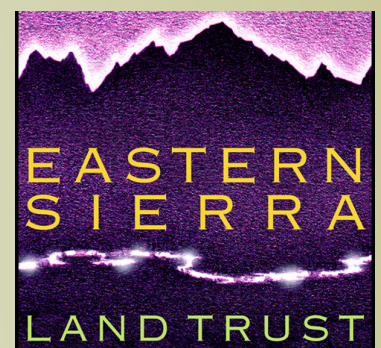




preserving our rural lands

The Eastern Sierra Nevada is a land rich in natural beauty, with soaring mountains, green valleys, teeming wildlife and endless vistas.

Since 2001, the Eastern Sierra Land Trust's vision has been to work with willing landowners to preserve these vital lands for people, for agriculture, and for wildlife.



2012 ANNUAL REPORT



for the future.

Dear Friends,

The Eastern Sierra region of California and Nevada has a strong agricultural legacy of working farms and ranches, abundant and diverse wildlife habitat, iconic landscapes and vast open spaces enjoyed by visitors and residents alike.

Despite its unique natural and cultural character, it faces increased pressure to grow and develop in ways that threaten the very values that make the region so special.

A land trust can't solve every problem, but where priorities and values are aligned, great outcomes can result, benefiting humans and wildlife alike. In 2012, ESLT collaborated with government agencies and other nonprofits to preserve habitat and agricultural lands, while also working to protect habitat for the Bi-State sage-grouse, a large ground-dwelling bird. Irrigated meadows that brush up against sage make perfect summer brood-rearing habitat for the sage-grouse, as well as prime livestock grazing land. Protecting these areas is a win-win for both ranchers and the sage-grouse.

Our Community Connections Program continued to reach out in 2012 to our regional community through site visits, field trips, seminars, work projects, and fun children's events such as our annual Sunflower Garden Project. It successfully connected people to the land and cultivated a sense of appreciation for all our region has to offer.

Working together, we can make great strides in assuring the preservation of this region of unique beauty we call home for both current and future generations.

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President

Kay Ogden,
Executive Director

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AmeriCorps Member



conservation & stewardship

CONSERVATION

The Eastern Sierra is a region rich in natural beauty, with its iconic landscapes of soaring mountains, dense forests, green valleys, sparse deserts and vast open spaces that stretch across 14,000 square miles. It is home to working farms and ranches, diverse wildlife habitats, a myriad of recreation opportunities and a rich history and culture.

The fear of losing these lands and the unique character of the region to population growth and increasing development pressures led to the founding of ESLT in 2001. Today, in 2012, ESLT has conserved over 7,500 acres.

As the only land trust based in California's Eastern Sierra, our conservation efforts focus on acquiring lands, setting up voluntary land protection agreements with willing landowners that allow them to retain title and management of their land while designating how it will be used now and in the future, or mediating land trades between landowners and public agencies.

In 2012, we completed the Sierra Nevada Conservancy-funded East Walker River Watershed Assessment and Plan; hosted multiple site visits with interested funding partners at several high-priority potential projects; and gave a presentation to the Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center on partnership benefits.

Additionally, we laid the groundwork for a number of important new conservation agreements, which, once finalized, will add to the 16 properties we have already conserved. We continued our work to preserve working ranches, protect existing wildlife habitats, and offer opportunities for people to connect with our treasured Eastern Sierra lands.

STEWARDSHIP

ESLT's Stewardship Program ensures that the scenic, agricultural, natural, recreational, historical, and watershed values preserved by our conservation agreements are maintained in perpetuity. We conduct annual monitoring visits, designed to document both natural and human-caused changes to the conservation values protected by each easement or agreement already in place.

Through this process, ESLT collaborates with landowners to develop ongoing communication in the easement partnership. Where funding allows, and at landowner request, we can assist in additional projects to enhance the values preserved by that conservation agreement.

In 2012, we initiated the Benton Hot Springs Ranch ponds restoration project funded by the USFWS. We monitored all our properties and found no violations; thus ensuring the continued preservation of vital intact ecosystems and landscapes.

programs

2012

working farms & ranches

The Eastern Sierra's working farms and ranches are scenic, historic, and a vital part of the region's economy and rural character.

Our Working Farms and Ranches Program helps ranchers and farmers to sustain financially-viable agricultural operations on their land, against rising pressures to subdivide.

In places like the Montgomery Creek Ranch and Benton Hot Springs Valley, we helped landowners to set up voluntary land protection agreements that permanently protect family farms and ranches.

Landowners retain title and management of their property, while designating how their land may be used now and in the future. Every landowner has different needs, hopes, and plans for their land, but ESLT has a standardized process for evaluating each land conservation project for feasibility and consistency with our mission and goals.

Our Lands Committee and staff carefully evaluate each potential project to ensure it involves significant conservation values, with final approval for projects coming from our Board of Directors. For example, landowners may want to protect their land's current agricultural use in perpetuity by prohibiting any subdivision or land use that would compromise those protected qualities, while otherwise retaining all their property rights.

Landowners also may benefit from significant tax advantages currently as well as for future generations.



Montgomery Creek Ranch



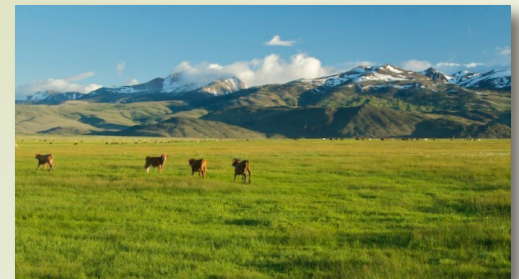
Cinnamon Ranch



Benton Hot Springs Ranch is preserved through an ESLT conservation easement.

We focus on rangeland and farmland in Owens Valley, Long Valley, Mono Basin, Bridgeport Valley, Adobe Valley, Tri-Valleys, and Antelope Valley.

We are continuing to work on new projects that will help preserve additional working farms and ranches in the coming years.



Cattle graze contentedly at Centennial Ranch Conservation Easement.



A mountain lion poses for the camera.

"candid camera" captures wildlife

With a grant from the Norcross Wildlife Foundation, ESLT purchased a motion-activated wildlife camera in the spring

of 2012. This weatherproof camera, which captures wildlife day or night without disturbing them, is used by scientists and wildlife enthusiasts worldwide. During the last monitoring season, ESLT staff installed the camera on ESLT project lands.

The camera's potential is maximized in locations with a variety of wildlife. In the Eastern Sierra, these usually include animal trails to a nearby creek or water supply. In combination with other sources of important data collected, the camera offers valuable information to improve land management.

partnerships help conserve sage-grouse habitat

The greater sage-grouse is found at elevations ranging from 4,000 to over 9,000 feet. It is an omnivore, eating mainly sagebrush, some other soft plants, and insects. This species is almost totally reliant on sagebrush, and cannot survive in areas where sagebrush does not exist.



A greater sage-grouse struts his stuff.

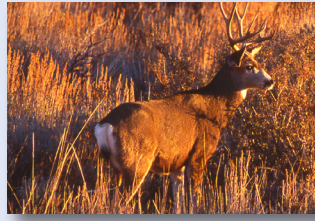
Eastern Sierra populations of the greater sage-grouse have been determined by the U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service to be a Distinct Population Segment (DPS) that warrants listing under the Endangered Species Act independent from greater sage-grouse in other areas. Their status will be reconsidered in September 2013.

Local agency biologists have long recognized the importance of the species and have been working hard for years to study known populations and identify and implement management actions designed to benefit it.



© John Muir Laws

Round Valley mule deer migration corridor preserved

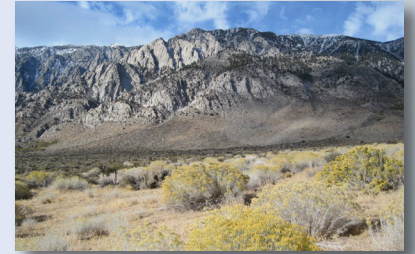


A mule deer at attention.

In 2012, ESLT continued its work of protecting and preserving vital wildlife habits. The natural phenomenon of large mammal migration is threatened around the world, and in the Eastern Sierra. With a grant from the California Wildlife Conservation Board, and the cooperation of the California

Department of Fish and Wildlife, which owns adjacent property, ESLT has been able to preserve the remaining 60 acres of the 1,000 acres that Joseph Swall originally settled in 1910.

The newly-named Swall Wildlife Preserve is located at the base of the Sierra Nevada, and affords dramatic views of Round Valley, Wheeler Ridge, and the White Mountains. The property includes Great Basin sagebrush, and is crossed by a perennial stream. It is a critical link in the migration corridor of the Round Valley mule deer herd between their summer range high in the Sierra and their lower elevation winter range.



The Swall Wildlife Preserve along the mule deer migration corridor.

John Wilson, Joseph Swall's great-grandson, wanted to protect the wildlife habitat on his property. "My family," Wilson said, "is very pleased that the last piece of land will be left open space to allow a critical migration corridor to the Round Valley wintering ground."

Karen Ferrell-Ingram, ESLT Executive Director in 2012, added, "We will manage the land for wildlife, from deer to golden eagles to migrating Monarch butterflies. This is a wonderful day for wildlife and the people of California."



Some creative partnerships have emerged because of the attention the greater sage grouse has received. Some private landowners, particularly those who make their living from grazing livestock, have voluntarily agreed to work with agencies such as the Natural Resource Conservation Service, Bureau of Land Management, and Fish & Wildlife Service to implement projects and land management strategies to both increase their range production and improve habitat for grouse.

Discussions about permanent conservation easements have begun. ESLT is in early conversations with several interested landowners regarding potential projects.

critical habitats

As our population grows, the wildlife of the Eastern Sierra can be crowded out of migration corridors, wetlands, and breeding grounds. Our Critical Habitats Program is working to maintain the viability of our region's wild inhabitants, through public education and land protection agreements.

community connections

Preserving the Eastern Sierra goes beyond protecting land with legal tools; it includes the whole community working together to keep our region healthy and thriving, now and into the future.

ESLT takes an active role in our communities—educating people of all ages about the value of preserving rural lands in the Eastern Sierra.

Community Connections offers ESLT members, as well as the larger Eastern Sierra community, the opportunity to connect with these treasured lands.

A child experiences the rich fragrance of a Jeffrey Pine at Family Day at Crowley Hilltop Preserve.

family day at crowley hilltop preserve

Crowley Hilltop Preserve hosts five different species of conifer trees, great views, and important habitat for bears, deer and other wildlife. Families came here on August 11th to learn about its complex ecosystem, play games, look for animal tracks and, yes, get up-close-and-personal with some fragrant giants of the forest.

Victoria's year was a "SNAP."

Victoria Ortiz lived up to the SNAP (Sierra Nevada AmeriCorps Partnership) motto of "getting things done" in 2012 by organizing or participating in over 40 events.



Victoria on a site visit.

As ESLT's AmeriCorps member, she helped build "Community Connections" every day, showing kids how to use binoculars to watch birds, teaching them creative writing during outings to conservation easements, helping them cultivate a stunning sunflower garden and organizing volunteers to support many ESLT projects.

She also joined Lands Director Aaron Johnson on annual monitoring visits to ESLT's conservation easements. As Victoria puts it, "The beauty of working with a small nonprofit is that I've been able to wear a variety of hats.

6 I've become immersed in multiple communities comprised of passionate individuals that have taught me how to inspire others and effectively garner support for a cause."

gardenfest

We celebrated spring on May 29th at our 3rd annual Gardenfest, held at our offices in Bishop. A wide array of started-plants were offered by local nurseries and organizations such as 4-H. Master Gardeners gave out great gardening tips; adults enjoyed the seed swap; a variety of educational resources and books were for sale; and kids had fun at the popular arts & crafts station.



Sharing gardening tips.

great sierra river cleanup

On Saturday, September 8th, 2012, ESLT partnered with the Los Angeles Department of Water and Power to clean up areas on the Owens River as a part of the statewide Sierra Nevada Conservancy's Great Sierra River Cleanup.



Volunteers pose proudly with all the debris they collected.

ESLT volunteers picked up trash from three sites along the Owens River south of East Line Street, collecting about 190 lbs. of trash and recycling, including plastic bags, bottles and cans, clothing, shotgun shells, food wrappers, fishing line and cigarette butts.

According to the Ocean Conservancy, it takes 1-5 years for a cigarette butt to decompose, and 1 million years for a glass bottle to break down. ESLT thanks all the participants who helped us keep the Eastern Sierra clean and beautiful.



lands & legacy

Bill Walton rides the June Lake Loop with ESLT members and supporters during the Lands & Legacy celebration.

During the weekend of July 20-22, 2012, ESLT hosted Lands & Legacy, a celebration showcasing the dramatic Eastern Sierra landscape, and connecting ESLT supporters with the wide open spaces of this beautiful region.

NBA great, bicycle enthusiast, and ESLT member and supporter Bill Walton, participated in the 23-mile bike ride around the June Lake Loop. After tackling the grueling high-elevation terrain, participants were treated to a delicious gourmet lunch.

As Walton put it so well, "This terrific event brings together all that is right in the world and life: the magnificent Eastern Sierra, health, sport, the team, riding our bikes with purpose and passion, and the chance to make a difference in all of our futures."

Other supporters spent the day exploring the rich history of ESLT's conservation projects at the foot of Dunderberg Peak. Also part of the weekend was a basketball clinic at Mammoth High School. Under the supervision and coaching of Bill Walton, local basketball stars polished their game and learned championship quality methods and techniques.

The weekend culminated with a gala dinner at Mammoth Mountain Ski Area's Mountainside Conference Center. The evening's celebration included a reception, dinner, a live auction conducted by Walton and Olympic marathoner Meb Keflezighi and live music by Flashback. It was a memorable weekend—full of fun for a good cause.



art for conservation

The Fourth Annual Art for Conservation show was held from June 26th through August 3rd at the G2 Gallery in Venice, California. It featured images of Mono



From left: Victoria Ortiz, Nolan Nitschke, Stephen Ingram, John Dittli, Karen Ferrell Ingram, Rick Kattelmann, Robb Hirsch, and Andy Selters.

Lake and other Eastern Sierra vistas from eight talented local photographers. A jury composed of two gallery directors chose the eight from among 27 photographers in a blind viewing.

Many of the photographers and ESLT board and staff members mingled with gallery visitors on Saturday for a special reception featuring live music. The beautifully-displayed Eastern Sierra images were enthusiastically received by attendees. Artists donated 40% of the proceeds from sales of their work to ESLT to help further our efforts to preserve the beauty of the Eastern Sierra.

The weekend culminated with a panel discussion Sunday afternoon featuring ESLT Executive Director Karen Ferrell-Ingram, Chris Langley of the Alabama Hills Stewardship group, and Geoff McQuilkin of the

Mono Lake Committee. With the artwork as a spectacular backdrop, the panel answered questions regarding the preservation of the Eastern Sierra.



Art patrons fill the G2 Gallery.

members

january to december 2012



Eastern Sierra Land Trust's success in preserving vital lands in the Eastern Sierra is made possible by the inspiration of our founders, the dedication of our board, staff, and volunteers, and the generous support of individuals, businesses and foundations.

We gratefully acknowledge all our supporters who have made gifts to ESLT in 2012.

Corporate & Foundation Sponsors \$5,000 and over:

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June Lake Loop Women's Club
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David Grah
Ray Gray and Martha Voght
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january to december 2012

\$100 - \$249 (Continued)

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The MacFarlane Foundation

Ruth MacFarlane has traveled a long way from her birthplace in Cape Town, South Africa to California, but the majestic mountains of the Eastern Sierra remind her of the "grand mountain ranges" of her homeland. She is



well traveled, having also lived in England, but was drawn to the Mammoth Lakes area because of the beauty of the Sierra.

Ruth and her husband, Roger, guide the MacFarlane Foundation, whose mission is to, "support programs and organizations which enhance the quality of life and opportunity for individuals, communities, and the environment." They were drawn by ESLT's strategy of utilizing conservation easements.

Ruth's many interests include art and music, serving as Chairman of the Board for Beach Cities Symphony. She particularly enjoys ESLT's art shows featuring plein air painters. We appreciate the support of the MacFarlane Foundation and Ruth's inspirational energy.

member spotlight

9

members

january to december 2012

\$50-\$99 (continued)

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Hugh Warnock
Patience and Fritz Wenck
Janet Westbrook
Polly Wheaton
Doris White
Bruce Whitney
Judy and Andrew Wickman
Thomas Williams
Wally Woolfenden

In-Kind Donations

A special thank you to all those individuals and organizations who supported ESLT through their In-Kind donations in 2012.

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ESLT Members and supporters at the Volunteer Orientation in February 2012.

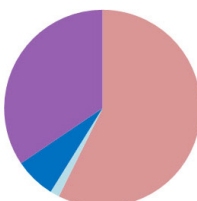
financial summary

Unrestricted Revenue	2011	2012
Contribution (Individual, corporate, and foundation)	\$186,192	\$217,296
Investment Interest and Gains (loss)	\$2,371	\$5,763
Program Services/Events	\$41,457	\$25,391
Funds Released from Restriction (Including land and easement acquisition grants)	\$3,702,829	\$130,490
Revenue Total	\$3,932,849	\$378,940
Expenses	2011	2012
Program Services (Land conservation and education)	\$271,191	\$265,460
Land & Easement Acquisition	\$3,537,912	\$11,716
Fundraising	\$26,512	\$24,718
Administration	\$29,722	\$28,204
Expense Total	\$3,865,337	\$330,099

Independent Accountants: Gregory & Pieper, LLP

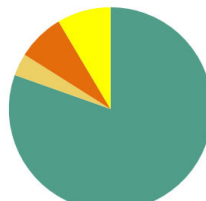
2012 REVENUE

- Contributions
- Investment
- Program Services
- Funds Released from Restriction



2012 EXPENSES

- Program Services
- Land & Easement Acquisitions
- Fundraising
- Administration



special thanks . . . **2012**
to our conservation partners



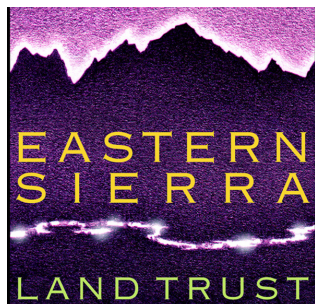
PHOTO CREDITS

Our sincere thanks to Stephen Ingram, Rick Kattelman, Jen May, Indigo Photography, and ESLT staff members for providing the pictures included in the 2012 Annual Report.



Our success in preserving vital lands in the Eastern Sierra is made possible by the generous support of individuals, businesses and foundations.

If you would like more information about how to support our work, or want to learn how to preserve your rural lands for future generations, please contact us at: info@eslt.org or through our website at www.eslt.org.



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