

# Mission Village

# VOICE

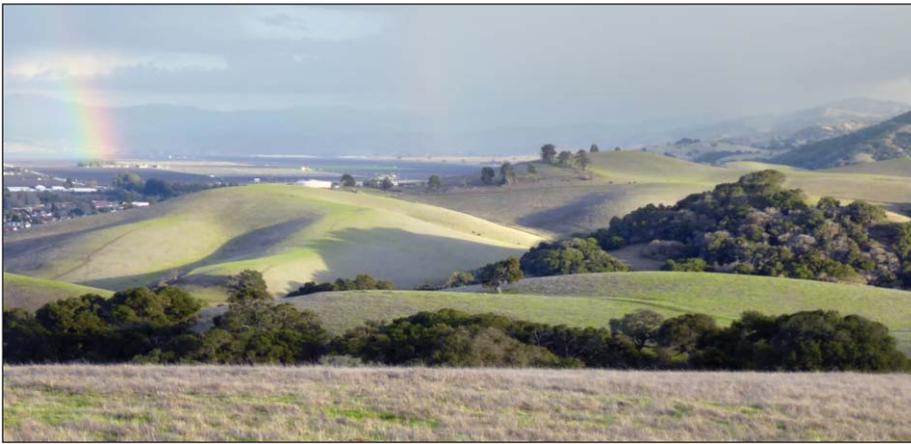
## Trust Worthy

SBALT will soon  
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The Nyland property provides a scenic western gateway to San Juan Bautista and San Benito County. Photo by John Nyland

## SBALT NEWS

# The Trust for Public Land partners with SBALT and regional land trusts to purchase 540-acre Nyland property

*The goal of the partnership is to sustain cattle ranching, provide for historic and indigenous interpretative activities, protect an important wildlife corridor, and mitigate climate impacts*

By Karminder Brown

On September 17, The Trust for Public Land (TPL), a national land trust, announced its purchase of the historic Nyland property located across Highway 156 from the City of San Juan Bautista. The 540 acres of oak-studded grasslands, wetlands, and seasonal streams supported the indigenous Amah Mutsun people for thousands of years before they were taken to the Mission San Juan Bautista and Mission Santa Cruz as part of the Spanish conquest of California.

The property, which was once the site of a land-grant era 40-room adobe, provides a scenic western gateway to San Juan Bautista and San Benito County. Cattle graze the property as they have for two hundred years. An array of native plants and wildlife can be found on the ranch, as well as a historic barn that marks a visitor's arrival to San Juan Bautista. The property also contributes to an important regional wildlife corridor linking the Gabilan Mountains to the Santa Cruz Mountains.

"Conservation opportunities like this are rare and could not be done without partners," said Guillermo Rodriguez, California State Director with TPL. "We are proud to be able to



work with local land trusts to ensure the natural health and indigenous, historic, and agricultural heritage of this property are preserved for future generations to enjoy."

This acquisition is an important milestone in efforts by the San Benito Agricultural Land Trust (SBALT) and other project partners to permanently protect this property. Recognizing that the 4th generation owners, the Nylands, were selling the land for estate purposes, SBALT reached out to TPL in 2018



The iconic Nyland barn will continue to welcome residents and visitors to rural San Benito County. Photo provided by Nyland Estate

for help in ensuring the property remained open space.

In response to the imminent sale of the property, TPL, with support from generous donors including the Wildlife Conservation Network's new California Wildlife Program, stepped in to purchase the property. The purchase by TPL will provide time for SBALT and regional land trusts to fundraise to ensure the permanent protection and stewardship of the land.

The long-term vision for the property reflects this partnership and includes ownership of the land by SBALT, with a conservation easement to be held by the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County (LTSCC), and a cultural easement to be held by the Amah Mutsun Land Trust (AMLT). The long-time cattle-grazing lessee, 101 Livestock Auction, will continue to graze the property.

"Permanent conservation of the ranch will ensure this land can support viable grazing operations that contribute to our local economy, feed people, and protect our scenic views," said Lynn Overtree, Executive Director of SBALT. "We are excited about managing these 540 acres, which completes a chain of protected lands from Rocks Ranch to San Juan Bautista, and we are honored to continue the Nyland family's loving stewardship legacy."

"After 10 years leasing this ranch from the Nyland family, it will be a bit of a change for us, but we think we can have a compatible working relationship with the organizations involved," said rancher Cole Warren of 101 Livestock Auction. "We're glad the land won't be converted to houses and that our cattle grazing operation will continue under the new ownership."

The acquisition is significant for the Amah Mutsun Tribal Band (AMTB) and AMLT. "The Amah Mutsun people have lived in Popoloutchum, which is now recognized as San Benito County and beyond for millennia," said Valentin Lopez, President of the AMLT and Chairman of the AMTB. "Our ancestors worked to fulfill their sacred obligation to take care of Mother Earth and all living things

for thousands of years. Today we are happy to return to Popoloutchum through this Cultural Easement. This easement will ensure this land remains undeveloped and intact. We hope to share our traditional indigenous knowledge and land management practices with our partners and the public so we can all learn from each other."

The property supports native habitat for numerous wildlife species, and several rare species call the ranch home. The property also contributes to an important regional wildlife corridor. The project does not include lands north of Highway 156 known as

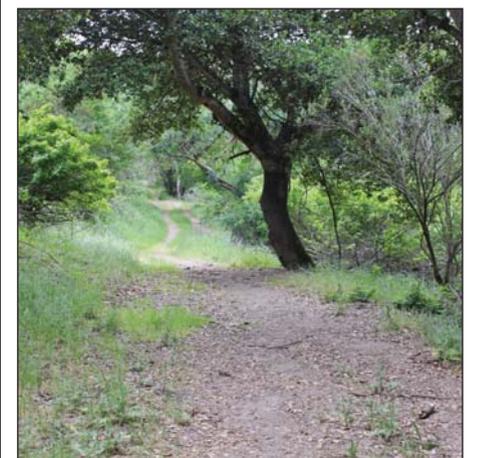


Cattle grazing the Nyland property. Photo by Lynn Overtree

"Nyland Ranch," which are separately owned. "The Land Trust of Santa Cruz County is proud to be a part of the collaboration that is making this project possible," said Sarah Newkirk, Executive Director of the LTSCC. "Especially in such a critical wildlife corridor, the fact that all these partners can work together to secure the ecological, agricultural, and cultural values of this land - all in one place - is truly remarkable."

The protection of the property also supports TPL's climate conservation efforts in the region. In collaboration with JPMorgan Chase and other donors, TPL recently launched the Central Coast Climate Conservation Initiative. There is also potential for future public access to this land through interpretive and educational programming by community partners, including SBALT.

"SBALT is grateful to the Nyland family for choosing to permanently protect the land and for the care with which they have tended it for decades," said Emily Renzel, SBALT President. "Open, grass-covered hills and the iconic Nyland barn will continue to welcome residents and visitors at this important gateway to rural San Benito County with its productive farms and expansive rangelands. Now we can be certain that cattle will traverse the slopes for generations to come." ■



Creekside trail at the Nyland property. Photo by Karminder Brown