



Solano Land Trust News September 2013



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Get Moving Outside

King-Swett Ranches Nature Hike

Saturday, October 5

Saturday, November 2

Saturday, December 7

9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

RSVP (requested, not required)
to Jim at (916) 870-4824 or
james.walsh@landcare.com

Please forward to a friend using the link at the bottom.

Accreditation for Solano Land Trust!

By Janet Mackey, Conservation Director



Executive Director Nicole Byrd and Conservation Director Janet Mackey celebrate accreditation

Accreditation may not sound as enticing as a stroll across a field of goldfields or as motivating as protecting a field of row crops, but accreditation is an important step in our ability to support these activities and more.

We began the process of seeking this gold standard seal of approval for land trusts across the country in 2005. We submitted piles of paperwork, underwent reviews, and adjusted policies and programs to meet the requirements. We spent \$30,000 in staff and legal costs, and our faithful board of directors and several

dedicated volunteers invested over 200 hours.

It was a lot of work but it is worth it. As a result of these investments, we can proudly claim to be one of 20 accredited land trusts in California out of 150, and fourth in the Bay Area to earn the distinction.

The payoff is a stronger organization. After taking a rigorous and critical look at our procedures we have now implemented many best practices for the future. We have revitalized board committees, spiffed up how we document decisions, and sorted through decades of information to retain key documents. Funders and landowners can feel confident in working with an accredited land trust. We have proven ourselves to be responsible stewards of funds and protected land.

"Applying for accreditation required that we look at how we were doing business including our board structure, financial management and policies that guide key aspects of our work. The board is exceedingly proud of this accomplishment," says Linda Seifert, Solano Land Trust board president.



Docents James Walsh & Larry Broderick
Photo by Aleta George

**Lynch Canyon
Birds of Prey Hikes**

Saturday, September 28
Sunday, October 20
Sunday, November 10
Sunday, December 8
10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
RSVP (requested, not required)
to Mary Beth at
(707) 685-5908 or
mbcrittendon@comcast.net

**Rockville Trails
Geology Trek**

Saturday, September 21
8:30 a.m. to noon
RSVP (requested, not required)
online through the
[Events Calendar](#) or by calling
Cathy at (707) 745-1913

**Rockville Trails
Ecology & Ecosystems
Hikes**

Saturday, September 28
Saturday, October 26
8 a.m. to noon
RSVP (requested, not required)
online through the
[Events Calendar](#) or by calling
Cathy at (707) 745-1913

**Rockville Trails Nature
Journaling & Hiking**

Saturday, November 16
9 a.m. to noon
RSVP (requested, not required)
online through the
[Events Calendar](#) or by calling
Cathy at (707) 745-1913

**Rush Ranch
Astronomy Night**

Saturday, October 5
7 p.m.: Indoor presentation
Dark: Telescope viewing
(Presented by [Rush Ranch
Educational Council](#))
RSVP not required

The [Land Trust Accreditation Commission](#) is a program of [Land Trust Alliance](#). The accreditation seal lets the public know that Solano Land Trust meets national standards for excellence, upholds the public trust and ensures that conservation efforts are permanent.



Meet the Farmer: History in the Making at Dixon Ridge Farms

Aleta George, eVistas Editor



**Dixon Ridge certified organic walnuts
ready for harvest**

Photo courtesy of Dixon Ridge Farms

I sat down for coffee with Lester in the big room of his farmhouse office at Dixon Ridge Farms where I learned that this fourth-generation farmer has plenty to say about personal responsibility and the importance of saving agricultural land.

Russ Lester's family has been farming in Northern California since 1860. Although his farming roots dig deep into California's past, Lester is on the cutting edge of technology and his farm is a model in sustainability and innovation. The awards he has won in recent years proves it.

[Click here or below to learn more about Russ Lester and Dixon Ridge Farms.](#)



Solano Land Trust and City of Vacaville team-up for conservation agreement

Janet Mackey, Conservation Director

In August 2013, the City of Vacaville partnered with Solano Land Trust to arrange a conservation agreement on 116 acres of agricultural land near the eastern Vacaville City limit. The agreement will ensure that the land will forever remain available for agricultural use, while also protecting burrowing owls and Swainson's hawks.

Solano Land Trust now has conservation agreements with landowners preserving more than 8,500 acres of agricultural land in Solano County.



**Rush Ranch
"Hunter's Moon"
Full Moon Night
Photography Workshop**
Wednesday, October 16
3 p.m. to late
\$100 (class is limited to 15)
ADVANCE REGISTRATION
REQUIRED by September 30
Contact Susan at
(707) 645-9860 or
nichols@thenocturnes.com
(Presented by [Rush Ranch
Educational Council](#))

**Rush Ranch
Raptor ID Powerpoint
Workshop & Hike**
Sunday, November 17
10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
RSVP REQUIRED to
mbcrittendon@comcast.net or
(707) 685-5908

**Rush Ranch
Get the Rush!**
See [Events Calendar](#)
for activities
Saturday, September 21
Saturday, October 19
Saturday, November 16
10 a.m. to 1 p.m.
Presented by [Rush Ranch
Educational Council](#),
[Access Adventure](#), and
Solano Land Trust

For more event information
and directions go to
www.solanolandtrust.org
or call Natalie at
(707) 432-0150 x200

(All events are free
unless noted)

Volunteers Needed

Citizen Science Fridays
(location varies)
Friday, September 20
Friday, October 18
Friday, November 15
8:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
See [Events Calendar](#) for
details
ADVANCE REGISTRATION
REQUIRED to Sue at
(707) 432-0150 x 207 or
sue@solanolandtrust.org



Burrowing owl
Photo by Tom Muehleisen

"There are many land trusts from around the state that can be the stewards of conservation agreements. I am glad we were able to partner with our local Solano Land Trust to accomplish this project and that they will be the perpetual steward of the agreement," says Laura Kuhn, city manager of Vacaville. "We look forward to working with Solano Land Trust again."

Event highlight: Rush Ranch at night



Full moon at sunrise
Photo by Tom Muehleisen

The gate at Rush Ranch usually closes at dusk, but this year in October there are two events that offer opportunities to see the ranch at night. At the first event you can see it under a new moon with lots of stars, and at the second event you can see it draped in the light of a nearly-full Hunter's Moon.

On Saturday, October 5, Rush Ranch Educational Council will host a FREE "Astronomy Night" with astronomy enthusiast Jim Jerrell. The night begins at 7 p.m. with a short presentation in the Nature Center. Outdoor viewing begins when darkness falls. Telescopes will be on hand. For more information call (707) 422-4491 or go to the [Events Calendar](#).

After 11 days, the moon will have traveled around the earth and will rise as a nearly-full Hunter's Moon on Wednesday, October 16. Join [Tim Baskerville](#) of [The Nocturnes](#) for a night photography workshop limited to 15 participants. The workshop begins with a docent-led tour of Rush Ranch's three trails. Then there is indoor instruction on night photography.

Partial proceeds of the \$100 workshop fee benefits the outreach and education programs of the [Rush Ranch Educational Council](#). Register by September 30. Contact Susan at nichols@thenocturnes.com or (707) 645-9860. For more information visit [The Nocturnes at Rush Ranch](#).

Docents introduce Rockville Trails to the

**CA Coastal Cleanup Day
Hill Slough Bridge,
Rush Ranch**

Saturday, September 21
RSVP (requested, not required)
to Ken at (707) 580-6277 or
ken@solanolandtrust.org

**Lynch Canyon
Community Workday**

Saturday, October 12
9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.
ADVANCE REGISTRATION
REQUIRED to Sue at
(707) 432-0150 x 207 or
sue@solanolandtrust.org

**Rush Ranch
Community Workday**

Saturday, October 5
Saturday, November 2
Saturday, December 7
9 a.m. to noon
RSVP (requested, not required)
to Ken at (707) 580-6277 or
ken@solanolandtrust.org

Become a Docent

**Become a
Solano Land Trust
Rush Ranch Docent**

Application deadline is
Monday, September 30
Training consists of eight
sessions in October
[Learn more and apply](#)

**Solano Land Trust
is hiring**

Click on the positions below
to learn more:

[Stewardship Director](#)

[Stewardship Coordinator](#)

[Field Steward](#)

Community Events

[Solano Open Space](#)
For more community hikes

[The Palate Project](#)
**Center for Land-based
Learning**

Friday, October 4
5 to 8 p.m.

[Hoes Down Harvest](#)
Capay Valley

public



Young explorers
Photo by Jane Hawkes

Since April, trained docents have introduced 178 people to Rockville Trails on 15 public tours. Specialty hikes have included a look at nature, pioneer rock walls, and the diversity of ecosystems.

Solano Land Trust has also hosted special groups such as Solano Open Space, the Natural Sciences Guild of the Oakland Museum, *Bay Nature* magazine, Greenbelt Alliance, and Napa-Solano Audubon.

[Napa-Solano Audubon](#) toured the property on June 21, the

longest day of the year, and yet they still got an early 7:15 a.m start. Docent Jane Hawkes led the group on a four-mile, four-hour hike on which they saw 37 species of birds.

I asked Solano Land Trust land steward and bird lover, Ken Poerner, to point out a few highlights from their list. Here's what he said:

- **Ash-throated flycatcher:** Fairly common in our area in the summer in the right habitat. Flycatchers are always a nice bird to see.
- **Rock wren:** Year-round resident of Rockville and the area, but hard to find since you have to be in the right habitat (rocky, open terrain), which is limited. They are at King-Swett Ranches, too. Everybody loves rock wrens and how they bob up and down on rocks out in the open.
- **Golden eagle:** Who doesn't like to see them, except maybe the squirrels.

"Birding is about the adventure, but seeing great birds makes it even more fun," says Ken.

Learn more about birds at Cornell's [All About Birds](#).

Who made those beautiful new picnic tables at Rush Ranch? Eagle Scouts!

By Ken Poerner, Land Steward



Boy scouts at work on the benches
Photo by Ken Poerner

Solano Land Trust is lucky to have a supportive Boy Scout community that contributes many noteworthy projects to our lands.

Recently, Nicolaus Smith and Fairfield Boy Scout Troop 482, built four picnic tables for the Rush Ranch picnic area.

The lumber for the tables was cut before the workday and one table was already partially assembled as an example for the scouts to follow.

(Benefits Ecological Farming Association)
Saturday & Sunday

Sightings

What: 24 Red-tailed hawks, 12 Northern harriers, 8 American kestrels, 15 white-tailed kites, 3 golden eagles, and 7 turkey vultures

Where: Lynch Canyon

When: September 8

Who: Larry Broderick and the raptor team



Photo by Tom Muehleisen

What: Young coyote

Where: Rush Ranch

When: August

Who: Tom Muehleisen

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



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Editor: Aleta George



Twenty volunteers put a total of 126 hours into the project. Family and friends raised \$1,552 to pay for the lumber, hardware, and stain. The volunteer project was organized and led by Nicolaus Smith for his Eagle Scout Award. Nicolaus is 15 years old and is a junior at Rodriquez High School.

Changes coming to UC Cooperative

The UC Cooperative Extension is gearing up to celebrate its 100-year anniversary in 2014 at the same time it is adjusting to the reality of shrinking budgets. One change that they will make as of January 2014 is to consolidate the Solano, Yolo, and Sacramento County offices into one, with director to serve all three counties. The office will likely be located in Yolo County, says Morgan Doran, current Solano County director. The Master Gardener, 4-H, and nutrition education programs will continue to be operated in each county and supported by the central office. The plan is being hashed out and will need to be approved by the Board of Supervisors from each county.

[UC Cooperative Extension](#)

Thank you Solano Land Trust Business Partners in Conservation.

We can't do it without you.



Symantec

Team Superstores

The Wiseman Company

Valero Benicia Refinery

Valley Farm Transport

Vestas

Winterhawk Winery

Wooden Valley Winery

Yumi Wilson Photography

[\(See full list here\)](#)

Please remember to support those who support us.

[Forward email](#)



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