



Conserving the natural and agricultural legacy of the southern Sierra Nevada and San Joaquin Valley.



Scenic Battle Mountain Ranch near Springville, California. - Photo by Bill Christian 2004©

Battle Mountain Ranch: Conservation on the Tule River

When Wayne and Nancy Badovinus decided to buy a ranch in the foothills, they weren't just looking for a beautiful property for their family – they wanted to find a unique place in rural California that they could help protect forever. So, they were thrilled when they found Battle Mountain Ranch near Springville and the opportunity to work with the Sequoia Riverlands Trust to conserve this important place.

Nestled in a spectacular basin with views of Sequoia National Park and Giant Sequoia National Monument, the 445-acre Battle Mountain Ranch follows two miles of the scenic North Fork of the Tule River. Extensive blue oak woodlands blanket this area, and the uplands of Battle Mountain Ranch support a diverse community of plant and animal life, including the rare Springville clarkia (*Clarkia springvillensis*), a lavender-pink flowering plant found only in Tulare County. Battle Mountain also features in the history of the area, getting its name after the 1856 battle that ended the Tulare County Indian Wars.

“Battle Mountain Ranch has always been a special place for us,” said Soapy

Mulholland, executive director of Sequoia Riverlands Trust. “The former owners, John and Dagny Grant, were great stewards of this incredible property and last year we gave them awards for their conservation leadership. As the community of Springville plans for its future growth and development, we want to work with landowners like the Grants who are committed to conserving parts of our natural heritage.”

The North Fork of the Tule River is unusual in the foothills of the Sierra Nevada because it flows from north to south, instead of east to west. This means that the sycamores, alders, and other riverside plants on the Ranch provide an important corridor of habitat for songbirds – like the rare Swainson's thrush and black swift – as they migrate between their summer and winter ranges.

“John and I invested a lot of ourselves in Battle Mountain and saw the threats to the Tule watershed as immediate and growing,” Dagny Grant said. “So, it was important for us to find the right people to buy the ranch. We were so happy when we learned that the Badovinus family

was interested and that they wanted to donate a conservation easement to the Sequoia Riverlands Trust. We couldn't have asked for a better outcome.”

John and Dagny Grant have now moved away, but their legacy of careful stewardship will be carried on by Wayne and Nancy Badovinus, with the help of Sequoia Riverlands Trust. After purchasing the ranch, Wayne and Nancy Badovinus worked with Sequoia Riverlands Trust to develop a conservation easement that will protect the unique features of this property for future generations. Said Wayne Badovinus, “We believe that we have a shared victory. We saved this wonderful piece of the earth from an uncertain future and together have guaranteed that it will be ‘Battle Mountain Ranch’ forever.”

Sequoia Riverlands Trust also holds conservation easements on the Circle-J Norris and River Ridge ranches in this area, protecting an additional 1,330 acres of rolling blue oaks woodlands and sensitive habitat along the North Fork of the Tule River.

VISTAS

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The Sequoia Riverlands Trust (SRT) is a local, community-based, 501 (c)(3) non-profit conserving the natural and agricultural legacy of the southern Sierra Nevada and San Joaquin Valley. A copy of the latest financial statement and registration filed with the Registry of Charitable Trusts may be obtained by contacting the SRT office. Contributions are deductible to the extent allowed by law.

Save the Date!

Explore Your Backyard

This year, our guided walks expanded from traditional monthly tours of Kaweah Oaks Preserve to outings rotating among other Sequoia Riverlands Trust conserved areas. For all walks, dress appropriately, wear sturdy shoes and bring water, binoculars and a friend. All ages welcome. Free

March 26, 8:30-10:30 am

Vernal pool prairie at James K. Herbert Wetland Prairie Preserve

April 23, 8:30-10:30 am

Quarry restoration at Dry Creek Preserve

May 28, 8:30-10:30 am

Range conservation at Homer Ranch

June 25, 8:30-10:30 am

Birds, summer visitors at Kaweah Oaks Preserve

July

No walk scheduled

August 27, 8:30-10:30 am

Oak galls at Kaweah Oaks Preserve

September 17, 8:30-10:30 am

Creepy, crawly spiders at Kaweah Oaks Preserve

September 24

Public Lands Day. Keep watch for volunteer opportunities on our preserves and at partner conservation areas.

April 10, 11:00 am-3:00 pm

Annual Fundraiser

Join us 'down on the ranch' to celebrate and dedicate the 1,800-acre Homer Ranch on beautiful Dry Creek. The day begins with guided tours of Dry Creek Preserve (just down the road from the ranch), followed by a gourmet lunch with fine wine under towering sycamore trees. We will honor Mike Chrisman, Secretary for the California Resources Agency, for his instrumental role in the protection of Homer Ranch and enjoy cowboy poetry from neighbor John Dofflemyer. We will cap the afternoon with tours of Homer Ranch. Be the first to tour the Ranch! Tickets: \$125 individual, \$250 patron.

May 7, 3:30-9:00 pm

Kaweah Oaks Preserve *Banquet Under the Oaks*

'Explore Your Outdoor Classroom' at our annual banquet under the oaks at Kaweah Oaks Preserve. Join us for special tours of our first and oldest preserve, starting at 3:30 p.m. An open bar and social hour precedes a 6:00 p.m. banquet under grand valley oaks, while bluegrass music from Buckeye Flats compliments the setting. A special program, silent auction and an award of the \$1,000 Lee Wilson scholarship to a local student conclude the evening. Tickets: \$45 in advance; \$50 at the door; \$25 kids under 12; \$750 table sponsorship, \$2,500 event sponsorship.

Please check www.sequoiariverlands.org for current information and additional programs.

Rolling oak woodlands at Battle Mountain Ranch. - Photo by Bill Christian, 2004 ©



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Nature Cooperates in Quarry Restoration

For years, residents and visitors traveling on Dry Creek Drive witnessed the effects of gravel mining at the former quarry with altered views of the land and creek. This spring, those moseying down this County-designated scenic drive will have a clear view of the rare sycamore alluvial woodland we seek to restore. Most noticeable is that the spoils piles along the road and in the former gravel processing area have been rearranged and appear to be gone!

Now that's some good dirt - This past fall, contractors removed artificial barriers that prevented natural stream flows during prior gravel mining. Our goal was to allow future high water to spread throughout the floodplain in braided channels, which



Dry Creek braided channels during high water. - Photo by Nathen Higgins, 2005 ©

was historically the case. With sustained rains this January, Dry Creek rose five feet, established new channels and deposited lots of new sediment in between those channels.

Growing grasses and trees - With the ground bare and exposed from rock and soil re-contouring, the potential for unstable soils and resulting erosion is high. We immediately seeded a five-acre upland area near the road and a three-acre floodplain area cleared by California Portland Cement Company during fall 2003, with a mix of native grass and forbs. Now, several months later, native seed did germinate, but so did the old non-native

seed still contained in the soil. SRT will continue to manage for native plant communities as this project continues. To replace the mature sycamores and valley and blue oaks felled during mining operations, we collected and germinated acorns, sycamore seeds and sycamore cuttings. With the rain on our side, we distributed sycamore seed in the new sandbar deposits created during flooding and prepared 160 valley oaks and 100 blue oaks for planting.

The look of the future - The Cal Poly Pomona 606 Studio, a masters-level class for landscape design, chose Dry Creek Preserve as one of four projects taken on by the Studio this year. SRT has asked them to work at several design

levels: watershed, preserve (for both Dry Creek and Homer Ranch, three miles up the road) and individual projects, like a concept design for visitor facilities in the footprint of the old gravel processing area. We look forward to sharing the results of this project with you.

The Preserving Wild California program of the Resources Legacy Fund Foundation and the Natural Resources Conservation Service's 'Wildlife Habitat Incentive Program' generously funded the initial stages of quarry restoration. This project, when completed, will be the first example of an ecologically-based aggregate mine reclamation in Tulare County.

SRT Snapshots



SRT board member Mike Olmos (left) and volunteer Thomas Van Huss

Photo by Brian Newton 2005©

SRT purchased an historic building in Visalia this winter and moved in last month. We could not have completed this move without the help of numerous hands. We are deeply grateful to the following volunteers for helping to make this move go smoothly (and if we left anyone out, know you are greatly appreciated!): *Paula Bayard, Lori Berger, Nancy Bruce, Carole Combs, Dennis Dismuke, Bobby Kamansky, John Kamansky, George Mabon, Carol Manning, Terry Manning, Brian Newton, Judy Newton, Mike Olmos, Annette Spear, Scott Spear, M.E. Van Huss, Thomas Van Huss, Andrew Wachner, Dave Wachner, Marilyn Wachner*

Each year, Sequoia Riverlands Trust awards the \$1,000 Lee Wilson Scholarship to a local youth who has completed a conservation project and/or performed conservation-based community outreach over an extended period of time. The purpose of the award is to encourage and recognize youth service to our environment; to provide scholarship funds to further environmental education; and to honor the memory of Reverend Lee Wilson, a pioneer in service to youth at the Kaweah Oaks Preserve. Applications are due by April 1. The award will be presented at the Kaweah Oaks Preserve *Banquet Under the Oaks* on May 7, 2005. For nomination information, call 559.738.0211.



2004 winner Steven Ingoldsby.

Photo by Alex Sherriffs 2004©

Our National Tree

In November 2004, Congress passed legislation designating the oak as America's national tree. With more than 60 species across the country and nine tree-sized oaks in California, this tree is one of America's most widespread hardwoods. Prized for their shade, beauty and lumber, we all value the serenity and peacefulness of the park-like setting they create. Here in California, oak woodlands cover nearly eight million acres, supporting a diverse assemblage of plants and animals. Many of Sequoia Riverlands Trust's preserves and voluntary conservation agreements with private landowners help to permanently protect blue oak woodlands and valley oak woodlands.

“The whole history of science has been the gradual realization that events do not happen in an arbitrary manner, but that they reflect a certain underlying order, which may or may not be divinely inspired.” - Stephen W. Hawking

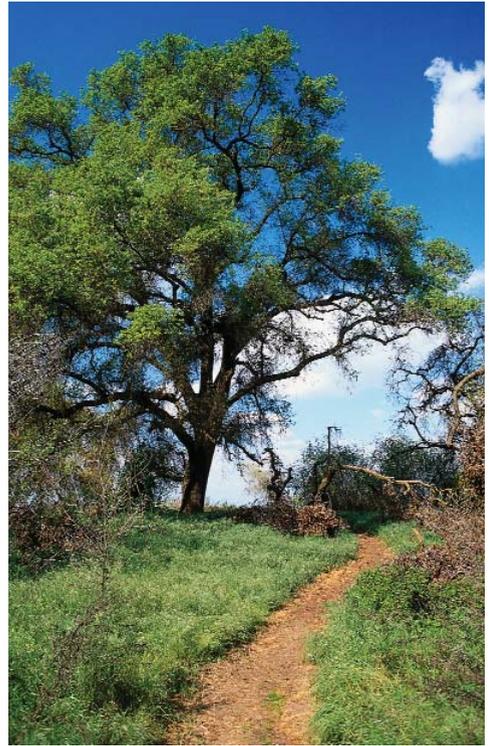


Photo by Mark J. Dolyak, 2003©

Protected valley oaks at Kaweah Oaks Preserve.



Sequoia Riverlands Trust
Conserving California's Heartland

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