

MIKE THOMPSON

1ST DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

COMMITTEE:

WAYS AND MEANS



CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES  
HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES  
WASHINGTON, DC 20515

April 5, 2006

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1040 MAIN STREET, SUITE 101  
NAPA, CA 94559  
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CAPITOL OFFICE:  
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WEB: <http://mikethompson.house.gov>

Doug Bosco, Chairman  
California State Coastal Conservancy  
1330 Broadway Street, Suite 1100  
Oakland, CA 94612

**RE: The Land Trust of Napa County**

Dear Mr. Bosco,

I am writing in support of the Land Trust of Napa County's efforts to purchase and protect the Wildlake Ranch.

The Wildlake Ranch includes 3,044 acres of largely untouched land within the Bell Canyon Watershed, the main water supply for my hometown, the City of St. Helena. This property is a vitally important open space resource for Napa County and has excellent potential as a southern extension of Robert Louis Stevenson State Park.

Scientific studies have revealed unusual diversity of biological resources in undeveloped areas of Napa County and in the Napa River. Protection of the watershed will help assure the long-term health of plant and animal communities and river water quality. The preservation of these resources is of critical importance to the people of Napa and the nation.

Napa County continues to experience intense real estate development pressure due to its proximity to the job centers of the San Francisco Bay Area. This situation leaves the wildlife, fisheries, and drinking water resources of Napa County at great risk. The purchase of this property is an excellent opportunity for the State Coastal Conservancy and the Land Trust of Napa County to further their main objectives of habitat preservation.

Doug Bosco, Chairman  
California State Coastal Conservancy  
April 4, 2006  
Page 2

The Land Trust of Napa County must secure the \$20 million necessary to purchase the Wildlake Ranch property by June 1, 2006 before it is potentially sold for development. I respectfully request that the State Coastal Conservancy prioritize this project as it distributes its available funds in 2006.

Thank you for your consideration of my request. If I may answer any questions regarding this issue, please call me.

Sincerely,



**MIKE THOMPSON**  
Member of Congress

**MT:bo**

*CC: Dave Briggs, Land Protection Coordinator, The Land Trust of Napa County*

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**APR 14 2006**

**COASTAL CONSERVANCY  
OAKLAND, CALIF.**

# California State Senate

SENATOR  
**WESLEY CHESBRO**  
SECOND SENATORIAL DISTRICT



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JOINT COMMITTEE ON  
LEGISLATIVE BUDGET, CHAIR  
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CHAIR  
COLLEGE & UNIVERSITY  
ADMISSIONS & OUTREACH  
DEVELOPMENTAL DISABILITIES  
& MENTAL HEALTH, CHAIR  
MOBILE & MANUFACTURED  
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AGRICULTURE  
ENVIRONMENTAL QUALITY  
GOVERNMENTAL ORGANIZATION  
HEALTH  
HUMAN SERVICES  
VETERANS AFFAIRS

STATE CAPITOL, ROOM 5035  
SACRAMENTO, CA 95814  
TEL (916) 651-4002  
FAX (916) 323-6958

April 6, 2006

Doug Bosco, Chairperson  
State Coastal Conservancy  
1330 Broadway, Suite 1100  
Oakland, CA 94612

Dear Chairman Bosco:

The Land Trust of Napa County has embarked on an urgent effort to protect a large expanse of natural land known as Wildlake Ranch. The property encompasses 3,044 acres of largely untouched land in the Bell Canyon watershed, the primary water supply for the City of St. Helena and stretches just South and contiguous to Robert Louis Stevenson State Park. The Land Trust has my wholehearted support in this endeavor for several reasons.

Scientific studies have shown that Napa County has an unusual diversity of biological resources that can be found in its remaining natural areas and in the Napa River. Protection of the watershed will assure the long-term health of plant and animal communities and river water quality. The preservation of these resources is of critical importance to the people of Napa as well as the entire State of California.

Napa County continues to experience intense real estate development pressure due to its proximity to job centers of the San Francisco Bay Area. This situation leaves the wildlife, fisheries, and drinking water resources of the County at great risk.

I believe that this is the right project, timing, and organization for advancing the work of natural resource preservation in this region and urge the State Coastal Conservancy to provide financial support for this important project.

Thank you for your attention to this request. The efforts and contribution of the Coastal Conservancy is greatly appreciated. Please let me know if I can be of any assistance on this project.

Sincerely,

WESLEY CHESBRO  
State Senator, Second District

WC:bf

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COASTAL CONSERVANCY  
OAKLAND, CALIF.



COMMITTEES  
HUMAN SERVICES, CHAIR  
BUDGET  
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VETERANS AFFAIRS

SUB COMMITTEE  
BUDGET SUBCOMMITTEE #3

SELECT COMMITTEES  
CALIFORNIA WINE, CHAIR  
GUN VIOLENCE PREVENTION

# Assembly California Legislature



**NOREEN EVANS**  
ASSEMBLYMEMBER, SEVENTH DISTRICT

April 7, 2006

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VALLEJO, CA 94500  
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NAPA  
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Website: [democrats.assembly.ca.gov/members/e07](http://democrats.assembly.ca.gov/members/e07)

Board of Directors  
State Coastal Conservancy  
1330 Broadway, Suite 1100  
Oakland, CA 94612

In Re: Acquisition of Wildlake Ranch, Napa County

Dear Chairman Bosco and Directors:

I am writing to urge your support for the proposal submitted by the Land Trust of Napa County requesting \$2 million to assist in the acquisition of Wildlake Ranch in Napa County.

This 3,044 acre property in Napa is unique for its large wildlife habitat corridors, near-pristine botanical resources, undeveloped hillsides and meadows, and location adjacent to Robert Louis Stevenson State Park. This parcel will represent over 15 miles of protected land. Far and away, it will be the largest contiguous protected landscape within the Napa Valley. For these reasons, it must be protected as open space for the benefit of my community and the State of California.

The Land Trust has a proven track record of land stewardship. Over the last 29 years, it has protected nearly 34,000 acres of land in Napa County. With some 1500 members and 160 volunteers, the organization's foundation in my community remains strong. This will help assure the success of the Land Trust's long-term plan to provide public access to this property, link it with Robert Louis Stevenson State Park, and transfer the parcel to State Parks.

With over one-hundred conservation transactions under its belt, including the transfer of 16 properties to 10 different resource agencies, the Land Trust has proven its ability to negotiate the land purchases, care for land, and work with resource agencies to ensure the long-term preservation of wildlife. Therefore, I recommend that the State Coastal Conservancy provide financial support for this proposal to protect Wildlake Ranch.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. Thank you for your consideration.

Yours very truly,

NOREEN EVANS  
Assemblymember, 7th District

NE/am

cc: Dave Briggs, Land Trust of Napa County





DIANE DILLON  
Board of Supervisors  
Third District

## COUNTY of NAPA

1195 THIRD STREET, SUITE 310 • NAPA, CALIFORNIA 94559-3082  
(707) 253-4386 (Office) (707) 253-4176

April 11, 2006

Douglas Bosco  
Chairman  
State Coastal Conservancy  
1330 Broadway, Suite 1100  
Oakland, CA 94612

Dear Chairman Bosco:

The Land Trust of Napa County has launched a major campaign to purchase a large expanse of open space in Napa County that is known as Wildlake Ranch. The current owners have used this property as their private hunting club for several decades and, as conservation-minded members of our community, have made the property available for purchase by The Land Trust before listing it for sale.

The Ranch is remarkable for its largely undisturbed watershed featuring rich wildlife habitat and outstanding views. The highlands of Wildlake Ranch are a major part of the world famous viewshed of Napa Valley. Further, the entire 3,044 acre ranch has outstanding potential as a future extension of Robert Louis Stevenson State Park

I have a special interest in preserving the open space resources of Napa County, mainly because some of the most pristine areas of Napa County, and perhaps all of northern California, are within my supervisorial district. The people of my district and the rest of Napa County want strong protections for these natural areas and improved access to publicly-owned properties. The Napa County Board of Supervisors responded by establishing a parks and open space advisory committee in 2004, and subsequently funding a full-time staff person to lay the groundwork for a county park and open space program.

The Board has given conceptual approval to a plan to place a ballot measure before voters in November 2006 that would provide residents the opportunity to create a park and open space district in Napa County. A recent poll conducted by a group of open space advocacy organizations, including The Land Trust and The Nature Conservancy, showed that 57% of those surveyed would vote for the formation of an open space district. We are on our way to becoming a strong local partner for parks and resource agencies at the state and federal level, but we continue to need the help of agencies like the State Coastal Commission to help save important lands in our area.

#### COMMITTEES/COMMISSIONS

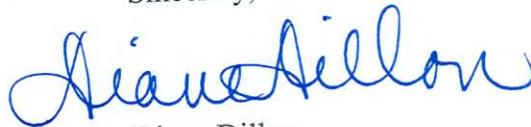
*Napa County Board of Equalization \* Napa County Flood Control & Water Conservation District \* Napa County Flood Protection & Watershed Improvement Authority \* Napa County Transportation Planning Agency \* Upper Valley Waste Management Agency \* Regional Council of Rural Counties  
(Partial List)*

Douglas Bosco  
April 11, 2006  
Page 2

To date, residents of Napa County have relied on public agencies and, in particular, on the Land Trust of Napa County, to preserve natural areas and to enhance opportunities for outdoor recreational opportunities in our community. The purchase of Wildlake Ranch would be another example of the invaluable role that The Land Trust plays in drawing together sufficient resources to respond to once-in-a-lifetime opportunities like the preservation of the Wildlake Ranch. I have no doubt that The Land Trust will do an excellent job of negotiating the purchase, caring for the land, and working with resource agencies to ensure the long-term preservation of the wildlife and fisheries of this area.

I strongly recommend that the State Coastal Conservancy provide its financial support for this timely proposal to protect this valuable open space. Please feel free to call me at (707) 963-0890 if you should need any additional information about this important project.

Sincerely,



Diane Dillon  
Supervisor, District 3

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COASTAL CONSERVANCY  
OAKLAND, CALIF.

UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, DAVIS

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DEPT. OF ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE & POLICY  
& UC NATURAL RESERVE SYSTEM  
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA  
ONE SHIELDS AVE.  
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PHONE (530) 752-7110  
FAX (530) 752-3350  
EMAIL spharrison@ucdavis.edu

April 5, 2006

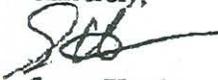
Don Bosco, Chairperson  
State Coastal Conservancy  
1330 Broadway, Suite 1100  
Oakland, CA 94612

Dear Mr. Bosco:

I'm writing to add my support to the effort by the Land Trust of Napa County to purchase the 3,000-acre Wildlake Ranch in the mountains east of Calistoga and St. Helena. The region surrounding and including this property has long been known to botanists as one of the richest places in the state for endemic and rare plant species. The Wildlake acquisition would add to a tract of protected land that includes Robert Louis Stevenson State Park and the Calistoga Palisades, thus providing a large intact block of this incredibly valuable natural habitat. In addition to its botanical riches, the wildlife, watershed, and scenic values of this property combine to make an extremely strong case for its protection. Someday it may also be possible to provide trail access to this area, which would be a tremendous recreational asset for citizens of Napa County and the entire state. Conversely, if the acquisition does not go forward, the Wildlake property will quickly fall prey to vineyard and luxury home development that have already consumed so much of the natural habitats of the coast ranges, adding to the inexorable loss of our biodiversity, watersheds, and open space.

The Land Trust of Napa County has an extraordinary record of effectiveness in land and easement acquisition. It has spearheaded many collaborative efforts involving state and local agencies and (in some cases) the University of California. It has been unique among land trusts in using biodiversity analyses as well as other criteria to prioritize its actions. For all these reasons, I would urge the State Coastal Conservancy provide financial support for the very important Wildlake project.

Sincerely,



Susan Harrison

# NAPA BOTANICAL SURVEY SERVICES



March 5, 2006

Chairman Douglas Bosco  
State Coastal Conservancy  
1330 Broadway, Suite 1100  
Oakland, CA 94612

Dear Chairman Bosco:

At the request of the Land Trust of Napa County, I have conducted a preliminary assessment of the botanical diversity of the Wildlake Ranch in Napa County. This work includes analysis of the strategic importance of preserving this undeveloped segment of the Napa Valley skyline and North Coast Range flora. A previous study conducted by the Nature Conservancy in 2001 identified this portion of Napa Range as being of very high importance to preserving the California North Coast Range Bioregion. This area has beckoned numerous botanists since the 1860's to study the rich flora of the numerous meadows and rock outcrops while more southern reaches of the range have received significantly less attention.

At this point, I can say with confidence that Wildlake Ranch is an exceptional botanical resource. The watershed of Bell Canyon Creek remains over 90% intact despite the pressures of development that have impacted other nearby watersheds such as Conn Creek and Dutch Henry Canyon Creek. Vegetation is distributed in a fine mosaic including Douglas Fir Alliance, Canyon Live Oak Alliance, Alder (Willow-Bay) Riparian Forest, Mixed Oak (Foothill Pine) Woodland, McNab Cypress Woodland, Oregon White Oak Alliance, Chamise Alliance, California Annual Grasslands Alliance, Rock Outcrop and Freshwater Marsh (ICE Mapping Classification, 2002). Dominant plant species include Douglas Fir, Canyon Live Oak, Foothill Pine, Chamise, Common Manzanita, Silver Lupine, and Common Buckbrush. Thus far, important botanical finds include the Rare and Endangered, Cobb Mtn. Lupine (CNPS List 1B), Victor's Gooseberry (CNPS List 4, Limited Distribution) and locally rare species, Mountain Oregon Grape, Brewer's Rockcress and Cuyamaca Campion. Early season surveys have identified about 180 native species on the ranch with the expectation of many further discoveries to be made as spring progresses.

These preliminary assessments have revealed the outstanding plant resources that can be found on the Wildlake Ranch. For this reason, I strongly recommend that the State Coastal Conservancy fully fund The Land Trust of Napa County's project to preserve the flora of this property.

Yours truly,

Jake Ruygt  
Botanist

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COASTAL CONSERVANCY  
OAKLAND, CALIF.



# Napa Valley State Parks Association

## Bothe - Napa Valley State Park

3801 St. Helena Highway • Calistoga, California 94515

April 6, 2006

Don Bosco  
State Coastal Conservancy  
1330 Broadway, Suite 1100  
Oakland, California 94612

Dear Mr. Bosco,

I am writing on behalf of our organization to express support for the Land Trust of Napa County's acquisition of the wilderness area known as Wildlake Ranch in Napa County. As the co-operating association for Napa Valley State Parks we have a particularly keen interest in this project. The Land Trust of Napa County is one of the most successful organizations of its kind in the country and we believe they will do a superior job in negotiating the purchase, managing the land, and working with other agencies to preserve this exceptional wildlife habitat area.

There are several reasons we support this project. First, Wildlake is contiguous to Robert Louis Stevenson State Park. The eventual addition of its 3,000 plus acres to the State Park system is a real possibility and would add immeasurably to the quality of experience at RLS. Second, it would ensure extensive ridge top and viewshed protection in our county where housing pressure is an ever-growing concern.

Third, much of Wildlake is in the Bell Canyon municipal watershed, water supply for the City of St. Helena. There is a history of water quality degradation in that watershed due to vineyard development and this project would mitigate that concern.

Fourth, in a county without a parks department or open space district and where hiking opportunities are limited, the potential for major trail extensions off the existing Palisades and Oat Hill Mine Trail is great. Acquiring the Wildlake property would instantly put in place a hiking experience from the top of Mt. St. Helena, along the new Palisades Trail, and continuing along the ridgetop to Three Peaks area nearly to Angwin, a distance of over twenty miles. It would be one of the finest in the Bay Area.

We believe the Wildlake Ranch project to be of the highest priority and worthy of financial support from the State Coastal Conservancy.

Sincerely,

Ken Stanton, President  
Napa Valley State Parks Association

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COASTAL CONSERVANCY  
OAKLAND, CALIF.





April 5, 2006

Chairman Douglas Bosco  
State Coastal Conservancy  
1330 Broadway, Suite 1100  
Oakland, CA 94612

RE: **Wildlake Ranch**

Dear Chairman Bosco:

I am writing a letter of support for the Land Trust of Napa County's Wildlake Ranch project in Napa County. As one of the representatives for the International Mountain Bicycling Association, I encourage local IMBA members to work with their area land trusts on just such projects. Our constituency fully supports opportunities to protect open space in special California locales. The Land Trust of Napa County works hard to preserve special places in its region. It is an honor to support them in all their efforts and in Wildlake Ranch at this time.

This undeveloped segment of the Napa Valley skyline deserves special attention. I personally have explored nearby trails and enthusiastically share my experiences with fellow hikers and cyclists who are in awe of the rich flora to be found. Such visitors make good stewards of open space.

Outstanding natural resources are a treasure on the Wildlake Ranch. I urge the State Coastal Conservancy to fully fund this special Land Trust of Napa County project.

Sincerely,

*Cathy Haagen-Smit*

Cathy Haagen-Smit  
IMBA State Representative

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OAKLAND, CALIF.**

