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SBALT NEWS

Nyland property: Restoring Indigenous culture, local history, and wildlife habitat

This article draws from previously published SBALT content and has been updated for this issue.

The Nyland Property is a 540-acre ranch located south of Highway 156, across from San Juan Bautista. Acquired by the Trust for Public Land in 2021 and donated to the San Benito Agricultural Land Trust (SBALT) in 2023, the property is permanently protected as a working ranch that preserves agriculture, wildlife habitat, and Indigenous cultural resources.

The property has been home to the Indigenous Mutsun people for thousands of years. A cultural easement held by the Amah Mutsun Land Trust (AMLT) provides Tribal members access for cultural, spiritual, and ceremonial practices while supporting restoration and stewardship through traditional Indigenous knowledge.

During the California land grant era, the property hosted the 40-room Manuel Larios Adobe. Most recently it was a cattle ranch, and the iconic yellow barn and farmhouse were said to be built on the old Larios Adobe site. History buffs may have noticed that the barn was stabilized and restored over the past two years. SBALT thanks those with the vision and the knowledge to

San Benito Agricultural



save this local landmark.

Our friends at AMLT have connections with an archeologist at the University of Oregon. Professor Gabriel Sanchez used ground penetrating radar and excavation by his summer field students to identify what is believed to be the old Larios Adobe.

The property is part of a critical wildlife corridor connecting the Gabilan Range and Santa Cruz Mountains, where Caltrans is planning the San Benito Wildlife Crossing. There are also culverts under Highway 156 that provide safe passage for animals. You may have seen some of the local school children who, under the guidance of Point Blue Conservation Science's STRAW program (Students and Teachers Restoring a Watershed), planted vegetation that will provide shelter for animals moving along the creek that flows through one of the culverts.

While the Nyland Property is not open to the public, these stories demonstrate the many ways that people connect to the land. Our community members can experience the ranch through SBALT's monthly Ranch Days - guided hikes and volunteer stewardship days. Please visit us at sanbenitolandtrust.org to learn how you can help protect places like the Nyland Property. ■