

YOLO LAND TRUST



Protecting Yolo County land for over 20 years.

SUMMER / FALL 2011

Board of Directors

Mary Kimball
President

Chris Sinclair
Vice President

Kathy Ward
Treasurer

Kristen Bennett
Secretary

Marsha Anderson

Dan Clawson

Beth Gabor

Peter Hunter

Jessica Kilkenny

Bob Marr

Chris Scheuring

Charles Tyson

Michele Clark
Executive Director

Margo Heekin
Stewardship Coordinator

The Yolo Land Trust is a California nonprofit public benefit corporation, founded in 1988 by an innovative group of farmers, ranchers, community leaders and conservationists dedicated to protecting Yolo County's land resources. The Yolo Land Trust has helped landowners place conservation easements on 51 parcels throughout Yolo County, permanently conserving almost 9,000 acres of land for future generations. These farms remain privately owned and operated. The Yolo Land Trust is conserving land today that will shape the character of Yolo County for centuries.



For more information on the Yolo Land Trust or to receive YLT E-News visit www.yololandtrust.org or provide us with your email address on the enclosed remit envelope.

A Day in the Country at Park Winters



Governor Brown and Paul Muller. Photo: Phil Hogan

The Yolo Land Trust thanks the greater Yolo County community and beyond for a very successful A Day in the Country held on September 11, 2011 at Park Winters.

Park Winters owners, Rafael Galiano, John Martin and Summer Rodman, opened their gardens to the public for the first time and more than 700 guests wandered amidst the trees, lawns and fountains while enjoying the scrumptious food created by 28 northern California restaurants.

Eighteen Yolo County growers and producers had donated their meat, fruits and vegetables to the chefs who created delicacies such as eggplant lamb and tomato rolls, candy-striped figs stuffed with walnut butter, pork sliders, and hand-shucked snow cones with fresh fruit syrup.

Ten local farms also had tastings ranging from olive oils to honey to beet cream puffs. Adding to the festive atmosphere were 13 Yolo County vintners who poured their wines and Sierra Nevada Brewery which provided beer.

Governor Jerry Brown made a surprise appearance and publicly congratulated local grower Paul Muller on receiving YLT's Thomson Rominger Award for leadership in agricultural conservation. Muller, owner of Full Belly Farm in Guida, also received a commendation by State Senator Lois Wolk and from the office of Congressman Mike Thompson. "I'm pleased to honor Paul Muller for his innovation and commitment to the

Yolo community," said Senator Wolk. "Yolo County is fortunate to have a leader such as Paul who has a passion for agriculture."

Governor Brown told the crowd he was happy to be amidst the Yolo County community and stressed the value and importance of working at a local level where cooperation and accomplishments are easier to attain. He spent nearly an hour meandering through the group, stopping to sample the delicious food, talk with people, and pose for pictures.

Thanks to all the growers, producers, restaurants, wineries, vendors, sponsors, donors and supporters who made the 2011 A Day in the Country a smashing success!

Congressman John Garamendi also attended the event as did California Secretary of Food and Agriculture Karen Ross, who helped grill lamb with Rominger Brothers Farms. "You here in Yolo County" commented Secretary Ross, "are such a fabulous model for other counties in the

Continued on page 3



People sampling delicious food from 28 northern California restaurants.

Photo: Phil Hogan

OUR ULTIMATE RESPONSIBILITY

The principal focus of Yolo Land Trust (YLT) is to preserve the agriculture capacity and existing wildlife habitat on Yolo County's farmland. The tool that YLT primarily uses is a voluntary conservation easement which is a recorded legal document that 'runs with the land'. The landowner retains ownership to the land and the YLT accepts the responsibility of the preservation of the conservation values and ensures the land use restrictions outlined in the conservation easement are followed by the current (and subsequent) landowner(s).

Stewardship - The ultimate ongoing responsibility of Yolo Land Trust is to monitor our protected properties to ensure compliance with the conservation easement in perpetuity!

Earlier this year YLT hired Margo Heekin as its first Stewardship Coordinator to manage our stewardship responsibilities. She works with our two volunteer monitors; prepares baseline reports and monitoring reports; and archives YLT's important documents. Margo is also reviewing and updating our monitoring and record keeping practices to comply with the latest requirements set forth by the Land Trust Alliance standards, our national land trust organization.

Prior to the completion of the conservation easement transaction, YLT staff meets with the landowner, visits the property and prepares a 'snapshot in time' of the property's current condition. This report is called a baseline report and describes with text, maps and photographs the current land uses and the conservation values that are protected by the conservation easement. An example of a conservation value would be the 'agriculture capacity' of farmland, or the 'wildlife habitat' of an adjacent riparian area. An example of a land use restriction to protect the conservation values could be a restriction on the number, location and/or size of additional buildings that could be built.

Before going out to the property, Margo reviews the conservation easement and the baseline report and prepares a monitoring checklist for each property. On the monitoring visit, the monitors take photographs and use the monitoring checklist to compare the current land uses with the baseline report. The monitors look for changes to the land uses that may affect the conservation values cited in the conservation easement. For example: If the conservation easement is protecting farmland, then the monitor will note any portion of the property that has been converted from farmland. A review of



Greg Merwin

Rich Jenness

the easement will determine whether such conversion is a permitted use.

To help visit the properties and take photographs,

Yolo Land Trust is very fortunate to have two skilled volunteers, Rich Jenness and Greg Merwin. Rich and Greg are Yolo County natives, grew up on Yolo County farms and both earned Civil Engineering degrees.

In 1959, Greg Merwin joined his father and brother to form a farming enterprise near Clarksburg, and married Patty Nikula. Patty and Greg Merwin, who recently celebrated 52 years of marriage, have raised two children and have four grandchildren, who all still reside in Yolo County. Greg and Patty's son now manages the farming enterprise, although Greg still helps out. Greg has also been very involved in the community and in leadership positions for organizations which include the California Beet Growers Association, Farm Bureau, Boy Scouts and United Church of Christ (Congregational); and served on the Yolo Land Trust Board of Directors for 8 years, and 52 years as the Clarksburg Community Church organist!

Rich Jenness spent 40 plus years with the local firm, Laugenour and Meikle Civil Engineers, working his way up to eventually buying the firm from his partners. Rich married his high school sweetheart, Rebecca Gordon, and they have three children and seven grandchildren who all reside in the area. Rich was involved in leadership positions during his professional life and continuing into his retirement with organizations which include local and state professional Civil Engineering organizations, St. John's United Church of Christ, Woodland Chamber of Commerce, (he was voted the 2009 Agri-Business Person of the Year), Heidrick Ag Museum, and 18 years on the Yolo Land Trust Board of Directors.

Sustainability to Yolo Land Trust is our ability to complete our stewardship responsibilities - in perpetuity! The land remains in private ownership; on the local tax rolls; and the farming enterprise on these protected lands will continue to provide food, jobs and revenue to the local economy. The public benefits from the scenic views of productive Yolo County farmland and protection of the local food shed. As a private non-profit, Yolo Land Trust relies on our local community for support to help us preserve Yolo County's productive farmland and wildlife habitat today, and for future generations.

New Staff and Board Member



Margo Heekin

Margo Heekin is the Stewardship Coordinator and works with volunteers and landowners to help manage the stewardship of Yolo Land Trust's conservation portfolio. Margo also works with the Land Conservation Committee regarding new projects, and maintains the land conservation files.

Margo was born and raised in the Sacramento area and earned a Master's degree in agriculture from Kansas State University and a Bachelor's degree in agriculture from California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo. Margo managed a purebred cattle ranch and worked on farms and ranches in Kansas and California. She also brings land trust experience to Yolo Land Trust, having worked as the Conservation Project Manager for The Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County. Margo lives in Woodland, and is very excited to live closer to family and be able use her diverse background and experience to help Yolo Land Trust in protecting local agriculture.



Charles Tyson

Charles Tyson, has been a resident of Yolo County for over thirty years, initially coming here to study soil science at UC Davis. He is currently employed by the California Department of Water Resources in Sacramento, where he manages the Delta Ecosystem Enhancement Unit of the FloodSAFE Environmental Stewardship and Statewide Resources Office. Charles previously worked within the state's Department of Conservation, where he managed the California Farmland Conservancy Program (CFCP) for fourteen years, overseeing CFCP grant funding to support local efforts to protect farmland, including the establishment of agricultural conservation easements throughout the state. Charles was the 2007 Thomson Rominger Award recipient. He resides with his family in Davis.

Qualified Charitable Distributions - An Opportunity to Save Tax Dollars

A qualified charitable distribution ("QCD") is generally a nontaxable distribution made directly by the trustee of an IRA (other than a SEP or SIMPLE IRA) to an organization eligible to receive tax-deductible contributions. The Yolo Land Trust is an organization eligible to receive tax-deductible contributions, such as a QCD. The donor must be at least 70½ when the distribution is made. The maximum annual exclusion for QCDs is \$100,000. Any QCD in excess of the \$100,000 exclusion limit is included in income as any other distribution. If the donor is filing a joint return, the spouse can also have a QCD and exclude up to \$100,000. A QCD will count towards a required minimum distribution.

The donor must have the same type of acknowledgement of the contribution that you would need to claim a deduction for a charitable contribution. See Records To Keep in IRS Publication 526, Charitable Contributions. The Yolo Land Trust will provide a gift acknowledgement letter.

For more information, talk with your accountant or tax advisor. The information provided here can be found in IRS Publication 590.

The rules governing QCDs are available for tax year 2011 only at this point. Call Michele Clark at 530-662-1110 if you are interested. We are prepared to help you save taxes!

A Day in the Country at Park Winters *(continued from page 1)*

State for bridging rural and urban interests, and for bringing people together to build community."

Lively music by Yolo County favorite, the Plainfield Pickers, filled the gardens. In the Kids' Corner, children created geometric structures with toothpicks and gumdrops. Each took home a special goodie bag.

Proceeds from A Day in the Country will help the Yolo Land Trust's mission of conservation of farmland and habitat lands.

Visit our website www.yololandtrust.org to see photos from the event. Next year A Day in the Country will be held on September 9, 2012.



221 W. Court Street, Suite 5
Woodland, CA 95695

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

NONPROFIT ORG
US POSTAGE PAID
WOODLAND CA
PERMIT NO. 137

Mark Your Calendars

Dig in and “harvest” a piece of art rooted in Yolo County at **Art Farm** to be held at Gallery 625 located at 625 Court Street, Woodland on **November 4, 2011** from 6:00 to 9:00 p.m. **Art Farm**, an art exhibit and fundraising event, will feature **A Taste of Yolo** with local food and wine, live music, and silent art auction. Proceeds benefit **Yolo Land Trust** and **The Art and Ag Project**. Admission ticket for food and wine is \$15 in advance/ \$20 at the door. Shovel ticket to “harvest” original artwork is \$150 and includes food and wine tastings for two. Tickets available online at:

www.yoloarts.org/boxoffice.php

Yolo Land Trust Honored

The **Soil and Water Conservation Society (SWCS)** California-Nevada Chapter honored the **Yolo Land Trust** at its 2011 Annual Conference in Reno, Nevada on May 25. “The Yolo Land Trust, which received the **2011 Honor Award**, is one of the more successful land trusts in the central valley,” said Ladi Asgill, SWCS director and Project Manager for Sustainable Conservation. “By protecting land from development, the Yolo Land Trust has contributed to the objectives of the Soil and Water Conservation Society.”

Many thanks to our donors and sponsors from January 2011 to June 2011

Agnes Abele
Agro Insurance
Ed & Carol Beoshanz
Betty Berteaux
Judith Blum
Francis & Nancy Borcalli
Christine and John Bruhn
California Rice Commission
Malcolm Clark
Davids Engineering, Inc.
Val Dolcini
Joy and Richard Dorf
Ecological Farming Association
Economic & Planning Systems
Far Western Anthropological
Fong Farms
Full Belly Farm
Marnelle Gleason to honor Elaine Gleason
Shirlee Griffin

Russell Hansen
Melissa & Blake Harlan
Jane Hart
Jim & Terry Heidrick
Bill and Laurie Hildebrandt
Diane Holcomb
Yvonne Hunter
Robin Kulakow & Bill Julian
John & Nancy Jungerman
Susan Keizer
Christopher Larson
Susan Mann
Marr Cellars
Linda McGrew
McMahon-Graf Partners Limited
John Meyer & Karen Moore
Monsanto
Oak Hills Ranch
Harriet Prato

Nori & Bill Reinert
Rominger West
Route 3 Winery
J. Neil Rutger
Chris and Angela Scheuring
Simas Family Winery
Al Sokolow
Barbara Steinberg in memory of Wallie Holmes
Henry Stone
T&Y Strawberry Patch
Jean Taylor
Tucos Wine Market & Café
Charles & Melissa Tyson
United Way
Vic's Ice Cream
Dick & Shipley Walters
Karolyn Wasserman
Jack Young & Jo Crescent
Zuni Café