

[ANNUAL REPORT 2010]

Connecting Community, Envisioning the Future

The Land
Conservancy
of San Luis Obispo County



[PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE]

Lisa Wise

It is an honor to be elected as the President of The Land Conservancy for the coming term. I would like to thank Gary Felsman for his service over the last eight years, first as Vice President and then as President. In his leadership role, Gary guided The Land Conservancy through a period of tremendous growth and helped build the capacity of the organization. We are pleased Gary will continue as a member of the Board of Trustees.

In considering my leadership role, I am reminded of the things that attracted me to The Land Conservancy, such as the generosity of our local community and the opportunity to work on important conservation efforts in the County. The Land Conservancy is a community-based organization, and I want to thank the extraordi-



Lisa takes in China

nary individuals, members, and organizations that help support and sustain our work through generous contributions and tireless volunteerism. Like many of you, I value our wild places and working landscapes, and I am motivated by the compelling possibility that important conservation and agricultural lands throughout the County can be permanently protected.

We are also fortunate to have talented and passionate staff stepping up to new roles, as well as new faces on the Board of Trustees, both critical resources for the future of the organization.

Our efforts in 2010 resulted in over 2,000 acres of conservation work valued at well over \$2 million. Indeed, there is much we can all be thankful for this year.



[DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE]

Robert A. Hill

I am proud and elated to work for you as the new Executive Director of The Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County. Having started as a volunteer intern in the summer of 2001, this opportunity represents a natural path that I have followed because of my deep appreciation and respect for those that have worked in this role before me. Yet, it is also a chance to bring forward my own vision and focus for the organization.

This year has been quite a year. Since my wife, Jaime, and I welcomed the beautiful birth of our twin sons, Albert and Oscar, I've felt more than ever the importance of the mission of The Land Conservancy by seeing the world through the eyes of our children. Observing the way they look up in wonderment at the trees, starting a tradition of visiting a family-owned Christmas



Bob enjoys the view

tree farm, feeding them local avocados from the farmer's market for their first food, or taking them for a Sunday stroll down a local trail – all make me grateful for our surroundings.

I offer my sincerest thanks to those that have supported The Land Conservancy in the past year and that have shared their time, passion, and belief in our mission.

Change in Leadership

The next generation of talented conservationists herald a new era for The Land Conservancy. Kaila Dettman, as Deputy Director, Wende David, as Director of Development, and Daniel Bohlman, as Director of Conservation Science, were promoted this year to round out the leadership team. They each offer diverse skill sets and breadth of experiences to the organization that will lead us into the challenges and opportunities of the twenty-first century. The new Directors are all under the age of 40, bringing a youthful and contemporary perspective to our conservation efforts.

[LEADERSHIP TEAM'S MESSAGE]

Looking Towards the Future

In the coming year, we will remain focused on our vision of San Luis Obispo County as a community with wild natural areas, productive farms and ranches, clean air and water, and stunning landscapes – forever. We'll join other land trusts all over the nation in the common goals of increasing the pace of local conservation, improving the quality of our programs, and ensuring the permanence of our work. In doing so, we will also remember that success means more than just dollars raised or acres saved – it means increasing the relevance of our work in the whole community by fostering the idea of conservation as a core value and a way of life.

"I remember my first bike ride from SLO to Avila Beach. I felt strong & free – dreamed of doing it for years and finally did it at age 30."

-Anonymous



We owe so much to San Luis Obispo County residents and visitors who have proven their commitment to natural resource conservation and open space. We look forward to our work with landowners and agencies each year. Over the last year, The Land Conservancy protected over 2,000 acres valued at more than \$2 million dollars. Our most notable projects included the Alamo Creek Ranch and the Froom Ranch Open Space.

Alamo Creek Ranch

The Alamo Creek Ranch, consisting of 1,767 privately owned acres adjacent to the Los Padres National Forest in southern San Luis Obispo County, has been protected by a permanent conservation easement funded through a grant from the California Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) as a part of their program to administer the California Oak Woodland Conservation Act of 2001. The project is the outcome of working together in partnership with the owners, Mr. and Mrs. Robert and Gretchen Loeff, and the WCB to achieve positive conservation results.

The Land Conservancy will provide stewardship in perpetuity while the landowners receive a financial incentive for their commitment to permanent conservation of an increasingly rare California landscape. The easement on the Alamo Creek Ranch protects diverse coast live oak, blue oak, and valley oak habitat, as well as the riparian zones along three major drainages. The ranch also supports a small herd of tule elk and lies within the endangered California condor's historic range. It is part of a large mosaic of intact oak woodland and oak savannah in the region and serves as an important wildlife migration corridor adjacent to the Los Padres National Forest.

The ranch will remain in private ownership as a working cattle ranch with a grazing plan designed to protect and enhance the ranch's oak woodlands and other natural resources. This is the concluding phase of a two-part project with owners Mr. and Mrs. Loeff following their generous donation of a conservation easement in 2009 of an additional 250 adjacent acres.



Cattle on the ranch

PHOTO BY DANIEL BOHLMAN



*"I remember my first visit to Alamo Creek Ranch in fall of 2008. I was excited to be part of the LCSLO team and fulfill my passion to help families protect farms and ranches in San Luis Obispo County."
-Margo Heekin Clark, Conservation Project Manager*

Froom Ranch Open Space

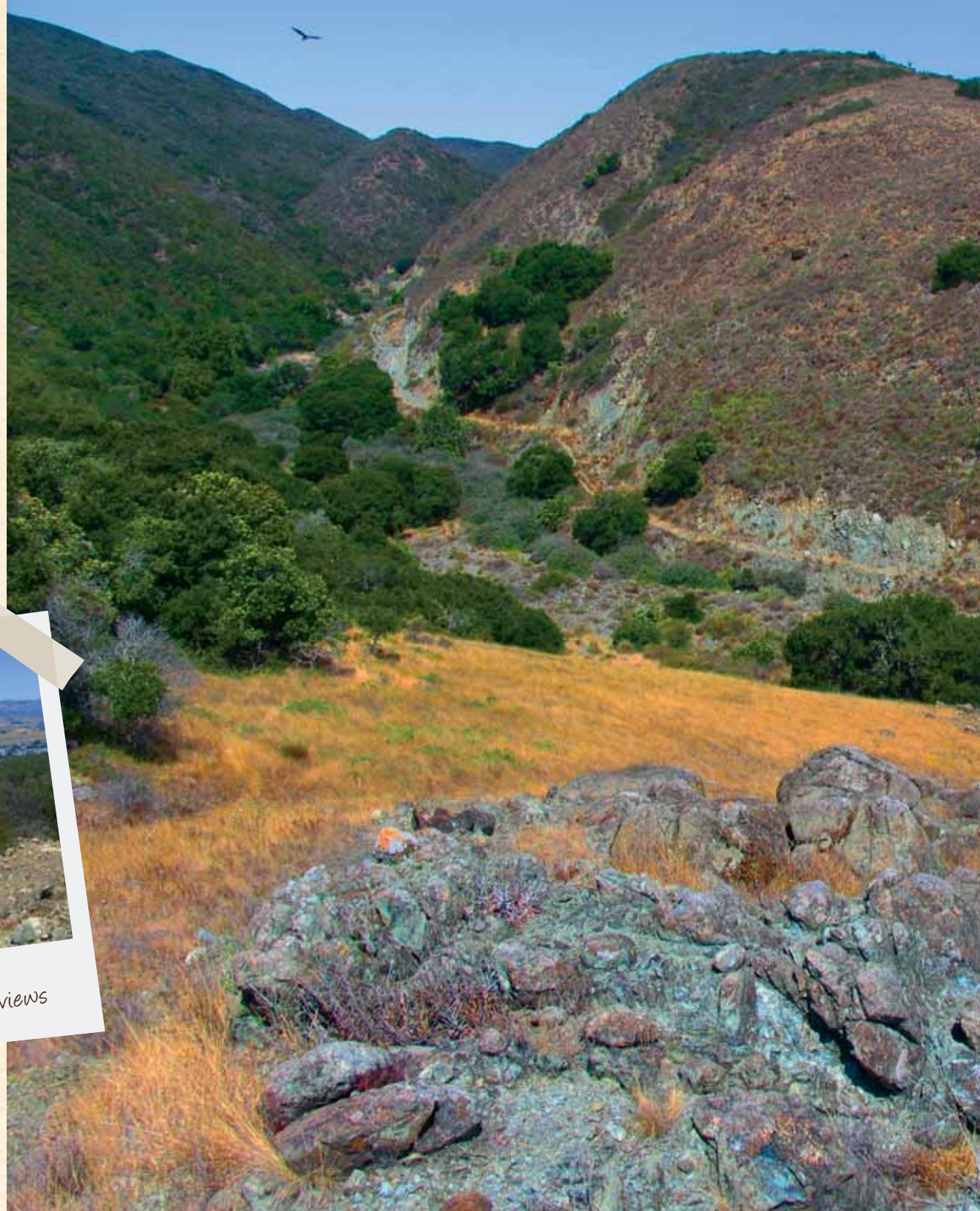
Once again the City of San Luis Obispo's Natural Resources Protection Program has teamed up with The Land Conservancy to preserve unique natural lands in and around the City—this time to permanently protect Froom Ranch.

The collaborative conservation effort for the Froom Ranch Open Space was completed with major project support from the City's own Measure Y funds, the Land & Water Conservation Fund, and The Nature Conservancy. Most remarkable were the \$63,000 in local donations for the 310 acre property that will offer new recreational opportunities and sweeping views of the San Luis Obispo Greenbelt.

Froom Ranch Open Space will significantly enhance the existing 6,000 acre greenbelt of conserved lands around the City of San Luis Obispo and includes rich wildlife habitat, dense chaparral, serpentine areas, oak woodland, and open grassland. The successful conservation of Froom Ranch has expanded the Irish Hills Natural Reserve to over 1,000 acres and several miles of new trails will soon be open to the public on the Froom Ranch lands.



*Taking in the
spectacular views*



“Nature rejuvenates so quickly, so completely.
Though we often view ourselves otherwise, we are nature.”

JEB DICKERSON



[RESTORATION AND STEWARDSHIP]

Notes from the Field

LOCATION: *Black Lake*

DATE: *6-10-10*

OBSERVER: *Carlos Torres*

“Arrived on site at just after 9am to find a full-on war zone: large tunnel under the deer fence and lots of tracks, likely fox and five new gopher holes in the irrigation line, plus several silver dune lupines, coming up from seed and doing really well, were root pruned by gophers and now upended and dead. Observed the same four deer as last week near the central band of vegetation. Deer browsing remains low, within fenced enclaves. Overall, recruitment from seed remains excellent and survivorship of container stock installed in January remains high at around 70%. Left tank full for irrigation next week.”



*Thanks to the
California Conservation Corps,
we're on a roll.*

PHOTO BY ROB DEGRAFF

LOCATION: *State Parks,
Guadalupe / Nipomo Dunes*

DATE: *8-18-10 @ 11 am*

OBSERVER: *Melodie Grubbs*

“The air is unusually still in the Dunes today; the air temperature is about 72 degrees. The fog has lifted. We hiked two miles through stabilized dunes to reach a remote beach grass removal site and have been working all morning. We treated two acres before lunch, per the GPS unit. We were delighted to see two coyote pups playing in the shrubs. They appeared to be in the middle of hunting practice, bounding from shrub to shrub playing hide-and-seek. These are the moments that remind me why we do this work. Total completed acreage today: 4 acres. We will return to this site tomorrow.”



Leaving what is found

LOCATION: DANA, off Thompson Rd,
Adobe Creek

DATE: 3-17-10 @ 2 pm

OBSERVER: Mark Skinner

“Mostly clear skies, some remnant clouds from the storm that came through 2 days ago, air temp 67 degrees. Full crew of CCCs is here to help. The soil is just dry enough to plant today. At my last count this morning, we have placed 4,200 shrubs and 500 trees in the ground. Just a few thousand more to go. Raptors sighted today include two red-tailed hawks, one northern harrier, two American kestrels, and one amazing California condor, circling in broad arcs above the site. I walked to the South Tributary; we need to hoe milk thistle and fennel next week, and need to tell the crew to watch out for the small blackberry shrubs. The box elders and mugwort from last year’s planting look good, the coffeeberry has been significantly browsed by deer. I need to prepare for running transects next week.”

LOCATION: Irish Hills

DATE: 4-12-10

OBSERVER: Carlos Torres

“Cool, heavy fog made the site muddy and slick making work difficult and slow covering only 120'. We learned a great way to tension the wire using just the fencing pliers. Large congregation of wild turkeys calling from the oak woodland across the road. While using the rockbar to help set an H-brace, Nate and I discovered a small patch of chanterelles. Daniel observed a bobcat here two days ago.”



Auger transport teamwork



Detailing the day

LOCATION: Lower San Luis Obispo
Creek Floodplain Preserve

DATE: 6-20-10 @ 4 pm

OBSERVER: Carlos Torres

“It is hot today, and a bit hazy. We had our full crew and were working on the upstream boundary of the preserve, near Hwy 101. The Arundo stand we are working on is over 200 feet long; some of the stalks are 25 feet high. While cutting, we found a willow trunk that was 2 feet in diameter and dead, probably outcompeted by the arundo. I expect it will take us another two days to cut and stack this stand. I took a GPS point so we can revisit the site and chip the piles later this year. Reminder: sharpen the chain on the big chainsaw.”

LOCATION: Black Lake Canyon

DATE: 4-27-10

OBSERVER: Cal Poly Ornithology Intern

Species List

- Chestnut-backed Chickadee - *Parus rufescens*
- Black Headed Grosbeak - *Regulus melanacephalus*
- Dark-Eyed Junco - *Junco hyemalis*
- European Starling - *Sturnus vulgaris*
- House Finch - *Carpodacus mexicanus*
- Mourning Dove - *Zenaidura macroura*
- Orange-Crown Warbler - *Vermivora celata*
- Pacific Slope Flycatcher - *Empidonax difficilis*
- Purple Finch - *Carpodacus purpureus*
- Red-Winged Blackbird - *Agelaius phoeniceus*
- Song Sparrow - *Melospiza melodia*
- Spotted Towhee - *Pipilo maculatus*
- Tree Swallow - *Ichthyophaga bicolor*
- Willow Flycatcher - *Empidonax traillii* *
- Wilson's Warbler - *Wilsonia pusilla*
- Yellow-Rumped warbler - *Dendroica coronata*

*Confirmed nesting of the state listed, threatened, Willow Flycatcher!

Local People. Local Land.

The Land Conservancy
OF SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY



View looking to the south from Froom Ranch, San Luis Obispo
PHOTO BY ROB DEGRAFF

"I remember my first hike in the Nipomo Dunes with Kathleen Goddard Jones in May 1985. It made me feel amazed. Kathleen introduced me to a new landscape that looked empty and barren, but she showed me that it was rich in native plants, animals, birds, and insects. I have spent the next 25 years learning about and trying to preserve the dunes."

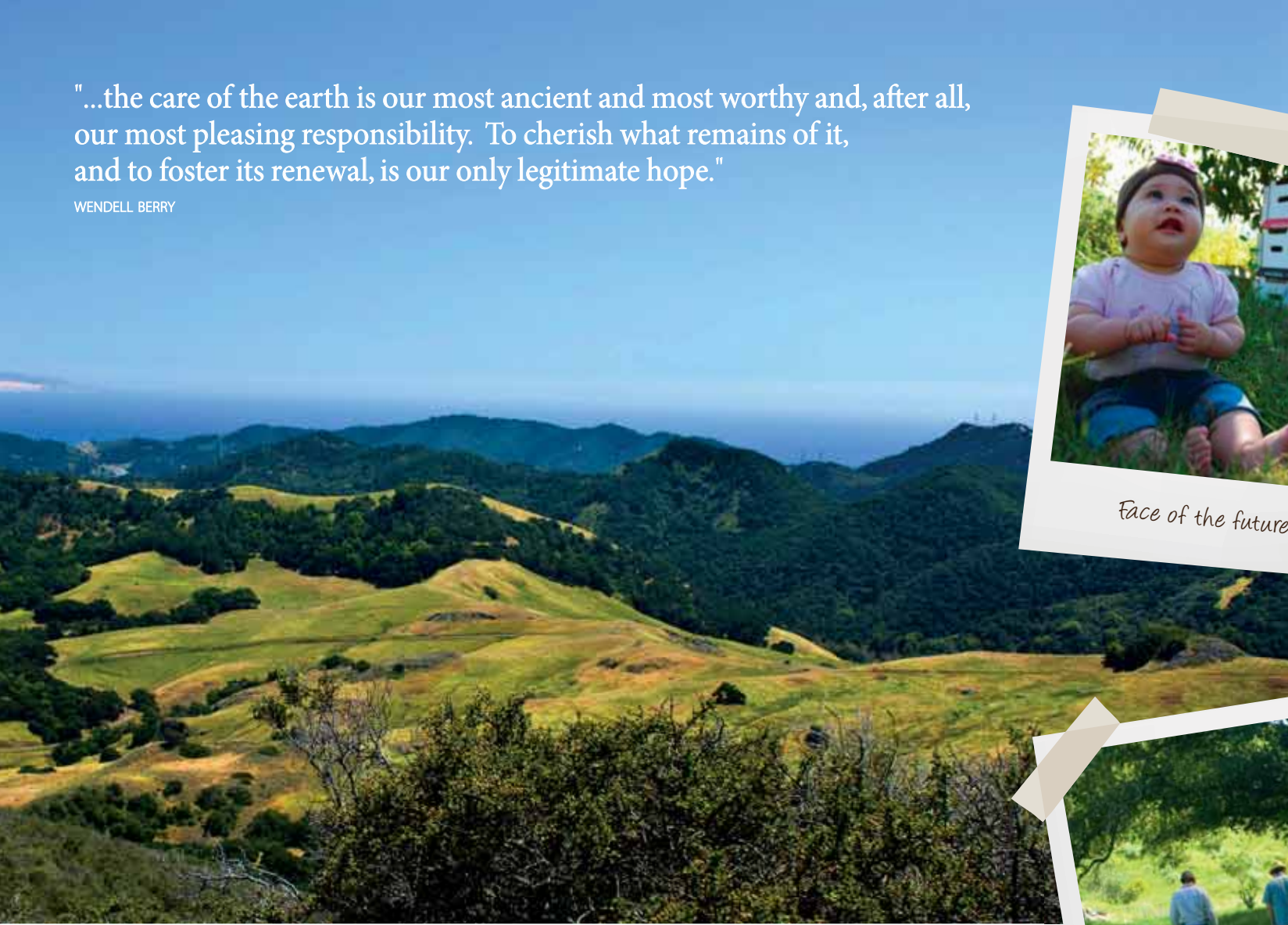
-Jack Beigle, Land Conservancy member

[MISSION STATEMENT]

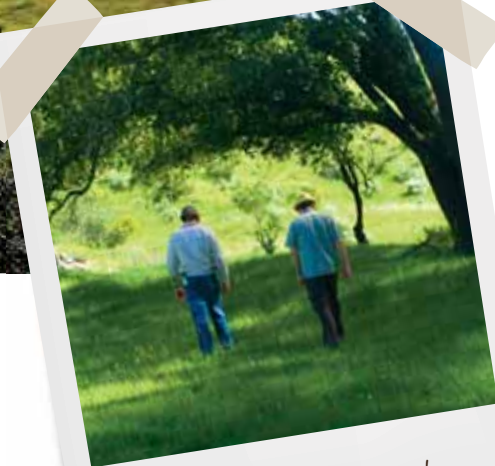
"Through voluntary and collaborative measures, The Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County works to permanently protect and enhance lands having important scenic, agricultural, habitat, and cultural values for the benefit of people and wildlife."

"...the care of the earth is our most ancient and most worthy and, after all, our most pleasing responsibility. To cherish what remains of it, and to foster its renewal, is our only legitimate hope."

WENDELL BERRY



Face of the future



Stewards of the land

Our County's distinctive towns nestle in awe-inspiring landscapes, from the sweeping ranchlands in the north to the sunny sands in the south. We believe in the importance of linking people to land; both local folk and those who come from afar find sustenance in its beauty. We eat from the bounty harvested here, drink of its clean water and good wines, and relish the outdoor surroundings. We honor those that came before us and work to conserve and steward the land for those that will follow.

“When we see land as a community to which we belong,
we may begin to use it with love and respect.”

ALDO LEOPOLD



PHOTO BY GARY FELSMAN

[COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS]



*Creek Day helpers
come in all sizes!*

Local People

San Luis Obispo was recently deemed Happy Town, U.S.A!¹ We like to think that The Land Conservancy is an integral reason for this prestigious accolade. Our contributions to green belts, trails, preserves, and farmlands are making headlines and people are noticing!

But it's not just the headlines that help spread our mission- it's our connection to people. Connecting People to Land is the heart of what our outreach involves. When we were invited to present a lesson to show elementary students that land is a valuable resource for us to grow our food supply, we received lots of thank you letters from the schools that participated. One student said, "Thank you for coming and talking about how you save land for farms so they will last a long time." These are the connections that are very meaningful to us.

Another part of Connecting People to Land involves our dedicated volunteers. Whether it's for Creek Day, restoring our riparian habitat, planting trees, tabling events, filing paperwork, sitting on a committee, or hosting an event, our steadfast volunteers donate their time and talent again and again. For that, we are so grateful and humbled that people want to support us and spend their time with us, too!

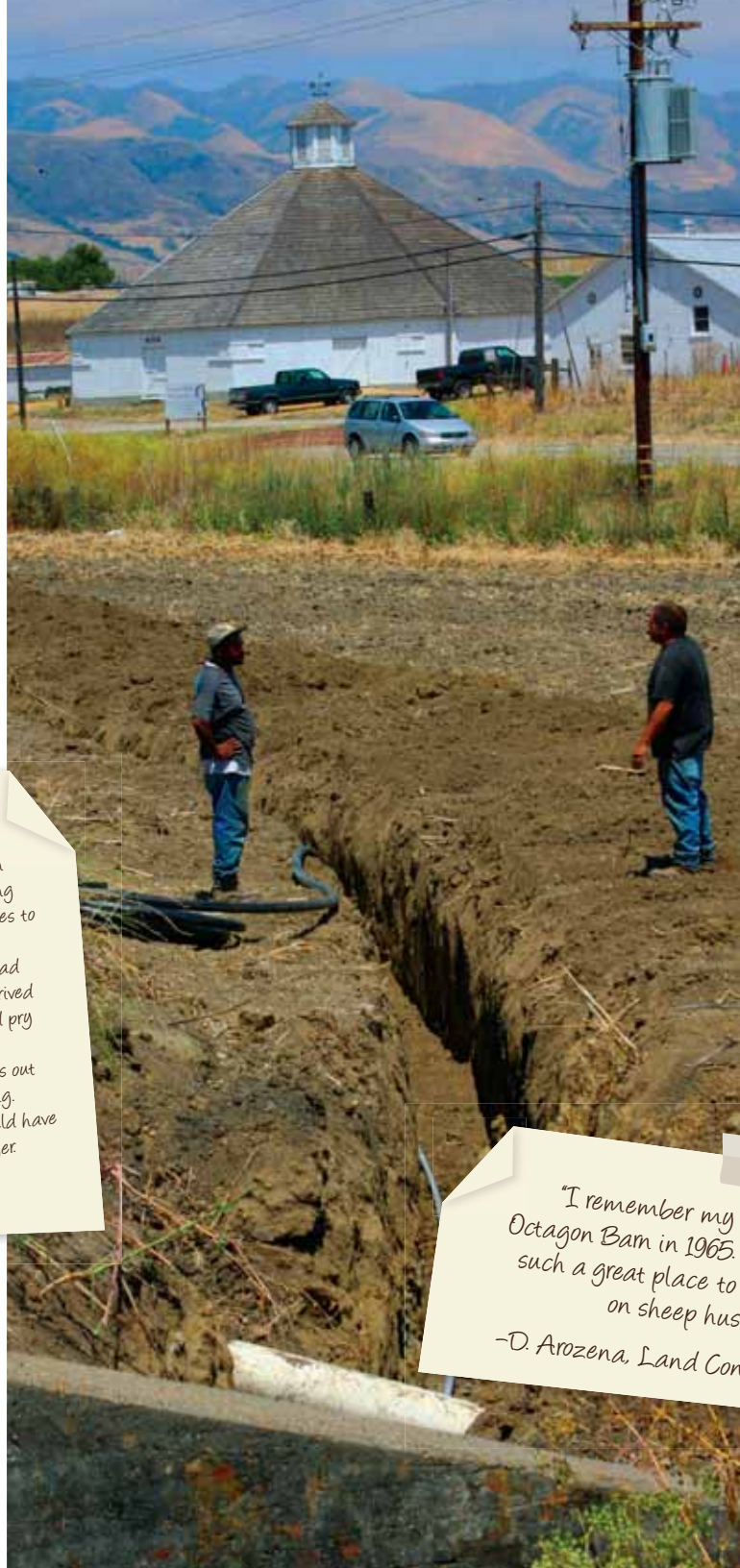
¹ From Dan Buettner's book, *Thrive: Finding Happiness the Blue Zones Way*.



Together with the devotion and passion of many community members and organizations, The Land Conservancy continues to move forward. This year, we installed a well, poured cement for concrete pads at all doorways, gained a cream ripener through a donation, and were granted a major gift from the Forbes Family Fund, which covers all the costs associated with the conditional use permit process. Staying true with our *Raising a Barn, Raising a Community* slogan, we anticipate the day when we can officially open the Barn doors to the public as a community gathering place and educational center.

"It was a lightly overcast day. Twelve Cal Poly WDWies arrived at 9 am. We began with a Barn orientation and history. Volunteers removed fencing and the rest were issued gloves, paint, and brushes to paint the newly installed emergency exit doors. About 10:30, we took a break. By noon they had completed the job. Second group of WDWies arrived at noon. They were issued gloves, hammers, and pry bars to dismantle the board corral fence by the Milking Parlor. They also moved old railroad ties out to the road to serve as car "bumpers" for parking. All were thanked for a contribution that would have taken our regular volunteers 2 or 3 times longer. A job well done!"

-Ed Carson



Taking care of oak saplings along the trail

Santa Margarita Community Forestry

Learning Among the Oaks (LATO) program celebrated its 5th Anniversary. This year, the **Demonstration Forest** gained more volunteers, a new sign, PTA support, adopt-a-tree activities, and new plantings. Santa Margarita Community Forestry (SMCF) was designated the non-profit partner for recognition of *Santa Margarita as the Western Gateway to the Carrizo Plain National Monument*. SMCF provided support for Santa Margarita's participation in the Healthy CommuniTree and continues educational activities, like the successful Santa Margarita School Nature Challenge and participation in the Great AgVenture.

NOTE: SMCF is a chapter of The Land Conservancy. The Land Conservancy and SMCF are key partners of LATO but it is under the auspices of the University of California Cooperative Extension with support from the California Wildlife Conservation Board.

"I remember my first visit to the Octagon Barn in 1965. I felt lucky to find such a great place to get my education on sheep husbandry!"

-D. Arozena, Land Conservancy member



PHOTO BY BOB HILL

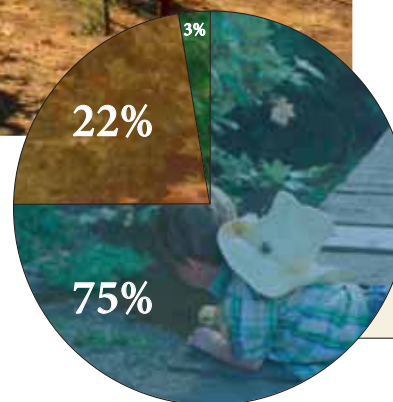
Financial Highlights

JULY 1, 2009 THROUGH JUNE 30, 2010

The Land Conservancy remained strong this past year, and we are happy to report that contributions from our community continue to be stable. We are extremely thankful to our members for their steadfast support of conservation in our County. We withstood State bond freezes and poorly performing endowments by acquiring other grant funding, activating projects with funding sources less affected by the economy, and continuing to control expenses where possible. We are pleased that 85% of our expenses went directly to mission programs. The other 15% provided critical administrative and fundraising support to help us endure the economic challenges that we faced. The investments we've made in the last few years in retaining professional skilled staff and pursuing diverse funding sources have set the course towards a sustainable financial future for the organization.

Balance Sheet

ASSETS	2008-09	2009-10
CASH & CASH EQUIVALENTS	\$716,588	\$767,437
RECEIVABLES	116,917	126,784
OTHER CURRENT ASSETS	940,245	939,171
FIXED ASSETS	4,519,175	4,403,641
TOTAL ASSETS	\$6,292,925	\$6,237,033
LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS		
ACCOUNTS PAYABLE & ACCRUED EXPENSES	\$18,499	\$13,360
OTHER CURRENT LIABILITIES	563,770	447,150
TOTAL LIABILITIES	582,269	460,510
TOTAL NET ASSETS	5,710,656	5,776,523
TOTAL LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS	\$6,292,925	\$6,237,033

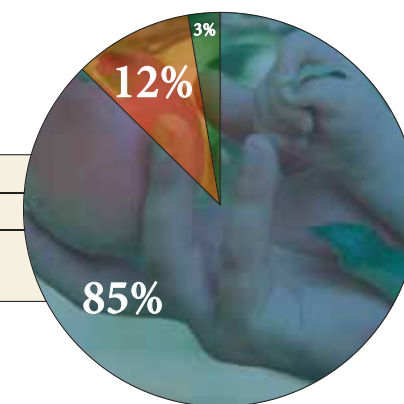


SUPPORT & REVENUE

GRANTS	\$761,872
CONTRIBUTIONS	222,495
PROGRAM OTHER	30,133
INTEREST	5,494
TOTAL INCOME	\$1,019,994

EXPENSES

MISSION PROGRAM SERVICES	\$815,859
ADMINISTRATIVE & GENERAL	110,614
FUNDRAISING & COMMUNITY OUTREACH	27,654
TOTAL EXPENSES	\$954,127



[BOARD OF TRUSTEES]
(July 2009 - July 2010 term)

Gary Felsman: President
Lisa Wise: Vice President
Valerie Endres: Treasurer
Beverly Gingg
Pete Jenny
Jeff Jorgensen
Herb Kandel
Brooke Langle
Sue Luft
Penny Rappa
B.K. Richard
Ed Carson: Emeritus

[CREDITS]

Cover Photo: Judith Hildinger
Back Cover Photo: Kaila Dettman
Uncredited Photos: From LC Files

[THE LAND CONSERVANCY STAFF]
(July 2009 - July 2010 term)

Executive Director: Bob Hill
Deputy Director: Kaila Dettman
Director of Development: Wende David
Director of Conservation Science: Daniel Bohlman
Conservation Project Manager: Margo Heekin Clark
Business Manager: Crystal Elwood
Restoration Ecologist: Mark Skinner
Project Manager: Carlos Torres
Membership & Outreach Coordinator: Teresa Tibstra
Field Crew Leader: Melodie Grubbs
Restoration Specialist: Tim Cole
Restoration Assistant: Melissa Sparks
Intern: Michelle Graeser

Former Staff: Brian Stark, Executive Director; Michael LeBrun,
Restoration Project Manager; and James Deutsch, Leah Lippe,
Thomas Miller, & Nathan Reiss, Restoration Specialists

Former Interns: Anthony Baniaga, Lidia D'Amico, Fallon Frye,
Christine Kempzell, Katy Lewis, Sarah McCutcheon, Brian Strachan



[THE LAND CONSERVANCY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO]

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