

10 Years – Looking Ahead

In January 2011 our land trust – your land trust – will celebrate our 10th anniversary. Several months ago we began an evaluation and planning process that will guide our work as we move ahead into our second decade. Let me tell you about the key parts of this effort.

This fall we reached out to over 800 members, friends and partners with a Strategic Survey to find out what you believe are the most highly valued qualities of the Eastern Sierra region and what you hope and expect the ESLT must do to preserve the lands that embody those qualities.

With your dreams and expectations in mind we created our Conservation Vision 2010 – a general roadmap for the years ahead. This document briefly discusses the Eastern Sierra region, its people and the work of ESLT. It identifies 6 current trends that threaten the character and landscapes of our region. Finally it spells out the means by which ESLT will address these threats and at the same time assure our organizational sustainability so that we can fulfill our permanent stewardship responsibilities.

At the threshold of our second decade we are excited about the prospects ahead, with the plans we are making, and are grateful for your continued support as we do your work here on the “East Side.”

■ *By Tony Taylor,
ESLT Board President*



Round Valley mule deer browse for winter forage on an ESLT Conservation Easement in Swall Meadows. Protecting mule deer and other wildlife were the impetus that inspired the founding members to start a local land trust.

On the Path to Perpetuity

Looking out into our next decade, ESLT has set the stage for completing a broad range of vital land conservation projects in this beautiful region. As outlined in our recent Conservation Vision, we will focus primarily on partnering to preserve important ranches and farms, maintaining the viability of wildlife corridors, and finding options to assist landowners with remote parcels. Achieving these priorities will also ensure that the incredible scenery and vistas that the Eastern Sierra is so famous for continue to inspire travelers and residents. The near future will see us working to preserve lands from high atop the Sweetwater Mountains near Bridgeport down to the shore of Owens Lake, as we partner with landowners who bring fascinating stories of days gone by on the land. We look forward to sharing those stories with you as these properties are preserved for future generations.



ESLT's new Conservation Vision outlines our goals and challenges as we look into the next decade. Preserving the incredible scenery, recreational opportunities, and habitat such as what is found here on Green Creek, overlooking the Bridgeport Valley, continues to be a high priority.

You can read the Conservation Vision online at www.eslt.org.

The Apache Silverspot

Butterfly enthusiasts know that the rare *Speyeria nokomis apacheana*, commonly known as the Apache Silverspot butterfly, is a prized resident of our Eastern Sierra region. This majestic and ebullient creature flutters through the eastern portion of the Great Basin from June to September, optimal months to reproduce and lay larval eggs amidst blooming foothill flora. Even to an untrained eye these butterflies can be easily spotted due to their large and colorful wings. The male upperside is bright orange with brownish accentuations, while the female upperside is black with a cream-colored design. Both have silvery spots on their underside, a trait from which the common name derives.

The Apache Silverspot nectars on bright purple thistle flowers found in moist meadows, seeps, and marshes. While drawn to these flowers for nourishment, they are attracted to *Viola nephrophylla*, the Northern Bog Violet, to lay their eggs. These low lying viola plants that grow in riparian areas have leaves that provide a protected shelter under which eggs can develop without disturbance from predators. Due to the close ecological relationship between its host plant and its nectar source, the Apache Silverspot has specific habitat needs and is quite vulnerable to impacts. Thus, the Apache Silverspot populations are scattered and uncommon. Keep your eyes open for these bright bursts of color on your next East Side adventure! ■ *By Sarah Spano, ESLT AmeriCorps member*



A vibrant male Apache Silverspot lands on a flowering bull thistle to nectar. Habitat for sensitive species like this butterfly are preserved through the work of ESLT. Photo by Stephen Ingram.



Thank you, Mary Pipersky and Herb Benham, for your countless hours and energy volunteering on the ESLT Board of Directors. Also pictured on right, ESLT volunteer, Sherryl Taylor.

ESLT Greetings and Farewells

Eastern Sierra Land Trust is guided by a talented and passionate Board of Directors. Recently, ESLT has said farewell to two wonderful board members, Herb Benham and Mary Pipersky. Herb is a long-time resident of Mammoth Lakes and served on the ESLT Development Committee, bringing his experience in business and agriculture to our discussions. Now retired, Herb is looking forward to spending his free time with his far-flung family and on the tennis court. Mary was a former member

of the Mono County Board of Supervisors, and a small business owner in the Eastern Sierra. Her talents and energy will be missed as she moves on with her work at the Mono County Library in Mammoth Lakes.

Even more recently, ESLT is excited to welcome Marie Patrick to our Board of Directors. Marie will bring a fresh perspective, new ideas, and energy to our Development Committee and board. Marie recently moved to Crowley Lake after many years of visiting the Eastern Sierra. She founded, owned, and managed the Los Angeles Marathon for over twenty years and continues to organize large-scale events throughout the west. Welcome Marie!

Eastern Sierra Land Trust works with willing landowners to preserve vital lands in the Eastern Sierra region for their scenic, agricultural, natural, recreational, historical, and watershed values.

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Enhancing Habitat for Native Fish in the Desert Through Partnerships

In early 2008 after working closely with several key partners, Eastern Sierra Land Trust (ESLT), along with 4th generation landowner Bill Bramlette, achieved permanent protection for the important 900-acre Benton Hot Springs Ranch, ESLT's largest conservation easement project to date. This property, just 6 miles southwest of the Nevada border, includes numerous springs and seeps, ponds, as well as both wet and dry alkali meadows. Wetlands and riparian areas in arid regions play a disproportionately large role in supporting the ecosystems in which they are located and thus their protection is crucial. The property is carefully managed as a grazing operation that balances the goals of productive working lands with the protection and enhancement of important plant and wildlife habitats. The easement property is known to provide important habitat for numerous resident wildlife species, migratory waterfowl of the pacific flyway, endemic rare plants, and will soon provide a critical refuge for a vulnerable native desert fish.

This project represents an important collaboration by a variety of organizations and agencies. The easement purchase was funded by the California Resources Agency and also benefitted from a Defenders of Wildlife Living



Research of previous field survey records dating back to the 1930's revealed that Benton Hot Springs Ranch once hosted a population of the native speckled dace fish.

Lands Biodiversity grant, which enabled our organization to have baseline conditions documentation as well as a conservation plan prepared for the property, making adaptive management recommendations for natural resources on the site. One of these recommendations included improving the quality of habitat of the ponds through vegetation management, desilting, and restoration, which would improve the site for a number of wildlife species. Working with biologists at the local California Department of Fish & Game office, potential projects were discussed that could achieve these habitat goals.



In 2008, fourth generation rancher Bill Bramlette preserved 900 acres of his Benton Hot Springs Ranch with a conservation easement. The property includes numerous springs, seeps, and ponds, as seen in this winter-time picture.

In the summer of 2010, the US Fish & Wildlife Service (USFW) expressed interest in a project that would benefit local

populations of a native fish—speckled dace—whose populations had become small and isolated, making them particularly vulnerable to extinction in the wild. Through careful research of previous field survey records dating back to the 1930's it was discovered that the Benton Hot Springs Ranch once hosted a population of these fish and could provide an ideal site to re-establish the species as one of only a few remaining refugia. With this information, supported by careful planning efforts, ESLT was awarded funding from the USFW to complete a restoration project at this site, as well as to evaluate the possibility of a second project on public lands in the region.

This project, as is true for many of the most successful land conservation and restoration projects, has been made possible only through the collaboration



The populations of the native speckled dace fish have become small and isolated, making them vulnerable to extirpation. The United States Fish & Wildlife Service has partnered with ESLT to re-establish the species in the ponds at Benton Hot Springs Ranch.

of a number of key partners: a willing landowner, land trust, skilled biologists, and important funding agencies. Whether attracting researchers interested in studying the results of work being done, identifying future funding partners, or attracting volunteers interested in getting their hands dirty, partnerships such as these will greatly benefit the plants, wildlife, and people of the Eastern Sierra.

■ Photos by Aaron Johnson and Karen Ferrell-Ingram

DeChambeau Creek Conservation Easement Celebration



The walking tour of the DeChambeau Creek Conservation Easement began at the farm. Here, farmer Joel Ellis demonstrates how the turkey tractor is moved. In addition to turkeys, the farm produces chickens, pigs, goats, and vegetables.



Continuing on, Lands Program Coordinator Aaron Johnson, led the walking tour through the sagebrush and meadow habitats of the property. Discussion centered around the historic uses of the property's 135 acres of habitat.



The celebration concluded with a local foods feast prepared by Linda Dore from the following Eastern Sierra Gardens: Apple Hill Farm, Goat Hollow Ranch, Joe Suppa, and Joel & Kristie's Simis Ranch Farm.

■ (photos by Sarah Spano and Heather Freeman)

Oak Group Show



ESLT and the **Oak Group** filled the Faulkner Gallery in Santa Barbara at our September 2010 Show and Sale Reception. The show was a great success; the beautiful artwork portraying the Eastern Sierra helped raise awareness and the sales benefited ESLT's land conservation work. *Lake Mary*, oil by Jeremy Harper. Photo by Stephen Ingram.

AmeriCorps Grant Renewed

For four years now, ESLT has maintained a successful and ever-growing relationship with the **Sierra Nevada AmeriCorps Partnership (SNAP)**, which has given four talented young women the opportunity to serve the Eastern Sierra community through educational programs, volunteer projects, and outreach efforts. We just received the exciting news that the AmeriCorps grant has been approved for another year! This means that a fifth young individual will volunteer a year of service with ESLT, helping to better inform and inspire the public about private land conservation in the Eastern Sierra. Stay tuned for news about our new AmeriCorps member and help us welcome him/her to the wild east side of California!

ESLT and AmeriCorps Partnership "Got Things Done" in 2010!

Our AmeriCorps member, **Sarah Spano**, was hard at work this year fulfilling AmeriCorp's national motto of "getting things done" in the Eastern Sierra. She made connections within the community by educating grade school children, organizing restoration and monitoring projects, and highlighting the importance of sustainability through local food programs. Below are some photos from Sarah's year of service.



Paperless Options

Do you enjoy your ESLT membership, but wish you could avoid some of the paper associated with it? Consider switching to our tree-free membership option! This will save paper and costs involved in our membership renewal, newsletters and other mailings



Responding to your requests, ESLT is now offering a tree-free membership. We can help you reduce the paper in your life by sending you renewal requests and our SierraScapes newsletter online. Photo by Stephen Ingram.

allowing more dollars to go towards land conservation efforts. In this paperless option, you will receive renewal notices and acknowledgements by email where possible. When our tri-annual newsletters come out, you'll receive an email letting you know how to download it directly from our website. If this is the option for you, please call us or email heatherf@eslt.org with your name, mailing address and the email address you would like the notices to go to.

Save the Date!

Saturday, March 26, 2011

ESLT's Birthday Bash

Join us as we kick-off our 10th anniversary with a celebration of the people and partnerships dedicated to preserving our treasured lands and their scenic vistas.

Weekend of June 25 & 26, 2011

ESLT invites you to join us for a fun filled weekend exploring our preserved lands. Activities will include our annual Mammoth Mountain Extravaganza, on Saturday, June 25, 2011, hosted by Rusty Gregory and Mammoth Mountain.

Mark your calendars and visit www.eslt.org for more information soon.

Membership Milestones

Thank you to all who recently sent contributions in memory or in honor of your family, friends, and loved ones. Such gifts pay tribute to these special people by helping us keep the Eastern Sierra a special place for now and for future generations—a true gift in perpetuity.

Fred Beck gave in honor of California. **Martha Breed** gave in memory of Betty Berenson. **Robert Colt** gave in honor of Liz Fleming. **France and Alice Davis** joined in honor of Aaron Johnson's great work with ESLT! **Anne and Kirk Halford** gave in honor of ESLT. **Susan Moore and Peter Woodman** joined in honor of Ms. Terry Middlemiss for her happy 65th birthday! **Cherie and Larry Savage** joined ESLT in support of Orrin and Cindy Sage and all others that cherish wilderness. **Brian Wegener** gave in memory of Mark Cloeter.

Generous Donations

The following individuals and businesses made generous in-kind donations: Apple Hill Farm | Ben and Jerry's Mammoth | Black Sheep Coffee Roasters | Jeff Bright | Linda Dore Catering | Joel Ellis and Kristie Nelson | Great Basin Bakery | Inyo Council for the Arts | Kevin and Lis Mazzu (McDonald's) | Orrin and Cindy Sage | Schat's Bakery | Wayne and Sharol Siemens | SnowCreek Resort | Sonoma Wine Company | Starbucks | Vons

Getting Out on the Land! Membership Highlights from 2010



Despite chilly temperatures this spring, visitors to Black Lake, a rare desert wetlands located in remote Adobe Valley, saw many beautiful birds including American Avocets, Cinnamon Teals, and Longbilled Dowitchers.



In a sea of colorful goldenrod in Snowcreek Meadow, workshop participants enjoyed learning to find their way using their GPS units with Mammoth Mountain in the background.



Spotting butterflies with binoculars, volunteers monitor the occurrence of a rare species. Migration corridors are important to all kinds of wildlife, including insects.

Volunteer Appreciation

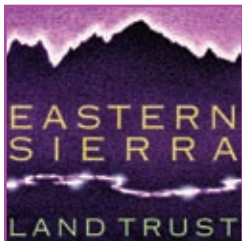
ESLT is deeply grateful to our volunteers who regularly contribute to the important work being done to preserve land in the Eastern Sierra. This year, over 100 volunteers gave more than 2,650 hours of their time, advice, energy, and passion to fulfill our mission. The work ESLT does would not be possible without the invaluable contributions of the following people: Dave Anziano, Herb Benham, Bill & Diane Bramlette, Chris Chapman, Sharon & Malcolm Clark, Mary Conner, Mike Davis, Dave Doonan, Kathy Duvall, Sabine Elia, Brian Ellison, Jacques Etchegoyhen, Jack Ferrell, Julie Fontaine, Kim Forkner, Keri French, Steve Frisch, Jerry Gabriel, Sally Gaines, Vireo Gaines, Carolyn Gann, Brianna Goehring, Nate Greenberg, Rusty Gregory, Jeff Griffiths & 4-H, Dave Hardin, Tom Hardy, Linda Hess, Rosanne Higley, Wayne Hinkel, Sandy Hogan, Jan Hunewill, Byng Hunt, Kay Hunter, Stephen Ingram, John Iwerks, Susan Joyce, Rick Kattelmann, Phil Kropoth, Roberta Lagomarsini, Kari Laird, Tiffany Lau, Joel Masser, Mary Ann Matthews, John McGurke, Roberta McIntosh, Geoff McQuilkin, Marvin Moskowitz, George Milovich, Phyllis Mottola, Hannah Murray, Larry Nahm, Katie Nelson, Jessie O'Dell, Ron & Barbara Oriti, Duke Ostendorf, Brandi Parsley, Marie Patrick, Lynn & Steve Peterson, Mary

Pipersky, Mary K Prentice, Pete Pumphrey, Doug Ross, Joel Saenz, Orrin & Cindy Sage, Jim Sammons, Selim Sandoval, Tim Sanford, Frank Stewart, Brian Stange, Gail Swain, Bill Taylor, Tony & Sherryl Taylor, Arturo Tello, Dawn True, Sid Tyler, Jim & Kathy Varnam, Terry Walker, Michael Walsh, Morgan Weir, Wally Woolfendon, Ann Wong, the Bishop Boy Scout Troop, and the staff of ESLT for giving their time above and beyond the call of duty.



Above, left: ESLT is grateful to our talented and passionate group of over 100 volunteers. Here, volunteer Kim Forkner, Cartographic Technician at Inyo National Forest, leads an introduction to Global Positioning System (GPS) for one of ESLT's Brown Bag Lunch discussions.

Above, right: ESLT engages volunteers in a variety of events like getting our volunteers out on the land for our first annual Great Sierra River Cleanup in Bishop. From left: Brianna Goehring, Morgan Weir, Aaron Johnson, Serena Dennis, Dawn True, and Tiffany Lau.



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