



FEATHER RIVER LAND TRUST

2019–2020 Annual Report

20 Years of Conservation
all thanks to you



Feather River Land Trust

We conserve the lands and waters of the Feather River region and steward their ecological, cultural, and educational values for current and future generations.

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In 2020 we celebrated our 20th anniversary as a land trust. What started as a seed nurtured by the passion and dedication of a small group of volunteers, has grown into a community over 1,100 members strong. Together we've protected over 63,000 acres of ecologically important lands and waters and created five beautiful preserves for the public to enjoy. Our K-12 Learning Landscapes program continues to foster curiosity about the natural world and a love of place in future land stewards, and its success is a model for land trusts throughout the United States.

This brief report highlights just a few of the successes your generosity has made possible over the last two years. There are far too many wonderful accomplishments to share in these few pages. As you read these stories, remember that you, our community of supporters, have made it all possible. You can take pride in knowing that the positive impact we've made will last for generations to come.

We've come a long way over the years, but the heart and soul of this organization has not changed. Our shared love for the land binds this community together, makes us resilient in difficult times, and will carry us forward to the future. That future is bright and filled with opportunities—opportunities to protect more ecologically rich lands and waters, to improve amenities at our public preserves for the benefit of all, to welcome new land lovers to FRLT, and to keep growing this community that began as a little seed over 20 years ago.



Shelton Douthit, Executive Director



Shelton Douthit with recent FRLT retirees Susan Payne and Karen Kleven at the 2019 Olsen Barn Dedication

CELEBRATING 20 YEARS

Founded in 2000 by local volunteers whose love for the Feather River region spurred them to protect it for future generations, today we're a nationally accredited land trust, 1,100 members strong. Here are just a few of the many important achievements you've made possible. frlt.org/our-story

FRLT BEGINS

With 40 charter members and no paid staff, FRLT forms as a nonprofit land trust to conserve the Feather River region's most important lands and waters

2003

LEARNING LANDSCAPES

With local school districts, FRLT kicks off its K-12 conservation and education program to connect kids to nature, now a national model

2006

NORTHERN SIERRA PARTNERSHIP

FRLT and four regional and national organizations launch partnership to conserve the northern Sierra's large landscapes

2010

2000

FIRST PRESERVE

FRLT acquires the 575-acre Maddalena Property, now part of the Sierra Valley Preserve, with help from The Nature Conservancy and Sierra Business Council

2004

HEART K RANCH

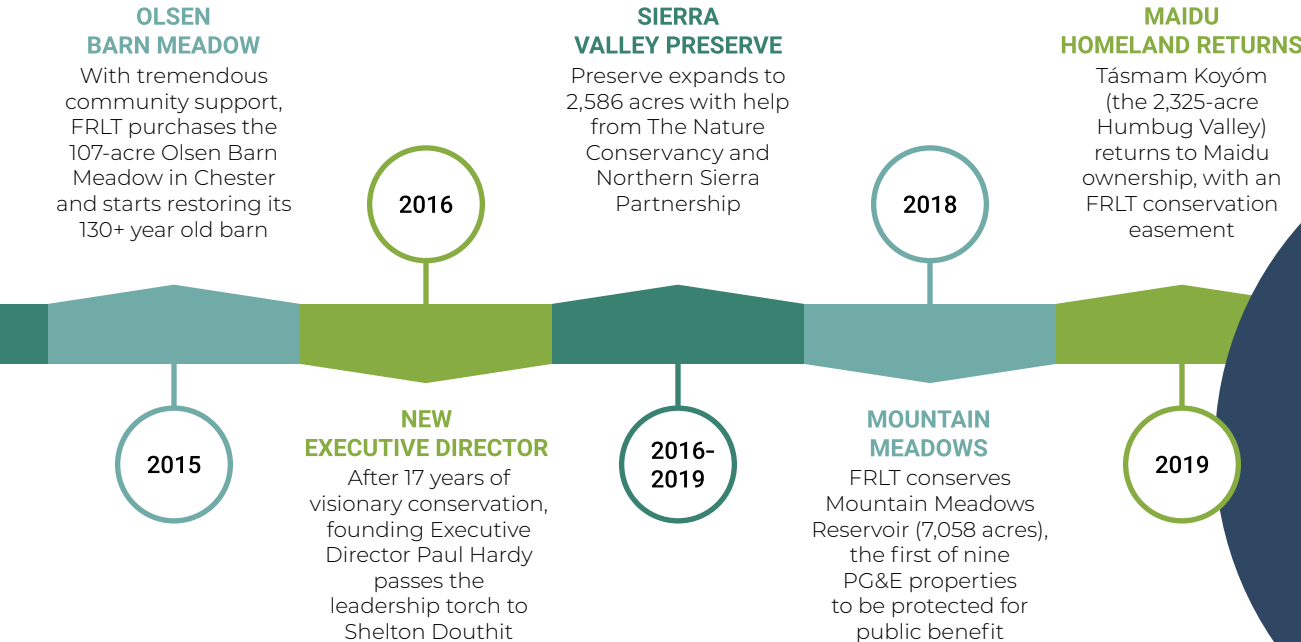
FRLT purchases the Heart K Ranch, a culturally important and biodiverse 903-acre historic ranch along Indian Creek in Genesee Valley

2007

30,000 ACRES CONSERVED

In just 10 years, FRLT helps conserve 30,000 acres of important wetlands, meadows, and family ranches rich in biodiversity and water

protecting what we love in the Feather River region



FRLT TODAY

Together, we've conserved over 63,000 acres of the Feather River Watershed, including 5 public preserves. With your help, we'll conserve 120,000 acres of important headwaters and habitats by 2022.

CONSERVING HEADWATERS



FRLT's Land Protection program is working to permanently protect 43,000 acres of important headwater lands owned by Pacific Gas & Electric with conservation easements. In a 2003 settlement agreement with the State of California, PG&E agreed to protect these lands for public benefit. frlt.org/pgc-lands

Lake Almanor © Colby Elliot

Protecting PG&E Headwaters and Maidu Homelands

A few miles west of Lake Almanor lies Butt Valley Reservoir, loved by many for trout fishing, camping, and boating, and home to a diversity of wildlife including Osprey and Bald Eagle. FRLT protected this peaceful lake and surrounding land (2,472 acres) with a conservation easement in 2020. This success is the most recent milestone in one of the most ambitious conservation projects ever undertaken by a land trust and a private corporation in the western United States.

FRLT is working with Pacific Gas & Electric (PG&E) and the Maidu Summit Consortium to permanently conserve nine distinct properties in the Feather River Watershed with conservation easements. This years-long effort is protecting water, wildlife habitat, Maidu homelands and cultural resources, outstanding scenic beauty, and some of the region's most beloved recreation sites.

Four of the properties include large reservoirs that will remain in PG&E ownership and be protected by FRLT conservation easements. In addition to Butt Valley Reservoir, FRLT protected Mountain Meadows Reservoir in Westwood in 2018, and expects to complete conservation easements at Lake Almanor and Bucks Lake by 2022. Five of the properties are important Maidu homelands that will return to Maidu ownership through the Indigenous nonprofit Maidu Summit Consortium, with FRLT holding conservation easements.

GRATITUDE FOR PROTECTING HEADWATER LANDS: Pacific Forest & Watershed Lands Stewardship Council, PG&E, Maidu Summit Consortium, Mountain Meadows Conservancy, CA Dept. of Fish & Wildlife, with support from Bella Vista Foundation, Firedoll Foundation, Mellam Family Foundation, Morgan Family Foundation, Northern Sierra Partnership, and land trust members like you.

NATIVE HOMELANDS



With your help, FRLT's Land Protection program is proud to partner with the Maidu Summit Consortium and others to conserve the cultural heritage and ecological values of Tásmam Koyóm and Native homelands in the Feather River region.
frlt.org/native-homelands

Tásmam Koyóm © Bud Turner

Tásmam Koyóm: A Maidu Homeland Returns Home

For millennia, Mountain Maidu people lived and thrived in Tásmam Koyóm, tending the beautiful mountain valley and surrounding forest. However, with Euroamerican settlement of “Humbug Valley,” detrimental resource extraction, and violent discrimination, Maidu presence was nearly lost. The land—and Maidu relationship to it—suffered. After years of effort, this special Maidu homeland has at last returned home. In a historic land transfer, Pacific Gas & Electric conveyed ownership of these ancestral lands to the Mountain Maidu people in 2019. The Maidu Summit Consortium's (MSC) reclaimed lands at Tásmam Koyóm (2,325 acres) are protected with conservation easements held by FRLT and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife.

Reflecting on this historic return, MSC Board Secretary Marvena Harris comments, “...our lands were created by Kodoyapem, World Maker, for our People to use and live. The land has always been ours and will always be ours. We are here to be stewards of the land and creatures that exist on the land.” The scenic mountain meadow is rich with native trout and wildlife habitats along Yellow Creek, a tributary to the North Fork Feather River. In addition to Tásmam Koyóm, the Maidu Trail (8 acres) and Maidu Forest (164 acres) properties near Lake Almanor have returned to Maidu ownership, with FRLT conservation easements.

GRATITUDE FOR CONSERVING TÁSMAM KOYÓM: Maidu Summit Consortium, Pacific Forest & Watershed Lands Stewardship Council, Pacific Gas & Electric Company, and CA Department of Fish & Wildlife, with support from the Firedoll Foundation, Mellam Family Foundation, Morgan Family Foundation, Northern Sierra Partnership, and generous members like you.

COMMUNITY CONSERVATION



FRLT owns five preserves in five distinct communities across the upper Feather River Watershed. With diverse histories and habitats, each preserve tells a unique story. FRLT manages these lands for water, wildlife, low-impact recreation, agriculture, and outdoor education. frlt.org/preserves

Marshall Property at the Sierra Valley Preserve © Kristi Jamason

Sierra Valley Preserve: A Special Place for Wildlife and People

With your help, FRLT added 50 important acres to the Sierra Valley Preserve in 2019, totaling 2,586 acres of private land for the public good. Our largest preserve protects crucial wetlands, wildlife habitats, and the only public access to this special valley. The newly acquired Marshall property overlooks the headwaters of the Wild and Scenic Middle Fork Feather River and was purchased as headquarters for managing the preserve.

In 2020, we continued planning for expanded visitor services and programs, and completed a beautiful welcome kiosk and two miles of new interpretive trails at the preserve's West Entrance (opening 2021!). Jeff Bue, who manages the preserve, reflects: "I'm in awe of the beauty of this valley and feel privileged to live here. The tranquil, open space punctuated by sounds of migrating birds during the day and howling coyotes at night are reminders of how special it is. I'm thrilled to soon be sharing these experiences with visitors."

The Sierra Valley Preserve, a haven for wildlife, plants, and people, has been 17+ years in the making with participation from local landowners, volunteers, the Northern Sierra Partnership, and FRLT members with a connection to this beautiful place, unlike any other in California.

GRATITUDE FOR PROTECTING AND ENHANCING THE SIERRA VALLEY PRESERVE: David and Lucile Packard Foundation, The Nature Conservancy, Northern Sierra Partnership, Community Foundation of Western Nevada, Resources Legacy Fund, with support from the Firedoll Foundation, Mellam Family Foundation, Morgan Family Foundation, and members like you.

LAND STEWARDSHIP



FRLT's Land Stewardship program works to improve the health of conserved lands. Sustainable grazing can be an important tool, and FRLT partners with local ranchers to graze pastures at Heart K Ranch, the Sierra Valley Preserve, and the Leonhardt Ranch Learning Landscape. frlt.org/stewardship

Monitoring Soil Health at Heart K Ranch © Vanessa Vasquez

Working Together: Conservation and Ranching

FRLT's 900-acre Heart K Ranch, is traversed by over two miles of Indian Creek—a major tributary to the Feather River—and holds incredible beauty, biodiversity, and Maidu cultural importance. As a working ranch, the Heart K presents both challenges and opportunities in demonstrating how conservation and ranching can work together.

In 2019, FRLT set a 10-year vision for the ranch that defines new goals for protecting and restoring its meadows, habitats, and cultural and historical resources. Our first step was to evaluate how a more holistic approach to grazing could improve ecological values like water quality and soil health. With rangeland experts from the Jefferson Center for Holistic Management, we identified ways to increase plant diversity, vegetation cover, and forage for livestock and wildlife, and put a robust monitoring program in place to evaluate our practices over time. In 2020, we worked with our local grazing partner and the US Forest Service to install over 6,000 feet of wildlife-friendly fencing around the pastures near riparian areas. This allows cattle to graze, while creating safer passage for wildlife and protecting creek-side habitats.

Next steps include improving water management and collaborating for safe underburning of forested areas, which is critical to mitigating high-intensity wildfire.

GRATITUDE FOR IMPROVING STEWARDSHIP OF HEART K RANCH: Resources Legacy Fund, Morgan Family Foundation, US Forest Service, Heart K grazing lessee Mark Foster, Feather River Resource Conservation District, Plumas Audubon Society, Jefferson Center for Holistic Management, and generous land trust members and volunteers.

KIDS IN NATURE

A close-up photograph of a child wearing a grey hoodie, sitting outdoors and writing in a white notebook with a yellow pencil. The child's face is partially visible on the right side of the frame. In the background, there is a field of tall, dry grass. To the left, the back of another child's head wearing a blue baseball cap is visible.

Learning Landscapes is FRLT's kid-centric land conservation and outdoor education program that reaches 2,500 school children annually in Plumas, Lassen, and Sierra counties. It's become a national model for outdoor education and fostering a land stewardship ethic in the next generation. frlt.org/learning-landscapes

Kids Field Journaling in Sierra Valley © Ellie Hinrichs

Learning Landscapes: A Model for Resilience

With a newly completed program operations manual in hand, FRLT's Learning Landscapes Coordinator, Rob Wade, was even more prepared than usual for the 2019–2020 school year. Fall semester went beautifully with great teacher engagement and Trail Tuesdays, Watershed Wednesdays, and Field Trip Fridays happening with students throughout the region. Rob spent winter break collaborating with national environmental education leaders and coaching other land trusts, and then ... the pandemic hit.

Ten years after we built our first outdoor classroom, the Feather River Watershed's 12 public schools were uniquely positioned to deal with the challenges presented by COVID-19. By conserving natural lands near schools and enhancing them with seating areas and trails, FRLT's program greatly increases the ability for place-based education to occur regularly throughout any school year. With outdoor classrooms just steps away, small cohorts of students and teachers can hold class in the open air. Fifteen off-campus outdoor classrooms and 12 on-campus sites are seeing unprecedented use, complementing virtual and classroom learning.

Rob notes, "It's always been a great idea to get kids outside. COVID just hard-tested our resilience." While a challenging time all around, one thing is clear—the protected outdoor learning spaces Learning Landscapes provides are more valuable than ever.

GRATITUDE FOR MAKING OUTDOOR LEARNING FOR KIDS POSSIBLE: Dedicated local teachers, students, and school districts; Susan Hopkins, Grant and Cindy Edwards, Foster Family Foundation, Northern Sierra Partnership, Learning Landscapes landowners and partners; and volunteers and generous members like you.

LAND CONSERVATION



FRLT's Land Protection program is working with visionary landowners, conservation partners, and public agencies to conserve working family ranches and farms in Sierra Valley, protecting critical wetlands and meadows that sustain abundant biodiversity. frlt.org/sierra-valley

Diamond G Ranch © Kristi Jamason

Sierra Valley Ranches: Wetlands, Wildlife, and Agriculture

At 120,000 acres, Sierra Valley rivals Lake Tahoe in size and beauty. It holds the Sierra Nevada's largest wetland complex and montane meadows—mostly on privately owned ranches. These wetlands form the headwaters of the Middle Fork Feather River, a Wild and Scenic River and one of California's most important water sources. A biodiversity hotspot, the Valley supports the Sierra's greatest diversity of bird species, providing a key stopover on the Pacific Flyway.

Together with the Northern Sierra Partnership, The Nature Conservancy, and public agencies, we're working to protect Sierra Valley's vast wetlands, diverse wildlife habitats, and Middle Fork Feather River headwaters, while sustaining agricultural vitality.

In 2019 and 2020, we worked with visionary landowners to permanently conserve six working family farms and ranches (2,490 acres) with conservation easements. As Gary Romano, owner of Sierra Valley Farms comments, "I'm happy the Land Trust is working with farmers and ranchers who are already taking good care of their land. We've been doing it for years, and do it well, so these easements are a great way to promote local livelihoods while maintaining natural resources." Thanks to your support, these open space lands are now protected for the benefit of current and future generations—human and wild—forever.

GRATITUDE FOR PROTECTING BIODIVERSE AG LANDS: Sierra Valley landowners, Northern Sierra Partnership, The Nature Conservancy, Natural Resources Conservation Service, California Wildlife Conservation Board, California Department of Fish and Wildlife, California Department of Conservation, and land trust members like you.

PROTECTING RANCHES IN SIERRA VALLEY



Sierra Valley Farms

65 acres | protected Sep 2019

The third generation Romano family farm is surrounded by FRLT's Sierra Valley Preserve and includes a certified organic farm and rich wetlands. The farm hosts a weekly summer farmers' market and other events, making it a beloved community gathering place.



Church Ranch

633 acres | protected Feb 2020

Five members of the Church family came together to conserve this historic ranch, which has been in their family since the 1860s. Its extensive wet meadows and diverse forests provide outstanding wildlife habitats, including nesting grounds for Greater Sandhill Cranes.



Diamond G Ranch

467 acres | protected Feb 2020

The Grashuis family grazes cattle seasonally on this ranch that connects key protected lands to the north and south. It's home to sensitive features like fens, aspen stands, vernal pools, and spectacular volcanic cliffs that provide breeding habitat for Peregrine Falcon.

for water, wildlife, and rural livelihoods



Hill Ranch

440 acres | protected Mar 2020

This working cattle ranch is home to many threatened bird species and is migratory range for Mule Deer and Pronghorn. The property's 1.5 miles of perennial streams support wet meadow habitat and the main stem of Smithneck Creek, a productive trout fishery.



Potter Ranch

253 acres | protected Mar 2020

With extensive upland sage habitat and seasonal tributaries to Smithneck Creek, this cattle ranch is important for landscape connectivity, wildlife movement, and groundwater recharge for Sierra Valley. The Potter family also provides grass-fed beef to local markets.



Genasci Ranch

632 acres | protected Jul 2020

Jim and Mary Genasci's protection of this fourth-generation ranch builds on their family's legacy of conservation in the region. It boasts a historic barn, native biodiversity, excellent fawning and migratory habitat for regional deer herds, and is important for groundwater recharge.



HERE TO STAY

Statement of Financial Position

ASSETS

Current Assets

| | |
|--|--------------------|
| Cash and Cash Equivalents | 1,285,978 |
| Investments | 2,188,703 |
| Receivables | 24,890 |
| *Conservation Easements | 17 |
| Total Current Assets | \$3,499,588 |
| Land Improvements & Equipment (net) | \$7,490,089 |

| | |
|---------------------|---------------------|
| TOTAL ASSETS | \$10,989,677 |
|---------------------|---------------------|

LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS

Liabilities

| | |
|--|------------------|
| Accounts Payable and Other Liabilities | 360,586 |
| Unearned Revenue | 0 |
| Total Liabilities | \$360,586 |

Net Assets

| | |
|---------------------------------|---------------------|
| Unrestricted | 464,291 |
| Unrestricted – Board Designated | 1,509,533 |
| **Permanently Restricted | 8,655,267 |
| Total Net Assets | \$10,629,091 |

| | |
|---|---------------------|
| TOTAL LIABILITIES & NET ASSETS | \$10,989,677 |
|---|---------------------|

*Reflects the number of conservation easements held at an assigned value of \$1 each

**Permanently restricted funds reflect reserves required to monitor lands annually, in perpetuity

Statement of Activities

REVENUES

| | |
|-------------------------------------|-----------|
| Grants & Endowments | 2,433,257 |
| Individual Donations | 454,106 |
| *Conservation Easement Revenue | 8 |
| Grazing and Service Revenue | 35,526 |
| Investment Income | 141,431 |
| Other Income (includes fundraisers) | 770,214 |

| | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| TOTAL REVENUES | \$3,834,542 |
|-----------------------|--------------------|

EXPENSES

| | |
|---------------------------------|-----------|
| Land Conservation | 1,448,850 |
| Land Stewardship | 431,777 |
| Education | 38,380 |
| Management and General | 222,060 |
| Fundraising/Membership/Outreach | 189,464 |

| | |
|-----------------------|--------------------|
| TOTAL EXPENSES | \$2,330,531 |
|-----------------------|--------------------|

| | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|
| CHANGE IN NET ASSETS | \$1,504,011 |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|

| | |
|--|--------------------|
| NET ASSETS, BEGINNING OF THE YEAR | \$9,125,080 |
|--|--------------------|

| | |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|
| NET ASSETS, END OF THE YEAR | \$10,629,091 |
|------------------------------------|---------------------|

Your support helps keep FRLT vital and strong. Audited financial statements and IRS Form 990 available by request.

For a full list of our generous donors, volunteers, and partners, visit frlt.org/annual-report

GRATITUDE



Whether you're a member of FRLT, a volunteer, a partner organization, or a foundation, your support makes our work possible. You are helping to conserve more land, restore people's relationship to land, and create a vital, sustainable organization.

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Western Grebes at Lake Almanor © Micah Silver

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Young Bobcat Siblings © Doug Blesse Photography

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“I want the Land Trust to continue long after my life so my grandkids can bring their grandkids here to enjoy the beauty and magic of this place and know their grandparents made a difference in this lifetime.”

Clare Churchill
Land Legacy Circle Member

Special thanks to our Land Legacy Circle members for helping to keep FRLT strong now and forever.

This visionary group of land lovers have chosen to make protection of the Feather River Watershed part of their legacy by planning to leave bequests to FRLT in their wills or trusts.

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In 2019 and 2020 we said goodbye to two Land Legacy Circle members whose deep passion and love for the land will endure for generations to come: Sam Catalano and Tony Linard.

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