Imagine traveling west out of Templeton, ocean-bound on Highway 46. You pass housing developments, ranchettes, and eventually several wineries.

As you approach the crest of the mountains and drive over a pass that cuts through the Santa Lucia range, the wineries give way to wild oak woodlands. Suddenly, the Pacific Ocean comes into view. Oak-studded hills cascade into the ocean; Morro Rock stands out in the distance; and Point Buchon drops into the sea.

Do you notice the cattle quietly grazing in an open meadow; a hawk perched in a tall Sycamore tree? Can you spot the several honeybee hives that dot the landscape?

Or do you imagine dozens of houses connected by freshly-paved driveways, with power lines obscuring the ocean view and trimmed lawns in place of open range?

Believe it or not, you have a choice between these opposing, but distinctly possible, futures for Highway 46 West. This landscape is iconic and historic, but that doesn’t mean it’s forever. Unless we act now, a very different view may be in store for SLO County.

HARMONIOUS HABITAT

Let’s reflect on that landscape again. It may be hard to believe that these hills are already fully developed. Can you see it?

They aren’t covered in condominiums or sprawling vacation rentals, but this land is already home to thousands of species of birds, insects, reptiles and mammals; not to mention the steelhead trout swimming up the streams that flow to Cayucos and the ocean below.

This land belongs to the mother bobcat, raising her young. To the golden eagle perched in a golden Sycamore. To the woodpecker carefully storing acorns in an ancient oak tree.

Many more animal homes will be made here as climate change forces California’s wildlife to migrate north.

Continued....
In fact, 46 West is part of a crucial wildlife corridor, stretching from Cerro Alto to Big Sur.

We have the opportunity now to protect these homes, to make sure that the mother bobcat still has a place to raise her young and the eagle can still leave its perch to soar through clear blue skies.

HOME ON THE RANGE
The saying goes, “cows have a good eye for real estate.” Here in San Luis Obispo County, we tend to agree. Agriculture is at the heart of our “SLO” lifestyle, and the ranches along 46 West define this heritage.

These ranches are local businesses. Our agricultural roots run deep, and our ranching heritage is still intact after a century of development that has forever changed much of California. However, this storied past does not guarantee a future of agriculture in our County.

The average age of farmers across the country is rising. Young people face many hurdles to starting a career in agriculture, and one of the most difficult issues is the cost of land.

When landowners want to pass their legacy on to the next generation, a conservation easement gives them peace of mind that the land won’t be sold to development or be impossible to afford through ranching alone.

Selling to a developer might be the easiest path, and sometimes it may be the only path for young heirs who can’t afford the costs of inheriting a large ranch.

The landowners who come to The Land Conservancy share your vision for the future of this landscape. They value their land for what it is today, for what it has provided their families, and what it can be for future generations.

CONSERVING LAND; LEAVING A LEGACY
The Land Conservancy is excited to launch a campaign to protect over 5,000 acres of land in the Highway 46 West Corridor.

We have been approached by local landowners who want to conserve this landscape right now!

Your membership with The Land Conservancy makes these amazing things possible. Your continued support will ensure that this special place is not lost forever. Rather, it will be permanently protected into perpetuity.

Subscribe to our e-newsletter at www.lcslo.org for updates about the Highway 46 West campaign!

“This landscape is iconic and historic, but that doesn’t mean it’s forever.”
A wet winter on the west coast filled many California reservoirs, and was a refreshing reminder of how important conservation lands are for water quality.

“The quality of water as it travels through the hydrologic cycle is influenced by the environments it passes through,” says Dylan Theobald, The Land Conservancy’s Stewardship Manager.

“Urban environments often result in poor water quality because storm water flows quickly off of rooftops and street surfaces, taking contaminants with it.

“Water that flows off of a natural system such as an oak woodland or floodplain moves much slower and is naturally filtered by vegetation along the way. Creeks, wetlands and floodplains provide a buffer for the impacts we have on the natural world and water quality.”

The Lower SLO Creek Flood Plain Preserve is a 148 acre property owned by The Land Conservancy. You may notice it if you glance to your right as you head toward San Luis Obispo after passing San Luis Bay Drive on the 101 North.

When the land was first acquired, the floodplain had been stripped of much of the riparian vegetation that helps improve water quality.

Your support allowed staff and local volunteers to restore the edges of the creek with native plant species that help slow water down, shade the creek, stabilize the banks, and provide animal habitat.

The value of a floodplain and creekside foliage to water quality is most recognizable during heavy rains. During this winter’s storms, water flushed out areas where a lot of waste enters the creek, carrying the debris down to the floodplain.

Fortunately, a large amount of waste was slowed down enough in the Floodplain Preserve. It was caught up behind a bridge and in tree branches and plants.

While this doesn’t paint a pretty picture, it allowed Land Conservancy staff, and volunteers from a local environmental collective One With Nature, to remove this trash before it could make its way out to the Pacific Ocean in Avila Beach.

In all, over 1,000 plastic and glass bottles and several garbage bags of Styrofoam, that would have otherwise flowed out to sea, were removed from the creek.

This story would not be possible without the support of our members and community partners that make water quality and land conservation a priority in San Luis Obispo County. Thank you for your support!

For a video of the creek clean-up effort, visit our Instagram page @LandConservancySLO.
The Pismo Preserve
BLAZING A TRAIL TOWARDS PUBLIC ACCESS

Following the winter rains the grass has grown and the wildflowers are blooming at the Pismo Preserve, creating a beautiful and fun setting for your next hike or ride. Thanks to our outstanding volunteers, docent-led hikes, mountain bike rides, and horseback rides on the Pismo Preserve are now open to the public!

We are also excited to announce that The Land Conservancy is planning to host “open days” on the Preserve starting in June, where anyone can check in with a docent at the front gate and explore the land on their own. Be sure to visit our website to register for a hike, or to learn more about our upcoming open day schedule.

The Land Conservancy is still on track to fully open the Pismo Preserve by the end of 2018 and we are grateful to you for making it possible for everyone to enjoy this spectacular landscape into the future.

For a full schedule of events or to sign up for a hike, visit lcslo.org/events.
On December 1, 2016, Oak Education Manager Bev Gingg walked into a classroom at Ocean View Elementary School in Arroyo Grande to meet the students who would become the school’s first “Oak Ambassadors” through The Land Conservancy’s Learning Among the Oaks program.

“I thought I had walked into the wrong classroom – there were so many students there!” recalls Bev. “It is so amazing to see the enthusiasm these children have to get out and explore the natural world.”

Thanks to gifts from people like you, Learning Among the Oaks expanded to its second location, Ocean View Elementary, for the 2016-17 school year. On April 13, twelve 4th graders earned the title of “Oak Ambassador” and will soon begin working with adult docents to guide oak nature hikes for children and families visiting the Pismo Preserve.

In the past three months, 23 students from both Santa Margarita and Ocean View Elementary schools participated in three field trips to local trails and 20 hours of environmental education that they would not otherwise have received.

There are other elementary schools in San Luis Obispo County asking The Land Conservancy to establish Learning Among the Oaks at their schools. They, like you, know how critical it is to build a connection to nature in today’s youth. Your support this year will help turn their dreams into reality!

Above: Lily held a king snake for the first time during a herpetology lesson by Cal Poly Biological Sciences senior Heather Neldner.

Below: Ocean View students explore the Pismo Preserve.
When a Barn Raises a Community

Have you heard the jackhammers out at the Octagon Barn? You wouldn’t necessarily think of those sounds coming out of the old milking parlor, but that’s what’s happening as construction begins and the project takes another leap forward.

This spring the Octagon Barn’s milking parlor building is coming to life. Built in 1938 to expand dairy production at the Barn, it will become a place for community meetings, family gatherings, educational programs, and fun events.

On its own, the parlor will be a valued amenity for our community, but it is also a critical part of the overall vision for the Octagon Barn Center.

Connecting kids to nature and agriculture is part of this vision, but so is its future as a community hub and new trailhead for the Bob Jones Bike Trail.

No other place in the region captures SLO County’s unique agricultural history quite like this barn does. And with a little more help, we can make the whole center come to life for all of us to enjoy together.

WHAT’S NEXT?

Well, we need your support. We are so close to making the project a reality. Thanks to generous support of foundations and people like you, only 6% of the funding is still needed.

Once the funding is complete we will be able to accelerate installation of the parking areas, lighting, final improvements to the Barn, the construction of a new amphitheater and drought-tolerant landscaping.

With that, the Octagon Barn Center will be open for people from all walks of life to enjoy.

This will mean gatherings at the Barn, like a 4-H show with kids and their animals, family celebrations, and the recent screenings for the SLO International Film Festival, will become a regular part of our lives.

The love and dedication you have shown for the Barn has made all the difference, and continues to help drive the project to completion. Thank you so much for your support. We hope to see you at our next Breakfast at the Barn on May 18th to celebrate this progress! Please see below for details.

Breakfast at the Barn

Thursday | May 18, 2017 | 9:00-10:00 am
4400 Octagon Way, San Luis Obispo

We hope to see you at the Breakfast at the Barn, on May 18th, from 9:00 a.m. to 10:00 a.m. to check out the progress and enjoy an informal, tasty, breakfast. Please RSVP online by visiting LCSLO.org/events, or call (805) 544-9096.
YOU’RE AMAZING!

DID YOU KNOW?
Monthly gifts help The Land Conservancy by providing a stable, monthly income that we can rely on to support important projects throughout the year.

Donating monthly is easy! By visiting our website at lcslo.org, you can give monthly in any amount you choose.

Your gift will allow us to plan ahead for more conservation, restoration and education right here in SLO County!

THANK YOU TO OUR MONTHLY HEROES!

- Greg Baxley
- Dawn Beattie
- Steele Bennett
- John and Mary Bohlman
- Glenn Carlon
- Andrea and Randy Chavez
- Rob DeGraff and Mary Sampson
- Elizabeth Ann Hallford
- Sandra Heller
- Debra and Herbert Holt
- Richard and Prisila Johnson
- Brooke Langle
- Paul and Linda Malarik
- Dmytro Marushkevych
- Wanda McDonald and Jim Hopkins
- Timothy McIntyre
- Susan and Jim Miers
- Gary O’Neill
- Patrick and JoAnn Wheatley

THANK YOU
• Young Professionals Networking Group (YPNG) for naming us the beneficiary of your Annual Monte Carlo Night Fundraiser at the Cliff’s Resort, which raised $5,000!
• One With Nature (@OneWithNatureCo) for film and photography support on recent projects.
• To all of our Pismo Preserve docents for leading thousands of members and guests safely through our trail system as we continue to prepare the site for public use.
• Bruce Berlin for the donation of a GMC truck for the Pismo Preserve, and his company Califlora for native seeds for restoration work throughout the county.
• Helen Kunkle for the donation of a Santa Maria style BBQ.

WELCOME
• Rachel Tarcon, our new bookkeeper, and Rudy Uribe, our newly hired Pismo Preserve Ranger!

FAREWELL
• To our amazing 2016-17 Restoration Crew, Sara, Trent and Colin for your hard work and dedication this season. We wish you the best of luck in all your future endeavors!

WISH LIST
• Tractor (John Deere or Kubota, mower attachment desirable)
• Wood chipper
• Check out our Wish List on Amazon.com - search “land conservancy” to find us.

Donated goods are tax-deductible. Call us at (805) 544-9096 or e-mail LC@LCSLO.org.

Treat Yo Self!
Tuesday, May 16th

Gino’s Pizza

will donate 20% of sales from 4-9pm to The Land Conservancy with the mention of this promotion!

1761 Monterey Street
San Luis Obispo, California, 93401
EVENTS CALENDAR

GINO’S PIZZA FUNDRAISER
Tuesday | May 16 | 4-9:00 pm
Head to Gino’s Pizza (1761 Monterey Street) for a delicious pizza dinner and Gino’s will donate 20% of sales (excluding alcohol and tips) back to The Land Conservancy!

BREAKFAST AT THE BARN
Thursday | May 18 | 9-10:00 am
Learn about the latest progress and updates from the Octagon Barn Center while enjoying tasty breakfast treats and beverages. RSVP at lcslo.org/events or by calling (805) 544-9096.

SLO ULTRA TRAIL RACES
Saturday | September 9 | Wild Cherry Canyon
Benefitting The Land Conservancy, this trail race will get you down and dirty with spectacular views in Wild Cherry Canyon. Sign up to run or volunteer at SOLUMTRA.com.

Keeping your membership current allows access to exclusive member events like the ones listed here! For your convenience we have included your membership expiration date next to your address.