



Story: The Lassen Creek Conservation Area

In December of 2003 Lassen Land and Trails Trust purchased the 149 acre Soule family property, a significant piece of prime mule-deer winter range and wildlife habitat that was threatened by “ranchette” style development in the scenic and agriculturally rich Honey Lake Valley in Northeastern California. Within this property is also a section of Lassen Creek, a valuable watershed that provides habitat for the Willow Flycatcher (a State of California threatened species and U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service listed sensitive species).

With development encroaching on many sides of this prime habitat, LLTT recognized a need to protect the last viable strip of open space between Bass Hill Wildlife refuge (owned by California Department of Fish & Game) and the Lassen National Forest in the Diamond Mountains. With a vision for a “habitat corridor” (a means for wildlife to move between seasonal locales) in place, LLTT then began work on its second acquisition--the 116 acre Charles W. Beckett Family Trust property.

Acquired in February of 2005, the Beckett Family Trust property lies between the Soule property purchased by LLTT in 2004, and 100 acres owned by the County of Lassen set aside for wildlife habitat protection in the late 1990’s. The Beckett acquisition was made possible by a \$100,000 grant through the **Preserving Wild California (PWC) program of the Resources Legacy Fund Foundation**, and a \$65,000 one-year no-interest bridge loan from **Norcross Wildlife Foundation**.

With this momentum, LLTT prepared a “Capp” –a Conservation Area Protection Plan, to outline the threats, values, and means to protect the corridor from fragmentation. This “Capp,” is a system put in place by the Wildlife Conservation Board of California, and now serves as the main planning document for the successful implementation of the project. Lands within the “Capp” comprise a total of 4,340 acres, and include possible acquisitions, as well as potential conservation easements on lands within the habitat corridor.

In December of 2007, LLTT officially paid off all remaining debts on the two parcels thanks to the sale of a Conservation Easement to the State of California Wildlife Conservation Board. This easement secured the “**Lassen Creek Conservation Area**” (**LCCA**) as wildlife habitat in perpetuity, and with the pending donation of 100 acres of bordering Lassen County land, moved the size of the preserve up to 365 acres.

But as circumstance often demands, LLTT's hard work has currently shifted to a new focus at LCCA—

A fire burned roughly 165 acres of land owned by the LLTT at the Lassen Creek Conservation Area on Saturday, June 23 2007. Though fire is part of a natural cycle, many non-native plants can take advantage of the open space left from a fire in the early stages of recovery.

Currently, the LLTT Conservation Committee has developed a rehabilitation plan for the LCCA to ensure re-vegetation of the Bitterbrush and other native species that were lost in the fire. These plants are vital to the migratory deer that frequent the preserve, and their success will be vital to the winter-feeding grounds that the herd relies on.

LLTT has been working hard with many local partners in this rehabilitation: California Deer Association, California Department of Fish & Game, the Eagle Lake office of the Bureau of Land Management, Antelope Fire Camp, the US Forest Service, The Susanville Rotary Club, Lassen County, and the numerous valuable professional volunteers that comprise the LLTT Conservation Committee.

Re-seeding the burned area of the preserve is ongoing, and thankfully, the most valuable wetland portion of the property did not burn in the fire.

The re-seeding of the preserve is anticipated to be completed in the spring of 2008, and LLTT is continuing its ongoing efforts to complete the "Capp" with the cooperation of conservation minded landowners and partners.

For more information contact 530-257-3252 or visit www.lassenlandandtrails.com

