Of course, the first time I set foot on the Pismo Preserve, now nearly 20 years ago, I was a bit awestruck. With views to the east of the Santa Lucia Mountains and Edna Valley - and to the west the unobstructed, panoramic ocean views and the old ranch roads, trails, wild flowers and cows.

As time passed, I hiked onto many areas of the ranch where civilization was not visible – no highways, no cars, no homes, no people...nothing but unspoiled native ranch land. I soon realized I was walking in places amongst the stands of ancient coastal oaks where no one has ever tread, except perhaps our Native American forefathers.

For many years, I had practiced what I believed to be responsible real estate development. The focus had been acquiring and repurposing “brownfield” assets (junk yards, landfills, dairies, forsaken and often dangerous industrial facilities) and environmentally impacted real property. With a skilled and focused team, we analyzed issues, met with regulators and elected officials, scoped cost and risk, and then executed a strategic environmental remediation plan. Following a typical rezoning process and the implementation of infrastructure, the commercial builders beat a path to our door.

So now the dilemma - 900 acres of pristine, coastal ranch land, no dilapidated buildings, no leaking underground storage tanks, no soil contamination and no buried waste. Once again looking to find the right team of professionals to seek answers and to do thoughtful and sensitive planning. Single family homes to serve a market demand both locally and for second home buyers desiring this coastal community. A hospitality component to serve visitors to the area and to help generate tax dollars. Estate homes on large lots up on the ridge line... how utterly desirable.

Then many years of careful analysis, studying the topography, the soil conditions, siting of lots, utilities, and roadways. Deliberate consideration of view sheds, scenic corridors and sight lines, and the investment of many dollars.

But then pause and reflect. Do we have the right team...the best plan...the proper notion of sensitivity... and stewardship?

So pause again. We had fallen in love with this special place, from the quiet cattle trail enveloped in ancient oaks to the majesty of the soaring vistas.

Who else has been here? Who has been able to share this dance with the natural world, this feeling of grandeur, the serenity amongst the “madding crowd”?

As if destiny intervened...along comes a new team, a group of people filled with vision and passion. Folks committed to securing assets for generations to enjoy. Places open to communities and to families to enjoy forever. Places to go to recreate, to contemplate, to meditate or to give thanks.

We are ever so grateful to The Land Conservancy, your fearless Board, your amazing management and staff, and your dedicated volunteers! You have inspired us and made us proud. We are so very happy to share this special place with all of you and our new community.

Brad Wilde is the former co-owner of the Pismo Preserve. Brad has been active in the investment and development business particularly in the Arizona area for over 23 years. He has established a reputation for his success in tackling and completing challenging and unique real estate projects.
SPECIAL ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

THANK YOU

• Creek Day Cleanup volunteers for spending your morning picking up trash to make our watershed cleaner and healthier.

• Blakeslee & Blakeslee for hosting the art exhibit "Painting the Pismo Preserve", and a huge thank you to the participating artists of this exhibit and for those who sold their work and donated a portion of their proceeds to the Pismo Preserve.

• Just Looking Gallery and artist Steve Thomas for their vision and creation of the LCSLO lands in the “Sea America” series of artwork.

• Dolphin Shirt Company for donating their services and t-shirts on behalf of the Pismo Preserve project.

• John Lawson for donating his time and talent to build the Mammals Among the Oaks Exhibit for LATO.

• Mike and Donna Young for donating vintage milk crates to be used as historical artifacts for the Octagon Barn’s Milking Parlor.

• Peggy Penney for all your exceptional office organization help.

• Jake Smith of Avila Valley Barn for meeting and grereeting our members and hosting our apple picking event. Everyone loved the apples, too!

CONGRATULATIONS

• Jose Esparza, recent Nipomo High School graduate, for earning a $500 scholarship for his exemplary public speaking efforts and volunteer work during the Pismo Preserve fundraising campaign.

WISHLIST

• Cuddeback Black Flash Model C3 wildlife camera

• Smart tv, flat screen, 42-48” for conference room

• Wood chipper

• Santa Maria style BBQ Grill

• Bushnell Scout 1000 ARC Laser Range Finder

• 170 square concrete blocks (approximately 12x12x2)

• Pressure washer (minimum 2500psi, gas powered)

• Gas or electric outboard freshwater motor (2HP)

• Check out our Wishlist on amazon.com and enter “land conservancy” to find us

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

MISSION STATEMENT

Through voluntary and collaborative measures, The Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County works to permanently protect and enhance lands having important scenic, agricultural, habitat and cultural values for the benefit of people and wildlife.

The Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County has successfully acquired the Pismo Preserve. Once closed and nearly 900 acres of land is now forever protected for the benefit of people and wildlife.

On behalf of LCSLO, I extend a most sincere thank you to our members and to the community who stepped forward to make this dream come true. Over $1.5 million in local contributions from individual citizens, local businesses and private foundations signaled to our local government that they could be confident in providing public funds for this project. San Luis Obispo County, and the cities of Pismo Beach, San Luis Obispo, Arroyo Grande and Grover Beach, as well as the Regional Water Quality Control Board, contributed a total of $2,845,000.

It was this aggregate momentum of local private and public funds that made the State agencies’ decisions to support this project an easy one. Two $4 million contributions from both the State Coastal Conservancy and the Wildlife Conservation Board were validated by both widespread local support and a reasoned evaluation of the statewide merits of this natural resource. Many public officials in these agencies demonstrated exceptional leadership essential to project success.

Some of the most articulate public speakers were youth from the Nipomo High School Conservation Club who reminded us that the preserve is an asset to the next and to all future generations.

— Herb Kandel, Immediate Past President

I cannot overstate the herculean task undertaken by LCSLO staff under the inspired leadership of Executive Director Kaila Dettman, then-Director of Development, Wende David, and Conservation Director Daniel Bohlm who provided confidence to both donors and public agencies alike and executed a myriad of details in a very short timeline. Additionally, LCSLO board trustees stepped up as project ambassadors and collectively contributed over $60,000 to the project.

The next nine months will involve planning and permitting to open the preserve. You will have opportunities to see initial designs and provide feedback in the coming months, and there will be on-site volunteer opportunities ahead. Again, a heartfelt thanks to all!
When The Land Conservancy first opened its doors in 1984, it was a small 150 square foot office on Higuera Street with no staff members and just a few volunteers. Projects focused largely on the County’s Transfer of Development Credits (TDC) program conserving property primarily in Cambria and Black Lake Canyon. In Cambria, for instance, the goal was to protect the Monterey pine forest by retiring development in the Lodge Hill neighborhood, and focusing it in other areas of Cambria with fewer sensitive resources. This was a monumental task because each lot in Lodge Hill was only about 25 feet wide by 70 feet long, or 1,750 square feet. Conservation would be difficult and would require piecing these small lots together to have a true impact. In the end, over 20 acres of Monterey pine forest was conserved forever. This may not sound like a lot to many folks, but it is a tremendous conservation feat as over 370 lots of these wild hideouts. And for those who understand the importance of life are untrammeled by man, where man himself is a visitor only a decade ago, LCSLO adopted the Land Trust Accreditation’s Standards and Practices, the ethical and technical guidelines for land trust operations, we are proud to announce. The Land Conservancy of SLO County Local People, Local Land Information System (GIS) as a conservation planning tool in the county and we are one of only a handful of land trusts that have a restoration focus. So once the Land Trust Alliance announced their efforts to provide training, guidance, and support to land trusts across the nation, we knew we had to be involved.

Nearly a decade ago, LCSLO adopted the Land Trust Alliance’s Standards and Practices, the ethical and technical guidelines for land trust operations, we are proud to announce that out of the 1,750 land trusts across the nation, we have reached the ranks of only 280 that have been awarded accreditation. With the addition of this round of accredited land trusts a major milestone was crossed, and now 75% or 15,483,874 acres of the total land protected through fee ownership or with conservation easements, are held by accredited land trusts.

The process was arduous but rewarding. Numerous staff and volunteers collaborated to show the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, an independent program of the Land Trust Alliance, that our policies and procedures meet national standards for excellence, that we uphold the public trust; and that we can ensure the conservation efforts that our organization partakes in are permanent. Some of the challenge of going through a process such as this is that industry standards and practices are not stagnant; they evolve and improve over time, thus forcing the land trusts to continue to strive for improvements.

The accreditation process was a valuable journey that compelled us to take a non-biased look at what we do as an organization to reveal our strengths and weaknesses. This was a tremendous opportunity for reflection and growth.

–Stacey Smith, Conservation Project Manager

The journey to accreditation does not stop here. As an accredited land trust the Land Trust Accreditation Commission holds us to high standards and requires that we apply for renewal every five years to ensure we continue to meet national standards and practices over time. However, we can stop for a moment and celebrate the milestone of joining the other 280 land trusts walking the same path with us and striving for excellence.

Wild lands to benefit all Wilderness Act celebrates 50 years

Those of us who cherish the great outdoors have much to celebrate. This year marks the 50th anniversary of the Wilderness Act, an act that signified the importance of natural areas for our collective well-being. Over the last 50 years, 255 wilderness areas have been designated in the United States preserving a total of 109 million acres of natural lands. These places are defined by the Wilderness Act as areas “where the earth and its community of life are untrammeled by man, where man himself is a visitor who does not remain.” Many of us will never see or visit most of these wild hideouts. And for those who understand the power of wilderness, that is exactly the point. Modern society revolves around the development and exploitation of the Earth’s resources, most notably its landscapes. Yet within each of us is a powerful, subconscious, and primal connection to nature. As we continue to encase our daily lives with the built-environment and a growing addiction to digital communication, these escape routes to nature become even more critical.

It’s hard to imagine what our county would look like without the Central Coast, is leading the way to continue this legacy of great outdoor places for future generations to experience. Perhaps the best way to celebrate milestone land conservation achievements like the Wilderness Act and the creation of the Pismo Preserve is to personally commit yourself to the permanent protection of our local lands. And of course, get outside and enjoy these special places as often as you can.
In 1997, while The Land Conservancy was working with the Hayashi Family to plant trees along San Luis Obispo Creek, the nearby Octagon Barn was a vacant shell of its historic past. The crumbling structure known by area residents and visitors for over 100 years was on its last legs. Ray Belknap, then-Executive Director, approached the Hayashi Family with the idea of restoring the Barn’s architectural style is unique. The octagonal shape of the barn enhanced its function in dairy agriculture with work efficiencies for small herds. The octagonal shape approached that of a circle, which reduced the amount of building material per usable floor area. The Barn’s potential is the most exciting aspect for our community. It is recognized as part of the “gateway” into San Luis Obispo from the south. It is clearly visible from US Highway 101. The Barn is unique among the few “round barns” built in California, in part because of its proximity to a city and because of its future civic purpose. The education component will be a valuable resource providing lessons in architecture, history, conservation, native plants, and sustainability (all delivered at the Barn Center which includes the adjacent Milking Parlor which was built in 1938). Additionally the Barn Center can be a hub for three bicycle routes (to SLO, Avila Beach, and to Pismo Beach).

If you have never seen the Octagon Barn or been inside its doors, you can have a chance to do so by attending our 7th Annual Octagon Barn Holiday Lighting ceremony (see page 11). As you look up to the roof and through the cupola, the view may transform you back to the 1900s and you may even hear the mooing of a cow. The Barn’s architectural style is unique. The Barn restoration complete, initial lease of 2 acres from Caltrans (now extended to 2034). Approach SLO County Parks about joining together at the Barn for the Bob Jones Pathway Staging Area.

The interior of Octagon Barn features a handpainted mural by Carol Paulsen and hanging flags represent the different ethnic groups involved in dairy farming. © B.K. Richard
**CHANGES IN LEADERSHIP**

**WELCOME BACK B.K. RICHARD, WELCOME RANDY KNIGHT**

We are pleased to announce that Chris Helenius has recently been elected as President to our Board of Trustees, Brooke Langle as our Vice President, and Rob DeGraff as our Treasurer. At this time, we would like to acknowledge Herb Kandel, our immediate past President who has provided us much wisdom, vision, and extraordinary leadership during his time as President. Herb is an inspiration to many, and we are honored that he continues to serve on our Board. Thank you Chris who served as Vice President and Jeff Jorgensen who served as Treasurer this past term. Additionally, returning to our team of Trustees is B.K. Richard. While B.K. has been off the Board in the past two years, he was never far because he has continued to be the volunteer project leader for the Octagon Barn Center.

And now, we would like to officially welcome Randy Knight as our newest Board of Trustee. Randy is not stranger to The Land Conservancy as he serves on our Land Committee and has been an LCSLO supporter for over two decades. To learn more about Randy, please visit our entire Board of Trustees, visit www.LCSLO.org/our-board.

However, Randy’s interests extend far beyond physics. At Cal Poly, he was Director of the Minor in Environmental Studies and taught courses on energy, oceanography, climate, and environmental issues. He has an especially strong interest in using land conservation to protect and preserve biodiversity.

Randy was Conservation Committee Chair of the local Sierra Club in the 1980’s, and he served on the Los Ojos Community Advisory Council for 10 years. He loves to hike, bike, and kayak. Randy and his wife Sally travel extensively to some truly wild places (such as Borneo and the Arctic), but when not on the road they live in a passive solar, straw bale house in Atascadero with their five cats. Welcome a’board Randy!

**HERE WE GROW AGAIN**

**NEW TEAM MEMBER JOEY CHAVEZ**

Joey Chavez hails from Cuba, New Mexico a small town at 7,000 feet above sea level in Northern New Mexico, where his family raised cattle on their ranch. This is where he grew a fondness for the outdoors and the importance of using existing resources and serenity of open spaces. After attending the University of New Mexico where is received his degree in Recreation, he was recruited to work at Yosemite National Park. Having never left the Land of Enchantment, he felt that this was an opportunity to begin exploring the world.

Thinking that he would work in Yosemite for the summer, something about that amazing place kept him there for 14 years. During his time in Yosemite, he hiked many trails, helped maintain trails, helped keep streams and rivers clean, and encouraged community members to think about their wellness while living in a National Park.

As strange as it may sound, the time came to leave Yosemite so it was decided that the Central Coast would be the next place to settle. Joey believed, that San Luis Obispo provides so many opportunities, that there is always something exciting happening in the area, “It’s a small town, with Big City amenities.”

Joey’s position will be our Operations Coordinator, supporting all programs within the organization. Before joining The Land Conservancy, Joey worked with the San Luis Obispo Downtown Association and the San Luis Obispo Chamber of Commerce. While with the Downtown Association, he assisted in the coordination of the weekly Thursday Night Farmers’ Market, the Concerts in the Plaza summer event series, and Santa’s House in Mission Plaza. During his time with the SLO Chamber of Commerce, he assisted and greeted members and guests that would come to the Visitor Center, while also supporting staff in many other tasks and endeavors.

Joey enjoys playing with his dogs, Pedro and Brando, improving his golf game, photography and traveling with his significant other, Michelle. Together they have traveled to many locations around the world, experiencing the cultures and sights that continue to inspire their souls.

For his final words of wisdom: “As we continue to grow, make sure to #enJOYLife”. At this time, we would also like to welcome back to our team, Judith Hildinger, Scott Couture, Wesley Meyers, and Michelle Perez. Judith will continue to support our Land Program area as our Stewardship Associate. Scott, Wesley, and Michelle make up our team of Restoration Specialists. Michelle is a former intern but is now officially part of the LCSLO team. Welcome back everyone!
The California Conservation Corps members volunteer their morning at the Pismo Preserve.

Kaila Dettman, Daniel Bohlman, and former Pismo Preserve co-owner Brad Wilde on the steps of the Capitol Building in Sacramento.

Herb Kandel, (r.), presents a scholarship to Jose Esparza (second from l.). Caren Ray, 4th District Supervisor (l.) and Assemblyman Katcho Achadjian (second from r.) commend Jose for his accomplishments.

The Octagon Barn gets a fresh coat of paint with the help of Len Domenic (l.) and Jim Buenrostro (r.).

Scott Couture (l.) and Wesley Meyers (r.) clean up Old Towne Creekside Preserve in Nipomo.

Wallace Group and LCSLO staff get to work on Pismo Preserve trail and parking lot design.

The Land Conservancy of SLO County and Atascadero Mutual Water Company are teaming up to visit Hidden Springs Christmas Tree Farm to learn how the Frank Family is keeping tradition alive through conservation. The farm parallels a spectacular section of Graves Creek. The farm will be in full operation for the season. Hot cider and cookies followed the walk. The location is 3202 Monterey Road in Atascadero.

Volunteer Opportunity: Trail Building School
Saturday | November 22 | 9:00 am-4:00 pm
LCSLO and the Central Coast Concerned Mountain Bikers (CCCMB) are hosting a trail building workshop and then putting the newly acquired skills to demonstration on the Pismo Preserve. Reservations for this event are full, but contact www.cccmb.org/pismo-preserve to get on the waiting list.

Learning Among the Oak Trail Hike
Sunday | November 23 | 2:00-4:00 pm
The 5th Annual Santa Margarita School Oak Ambassador showcase hike features the Oak Ambassadors along with the LATO docent team who will share their favorite oak ecosystem discoveries. Come enjoy a fall walk! RSVP required, space is limited. Please contact Bev Gingg at (805) 549-9319 or bevg@learningamongtheoaks.org before November 19 to get directions and to guarantee your spot.

Octagon Barn Holiday Lighting
Friday | December 12, 2014 | 5:30-6:30 pm
Join us for the 7th annual, members-only holiday lighting at the Octagon Barn. Hear the latest updates with the Octagon Barn Center and the Bob Jones Trail Pathway. John Wallace of Wallace Group will be this year’s honorary light flipper as we count down from eight to flip the switch on a mile’s worth of LED holiday lights! Additionally, guest artist Laurel Sherrie will have her gift shop featuring Impassioned Paintings of Treasured Places. Come out of the cold and enjoy warm beverages and tasty treats!

Organic Squash Box Benefit
Thursday | November 20 and Tuesday | November 25 | 3:30-5:00 pm
Exclusive offer for Land Conservancy members only! Branch Mill Organic Farm is offering a 30-b organic variety of produce for $35. Each box will contain a variety of squashes and pumpkins. For every $35 box purchased, the Farm will donate $10 to LCSLO. To purchase a box, contact Ruth at (805) 481-9205 or rmadocks@gmail.com. Boxes must be prepaid to Ruth and can be picked up at The Land Conservancy office on one of the two dates you reserve.

Annual Conservation Reception
Thursday | February 26, 2015 | 6:00 pm
You will not want to miss our signature members-only event of the year! Please join us in celebrating a year’s worth of conservation successes. Listen to the next suite of exciting projects. Light hors’doeuvres, complimentary beer from Central Coast Brewing, and complimentary wine from Turley Wine Cellars will be available. Location will be at Congregation Beth David on 10180 Los Osos Valley Road in SLO. Space is limited. Please RSVP early to ensure your spot. Current members will receive priority registration.

To RSVP for an event or to volunteer, go to www.LCSLO.org/events to register. We may add more events throughout the year; so be sure to check back with us for an updated list of events, or “LIKE US” on Facebook for recent news.
2014-2015 Annual Membership Campaign

Name ___________________________________________
Address __________________________________________
Email __________________ Phone ________________

Membership Amount ($35 suggested minimum) $ ______
Optional Donation towards Heart & Soil Campaign (which includes Pismo Preserve) $ _____

[ ] Do not publish this donation.

Do not publish this donation.

Membership is on an annual basis from July 2014 – June 2015. Donations are fully tax deductible. Please make checks payable to The Land Conservancy or LCSLO.

DONATE TODAY TO JOIN OR RENEW YOUR MEMBERSHIP!

If you recently renewed your membership or made a contribution, we thank you for your support. Please pass along this newsletter to someone else and share your reasons for being a Land Conservancy member!