



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.

The award is in recognition of their lifelong contributions to the mission of Greenbelt Alliance—protecting our natural and agricultural lands and promoting smart growth within our cities and towns to make the Bay Area a place where all residents can thrive.



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 land around San Pablo Reservoir in the 1950s, and in the creation of Martin Luther King Jr. Regional Shoreline in East Oakland, with picnic areas, restored wetlands, and critical habitat for migratory birds. More than 50 years ago, he scored a significant environmental victory with an election campaign to save Snow Park, near Lake

Merritt in Oakland, blocking city efforts to develop it for commercial use. His crowning achievement as an East Bay Regional Park District board member has been the district's acquisition of former Oakland Army Base land to create what will become Gateway Park, the terminus of the Bay Bridge bike and pedestrian trail. After 20 years on the board of the East Bay Regional Park District, John is retiring this year.



Laney Thornton has served on the Board of Greenbelt Alliance for 27 years, and ours is the only non-profit board on which he serves. Among his many contributions to Greenbelt Alliance, Laney spearheaded the creation of the Sonoma Leadership Council, which has been instrumental for many years in raising awareness for our work in Sonoma County and raising money to support our efforts to protect the agricultural character of Sonoma County and prevent sprawl development. Laney is a passionate advocate for protecting the iconic 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. A committed environmentalist, Laney also generously supports several other local and national environmental organizations.