

Siskiyou Land Trust at a Glance

Dear Community,

The Board of Directors is so proud of the ways Siskiyou Land Trust's incredible growth over this past year translates into real improvements in the quality of life for all. Our conservation growth means more land, plants, animals, views, working lands, and watersheds have been permanently protected. The expansion of our outreach programs provides more ways for community members to connect with the natural environment through education, outdoor experiences, and volunteer opportunities. The expansion of our staff has created more local, high-quality jobs which inject resources back into our economy.

We recognize that growth can bring increased risk as we take on the burden of sustaining a larger operation into the future. Through sophisticated financial forecasting tools and development of new streams of grant and donor income, we are taking on the challenges of expansion with our "eyes wide open" and a determination to build a sustainable, enduring organization. With the continued support of our amazing community of donors, volunteers and land-owner partners, there is no limit to what we can accomplish together.

Since 1993, Siskiyou Land Trust has permanently conserved:

41,782 - acres

Riparian & Open Space Conservation Easements
313 acres

Agricultural Conservation Easements **6,409 acres**

Forest Conservation Easements **33,384 acres**

Lands Owned and Stewarded by SLT 1,676 acres

21 Properties

protected forever through conservation easements and land ownership

Wendy Whitson Board President

This year...

2000+ volunteer hours

supported the mission of Siskiyou Land Trust

250 volunteer hours

helped restore habitat in Sisson Meadow

30 nature walks

engaged over 300 community members

700 native plants

planted to support biodiversity

75 butterfly species

identified with community partners, demonstrating regional biodiversity and a healthy ecosystem

Siskiyou Land Trust permanently conserves and stewards the irreplaceable wild places, watersheds, and working lands that are the heart of Siskiyou County.



The Siskiyou Land Trust's office and conserved properties are located on the ancestral lands of the Shasta, Winnemem Wintu, Karuk, Modoc, Yurok, Klamath, Okwanuchu, and Wintu peoples.

It is essential to protect and honor the history and people of these places. The Land Trust is committed to building a culture of inclusion to amplify and value indigenous voices as we move forward to steward these conserved lands.

Meet the Team



Administration and OperationsKathleen Hitt, Kristin Davis, Sara Cowan



Land Acquisition ProgramAlexis Robertson, Jessica Matthews



Stewardship and Outreach ProgramsHannah Link, Peter Townley, Emily Williamson, Laura Bradley



Summer Stewardship Intern Seth Bleazard

"As I've climbed and skied, and come to love the land, I've gained a sense of responsibility to be a steward. The best way to learn to love the land is to spend time working for it."

- Seth Bleazard Summer Stewardship Intern



Board of Directors

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Alexis Robertson, Land Acquisition Program Director
Kristin Davis, Grant & Administrative Coordinator
Laura Bradley, Stewardship Manager
Peter Townley, Stewardship Manager
Hannah Link, Conservation Coordinator
Jessica Matthews, Conservation Project Manager
Emily Williamson, Conservation Coordinator
Sara Cowan, Administrative Assistant
Seth Bleazard, Summer Stewardship Intern
Erica Harris, Stewardship Program Director (joined fall 2024)

"We've expanded our Board of Directors to eleven members (with six of those joining in just the last 18 months) and have the momentum, skills, and dedication to meet the opportunities before us in a responsible, balanced way."

> - Wendy Whitson Siskiyou Land Trust Board President

Celebrating this Year's Accomplishments



Brennan Tract of the Shasta River Riperian Conservation Easement

John and Susan Brennan generously placed twenty acres of vital Shasta River riparian corridor and adjacent meadow into a conservation easement with SLT. Their gift protects this precious land and its ecosystems and ensures it will remain a part of their family's legacy for generations to come. By choosing conservation, the Brennans are safeguarding California's natural beauty and reducing the financial burden on their heirs, showing how we can all make a difference by protecting the places we love.

Luginbuhl Ranch Preserve

2024 marks a momentous year for the Siskiyou Land Trust, as a longtime dream became reality with the acquisition of the Luginbuhl Ranch. This breathtaking landscape, rich with natural beauty, history and biodiversity, now stands as a symbol of our unwavering commitment to protecting the lands that define our community.





Upper Bear Creek Forest Conservation Easement

SLT is thrilled to announce the protection of 4,768 acres of working forest, home to extensive meadows, aspen groves, and riparian woodlands. This headwaters landscape protected in partnership with New Forests, was made possible by the CA Wildlife Conservation Board, CalFire, and the Trust for Public Land, who championed the project during the challenges of COVID. Together, we've ensured that this remarkable ecosystem will thrive for decades to come, benefiting wildlife, local communities, and the environment.

Looking Forward Together: Conservation Legacies in the Making

Novy Ranch Agricultural Conservation Easements

In 2025, Doc Novy and his family will take a significant step to protect the future of Siskiyou County, placing two properties totaling 2,326 acres under agricultural easements. By doing so, the Novys join a growing community of dedicated landowners, who have partnered with Siskiyou Land Trust to conserve their historic ranches, the biodiversity they host and rural heritage. It's a powerful reminder that through conservation, we all play a part in protecting the landscapes and traditions that make Siskiyou County so special.



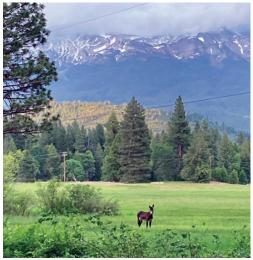


Shackleford Forest Conservation Easement

This year marks a significant milestone as SLT finalizes the third forest conservation easement in partnership with landowner EFM. The Shackleford CE will protect over 12,000 acres and will join the Whiskey and Wildcat forest easements to create a vast, interconnected network of nearly 40,000 acres of conserved forestland in the Scott River Headwaters.

Rainbow Ridge Forest Conservation Easements

Thanks to support from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy, SLT is able to partner with neighbors to the north and south on Rainbow Ridge to develop forest conservation easement projects next to SLT's Wherrit Forest to safeguard these vital lands from the growing threats of development in the wildland urban interface along the Interstate-5 corridor.



Learning to Live with Fire



Community Partnerships Making a Difference

Learning to live with wildfire and managing working forests during catastrophic wildfire events is challenging. Siskiyou Land Trust is dedicated to working with our landowner partners to navigate these situations. In the case of the 2024 Shelly Fire, preventative fuels reduction work conducted by our easement landowners (EFM) with stewardship partners, played a vital role in protecting adjacent forest lands and surrounding communities. Work included shaded fuel breaks, removal of small diameter trees, and prescribed fire. Their effective fire mitigation and defensible space practices set a valuable example for how to protect communities near other working forests in Siskiyou County.

Why Limiting Development in the WUI Matters

A Conservation Easement in the Wildland-Urban Interface (WUI) means more than conserving habitat. When confronted with fire, we are reminded of the importance of limiting development in these areas. Had these hillsides not been protected from residential development, much more damage would have occurred. The forest served as a critical line of defense for all of Scott Valley's communities.

Whiskey Forest CE post-fire visit

Collaborating with Partners on Rainbow Ridge

Working Toward Defensible Space

We look to EFM's example of fire mitigation and creation of defensible space in Scott Valley with the hope that our own efforts on Rainbow Ridge will similarly protect the surrounding forest communities. Under the West Mount Shasta Forest Resiliency Program (WMSFRP), Siskiyou Land Trust engaged in targeted thinning, brush reduction, and shaded fuel break work along the northern and southern ridges. This work prepares the way for returning fire to the land through use of prescribed fire in partnership with CalFire and the Siskiyou Prescribed Burn Association in consultation with local tribes. While we all learn to live with smoky skies and a changing forest landscape, we are grateful to our partners at Jefferson Resource Company for their work in crafting a safer, more sustainable forest.

"Any time you remove combustible fuels from the natural landscape you're going to have a net positive effect on improving your suppression efforts and fire resilient outcome."

- Jeremy Ravenscroft Registered Professional Forest, Siskiyou Unit CalFire



Ridge Incident 2022 (photo by John Thomas)

Listening: The Journey to Steward Luginbuhl Ranch

After acquiring the Luginbuhl Ranch, whose headwaters hold deep significance for numerous Indigenous tribes and are vital to Siskiyou County and the state of California, the Siskiyou Land Trust sought guidance from local tribal members on how to care for this extraordinary land. The wisdom we received was profound: take it slow, listen deeply, get to know the land intimately, and let its needs and wonders shape our plans.

As Karuk Tribal Council member and SLT Board member Aaron "Troy" Hockaday shared, when people come to tribes with a finished plan for tribal input, they have already made up their minds. With that sentiment in mind, SLT spent the summer and fall deeply listening to nature, all that makes this place its home, and to our community. SLT Board and staff invited small groups of community members to experience the preserve, soaking in unobstructed views of Mount Shasta and Black Butte, exploring the rare beauty of Darlingtonia and shooting star fens, and allowing the land itself to inspire and inform how we move forward.

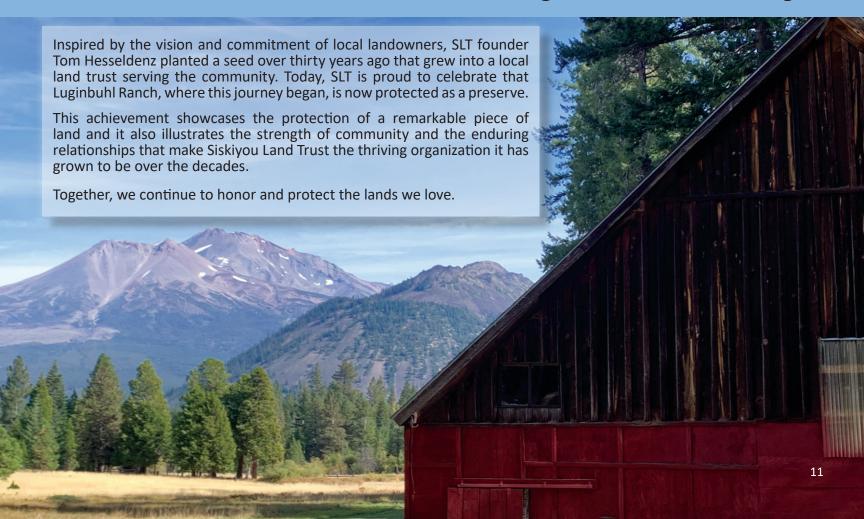
This journey is about more than stewardship - it's about forging a relationship with the land, guided by patience, respect, and deep listening. As we walk this path, we are reminded that true care for the land begins with understanding its voice and honoring the wisdom it holds.

Luginbuhl Ranch is located on the ancestral lands of the Shasta Nation. Its waters are considered ancestral waters of several Indigenous peoples.



Eye-spotted skimmer (photo by Steve Huckabone)

Preserving the Heart of SLT Heritage



Growing the Next Generation of Naturalists



Garden Pathways of Connection

For 15 years, the Land Trust's Garden Greenway has flourished, expanding in both scope and community use. This year, our partnership with the Family Resource Center and First 5 Siskiyou introduced a weekly program that invited young children and their families to explore, learn, and connect with nature through crafts in a safe outdoor environment. By fostering play and nurturing a connection to the earth through caring for flowers, fruits, and vegetables, we aim to inspire a lifelong love for the land, supporting both healthy development and a deep appreciation for nature to be shared across generations.

"The garden serves as an outdoor classroom, where every experience is a learning opportunity. It allows children to engage with nature directly, fostering a deep connection to nature while they explore and discover."

- Krista Weagraff, First 5 Siskiyou



Children bring joy and delight to SLT's Garden

Together We Cultivate Community

Friends of the Meadow

When the community cares for SLT's preserves, both the land and its caretakers thrive. SLT's Friends of the Meadow volunteer group exemplifies this collaboration, connecting volunteers and staff while enhancing habitats for native plants, pollinators, and wildlife. This year, meadow volunteers removed a significant amount of Canada thistle by hand to support a non-toxic approach to wet meadow stewardship. Sisson Meadow, open daily to Mt. Shasta locals and visitors, flourishes through the combined efforts of community volunteers and SLT staff. If you've ever enjoyed strolling the Sisson Meadow boardwalk, sat at one of its benches to contemplate the view and take a break from your busy day, or walked through the meadow for a beautiful path into town, consider what the Land Trust and these community green spaces mean to you.



"I love working with the SLT staff and hearing about the many programs they are planning. Also, it's great meeting others who enjoy similar activities."

> - Steve Huckabone, Volunteer and photographer

Weekly Friends of the Meadow volunteers



Partnerships Transform Land and Community

Life in the Meadow

Funding from the US Fish and Wildlife Partners Program, Mt. Shasta Rotary, and guidance from local restoration partner StreamWise made the Sisson Meadow project possible. SLT is grateful for their support in installing 30 willow weirs and 1,500 sq. ft. of pollinator gardens in Sisson Meadow and the Garden Greenway. Crafted from willow harvested from the meadow, these weirs slow water flow, allowing it to seep into the soil and raise the water table, essential for supporting native plants and wildlife. This project shows how community collaboration keeps our natural landscapes thriving.





Monarch Butterfly (photo by Caitlin Bean)

Native Plants for Pollinator Gardens

A generous donation of 700 native plants from Union Pacific Railroad is helping create thriving habitats for pollinators and wildlife in Sisson Meadow and the Garden Greenway. Dedicated staff and SLT volunteers planted young sprouts with care throughout the year. Soon they will grow into vibrant blooms that attract and support butterflies, bees, and birds. Next time you're in the area, look around and enjoy these new plants transforming our landscapes and ehancing biodiversity.

Community Conversations: Presentation Series

This year, SLT's Sisson Slideshow series, in partnership with the Sisson Museum, brought people together for engaging presentations on wildfire resilience, Klamath region geology, river restoration after dam removal, and nature photography. These evenings foster shared learning and connection, with local experts generously sharing their insights. A heartfelt thank you to our presenters and the Sisson Museum for creating space for these important community conversations that shape our landscapes and lives.



Journey Through Nature

This year, Stewardship Manager Laura Bradley and the SLT Board led over thirty enchanting nature walks and talks that captivated hearts and minds, from the graceful dance of dragonflies to the wonder of stargazing and the art of native plant propagation. SLT was thrilled to welcome more than 300 participants on these learning adventures, where community and nature intertwine!





Western Tanager (photo by Steve Huckabone)

Birds of a Feather

SLT's partnership with the Audubon Society leverages resources to enrich our community and enhance our shared love for the natural world. This year, we collaborated on initiatives like the Christmas Bird Count and nature walks to celebrate the vibrant avian life in Siskiyou County. Audubon has also donated the bird boxes, baths, and feeders found in the SLT Garden that benefit local wildlife. Together, we are fostering a beautiful, bird-friendly community.

Developing Regional Partnerships

This year, SLT staff embarked on two inspiring journeys to Redding to connect with the Shasta and Northern California Regional Land Trusts. These gatherings were more than just meetings; they were transformative moments of collaboration and shared vision, centered around each land trust's commitment to conserving the beautiful landscapes of Northern California.



Growing Your Legacy of Conservation



Land Protection is All About Relationships - Landowner partners are the heart of conservation. Each person who approaches the Land Trust has a unique connection to the land and personal reasons for conserving it. If you're interested in protecting the land you love, reach out to us; your inquiries are confidential. Your commitment can help safeguard natural treasures for generations.

Giving in Relationship to Your Values - Your financial contributions play a vital role in SLT's work. This year, your support has covered nearly a quarter of SLT's conservation activities. When you choose to support conservation annually or monthly, you help sustain SLT's ability to protect the biodiversity, open spaces, and natural beauty of Northern California. Together, we make a difference in a world that needs it.

A Stronger Community Together - Business sponsors fuel conservation by supporting clean air, fresh water, and natural spaces that benefit all. Over \$25,000 in cash and in-kind contributions from businesses last year made an incredible impact across Siskiyou County. When your business joins SLT in caring for the land, we create a shared purpose that enriches local communities, the environment, and economies.

Guardians of Nature's Legacy - **Bequests** are a powerful way to build a lasting impact, ensuring that the beauty and diversity of our lands endure. SLT's leadership team can help you connect with planners or estate attorneys to make this legacy meaningful. This year, SLT nature walk leader and volunteer, Caitlin Bean elected to include SLT in her estate planning.

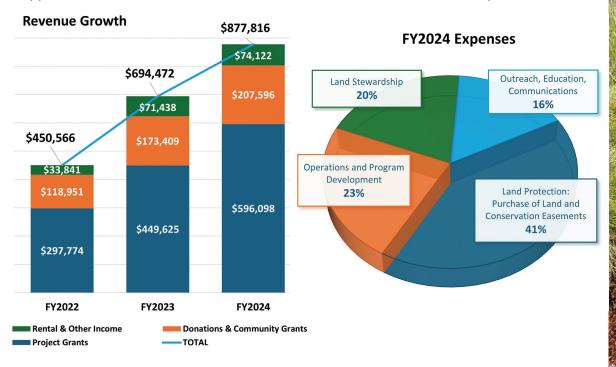
"I have been searching for an organization aligned with my values to leave my estate to, specifically one focused on local biological conservation. One reason I live here is Siskiyou County's natural beauty, so I wanted to support an organization dedicated to protecting it. This summer, as a volunteer, I got to know the staff at the Siskiyou Land Trust and visited the Luginbuhl Ranch. I'm delighted to leave my estate to them, as they perfectly meet my goals."

- Caitlin Bean, SLT Nature Walk Leader, Volunteer, Donor

Financial Report

Your Donations at Work

For every \$1 you donate, Siskiyou Land Trust generates an additional \$19 in grants and other funding for conservation in Siskiyou County. Last year, SLT leveraged over \$207k in donations from the community to total over \$4.5 million for conservation work. With your support, this trend will continue. Your donation will have 20 times the impact!







For over 30 years, Siskiyou Land Trust has worked to preserve agricultural, forest and wildlands in far northern California. Our donors make this possible. We're deeply grateful for each of you.

Active Donors January 2023 - September 2024 * Monthly Donors

Pacific Flyway migration cooridor, Novy Ranch, Shasta River Valley

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Darlingtonia 'cobra lily'



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Support SLT this Giving Tuesday December 3, 2024 NorthStateGives.org/SLT

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Front cover photo: Shooting star flowers by Mike Hupp
Back cover photo: Dragonfly, Emily Williamson