

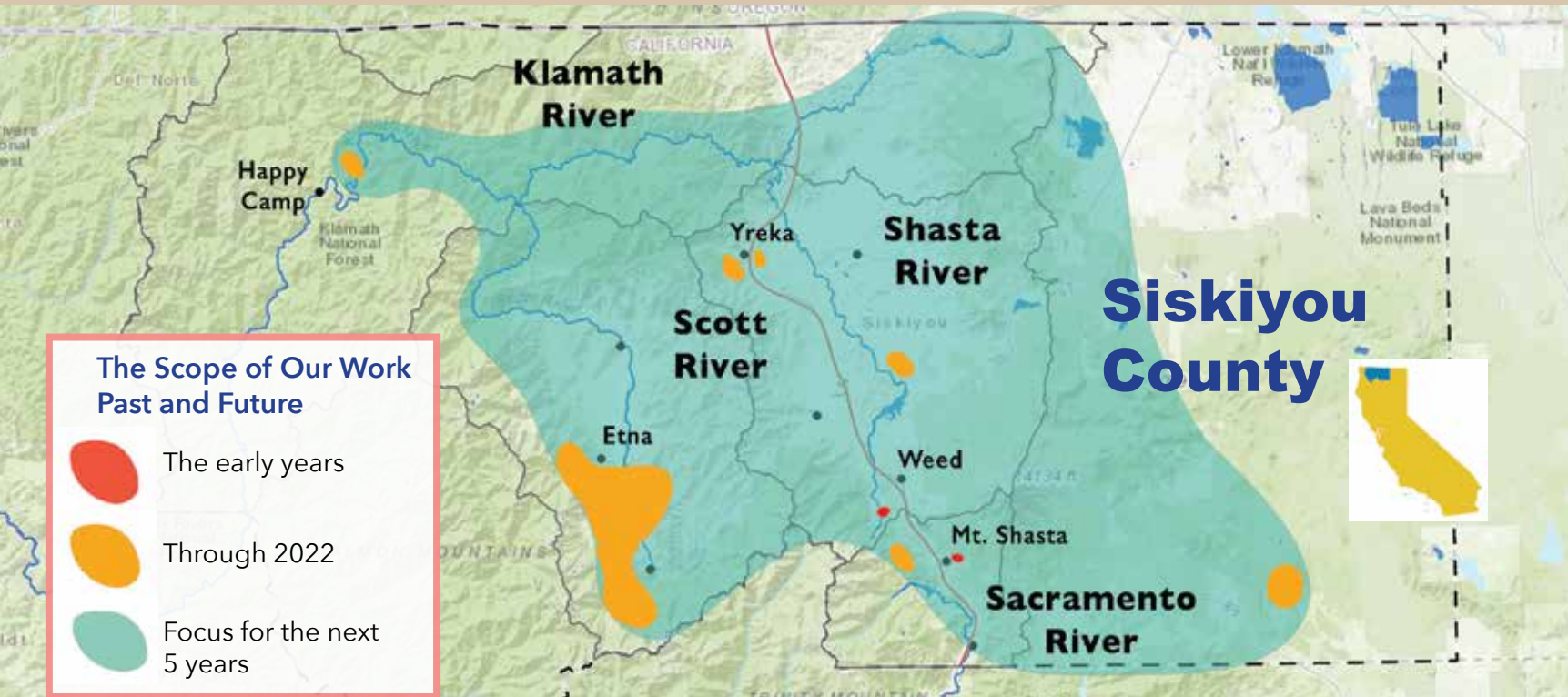


2021-2022

Annual Report

Siskiyou Land Trust

Connectivity over the Decades and into the Future



An Ambitious Goal: The U.S. has joined an international movement with the goal of conserving 30% of terrestrial and marine habitat by 2030 (“30x30”). This goal is in alignment with Siskiyou Land Trust’s long term conservation vision of connecting landscapes of open space and wild land corridors to leverage our impact. **We intend to contribute to the 30x30 effort in a big way by permanently conserving 100,000 acres by 2030.**

Cover photo of Thompson Creek Conservation Easement by Mike Hupp, Dawn Patrol Images. Back cover photo from Novy Ranches.

Message from the Board President

Dear Community,

Whether we are connecting large tracts of conserved lands to protect California's headwaters, working with partner agencies to create new opportunities, or engaging our volunteers to deepen their sense of investment in the community that sustains us, the effectiveness of Siskiyou Land Trust's work is exponentially magnified by these connections.



Maintaining the connections is not always easy, though. With more projects and bigger goals, our Board and small, dedicated staff have been challenged to keep our connections strong. As we expand our team in the coming year and reengage with our volunteers, we plan to lean even more deeply into the connections that make Siskiyou Land Trust so uniquely impactful.

In these challenging times, Siskiyou Land Trust is proud to be a force for strengthening our bonds to each other and to our natural landscapes.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Wendy Whitson".

Board of Directors

Wendy Whitson, *President*
Mt. Shasta

Dorinda Thompson, *Vice President*
Gazelle

John Whitson, *Treasurer*
Mt. Shasta

Gareth Plank, *Secretary & Land*
Acquisition Committee Chair, Etna

Rod Merys, *Mt. Shasta*

Steve Bollock, *Mt. Shasta*

David Tucker, *Lake Shastina*

Bruce Berlinger, *McCloud*

Staff

Kathleen Hitt,
Executive Director

Kristin Davis,
Grant and Office Administrator

Ed Stanton,
Conservation Project Manager

Peter Townley,
Stewardship Manager

Laura Bradley,
Stewardship Associate

Kim Solga,
Outreach Coordinator



Conservation Projects: Laying the Ground Work for the Future

Agricultural Lands, Riparian Corridors

- Scott River watershed- Spencer and Fowle Ranches Ag CEs
- Shasta River watershed - Novy Ranches - Gazelle and Grenada Ag CEs



Forest Land, Riparian Corridors, Wetlands, Source Waters

- Scott River headwaters - Shackleford Forest CE
- Upper Sac/Fall River headwaters - Upper Bear Creek Forest CE



Wildlands & Source Waters

- Shasta River headwaters - Soap Creek/China Hill-Yreka Phlox, Brennan CE
- Upper Sacramento headwaters - Luginbuhl Ranch

◀ *Our active projects: Spencer Ranch Phase 2, Luginbuhl Ranch, China Hill Phlox*

Organizational Growth: Increasing Capacity to Embrace Opportunity

The face of Siskiyou Land Trust has changed in a number of exciting ways this year. After many years of inspired leadership, Board President Rod Merys and Executive Director Renee Casterline have turned over the reins to a new team. Board member Wendy Whitson took over as President in May, and Conservation Director Kathleen Hitt has stepped into the Executive Director position this Fall. Wendy and Kathleen are excited to guide Siskiyou Land Trust as it enters a new era and are grateful for all that Rod and Renee have done to bring the organization forward.

We've also hired Peter Townley as our Stewardship Director and Kristin Davis as our Grant and Administrative Coordinator. As Kathleen transitions into her new role, we'll also be hiring a second Conservation Project Manager to make sure we can take advantage of all the exciting opportunities before us.

With this expansion, the days of one person doing five jobs will be nearly over, and staff will have breathing room to focus on their areas of expertise. The expansion will give us the bandwidth to step into the next stage of growth, which includes pursuing Land Trust Alliance Accreditation and updating our strategic plan.



Rod and Renee



Wendy and Kathleen



Peter and Kristin

Lessons Learned About Staying Connected

What we Learned from the Ridge Fire

Late in the evening on June 26, 2022, a fire broke out on a portion of Rainbow Ridge. It affected National Forest Service land and adjacent private properties including Siskiyou Land Trust's Wherrit forest. Thankfully, there were plenty of resources available and the fire was limited to a total of about 12 acres, only one of which was on SLT's property. But it was a long and frightening night. Among the lessons we learned are:

The power of partnership: Jefferson Resource Company (JRC), our forestry partner, provided us with streamlined, current information about the situation and enabled us to support CalFire first responders quickly. They also met with us after the fire regarding mitigation and clean up. Their support and resources were critical both as the fire was active and in planning how to move forward afterward.

The power of community: Neighbors adjacent to the SLT property joined us in inspecting the damage, talking with JRC about how to manage risk in future and sharing fire mitigation efforts they have taken on their properties. We also recruited a small group of neighbors to act as stewards and monitor the roads and trails for safety.

The power of looking to the future: We were so very lucky that the fire was limited in scope and recognize that it could have been much, much worse. We intend to use this near miss to not only manage the forest into the future in way which will mitigate risk but to act as an example to others. Working with Shasta Valley Resource Conservation District, we are planning to use the property as a Demonstration Forest illustrating options for fuels reduction and bringing healthy fire back onto the landscape.

◀ *Firefighter on the Ridge Fire, June 2022 – Photo by J.Thompson*



What We Learned Amid Isolation

When the pandemic shutdowns started in early 2020, we never imagined that we'd still be limiting our contact with others well over two years later. The social isolation has impacted us all deeply on many levels yet also taught us some very important things:

Volunteers leverage our impact: SLT is only able to accomplish our mission when we connect with our dedicated volunteers. So many of the places we love that were historically cared for by our volunteers have suffered over the past two years. Sisson Meadow definitely missed the attention brought by those who previously worked to keep this treasure pristine. Thankfully, a core of volunteers kept the SLT garden going and growing. Our group fundraising efforts and social connections also suffered from the difficulty in gathering during the pandemic. Our volunteers are essential to community vitality.

New ways of connecting can extend our community: While many of us tire of Zoom meetings and long to see each other in person again, SLT has learned that virtual meetings and events can be an effective way to engage supporters who don't live in Siskiyou County. As we plan to reconnect in person, we will work to include remote options that give folks outside the area a continuing way to stay connected.

It is important to stay connected to our past: The pandemic also affected our ability to stay in touch with our alumni board members. This group is an incredible resource of history, perspective and experience. We're happy to have been able to reconnect at a Board Alumni Gathering this past summer. We intend to continue to strengthen those bonds as we move forward.

Volunteers kept the garden flourishing in the early days of COVID. ►



Looking Ahead: A Thoughtful Approach

Complimentary Conservation

When identifying potential partnerships and properties, we consider how these relationships fit into our larger vision. We look to see what is conserved on the landscape, and where we can make meaningful connections and strategies.

As we set the ambitious goal of protecting 100,000 acres by 2030, we are actively exploring big questions about what is important to our communities and ecosystems. What could the landscape of our forests and ag lands be in Siskiyou County to support climate change resilience? Where do we need to focus Land Trust tools for sourcewater protection? We recognize the importance of Siskiyou County ecosystems to areas well beyond our boundaries. Our lands, our waters and even our airways support immense biodiversity. How can we maximize our capacity and effectiveness while we still have opportunities to work with willing landowners to keep these landscapes intact?





Planning for Climate Change Resilience

Siskiyou Land Trust's current projects are adding 18,500-acres of forest, ag and wildland conservation to the existing 36,000-acres of land we currently steward. As we look to the future, we anticipate adding the following projects to additionally enhance climate change resilience:

Ag CE Acquisitions **10,000-acres**
River corridors, carbon sequestration, soil conservation, biodiversity, habitats, local economy.

Forest CE Acquisitions **35,000-acres**
Sourcewater protection, carbon sequestration, biodiversity, habitats, local economy.

Wildlands and Public Spaces **500-acres**
Biodiversity, species recovery, wetlands, public awareness, stewardship, access and trails.

Strategic Partnerships: Professional & Community Connections

Acquisition Partners form the foundation of our work, and they represent the expansion of the lands we can protect. Our partners include agencies, organizations, individuals and willing landowners working with SLT on project development.

Forests: Past and current partners include CalFire, CA Wildlife Conservation Board, Shasta Valley Resource Conservation District, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, CA Dept. of Fish and Wildlife, EFM, Shasta Cascade Broadcasting, FWS Forestry, Western Rivers Conservancy, The Nature Conservancy, Bella Vista Foundation, Jefferson Resource Company, Thamer family, Glen Blakesley and Tina von Moltke, Ward family, Kate Luginbuhl, Thamar Wherrit and many more.

Ag: Partners in agricultural conservation include CA Department of Conservation, Natural Resources Conservation Service, Siskiyou Resource Conservation District, Bella Vista Foundation, CA Wildlife Conservation Board, Scott River Water Trust, Keith and Harrie Whipple, Gareth Plank, Melinda Whipple-Smith Plank, Jennifer Whipple, John and Carol Spencer, Jeff and Erin Fowle, Melanie Fowle, Dr. Novy, Judy Novy Holmes, Justin Holmes and many more.

Wildlands, Trails and Public Spaces: Partners include CA Resources Agency, Scott Valley Bank, Mt. Shasta Trail Association, Mountain Runners, Mountain Wheelers, Mt. Shasta Rotary, CA Wildlife Conservation Board, Susie Boyd, Sam Baxter, Tom Hesseldenz, Doug Carter, Chuck Ryan, Joe and Michael Wirth, Jane Riggs, Crystal Geysler, Lakeside Homeowners Association, Al Kennedy, Judith Anderson, Joan and Gary Tillotson, US Fish and Wildlife Service, CA Department Fish and Wildlife and many more.

◀ *Rainbow Ridge near Mt. Shasta is preserved as a sanctuary for wildlife and native forest*

Stewardship Partners provide critical support for our commitment to care for the lands we have preserved in perpetuity.

Professional Stewards: As we learned during the Ridge Fire, our relationship with our forestry partner, Jefferson Resource Company, brings with it so many unanticipated benefits. We also partner with the Scott River Watershed Council, Scott River Water Trust, Mt. Shasta Trail Association, Streamwise, Timberworks, Fish & Wildlife Service and Resource Conservation Districts to increase the effectiveness of our stewardship.

Community Stewards: Our neighbors, volunteers, supporters and conservation easement landowners all participate in caring for the properties we have conserved. For example, Rainbow Ridge, Sisson Meadow, the SLT Garden Greenway, Spring Hill and Kingston Meadow trails are kept in a safe condition by our community stewards and partners. And let us not forget that 35,000 acres of our conserved lands are cared for on a daily basis by our landowner partners.

Stewardship Education: Through their work at the SLT Community Garden, a group of parents and children organized through the Mt. Shasta Resource Center have not only produced food for local families, they have also planted the seeds of connection with nature in our next generation of stewards. Our garden partner, Kara Saunders of Bear Wallow Herbs, hosts an apprenticeship program for herbal gardening and medicine making. With the hiring of our new stewardship manager, we look forward to expanding our education programs in the coming years.

Volunteers gather for trail work at the Garden Greenway in Mt. Shasta ►



Working Towards Accreditation

What it means to be an Accredited Land Trust

The Land Trust Alliance, our national leader in land trust standards, administers a rigorous program to certify that a land trust follows best practices to support conservation in perpetuity. Because our conservation obligations last forever, land trusts are held to a higher standard than other nonprofits. Accreditation help us achieve the capacity to protect our holdings over this infinite timeframe. Siskiyou Land Trust is committed to working toward LTA Accreditation over the next two years.

Benefits of Accreditation

- Donors want to give to effective, well-run organizations. Accreditation assures them that our land trust is a good investment.
- Land owners are assured that we will be able to carry out their conservation vision in perpetuity.
- Accreditation makes it easier to meet the strict funding requirements for grant recipients.
- Land trusts who go through the accreditation process say that it improves their policies and programs and makes them stronger.
- Accreditation can entitle a land trust to discounts on insurance and other perks as they are less risky to insure.
- The increased efficiency that Accreditation will bring gives SLT the capacity we need to embrace the unprecedented opportunities before us.



What it takes to get accredited

The accreditation process requires a significant fiscal and time commitment. It includes, among other things, updating corporate foundational documents and our strategic plan, updating and implementing financial and operational policies, conservation practices and employment policies. The preparation to apply takes several years, and the process to become accredited may take yet another two years. The application fee for an organization our size is over \$12,000 and the total investment of time and resources in the process will likely exceed \$200,000.

Why we are ready to start this process now

The explosive growth of our conservation work over the past several years has pushed us to a new level at which we must be accredited in order to fully function and take advantage of opportunities before us. With the capacity added by our new staff members, our energetic and visionary Executive Director, and an engaged and focused board of directors, we are well situated to achieve this ambitious goal.

Where Accreditation will take SLT

As a fully accredited land trust, SLT will join the ranks of the top conservation organizations in the country and will be here to do this work now and in the future.

“Accreditation is the single most important step the land trust community has taken in the last decade to advance the quality of land trust operations and secure the public’s trust.”

— Rand Wentworth,
Land Trust Alliance

Entrance to the community trail at Sisson Meadow in Mt. Shasta ►



Financial Summary 2021/2022

The scope of our projects is not confined to a single year so financial results for one year in isolation don't quite show the whole picture. We are making investments for the future this year that will pay off in the years to come. We currently have ten active acquisition projects, five of which are scheduled to close during the 2022-2023 fiscal year. We have also increased our stewardship focus as an investment for the future. This year the Board committed to increasing project capacity by investing in staffing and staff benefits.



Gifts big and small

Whether you are making a monthly donation of \$5 or a gift of thousands, every single donation makes a real difference. The cumulative effect of a large number of smaller contributions forms a significant piece of our annual budget while the larger donations help us leap forward. We're grateful for every hard-earned penny you choose to donate and couldn't do our work without your support.

The graph shows this past year's donations coming to us from many sources.

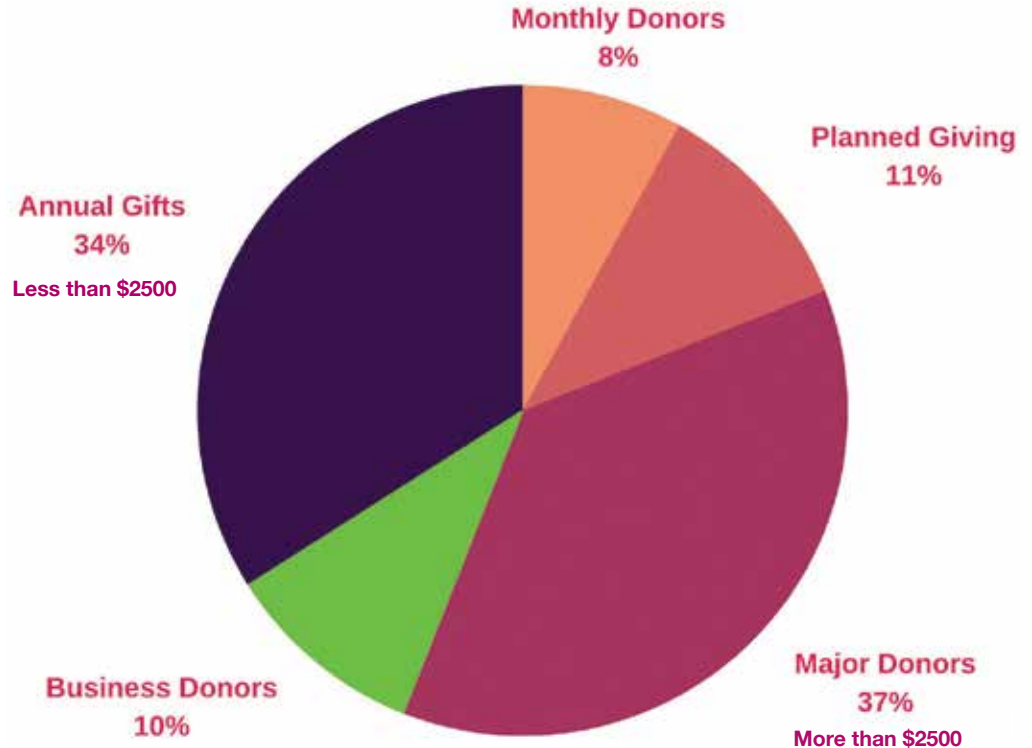
Monthly Donors: from 27 people.

Planned Giving: gifts from estate and financial planning.

Major Donors with gifts over \$2500 in the year: from 5 individuals.

Business Donors: sponsorships from 7 businesses near and far.

Annual Gifts less than \$2500: donations less than \$2500 and down to \$10: from 220 people.





What We Need to Accomplish Our Goals

Conservation work has several different phases, some of which are eligible for grant funding, while other phases of the work require private donors and community support.



The vast majority of the grant funding we receive is for our Acquisition projects, specifically the real estate transaction. Project development and stewardship of lands we own, as well as our strategic planning and operations are not covered by grants. This represents 35% to 40% of our total operating budget. This is the substantial “gap” that we must look to our supporters to help us fill.

In our current state of growth and transition, we are adding staff to increase our capacity while trying, at the same time, to build our financial foundation. Thanks to the generous bequest from Thamar Wheritt, we have some breathing room to stretch our capacity without going into debt. We recognize that this leap forward will require a fundraising “push” beyond what we’ve done in the past. We believe that once that foundation has been laid, there will be no limits to what we can do to preserve our precious open spaces and wild landscapes.

How You Can Help



Monthly Donor: Marty Sochet is one of the supporters who has opted to make a monthly pledge to SLT. This regular income goes a long way to help us even out the peaks and valleys of our cash flow. By making regular monthly donations, you too can have a big impact over time. **Schedule your monthly donation by clicking DONATE at siskiyoulandtrust.org or phone our office at 530-926-2259.**



Required Minimum Distributions: The Sandas have set up an automatic monthly donation sent to SLT directly from their IRA account which saves them taxes and makes supporting the work we do so very easy. **Talk to your tax advisor when you do your year end planning about RMDs and QCDs.**



Gifts Throughout the Year: Susie Boyd has given generously to SLT every year for decades. These donations provide the foundation of our non-grant income and are essential to our continued operations. **Donate on-line or send your tax-deductible check to SLT, PO Box 183, Mt. Shasta CA 96067.**



Business Sponsorships and Matching Gifts: Berryvale Grocery in Mt. Shasta has sponsored SLT annually in recognition of the fact that conservation matters to their employees and to their customers. **For details on the benefits for your business, call Wendy at 707-695-9093.**



Planned Giving: In addition to their regular donations, Sam and Kris Baxter have left a gift to SLT in their estate plan. These pledges create a legacy for future generations and propel SLT forward in a significant way. **Talk to your estate planner or attorney to add SLT to your estate giving.**



Giving Tuesday: The Community Foundation of the NorthState champions generosity in our region, including hosting the NorthStateGives.org on-line charitable donation platform each year on the Tuesday after Thanksgiving. Giving Tuesday began in 2011 and has become a global generosity movement unleashing the power of people and organizations to transform their communities and the world. **You can help SLT give generously to the land at NorthStateGives.org/SLT or in-person at our office on November 29.**

Thank You Land Trust Supporters

For 29 years, Siskiyou Land Trust has been focused on long-term stewardship of agricultural, forest and wildlands in Siskiyou County. Every one of our donors has made this possible. We're deeply grateful for each of you.

Cheers to our monthly donors indicated with *. Their regular and dependable gifts are so very helpful to the Land Trust!

Joan Adams
Dorian Aiello
Sharon Allen
Regan Anderlini
Flo Anderson
Sherry Anderson
Kevin & Michelle Andras
Leslie Andrews *
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Jennifer Arneson
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Alfred Winter *
Joe & Michael Wirth
Kate Yorke
Janet Zalewski
Noam Zimin
Barbara & Steven Zlotowski

Support SLT on Giving Tuesday
Tuesday, November 29th
6am to 8pm

NorthStateGives.org/SLT

This year help us raise \$75,000!

Early Giving opens on
Nov. 15th for scheduling
donations ahead of time.



This year we will
celebrate together again!

Come on down to the SLT Office
on Giving Tuesday from 4-8pm for
refreshments and excitement.

Siskiyou Land Trust
522 Alma Street, Mt. Shasta, CA 96067



530.926.2259

www.siskiyoulandtrust.org