


YOLO LAND TRUST 2016 ANNUAL REPORT



The Yolo Land Trust is devoted to one critical mission: protecting farmland and rangeland in Yolo County. We create solutions for land conservation that benefit both the land and the landowner. Since its founding in 1988, the Yolo Land Trust has permanently conserved more than **11,000 farmland acres on 62 family farms.**



Housing development encroaches on Yolo County farmland. Population growth and urban sprawl are threatening our rural heritage.

Monitoring Existing Conservation Portfolio

The most significant work we do is the annual monitoring of our conservation portfolio. With over 60 separate conservation easements, we have a huge task because we visit each farm with our specially tailored checklist to confirm compliance with the terms of the conservation easement. Whenever possible, we meet with the owner and/or the tenant to discuss any concerns they may have about the conservation easement. We also like to know how the farm is doing for our own understanding of agriculture in Yolo County. We are blessed with great owners and operators who respect the role we play in conserving our precious farmland.

Acquisition of Agricultural Conservation Easements

One project was completed in 2016, the addition of 245 acres of Swainson Hawk habitat to an existing conservation easement. The easements for Swainson Hawk habitat differ from our traditional conservation easements because the owner agrees to never plant orchards, vineyards and rice. Given the price of walnuts and almonds in Yolo County, owners who agree to give up the right to plant orchards forever are making a significant contribution to conservation.

Additional projects were not processed in 2016 for the primary reason that with the exception of a Swainson Hawk conservation easement, the price to be paid for development rights has been greatly diminished due to the high value of land for orchards. The other significant issue is the lack of public grant funds for acquisition. The largest State program is called the Sustainable Agricultural Lands Program. It is structured for counties where there is little zoning for the protection of ag land. Thus, in a county like Yolo, there are few farms that would qualify. We continue to monitor the Program and make suggestions that would make the Program more suitable for Yolo County projects. The Federal program is funded through the Farm Bill, and would only cover 50% of the acquisition funding. So without a significant partner (like the State), using the federal program is not viable for us.

Outreach

Meanwhile, we are engaged in the County and local planning processes, attending meetings when issues related to the development of farmland are raised. When the Supervisors see a representative of the Yolo Land Trust walk into the County Chamber, they know we are there to advocate for our precious farmland. Our annual farm to fork fundraiser, *A Day in the Country*, was our most successful to date. We loved being able to honor Greg Merwin, of Clarksburg, for his support of the Yolo Land Trust's work by monitoring portions of our conservation portfolio.

Highlights

245

We protected an additional 245 acres of Yolo County farmland

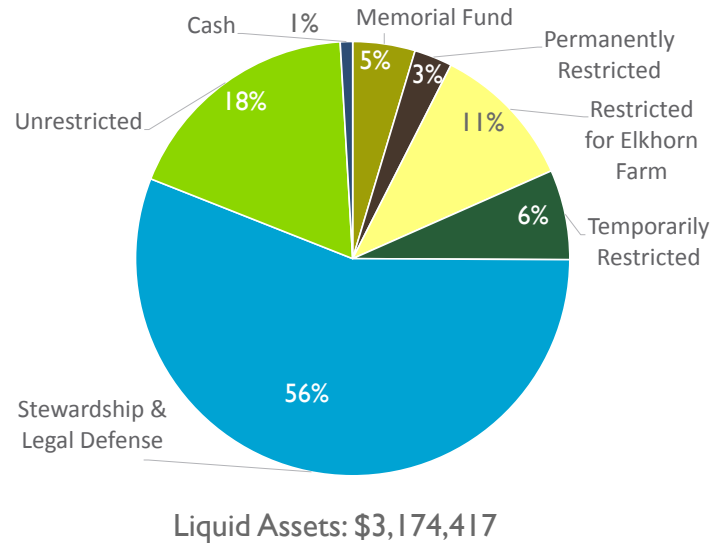
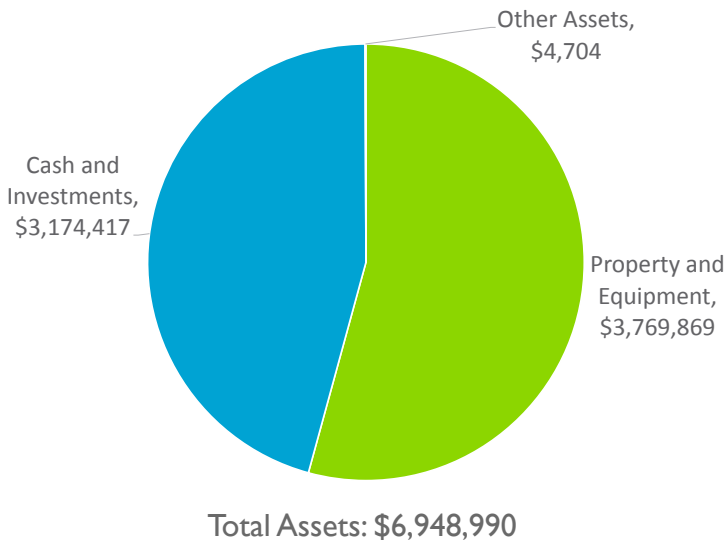
\$76,000

A Day in the Country raised a record \$76,000 net from sponsors and ticketholders

16%

Increase in average donation from 2015 to 2016

Financials



Going Forward

In 2017 we will launch a new outreach effort called *Who Farms Yolo*, a story telling campaign that will introduce some of the wonderful individuals who farm our conservation easement farms. Look for email newsletters announcing these local folks with amazing stories.

We will also be holding three education and outreach events to educate our Yolo community about the significant benefits of agriculture. Our first event focused on pollinators with a guest speaker, Neal Williams, professor in the UC Davis Department of Entomology & Nematology.

Finally, our Legacy Giving Program will be presented with a focus on encouraging our long-term donors to name the Yolo Land Trust in their will or other estate planning documents.

SUPPORT THE YOLO LAND TRUST!

More than 30,000 acres of good farmland is lost every year in California. The majority is lost to urban development. In Yolo County we want our prime soil to grow food and support the agricultural economy.

Help support the Yolo Land Trust's vital work!

- Tell one person about the Yolo Land Trust this year.
- Send us a note about how the Yolo Land Trust's work is important to you.
- Consider a first time financial gift or an increase in your giving this year, or name the Yolo Land Trust in your will.

Conservation is a state of harmony between men and land.

-Aldo Leopold

