



President/CEO Message

For whom have we conserved these lands? This was the overarching question that prompted a wave of expansion in how Big Sur Land Trust defined its mission. As a traditional land trust that had actively conserved important habitat and scenic vistas along California’s most scenic coastline, we had much to be proud of. We helped to create and expand iconic parks and open spaces for coastal residents and visitors from around the world to enjoy and appreciate. And yet, there was a growing awareness that our work did not adequately serve the communities in our County.

Like much of land conservation across the U.S, conservation in Monterey County has significantly benefitted some communities more than others. Given that land, access to land and real estate assets have traditionally been the foundation for building wealth and achieving the American Dream, we must reckon with the role that land conservation has also played in perpetuating social inequities; focusing investment in parks and open space in wealthy areas, limiting recreational activities that appeal to the dominant culture, and encouraging (often unintentionally) gentrification of areas post-park creation. Even our conservation icons that we proudly quote have a history of promoting displacement of people in favor of open space for the privileged. Big Sur Land Trust recognizes that our conservation work is not separate from social issues facing our communities today.

Conservation and environmental organizations have also trailed behind on issues around diversity and inclusion in the workforce and on boards. A publication by Green 2.0 Working Group titled “The Green Insiders’ Club” examined why decades of promises for diversity from the conservation and environmental non-profit sector have not delivered. This comprehensive study found that unconscious bias, discrimination and insular recruiting led to poor recruitment and retention of racially diverse talented people.

Big Sur Land Trust has made good progress towards prioritizing multi-benefit projects that are community driven and have more direct benefits to local residents. We have worked to build trust with new groups by building reciprocal relationships and learning from other local organizations that meet public health, affordable housing, education, and community advocacy needs.

Big Sur Land Trust’s Diversity Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Plan is about aligning our practices with our organizational values, increasing the effectiveness of our mission, and ensuring our conservation efforts will withstand the test of time. It’s about honoring the many ways people relate to land and to each other. It’s about building a lasting organizational culture of learning, inclusion and innovation. To do this, we must strive to build a workforce and volunteer board and advisory council that better reflects the diverse cultural, racial, socio-economic, age, gender and physical abilities of people in our service region. This 7-year Plan is an evolving document

that will help guide the Land Trust toward meeting our DEI goals and demonstrate our commitment to continuously striving to live up to our conservation mission of service for the greater public good.

Big Sur Land Trust Values

Healthy Lands: Conserving and caring for the magnificent natural landscapes, habitats and waterways of our region to ensure a sustainable future.

Healthy People: Providing opportunities for all who live in and visit Monterey County to experience the healthful benefits associated with access to parks and open spaces, fresh food, clean air and water, and a deep connection to nature.

Healthy Communities: Engaging in partnerships where conservation and civic participation increase community vitality, economic prosperity and social equity.

Definitions: How do we define diversity, equity and inclusion?

Diversity is the variety of social, physical, and cultural identities among people existing together in a defined setting. Diversity also includes a broad range of experiences and ideas.

Equity is when all people, according to their circumstances, have the appropriate access to the opportunities necessary to satisfy their essential needs, advance their well-being and achieve their full potential.

Inclusion is creating an environment where everyone feels welcomed and invited to participate in influencing organizational culture.

Demographics of BSLT’s Service Region

	Monterey Peninsula (Monterey, Carmel, Pacific Grove, Pebble Beach)	Salinas	Monterey County (All Peninsula, All North County, All Salinas Valley, All South County)
Population	56,971	157,596	437,907
Median Age	49.3	30.1	
Median Income	\$85,488	\$52,338	\$60,889
Ethnic Background			
- White	76%	14.1%	29.8%
- Hispanic	12.5%	76.6%	58.8%
- Other	11.5%	9.3%	11.4%
Parks Ratio			

Internal Goals & Actions

GOAL 1: Staff Recruitment, Retention & Promotion: Prioritize recruitment, retention, and promotion of diverse and multi-culturally sensitive staff.

GOAL 2: Board Composition: Build a robust and effective Board of Trustees that draws on the skills, talents and perspectives of a diverse range of leaders from different life experiences and cultural backgrounds.

GOAL 3: Organizational Culture: Promote employee and trustee satisfaction, engagement, culture of trust, respect and inclusion. Actively work to ensure a positive team environment (for both staff and board) where individuals are comfortable with expressing diverse views and opinions and sharing power and responsibility for BSLT's mission.

External Goals & Actions

GOAL 4: BSLT Outdoor Programs are offered to and reflect the communities we serve.

GOAL 5: BSLT has established a non-traditional, community-based network of staff, partners, neighbors, campers, funders and volunteers:

GOAL 6: Monterey County residents have equitable access to BSLT experiences, which embody community diversity.

Communications

GOAL 7: Communications from the Big Sur Land Trust are culturally relevant.