



## Collaboration and Partnership

Started in 1998, the BRBNA Conservation Partnership brings together public resource agencies, private landowners, and non-profit organizations that are interested in working to protect the natural and working lands of the BRBNA. Our mission is to promote the conservation and stewardship of the BRBNA by fostering communication and collaboration among regional stakeholders. While a Steering Committee provides direction, the Partnership is run by consensus of its members.

The Partnership is among those leading the effort in large-scale landscape protection and collaborative planning. In 2005, the group issued The BRBNA Conservation Framework, a comprehensive guide to the region and collaborative conservation efforts. A fundamental principle of this Framework is its approach to decision-making – one that is premised upon inclusive and cooperative conservation. With a landscape of such diverse ownerships, the Partnership recognizes that effective conservation on this scale occurs not only through protection of biodiversity and wildlands but also depends on sustaining local economies through compatible agriculture and recreation.

## The Essential Ingredient: Your Support & Involvement

The Partnership meets regularly and welcomes all those with an interest in conservation of the BRBNA. Guest speakers present on current topics and there is plenty of opportunity to discuss and share information. We also have subcommittees and working groups to address specific issues and provide collaboration opportunities. Please join us! For more information, visit our website at: [www.BRBNA.org](http://www.BRBNA.org) or email us at: [info@BRBNA.org](mailto:info@BRBNA.org).

**PHOTOGRAPHY:** Cover and inside left: Grant Johnson, [www.grantjohnsonart.com](http://www.grantjohnsonart.com). Cowboy and rafting: Carol Kunze

*Working Together to Protect an Endangered Landscape*



## A Landscape of Ranches, Lakes, Creeks and Wildlands

The Blue Ridge Berryessa Natural Area (BRBNA) encompasses approximately 800,000 acres of wild and range lands that extend southward from the Mendocino National Forest in a long wedge-shaped landscape that includes portions of Lake, Napa, Solano, Yolo, and Colusa counties. The region's boundaries are defined by the Putah and Cache Creek watersheds, both tributaries within the Sacramento River basin. Abounding in natural habitat, working ranches and recreation lands, it is one of the last large landscapes in California that remains relatively undisturbed by the development of cities, towns and commercial development.

Close to half of the BRBNA is in public ownership, including areas managed under the Bureau of Land Management, the Bureau of Reclamation, the U.S. Forest Service, the California Department of Fish and Game, and State Parks. Large ranches comprise most of the remaining landscape including Bear Valley, Antelope Valley, Cortina Ridge, and the slopes of the Blue Ridge. The University of California Natural Reserve System manages approximately 10,000 acres in the region, and there are a number of land trust reserves as well as private lands protected under conservation easements.



## Reasons to Protect and Conserve

Four distinct values characterize this sparsely populated landscape – the beauty, biological diversity, and uniqueness of its plant and wildlife habitats; the legacy of its working ranches and ranching families; the many recreational opportunities offered by its public lands and waters; and the evidence of human history that tell an important story of people who once lived on the land.

### Diverse Habitat

The BRBNA is among the most biologically diverse areas in the country and supports a variety of notable ecological communities: riparian, blue and valley oak woodlands, grasslands, northern mixed chaparral, serpentine prairie and chaparral, northern cypress forest, vernal pools, and cliff habitats. A rich array of wildlife species rely on these communities as critical habitat. Scientists from U.C. Davis and elsewhere have been studying these habitats and encouraging their protection.

### Ranching As A Way Of Life

Expansive rangeland, distinguished by a number of large ranches, is a testament to the region's land-based economy and its rich history, revealing

a landscape shaped by decades of human use. Varied topography, less fertile soils, unreliable water and remoteness have limited competition from other land uses, allowing cattle ranching to continue as the predominant agricultural activity. However, although many family ranches go back generations, the future of these operations is uncertain. Involvement in conservation efforts offers a key avenue for keeping ranch lands from development and helping families stay in business.

### Places To Raft, Fish, Hike & Swim

The BRBNA's public lands and waters draw visitors seeking out a variety of recreational activities. These include hiking through the region's scenic and varied terrain; lakeside and remote camping; bicycle and horseback riding along miles of back country roads and trails; fishing and hunting; canoeing and kayaking in lakes and creeks; swimming, boating, and water skiing at Lake Berryessa; and white water rafting in Cache Creek. Public recreation in the BRBNA demands careful management to ensure protection of natural resources and compatibility with the rights and land uses of private property owners.

## A History of Native Peoples, Miners & Ranchers

Archeologists have found traces of human settlement throughout the BRBNA dating back 10,000 years. Four Native American groups populated the region – the Hill Patwin, the Pomo, the Lake Miwok, and the Mayacamus (Wappo). Spanish explorers arrived in the region as early as 1808, followed by other settlers in search of land and livelihood. The California Gold Rush provided a market for the quicksilver produced by the area's mercury mines, transforming surrounding communities and leaving a lasting imprint on the region's lands and waters.

