

SIERRASCAPES

The Eastern Sierra Land Trust Newsletter

www.eslt.org

Fall 2017

“When one tugs at a single thing in nature, he finds it attached to the rest of the world.”

– John Muir



It's About The Land

Letter from the Executive Director

I was 10 years old when my grandfather's dairy ranch was sold. It was important to him that the new owners kept it intact, so they assured him they would. And for a few years, they did – until they sold it to a developer, who subdivided it into small parcels.

That place was a piece of history for my family. I can still recall him telling me how painful it was to watch his beloved ranch go from open, working land into houses on the outskirts of a growing community.

"It's about the land," he said.

Are there moments in your past that have shaped who you are, or the path you have chosen to follow? I point to my grandfather's story, and to those simple words he said. *It's about the land.*

Today, it's about *this* land – an amazing place we call the Eastern Sierra. Our love of this land is what brings us together. What does the Eastern Sierra mean to you?

For some, it is a place to escape. To get away from the sounds and smells of the city. To clear your head and heart.

For others, this is a place to find a more peaceful way of life. Or maybe for you this is a place of adventure – where there are still unnamed peaks to summit, trails to navigate, and secret springs where you can take off your boots and feel the icy water between your toes.

For you, for me, and for all of us, this land means something. We are connected by this place. And in these challenging times – when there is so much sorrow in our world – we need the Eastern Sierra more than ever.

This land can give us hope.

Because of you, and through your generosity, we are protecting the open spaces that mean so much. We are making a difference. And we will continue to make a difference: for you and your loved ones, for kids of all ages, for the wildlife that roam here, and for those who come after us.

It's about the land – and thanks to you, its legacy will endure for generations to come.

With gratitude,



Kay Ogden, Executive Director

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At Home On the Range

You're protecting habitat for a mammal that is as elusive as it is iconic

Imagine peering through binoculars, scanning the open hills – when all of a sudden, a slight movement catches your gaze. Dark ears and horns lift above the sage. Then a burst of tan and white, and the bounding beast is gone.

Pronghorn are a beautiful and astonishing sight – if you are lucky enough to catch a glimpse of them.

Thanks to you, open spaces where this iconic animal is known to roam are now being conserved. You're helping make sure that the elusive pronghorn will continue to have a *home on the range*, right here in the Eastern Sierra.

BORN TO RUN

As the fastest land mammal in North America, the pronghorn evolved in a time when its most formidable predator was the North American cheetah. With this fearsome hunter long gone, the pronghorn's swiftness and endurance is unmatched.

Nothing compares to witnessing a herd of pronghorn in full flight. They accelerate in mere seconds up to 45 miles per hour, a speed they can maintain for four miles or more – with sprinting bursts up to 60 mph. Each stride can span an impressive 30 feet.

HAZARDS IN THEIR HABITAT

Pronghorn rely on the open ranges of the American West, and fences are not their friend. Unlike mule deer, pronghorn do not jump over fences; instead, they go under. Where a fence has woven wire at its base, or where the bottom wire is too low, a pronghorn can get hung up. And if it tries to go around, it becomes an easy target for predators.

Places like the Bodie Hills, with its rolling ridgelines and minimal fences, provide an excellent home for pronghorn. Yet there are still many old fences and other hazards out on the range that put pronghorn at risk.

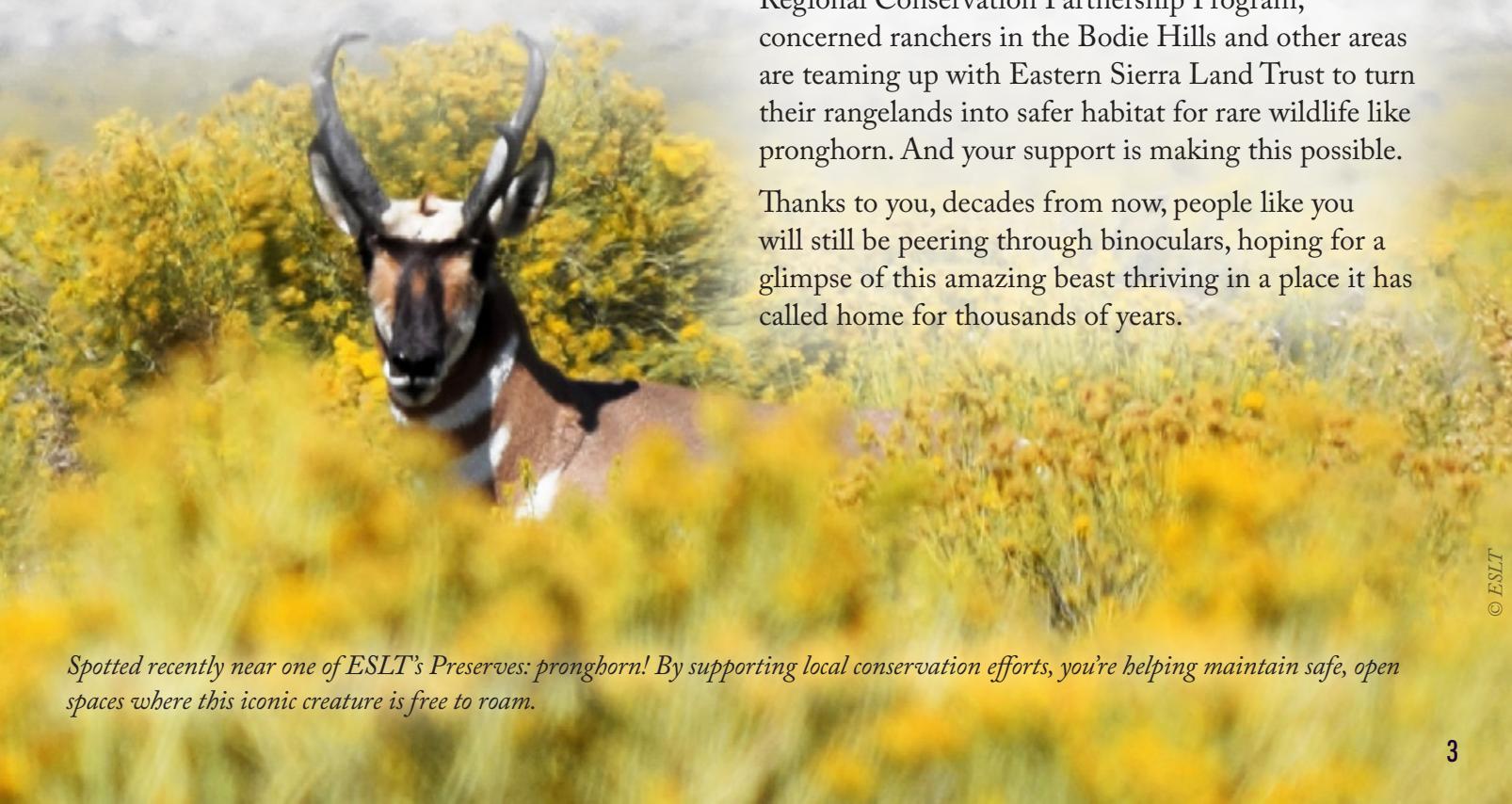
With your help, we're working to change that.

CREATING A SAFER HOME

There's good news: though still rare, the number of pronghorn sightings in the Eastern Sierra has been on the rise – particularly this year.

With funding assistance provided through the Regional Conservation Partnership Program, concerned ranchers in the Bodie Hills and other areas are teaming up with Eastern Sierra Land Trust to turn their rangelands into safer habitat for rare wildlife like pronghorn. And your support is making this possible.

Thanks to you, decades from now, people like you will still be peering through binoculars, hoping for a glimpse of this amazing beast thriving in a place it has called home for thousands of years.



Spotted recently near one of ESLT's Preserves: pronghorn! By supporting local conservation efforts, you're helping maintain safe, open spaces where this iconic creature is free to roam.



"This experience gave us a new, hopeful perspective on what it means to volunteer."

- Quinn Navarro, Class of 2018

© ESLT, taken in the field

Bright Minds Take On Conservation

Students from the University of Redlands are making local conservation a priority

Your support makes it possible for us to organize and fund habitat restoration projects in the places wildlife need it most – locations like Conway Ranch. And to accomplish this important work, we rely on help from hardworking volunteers.

So when Quinn Navarro and his classmates from a 300-level Chemistry class at the University of Redlands offered to join us this summer to lend a hand, we were thrilled. The work they accomplished was critical to improving habitat for rare wildlife. And the insights we gained from them stick with us to this day.

Quinn shared his reflections on the experience, and we couldn't help but feel inspired. We hope he inspires you, too.

As an undergraduate student studying biology and chemistry, I am sometimes troubled by the idea of conservation.

My classmates and I understand the magnitude to which our actions as a human race have negatively impacted this planet. In such a large frame of focus, it can be easy to feel that our efforts to maintain the health of the natural world are insignificant. Paper instead of plastic; carpooling to work; a day of volunteer work on the land. What difference can one person make?

Yet I have come to realize that not every effort to maintain our planet's well-being needs to be monumental in the scientific community. The seemingly-small actions that we can all take on a daily basis can, and do, leave their mark. Volunteering with Eastern Sierra Land Trust helped me understand this.

By cleaning irrigation systems, uprooting invasive species, and removing dead foliage, my classmates and I helped make Conway Ranch a healthier, safer environment. This was rewarding work, knowing that we were protecting the remarkable flora and fauna found there.

And perhaps more importantly, this experience gave us a new, hopeful perspective on what it means to volunteer.

To benefit the health of our entire planet, we need to embrace conservation in every way we can. Any one action might feel like a drop in the bucket. But if enough of us work together to benefit the world in which we live, we can fill that bucket up. That's how you make a lasting difference.

- Quinn Navarro, University of Redlands Class of 2018



Quinn, left, joins his classmates Sebastian Gallardo and Spencer Tibbitts to improve wildlife habitat at Conway Ranch.

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Member Spotlight: Jan and Stan Hunewill

Contributed by Tony Taylor, ESLT Board Member Emeritus

IMAGINE... A local ranching family that, for over 150 years, has maintained a spirit of true western hospitality in the Eastern Sierra, and that now operates a working cattle ranch and guest ranch which brings visitors of all ages to Bridgeport Valley every summer.

IMAGINE... A couple that, for decades, has served the public in eastern California and western Nevada in multiple elected and appointed positions.

IMAGINE... A family represented by three generations, all working together every day of every year, modeling the best of what family means in these challenging times.

IMAGINE... A man who cared so deeply about Eastern Sierra conservation and the region's ranching heritage that he volunteered on Eastern Sierra Land Trust's Board of Directors for three years; and when his health began to decline, imagine his wife taking up his legacy and joining the ESLT Board.

MEET Jan Hunewill and her late husband Stan. No need to imagine... Jan, Stan, and their family embody all of the descriptions above – and much more.

I was honored to recognize Jan and Stan with Eastern Sierra Land Trust's *Legacy Award* this past summer at our Lands & Legacy Celebration. This award singles out those in our community whose inspiration, leadership, and commitment have made an enduring impact on the Eastern Sierra lands we care so much about. I can imagine no one more deserving of this distinction than Jan and Stan Hunewill.

Our Land Trust and our entire region are the beneficiaries of the committed lives of these two amazing people.



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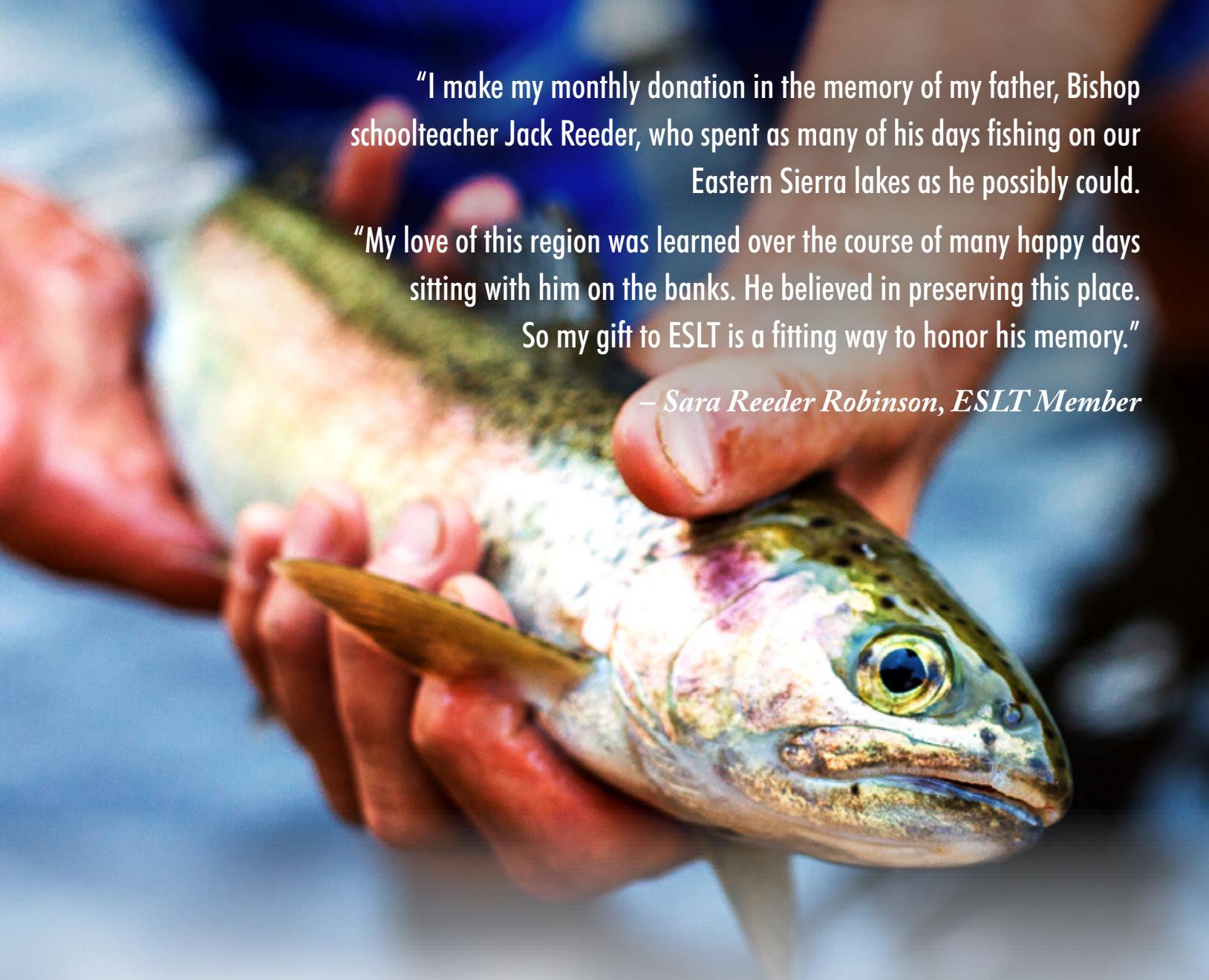
Celebrating the Magic of the Land

At our 9th annual Lands & Legacy on August 11-13th, our community came together to celebrate the remarkable places that you help protect forever.

What a weekend we had – full of visions of the beautiful future that we can create together. Visions that are now coming to life, thanks to donors like you who helped make this year's Lands & Legacy Celebration our most successful event ever.

We can all agree: *it's about the land*. This place is magical. And thanks to you, its legacy will endure for generations.

We are deeply grateful to Rusty Gregory for matching all donations made at the Lands & Legacy Benefit Dinner, and to our generous sponsors: Mammoth Mountain Ski Resort, Tim and Pam Bartley, Ruth and Roger MacFarlane, Brynn Pewtherer & Tony and Sherryl Taylor, and Betsey Tyler.



"I make my monthly donation in the memory of my father, Bishop schoolteacher Jack Reeder, who spent as many of his days fishing on our Eastern Sierra lakes as he possibly could.

"My love of this region was learned over the course of many happy days sitting with him on the banks. He believed in preserving this place. So my gift to ESLT is a fitting way to honor his memory."

— Sara Reeder Robinson, ESLT Member

Who Taught You to Fish?

Join us as we recognize those who inspire you to care

There's an ancient proverb that goes, "Give a man a fish and you feed him for a day. Teach a man to fish, and you feed him for a lifetime." This same saying holds true when it comes to conservation.

Does spending time in the Eastern Sierra fill your soul? Then you're in good company. And for many, there's likely a certain person who helped you discover your love of this amazing place. Someone who taught you that by having a hand in local conservation, you will continue to feel fulfilled – not just for a day, but for a lifetime.

We want to recognize those relatives, friends, and teachers who inspire you to care.

This holiday season, we encourage you to make a gift in honor or in memory of someone who has touched your heart. On the envelope enclosed with this newsletter, there's a place for you to write in your dedication. You can also make a tribute gift online, and it's simple and secure to do: visit www.eslt.org to learn more.

Your gift will help conserve the lands, water, and wildlife you treasure. And by sending it with a dedication, you give thanks to the person whose love of the Eastern Sierra helped shape who you are today.



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You Help Conservation Grow!

By supporting our annual family-friendly events that teach kids about nature, you're introducing boys and girls to the magic of nature. Thanks to you, they'll grow up with a deeper understanding of the world around them – and, we hope, the drive to protect it.

What's more, by getting kids outdoors, you're giving them many other benefits, too.

A growing pool of research shows that kids who participate in this type of experiential learning outside of the classroom are more likely to do better in school, have higher self-esteem, show reduced symptoms of attention deficit disorder, and have lower levels of stress.

This is great news: for these kids, for our community, and for the future of the lands and waterways you love.



Want to learn more? Sign up for our monthly e-newsletter and "like" us on Facebook! We'll keep you up-to-date about how your support is making a positive impact in our community.