

## Howdy, Pardner!

Some exciting and productive partnerships have blossomed recently for ESLT. Hunters who seek abundant game, businesses who benefit from enthralled visitors, military units who need plenty of open space to maneuver, artists who treasure a beautiful vista, ranchers who work and know the land well, multi-agency efforts to design a well-balanced master plan for Owens Lake – these are a few of the varied partnerships that I'm excited to see growing.

Another primary partnership is with landowners who have taken the amazing step of preserving their land permanently. Through our Conservation Real Estate Program, we are actively trying to grow the number of individuals who take conservation into their own hands by purchasing and protecting a special piece of land. Tax benefits aren't the main reward for these visionary people, but those significant savings can help make an investment pencil out. Check out the beautiful properties at [www.eastsidelands.com](http://www.eastsidelands.com)!

With a shared vision of a whole and healthy Eastern Sierra, these partnerships will make a huge difference to our future. As a supporter of ESLT, much depends on our partnership with you, too, dear reader. To ensure that we're representing your vision and passion for the Eastern Sierra, we will soon be seeking your input on our next decade's strategic vision. Please keep an eye out for an upcoming visioning session and survey – we'll be awaiting your best ideas for ESLT as we celebrate our 10th birthday and refresh our strategic plan.

■ *By Karen Ferrell-Ingram,  
Executive Director*



*Historic cabin restored from the original built in the late 1800s.*



*The Simis Ranch raises goats, chickens, and vegetables, carrying on the tradition of agriculture in the Mono Basin since the late 1880s. Photos by ESLT staff.*

## Preserving the Mono Basin for People and Wildlife

Thanks to your help, the new DeChambeau Creek conservation easement preserves 135 acres of wildlife habitat, cultural history, and working lands.

DeChambeau Creek, the newest addition to ESLT's Working Farms & Ranches Program, is a unique place that leaves a lasting impression on people. Perched above the western shore of Mono Lake with stunning views over the lake basin and into the White Mountains, with a gently flowing creek, scattered aspen stands, and seasonally lush green meadows, it is easy to understand why both humans and animals have been drawn here for centuries.

The current chapter began a half a century ago when landowner Jan Simis purchased the land after falling in love with the beautiful location. "I have been lucky enough to know and love this land for over fifty years. The amazing views, plant life, and wild creatures combine in magical ways that thrill me every day" says Jan. Like many of our western landscapes the land had been worked for many years, the results of which are visible today in the productive green meadows, an aging orchard, and even a hardy hops plant presumably used to flavor some of the basin's earliest beer. One of the first things Jan did was to begin the process of restoring one of the early homesteads that remained on the property in a state of disrepair. With the help of friends and local craftsmen this cabin was restored and has served as a home since.

Other traditional uses continue, or have been returned to the land, as well. A portion of the property is utilized as a small scale farm. You can find local produce grown here by "Simis Ranch" and distributed by the Sierra Bounty Produce Collective. Everything from chickens to carrots, beans and leafy greens can be found on the farm.

The property is also often used as a classroom. Julia Parker and her daughter Lucy teach basket weaving here, several times a year, sitting under cottonwood trees in the shade, through a seminar sponsored by the Mono Lake Committee. A University of California at Santa Cruz Natural History class has been visiting the property each

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### Crooning Spadefoot Toads

Up in the Mono Basin, the beautiful sage and juniper country is home to a little amphibian, the Great Basin Spadefoot Toad. The toad is tan and olive colored, slightly smaller than the palm of your hand. Its name comes from the small, hard, black “spade” shaped markings on the hind feet. These spades help the toad to dig its winter burrows in order to escape the arid climate.

Just as it feeds on ants, beetles, grasshoppers and other insects, the toad must also watch out for coyotes, owls, snakes, and fish who regard the toad and its eggs as a tasty treat. To avoid being the mid-morning snack of a garter snake, the toad has unique noxious skin oil that repels predators and can cause an allergic reaction in the eyes of humans.

These high desert dwellers migrate every year from their winter burrows to their spring breeding grounds. On the first warm evening of spring, males travel to the springs and streams where they will start calling, hoping to attract a female with whom to mate. While crooning for a partner, males can become competitive, and physical contests among them are not uncommon.

Although the Great Basin Spadefoot Toad is not in great danger, when humans dam or disrupt bodies of water, the breeding grounds for the toad can in turn be disturbed. The ESLT Dechambeau Creek conservation easement is home to this high desert dweller, and the riparian areas surrounded by sagebrush and juniper habitat provides a perfect place for the toad to prosper. So as we dive even deeper into the summer months and you hear croaking in the Mono Basin area, remember our warty friend, the Spadefoot Toad! ■ *By Jessie O’Dell, ESLT intern*



*Wildlife habitat is preserved for the Great Basin Spadefoot Toad with a conservation easement. Photo copyright 2006 Richard D. Bartlett.*

*Eastern Sierra Land Trust works with willing landowners to preserve vital lands in the Eastern Sierra region for their scenic, agricultural, natural, recreational, historical, and watershed values.*

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*Chase Lefebvre, a member of IMACA's 2009 Eastern Sierra Youth Conservation Corps removes the invasive bull thistle. Plant by plant, the meadow rangeland habitat is enhanced.*

### Beyond Preservation

**Working together with landowners and volunteers to improve rangeland and habitat**

On most of our conservation projects, our primary focus is the permanent preservation of land. However, on certain projects where landowners are interested and willing, we may go beyond protection and engage in opportunities to enhance the conservation values being protected on that site. On the 900-acre Benton Hot Springs Ranch easement property, we are working with landowner Bill Bramlette and other partners, including volunteer community members, to enhance habitats for plants and wildlife in a number of ways. This work includes managing an invasive thistle that currently occupies some of the important wetland habitat, carefully

managing livestock use in balance with habitat considerations, and utilizing the skills of our volunteers and staff to inventory the unique natural resources present on the property. We are also working on developing plans to improve the quality of the pond habitat for native fish as well as providing a wider variety of habitat types to attract bird species. Interested in getting involved? Please contact Sarah Spano at ESLT for more information.

# The Oak Group Show and Sale, a Benefit for ESLT

Faulkner Gallery in Santa  
Barbara, September 2-30

We are excited to announce a special ESLT Art Show at the Faulkner Gallery in Santa Barbara this year, hosted by the highly acclaimed Oak Group with Eastern Sierra guest artists. The Oak Group, based in Santa Barbara, has worked successfully for over twenty years with numerous land trusts to preserve working and wild landscapes. The show and sale will feature an Eastern Sierra collection portraying the natural beauty of our region and raising awareness to protect our treasured lands. Fifty percent of all sales will support ESLT's important land conservation work.



Red Marsh at June Lake,  
oil by Sarah Vedder

**Join ESLT at the show, September 2 through September 30, and for a member picnic with Land Trust of Santa Barbara County on September 11.**

For more information, email [art@eslt.org](mailto:art@eslt.org), or call 760-873-4554.

Left: Serenity, Sabrina,  
watercolor by Chris Chapman



## Personal and Professional Commitments

List of Business Partners continues to grow and support ESLT

Open spaces, working farms and ranches, scenic vistas, and thriving wildlife and plant communities all contribute to our local quality of life, and our local economy. ESLT is proud to have a steadfast and loyal group of Business Partners who support our work to preserve rural lands in the Eastern Sierra.

Pelago, a Santa Barbara based web design and development business, donates 1% of its annual profits to ESLT's land conservation work. Pelago owners John Reeve, Michael Payne and Braden Jones have made a personal and professional commitment to the future of the Eastern Sierra. John explained, "We appreciate

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### Member Milestones

Thank you to all who recently sent contributions in memory or in honor of your family, friends, and loved ones. Such gifts pay tribute to these special people by helping us keep the Eastern Sierra a special place for now and for future generations—a true gift in perpetuity.

**Mollie Scott** gave in loving memory of her husband, Jeffrey Scott. **Larry and Ruth Blakely** gave in memory of Chuck Washburn.

Thank you to the following members who gave ESLT gift memberships to friends: **Rosanne and Tom Higley, Ann and Kevin Klinefelter, and Annie and Rick Cashner.**

## Member Spotlight



ESLT member and volunteer Lynn Peterson creates paintings with artist and ESLT member Pat Crowther to support land conservation in the Eastern Sierra.

ESLT members and volunteers, **Lynn and Steve Peterson**, enjoy living in the Eastern Sierra for the spectacular views, the friendly people, and the small town atmosphere. Lynn is a talented watercolor artist who revels in capturing the changing colors from season to season in this beautiful scenery. Studying how the light plays out on the landscapes inspires her to paint weekly with the local painting club, the Eastern Sierra Plein Air Painters.

Members since 2006, Lynn and Steve have found numerous ways to contribute to ESLT. Lynn actively volunteers on ESLT's Art for Conservation Committee. Lynn said, "I enjoy volunteering on the Art Committee because I meet new people and new artists. It is inspiring to see all the wonderful paintings everyone created at the show." She appreciates how ESLT supports the artists by holding shows and featuring groups such as the Eastern Sierra Plein Air Painters and finds it rewarding to help raise money to support our mission. She is also continually connecting ESLT with new members who are supportive of our work. Steve has volunteered at everything from grilling burgers at events to driving his vintage Lancia car for the Mammoth 4th of July parade last year. ESLT thrives on the support of all our wonderful volunteers, like Lynn and Steve, who make our mission possible.

## Preserving the Mono Basin for People and Wildlife

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spring for more than 20 years, with the college students camping for a week in the meadow, learning about the unique biology of the area.

Other landmark events have taken place on this land. Mono Lake Committee Executive Director, Geoff McQuilkin, explains “The beautiful DeChambeau Creek property holds a very special place in the Mono Lake Committee’s history. Tucked in an aspen grove is a ring of wooden benches and fire circle that, back in 1976, hosted a team of scientists camping for the summer. They conducted a comprehensive ecosystem study of Mono Lake and in the process revealed the damage caused by excessive water diversions. The place, and the peril, captivated them, and believing that someone had to take action they formed the Mono Lake Committee to advocate for the lake’s protection. It’s wonderful to come full circle; congratulations to Jan Simis and the Eastern Sierra Land Trust on preserving this scenic and special corner of the Mono Basin.”

Clearly the property has touched many people’s lives and continues to be enjoyed by others today. Sharing the magical beauty is one of the many good reasons that Jan recently decided to preserve her land permanently with a conservation easement. Thank you, Jan!

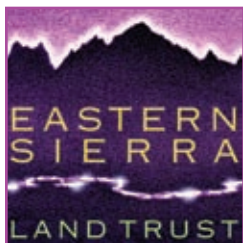
## Personal and Professional Commitments

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all the open lands the region offers and our freedom to explore them, so as a business we chose to support ESLT because we believe in the work of ESLT.”

Rusty Gregory and Mammoth Mountain are another important Business Partner in our community. As Rusty explained, “The Mountain feels it is important to support organizations like ESLT because their work helps bring an important balance to the work of the Mountain. Mammoth Mountain brings many people to our region, and preserving our region – its beautiful open spaces and landscapes – helps to keep those people returning. That is why we are committed to supporting the work of ESLT.” Rusty and Mammoth Mountain support ESLT through generous annual donations and by hosting an annual fundraising event for ESLT.

Whether your business can make an annual contribution, donate a percentage of profits, sponsor an event, or make an in-kind contribution, our business partnerships will benefit everyone – our treasured lands and our community. Please visit our website for a complete list of ESLT’s Business Partners. For more information on how your business can support ESLT, please call us at 760-873-4554.



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