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## Solano Land Trust News February 2010

Welcome to the second edition of our bi-monthly electronic newsletter. The print version of *Vistas* will continue to arrive in your mailbox in the spring and fall. Only members receive the print version and invitations to special events.

[Join or renew today!](#)

### Where's the Lamb?

*Support your local farmers*

If you want to be a locovore, someone who buys all your food locally, Solano County makes it easy. You can go straight to the source for your produce and wine, but what about meat? Dixon and the Montezuma Hills are known as lamb country, but where can you buy it?



Just twenty years ago, you could buy a sheep directly from a farmer and send it to one of several local slaughterhouses, but nearly all the family-owned facilities have closed. "Regulatory overhead, compliance costs, economies of scale have made industrial processing more cost effective," said Jim Allan, Solano County Agricultural Commissioner.

Years before the locavore food movement, Solano Land Trust Board President Ian Anderson tried to direct market his lamb. He found that it was too time consuming. Instead, he sells his sheep to Niman Ranch, a high-quality, natural, meat purveyor. If you buy Niman Ranch lamb in summer and autumn, the lamb will be from sheep raised in the Montezuma Hills, either from Anderson's ranch or several others including Jeanne McCormack's, which has a conservation easement held by Solano Land Trust.

Another local lamb product is labeled Superior Farms. Superior Farms in Dixon is the only processing plant west of the Rockies. Superior guarantees that if you buy your lamb locally, the product will be from local sources. (Superior has plants in other states, and the products sold in those states will come from their local sources.)

The era of the direct lamb purchase isn't completely over. If you

[Join or Renew  
Today!](#)

### COMING EVENTS

## FARM FRESH FEAST

Saturday, May 8,  
2010

4:30 to 8 p.m.

Join host Russ Lester at Dixon Ridge Farms in Winters for a "locavore" feast to benefit Solano Land Trust. Dine by candlelight in a beautiful walnut orchard while enjoying a four-course, locally-sourced meal prepared by San Francisco

Executive Chef Lauren Kiino. Live music & carriage rides.

[Tickets available  
online now!](#)

For more information call Development Director Greg Peterson at (707) 432-0150 x 205 or [greg@solanolandtrust.org](mailto:greg@solanolandtrust.org)

**Jepson Prairie  
Docent-led  
Tours**

raise your own or know someone who will sell you a sheep, you can send it to Gates Ranch Meat Company in Vacaville where Joe Gates will cut and wrap it for you.

Places to buy pre-packaged local lamb:

[Davis Food Co-op, Davis](#)  
[Lira's Supermarket, Rio Vista](#)  
[Raley's Supermarkets](#)  
[Nugget, Vacaville](#)

Mediterranean Food Center, Fairfield

## Coalition Urges Governor to Restore Funding for the Williamson Act

Nicole Byrd, *Executive Director*

Solano Land Trust, along with 41 other members of the California Rangeland Conservation Coalition, signed a letter this month urging Governor Schwarzenegger to restore subvention funding (financial assistance) to counties for the Williamson Act.

Historically, Williamson Act funding from the state has helped counties provide tax relief to farmers and ranchers by assessing their land at the agricultural value instead of the developable value, which can be assessed at more than twice as much. In exchange for being taxed at the agricultural value, the farmer or rancher agrees to keep the property in agriculture for ten years. This program provides a strong investment in agriculture and helps keep farmers and ranchers in business by keeping their taxes low.

When the state eliminates subventions to the counties, counties must take on the burden locally. In the current economy when counties are increasingly burdened by the state's massive budget shortfall, taking on Williamson Act subventions may be more than counties can handle over the long term. So far, Solano County Supervisors have supported continued funding for the Williamson Act program; however, it is imperative that the state resume subventions to keep the Williamson Act sustainable over the long term.

The California Rangeland Conservation Coalition, which Solano Land Trust joined in 2009, is an unprecedented group of California ranchers, environmental organizations, and government agencies. Together, these partners are working to preserve private working landscapes, support the long-term viability of the ranching industry, and protect and enhance California rangeland for both legally protected and still-common species. This unique partnership encompasses the expertise of rangeland managers, ecologists, grassland wildlife experts and private ranchers who strongly believe the Williamson Act is intrinsically linked to the coalition's ability to preserve private working rangelands.

## Partnership a Win-Win

*Solano County takes pride in Lynch Canyon*

Lynch Canyon Open Space and the ongoing partnership between Solano County and Solano Land Trust are prominently featured in text and photos in the recently released Solano County 2009 Annual Report. Lynch Canyon is heralded for offering healthy recreation (including a photo and caption on the annual Lynch Canyon Trail Run), community service, and other volunteer opportunities. [The report praises Lynch volunteers' "can-do spirit](#)

Mar. 13 - May 9,  
2010  
(Saturdays &  
Sundays)  
10 a.m. - 12 p.m.



### King-Swett Ranches Docent-led Hikes

Mar. 6, 2010, 9  
a.m.

Apr. 3, 2010, 9  
a.m.

### Lynch Canyon Docent-led Hikes

Feb. 27, 2010, 9  
a.m.

Mar. 7, 2010, 9  
a.m.

Mar. 20, 2010, 9  
a.m.

Mar. 27, 2010, 9  
a.m.

### Rush Ranch

Mar. 20, 2010  
Guided walk (9  
a.m.)

Blacksmith demo  
(10 a.m.)

Wagon rides (11  
a.m.)

### Rush Ranch Raptor ID Workshop & Tour

Feb. 28, 2010, 12  
p.m.

Mar. 21, 2010, 10  
a.m.

### SPECIAL EVENTS: SAVE THE DATES!

### Rush Ranch Annual Open House

Saturday, April  
24, 2010  
a

Join Rush Ranch  
Educational

and love of the outdoors" and their major contribution of over 2,900 volunteer hours for Lynch! Congratulations to the entire Lynch Canyon team of volunteers, County Parks and Solano Land Trust staff for your ongoing success story!

To see the full report, please go to:

[http://www.solanocounty.com/depts/county\\_admin/special\\_reports/all\\_reports.asp](http://www.solanocounty.com/depts/county_admin/special_reports/all_reports.asp)

## Got Furlough Fridays?

*Join us every third Friday for land restoration*

Solano Land Trust has several sites where we are working to plant native trees, shrubs, and grasses.

Regularly scheduled restoration workdays for volunteers are the third Friday of each month. We would also love to have volunteers join staff on weekday ranch projects or to work independently on projects at Lynch Canyon. These Friday restoration activities are in addition to our regular Saturday workdays.



If you are interested in participating or just want more information contact Sue at Solano Land Trust, (707) 432-0150 x 207 or [sue@solanolandtrust.org](mailto:sue@solanolandtrust.org). These projects are great team-building activities for groups or organizations. We'll supply all the equipment; you need your own boots and gloves. Thank you.

## The Poetry of Place

*Kids writing on the land*

Solano Land Trust partners with Solano Resource Conservation District for environmental education activities on our properties. Monica Cook, a Crystal Middle School student in Linnea Detterman's class, was inspired to write this poem on a field trip to Rush Ranch on November 17, 2009.

The Suisun Marsh

The river shining blue,  
As the waves move,  
As you hear stillness,  
When you keep quiet,  
When you see the plants,  
Or even the animals  
Just enjoy the sight.

As you know nature,  
Is the best part of life,  
There are tons of places to go,  
But if you really love plants  
Even animals are clues  
This is the best place to go,  
The Suisun Marsh.

## Sightings

*Here's what visitors are seeing on our properties  
(Go to [www.solanolandtrust.org](http://www.solanolandtrust.org) for days/hours that our properties are open to the public.)*

### King-Swett Ranches

◦ In mid-February, James Walsh counted 425 **western meadowlarks** at King Ranch, in addition to a **prairie falcon**,

Council and Solano Land Trust for our family day at the ranch. New this year:

Ranch life art station for kids!  
[www.rushranch.net](http://www.rushranch.net)

### Second Annual Lynch Canyon Kite Festival

May 2, 2010, 12 a.m.



aa  
**Explore Lynch Canyon:  
Celebrate with Solano County Parks & Solano Land Trust**  
May 15, 2010

### Lynch Canyon Third Annual Trail Run & Community Hike

Saturday, June 5, 2010

a  
For group, corporate or individual sponsorship opportunities call Greg at (707) 432-0150 ext. 205

[www.lynchcanyontrailrun.com](http://www.lynchcanyontrailrun.com)



Find out more information about events at:  
[www.solanolandtrust.org](http://www.solanolandtrust.org)

"the usual" **red-tailed hawks**, and a great number of **western bluebirds**.

<sup>a</sup>

### Lynch Canyon



◦ Solano Land Trust staff were spotted doing restoration work at Lynch Canyon. All staff, including Executive Director Nicole Byrd, were planting native trees and shrubs and installing protective fencing as part of a staff team-building day. Contact us to plan your business team-building project today!

<sup>a</sup>

◦ Mary Beth Crittendon saw a **ferruginous hawk, golden eagles, red-tailed hawks, kestrels, and harriers**.

<sup>a</sup>

◦ Staff accidentally disturbed four sleepy **barn owls** along the South Fork Lynch Creek riparian area.

<sup>a</sup>

### Rush Ranch

◦ Professor Christine Whitcraft visited on a day then the "landscape looked like a child's painting with white puffy clouds, bright blue sky, and green grass." The tides were high and she saw a **Suisun shrew**.

<sup>a</sup>

◦ Ken Poerner noted that two **burrowing owls** had taken up residence next to Grizzly Island Road before the first pond fence gate.

<sup>a</sup>

◦ Teri Engbring & Maggie Ingalls saw three **kites** and a **Black and Say's phoebes** off South Pasture trail, and **Northern harriers** near the road north of the stallion barn. They also saw three **red-tailed hawks**, an **American kestrel**, and two gorgeous **Ferruginous hawks** being harassed by a pair of **common ravens** who wanted their lunch.

### Jepson Prairie



◦ Doug Wirtz saw a **great-horned owl** in the eucalyptus tree near the parking lot.

<sup>a</sup>

◦ Wirtz photographed his first **Delta green ground beetle** of the season and a single **golden violet**.

*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](mailto:info@solanolandtrust.org)  
[www.solanolandtrust.org](http://www.solanolandtrust.org)

To comment on E-Vistas or to be added to our mailing list please contact [vistas@solanolandtrust.org](mailto:vistas@solanolandtrust.org)



### ATTENTION VOLUNTEERS!

**Have some fun and become part of our team!**

Volunteers are the heart and soul of Solano Land Trust's programs.

Join us for workdays on the land or at a special event.

Learn more at [www.solanolandtrust.org](http://www.solanolandtrust.org)