



LEGACY

Summer 2024 - 20th Anniversary Edition



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Protecting the farms that feed your family



**CALIFORNIA
FARMLAND
TRUST**

OUR MISSION

Help Farmers Protect the
Best Farmland in the World

CURRENT COUNTIES SERVED

Sacramento, San Joaquin, Contra Costa,
Stanislaus, Merced, Madera, and Fresno

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Ron Freitas, Modesto
Ryan Jacobsen, Fresno
Jim Jorgensen, Rocklin
Maxwell Norton, Merced
Barbara Smith, Courtland
Mike Wade, Modesto

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Emily Rooney
Ann Veneman
Paul Wenger

Staff:

Charlotte Mitchell
Executive Director

Matthew Grizzle
Operations Director

Amy Wolfe
Development Manager

Amy Cotta
Communications Manager

Quinn Mulrooney
Conservation Manager

Lauren Fox
Program Associate

Stacey Ming
Office Manager



Platinum
Transparency
2024

Candid.

Lucas Ranch farmland conservation easement is number 85.
A rich family heritage is now protected forever in Merced County.



An abundance of activity this summer

Summer is upon us, and farmers throughout the State have been working hard to manage the harvest. With our extremely hot summer, many crops did not tolerate the heat, affecting potential yields and quality of fruit, vegetable, and nut crops. While we don't have much control over Mother Nature, we do have control over supporting our State's farmers and ranchers by buying CA Grown. Shop at your local farmer's market or farmer-owned fruit stand, and shop for only CA Grown at the grocery store. Farming is not for the faint of heart, and we can help keep our local produce here by supporting those who grow it.

Just as you can help support farmers, California Farmland Trust continues to do the same. This last month we were thrilled to announce the protection of two more farms. Both are located in Merced County and are known as the Bonner Property and Lucas Ranch, bringing our total to 18,260 acres across 85 farms! Watch for future issues of the Legacy for the stories of these great families who wanted to ensure farmland is protected forever.

I am also pleased to announce that we have added three people to our team. Matthew, Amy, and Quinn bring vast skills and experience to ensure we can continue to protect more acres of farmland throughout the State. Learn more about our new team members on page 3.

Lastly, we are preparing our 20th Anniversary event on November 2nd, and I hope you can help us celebrate this joyous occasion. In the last issue of Legacy, we brought to you the early years of the organization, beginning with the Merced County Farmland and Open Space Trust (MCFOST). As those leaders with MCFOST, Stanislaus Farmland Trust, San Joaquin County Open Space Working Group, and the Sacramento Valley Agricultural Land Conservancy saw, they could protect more farmland if they joined together rather than going at it alone. This effort formed the Central Valley Farmland Trust (CVFT). In this issue, we talk to those who were influential in the work of CVFT between 2004 and 2018.

Please enjoy this issue, and I hope you have an excellent rest of your summer.

Sincerely,

Charlotte Mitchell
Executive Director



California Farmland Trust Welcomes New Staff

MATTHEW GRIZZLE
Operations Director



Matthew joins California Farmland Trust as the Operations Director, bringing with him more than twenty-five years of experience in executive management and business ownership. Before joining CFT, he founded Invictus Management, a non-profit consulting firm, and served as the Business Development Manager for Northern California at Staples, Inc. Prior engagements include his tenure as Executive Director of the Miracle Mile Improvement District in Stockton and nearly a decade as the proprietor of Midtown Creperie & Café restaurant and catering company.

Committed to community service, Matthew currently holds positions as a director on the Greater Stockton Chamber of Commerce board, Club Secretary for the Rotary Club of Stockton, and Secretary of Stockton Rotary Endowment. He has also served as board president for numerous organizations and has been an active member of the Masonic Family for over thirty years.

In pursuit of further education, Matthew recently returned to college and is on track to earn his Bachelor of Science in Business Management from BYU, Idaho in December and then will be starting the MBA program at California State University, Stanislaus in the Spring. He holds certifications in Business Leadership, Social Media Marketing, Commercial Fundamentals, and Non-Profit Management from the University of the Pacific, Stockton.

Matthew resides in Turlock with his wife Michelle and their four children.

QUINN MULROONEY
Conservation Manager



Quinn joins California Farmland Trust as our new Conservation Manager. He brings a wealth of experience in agricultural real estate, conservation easements, and farm management to his new role, where he will oversee CFT's conservation and stewardship programs.

Before joining CFT, Quinn served as Vice President of Agriculture for Land Advisors Organization and Director of Agricultural Properties for Northgate Commercial Real Estate. His background also includes managing his family's farm in Sacramento County, where he leased and operated over 2,500 acres of irrigated farmland. Quinn's deep understanding of production agriculture and his experience in conservation transactions make him a perfect fit for leading our efforts to protect California's vital farmland.

In his role, Quinn will focus on the management, administration, and stewardship of farmland conservation easements, ensuring that family farms are preserved for future generations. His knowledge and experience as a farmer and agricultural real estate professional will be invaluable in advancing CFT's mission.

Quinn holds a Bachelor's Degree in Agricultural Studies, with a focus on biology, from California State University, Stanislaus.

He resides in Galt, with his wife Taylor and their three children.

AMY COTTA
Communications Manager



Amy joins California Farmland Trust as our Communications Manager. She has a robust background in brand strategy, program management, and producing brand and product content, most recently working for the global vegetable company and worldwide seed developer, HM.CLAUSE.

For the past decade, Amy has developed and promoted commercial brands and corporate images across the agricultural, food and beverage, and retail sectors. She is passionate about creating compelling narratives, and prides herself on brand storytelling.

Amy possesses a Master of Arts in Creative Writing from California State University, Sacramento, and a Bachelor of Arts in English from California State University's Honors College. Amy holds certifications in reputation risk management, design thinking and business innovation, and holds her PCM (Professional Certified Marketer) and CDMP (Certified Digital Marketing Professional) from the American Marketing Association.

The Cotta family has been farming in the Lodi Appellation for over 40 years. Their children continue to be involved in day-to-day operations of the family businesses, Joe A. Cotta Vineyards, Rhythm & Blueberries, and Seasons Coffee.

Amy resides in Sacramento, with her husband Greg and their newborn daughter.

2023 Impact Report Available



We are excited to share the milestones, accomplishments and successes of the last year in our 2023 Impact Report.

During 2023, we brought our preserved farmland total to 17,665 acres!

We also continued our commitment to connecting with our community about the importance of protecting this precious resource.

Read all about our incredible year at www.cafarmtrust.org/annual-reports, or by clicking the QR code provided here.



2024-2026 Board Officers



SAM ZANUTTO
President



THERESA KIEHN
Vice President



BILL HOOBLER
Secretary



MIKE MACHADO
Treasurer



Celebrating Fiorini Ranch Conservation Easement

On June 13, 2024, the California Farmland Trust Board of Directors, staff, and close supporters celebrated the closing of the 60-acre Fiorini Ranch agricultural conservation easement in Delhi, California. The celebration was held at the El Capitan Hotel in Merced, with lunch for guests who contributed to the success of protecting this farmland. The Fiorini Ranch is located half a mile from an approved housing development; this farm is now linked to a conserved corridor of 200 acres of other protected farms that are helping to stop further development of this important agricultural area in Merced County.

*"If we're going to preserve agriculture in California, the Central Valley is the last stand. If this falls, then kiss California agriculture goodbye."
~ Randy Fiorini*

Randy Fiorini, along with his two children involved in the farming operation, recognized the importance of farmland protection from others in the County who also put their land in a conservation easement. "Following the example of the Espinoza's, the Zollinger's, the Ferrari's, and others in the Delhi area, I knew this

was the right avenue to take," noted Fiorini. Knowing that urban development was eminent, they wanted to ensure the land could be passed down and remain in production for the next generation.

The celebration also recognized the Henry Mayo Newhall Foundation, which made a significant contribution to this project and, along with individual donors, made protecting this farm a reality. Henry Mayo Newhall was a California pioneer and a successful rancher during his life in the late 1800's. The Foundation honors his legacy with a mission to improve the quality of life within the geographic areas associated with his career and legacy. Natasha Hunt, representing the Foundation, applauded Fiorini for taking the initiative of farmland protection to avoid what happened to the Henry Mayo Newhall ranch in the Santa Clarita Valley after Henry's passing.



Brentwood Agricultural Land Trust board of directors and the Central Valley Farmland Trust board of directors formalize the merger on November 14, 2017.
 Left to right standing: Larry Ruhstaller, Jim Jorgensen, Patrick Johnston, Janet Caprile, Jon Harvey, Ron Freitas, Tim Byrd, Jim Gwerder.
 Left to right sitting: Tom Bloomfield, Barbara Smith, Maxwell Norton, Ken Oneto.

20th Anniversary Series

Gaining Momentum *Written by Vicky Boyd*

When representatives of four farmland conservation groups met in late 2003, they agreed that the status quo probably wasn't the best way to protect agricultural land moving forward. Then the discussion evolved around possible new structures. Should the Sacramento and San Joaquin County groups band together? Should groups from Stanislaus and Merced counties form their own organization or remain independent? Or should the four join together to create a new farmland trust and hire an executive director who could strengthen community ties and conduct formal fundraising?

Based on formal discussions as well as informal chats during breaks, Denny Jackman — a participant and Modesto City Council member at the time — said representatives from all four groups favored forming a new farmland trust.

"We coalesced and started working together through the Great Valley Center," he said about the Modesto-based nonprofit organization that facilitated the meetings. "There was strength in numbers, and there was strength in backgrounds."

Tim Byrd, a Stanislaus Farmland Trust founding member, along with wife Suzanne, agreed. "I think they saw a larger group as being a more efficient and effective way of protecting farmland in the San Joaquin Valley. We all agreed at the meeting that it just made a lot of sense to come together in terms of efficiency instead of everybody having their own executive director and own insurance."

Merced County Farmlands and Open Space Trust had the most easements, San Joaquin County Open Space Working Group had \$200,000 in

development mitigation funds, Stanislaus Farmland Trust had a formal organizational structure and the Sacramento Valley Agricultural Land Conservancy was located near the State's capital.

Thus was born the Central Valley Farmland Trust in May 2004. The organization expanded its reach again when the Brentwood Ag Land Trust merged with it, and in 2018, the California Farmland Trust was formed.

Since CVFT's inception in 2004, it has protected over 18,260 acres of prime farmland on 85 farms in six counties throughout the Central Valley, including the additions of Madera and Fresno.

At the heart of the California Farmland Trust are agricultural easements, which are designed to protect prime farmland threatened by development. Landowners voluntarily donate or sell their development rights to the trust through a complex set



Crabs for Conservation event held on February 6, 2010.

of legal agreements designed to ensure the land, the owners and the trust are all adequately protected.

Raley's Field Trips on the Farm were an integral part of the Central Valley Farmland Trust. Students listen to farmer Michael explaining the corn crop, July 2016.

Landowners can continue to farm whatever crops they want, and they're free to sell the land or pass it on to the next generation as long as it remains in agriculture. "It just happens to be a tool that is used by farmers to assure the land stays in farming," Jackman said.

The impetus for the four groups initially meeting was a report, titled "Issues and Opportunities for Agricultural Land Conservation in the Central Valley of California." It was sponsored by a grant from the Great Valley Center, which supports activities and organizations that benefit the economic, social and environmental well-being of the Central Valley.

As meetings and discussions continued, three representatives from each of the four farmland conservation groups came to a



2004. At that meeting, they contracted with Hooper to work part-time as the office administrator.

In February 2005, the trust hired Bill Martin as CVFT's first executive director. He was based at a leased office in Elk Grove. Hooper joined Martin in April 2005 as the trust's other full-time employee.

"Bill and I had very different skill sets," Hooper said. "His strengths were finance and budgeting, public relations, outreach to community groups, the farming communities, and funding agencies, and crafting agricultural conservation easements. My responsibilities included

(continued on page 8)



Central Valley Farmland Trust's Associate Director Susan Hooper and Executive Director Bill Martin, February 2010.

consensus that they would like to form one group headed by a professional manager.

Susan Hooper, a part-time Sacramento County Farm Bureau staff member, attended those meetings as a Sacramento Valley Agricultural Land Conservancy representative.

"Members of the four groups had worked hard to conserve farmland for years," she said. "They were ready to hire staff, but none of the groups individually had adequate financial resources."

The representatives also discussed what they wanted their new organization to resemble. Because the bylaws of the Stanislaus Farmland Trust most closely fit what members were attempting, they voted to adopt those with a few minor changes, Jackman said.

In addition, they conducted focus group sessions to gauge public sentiment that were held in each of the four jurisdictions: Sacramento, San Joaquin, Stanislaus and Merced counties.

What would become the CVFT was approved in May 2004, and its first board of directors, consisting of three representatives from each of the four originating groups, were elected in June

CENTRAL VALLEY FARMLAND TRUST FOUNDING MEMBERS 2004

- Markus & Elizabeth Bokisch**
- Timothy & Suzanne Byrd**
- Richard & Sharon Clauss**
- John & Jeani Ferrari**
- E. & J. Gallo Winery**
- Hilmar Cheese Company, Inc.**
- Vance Kennedy, Ph. D.**
- Brad Lange/Lange Twins Partnership**
- Martin & Stacey Machado**
- Charles & Sally Magneson**
- Scott & Pamela Magneson**
- Maxwell & Diane Norton**
- Donald & Lynn Skinner**
- Duncan & Barbara Smith**
- Michael & Cathy Tanner**



Central Valley Farmland Trust's 10th Anniversary celebration at LangeTwins Winery.
 Darla Guenzler from the California Council of Land Trust's presents a resolution of recognition.
 Left to right: Bill Martin, Tim Byrd, Ken Oneto, Maxwell Norton, Denny Jackman, Barbara Smith, Darla Guenzler, Ron Frietas, Susan Hooper.

managing educational outreach programs and events, coordinating all board and committee meetings, managing the accreditation and accreditation renewal process, and getting our first publication, Legacy, started."

In 2006, the National Land Trust Alliance created the Land Trust Accreditation Commission as an independent review program. To become accredited, land trusts voluntarily undergo rigorous assessments that examine what the commission considers best practices. Among them are fiscal accountability, organizational leadership, transactions, and lastly stewardship of the land it conserves.

In 2008, CFVT hit another landmark by becoming one of the first land trusts to be accredited with the Land Trust Accreditation

Commission, and it has been re-accredited every five years since.

"We had to provide tons of documentation," Hooper said. "With over 600 hours of Bill's and my time, becoming accredited that first time was a huge undertaking."

Jeani Ferrari, who was among the founders of the Stanislaus Farmland Trust, was on the board when it merged with three regional land trusts to form the Central Valley Farmland Trust in 2004.

"When I left the board, California Farmland Trust was doing great work. I don't think there's a farmland trust, anywhere, that does more important work. Executive Director Charlotte Mitchell is a remarkable team leader."

20th Anniversary Celebration

November 2, 2024

Byrd Barn | Modesto, CA

Tickets Available Now

www.CFT20th.com



We invite you to commemorate our shared success in achieving this milestone and continuing our vital mission to protect the best farmland in the world!

California Farmland Trust's 20th Anniversary Celebration

*Saturday, November 2nd, 2024 at 4:00 PM
 The Byrd Barn
 1954 N Dakota Avenue ~ Modesto, CA
 (See Website for Offsite Parking Information)*

*Reserve Your Seats at www.CFT20th.com
 \$150.00 Per Person
 Includes: Social Hour, Hors D'Oeuvres, Coursed Gourmet Meal
 Business Casual Attire Requested*

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

At California Farmland Trust, we are excited to bring you Community Connections, linking our network to like-minded, synergistic organizations doing good work for the betterment of our state's agricultural industry. We will feature events and activities as part of our monthly news, so make sure to sign up for our monthly e-news at cafarmtrust.org. If you have an event you would like us to share, send details to Amy Wolfe, Development Manager, at awolfe@cafarmtrust.org.

BLACK URBAN FARMERS ASSOCIATION



Black Urban Farmers Association (BUFA) is an alliance of farmers who have united behind the cause of wanting a healthier, affordable way to access fresh produce. Based in the heart of California's Central Valley, BUFA aims to combat the barriers that separate urban communities from access to fresh, real, and whole food. They are currently seeking a dedicated and experienced Part-Time Farm Manager to oversee operations on their 1/4-acre pesticide-free farm. To apply or learn more about this organization visit their website at www.stocktonbufafarm.org.

RALLY 2024

September 25-28 | Providence, RI

The National Land Conservation Conference - Where people who share a passion for conservation will re-energize and inspire you. Gather to learn about diverse conservation topics, connect with friends and colleagues, and gain the skills you need to take your conservation work further. Registration is now open, visit www.alliancerally.org.



The California Chapter of the American Society of Farm Managers and Rural Appraisers (ASFMRA) will hold its annual Fall Meeting and Tour in October. To register or for more information, visit www.calasfmra.com.

ASFMRA is the nation's premier organization of professionals who adhere to exceptionally high standards for education, ethics and performance in appraisal and management of agricultural properties, and consulting for agribusiness. The California Chapter is one of 31 chapters affiliated with the national organization.

Fall Meeting 2024

| | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| Tuesday October 22 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eminent Domain (Day 1) Board of Directors Meeting Welcome Reception at Five Window Beer Company |
| Wednesday October 23 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eminent Domain (Day 2) Ag Pros Learning Lab - Water and Changing Real Estate Market Focus Member Meeting / Installation & Awards Dinner |
| Thursday October 24 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Eminent Domain (Day 3) Fall Ag Tour |



RACE TO SLOW THE PACE

BOKISCH VINEYARDS 5K & 10K LODI, CA



Fourth Annual Race to Slow the Pace



REGISTER NOW!

SEPTEMBER 15, 2024

CAFARMTRUST.ORG/RACETOSLOWTHEPACE



The fourth annual Race to Slow the Pace 5K & 10K, presented in partnership with the John and Jeani Ferrari Family Foundation, will be held at Bokisch Vineyards in Lodi, CA. The event is a trail run which aims to connect people with nature, the environment and family farms that feed them, while furthering California Farmland Trust's mission. Our goal is to foster a connection to the land and why we must slow the pace of development and protect farmland.

Runners will weave their way through the scenic vineyard at Bokisch while taking in the vines, the habitat, and the value of open space that farmland provides. Your participation in the run connects you to the local community and demonstrates your support for agriculture. This is a family, stroller and pet-friendly event designed to get you out into the beauty of Lodi and a working vineyard.

Not a runner? Not a problem! You can still enjoy the day with us and celebrate others as they cross the finish line with a brunch only registration.

Thank you to the sponsors who have already committed to this year's race: John & Jeani Ferrari Family Foundation, Farm Credit Alliance, Dwelley Family Farms, Montpelier Farming Corporation, Mujeres Poderosas, Vino Farms LLC, Fluetsch & Busby Insurance, Bokides-Hesseltine Real Estate Company, Mitchell Farms Club Lambs, Hoobler Insurance Services, KLM Ranches Inc, The Zenith, Grow West, Relation, The Willamette Valley Company, Pacific Coast Producers, and Mercedes-Benz of Modesto. Find more information about becoming a sponsor or register for the race at www.cafarmtrust.org/racetoslowthepace.

Join Our Community of Donors to Secure Farmland for Years to Come

Disclaimer: This information is provided as a service to highlight a matter of current interest. It is not intended to constitute a full review of any subject matter, nor is it a substitute for obtaining financial or legal advice from an accountant, financial advisor, or an attorney.

✓ Required Minimum Distribution

A required minimum distribution (RMD) is the minimum amount of money that must be withdrawn from a retirement account each year. RMDs are required by U.S. tax law for traditional IRAs and employer-sponsored retirement plans. The age at which RMDs must begin depends on the year the account owner was born (age 72-75).

The first RMD for those who turn 73 in 2023 or later must be taken by April 1 of the following year, with subsequent RMDs due by December 31 of each year. If an RMD is not taken, a penalty may be imposed. The penalty was reduced from 50% to 25% by the SECURE 2.0 Act of 2022, and may be further reduced to 10% if the late withdrawal is removed by a specified deadline. This reduced penalty applies to late withdrawals for 2023 and later.

To do: Calculate your RMD. Plan your withdrawal. Decide which account(s) to make withdrawals from, and how much of that withdrawal you plan to give. You may have an RMD total and certain accounts with individual RMDs. California Farmland Trust is a qualified 501(c)3 organization and can receive your RMD. We must receive your gift by December 31st, for your donation to qualify this year. If you have check-writing privileges on your IRA, please mail your check by December 15th, to allow time to process your gift. When you file your taxes for the year, include your donation on the relevant tax document.

✓ IRA Distribution

If you are 59½ or older, you can take a distribution from your IRA (traditional IRA, SEP or SIMPLE IRA) at any time and make that gift to California Farmland Trust without penalty. If you itemize your deductions, you can take a charitable deduction for the amount.

To do: Contact your financial institution holding your IRA assets for distribution instructions.

✓ Employer Match

Do you know if your company offers a gift matching program? Many times, employers will give where you give – doubling the impact of your gift. Check with your HR department to see if these options are available.

✓ Donor Advised Fund (DAF)

Contribute to a donor-advised fund and enjoy tax savings on that amount when you itemize. A DAF allows you to make a charitable contribution to California Farmland Trust, receive an immediate tax deduction, and then recommend additional grants from the fund over time.

To do: Complete the contribution by December 31st. You do not have to designate the funds this calendar year to receive the tax benefits.

✓ Direct Gift of Stocks

You may enjoy two tax benefits with a gift of appreciated stock: Avoid paying taxes on the appreciated value and qualify for an income tax charitable deduction based on today's market value, when you itemize.

To do: Complete all transfers by December 31st. This includes electronic transfer, hand-delivery of the securities or mailed stock and stock power (mailed separately for security).

✓ End-Of-Year Planning

Update your will or living trust. Ensure that your designations are still appropriate, and your charitable intentions are noted.

Review your retirement plan beneficiaries. Assess your named beneficiaries to ensure you've considered your loved ones and favorite causes.

Review your life insurance policy. If you have a policy that is no longer a significant piece of your estate plan, consider making a gift by assigning ownership to the California Farmland Trust or making us the beneficiary.



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THANK YOU TO OUR 2024 SPONSORS

Thank you to our 2024 sponsors, many of whom have provided California Farmland Trust with ongoing support for years. We appreciate their support and investment in the mission of our organization.

Legacy



Visionary



Heritage



FARM CREDIT
 AgWest Farm Credit
 American AgCredit | CoBank

John and Jeani
FERRARI FAMILY
 FOUNDATION

Guardian



Make a gift today at cafarmtrust.org | Follow us @cafarmtrust