

# ***GOOD DIRT***

The Newsletter of the Anderson Valley Land Trust  
Fall – Winter 2006

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## **FILIGREEN FARM CREEK RESTORATION PROGRAM**

**By Lee Serrie**



The severe storm of December 30, 2005 left many Valley landowners with riverbank blowouts along the creeks and streams running through their property, leaving them with a difficult problem to solve. Filigreen Farm addressed this problem as well as more significant river restoration work after the El Nino deluges of 1997. Through an industrious process of trial, observation, and persistence, which began in 1983, the hard-won efforts have borne a beneficial result and could be a lesson for many Valley landowners who also grapple with these difficult watercourse problems.

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Filigreen Farm lies on the north end of Anderson Valley Way. The Anderson Valley Land Trust has had an easement on this working farm for four years and has watched as land manager, Chris Tebbutt, has graded land contours, installed ponds, built a bridge over Anderson Creek, farmed biodynamically, and planted fruit trees. He has taken years to transform the farm into lush agricultural land capable of producing diverse crops.

However, the most remarkable change on the property is his stream restoration project along the banks of Anderson Creek as it journeys along its ½ mile course through the farm. Most attempts to change a moving watercourse create more problems than they solve. (The Aswan Dam and the Mississippi River levee megaprojects come to mind.) This restoration project started with Anderson Creek spreading over a 300-foot wide gravel bed in which the summer trickle of water went underground. Now, the summer flow stays topside in a deep channel with creek banks lushly planted with willows and alders. Canopy cover is growing taller with each passing year, helping to moderate water temperatures. And the Anderson Creek watercourse is now only 75 feet wide and supports steelhead redds as well! The creek restoration has also added several acres of fertile topsoil to the farmland. Not bad!



Chris showing 100' swath of reclaimed topsoil to Karen Altaras

We think you will also be fascinated to see this turn around in this portion of Anderson Creek. AVLT has arranged for Chris to lead a tour of the restoration project. He will show us the results gained over the past few years as well as show us the techniques that he developed to accomplish this ongoing task. We will meet Saturday, November 18, at 11AM at 11600 Anderson Valley Way. Drive to the front of the barn and park there to join the tour.

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## *A letter from the President:*

Dear Friends,

The crisp mornings and colors of fall have arrived. As fall is a time of year for harvesting, assessing the past, and planning for next year's gardens, it is also time for the Anderson Valley Land Trust to review our progress, goals, and plans for the coming year.

The Land Trust was founded on the premise that friends and neighbors who live in and love Anderson Valley should cooperate to protect this beautiful place. We have enjoyed working with many land owners to preserve what they love about their land, and as you have read in past issues, our conservation easements are very diverse, from preserving redwood groves and protecting stream habitat, to ensuring organic agriculture. This year, we added a 115 acre parcel which will protect significant extant forest and grassland ecosystems, and we are currently working on additional easements totaling 210 acres.

In the last 12 months, we added three new board members and also established an advisory committee. Thom Elkjer, Alan Porter and Kathy Bailey (see page 6) have brought fresh ideas and energy to the board, with Thom reviewing grant possibilities, and Kathy and Alan assisting our executive director, Susan Addison. Susan continues to be the glue that holds us together and focuses on developing AVLTT's conservation easements. Our advisory committee will provide us with additional expertise and help position us to increase our capacity to acquire new easements.

One of our goals has always been to create a conservation corridor along the Navarro River and its tributaries, including the Rancheria, Indian and Anderson Creeks. To date, we have established conservation easements with John Scharffenberger, to protect a portion of Indian Creek, with Todd and Marge Evans (Wellspring), protecting a portion of the Navarro River, and with the Hallers (Shenoa), which abuts the Evans' parcel. In the coming year, we hope we will be able to continue to expand this protection of the Anderson Valley watershed.

This fall we are hosting a River Restoration Workshop with Chris Tebbutt (see page 8) and we are actively working to begin offering docent-led walks in this beautiful valley we call home. Many exciting new initiatives are in the works and we look forward to the coming year.

Your generous donations allow us to continue our work of ensuring a sound environmental future for Anderson Valley, the Navarro River and its tributaries.

Please use the enclosed envelope to renew your support or become a new donor.

Thank you,

Karen Altaras, President

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**YES ON PROP 84 – CLEAN WATER, PARKS & COASTAL PROTECTION**

The Anderson Valley Land Trust is asking for your support of Proposition 84 on Tuesday, November 7. This Proposition will provide funding that will ensure Californians:

- safe drinking water
- better flood control and protection
- protection of our rivers, lakes, streams, beaches and bays
- state and local park improvements
- public access to natural resources and
- protection of our coastline.

Funding for land conservation is nearly depleted but the land still needs protection. Your YES vote will assure the protection of our precious resources for all of us to enjoy now and still be there for future generations.

**INCREASED TAX BENEFITS FOR DONATIONS OF CONSERVATION EASEMENTS IN 2006 AND 2007**

The federal government recently passed and President Bush signed the Pension Protection Act, a large package of items that included among other things increased incentives for the donation of land and easements.

This legislation expands the incentives for donating conservation easements by allowing landowners who donate a conservation easement to:

1. Deduct up to 50% of the value of the easement from their adjusted gross income (up from 30%).
2. Farmers and ranchers who earn the majority of their income from farming, ranching or forestry can deduct up to 100% of the value of the easement from their adjusted gross income (up from 30%).
3. Carry-forward their tax deduction for a maximum of 15 years (up from 5 years).

These new incentives will only be available to donors during 2006 and 2007, so now is the time for significant land conservation to be implemented. The hope, of course, is that if these incentives are successful they will be made permanent by the federal government.

For more information on tax benefits please visit the Land Trust Alliance website [www.lta.org](http://www.lta.org). For conservation easement information call AVLT 707 895-2103.

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## SPLENDOR IN THE VALLEY - THANK YOU ALL!

By Patrick Miller

Our heartfelt thanks go to the Anderson Valley Horticultural Forum and the participating garden owners for organizing a wonderful garden tour in May, the proceeds of which benefited the Anderson Valley Land Trust. A special nod of appreciation goes to Ginger Valen who devoted many volunteer hours to line up gardens, arrange logistics, and make this event a resounding success. And to those garden owners, whose obvious tending to the garden details throughout the year made the day a memorable event - Nancy Chadwick, Jim Chadwick, Collette Rothchild, Peter Rothchild, Sandhya Abee, Robert Tierney, Sandra Rennie, Nick Yost, and the Wellspring Renewal Center staff - a very warm thank you!

The reports we received are that the garden owners were all impressed by the respectful behavior exhibited by the tour participants...boding well for future collaborations. The weather was lovely, the gardens were beautiful, and it seems that a good time was had by all! To those one hundred and seventy-five individuals who spent the day traveling throughout the Anderson Valley, thank you!



A quick synopsis of gardens visited:

- Chadwick Garden: a parcel that encompasses hills, meadows, vernal pools and rock outcrops where local landscape designers worked with the owners to develop an amazing entry court and house gardens that incorporate their favorite plants.
- Rothchild Garden: featuring expansive views as well as cozier areas for musing or picnicking. The site features a rustic barn, home and old apple orchard.
- Giardino de la Brezza: an undulating piece of land that hosts a variety of plants, especially featuring many ornamental grasses, with an emphasis on plants that don't demand much water.
- Hacienda Secoya: designed and developed by the owners and organized by "garden rooms" – nine in all – from a tree house to a Laburnum Walk that draws the garden visitor into an experience carefully choreographed by color, texture, and seasonal themes.
- Wellspring Renewal Center: a spiritual retreat devoted to sustainability, beauty, and providing organic food to the local community.

We have heard that the tour will take a vacation in 2007, but do please put a sticker on your 2008 spring calendar for the next bouquet of gardens presented to you by the Anderson Valley Horticultural Forum and our local garden aficionados!

## KATHY BAILEY JOINS BOARD



Early this year the Anderson Valley Land Trust welcomed our newest board member, Kathy Bailey. Kathy is a long term resident of Anderson Valley, arriving in 1971, and brings a wealth of land use knowledge to the board.

When Bailey arrived she was looking forward to simple country living and a place to raise a family. Little did she know that “simple country living” could keep her so busy.

In 1973 she was appointed by the Mendocino County Board of Supervisors to the first Citizens Advisory Committee convened in the County to provide local input to a court-ordered General Plan update. The committee provided recommendations that remain the foundation of local zoning to this day. This was the beginning of her education in land use issues, but it was in 1976 when Agent Orange was going to be sprayed, by helicopter, on the hillside behind her house that she began her forest conservation activism. She became a founding member of Citizens Against Toxic Sprays in Mendocino County and in 1979 voters approved by nearly a 2-1 margin a ban on aerial spraying of phenoxy herbicides.

In 1984, after becoming a mother, Bailey was elected to the board of the AV Unified School District. She served for six years and feels it was “an eye-opening experience being on the management side of the table”. She is a founding member of Forests Forever and went on to represent the California Sierra Club from 1993 – 2003 on state-regulated forest conservation issues, and was one of the principle spokespersons regarding the Headwaters Forest. She has been on a number of 'stakeholder' groups as an environmental representative and has also represented the Sierra Club in Washington DC. Currently, she is commenting on the latest 1400-page EIR regarding Jackson State Forest and along the way she has published both advocacy and technical articles on land use and forest conservation issues.

Kathy is married to Eric Labowitz, a Mendocino County Superior Court judge, and they have two children, Nora and Keevan. After graduating from AV High School Keevan and Nora have gone on to college and to explore the world and Kathy and Eric have enjoyed visiting them in many different time zones.

AVLT looks forward to utilizing Kathy’s ability to work within group settings and her knowledge of land use issues. We are pleased she will now be working for the voluntary preservation of the Navarro River Watershed.

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## *Heteromeles arbutifolia* or TOYON

By Jane E. Miller

*Heteromeles arbutifolia* • Toyon, also known as Christmas Berry and California Holly, this versatile shrub of the rose family provides a colorful show of red berries between November and February, thus the reason for these other common names. Flat-topped clusters of small white flowers, typically appearing in June or July, precede the holly-like fruit. When profuse, the blooms produce quite a show, as do the red berries that follow. There is a form that produces yellow berries, although it is far less common. The flowers entice bees; birds relish the fruit. The berries were useful to Indians, eaten raw or made into a beverage. They also stored the berries for a few months, then parched and ground them into meal. A tea brewed from Toyon's bark and foliage is rumored to ease a variety of aches and pains. Fishermen in the Channel Islands used the bark to tan their nets.

In more recent times, *Heteromeles arbutifolia* was once used extensively by the floral trade; large quantities of the foliage and fruit were annually shipped out of California for seasonal decoration. Much of this use has been supplanted by *Pyracantha*, *Cotoneaster*, and *Ilex* species, also colorful during the winter with their orange and red berries. Toyon, however, is still very popular for ornament in the California landscape.

One of our best-known California native plants, Toyon has a broad natural range that includes both chaparral and woodland plant associations throughout much of the state. When growing out in the open, *Heteromeles arbutifolia* takes on a dense and compact appearance, and is likely to produce a heavy flower and fruit display. But in the wild, Toyon is also found surrounded by other larger trees, where it will bend and grow tall to reach for the sunlight – resulting in a more open habit with fewer flowers and fruit, but revealing a smooth, grey bark. Beyond its widely distributed native habitat, *Heteromeles arbutifolia* exhibits great tolerance of cultivation under ordinary garden conditions. Barring poorly drained soils, Toyon takes just about any other growing environment – it tolerates rich or poor soils, lots or little water, sun or partial shade, and pruning at will!

Toyon can be an answer to many garden functions – its dense evergreen foliage can screen a view; it can be clipped into a formal hedge; it provides a flower display in the summer when many other shrubs have finished their show; it can be a magnet to attract birds to the autumn garden. This multi-talented plant deserves more use in the designed landscape. As for our image . . . please picture it as red and green.



***RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED***

***SAVE THIS DATE !!! NOVEMBER 18 AT 11 AM***

**THE ANDERSON VALLEY LAND TRUST IS HOSTING A TOUR OF FILIGREEN  
FARMS RESTORATION PROJECT ON ANDERSON CREEK**

Chris Tebbutt will lead a tour of the Filigreen Farm Creek Restoration Project. He will show us the results of his work over the past few years as well as show us the techniques that he developed to accomplish this ongoing task. We will meet Saturday, November 18, at 11am at 11600 Anderson Valley Way. Drive to the front of the barn and park to join the tour.

Please call the Land Trust at 895-2103 to let us know that you are going to join us for this special opportunity to view land conservation at work.

