



THE WILDERNESS LAND TRUST • SPRING 2020 NEWSLETTER



SPRING 2020 NEWS

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MISSION

We Keep the Promise of Wilderness — by acquiring and transferring private lands (inholdings) to public ownership that complete designated and proposed wilderness areas, or directly protect wilderness values.

VALUES

We revere our remaining wild places, a legacy to pass on to future generations, the tenacity to work until the job is done and treating everyone with fairness.

VISION

We envision a National Wilderness Preservation System that is complete, secure and accessible.



Mt. Pico Blanco, CA Aimee Rutledge

*“This land was our church,
our chapel, a place where
we reunited with nature
and ourselves.”*

— David Duveneck, land donor (see story, page 5)

THE NECESSITY OF WILDERNESS

by Brad Borst, President

The scent of damp pine after a hard rain, the sound of wind roaring through towering trees above, the sight of a majestic bull elk at the edge of the forest, the taste of icy cold water from a clear mountain stream.

When you step into wilderness, what fills your senses with wonder?

Spring is a season that ushers in longer days, warmer temperatures and a vibrant burst of activity as flora and fauna awaken from their long winter nap. But unlike seasons past, this spring finds all of us navigating COVID 19 and anxiously waiting for things to return to what they once were.

It is my hope that you find comfort in the fact that despite the challenges we face, some things remain the same. America's National Wilderness Preservation System is our rock; a perennial source of spiritual and physical healing, whether we step foot on a time-worn trail or reminisce about a favorite wild place from our living room. That's why our mission remains more important than ever in this time of crisis.

Since our founding 28 years ago, The Wilderness Land Trust has permanently protected more than 52,000 acres and added 486 parcels to 106 wilderness areas now owned by you, the public. Project after project, state by state — we never waiver from our mission to remove the threat of development in wilderness areas you love. Wild places that are a necessity for nourishing your soul.

Every parcel of land we've acquired and transferred has a compelling story behind it. Our 2020 spring newsletter is an opportunity to share some of them with you, as well as shine a spotlight on just a few of the special people who help make it happen.

Thank you for your continued investment in our work, especially during this challenging time. We are deeply grateful for your support.



A SAMPLE OF YOUR SUCCESS

Over the last six months we have removed the threat of private development, protected vital plant and animal habitat, and preserved recreational access for generations of wilderness users across the western United States. Some of our recent wins:

- We purchased 960 acres in California's **Eastern Sierra**, protecting a vital habitat for sage grouse and other species (see story on page 4).
- We acquired 80 acres that border the **Ventana Wilderness** in the watershed of the south fork of the Little Sur River in California (see story on page 5).
- We purchased 80 acres of land in the **Mt. Tipton Wilderness** in Arizona, removing the threat of private development on this area popular with hikers and sightseers (see story on page 6).
- We transferred the last of three Trout Creek properties to public ownership within the **Los Padres National Forest** in California. This 324-acre piece of land is located near Arroyo Grande, Pismo Beach and San Luis Obispo. In July we transferred Trout Creek I and II (480 acres) to the same national forest, bringing the total saved to more than 800 acres.
- We transferred the 10-acre Grandview Lode property in Colorado to the U.S. Forest Service for permanent protection within the **Collegiate Peaks Wilderness**.



Ingrid Ougland

Visitors to the Trout Creek properties, now under management with the Los Padres National Forest Service, California, will find a moderate hiking trail that takes them past lush green landscapes and small streams. The trail eventually winds its way into the **Garcia Wilderness Area**.

What's on the horizon?

We are actively working in designated and proposed wilderness areas in Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon and Washington, and look forward to sharing progress on these projects with you throughout the coming year.

Keep up with our work at The Wilderness Land Trust by following our adventures on Facebook and Instagram, and share your wilderness adventure stories with us by emailing them to Ingrid@wildernesslandtrust.org.

Thank you for your unwavering support of our work to protect our wilderness landscapes!



A WIN FOR WILDLIFE HABITAT IN EASTERN SIERRA

Did you know it's nearly impossible to replicate sage grouse habitat? These seasonally vocal, magnificent birds require habitat under very specific conditions and are strident about returning to the same location every year.

During the past six months, The Wilderness Land Trust acquired two properties totaling 2,658 acres in California's Eastern Sierra landscape. This land provides vital habitat for sage grouse and other species in the rare and diverse sagebrush steppe that is vastly under-represented in the National Wilderness Preservation System.

The properties are located in the Bodie Hills, an area adjacent the Granite Mountain Wilderness and integral to three Wilderness Study Areas – Bodie Mountain, Mount Beideman and Mormon Meadows.

This high elevation land is part of the sagebrush steppe ecosystem that provides a home for approximately 400 types of plants that provide habitat, food and water for more than 250 species of animals. It is also a place to soak in gorgeous vistas over mountain ranges in California and Nevada and Mono Lake, a unique saltwater lake supporting endemic species.

Needless to say we jumped on the chance to buy and preserve this special land. The Trust is now partnering with the Eastern Sierra Land Trust on sage grouse habitat restoration before transferring the property to the Bureau of Land Management for protection and long-term management as open space.

What Makes Bodie Hills Unique?

The Bodie Hills are filled with a diversity of species because of the availability of water in a landscape where it is often scarce. The properties secured by The Wilderness Land Trust provide plentiful

and critical water for this region. The watersheds in the Bodie Hills are important tributaries to Mono Lake and the East Walker River.

A lek is an area where birds gather during the breeding season to attract mates. In the Bodie Hills, lek habitat are openings within the sagebrush that host nesting sites. Lek habitat and broodrearing have been identified on these properties. Lek habitat for sage grouse is rare and nearly impossible to duplicate, and the sage grouse habitat quality provided by these properties is exceptional.

This land is also home to significant plant species, including sagebrush, riparian and Aspen groves, and pinyon pine woodland. In addition to sage grouse, the Bodie Hills provide habitat for a variety of other species, including pronghorn antelope, black bear, pikas and pygmy rabbits, mountain lions, mule deer and golden eagles.

T. Gettelman



The Bodie Hills land acquired by the Trust is called an “emerald island” because its water source represents less than two percent of the entire mostly arid landscape.

Protecting and restoring these emerald islands provide ranchers with drought insurance by ensuring a more reliable water source. As summer heat dries out soils in sagebrush uplands, sage grouse and other wildlife species follow the emerald island's line of green vegetation that provides them with protein-rich forb and insect foods that help newly hatched sage grouse chicks grow and thrive.

“The sage grouse aren’t the only focus, but they are a symbol of a healthy ecosystem. If they are doing well, then we’ve likely built a good ecosystem that is resilient to wildfire and other invasive threats.”

– Susanna Danner, land conservation program director, Eastern Sierra Land Trust

PROTECTING A PARADISE

David Duveneck’s first memory of hiking to his family’s property near Mt. Pico Blanco in California was at about three years old when his dad plopped him in an Adirondack basket, strapped him to his back and headed into the forest with the rest of his family.

“I still remember the smell of my dad’s hair and the feel of the whiskers on his cheeks as I sat in that basket and held on to him,” David smiles wistfully. “It’s amazing how something like that sticks with you. To this day it’s a really strong memory because we enjoyed camping so much as a family.”

The land that fills David’s memories is an 80-acre hidden paradise that borders the Ventana Wilderness in the watershed of the south fork of the Little Sur River a few miles south of Monterey, California. David’s grandfather purchased the land in 1929 and turned it into a family retreat. Eventually his grandfather passed the land on to David’s father, who carried on the family tradition. “As a family, we made regular treks to this property for as far back as I can remember,” recalls David. “For years, we enjoyed camping, fishing and hiking as a family. And once a year, my dad would take each of us kids on a solo hiking trip to the property.”

“Ever since I was ten years old, this land has always been my favorite camping spot,” says Peter Duveneck,

David’s brother. “There was a cabin there amongst the old growth redwoods where we would come and stay for weeks on end, an outdoor cook stove where we cooked our meals, a fishing stream where we would catch rainbow trout for dinner and a mountain to climb. At first we came as a family. Later as a teenager I came camping with my friends. It was camping at Pico Blanco where I gained an appreciation for the outdoors.”

In 1993 David’s father passed the property on to David and Peter, who shared it with their families. And when it came time to pass the torch once again, the two brothers decided to donate the land to The Wilderness Land Trust so it could be protected and enjoyed by other families for generations to come.

“We have all these communal memories of this land. We can just look at one another, mention one word and a flood of memories come back. This land was our church, our chapel, a place where we reunited with nature and ourselves,” says David. David adds that it wasn’t a difficult decision to donate the land to the Trust to give future generations a chance to enjoy it as much as they have. A chance to create memories of a beautiful mountain that can be conjured up by a simple word, smell, or the touch of a cheek.

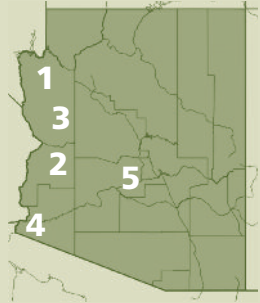
The Wilderness Land Trust is grateful for the 80-acre donation made by David (left) and Peter Duveneck. This land borders the Ventana Wilderness in the watershed of the south fork of Little Sur River south of Monterey, California.



SAVING ARIZONA

The Wilderness Land Trust purchased 80 acres of land in the Mt. Tipton Wilderness in Arizona in November 2019, removing the threat of private development on these properties. The result of our work in Arizona has now protected 63 parcels and 2,488 acres in five designated wilderness areas.

The Trust is steadily working to reduce the number of inholdings in order to stitch together the fabric of Arizona’s wilderness landscape into a unified whole. By eliminating the last remaining private inholding in the Hells Canyon Wilderness, the Trust succeeded in making this wilderness area complete.



Above: a prickly pear cactus in the Mt. Tipton Wilderness, Arizona. Cacti are known for their flat, fleshy pads that look like large leaves, but are actually modified branches that serve several functions – water storage, photosynthesis and flower production.

Right: a Gila Monster at home in the Hells Canyon Wilderness. Gila monsters are the largest lizards native to the United States. They get their name from Arizona’s Gila River basin, where they were first discovered.



ARIZONA AT A GLANCE

- 1

MT. TIPTON WILDERNESS
17 parcels acquired | 550 acres permanently protected
The Mt. Tipton Wilderness is home to some of the most breathtaking views in Arizona. Many people visit this area to climb Mt. Tipton – at more than 7,000 feet, it’s quite a challenge! Others are drawn to the unique beauty of the Cerbat Mountains, dense with a diversity of vegetation that provides a stunning contrast to the gray and red rock outcroppings.
- 2

SWANSEA WILDERNESS
26 parcels acquired | 603 acres permanently protected
The Bill Williams River flows through the center of this wilderness into Lake Havasu on the Havasu National Wildlife Refuge. This six-mile stretch of water cuts through a deep gorge that is rarely seen by humans.
- 3

WABAYUMA PEAK WILDERNESS
17 parcels acquired | 505 acres permanently protected
Wabayuma Peak dominates this wilderness at 7,601 feet. It is surrounded by massive ridges that plunge nearly 5,000 vertical feet to meet the desert below. Located in the Hualapai Mountains, this area is popular for experienced backpackers on foot and horseback.
- 4

MUGGINS MOUNTAIN WILDERNESS
2 parcels acquired | 190 acres permanently protected
This wilderness area is close to the Arizona-California border and is known for its rugged peaks that range in elevation from 200 to 1,600 feet. Day hikers, backpackers and rock climbers occasionally make the trek here, but you’ll most likely have the area to yourself. Sound intriguing? Check out the 5.6-mile Muggins Peak Trail. With only 3.8 inches of precipitation per year, chances are you’ll stay dry.
- 5

HELLS CANYON WILDERNESS
1 parcel acquired | 640 acres protected
Wilderness completed (no private inholdings remain)
The mountain peaks in Hells Canyon Wilderness rise from 1,877 to 3,597 feet, and encircle and isolate Burro Flats from the rest of the world. The canyons provide relatively easy hiking with 10 miles of accessible trails and plenty of primitive camping sites. Remember to leave no trace!

SHARING THE ART OF ADVENTURE

If you are lucky to get to know Liz Schoeberlein and visit her cozy Colorado home, you are treated to walls filled with beautiful landscape paintings. Her use of bright cheerful colors and the inclusion of curious children – her own when they were young – demand smiles from all who visit. Liz doesn’t spend as much time in the wilderness as she used to, but she continues to bring the outdoors into her home through painting.

Liz’s love for the outdoors started during World War II in a cabin perched 9,000 feet high in the Colorado mountains. “My great grandmother and grandmother bought an old broken down miner’s cabin in Ward, Colorado in 1911 and would spend summers up there with my mom, aunt and uncle,” explains Liz. “The cabin had no electricity or running water, but they’d spend three months of the year up there to escape the heat.”

When Liz’s father was sent overseas to England during World War II, her mother decided to come back to the cabin during the summers of 1944 and 1945, this time with her four children, her sister-in-law and her three kids, plus two cousins from Chicago. Liz was only 10 at the time and laughs heartily as she recalls those fateful summers. “There were 11 of us in that three room cabin, two adults and nine kids from age two to 15. There was nobody up on that mountain and we just wandered all over the place. We all fell in love with Colorado that summer.”

Liz moved to Colorado permanently in 1958 and became an art professor, but she always found time to explore the outdoors, spending much of her time kayaking, canoeing and later on, rafting. She is proud to say she rowed the Grand Canyon twice, as well as numerous other rivers throughout Colorado, Wyoming, Idaho and Utah.

When her college closed, she earned a master’s degree in social work and went to work for a local mental health center. It was here she found a unique way to blend her professional life with her love of the outdoors – as an instructor for Outward Bound.

“I would take my clients, many of them victims of abuse, on a four-day wilderness course, and it was amazing to see what happened,” she explains. “These people didn’t trust anything, including themselves, they had no confidence. But in the wilderness they felt success. I could see it immediately. It was quite remarkable.”

In her free time, she continued to explore the west, seeking out rivers, mountains and forests from Utah to Washington and everything in between. It’s important to Liz that she pass on her sense of adventure to the generations that follow her, not just because it’s fun, but because it makes them better people. So when her three children were old enough, she made sure they were included in many of her adventures. “My kids are much stronger and more resilient and more in touch with themselves because they got to do so many outdoor things,” says Liz. “And my grandkids feel comfortable in the outdoors as well, which is not true of a lot of people their age.”

It’s difficult for Liz to recall a favorite memory of her adventures, since her life has been full of them – like the time she came face to face with a berry-eating bear in Glacier National Park, or when she was stuck on a high mountain trail waiting for a mountain goat to let her pass by, but her paintings tell some of her stories. If only the walls in that three room cabin high up in the Colorado mountains could talk...



Why Liz Schoeberlein supports The Wilderness Land Trust

Liz Schoeberlein has been a supporter since 2004 when she was introduced to the Trust by a family friend. Liz says it’s critical to preserve public access to our nation’s wilderness areas. “I think wilderness lands are very precious. I want to save them and not let them become private and inaccessible,” says Liz.

Above: Liz stands in front of a large landscape she painted of the Rio Grande in Big Bend National Park, Texas. Below: Liz’s painting of the Gore Mountains in Colorado.





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SPRING 2020 NEWS

KEEPING WILDERNESS WILD

Bruce Capdeville

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- The Trust welcomes
Kelly Conde to the team
as our new lands specialist.
An Idaho native, Kelly's
conservation career includes
work with the Sawtooth
Society and Sagebrush
Steppe Land Trust. Check out
her full bio on our website.
Welcome Kelly!



Titcomb Basin in the Bridger
Wilderness, Wyoming