

THE FOOTHILL ADVOCATE

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SIERRA • FOOTHILL



• CONSERVANCY •

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a good year



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The Geology of the McKenzie Preserve

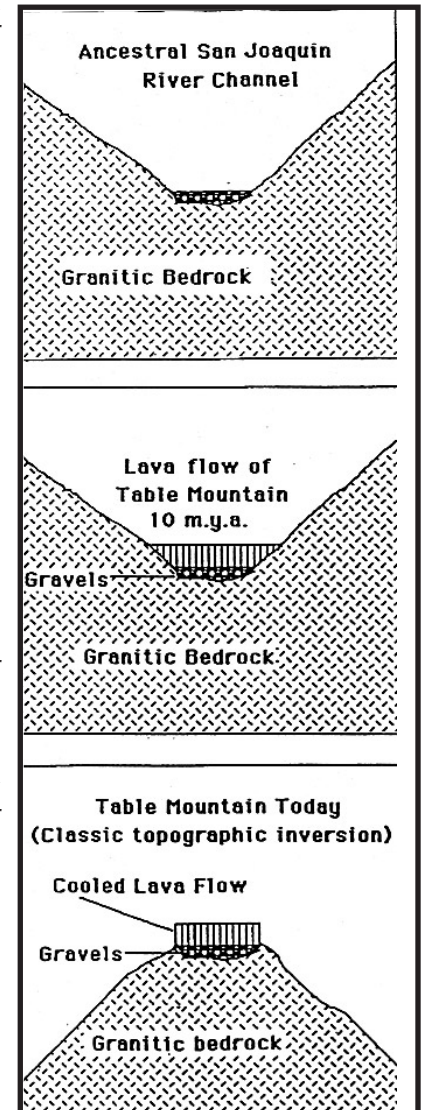
When you drive by the SFC McKenzie Preserve, or better yet go for a walk or hike, you will see the flat stony surface which forms the top of the table mountain. Did you know that this lava flow is much older than the entire Sierra Nevada Range? Geologists tell us that these table formations were created about ten to twelve million years ago, long before the Sierra Nevada Range was pushed up by tectonic forces. A volcano in what is now Nevada sent a river of hot lava down an ancient westward flowing river valley. Over the millions of years that followed, this landscape tilted up to form the foothills of the Sierra, and the ground around the lava flow eroded away, leaving the lava on top of a series of ridges. The lava has prominent vertical columnar joints which were caused by contraction during cooling, somewhat like the Devil's Postpile on the eastern side of the Sierra.

There are similar tables north and east of the McKenzie table, in a sinuous pattern following the path of the ancient river bed. On highway 140 toward Madera there is a mountain called Little Table, which is not part of this lava flow, but is capped by cemented stream gravels.

At the bottom of the ancient river were rounded cobbles and gravels which can now be found under the lava. In several place these rocks were dug out by forty-niners in search of gold, and there are the remains of an arrastra near the base of the mountain slope where the miners used a mule to crush the rocks.

The geology of Table Mountain has been extremely important in helping geologists to establish the rate of uplift for the Sierra. When the slope of the lava on Table Mountain~the ancient river~is compared to the modern San Joaquin, it indicates that the Sierra has risen about 6000 feet at the crest over the last ten million years. This is an average rate of about three quarters of an inch (after erosion) per century.

In good rainfall years the top of the table is covered with colorful wild flowers in the spring, and there is a special treat of a large vernal pool, a shallow depression in the ground which becomes



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2012 was a good year for SFC

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The Sierra Foothill Conservancy is a non-profit public benefit corporation under Internal Revenue Service Code Section 501(c)(3) and California Revenue and Taxation Code Section 23701d. Contributions are deductible for federal income tax purposes.

Some of the greatest joys about land conservation work are the many opportunities for inspiration from the different people involved in making it happen. From the fourth generation rancher ensuring that his property will forever remain a scenic working landscape, to the college volunteer guiding field trips for kids, to the member-donor investing in the natural legacy of our region, we are bound by a common value rooted in a deep appreciation for land and its future.

I was reminded of this recently on a warm fall day when a group of us went to visit a potential preserve property. Our field troop included two Sierra Foothill Conservancy staff members, our board president, our AmeriCorps volunteers and a funding representative. We dispersed to different areas of the property, excited about observing and documenting wildlife, viewing the ponds and touring a historic orchard site. While walking with the landowner, he shared stories of his family's history on the ranch which dated back to the 1930s.

Our group left the property energized by our visit, and we continued our conversation over dinner. Thinking about the landowner's long history with the property and the unique stories of the individuals around the dinner table, I was struck by how our different experiences had somehow led us all to a common land conservation path.

It is a wonderful thing to have a deep connection to a specific place with stories that span multiple generations. For many of us, the story of our family is spread across various states or continents. But no matter where we come from, we probably each have some memory of finding refuge and wonder in an open field or meadow, stream or river, tree or forest. More than likely, these early memories laid a foundation for our lifelong appreciation of the outdoors.

Sierra Foothill Conservancy protects places that have stories and places that will continue to make memories for generations to come. Whether you are a long-time member who can't wait to see the Carpenteria in bloom again, a partnering landowner who has decided to conserve her property in perpetuity, or a second grader who experienced the foothills for the first time on the McKenzie Preserve, SFC helps to ensure that there will always be places for refuge and wonder.

Your investment in land conservation truly makes a difference. Our major accomplishments over the past year include a conservation easement on 680 acres of blue oak woodland and rangeland on the south side of Black Mountain. We implemented land stewardship projects including fuels reduction, management of invasive plants, riparian restoration and trail building. We renovated the McKenzie Preserve entryway, developed the outdoor classroom, and connected over 3,000 people to foothill lands through classes and hikes, open house events, volunteer opportunities, and school field trips.

We conserved 1,390 acres of scenic land along the upper San Joaquin River corridor, and purchased a 280 acre ranch near the McKenzie Preserve, now known as the Ted Martin Wildlife Preserve.

By the end of 2012, we will have completed projects that will bring us to over 25,000 protected acres. 2013 promises to be another exciting year for local land conservation. From our entire Board and Staff, we wish you and yours a wonderful Holiday Season!

Jeannette Tuitele

SFC winter events, classes and hikes

Hikes and classes are open to the public; reservations are required. Classes are \$10 for members, \$20 for members' families, \$5 for student members, \$15 for non-members or \$30 for their families. There is a suggested \$5 donation for hikes for non-members. To register for classes, go to www.sierrafoothill.org and follow the Hikes & Classes link, or you may call Rosanna at 559-855-3473 for Fresno county events or Ray at 209-742-5556 for Mariposa. Bring lunch and water; hiking shoes or boots are a good idea for both classes and hikes.

Classes for 2013

Saturday, March 16: Natural History of the McKenzie Preserve: Join biologist Rodney Olsen, geologist Craig Poole and anthropologist Allen Beck to explore plants, animals, rocks and archeological sites, including a 6 mile round trip hike to the table top. Bring lunch and water. **9 a.m. to 3 p.m.**

Photography on the McKenzie Preserve: Join local nature photographer David Hunter for a day of learning practical nature photography tips for all skill levels. Bring your camera and a snack. Look at samples of David's work at www.davidhunterphoto.com. Date to be announced.

Sunday, April 14: Wildflowers on the McKenzie Preserve: Botanist and local wildflower authority John Stebbins will show you beautiful spring flowers including vernal pool species and spectacular scenery on a fairly strenuous 6 mile round trip hike to the top of McKenzie Table. **9 a.m. to 3 p.m.**

Hikes for 2013:

Saturday, January 5: Smith Basin. 9 a.m. 8 miles round trip, 1000 feet elevation gain to the table top and 800 feet down to the basin and back. With lunch in Smith Basin, this is a 7 hour hike.

Saturday January 26: McKenzie Table Top. 9 a.m. A 6 mile round trip, elevation gain about 1000 feet. With lunch on top, about 5 hours.

Sunday, January 27: Fine Gold Creek. 9 a.m. An easy walk, one to two miles round trip, appropriate for children with parents.

Saturday, February 2: Smith Basin. 9 a.m.

Sunday, February 3: Black Mountain Summit. 9 a.m. About a 4 mile round trip along a dirt road, elevation gain 800 feet. If the group wishes, the hike may go another mile out along the ridge.

Sunday, February 10: Table Mountain Loop. 8 a.m. A very strenuous hike, about 10 miles round trip with quite a bit of cross country. About 1000 feet climb, 700 feet down to the river, then up to the table and down. About 8 hours.

Saturday, February 23: Table Mountain Power Hike. 9 a.m.

Saturday, February 23: McKenzie Table Top 9 a.m.

Sunday, February 24: Fine Gold Creek. 9 a.m.

2013 McKenzie Open Preserve Days

The preserve will be open for family hikes or picnics. No reservations are needed.

Saturday January 12, Saturday February 9, Saturday March 9, and Saturday April 13.

SFC's audited financial report for fiscal year 2011 through 2012 will be available on SFC's website, www.sierrafoothill.org, the first week of January 2013.

McKenzie Table

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a pond during the rainy season. These pools hold water long enough in the spring to allow some rare plants and animals to grow and reproduce, but not long enough for a marsh ecosystem to develop. Vernal pools were common in California in the days before agriculture and development plowed and paved the land, but today they are quite rare. They require poorly drained soil such as hardpan or weathered lava rock. As the water slowly evaporates, beautiful circles of plants such as goldfields, meadowfoam and popcorn flowers bloom and set seeds for the next year. The pools may also contain tiny animals such as Fairy Shrimp, Tadpole Shrimp. Seed Shrimp and Copepods. These critters are quite rare, and some are protected by the Endangered Species Act. One of the reasons that the McKenzie Table became a preserve is to protect the habitat of these rare plants and animals.

Sallie Mook

SFC Lifetime Giving Circles

Carpenteria Circle

Edward Martin Family Foundation (\$1,200,000)
Dr. Bill Miller (\$500,000)
Table Mountain Rancheria (\$193,500)
Betty White (\$150,000)

Checkerbloom Circle (\$50,000+)

Mark and Jan Balcom
Jerry and Edith Kemp
Bart and Cindy Topping

Blue Oak Circle (\$25,000+)

Stefan and Mary Biskup

Live Oak Circle (\$10,000)

Anonymous
David and Anne Cehrs
David and Caryn Coss
Jean Drum
Jerry Fischer
Bertha and John Garabedian Foundation
Pete Gustafson and Heidi Riedle
Coke and James Hallowell
Steve and Toni Kellenberg
Robert and Holly Longatti
Bea and Kevin Olsen
Check Peck and Peg Smith
Craig and Lisa Poole
John Scholefield and
Kristine Petrucci Scholefield
Fred Schreiber
Mike Spiess and Pat Witt
John and Elaine Stebbins
William Stookey
Terry and Catherine Tuell
Sierra Endocrine Associates

Manzanita Circle (\$5,000+)

Al and Carliene Anderson
Baker, Manok & Jensen
Effie Beeman
Tom Biglione
Walt and Susan Buster
Sam Gitchel and Nancy Bleile
George and Jackie Folson
Don and Jennifer Gaede
John Benedict Gaguine
Dave Hartesveldt - Live Oak Associates
Louise Hastrup
Steve and Diane Haze
Heberger & Company
James F. Kemp
Ken and Janet Klug
Terry and Cat Krosschell
Jean Linder and Paul Rempel
Kenneth and Carol Lewis
Norma Mastin
John and Vickie Maxwell
James and Sandra McHenry
Jane Medley
Elise and Alex Moir
Charles and Becky Morales
Rodney and Mariette Olsen
Sharon Powers and Mike Smith
Jane Pritchard
Regency Investment Advisors
John and Stacey Schiro
Steven and Cheryl Stegmaier
Bob and Dee Wilkins
Robert and Phyllis Wright
Tom Zimoski

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Christopher and Anna Heckler
Steve and Toni Kellenberg

Mareka Lodge and family
Ted Martin
Bill Miller
Teri and Ken Pulvino
Art Staebler family
Rita Vanderburg
James and Todd White

Agency Partners

Bureau of Reclamation
Central Valley Project Conservation Program
Natureal Resources Conservation Service

Sierra Nevada Conservancy
State Resources Agency
Wildlife Conservation board

Sierra Foothill Conservancy

Annual Giving Circles and Project Funders 2012

Carpenteria Circle

Edward Martin Family Foundation (1.1 million)

Sierra Nevada Conservancy (1.1 million)

Blue Oak Circle (\$25,000+)

S.D. Bechtel Foundation

Bart and Cindy Topping

Live Oak Circle (\$10,000+)

Southern California Edison

Manzanita Circle (\$5,000)

Mark and Jan Balcom

Benito & Francis C. Gaguine foundation

Pacific Gas and Electric company

California Buckeye Circle (\$2,500)

Anonymous

Stefan and Mary Biskup

Charles and Becky Morales

Carolyn Sanders and Eric Boysen

California Poppy Circle (\$1,000+)

Baker, Manock & Jensen

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Bob and Holly Longatti

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Teri and Ken Pulvino

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Craig and Lisa Poole

Regency Investment Advisors

John Scholefield and

Kristine Petrucci Scholefield

Fred Schreiber

Onkar Singh

Jim Wheeler and Harriet Wrye

Yosemite Bug Rustic Mt. Resort

Tom Zimoski

Lupine Circle (\$500+)

Loren Alvig and Dzung Trinh

Ralph and Kebi Brown

Walt and Susan Buster

Eric and Kristen Cole

Jean Drum

Jeffrey and Sandra Gabe

Michael and Kimberly Goldring

David and Christine Hartesveldt

Louise Hastrup

Heberger & Company

David K. Hill and Dee Lacy

Carol A. Johnson

Jean Linder and Paul Rempel

Live Oak Associates

Elise and Alex Moir

Kay Mulholland

Joan and Stan Poss

Jerry Radinoff and Paula Siegel

David Slater and Chris Hays

John and Elaine Stebbins

Jeannette and Jamie Tuitele-Lewis

Peter and Virginia Van Kuran

Foothill Heritage Circle

Supporters who make a life-income or estate gift become honored members of the Foothill Heritage Circle. As a member you will help insure that the land you care about will be protected forever. Your planned gift to SFC is a meaningful statement of your vision for the future and what you want to leave behind.

Anonymous

Beverly Brock

Jerry and Edith Kemp

Sy and Linda Mack

Norma Mastin

Carley and Lyell Metcalf

Bea and Kevin Olsen

Jane Prithchard

Gary and Evelyn Temple

A New Topping Ranch Conservation Easement links conserved lands and protects rangeland and endangered species

SFC is delighted to announce the completion of the Topping Ranch Conservation Easement on the San Joaquin River corridor in eastern Madera County. This project is part of a continuing 20 year effort to conserve lands in the Fine Gold Creek and San Joaquin River corridor. Funding for this project has been provided by the Sierra Nevada Conservancy through the Proposition 84 grant program.

The Topping Ranch is a fourth generation family ranch where landowners Bart and Cindy Topping have a cow-calf operation. The Toppings, who are longtime supporters of SFC, have been great partners in conservation for more than a decade. Bart previously served on the SFC Board of Directors and continues to be an advisor to the organization. In 2002, SFC acquired a conservation easement on 600 acres of the ranch located on top of the Kennedy Table. For a number of years SFC's major donors have enjoyed spring picnics on Kennedy Table among the blooming vernal pools and great fields of flowers.

Kennedy Table is part of an ancient volcanic lava flow which has vernal pool habitat hosting three endangered plant species and an endangered fairy shrimp. The new Conservation Easement funded by the Sierra Nevada Conservancy places an additional 1,350 acres of the ranch's rolling blue oak woodland and annual grasslands into permanent conservation, completing 1,950 acres of land conservation.

The ranch adjoins the 2,400 acre Van Allen Ranch, which was placed under conservation easement by the California Rangeland Trust and the Van Allen family in 2007. Together, these three easements conserve 4,350 contiguous acres of prime ranchland, important vernal pool habitat and blue oak woodland. The ranches also adjoin over 30,000 acres of publicly owned land along the Upper San Joaquin River Corridor, which eventually connects with Sierra National Forest. The properties will exist in perpetuity to serve as family ranches, open space, and wildlife habitat.



SFC supporters enjoy a spring picnic on the Kennedy Table

The easements also protect a major portion of the Fine Gold Creek Watershed. This watershed feeds Fine Gold Creek which flows through SFC's Fine Gold Creek Preserve and into Millerton Lake. By ensuring that these lands remain undeveloped, the water quality of the Fine Gold Creek will be protected from added sediment and hazardous material runoff associated with alternative land uses.

SFC offers heartfelt thanks to the Toppings for their commitment to land conservation and stewardship. We would also like to thank all of our many project supporters and partners in this long collaborative effort, including local landowners, The Sierra Nevada Conservancy, California Department of Fish and Game Region 5, Bureau of Land Management, Bureau of Reclamation, US Fish and Wildlife Service, The Trust for Public Land, The San Joaquin River Partnership, USFS Botanist Joanna Clines, California Rangeland Trust, California Native Plant Society, California Audubon, Fresno Audubon, Sierra Business Council, The Nature Conservancy, and KFSN ABC 30 News.

Bridget Fithian

Rodney Olsen's stories of his time on the SFC Board

What a busy year it has been for Sierra Foothill Conservancy! Since Jeannette has shared some of the recent accomplishments and exciting projects, I want to focus on the activity of the Board of Directors. A past board member told me that the Sierra Foothill Conservancy Board is the hardest working board on which he has served. In addition to the typical board duties of governance, financial oversight, planning and fundraising, our board members also serve on various working committees that meet regularly. As part of these duties, SFC's 2012-2015 Strategic Plan was completed this year, and priorities and outcomes have been developed to help SFC meet its long-term vision and goals. Thank you to all of our Board, Staff and Advisory Council members for your involvement in the strategic planning process. The plan will be available on our website in early 2013.

We have worked to align committee structure and responsibilities with the strategic plan and have become more outcomes oriented. Large steps have been made to develop and/or review policy and to document our activity at all levels of the organization. Further, we have worked to mobilize the board to focus on governance and organizational leadership through education and the restructuring of meetings to include more time for higher level planning and discussions. For all of the hard work and commitment of my fellow board members, a big thank you!

As my term as Board President of Sierra Foothill Conservancy comes to a close, I have asked myself why I have chosen to be so involved with this organization and its cause. While the answer involves my commitment to the conservation of land, its inhabitants and the multitude of ecological and economic services that come from it, a more contemplative answer involves why I find these things important and why I have chosen to invest my time and work for Sierra Foothill Conservancy.

The birth of my conservation ethic and realization of my passion for the natural world both came through my association with the Conservancy. In SFC's early days, my father and I volunteered many hours building fences, eradicating weeds, fencing oaks and other stewardship projects.

I was also a member of the preserve patrol, which led to a prolonged naturalist study on the McKenzie Preserve that was a perfect complement to my studies as a biologist. When I was growing up in the Central Valley, I had spent little time in the oak woodlands of the Sierra Nevada foothills. Since much of the foothill land in our area is in private ownership, the foothills were what we traveled through to get to our destinations in the higher elevations.

During my time spent on the preserves I began to connect to foothill lands in a way that I never had before. I began to see the land as not only a physical place, but a system of complex interactions of which we humans are a part. I began to understand the role land-based economies can play in the conservation of land and ecological systems, and the importance of working with land owners to advance ecological and local economic causes. The memories that I have of this time are those of a growing connection to the natural world and a strong desire to share my connections with others. So why Sierra Foothill Conservancy? It was through my association with the Conservancy that I saw the value and necessity of pragmatic land conservation. It was through the Conservancy that I made a connection to the land.

My challenge to you in this upcoming year is to connect with the land and see where it takes you. As you visit the preserves on a hike, class or volunteer project, appreciate that through the contributions of yourself and other members, land owners, countless volunteers, and staff, these lands will remain as open space, working landscapes and functioning systems into perpetuity. Through membership, volunteerism and financial contributions you can remain connected to the land and ensure that the opportunities for others to connect will be there in the future.

Rodney Olsen

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www.sierralandsbeef.com**



The grasslands, foothills and forests between Yosemite and Kings Canyon National Parks provide land for farms and ranches, a home for native plants and wildlife, and a source of clean water. The Sierra Foothill Conservancy honors our natural and cultural heritage by protecting these resources and ensuring that present and future generations will continue to experience and enjoy the land in this region.

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