

Green Valley Land Conservation Project Twenty-sixth Annual Report and Proposed 2017-18 Budget to the Solano County Board of Supervisors

Introduction

This document is the 26th 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 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. David Eimrol.

Green Valley Activities in 2015-16

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

1. Acquisition Projects and Project Development

The Rockville Trails Preserve Initial Study/Mitigated Negative Declaration for rezoning and construction of public access facilities on the property has gone through a public comment period and will go to the Solano County Planning Commission on June 1, 2017. We thank GVLA for their review of these documents and their support letter to the Commission. If the Planning Commission recommends approval, the topic will go to the Solano County Board of Supervisors on June 27, 2017.

SLT continues to discuss the potential protection of the Vallejo Lakes property with the GVLA, Bay Area Ridge Trail, and Napa County Regional Park and Open Space District and the City of Vallejo. The Vallejo Lakes property is important grazing land, high quality habitat, and would be another vital piece in the regional trail connection puzzle. Vallejo Lakes has a mix of oak woodland habitat and grassland containing dozens of species of special concern.

2. Conservation Easement Monitoring

During the past year, Tracy Ellison, SLT's Agricultural Project Manager, monitored the Rowe conservation easement.

3. Coordination with GVLA

David Eimrol is the GVLA representative on the SLT Board (since 2015), and is chair of SLT's Audit Committee. SLT, David and GVLA Board President, Roger Merrill meet, as needed, to discuss opportunities for SLT and GVLA coordination and make sure the public is aware of pertinent information regarding Rockville Trails.

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 that established priorities for protection of

agricultural land in the county. Through 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

Over the past year, SLT worked to identify high priority agricultural lands in Solano County through the creation of the SNAP tool, including lands in the Green Valley area.

Green Valley Land Conservation Project – 2016-17 Financial Summary

The FY 16-17 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 17-18 budget for GVOS is summarized in Attachment B.

For further information regarding the Green Valley Land Conservation Project contact Nicole Byrd Braddock, Executive Director of Solano Land Trust, 1001 Texas St. Suite C. Fairfield, CA 94533.

Attachment A.

SOLANO LAND TRUST
GREEN VALLEY LAND CONSERVATION PROJECT
GVOS FINANCIAL SUMMARY FY 16-17 (as of 5/25/2017)

I. Green Valley Open Space Maintenance District (Fund 589)

REVENUES

Tax Receipts, 2016-2017	101,031
Interest, 2016-2017	<u>4,811</u>
Subtotal	105,842

EXPENSES

Trust Project Expenses	15,829
Solano County Collection Charges	1,031
City Engineer Report & Admin	
City Finance/audit costs	<u>3,363</u>
Subtotal	20,223

ACQUISITION RESERVE FUND

Fund Balance, July 1, 2016	564,031
Net Revenue, 2016-2017	<u>85,619</u>
Reserve Fund Balance, May 25, 2017	649,650

Operating Balance at end of year	<u>10,000</u>
Total Cash Balance Fund 589 May 25, 2017	659,650

II. North Cordelia Community Facility District - CFD#2 (Fund 326)
FY 16-17 (as of 5/25/17)

REVENUES

Tax Receipts, 2016-2017	442,326
Interest, 2016-2017	<u>5,886</u>
subtotal	448,212

EXPENSES

Trust Project Expenses	58,008
Solano County Collection Charges	4,514
City Finance/audit costs	<u>52,123</u>
subtotal	114,645

ACQUISITION RESERVE FUND

Fund Balance, July 1, 2016	653,979
Net Revenue, 2016-2017	<u>333,567</u>
Reserve Fund Balance, May 25, 2017	987,546

Operating Balance at end of year	<u>10,000</u>
Total Cash Balance Fund 326 May 25, 2017	997,546

Total Acquisition Reserve Fund from both funds, July 1, 2016:	1,218,010
Total Acquisition Reserve Fund from both funds, May 25, 2017:	1,637,196

Attachment B.

**SOLANO LAND TRUST
FY 17-18 PROPOSED GVOS BUDGET**

**GREEN VALLEY OPEN SPACE MAINTENANCE DISTRICT
FOR THE GREEN VALLEY LAND CONSERVATION PROJECT**

I. Green Valley Open Space Maintenance District (Fund 589)

REVENUES:

Tax Receipts, 2017-2018	103,000
Interest, 2017-2018	<u>6,000</u>
subtotal	109,000

EXPENSES

Trust Project Expenses	16,431
Solano County Collection Charges	1,050
City Engineer Report & Admin	2,250
City Finance/audit costs	<u>3,761</u>
subtotal	23,492

ACQUISITION RESERVE FUND

Fund Balance, July 1, 2017	649,650
Net Revenue, 2017-2018	<u>85,508</u>
Reserve Fund Balance, June 30, 2018	735,158

Operating Balance at end of year	<u>10,000</u>
Total Cash Balance Fund 589 June 30, 2018	745,158