



The new bridge is in at Mitteldorf Preserve!

The long-awaited replacement of Bridge #10 at Mitteldorf Preserve is now complete. Since the Soberanes Fire in 2016 and subsequent heavy winter rains damaged the property, our stewardship team has been securing permits and funding to install the new bridge. In August, after salvaging plants in the affected area, completing a biological survey, and training the work crew on how to lessen impacts on biological resources, the process of removing the old bridge and installing the new one began.

The new bridge restores access to the lodge, Nature Loop trail, and the Dewing Redwood while also improving habitat for sensitive NOAA-designated steelhead trout.

Because of you, our generous donors, partners, and funders, this work was possible – and now hike reservations are open for Mitteldorf Preserve! Sign up at bigsurlandtrust.org/hike-request. Be one of the first to cross our new bridge – we know you want to!

Major NRCS fuel reduction project was also completed this summer

In mid-July, Big Sur Land Trust concluded the second phase of a two-part fire fuel reduction and forest stand improvement project at Mitteldorf Preserve. Implemented in partnership with the Natural Resource Conservation Service (NRCS), the project was supported financially and technically through the federal agency's Environmental Quality Improvement Program.

The goals of the "Catastrophic Fire Recovery Project" included reducing hazardous fire fuels to increase forest resilience, enhancing and protecting California spotted owl (*Strix occidentalis occidentalis*) habitat, safeguarding historic redwood structures, improving soil health and quality, helping to improve public safety by removing hazard trees, proactively removing Sudden Oak Death-affected tanoak, and reducing potential carbon emissions in the advent of another wildfire event.

Encompassing 138 acres, the project created defensible space at the lodge and the bunkhouse. It also managed fuel accumulations and hazard trees along an important emergency response route and the Nature Loop trail. Visitors can expect to see cut rounds and branches, felled disease- and fire-affected trees, and masticated material. Cut material was left on-site but scattered with as much soil contact as possible to accelerate decay. During the winter months, this cut material will absorb moisture and begin decomposing.

We're celebrating the Salinas City Council's approval of our Carr Lake Park project!

It was unanimous! On September 14, 2021, the Salinas City Council adopted the mitigated negative declaration (CEQA document) for our Carr Lake Park project and approved the General Plan amendment and site rezone. This is a major milestone in the project's history.

We want to thank all the project partners that publicized this important meeting and those who attended to advocate for the project in person – including Building Healthy Communities, Center for Community Advocacy (CCA), MILPA, and the Monterey County Department of Health – along with many residents. A special shout-out goes to CCA for their tireless engagement efforts, and for delivering 1,560 petition signatures and 254 letters from residents supporting our project! We also appreciate the amazing work that CSUMB's Return of the Natives program has done to keep residents of all ages engaged in planting and caring for the site's native plant demonstration garden.

The most inspiring aspect of this project has been just how enthusiastically community members have continued to support the park project. They have demonstrated their commitment by participating in community stewardship events at the garden, site design meetings, and engagement events – reaffirming just how important this project is for the city of Salinas.

What's next?

Rachel Saunders, director of conservation, explains, "Now we are moving forward in the design process. We'll be completing 50% design plans by the end of this calendar year and moving into final design in 2022. We'll be filing for a myriad of state and federal permits while working to raise the remaining funds. The cost of permitting, final design and construction for the traditional park area, the restoration area, and a new community-serving building is between \$22 and \$23 million." Construction may need to be phased



Photo by Gurufoto

Learn more about our Carr Lake Park project at: bigsurlandtrust.org/carr-lake-salinas/

depending on funding and the permitting process. Rachel adds, "Right now, the best-case scenario would be that construction could begin in mid-2023 and the whole park and restoration area would be completed and open in late 2025."

With the dedication of community members and leaders and the support of our generous donors and funders, we will all continue to rise and meet our collective vision for healthy lands, healthy people, and healthy communities.



Photo by Gurufoto

Marks Ranch is open for hiking!

After months of significant recovery work by our stewardship team and volunteers, Marks Ranch in Salinas is open for hiking! Over a year ago the ranch supported the incident command center during the River Fire while several acres burned on the property. When the fire was finally contained, water infrastructure, roads, electrical utilities, historic structures, fencing, trails, and the land itself, sustained severe damage.

Along with addressing the major repair, here are just a few examples of the additional steps our stewardship team has taken to make the ranch safe:

- Removed hazard trees surrounding the Hacienda.
- Removed debris piles above the Hacienda. Sites were then hydroseeded and wattles were installed in areas at risk for erosion.
- Held two volunteer events to perform brushing, corridor maintenance, and trail maintenance at the property.
- Stabilized weathered pumphouse serving the active well.

Thanks to the generous support of our donors, partners, and funders and lots of hard work by expert contractors, volunteers, and staff, you can make hike reservations at bigsurlandtrust.org/hike-request.

Now is the time to get out and enjoy miles of trails through oak woodlands and rare expanses of native grasses while savoring the breathtaking views that Marks Ranch offers!



Marks Ranch Maintenance Monday

Sharing our message of healthy lands, healthy people and healthy communities

BSLT's conservation team and youth outdoor programs team, including youth leaders for our camps program have been out at special community events like the General Plan Fair in Salinas, Ciclovía in Soledad, and a visit from York school's spanish class to our Carr Lake Park project. Spread the word – healthy people out on healthy lands mean healthy communities!



York school's spanish class learns about BSLT's Carr Lake Park project at the site



Future conservationists learning about animal tracks at Ciclovía



BSLT's Jennifer Vasquez explains our Carr Lake Park project at Salinas' General Plan Day



Making track molds at Marks Ranch



GHGH at Martin Dunes pulling ice plant



Youth Leaders learning tracking at Marks Ranch

In-person day camps for youth are back!

After 18 months of virtual programming, Corinne Calhoun, youth outdoor programs manager, and Todd Farrington, director of community programs, have been taking local youth back out on the land. Though BSLT was not able to host overnight camps at Glen Deven Ranch in Big Sur this summer due to Covid-related concerns, we were able to host day campers out at Marks Ranch in Salinas and Martin Dunes in Marina and pilot our expanded Youth Leadership program!

Learning at Marks Ranch and Martin Dunes

Campers from North Monterey High School and CHISPA had a variety of experiences at Marks Ranch. They learned about fire ecology as they explored the recovering burn scar from last year's River Fire. Thanks to a donation of plaster cast molds from the Elkhorn Slough Reserve, many campers got an opportunity to make their own casts of animal tracks. And some campers even brought instruments into the field to create nature-inspired music.

Our camps at Martin Dunes this year were made possible thanks to a WHALE TAIL® grant by the California Coastal Commission and all the folks who purchased a WHALE TAIL® license plate or donated to the Protect Our Coast and Oceans Fund on the California state tax form. Monterey County youth from Girls' Health in Girls' Hands and the Boys & Girls Club of Monterey County explored the Salinas River watershed starting downstream at Martin Dunes. During an immersive learning experience, campers deepened their understanding of the many connections between human communities and local coastal and inland ecosystems. They also learned about the many sensitive, threatened, and endangered species that call Martin Dunes home. Through an additional stewardship activity they contributed to a multi-year dune restoration effort by pulling invasive ice plant. We're excited to continue this two-part camp series next spring when these same campers come out to Marks Ranch to explore another part of the watershed.

Some facts our campers learn about the Salinas River Watershed:

- A watershed is an area of land (and everything in it) that drains all the streams and rainfall to a common outlet. Then all the water ultimately reaches the same river, lake, or other body of water—in this case the Salinas River which ultimately flows into the Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary.
- The Salinas River, flowing over 170 miles from San Luis Obispo County, is the Central Coast's largest river and has the 4th largest watershed in California. Its tributaries include: Nacimiento River, San Antonio River, Estrella River, Arroyo Seco River, Paso Robles Creek, Jack Creek, Santa Rita Creek, Atascadero Creek, Santa Margarita Creek, Trout Creek, Tassajara Creek, and the Rinconada Creek.
- Because it flows northward (vs. south or west like most CA rivers), the Salinas River is called "the Upside-Down River."
- Flowing through 200,000 acres of irrigated agriculture, the Salinas River is critically important for both agriculture and wildlife. It recharges the underground aquifer that provides this crucial irrigation for the multi-billion dollar Agriculture industry and creates habitat for many wildlife species, directly and indirectly.

Sources: conservationconsulting.net/UpsideDownRiver and rcdmonterey.org/salinas-river



Salinas River National Wildlife Reserve saline pond/salt marsh near mouth of the Salinas River

We've expanded our Youth Leadership program

Our current Youth Leadership (YLP) program hosts five high schoolers and recent graduates who were encouraged to apply by partner organizations including Girls' Health in Girls' Hands as well as Salinas and Castroville Teen Leadership Councils. Four youth leaders are camp alumni and attended BSLT camps for one or more years between 2016 and 2018.

"The Youth Leadership Program was originally created to provide a way for former campers to come back to a Glen Deven Ranch overnight camp and engage in creating a camp experience for others," Corinne explains. "The expanded offerings we piloted this year were created based on feedback from past YLP participants and engaged youth leaders in leading activities at day camps and assisting with stewardship volunteer activities or community engagement days, like Ciclovía Soledad. After each outing, youth leaders assess their own performance as they led activities with the campers. Then we discuss how we can support them for their next leadership experience. Campers can relate to the youth leaders in a different way than they would with me or other staff members. The youth leaders are 'near peers' and campers look up to them, partly because of shared experiences. It's been really rewarding to see everyone's growth and to learn from our youth leaders, who have each provided valuable insights into programming."

Lands End and Ocean Beach, San Francisco (Sept. 2020) • Photos by Gurufoto

A land conservationist's perspective on California's "30x30" initiative to fight climate change



A big part of why I came to Big Sur Land Trust in 2014 was because of the organization's willingness to consider the many ways that land could be part of the solution for so many issues we face. Being a part of "on the ground" actions that increase biodiversity, address climate change impacts, and help build healthier and more resilient communities is what keeps me cautiously optimistic. This is why I am also excited about the 30x30 initiative and what it means for conservation in California.

As record-breaking fires burned in September 2020, residents across the State of California woke to a rising dark sun, signaling that something was gravely amiss. Anyone who is paying attention understands that we are living in a time where extreme weather events around the world are

hitting new records as humanity experiences the future of a changing climate. Rising sea levels, drought, increasingly intensive storm events, etc. will continue to impact all living species, forcing us to prepare our communities, redesign our cities, rethink our economies, and evolve our relationships with land and the natural resources we depend on.



Jeannette Tuitele-Lewis
President & CEO, Big Sur Land Trust

Indeed, the challenges ahead are incredibly daunting, and we cannot escape our current climate fate that has been generations in the making. But, as a mother of two children who worry about the world they are inheriting and as a woman who has spent her career protecting the landscapes she loves, hopelessness is not an option for me.

Research indicates how our forests, grasslands, wetlands, and other ecosystems are critical carbon sinks – able to absorb massive amounts of carbon dioxide from the atmosphere. Recommendations have been made that we will need to conserve half of all terrestrial ecosystems in addition to reducing carbon emissions to meet global climate goals. Land and water conservation will also help maintain biodiversity and avoid the collapse of ecosystems vital to human health and our global economy.

Governor Newsom's 30x30 Executive Order, announced in fall of 2020, set a bold precedent for joining nations across the world in committing to conserve 30% of lands and oceans by 2030 – an important milestone in meeting our climate goals. Earlier this year, the Biden/Harris administration committed the U.S. to the 30x30 initiative, and they are paying close attention to how California rolls out their planning for this most ambitious coordinated effort to conserve the lands and waters that sustain us. Depending on the State's definition of existing conserved lands, California may need to conserve millions of acres over the next eight years while restoring degraded landscapes to increase biodiversity, soil health and carbon storage along with other environmental and social benefits. Local Land Trusts are positioned to be a strong partner in helping California meet 30x30.

Addressing a long history of social inequities in conservation planning, park access, and conservation funding and implementation across the State is central to California's plan. Since this spring, a massive effort has been underway to encourage California residents to weigh in on what 30x30 can and should mean for each region of the State. Because recognizing the original indigenous land and water stewards of California, along with their invaluable traditional ecological knowledge and relationships to land will be central to informing a more sustainable path forward, tribal governments are being consulted in parallel with efforts between local, state, and federal governments.

Earlier this summer, I was humbled and excited when I was asked to serve on a State-wide panel with six others to develop a set of recommendations for how California should define "conservation" for the purposes of 30x30. Serving on this panel was an honor and reflects Big Sur Land Trust's reputation as a forward-thinking land conservation organization. In early October, the California Natural Resources Agency (CNRA) released the Natural and Working Lands Climate Smart Strategy that will set forth how California can reduce greenhouse gas emissions and improve climate resiliency for communities and landscapes. In February 2022, CNRA will release its Pathways to 30x30 document, which will outline how the State will work to conserve 30% of its lands and near shore waters.

So, what might 30x30 mean for Monterey County and Big Sur Land Trust? To start, BSLT's major multi-benefit initiatives including the Carmel River Floodplain Restoration and Environmental Enhancement Project (Carmel River FREE) as well as our Carr Lake project are in line with where California is headed. This is exciting, as sustained momentum for these audacious, large-scale green infrastructure projects is needed to see them through.

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In addition to increasing the pace and scale for land and water conservation, my hope is that the 30x30 initiative will also incentivize greater collaboration between land-based organizations, social cross-sector interests, local governments including tribes, businesses, and educational institutions to develop regional conservation priorities and work together to make them happen. This could include planning and managing for biodiversity, cultural resource protection, increasing equitable access to parks and outdoor education opportunities, urban planning for climate resiliency, and ensuring regional and sustainable food security.

A more hopeful future feels possible when we act on our deepest values and take the necessary actions that align with them. 30x30 is as much a values statement, as it is a plan that gives many of us in the conservation/environmental sector hope for how we might collectively work toward addressing the biggest challenge humanity faces. The success of 30x30 will depend on all of us working together across communities, agencies, organizations, and industries. This is no small endeavor, but we at Big Sur Land Trust, with the support of our generous donors, funding agencies, and expert partners, are committed to doing all we can to ensure that the lands and waters of our beloved region are part of the global solution. And knowing this helps me hold on to hope for all of our children's future.



Jeannette's children, Amaelia (15) and Malae (12) at Glen Deven Ranch • Photo by William Tovar

Remembering Alfred Diaz-Infante



Our hearts are broken by Alfred Diaz-Infante's passing. Along with people across Monterey County, especially the Salinas community, we are mourning the loss of a dedicated advocate for people and open spaces. Big Sur Land Trust has been honored to have Alfred serve on our Advisory Board from 2010 – 2013 and on our Board of Trustees since 2014.

Alfred was a passionate voice for partnerships and putting the power of advocacy directly into community members' hands. In a conversation with Peter Forbes for *Convergence: A Story of People, Place and Opportunity at Carr Lake*, Alfred reflected on the meaning of power, "If you want to be a leader, you've got to take risks, which means stepping into areas where you don't have all the answers or hold all the power. Poder means 'to be able.' It also means to 'take responsibility.' Poder in our language does not mean power over, but power with and through."

Alfred used his many talents in support of affordable housing, education, health, and too many other causes to name. He was a champion for equity and lived as a truly collaborative example of "power with and through."

We will always remember you with deep respect and appreciation, Alfred.

"If you want to be a leader, you've got to take risks, which means stepping into areas where you don't have all the answers or hold all the power. Poder means 'to be able.' It also means to 'take responsibility.' Poder in our language does not mean power over, but power with and through."

Alfred Diaz-Infante



Welcome to our new volunteer trustees!



Pinney Allen



Yuri C. Anderson



Hans Buder



Carmen Gil, MPA



Monica Tovar

Thank you to our new board members and all our trustees. Your time and talents are making a difference for the lands we all love! To learn more about our Board visit bigsurlandtrust.org/board-of-trustees/.

Meet our new staff members!



Cate Stanley, Land Steward

Along with getting Marks Ranch ready to open, Cate has been working on the Native Habitat Restoration project at Glen Deven Ranch. Her experience in restoration began as a volunteer down on the Gulf Coast rebuilding oyster reefs and rehabilitating wetlands. After spending several seasons in Mississippi and Louisiana she relocated, continuing her work in restoration by doing erosion mitigation on stream-side trails in Colorado and southeastern Idaho. Lately at Glen Deven, she and a dedicated group of volunteers have been tending over 800 native plants established near the front parking area last year. Keep an eye out – this winter Cate and BSLT volunteers hope to plant at least 400 more!



Tonalla Renteria, Cultural Research Intern

Tonalla has been working on the Monterey County Indigenous and Racial Minority Land Loss Timeline project. She began by focusing on Indigenous land loss using first perspective narratives from California Native Americans as the groundwork for historical context. Then she proceeded to analyze educational databases looking at Spanish and Mexican land grant distribution within the local area. In addition to local Indigenous history, Tonalla continued to look at racial minorities affected by land loss, including African Americans, Chinese, and Japanese. (BSLT’s board member Larry Oda provided great resources for local Japanese history!) The final project is a functional digitized timeline, a document of historical images and their references, and a slide presentation that summarizes the project’s process and findings. Tonalla is looking forward to presenting this timeline of the unique history of land loss and allocation in Monterey County.



Hadley Hargrove, Preserve Manager

Hadley comes to BSLT from the University of California Natural Reserve System where he lived at and cared for Landels-Hill Big Creek Preserve. He grew up on a wool and mohair ranch in West Texas helping to manage 80,000 acres and 10,000 head of sheep and goats with his father and brother. After high school Hadley lived in Mexico ranching and perfecting his Spanish. His life at sea began when he joined the Hawaiian Chieftain, an educational vessel voyaging from Santa Cruz, CA to Port Antonio, Jamaica. After 13 years, Hadley’s yearning for land grew too strong to resist. The broad range of skills and colorful experiences he gathered before joining our stewardship team are true examples of “doing what you love.” Now he is using his many talents while living at and navigating the demands of caring for Mitteldorf Preserve. Hadley invites you to slow down and say “Hi” whenever you’re there and see what fun projects he has going!



Jenny Jacox, Americorps VIP Volunteer Coordinator

“For many of us navigating life amidst a pandemic, Big Sur Land Trust’s conserved lands provided beauty, freedom, and peace along with safe space to roam and maintain our connection to the outside world. I am forever changed by my time spent on these lands, and grateful for the chance to pay this gift forward.”

Jenny earned her BS (Marine Biology) and her PhD (Ocean Sciences) at UC Santa Cruz. Most recently, she worked in coastal policy and management at the San Francisco Bay Conservation and Development Commission. Inspired to give back, Jenny joined Big Sur Land Trust in August. During her 11-month appointment, Jenny will develop BSLT’s volunteer program infrastructure for increased capacity and efficacy. Part scientist, part runner, Jenny’s wonder is as far-ranging as the trails she wanders. She invites you to share your wonderings/wanderings by emailing her at jjacox@bigsurlandtrust.org or introducing yourself at our next volunteer event.



Glen Deven Ranch • Photo by William Tovar

Land & Legacy Spotlight: Joyce Stevens *A lifetime of giving back to the natural world*

Now in her 90s, Joyce Stevens has been close to the land and nature ever since her childhood in Anchorage, Alaska. “We’d go out our door and there’d be gorgeous blueberries in the summer. It would be -10 degrees in winter but we’d see pink and blue northern lights hanging in the night sky. It was magic.” Wanting to have a positive impact on humanity, she studied architecture at the University of Washington. After graduating she took a position with the Air Force in Fairbanks, Alaska. When she was ready to leave Alaska, Joyce took a trip through California. She’d heard about Carmel’s moderate climate from friends. After showing her architectural drawings to the Chief Engineer at Fort Ord she was hired on the spot!



Joyce joined the Sierra Club and led hikes for 30 years. After hearing Earl Moser, a retired oil executive, describe “driving over the Salinas River into Monterey, and seeing the entire bay curving around with the green forest up above like a diamond tiara,” she realized she wasn’t paying enough attention to protecting her adopted hometown landscape. “I’d driven that same stretch of road and had never seen it the way Earl described.” She decided to learn more about local lands and help conserve the environment.

When the Monterey Dunes Coalition formed, Joyce remembered what Earl said and shared her vision. “We’re starting at the Salinas River and saving that whole piece of coastline.” Their hard work saved 13 miles of dunes, including what would become Big Sur Land Trust’s Martin Dunes Preserve, and inspired the creation of the Monterey Bay State Seashore preventing that stretch from being filled with hotels.

Later, Joyce became a trustee – and eventually president – of Big Sur Land Trust’s Board, helping with the acquisition of Mitteldorf Preserve. She also helped start the Fort Ord Parklands Group, Monterey Pine Forest Watch, and Hatton Canyon Coalition. In a full circle moment, Joyce led Monterey Pine Forest Watch efforts to preserve rare Monterey pine forest in the “tiara” over Monterey Bay that Earl Moser described! At the urging of the Pine Forest Watch, the Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District acquired 850 acres adjacent to Jacks Peak Park, creating the world’s largest stand of protected Monterey pine forest. In late 2020, to honor Joyce, this new open space was named the Joyce Stevens Monterey Pine Preserve.

Ever humble, Joyce sums up her legacy of working hard for the lands she loves by focusing on young conservationists. “Stay close to nature. You’ll be motivated to follow your heart and do what’s right.”

Interested in learning more about planned giving and becoming a Land & Legacy Society member? Please email Kate Mitchell Mehle at kmitchell@bigsurlandtrust.org or call her at (831) 886-7813.

Volunteers working hard for the Lands You Love

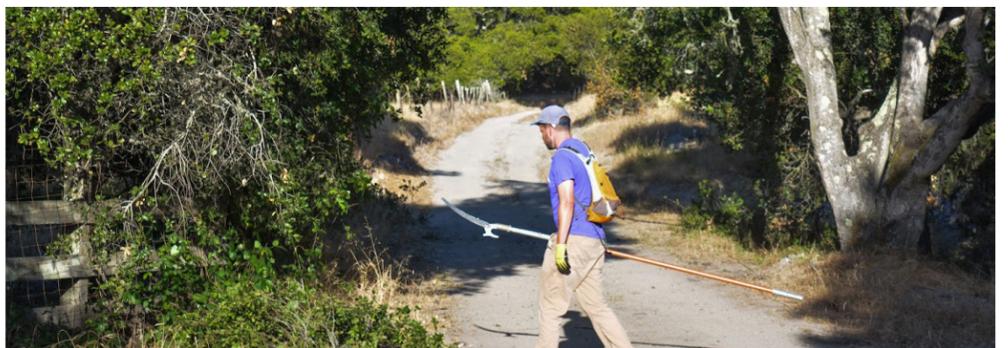
We can’t say thank you enough to all those volunteers who have shown up whenever possible – even for socially distanced outdoor activities – during these last 18 months. You inspire us beyond words!



Sandbag removal by Eagle Scout Troop 90 at Mitteldorf Preserve



Family volunteers, Carr Lake Park project



Tree work at Marks Ranch Maintenance Mondays



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Wednesday, November 17, 2021 | 9:00 am - 12:30 pm PST
 Mark's Ranch, 117th D, Salinas, CA 93908



- Seeding methodologies including hydroseeding, broadcast seeding, drill seeding and alternative seeding methods for rangelands
- Guide to choosing the best seed mix for your particular rangeland conservation goals
- Live demonstration of drill seeding, resources available, opportunities for conservation and restoration
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SPEAKERS

Shawn Milar
 U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service

Philip Brownsey
 Natural Resources
 Conservation Service, Stockton

Rodrigo Sierra Corona
 Santa Lucia Conservancy

Allison Tokunaga
 Natural Resources
 Conservation Service, Salinas

Devii R. Rao
 University of California
 Cooperative Extension

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For more information, contact Jazmine Mejia-Muñoz at jazmine@californiamsf.org or call (661) 331-2612.

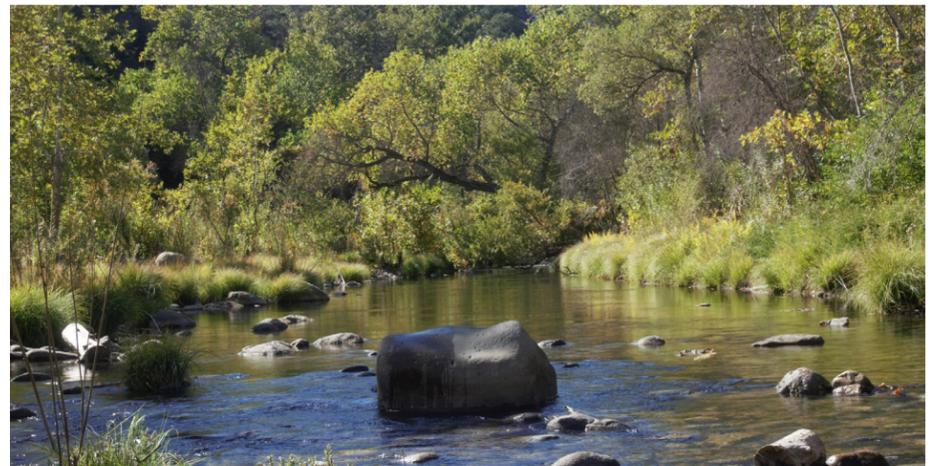
Docent-led hikes are back!

Our volunteer hike leaders are very excited to get on the lands we all love with you. Get more details and sign up at bigsurlandtrust.org/events/

November 13

Arroyo Seco Ranch, Greenfield

The ranch's rolling 1,675 acres includes a two-mile stretch of the Arroyo Seco River, which is a priority steelhead restoration site. Rare sycamore alluvial woodland forests, abundant songbirds, and the threatened California red-legged frog are all part of this ecosystem.



November 20

Martin Dunes, Marina

This 125-acre restoration site is part of a critical ecosystem for Monterey Bay. Because of our consistent, long-term care Martin Dunes remains one of the central coast's best examples of healthy coastal dunes.



We are excited to be part of *Monterey County Gives!* once again this year from November 11 through December 31!

MC GIVES!

montereycountygives.com/bslt