



# YOLO LAND TRUST *newsletter*

Fall/Winter 2006



## *A Day In the Country 2006*

On a warm September afternoon, over 400 folks joined us to celebrate the rich agricultural heritage of Yolo County. Is there any better combination than food, wine and friends?

We are grateful to everyone who played a part this year. In particular, many thanks go to the 28 farms and ranches, 24 restaurants, 11 wineries, innumerable volunteers, sponsors and ticket-buyers, who helped make this year's event a fabulous success!

Special thanks goes to Adele Giovannetti and her family for hosting the event and welcoming over 400 of our friends onto their property.

Save next year's date:  
*September 9, 2007*

*Harlan Ranch*

We hope to see you there!



## **A Message from the President**

Autumn is a thoughtful season. For farmers, it is a time to catch our breaths from the long months of preparation that finally culminate with harvest. It is a time to reflect on practices that worked well and to contemplate new strategies for the next year. In that same vein, Yolo Land Trust uses this season as well to contemplate and to plan.

Over half of our board members are active farmers. This gives the board a unique perspective towards land preservation. We are keenly aware that like a successful harvest, land conservation cannot simply be dictated. It happens because of a lot of hard work. Successful conservation is a complex process that requires mutual agreements among a host of participants. The conservation easements held by the Yolo Land Trust are all voluntary agreements. Bringing these easements to fruition requires patience, a strong hand and abundant commitment.

Commitment is the energy that keeps us going. Yolo Land Trust is committed to preserving farmland, habitat and open space because we know first hand the value of a vital, local ag community. In an increasingly global economy, we know that the availability of locally grown food, coupled with the satisfaction of being able to put a face on the producer is, as a popular commercial states, priceless.

The pressures for farmland conversion are immense. With your continued support, we will continue to be a strong voice in the county for land preservation. We are actively exploring new financial and tax tools that encourage conservation. We are forming alliances with our partners so that we may all speak with a clear and united voice. We celebrate our successes and optimistically hold to the future.

*- Peter Hunter*



## **New Conservation Tax Incentives Offer Substantial Benefits to Landowners, Farmers and Ranchers!**

In August 2006, President Bush signed into law H.R. 4, containing provisions that significantly expand the tax incentive for conservation easement donations made during 2006 and 2007. In brief, the new law:

- ✓ Raises the allowable deduction a donor can take for donating a conservation easement from 30 percent of his or her income in any year to 50 percent;
- ✓ Allows qualifying farmers and ranchers to deduct up to 100 percent of their income; and
- ✓ Extends the carry-forward period for a donor to take tax deductions from 5 years to 15 years.

Yolo Land Trust would be happy to discuss conservation strategies and options for your property - please call us at (530) 795-3110. To learn whether you can take advantage of this new tax incentive, please consult a legal or tax professional.

## ***In Memory of Charlie Rominger***

Charlie Rominger was one of the silent heroes of land conservation, inspiring and touching a great many people during his too-short life. When Charlie lost his battle with cancer last month, we were all deeply affected. YLT has enjoyed a long relationship with the Rominger family. Charlie's father, Richard, was a founding board member of YLT. Charlie's wife, Cairn, served on our Board. Charlie himself was always supportive of YLT's mission. We are truly honored that the Rominger family chose YLT to establish a special fund in Charlie's memory, the Charlie Rominger Farmland Preservation Fund. This fund will be used exclusively for the acquisition of one or more significant and strategically located agricultural easements in Yolo County. If you would like to designate a portion of your annual YLT contribution to extend Charlie's legacy, please note that on your gift.



## ***A Year of Conservation Agreements: 931 Acres of Working Farms Protected***

YLT works with landowners who are interested in preserving the conservation resources of their property: soils and farmland, habitat, open space and scenic viewsheds are some of the resources we can help protect in Yolo County. While many conservation tools are available to us, conservation easements are the most common. Easements are legal agreements that protect one or more resources forever. When land is protected by an easement, the landowner continues to own the land while the land trust's role is to make sure the resource values are protected over time. In 2006, Yolo Land Trust closed 3 transactions totaling 931 acres, bringing YLT's total of land preserved to over 6,300 acres. Here are our latest additions:

### **Merritt Ranch**



Early in the year YLT closed on the 643-acre Merritt Ranch agriculture/habitat conservation easement. The benefits of this agreement are two-fold, as it protects both farmland and Swainson's hawk habitat forever. The property is bound by Highway 113, CR 27 and Willow Slough. Willow Slough provides nesting area and the fields offer good foraging grounds for raptors. This transaction marked the end of the first phase of mitigation requirements for the Spring Lake development in Woodland. YLT now holds nearly 1,000 acres of habitat mitigation easements in the County.

### **Pollock Farm**



The Pollock family has been farming in Yolo County for over 100 years, a tradition passed from generation to generation. Herb and Lynnel Pollock bought this particular 137-acre property, south of Yolo, to make it the home-base for farming with their sons, Brad and Greg, and to protect it forever. The soils are fertile, of course, but the property also fronts  $\frac{3}{4}$ -mile of Cache Creek, providing significant wildlife habitat. The property also has great historic value, including an early Wells Fargo bank building and stage stop. In preserving their farm they are affirming a way of life, ensuring that the land remains in farming, and preserving a significant piece of Yolo County's natural and cultural heritage. The transaction was funded by the California Farmland Conservancy Program and the Great Valley Center.

### **South Madison Farms**



The Butlers began their journey toward a conservation easement several years ago when they began working with the Yolo County Resource Conservation District and the Natural Resource Conservation Service to build tailwater return ponds and plant hedgerows for wildlife habitat on their property. Protecting the land with an easement became an extension of their farm stewardship activities. Lew Butler approached YLT in 2005 to discuss protecting two of his parcels, about 151 acres of prime farmland just south of Madison. The two parcels support a variety of field and row crops, native grasses grown for seed, and mature trees that provide wildlife habitat. The acquisition of these easements was funded by the California Farmland Conservancy Program (CFCP) and Yolo County LAFCO mitigation funds.

The landscapes that we love depend on the success of local farming.



*The Yolo Land Trust is a non-profit public benefit corporation, organized and operated exclusively for charitable purposes. Formed in 1988, it is the oldest agricultural land trust in the Valley and one of the most active in the nation.*

**Board of Directors**

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Harry Pollack, Conservation Partners

**Yolo Land Trust Mission**

To protect and preserve the agricultural, open space, and habitat lands of Yolo County.



*The following names include foundations, corporations, state agencies, and individuals who made a financial contribution to the Yolo Land Trust of \$100 or more over the last 12 months. Although we are unable to list all our supporters' names here, we thank each and every one of you for your vision and generosity.*

**\$10,000 +**

CA Farmland Conservancy Program  
 Great Valley Center  
 Dan & Sarah Hrdy  
 Yolo County Advisory Committee on Tribal Matters

**\$1,000 +**

A. Teichert Construction  
 Anonymous  
 Ecological Farming Association  
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 Foothills Foundation

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 Wilson & Katherine Smith  
 Yolo County Flood Control & Water Conservation District

**\$500 +**

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**\$250 +**

Bryan & Cristina Bonino  
 Cal/West Seeds  
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 Yolo County Resource Conservation Dist.

**100+**

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 Armstrong & Associates  
 Jim & Sally Barrett  
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Sally Button  
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 Meridian Pacific  
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 Dr. Doris E. O'Connor & the Ribera Children

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Yolo Land Trust  
 P.O. Box 1196  
 Woodland, CA 95776

**Support the Yolo Land Trust**  
*...help us preserve farmland and natural areas in Yolo County!*

The Yolo Land Trust is thankful for all the individuals and organizations who have supported our work over the years and warmly welcomes new supporters. If you would like to renew your support or join us for the first time, please fill in the information below.

\_\_\_ \$1,000    \_\_\_ \$500    \_\_\_ \$250    \_\_\_ \$100    \_\_\_ \$75    \_\_\_ \$50    \_\_\_ \$35    \_\_\_ Other

*Yolo Land Trust is a 501(c)3 non-profit corporation. Your contribution is tax deductible to the extent allowable by IRS guidelines.*

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Name

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Address

\_\_\_\_\_  
 Email

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 City, State, Zip Code

\_\_\_\_\_ I would like to be contacted to discuss conservation options for my property.

\_\_\_\_\_ Please direct \_\_\_\_\_% of my gift to the Charlie Rominger Farmland Preservation Fund.

Please make your check payable to the **Yolo Land Trust**.  
 Return form to: Yolo Land Trust, PO Box 1196, Woodland, CA 95776