



## Black Swan Ranch

### A landscape abundant in Yuba treasures

The Black Swan Ranch located in far western Nevada County along the Lower Yuba River includes pristine oak woodlands ponds and wetland habitat. Bear Yuba Land Trust (BYLT) acquired this land with a goal to yield myriad benefits: habitat connectivity, permanent protection of the multiple natural, cultural, and scenic resources, and opportunities for public access for recreation.

The Black Swan is part of a larger conservation project between BYLT and California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG). It runs along the Yuba and Nevada County line on land that surrounds Smartsville and protects imperiled oak woodlands and Sierra Foothill habitat. It includes 3 miles of Lower Yuba riverfront,

commonly referred to as The Narrows, and the culturally important confluence of Deer Creek and salmon spawning habitat.

#### **Nature Thrives and Prospers**

The Black Swan Ranch includes the historic Black Swan hydraulic diggings - excavated lands that have evolved into ponds providing for rich associated wetlands. This intact wetland is a critical habitat for the endangered Western pond turtle, as well as bass, an array of waterfowl including the American Dipper and Belted Kingfisher.

Black Swan's grassland pastures, rolling hills, and meadows of blue oak and gray pine woodlands provide

*The entire conservation project comprises nearly 700 acres including the Yuba Narrows Ranch owned by Ca. Dept. of Fish and Game and the 158-acre Black Swan Ranch. Directly across the river is the 5,700-acre UC Sierra Foothill Research Station. This entire conservation corridor links more than 10,000 acres of foothills oak woodlands allowing for north-south animal migration, watershed protection and iconic golden California landscapes. This region is under intensive development pressure since it is located on Highway 20, with close proximity to Marysville/Yuba City.*

substantial and meaningful habitat for a variety of terrestrial wildlife including bears, bald eagle, mountain lions, and wintering deer from the Mooretown deer herd. Additional known endangered, species on the properties or in the immediate vicinity include valley elderberry longhorn beetle, Western burrowing owl, and black rail.

### **A Wealth of History and Artifacts**

A faint, time worn trail leads up from a pool on Deer Creek upstream through the oaks and countless boulder outcrops along the way. How sacred this pool must have been to the Maidu who walked that trail between the pool and their village, and who celebrated the Chinook salmon who returned every spring and fall to this very pool.

A little up from the creek are traces of the old stagecoach road which ran from Parks Bar, through Sucker Flat and Excelsior, then up Deer Creek to Mooney Flat Road, and from there to the diggings at French Corral. Numerous stone foundations overgrown, with oak and buckeye jut out unexpectedly from the undergrowth, and remain some of the only traces of the community that once spread across this hillside.

The Black Swan Ranch property became the site of a large ranch and homestead in the late 1800s. Home site remnants remain as well as lichen-covered stone walls and date orchard.

### **Prospecting for Recreation**

Black Swan will provide new public recreational benefits. This conservation purchase will ultimately permit public access along the new “Miner’s Ditch Trail” which passes through both the Black Swan and Yuba Narrows Ranches, providing miles of trails with breathtaking views along the Yuba River Narrows.

Conserving the Black Swan Ranch property is consistent with the surrounding land uses. The goal of this and other conservation acquisitions in the Yuba River watershed is to maintain habitat connectivity and protect the region’s biodiversity while improving public recreational opportunities and contribute to the local economy. The connectivity of this site to already-protected lands helps create a “landscape level” corridor of protection to ensure the long-term environmental, recreational, and economic sustainability, and habitat and wildlife corridor viability of protected and private lands.



*Bear Yuba Land Trust is a non-profit, membership-supported group promoting voluntary conservation of our natural, historical and agricultural resources.*

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For more information or to support this project please visit our website at [BearYubaLandTrust.org](http://BearYubaLandTrust.org) or 530-272-5994 or [info@BearYubaLandTrust.org](mailto:info@BearYubaLandTrust.org).