



# Central Valley Farmland Trust

## Legacy

Winter 2011

### Merced County Celebration



Members of the Alvernaz Family receive special recognition from Deidre Kelsey, Merced County Supervisor, for the placement of an agricultural easement on their farm near Livingston.

Members of the Alvernaz family of Livingston and the Bear Creek Ranch Partnership of Merced joined farmland conservation supporters on Nov. 4 to celebrate the completion of two agricultural conservation easements. The Alvernaz Farm easement and Bear Creek Ranch easement conserved 455 acres, adding to an impressive total of 10,052 conserved acres in Merced County.

Farmland conservation in Merced County began in the late 1990s with the formation of the Merced County Farmland and Open Space Trust (MCFOST). "These sites represent some of the best soils and water

in the county," said CVFT board member Maxwell Norton. "We are delighted to have these projects come to fruition. Merced Irrigation District is one of the better IDs in the state and farmland in the district is considered valuable. These soils are very productive and can support a wide array of crops."

The agricultural conservation easements originally held by MCFOST are now held by CVFT. The transition occurred in 2006, and since that time CVFT has completed an additional 11 projects in the county. "Merced County is a very robust agricultural area and CVFT was thrilled to help in permanently protecting

*continued on page 3*



Bill Martin

## Executive Director Message

Where do we go from here and how do we get there? Our board, staff, volunteers and outside consultants are coming off a most impressive performance over the last year. But are we poised and prepared to take our game to the next level? I suppose it would be easy for some to simply assume we have “arrived” with no need to improve. But we can always make improvements. It’s time to focus on the future, correct the mistakes, and strategically plan for the next game.

Although our mission of farmland conservation in the Central Valley has not changed, the environment within which we operate has been anything but static. Consider the impact on productive Central Valley farmland by such things as the proposed high-speed rail, proliferation of solar generation facilities, General Plan updates among valley cities, farmland mitigation, a lackluster economy, and lack of conservation funding. Given all the known and unknown implications of these issues and initiatives, how can CVFT play an important role in moderating the loss of productive farmland in the Central Valley? Personally, if left to my own devices, I would simply work harder and knock down a few brick walls to get the job done (Ha! Typical meathead, as my daughters would say.) Working hard is necessary, but in this environment it will no longer single-handedly get us to where we need to go.

So that we are not accused of missing the forest for the trees, in February 2012 the board and staff are planning what could be one of our most important strategic planning retreats. We have engaged Marc Smiley, a well-known land trust consultant, to facilitate the retreat. Marc helped in the creation of CVFT in 2003 and 2004. He is an expert in rooting out problematic issues, identifying critical paths, and crafting pragmatic strategic planning initiatives. We intend to open up and look objectively and thoroughly into the inner and outer workings of CVFT, identify issues which could hold us back, and devise a plan to move our game to the next level. As part of the process we invite your input and suggestions in making CVFT the leader in farmland conservation in the Central Valley. Thank you!

### CENTRAL VALLEY FARMLAND TRUST

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Bill Martin,  
*Executive Director*

Susan Hooper,  
*Associate Director*



The accreditation seal recognizes land conservation organizations that meet national standards for excellence, uphold the public trust and ensure that conservation efforts are permanent.

## Future Dates For Your Calendar

- Saturday, February 4, 2012**     **Crabs for Conservation**  
*Waterloo Gun and Bocci Club, Stockton*
- Saturday, April 28, 2012**     **A Taste of the Country**  
*Merced Ag Museum, Merced*
- Saturday, October 20, 2012**     **An Evening at the Carnegie**  
*Carnegie Arts Center, Turlock*

MERCED CELEBRATION continued from page 1



John Colbert and Bob Kolberg from the Bear Creek Ranch Partnership receive recognition from Deidre Kelsey, Merced County Supervisor, for their work which resulted in an easement being placed on the Bear Creek Ranch property near Planada.

these productive farms, which will forever help maintain the farming legacy the county is known for,” said Bill Martin, CVFT executive director.

The Alvernaz Farm was purchased by Joe Alvernaz in the early 1960s. Joe and his son Jim rotate the sweet potato plantings with Merced rye grass. The family’s desire to protect the farmland from urban encroachment was their motivation for placing

the farmland in an agricultural conservation easement.

Bear Creek Ranch Partnership is part of the historic Del Monte Peach Ranch located east of Merced. It is a large, efficient ranch with excellent soils that produce almonds. The crop receives water from the Merced Irrigation District and a large supply of ground water.

Thanks to everyone who contributed to the successful completion of these conservation projects.

## Welcome Ron Freitas

We are pleased to announce that Ron Freitas has joined the CVFT board of directors. Ron brings a wealth of experience, knowledge and skills in land use planning and policy development. He is a graduate of Cal Poly, San Luis Obispo and currently resides in Modesto.



Ron’s 18 years as the director of planning and community development for Stanislaus County gave him the opportunity to participate and direct land use planning activities, which helped him form land use and

agricultural policies for Stanislaus County.

He played a major role in the development of the first comprehensive General Plan for the county. In 2007 he oversaw the development of the first

Back by popular demand!



## Crabs for Conservation



We hope you will join us for our community crab feed on Saturday, February 4, 2012 at the Waterloo Gun and Bocci Club in Stockton. Festivities begin at 6:00 p.m. You may have been to other crab feeds, but if you haven’t been to ours you’re really missing out!

Join us for a fun evening with friends enjoying a delicious meal including unlimited crab and shrimp, pasta, salad, bread and a large assortment of wonderful wines from local wineries and vineyards. Enter to win the door prize and a wide assortment of raffle prizes. Tickets are \$50 per person or \$90 per couple. Table sponsorships are also available at \$1,000 for a full table; \$500 for a half table.

To sponsor or purchase tickets contact Susan at (916) 687-3178 or email [shooper@valleyfarmland.org](mailto:shooper@valleyfarmland.org). See you at the crab feed!

Agricultural Element of the General Plan, which withstood a court challenge on the requirement for agricultural land mitigation.

“Ron has seen it all in land use in Stanislaus County,” said CVFT Vice President Denny Jackman. “He brings a competent, pragmatic view of our history as a native and government insider. Ron knows land use issues and politics and will help our board serve our customers better.”

In addition to the CVFT board, Ron serves on the board of directors of the Farmland Working Group, the Rabobank Regional President’s Advisory Council North Central Valley and the board of directors of the Modesto Kiwanis Club. He is the alternate public member on the Stanislaus LAFCO and is a guest lecturer at Cal State Stanislaus on land use issues.

We welcome Ron to our board and know that his participation will greatly enhance our farmland conservation efforts.



## President's Message



Ken Oneto

On April 4, 2005, we had a levee break on our ranch. We had been sand bagging and dozing it all day, only to lose the battle late that afternoon. The result was a free irrigation for our cherries which were in full bloom. It was a little more water than we really wanted to apply, two feet deep and moving quickly. After a long month, the trees survived and we picked a nice crop of cherries. The only major loss was the bees that floated all over the ranch.

The main thing we learned from this incident was that moving water does not penetrate or become stagnant. Here at CVFT, even though we have been very successful over the last year and a half, we are going to keep moving and not sit still. Just like the river water, movement is a good thing. We could just stay where we are and do what we are doing, but we are choosing to move forward, look ahead, look into the crystal ball and see the future. To kick off 2012, we are planning an incredibly valuable board retreat to give ourselves a chance to look within to see what the future may bring.

There are many things on the horizon to be dealt with: high speed rail, city and county general plans, mitigation programs, solar facilities, and continued urban growth. We need to step back and look how we can effect these situations and how we can use them to serve our mission to protect the most valuable land on earth. We need to remember that land is our manufacturing floor. We can't just build a new factory in China.

Your continued support is greatly appreciated. Thank you to those who attended the event at the Carnegie in Turlock. We will be back there next year. In

February, we return to the Waterloo Gun and Bocci Club for a terrific crab feed. I hope you can join us.

In the meantime, enjoy your California produced foods.



### Charter Board Members

Don Bo  
Markus Bokisch  
Tim Byrd  
Jeni Ferrari  
Denny Jackman  
Brad Lange  
Linda Macedo  
Maxwell Norton  
Ken Oneto  
Mike Tanner

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## Support Central Valley Farmlands *Forever* *You Can Make a Difference*

Leaving planned gifts to organizations you value and support is a wonderful and generous way to make a difference.

Central Valley Farmland Trust is pleased to announce the creation of Central Valley Farmlands Forever. This planned giving program is designed for those who intend to make a lasting gift that will ensure that farmland preserved today remains protected in perpetuity.

There are two ways to participate in Central Valley Farmlands Forever. The simplest is to make an annual contribution. This can be made at one time or as a monthly donation. Memorial gifts, tribute gifts or gifts of tangible personal property are also considered annual contributions.

Another way to participate is by leaving a planned

gift. These gifts can be made through a variety of estate planning tools, including bequests in your will or trust, retirement account designations, or gifts of securities. When you inform us that you are leaving a planned gift you will be recognized as a member of the Farmlands Legacy Society. This is a way for us to distinguish these most thoughtful contributions to the future of farmland conservation.

We encourage you to consult with your estate planning attorney or financial planning professional before deciding which planned giving option is best for you. If you have already included CVFT in your will or trust, please let us know so we can include you in the Farmlands Legacy Society. If you would like additional information on our planned giving program, please contact us at (916) 687-3178 or [shooper@valleyfarmland.org](mailto:shooper@valleyfarmland.org).

## Donor Recognition

Gifts received through November 30, 2011

### Conservator (Gifts \$5,000 and above)

Joe Alvernaz  
American AgCredit  
Bear Creek Ranch Partnership  
Garrett and Renee Becker  
Bokisch Vineyards/Markus and Elizabeth Bokisch  
Jon and Christine Brandstad  
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E & J Gallo Winery  
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Kyle Herbold  
Vance Kennedy, Ph.D.  
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Dave and Kathy Zollinger

### Guardian (Gifts between \$100 and \$499)

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## A Fabulous Evening at the Carnegie!

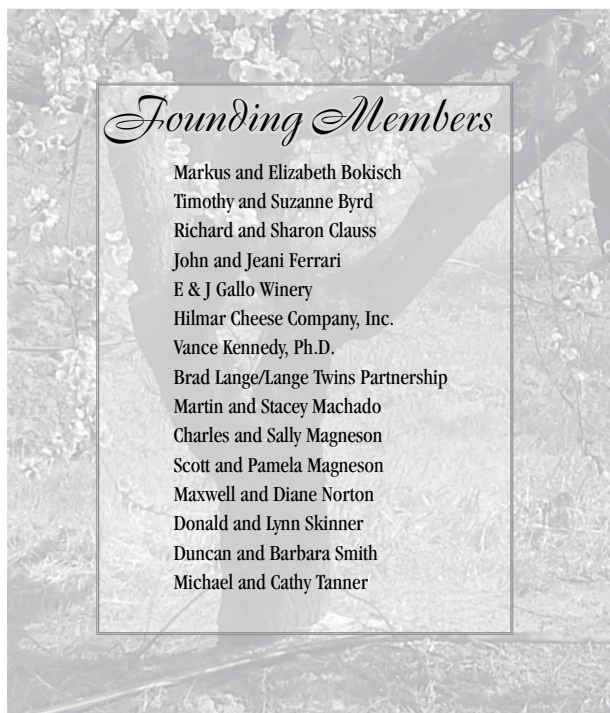
Our Evening at the Carnegie event on October 8 was a huge success – and one for the record books! Thank you to our guests and volunteers who worked to make the first annual event so wonderful. Additional thanks to our corporate and table sponsors and everyone who generously contributed items for the silent auction. A special thank you to Tim Byrd, who presided over the event, and to our key note speaker Paul Wenger, president of the California Farm Bureau. We hope you will join us on October 20, 2012 for the second annual An Evening at the Carnegie!

### Corporate Sponsors



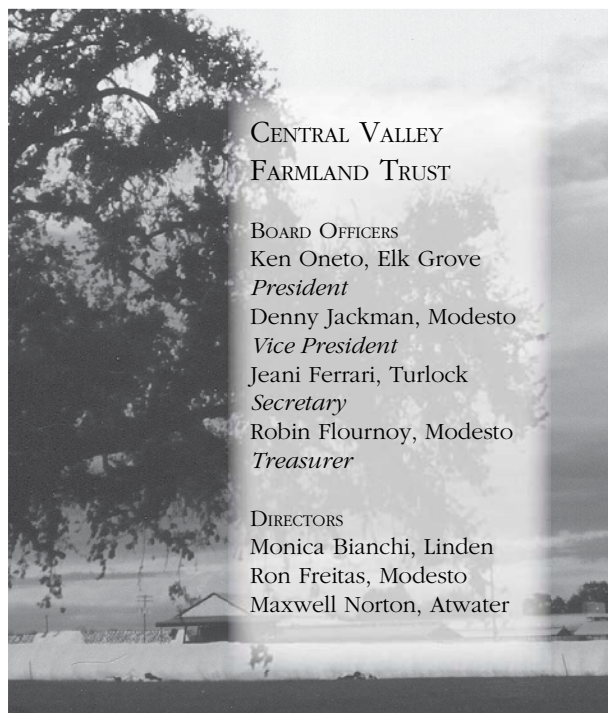
### Table Sponsors

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