



Shovel Ready Conservation!

Birthdays often bring reflection, and the ESLT's recent 8th birthday has inspired me to think about where we have come from and where our future path might take us. I think it's fair to say that our success has surprised everyone, including me and the other founding members. In a short time, we have gone from a passionate dream to a passionately held reality—helped by our many supporters, we've assisted landowners to preserve over 6000 acres of productive farm and ranch land, critical wildlife habitat, and beloved scenic vistas across our region. We have brought almost \$5 million to our region in easement and land acquisitions, jobs, purchases of supplies, paid rent, and other boosts to the local economy. Funds for an agricultural easement can supply needed capital for improving farm and ranch operations and help keep the land productive. It is clear that land trust efforts can not only preserve important lands, but can also contribute to the economic vitality of a rural area. With your continued support, we are poised to preserve our beloved Eastern Sierra for future generations and to help our communities weather the economic downturn.

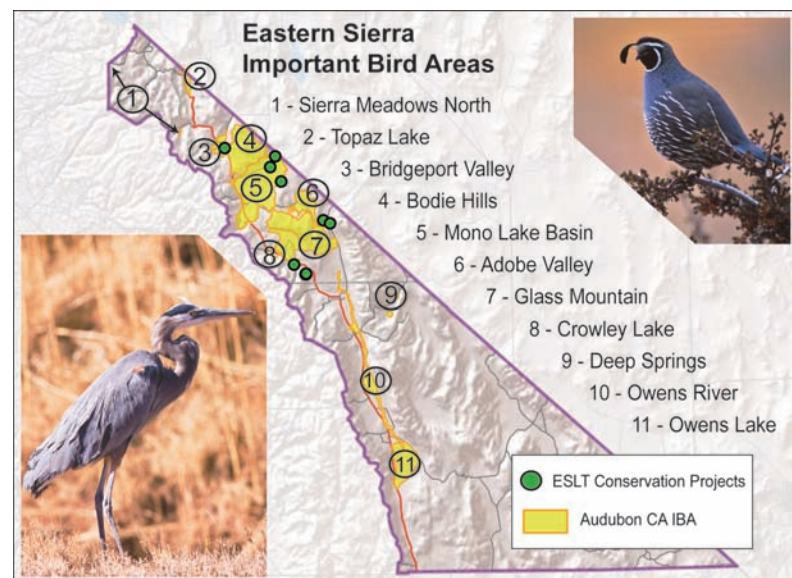
■ *By Karen Ferrell-Ingram, Executive Director*

Partnerships Are For The Birds

The Eastern Sierra is a great place to live if you like birds. Whether you are an avid birder looking to expand your 'life list' with rare sightings, a casual generalist such as I who delights in the spring greeting of the meadowlark, or an admiring passive observer who takes pleasure in viewing our numerous roadside raptors, there is something here for everyone. From the canorous canyon wren and threatened sage grouse, to waterfowl and waders, the Eastern Sierra region provides important habitat to a wide variety of avian wildlife.

Audubon California agrees. In fact, they recently rolled out a new program identifying Important Bird Areas (IBAs) throughout the state. IBAs are public or private lands that provide essential habitat, (breeding, wintering, and/or migrating) for one or more species of bird. IBAs may be small or large, but usually they are discrete sites that stand out from the surrounding landscape, providing special habitat. Not surprisingly, a good number of these coincide with the same lands that we here at the ESLT are working to preserve. From important Sierra meadows habitat near Kirkwood in Alpine County in the far north, to the saline waters of Owens Lake in the south, a total of eleven IBAs fall within the current ESLT service area.

What does this mean for the ESLT? According to Audubon CA, the IBA designation is meant to "prioritize conservation action and to develop partnerships with public agencies and conservation organizations," creating a tool meant to stimulate cooperative action toward implementing "site-based" bird conservation. Audubon CA sees the bird area designation as a priority setting tool that can be used to coordinate conservation efforts at a variety of scales from federal and state agencies, local Audubon chapters, conservation groups such as ESLT, and even interested individuals. To learn more or see how you can get involved, contact us here at the ESLT or Audubon CA. ■ *By Aaron Johnson, ESLT Stewardship Coordinator*



*Left to right:
Great Blue Heron.
Photo by Rick Kattelmann.
California Quail.
Photo by Stephen Ingram.*

Dragonflies: Marvels of the Meadows

Dragonflies flew among dinosaurs. One fossilized dragonfly species, from 250 million years ago, had a wingspan of more than 2 feet! Dragonflies have always been important in human culture, and are considered by some to bring good

luck. In Japan, dragonflies are symbols of courage, strength, joy, and light. To both professional and amateur naturalists, dragonflies are regarded highly for their 300 million-year history, and their adaptations that enable them to fly backwards, hover, and change directions instantly while tracking down their airborne prey.

Dragonflies spend most of their lives as immature nymphs, inhabiting streams, ponds and marsh habitats, feeding voraciously on other insect larvae, and occasionally eating tadpoles or small fish. After several months to five years, the larvae crawl up from the water onto emergent plants, shed their larval skin, and metamorphose into winged adults. These colorful, strong-flying predators feed on mosquitoes, gnats, midges, and other small insects.

The insect order Odonata (which includes dragonflies and damselflies) consists of approximately 5000 species worldwide, with roughly 450 species in North America. According to local dragonfly expert, Ron Oriti, approximately 35 species inhabit the Eastern Sierra region. The large Skimmer family includes the well-known skimmers, meadowhawks, gliders, the western pondhawk, and others. One common species, the eight-spotted skimmer (*Libellula forensis*), grows to 2 inches long and can be easily identified by having two dark and two white spots on each transparent wing. The massive eyes of eight-spotted skimmers (and other dragonflies) contain 30,000 separate lenses that give them exceptionally keen eyesight and broad peripheral vision. Just as dragonflies eat flying insects, they in turn are eaten by kestrels, and as larvae they are preyed upon by diving ducks. The ESLT conservation easement at Benton Hot Springs Ranch, with its ponds and healthy alkali meadows, is a good place to marvel at the aerial maneuvers and natural history of dragonflies. ■ *By Stephen Ingram*



*Eight-spotted Skimmer.
Photo by Ron Oriti.*



*Katie handing over the reins to Serena at the ESLT Friends Holiday Party.
Photo by Stephen Ingram.*

ESLT Greetings and Farewells

ESLT would like to welcome Jan Hunewill officially to our Board of Directors. We are thrilled to have the Hunewill family continue their association with the ESLT, as Jan's husband, Stan, just recently retired from the Board of Directors. Jan and Stan, along with the rest of their family, own the Hunewill Guest Ranch, which is also a working cattle ranch in the beautiful Bridgeport Valley.

Serena Dennis is also joining the ESLT team, as the new AmeriCorps member, with the official title of Education and Outreach Coordinator. Serena grew up on 'the other side' of the Sierra, and is looking forward to

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Eastern Sierra Land Trust works with willing landowners to protect vital lands in Inyo, Mono, and Alpine counties for their scenic, recreational, historical, agricultural, botanic, watershed, and wildlife values.

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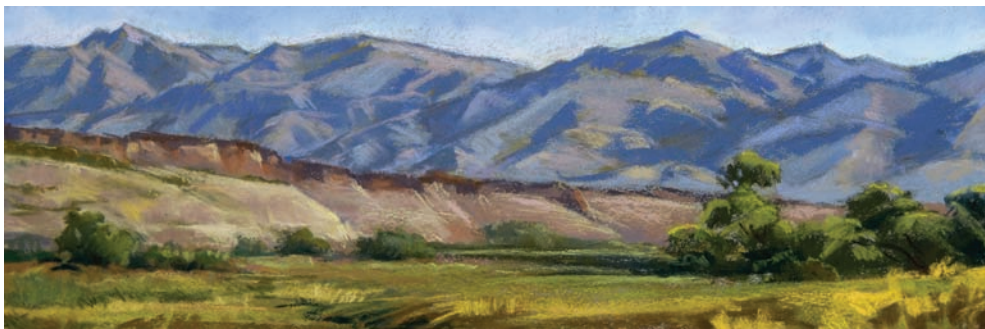
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EASTERN SIERRA LAND TRUST

P.O. Box 755
176 Home Street
Bishop, California 93515
Phone (760) 873-4554
Fax (760) 873-9277
www.easternsierralandtrust.org



"Pleasant Valley" pastel by Chris Chapman.

Calling All Artists: Art for Conservation Show & Sale

The Eastern Sierra Land Trust is excited to announce its first *Art for Conservation Show and Sale* slated for July 18-19, 2009 in Mammoth Lakes. This *Art for Conservation Show and Sale* will exhibit landscape art to help raise awareness for ESLT's important land conservation work. Fifty percent of all sales will go directly to supporting ESLT's work to preserve our rural lands.

The ESLT invites all California artists to submit work to be reviewed for the juried show and sale. Artwork will be accepted in any medium for review and must be received by April 1. For more information and artist submission guidelines, please email art@eslt.org or call 760-873-4554. Guidelines are also available at www.easternsierralandtrust.org.

ESLT Wish List

Been meaning to bring that grill to the thrift store? Not sure what to do with that third screwdriver? How about donating it to the ESLT! Call us today, 760-873-4554. *Grill, water jugs/coolers, paper cutter, tool box (w/ tools?), wheel barrow, loppers, surge protector, small electric heater.*

Working Farms and Ranches Program Update

In December 2008, the state of California froze spending for many of its bond-funded programs. One particular program impacted was the California Farmland Conservancy Program (CFCP). This hit the ESLT pretty hard because the Agricultural Lands Specialist position at ESLT has been funded almost entirely through a grant from CFCP, which also funded some of the project expenses associated with easement implementation on agricultural lands.

The ESLT is looking at this freeze as an opportunity to re-vamp our Working Farms and Ranches Program to broaden our programs to serve more of the community. Work will continue with willing landowners on creating agricultural conservation easements, but we plan to also work with local agencies, organizations, and individuals to help increase community support and awareness of local agricultural businesses and food production. Expect to see new and exciting workshops and events this year that feature Eastern Sierra farms and ranches, including a "Family Farm Day." We are also excited to support "local food" efforts, whether through community gardens, farmer's markets, youth projects, small-scale farming, or Eastern Sierra Ag product marketing strategies.

It is impossible to predict when and if the state grants will come back on line for our Working Farms and Ranches Program. In any case, we believe that this is a critical program that has wide-ranging benefits for the region and for all the

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Member Spotlight: Donald & Jodi Sage

Don and Jodi Sage of Mammoth Lakes have been members of the ESLT since 2004. "About ten years ago, we relocated from Southern California to this area because we love and appreciate the natural beauty, the changing seasons and the local community. We support the ESLT's important work for many of those same reasons. In particular, we support the ESLT because we think it is an important and worthwhile endeavor to preserve these lands and prevent indiscriminate development. The Land Trust is doing a great job at preserving our lands and helping the local community maintain the quality of life we cherish."

Don and Jodi are active members of our Eastern Sierra community. Don serves as Mammoth Hospital Board Chairman and Jodi has been active in the Mammoth Hospital Auxiliary. Don has served various offices in the Mammoth Lakes Rotary Club and they are both aficionados and supporters of local Chamber Music productions. Don is Board Chairman of Chamber Music Unbound and chaired the Sierra Summer Festival several years ago. ESLT is honored to have Don and Jodi's long-term involvement and support; they are inspirational members of our community!



Don and Jodi Sage at their home in Mammoth. Photo by Tripod and Timer.

Greetings & Farewells - *continued from page 2*

experiencing this side. Serena has experience working with volunteers, and leading education programs. "I am looking forward to meeting everyone, and working for an organization that helps the local community preserve what is so amazing about this place."

Lastly, ESLT would like to say thank you and farewell to Katie Nelson, our previous AmeriCorps member, who accomplished so much in her year with us. Katie is still local—you can find her in the mountains west of Bishop, scrambling over rocks, tracking Sierra Nevada bighorn sheep.

Working Farms and Ranches

Program Update - *continued from page 3*

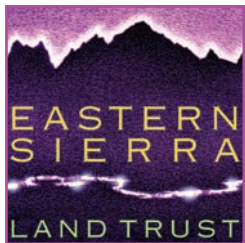
people who value and depend on our scenic and productive green valleys. We know you agree and hope that you will help us keep this program alive with your continued financial support.

Leave a Lasting Legacy

Did you know there are many ways you can help the Eastern Sierra Land Trust preserve the rural and natural lands we all cherish, while meeting your financial planning goals as well? Did you know that your will or trust can be a simple and lasting way for you to support the work of the ESLT for years to come?

A bequest allows you to translate your passion for preserving the Eastern Sierra into a permanent gift while maximizing the benefits to you. By designating a set amount or percentage of your estate to ESLT, you can guarantee that the work to protect our treasured lands of the Eastern Sierra will succeed. Your lasting legacy will help ensure that future generations will enjoy this special place.

Thank you to all our members for your dedication to preserving our rural lands and for your foresight in protecting these lands in perpetuity. To find out more about making a planned gift that is most appropriate for you, please contact Mary McGurke at mary@eslt.org or call 760-873-4554. You may also call ESLT Advisory Board member and estate planning attorney, Linda Hess, at 760-934-3113.



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