

THE FOOTHILL ADVOCATE

March 2013

Vol. 17 No.1



Highlights

SFC has now
protected 25,000
acres!



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The Ted K. Martin Wildlife Preserve

Just east of Table Mountain lies Auberry Valley, an expansive open landscape of mostly blue oak woodland and grassland habitat that stretches north to the San Joaquin River Gorge. Intermittent streams and natural springs feed into the ponds of this valley that often hold water all year long. Canadian geese and wood ducks are frequent visitors searching for food and a place to rest. On any given day hawks can be seen flying overhead and at this time of year, you may even get a glimpse of a golden or bald eagle.

On a warm day in August of last year, SFC staff got to tour the 280 Tallman Ranch with Mr. Ted Martin. As a long time supporter of SFC, Mr. Martin was interested in making a legacy gift of land. We had discussed several possibilities, but he was waiting for the right property. As we drove around the ranch in the truck, I sat in the back with two other staff who were taking photographs and writing down observations of what they saw. Sitting in the front, Mr. Martin remained quiet. But, his reflection in the side view mirror let me know that he was excited about the project. He had the widest smile on his face.

The property was stunning, even in the middle of the summer. Despite last year's little rainfall, the four ponds on the property still had water in them. In one of the larger ponds, we saw wood ducks, egrets and so many blue heron we assumed there must have been a rookery.

The day after the tour, Mr. Martin called "I want to help the Conservancy get this property" he said. "What do we need to do to make this happen?"

Edward K. Martin was born in 1923 in Armenia. He moved to the Central Valley with his family when he was a young child. It was during his high school years that Ted became really interested in wildlife. His dad would take him salmon fishing on the San Joaquin River and this led to a lifetime appreciation for nature. As an avid outdoorsman, he vacationed up and down the west coast from Mexico to Alaska, visiting places where he could fly fish and hunt. But, it was the region between the San Joaquin and the Kings Rivers where he felt most at home. In 1977 he and his wife Darlene purchased the old Sample Ranch in Academy, where he remained for the rest of his life.

Two more visits were made to the Tallman Ranch in the fall to talk with the landowner, learn more about the history and further document the natural resource values of the property. We learned that the ranch was purchased by the Tallman family in 1935 for ten dollars. The

(Continued on page 2)



Martin Preserve Photo By Rosanna Ruiz

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SFC Reaches 25,000 Acres

On December 30th 2012, SFC closed the 2,011 acre Kimbler Ranch Conservation Easement on the south side of Black Mountain. The completion of this project increased land conservation on Black Mountain to over 4,500 acres and SFC's total land conservation efforts to over 25,000 acres. Look for more details of the Black Mountain Expansion Project in the next issue of the Foothill Advocate.

Come and help us celebrate reaching 25,000 acres

On May 18th, 2013 we will be holding our annual Fundraising Dinner and Auction with a theme of celebrating 25,000 acres and connecting people to land. The event will be held at the scenic Beal Ranch in eastern Clovis and will be catered by Pardini's. Entertainment will feature music by Eva Scow. To celebrate reaching our milestone, we will be having a special slideshow that features the lands we have helped to conserve and the people who have helped make it happen.

We look forward to seeing you there!



Meet interns Michelle and Tesia

This semester, SFC was able to work with Fresno State's Community Service Scholarship Program and obtain two valuable interns. Both Michelle Swift and Tesia Vang hail from the Recreation Department and have been a great match for our Education and Outreach programs. Though they are immersed in our spring programming, they are also working on aspects of accreditation, programming, membership efforts, and e-communications. If you get a chance to meet them at one of the many events this spring, please join us in thanking them for all

their hard work. Their dedicated, enthusiastic support has not gone unnoticed!! Thank you Michelle and Tesia ... we appreciate all you do for SFC!

(Continued from page 1)

property had been an orchard and vineyard prior to prohibition. There are still olive trees and remnants of old cabins. The SJ&E railroad used to run through what is now the north end of the property.

The terrain of the ranch is largely flat, except for some rolling hills at the east and southern end of the property. In addition to the blue oaks and live oaks, the property also has button willows and some sycamores and cottonwood near the ponds. Granite rock outcroppings are found throughout along with some cultural sites with evidence of mortar holes. In a two hour period last fall, biologist Rodney Olsen counted over forty bird species. Other wildlife that have been recently viewed on the property include western pond turtle, wild turkey, coyote, and a bald eagle that sat above one of the ponds for over an hour harassing the ducks.

With the generous help of Mr. Martin, SFC acquired its eighth fee title property now known as the Ted K. Martin Wildlife Preserve. When Mr. Martin was asked why he chose to make this investment he responded by saying "It's a beautiful property that should be preserved. It has a lot of water and a lot of game. If we can protect the habitat for the wildlife, they will continue to be there."

On March 5th, Mr. Martin passed away. Over the past several years he had become a dear friend to SFC and he will be truly missed. Thanks to Mr. Ted Martin's generosity and commitment to wildlife and land conservation, places like the Martin Preserve will continue to be a lasting conservation legacy.

Jeannette Tuitele-Lewis

Sierra Foothill Conservancy
Annual Financial Report
July 1, 2011—June 30, 2012

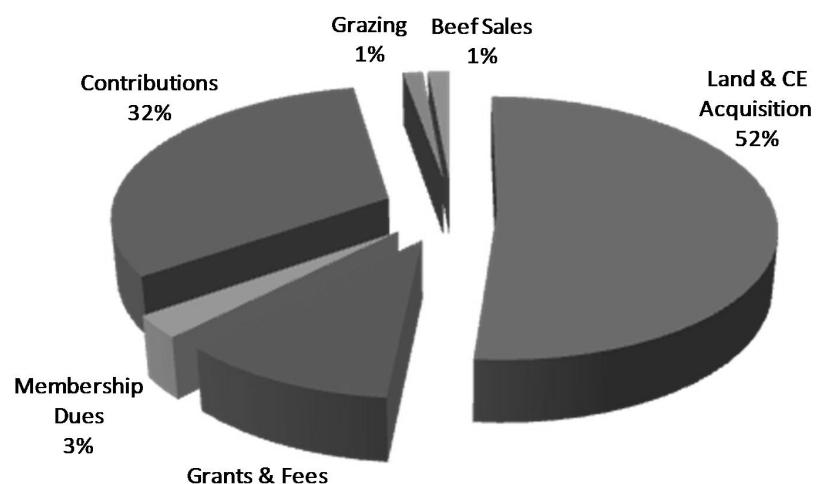
This Statement of Financial Activities and accompanying charts represent the Conservancy's 2011-2012 fiscal year as stated in our financial statement audited by Price, Paige and Company CPAs. Our Land Stewardship included 2 restoration projects, as well as ongoing care for our 7 preserves.

Also included in the charts below are the land values of 3 new Conservation Easements established (including 680 acres of Blue Oak woodland on Black Mountain and 641 acres of vernal pool and Tiger Salamander habitat in Madera and Merced counties) Not included are 410 acres in Mariposa, publically accessible with trails, transferred to the Mariposa Public Utilities District. The combined value of these acquisitions is \$2,051,500.

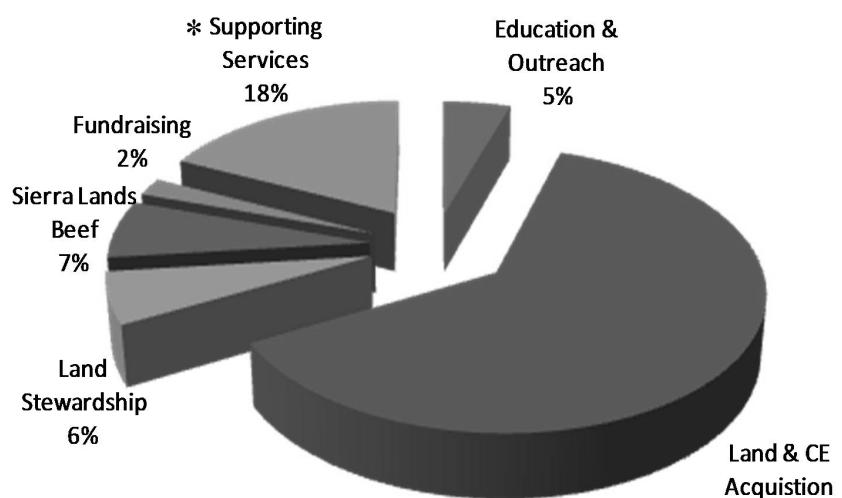
June 30, 2012 Balance Sheet

ASSETS:	
Cash & Cash Equivalents	631,594
Investments	1,711,737
Grants & Other Receivable	3,840
Prepaid Expenses and Other Assets	25,718
Inventories	32,791
Property and Equipment Net	458,049
Conserved Land	<u>6,518,964</u>
Total Assets	9,382,693
LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS:	
Liabilities:	
Accounts Payable	52,874
Accrued Expenses	37,619
Deferred Revenue	29,440
Agency & Trust Fund	21,882
Line of Credit	<u>280,000</u>
Total Liabilities	421,815
Net Assets:	
Unrestricted:	
Undesignated	457,837
Board Designated	<u>493,025</u>
Total Unrestricted	950,862
Temporarily Restricted	1,453,484
Permanently Restricted	<u>6,556,532</u>
Total Net Assets	8,960,878
Total Liabilities & Net Assets	9,382,693

Income:



Expenses:



* Supporting Services includes program & project management costs, which increase our capacity to protect more land and are important for long term sustainability.

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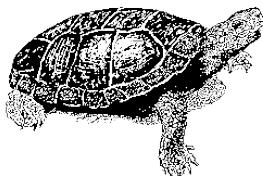
The grasslands, foothills, and forests between Yosemite and Kings Canyon National Parks provide land for farms and ranches, a home for native plants and wildlife, and a source of clean water. The Sierra Foothill Conservancy honors our natural and cultural heritage by protecting these resources and ensuring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

The Pacific pond turtle

If you have been out on the McKenzie or Fine Gold Creek preserves this winter and spring, there is a good chance you have been in the immediate vicinity of a Pacific pond turtle (*Actinemys marmorata*). As California's only native freshwater turtle, the Pacific pond turtle can be found locally in rivers, creeks, stock ponds, lakes, freshwater marshes and even in irrigation canals from the valley floor to the mid-elevation zones in the Sierra Nevada. Pond turtles feed only while in the water, consuming aquatic vegetation, aquatic insects and other invertebrates, small fish and carrion. When not feeding, turtles can be found basking on rocks, shorelines, floating logs and on aquatic vegetation. Turtles bask to elevate their body temperature which assists in digestion and general metabolism. Locally, courtship and copulation takes place in the water in late winter and spring. When the eggs have developed inside of the female, she will lay eggs in an earthen nest up to a quarter of a mile from a water source. This behavior likely reduces the competition for the limited number of suitable nesting sites found within the immediate vicinity of a body of water. The eggs hatch after three months and the young are nourished from their yolk sac while they remain in their nest until the following year. When they emerge, the vulnerable young ("cookies" we like to call them) make their way to water where they feed and grow, reaching adulthood at the age of 8-10 years old. In the winter, pond turtles hibernate in the soft substrate at the bottom of a body of water. During this time they do not need to come up to breathe as they are able to acquire oxygen from the water through a lining within their cloaca (common opening to their digestive and reproductive systems). If a body of water is not available they can also hibernate within rodent or self-dug burrows.

Pacific pond turtles were once abundant in our area as indicated by early descriptions of the roaring sound accompanying large numbers of basking turtles retreating from shorelines to the water as a threat approached. Although consumed by Native Americans, the major declines in pond turtle populations began as they showed up on the menus of many restaurants throughout California. Market hunting during the late 1800s and early 1900s and a price of 25 cents per dozen led to the consumption of tens of thousands of turtles which dealt a large blow to their population numbers. Subsequent habitat loss and the introduction of non-native predators such as the American bullfrog and large-mouth bass, both of which consume young

turtles in large numbers, have contributed to the continued decline of this species. The presence of Pacific pond turtles on several of Sierra Foothill Conservancy's preserves, including the most recent Ted Martin Wildlife Preserve, underscores the importance of our work in protecting California's natural resources for present and future generations. The next time you are on one of the preserves, keep your eyes open and your movements slow near bodies of water... you may have the opportunity to observe a Pacific pond turtle.



Rodney Olsen & Malachi Whitford