



BIG SUR
LAND TRUST

2017 Annual Report | Shaping Our Future



Gratitude

A look back at 2017



Nigel Lovett, Board Chair and
Jeannette Tuitele-Lewis, President/CEO

When we reflect on the last year, we must start with profound gratitude for our wonderful family of supporters, partners and funders. Because of you, treasured landscapes all around Monterey County – from Marina to the Gabilan Mountains and Big Sur to Salinas, along with many points in between – have been protected and cared for.

Together, we have built an enduring story of dedication to the land that is sustained through stewardship and generosity. It's about the inspiration that resonates from open spaces, and the transformation of people who experience life-changing moments outdoors. And it's a story of collaboration that keeps our mission of inspiring love of land echoing across generations.

- BSLT now owns 73 acres at Carr Lake in Salinas! Local leaders and residents are sharing their ideas for a park that will reflect the heart and soul of the city, while planning is underway for extensive restoration of the site.
- Major repairs continued at Mitteldorf Preserve after the damage this magnificent property suffered during 2016's Soberanes Fire, rains and flooding. Only guided tours are available while we work to make this beautiful place safe for self-guided hikes.

- Detailed engineering (60% complete) design plans were delivered for the Carmel River Floodplain Restoration and Environmental Enhancement (Carmel River FREE) Project located south of Carmel, east of Highway One. This is a major milestone for a critical multi-benefit flood protection and riparian habitat restoration project on the Central Coast.
- We hosted our 50th outdoor summer camp at Glen Deven Ranch along with several day camps at Marks Ranch. Since 2013 over 900 Monterey County youth have benefited from their experiences in these vast, natural open spaces.
- Current BSLT supporters can now take self-guided hikes at Marks Ranch, a historically significant 79-acre former egg-production ranch where trails lead to epic views of the Salinas Valley.

Thanks to you, Big Sur Land Trust continues to be a leader in conserving local lands and connecting our community to those lands – perpetuating the work that you are passionate about. Sustained, local action is imperative.

2018 marks our 40th anniversary! We are proud to continue the momentum started by our founders as we actively work on new, large land projects. More exciting accomplishments are on the horizon, so stay tuned for an update later this year.

Wishing you an abundance of time outdoors with friends and loved ones,

Dedication

A legacy of giving

After seeing a story on Big Sur Land Trust in Sunset Magazine while they were visiting Big Sur in the 1980s, Bruce Merchant and Sandra Reel became BSLT supporters. They visited the coast often and eventually bought their Palo Colorado Canyon home in 2000.

“I helped start Ohio’s Western Reserve Land Conservancy, so Sandra and I bring a unique understanding and appreciation for the importance of BSLT’s mission,” Bruce explains as he takes in views from their deck overlooking Glen Deven Ranch to the west, and Palo Corona to the north. “I am grateful to BSLT for preserving land throughout our county in an ‘unpaved’ state. That’s what land trusts are for. It starts with the land – but it goes beyond just acquiring property. Long-term stewardship is critical to the health of our region’s spectacular landscapes. Big Sur Land Trust has played a critical role in preserving many of the open spaces that make living in, or visiting this area, so desirable.”

Sandra adds, “BSLT’s youth programming is essential. It’s really important to get kids out on the land – especially those who have little or no familiarity with natural open spaces. Experiencing the care and wonder of nature is something that has to be modeled and learned so that local youth can become future conservationists.”

In addition to being long-time volunteers, Bruce and Sandra are also members of BSLT’s Land & Legacy Society. “Including BSLT in our estate planning was a practical choice,” Sandra explains. “We are dedicated supporters, but we may not always be able to make regular, annual donations. So, we decided to select a few beneficiaries as legacy recipients. It’s a great option to consider!”

If you are interested in joining the Land & Legacy Society, have already included BSLT in your estate plans or would like more information about planned giving, please contact Kate Mitchell Mehle at 831-625-5523 ext. 105.



Bruce and Sandra at their home in Big Sur





Responsibility

Mirroring nature through sustainable grazing

After graduating from Cal Poly, Mark Farr started Corral de Tierra Cattle Company. Wanting to focus on grass-fed beef and sustainable grazing practices, Mark contacted Big Sur Land Trust about grazing cows on conserved lands. Agreeing to follow BSLT's grazing plan, Mark brought a herd out to Arroyo Seco in 2014 – now he grazes cows on about 600 acres of the 1600-acre ranch. Depending on the season, he may also have a small herd at Glen Deven Ranch.

“Over the years, I've learned more from Big Sur Land Trust's stewardship team about improving my sustainable grazing approach and what type of landscapes we are working towards at the two properties. We're mirroring the way nature worked back when large herds of deer, antelope and elk roamed the area. Grazing in this way means fire danger is greatly reduced; soils are fertilized; healthy native grasses, legumes and forbs grow; and ground water quality is improved. The cows are a natural

tool for growing great grass; they mow while they eat, help turn the soil with their hooves, and fertilize.

A perfect example of this happened after a 50-acre field at Arroyo Seco Ranch was used as a helicopter base for fighting the 2016 Soberanes Fire. When it was time to reseed the area that had been damaged by all the firefighting efforts, I used cows for 85% of the project. After scraping the soil with a ring-roller, broadcasting California native seed, and covering that with alfalfa and rice straw, I turned the cows out to eat the alfalfa. They stomped the seed into the rice straw, making the perfect seed bed, and they also contributed great 'fertilizer' to the mix. We had terrific germination rates, and by mid-June 2017 we had the only green grass in Arroyo Seco on that spot!

Responsible land management absolutely requires that conservation organizations and ranchers work together. Typically, rangelands cannot be converted into farmlands – and that leaves them susceptible to development. Through sustainable grazing, grasslands, forested lands and chaparrals can grow food and fiber. Big Sur Land Trust donors are saving thousands of acres of land – and I am honored to be part of keeping those lands healthy while preserving ranching traditions and producing food that is locally and sustainably raised.”



PHOTO: Born in East LA, Christopher Garcia is a percussionist who works with indigenous instruments of Mexico/Mesoamerica, and north and south India. He is a historian, a composer and a music educator and has given over 1200 performances in 28 countries on five continents.

Resonancia

Christopher Garcia: A perspective on inspiring the next generation of conservationists

“I have been invited to Glen Deven Ranch for four years to share drumming, music and experiences with kids and adults from Monterey County. Coming from various cultural, economic, religious and social backgrounds, most have never had an opportunity to experience the beauty of amazing places like the ranch — or the beauty within themselves. They rarely get away to a place where they can just be who they are.

High atop a mountain, far removed from the digital world, they experience many firsts: taking a rigorous hike through majestic redwoods; wading through a rumbling creek; drumming on a ridge overlooking the ocean at sunset; and uninterrupted silence. They are with themselves, able to listen, ask questions, share their life stories, reflect, and journal their daily experiences.

Being an improvising musician, I try to come into every situation with an open mind, heart and soul – without expectations. While we’re together, campers start to feel comfortable sharing what they feel; what they think; what they’ve observed; what’s on their mind and in their hearts. Many have never had the opportunity to have someone BE with them and just LISTEN to them. Though they may start out not knowing each other, by the last day several have formed strong relationships far outside the parameters of camp. They blossom and bloom.

I do a lot of presentations at all levels of schools, and it’s so different to share in a living classroom. Music resonating out in nature is profoundly different; the reverberations created through the campers’ own hands connect us to the land and to each other. These young campers discover they are an important part of something much larger than what they’ve been led to believe – and that is the land, their families, and their communities.

“It’s a part of us, which is much like the land itself, always changing yet always remaining the same when treated with love, care, peace and attention.”

I start each camp with a heartbeat rhythm and the resonance of the conch shell ringing out across the valleys acknowledging the four cardinal directions. The resonance of BSLT’s work in creating the next generation of conservationists reaches far beyond Monterey County and does not diminish when camp ends.

In life, we all start and end with the same rhythm; the rhythm of our mother’s heartbeat, the rhythm that surrounded each of us for nine months before our feet touched this world. We live within the rhythm of our own heart through our own creation, and only when our heartbeats stop do we leave this world. This cadence, this resonance is our experience and undeniable connection to each other and to all living things.

Glen Deven Ranch is a memory, an experience, a glimpse into hope and possibilities that we carry with us through our lives. It’s a part of us, which is much like the land itself, always changing yet always remaining the same when treated with love, care, peace and attention.”

Transformation

A young woman finds her voice

Luna Nirvana Dimas has always had a lot to say but didn't think she had a voice. Today, at age 15, Luna speaks up with confidence and pride and sings out loud.

"I haven't always been as social as I am now – and I know exactly when and where I started opening up more! Three years ago, as a member of Youth Orchestra Salinas (YOSAL), I was invited to Big Sur Land Trust's outdoor camps at Glen Deven Ranch. It had always been a dream of mine to sleep out under the stars, and even though I was scared at the thought of this new experience, I signed up.

The first day of camp I was trying to adjust to new people and I was really missing my family. The second day, I made up my own tune on the violin with the help of our camp music teacher, Edwin Huizinga, and that's when things started to change for me. We took a hike down to the creek, and we were asked to share why we started playing music. I explained that I wanted to be more social, and express myself through music, singing and dancing. From that moment on, I slowly started talking more with Big Sur Land Trust staff and the other kids.

Now, I am a junior counselor at camp! I feel much more comfortable speaking to a crowd, and leading camp activities. Because of my own experiences, I know that being outdoors is much better than being a couch potato.

Kids can be isolated by all the phones and technology in their lives – their imaginations get limited and they may miss out on healthy adventures. I realize how important the work that Big Sur Land Trust is doing because at camp we try to get kids to have new experiences and get them out of their comfort zone."



Collaboration

Partnering to create a vision for the land

On a brisk evening in December 2017, Salinas residents met for the first time with a team from Center for Community Advocacy (CCA) to learn more about Big Sur Land Trust's 73-acre restoration project at Carr Lake. Afterwards, David Delgado, a resident in the Carr Lake area, shared his dream for a future park. "I look forward to having a place where we can catch some sun and go for walks – a safe area where people can come together as a community and where working people can gather as a family."

Big Sur Land Trust has partnered with CCA to engage residents in a dialog for envisioning a park that will reflect the spirit of Salinas. The Center's long history of organizing Monterey County's farmworkers and residents on housing and health issues makes them a powerful project partner for BSLT.

Sabino F. Lopez, CCA's Interim Executive Director, explains the Center's approach, "Since CCA opened its doors in August 1990, we've used a proven model to build leadership through organizing and building relationships. In the early days, I started working with farmworkers in Monterey County by knocking on doors, introducing myself and our work. Then, and now, whatever issue we are focusing on, our goal is to teach the farmworkers' families to help themselves improve their quality of life – that they have rights, responsibilities and obligations. CCA also offers training and leadership opportunities. We build leaders that can take ownership and action to benefit their community."

PHOTO: Norma Ahedo Juarez, Sabino F. Lopez and Joel Hernandez-Laguna of CCA at the site of the future native plants garden at BSLT's Carr Lake property. (Armando Asencio not pictured.)

Joel Hernandez-Laguna, CCA's lead organizer, adds, "I am a true example that our model works effectively. Before joining CCA, I knew I wanted more than the jobs I was doing. I found a passion for this work and began volunteering and attending trainings as a community leader at Acosta Plaza, where I had grown up. I also attended trainings, and after a year, I started full-time. Now, five years later, though I only attended one year of college, I feel like I have earned a Master's degree in the real-world skills of community organizing – by developing new youth and adult leadership; building collaborations; changing the narrative; and now, working with residents, stakeholders, and other leaders on issues that improve our community's quality of life. I know first-hand that partnerships and collaboration are critical to successful change."

Sabino and Joel agree that as Big Sur Land Trust plans extensive restoration on its property at Carr Lake, partnering with CCA to collaborate with residents is key to delivering on the long-held dream of a park in the heart of the city.

"After spending three months learning about Big Sur Land Trust and their property, Armando Asencio, CCA organizer, led a three-week door-to-door campaign educating families and hearing from them about Carr Lake. At our first gathering in December, residents were surprised and excited to be invited by CCA organizers to tour BSLT's property," Sabino said. "Once they were inside the building, they began envisioning how the meeting space and the land might be used. They appointed their own leaders and showed an immediate sense of connection by offering to clean the space before the next meeting! Clearly, the trust-building and engagement had begun."





“Espero tener un lugar donde podamos tomar un poco de sol y salir a caminar – una zona segura donde la gente puede reunirse como una comunidad y donde la gente que trabaja se puede reunir como una familia.” - David Delgado

Together

We conserved 40,000+ acres in 40 years



BSLT Founders



East Odello Fields



Emil White at HMML



Mitteldorf Preserve



Clint & Margaret Eastwood with Zad Leavy



Martin Dunes



Harriet & Arthur Mitteldorf



Glen Deven Ranch



Palo Corona Ranch



1. BSLT incorporated as non-profit.
2. Acquired first property in Big Sur June 1978.
3. Emil White donated .4 acres in Big Sur that became Henry Miller Memorial Library (HMML). Transferred* to HMML.
4. Purchased 184 acres in Big Sur. Transferred to MPRPD** for Mill Creek Preserve.
5. Purchased 3 acres at San Carlos Beach Park in Monterey. Transferred to City of Monterey.
6. Purchased 1,157 acres in Palo Colorado Canyon. Transferred to MPRPD for Mill Creek Preserve.
7. Purchased 1,057 acres in Carmel Valley with donation from Arthur and Harriet Mitteldorf to create Mitteldorf Preserve.
8. Transferred 4 acres in Sand City to CA State Parks for Monterey Bay State Seashore.
9. Purchased 1,312 acres at Point Lobos Ranch in Carmel. Transferred to CA State Parks.
10. Purchased 83 acres at Condon/Veeder Ranch in Carmel Valley. Transferred to MPRPD.
11. Purchased 1 acre in Moss Landing. Transferred to CA State Parks for Zmudowski State Beach.
12. Purchased 480 acres in Big Sur. Transferred to Regents of University of California for Big Creek Reserve.
13. Clint and Margaret Eastwood donate 49 acres at East Odello Fields, Carmel.
14. Purchased 423 acres in Castroville. Transferred to Elkhorn Slough Foundation.
15. Accepted donation of 1,203 acres at Little Horse Ranch in Big Sur from the Murphy family. Transferred to MPRPD as part of Palo Corona Ranch.
16. Purchased 125 acres at Martin Dunes in Marina. Additional purchase in 2000 gave BSLT 69% ownership. Property is contiguous to the Salinas River National Wildlife Refuge to the north and the CEMEX property to the south.
17. Purchased 51 acres at Granite Rock Dunes in Marina. Transferred to MPRPD. This is now the Marina Dunes Preserve just south of the CEMEX property.
18. Seeley and Virginia Mudd donated 860 acres at Glen Deven Ranch in Palo Colorado Canyon, Big Sur.
19. Purchased 5.6 acres at Notley's Landing in Big Sur.
20. With The Nature Conservancy (TNC), purchased 9,898 acres at



Palo Corona Ranch



Songbird Preserve



Arroyo Seco Ranch



Marks Ranch



Engaging Community



Dr. Seeley & Virginia Mudd



Marks Ranch



Glen Deven Ranch



Odello East



Aerial view of Carr Lake



- 20. Palo Corona Ranch. 4,350 acres transferred to MPRPD to create new park. The remainder was transferred to CDFW, expanding Joshua Creek Ecological Preserve.
- 21. Purchased 35 acres at DeDampierre Park in Carmel Valley. Transferred to MPRPD.
- 22. Purchased 816 acres at Marks Ranch in Salinas. Transferred 737 acres to Monterey County Parks to become part of Toro County Park. Currently own 79 acres.
- 23. With TNC, purchased 3,200-acre conservation easement at Violini Ranch in Sierra de Salinas Mountains near Gonzales.
- 24. Purchased 12 acres at Carmel River Songbird Preserve in Carmel Valley.
- 25. Conservation easement donation of 1,107 acres at Rancho Colinas, Gabilan Mountains north of Salinas.
- 26. Purchased new offices at Gabriel de la Torre Historic Adobe in downtown Monterey.
- 27. Purchased trail easement and built South Bank Trail in Carmel Valley. Key connection to Palo Corona Regional Park and MPRPD's new park unit at Rancho Cañada.
- 28. Purchased 317 acres at Whisler Wilson Ranch between Pt. Lobos Ranch and Palo Corona Regional Park. Transferred to MPRPD.
- 29. Purchased 965-acre Vierra Ranch conservation easement in the Gabilan Mountains, north of Salinas.
- 30. Clint and Margaret Eastwood donate 79-acres at East Odello Fields, Carmel. Makes Carmel River FREE project possible.
- 31. Purchased 73 acres at Carr Lake. BSLT begins community engagement process.
- 32. BSLT celebrates its 40th Anniversary.

* In most cases, transfers happened several years after purchase.

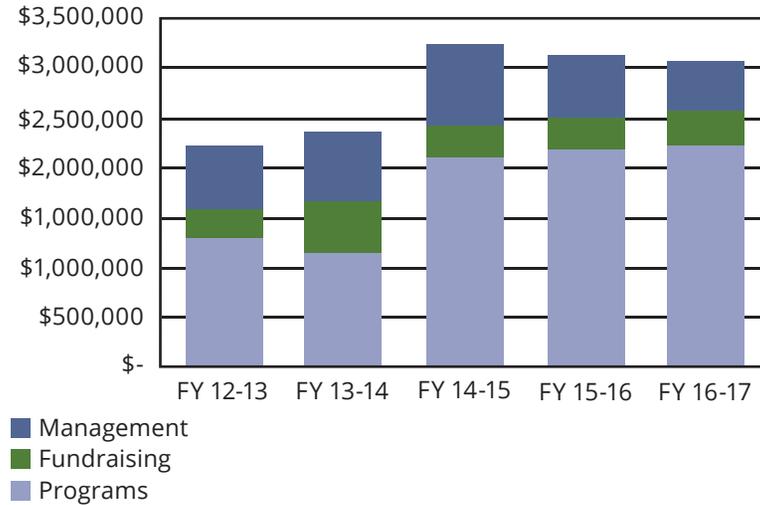
** MPRPD - Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District

Numbers

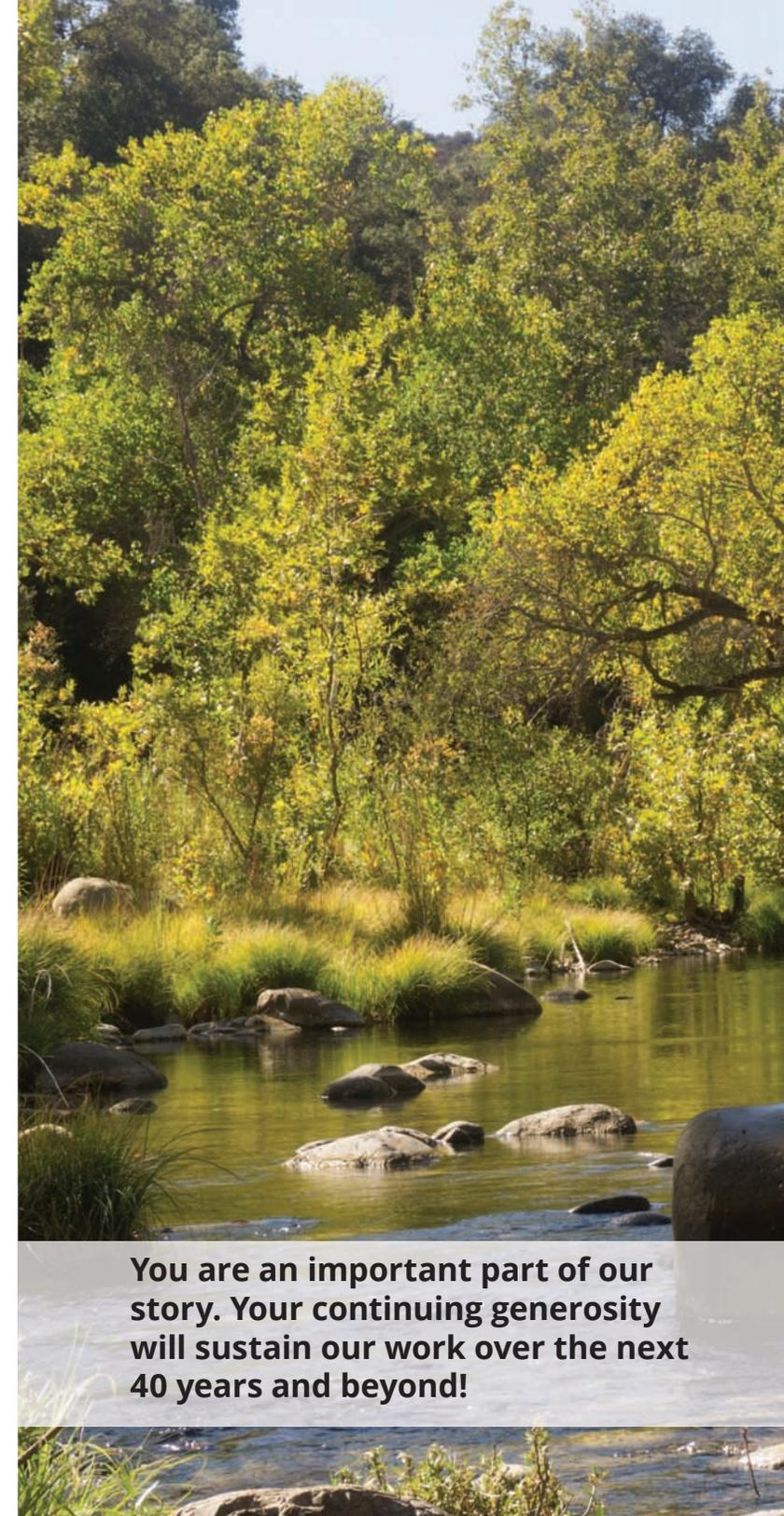
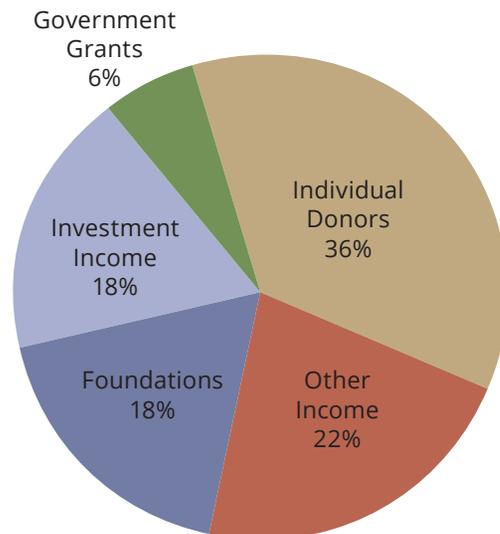
Your donations in action

Expenses Fiscal Years 2011/12 - 2016/17

Does not include land purchases



Revenue Sources Fiscal Year 2016/17



You are an important part of our story. Your continuing generosity will sustain our work over the next 40 years and beyond!



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