

Yolo Land Trust NEWSLETTER



Celebrating 30 Years of Farmland Conservation Work

By: Michele Clark, Executive Director

Thirty years ago, prominent Yolo County farmer Rich Rominger and Supervisor Helen Thomson shared a passion and belief that Yolo County lands should be conserved so that agriculture would thrive, wildlife habitat would be sustained and open space preserved. They convinced friends, neighbors and like-minded leaders to join them in forming the Yolo Land Trust. A grassroots affair, the Land Trust met monthly for seven years before completing its first conservation easement transaction. It took another three years for the Land Trust to receive a grant that enabled it to hire a full-time executive director.

The Land Trust remains rooted in the Yolo community. The most visible activity is the Land Trust's signature event, A Day in the Country, which started the "farm-to-fork" movement in our area. A Day in the Country was, and is, an opportunity for the community to gather and celebrate the bounty of Yolo County. Read more on page 2 and see the impressive list of locations that have hosted the event.

Throughout our thirty-year history, one fact has remained constant. The work of the Land Trust has always been committed to the protection of farmland here in Yolo County. We are a community-based organization that grew up here and has stayed here to watch over our farmland and protect it forever. The Land Trust has never wavered from the vision of the founding board of directors. As stated in our Articles of Incorporation, the Yolo Land Trust's work is for the "benefit of the citizens of the County of Yolo."

We recorded our 66th conservation easement on December 14, 2018. Like many of our other easement transactions, this last one took two years to complete with multiple funders and dedicated owners who had the vision and determination to keep their orchard in farming forever. We are honored to help them fulfill their dream.

No two easements within our conservation portfolio are exactly identical, as no two farms are exactly alike. Each easement is tailored to meet the grower's needs within the requirements of the funder(s). Foremost while writing a Land Trust easement is making certain that the farming operation can continue once the conservation easement is in place. With the exception of one habitat easement that the Land Trust took early in its tenure, each easement is on a farm that continues in active agricultural production, privately owned and operated.

On my daily drive to our office on either County Road 98 or 99, I see abundant farmland between Woodland and Davis. Along both roads are several easement farms. I watch the progression from spring to harvest of tomatoes, sunflowers, corn, onions, wheat, almonds, and walnuts. I see hawks on telephone poles. I have seen a coyote running through an orchard. I smile in gratitude that I have been able to continue the work of this wonderful organization.

A Word from Paul Muller Board Member 1989-2011, Board President 2003-2005

Here in Yolo County, we have inherited a legacy that continues to shape our lives. The geological history of fertile lands being created over millennia by the forces of nature - the weathering of stone, the accumulation of life and decay in our soils - is a bank of wealth from which we continue to withdraw the interest of fertility, good food and good health. Good farmland is the lasting cornerstone of California's past and future prosperity. The annual renewal of planting, growing and harvest shape the flavor of life in Yolo County. Agriculture nourishes our lives in many ways: fresh foods on our table and in our restaurants, open vistas of crops and well kept land, jobs and opportunities for our citizens and the economy of local ag businesses. These lands feed us physically, culturally and spiritually. The gifts of good soil, clean water and gentle climate join into a timeless logic that these lands should always be farmed.

A Day in the Country Over the Years

Event Locations

1990: Hays Truck Museum, Woodland
1991: Oakdale Ranch, Esparto
1992: Holland Land Company, Clarksburg
1993: Hamm/Russell Ranch, UCD
1994: Cowles & Dona Mast, Esparto
1995: El Dorado Ranch, Knights Landing
1996: Gold Oak Ranch, Rumsey
1997: Herb & Lynnel Pollock, Yolo
1998: Holland Land Company, Clarksburg
1999: Nelson's Grove, Woodland
2000: Yolo Land & Cattle Company
2001: Snowball Mansion, Knights Landing
2002: Peabody Ranch, West Sacramento
2003: Hamilton, Winters
2004: Charles & Kathryn Tyson, Davis
2005: Kim & Trish Timothy, Yolo
2006: Bemmerly Ranch, Yolo
2007: Harlan Ranch, Woodland
2008: Mike & Tootie Beeman, Woodland
2009: Elkhorn Basin Ranch, West Sacramento
2010: Elkhorn Basin Ranch, West Sacramento
2011: Park Winters, Winters
2012: Terrain Ruisseau, Winters
2013: Taber Ranch, Capay
2014: Old Sugar Mill, Clarksburg
2015: Gold Oak Ranch, Rumsey
2016: Barger Keasey Family Farm, Davis
2017: The Maples, Woodland
2018: Heringer Estates, Clarksburg



The Yolo Land Trust was incorporated in December 1988. Two years later, Paul Muller came to the board of directors with an idea: what if the directors invited the non-farming folks to meet with local farmers on a Sunday afternoon? It was hoped the dialogue would build trust between the two and spread the word about the nascent organization, the Yolo Land Trust.

The first A Day in the Country, in 1990, was a casual, simple affair. The directors (there was no Land Trust staff) were asked to bring a tray of hors d'oeuvres to share. It was held at the Hays Truck Museum in Woodland.

From that humble beginning, A Day in the Country now involves over twenty of the region's top chefs who prepare dishes made from food grown on local farms. For the past 29 years, the location of A Day in the Country has changed (almost) every year and has moved throughout the County, from the Holland Land Company headquarters in Clarksburg, to Gold Oak Ranch in Rumsey, to the Snowball Mansion in Knights Landing, and Peabody Ranch on Old River Road in West Sacramento.

Today, A Day in the Country is the Yolo Land Trust's sole annual fundraising event. Proceeds from sponsorships and ticket sales support the vital work of preserving farmland.



A Look Back: Yolo Land Trust in the News

New land trust strives to preserve open space

Excerpts from Daily Democrat article originally published September 8, 1988

Concerned about the growth pressures threatening the county's agricultural territory and open space, 12 residents joined forces to create the Yolo Land Trust. The organization's articles of incorporation outline the trust's three-pronged mission: to preserve undeveloped land through the acquisition of property and development rights, to educate citizens about the benefits of such preservation, and to encourage "sound land-use planning."

"Part of the land trust is education, getting people to think about the long-term consequences of paving over our good soil." - Winters farmer Rich Rominger, the organization's president.

The trust has a distinct farm flavor. Of the dozen members on its board of directors, seven are growers, including Rominger, Lynnel Pollock, Kathy Merwin, Garreth Schadd, Paul Muller, John Stephens and Dave Scheuring. Rounding out the membership are John Brinley, Mar Lynn Ormsby, Glen Lucas, Paul Deering and Tom Purtell. Rominger sees the trust as a safety valve for farmers facing pressures to develop. By donating or selling development rights to the trust, they can ensure that parts or all of their land remain in agricultural production.

Partners preserve farmland between 2 cities

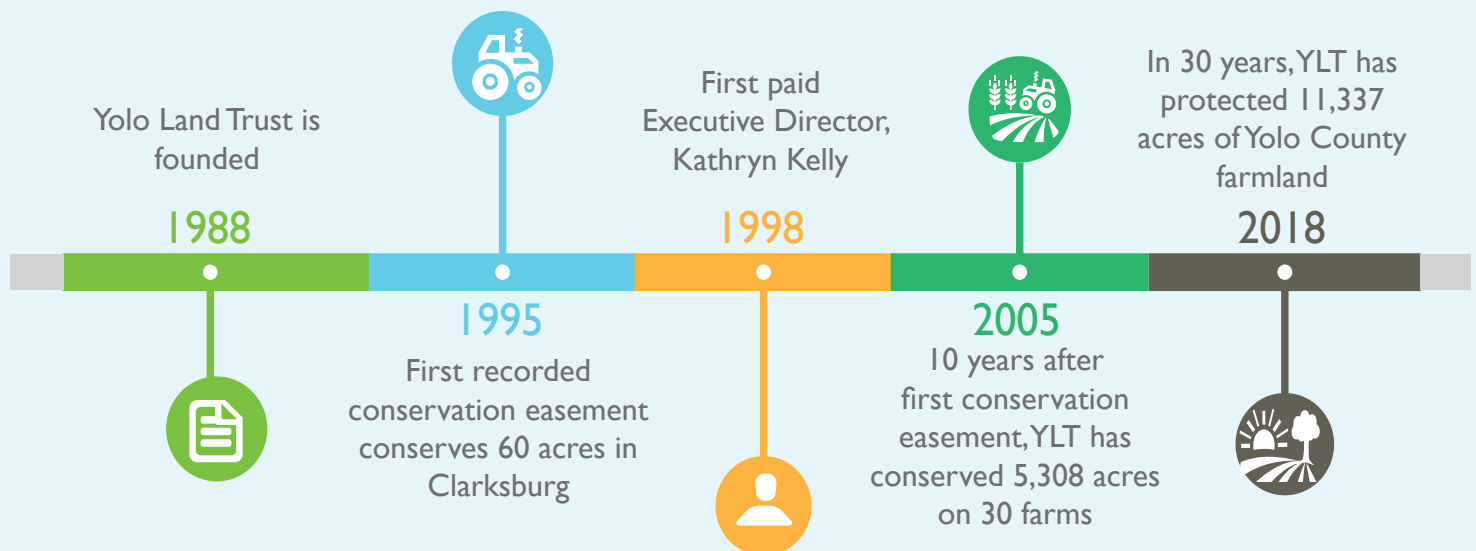
Excerpts from Davis Enterprise article originally published September 5, 2008

Two 80-acre parcels along Dry Slough between Davis and Woodland have been added to a list of those permanently shielded from development by an agreement between landowners, the city of Davis and the Yolo Land Trust. The first easement is for land owned by Paul Barger and his family. It covers farmland as well as the area around the slough. The second is for property owned by Karolyn Wasserman and her daughter, Lauren. It is classified as prime farmland and also includes land near the slough.

The newly preserved 160 acres brings to 1,943, the number of acres of preserved farm and habitat lands between Woodland and Davis. Yolo Land Trust has dubbed the land the "John Williamson Easements," in honor of the local legislator who enacted the Williamson Act.

Karolyn Wasserman said seeing farmland elsewhere bulldozed to make way for development made the family want to protect their property's future.

"This place is so peaceful and so beautiful, and we're surrounded by all these productive farm lands," she said. "I just don't want to see that end."





Our Lands. Our Future.

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

Support YLT at Nugget Markets

Nugget Markets has partnered with the Yolo Land Trust to raise funds for the preservation of farms and ranches in Yolo County. Through the Nugget Markets Scrip Program, Nugget Markets donates up to 4% of your purchases to the Yolo Land Trust each time you shop at Nugget Markets. THE SCRIP PROGRAM IS SIMPLE TO USE AND ABSOLUTELY FREE.

- Simply obtain a card from the Yolo Land Trust.
- Register it online.
- Show it to the cashier each time you shop.
- Sit back and feel gratitude that you are conserving the land that grows our food.

Call YLT's office at 530-662-1110 or send an email to tloveridge@theyololandtrust.org to get your own Nugget Markets Scrip card.



Nugget MARKETS



Our Lands. Our Future.

The Yolo Land Trust is a private, independent, nonprofit founded by farmers, community leaders and conservationists dedicated to protecting land resources in Yolo County.

Yolo County lands are wedged between a northeastward expanding San Francisco Bay area and metropolitan Sacramento's westward push. At risk are prime agricultural soils, pure water, quiet country roads, and rural atmosphere.

The Yolo Land Trust works with farmers and other landowners who want to preserve their rural properties from development. Together we are conserving precious farmland and open space for generations to come.

When you make a donation to the Yolo Land Trust you join a community of supporters who recognize the importance of preserving Yolo County's unique agricultural resources. When you invest in the Yolo Land Trust, you are investing in the future.