THE FUTURE OF LAND CONSERVATION IN SANTA BARBARA COUNTY

OUR MISSION
The Land Trust for Santa Barbara County conserves natural resources, agricultural land, and open spaces for the benefit of present and future generations.

OUR VISION
We envision a future with conserved lands throughout the county that engage and nourish both people and nature, including productive family farms and ranches that succeed from generation to generation; healthy natural habitat areas to sustain and harbor wildlife and plants; and beautiful trails and open spaces that provide recreational gateways accessible to all.

The Land Trust has served the people of Santa Barbara County for more than 30 years by collaborating with willing landowners to conserve important properties for community benefit.

Our work restores natural habitat, preserves agriculture, enhances recreational access, and provides education and programs to inspire, entertain, and enlighten people of all ages and from all walks of life.

The following pages depict our vision for the next five years and the impact we hope to make for our community. We believe that it has never been more important to accelerate the pace and improve the quality of our land conservation work. We hope you share our inspiration and join us for what promises to be an exciting ride.

Chet Work
Executive Director
Homegrown. The Land Trust was founded by people with deep roots in Santa Barbara County, and the organization continues to be funded largely by residents of this diverse region. Our Board of Trustees and staff live here, and we care deeply about the character of our county, its residents, and the unique quality of life that we are privileged to enjoy. We share with our members, partners, funders, and committed landowners a sense that we are more than just collaborators—we are neighbors.

Trusted. Conservation requires sincere collaboration and strong partnerships. Our success depends on the enduring quality of the relationships we build with people from around the county. We work to be transparent, responsible, and ethical, and to respect the communities we work within and the privacy of those with whom we work.

Balanced. The legacy of conservation begins with respect for private property rights and for those who have cared for the county’s precious lands for generations. We recognize the landowners whose stewardship provides quality-of-life benefits to our whole community. We strive to create conservation solutions that meet the needs of landowners and their families who choose to work with us, as we work to provide lasting benefits to the broader community.

Enduring. We protect and care for special places forever. We take seriously the responsibility to maintain and enhance the quality of life and community character of Santa Barbara County for future generations. A commitment to sustainability and permanence runs through everything we do.

Engaged. We believe that the best conservation outcomes emerge through creative problem solving and open, collaborative communication. Our staff and Board are committed to listening and responding to questions, concerns, and information about opportunities from all who care about the conservation of special places. We interact with a network of other land trusts, appraisers, real estate professionals, wildlife managers, farmers, ranchers, educators, and other experts in their fields.

Expert. Conservation in Santa Barbara County is exceedingly complex. Lasting results depend on the decades of extensive experience our Land Trust staff and Board bring to each relationship and transaction. Working together, we get the job done.
Pace
In the coming years, we will significantly increase the pace and scale of our land conservation efforts. Today, with land conversion and fragmentation occurring at an ever-accelerating pace, we feel a fresh sense of urgency to keep important lands—working farms and ranches, important wildlife habitat, and places for outdoor recreation—intact.

Quality
With the help of our Conservation Blueprint, we use cutting-edge science to identify our county’s unique natural resources, critical recreation needs, and habitats that will remain viable and resilient in the face of our changing climate. In the coming years we will use this knowledge to ensure that the lands we work to conserve are the most important for our community.

CONSERVING LAND FOR FUTURE GENERATIONS

Since 1985, the Land Trust has helped to preserve 26,000 acres of wildlife habitat.

The Land Trust has worked with more than 50 local families to keep family lands in family hands.

More than one third of Land Trust-conserved properties include trails for public hiking, biking, or horseback riding.

The Land Trust will add at least 2,500 acres of newly conserved lands—working land, wildlife habitat, places for recreation—each year, achieving a total of 40,000 conserved acres countywide.

The Land Trust will protect at least one key property along the Gaviota Coast.

The Land Trust will explore options for the creation of a signature preserve—like Arroyo Hondo—for the people of the Santa Maria Valley.
Stewardship
With each conservation project, the Land Trust takes on the obligation to monitor or maintain the land forever—this land stewardship is our most fundamental responsibility. We manage the properties we own in a way that both ensures and enhances their conservation values and we work with landowners of other conserved lands to provide land management and restoration resources.

Education
The Land Trust has long used our preserves and properties as venues where residents and visitors alike can learn about Santa Barbara County’s environment, agriculture, and human history. Our Arroyo Hondo Preserve, on the Gaviota Coast, provides year-round opportunities for school groups and others to learn about and enjoy nature, led by teams of passionate and engaging docents.

Efficiency
The Land Trust has served the people of Santa Barbara County for more than 30 years by collaborating with willing landowners to conserve land for broad public benefit. We are committed to achieving results that stand the test of time. We have built a group of talented staff, Board, volunteers, and community ambassadors and have established ourselves as a trusted community institution. We will continue to grow and strengthen our team to meet the needs of the community and our conservation goals.

Over the next 5 years
➔ The Land Trust will reach out to our diverse communities and deepen our understanding of conservation, recreation, and outdoor education priorities in all parts of the county.
➔ The Land Trust will expand the use of our preserves and protected land for the education of current and future generations of conservationists.
➔ The Land Trust will expand opportunities for the community to participate in our work and increase community awareness of our organization throughout the county.
➔ The Land Trust will invest in growing the capacity of our organization—our Board, staff, and volunteers—to support and sustain increased conservation.

To date, more than 21,000 students have participated in Land Trust educational programs.
The Land Trust would like to thank the Overall Family Foundation and the Walter and Holly Thomson Foundation for their financial support for this strategic plan and Marc Smiley and the team at Solid Ground Consulting for their guidance during the planning process. Advice and expertise provided by Anne Dewey, Sandy Seale, and Tres Riordan were invaluable—thank you. The Land Trust is also very grateful for the many hours invested in this plan by our volunteer Board of Trustees, led by Board President Greg Parker.