



# SISKIYOU LAND TRUST NEWSLETTER

Spring 2011

522 East Alma  
P.O. Box 183  
Mt. Shasta, CA 96067  
(530) 926-2259

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

## CELEBRATING SUCCESS THE PLANK/WHIPPLE EASEMENTS

The Siskiyou Land Trust is celebrating the successful completion of the Plank and Whipple conservation easements in Scott Valley!

After four years of working with the land trust, and many more years before that working on turning the concept into a reality, the Plank and Whipple families recorded five conservation easements on December 28, 2010. While the purchase and recording of the easements signals completion of the acquisition, the land trust will be maintaining a long-term commitment to monitoring the easements annually in accordance with nationally accepted land trust practices.

### A LOOK BACK

**This project's success comes** with countless thanks and a



Scott River running through Plank/Whipple

wealth of experience. At the beginning of 2010, the land trust was operating in a world of shaken economies and budget freezes. At that time, the Plank-Whipple conservation easement project was on life support and in serious need of CPR. This is when being a persistent optimist pays off.

Continued on Page 7

## Inside Pages

*A Message from the SLT President* 2

*Member Focus: Mike Sojka* 3

*Why Give?* 4

*MOUNT EDDIE FOR SALE?* 5

*Conservators Circle Event* 6

## WHY VOLUNTEER?



Sam and friend enjoying Sisson Meadow.

Most of the time a volunteer project is something that no one else wants to do. And any person like me who **has served in the Armed Forces knows, 'you do not volunteer for anything.'** **When I was in the Marine Corps, I** remained practically invisible at volunteer time. So why volunteer? It has to be for something that touches your heart or excites you.

In my case, it was the feeling of joy and awe that I experienced when I first walked the trail at Sisson Meadow. I realized that right in the middle of Mount Shasta City there is a beautiful, preserved, and protected meadow that I can walk through and enjoy nature and scenery. I researched a bit of history about the meadow and found that the Siskiyou Land Trust was one of the participants in this fantastic story. I contacted them and found out that they would be happy to have me help in the meadow. **I said "OK."**

Now I look forward to summer when I can join a group of Mount Shasta friends and neighbors who are interested in clearing invasive Scotch Broom, fixing the walkway, and taking trash out of the meadow.

This is the volunteer opportunity that I volunteered to do. I guess I didn't learn about the merits of volunteer-

**"When I was in the Marine Corps, I remained practically invisible at volunteer time."**

Here we go into that seasonal time of renewal and I know Siskiyou Land Trust is on board with that program! After completing the Plank/ Whipple conservation easement, we once again have our proverbial sleeves rolled up for the next stage of **Siskiyou Land Trust's professional development**. We are working diligently to complete formal business working procedures. Our investment policies, confidentiality agreements and myriad other rather dry, but necessary policies and procedures are in line to be completed. With the completion of the Plank/Whipple easement, and our directors and board freed up, we have the time to get these necessary policies in place.

As you read through this newsletter, I hope you will join us in future land trust activities, and I want to thank all of you who have participated and enjoyed our slide show series and membership events. Our thanks to our INCREDIBLE volunteers and all of those who have given us feedback to help us mature.



## Tell A Friend About the Siskiyou Land Trust!

Annual memberships with the Siskiyou Land Trust fund local project development, community outreach activities, **and the organization's long-range planning.**

Help the Siskiyou Land Trust double its membership! Give the gift of SLT membership to a friend, share this newsletter with your neighbor, or simply renew your membership. Thank you for your continued enthusiasm and support!

### Annual Membership Categories

|          |             |
|----------|-------------|
| \$10,000 | Super Hero  |
| \$5,000  | Super Star  |
| \$1,000  | Conservator |
| \$500    | Protector   |
| \$250    | Steward     |
| \$100    | Sustainer   |
| \$50     | Supporter   |
| \$20     | Friend      |



## Need a Tax Deduction?

Susie Boyd

If you have an IRA, and are subject to an RMD (Required Minimum Distribution), this news just may be of interest to you! Upon distribution, your IRA funds are subject to federal taxes based on your current income status. However, **temporary legislation** has been passed by Congress which waives this tax if the distribution is passed directly to a qualified non-profit organization, such as the Siskiyou Land Trust. Here is how it worked for me in 2008. I passed my entire distribution that year to the Siskiyou Land Trust, thus waiving the tax. My gift to the organization was 30% larger as a result and, it was a win-win situation. I won, by waiving the tax and future generations of Siskiyou County win by supporting the work of the Siskiyou Land Trust!

The Siskiyou Land Trust is switching gears in 2011 after operating at half-staff for much of 2010 and after focusing much of our attention on closing the Plank and Whipple conservation easements. After moving full steam ahead and navigating through the state budget crisis we focusing our efforts on strengthening our acquisition and stewardship programs to ensure the organization's mission is successful. Our board, staff, and volunteers are in full agreement - It is time to roll up our sleeves and lay a strong foundation for the Siskiyou Land Trust to build a reliable conservation organization that private landowners in our communities can rely on and we are all proud of.

How are we accomplishing these lofty goals? So far, we are expanding our stewardship activities; identifying annual stewardship responsibilities, building multi-media information packets and tools for landowners, members and our communities; offering presentations and workshops; and refining our approach to land and easement acquisitions.

These additions to the land trust are already strengthening our ability to care take the places we are entrusted to protect, and will help make sure we take appropriate action to protect those places that need it most in the future. In the meantime, we are moving forward with a forest conservation easement project on Rainbow Ridge, looking forward to partnering with the Shasta Resource Conservation District to facilitate additional forest conservation activities along Rainbow Ridge, and actively reviewing several potential projects throughout Siskiyou County that would protect wetlands, agricultural land, and forest lands. We are also continually corresponding with interested landowners who would like to learn about their options for conserving land and about what it means to work with the Siskiyou Land Trust.

## Member Focus: Mike Sojka

*Mike Sojka is a semi-retired hi-tech manager who lives in Mount Shasta. He serves on several committees, edits the newsletter, and works on our website. We caught up with him for this issue's Member Focus.*

“Someone at SLT mentioned the other day that Siskiyou County actually carries the designation of *frontier*. We live on the frontier! I know it might sound a little corny, but to me, that seems so cool and makes me feel part of **something bigger than me.**”

### ***SLT: You have gotten quite involved lately. What's up with that?***

Mike: A newsletter or two ago I saw a blurb about SLT needing a “wordsmith”. From my many years working in high-tech I knew what that meant. One of my children is away at college and the other graduated in December and with me just working six weeks as a bicycle tour guide last year, there was time to volunteer.

*SLT: What have you been doing on these committees?*

Mike: Well, it has been fun to find that some of my corporate skills that I thought would never be used again because of how boring

that work was to me, are relevant to SLT needs.

### ***SLT: What makes you most passionate about SLT's mission and direction?***

Mike: In just the 10+ years my family has been in Mount Shasta many trails we used to walk to from our house on McCloud Avenue disappeared due to developments being put in with new roads, houses, and land clearing. While we love a local vibrant economy and understand progress has a price, we feel in many cases development could have been done differently to preserve the treasures right outside our door. We are hoping and praying SLT can do more projects like Sisson Meadow which keep land adjacent to and inside cities available for enjoyment a short walk from your house. I much prefer walking from my house than having to get in the car and drive.

*SLT: Thanks for getting involved. We need people for all those things and more. Anything else you want to add?*

Mike: Thanks for the acknowledgement. Even though on one level **someone might consider all that stuff “work”, for me**, it has been a blast and meeting many locals who are working on the various committees has been fun, a real treat, and satisfied the part of me that missed the social interactions at a job. I hope SLT can be successful taking the next step to bring in more land conservation from the northern part of Siskiyou County.





My family moved to California from New Jersey when I was about 4 years old, so I guess that I'm not quite a native - but for most of us that are of non-Native American descent, our families all came from somewhere else. I remember my parents moving us to our family home in the Antelope Valley just 45 minutes outside of San Fernando Valley. On weekends we would visit friends in "The Valley" and drive through ranches and miles and miles of orange groves with the smell of blossoms intoxicating. When we would come back home to the high desert, I would sit out on our back porch, our house was literally in the middle of nowhere, and watch those brilliant crimson sunsets and smell the hot day turn to night. At that time, just 52 years ago, there really were antelope there and alfalfa, the primary crop, covered half the valley floor. The entire population of the Antelope Valley was about 44,000 people, same as Siskiyou County is now.

*"I remember seeing Mt. Shasta for the first time, way in the distance as we picnicked on the Sacramento River."*

It had been years since I visited my old desert stomping grounds, yet last summer as I was hiking the Pacific

Crest Trail, I needed to pick up a "re-supply" in the Antelope Valley. My niece picked me up and we drove into Lancaster and now the current population of the Antelope Valley is 483,000. I have to say that aside from the Tehachapi Mountains in the distance, I could not recognize where I was. The miles and miles of alfalfa fields have been replaced with tract homes, strip malls and shopping centers. Freeways crisscross the lands where the antelope used to run. I felt my heart breaking.

When I first visited Siskiyou County in the 1960's, I remember driving north from Sacramento on Hwy 99 through the miles upon miles of farm and ranchlands up



to Redding before we wove our way up the corridor to Mt. Shasta. I remember seeing Mt. Shasta for the first time way in the distance as we picnicked on the Sacramento River just outside of Sacramento. In the past 40 to 50 years as urban development crept north, many of those farms and ranchlands have been consumed by miles of tract homes, jumbo warehouses and mega shopping centers and it is a rare day when the sky is clear enough to see Mt. Shasta from Sacramento.

As I visit the special places in Siskiyou County, the ranches and farmlands of the Scott, Shasta and Butte Valleys, the vast timberlands and open spaces, the rivers and high mountain lakes, I want to think that it will be this way forever. And, in my lifetime, which I hope to be at least another 40 years, I may not experience that much change.

**And yet, I can't help think of what may occur 100, 200 even 500 years from now.** Will people then be able to experience these forests, lakes, streams and high mountain lakes?

So, why do I write a check each year to the Siskiyou Land Trust? I write that check for many reasons. I give because I love the farms, ranchlands, viewsheds, rivers, mountain lakes and streams of Siskiyou County. I give because it takes money to save and take care of sensitive lands. I give because those who work with the Siskiyou Land Trust hold the same passion for the land that I do and are committed to saving it forever.

**And...more dollars translate into more land saved.** If you have managed to read through to the end of my story, perhaps you too share a passion for the land. If so, I ask you to join in on the effort by writing that check once a year. For those who are already on board, know that you are paying it forward to future generations.

Janet Zalewski is the current SLT Executive Director.



CINDY DIAZ

*An outright gift of cash.* **Today's dollars** sustains the day-to-day operations of the Siskiyou Land Trust and you benefit with a tax deduction.

*An outright gift of appreciated assets.* Contribute such items as stock or property owned for longer than one year. You would receive a charitable deduction equal to the current value of the assets while avoiding capital gains tax.

*A life insurance gift.* Naming the Siskiyou Land Trust as a primary or even secondary beneficiary of your insurance policy paves the way for a larger gift. Should you wish to contribute a life insurance policy that is no longer needed to protect current beneficiaries, you could realize substantial income tax deductions.

*A gift through your will.* You may consider including the Siskiyou Land Trust in your will or living trust. In this way, a fixed amount, specific asset or percentage of your estate may be set aside as a bequest and qualify you for estate deductions.

*A gift made through a charitable trust or annuity.* Creating a charitable trust or annuity provides lifetime income for yourself and/or others. With all or a portion of your gift eventually directed to the Siskiyou Land Trust.

Be sure to talk to your tax advisor to see which of the above ways of supporting the Siskiyou Land Trust is best for you!



## Conservation News



Snow Camping on Mount Eddy.

## Mount Eddy for Sale!

Did you know thousands of acres in and around Mt. Eddy are privately owned and for sale?

The Frase Trust, which also owns a portion of Castle and Heart lakes, is looking for a conservation buyer for several sections of land in the Mt. Eddy area. The land includes a portion of the Pacific Crest Trail near the Parks-Creek Road. Several organizations have stepped forward to ensure that the land is protected, but they need help raising approximately \$2 million dollars for the acquisition and stewardship costs.

The Siskiyou Land Trust is able provide a meeting place for Mt. Eddy fundraising activities and some administrative support. Fundraising activities would need to be coordinated with other conservation organizations. If you would like to spearhead a local effort, please contact Janet or Kathleen at the land trust office (530) 926-2259.

## Conservation Easement Workshop

The Siskiyou Land Trust will be hosting a workshop on conservation easements June 9<sup>th</sup> in Yreka (location to be announced soon). Topics will range from conservation easement basics to in-depth discussions regarding legal and financial implications for landowners. Workshop presenters include Marilyn Cundiff (Program Manager for the Wildlife Conservation Board), Tom Wearing (practicing attorney), Kathleen Hitt (Siskiyou LandTrust Conservation Director), and several others.

People interested in learning more about conservation easements will be able to sign up for a conservation easement informational booklet. Space is limited, please RSVP to Kathleen Hitt (530) 926-2259.

## ANNUAL LAND TRUST MEETING

Wednesday May 11, 7 PM

Mount Shasta Resort  
1000 Siskiyou Lake Blvd.  
Mount Shasta, CA 96067

Dessert provided and no-host bar.

All Are Welcome!



Over 20 people gathered on February 9th at the home of Jan Schrag and David Vogt for an intimate evening featuring organic food, fine wines & beverages, and in-depth discussion focused on the Siskiyou Land Trust. The event was the first convening of members of the **Conservator's Circle, people who have made a financial commitment to the SLT in the amount of \$500 or more.** We applaud their trust in our organization.

After time socializing and relaxing, participants were led by SLT Executive Director Janet Zalewski in a lively discussion of how we can ensure the important work of conserving valuable land in Siskiyou County. The three central topics explored were: on what should SLT focus at this time, what resources are available to assist SLT and how can those resources be accessed, and how do we enroll others.

What seemed like a casual evening out for these major donors turned into a productive work evening. Breakout sessions ensued, culminating with a plethora of ideas that only magnified when the full group reconvened. We came away from the evening with a better idea of what the land trust is and how to more succinctly express that understanding. One important need identified by the group was a focused vision statement for SLT. It was a great evening and will help the board progress with more understanding of what the membership values.

Financial support is an ongoing part of the SLT. As a vital organization in the community, **we are continually looking at ways of expanding this Conservator's Circle.** You can find the names of these individuals and businesses listed in this newsletter. We welcome the opportunity to grow the circle by adding your name to this list. Staff and board members are always available to meet with members and potential members who would like more information and education regarding the SLT before making a major donation.

#### **Sincere Thanks to our Conservator's Circle Donors**

Susie Boyd Thamar Werrit Belinda Higuera Berryvale Grocery  
 Alistair and Carol Mowat Jan Schrag and David Vogt Mt. Shasta Ski Park - Chuck Young  
 and Andy Aguilera Jack and Lori Saunders Rick and Linda Chitwood  
 Janet Zalewski and Linda Richter John and Laurie Harch Joe and Michael Wirth  
 Joseph and Kathleen Heller Roger Kosel Leslie Andrews Nancy and Tom Driscoll  
 John and Susie Brennan Keith and Harrie Whipple Gareth and Melinda Plank  
 Jennifer Plank Mark and Ellen Coleman

## Board of Directors

*President*  
Belinda Higuera

*Vice President*  
Stacy Smith

*Treasurer/Secretary*  
Susie Boyd

*Board Members*  
Leslie Andrews  
John Brennan  
Roger Kosel  
Jan Schrag  
Michael Zanger

## Staff

*Executive Director*  
Janet Zalewski

*Conservation Director*  
Kathleen Hitt

*Tech Czar*  
Mike Sojka

*Newsletter*  
Claire Tenscher

## SLT Holdings

Sisson Meadow  
Mt. Shasta, CA  
7.7 acres of scenic view-shed  
and wetland habitat

Trinity River Conservation  
Easement  
70 acres of open space, view-  
shed and river corridor

Scott Valley Conservation  
Easement  
5,500+ acres of agricultural  
land, rangeland, river corridor,  
and wildlife habitat

Hammond Reservoir  
Weed, CA  
67 acres of open space, wet-  
land, and wildlife habitat





2011 celebration with Whipple and Plank families and SLT Board members

Fortune smiled upon us last spring. We all recognized the situation last year as an opportunity to become our best. When you have something so precious that it simply cannot be lost, something worth putting your heart and soul into - you have the ingredients for success.

The Plank and Whipple easements were moved forward by several individuals at the Wildlife Conservation Board and California Department of Conservation the moment a drop of state funding became unfrozen. The easement project was put on the May 2010 Wildlife Conservation Board agenda for project approval, along with a few other fortunate projects. On our way to project completion, it appeared that all we had to do was agree to the final language in five easements, sign grant agreements for project funds, document the

condition of the properties for future easement monitoring, and record the transaction. Time to celebrate!

Hold the Champaign! We quickly learned that project approval does not equate to immediate **release of grant funds to close escrow....There** were several nail biter months in-between May 2010 and the project close last December – filled with victories and set-backs. In this time, we gained important experience that will help guide future land trust projects. worked on a project that was subject to government grant funds – consider yourself blessed.

### LESSONS LEARNED AND THE JOURNEY FORWARD

As October quickly rolled into November, and November into December – it became very clear that the success of this organization and our projects require a collaborative effort **where everyone's contribution plays a role in** our overall success.

We were able to secure project funding and close escrow in time because everyone who participated in the project gave 100% to their effort, and gave with a smile. Working together for several years under challenging conditions can undermine the best of intentions. The Planks and Whipples, the people working at the state agencies, and the people working and volunteering for the Siskiyou Land Trust made sure that even the most challenging tasks would be tackled - and they were tackled as a team effort. The five conservation easement

documents that took countless hours to prepare, review, and edit. The baseline conditions report took over 500 hours of staff and volunteer time. The *release* of grant funds for this project was made possible by the extraordinary efforts of over a dozen top State agency officials. All of this took teamwork.

We are celebrating more than acquiring five conservation easements that protect over 5,500 acres of incredibly important land in Siskiyou County. We are celebrating our ability to rise up to challenges, our ability to identify and cultivate our assets, and our commitment to cooperative relationships with landowners, funding partners, volunteers, and our community. In defining our success broadly, we are recognizing that we can overcome adversity and succeed in protecting the places we love. Even if it means taking longer than we would all like– we can and will go the extra mile to accomplish our goals.

Completing the Plank and Whipple conservation easement project in this time of economic distress is no small miracle. Yet it is exactly this kind of grit and challenge that makes people in Siskiyou County tick, and it is our resilience to hard times that makes us all know that no matter what some economic ticker tells us – we have what it takes to succeed!

### Special thanks to all directly involved with the Plank-Whipple project success!

Thank you to all the landowners who placed conservation easements over their land: Keith and Harrie Whipple, Melinda Whipple Smith Plank, Gareth Plank, and Jennifer Whipple. Thank you for leading the way and showing Siskiyou County what is possible!

Countless thanks to Larelle Burkham-Greydanus and Chuck Tyson from the Department of Conservation; Marilyn Cundiff, John Donelly, and Randy Nelson from the Wildlife Conservation Board; John Brennan, interim Executive Director & past Board Pres.; Josh McPherson from Gray Ridge Cartography; Steve Horn former SLT Executive Director; James Peirce – former SLT Executive Director and current counsel for Dept. of Conservation; David Collier, Vicky Sheehy, and all the folks at Siskiyou Title Company; Jeff Swanson attorney; Tristan Behm, Nick Joslin, Crystal Bowman SLT volunteer data gatherers; Julian Colecott from North State Resources Inc.

Everyone from the Resource Legacy Fund Foundation who believed that funding the Siskiyou Land Trust would result in permanent protection of important resources.

Thanks to all who coached us along the way: Jennifer Sylvierra from US Fish and Wildlife Service, Bob Hammond from Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, and George Stroud from TNC



Many thanks to all who contributed volunteer time, financial resources, talents, input, and passion for this place!



At the beginning of every ski season I always anticipate the first ski day. This season the snow started falling and sticking in autumn. In the twenty years I've lived in Mt. Shasta, there have only been two times when I've said, "Happy Halloween" to a passing skier. This season it started October 26, 2010...and what a great season it's been so far. Everitt Memorial Highway was plowed up to the Old Ski Bowl through mid-November making backcountry skiing pleasant and possible since the coverage down lower wasn't very good. Thank you to the County Snow Plowers! Thanksgiving week was the beginning of our major snow accumulations. In December the Mt. Shasta Ski Park opened a week early with all the snow. That was an extra bonus. The backcountry continued to improve with storm after storm until New Years Day!

Juneuary...oops I mean January was a Corny snow month. With warm temperatures throughout the month, it felt spring-like and I got my annual winter Helen Lake ski in.

February rolled around bringing very high winds, more snow, avalanche alerts and cold temps. What does that equal= smoking powder skiing! These conditions brought awesome low-angle tree skiing opportunities in Mt. Shasta's backcountry and great Mt. Shasta Ski Park days.



*'The ski season has been one of my best on record. Over 125 days so far and counting.'*

March...well what can I say snow records were broken with DEEP POWDER CONDITIONS. Massive amounts of snow closed the mountain highway for a good part of the month. The Mt. Shasta Ski Park was the ticket with phenomenal powder.

Happy April! So far the forecast looks pretty good with mild temperatures. Maybe the crazy weather's over but then again...this is Mt. Shasta!

This season started in October and will continue into late June or July depending on conditions. I regularly post current road and snow conditions on Mt. Shasta on my new website/blog. Check it out- [www.mountshastaguide.com](http://www.mountshastaguide.com).

**There's still great snow to be had. Get out there,** snowshoe it or carve some turns and have FUN

Robin Kohn is the local author of the *Mount Shasta Guide to Fun* and an avid skier,





The Siskiyou Land Trust is dedicated to long-term stewardship of agricultural, forest and wild lands in Siskiyou County by working with willing landowners, agencies and organizations.

522 East Alma  
P.O. Box 183  
Mt. Shasta, CA 96067

Phone: (530) 926-2259

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

Would you like to write an article for the next newsletter?

Have a slideshow or picture you want to share?

Email us at:  
[newsletter@siskiyoulandtrust.org](mailto:newsletter@siskiyoulandtrust.org)



Visit the SLT website for full additional content. Full color photos, more calendar dates, and additional articles including a backcountry ski report by Robin Kohn are all awaiting your perusal. [siskiyoulandtrust.org](http://siskiyoulandtrust.org)

## SLT CALENDAR

Visit: [siskiyoulandtrust.org/calendar](http://siskiyoulandtrust.org/calendar)

### MAY

EARLY MAY, TBA 7PM – 8PM

SLT: EDUCATIONAL SALON  
Private House, Mount Shasta  
RSVP – Limited Space Contact: Jan Schrag

MAY 7 6PM – 10PM

RIVER EXCHANGE: ANNUAL RIVER CELEBRATION FUNDRAISER  
Mt. Shasta City Park Upper Lodge  
[riverexchange.org/calendar.html](http://riverexchange.org/calendar.html)

MAY 7 9AM – 12PM

SLT: SISSION MEADOW CLEAN UP - WORK PARTY  
Sission Meadow – Contact Sam Baxter

MAY 11 7PM

SISKIYOU LAND TRUST: ANNUAL MEETING  
Mount Shasta Resort; 1000 Siskiyou Lake Blvd

MAY 18 6PM – 8PM

CALTROUT: 2011 WATER TALK SERIES  
CALIFORNIA WATER LAW POLICY  
Sission Museum Activities Room  
1 North Old Stage Road, Mount Shasta

### JUNE

JUNE 9 10AM – 2PM

SLT: CONSERVATION EASEMENT WORKSHOP  
Yreka CA  
Contact Kathleen Hitt for location

JUNE 16 6PM – 8PM

CALTROUT: WATER TALK SERIES – LOCAL FISH AND FISHING  
Sission Museum Activities Room  
1 North Old Stage Road, Mount Shasta