



LAND LINES

Placer Land Trust Newsletter

Volume VIII, Number 2

July 2009

Blue Goose Produce: Committed to Placer County Heritage

by Karrie Thomas

Blue Goose Produce peddles just about everything grown in Placer County from the west end of the old Blue Goose packing shed in Loomis. Owner **Mark Foley** stocks fruit, vegetables, meat, eggs, bread, and value-added products all sourced as close to home as possible.

According to Foley, “creating an outlet for local producers helps provide income to the region and helps preserve our agricultural heritage.”

To this end Blue Goose also sponsors a weekly farmers market on Saturdays from 8-12. Local farmers, ranchers, and artisans can sell their products without a market fee and generate community interest in their goods.

Foley also works closely with the South Placer Heritage Foundation, which is renovating the old packing shed to create space for company meetings, private parties, community events, and cultural exhibits that will
(continued on page 3)

PLT Honors Joe Medeiros as 2009 Placer Conservator

by Kelsey Stavseth

Placer Land Trust will present educator and conservationist **Joe Medeiros** with the 2009 Placer Conservator Award at a fundraising dinner on July 18th at High Hand Nursery in Loomis.

The Placer Conservator Award honors extraordinary individuals or organizations that enrich the quality of life in Placer County through resource conservation.

A native of the San Joaquin Valley, Joe watched thousands of acres of native grasslands, wetlands, and riparian forests fall to the plow and the chainsaw. He grew up on a dairy farm and ran to the Sierra Nevada in the summers to escape the stifling heat.

“I forever fell in love with wild places, wild creatures, and all the incredible processes that enable life to exist on earth,” said Medeiros.

PLT to Host Awards Dinner July 18 in Loomis (see page 3)

As a means of sharing his passion for the outdoors and the environment, Joe dedicated 33 years to the California Community College system. He taught botany and biology at Modesto Junior College from 1974-1990 and was the Founder and past Executive Director of the Great Valley Museum of Natural History at the college. From 1990-2009 he taught botany, ecology, and environ-
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A typical lecture in Joe Medeiros' class would be held in outdoor "classrooms" ranging from foothill woodlands to Sierra Nevada forests.

JUSTIN WAGES

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From the Board Room

California Trails & Greenways Conference

by Jim Haagen-Smit

Over 250 open space and trail leaders attended the recent California Trails & Greenways Conference at Tenaya Lodge in Yosemite. The annual conference presents a forum for education, networking and development of strategies for envisioning, planning, funding, designing, constructing, and managing non-motorized recreational trails in California. California State Parks holds this meeting each spring at different locations; excitement is already brewing over next April's location - Cambria.

I regularly attend the conference and I've found the time well spent for developing contacts, resources, and new ideas for trails here in Placer County. In recent years I have noticed growing interest by various land trusts attending from around the state. Land trusts are all realizing that public trail access on preserved lands helps gain support for both public and land trust owned lands.

Public access must find balance with land preservation to prevent damage to habitat. However, without trails the public often doesn't realize the value of land preservation.

This year Lassen Land and Trails Trust led a session of particular interest. "Utilizing Momentum and Partnerships for Developing Trails in Lower Income Rural Communities." The session detailed how the trust developed support for the Modoc Rail Line acquisition, which allowed them to build a new 80 mile rail-trail with backers including the Sierra Nevada Conservancy and the Wildlife Conservation Board.

Details on past conferences, including session papers and information on next years conference are posted at <http://www.parks.ca.gov/default.asp?page id=24151>.

Happy Trails!



COURTESY TO PLT

PLT Board member Jim Haagen-Smit (at left) at California Trails & Greenways Conference in Yosemite.



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MISSION

Placer Land Trust is a private nonprofit organization dedicated to working with willing landowners and conservation partners to permanently preserve natural open spaces and agricultural land in Placer County for future generations.

Land Lines is the seasonal newsletter of Placer Land Trust, available free-of-charge to Placer Land Trust members.

Vol. VIII, No. 2, July 2009

Thank You to Placer Land Trust's Supporters!

The following individuals have made contributions to Placer Land Trust in the past few months. If we've missed acknowledging your gift, please let us know, and THANK YOU!

PLACER PARTNERS (\$5000+)

California Wildlife Foundation (californiawildlifefoundation.org)

Placer Community Foundation (placercf.org)

MILLENNIUM (\$1000+)

Rich Ferreira

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PROTECTORS (\$500+)

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Ann Moen

Sydney Palaca

Ernest Riley

Robin Riley

Tod Santos

Robert & Harriet Stephens

Sallysue Stein

Phil & Kathy Weber

MEMORIAL GIFTS

Jeff & Christa Darlington, in memory of Dorothy M. Darlington (1916-2009)

PLANNED GIVING

Please consider a planned gift to PLT, or remembering PLT in your will. For more information about supporting PLT, contact Fund Development Coordinator Karrie Thomas at 530-887-9222 or karrie@placerlandtrust.org.

Blue Goose

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attract more people to historic downtown Loomis.

Foley's long-standing support of Placer Land Trust compliments his interest in building strong markets to sustain agriculture in the area and preserve cultural heritage in the County.

"Loomis is on the front lines of development spilling over from Rocklin. We have to consider the sustainability of our open spaces and take steps to protect the rural character and agricultural land that define Placer County."

So wander over to Taylor Road in Loomis and see what Blue Goose Produce has to offer.

Placer Land Trust Presents the 2009 Placer Conservator Award

Enriching the quality of life in Placer County through resource conservation

Honoring Joe Medeiros

High Hand Nursery

3750 Taylor Rd

Loomis, CA 95650

July 18th, 6pm

**\$75/Plate ~ RSVP by July 13th
to Kelsey Stavseth 530 887-9222**

kelsey@placerlandtrust.org



Directions ~ From I-80 take exit 110, Horseshoe Bar Road in Loomis. Turn north onto Horseshoe Bar Rd toward downtown Loomis. Turn Left onto Taylor Road. High Hand Nursery will be on your right.

Invasive Species Alert ~ *Sus scrofa* the Feral Pig

by Jeff Ward

Invasive species are not limited to plants and insects. In Placer County and other parts of California we are dealing with a very destructive invasive mammal, the feral pig (*Sus scrofa*).

European settlers introduced the feral pig as a domestic food source. Today it ranges from coastal areas to inland oak woodlands. Feral pig damage greatly reduces oak regeneration, degrading wildlife habitat and species diversity and creating risk of disease such as Foot and Mouth Disease Virus (FMD) and E. coli.

PLT preserves in the Big Hill and Bear River area have suffered significant damage from feral pigs. Adjacent landowners have also voiced their concerns about the damage that pigs have inflicted on their properties. PLT is currently exploring creative management options to address this issue.

Oak Regeneration

Feral pigs depend on permanent water sources and prefer oak woodlands because of the abundance of food. Pigs spend a significant amount of time rooting beneath the soil surface in search of bulbs, acorns, earthworms and other invertebrates. If the opportunity arises they will consume all available oak acorns and seedlings. Their high rate of consumption is a grave threat to oak regeneration. Without oak regeneration, we stand the chance of losing an essential part of California's natural heritage.

Wildlife Habitat Degradation

Vegetation consumption by feral pigs also reduces availability of above ground vegetation, which provides critical cover for food resources for native wildlife and creates unhealthy competition. Their mass consumption can alter plant species composition and reduce



LARRY LINTON

species diversity. The pigs feed mostly on plant material and insects, although if given the opportunity they will also prey on animals such as ground nesting birds, small mammals, reptiles, and amphibians. Pig rooting and wallowing disturbs and loosens the soil surface and contributes to soil erosion. This behavior near streams can increase sediment loads into nearby waterways and reduce water quality and the health of our overall watershed.

Societal Impacts

Feral pigs carry diseases that can be transmitted to livestock and humans. The recent E. coli incident with spinach in Salinas Valley was directly traced to feral pigs entering the spinach fields and contaminating vegetation. Placer County estimates that feral pig management will cost \$60K over five years

Management Plans

PLT is currently working with the Department of Fish and Game (DFG) and Placer County Wildlife Services to reduce the impact of feral pigs on our property.

PLT plans to work with DFG, the County, other agencies, community members, and our neighbors and landowner partners to develop a strategy that will help reduce the negative effects of feral pig populations on PLT preserves and neighboring lands. Planned management activities include a fall pig hunt with DFG, to assess the viability of hunting as a management plan component.

Placer County Locals: Tri-Colored Blackbird

by Justin Wages

Appearance

The tri-colored blackbird (*Agelaius tricolor*) is a medium-sized bird.

The glossy black adult males have bright scarlet epaulets with a bright white band below distinguishable from the red-orange epaulet and yellow or gold band of the adult male red-winged blackbird.



JUSTIN WAGES

Local Distribution

Darries and Open Rangeland in the Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta and Central Coast provides critical habitat for wintering tricolors. They can be found in large colony flocks of 25,000 birds but may be as small as tens of birds. We often see Tricolors on PLT's Doty Ravine Preserve and Swainsons Grassland Preserve; however, this bird is a California Species of Special Concern due to declining habitat and other impacts.

Reasons for Decline

1. Habitat loss resulting from wetland drainage and/or water diversions, land conversion or unsuitable agriculture, and urbanization
2. Poisoning and/or shooting as agricultural pests
3. Grain field harvest while eggs or young are still in the nests.

How You Can Help

Support local farmers and ranchers that are sensitive to wildlife. Employ Conservation Easements on your property as a way to fund habitat protection. For more information see: <http://tricolor.ice.ucdavis.edu>.

Grasslands of the Central Valley

by Mehrey Vaghti (part 1 of 4)

The parched grasses of summer may contribute to the modern image of the Golden State, but this was not the case before Eurasian occupation of California.

The present Central Valley grassland is dominated by annual grasses brought to the region by the Spanish and their livestock in the mid 1700's. Native to the Mediterranean, these grasses were well adapted to climatic conditions similar to that of California.

The workings of the original California bunchgrass prairie are unknown: even the composition and relative importance of species is uncertain. Scientists relied on various archeological methods to improve our understanding of these grasslands prior to Eurasian influence, and in some cases, prior to Native American settlement. During the Pleistocene (18,000 years ago) open woodland and savanna vegetation, similar to that currently found in parts of the Great Basin, likely dominated this landscape. Much of the Pleistocene megafauna was also likely associated with this vegetation. The majority of these animal's extinction occurred in the Holocene (around 10,000 years ago). Only three survived in the California grasslands: elk, deer, and pronghorn.

California's original grasslands probably supported several million pronghorn and at least half a million tule elk as well as numerous deer, rabbits and rodents. The dominant grass of the Holocene was likely purple needlegrass (*Nassella pulchra*) with important associates: blue wildrye (*Elymus glaucus*), one-sided bluegrass (*Poa secunda* spp. *secunda*) and deergrass (*Muhlenbergia rigens*). Annual forbes were likely significant contributors to the original grassland prairies.

Fires ignited by lightning were part of the historic valley grassland ecol-

ogy, occurring at similar intervals as the present. Native American occupation commencing in the Holocene brought fire management to the landscape. The ecosystem relied on fire to renew grasslands after seed harvest, to control insects and disease and to trap animals, among other purposes. The fire return interval in valley grasslands was likely 1-3 years.

Eurasian occupation brought a suite of well-adapted introduced annual species as well as continuous livestock grazing, which is likely a predominant factor in the conversion from perennial to annual grasslands in California.

Settlers introduced annual species such as annual bluegrass (*Poa annua*), Mediterranean barley (*Hordeum marinum*), Italian ryegrass (*Lolium multiflo-*

rum) and filaree (*Erodium* species). If these grasses had landed here without several other factors, the original bunch grasses may have been able to compete. But the non-native grasses out-competed native bunchgrasses under the increased grazing pressure, summer drought stress, insect and rodent herbivory, and human land disturbance. These changes also resulted in the dramatic decline of tule elk and pronghorn antelope.

CAROL WITHAM

[References: Bartolome, J.W., W.J. Barry, T. Griggs & P. Hopkinson. 2007. Val-



Purple Needle Grass

ley Grassland. In M.G. Barbour, T.K. Wolf & A.A. Schoenherr Terrestrial Vegetation of California 3rd Edition. University of California Press.]

Joe Medeiros Honored

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mental studies at Sierra College in Rocklin. During his tenure there he was the first faculty advisor of ECOS (Environmentally Concerned Organization of Students), voted Faculty of the Year (chosen by academic senate), Teacher of the Year (Chosen by Students) and received a Lifetime Achievement Award. *Fremontia Magazine* recognized Joe as a "Hero of the Great Valley" in 2000.

"Joe has inspired a new generation of conservationists. He helped students recognize the significance of their impact on the planet," said PLT's **Justin Wages**, a former student.

Gary Noy, Founder and Direc-

tor of the Sierra College Center for Sierra Nevada Studies, has worked with Joe for many years on college projects related to Placer County and the Sierra Nevada, and says: "I have never met anyone who has shown as much passion, respect and commitment to the land as Joe Medeiros. He richly deserves the Placer Conservator Award."

The Placer Conservator Dinner & Award Ceremony will be held July 18 in Loomis. The event features PlacerGROWN food, music from Rita Hosking and Cousin Jack and a few stories from the field from Joe himself. To RSVP or support the event, contact PLT at 530-887-9222 or kelsey@placerlandtrust.org.

Volunteer Opportunities at Placer Land Trust!

by Kelsey Stavseth

As Placer Land Trust acquires new land, and continues to mature as an organization, community involvement is essential. Volunteer support has never been so important as over the past two years, with the economy freezing grant programs and reducing the funding available for nonprofits.

This year marks a turning point in PLT's commitment to a volunteer program.

Beginning in January, PLT staff began defining guidelines for volunteers in order to develop and promote a comprehensive program that will aid in monitoring and restoration efforts, while providing education and skill development for volunteers. These protocols set us up for several successful volunteer work days this spring.

The first work day took place at Doty Ravine Preserve in Lincoln. **Justin Wages**, PLT's Land Management Technician, worked with a group of students from Blue Oaks Elementary School in Roseville to install boxes throughout the property. The boxes encourage native birds to nest and lay eggs. While we didn't necessarily expect the birds would take up residence this year, follow-up surveys showed that all of the nests had some activity and most had signs of living inhabitants. Further, since we discovered the first signs of life in mid April, PLT has monitored the boxes and most have yielded eggs. As of mid-May, we even had little hatchlings!

"I'm very excited to see such success and productivity in the first year of the Nesting Box Program," said Justin. "Many volunteers have contributed to this success, and we keep them updated with pictures of nesting birds and their young."

Doty Ravine was an early season success that set the tone for PLT projects throughout the spring.



JUSTIN WAGES

Volunteer Irene Smith of Loomis assists PLT's Kelsey Stavseth with bird boxes at PLT's Doty Ravine Preserve in Lincoln.

The next effort was restoration on Stagecoach Preserve, located in Auburn. Nestled in a residential area, Stagecoach Preserve has always seen significant traffic from outdoor enthusiasts. PLT staff and board members, in partnership with the Placer County Resource Conservation District (RCD) and the Regional Occupation Program (ROP), have removed invasive species and made the site more user-friendly.

Special thanks to PLT board member **Rich Ferreira** who built and donated a footbridge across the creek (*pictured below left*), enabling passersby to utilize the shade on the other side.

PLT plans to place a bench in the shade before the project is over. We would also like to thank neighborhood resident **Bill Flake** for his countless hours on the weed whacker at Stagecoach Preserve!



KRISTIN HAIDER

PLT Stewardship Coordinator Jeff Ward appreciates volunteer support, even when he's NOT digging through Placer County's rocky dirt to put up interpretive signage!

All stewardship work at PLT requires many hands, and as we acquire more property, volunteers will increasingly play an essential role in stewardship.

Look here in *Land Lines* or visit the volunteer page on our new website, www.placerlandtrust.org, for future events and volunteer opportunities.

To speak with someone directly, contact me at 530-887-9222 or kelsey@placerlandtrust.org.

Strategic Plan Survey Results

by Jessica Pierce

As many of you know, at PLT we are updating our Strategic Plan. As part of this process we gathered input from our membership, advisors and friends to understand three things:

1) where you would like our conservation work done;

2) what you would like us to do with the land once preserved; and

3) your greatest concerns regarding land use in Placer County.

We emailed a survey to over 500 members, advisors and friends of PLT in March 2009, and we now have the results, including some interesting information to share with you.

Not surprisingly, 84% of respondents believed that conversion of agricultural land to other uses was one of the biggest threats to open space lands in Placer County. Population growth and Parcelization/Fragmentation rounded out the top three.

Regarding where PLT should focus ... although 48% voted for the Valley as region of the County was most threatened, 69% think that the Foothills region should be PLT's priority for preservation.

There's lots more interesting information from this survey. Thank you to our members, friends and advisors who completed the survey! Your voice has contributed to PLT's long-term vision for the future of Placer County. As we move forward with our strategic planning through the fall with the assistance of a Placer Community Foundation grant, we welcome additional comments; please let us know if you have any input, or if there is a special place in Placer County that we can work on for the benefit of current and future generations. Please contact me at jessica@placerlandtrust.org with any comments.

Snap Shot of other Survey Responses:

What's the most important thing PLT can do in the next 5-10 years?

- | | |
|--|-----|
| 1. Preserve more land | 75% |
| 2. Public education and awareness | 12% |
| 3. Enhance public benefit of existing land | 10% |
| 4. Other | 3% |

Is there a particular landscape type that is the most threatened?

- | | |
|--|-----|
| 1. Oak woodlands and foothill lands | 33% |
| 2. Vernal Pools and grasslands | 30% |
| 3. Rivers, streams, meadows and wetlands | 18% |
| 4. Agricultural lands | 11% |
| 5. Other | 8% |

Is there a particular type of landscape that should be a priority for PLT?

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-----|
| 1. Natural land | 78% |
| 2. Agricultural land | 57% |
| 3. Land for public recreation | 28% |

If you donated a \$1 million to PLT for one thing only, what would it be?

- | | |
|---|-----|
| 1. Protection of new property | 54% |
| 2. Building of long-term endowment funds | 21% |
| 3. Unrestricted program activities
and operations | 9% |
| 4. Restoration of existing properties | 5% |
| 5. Enhancement of recreation values on
existing properties | 4% |
| 6. Other | 7% |

Check Out PLT's New Website!

Working with Blast Advanced Media in Roseville, Placer Land Trust has completely revised and re-designed our website. We've added new information, new links, and new ways to support and interact with Placer Land Trust.

We are now able to accept donations online via a secure server. Be among the first 50 people to donate \$100 or more online, and we will enter your name into a raffle to win a rafting trip on the American River with **River Otter Adventures!**

www.placerlandtrust.org

Executive Director's Report

New (and Used) Ways to Support PLT

If today's economy is making you feel like a boxer who's taken too many punches to the head, you're not alone. In the nonprofit community, donations are down, private foundations are covering up, and State grant funding has been knocked out. Fortunately, PLT has managed our funds and positioned ourselves to outlast this economic slugfest. Nonetheless, we still have to keep our head up and our feet moving to continue preserving land.

These days, PLT is relying more and more on non-cash support. We encourage and welcome donations of equipment and services. For example, **Nanette Herron** of Rocklin donated a mountain bike to PLT in March - thanks Nanette!

Since the mountain bike won't haul our trailer and mower and PLT staff aren't strong enough (*see photo at right*) we need a truck for our stewardship program. Donating a used vehicle to PLT is a great way to support us. It provides us with something we can use (if it fits the bill) or sell (if it doesn't),



and the donor can also claim the bluebook value of the vehicle as a charitable tax-deductible contribution.

Do you or someone you know have a truck to donate to PLT? If it's in good working condition, we'll come pick it up from you and handle all the paper work. We're looking for a full-size, 4-door, 4WD truck with towing package (but hey, we're not picky!).

Please consider how you can support PLT during this tough economy. We appreciate all methods of support, including membership renewals, event sponsorships, volunteer time, and non-cash donations!

To view PLT's full wish list, please see www.placerlandtrust.org/non-cash-donations.aspx.

JEFF DARLINGTON
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

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PLACER LAND TRUST



Join PLT for the 2009 Placer Conservator Dinner & Awards Ceremony on Saturday, July 18, at the High Hand Nursery in Loomis, to honor educator Joe Medeiros.

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