

President's Report

by Tony Taylor



Breathtaking! A perfect word to describe our Eastern Sierra region. And, I think, a perfect word to describe the growth and progress of your Eastern Sierra Land Trust as we close the books on our 5th fiscal year.

Do you need convincing? How about these achievements for an organization that started just over 5 years ago in the living rooms of our 7 original board members?

- Five completed land protection agreements that permanently preserve nearly 1,000 acres of important, privately held agricultural, natural and scenic lands in this region.
- Current projects under way with private landowners that will address protection of several thousand additional acres.
- An active conversation under way with the City of Los Angeles toward permanently protecting tens of thousands of acres of their land here in the Eastern Sierra.
- A talented and experienced staff of 4 professionals that energize and drive our efforts.
- Dozens of energetic volunteers that support our work.

One last element of our success that inspires us every day—you, the nearly 300 supportive members of our land trust. Your encouragement and financial support give us energy and tell us that we are doing critical work in this region that we all love.

So please, please, please continue your generous support. And let us hear from you about how we are doing and what we can do to better achieve success. ■



Photo: Karen Ferrell-Ingram

Protecting Our Treasured Scenic Views

by Karen Ferrell-Ingram

Eastern Sierra highways and byways are full of travelers this time of year, all enjoying the famously scenic wonders of our region. Part of the ESLT's mission is to protect these scenic resources that are of premium value to residents, passersby, and local economies. The ESLT recently completed a land protection agreement in the beautiful Bridgeport Valley on undisturbed land that borders Scenic Highway 395, a highway which has received official scenic designation from the State of California and Mono County. The conservation easement eliminates future development on most of the 75-acre parcel. This legal agreement allows for one future building site but restricts the size, height, use, and location of the home. The ESLT's Stewardship Program has taken on the job of ensuring that those protections are forever upheld.

Through the use of a finely crafted conservation easement, scenic values like these can be maintained for the enjoyment of future generations and landowners can know their beloved land is not ever going to be developed. Landowners may also benefit because the Internal Revenue Service recognizes significant scenic resources as being of value to the public. Protecting a scenic vista may qualify the landowner for tax benefits and it definitely qualifies those landowners as heroes to the ESLT and its members. ■

In Memoriam

The Eastern Sierra Land Trust extends its condolences and warm wishes to the family of Wesley Marquart, 88, who passed away on June 19, 2006. Wesley had a passion for fishing and camping and the Eastern Sierra claimed a place in his heart. For decades, he and his family have enjoyed their cabin near June Lake. His wife Patty's wishes were that donations be made in his honor to ESLT and we are extremely grateful for the generosity of his friends and family. ■

Cave-dwellers No More by Michelle Pettit

The emergence of bats each night is a common summer sight here in the Eastern Sierra, and, while watching them flit about to catch their prey, one may secretly hope that mosquitoes are their favorite food.

With some bat species eating at least 6,000 mosquito-sized insects each night, the capacity of bats to consume large numbers of insects plays a key role in ecosystem balance.

Bats account for a whopping one quarter of all mammal species worldwide, and seventeen species are found locally. One factor in determining bat populations is the availability of roosting sites. Several species, like the Townsend's big-eared bat (*Corynorhinus townsendii*), have adapted to roosting in local abandoned mines.

This adaptation has served the Townsend's big-eared bat well, for it naturally roosts in caverns which rarely occur in this area. Thus, abandoned mines have created new roosting habitat for this species. This is important because the Townsend's big-eared bat is a California Species of Special Concern with overall population numbers on the decline.

An even greater factor affecting population numbers (and an indicator that they are a species sensitive to habitat change) is that they also require undisturbed foraging habitat to thrive—which they can find in the sparsely-populated Eastern Sierra.

Helping creatures like the Townsend's big-eared bat maintain a critical foothold in this region highlights the importance of the ESLT's mission to preserve rural landscapes...though we can't make any promises about the mosquitoes.

See more info about bats on our web site: www.easternsierralandtrust.org/Pages/OnWildSide.htm. ■



Townsend's big-eared bats roosting in a mine. Photo: Dr. Patricia Brown

The mission of the Eastern Sierra Land Trust is to protect and enhance vital lands in the Eastern Sierra for their scenic, recreational, agricultural, historical, botanic and wildlife values.

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Our roving photographer caught Tony Taylor and Julie Bear trying to make a rather large deposit at the local ATM. Photo: Michelle Pettit

Mammoth Mountain Gives Generously

Perhaps because of its namesake, Mammoth Mountain gives in a big way. And so it was last February when Mammoth Mountain CEO Rusty Gregory presented ESLT with a giant, Mammoth-sized check for \$10,000. A humongous thank-you to Mammoth Mountain! ■

PRESERVE THE BALANCE: FUNDING UPDATE

by Karen Ferrell-Ingram

When the first snows bring the mule deer and other animals down from the high country this fall, they'll find their advocates have been busy working to maintain safe passage for wildlife through the Wheeler Ridge Wildlife Area. The California Deer Association (CDA) has just notified the ESLT that they have approved our grant request for \$50,000 in matching funding to help purchase a conservation easement to permanently protect migration and winter range habitat. The ESLT is partnering with other organizations and agencies to secure voluntary land protection agreements with a long-term goal of maintaining the viability of the Round Valley deer herd.

This grant, in addition to the generous ESLT member support of our new Preserve the Balance campaign, will be matched with other grant funding to finalize the purchase. We are very grateful for the quick response to the campaign by our members, and to the CDA for their support and collaboration. The CDA has an active habitat protection and restoration program, benefiting wildlife in the Eastern Sierra and throughout the state. Please check out the ESLT website to learn about the Preserve the Balance campaign and the incredible migration corridor. ■

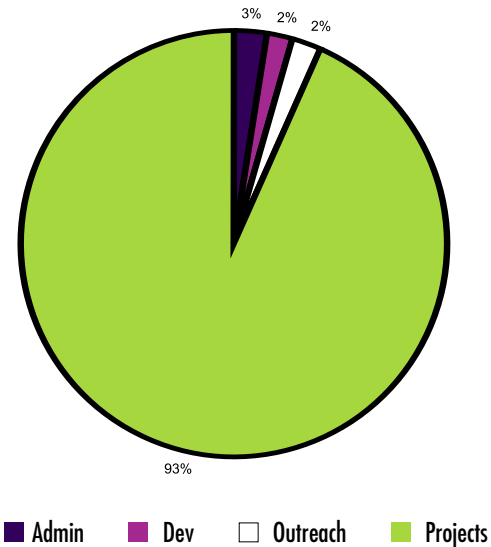
ESLT Giving and Expenditures 05-06

As illustrated in the pie chart, much of the funding we received in FY 2005-06 (93%) was spent on our land protection projects work. Development and Outreach accounted for 4% of our expenditures, while Administration was held at 3%. An annual report will appear in the next edition of *Sierra Scapes*.

The Eastern Sierra Land Trust gratefully acknowledges the individuals, foundations, organizations and companies that have joined our efforts to preserve rural landscapes this past fiscal year 2005-2006. You make possible the successes we highlight in this newsletter issue after issue—thank you, thank you, thank you.

If you do not see your name on this list and would like to be included in future issues, please let us know—we have only included individuals who have granted us permission to print their names.

EASTERN SIERRA LAND TRUST 2005-06 EXPENDITURES



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 Michael and Linda Lyon
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 Jeff Wyneken and Connie Millar
 Julie Yost

Sierra Century Update by Julie Bear

We have been working hard on several land conservation projects this summer, one of the most public being the one which will protect land owned by the City of Los Angeles here in the Eastern Sierra. In the latest chapter of this ongoing saga we have been busy holding meetings with the region's land planning experts from various organizations and entities here in the Sierra.

Our goal for these meetings was to learn from others with years of collective experience, the best practices for undertaking this large, historic, and important endeavor. The discussions were lively, candid, creative, and informative. Thanks to all who participated—we have a much clearer idea of how we wish to proceed both with key stakeholders, Los Angeles officials, and most importantly, our friends and neighbors.

Many have asked how they can help bring about a proposal that will protect our rural legacy: recreational opportunities, historic uses such as ranching, scenic vistas, open-space, and wild places. Please keep supporting the ESLT, promoting this proposal to your friends, neighbors, and the decision makers. It is a legacy worthy of much of our energy and imagination; a legacy for all time. ■



Photo: Karen Ferrell-Ingram

A Brewer's blackbird (*Euphagus cyanocephalus*) nest with these four eggs was one of many highlights from the Mono Basin Field trip last June 10.

**Preserving
Our Rural Lands**
www.eslt.org

Come join the ESLT for one of our semi-annual Scenic Highway Clean-up days along Scenic Highway 395! The fun begins at 8:30 am on Monday, October 2. The ESLT's section is on the Sherwin Grade in southern Mono County. It should take a few hours, but volunteers should feel free to leave whenever they need to. Our Highway Clean-up coordinator, Mary Canada, promises to bring some of her homemade cookies. Please call 873-4554 to let us know if you can come and to confirm the meeting time and place. Thank you!



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