

The Land Conservancy

OF SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY

P.O. Box 12206 • SLO, CA 93406 • (805) 544-9096 • FAX (805) 544-5122

VISIT US ONLINE AT: WWW.LCSLO.ORG

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CONTACT: Wende David, The Land Conservancy wended@LCSLO.org (805) 544-9096

New Executive Director, Bob Hill, Makes Land Conservancy History

The Land Conservancy welcomes Bob Hill as its new Executive Director, following Brian Stark's decision to step down in order to be closer to his family. Over the course of The Land Conservancy's 25-year history, other former Executive Directors have included John Ashbaugh (1984-1991) and Ray Belknap (1991-2004) but Hill is making organizational history as the youngest person to be appointed Executive Director at the age of 35.

Hill has served as Conservation Director under the Board of Trustees since 2004 and has significantly expanded the scope and scale of the land conservation department during that time. Hill joined The Land Conservancy as an intern in 2001 while at Cal Poly working on his Master's degree in City and Regional Planning. As an intern, Hill updated the San Luis Obispo Greenbelt plan and was hired as a full-time employee upon completing his graduate studies. *"It's a great feeling to have started off as an intern, then join the staff, followed by a leadership role, and to now have the trust and support of the Board and our community to lead our local land trust well into the future,"* remarks Hill. Previously, Hill earned his Bachelor's degree at UC Santa Cruz and then worked for several years at a community bank where he learned real estate and finance doing construction loans and commercial mortgages.



The Board of Trustees unanimously appointed Hill as the new Executive Director without hesitation. *"Bob Hill has tremendous composure, diplomacy and conservation experience. He is directly responsible for our organization's recent land protection successes and we are thrilled to have him at the helm of our organization,"* said Gary Felsman, Land Conservancy Board President.

As Conservation Director, Hill oversaw more than \$15 million worth of important conservation projects countywide. Hill more than doubled our conservation holdings in the Fern Canyon area of Cambria; completed key conservation projects in Black Lake Canyon and the Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes while serving as a chair of the Dunes Collaborative; helped forge a successful conservation partnership with the Dana Adobe Nipomo Amigos and County Parks; continued The Land Conservancy's long-standing efforts working together with the City of San Luis Obispo; and helped pioneer Camp San Luis Obispo's Army Compatible Use Buffer Program to further the San Luis Obispo Greenbelt.

In the Executive Director role, Hill sees a future for the organization that includes keeping a keen focus on the conservation of agricultural lands and local food production, embracing the Octagon Barn as a signature project, as well as continuing critical land restoration and stewardship activities. Ensuring The Land Conservancy's permanence and long-term sustainability are also hallmarks of Hill's vision.

On any given weekend you might find Hill climbing the rocky face of Bishop Peak, foraging the hillsides for wild mushrooms or hiking with his dog on a local trail. Hill and his wife, Jaime, live in San Luis Obispo and are expecting twins in April.