

A stylized, colorful illustration of a landscape. It features rolling green hills, a blue river or stream, various trees in shades of green and blue, and a small white house with a red roof. The foreground shows rows of crops in a field.

VISTAS

Land connects us all – protecting it today, saving it for tomorrow



A view from the land

A vow fulfilled at Dixon Ridge Farms

Protected land is part of the climate solution

Growing up as a boy on a farm in Santa Clara County, Russ Lester could watch the changes coming from the treehouse in his apple tree.

“I would go up there,” Russ says, “and look around and see the houses encroaching on our property and other properties in Santa Clara. I heard my dad talk about how this wasn’t a good idea and that he was going to try to fight it.”

The fight to save the former Valley of Heart’s Delight was ultimately, heartbreakingly, a losing battle. The land his family had been on since 1883 was a place where you could grow “apricots, cherries, walnuts and just about anything in the world.”

“When that transition occurred, I made a vow that I would do whatever I could to conserve ag land.”

“We are fortunate to still have productive farms and ranches here in Solano County,” says Tracy Ellison, Conservation Director at Solano Land Trust. “We believe that we can build homes and have economic development while also supporting an innovative and vibrant agricultural industry.”

People like you, and like Russ Lester, are supporting that effort by protecting land to ensure that future





Sam Adams

A rich cover crop returns nitrogen and controls pests in the organic orchard at Dixon Ridge Farms

farmers and ranchers can grow food right here in Solano County. For Russ, the protection of his 913-acre property at Dixon Ridge Farms, and the world class soil beneath it, fulfills the vow he made all those years ago.

Farming with the climate in mind

The orchard where Russ grows Hartley and Chandler walnuts has been certified organic since 1992, well before it was trendy or when methods for growing organic walnuts were well-established. He was motivated by personal reasons: his father died of Non-Hodgkin’s Lymphoma and Russ worried the exposure to pesticides played a role. As the father of four children, he was worried about the risk.

“I decided to make a commitment to move away from all the chemicals. We’ve been certified organic ever since. There was no information on how to raise walnuts organically. We tweaked things a little bit over the years but it works pretty darn well.”

Today, Dixon Ridge Farms is among the nation’s largest handlers of organic walnuts. The farm gets its name from the slightly sloping geological feature that marks some of the most fertile and productive soils in the state. All around sustainability is the rule. Irrigation drip lines snake through the trees, dropping only necessary amounts of water, and losing less to evaporation. A high and diverse no-till cover crop moves gently in the wind, full of legumes that enrich the soil with nitrogen. Elsewhere on the property, row crops including tomatoes, sunflowers, and wheat thrive in the sunny Mediterranean climate.

Russ knows his farm is part of a bigger system, and he works with the climate in mind. A portion of the funding for the conservation agreement came through SALC, a part of California Climate Investments, a statewide program that puts billions of Cap-and-Trade dollars to work reducing greenhouse gas emissions, strengthening the economy, and improving public health and the environment.



Kuo Hou Chang

Russ Lester and Kathy Lester celebrate the closure of conservation agreement at Dixon Ridge Farms

Russ sees farms like his as part of the solution: recapturing carbon, maintaining good air quality, and reminding people innovation isn't just the province of Silicon Valley. Around fifteen years ago, he turned his attention to renewables.

"I read a book saying that basically we couldn't do much about climate change until 2045 and that renewable energy wouldn't be viable until that time," Russ says.

"I kept on saying: Why can't they? Then I realized all these fingers were pointing at me. So I made a commitment to become energy renewable, self-sufficient, and carbon negative. I was looking at a million-pound stack of walnuts in the backyard and saying that's nothing but energy. We just have to convert it to the form that we can use."

The man who watched the orchards of his youth vanish sees tremendous potential for Solano County as an example of a place where farms and cities get along, supporting one another.

"Protecting agricultural land has huge positive benefits: not just in terms of producing food for the people here, not just economically, but also as a way of capturing carbon, lessening air pollution, and reducing the effects of climate change which we are suffering unfortunately from already."

This goal led to Russ to acquire a BioMax® biomass-to-energy gasifier, which worked for years to make the farm carbon negative. Presently some mechanical issues keep it from full operation, but such setbacks are part of the risk you take trying to be ahead of the curve.

And now that his property is protected for future generations, Russ can keep innovating sustainable, renewable approaches while forever having the land available for food production and ag uses.

"This is a culmination of a lifetime vow to myself and my family that I would conserve land."

"This is a culmination of a lifetime vow to myself and my family that I would conserve land."

Russ Lester



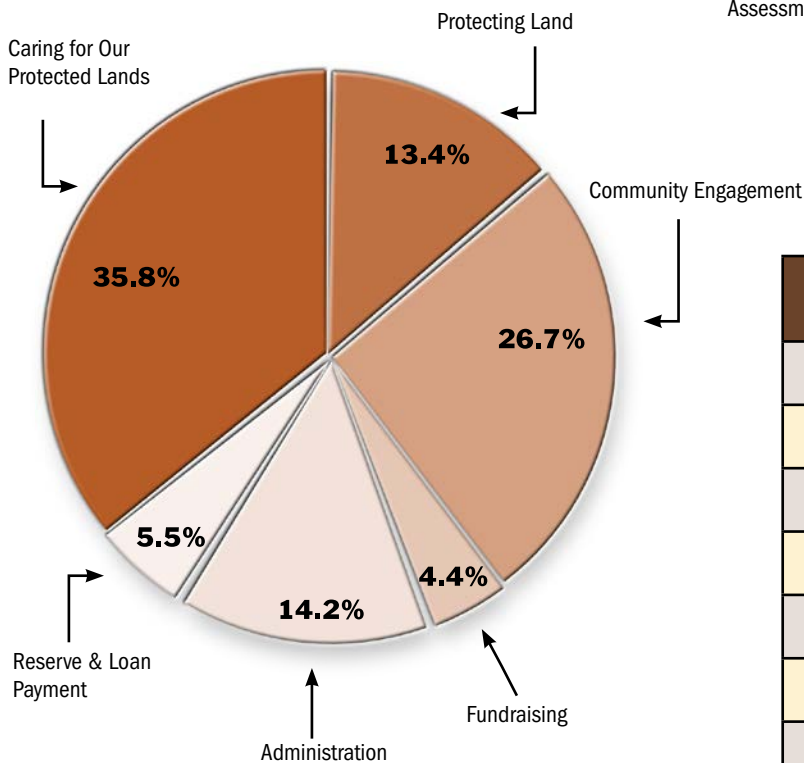
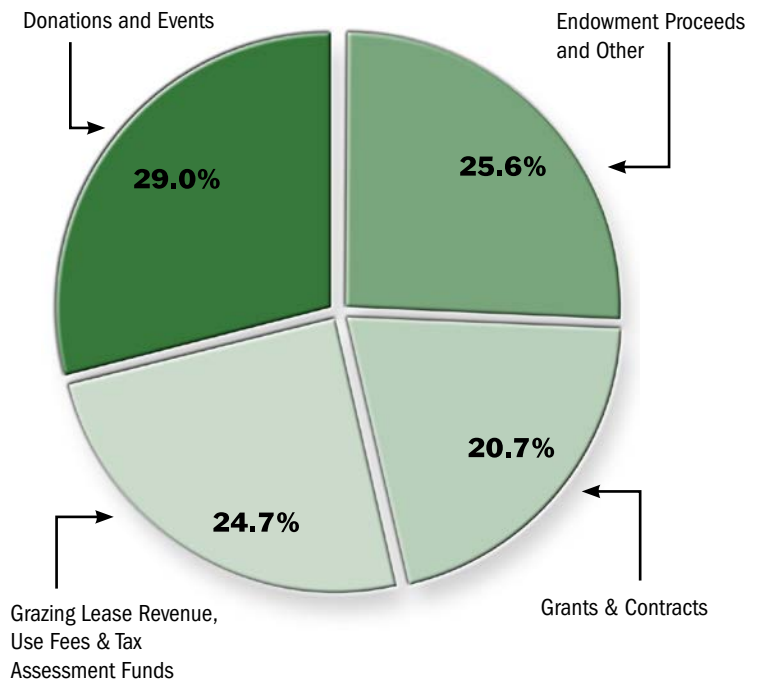
Di Hokabi and Tracy Ellison

Annual Report

Financial Year 2021-22 – Operating Only

| Revenue* | \$ |
|--|------------------|
| Donations and Events | 736,548 |
| Endowment Proceeds and Other | 649,544 |
| Grants & Contracts | 524,210 |
| Grazing Lease Revenue, Use Fees & Tax Assessment Funds | 627,889 |
| TOTAL | 2,538,191 |

*Revenue does not include \$29,234 unrestricted net assets applied for Patwino Worrtla Kodoi Dihi Open Space Park internal loan.



| Expenses** | \$ |
|--------------------------------|------------------|
| Caring for Our Protected Lands | 814,874 |
| Protecting Land | 305,796 |
| Community Engagement | 607,797 |
| Fundraising | 99,744 |
| Administration | 323,806 |
| Reserve & Loan Payment | 125,000 |
| TOTAL | 2,277,017 |

**Expenses include \$100k reserve investment, \$25k internal loan payment.

Report: A view from the land

What nearly 30,000 conserved acres means for your community

Farms and Ranches

Conserving productive farmland and ranches in Solano County

- ❖ Over the past 36 years, Solano Land Trust has protected 32 working farms and natural areas in Solano County.
- ❖ A third of these lands were protected in the last decade. In the last five years alone, 4,903 acres entered permanent conservation status.
- ❖ These protected farms and ranches represent diverse agricultural lands and are found in nine of the ten different agricultural regions of Solano County.
- ❖ Solano Land Trust owns and manages nine properties that are working ranches. Between these properties and the private lands protected through conservation agreements, Solano Land Trust has conserved over 27,750 acres of agricultural land since 1986.
- ❖ A goal to preserve 2,500 acres every five years brings a 30,000-acre milestone in view.



Habitat and Water

- ❖ At least twenty-five species of special concern live on our protected lands. Eight species are federally listed as endangered. Three species, the Conservancy fairy shrimp, the Delta Green Ground Beetle, and the Nodding Harmonia flowers are rarely seen outside our protected properties.
- ❖ Bluebird monitors are part of a successful regional effort to improve the population of Western bluebirds and other cavity nesting birds. Other land trust programs protect Swainson's Hawk habitat, red-legged frogs, and California Tiger salamanders.
- ❖ Trail cameras show bobcats, great-horned owls, coyotes, and mountain lions on our protected properties. Raptors from as far as the arctic circle winter on our protected lands.
- ❖ Creek restoration work has widened the flood plain in Lynch Canyon. A culvert installed at Rush Ranch has helped marshes spread to the uplands. Future restoration work will take place on a mile-long creek in the expansion area of Lynch Canyon.
- ❖ Land trust properties contain creeks, vernal pools, seasonal wetlands, marshes, ephemeral streams, and sloughs. Our first property, Rush Ranch, is located on the largest brackish water marsh on the West Coast.



The endangered Callippe Silverspot Butterfly, whose larvae only eat the native Viola pedunculata flower, photographed at King-Swett Ranch by Doug Wirtz

Inspiration and Education

- ❖ Over 800 children from local elementary schools, homeschooling programs, and camps visited Solano Land Trust's lands for tours led by highly qualified docents in the past year.
- ❖ This spring, Solano County Office of Education piloted an educational scavenger hunt at Rush Ranch which utilized videos to educate kids and families about local wildlife.
- ❖ The Solano Resources Conservation District hosted their Solano Water Institute for Teachers at Rush Ranch in August, connecting hundreds of local teachers to the ranch.
- ❖ Staff presented at career fairs to over 1,200 local eighth graders, helping students learn about career paths in conservation.
- ❖ Monthly community science activities teach plant identification, counting strategies, communing with cattle, and more to learners of all ages.
- ❖ Recent illustrated signage at Jepson Prairie Preserve makes self-guided tours easy and informative for visiting families.





Recreation and Community

- ❖ Over 5,000 people visited Solano Land Trust's protected properties last year.
- ❖ With the exception of major holidays, every weekend of the year features staff or docent-led activities such as hikes, bicycle trips, volunteer days, or community science.
- ❖ We strive to provide positive outdoor experiences for all, using a wide variety of events and activities like Lynch Canyon Kite Festival, Rush Ranch Open House, Harvest Festival, Birds of Prey Hikes, Blacksmithing Lessons, and Astronomy Nights at Rush Ranch.
- ❖ Our monthly Get the Rush! event is a free family event that celebrates the land and culture of the region with youth concerts, presentations from local dancers, Las Posadas-themed activities, wagon rides with Access Adventure, and scavenger hunts through the Marsh Trail.
- ❖ Local high school track teams jog the trails, teenage Eagle Scouts carry out their capstone projects on our protected lands, and equestrians will soon enjoy twenty miles of trails when Patwino Worrta Kodoi Dihi Open Space Park opens.



A Beautiful View

By Deborah Durr Ferras, Board President

On August 24, 2022, I had the privilege of participating in a site inspection of Patwino Worrta Kodoi Dihi Open Space Park with the board, staff, and primary contractor, Campbell Grading. My first thought upon entering the park was of the vast expanse of open space: no freeway or city hardscape anywhere in sight. I was surrounded by the spectacular view of rolling hills, trees, and grasslands. Breathing in that view, I took a step away from the stress of daily life and simply basked in the wonder of the moment.

As we were updated on the completed work and the remaining tasks prior to its opening, I was struck by the enormity of the contributions made by so many people to construct this open space for recreational use, while maintaining its beauty and serenity. When challenges arose (such as unexpected pipelines or ensuring a long-lasting and permeable base for hiking paths), the contractor, Barth Campbell, Solano Land Trust's project manager, Hilary Dustin, and our staff found ways and means to resolve those challenges. They were tireless in their creativity in resolving the sometimes conflicting visions for the uses and structure of the park. The design of the trails created by John Anderson and the input by staff member Wanda Williams to the All People's Trail ensured the park's accessibility for so many people with varying levels of physical capabilities.

The strategically placed benches and picnic tables along the All People's Trail offer way stations to take a breather before climbing to the viewpoint at the top of the trail with a spectacular 360° view of the surrounding hills and valleys. Thoughtful consideration was given to park accessibility for horseback

riders, including the availability of water and the parking of trailers. Of course, the planning included picnic areas, restrooms, and parking. So many aspects to the construction were meticulously considered and weighed to maintain a balance between nature and functional use. This thoughtful balancing, in its thoroughness and creativity, captured Solano Land Trust's intent that this open space be accessible to all and to provide an opportunity to "breathe" in the beauty of nature.

Of course, the acquisition of the land and the construction of this park could never have happened without a strong base of caring donors and the generous financial support of individuals, businesses, private and public grantors.

This generosity and the enduring belief in our mission ensures the continued viability of the Solano Land Trust and our most enduring policy: *To inspire a love of the land and preserve it for people, food, and the natural environment.*



Trail crew volunteers assembling new picnic tables for the park

New trail honors legacy of local outdoor leader

The Doris Klein Bay Area Ridge Trail brings adventure home

As a supporter of Solano Land Trust, you are protecting outdoor spaces where people come together and build community. It's one of the most amazing things about this beautiful place that we call home.

Yamit Wilson



Doris Klein was one of those special people that built community by bringing people outdoors, and we were lucky to have her influence in our region. I met Doris Klein when I first arrived in Solano County twenty years ago. I would have been hard pressed to find a better ambassador for Solano County and its outdoor attractions. She wore her dark hair in a distinctive style with her braids wrapped around her head. She was not young then, but her eyes were bright and her smile welcoming. It wasn't long before I learned how much welcoming she had done.

As people who care about nature, land, and community, we never know how our actions will affect the lives of future generations. Though she traveled widely and adventurously, Doris remained a champion of the city of Vallejo and Solano County. Her legacy was an ongoing and heartfelt invitation for people to get outside in Solano County's open spaces, and to learn how the land connected to something bigger. As a founding member of the Bay Area Ridge Trail, she worked to make that connection tangible.

Doris passed away this year at the age of ninety-five. Her daughter Susie saw how the community benefitted from Doris' advocacy for hiking and what the outdoors meant for their mother. This fall, Susie dedicated a trail in her honor at Patwino Worrtila Kodoi Dihi Open Space Park.

We are humbled, delighted, and honored by her daughter's decision. The Doris Klein Bay Area Ridge Trail honors her legacy while connecting the county she loved to the 450-mile-long hiking system that connects our rolling hills to Mount Tamalpais, Mount Diablo, and the coast range.

You are also creating your legacy, in part, through your support of people and land in Solano County. Thanks to you, Patwino Worrtila Kodoi Dihi Open Space Park will soon be ready to welcome thousands of schoolchildren, host trails for horse riders, and encourage learning in people of all ages.

I truly believe the acts we make locally resonate across time and space. It is a belief I hold because I've been fortunate to see the examples set by people like Doris, and the kindness and generosity shown by people like you.

Thank you for being a beacon of hope for our future.

P.S. If you are interested in honoring a loved one through a bench, trail, or other naming opportunity, please contact Laura Livadas, Development Manager at laura@solanolandtrust.org.

Susan Klein



Doris Klein pictured with her grandson Galen

The legacy of an adventurer comes home

The Doris Klein Bay Area Ridge Trail helps the next generation of nature lovers find their path

When speaking of her late mother Doris Klein's early years, her daughter Susie describes a woman whose life was defined by the challenges of her time. Born in Wyoming and raised in Lake County, CA, Doris missed out on a university education and pitched in to support her family in the years following the Great Depression. She met Robert, the love of her life, in Oakland. They married, moved to Vallejo, and, like other young mothers of the post-war era, Doris took on the domestic work raising her three children and went in full cylinder.

Then, when her kids were away at college, and Doris was in her early fifties, she started taking hikes.

And not long afterwards, the hikes took Doris: they called her to new purposes, connected her to others, and brought Doris's courage and flair for leadership to the surface to inspire the communities she loved.

We want to tell you about the amazing and adventurous life Doris led connecting people to the outdoors, but first we have a question.

Our challenges today are not the same that Doris faced. But in Solano County and throughout the United States, people live in a world altered by the pandemic, tense with international conflict and political division, and worried about extreme weather and a changing climate. In a time where healing and togetherness are sorely needed, are people, our friends and neighbors, hearing the message that open land is part of the solution?

Doris knew that people need places where they can experience nature, activities that get them out of their rut, and communities whose members make each other stronger, braver, and more capable than they would be alone. She would found, name, and lead a group of female hikers called the Jane Muirs who hiked the entire John Muir trail through the Sierra Nevada Mountains. She led "adventure hikes" each Thursday in partnership with the Greater Vallejo Recreation District. And when her grandkids could walk, she took them through the soft undergrowth of the redwood forests, coached them past their reluctance, and inspired a passion for land that continues today.

This transformation happened in Doris's life because Doris was an extraordinary person. But it was possible because she lived in an extraordinary place.

Doris took her love of California's land and paid it forward. On her multi-day Jane Muir hikes, many of the women were decades Doris's junior. She meticulously created guides with maps, notes, and points of interest. Before their excursions started, she wrote up and divided assignments for the members of the group—



Marilea Tanner-Linne

Doris Klein



Nicole Bradlock

The trail named for Doris Klein will one day bring the Bay Area Ridge Trail from Napa to Fairfield

cleaning, cooking, assembling tents—but she rarely had to read out the assignments. People knew what they needed to do, they enjoyed helping each other, and impressing Doris. And when it was time to hold the rope and navigate sheer cliffs, Doris showed others the way.

But as she gazed from many high summits, Doris never lost sight of home. Solano County was where she had raised her family and where the forces of geology had produced many walkable outdoor wonders not yet covered by development and sprawl. As she got older, she drew even more on the resources just outside her door and began leading hikes closer to home.

As a booster for her hometown and the outdoors, Doris was naturally proud to be a founding member of the Bay Area Ridge Trail, a still-growing 450-mile loop through the nine counties of the Bay Area. The ridge trail linked Solano County to mountains like Diablo and Tamalpais, and it put all the peaks, woodlands, and valleys the trail crosses into the same excited conversation about the land.

Doris rang in her eightieth birthday hiking through Solano County with her friends. She was getting over an injury, so the woman who once bushwacked through poison oak at the front of the group let her companions take the lead.

She had hiked for over twenty-four years with these companions, and she wrote the Vallejo Times Herald a letter about her lovely day with the group. She noted her hiking group often met together off trail: distributing recycling bins, volunteering at farmers markets, cleaning up coastlines, and keeping each other healthy.

“Thanks to the Bay Area Ridge Trail,” wrote Doris, “and other trails in adjacent counties, these folks are so fit, and exude such good cheer, I have to salute such good people.”

She often wrote to her hometown paper, including updates about the ridge trail. In one letter, Doris describes a “future trail in the hills between Green Valley and Napa’s Skyline Wilderness Park.”

Today, that trail is named for her.

The Doris Klein Bay Area Ridge Trail is what brings the Bay Area Ridge Trail through Patwino Worrntla Kodoi Dihi Open Space Park, and it’s a route that will bring this park into the lives of others. It will take years to connect it to Napa County’s Skyline Wilderness Park, but the nearly two-mile trail is already in use today.

Doris died this year at ninety-five-years-old. We are so grateful to Doris’s daughter Susie Klein for dedicating this portion of the Ridge Trail in her mother’s honor.

Because we want—and we need—people in our community to receive the message that found Doris, changed her life, and turned her into an outdoor leader.

- ❖ People who are just getting comfortable again breaking their pandemic isolation.
- ❖ People training for their first overnight hike.
- ❖ People learning the outdoors is for them.
- ❖ People visiting from outside the county, ready to have their impressions of Solano County changed forever by this stunning park at the edges of the Suisun Valley.



Michelle Dickey

Galen Hammitt, Susie Klein, and Jim Hammitt standing near the Doris Klein Bay Area Ridge Trail

The legacy of an adventurer

Continued from P13

Patwino Worrta Kodoi Dihi Open Space Park isn't open to the public yet. But thanks to support from donors like you, we can draw on staff and a volunteer network who have brought groups here to write poetry, count rare flowers, and even take their first horseback ride. People are challenging themselves, improving their skills, and restoring connections to each other and to the land. They're making a community on the land that would make people like Doris proud.

But there are so many people we aren't reaching. People unaware of what land and community can do to heal what hurts.

A love for the land can be developed at any time, but the surest way is to cultivate it early, like Doris did for her grandson. That's why we've built parking spaces for school buses and partnered with local educators to design signage that makes it easier to learn about the park's geology, oaks, and significance for the native peoples of California.

But the benefits of land touch us throughout all our lives. Not everyone celebrates their eightieth birthday hiking in the company of friends, and kids too are spending a troubling amount of time alone. Over time, social isolation is shown to increase the risk of premature death at levels that rival smoking and obesity.

Not everyone who cherishes the land will show Doris's dedication. But everyone deserves the chance to make a connection to the outdoors and experience the land people like you have protected.

Whether they find what Doris found or not, everyone deserves a chance to start the quest.

That is going to happen in 1,500 wooded acres of parkland in a big city like Fairfield. We are not tucking this park away in the background. And we are not done making it better. Doris's trail will one day take hikers north to Napa County, fusing the Bay Area Ridge Trail into something stronger.

By donating today, you support this park's connection to a world-class trail system that brings the Bay Area together and shows off its best parts.

And, as Doris Klein knew, those best parts can be found right here in Solano County. Let's spread the message. And start the adventure.



Doris's daughter Susie Klein, her husband Jim Hammitt, and her grandson Galen join members of the Bay Area Ridge Trail and Solano Land Trust on the All People's Trail

Snapshots from Sunday Supper 2022

Thank you to everyone who turned out to make this our most successful Sunday Supper yet! We feel so fortunate by the crowd of supporters that showed up to Ethel Hoskins' beloved Joyful Ranch. From the sterling crew of volunteers who manned the auction tables, to the wonderful music by Duo Sonics, and the delicious food by chef Lindsey Chelini. A special thanks goes out to Auctioneer Joseph Diaz who guided bidders through the auction items that reflect the best of Solano County. Joseph's uncle was the late Joe Gates, who hosted our previous Sunday Suppers and had a legendary reputation for the generosity he showed to the nonprofits of Solano County.

To all the donors who bought a ticket, bid online, or supported in any way: We would dine you like this every weekend if we could. You're the force that keeps Solano Land Trust successful in conserving land in Solano County and making it available for the benefit of present and future generations.

Western bluebirds fledge because their mothers have fed them well. But the birdboxes stand on land the community protected because people dedicate time and money to make sure the world they love is the world their grandchildren will see. We feel inspired and grateful every day for the support you show.



Andres Velez



Andres Velez



Andres Velez



Sami Adams



Yami Wilson



Yami Wilson



Solano Land Trust
198 Dobbins Street, Suite A
Vacaville CA 95688
(707) 432-0150

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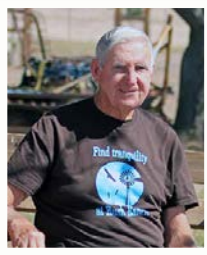
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Remembering Virgil LeRoy Sellers 1932-2022

Tom Muehleisen



If you have made Rush Ranch a special place in your life, you probably met or heard of Virgil Sellers, who passed this June. Even if you've only visited, you've seen his work. A veteran of the Korean War who came to Travis Airforce Base, Virgil spent a long and productive retirement making Rush Ranch into the resource for the community it is today. Virgil first visited Rush Ranch in 1991 for a wildflower walk advertised in the paper. While there, he noticed the barn was sinking. He and a crew of weekend volunteers jacked up the barn, installed pressurized posts, and re-shingled the roofs. After that, he never stopped helping. Mechanically gifted, Virgil restored vehicles on the property, converted equipment into fire pits, and showed countless people the basics of blacksmithing in the shop now named in his honor. He continued volunteering and inspiring into his late eighties. He is survived by his wife of 71 years, Patsyann, their daughter, and two sons.

Di Holokahi



Our Mission Statement

Inspire a love of the land and preserve it for people, food, and the natural environment.

