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CREDITS
Cover photo: O’Connor Ranch by Kaila Dettman
Additional photo credits: Judith Hildinger, Kaila Dettman, Land Conservancy staff
Design: Teresa Tibstra

THE LAND CONSERVANCY OF SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY
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Printed locally on Forest Stewardship Council Certified paper with 55% recycled content from 30% post consumer waste.
It is with great honor and enthusiasm that we address you as the new leaders of The Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County. Our goal is to deliver premiere local land programs that emphasize our nonprofit mission: CONSERVE, CARE, and CONNECT. Using these actions, we take a holistic and thoughtful approach towards land conservation challenges throughout our county. This has resulted in the permanent protection of thousands of acres—roughly twice the total area of the City of San Luis Obispo.

Land conservation has never been more important than it is today. By conserving land, we safeguard life’s necessities: pure water, rich soil, clean air, and local food. By caring for wounded landscapes, we ensure quality habitats for wildlife. By connecting our community to the land, we foster an understanding of the natural world and promote healthy living.

The Land Conservancy is a seasoned veteran and leader of conservation in our county. A key to our success is our unwavering commitment to experienced leadership. Recent signature conservation projects such as Highland Ranch and Point Sal Preserve demonstrate our capacity to protect outstanding landscapes for current and future residents of the Central Coast.

Responsible leadership means, not only protecting additional important land but, forever stewarding the properties in our care. This commitment is foremost in our minds, and this will require the ongoing and enthusiastic engagement of every sector of our community as both beneficiaries and participants in legacy conservation.

Our county is unique, diverse and abundant. From the family farms in Los Osos Valley, to the majestic dunes along our coast, to the busy hiking trails along our local creeks, our economy and our way of life are supported by the land we call home. These natural treasures are worthy of all our very best efforts for protection and enhancement.

We invite you to join in our mission, enjoy the lands that are protected today, and know with confidence that, together, we are conserving our county for future generations.
Conserving An Agricultural Legacy

The nation's most productive soils have been identified as prime farmland, and great value is placed on protecting them. Because that is the soils that feed us. In San Luis Obispo County we enjoy the luxury of incredibly food produced in unique and treasured soils all year long, but development pressure and shifting global markets threaten local agriculture as we know it in the Valley. Preserving prime farmland using voluntary conservation easements allows farmers to continue their agricultural operations while permanently protecting the land from development. This year, The Land Conservancy completed such a project with a beloved family who has worked the rich, dark Los Osos Valley soils for over a century.

Strolling down Higuera Street in San Luis Obispo, one may notice a historic building which displays the name "HM WARDEN JR" and is known as the "Tower Building" for the clock tower that once sat atop it. Upon looking at the structure one would think it had another purpose than a time-ticking clock. Not so, the "Tower Building" is home of a fascinating family who is helping to keep the land farmable for the foreseeable future.

To understand the importance of this family, we must go back to the late 1800s when Horatio Moore Warden and his brother drove livestock across the Great Plains from Chicago to California in 1850. Once in California, they found success mining gold before settling in the Los Osos Valley. At this time Horatio purchased approximately 3,000 acres of land to raise sheep and cattle on what he named Highland Ranch. Farming operations grew, and the ranch soon included a dairy. It was once said that "horses and hogs were his pride and profit" and his short-horned cattle were of the highest quality in the nation.

Four generations later, Don Warden still plows the same fields, preserving his family's 100-year tradition of farming. Don, like Horatio before him, is deeply involved and highly respected in his community. He was the former president of the San Luis Obispo County Farm Bureau and was named Agriculturalist of the Year in 1988. He is also active with the Farm Bureau's Legislative Committee, Property Committee, and the Williamson Act Review Committee.

As the owners of Highland Ranch, Don and his wife Marilyn continue the family legacy by grazing cattle on the emerald green rangeland of the Iris Hills and planting crops in the fertile valley Bookcliffs. Today, the Wardens farm 170 acres of irrigated cropland in prime farmland soils, cultivate several acres of dryland fields intermittently planted with grain, and manage over 250 acres of rangeland and open space used primarily for cattle. With a struggling economy and local development pressures, the Wardens began looking for alternatives that would allow them to continue farming Highland Ranch while earning a living. After exploring an option to subdivide the land for a future housing development, they eventually chose a voluntary conservation easement that would keep the property as the working farm they love. To do so, they would forever retire much of the development potential of the ranch. This was a difficult decision for the family. Like many folks living on the land, the land is an intimate part of who they are as people, and any changes to that relationship are complicated.

The Highland Ranch project is incredibly important on so many fronts; it keeps valuable farmland in production, it protects the rural and agricultural character of the valley, and it supports the farmers who feed us. The Land Conservancy stepped in to offer a win-win solution to keep the land in agriculture and in the family while providing community benefits to local people and wildlife.

With the assistance of numerous project partners, including major support from the National Guard Bureaus (Readiness and Environmental Protection Initiative), the Department of Conservation (California Farmland Conservation Program), and the Morro Bay National Estuary Program, two conservation easements now protect the entire 530-acre ranch. This project is the first agricultural conservation easement The Land Conservancy has completed that protects prime farmland for crops.

The conservation of Highland Ranch also provides a connection to other protected lands in the Iris Hills and is the latest addition to what is now 6,982 acres of conservation properties within the San Luis Obispo City Greenbelt. The Land Conservancy aims to leverage this collaborative project as a successful example of how to conserve prime farmland using voluntary conservation easements.

The Highland Ranch is successfully conserved, the Wardens are pleased that the property and their family's legacy will continue on for future generations to enjoy.

• Completed a win-win solution to keep the land in agriculture and in the family while providing community benefits.
This gateway property was named Kathleen's Canyon Overlook in honor of the late Kathleen Guadalupe Jones. Kathleen was a champion for the Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes and for Black Lake Canyon. She worked tirelessly to keep these places open the eyes and hearts of visitors. Recently, we planted dozens of native trees at Kathleen’s Canyon Overlook. The proposed project will enhance six of the twelve acres to include a wildlife viewing platform with an ADA boardwalk, picnic grounds, a walking path interpreted by a multi-lingual audio cell phone tour, a sunken amphitheater for educational talks and events, and a parking area for visitors and equestrians.

Our ultimate stewardship goal is to engage local communities in helping us care for Kathleen’s Canyon Overlook and other Land Conservancy properties. Neighbors, volunteers, school groups, families, and supporters like you are essential for our success.

**ACCOMPLISHMENTS**

- Supported the removal of the highest priority fish barrier in San Luis Obispo County to provide steelhead access to Santa Rosa Creek (Ferrasci Steelhead Fish Passage Project).
- Completed biological surveys for every property we own with help from university students interns.
- Successfully recruited 153 acorns across the San Luis Obispo Creek watershed in an effort to eradicate this invasive species.
- Leveraged $1.5 million to engage 1,147 volunteers in the enhancement of 9.5 acres at Lower San Luis Obispo Creek Floodplain Preserve by removing invasive Cape ivy and planting 2,500 native plants.
- Treated 85 acres of invasive wind grass in the Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes and removed 1.3 acres of fragile grass vines from Camp Osol in Carpinteria.
- Collaborated with local agriculturists to produce food on properties we own through cooperative farming.
- Replaced over 40 eucalyptus trees with coast live oaks to improve biodiversity and valuable shade at Kathleen’s Canyon Overlook.
- Partnered with Central Coast Salmon Enhancement Foundation to remove weeds in Pismo Creek.
- Mentored two AmeriCorps Watershed Stewards Project members to map and survey San Luis Obispo Creek for invasive plants.
- Designed projects and applied for grant funding to address possible water quality violations.
- Conducted 28 easement field visits to record annual photo points and assess land uses.

**CARE**

**Caring For A Special Place**

Our ability to care for lands that we own is based on more than two decades of experience, a professional staff with exceptional skills, and a deep commitment to nurturing local people and wildlife. For the last seven years, one person has worked largely behind the scenes to ensure that our properties are looked after and sufficiently funded. Recently promoted to Conservation Director, Daniel Bohlman has overseen The Land Conservancy’s conservation and stewardship efforts using a balanced approach that blends scientific acumen and conservation passion. With inspiration from local leaders, Daniel applied his conservation experience to help craft a landmark vision for one of the most unique properties we own.

Tucked away in southern San Luis Obispo County, prehistoric prairie dogs scent the air with their heady organic perfume and the loudest sound you might hear is that of a chirping Bewick’s wren. This place is called Black Lake Canyon, a four-mile long road and Highway 1 in rural Arroyo Grande, acres of this landscape on the corner of Callender Road and Highway 1 in rural Arroyo Grande, the staff had a vision of creating an interactive community-based restoration site which would serve as a gateway to Black Lake Canyon.

Unlike many restoration efforts which command visitors to stay out, our vision for this project is one which pulls the visitor closer, encourages investigation, and provides not only education but inspiration. Daniel Bohlman

Black Lake Canyon may well be the best kept secret in San Luis Obispo County.

Daniel Bohlman

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**2012 Annual Report | Page 7**
Connecting Land and Community Leaders

A critical tenet of our mission is to provide opportunities that bond people to the heritage, wonder, and bounty of our county’s vital lands. Here is the story of an exceptional local man whose life has been enriched by volunteering with The Land Conservancy and whose contributions have impacted the future of land conservation in our region.

Before retiring to San Luis Obispo, B.K. Richard spent his career managing advanced technology projects for TRW, Inc. His 29-year project experience included leading a system engineering team to develop a large system. In addition to expanding awareness of the Barn project vision so that it serves many complementary user groups. B.K.’s continued leadership empowers staff, Trustees and fellow conservation supporters. Equally valuable is the important relationship that ties him to this community and to the places that make it special. B.K.’s experience reflects The Land Conservancy’s critical tenet of our mission is to provide opportunities that bond people to the heritage, wonder, and bounty of our county’s vital lands.

As our most recently appointed Honorary Trustee, B.K.’s continued leadership empowers staff, stakeholders, and inspired community support. Equally valuable is the important relationship that ties him to this community and to the places that make it special.

B.K.’s experience reflects The Land Conservancy’s goal of creating meaningful connections between local people and local lands.

B.K. joined The Land Conservancy’s Board of Trustees in 2004 because it provided a compelling opportunity for him. Since then, B.K. has served on The Land Conservancy program services and helped develop staff resources required to successfully complete large projects. As a leading voice for local land conservation, he helped direct the county’s Transfer of Development Credits program and developed a study on Community Separators.

In 2009, B.K. became the founding contributor to our Conservation Impact Fund with a multi-year pledge that increased the pace and impact of local land conservation.

B.K. most recently took on management of our Octagon Barn Center project because he saw a need that his professional project management experience could fulfill. He engaged the community in developing the Barn project vision so that it serves many complementary user groups. B.K. also systematically augmented the restoration effort into realistic phases which are now coordinated by various committees.

What was once a sagging Barn with a handful of dedicated volunteers working on its behalf will soon be the iconic gateway to San Luis Obispo with long-term financial stability and widespread community support. We owe a debt of gratitude to B.K. for advancing the vision of the Octagon Barn Center and the greater mission of The Land Conservancy.

Few things have given me more satisfaction than the donations I’ve made to enable The Land Conservancy to accelerate its work and increase the level of professional performance. I’ve gotten to watch this up close and can take a measure of satisfaction in the conservation of thousands of acres that are partially due to a board member’s confidence and commitment.

Multi-year gifts provide a significant level of fiscal stability for the organization as other sources of funds rise and fall.

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B.K. Richard

Conserved land is one of the vital dimensions of a healthy community and because our work leads to saving land in perpetuity, it is one of the few ways of making an enduring contribution for generations to come.

B.K. Richard

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B.K. Richard
Land is fundamental to our quality of life and economic vitality. The Land Conservancy’s essential role as your local land trust is to permanently protect the places that define our community and enrich our lives. One such area is the Guadalupe-Nipomo Dunes Complex, a National Natural Landmark that spans roughly twenty miles in both San Luis Obispo and Santa Barbara Counties. This stretch of coastal dunes supports a variety of uses. The Oceano Dunes State Vehicular Recreation Area is one of the last places in the nation where you can drive your vehicle onto the beach, while other portions of the Dunes Complex have been set aside exclusively for wildlife.

When members of the To gnazzini Family approached The Land Conservancy about conserving a coastal property in the Dunes Complex that had been in their family since the turn of the century, the environmental benefits were obvious. Keeping the healthy dune habitat undeveloped would protect air and water quality for people and wildlife while providing possibilities for future hiking access. It was also the last unprotected parcel of land identified in the 800-acre Point Sal Reserve Plan.

But these community benefits are just one part of the story. Conserving the scenic and natural beauty of our region secures San Luis Obispo County’s status as a top tourist destination for outdoor lovers all over the world. That means more money and jobs for our local economy.

The Outdoor Industry Association found that active outdoor recreation contributes $46 billion annually to California’s economy, supports 408,000 jobs across the state, generates $3.1 billion in annual state tax revenue, and produces $28.1 billion annually in retail sales and services across California.

As the Tognazzini project demonstrates, our conservation efforts are crucial to San Luis Obispo County for the environmental, cultural, recreational, and economic ways they benefit local people and wildlife.

Benefiting People and Wildlife

Looking ahead, we are excited to embark on our new 2015-2018 Strategic Plan which will provide us with a framework to effectively and efficiently build capacity in order to implement exciting new endeavors throughout San Luis Obispo County. The plan will map out a five-year focus on long-term organizational and financial sustainability to support our future goals.

By 2014, The Land Conservancy aims to be accredited by the Land Trust Alliance and formally recognized for meeting professional standards of excellence, upholding the public trust, and ensuring permanent conservation. Along with earning this mark of distinction, we will also concentrate on growing our Healthy Lands Forever Fund and our Conservation Easement Defense & Stewardship Fund to ensure that we can care for the lands under our watch for generations to come.

The Land Conservancy has many outstanding projects in the queue, including a public conservation park at Kathleen’s Canyon Overlook, habitat restoration at our Black Lake Canyon Wetlands Preserve, development of the Octagon Barn Center, and several outstanding land conservation projects that total nearly 10,000 acres of priority lands. These and other exciting ventures are on the horizon, all made possible by the support of our donors and partners.

As a public charity, our ultimate goal is to benefit local people and wildlife by addressing the priorities of our communities in San Luis Obispo County and nurturing our connections to the natural world.

Kaila Dettman

We pledge to continue supporting our local economy by conserving farms and ranches that produce our food and by creating parks and open space that serve as the foundation for our tourism industry. We will also continue enhancing our high quality of life by healing landscapes that sustain our drinking water, fresh air, and wildlife.

We believe that today’s land conservation movement is one of the most important movements of our time, and we are proud to serve our community as your premier local land trust.

Daniel Bohlman

Investing in The Land Conservancy your local land trust assures our region’s landscapes will continue benefiting people and wildlife for generations to come.

Daniel Bohman
We connected with 549 donors like you who gave 742 donations and 739 volunteers who donated 2,668 hours of time and talent.

Your gifts help protect the places we love, forever.

Wende David
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2012

VOLUNTEERS

Tad Alvin
Roberts Brewer
Steve Buechler
Stacy Burchard
Jonathan Bryant
Le Briggs
Doug Brown
Marc Brunette
Carlos Burgoza
Leilani Burks
John Caballero
Alan & Sue Percival
Sue Palmer
Lynda & Sal Orlando
Laurence Oertel
Kristen Nelson
Holly Naylor
Denny & Kitty Mynatt
Bernita Myers
Kate Montgomery
Angela McNulty
Alyson McLamore & Terry Spiller
Shelley Massa & Watson Gooch
Mary Marquardt
Frank Little & Bette Kulp
Diane & Robert Levison
Lynne Levine
Mark & Christine Leopold
Deborah Krueger
Steve & Pam Kennington
Todd Katz & Jeanne Dale
Arlen Bass & Risa Kaiser
Arylane Hill
Jan Hendrickson
Nancy Grant
John & Ginger Goodell
Saul & Carol Goldberg
Peter Giles
Richard & Marie Garrett
Mary French
Fred & Patricia Frank
Louroe Fogo
Florence Mesler
Ian & Mae McMillan
Rebekah Lynn
Karl Krupp
Alec Kelly
Jenny Corn & Joe Glowa
Kenneth Hill
Darrell B. Groover
Anna, Thomas, & Vernon Grady
Wes Conner
Clifford Chapman
Henry O. Case
Scott Ramsey Carr
Kevin Zunich
Dan & Mary Woodson
Margaret Whitson
Bob & Marjorie Weed
Dianne Weatherford
Eleanore Walt
William Turner
Elizabeth & David Tolley
Ron Tilley & Jeanne Potter
Kent & Kerry Taylor
John & Nancy Stephens
Julie & Irvin Ray Smith
Holly Sletteland
Bruce Silverberg
Jared & Maureen Sharon
Alice Reinheimer
Galen & Carolyn Rathbun
Karen Randall
Mary Lou Wilhelm & Richard Root
Splash Cafe
SLO Baked Bakeries
Panera Bread (3)
Louise Noel & George Lewis
Brad Hill
Beverly Hensel
Kristen Hazard & Brooke Langle
Linda Groover
Lynn Cooper
Patricia Beck & Ray Belknap
Patricia Sweet
Anne Stubbs
Mrs. Ricky Parrish
Frank Lebens
Land Conservancy Staff
Land Conservancy Staff & Board
Gary Felsman
Jakob David
City of San Luis Obispo
Ed & Anita Carson
California (3)
Phil Ashley
Jane P. Wiley
Patrick O. Wheatley, Jr. (2)
Patricia Rogers
Jason Robert Olivera
John Muir

FUNDERS & PARTNERS

American Land Conservancy
California Conservation Corps
California Department of Conservation
California Farmland Preservation Program
California Department of Fish and Game
California Natural Resources Agency
Dunes Collaborative
DRWC
Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve
Federal Lands
Golden State Forest Foundation
Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute
Humboldt State University
International Coastal Cleanup
Kern Valley College
Mary Lou Wilhelm & Richard Root
Santa Lucia Flyfishers
Mary Sampson
Sarah Risley
Sam Rankin
Outside Now
Anne O’Rourke
Robert Lindquist*
Level Studios
Response
Game-Office of Spill Prevention and Response
 
California Farmland Preservation Program
California Department of Fish and Game
Conservation-California Farmland
Conservation-Remote Sensing

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California Department of Fish and Game
California Natural Resources Agency
Dunes Collaborative
DRWC
Elkhorn Slough National Estuarine Research Reserve
Federal Lands
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Harbor Branch Oceanographic Institute
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Santa Lucia Flyfishers
Mary Sampson
Sarah Risley
Sam Rankin
Outside Now
Anne O’Rourke
Robert Lindquist*
Level Studios
Response
Game-Office of Spill Prevention and Response

Throughout this organization’s history we have relied on diverse funding sources to support our mission, and this last year was no exception. Two of our significant land conservation projects were funded by cooperative agreements with the federal government, state bond funding, grants from local partners, and donations from our community. Our restoration projects were supported by federal, state, and local government foundations, and private stewardship. We are proud that 85% of the funds we receive go directly towards programs and projects, and that the administration costs we do pay go directly towards maintaining our status as an excellent and accountable non-profit public benefit corporation.

BALANCE SHEET

July 1, 2011 through June 30, 2012

Assets
Cash & Cash Equivalents $1,114,956
Receivables $54,317
Land Assets & Prepaids $4,519,102
Inventories $34,317
Contributions $256,788
Support and Revenue
Total Expenses $1,955,943
Interest $7,674
Total Income $1,727,677

Total Assets $6,767,557
Liabilities & Net Assets
Accounts Payable $44,760
Accruals & Other Liabilities $92,383
Invented Expense $56,532
Total Liabilities $287,675
Total Net Assets $6,479,882
Total Liabilities & Net Assets $6,767,557

Support and Revenue
Grants $1,443,273
Contributions $256,542
Lease Income $20,642
Interest $7,674
Total Income $1,727,677

Expenses
Program Services $1,615,600
Administrative General $303,845
Fundraising & Community Outreach $36,300
Total Expenses $1,955,943

For a detailed financial statement, a copy of our IRS Form 990 is available at www.LCSLO.org.

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