

Promises of Perpetuity News from the Executive Director

This year ESLT has made exciting strides forward in ensuring the permanence of our conservation projects. You've heard about our newly accredited status, which acts as a seal of approval of our policies, procedures, and overall operations. ESLT's accreditation is something that our landowners, agency partners, and our members can rejoice over because it assures them that we operate efficiently and effectively to achieve our mission.

ESLT is taking another step on the path to perpetuity by enrolling in a visionary new program that will provide conservation defense insurance. While we work hard to maintain good communications with our easement landowners and we've never had a violation, we recognize that as time goes by and land changes ownership, the risk increases that we may need to legally defend our easements. The Land Trust Alliance has formed a new entity, called Terrafirma, which is an insurance program that will help enrolled land trusts defend their conserved lands from legal challenge. This is the first far-reaching, national initiative to ensure the permanence of conservation efforts by organizations like ESLT. We are proud to have committed to the program and to ensuring that the beauty and vital resources of our preserved lands live on far into the future.

■ *Karen Ferrell-Ingram,
ESLT Executive Director*



ESLT helps local farmers preserve their prime farmland in the Hammil Valley.

Preserving the Rural Character and Prime Soils of Mono County

602 acre Alfalfa Farm in Hammil Valley Preserved

ESLT's latest conservation project is a beautiful farm tucked under the towering White Mountains, north of Bishop. Richard Moss and his wife Barbara have preserved their 602 organic alfalfa farm, known as Cinnamon Ranch, in the Hammil Valley. The Moss family purchased the ranch in 1970, making alfalfa hay the primary agricultural product from the ranch. Through the conservation easement, these long-time landowners retain title and management of their property, while designating how their land may be used now and in the future.

Cinnamon Ranch has a history of over 150 years, dating back to the first recorded landowner, William Hamil (original spelling), who founded the ranch in 1864. The Sinnamon family (more original spelling!), ranchers from northern Mono County who capitalized on the Bodie gold mining boom, acquired the land in 1900. The ranch became a significant crossroads in Mono County, with a railroad station and county road.

Agriculture remains an integral part of Mono County's economy and regional identity, with field crops like alfalfa contributing 40% of Mono County's agricultural income. The property's important scenic value to residents and visitors to the Eastern Sierra provides travellers along Highway 6 a taste of Mono County's rural character.

ESLT works with local farmers to sustain financially viable agricultural operations on their land against rising pressures to subdivide. "It is important to me that this land remains open for agriculture and not be split up. That way it can always provide a home and a way of life for my family like it does now. After seeing many of the farms in Lancaster where I grew up turned to dust and subdivisions, I always knew that I wanted this land to remain available for farming," said Richard Moss. In places like the Hammil Valley, ESLT helps landowners to set up voluntary and binding agreements that permanently protect their family farms.

Thanks to our members and our partners at Sierra Nevada Conservancy and the Farm and Ranchland Protection Program at the Natural Resources Conservation Service, this prime farmland will continue to be productive far into the future.

Joseph Swall's Apple Orchard Still Provides Fruit and Plenty of Habitat for Wildlife

We've been thinking a lot about apples recently at ESLT, partly because of the crisp fall mornings in Bishop, but also because of the historic apple orchard that has been preserved as part of our recent Naylon Conservation Easement in Swall Meadows.

The century old orchard is a remnant of the original orchard of around 3,000 trees that Joseph Swall planted in the early 1900's. Many of these trees are still healthy and produce fruit in most years, except when the orchard experiences a spring cold snap due to its elevation of about 6,500 ft. Swall's high elevation operation also included pears, cherries, gooseberries, and currents, which were sold at a roadside market on old HWY 395.

Not only does this old orchard enhance the scenery and agricultural value of the property, it also provides a food source for wildlife. As mule deer and other wildlife come through Swall Meadows on their way from their summer range in the mountains, they can feed on apples, along with apple tree twigs and foliage. Foxes, porcupines, bobcats, and coyotes snack on apples that have fallen to the ground. Black bears are known for their appetite for apples, and will climb trees to get them. The small mammals that nibble on apples attract circling hawks and other predators.

Many birds flock to this old apple orchard. Sapsuckers often feed on the sap of apple trees, leaving their characteristic lines of sap wells around the trunk of the tree. Many species of bees, butterflies, and other beneficial insects visit the apple blossoms in spring. Branches and cavities in apple trees are common nest sites, and woodpeckers find insects to eat in the dead limbs of these old trees.

As the heart of Swall Meadows, the Naylon property provides excellent browse and safe passage for Round Valley mule deer, stunning views of Round Valley, and a rich history. The presence of this old apple orchard adds another layer of value, increasing both wildlife habitat and scenic beauty.

■ *By Hillary Behr,*
ESLT AmeriCorps Member



Photo by Stephen Ingram.



ESLT Board and Staff gather together at a planning retreat in Death Valley.

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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Eastern Sierra Land Trust Introduces New Legacy Circle

ESLT is proud to announce its new **Legacy Circle**. This is a special group of land conservation supporters who have made a lasting commitment to the Eastern Sierra through a variety of estate planning tools such as bequests in a will or trust, IRA designations, or gifts of life insurance. The Legacy Circle is a way for us to recognize this profound contribution to the future of land conservation in our beloved region.

If you wish to name Eastern Sierra Land Trust in your will or estate plan, the required language is: Eastern Sierra Land Trust, a nonprofit corporation, organized and existing under the laws of the State of California, with principal business mailing address of P.O. Box 755, Bishop, CA, 93515. Our tax identification number is: 77-0566099.

Please contact us about becoming a member of the Legacy Circle or making a planned gift at (760) 873-4554 or david@eslt.org. Legacy Circle members need not be publicly named and may remain anonymous. We would be happy to assist you with a plan that meets your goals.

ESLT and Sierra Nevada AmeriCorps Partnership "Got Things Done" in 2011!

Hillary Behr followed in the fine tradition of past members and fulfilled the national AmeriCorps motto of "getting things done" in the Eastern Sierra. Hillary educated local youth about gardening, birding, and wildlife on ESLT's conservation easements. She recruited volunteers to help her monitor and restore lands in the Eastern Sierra.



A very excited group of Edna Beaman Elementary students follow Hillary during their birding field trip to Benton Hot Springs Ranch and ponds.



Hillary happily joins the crew to cut invasive bulrush as part of the speckled dace restoration project at Benton Hot Springs Ranch and ponds.

Member 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 place for now and for future generations — a true gift in perpetuity.

Derek Taylor dedicated his gift to California. **Contoocook Valley Board of Realtors** gave in memory of **Kip Garre**. **Maggie Stokes** gave in memory of **Bill & Betty Mead**. **Robin Cox** gave in memory of **Elizabeth Caroline Smith**. **Craig Behrens** gave in memory of **Bob Schneider**. **Glen Poulsen** gave in memory of **Kip Garre** and **Allison Kreutzen**.

Member Spotlight: Jeanne Adams



Jeanne Adams first joined Eastern Sierra Land Trust in 2002 and has been visiting the Eastern Sierra since she was a young girl. "When I was ten I had the chance to visit the Hunewill Ranch in Bridgeport and my interest in the Eastern Sierra became lifelong," says Jeanne. "My grandmother really enjoyed spending time at Fales' Hot Springs and my family would make the trip to take her there every summer."

She married her husband Michael in 1962, and together they are operating owners of the Ansel Adams Gallery in Yosemite National Park. Michael, (son of photographer and conservationist Ansel Adams) and Jeanne have been intimately involved in business, education, photography and interpretation in this treasured spot their entire adult lives.

In the mid 1970s, Jeanne met David Gaines in Yosemite to discuss a strategy for saving Mono Lake by helping to launch the Mono Lake Committee store and interpretive center. Recently, she became interested in the now former Eastern Sierra Academy in Bridgeport. Impressed with what the Academy was doing, Jeanne supported them in out-of-area field trips and continues to do the same now with Lee Vining High School.

"I enthusiastically support efforts which I believe to be in the good interests of long-term community and environment. Eastern Sierra Land Trust is certainly one of these."

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 2,276 hours of their time, advice, energy, and passion to fulfill our mission. Thank you to our dedicated volunteers—ESLT couldn't do it without you! Individuals who gave their time this year are:

Rose Banks, Maureen Barrett, Ian Bell, Bill Bramlette, Dori Cann, Dale Dalrymple, Dave Doonan, Kelly Dunn, Kathy Duvall, Jacques Etchegoyhen, Jack Ferrell, Kim Forkner, Steve Frisch, Sally Gaines, Brianna Goehring, Justin Gilpin, Nate Greenberg, Rusty Gregory, Heidi Hall, Jan Hambleton, Dave Hardin, Brad & Amy Henderson, Linda Hess, Rosanne Higley, Sandy Hogan, Marty Hornick, Jan Hunewill, Byng Hunt, Kay Hunter, Stephen Ingram, Rick Kattelman, Phill Kiddoo, Ceal Klingler, Joe Lane, Michael Lofthus, Mary Ann Matthews, Ruth MacFarlane, Steve McLaughlin, Geoff McQuilkin, George Milovich, Mignon Moskowitz, Hannah Murray, Kathleen Nelson, Ruth Norris, Jessie O'Dell, Ron & Barbara Oriti, Duke Ostendorf, Jim & Debby Parker, Brandi Parsley, Marie Patrick, Steve & Lynn Peterson, Pete Pumphrey, Doug Ross, Terry Gooch Ross, Orrin & Cindy Sage, Nelson Sanchez, Tim Sanford, Mollie Scott, Brian Stange, Gail Swain, Tim Taylor, Tony & Sherryl Taylor, Sid & Betsey Tyler, Jim & Kathy Varnam, Pam Vaughan, Mary Verbeck, Gayle Woodruff, Wally Woolfenden, Piper Wright, Terry Wright, Lesley Yen, and Ann Wong.



ESLT is grateful to our talented and passionate group of 100 Volunteers. Here, Heidi Hall and Mollie Scott assist at ESLT's 10th Birthday Party.



ESLT volunteers get out on the land and help pick up trash along the Owens River.



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