



# **Forming and Sustaining Regional Stewardship Collaborations: Lessons Learned**

**August 2017**



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# CONTENTS

<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY</b> .....	<b>1</b>
<b>PART 1: INTRODUCTION</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>PART 2: LESSONS LEARNED</b> .....	<b>5</b>
Forming a Regional Stewardship Collaboration.....	6
Partnership Sustainability and Longevity .....	12
Funding and Fundraising .....	18
Conclusion .....	20
Recommended Next Steps.....	21
<b>PART 3: COLLABORATION PROFILES</b> .....	<b>23</b>
<b>PART 4: ADDITIONAL RESOURCES</b> .....	<b>34</b>
Partnership Tools and Guidance.....	34
Partnership Organizations .....	35
Partnership Case Studies .....	35
National Park Service Collaboration Documents.....	35
Large Landscape Collaborations .....	35
Collective Impact.....	35

## **APPENDIX I: REGIONAL STEWARDSHIP SYMPOSIUM PRESENTATION SUMMARIES (SEPARATE DOCUMENT)**



# EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Often a land trust is an island – working very hard, but alone, to steward the properties it holds. Yet the conservation community is realizing that there is greater benefit ecologically and organizationally to addressing our land stewardship responsibilities regionally and collaboratively.

Regional stewardship collaborations involve land trusts, agencies and landowners in working together and developing regional approaches to address some of the greatest conservation issues we face today including climate change, and habitat loss and fragmentation. Each organization involved remains a unique entity with a distinct vision and mission.

This report looks at urban and rural collaborations in California that stretch beyond the boundaries of a single property and involve land trusts as well as agency and private landowner partners in collaborative land management and stewardship. It illustrates that participation in regional collaboration is a tool that allows land trusts to connect the management of their protected lands to others in the region, stretching stewardship and land management funding, increasing efficiencies, and improving stewardship across a much broader landscape.

To develop this document, over 35 land trust and agency representatives were interviewed and some also made presentations as part of CCLT's Regional Stewardship Symposium in March 2017. Each had stories to tell about collaborative stewardship, observations on its benefits and challenges, and advice on starting and sustaining a collaboration. These stories and words of wisdom have been distilled into these fourteen lessons learned (see sidebar) that land trusts can apply to strengthen existing collaborations and promote new ones in order to improve land management and stewardship outcomes. These lessons are not an exhaustive compendium of how to start and sustain regional stewardship collaboration, but instead they provide advice echoed by multiple partners on the key elements of successful partnership.

These lessons can be thought of as a series of questions; questions a land trust must consider before it creates or enters into a partnership beyond its own boundaries:

- What is the compelling issue to be addressed?
- Who are your potential partners?

Regional Stewardship Collaborations: Lessons Learned	
Forming a Regional Stewardship Collaboration	Lesson 1: An effective stewardship collaboration must meet a shared resource need.
	Lesson 2: Successful partnerships are built on, and sustained by, strong relationships.
	Lesson 3: Written guiding documents build the foundation for partnership success by clarifying each partner's expectations, commitment to the partnership, partner roles and responsibilities, expectations and measure of collaborative success.
	Lesson 4: Regional stewardship collaborations can take different forms depending on the number and types of partners that share the stewardship challenges in the region and the clarity and immediacy of the challenges.
	Lesson 5: Media coverage can help strengthen and build support for regional stewardship efforts.
Partnership Sustainability and Longevity	Lesson 6: The multi-faceted role of coordinator is essential for the partnership to accomplish its goals.
	Lesson 7: Clear and consistent communication among the partners builds the strong relationships that sustain a partnership.
	Lesson 8: Understanding and navigating the different cultures and needs of the various partner organizations is essential for partnership success.
	Lesson 9: Realizing the results of collaboration frequently takes time, effort and long term commitment. Organizational and on-the-ground results are not always realized immediately. Partners must be aware of this at the outset and not expect immediate outcomes.
	Lesson 10: Public agencies have been spearheading collaborative regional stewardship efforts for many years, recognizing that collaboration is the only way to effectively manage lands at the ecosystem scale while also reducing inefficiencies and duplication.
	Lesson 11: Smaller partnerships, where talent and resources are exchanged, can be effective ways to meet resource and partner needs and also to provide the first step towards broader partnerships.
Funding and Fundraising	Lesson 12: Securing funding for ongoing partnership operations, coordination and management is one of the most significant challenges for regional collaborations.
	Lesson 13: Operational funding for land management and stewardship as well as capital improvement funding is more easily obtained collaboratively.
	Lesson 14: For some land trusts, regional stewardship has provided a new way of engaging donors.

- Who do you have relationships with now and what relationships should you cultivate?
- What shared goals could be achieved more efficiently through partnership?

Once the potential to partner has been evaluated and agreed upon there are additional considerations to assure a strong foundation:

- What is the common vision your partnership hopes to achieve?
- How will the partnership benefit each partner?
- What agreements will guide your work on-the-ground?
- What specific measurable outcomes will you work on in partnership?
- How will the partners communicate and operate on a day-to-day basis?
- How will partnership activities be funded and sustained?

Most partnerships form out of a common need and function based upon a common vision. Most land trusts and agencies believe that collaboration, although not without challenges, results in improved effectiveness and efficiency. The benefits of partnership – an expanded network, increased funding opportunities, improved stewardship and a broader perspective – generally outweigh the challenges when there is a true need for the partnership.

Regional stewardship partnerships offer land trusts the opportunity to expand their reach, share expertise, and improve outcomes on the land. Although partnership results are not always immediate, most land trusts find that staying with a partnership to address a common goal benefits both the land trust and the region’s resources.

In order to further the engagement of land trusts in regional stewardship collaborations around California, a number of next steps have been developed for individual land trusts and CCLT to pursue (see box).

Recommendations for Next Steps	
For Land Trusts	Recommendation 1: Utilize CCLT’s website and resources to learn more about regional stewardship collaborations.
	Recommendation 2: Consider the benefits of stewardship collaboration to your organization and take the next step towards participating in stewardship at a more regional scale.
For CCLT	Recommendation 3: Help make the case for funding regional stewardship partnerships, and more specifically, partnership coordinators, by conducting a study on the measurable stewardship benefits provided by dedicated coordinators.
	Recommendation 4: Regularly update the CCLT Regional Stewardship Partnership website.
	Recommendation 5: Focus a portion of the annual CCLT conference on advances in regional stewardship collaboration.

In addition, there are many resources available online for land trusts to better understand the nuances of regional stewardship collaborations – from partnership tools and guidance to case studies and organizations dedicated to collaboration. The field of regional stewardship collaboration is growing rapidly and new resources for those interested in engaging in partnership are continually emerging.

But, despite the availability of new resources and tools, the foundation of a successful regional stewardship collaboration still rests, to a great extent, on the fourteen lessons and the wisdom shared by the practitioners involved in regional stewardship collaborations around the state. These lessons of shared needs and strong relationships, excellent leadership and communication, and patience and cultural fit can, if applied, help a land trust form a strong foundation for a new collaboration or strengthen elements of an existing one.



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## PART I: INTRODUCTION

Often a land trust is an island – working very hard, but alone, to steward the properties it holds. Some land trusts may work with the Resource Conservation District or local citizens to improve management and stewardship of their properties by restoring habitat or removing invasive species. But both of these approaches beg the question – what happens beyond the property boundary? What path does the mountain lion follow when he leaves the protected property – are there contiguous connections allowing him to roam freely? How are noxious weeds treated by the neighboring landowners? How is a land trust’s creek restoration affected by activities upstream? It is questions like these that can be addressed by looking at our land stewardship responsibilities regionally and collaboratively.

Ultimately, the goal is to engage more land trusts, agencies and landowners in working together and developing regional approaches to land management, approaches that are necessary to address some of the greatest conservation issues we face today including climate change, habitat loss and fragmentation. Many land trusts, agencies and landowners are already collaborating in creative ways to manage land at this

broader scale. Land trusts are working with agency partners and private landowners to assure that wildlife corridors remain open; nonprofit and agency partners are collaborating to manage a multi-jurisdictional mountain as a single place; and land trust and agency partners are collaborating across an archipelago to manage wildlife and address ecosystem health. Other partnerships have developed unique structures to address regional stewardship challenges, including land trusts that steward lands for other agencies; and a group of land trusts collaborating on stewardship. Even those land trusts that are working in partnership with agencies and the community on their own properties understand the benefits of regional partnerships – increased efficiency, shared expertise, and most importantly, improved stewardship – even if they have yet to engage in more regional forms of stewardship.

What is collaboration? For the purposes of this report, collaboration is the act of land trusts working together with other nonprofits, agencies and landowners to improve stewardship outcomes. Each organization involved remains a unique entity with a distinct vision and mission. Mergers and other forms of consolidation are not explored as a part of this study.

What is regional stewardship collaboration? This report focuses on the unique and innovative approaches being used by California land trusts to address large-scale stewardship. Working at this large-scale is familiar to some, but not all, California land trusts and large-scale stewardship in California has yet to reach the scale that is being implemented at the national level where collaborations such as the Yellowstone to Yukon (Y2Y) Initiative (a visionary 2,000 mile connected corridor extending from Canada to Yellowstone National Park), the 22 Landscape Conservation Cooperatives that cover most of the United States, or the 38 regional conservation partnerships scattered across the northeast, collaborate at the ecosystem level. Instead, this research looks at collaborations in California that stretch beyond the boundaries of a single property and involve land trusts as well as agency and private landowner partners in collaborative land management and stewardship. Traditionally, the land trusts that have participated in such partnerships are large and well-established, yet participation in regional collaboration is a tool that many land trusts could use to connect the management of their protected lands to others in the region, stretching stewardship and land management funding, increasing efficiencies, and improving stewardship across a much broader landscape.

On the surface, regional stewardship collaborations may appear to be more applicable to non-urban areas, areas where conservation efforts have traditionally focused; however, some of the strongest partnerships exist in highly urbanized areas such as Los Angeles and the Bay Area where urban growth threatens to close off wildlife and habitat connectivity essential to climate adaptation and species survival. California cities also play a role in the ecosystem, harboring biodiversity in their mountains, wetlands, bays and coastlines, and offering opportunities for unique regional conservation partnerships.

To develop this document, over 35 land trusts and agency representatives were interviewed. Some made presentations as part of CCLT's Regional Stewardship Symposium in March 2017. Each had stories to tell about collaborative stewardship, observations on its benefits and challenges, and advice on starting and sustaining collaboration. These stories and words of wisdom have been distilled into lessons learned that land trusts can apply to strengthen existing collaborations and promote new ones to improve land management and stewardship outcomes. These lessons are not an exhaustive compendium of how to start and sustain regional stewardship collaboration, but instead they

provide advice echoed by multiple partners on the key elements of successful partnership.

## BACKGROUND

The California Council of Land Trusts (CCLT) received a grant from the S.D. Bechtel, Jr. Foundation to develop a regional stewardship resource to help land trusts improve land management and stewardship by exploring some of the unique and successful regional stewardship efforts involving California land trusts. By sharing their stories, advice and lessons learned, the information provided in this compendium is intended to help California land trusts either initiate, strengthen or expand their own regional stewardship collaborations. The development of this report involved four components:

1. A short survey was sent to CCLT's land trust and agency members asking about their involvement in regional stewardship collaborations and their willingness to discuss them as part of this study. The land trusts that responded to the survey were interviewed about their regional collaborations and asked to share their advice and lessons learned.
2. Some of the land trusts and agencies that are doing innovative work at a regional scale shared their partnership stories as part of the CCLT Regional Stewardship Symposium on March 8 and 9, 2017.
3. Symposium participants were asked what information would be most valuable to them as they pursue regional stewardship collaborations. Areas of interest included funding and fundraising for regional stewardship, ensuring partnership longevity and sustainability, partnership agreements and relationships, measuring success, and setting and implementing stewardship priorities.
4. The final outcomes of this study include this overview of lessons learned, and a web-based resource of partnership profiles, resources and information for forming, growing and sustaining regional stewardship partnerships.





Photo courtesy of Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy

## PART 2: LESSONS LEARNED

The following lessons learned were gleaned from interviews with, and presentations by, land trusts and public agency representatives. The goal of this section is to provide land trusts throughout the state with advice and encouragement to pursue collaborative stewardship partnerships. This advice is not exhaustive; it represents the information shared by California land trusts and selected agencies and reflects the information deemed most important by the attendees at the Regional Stewardship Symposium. Namely, advice on funding and fundraising for regional stewardship, ensuring partnership longevity and sustainability, partnership agreements and relationships, measuring success, and stewardship priorities and implementation. Many of these lessons are intertwined and interrelated and therefore, are considered guidelines for an effective partnership, rather than a step-by-step guide to partnership formation and sustainability. The lessons learned below fall into three categories – forming a regional stewardship collaboration, partnership

sustainability and longevity, and funding and fundraising.

Part 2 of this document includes profiles of each of the partnerships discussed in this document. Part 3 includes additional links and resources that provide more information about partnerships in general as well as specific links and articles about the partnerships discussed herein. Part 4 includes the transcripts of the presentations given at the Regional Stewardship Symposium in March, 2017.

*“If you want to go fast you go alone, if you want to go far you go together — remember you are in this for the long haul. Don’t go fast, deliberate carefully, and ensure that all partners are on same page and that everyone is keeping up. It involves a lot of process and patience but in the end, going far is what this is all about.”*

Brian Largay, Conservation Director  
Land Trust of Santa Cruz County

## FORMING A REGIONAL STEWARDSHIP COLLABORATION

### Lesson 1: An effective stewardship collaboration must meet a shared resource need.



Photo courtesy of National Park Service

Regional stewardship partnerships are formed for many reasons but those that thrive are rooted in a common and clearly articulated need to solve a defined problem. This need can range from an immediate and shared crisis to a sense that a group of organizations are working on similar land management issues and should meet and determine if partnership would be beneficial.<sup>1</sup>

On the Channel Islands, the plummeting Channel Island fox population exemplified an immediate and shared crisis. The land managers of the affected islands – the National Park Service, the Nature Conservancy and the Catalina Island Conservancy

– partnered with federal and state wildlife agencies and successfully implemented a recovery plan that brought the species back from near-extinction. The group continues to collaborate today to monitor the fox population as well as to address other common resource concerns.

Another partnership that grew out of an immediate and shared crisis was Sonoma Land Trust’s Sonoma County Wildlife Corridor Project. The corridor is one of the region’s critical habitat linkages. A large property located at a pinch point in the corridor would, if developed, permanently close the corridor and impede wildlife passage between Lake County to the north and Marin County to the south. Sonoma Land Trust began a process of partnering with a variety of agencies and organizations to address acquisition, land management, research and monitoring, and education and outreach. Due to the immediacy of the challenge, the most efficient response was for Sonoma Land Trust to serve as the coordinator of all the efforts. Only recently, has the project reached a point where all of the participants can come together and collaboratively identify next steps.

### Lesson 2: Successful partnerships are built on, and sustained by, strong relationships.



Photo courtesy of Sonoma Land Trust

In addition to a common need or vision, strong partnerships depend on relationships among both those at the executive level (boards, executive directors, etc.) and those doing the day-to-day work. In many cases, formal partnerships evolve from informal relationships among organizational leaders. These relationships also set the tone for how the partnership will function. If an organization’s leaders value relationships built on trust and mutual understanding, these values will be reflected in the day-to-day relationships among the working team. Relationships at both the working group and executive levels are sustained through many of the other lessons noted herein – clear and frequent communications; an agreed upon vision,

<sup>1</sup> John Mack, Catalina Island Conservancy, Regional Stewardship Symposium Presentation

goals and action plan; and shared roles and responsibilities.

**Consistency of the Formative Team.** Ongoing partnership effectiveness can most often be attributed to a core group of dedicated staff that work well together, realize the benefits of collaboration to their organization (and often to themselves personally), and understand how to work within the culture of their own organization to get things done. Generally, members of a core group are senior staff members that are established within their organization and have a degree of autonomy and authority. These individuals are more likely to remain core members of the partnership for longer than junior staff that may be changing jobs more frequently to advance their career. The relationships between those at the top of each organization are equally important because, in creating a regional stewardship partnership, the long term connections between the organizations outlast the individuals. When organizational leaders value and promote a culture of partnership within their organization, partnership becomes the organization's way of doing business and endures beyond any individual.

**Sustaining Partnerships through Personnel Transitions.** Periods of personnel transition can pose challenges to any partnership. In order to maintain strong and effective relationships during periods of transition, orienting new staff and organizational leaders into the partnership should be a deliberate process. Similar to a nonprofit board that ideally has a clear recruitment, selection, orientation and mentoring process, a working group or executive committee should also develop such a process to smooth transitions and help new members understand the partnership and their own roles and responsibilities.

**Partnerships Arising from Long Term Relationships.** Peninsula Open Space Trust, Save the Redwoods League, Sempervirens Fund, the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County and The Nature Conservancy were long time conservation colleagues on the San Francisco Peninsula. Their prior relationships, a common need to protect and steward the California coast at a larger interconnected scale, and a shared set of values related to this need led them to form the Living Landscapes Initiative to "create and maintain a vibrant, sustainable living landscape in the heart of coastal California," and to develop a working agreement, vision and goals. It was envisioned that collaborative projects would arise from the broader initiative. The San Vicente Redwoods project is one such project. It involved all five partners

purchasing the property and then four partners staying on to manage the 8,500-acre property, guided by additional agreements to implement the partners' day-to-day work.

**Partnerships Built in Advance of a Specific Collaborative Project.** In some situations, partnerships can be cultivated first. This unique approach to partnership formation was recently implemented by the Santa Cruz Mountains Stewardship Network, where building relationships was the first priority and identifying collaborative work followed. The partners generally agree that this was a beneficial way to initiate a new partnership among a diverse array of partners that included landowners, timber companies, land trusts, agencies and tribes. Once relationships were developed, reaching agreement on collaborative priorities was a clearer and easier process.

*"The viability of a partnership is a direct reflection of the leadership. If the partnership is not in the right place, don't start."*

Mike O'Connell  
Irvine Ranch Conservancy

**Partnerships Sustained Beyond Project Completion.** Even if partnerships successfully accomplish their primary stewardship goals they frequently remain active because resource threats and challenges rarely disappear and monitoring and adaptive management are essential to maintaining stewardship successes. The partnership between the Catalina Island Conservancy, National Park Service and The Nature Conservancy to protect the Santa Cruz Island fox was initially formed to address an immediate and pressing threat that, if left unaddressed for a short time, could have disastrous consequences. However, once the fox population was stabilized, the relationships and momentum were still strong. The group did not disband but the focus and intensity of the partnership changed from addressing the immediate threat to monitoring and sustaining the fox population. The partners also explored other common challenges and the initial relationship has spawned additional partnerships including a plant biosecurity working group.

**Lesson 3: Written guiding documents build the foundation for partnership success by clarifying each partner's expectations, commitment to the partnership, partner roles and responsibilities, expectations and measure of collaborative success.**



Photo © Mike Kahn

Written guiding documents such as a memorandum of understanding or charter that spell out a common vision and goals, as well as partner roles, responsibilities and expectations provide the foundation for a strong partnership. A detailed work plan, with clearly delineated measures of success, results in increased focus and effectiveness. For a collaboration to have long term success, the mission of each organization must be reflected in these guiding documents to assure that each partner receives value from the collaboration. At times, partners will have very different missions. For the partnership to be effective and sustainable, the uniqueness of each mission needs to be reflected both in the guiding documents and also delineated in the unique roles and responsibilities assigned to each partner. Receiving value from the collaboration whether in the form of increased capacity, funding, improved stewardship, or other benefit is essential for partnership success. The more clearly expectations can be spelled out in the early stages of the partnership, the greater the chances that a sustainable partnership emerges.

Stewardship collaborations use a wide variety of documents to guide their work together. Some have only a simple memorandum of understanding that spells out the roles and responsibilities of each partner, while others have a full suite of guiding documents. The number and complexity of guiding documents is related to a number of factors including the complexity of the stewardship challenge, the number of partners, the expected duration of the partnership and the resources the partners expect to exchange. If the partnership

is based upon exploring collaborative opportunities, fewer guiding documents may be needed. However, a complex partnership with numerous partners and a lengthy time horizon, where resources (financial, staff and/or equipment) will be pooled and/or shared, will need more extensive guiding documents. In all cases, some sort of partnership agreement and a vision for the partners' work together helps clarify expectations. Once the partners have agreed to execute on-the-ground projects and collaborative programs, more detailed agreements should address the allocation of resources, responsibilities of each partner, and measures of success. Guiding documents include:

**Memorandum of Understanding (MOU).** An MOU between parties outlines the roles and responsibilities of each partner and generally includes the shared vision and goals of the partners. Joint responsibilities might address staff participation in planning; how projects and programs are defined and selected; and what further agreements are envisioned (e.g., specific project agreements). The MOU may further clarify communication responsibilities and agreement duration.

**Vision and Goals.** The overall vision for the landscape and the goals for stewardship and management provide a common sense of purpose for all the partners. The vision and goals are rooted in the needs of the land but are also in alignment with the mission and goals of each partner organization. Without this alignment it is difficult to reach consensus on direction.

*"There is more power and effectiveness to achieve your mission by having everyone do what they do best. If someone else is doing something they do best, then you don't have to do it."*

Mike O'Connell  
Irvine Ranch Conservancy

**Management Plans and Project Selection.** Management plans direct the on-the-ground activities of the partnership, identifying specific projects and management and stewardship actions along with implementation steps that include timing, responsibilities and measures of success. These plans also clarify how individual project selection occurs. In the case of the Tamalpais Lands Collaborative (TLC), the partners

developed and agreed upon a process to identify priorities for the TLC as a whole. They agreed to select projects that met the vision and goals of the TLC and provided the potential for collaboration among the partners. Additional project-selection criteria included project timing and readiness, resource benefits, feasibility, funding potential, visibility, and public support.

**Measures of Success.** Measures of success are essential to understand whether the stewardship partnership is effective. Baseline data should be collected to accurately measure progress. Measures should be developed for both stewardship and resource management activities as well as partnership progress. Measures should relate directly to the collaborative efforts set forth in the management plan. The Tamalpais Lands Collaborative also built measures of success into its five-year strategy. Measures were developed for each element of the strategy – public awareness, philanthropy, partnership, and projects – that were specific, measurable, achievable, results-focused and time-bound (i.e., SMART). Measures of partnership success for the first year included completing cooperative work agreement templates and establishing systems to train and orient staff and volunteers to the TLC while measures of project success included development and approval of project and program priorities, and initiation of three small collaborative projects or programs.

### **The Spectrum of Regional Partnerships**

As noted above, a regional partnership in its early stages may not need extensive agreements to explore the possibilities for collaboration. An example of such a nascent partnership relates to the Rivers & Lands Conservancy's management of critical habitat for the

Delhi Sands flower-loving fly. Once endemic to the southern California sand dunes that covered over forty square miles, the fly habitat has dwindled to less than 2% of its original area. The Rivers & Lands Conservancy protects and manages approximately 150 acres of fly habitat while other agencies and organizations are responsible for the remainder. Recently, a regional effort was launched – the Delhi Sands Fly Working Group – to bring together land managers, public agencies, scientists, land owners and others interested in protecting the contiguity of the fly habitat across the broader region. At this early stage, the working group has not developed collaborative agreements but is exploring how best to work together.

*“Once you have established the broad goal of what you want to do, make a roadmap of who will do what knowing that long-term roadmaps need regular refinement.”*

Frazier Haney  
Mojave Desert Land Trust

At the other end of the spectrum is the Tamalpais Lands Collaborative that has numerous agreements that guide its collaborative activities. At the outset, the partners developed an MOU and a vision for the shared landscape of Mt. Tamalpais. This was followed by an agreed upon five-year strategy that addressed conservation and restoration; education and interpretation; and volunteerism and philanthropy. For specific programs and projects, the partners develop cooperative agreements and detailed project agreements that address shared funds, staff and resources. Embedded in each of these documents are measures of success and opportunities for adaptation and course corrections when needed.

## Lesson 4: Regional stewardship collaborations can take different forms depending on the number and types of partners that share the stewardship challenges in the region and the clarity and immediacy of the challenges.



Photo courtesy of Irvine Ranch Conservancy

Regional stewardship collaborations take on different forms that reflect the number and types of partners already addressing the stewardship issue(s); an understanding of the specific issues to be addressed and the desired outcomes; and the level of action needed from each partner. The form of the partnership can range from one where the partners share information and build relationships; to a hub-and-spoke that is often beneficial when the challenge is complex and immediate and a single outcome is desired; to situations where existing partnerships are addressing an element of the regional stewardship issue and broader collaboration could yield more comprehensive results.

### **Information Sharing and Relationship Building.**

Because this document focuses on regional stewardship collaborations, the partnerships profiled herein were formed to engage in on-the-ground outcomes. However, some partnerships are formed with less of an on-the-ground focus and instead serve as a forum for sharing information and building relationships. At the outset, clarity among the partners about the type of partnership or collaboration being formed is essential. Often, the information sharing/relationship building partnerships eventually spawn on-the-ground collaborations between partners and/or evolve to take on a greater regional collaborative stewardship role but this is best done deliberately, with agreements and plans to guide partnership action.

**Hub and Spoke.** In the case of the Irvine Ranch Conservancy, the stewardship need was consistent long-term management of the open space lands protected over the last 40 years on the historic Irvine Ranch and declared both a National and California Natural Landmark. These lands are now all public and under the

jurisdiction of several government entities, such as the cities of Irvine and Newport Beach, the County of Orange, and the state of California (both State Parks and the Department of Fish and Wildlife). Irvine Ranch Conservancy was founded 12 years ago with the goal of ensuring consistent, high quality land management and stewardship across the entire protected landscape, regardless of ownership. The Conservancy has long term land management agreements with many of the jurisdictions and these agreements provide a common thread allowing the lands to be managed with a consistent vision. To date, a formal shared vision has not emerged among all the landowners, although that remains a goal.

**Collaboration of Land Trusts.** The four land trusts involved in the management of the 8,500-acre San Vicente Redwoods property – the Peninsula Open Space Trust, Sempervirens Fund, Save the Redwoods League and The Land Trust of Santa Cruz County – are some of the partners involved in several larger regional stewardship networks in the Santa Cruz Mountains including the Living Landscapes Initiative and the Santa Cruz Mountains Stewardship Network. In managing the San Vicente Redwoods, the partners have developed several plans that establish common objectives and consensus around the use and management of the property. These documents include a Conservation Vision, Conservation Plan (to become the Management Plan), the Conservation Easement and Public Access Plan. In addition, the Peninsula Open Space Trust, Sempervirens Fund, and Save the Redwoods League created a Tenancy-in-Common/Three-way Cost-sharing Agreement as a part of the project funding model. A close-knit Working Group addresses day-to-day management and stewardship with each member responsible for keeping their organization apprised of progress and ensuring organizational buy-in. This collaboration is highly nimble and able to move relatively quickly due to all partners having somewhat similar organizational cultures and structures and to the numerous management documents, agreements and practices in place.

**Partnership of Partnerships.** The Mayacamas to Berryessa Habitat Connectivity Project is a partnership of partnerships. The group was formed to address habitat

connectivity in a region that already had several large, existing public/private partnerships. Rather than reinventing the wheel by reaching out to individual land managers, the Mayacamas to Berryessa project invited the existing partnerships to become part of the larger habitat connectivity partnership. The Mayacamas to Berryessa Project and its partnership is also a part of the much larger California Landscape Conservation Cooperative (CaLCC). This raises the concept of nested partnerships; how to foster communication between partnerships to avoid duplication of effort; and how to ensure that efforts at the larger scale trickle down to smaller collaborations and vice versa.

To address these issues, some of the coordinators of the larger collaborations in the state have formed a collaboration of their own to address the challenges they face in coordinating a regional stewardship effort and how coordination and sharing information among these groups could improve efficiencies. This nascent partnership of partnerships includes many of the part-

nerships profiled in this document – the Tamalpais Lands Collaborative, the Irvine Ranch Conservancy, the North Coast Redwoods, the Peninsula Working Group and the Santa Cruz Mountains Stewardship Network. This group recently completed its first meeting to determine the feasibility and structure of such a venture. This network, the California Land Stewardship Peer Exchange Network, emerged from a need voiced by these collaborations to exchange information, ideas and tools that would enable the partners to address shared challenges, such as building and sustaining capacity, managing and implementing cross-agency stewardship, building organizational partnership competencies, cross-border data management, and multi-agency permitting and planning. The group is currently guided by a Planning Team that organized the recent gathering and will continue to refine the Network’s purpose and desired outcomes, work plan, criteria for shared activities, membership criteria, and other essential guiding elements.

## Lesson 5: Media coverage can help strengthen and build support for regional stewardship efforts.



Photo © Sean McCain

Although not considered a typical partner in regional stewardship collaboration, the media can play a role in building community awareness about the stewardship issue being addressed by the partners. Media coverage often results in greater understanding of an issue, a willingness by landowners to enter the partnership and increased community support of the partnership’s activities either through funding, volunteer activities or additional voices.

Of all types of regional stewardship partnerships, those involving wildlife and wildlife corridors have been most successful at garnering both media atten-

tion and subsequently, increased community understanding and support based upon the publicity. Media coverage of the Sonoma Valley Wildlife Corridor project helped increase the number of landowners establishing wildlife corridor friendly practices on their individual properties. The Tamalpais Lands Collaborative saw an increase in interest in and support for its efforts when the news media reported on the first images released from its wildlife camera project. Finally, the work of the Arroyos and Foothills Conservancy and others involved in wildlife corridors in greater Los Angeles has been given a tremendous boost by ongoing local and national media coverage surrounding the plight of the mountain lion and other large wildlife, including bears in Griffith Park and the Santa Monica Mountains. Again, wildlife camera images helped bring this story to life. In the case of wildlife corridors, media attention has built a greater awareness about these regional stewardship issues and hastened discussions with public agencies about the need for safe wildlife passages through urban areas.

## PARTNERSHIP SUSTAINABILITY AND LONGEVITY

### Lesson 6: The multi-faceted role of coordinator is essential for the partnership to accomplish its goals.



Photo courtesy of CalCC

The ability of a partnership to accomplish its goals lies, to a great extent, in how it is managed on a day-to-day basis. Partnership management tasks range from the mundane to the essential – ensuring clear and frequent communications, scheduling and facilitating meetings; building and maintaining consensus among the partners; and ensuring that the work of the partnership gets done in a timely manner. The coordinator/facilitator must act in the best interests of the partnership, and if the coordinator also represents one of the partners, must balance the interests of his or her organization with those of the other partners. Most importantly, the coordinator must be a good fit with the particular partnership – keenly understanding and able to navigate its goals, partner organizations and cultures, and the dynamics of the group.

The roles of a coordinator are generally accomplished in one of the four ways – the coordinator role rotates between partners, one partner serves as the coordinator, a dedicated coordinator is hired, or one organization serves as the backbone organization.

**Rotating Coordinator Role.** In many stewardship partnerships, the roles and responsibilities of coordinator rotate among the partners on a regular basis. The benefits with this approach include each partner understanding the importance of partnership coordination and its many responsibilities. The challenges

include partners having varying degrees of comfort and competency with this role.

**One Partner Serves as Coordinator.** The most common approach to the day-to-day management of a stewardship collaborative involves a staff member of one of the partners being responsible for partnership coordination. For this arrangement to succeed, the coordinator must be able to take off his or her organizational hat to be a neutral facilitator.

**Dedicated Coordinator.** In this situation, a dedicated coordinator is hired and funded by the partners, a public agency, and/or by a grant. Dedicated coordinators are most common with larger partnerships and with agency-led partnerships. As long as the coordinator is an appropriate fit for the culture of the partnership, a dedicated coordinator is ideal because they can focus on the health of the partnership and allow organizational staff to focus on the work of the partnership. Both the Mayacamas-Berryessa Wildlife Habitat Connectivity Project and the California Land-

*“The facilitator must be able to hear many voices at the same time, be the bridge between complex science and laypersons, and meet the needs of all the groups and individuals involved.”*

Lisa Micheli  
Pepperwood Preserve

scape Conservation Cooperative have paid coordinators dedicated to achieving partnership outcomes.

**Backbone Organization.** The concept of the backbone organization is one of the five conditions of Collective Impact, a framework that brings partners together in a structured way to achieve social impact.<sup>2</sup> Collective Impact is an interesting model for land trusts looking to create larger, more effective partnerships and, even if a partnership chooses not to pursue the Collective Impact structure, provides a number of guiding principles that can be applied to partnerships of any scale. These guiding principles include a common agenda, consistent measuring of results, mutually reinforcing

<sup>2</sup> <https://collectiveimpactforum.org/what-collective-impact>



activities, open and continuous communication, and a backbone organization.<sup>3</sup> The backbone organization “develops and manages the partnership’s shared vision; develops its common system for measuring outcomes; identifies mutually reinforcing activities; emphasizes continuous communication; and provides backbone support.”<sup>4</sup>

The Tamalpais Lands Collaborative (TLC) – a partnership between one nonprofit (Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy) and four public agencies (National Park Service, California State Parks, Marin County

Parks and the Marin Municipal Water District) – was formed to establish a more unified approach to the management and stewardship of Mt. Tamalpais, as well as volunteer activities, education, and community engagement. The Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy serves as the backbone organization for this collaborative. The partners agree that the pace and number of TLC accomplishments can be attributed, to a large extent, to the unwavering presence of this backbone organization.

## Lesson 7: Clear and consistent communication among the partners builds the strong relationships that sustain a partnership.



Photo courtesy of Golden Gate Nat'l Parks Conservancy

Regardless of the type of coordinator, one of the coordinator’s most important roles is to foster clear, regular two-way communication among the partners. Often the coordinator is called upon to restate what one partner has said so another can better understand it. This helps avoid miscommunication and misunderstandings. This is frequently the case when highly technical scientific information needs to be translated to on-the-ground resource managers – a challenge that often falls to the coordinator of the California Landscape Conservation Cooperative (CaLCC).

Ongoing conversation among partners at both the day-to-day and executive levels, facilitated by the coordinator, builds and maintains the strong relationships and trust needed to sustain the partnership. One ingredient that is essential to communication is face-to-face meetings. Although digital tools provide the opportunity to avoid meetings, several interviewees noted that regular in-person meetings reinforce the communication that occurs between meetings and help cement relationships in a way that telephone calls and emails cannot. One issue that will likely become more apparent over time is how the communication styles favored by different generations affect the effectiveness and sustainability of a partnership.

The four land trusts that are partners in the San Vicente Redwoods recognize that although communication can be difficult, it is essential to making things work effectively. This group also noted that although communication between their peers on the Working Group was important, it was equally important for each representative to convey information up the chain in their own organization in order to support executive-level decision-making. The group also noted the value of transparency in inter-organizational communication.

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.collaborationforimpact.com/collective-impact/>

<sup>4</sup> [https://ssir.org/articles/entry/understanding\\_the\\_value\\_of\\_backbone\\_organizations\\_in\\_collective\\_impact\\_2](https://ssir.org/articles/entry/understanding_the_value_of_backbone_organizations_in_collective_impact_2)

## Lesson 8: Understanding and navigating the different cultures and needs of the various partner organizations is essential for partnership success.



Photo courtesy of Mojave Desert Land Trust

Every organization has a unique culture that stems from many things including its history, decision-making style, organizational structure, level of resources, and hierarchy. Often, the full complexity and variety of organizational cultures are not fully apparent in the early stages of partnership but become more pronounced as issues and challenges requiring decisions arise. Unresolved differences in organizational culture can have a variety of consequences ranging from slow decision-making to an ineffective partnership.

Most frequently partnerships encounter differences between the culture of a more nimble, fast-moving non-profit and a public agency with an elected board and complex layers of decision making. A board-led agency is beholden to the electorate and the organization is unlikely to take any actions that are not first approved by the elected board. Rarely can the staff person appointed

to oversee the day-to-day partnership activities make major decisions on behalf of the agency.

The land trusts that are deeply engaged in regional partnerships have looked closely at their own culture and consciously adopted a broad regional perspective – some going to the extent of making working collaboratively at a landscape-scale a distinct program. Other land trusts have not yet made this leap and can struggle with embracing what is seen as the additional work of stewardship beyond the land trust’s ownership boundaries.

Ideally, the concept of partnership is, or will become part of each organization’s culture and is valued and promoted at the leadership level. This is often a slow process that builds momentum as more and more staff

*“Vastly different financial situations, organizational bandwidths and levels of bureaucracy among the partners result in different levels of engagement and commitment.”*

Daniel Olstein  
Peninsula Open Space Trust

members become engaged in, and see the benefits of, collaboration. In an organization where partnership is a foreign idea, it may require intervention from senior management and training at the staff level to change the culture.

**Lesson 9: Realizing the results of collaboration frequently takes time, effort and long term commitment. Organizational and on-the-ground results are not always realized immediately. Partners must be aware of this at the outset and not expect immediate outcomes.**



Photo courtesy of Mojave Desert Land Trust

The benefits of collaboration are often cited – improved organizational efficiencies, enhanced on-the-ground stewardship, a greater knowledge base – but realizing these results takes time and commitment from all the partners. Initially, each partner organization is taking on something new, diverting staff and resources from individual land trust projects to a collaborative project or projects. At the outset, there is likely additional work involved rather than the efficiencies that were expected. Logistics and relationships must be worked out, plans and projects identified, and roles and responsibilities defined. This process can move at different paces depending on a number of things including having organizational buy-in and support; the presence or absence of a dedicated coordinator or backbone organization; the level of crisis or need; and the availability of project funding.

Often the first results to become visible are those relating to a greater knowledge base. For resource staff of the five Tamalpais Lands Collaborative partners, having colleagues in their field to share ideas and discuss challenges with was an enormous benefit both to the individual staff members and eventually to the overall landscape. Most organizations do not have more than one resource specialist in any given field. Thus,

that person frequently addresses the organization's resource challenges alone. Simply having additional thought partners in the same discipline led to improved solutions to common challenges. Talk quickly turned to collaborative action, resulting in improved on-the-ground practices and procedures.

For the Mojave Desert Land Trust (MDLT), partnership with the National Park Service and Bureau of Land Management was difficult at first due to the differences in pace and culture between the nonprofit and the agencies. Working out the details relating to streamlining land protection and property transfer required MDLT to slow its pace and work within the confines of agency rules and regulations. Today, all parties would agree that the time it took up front resulted in a win for all. Taking the time to build the collaboration strengthened MDLT by providing them with a consistent and supportive program that has also lessened the workload of agency staff, enabling them to focus on other priorities.

*"The benefits of partnership are often in the future. You have to have the organizational will to start and stay with it to see the benefits – on the first day there are no benefits and you are doing stuff you don't have money for."*

John Mack  
Catalina Island Conservancy

Occasionally, success appears to happen quickly. This is generally a result of the groundwork for the collaboration being laid well in advance of the formation of the partnership. This was the case with the San Vicente Redwoods Partnership. The four land trusts were a part of several other regional collaborations including the Living Landscapes Initiative and the Santa Cruz Mountains Stewardship Network. The relationships built through these collaborations helped foster early conservation successes when the partners began their collaborative stewardship activities.

**Lesson 10: Public agencies have been spearheading collaborative regional stewardship efforts for many years, recognizing that collaboration is the only way to effectively manage lands at the ecosystem scale while also reducing inefficiencies and duplication.**

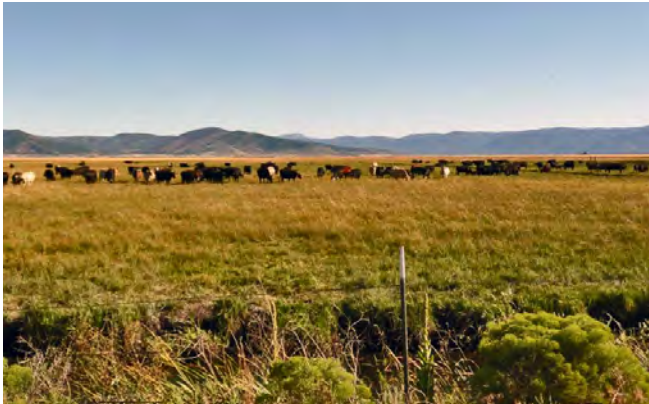


Photo courtesy of Sierra Valley RCD

Most federal, state and local land management agencies have built strong partnerships with other public agencies as well as private partners, recognizing that large, intractable land management problems cannot be solved alone and that duplication and overlap in agency efforts results in inefficiencies. Selected agency-driven regional stewardship partnerships relevant to California are described below.

**California Large Landscape Cooperative (CaLCC).** Landscape Conservation Cooperatives (LCC) are a Department of the Interior initiative designed to provide resource managers across all federal land management agencies better applied science for on-the-ground decisions. The 22 LCCs spread across the United States support scientific studies that help guide landscape-scale planning and decision making. Each LCC, the CaLCC included, is a large partnership of public and private resource managers and scientists. Each has a Steering Committee that guides the development of conservation science as it influences a large area in a landscape. The CaLCC recently funded the Mayacamas to Berryessa Habitat Corridor Project.

**Regional Conservation Partnership Program (RCPP).** The USDA's Natural Resources Conservation Service oversees the RCPP. It is a competitive grant program that brings together nonprofit organizations, local agencies, universities, Resource Conservation Districts, agricultural landowners and others to collaboratively address natural resource challenges, including forest health, wildfire risks, drought, poor water quality, and land conservation. The most successful RCPP projects

innovate, leverage additional contributions, offer impactful solutions, and engage more participants.

The Sierra Valley RCPP is a partnership that includes lead partner, the Feather River Land Trust, along with The Nature Conservancy and the Northern Sierra Partnership. The project focuses on land conservation and stewardship over a 26,000 acre area. The project fostered a coordinated effort among land trusts, agencies, private landowners and others to conserve and steward this region. The noted benefits of this program include sharing resources to reduce costs.

**Bureau of Land Management (BLM).** The Bureau of Land Management partners with land trusts throughout California. The agency is able to work across its ownership boundaries with land trusts, state and local agencies, and non-governmental organizations at a landscape scale, linking corridors and ecoregions in ways that would not be possible alone.

The Mojave Desert Land Trust works closely with the BLM to acquire and transfer inholdings in the two desert national monuments and 36 Wilderness Areas. The land trust and BLM have worked to improve efficiencies by streamlining the acquisition and transfer process and bundling a number of small properties into a single title report.

Across the 250,000-acre Carrizo Plain, BLM works with the Sequoia Riverlands Trust, The Wildlands Conservancy, The Nature Conservancy, and other public agencies to manage the patchwork of public and private lands. These collaborative efforts led to the designation of the Carrizo Plain National Monument, development of a resource management plan and conservation strategies, and scientific studies aimed at improving ecosystem management.

**National Park Service (NPS).** The National Park Service has worked in partnership for many years and a number of the projects profiled for this study involve land trust partnerships with NPS including the Tamalpais Lands Collaborative, the Mojave Desert Land Trust, and the efforts to develop wildlife corridors for mountain lions and other large mammals in southern California. What is unique among these partnerships

is that NPS has broken down internal barriers and embraced a collaborative way of working, something that not all public agencies have been able to accomplish. One of NPS' former superintendents, Brian O'Neill of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area focused his 25-year career on breaking down NPS silos and forging partnerships across boundaries. Based on his experiences, he developed his 21 Partnership Success Factors that guided collaborations with agencies and organizations. Many of these factors were mentioned by those profiled for this regional collaborative stewardship study – a shared vision, formal agreements, excellent communication, and understanding organizational cultures. Other factors are more nuanced and, although they did not emerge as lessons learned from the land trusts and agencies surveyed for this study, are no less important – celebrating success, being cour-

teous and diplomatic, and diversifying your funding sources.

**California State Parks.** The 2011 California State Parks funding crisis saw many nonprofit partners stepping up to help manage and steward State Park properties in danger of closure. Since then, the agency has developed a partnership program to help formalize partnerships as a component of its operations. The Tamalpais Lands Collaborative is one example of State Parks' engagement in partnership. Another is State Parks' partnership with NPS and Save the Redwoods League in the Redwood National and State Parks that focuses on redwood ecosystem restoration. This partnership will be guided by a mission and vision statement and establishment of common priorities.

**Lesson 11: Smaller partnerships, where talent and resources are exchanged, can be effective ways to meet resource and partner needs and also to provide the first step towards broader partnerships.**

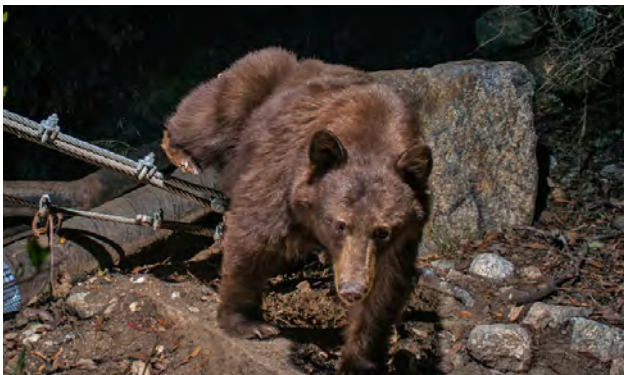


Photo © Denis Callet

In some cases, collaborations between a small number of partners can benefit the parties involved and the natural resources as well as sparking the potential for more regional collaboration. A partnership between the Sequoia Riverlands Trust and the Carrizo Plain Conservancy has resulted in a win-win relationship where the Carrizo Plain Conservancy holds property in fee and the Sequoia Riverlands Trust stewards the land. The two groups have developed a combined vision for the Carrizo Plain and make land management decisions collaboratively. In partnership, the two organizations have received grants for restoration and are now working with San Luis Obispo County and other partners to expand the protected areas of the national monument through acquisition of tax delinquent properties.

This collaboration has led to heightened interest in a broader partnership with other land managers in the southern San Joaquin Valley including the BLM and members of the Southern Sierra Partnership to address invasive species, grazing management and endangered species protection.

After completing its conservation plan, the Arroyos and Foothills Conservancy became interested in a small piece of property in Pasadena that had year-round water and community support for conservation. On the surface the property didn't appear exceptionally unique but the Conservancy decided to install wildlife cameras to better understand wildlife use of the property. They found that the property was well used by mountain lions, brown bears and other large mammals and served as a critical (and threatened) link between the urban foothills and the San Gabriel Mountains. This discovery quickly expanded the land trust's focus from protecting a local property to securing a key pinch point in the regional wildlife corridor system. New partners include those working regionally on wildlife connectivity in Los Angeles – NPS, the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and the city of Glendale.

## FUNDING AND FUNDRAISING

### Lesson 12: Securing funding for ongoing partnership operations, coordination and management is one of the most significant challenges for regional collaborations.



Photo courtesy of BLM

As noted above, having someone acting in the role of coordinator is considered essential for a stewardship collaboration to function smoothly. However, these positions are notoriously difficult to fund because, unlike specific projects and programs, the benefits of having a coordinator are not easy to measure. Most land trusts recognize that much more can be accomplished with a coordinator – more grants submitted and won, guiding plans developed and implemented, and projects and programs completed in a timely fashion. More importantly, with a strong coordinator, relationships are nurtured and a strong and solid collaboration results. Without a dedicated coordinator, these tasks fall to the staff members of the partnership organizations who often have a multitude of responsibilities beyond partnership coordination.

Most land trusts interviewed noted a lack of funder support for collaborations. Although funding for the outputs of collaborations – stewardship projects and programs, research and studies, and educational programs – is more readily available, funding to support the workings of the collaboration – namely the coordinator, the convening, and day-to-day partnership management – is much more difficult to obtain. Some funders have designated funds for a partnership coordinator for a one to two year period by which time the collaboration is expected to raise the funds to support

the coordinator on its own. The challenge results from most collaborations being focused on achieving success on the ground, not in raising ongoing funds for the coordinator, even though the coordinator helps make success on the ground possible.

Although most partners report that collaboration increases efficiency and effectiveness, it may be that these efficiencies are not reflected in actual dollars saved that could be applied to a coordinator position. Instead, the increased efficiency results in more work (as in expanded breadth of stewardship) being accomplished over the same amount of time.

*“The leverage a well-led partnership can wield is huge. Most funders do not see a project as a function of the network.”*

Lisa Micheli  
Pepperwood Preserve

The Pepperwood Preserve recently received funding from the CaLCC for the Mayacamas to Berryessa Habitat Connectivity Project – a regional collaboration to address habitat connectivity and climate change. The partnership includes individual agencies and organizations as well as existing partnerships and aims to bring together the tremendous amount of information and data collected by the partners into a set of priorities and recommendations for land acquisition and stewardship. One of the keys to the success of the proposal is combining the concept of facilitated collaboration with a measurable outcome. In this case, the coordinator is also the project manager responsible for the measurable outcome. The downside is that once the project is complete, funding for the coordinator (project manager) will end. However, this approach of linking a measurable outcome to project management/partnership coordination does offer a possible short-term solution for the coordinator position that could be explored with other partnerships.

## Lesson 13: Operational funding for land management and stewardship as well as capital improvement funding is more easily obtained collaboratively.



Photo © William K. Mathias

Historically, funders (agencies, foundations and individuals) have been more interested in funding land acquisition and capital improvements that are visible, permanent and measurable reflections of their donation. Operational funding for land management and stewardship has been much more difficult to secure as the benefits are less tangible and more difficult to measure. However, although funding is never easy to secure, working in partnership often helps leverage funds that would be harder to access alone.

Working collaboratively The Nature Conservancy, the Peninsula Open Space Trust, Save the Redwoods, Sempervirens Fund and The Land Trust of Santa Cruz

County applied for and were awarded funding from the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation to support their partnership – the Living Landscapes Initiative. The resulting collaboration met one of the Foundation’s desired outcomes of its grant-making – “stronger partnerships across the region foster effective collaboration among stakeholders involved in conservation and management.”<sup>5</sup> The partnership was then

*“When you pull the groups together, you have a cost savings and draw resources from different people with different strengths.”*

Dean Kwasny  
USDA Natural Resources Conservation

awarded funding to acquire the San Vicente Redwoods property, where the partners have developed a funding model that leverages the capacity of each other through cost-sharing and matching. In addition, one of the management activities on the property is that of a Working Forest, where revenue generated through sustainable timber harvest activities is invested back into the property. A recent evaluation of the Foundation’s grant-making noted that this collaboration was notable for its “establishment of effective conservation finance structures to maximize the impact of the grant funding and ensure financial sustainability.”

<sup>5</sup> [https://www.moore.org/docs/default-source/default-document-library/bay\\_area\\_conservation\\_subprogram\\_evaluation\\_exec\\_summary.pdf?sfvrsn=0](https://www.moore.org/docs/default-source/default-document-library/bay_area_conservation_subprogram_evaluation_exec_summary.pdf?sfvrsn=0)

## Lesson 14: For some land trusts, regional stewardship has provided a new way of engaging donors.



Photo © Stephen Joseph

Stewardship has historically been and continues to be underfunded with the majority of grant and donor funding being focused on land acquisition or specific land trust projects and programs. In recent years, most acquisitions have come with a stewardship endowment but funding for stewardship frequently comes up short. Land trusts that are engaged in regional stewardship collaborations and have conveyed the benefits to donors have found that donors value the economy of the regional approach; donors believe that supporting the efforts of a regional collaboration is the most efficient use of their funds. Donors are interested in the dual benefits of regional stewardship, the conservation benefit – to address climate change, ensure wildlife connectivity and foster intact ecosystems, and the organizational benefits – a more efficient use of resources and additional expertise working on complex conservation issues.

## CONCLUSION

There are many considerations when a land trust creates or enters into a partnership beyond its own boundaries:

- What is the compelling issue to be addressed?
- Who are your potential partners?
- Who do you have relationships with now and what relationships should you cultivate?
- What shared goals could be achieved more efficiently through partnership?

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.malt.org/protected-lands/carbon-farming>

The Sonoma Land Trust spearheaded the Sonoma County Wildlife Corridor Project and noted that one of the benefits of the project was increased donor interest and support. The land trust attributes this to a number of things including media attention on the wildlife corridor and the wildlife camera images that captured the interest of the community. More importantly, this was the land trust's first truly regional program and its success has changed the organizational culture to one that thinks at the larger landscape scale rather than what it can do with a particular property. This is the shift organizations need to make in order to embrace regional collaboration and step beyond property boundaries.

*“Collaboration yields greater philanthropic results than could be achieved by any individual organization.”*

Daniel Olstein  
Peninsula Open Space Trust

Marin Agricultural Land Trust (MALT) is partnering with landowners, the local Resource Conservation District and other land trusts to implement carbon farming in Marin County. Carbon farming involves implementing a set of management practices “that reduce or reverse a farm or ranch’s greenhouse gas emissions.”<sup>6</sup> Aside from this being an exciting and innovative approach to regional stewardship, MALT found that the approach was especially interesting to donors who realized that this was a tangible way that their donations could make a difference in climate change.

Once the potential to partner has been evaluated and agreed upon there are additional considerations to assure a strong foundation:

- What is the common vision your partnership hopes to achieve?
- How will the partnership benefit each partner?
- What agreements will guide your work on-the-ground?
- What specific measurable outcomes will you work on in partnership?



- How will the partners communicate and operate on a day-to-day basis?
- How will partnership activities be funded and sustained?

As noted previously, most partnerships form out of a common need and function based upon a common vision. Most land trusts and agencies believe that collaboration, although not without challenges, results in improved effectiveness and efficiency. They noted that the benefits of partnership – an expanded network, increased funding opportunities, improved stewardship and a broader perspective – generally outweigh the challenges when there is a true need for the partnership. Those interviewed identified a number of partnership benefits:

- “Expanded and improved relationships mean there are people to call about opportunities, challenges and potential projects.”
- “Collaboration yields greater philanthropic results than could be achieved by any individual organization.”

- “Partnership is a critical part of fulfilling our mission.”
- “Partnership results in more integrated science and decision making.”
- “Land management can’t happen in a vacuum – partnership provides the opportunity to interact with professionals and experts facing same problems – in same region.”
- “Compared to working alone, partnership allows you to leverage a larger brain trust, knowledge base and funding.”
- “Doing things alone doesn’t allow for the breadth and depth of doing stewardship and management in partnership.”

Regional stewardship partnerships offer land trusts the opportunity to expand their reach, share expertise, and improve outcomes on the land. Although partnership results are not always immediate, most land trusts find that staying with a partnership to address a common goal benefits both the land trust and the region’s resources.

## RECOMMENDED NEXT STEPS

### FOR LAND TRUSTS

#### **Recommendation 1: Utilize CCLT’s website and resources to learn more about regional stewardship collaborations.**

CCLT has developed a regional stewardship collaboration resource on its website that includes lessons learned from regional stewardship partnerships in California as well as a host of other partnership materials, profiles and websites to explore. Gaining a better understanding of what regional stewardship is,

and is not, will help inform land trusts as they expand their collaborative stewardship efforts. Attend the annual CCLT conservation conference to learn firsthand about successes, lessons learned and trends with partnership practices.

#### **Recommendation 2: Consider the benefits of stewardship collaboration to your organization and take the next step towards participating in stewardship at a more regional scale.**

Most, if not all, land trusts are already working in partnership on their own properties. Moving forward, CCLT encourages land trusts throughout California to take a step back and look at your lands in the broader regional context. Where are the connections and linkages between your lands and others? What organizations and agencies do you have relationships with that you could deepen and expand? What regional stewardship collaborations already exist? How

might a broader partnership benefit your land trust? Identifying and exploring partnerships that can link your lands to a larger regional stewardship network is a step that will benefit your organization as well as the larger ecosystem. Consider and apply the lessons and tools provided throughout this document to help you take the next step.

## FOR CCLT

### **Recommendation 3: Help make the case for funding regional stewardship partnerships, and more specifically, partnership coordinators, by conducting a study on the measurable stewardship benefits provided by dedicated coordinators.**

Anecdotally, most partners know that a skilled coordinator not only ensures effective communication and collaboration, but more importantly, is the person that makes on-the-ground stewardship happen whether it is by seeking grants, leveraging funds or putting together projects. The coordinator secures funding for the partnership's collaborative activities from a variety of sources; funding that would not have been available without the coordinator's efforts.

New models for funding and sustaining the coordinator role need to be developed. Many of the land trusts interviewed felt that measures of collaborative success with and without a coordinator should be developed

to help make the case to funders that funding the coordinator role has a significant positive impact on the successful stewardship outputs of the collaboration. The study should address not only the monetary benefits that result from having a dedicated coordinator but also seek to quantify the ecosystem benefits and organizational efficiencies that would not have resulted without a coordinator.

*"We need to convey to funders the value of working effectively as a team, eliminating redundancies, and leveraging resources in order to make the case for investment."*

Lisa Micheli  
Pepperwood Preserve

### **Recommendation 4: Regularly update the CCLT Regional Stewardship Partnership website.**

One of the outcomes of this study is a portion of CCLT's website dedicated to regional partnerships. The lessons learned, partnership profiles, conference proceedings and links to other partnership resources will be the first website items. Because regional stewardship collaborations are fast becoming a more common approach to solving large-scale landscape challenges in California and elsewhere, additional ma-

terials that provide best practices and new approaches to collaboration are being generated rapidly. As new information becomes available that would support and facilitate land trusts engaging in these larger collaborations, CCLT should add them to its website, maintaining an up-to-date regional stewardship collaboration resource.

### **Recommendation 5: Focus a portion of the annual CCLT conference on advances in regional stewardship collaboration.**

Over the past two to three years, a number of new regional collaborations have emerged and succeeded. Some are not land trust collaborations but still provide useful lessons for land trusts. Research on the effectiveness of regional partnerships, as well as case studies on, and organizations dedicated to, regional stewardship continue to emerge and expand at a rapid

pace. CCLT should track these emerging trends, and at its regional conference, highlight those that are most relevant to California land trusts and update the land trust community on the state-of-the-art in regional stewardship partnerships.



Photo courtesy of Irvine Ranch Conservancy

## PART 3: COLLABORATION PROFILES

The following includes a short profile of each regional conservation collaboration or partnership discussed in the foregoing document. Partnership profiles are arranged alphabetically:

- California Landscape Conservation Cooperative
- Channel Island Fox Species Recovery
- Cottonwood Canyon Wildlife Corridor Project
- Delhi Sands Flower-loving Fly Partnership
- The Irvine Ranch Conservancy's land management partnerships with local municipalities
- Living Landscape Initiative
- Mayacamas to Berryessa Landscape Connectivity Network Partnership
- Mojave Desert Land Trust Inholdings Program
- Peninsula Working Group
- San Vicente Redwoods
- Santa Cruz Mountains Stewardship Network
- Sierra Valley Regional Conservation Partnership Program
- Sonoma County Wildlife Corridor Project
- Tamalpais Lands Collaborative

## California Landscape Conservation Cooperative (CaLCC)



Photo courtesy of CaLCC

**Problem it was formed to solve:** Climate change and other ecosystem challenges require that land management cannot occur on a property-by-property basis but at a landscape scale with broad partnerships.

**Land Trust Partners:** The Nature Conservancy and others that change from year to year

**Other Partners include:** All federal agencies – NPS, NOAA, USFWS, BLM, etc.

**Funding:** Department of the Interior funding for five staff. Other partners bring resources as needed.

**Guiding Partnership Documents:** Mission and vision, Science Management Framework

**Leadership/Facilitation:** One dedicated facilitator and a Steering Committee composed of scientists and resource managers. It is purposely kept small to get things done and the composition is reviewed annually.

**The Story:** The LCC Initiative was launched by the Department of the Interior in 2010. There are 22 LCCs that are based on the vision of connecting ecoregions across North America. The LCCs are locally-driven with different composition and priorities depending on local interest and emphasis. The CaLCC is composed of federal and state agencies and NGOs but no local governments. The goal is to meet common needs for scientific data without duplication of effort.

**Why Did It Work?**

Federal agency partners understood that partnership would help them better meet their goals, avoid duplication and integrate science and decision making.

**For More Information**

<https://lccnetwork.org/lcc/california>

## Delhi Sands Flower-loving Fly Working Group



Photo courtesy of Rivers & Lands Conservancy

**Problem it was formed to solve:** Lack of communication and coordination among the agencies, nonprofits, and landowners around management and protection of contiguous habitat for the endangered fly in Riverside and San Bernardino Counties.

**Land Trust Partner:** Rivers and Lands Conservancy (formerly Riverside Lands Conservancy)

**Other Partners include:** USFWS, Western Riverside County Conservation Authority, University of California Cooperative Extension, scientists, private landowners

**Funding:** Working Group is in its exploratory phases, no funding yet.

**Guiding Partnership Documents:** There are no partnership documents but management of the fly is addressed in various HCPs and in the USFWS' recovery plan

**Leadership/Facilitation:** The Working Group began meeting in December 2016 and is facilitated by Rivers & Lands Conservancy.

**The Story:** Rivers and Lands Conservancy along with other private landowners and agencies manage the remaining habitat for the endangered Delhi Sands flower-loving fly. The fly habitat once stretched over 40 square miles and has dwindled to less than 2% of its original extent due to development. The newly formed Working Group shares knowledge about management and habitat restoration; identifies additional conservation lands; ensures adequate management of existing protected areas; and pools resources to manage fly habitat on a regional scale.

**Why Did It Work?** Working Group is in its early stages.

**For More Information**

<http://www.riversidelandconservancy.org/index.php/projects/dehli-sand-fly-management>

## Channel Island Fox Species Recovery



Photo © Chuck Graham

**Problem it was formed to solve:** Precipitous decline in the Channel Island fox population

**Land Trust Partner:** Catalina Island Conservancy

**Other Partners Include:** NPS, The Nature Conservancy, US Navy, Institute for Wildlife Studies, University of California, USFWS

**Funding:** A variety of sources including grants and funding from each partner.

**Guiding Partnership Documents:** No formal partnership document but strategy documents included NPS Recovery Strategy and USFWS Species Recovery Plan

**Leadership/Facilitation:** Coordinator and Island Fox Conservation Working Group

**The Story:** The Channel Island Fox partnership was formed ten years ago and included Channel Island land managers and owners, veterinarians and researchers. It was initiated when the Channel Island fox population was crashing throughout the Channel Islands for a number of reasons including a decline in the bald eagle population (fish-eating) and an increase in the golden eagle population that preyed on the fox pups. At the same time, Catalina Island's population was affected by canine distemper virus carried by dogs.

**Why Did It Work?** Everyone was pulling in the same direction with the same goal and there was lots of collaboration. The partners were there to solve a problem and they did whatever needed to be done. The fox working group continues to meet regularly today.

### For More Information

For more information about the Catalina Island Conservancy: <https://www.catalinaconservancy.org/>

For more information about the recovery of the Channel Island Fox, please visit:

The National Park Service: <https://www.nps.gov/chis/learn/nature/fox-saving.htm>

The Nature Conservancy:

<http://blog.nature.org/science/2016/08/15/recovery-america-cas-dwarf-fox-second-chance-channel-island-endangered/>

[https://www.nature.org/ourinitiatives/regions/northamerica/unitedstates/california/placesweprotect/saving-the-santa-cruz-island-fox.xml?redirect=https-301&s\\_intc=footer](https://www.nature.org/ourinitiatives/regions/northamerica/unitedstates/california/placesweprotect/saving-the-santa-cruz-island-fox.xml?redirect=https-301&s_intc=footer)

## Cottonwood Canyon Wildlife Corridor Project



Photo © Denis Callier

**Problem it was formed to solve:** Ensuring connectivity for mountain lions and other wildlife between the San Rafael hills and the San Gabriel Mountains.

**Land Trust Partner:** Arroyos and Foothills Conservancy

**Other Partners include:** The Conservancy is in the early stages of engaging in the network of wildlife corridor partnerships in the LA region. Key partners include NPS, the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, and various municipalities

**Funding:** Potential acquisition funding from state bonds; preparation of Conceptual Area Protection Plan from donors and Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy.

**Guiding Partnership Documents:** None developed yet

**Leadership/Facilitation:** Arroyos and Foothills Conservancy

**The Story:** The Arroyos and Foothills Conservancy acquired its Cottonwood Canyon parcel which was found to provide passage for large mammals. The Conservancy is in the early stages of engaging in the larger partnerships in the Los Angeles region focusing on wildlife passage.

**Why Did It Work?** Although the Conservancy is early in the process of engaging in the region's wildlife corridor partnerships, the turning point was realizing that their property had regional, not local significance, and actively seeking out the information and contacts necessary to engage in the regional efforts around the protection of wildlife corridors.

**For More Information**

<http://www.arroyosfoothills.org/cottonwood/>

## The Irvine Ranch Conservancy's land management partnerships with public landowners



Photo courtesy of Irvine Ranch Conservancy

**Problem it was formed to solve:** To ensure that the 45,000+ acres of natural lands protected on the historic Irvine Ranch are stewarded and enjoyed to the highest possible standards, regardless of ownership. These lands are now owned by 13 different entities.

**Land Trust Partner:** Irvine Ranch Conservancy

**Other Partners include:** City of Irvine, City of Newport Beach, County of Orange, State of California

**Funding:** The Conservancy gets 95% of its annual revenue from public land management service agreements.

**Guiding Partnership Documents:** No overarching documents.

**Leadership/Facilitation:** The Conservancy isn't a central hub of the network but rather has working relationships with many of the other network partners.

**The Story:** The Irvine Ranch Conservancy was established in 2005 to help care for the permanently protected wildlands and parks on the historic Irvine Ranch. Rather than a formal network of all landowners, the Conservancy operationally manages a significant portion of the lands under multiple ownerships as one large landscape. The Conservancy's activities include science, land stewardship, community programs, and visitor use and enjoyment.

**Why Did It Work?** This is a model of collaborative land management and stewardship built to address a specific problem. The underlying premise is that each partner is doing what they do best – the Conservancy brings expertise in areas like science, volunteer management and trail building to the partnership and the public landowners provide public accountability, public safety and enforcement, and operations. In many cases, having an outside management partner has provided significant cost efficiency and higher quality management than a municipality might be able to provide.

**For More Information**

<http://www.irconservancy.org/>; [www.letsgooutside.org](http://www.letsgooutside.org)

## Living Landscape Initiative



Photo © William K. Matthias

**Problem it was formed to solve:** To demonstrate to major funders the collective nature of the work of the five partners.

**Land Trust Partners:** Peninsula Open Space Trust, Save the Redwoods League, Sempervirens Fund, the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County, and the Nature Conservancy

**Funding:** Foundation grants, state and federal agency matching funds, and individual donors

**Guiding Partnership Documents:** Mission statement, vision and goals

**Leadership/Facilitation:** Quarterly facilitated meetings attended by the leadership of all five partners. Regular conversations on joint and multi-party projects.

**The Story:** The partnership initially was formed to demonstrate to major funders the collective nature of the work of the five partners. The partnership has three major roles – stewardship collaboration, external branding and targeted outreach to funders. The group identified projects to work on collaboratively with the most significant project to date being the purchase of the largest unprotected property in Santa Cruz County – the San Vicente Redwoods – which required the efforts of all five partners due to its size and complexity. Ultimately, the San Vicente Redwoods project resulted in another partnership among four of the five partners to manage and steward the property. The broader collaboration among the Living Landscape Initiative partners continues.

**Why Did It Work?** The Initiative emphasizes the unique role private conservation organizations play in the long term management and stewardship of the Santa Cruz Mountains. The five partners also realized that collaboration yields greater philanthropic results than could be achieved by any individual organization.

**For More Information**

<http://livinglandscapeinitiative.org/>

## Peninsula Working Group

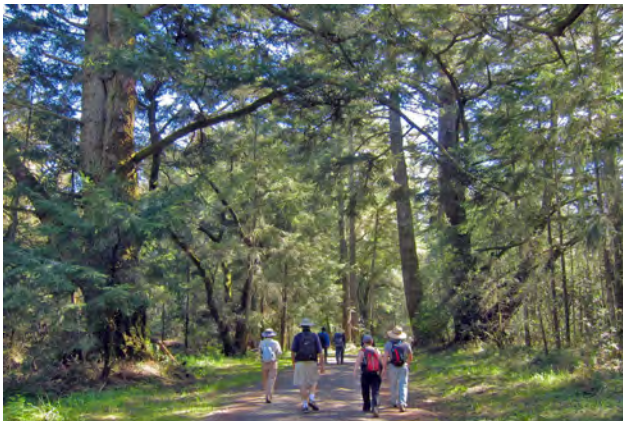


Photo © Miguel Vieira

**Problem it was formed to solve:** Need for a mechanism to allow leadership from major land management agencies and private conservation organizations on the San Francisco Peninsula to meet, discuss common opportunities and challenges, and investigate potential ways to work together.

**Land Trust Partner:** Peninsula Open Space Trust

**Other Partners include:** Initial partners: Golden Gate National Recreation Area, Coastal Conservancy, California State Parks, Mid-Peninsula Regional Open Space District,

San Mateo County Parks. Recent additions: San Francisco Public Utilities Commission.

**Funding:** Grant funding for facilitator to organize and convene meetings. Each agency funds its own participation. Collaborative projects requiring funding have yet to emerge.

**Guiding Partnership Documents:** Formal MOU recently developed (to date signed by four of the seven partners)

**Leadership/Facilitation:** Outside facilitator

**The Story:** The Peninsula Working Group was formed ten years ago to provide leadership from land management organizations an informal opportunity to discuss challenges and identify opportunities for collaboration. Relationships were built and the group focused on information exchange among the partners. Over time, leadership and working relationships changed and the group became less effective. In the past few years, the group has undergone several organizational exercises and recently agreed upon a vision and developed an MOU that was signed by four of the seven partners. The group has agreed that its preliminary focus will be on developing regional trail connections on the San Francisco Peninsula incorporating lands owned by the partners. One of the challenges faced by the Peninsula Working Group is that the lands managed by the partners are not contiguous making collaborative projects more difficult.

## Mayacamas to Berryessa Landscape Connectivity Network Partnership



**Problem it was formed to solve:** Need for a scientifically sound multi-county habitat connectivity roadmap from the Mayacamas Mountains to the Berryessa Snow Mountain National Monument.

**Land Trust Partner:** Pepperwood Preserve is the facilitator of the Partnership.

**Other Partners include:** UC Berkeley, BLM, local RCDs, land trusts (Napa, Lake, Sonoma Counties) and others. This partnership also includes existing partnerships including the Mayacamas Forum (for land and water managers), the Native American Advisory Council, the Blue Ridge Berryessa Partnership, the Terrestrial Biodiversity Climate Change Collaborative, and the Bay Area Open Space Council.

**Funding:** Two year funding for partnership coordination and development of the priority action plans provided by CA-LCC Place-Based Adaptation Projects funds.

**Guiding Partnership Documents:** Pepperwood/BLM partnership agreement; Mayacamas to Berryessa partners to develop a project work plan with measurable outcomes to evaluate success.

**Leadership/Facilitation:** Pepperwood Preserve is the network facilitator and backbone organization

**The Story:** The Mayacamas to Berryessa Landscape Connectivity Network Partnership forms an expanded regional partnership among pre-existing collectives and organizations already focused on landscape units within the project area. The goal of the Mayacamas to Berryessa Landscape Connectivity Network is to respect the integrity of existing partnerships (including their working agreements, goals, objectives, and knowledge bases) while aiming to add value by forging liaisons across geographic and jurisdictional boundaries. The project itself builds upon the existing data and knowledge of the regional partners to build connectivity action plans and priorities spanning the region

**Why Did It Work?** The partnership respects and builds upon the existing collaborations and partnerships and the extensive collection of research and data that already exists. The partnership is in its nascent phases but has a clear focus and desired outcome – priority plans for protecting pinch points in the regional wildlife corridor network. The outcome furthers the mission of all the partners.

### For More Information

Pepperwood Preserve:

<http://www.pepperwoodpreserve.org/>

### Project Description:

<http://climate.calcommons.org/sites/default/files/proposals/2016%20Proposal%20%24194%2C721.pdf>



## Mojave Desert Land Trust Inholdings Program



Photo courtesy of Mojave Desert Land Trust

**Problem it was formed to solve:** Complexity of acquiring and transferring hundreds of small private wilderness inholdings to public agencies.

**Land Trust Partner:** Mojave Desert Land Trust

**Other Partners include:** BLM, NPS

**Funding:** Funding does not transfer between the land trust and the agencies but the agencies provide staff to assist with environmental and acquisition documentation.

**Guiding Partnership Documents:** Formal MOUs with each agency

**Leadership/Facilitation:** Small partnership doesn't require a formal leadership structure

**The Story:** Much of the wilderness in the California desert is interspersed with very small (2 to 10 acres) private inholdings. The challenge to the agencies is that it has historically been cost prohibitive to acquire these inholdings because the cost of the transaction in terms of time and labor is much greater than the cost of the land and the agencies are under-staffed and under-budgeted. However, this situation allowed MDLT to develop a streamlined inholdings program and take advantage of programs that pay for overhead to do that work. MDLT developed a strategy to bundle multiple pre-acquired small parcels into one transaction. This creates an efficient process, saves time and money, and by the time the lands get to the agency, the title is clean. One recent acquisition involved 100 separately acquired parcels inside the desert tortoise habitat in just three transactions. Over time this streamlining process has become hardwired with MDLT's agency partners – they know what to expect and the process moves fast. MDLT now has MOUs with NPS and BLM that addresses both the real estate transaction logistics and how MDLT will manage the land while they own it (e.g., cleaning up dump sites, restoring road beds, etc.)

**Why Did It Work?** Mojave Desert Land Trust took the time to understand its partners' needs, strengths and limitations and developed a program that worked within these parameters, at a pace that was comfortable for the agencies. The resulting partnership helped further the missions of the land trust and the agencies.

### For More Information

Mojave Desert Land Trust: <https://www.mdlt.org/>

## Sierra Valley Conservation Partnership Program



Photo courtesy of Sierra Valley Resource Conservation District

**Problem it was formed to solve:** Limited funding and significant landowner interest in conserving working ranches in Sierra Valley

**Land Trust Partner:** Feather River Land Trust

**Other Partners include:** Northern Sierra Partnership, The Nature Conservancy, Sierra Valley landowners

**Funding:** NRCS Regional Conservation Partnership Program

**Guiding Partnership Documents:** Grant agreement with NRCS

**Leadership/Facilitation:** Feather River Land Trust

**The Story:** Sierra Valley is a ranching valley with thriving natural resources. Ranchers were interested in conserving land and the partners were interested in protecting the unique habitats in the valley. The partners unsuccessfully sought funding for land conservation and resource management in 2014. The proposal was resubmitted in 2015 with a clearer focus on and understanding of the NRCS process and the proposal was funded.

**Why Did It Work?** Persistence in seeking funding and an effort to tailor the land conservation program to the RCPP requirements. The project shares resources and reduces costs (e.g., the appraisals are all done at once). Cost savings also result from bringing different groups together that lend different strengths to the partnership.

**For More Information**

NRCS Regional Conservation Partnership Program:

<https://www.nrcs.usda.gov/wps/portal/nrcs/main/national/programs/farmbill/rcpp/>

Sierra Valley RCPP:

<http://www.frlt.org/sites/default/files/SVCP%20brochure%202016.pdf>

Sierra Valley Resources and Conservation:

<http://northernsierrapartnership.org/sierravalley/>

## San Vicente Redwoods



Photo courtesy of Land Trust of Santa Cruz County

**Problem it was formed to solve:** Management of an 8,500 acre redwood forest for multiple values – resource protection and restoration, sustainable timber harvest, and recreation.

**Partners include:** Peninsula Open Space Trust, Save the Redwoods League, Sempervirens Fund, Land Trust of Santa Cruz County

**Funding:** Contributions from each land trust

**Guiding Partnership Documents:** Conservation Vision, Conservation Easement, Management Plan, Public Access Plan

**Leadership/Facilitation:** A Core Team with representatives from each land trust talks weekly (at minimum) and meets

monthly to address various projects and topics. Core Team representatives keep their own land trusts, including executive leadership, abreast of the project.

**The Story:** Peninsula Open Space Trust, Sempervirens Fund, Save the Redwoods League, the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County and the Nature Conservancy began initial conversations about forming the Living Landscapes Initiative in 2009-2010 to address conservation issues across the broad landscape of the Santa Cruz Mountains where all five land trusts work. Together they purchased the San Vicente Redwoods. Following the purchase of the property, the Nature Conservancy stepped away from the project and the four remaining partners worked together to develop a structure for ownership and long term stewardship. Peninsula Open Space Trust and Sempervirens Fund jointly own the property in fee, Save the Redwoods League holds the conservation easement and all partners contribute financially and work collaboratively to steward the property.

**Why Did It Work?** The collaboration works due to the people involved and the guiding documents that reflect the “spirit of partnership”. The partnership helps the partners do more, due to additional staff resources and connections that arise out of collaboration. This project couldn’t have been done without the four organizations being involved.

### For More Information

<https://www.savetheredwoods.org/project/san-vicente-redwoods/>

## Sonoma County Wildlife Corridor Project



Photo courtesy of Sonoma Land Trust

**Problem it was formed to solve:** Potential development of a narrow pinch point in the regional wildlife corridor network linking Napa and Sonoma Counties threatened to sever this critical linkage for wildlife.

**Land Trust Partner:** Sonoma Land Trust

**Other Partners include:** Sonoma County Ag Preservation and Open Space District, Sonoma County Regional parks, Audubon Canyon Ranch, Pathways for Wildlife, an Advisory Group of biologists and wildlife agency staff, landowners and many others.

**Funding:** Grant and local agency funding for various studies; facilitation and engagement funded by Sonoma Land Trust

**Guiding Partnership Documents:** Not yet formalized.

**Leadership/Facilitation:** Sonoma Land Trust

**The Story:** A single 1,000-acre property is the largest and most significant unprotected land in Sonoma Valley and one that allows for wildlife passage across the valley. This property and the future of the Sonoma Valley Wildlife Corridor caused the Sonoma County Land Trust to bring together a wide variety of agencies, scientists and landowners to address these challenges. A 15-person Advisory Group consisting of ecologists, biologists and land managers drafted the key elements of the strategy for the corridor and small groups of partners focused on addressing different aspects of the problem simultaneously due to its immediacy. In 2017, the first partnership gathering will be held, bringing together everyone involved in the project to discuss regional strategies that tie together the many pieces that have been created to date.

**Why Did It Work?:** Because of the time sensitivity of the problem, the project's many partners focused on different aspects of the problem – land acquisition, land management and research – to gather information rapidly. Having an overall coordinator of these efforts (Sonoma Land Trust) ensured that key information was disseminated, that key agencies were involved, the media covered the issues, and landowners were engaged and informed about their role in wildlife corridor protection and management.

**For More Information:**

For more information about the Sonoma Land Trust: <https://sonomalandtrust.org/outings/index.html>

For more information about the Sonoma County Wildlife Corridor:

[https://sonomalandtrust.org/pdf/plans\\_reports/1015-general-wildlife-corridor-brochure.pdf](https://sonomalandtrust.org/pdf/plans_reports/1015-general-wildlife-corridor-brochure.pdf)

[https://www.sonomalandtrust.org/pdf/plans\\_reports/SLT-Wildlife\\_web.pdf](https://www.sonomalandtrust.org/pdf/plans_reports/SLT-Wildlife_web.pdf)

## Tamalpais Lands Collaborative



Photo courtesy of Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy

**Problem it was formed to solve:** The inability to address land management and stewardship issues at a mountain-wide scale versus individual jurisdictions.

**Land Trust Partner:** No land trusts are involved. The Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy is the backbone organization

**Other Partners include:** NPS, California State Parks, Marin Municipal Water District, Marin County Parks

**Funding:** Each partner provides staff to support the Core Team, staff and volunteers for collaborative events, and funding for collaborative projects on their properties. The Parks Conservancy fundraises annually to support the collaborative programs and infrastructure. Funds are provided through foundations, individual giving, businesses, and agencies.

**Guiding Partnership Documents:** Vision for Mt. Tamalpais, MOU, Five-year Strategy, project and program agreements among partners addressing scope, costs, funding and resource sharing.

**Leadership/Facilitation:** The Parks Conservancy is the backbone organization. A Core Team consisting of two representatives from each partner organization meets monthly and manages the day-to-day work of the partnership. An Executive Team consisting of the directors of each partner agency meets twice yearly to address overall vision and direction of the partnership. Subcommittees oversee the specific project and program outcomes.

**The Story:** Prior partnerships and collaborations, the State

Parks budget crisis, the shared geography of Mt. Tam and frequent casual meetings among the organizations' executives were some of the elements that laid the groundwork for the formation of the Tamalpais Lands Collaborative in 2013. The partners agreed upon a vision and signed an MOU. Over the next year the Core Team developed planning documents and fundraising strategies; built a public awareness campaign and engaged stakeholders; worked with existing agency volunteer programs conduct collaborative stewardship; and began the development of scientific research addressing the health of the mountain. Today volunteer and youth education programs are thriving, key projects are underway and the collaboration has become an integral part of each organization's culture.

**Why Did It Work?** Many factors influence the success of the Tamalpais Lands Collaborative. Initially, there was a clear need for the partnership and a readiness to partner, followed by development of a common vision, the presence of a strong backbone organization and facilitator, and extensive community engagement to build local support and trust. Three years into the partnership, much of the partnership's success stems from consistent and dedicated members of the Core Team, excellent facilitation, notable on-the-ground successes that create momentum and enthusiasm, and an increased understanding of the efficiencies that partnership offers to each organization.

### For More Information:

General Information

<http://www.onetam.org/tamalpais-lands-collaborative>

Memorandum of Understanding

<http://www.onetam.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/tlc-mou.pdf>

*Case Study 1: Managing Public Lands for Impact and Sustainability*

[http://www.onetam.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/TLC\\_Case\\_Study\\_FINAL4.pdf](http://www.onetam.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/TLC_Case_Study_FINAL4.pdf)

*Case Study 2: Developing Landscape-Scale Partnerships*

[http://onetam.org/sites/default/files/basic/TLC\\_Case\\_Study2\\_Final\\_0.pdf](http://onetam.org/sites/default/files/basic/TLC_Case_Study2_Final_0.pdf)

*Case Study 3: Measuring the Ecological Health of a Multi-Jurisdictional Mountain*

[http://www.largelandscapenetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Mt.-Tam-Case-Study\\_finalpdf.pdf](http://www.largelandscapenetwork.org/wp-content/uploads/2017/03/Mt.-Tam-Case-Study_finalpdf.pdf)

## PART 4: ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

The following includes additional information to explore relating to forming and sustaining partnerships including tools, partnership organizations, case studies and specific approaches to partnership.

### PARTNERSHIP TOOLS AND GUIDANCE

#### **Conservation Partnership Center (The Nature Conservancy)**

The Nature Conservancy's Conservation Partnership Center is an interactive, web-based resource center for conservation practitioners who want to learn how to create and manage more effective partnerships for greater conservation impact. The website includes tools and information on developing and maintaining conservation partnerships.

<https://www.conservationgateway.org/ExternalLinks/Pages/conservation-partnership-.aspx>

#### **How to Build Conservation Partnerships That Thrive (Kristin Sherwood, The Nature Conservancy)**

This PowerPoint helps an organization considering partnership ask the right questions. It briefly explains the stages of partnership – preparing, selecting, negotiating, managing, measuring and concluding or adapting and provides guidance at each step. Use the following link to access the PowerPoint and proceed by closing any windows that ask you to Sign In.

<https://www.conservationgateway.org/ConservationPlanning/partnering/cpc/Documents/partnership ppt for gateway.pptx>

#### **The Partnering Toolbook: An Essential Guide to Cross Sector Partnering (International Business Leaders Forum)**

<http://thepartneringinitiative.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/Partnering-Toolbook-en-20113.pdf>

#### **Partnerships: Frameworks for Working Together**

<http://www.strengtheningnonprofits.org/resources/guidebooks/Partnerships.pdf>

#### **The Partnership Toolbox (World Wildlife Foundation)**

A publication designed to guide the user through setting up a partnership – from key considerations and partnership agreements to monitoring and evaluating partnerships.

[http://assets.wwf.org.uk/downloads/wwf\\_partnershiptoolboxartweb.pdf](http://assets.wwf.org.uk/downloads/wwf_partnershiptoolboxartweb.pdf)

#### **Tools for Measuring Collaboration (Broadleaf Consulting, Canada)**

A collection of sample tools to provide ideas about how to measure collaboration. This is not a recommendation to use any one particular tool, but a selection of references that may be helpful in thinking about collaboration.

[http://broadleafconsulting.ca/uploads/3/4/0/8/3408103/tools\\_for\\_measuring\\_collaboration.pdf](http://broadleafconsulting.ca/uploads/3/4/0/8/3408103/tools_for_measuring_collaboration.pdf)

#### **Working Across Boundaries: Principles of Regional Collaboration**

[http://datatoolkits.lincolnst.edu/subcenters/regional-collaboration/pubs/Principles\\_of\\_Regional\\_Collaboration.pdf](http://datatoolkits.lincolnst.edu/subcenters/regional-collaboration/pubs/Principles_of_Regional_Collaboration.pdf)

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## PARTNERSHIP ORGANIZATIONS

### **Network for Landscape Conservation (national organization, primarily federal agency focused)**

A clearinghouse for large landscape conservation initiatives nationwide.

<http://www.largelandscapenetwork.org/>

### **Partnership & Community Collaboration Academy**

Focus on partnership and collaboration among Federal agencies. Some good resources.

<http://www.partnership-academy.net/>

### **The Partnering Initiative**

An international nonprofit providing training and services, and research and learning to further innovative cross-sector collaborative action for a sustainable future. The site includes case studies and documents on partnership.

<http://thepartneringinitiative.org/>

## PARTNERSHIP CASE STUDIES

### **Cosumnes River Partnership**

Strong Project Leadership and Staff Allow a Model Project to Succeed Over Time

[https://www.conservationgateway.org/ConservationPlanning/partnering/cpc/Documents/4B2\\_CaseStudy\\_Cosumnes.pdf](https://www.conservationgateway.org/ConservationPlanning/partnering/cpc/Documents/4B2_CaseStudy_Cosumnes.pdf)

### **Tamalpais Lands Collaborative**

*Case Study 1: Managing Public Lands for Impact and Sustainability*

[http://www.onetam.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/TLC\\_Case\\_Study\\_FINAL4.pdf](http://www.onetam.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/TLC_Case_Study_FINAL4.pdf)

*Case Study 2: Developing Landscape-Scale Partnerships*

[http://onetam.org/sites/default/files/basic/TLC\\_Case\\_Study2\\_Final\\_0.pdf](http://onetam.org/sites/default/files/basic/TLC_Case_Study2_Final_0.pdf)

*Case Study 3: Measuring the Ecological Health of a Multi-Jurisdictional Mountain*

<http://www.onetam.org/sites/default/files/pdfs/peak-health-white-paper-2016.pdf>

## NATIONAL PARK SERVICE COLLABORATION DOCUMENTS

### **Scaling Up: Collaborative Approaches to Large Landscape Conservation**

<https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1412/upload/Scaling-Up-2014.pdf>

### **Brian O'Neill's 21 Partnership Success Factors**

<https://www.nps.gov/subjects/partnerships/upload/BrianONeillBooklet-Edited-9-27-13-2.pdf>

## LARGE LANDSCAPE COLLABORATIONS

### **Expanding Horizons: Highlights from the National Workshop on Large Landscape Conservation**

[https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1412/upload/ExpandingHorizons\\_Feb11.pdf](https://www.nps.gov/orgs/1412/upload/ExpandingHorizons_Feb11.pdf)

## COLLECTIVE IMPACT

### **Stanford Social Innovation Review**

[https://ssir.org/articles/entry/collective\\_impact](https://ssir.org/articles/entry/collective_impact)