.



## Hunewill Ranch is Protected Forever

### A new 4,100-acre conservation easement advances this historic family's legacy

It was 1859 when Esther and Napoleon Bonaparte Hunewill married, crossed the Isthmus of Panama, and came to California. That same year, W.S. Bodey struck gold.

When Esther and Napoleon founded Hunewill Ranch in 1861, it was to supply timber to the new mining town of Bodie. When Mono Mills began operations in 1881, the canny businessman Napoleon decided to supply beef to Bodie as well. The rest, as they say, is history.

The family has since owned and operated their ranch over seven

generations, making them one of our region's longest-established ranching families. They have been terrific stewards of their land, which hosts sage-grouse, black bear, and mule deer.

***"It has been inspiring to work with a family with so many years of stewardship of their land," says ESLT's Executive Director/CEO Kay Ogden.***

The Hunewill family's dedication to conservation led them to protect the ranch's habitat and scenic views forever with a conservation easement.

This amazing result comes after years of hard work, and was made possible by your support.

Now, a large portion of the vast Bridgeport Valley will remain open and scenic, and wildlife will continue to find homes and migration pathways.

Meanwhile, this family's legacy as a bedrock of the Eastern Sierra community and economy lives on. They will continue to own and operate their ranch as they have since 1861.

*Funding for this project was provided by Natural Resources Conservation Service, California Wildlife Conservation Board, California Deer Foundation, and the California Department of Conservation.*

***As of fall 2020, you have protected 18,712 acres in the Eastern Sierra.***



# A Unique Tool

*Conservation easements serve a special need to protect private land like Hunewill Ranch*

Bi-State sage-grouse need lush irrigated meadows and sagebrush steppe to raise chicks. That's why the survival of this iconic species hinges on the conservation of ranches like Hunewill Ranch, which provides perfect homes for a thriving population of these birds. This is one of many situations that illustrate the importance of protecting private land. Your support saves these irreplaceable landscapes through the use of one legal tool in particular:

## The Conservation Easement

A conservation easement is a voluntary land protection agreement between a landowner and a land trust, each of which is uniquely tailored to the needs of its landowners and funders. Most restrict developments like subdivision, industrial uses, and mining. When a conservation easement is completed, the landowner continues to own and manage their property. The easement designates how the land will be used now and in the future, and it persists through any changes in ownership. This ensures that the conservation values of the property stay protected forever.

Placing a conservation easement on a property is a complex process. Still, we say that "once the easement is in place, the real work begins." That's because ESLT is legally obligated to monitor the property in perpetuity, making sure the terms of the easement are upheld. Your support powers this work. Thanks to you, we can fulfill a profound promise to our region: to care for special places like Hunewill Ranch forever. We have more acres in our queue, and your ongoing support ensures that they can all be saved.



Each summer morning at Hunewill Ranch, wranglers bring horses in from the pasture at 6:00 AM. "They're an important part of what we do... you can't do a good job if you don't take care of your horse," says Megan Hunewill.

*At Hunewill Ranch, sustainable ranching and wildlife conservation go hand in hand. Meet the species that thrive here!*

### Mule Deer



Mule deer migrate to Hunewill Ranch each year. Many spend summers in the Sierra Nevada slopes within the ranch boundary.

### Sierra Nevada Bighorn Sheep



Hunewill Ranch buffers the nearby alpine home of Sierra Nevada bighorn sheep, reducing threats to this federally-listed endangered species.

### Bi-State Sage-Grouse



Just a few miles southeast of Hunewill Ranch, this iconic and rare bird gathers for its famous annual mating dance. Females then nest in sagebrush and bring chicks to the ranch's green meadows.



# A History of Resilience, A Future of Permanence

*After generations of dedication and persistence, a special place is protected forever*

Keeping a family business successful for over 150 years isn't easy, but the Hunewill family is strong. Their resilience led them through times of challenge and kept them committed to each other, their business, and their land.

During the 1918 Influenza Pandemic, the Hunewill siblings became early adopters of social distancing. They moved from their ranch, each to a different place, so at least one would survive the pandemic. They all lived.

During the Great Depression when beef prices dropped as low as five cents per pound, family matriarch Lenore Hunewill had an idea. She galvanized

her family to welcome paying guests, supplementing their beef business. To this day, guests are warmly welcomed to Hunewill Ranch each summer.

The guest ranch splendidly influenced the life of Lenore and Stanley's son, Stan Hunewill. He met his future wife Jan when she visited as a guest.

## A Conservation Tradition

The rich land of Bridgeport Valley and Buckeye Canyon was originally stewarded by the Northern Paiute, and this landscape has continued to thrive under the Hunewill family's consistent care. Jan, Stan, and their children

and grandchildren have ushered in a new chapter for this family's story of dedication to conservation. Under their leadership, the family protected their land forever with a new conservation easement.

Stan Hunewill passed away in 2014, and Jan (pictured below) remains a beloved and intrepid force in the Eastern Sierra community.

Today, the family plans for a bright future in Bridgeport Valley. Through thick and thin, they are committed to caring for this special place for generations to come.

Jan Hunewill is a skilled horseback rider and conservationist who enjoys performing cowboy poetry. She is a community and business leader who embodies the Hunewill family spirit.



# More Good News

## Black Lake Preserve

Black Lake is an oasis in Adobe Valley filled with iconic wildlife like spadefoot toad, pygmy rabbit, and migratory birds. It is the southernmost of a string of delicate alkali wetlands in the valley.

In 2014, Michelle Browner donated this property to ESLT, protecting it forever.

After years of collaboration with the Natural Resources Conservation Service, we placed a Wetlands Reserve Easement over Black Lake Preserve. This easement adds extra protections for the Preserve's lake, lakeshore, and alkali meadows.

This is good news for visitors who can forever enjoy Black Lake's beauty, and for wildlife and migratory birds like Wilson's phalarope, who are sustained by the wet meadows and lake edges.

The project also comes with funding for restoration at the Preserve for three years. We can't wait to invite you to Black Lake Preserve for Stewardship Days once it's safe to gather.

## Swall Meadows

This May, we transferred Swall Wildlife Preserve to the care of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

This no-cost transfer connects public lands like a missing puzzle piece. The Swall Meadows Wildlife Area is now under unified ownership and consistent, coordinated care, benefiting our deer.

## You Power Land Protection

This year has been a challenging one, and your support allowed us to continue working to protect the land you love.

You pushed land protection successes across the finish line, and you enabled us to pivot our education programs to an online format. We hosted youth education events, pollinator garden workshops, and our 12th annual Lands & Legacy Celebration, all online. View these recorded events at ESLT.org!

Thank you for ensuring that Eastern Sierra conservation didn't miss a beat.



*We've hosted workshops, certified pollinator gardens, and more, all virtually. Thank you for joining us from home.*

*Top: A Wetlands Reserve Easement adds new protections to Black Lake Preserve.*

*Center: Swall Wildlife Preserve has transferred to CDFW, bringing Swall Meadows Wildlife Area under unified care.*

*Bottom: Pam's pollinator garden is certified!*



# Our Strong Conservation Connection

*Letter from the Chair of our Board of Directors*

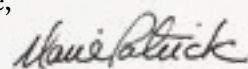
As we reflect back on 2019 together, are you thinking what I'm thinking? All our in-person gatherings and celebrations were so wonderful, and so precious!

The year 2019 was filled with festivities. We connected in so many ways, from touring recently protected special places together to enjoying seasonal backyard social mixers.

It was terrific to connect with you through our shared love for the Eastern Sierra. Then, when we began physically distancing in 2020, we kept connecting. It gave me hope to be part of this strong community of conservationists.

The support of this community in recent years, including legacy gifts from the incredible Doris Link, Jan Simis, and Genny Smith, has set us up for resilience. Still, our work is never finished. I've been grateful for your support through good times and challenging times. I hope you enjoy looking back on 2019's festivities as much as I did.

Take Care,



Marie Patrick  
Chair, ESLT Board of Directors



## Our 2019 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](http://eslt.org/newsroom).



# 2019: Another Bright Year for the Eastern Sierra

*Supporters like you power land protection, restoration, and education*



## Saving Lundy Canyon

As of May 2019, a critical 49-acre piece of the magnificent Lundy Canyon is protected forever.

In Lundy Canyon, year-round waterfalls cascade down from all directions. Spring wildflowers and fall leaves each fill the canyon with color. Here, hikers find peace and Sierra Nevada bighorn sheep find homes.

When a private inholding went up for sale, we joined with the Mono Lake Committee and Wilderness Land Trust. Thanks to your support, we secured its permanent protection.



## Caring for our Wildlife

You devoted volunteer time in 2019 to caring for wildlife in the Bodie Hills. Together with Bureau of Land Management, we improved fences to make them safer for wildlife like mule deer and pronghorn.

Dedicated volunteers also worked to improve homes for wildlife at Black Lake Preserve, where we removed old barbed wire from the ground and brush, and tagged fences to make them more visible for sage-grouse.

Thanks to each of you who wielded tools so deftly in support of wildlife.



## Training Sierra Stewards

"Taking Root," an outdoor education program for local third graders, takes place at the Bishop Paiute Tribe's Conservation Open Space Area. There, students form deep bonds with the nature around them.

This is one of many collaborations with schools you powered in 2019, along with Family Science Nights and our Sunflower Garden Project.

These programs train our children and grandchildren to care for land just like you do, forging ethics of land protection that last generations.



*In 2019,  
you led **5** projects  
closer to protection.*



*In 2019,  
you donated **287**  
volunteer hours.*



*In 2019,  
you hosted **40** youth  
education events.*





# 2019 Financial Summary

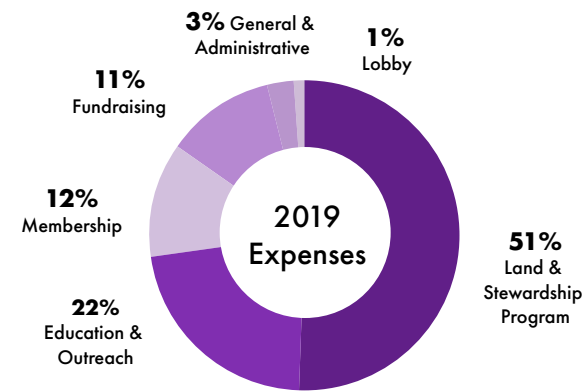
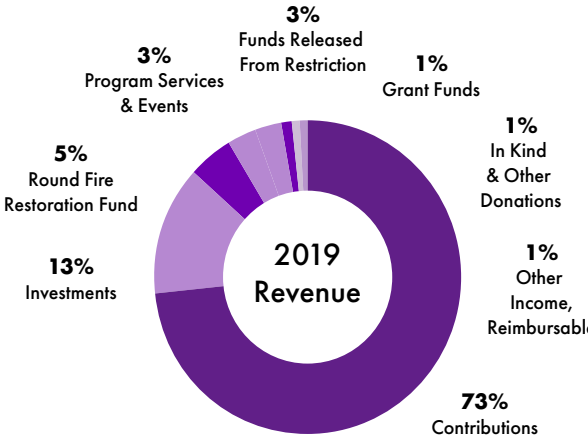
Your generosity promises a secure future for Eastern Sierra conservation

2019 was a year full of connection. We toured the recently-protected Sceirine Point Ranch at our Lands & Legacy Celebration, hosted Stewardship Days and a summer concert, welcomed young students to learn in our office garden, and much more.

We're grateful to have you by our side as we celebrate successes like Lundy Canyon's permanent protection and as we continue to build the foundation for future conservation projects.



© Heather Freeman, ESLT



990 available at [www.eslt.org](http://www.eslt.org)

Revenue Without Restrictions	2019	2018
Contributions (Individual, corporate, and foundations)	\$3,022,245	\$3,553,019
Program Services & Events	\$126,484	\$167,503
Investment Interest & Gains	\$423,653	\$-49,833
In-Kind & Other Donations	\$31,797	\$32,465
Other Income — Reimbursable	\$39,200	
Grant Funds	\$36,103	\$174,223
Grant Funds Released from Restriction	\$113,776	\$86,945
<b>Total Revenue Without Restrictions</b>	<b>\$3,793,258</b>	<b>\$3,964,322</b>

Revenue With Restrictions	2019	2018
Investment Interest & Gains	\$122,869	-\$25,433
Round Fire Restoration Fund	\$195,212	
<b>Total Revenue With Restrictions</b>	<b>\$318,081</b>	<b>-\$25,433</b>

Expenses	2019	2018
Education & Outreach	\$185,578	\$123,913
Land & Stewardship Program	\$425,738	\$338,855
Membership	\$100,905	\$60,356
Fundraising	\$96,167	\$113,375
General & Administrative	\$23,495	\$7,035
Lobby	\$7,902	\$5,598
<b>Expense Total</b>	<b>\$839,785</b>	<b>\$649,132</b>

Net Assets	2019	2018
Total Net Assets, end of year	\$12,799,187	\$9,391,409

## You Set the Stage for Success

In addition to powering successes, you also mobilize hard work behind the scenes. That means your support is always setting the stage for future celebrations. Although protection projects often take years to complete, we respect

landowner confidentiality and can't reveal details of the special places in our protection queue. Thanks to your trust and ongoing support, we're always working to protect more of the land you love. As we celebrate the completion of some

projects, we also continue our work on the acres still in our queue. With you by our side, we'll continue to have more to celebrate. Below: As volunteers cared for Black Lake Preserve in 2019, we also worked on its Wetlands Reserve Easement.



© Kristen Shipman, ESLT

## Save the Date for #GivingTuesday!

Help us repeat 2019's success on December 1st this year

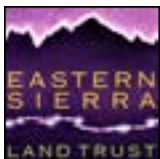
2019's Giving Tuesday raised over \$37,000 for Eastern Sierra land and wildlife. Stay informed about our 2020 plans by signing up for our monthly e-news at [eslt.org](http://eslt.org) or by following us on Facebook and Instagram.

Thank you! Your support leaves a positive impact on the land you love.



© Rick Kattelmann, ESLT Board of Directors





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WWW.ESLT.ORG

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## Connect From Home



*Watch exciting videos like  
a nature journal workshop  
with Jack Muir Laws, at  
[ESLT.org/At-Home-Haven](https://www.eslt.org/at-home-haven)*

We've missed connecting  
with you in person!

Until we can gather again,  
tune in to our online world  
of games, virtual events, and  
resources for enjoying nature.

Watch your little ones explore  
outside with scavenger hunts  
and Bird Call BINGO, then  
listen to Kendra Atleework,  
author of *Miracle Country*, as  
she shares about growing up  
in the Eastern Sierra.

*We hope to "see" you there!*

