

Green Valley Land Conservation Project Thirty-fourth Annual Report and Proposed 2025-26 Budget to the Solano County Board of Supervisors

Introduction

This document is the 34th annual report since the establishment of the Green Valley Land Conservation project. In 1990, the City of Fairfield, County of Solano and residents of the rural Green Valley community finalized a unique agreement designed to foster the preservation of a viable agricultural base and maintain open space within Green Valley. In order to accomplish these goals, the Green Valley community voted to assess itself in order to generate funds for the acquisition of property and easements of open space and agricultural land, and, where necessary, to maintain the same. The City of Fairfield maintains the funds in a separate, interest-bearing account, and provides matching monies from a City-sponsored Mello-Roos tax district, the proceeds of which are to be used in the Green Valley area.

Purpose and Area Served

The purpose of the Green Valley Land Conservation Project is to preserve a viable agricultural industry and open space amenities within Green Valley. The service area for the Green Valley Project was set by the Green Valley settlement agreement and an agreement between the City of Fairfield, County of Solano and the non-profit Solano Land Trust (SLT), formerly known as Solano County Farmlands & Open Space Foundation. It is defined as follows:

“Beginning at the point where State Route 12 crosses the Napa-Solano County line, north and east along the Napa-County line to Suisun Valley Road, then south along Suisun Valley Road to Interstate 80, west to State Route 12, then west to the point of the beginning.”

The City and County have contracted with SLT to serve as trustee for the community in carrying out this project. Responsibilities include administrative functions reasonably related to the project purpose, and to hold title, easements, or less-than-fee interest in lands involved in the project area. The Board of Directors of SLT has established priorities based on advice from the Green Valley Landowners' Association as follows:

1. Floor of middle Green Valley,
2. Lands east of Green Valley and west of the floor of Green Valley,
3. More remote and rugged lands west, north and east of Green Valley, and
4. Other lands within the service area.

Tools for Conservation

The underlying concept of the project is voluntary cooperation. This is based on the assumption that the idea of agricultural and open space conservation coupled with available funding and the ability to pay market prices will prove attractive to landowners and they will participate voluntarily. All acquisitions by SLT require a willing seller. SLT does not have the right to use eminent domain proceedings to take property from unwilling sellers.

There are two categories of tools available to SLT to accomplish the Green Valley Project purposes, acquisition of fee simple interest and acquisition of conservation easements. Acquisition of conservation easements does not require public access to property. In addition, the property remains in private hands and on the tax rolls:

- *Fee Simple:* purchase of, or receipt of donation of, the fee title to land
- *Conservation Easement:* **purchase** of, or receipt of donation of, development rights to land

As part of the Green Valley settlement agreement, SLT expanded its Board to include two representatives of the Green Valley Landowners Association (GVLA). In September 2012, SLT revised its board structure to provide balanced representation of five groups, including the public sector, agriculture, resource conservation, business community, and members-at-large. One of the at-large directors continues to be appointed by the GVLA board. The current GVLA representative is Mr. Roger Merrill.

Green Valley Activities in 2024-25

The primary accomplishments of the past fiscal year were in the following areas:

1. Acquisition Projects and Project Development

a. Patwino Worrtda Kodoi Dihi formerly Rockville Trail Preserve

All amenities including parking lots for cars and horse trailers, restrooms, shade structures, a sign kiosk, picnic tables and benches, and a nature garden are now in place. Infrastructure for livestock grazing is complete. Some additional signage is in progress. A ribbon-cutting ceremony was held on August 21st, and the park opened to the public on August 23rd.

Solano County Parks is managing visitor access Fridays through Mondays. Monthly visitor totals, excluding annual pass holders, are shown in Table 1 below for the period of August 2024 to February 2025. Data was provided by Solano County Parks.

Table 1: Monthly visitor counts for Patwino Worrtda Kodoi Dihi Open Space Park

Month	Visitor Count
August-2024	232
September-2024	526
October-2024	338
November- 2024	442
December- 2024	202
January- 2025	382
February- 2025	556

b. Lynch Canyon Expansion public access plan update:

Once both properties, Brown and Souza were owned and managed by SLT, the next step was to develop a public access plan that pulls the Lynch Canyon and the Lynch expansion properties (Brown and Souza) together into one management unit.

That plan is currently in development and expected to be in place July 1, 2025. SLT did outreach to the community with multiple gatherings in previous years and more recently with Solano County Parks Manager Chris Drake. By July 2026, the public access and resource management plan is slated to be completed. The scope of this plan includes both Natural Resource Management and Restoration and Public Access and Amenities Development. There are clean-up issues on the property to address first, including potential contaminant remediation and other safety hazards. Starting in July 2025, SLT will embark on a public engagement process that will be led by SLT with support from our contractor to address these issues. In the longer term, our goal is to open the expansions for public access by 2029. SLT staff have been working with Solano County Parks and the Bay Area Ridge Trail to design a trail network connecting the Brown and Souza properties to the existing Lynch trail system. As currently conceived, we will continue to use the Lynch Road entrance for public access but will allow hiker entry at the western entrance at the I-80/American Canyon Road intersection. This western entrance can also be used for special events.

2. Conservation Easement Monitoring

During the past year, Tracy Ellison, SLT's Conservation Director and Keandra Wheaton, SLT's Conservation Project Coordinator, monitored the Rowe conservation easement.

3. Coordination with GVLA

Mary Burczyk is the GVLA representative on the SLT Board (since 2024), and she is a member of the Fundraising and Donor Engagement and Finance Committees. Solano Land Trust ED Nicole Braddock and Mary Burczyk as GVLA Board President communicate regularly about potential coordination and communication, especially regarding Patwino Worrtla Kodoi Dihi Open Space Park.

4. Open Space Planning Effort

SLT completed its Solano Natural Areas Protection (SNAP) Plan in 2015 to prioritize its agricultural and natural resource protection work in the future. The SNAP Plan will be a companion plan to SLT's Agricultural Conservation Easement Plan developed in 2002 and the updated Agriculture Conservation Plan, 2022, that established priorities for protection of agricultural land in the county. Throughout the year there were continued efforts to identify those priority lands for landowner outreach and direct SLT's conservation work.

5. Agricultural Conservation Easement Planning

SLT completed an update of its Agricultural Conservation Plan for 2022, looking forward 20 years with goals and actions to conserve the county's high quality prime soils, clean and recharged water and support climate action practices for clean air and carbon sequestration. Staff and Consultant interviewed 21 landowners, producers, Ag Support Services, Land Conservationists, Government and consumers to learn what was impacting land uses and what could ag look like in 20 years. This plan will direct SLT Board and Staff in decision making related to Conservation Easements.

Over the past year, SLT continued to update data related to high priority agricultural lands in Solano County through the creation of the SNAP tool, including lands in the Green Valley area. This tool is used each time an application for land conservation with an easement agreement comes in or for consideration of a fee title purchase.

In FY 2024/25 SLT built memberships of the Agricultural Strategies and Climate Committees and all SLT committees are working on workplans and benchmarks for reporting to the SLT Board. These committees will support SLT staff and the Board in making community informed decisions related to supporting the agricultural economy, ag land conservation and climate issues.

6. Additional Conservation Activities Taking Place in the Green Valley

Solano Land Trust continues to stay in communication with County Planning and residents in Middle Green Valley to discuss and advise on working with an accredited land trust to support the transfer of development rights and other project needs.

Green Valley Land Conservation Project – 2024-25 Financial Summary

The FY 24-25 financial summary for the Green Valley Open Space Maintenance District and the financial summary for the North Cordelia Facility District – CFD#2 are included as Attachment A. The proposed FY 25-26 budget for GVOS is summarized in Attachment B.

For further information regarding the Green Valley Land Conservation Project contact Nicole Braddock, Executive Director of Solano Land Trust, 198 Dobbins St., Suite A, Vacaville, CA 95688.

Attachment A-1

**Solano Land Trust
Green Valley Land Conservation Project
GVOS Financial Summary FY24-25 (as of 5-28-2025)**

Green Valley Open Space Maintenance District (Fund 589)	
REVENUES	
Tax Receipts, 2024-2025	110,910
Interest, 2024-2025	20,496
Subtotal	131,406
EXPENSES	
Trust Project Expenses	14,172
Operations of Patwino Worrtla Kodoi Dihi - Year 2	23,931
Solano County Collection Charges	1,109
City Engineer Report & Admin	3,400
City Finance/audit cost	2,053
Subtotal	44,665
ACQUISITION RESERVE FUND	
Fund Balance, July 1, 2024	891,667
Net Revenue, 2024-2025	86,741
Reserve Fund Balance, May 28, 2025	978,408
Operating Balance at end of year	10,000
Total Cash Balance Fund 589, May 28, 2025	988,408

Attachment A-2**North Cordelia Community Facility District - CFD # 2 (Fund 326)
FY24-25 (as of 5-28-2025)**

REVENUES	
Tax Receipts, 2024-2025	577,331
Interest, 2024-2025	63,939
Subtotal	641,270
EXPENSES	
Trust Project Expenses	73,732
Operations of Patwino Worrtla Kodoi Dihi - Year 2	118,344
Park Construction Patwino Worrtla Kodoi Dihi	-
Solano County Collection Charges	5,773
City Finance/audit cost	6,600
Subtotal	204,449
ACQUISITION RESERVE FUND	
Fund Balance, July 1, 2024	2,726,640
Net Revenue, 2024-2025	436,821
Reserve Fund Balance, May 28, 2025	3,163,461
Operating Balance at end of year	10,000
Total Cash Balance Fund 326, May 28, 2025	3,173,461
Total Acquisition Reserve Fund from both funds, July 1, 2024	3,618,307
Total Acquisition Reserve Fund from both funds, May 28, 2025	4,141,869

Attachment B.

**Solano Land Trust
FY25-26 PROPOSED GVOS BUDGET
Green Valley Open Space Maintenance District
Green Valley Land Conservation Project**

	FY2025-2026
REVENUES	
Tax Receipts, 2025-2026	118,490
Interest, 2025-2026	15,000
Subtotal	133,490
EXPENSES	
Trust Project Expenses	14,514
Solano County Collection Charges	1,185
Operations of Patwino Worrtla Kodoi Dihi - Year 3	86,180
City Engineer Report & Admin	2,950
City Finance/audit cost	2,908
Subtotal	107,737
ACQUISITION RESERVE FUND	
Fund Balance, July 1, 2025	997,032
Net Revenue, 2025-2026	25,753
Reserve Fund Balance, June 30, 2026	1,022,785
Operating Balance at end of year	10,000
Total Cash Balance Fund 589, June 30, 2026	1,032,785