



Siskiyou Land Trust

# Newsletter

Spring 2013

**In this Issue: Garden Update, Monitoring our Easements, What's happening on Rainbow Ridge? and more.**

# Community

## Seasonal Journal of Sisson Meadow

Sam Baxter

July 2012 Spring & Summer Days: No more baby Canada Geese to watch grow up. No more baby Mallard ducks to watch swim around the pond. And if you thought that was the only reason to come over to the meadow, rethink the possibilities.

Spring and summer flowers have been in full bloom. So much so that the Outreach/Education Committee thought we should be on the Mt. Shasta Garden Tour organized by Spring Hill Nursery and Gardens. We asked, they said yes, we were thrilled. On Saturday, June 23rd from 10 to 3, seven meadow volunteers welcomed nearly two hundred Garden Tour visitors. It was fantastic.

We had prepared a Field Guide to the Meadow plants that were in bloom. Visitors walked the Meadow, reading about the beautiful plants, grasses and landmarks around them. That field guide will be a permanent part of the Meadow and will be available at the kiosk near the picnic tables. The most rewarding part of the day was finding about five local residents who did not know the Meadow was in their backyard!

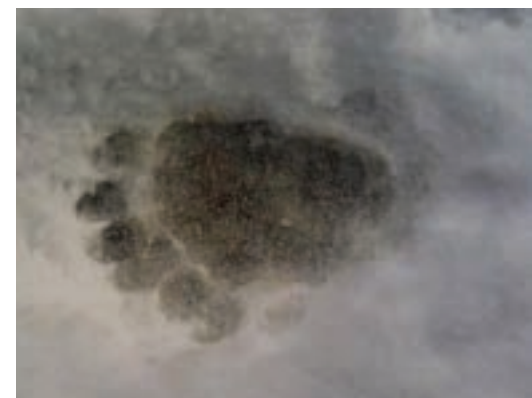
During the summer, several volunteers chopped back the blackberries, sweet peas and other weeds that were growing on to the pathway and boardwalk.

February 2013 Winter Reflections: The baby Canada Geese and baby Mallard ducks have grown up and headed south. Prints in the snow tell stories: dogs, neighbors, coyote and fisher. Blue bird nests wait to be cleaned out for spring migrations. A stray Snow Goose is spotted near the pond by Matolle Valley Charter school science class – early harbinger of spring! High School students on cross country skis help us begin our photo-monitoring of the meadow. I listen to the silence of winter and wait for the sounds of spring to return.

Stop by and visit your Meadow. It is waiting to receive you with all of its beauty, solitude and splendor. We would like to thank Spring Hill Nursery for making Sisson Meadow part of the 2012 tour, and special thanks to all of our dedicated volunteers who work hard to keep our meadow open.



Photos this page: Sisson Meadow Bog Orchids in bloom by Julian Colescott, the meadow under snow, a bear footprint in the snow at Scott River Ranch





Clockwise from top right: Volunteers at our forest cleanup day; Mattole Charter School Science Class monitoring the meadow in February; Kim Solga and Steve Bollock monitoring the Scott River Ranch Conservation Easement.

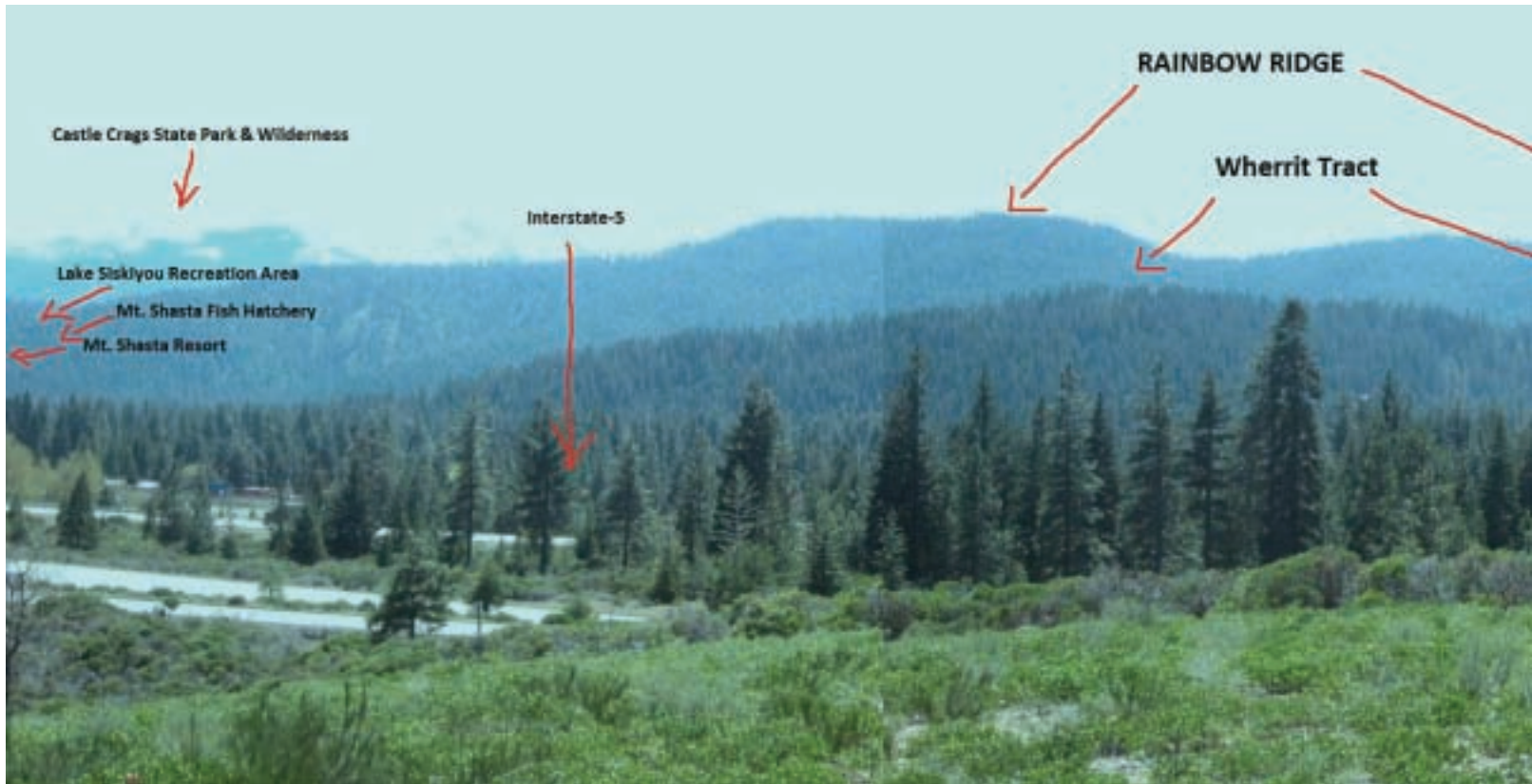
If you want to help with ongoing activities at Sisson Meadow, e-mail Sam Baxter at [sam@baxters.net](mailto:sam@baxters.net) or stop by the Siskiyou Land Trust office located at 522 Alma Street.

Thank you Aiello, Goodrich & Teuscher, Sam Baxter and Jan Schrag for sponsoring this newsletter.

### Sisson Meadow Volunteer Spotlight

For many years, Dennis McFall and his friend Gracie have been volunteering as Sisson Meadow Stewards with the Siskiyou Land Trust. Every Friday, Dennis and his eager companion drive over to the meadow in their electric cart. There, they take a full bag of trash out of the meadow trash can and replace it with a new bag. Dennis even got the fine folks at Ramshaw's Ace Hardware to help him dispose of the trash bag. Who asked Dennis to do this? Nobody! Dennis took it upon himself to keep our meadow healthy and clean. Sisson Meadow is an important part of our community. It gives us a quiet place to go for a walk, allows refuge for wildlife and lets the beauty of our local environment to be shared by everybody. The SLT gives a hearty thank you to Dennis McFall and his friend Gracie for keeping Sisson Meadow beautiful. By the look on Gracie's face, she is ready to go for a ride!





# Rainbow Ridge Update

Conservation work doesn't end at land acquisition – that is where it often begins!

Conservation is something that everyone can practice. We can create easements, become stewards or simply care for our own private and public lands.

When it comes to the Rainbow Ridge forest stewardship collaboration, SLT's work began by partnering with forest landowners and conservation organizations like Shasta Valley RCD. We then adopted Thamar Wherrit's conservation easement as an active project.

Shasta Valley RCD, SLT, and the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS) established an informal partnership in 2009 to develop resources and support for landowner-based, collaborative forest stewardship and restoration initiatives along Rainbow Ridge. We are working on Rainbow Ridge because landowners voiced their concerns and identified opportunities.

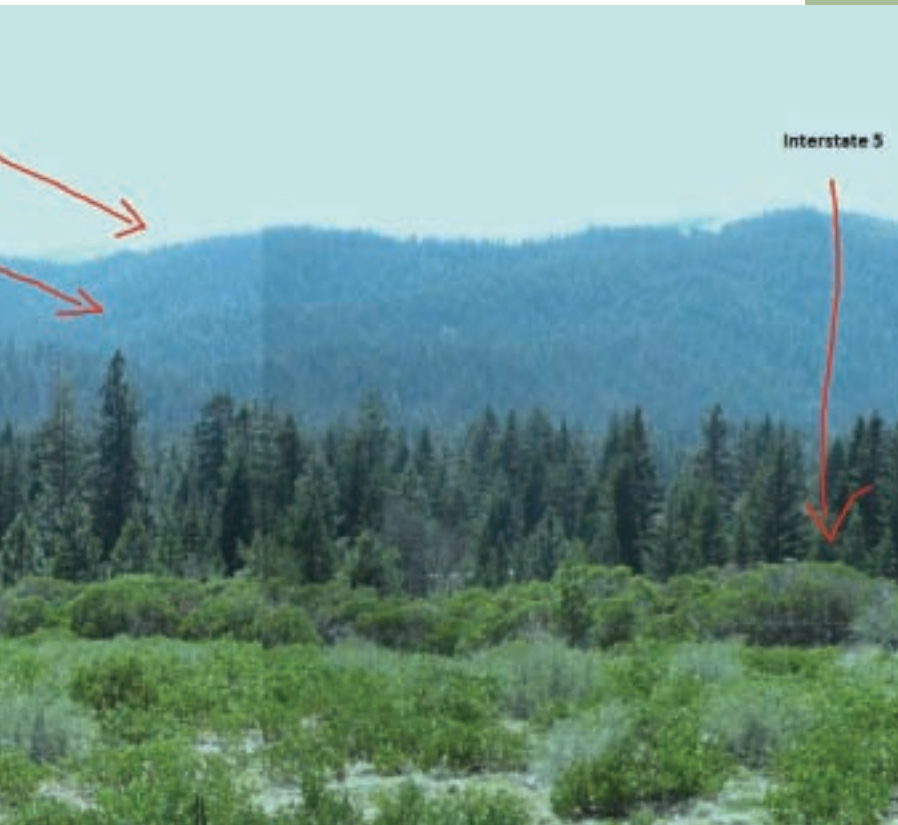
This area is an important forest resource, it is also a prominent viewshed. Situated next to public land managed for old-growth species, this ridge offers an opportunity for forest stewardship that goes beyond property boundaries and forest management goals.

How do we move from ideas to successful collaborations? We provide opportunities to inform ourselves and the public about our local forest conditions and forest stewardship. To meet this goal, Shasta Valley RCD began hosting an educational series on forest stewardship in May 2012.

We've invited experts from near and far to share their knowledge and experience with the community. Topics have ranged from fire ecology in historic forests to collaboration in forest management, funding opportunities and defensible space. Presenters have included the Mount Shasta Area Fire Safe Council, NRCS, US Forest Service Mt. Shasta Ranger District and Pacific Southwest Research Station, College of the Siskiyou's Environmental Resource Program, Siskiyou County, Sierra Pacific Industries, the Jessup Family, and UC Davis Cooperative Extension.



Rainbow Ridge landowners with Dr. Eric Knapp (far left), Fire and Fuel specialist. He's explaining fuels buildup difference between oak and conifer forests,



Shasta Valley RCD is also leading the way for collaborations among Rainbow Ridge landowners. Our pilot projects began as conversations among neighbors and evolved into projects directed by landowner interests in conserving and caretaking forest resources.

This past Fall, Watershed Coordinator Kara Baylog facilitated our first Rainbow Ridge collaboration. The collaboration consists of three neighbors who manage over 26 acres of forest on Rainbow Ridge. These particular landowners expressed interest in learning how to manage their forest to reduce fuels and fire risks, maximize wildlife habitat, and minimize costs. They wanted to learn first-hand from experts like forester Charlie Diehl (NRCS), and leading forest ecology researcher Eric Knapp (USFS Pacific Southwest Research Station).

Thanks to landowner cooperation and the generosity of Eric and Charlie, these neighbors were able to participate in a day long educational discussion tour of their forests. As the collaboration moves forward, property owners decide how to plan projects for their forests and neighbors decide how they can work together to share planning resources, equipment, and costs. Meanwhile, the USFS and NRCS continue to offer guidance and technical assistance.

Eric Knapp is helping us all attune our eyes, and consider a less homogenous approach to forest and fuels management that can be applied on a small scale. Charlie Diehl has retired, so we anxiously await the arrival of a new NRCS forester to help us along this journey.

Kara Baylog is the Shasta Valley Resource Conservation District Watershed Coordinator

## Did you Know?

Rainbow Ridge used to be the sediment on the bottom of a pre-historic ocean. This sedimentary rock is unlike the volcanic geology of most of our area. It lies over the serpentine and gabbro of the Trinity Complex (exposed on Mount Eddy). The Rainbow Ridge rocks are part of one of the oldest terranes in the Klamath Mountains. They probably formed far from their present location before being added to North America.

‘Bear wallows’ -where water seeps to the surface of the ridge-like the one pictured above, are natural drinking holes for the animals of our area

Bill Hirt and Rob Furnaugh will be presenting *Rocks to Forests: The Geologic and Ecologic Forces that Created the Natural Landscape of Siskiyou County*. The presentation will include geology of Rainbow Ridge area

**September 27th, 5-7 pm at Sisson Museum**

## What can You do?

Landscape-scale conservation requires a landscape-wide community effort! We welcome you to attend our Forest Stewardship Workshop Series These occur once a month, often on the last Wednesday. We are in the process of making video recordings for you to watch if you miss a workshop. You can visit the Shasta Valley Resource Conservation District website for more information: <http://svrcd.org/>

We also welcome your inquiries and interest in neighborhood collaboration opportunities. *If you are a Rainbow Ridge landowner interested in mobilizing your neighbors to begin a pilot project, please contact Kara Baylog or Kathleen Hitt at the SLT office or call 530-926-2259.*

We are working with forest landowners of all different property sizes and land management objectives. If you are a landowner of forested property outside of Rainbow Ridge, but you are interested in becoming a part of this program, feel free to contact us as well. We are focusing efforts on Rainbow Ridge at this time, but envision expanding the program as resources allow.

# Plans for the Future

## Garden Greenways Acquisition Project- Community Campaign: May 23rd to July 6th

Help the Siskiyou Land Trust leave a legacy of gardens, green spaces, and pathways for our community! Our goal is to raise \$150,000 of matching funds to help us purchase 3 acres in the heart of Mt. Shasta.

What began as an office move back to Mt. Shasta and an experimental garden has grown into a land trust acquisition project with a vision of community space, pathways, gardens, educational opportunity, and greenway for Mount Shasta. Our proposed Garden Greenways acquisition is located on Alma Street across from Sisson School and the Mt. Shasta Library, and connected via Rotary Trail to Sisson Meadow. You know the spot – it's the 3 acre lot right under the AM radio tower that transmits public radio via the Jefferson Exchange.

We moved the land trust office to the project location in 2010, and immediately noticed its key location and incredible soil. The property sits at the edge of residential neighborhoods, schools, the library, Sisson Meadow, and town. This space is a favorite path for neighbors travelling to and from these places – as it conveniently hooks up with Castle Alley, the Rotary Trail to Sisson Meadow, Ski Bowl and Carmen streets, and the front Steps of Sisson school. While facilitating an organic garden here with Shasta Commons and a dozen community members, we learned that this land was part of a historic truck farm that grew award winning cabbage. We also noticed the for sale sign and learned that a tentative map had been approved for the property to divide it up into four ¼ acre lots and a remainder parcel – with visions of multiple family housing. Hmm.....

After much research and consideration, the land trust Board decided to make the purchase and enhancement of this property a priority. Multiple family housing is an important community benefit, but considering the location, current use, and potential of this land, we think the best use of it includes the larger community. We'd like to see gardens, greenway, outdoor classrooms, and pathways for our community here. The community campaign goal of raising \$150,000 is roughly half the purchase price that will be used to match grant funds that we are currently applying for. Learn more about the Garden Greenways Project at the annual member meeting on May 23rd and help us create the vision for this space and our community. Thanks to an anonymous donor, every dollar donated to the acquisition project will be doubled up to \$75,000! That means if we can raise \$75,000 – we'll meet our goal. We are asking that contributions beyond our goal be put toward establishing pathways and garden space for school gardens. Thank you all for helping us envision and build our vibrant community!



Both pages clockwise from above: Plans for the SLT Garden Greenways Project; Keith Whipple and a rescued cottonwood; installing Solar Panels on a barn at Scott River Ranch; workshop participants identifying forest restoration opportunities; volunteers maintaining the forest on the Wherrit Tract.





## Farewell from the President's Desk

The Siskiyou Land Trust is continuing to bring itself up to current business and legal practice standards that will allow us to approach donors with appropriate professionalism. The board has been fantastic in drafting financial handling and oversight policies that are a must in today's business climate. As we implement these policies, we are ensuring that our member donations fulfill our conservation mission to the fullest extent possible.

We continue the process and search for hiring a Development Director to aid the organization's short-term financial needs and to ensure long-term financial success. The Land Trust Board considers the DD position a necessary investment in our future. We cannot take on the number of projects that interested landowners have brought to us without increasing the organization's capacity.

The DD will be responsible for applying for additional grants, expanding our donor base, developing a planned giving program and establishing an acquisition fund to provide the SLT with permanent financial resources. The DD will also assist the board with budget, financial, and monthly tasks. Initially, this position will be paid for by grant funds and a small amount of Land Trust savings. The long-term intent is for the DD to raise the capital to pay for this position and other operational expenses.

The SLT has been a great experience for me. I have truly enjoyed working with the board. Kathleen is a jewel and I can't say enough great things about her. Last, but not least, the volunteers at SLT are really the best. If you aren't one now, become one just so you can get to know these great people.

Thank you for supporting SLT, and may everyone have an enjoyable spring and summer. Peace on Earth.

*Belinda Higuera, Outgoing Board President*



## Helping Hands

A big thank you to all of our volunteers whose time and effort supports local land conservation! Last year, volunteers contributed over 2,500 hours helping with everything from bookkeeping, communications, newsletter, events, educational outreach, presentations, caretaking Sisson Meadow and Hammond Pond, growing gardens, monitoring easements, collecting data, and sharing input to help us hone our vision. Our Board and committees meet monthly to plan and implement land trust projects and activities.

Consider volunteering for one of the following:

**Fourth of July Booth:** Will you be in the area for the 4th of July festivities in Mount Shasta? We'll need docents on July 4th and 5th to give tours and volunteers to man our booth. **Monitoring our Lands:** SLT needs volunteers to assist with conservation easement monitoring. This will take a few days in June. We also need help establishing annual monitoring protocols for Sisson Meadow and Hammond Pond.



**Education:** We would love to get a few volunteers to put curriculum together for Sisson Meadow. We've talked to several teachers who use Sisson Meadow regularly, but haven't had the people power to make it happen. This could be an opportunity for someone who is looking for grant writing experience Or help us with these: **Garden Greenways Acquisition Campaign, Electronic Document Database, Scientific Advisors and Input, Outreach & Membership.** Email or call for additional information!



Above: *The end of an old friend. We counted a hundred and forty eight rings... so the tree was about 148 years old! The tree died early this winter so we wanted to bring it down while it could still be salvaged for lumber. Future barn repairs in the making!* -Scott Valley Ranch

Below: This is a train trestle on the future Rails to Trail route from McCloud to Burney. It may look familiar: this bridge was part of a pivotal scene in the movie *Stand By Me*.

## Siskiyou Land Trust

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## SLT Board Members

Susie Boyd, John Brennan, Stacy Smith, Leslie Andrews; Roger Kosel, John Schuyler, Sam Baxter; Steve Bollock

## Conservation Director

Kathleen Hitt

**Newsletter** Claire Tenscher

Additional Photos and Text: Kathleen Hitt, Whipple and Plank Families

## Calendar of Events:

**May 23 – July 6th**

Garden Greenways Acquisition Campaign

**May 24**

Forest Stewardship Series: Community Forest Presentation @ Sisson Museum

**May 27-29**

Garden Greenways Project Tours – 11:00 and 1:00 Sign Up by phone or e-mail

**June 27, 28**

Northern California Land Trust Conference: Fortuna, CA

Connecting Land and People: Farms, Fish, and Forest for Future Generations

**July 4th & 5th:**

Mt. Shasta 4th of July Booth

Volunteer Appreciation day and Meadow Cleanup TBA

Thank you all for supporting the Siskiyou Land Trust. Help comes in all shapes and sizes, and we recognize that every bit makes a big difference. We are so thankful for community participation and continue to learn how to connect your incredible talents with opportunities to share them at the land trust.

**May 23 is our Annual SLT Meeting.**

**7:00PM at Sisson Museum**

**See you there!**