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Solano Land Trust News - July 2010

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Let the feast continue: Save the date!

Carol Berman, Heritage Feast Chairperson



It will be a challenge to match the success of Solano Land Trust's sold-out Farm Fresh Feast held at Russ Lester's Dixon Ridge walnut farm in May. Those who attended will tell you about the long, family-style tables in the orchard; the strings of lights in the trees; the scrumptious dinner prepared with seasonal foods from local farms; and best of all, the camaraderie of 150 people passionate about protecting Solano County's agriculture and natural areas.

While it may be a challenge, we're going to do our best at the Heritage Feast in September. Join us on Saturday, September 25, 2010 at Rush Ranch for the Second Heritage Feast. Once again we will highlight local foods and wine, music, and fun. Access Adventure, Solano Land Trust's partner in conservation, will also provide carriage rides led by four-horse teams.

The highlight of this year's Heritage Feast will be the art auction. For the past several months, painters, photographers, and other artists have been creating beautiful art pieces on our lands. These wonderful paintings will be featured in a live auction. A preview of some of the artwork can be viewed on the [Solano Land Trust website](#).

Tickets are \$70 per person and can be purchased [online here](#). For sponsorship opportunities contact Development Director Greg Peterson at (707) 432-0150 x 205.

Volunteer spotlight: In these economic times it pays to have seasoned financial leaders on your team!

Nicole Byrd, Executive Director



Like all businesses, Solano Land Trust is striving to leverage fewer resources to get more done. Because we promise to take care of our natural areas and steward our conservation easements forever, prudent financial management is imperative to our success.

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UPCOMING EVENTS

King-Swett Ranches
Docent-led Hikes
July 3, 2010, 9 a.m.
Aug. 7, 2010, 9 a.m.
Sep. 4, 2010, 9 a.m.

Lynch Canyon
Docent-led Hikes
Jul. 24, 2010, 9 a.m.
Aug. 28, 2010, 9 a.m.
Sept. 25, 2010, 9 a.m.

Rush Ranch Guided walk (9 a.m.)
Blacksmith demo (10 a.m.)
Wagon rides (11 a.m.)
July 17, 2010
Aug. 21, 2010
Sept. 18, 2010, 9 a.m.

Find out more information about events at:
www.solanolandtrust.org

June is budget time, and we have been putting in overtime to build a budget that combines realism with smart planning. We know that planning for our financial future is critical, but how do we plan for revenues when state grants may be frozen? How do we plan for endowment draw downs when the market is so volatile?

To help answer these and other questions, we look to the financial expertise of our finance and investment committee. Solano Land Trust is lucky to have some high-profile and highly-seasoned financial advisors on that committee: Solano County Treasurer Chuck Lomelli manages the county's \$800 million investment portfolio; Fairfield City Manager Sean Quinn is responsible for the city's \$292 million budget; Don Strauss has over twenty five years of extensive finance, internal controls, and capital markets experience; and CPA JD Miller, with 35 years of experience, specializes in financial planning. Jeff Dittmer, Solano Land Trust treasurer and fifth generation cattle rancher and ag businessman, also sits on the committee along with Al Lavezzo, founding partner with Favaro, Lavezzo, Gill, Caretti and Heppell.

Together this group guides the management of Solano Land Trust's \$6.5 million in cash and investments and helps the organization plan for the long term. We are grateful for the expertise and passion that this all-volunteer committee provides.

They did it! *Hundreds of runners and hikers descend (and ascend) on Lynch Canyon for the annual trail run*
Deanna Mott, Lynch Canyon Trail Run Co-Director



At the Third Annual Lynch Canyon Trail Run and Community Hike, the morning coastal fog kept volunteers moving quickly as they set up, and runners and hikers kept their jackets and warm-up pants on until the 8 a.m. start time. The participants ranged in age from a 3-year-old boy who "hiked the whole mountain with a broken arm" to a 75-year-old man who ran the half marathon and finished 36th overall.

Many local residents participated this year, but runners also came from as far as Walla Walla, Wash., and San Antonio, Texas. The hikers numbered well over 50, and 188 runners participated, ranging from beginning to competitive athletes. (This is a 15% increase from last year.) The half-marathon winners were Dave Mackey (1:31:28) and Penny MacPhail (1:46:20). The 10K winners were Justin Morejohn (44:38) and Rewick Sunny (57:19). These competitors should be very proud of their accomplishments, but so should every single person who walked or ran the 2.5, 6.2 or 13.1-mile courses. The crowd cheered for every single person that crossed the finish line, including the very last runner who struggled with leg cramps.

"At the eight mile run, my leg started to cramp," said Josephine Guerrero, number 366. "On the ten mile I was just about ready to collapse. By the time I got to the twelve mile I was barely able to walk." Guerrero was afraid that everyone would be gone by the time she finally



A
Great blue heron at Jepson Prairie.
Photo by Doug Wirtz

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

Have some fun and be part of our team!

Event staffing needed for:
Heritage Feast, September 25, 2010
Contact: volunteers@solanolandtrust.org

Habitat restoration help needed for:
Furlough Fridays, Jul. 16, Aug. 20, Sept. 17
Lynch Stewardship, Jul. 10, Aug. 14, Sept. 11
Rush Ranch Stewardship, Aug. 7, Sept. 4
Contact: sue@solanolandtrust.org

UPCOMING EVENTS

Native American Flute-Making Workshop
Saturday, Aug. 7, 2010, 10 a.m.

Enjoy a creative and educational day at the Rush Ranch Nature Center while learning how to make traditional flutes. Contact Mary Takeuchi at taksan@sbcglobal.net. Fee: \$10.

Heritage Feast and Art Show and Sale
Saturday, Sept. 25, 2010

Join Solano Land Trust for an evening of local food, music, carriage rides, silent and live auctions, and historic characters. Tickets are available now.

Special Cross-Ranch Hike
Saturday, Nov. 6, 2010

Time: TBD
Hike from King to Vallejo Swett Ranches. Serious hikers, save the date!

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Volunteers please take our survey!

Solano Land Trust is always working to refine and refine our programs. As we've grown and acquired more properties, more wonderful volunteers, members, and affiliates have come on board.

We want to make sure we only send you information you are interested in, and that we stay up-to-date on your interests and contact information. We will soon be sending out a survey to everyone on our volunteer and potential volunteer lists. Won't you take a moment to fill that out? It will help us know what you like to do, what your availability is, and how we can best serve you.

The survey will also be available as a postal mail-in form, for those who prefer. If you are not a volunteer but have moved or changed your contact information, please send an email to anne@solanolandtrust.org to let us know.

Other recent changes include a volunteer "parking lot" website for training information at www.sltvolunteers.volasite.com, and a streamlined coming events calendar, available for download at www.solanolandtrust.org.

We hope you will keep in touch, and thank you for being a supporter of Solano Land Trust!

made it to the finish line. To her surprise, she came over the final hill to find the crowd cheering for her and the commentator calling her name. "Thank you to all who waited at the finish line for #366 to come in," Guerrero wrote in her emailed thanks to the organizing committee.

This is the largest fund raising event for Lynch Canyon, and each year it gets better thanks to the commitment of over 40 volunteers, the dedication of the planning committee, and of course, the sponsors. Thank you to Deloitte, NorthBay Healthcare, Valero Benicia Refinery, Fleet Feet Vacaville, Brooks, Kaiser Permanente, Potrero Hills Landfill, FRS, Recology Vallejo, Vallejo Convention & Visitors Bureau, Vallejo Chamber of Commerce, Ray's Cycle Shop, Peet's Coffee, and Costco.

Hope to see you there next year!

Jepson Prairie bloomed big this year from increased rainfall and media exposure

Kate Mawdsley, Jepson Prairie Volunteer

Every year at Jepson Prairie is different because the wildflower display and the invertebrate activity are completely dependent on rainfall and temperature. Wildflowers grow in the moist areas around the pools and when the rain stops, the pools slowly dry up and the rings of wildflowers follow the receding edge of the water. This year the rain started early



and continued into May without prolonged dry spells, and it was unusually cool without major frosts. We didn't see many fairy shrimp after March, but there were California tiger salamander larvae and tadpole shrimp throughout the tour season. Water in Olcott pool was still fairly high by mid-May with major blooms where the water had just

receded. Just two years ago Olcott Lake had dried up completely by May.

(Photo by Doug Wirtz)

The most brilliant displays of goldfields came in late April, with *Downingia* even later. The timing was perfect for the Bay Area's rediscovery of Jepson Prairie, thanks to major stories in Oakland and San Francisco newspapers after a Fish & Wildlife Service media day to publicize the tiger salamander research on the preserve. More than a third of the 350 to 400 people who attended weekend public tours came in the last two weeks of the season, many citing the recent publicity. Another 254 students and others met docents for special tours.

Now that the season is over, volunteers are getting busy on two projects funded by the U.S. National Park Service. One will enhance the visitor area's facilities and interpretive signs, and the second will manifest in a new handbook for visitors. Docent Liz Vasquez took the lead in writing the grant, with major coordination assistance from Solano Land Trust Conservation Planner Ben Wallace. Carol Witham will oversee the handbook project that features color photography. It should be ready for the 2011 season. Improvements to the visitor area will depend on additional funding, and we eagerly anticipate having finished designs and cost data that we can show to prospective funders to engage their support.

Have you seen the new interpretive kiosk at Lynch Canyon? Thanks Eagle Scout Troop 852!

Miriam Sachs Martin, Volunteer and Education Coordinator

Kyle Jenks, together with his family and Scout Troop 852, recently

completed an impressive and very useful Eagle Scout Project at Lynch Canyon Open Space.

Installing this interpretive kiosk took several months of planning and coordination. Kyle contacted Yellowstone National Park to research a kiosk design that would stand up to the cows that will be using the kiosk as a scratching post (in Yellowstone it's bison scratching the signs!). An all-volunteer team worked on the interpretative messages and provided dozens of pictures of Lynch Canyon's wildlife. Seventeen Eagle Scouts helped the Jenks family on installation day.

The kiosk was purchased and installed with money from the 2008 and 2009 Lynch Canyon Trail Run. Solano Land Trust thanks Kyle, the Jenks family, Scout Troop 852, Solano County Park Ranger Ted Armstrong, all organizers and participants of the Lynch Canyon Trail Run, and the volunteer interpretative sign committee for this beautiful new sign showcasing the biodiversity and natural resources of one of our key properties. Great work everyone!



Sightings

Here's what visitors, docents, and staff are seeing on our properties (Please visit www.solanolandtrust.org for days/hours that our properties are open to the public.)

Where: Lynch Canyon

When: June 5, 2010

Who: Six year-old hiker

What: The hiker told the volunteer that he had climbed the mountain *and* hiked three miles. "Well, you had better carry on then," said the volunteer. "I will," said the child. "I am going to do this for the rest of my life."

Where: King Ranch

When: June 18, 2010

Who: Citizen scientists Maggie Ingalls and Barry Hill

What: Collected and identified wetland plants at two restoration areas. Join Sue Wickham on Friday, July 16 for the next Furlough Friday workday.



Where: Lynch Canyon

When: June 26, 2010

Who: Docents Jim Walsh, Earl Swenerton, Deborah Bartens, and hikers

What: Adult and baby barn owls.

Where: Rush Ranch

When: After the volunteer appreciation lunch

Who: Bing Huey, Jepson Prairie volunteer

What: *Cordylanthus mollis* (soft bird's beak)



Where: Solano Land Trust offices

When: Late afternoon

Who: Ben Wallace

What: Sighted a chocolate bar but it flew away and disappeared.

Photo by Bing Huey

Solano Land Trust has been protecting working farms and natural areas in Solano County since 1986.



Solano Land Trust
1001 Texas Street, Suite C
Fairfield, CA 94533
(707) 432-0151 x 209
info@solanolandtrust.org

www.solanolandtrust.org

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please contact vistas@solanolandtrust.org*