

SIERRA·FOOTHILL



## **25<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Series: A Look Back at SFC's 20 Year Impact in Mariposa County**

*This month's 25th Anniversary Series article was contributed by SFC Board Member, Sue Overstreet.*

SFC began its conservation efforts in Mariposa County in 2001, expanding the organization's regional strategy for protecting conserved corridors of land throughout the Central Sierra Nevada. Conservation opportunities in Mariposa are diverse, representing a wide range of landscape elevation and acreage. Over the last two decades, SFC has completed many critical projects in the Mariposa region including eighteen conservation easements, two preserves, community conservation projects, transferred properties, and large-scale restoration projects. Last year, SFC's total acreage conserved in Mariposa County surpassed 20,000 acres. None of this would have been possible without the commitment of a few passionate individuals who worked to expand SFC's services into the Mariposa region. Because of their foresight, SFC has had the opportunity to help protect Mariposa's working lands, prevent shrinking habitat, restore natural landscapes, and connect community members and visitors to the land through seasonal guided hikes, publicly accessible trails, and community programming. Sue Overstreet was instrumental in bringing SFC's services to Mariposa. Sue has roots in Mariposa County that go back four generations. She returned to Mariposa in 1995 to take an administrator position with the school district. Previously, she had been a member of the Napa Land Trust and had even helped a relative put her property into an easement with the Vermont Land Trust. Following retirement, Sue rekindled her interest in land trust work and private land conservation. Sue reflecting on SFC's early work in Mariposa: "The first SFC event held in Mariposa was in March of 2000. SFC representatives gave a presentation about SFC and land conservation at the School District board room. About 25 people attended. From that point on, interest in SFC's work grew. The next few years saw a burst of activity in Mariposa County including closing the Clark's Valley easements from 2003-2007, the Von der Ahe easement in 2003, and the Long Ranch in 2004. Not only was land protected but an office opened, a fundraising event at the Mariposa County Arts Council gallery featuring local artists was held as well as several celebrations for Mariposa members. One I remember fondly was held at Michael and Jeanne Adams' home. Membership grew by leaps and bounds. It has been very rewarding to watch SFC grow into the powerhouse it is today."