

Old barn photo: "I've stood through years of wind, rain, and sun, my weathered boards holding the stories of this land."

SBALT NEWS

An icon revived: The Tale of the Yellow Barn begins a new chapter

By Robert Connolly, SBALT Vice President

I have come a long way. My previous life was on the verge of collapse. My posts and beams were wracked, and my future was cast with doubt. Many thought I was a lost cause. One day a crew with trucks, cables, and winches arrived at my side. I feared the worst. Were my days over? It was not to be! The crew straightened my posts and strengthened my beams. My foundation was restored. Next, my exterior was enclosed with fresh boards and battens. New windows and doors were added and my interior was enclosed.

Scholars like Professor Gabriel Sanchez from the University of Oregon and Alex Apodaca from the Amah Mutsun Land Trust have excavated in and around my site and found that I am merely the most recent structure to inhabit this site. Shards of clay roof tiles and previous foundations are sleeping in the ground around me. Who knows what may turn up in future excavations: a hacienda, a stable, a ceremonial site? A good place now would have been a good place when the first people arrived.

Now with care, conservation, and stewardship, the site can flourish again. A creek nearby is being restored with native plants and trees. School teachers and nearly 1,000 children have come out to plant under the guidance of STRAW (Students and Teachers Restoring A Watershed) and with the help of the Amah Mutsun Land Trust's Native Stewardship Corp.

I now stand to allow the sun, wind, and rain to buffet me as they will. The sound of people and workers in the workshop is inspiring. I've been renewed and refreshed so another generation may see me as an asset to the property around me. I am no longer in danger of collapse. I am a resource to help steward the pastures with their grazing cattle, and the ponds, plants, and wildlife that have surrounded me for eons. I have a feeling more is to come. A good place now can be a good place in the future. ■

San Benito Agricultural LAND TRUST



New barn photo: "Thanks to the care and generosity of the community, I've been given a new lease on life, with fresh wood and renewed strength to carry my story into the future."