



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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LandWatch Releases Publication Celebrating the “David Versus Goliath” Battles

Twenty years of history, challenges, opportunities, and wins are revealed

Salinas, CA – Today LandWatch Monterey County, a land conservation and planning organization focused on sustainable growth, released *LandWatch Monterey County: A Short History*, a publication recounting its efforts to improve Monterey County’s quality of life since 1997. This 40-page narrative, available in print and [online](#), includes details on the formation of LandWatch; its launch and development; its involvement across Monterey County to engage and educate residents, petition government, and change, support, and challenge public policies and development projects; and its important accomplishments.

“We are grateful to historian and sociologist John Walton for his ability tell LandWatch’s story so poignantly,” recounts Michael D. DeLapa, LandWatch’s Executive Director. “The vision and goals for our organization are realized year after year because of the tireless efforts of board members, staff, grassroots activists, and incredibly dedicated supporters.”

This carefully crafted publication weaves together creative policy outcomes (like the creation of the Marina Urban Growth Boundary), land use litigation (like the opposition to the proposed Ferrini Ranch project), and thoughtful engagement strategies (like the 12 guiding principles for land use). An early victory from the 2000s was Marks Ranch, which could have become urban sprawl, but with thoughtful strategies, public outreach, and petitioning, LandWatch’s efforts held off the subdivision until the land was preserved in perpetuity by the Big Sur Land Trust. In 2013, LandWatch led the opposition to Monterey Downs, a massive horse racing and sprawling commercial and residential project on recreational lands on the former Fort Ord. LandWatch organized other nonprofits and local residents, and also filed a lawsuit, which eventually led Seaside to overturn project approvals.

“LandWatch has always relied on the support of community members, activists, and partner organizations,” says DeLapa. “We wouldn’t have the successes we have today without aligning our work, understanding the political environment, and having good working relationships with staff and elected leaders.”

Many of the efforts LandWatch engages on promote people-oriented developments, sustainable water supplies, and have an eye to the future. In 2020, LandWatch will focus its efforts on supporting affordable, climate friendly workforce housing; advancing urban growth boundaries; protecting farmland and local economies; and ensuring sustainable water supplies for both urban and agricultural use.

The publication is available for download on [LandWatch’s website](#). Many thanks to the countless supporters, volunteers, donors, elected leaders, and activists—throughout the region—that made LandWatch successful, approachable, and credible.

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Formed in 1997, LandWatch’s mission is to promote sound land use policies that improve economic vitality, agricultural productivity, environmental health, and social equity in Monterey County.