

GOOD DIRT

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ANDERSON VALLEY LAND TRUST
DEDICATED TO THE PRESERVATION AND RESTORATION OF OUR UNIQUE RURAL LANDSCAPE
SPRING-SUMMER, 2015

A Conservation Easement Change of Hands

Bud and Pauline Ledbetter loved their 30 acres of forested land on Honey Creek and completed a conservation easement in 2000 to protect it permanently. They wanted to see the trees and wildlife thrive while allowing for residential activities, an orchard, and productive forest management. When Pauline passed away a few years later, and with the knowledge that the land would remain protected, Bud, deciding he did not want to stay here without her, put the property up for sale. Once the land was sold, Bud made another lasting contribution to Anderson Valley. He donated his and Pauline's collection of Paula Gray artwork to AVLT. The collection included ceramic plates, fabric designs, and paintings. Bud went a step further and offered to make a donation to AVLT matching the funds from an auction of the works. In November, 2004, AVLT hosted a lively Zydeco dinner and art auction at Wellspring (now River's Bend) and found appreciative homes for all the pieces. From the proceeds of the auction, AVLT formed the Pioneer Fund, set aside to make loans to landowners who would like to create conservation easements to protect their land, but who do not have the needed funds readily available.



Paul and Amy Soderman were looking for an alternative to the hustle and bustle of Silicon Valley when Paul was ready to retire from NASA after 38 years as an aeronautics engineer. They started looking for land somewhere in the Pacific Northwest. Amy had fond memories of camping at Hendy Woods, so the couple began to look in Anderson Valley.

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SUMMER FUNDRAISER AT STONEY BOTTOM GARDENS TO BENEFIT ANDERSON VALLEY LAND TRUST SATURDAY, JULY 25, 2015



MORE INFORMATION INSIDE →

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE:

Sometimes Land Trust Board members receive questions about the “in perpetuity” aspect of conservation easements. How are easements enforced over the long run, particularly after a property changes hands? Can detailed restrictions imposed by the original easement grantor be softened or amended out by a subsequent owner? The article in this issue of *GOOD DIRT* about the Ledbetter-Soderman easement illustrates an ideal turnover scenario, where the second owners (Soderman) fully embraced the restrictions contained in the easement originally granted by the Ledbetters.

But if a subsequent owner is unhappy with restrictions in the easement, what will the Land Trust do to accommodate those concerns? We will listen and review the easement documentation, including all drafts and secondary documents in our file (such as e-mails) with care. We will then use our best efforts to make a thoughtful reply to the subsequent owner. Our guiding principles will always be to protect and preserve the conservation values of the land, as identified in the easement; and to honor and enforce specific restrictions imposed by the original easement grantor.

An example of this might be limits on the number of residences, or their size. Some of our easements permit only one residence, even though local zoning would allow two houses. Some of our easements impose size restrictions on residences, even though local zoning would allow a larger structure. There could be legitimate debate over whether these specific restrictions were truly necessary to protect the conservation values of the land. But we will not engage in those debates after-the-fact, even if some Board members or community members might think that the easement was written too strictly. With very limited exceptions, we will enforce these restrictions as written, to honor the wishes of the original grantor.

We have received requests to soften or remove restrictions in an easement, accompanied by a justification based on the income tax deduction claimed by the original grantor. People have said that the appraisal on which the original grantor's income tax deduction was based did not ascribe any value (i.e., diminution in value) to the specific restriction. They have argued that the Land Trust should be willing to remove it, because the original grantor took no tax deduction for it. We are not free to grant these requests, because to do so would not honor the original grantor's wishes.

If you are an easement donor, this should give you peace of mind that your wishes will be respected. If you are a community member, we hope this gives you confidence that a conservation easement is a real, enforceable document that protects conservation values of property in our beautiful valley. And if you are one of those subsequent owners, we thank you for your understanding. When all is said and done, we have two closely related missions. Firstly, to protect conservation values of land, as captured in specific, perpetually enforceable contracts called conservation easements. Secondly, to honor and enforce restrictions imposed by original grantors when these people are no longer available to take action for themselves, in perpetuity.

Sincerely,

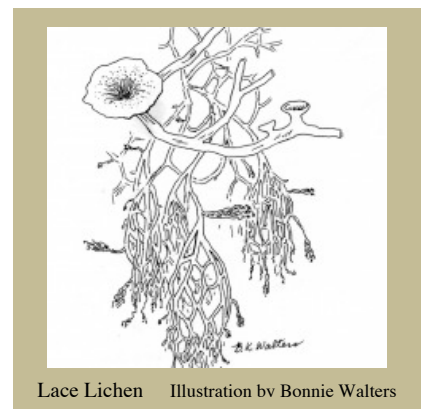
David Hopmann

President, AVL T Board of Directors

Lizard GPS and Oak Gall Nurseries

Anderson Valley Land Trust hosted a walk among the Oak woodlands of Yellow Dog Ranch, near Yorkville, on March 21. Author-naturalist Kate Marianchild regaled us with the fascinating true tales of the interaction of the bountiful plants, fungi, birds, reptiles, amphibians, insects, and mammal life. Many of us were amazed to learn about the western fence lizard's third eye “GPS” system, and how this parietal eye tells the lizard where it is and how to get home, or that the California newt's lethal toxin is potent enough to kill up to ten humans if they ingest it, four hundred if it's injected.

Continued on page 6



Lace Lichen Illustration by Bonnie Walters

PICNIC IN THE GARDEN

A BENEFIT FOR ANDERSON VALLEY LAND TRUST

SATURDAY, JULY 25, 2015 FROM 5:30-8:00 PM

Please join us at Stoney Bottom Gardens in Boonville for a farm-fresh dinner featuring vegetables, fruits, and meats from local producers, prepared by renowned chef Shannon Hughes. Anderson Valley wines and the music of Bob Day will complement the evening. There will be a variety of art collectibles, tours and unique cellar selections among the items up for bid during the silent auction. There will be tours of the gardens.

**Tickets: \$100 per person
(Includes food and wine)**

Purchase tickets on our website events page

[Tickets for Picnic in the Garden](#)

Contact us at avlt@mcn.org or 707-895-3150



Photo courtesy of Stoney Bottom Gardens



Photo courtesy of Stoney Bottom Gardens

ART AND GARDENING

AVLT would like to thank Ginger and Walt Valen for the opportunity to host our Summer event at Stoney Bottom Gardens. Since buying the property in 2000, the Valens have improved and expanded Stoney Bottom to include two unique rental accommodations among the beautifully landscaped gardens surrounding their home. Ginger is an avid gardener, a collector of succulents, and for more than 11 years was a potter and slab builder.

Evidence of her former hobby, which she describes as “posing as art”, is visible throughout the garden. The gardens are a natural extension of Walt’s talents as he served as Director of the Botanical Gardens in San Francisco for many years. He and Ginger founded the Anderson Valley Horticultural Forum, and Ginger created the A. V. Garden Tour, a fundraiser for many Valley organizations.

For information on accommodations at [Stoney Bottom](#) for the weekend of our event please call 707-895-9424.

Culinary Notes: Shannon Hughes

We are pleased to have the culinary expertise of renowned chef Shannon Hughes for our Summer Fundraiser at Stoney Bottom Gardens. We recently had a chance to ask Shannon how living in Mendocino County inspires her cooking.

“In my 30 years cooking in Mendocino County,” she told us, “I am constantly inspired and delighted by the seasonal offerings. I love to cook and eat this way, the anticipation of salmon season, or crab season, the summer garden bounty and winter’s sparse but nourishing crops. I work with several local farmers and cheese makers, and I’ve created my culinary voice on these relationships. It’s a real privilege to live and work in a community where sustainability and agricultural responsibility are a long time philosophy and practice. One of my favorite times of the year is the opening of salmon season, which begins on May 1st - it’s always really exciting to prepare the first catch of the season.”

Shannon has a terrific food blog on which she often posts new recipes and offers a monthly subscription newsletter – www.shannonfood.blogspot.com.

Sustainable "D" in September • Mark Your Calendars

The fifth, almost-annual, *Anderson Valley Sustainable Discoveries* event will be held on **Saturday, September 26, 2015**. For inquisitive folks truly interested in sustainable agriculture, this year promises to be another one-of-a-kind experience. Local agriculture is an important component of the AVLT's conservation program and the places we visit are truly treasures of the Valley. We will: learn about the olives, cabernet sauvignon, sauvignon blanc and syrah at the [Chatham Ranch](#); look *Cinta Senese* Italian pigs right in the eye (almost as if we were in the forests of Tuscany), learn about restoring the 10-acre heirloom apple orchard at [Acorn Ranch](#); and enjoy a farm to table lunch at the **Julie Liebenbaum/Darius Richmond Homestead**, the talents behind the Boonville General Store. There we will have the opportunity to wander the organic gardens.



To learn more about 2015 Sustainable Discoveries or AVLT events and walks visit our [EVENTS](#) page or contact us at avlt@mcn.org or 707-895-3150.

Sustainable "D" Over the Years

Over the years the AVLT's Sustainable Discoveries program has been very fortunate to have some great Anderson Valley farms and ranches host our visits. Put them all together and they make an impressive array contributing to how we enjoy local farm to table sustainability. We thank them all and suggest to all our readers that they support these, might we dare say, "institutions" of the Valley!

2010

Chestnut Hill Ranch
Table 128
Blue Meadow Farm
Farm to table lunch at the Boonville Hotel

2011

Brock Farms
The Wilder Garden
Philo Apple Farm
Farm to table lunch at the Apple Farm

2012

Filigreen Farm
Boont Berry Farm
Petit Teton
Farm to table lunch at Filigreen Farm by Burt Cohen

2013

Yorkville Olive Ranch
Pennyroyal Farm
Anderson Valley Community Farms
Farm to table lunch at Meyer Family Cellars'
by Aquarelle Café & Wine Bar

Navarro-by-the-Sea Day and 150th Birthday Celebration

Saturday, June 6, 2015

Open House Tours from 1-5 PM

Pre-Show Dinner 5-7 PM

Music Performance 7-10 PM

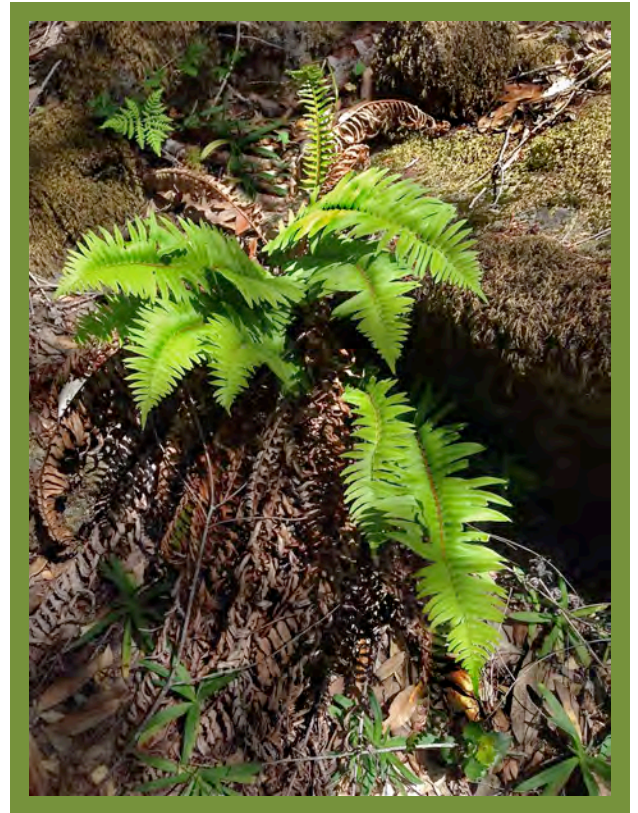
Navarro Beach, Navarro River Redwoods State Park:
Between Albion and Elk

Celebrate the 150th anniversary of the historic Captain Fletcher's Inn (ca 1865). The Mendocino District of State Parks and the all-volunteer Navarro-by-the-Sea Center non-profit sponsor the event. Major stabilization work on the Inn was completed last year, and the efforts won the 2014 Governor's Award for Historic Preservation and the 2014 Preservation Award from the California Preservation Foundation. Celebrate the reopening of the Inn, check out the progress on the remaining renovation work that still needs to be done, and enjoy the beautiful Navarro Beach. Live music featuring The Ukeholics, All About Sally, and Goforth and Kroll.

Contact Jim Martin at 707-877-3477 or beach127@aol.com for more information or visit <http://www.navarro-by-the-sea-center.org>

Polystichum munitum Western Sword Fern

California is blessed with several different types of ferns amongst its native plants. One of the most stalwart of these is *Polystichum munitum*, commonly known as Western Sword Fern. Unlike some of our other native ferns that are either summer-deciduous in response to lack of available water or winter-deciduous in response to low temperatures and shortened day length, this one is evergreen, holding onto its lush, glossy foliage year-round. A substantial plant, *Polystichum munitum* can reach proportions of up to about four feet tall and wide, forming a graceful, dark green fountain-like mound. Since it is a true fern, it does not bear flowers or set fruit; rather it reproduces by spores. These spores are produced and contained in structures collectively known as sori, and can be seen by inspecting the underside of a frond and spying the rusty brown marks that resemble small circles. This same rusty brown fuzziness is apparent covering the tips of developing fronds, known as fiddleheads, as they emerge and unfurl from the center of the plant.



Western Sword Fern ranges from Alaska to southern California, east to Montana and occurs in isolated populations in a few other locations. It favors damp shaded forested slopes or close proximity to streams and drainages.

Two parts of its common name are easily understood, in that it is native to the west, and it is a fern. The less obvious part is reputed to derive from the visual resemblance of the small protrusion at the base of each "leaflet" to the hilt of a sword.

Western Sword Fern seems an appropriate subject for this spring's newsletter, as its sturdy constitution allows it to thrive even in our fourth consecutive year of low rainfall. Where most ferns need ample water to retain vitality, *Polystichum munitum* can withstand drier conditions and still retain its handsome demeanor.

So look for it on your forest strolls and enjoy sightings of this fern that graces the valley with its lush abundance!

North Fork Navarro River Road Hike

Join the Anderson Valley Land Trust and the Navarro River Resource Center for a walk along the North Fork Navarro River on Saturday May 23rd from 9:30 AM-12:30 PM. The walk will be 3 to 4 miles round trip along a road adjacent to the North Fork Navarro, which is owned by Mendocino Redwood Company, and scheduled to be de-commissioned later this year. To RSVP and for more information about the starting point and carpooling please contact AVLT at avlt@mcn.org or 707-895-3150 or NRRC at 707-895-3230

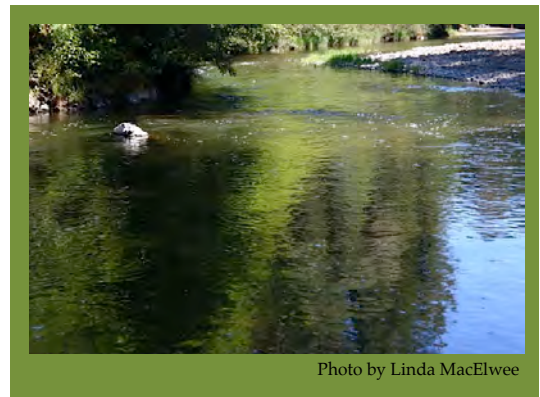


Photo by Linda MacElwee

A Conservation Easement Change of Hands (continued from page 2)

They looked at the Ledbetter property and loved the southern exposure, the mix of conifers (especially the redwoods and nutmeg), Honey Creek, and the ridge-top views. They reviewed the conservation easement carefully and found its goals were in keeping with their vision for the property. Paul said, "It is what we would have wanted to do anyway – it is a simple easement with no harsh terms." For them, the conservation easement enhanced the value of the land. Since acquiring the property, Paul and Amy have expanded the original house, built a shop and other out buildings within the residential zone.

Paul and Amy have become an integral part of the Anderson Valley community. Paul has been a volunteer with the Anderson Valley Fire Department for seven years, through the Lightning Strike fires, joined the Strike Team working in Sierra Nevada and Los Angeles area fires, and now handles the water-tender near their home. Amy trains and shows Tibetan Terriers and Nova Scotia Duck Trolling Retrievers as well as doing bookkeeping and tax work.



Nutmeg Tree

AVLT stewards 26 conservation easements in the Valley, ten of which have changed ownership. We encourage conservation easement holders, prospective buyers, new property managers, and realtors to meet with us when a property transitions to new ownership or new management. New owners are bound by the terms of easements, and must comply with them, so it is important that they fully understand the conditions of their easements. The long-term goal is to ensure that key natural resources on easement land continue to be protected for future generations, in keeping with the vision of the property owner, as reflected in the terms of the conservation easement.

Lizard GPS and Oak Gall Nurseries (continued from page 2) As we walked through the forest Kate talked about the California ground squirrel, and its labyrinth of tunnels that can descend six feet underground and run horizontally as much as thirty feet. Those seemingly harmless ground squirrels are part of a co-evolutionary arms race with rattlesnakes, having developed a resistance to rattlesnake venom to protect their colonies, resulting in the snakes developing increasingly potent venom.

Kate combined her extensive personal observations with the latest scientific research on our lively 4-hour walk, fascinating us with more stories about acorn woodpecker diapers, lace lichen's air cleaner, oak gall insect nurseries, the service Manzanita and Madrone provide as refrigerator trees, and much, much more. Folks who missed this spectacular walk can still enjoy much of Kate's captivating knowledge and insights through her new book, *Secrets of the Oak Woodlands: Plants and Animals Among California's Oaks*.

AVLT would like to thank Janet and Steve Snyder for the opportunity to have the Oak woodlands walk at Yellow Dog Ranch, which was originally purchased by Steve's grandfather in 1893. The Snyder's completed a conservation easement on their property in 2007.

Indoors Water Conservation Tips

Repair leaks. Visit <http://mcrd.org/drought-water-conservation-resources/> for a leak detection guide.

Install low flow showerheads and faucet aerators.

Buy a high efficiency/dual flush toilet when replacing an old one or convert your existing toilet.

Don't flush unless you need to.

Run the dishwasher and clothes washer with full loads only.

Turn off the water when brushing your teeth, and use a glass to rinse.

Limit your time in the shower to five minutes.

Don't use a garbage disposal! Composting saves energy and water.


THANK YOU TO OUR GENEROUS DONORS

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 Peter Wiley & Valerie Barth
 Steven & Deborah Wolfe
 Gene Zanon

AVLT 2014 Financial Statements		
Assets: December 2014	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds
Operating Accounts	35,452.00	
Pioneer Stewardship Fund		28,928.00
Stewardship Endowment*		264,954.00
Furniture/Equipment	743.00	
Total Assets	36,195.00	293,882.00
Total Liabilities	-	
Net Assets		
At Beginning of Year	335,903.00	
Change in Net Assets	<5826>	
At End of Year	330,077.00	
Total Liabilities & Net Assets	330,077.00	
Statement of Activities as of December 31, 2014		
Support & Revenue	Unrestricted Funds	
Donations & Grants	37,657.00	
Rent	1,980.00	
Interest & Refunds	66.00	
Total Support & Revenue	39,703.00	
Expenses		
Insurance	2,757.00	
Easement Expense	1,138.00	
Office	2,003.00	
Payroll	17,173.00	
Postage	1,076.00	
Printing	5,285.00	
Rent & Utilities	7,062.00	
Professional Fees	2,244.00	
Special Events & Workshops	6,215.00	
Website	117.00	
Total Expenses	45,070.00	
* restricted funds for the protection of our easements.		
Note: \$67,207 increase in our Stewardship Endowment Funds		

THANK YOU
TO THE
AVLT
VOLUNTEERS
WHO HELPED OUT
ON MAY 2, 2015
AT THE
19TH ANNUAL
LEGENDARY

BAHL HORNIN'!



Western Fence Lizard

Illustration by Ann Meyer Maglinte
From *Secrets of the Oak Woodlands*
By Kate Marianchild

INSIDE DIRT

A CONSERVATION EASEMENT
CHANGE OF HANDS

AVLT SUMMER FUNDRAISER

LIZARD GPS AND OAK GALL NURSERIES

SUSTAINABLE DISCOVERIES RETURNS

WESTERN SWORD FERN

AVLT - NRC NAVARRO RIVER WALK

NAVARRO BY THE SEA



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