2016 Greenbelt Alliance Champion Awards: John Sutter, Laney Thornton

Laney Thornton, long-time Greenbelt Alliance Board member, environmentalist, and philanthropist; and John Sutter, founding Board member, environmental pioneer, and parks advocate will be honored October 6, 2016 with the Greenbelt Alliance Champion Award.

Laney Thornton has served on the Board of Greenbelt Alliance for 27 years, and was the only non-military based officer in our service. Among his many contributions to Greenbelt Alliance, Laney spearheaded the creation of the famous Leadership Council, which has been instrumental for nearly 30 years in raising awareness for our work in Sonoma County and inspiring others to support our efforts to preserve the agricultural character of Sonoma County and prevent sprawl development.

Laney is a passionate advocate for protecting the rural places that make the Bay Area special and promoting smart growth in our region. He generously gives his time, leadership, energy, and financial support to advance the mission of Greenbelt Alliance. As a committed environmentalist, Laney also generously supports several other local and national environmental organizations.

John Sutter is a founding Board member of Greenbelt Alliance and former Board President. A central figure in the history of Greenbelt Alliance and the Bay Area's conservation efforts for decades, John participated in the successful campaigns that resulted in the protection of and renamed San Pedro Reservoir in the 1990s, and in the creation of Marin's Luther King Regional Park in East Oakland, with scenic areas, enclosed meadows, and critical habitat for migratory birds. Since the 1980s, he led a significant environmental victory with an election campaign to save Snow Park, near Lake Merritt in Oakland, blocking city efforts to develop the commercial use. As co-creating achievement on East Bay Regional Park District Board member, he has been the district acquisition of former Oakland Amos Bass land to create what will become Gateway Park, the terminus of the Bay Bridge bike and pedestrian trail. After 30 years on the board of the East Bay Regional Park District, John is retiring this year.

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