

YOLO LAND TRUST



YOLO LAND TRUST

Protecting Yolo County land for over 20 years.

FALL/WINTER 2008

Casey Stone
President

Kathy Ward
Vice President

Dan Clawson
Treasurer

Mary Kimball
Secretary

Marsha Anderson
Director

Suzanne Ashworth
Director

Michele Clark
Director

Val Dolcini
Director

Peter Hunter
Director

Richard Jenness
Director

Kent Lang
Director

Gregory Merwin
Director

Paul Muller
Director

Staff

Judith Boshoven
Executive Director

Deborah North
Conservation Director

The Yolo Land Trust is a 501c3 nonprofit organization founded in 1988 by farmers, community leaders and conservationists dedicated to protecting Yolo County's land resources.

The Elkhorn Basin Ranch Acquisition Boosts Regional Agriculture, Flood Control, and Water Resources Planning Objectives

The Sacramento Valley Conservancy (SVC), in collaboration with Yolo Land Trust, successfully completed the purchase of the 1,682-acre Elkhorn Basin (aka Knaggs) Ranch in Yolo County, located along the Sacramento River 10 minutes northeast of Woodland, just north of I-5, and 20 minutes from downtown Sacramento. The project offers an innovative model for regional collaboration.

The acquisition of the Elkhorn Basin Ranch permanently preserves land in the Elkhorn Basin for agricultural, wildlife habitat and open space use. The project boosts local farmland preservation - as the ranch will remain in productive agriculture

Continued on Page 2



Riparian Habitat at Elkhorn Basin Ranch

Celebrating 20 years of Achievements

By Casey Stone, President

Recently, the Yolo Land Trust was proud to celebrate the beginning of its 20th year, with several hundred of our closest friends. Our "Day in the Country" fundraiser, held at the lovely Woodland farm of Mike and Tootie Beeman, featured gourmet cuisine prepared by leading regional restaurants, all supplied with fresh bounty from local growers. This premier Yolo County event has allowed us to reflect on our humble beginnings and current accomplishments.

Twenty years ago, Richard Rominger and Helen Thomson gathered area farmers and community leaders to form a non-profit organization that could hold agricultural

conservation easements. While this was a noble idea, implementation presented numerous challenges. In 1988, agricultural easements were a new concept in California. There were few models or policies to guide the original founders, and no funding sources were available. Cities had not yet established farmland and habitat mitigation requirements.

For the first five years, YLT board members met faithfully every month, developing a mission statement, crafting policies, and periodically holding workshops to educate people about conservation easements. In order to establish trust and credibility with landowners, funders, and policy makers,

Continued on Page 2

The Elkhorn Basin Ranch Acquisition *Continued From Page 1*

including both orchards and row crops; provides riparian forest habitat; retains local water resources; and enhances regional flood protection.

“This important acquisition serves as a model for regional collaboration that will strengthen regional flood protection, preserve our heritage, and help support continued local food production and our agricultural economic base,” said Assembly member Lois Wolk, who serves on the Legislative Advisory Committee of the Wildlife Conservation Board. “As our region grows and evolves, we must develop innovative partnerships that preserve Yolo County’s agricultural land use strategy while maintaining its scenic beauty.”

“I am pleased that the Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency played an active role in this effort to preserve this area as permanently protected agricultural land and complementary habitat,” said Senator Darrell Steinberg. “This creative partnership demonstrates that working together we can make both sides of the river safer, more secure, more beautiful, and, at the same time, maintain economic productivity.”

“I am pleased that AB 930 is demonstrating its value in fostering regional cooperation for the conservation of our valuable agricultural lands as well as fostering good floodplain management practices,” said Assemblyman Dave Jones (D-Sacramento), the author of a 2007 measure to encourage landowners to voluntarily enter into easement agreements as a part of the capital region’s integrated flood control strategy.

“By acquiring and managing the Elkhorn Basin Ranch, SVC and Yolo Land Trust are fulfilling our mission to protect our communities’ heritage while investing



Walnuts at Elkhorn Basin Ranch

in our future,” said Aimee Rutledge, executive director of SVC. “The innovative partnerships established during the Ranch acquisition enhance regional cooperation on flood issues, sustain local walnuts, wheat and other crops, and provide unique opportunities for Sacramento River habitat restoration to provide homes for endangered song birds, fish and other species.”

“We are excited to build this bridge across the river – linking two counties-- by partnering with SVC. We look forward to a close and on-going collaboration with SVC to help sustain the agricultural land uses and habitat values along the Sacramento River that are so important to the region,” said Debbie North, Conservation Director of the Yolo Land Trust.

Funding partners for this project include the Sacramento Area Flood Control Agency (SAFCA), the Department of Water Resources, the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, the Resources Legacy Fund, and the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB-pending approval). Yolo County also established a partnership with SAFCA on issues of mutual interest.

20 Years of Achievements *Continued From Page 1*

YLT promoted a non-political emphasis, avoiding taking sides in emotional land-use debates. Instead, we offered technical advice on sound planning principles where it was requested. Eventually the first two transactions were completed, and we’ve never looked back.

Today, the Yolo Land Trust is a vibrant organization with an energetic board of directors and highly skilled staff. We have permanently preserved 8,600 acres with 43 easements, just over 1 acre per day in the history of our existence. This year alone, we have preserved 2,300 acres, with many more easements set to close in the near future. We’ve formed excellent working relationships with

funding agencies, landowners, municipalities and policy makers. We have also worked collaboratively with other neighboring land trusts to accomplish regional conservation goals. Our easement portfolio has expanded from exclusively farmland to include habitat, rangeland and mitigation easements. The current surge of interest from willing landowners is perhaps our greatest success story.

Open space that divides our cities is much more than just a brief respite from concrete and asphalt. It is a working landscape which supports our communities, and enhances our quality of life. We believe it is worth preserving, now and forever.

Partnerships Continue with Landowners and the City of Davis in the County Road 27 and 29 Corridor

In a continuing partnership between landowners, the city of Davis and the Yolo Land Trust, 80 more acres of farmland and habitat have been placed into a conservation easement, protecting the land forever from development.

The Wasserman easement is on County Road 99 between county roads 27 and 29. The entire property is classified as prime farmland and includes a portion of Willow Slough, an important riparian corridor that crosses the property. There are now 1,943 acres of preserved farm and habitat lands

between Woodland and Davis, a cluster which has been named the John Williamson Easements.

“The Wasserman easement implements long-standing farmland protection policies of the city of Davis, the Yolo Land Trust and Yolo County while also preserving



Wasserman easement

unique habitat resources,” Debbie North, YLT Conservation Director explained. “The sloughs provide irrigation water for the farms and support abundant habitat that is critical for a variety of wildlife species in this area, including Swainson’s hawks.”

Michele Clark joins the YLT Board

This summer, the Yolo Land Trust was very pleased to welcome Michele M. Clark to the YLT Board of Directors. Michele is a native Californian who has spent the last 15 years living in Yolo County. Michele has been a supporter of the Land Trust for many years.

She currently is the transaction director for the California Rangeland Trust, a statewide land trust whose mission is to preserve working ranches in California. Michele is a graduate of Class XXXVII of the California Agricultural Leadership Program. She earned her law degree from Rutgers University and practiced commercial real estate law in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Boca Raton, Florida and was a shareholder with the Sacramento law firm of McDonough, Holland & Allen until 2000. While at McDonough, Michele represented the City of Davis in one of the first conservation easement transactions funded by the California Farmland Conservancy Program, an easement currently held by the Yolo Land Trust. During that time, she also represented the Merced County Farmlands

and Open Space Trust in the acquisition of conservation easements over agricultural land. Michele also served as western regional counsel for the Trust for Public Land, a national nonprofit organization. Michele has taught numerous classes on conservation easements for the Land Trust Alliance, including its annual conference and at regional conferences.

She has spoken at farm bureaus throughout the state as well as at colleges and to other groups interested in conservation easements.



Michele Clark



1059 Court Street, Suite 217,
Woodland, CA 95695
PO Box 1196, Woodland, CA 95776

NONPROFIT ORG
US POSTAGE PAID
WOODLAND CA
PERMIT NO. 137

It was a Sweltering “Day in the Country” – But still a Big Success

On September 7th the Yolo Land Trust celebrated its 20th anniversary at the annual “A Day in the Country” fundraiser. Despite the more than 100-degree weather, 700 people came together to celebrate the contribution of Yolo County’s farmland, habitat and open space to our quality of life.

Honored was one of the founding members of the Land Trust, Paul Deering, who was praised by Yolo County Supervisor Helen Thomson and former USDA Assistant Secretary Richard Rominger as being a person of vision. Deering served as a board member of the Land Trust for 16 years and was credited with helping establish policies that have paid off over the years with putting more land into conservation.

Please join us in thanking the sponsors who share our passion for protecting the lands that nurture and sustain us: Abbott and Kinderman, LLP; American International Manufacturing Co.; Amistad Ranches; Bogle Winery; California Rangeland Trust, Carbahal & Company; California Rice Commission; Campbell Soup Supply Co., LLC; Supervisor Duane Chamberlain; Michele Clark & Paul Simmons; Conservation Partners; Davis Food Co-op; Eaton Drilling; Esparto FFA; Eureka Seeds; Farm Credit West; Fidelity National Title; First Northern Bank; Full Belly Farms; Hedgerow Farms; Holt of California; Dan & Sarah Hrdy; Peter & Debbie Hunter; Kimzey Welding Works, Inc.; LPL Financial Services; Laugenour & Meikle; Luna Vista Rotary; Mariani Nut Company; McDonough, Holland & Allen; Linda McGrew; Greg & Patty Merwin; Joe Muller & Sons; Nugget Markets; Amy Pargman; Harry Pollack, Herb & Lynnel Pollock; Remy Thomas Moose & Manley; River City



From left to right: former USDA Assistant Secretary Richard Rominger, Yolo County Supervisor Helen Thomson, and one of the founding members of the Land Trust Paul Deering,

Bank; Santoni; Seminis; Sheffield Real Estate; Somach, Simmons & Dunn; Tom & Margaret Stallard; Casey & Angela Stone; Lux Taylor; Supervisor Helen Thomson; The Lyman Group, Inc.; The Tremont Group, Inc.; TS&L Seed Co.; Charles & Kathryn Tyson; Umpqua Bank; Valley Tire Center; Valley Truck & Tractor Co.; Wildlands; Woodland Tractor & Equipment Co.; Yolo Community Foundation; Yolo County Farm Bureau; Yolo County Flood Control & Water Conservation District; Yolo County RCD and Ziegler Associates.

This event would not have been possible without the many farms, who donated farm products, the restaurants, who contributed culinary creativity and “sweat equity” serving on such a hot day, and the wineries, who poured their local wines. We have listed them on our website www.yololandtrust.org under events.

We also offer a very special thanks to Michael and Tootie Beeman for hosting the event, and to Paul Muller for his leadership.