

San Benito Agricultural™



All-In San Benito

Cultivating Our Future of Agricultural Lands and Open Space



The San Benito Agricultural Land Trust (SBALT) plays a crucial role in protecting agricultural lands in San Benito County, an area known for its rich soil and agricultural heritage. Our work is critical to preserving the land that sustains productive agriculture, provides habitat for wildlife, and supports the local economy.

To protect the land for the long term, we work with individual landowners and partners to secure conservation agreements that permanently restrict nonagricultural development. Since 1993, SBALT has protected 7,300 acres in conservation easement partnerships and fee title acquisitions.

SBALT is the only local land trust focused on preserving the unique farmland, rangelands, and natural spaces of San Benito County for generations to come. Without our efforts, San Benito County's agricultural land would be at much greater risk of conversion to development.

The Mission of the San Benito Agricultural Land Trust is to **conserve regionally significant lands that sustain productive agriculture, preserve open space, and maintain the rural character of the county.**



Nyland Property



Silva Ranch
Conservation Easement



Soap Lake Ranch
Conservation Easement

Agricultural Land is Converting at an Unprecedented Rate

Population Growth

San Benito County's population grew nearly 20% in the 2010s. The San Benito Council of Governments' 2040 Transportation Plan predicts a growth rate twice that of Monterey and Santa Cruz Counties. With growth, agricultural land is often lost. That land is the foundation of the agricultural industry, a major driver of our local economy.

The City of Hollister and the County of San Benito do not mandate mitigation for development of farmland. Hollister, furthermore, does not have an Urban Growth Boundary.

Loss of Rural Culture

Loss of agricultural land can lead to the loss of ranching and farming culture. Ranching and farming are not just economic activities but are deeply intertwined with the social and cultural fabric of communities that depend on them. These communities have a strong connection to the land they cultivate or on which they graze livestock.

Feeding the World

San Benito County's agricultural lands are a finite and threatened resource. The top crops by value are wine grapes, lettuce mixes, spinach, broccoli, and cattle. Apples, cherries, and apricots are the top orchard crops. This food is distributed to over 50 countries as distant as Argentina, South Africa, Saudi Arabia, and Thailand.

Habitat Preservation

These productive lands also serve as habitat for a remarkable array of threatened, endangered, and other protected species, showcasing the region's biodiversity. Notable examples include the majestic California Condor, the southwestern pond turtle, and the elusive California tiger salamander, alongside numerous common species that find refuge in these protected areas.





OUR SOLUTIONS::

With 30 years of experience, and as the only nationally accredited local land trust focused on preserving the natural beauty and resources of San Benito County, SBALT is uniquely positioned to conserve agricultural lands and open space in our community.

- SBALT works with landowners, farmers, and ranchers to provide financially viable options that meet their individual needs while also preserving thousands of acres of vital lands.
- SBALT works collaboratively with other conservation organizations, including the Trust for Public Land, the California Rangeland Trust, the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County, and the Amah Mutsun Land Trust.
- SBALT has established itself as the trusted conservation entity in the county. Educational outreach to city and county planning agencies promises stronger policies that take protection of farmland and rangelands into serious consideration. San Benito County's pride in its agricultural heritage is reflected in SBALT directors, advisors, and conservation easement partners, new as well as multi-generational agrarians.

KEY ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

Staffing. From an all-volunteer organization in 2018, SBALT has grown into a professional organization with paid staff.

Land Trust Accreditation. In 2022, SBALT received national accreditation, establishing policies and procedures that demonstrate financial, governing, and stewardship excellence.

Nyland Property Acquisition. In partnership with the Trust for Public Land, the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County, and the Amah Mutsun Land Trust, SBALT received ownership of 540 acres of grazing land along the scenic route to San Juan Bautista.

Easements. Through donation, mitigation, and grant funding, SBALT has acquired eight conservation easements, and committed to the ongoing efforts to ensure their protection.

Outreach. SBALT authors monthly articles in the local Mission Village Voice highlighting agriculture and nature.

Ranch Days. SBALT leads monthly public events on our lands.





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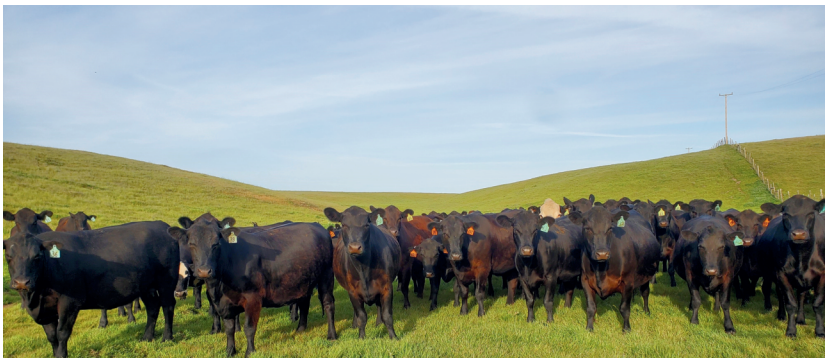
GOALS AND PRIORITIES

- Secure ongoing funding for our Executive Director position. Professional expertise is critical to secure conservation easements, facilitate fee title acquisitions, oversee land stewardship, and develop meaningful partnerships with landowners.
- Ensure SBALT's long-term financial stability by securing funds to cover current operating expenses, expand our capacity, and build financial reserves for growth.

HOW CAN YOU JOIN US, *ALL-IN SAN BENITO*?

SBALT's All-In San Benito Campaign is a three-year effort to raise at least \$200,000/year for a total of \$600,000. Your generous contribution will help fund significant conservation projects, support local agriculture, and ensure that future generations will enjoy the open spaces and agricultural lands that make our community exceptional.

We could not have accomplished so much over the last 30 years without our committed donors and volunteers. Together, with your help, we will effectively steward our natural resources and ensure that our community remains healthy and vibrant for years to come.



Sound Finances
Ethical Conduct
Responsible Governance
Lasting Stewardship

Platinum
Transparency
2023

Candid.

