

Sierra Scapes

The Eastern Sierra Land Trust Newsletter www.eslt.org

Summer 2023

the land

yesterday. today. tomorrow.

**“This summer, we will gather together
on the Eastern Sierra land we’ve help protect,
share stories, explore its wonders,
celebrate successes, and honor those
who’ve made them possible.”**

**- Kay Ogden
Executive Director/CEO**

In this issue: back to the land, lands & legacy and more

the land



ours to preserve & share

Eastern Sierra Land Trust was officially incorporated as a public benefit nonprofit in January 2001. It was the result of the strong vision of landowners and conservationists in Inyo and Mono counties who recognized the need to create a land trust with its unique tools to protect the wildlife habitats and open spaces of the area's spectacular rural landscapes.

The land welcomes us back



©ESLT Staff

positive impacts continue today; but we have not done this alone. We depend on willing landowners, the continued support of our Board of Directors, the selfless dedication of time by volunteers, gifts from generous donors, and the cooperative efforts of the public and private agencies that share our commitment to protecting the natural beauty of the Eastern Sierra.

Journey along with us

I'd like you to think of this Summer Newsletter as a journey—an exciting one we will be taking together.

It is filled with history, profiles and existing and new ESLT projects, each of which helps shine a light on an important part of what Eastern Sierra Land Trust is all about.

We'll celebrate the generosity of supporters and volunteers, and explore programs that promote learning and offer chances to get back out on the land.

And finally, we'll share the joy of once again gathering, sharing and celebrating together. It's a journey we hope that you won't want to miss.



Kay

Kay Ogden,
Executive Director/CEO

The future builds on the past

The last three years of relentless COVID and this year's winter have been challenging . . . for our resilient staff, our dedicated board and our valued supporters. Like the sturdy crocus that pushes up through the last crusty layer of snow to open its bright yellow and purple petals into the sun, we have re-emerged with new determination.

This summer season, we will be gathering together again to celebrate the wonders of the Eastern Sierra, remember the past work that has established ESLT as a conservation leader, highlight our ongoing projects, honor those who make our mission attainable, and look forward to new successes.

Focusing on the land

In our Summer Newsletter, we are focusing on the land—past, present and future. We will revisit some of ESLT's important conservation achievements in land donations and conservation easements. Their

Cover photo © Dwayne Leonard

A HISTORY OF SUCCESS

ESLT's work to conserve the Eastern Sierra is not new; we have a long, successful history. Fears that increasing pressures on the region to grow and develop in ways that would destroy its iconic natural beauty and wildlife corridors prompted the formation of the Eastern Sierra Land Trust in 2001.

Since then, ESLT's conservation and stewardship leadership has worked with willing landowners and conservation partners to protect over 21,000 acres, supporting sustainable working ranches and protecting wildlife habitat.



©ESLT Staff

Previously a site for groundwater pumping and export, the current owner, Dr. Dave Doonan, returned the land to agricultural production and completed the conservation easement with ESLT in 2005, funded by the California Farmland Conservancy Program and the federal Farm and Ranchland Protection Program through the Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS).

Situated to the west of the White Mountains and east of Benton, this private working ranch produces organic alfalfa on its prime soils and runs a direct-to-consumer grass-finished beef operation. The water resources on this property are protected by the conservation easement, which restricts any export of water from the valley. The ranch represents nearly 20% of the agricultural production in the Tri-Valley area.

Montgomery Creek Ranch serves as a wildlife corridor connecting the high elevation White Mountains and the volcanic tablelands. Numerous

species utilize the ranch lands including mule deer, mountain lions, Swainson's hawks and California quail.

The Doonan family believes that a local food system is paramount to sustainable agriculture, and is proud to contribute locally produced food to the Eastern Sierra community. "Regionally, the Montgomery Creek Ranch conservation easement contributes to the agricultural production of the Mono County and Tri-Valleys area. This easement maintains the viability of the region's agriculture, sustains natural resources, and provides vistas of working landscapes," says Kay Ogden, ESLT Executive Director/CEO.

The project is part of ESLT's Working Farms and Ranches Program. Learn more about Montgomery Creek Ranch and ESLT's other private and public conservation successes at www.eslt.org.

the land

forever. for certain.

Willow Flat Ranch Conservation Easement

Situated at 8,000 feet elevation in northern Mono County, the Willow Flat Conservation Easement contains 60 acres of sagebrush scrub, beautiful old growth Sierra junipers and Jeffrey pines, and a half mile of riparian habitat with native fish along the Little Walker River.

Originally owned by the Wedertz family, it was later purchased by Tina Bundy-Nappe, who has spent over 40 years as a volunteer with land trusts and other organizations defending wildlife interests.

Because it is located at the flat bottom of a glacial valley, between moraine deposits along a waterway, it is an important migration route for wildlife that move between seasonal habitats. Mule deer, black bear, mountain lion and a variety of birds all use this property as habitat.

It is one mile from the Hoover Wilderness, nine miles from Yosemite National Park, and includes two publicly used trails connecting it to the adjacent Humboldt-Toiyabe National Forest, providing habitat connectivity and recreational connection to wilderness and roadless areas.

Conserving this land in its natural state was key for Tina: “Our family has been blessed in that we were able to obtain this property, plan to continue to enjoy it and also provide the best protection we can for its natural values. In this process, we are grateful that ESLT exists and has been willing to work with us.”

A HISTORY OF SUCCESS

©ESLT Staff

In 1997, this property was in danger of becoming a large-scale 600-unit housing development with a 27-hole golf course, conference facilities, shopping center and other amenities.

The Trust for Public Land along with Mono County secured funding from CalTrans, the CA Department of Parks and Recreation and the

Ranch is 160 acres on the west side. They were homesteaded in 1982 and 1894 respectively, with the lands utilized for agricultural purposes.

The historic ranch site, including some of the Conway family’s historic buildings, dates back to the California Gold Rush when the property was used to produce food for the mining town of Bodie.

Conway & Mattly Ranch Conservation Easements



©Kathleen Bishop

National Fish and Wildlife Foundation to stop that development. In 2014, a partnership was formed to permanently protect this land.

The conservation easement permits livestock grazing and the creation of a fish rearing facility by Mono County, the property owner, but restricts future building and subdivision.

The Conway and Mattly Ranches Conservation Easement encompasses 806 noncontiguous acres of vital irrigated meadows, wetlands, riparian habitat, and upland sagebrush habitats in the northwestern portion of the Mono Basin. Conway Ranch is approximately 660 acres on the east side of Highway 395 and Mattly

It is important to recognize that this property was originally an important stop on Native American trade routes. The Mono Lake Kutzadika’a Tribe traded salt, pine nuts, basketry and obsidian from the area.

The Mono Lake mule deer herd migrates twice a year through the property to and from its winter range; the range offers habitat for the rare Bi-State sage-grouse and a variety of migratory songbirds, waterfowl and shorebirds.

Conway Ranch is open to the public, where popular activities include hiking, birding, fishing, photography and sightseeing. Tours are also conducted by Mono County and ESLT. See page 8 for more information.

Bridgeport Valley

a little history . . .

Bridgeport Valley, also known as “Big Meadows,” is one of the largest intact mountain meadow areas in California. Framed against the majestic snowy peaks of the Sawtooth Range, a sub-range in the Sierra, its sweeping open vistas, plentiful and diverse wildlife, and working ranches make it a special area of the Eastern Sierra that ESLT has been dedicated to protect for decades.

Because it contains the largest wetland complex in California’s Eastern Sierra, it provides vital habitat to many species of both mammals and birds, who use Bridgeport Valley’s irrigated meadows to roam, forage and raise their young.

The Nüümü People were the original land stewards, and The Bridgeport Indian Colony (BIC), located just outside of Bridgeport, consists of descendants from Miwok, Mono, Paiute, Shoshone, and the Washoe tribes. The BIC continues to promote preservation, protection, conservation, assistance in health, education, welfare, and tradition for its members.

Around 1827, settlers found Bridgeport Valley when a party led by Jedediah Strong Smith crossed the Sierra and discovered gold in the foothills around Mono Lake and in nearby Bodie.

Gold mining played out, but the irrigated rangeland, laced with creeks and wetlands, was well suited for agriculture. However, as crowded urban areas to the north expand, the valley has become increasingly viewed as an excellent location for development and subdivision.

ESLT has partnered with willing families and landowners to protect Bridgeport Valley for its scenic vistas, wildlife connectivity and biodiversity, and its economic values for the surrounding communities.

This was accomplished through the creation of conservation easements—voluntary legal land protection agreements between private landowners and land trusts like ESLT, that permanently protect these properties’ unique wildlife, agricultural, ecological or recreational values. Conservation easements are tailored specifically to each property; the owner retains title and management of the land with certain permanent restrictions on land developments like subdivision.

Conservation easements in Bridgeport Valley include: Big Hot Springs Ranch Conservation Easement: 75 acres, December 2005; Centennial Ranch Conservation Easement: 718 acres, December 2011; Sceirine Point Ranch Conservation Easement: 2,375 acres, January 2018; Hunewill Ranch Conservation Easement: 4,100 acres, August 2020; Ullman Ranch Conservation Easement: 1,424 acres, March 2021; and Centennial Point Ranch Conservation Easement: 1,741 acres, May 2022.



©Terrance Emerson

These conservation easement properties remain working ranches or open space, while protecting the important wildlife habitat they provide. Because of ESLT’s continued proactive approach to protecting Bridgeport Valley, and the generosity of willing landowners, it will remain the wonderful place it is forever.

hunewill ranch conservation easement

The Hunewill Ranch Conservation Easement is ESLT’s largest conservation easement to date at 4,100 acres. This historic agreement protects critical habitat for wildlife like mule deer, American badger, Bi-State sage-grouse, black bear, peregrine falcon, golden eagle and songbirds, while also ensuring that Hunewill Ranch can continue its sustainable cattle ranching operations and guest ranch.

“We are deeply grateful to the fine people of the Eastern Sierra Land Trust. It is very important to our family that this ranch be preserved and remain green and productive forever. Through their steadfast commitment to the preservation of the Bridgeport ranch, ESLT has helped us to realize that goal,” said Jeff Hunewill, 5th generation landowner at Hunewill Ranch.

The Hunewill Ranch has been an important part of Bridgeport Valley’s settler history since it was first homesteaded by Esther and Napoleon Bonaparte Hunewill in 1861. Oxen hauled timber from the ranch’s timber groves to build the towns of Bridgeport, Bodie and Aurora. When a lumber mill and rail line came in, Napoleon switched to cattle ranching, supplying towns with beef instead of lumber.

Hunewill Ranch has been worked as a family-run cattle ranch for seven generations. Its expansive irrigated meadows and upland sagebrush scrub provide summer pasture for cattle and the ranch’s wet meadows—the “emerald islands”—provide critical habitat for a variety of species in the arid West.

The family established a guest ranch on the property in 1931, where visitors can become immersed in the ranching lifestyle, learning to ride, rope and herd cattle.

“The Hunewill family’s longstanding care for the land embodies how the strong agricultural

tradition of our region works hand in hand with conservation goals,” says Rick Kattelmann, ESLT’s Lands Committee Chair. “The Hunewill family’s vision for the future of their ranch has been protected by the conservation easement. Working with the family to achieve this result was incredibly inspiring for everyone at ESLT. Preserving Hunewill Ranch is a win for the wildlife who rely on this valley. And it’s a win for future generations who will always be able to enjoy this area’s beauty, history, and peace.”

GETTING BACK TO THE LAND



©ESLT Staff

go wiggle your toes in a wetland

Ullman Ranch Land Tour

Mark your calendars for an exclusive land tour of Ullman Ranch on August 28th. This event presents a golden opportunity to delve into the heart of the region, exploring its distinctive landscape, and the “emerald islands” of wet meadow that are so critical to wildlife in the arid West.

Experience a behind-the-scenes exploration of the 1,424-acre Ullman Ranch, an active cattle operation steeped in rich history. Immerse yourself in its irrigated pastures and sagebrush steppe as you learn about the intricate land restoration strategies ESLT and the landowner are planning, including upcoming low-tech wet meadow restoration to preserve this stunning working landscape. Come experience firsthand the private lands we work to protect. Step into the stewardship and restoration story of permanent land conservation and engage with the very heart of our mission. RSVP now for this incredible land tour on our website at www.eslt.org/events.

Conway Ranch Land Tour

Join us on a unique exploration of the storied Conway Ranch, an upcoming tour with expert land managers. Set within the awe-inspiring terrain of Mono County, Conway Ranch serves as a prime example of the region’s varied wildlife and land management practices.

On August 19th, we’ll learn how well-managed grazing contributes to the ecosystem’s health, offering numerous co-benefits including protecting habitat for the Bi-State sage-grouse.

Don’t miss this opportunity to explore the ranch and gain insights into the tools and strategies ESLT employs to uphold the conservation values in our projects.

We invite all who are interested to join us in this educational adventure. Please reserve your spot today by calling our office, visiting our website, or the provided QR code. Join us in fostering an appreciation for land management and its key role in conservation. Discover, learn, and get excited about the positive impact of responsible stewardship at Conway Ranch.

the land

our wild, wonderful places



ESLT Board welcomes Leslie Hunewill

ESLT is proud to welcome to its Board of Directors Leslie Hunewill. Leslie is a sixth-generation rancher in Bridgeport

Valley, where her family raises cattle and operates the Hunewill Guest Ranch. With a rich heritage tied to the Eastern Sierra, Leslie brings an unrivaled passion and commitment to conservation and sustainable ranching.

Born and raised on the historic Hunewill Ranch, Leslie learned the rhythm of life connected to the land, from the annual cycles of the grazing cattle in their summer home, operating the guest ranch, and to the quiet peace of winter.

Leslie’s connection to the land isn’t limited to ranching. An avid horsewoman and outdoor enthusiast, she appreciates the Sierra from multiple perspectives — from its value as agricultural land, as a home to diverse wildlife, and as a source of recreational joy.



Hunewill Guest Ranch offers guests the opportunity to enjoy trail rides to explore the wonderful outdoor scenery.

She’s also the mother of two children, ages two and four, and is raising her kids on the ranch where she grew up and enjoys seeing them get involved with every facet of ranch life.

“ESLT is one piece of the community that has made it possible for us to help protect and preserve our land for my children, nieces, and others in the seventh

generation of the Hunewill family—and for many generations of our family to come,” says Leslie.

Her family has been ongoing careful stewards of the land. In August 2020, ESLT completed a conservation easement with the Hunewill family, permanently protecting 4,100 acres of the family’s historic ranch.

Her grandfather, Stan Hunewill, a recipient of the ESLT Legacy Award with his wife and the matriarch of the family, Jan, started implementing Holistic Management practices several decades ago. Today, Leslie helps create each year’s grazing plan to ensure that care is being taken to sustain and support the land. She manages the herd health, genetic selection, and records for their cattle operation, and helps out with the day-to-day activities as she can. Leslie also fills in when and where she’s needed on the guest ranch.

We warmly welcome Leslie Hunewill to our board, appreciative of her skills and knowledge that will help ESLT and our mission. “As a sixth-generation rancher in the Bridgeport Valley, I feel that the land my family owns is held in trust by each generation and it is our job to pass it along as good as or better than it was passed to us,” Leslie says.

Board of Directors

Marie Patrick, Chair	Fran Hunt
Tim Bartley, Vice President	Rick Kattelmann
Cyd Jeneffsky, Secretary	Marta Kurland
Robert Sharp, Treasurer	Brynn Pewtherer
Leslie Hunewill	

Tony Taylor, Member Emeritus



Leslie’s husband Ido and their kids: Tule, on the left on horseback, and Alton sitting on the horse with Leslie.

© Heather Freeman



©Patrick Poendl

A Sunlight Season

Warm greetings to you all. As we step into the heart of summer, I am delighted to share the inspiring progress we've made together, and invite you to join us, in-person, on the land this summer.

Our work is a celebration of nature, of partnership, and of the enduring spirit of our shared commitment to conservation. Together, we have turned our passion into impactful actions that make a real difference for our Eastern Sierra landscapes.

Enjoy these pages of inspiration and news, and remember: by supporting ESLT, you help ensure that our wide open mountain vistas and valley views are here forever. You are the reason they'll still be here, protected forever.

I look forward to joining you on the land this summer.



Marie Patrick

Marie Patrick
Chair, ESLT Board of Directors

A SMALL BUT MIGHTY TEAM

julie royall Education Coordinator/AmeriCorps Member

To say that Julie hit the ground running when she joined the ESLT staff is an understatement. Only moving to Bishop this May, she has already been actively involved in ESLT's outreach and education programs like the recent GardenFest community gathering.



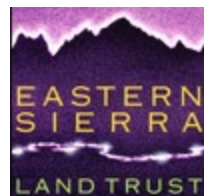
Julie graduated from Vassar with a degree in psychology, but has since used her training in permaculture, gardening, botany and the environment in a mix of jobs that eventually led her west to the Eastern Sierra. She has spent the last decade working as an outdoor environmental educator.

Of her new role at ESLT, she says, "My job as Education Coordinator combines my passions in a way I can use my skills in environmental education, working with

children and adults, connecting them to the outdoors and an awareness of nature."

Julie values education, and the "learning mindset," but wants to connect it to active engagement with the environment—working to protect the land. She began that work on June 3rd at World Migratory Bird Day, and will continue environmental education as she coordinates ESLT's Certified Pollinator Garden Program and works with youth growing sunflowers hands-on in the Sunflower Kids Project.

"I've always been good at teaching," she adds. "It comes naturally to me." Julie also looks forward to working with ESLT staff to make sure her programs fit effectively into ESLT's overall mission of education, land conservation and stewardship.



andrea stewart Communications Manager

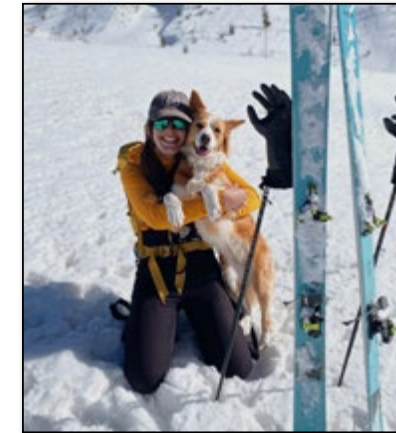
Andrea (Andie) Stewart loves dogs, horses, and mountains. But that's not all she loves. She also loves, "Anything I do with my time that contributes to giving back and making the world feel more just."

Born and raised in a vibrant university town in Kansas, Andie grew up galloping around cornfields on horses, and learned from a young age the value of expansive spaces, thinking critically, and navigating polarized spaces.

Andie's previous professional experience saw her working in the Middle East specializing in human rights and land access issues before moving to Bishop in 2020. Stepping into the role of Communications Manager at ESLT, she brings with her a vast skill set, ranging from academia to consulting to working in the human rights non-profit world.

"I wanted to live in a place where I felt I could make an impact. I was looking for the right fit."

Andie's road to her new position at ESLT took a few twists and turns. For her undergraduate degree, she studied political science and theology from Westmont College before moving to Israel-Palestine for four years. She worked for a human rights organization and completed her graduate degree in International Human Rights Law from the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. She specialized in predictive analysis of conflict zones, human rights advocacy, and visual media as a powerful medium for shifting public opinion.



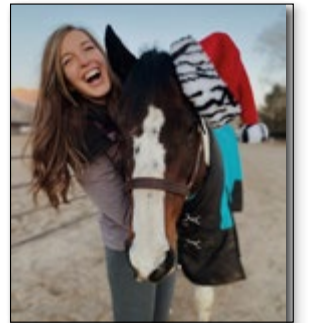
Returning to the U.S. during COVID, she decided to stay Stateside and put roots down in Bishop.

"I wanted to live in a place where I felt I could make an impact, and Bishop suits me for so many reasons, with the expansive mountains and tight-knit community luring me in." When the Communications Manager position at ESLT became available, she explains, "I was looking for the right fit in Bishop. The position at ESLT seemed like a perfect marriage of my skill set, with ample room for personal upward possibility and

organizational growth. ESLT fits so well with how I am calibrated—My passion for working closely with causes that make the world a more just and equitable place."

Andie sees ESLT as a place that needs what she has to give, and vice versa. As Communications Manager, the most exciting part of her job is the chance to help shape ESLT's story in a comprehensive and inclusive way as the organization grows into its next chapter.

"With the right storytelling, we can reach more people to help accomplish our mission; we can get social buy-in and support for ESLT from a wider network." She compares her work with securing funding and political support for important causes on an international level with that at ESLT. "Here, I can offer my international perspective on leveraging the power of private funding to advance critical causes. I couldn't feel more passionate about the power and impact of working within a nimble but sophisticated non-profit model like ESLT."



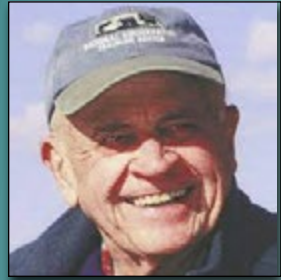
ESLT Staff

Kay Ogden, Executive Director/CEO (FT)

Heather Freeman, Development and Marketing Director (FT)
Carissa Gospodinoff, Operations Director (FT)
Claire Marvet, Program Associate (PT)
Julie Royall, Education Coordinator/AmeriCorps Member (FT)

Amanda Serenyi, Membership Coordinator (PT)
Emmalyn Snead, Land Stewardship Program Director (FT)
Amanda Stewart, Communications Manager (FT)
Amy Sturgill, Land Conservation Program Director (FT)

GIVING. DOING. LEADING.



Phil Pister

A champion for the Eastern Sierra

Giving.

On January 17, 2023, two days after his 94th birthday, Phil Pister died in Bishop, California. On that day, ESLT and the larger conservation world lost an unassuming legend.

Phil spent his career working as a district fisheries biologist for the California Department of Fish and Game in the Sierra Nevada. From his time at UC Berkeley, he internalized the values of the as-yet unknown term environmental ethics, with a reverence for all forms of life.

This was clearly apparent on August 18, 1969, when he found, while monitoring in the field, a remnant population of the endangered Owens Pupfish struggling to survive in a small pond. These isolated habitats were islands of water in a sea of sand. He and an assistant scooped them into wire cages and put them in a safer part of the marsh. He returned to check that evening, and found them struggling. In the dark, he placed them into buckets

“Phil’s dedication and expertise have made a difference that’s impossible to quantify.”

and carried the two 30-lb. buckets full of fish across the desert to Fish Slough, single-handedly ensuring the survival of the species.

He later founded the Desert Fishes Council whose mission is to preserve the biological integrity of desert aquatic ecosystems.

“His passion for protecting our landscape and biodiversity was not merely a job for him; it

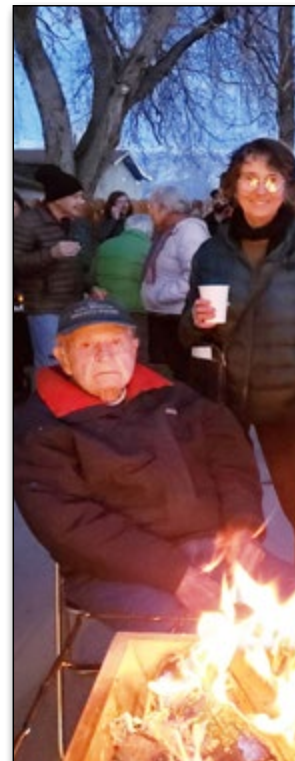
was a calling that he responded to every day with unparalleled dedication,” Kay Ogden, ESLT Executive Director/CEO stresses.

As a guiding spirit of ESLT, Phil set an extraordinary example for those who believe in preserving the balance of the Eastern Sierra’s unique ecosystem. “Phil’s dedication and expertise have made a difference that’s impossible to quantify,” Ogden adds.

Phil cherished time together with people in the Eastern Sierra community. He was an avid participant in nearly every monthly Mixer hosted by ESLT, including the one in December 2022.

When the frequency of Mixers shifted from monthly to quarterly, he had a quirky tradition of sending Kay an image of a Rat Fink—an inside joke that we shared over time.

A Celebration of Life for Phil was held on May 19, 2023. ESLT’s 2023 Legacy Award will be given posthumously in honor of Phil at the 2023 Lands & Legacy on September 23rd at Mammoth Mountain Ski Resort Area’s Parallax Restaurant.



Phil roasting marshmallows at the December 2022 Holiday mixer.

©ESLT Staff

GardenFest 2023

Recently, the heart of Eastern Sierra buzzed with ESLT’s annual GardenFest, a springtime celebration linking gardening passion and community spirit for green thumbs and aspiring green thumbs alike.



At GardenFest, attendees embraced the chance to buy native starter plants from the California Native Plant Society-Bristlecone Chapter, encouraging biodiversity across the region. The Inyo County Seed Library presented an array of seeds, stirring attendees to explore new gardening ventures. Expert advice was on hand from the UCCE Master Gardeners of Inyo &



Mono Counties and the Eastern Sierra Audubon Society, providing valuable insights on local horticulture and conversation about local ecosystems. We were also joined by Julie Fontaine and her organic Compost Tea, Lorraine Masten with her beautiful greeting cards, and a long-time ESLT supporter for her homegrown organic tomato starters. The event was spiced up with incredible Lao food from Mee’s Small Eats and craft beers from Mountain Rambler Brewery.

We’re overwhelmed with gratitude for everyone’s participation, especially our project partners, in making GardenFest 2023 such a success. Here’s to the flourishing relationship between our community and the land!

Photos ©HeatherFreeman



©Rabbits

Eastside Pollinator Garden Project

ESLT’s Eastside Pollinator Garden Project provides guidance on selecting native plants, optimizing garden layout, and maintaining the garden to maximize benefits for pollinators.

Not only are pollinators the unsung heroes of our ecosystems, but one third of our food supply and 80% of the world’s flowering plants are dependent on these industrious pollinators. With each backyard transformed, we strengthen our environment, one flower at a time. Visit eslt.org/pollinator-gardens/ for more information.

lessons from the land

leadership at work

Redlands University Hosting & Training

ESLT welcomed two enthusiastic interns from Redlands University for the summer, Dom Casolari and Sarah Brekke. They will be assisting our Lands Program with ESLT Stewardship Director Emmie Snead and Conservation Director Amy Sturgill.



Dom is pursuing a B.S. degree in Environmental Science with a minor in Spatial Studies/GIS. He says, “I am looking forward to applying curriculum from both my minor and major studies to the field and learning more about the interactions between the different land management agencies, the land trust, and private owners.”

Sarah is a senior at Redlands University with a major in Environmental Science and minors in Spatial Studies and Women and Gender Studies. She grew up camping and hiking with her family. “I look forward to applying and solidifying my



skills in ArcGIS and the natural sciences through my time with the wonderful ESLT staff!”

They will be shadowing each ESLT staff member throughout the summer. They will learn about ESLT’s programs, private land conservation and what land trusts do to protect the natural beauty of the Eastern Sierra. It provides an opportunity for college students to gain work experience outside of the classroom and apply their coursework in environmental studies and Geographic Information Systems (GIS) within an actual employment setting.

With the addition of two more talented people to assist with ESLT’s annual monitoring, it allows boots-on-the-ground for the more remote and large conservation easements. It provides an opportunity for ESLT to collaborate with the interns on integrating and updating GIS systems and tools. By integrating educational pursuit with real-world application, this innovative alliance fosters both the professional growth of the students and the practical advancement of land conservation.

World Migratory Bird Day



In the heart of the Adobe Valley, Black Lake Preserve serves as a crucial oasis for countless migratory birds making their journey across continents, an event celebrated worldwide as World Migratory Bird Day.

This year, on June 3rd, ESLT celebrated the day with birding activities, educational presentations, and a birdwatching tour led by renowned biologist, Santiago M. Escruceria. Escruceria explains, “For the migratory species that stop here, it is similar to a welcoming rest stop along a highway for weary human travelers.”

The Preserve’s fate could have been starkly different. Once at risk of development, it now stands as a beacon of

conservation, thanks to Michelle Browner, a very generous landowner who chose to protect this special place by donating it to ESLT.

BLM Wildlife Biologist Evan Standifert and ESLT Volunteer Alex Wilson also helped identify various migratory birds like Wilson’s phalarope, a bird sustained by the wet meadows and lake edges at Black Lake Preserve.

Professor Maria Elena Fernandez’s Healing Circle, Colita de Rana, based in the Chicana/o Studies Department at Cal State Northridge, joined in learning about the marvels of bird migration and the Preserve’s role in their journey. We hope to work with Maria and her class in the future!

the land

breathe in the natural beauty



lands and legacy



Get ready to celebrate Lands & Legacy with us!

This year, as we commemorate the 22nd anniversary of ESLT and finally reunite in person, we’ll toast to our shared victories of yesterday, today, and the promising tomorrow in land conservation.

We’ll begin with a tour of Hunewill Ranch on September 22nd, and culminate in a breathtaking sunset dinner and Paddle Raise at Parallax Restaurant on September 23rd, hosted by Mammoth Mountain Ski Area.

At our Lands & Legacy Celebration dinner, we’ll recognize the inspiration, leadership, and commitment of two individuals who have made a powerful difference in the future of the Eastern Sierra, the honorees of our prestigious ESLT Legacy Award.

One award will be presented posthumously to conservation hero Phil Pister, who passed earlier this year. Phil was an extraordinary example for those who believe in preserving the balance of the Eastern Sierra’s unique ecosystem.

The next award will be presented to the CA Wildlife Conservation Board’s recently-retired Executive Director, John Donnelly. John helped fund many of ESLT’s projects, including Hunewill Ranch, Montgomery Creek Ranch and Centennial Point Ranch conservation easements.

So, please join us for an unforgettable time celebrating the land we love, the stories we share, and the successes that bind us together. After all, whether it’s land or fish, every aspect of nature is a thread in the beautiful tapestry we strive to protect. This year, let’s celebrate, let’s be inspired, and let’s continue writing our conservation legacy!

Secure your dinner and tour tickets—registration is open. Tickets are \$125 each; ESLT members receive a 10% discount. Check QR code on back cover and [ESLT.org/lands-legacy-2023/](https://www.eslt.org/lands-legacy-2023/) for registration and updates.



P.O. Box 755
Bishop, California 93515

Return Service Requested

WWW.ESLT.ORG
(760) 873-4554



22ND ANNIVERSARY LANDS & LEGACY CELEBRATION

REGISTRATION OPEN

Parallax
Restaurant
Mammoth Mountain Ski Area

September 23, 2023

