



# News and Views

February 2011

Tri-Valley Conservancy

Preserving Land for Future Generations

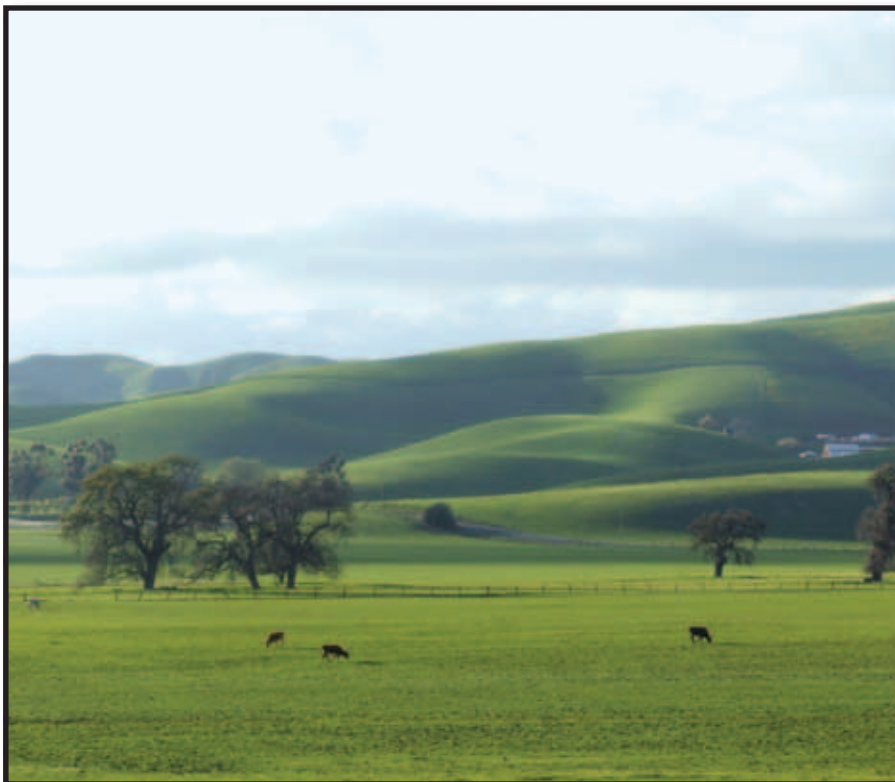
## *Enhanced Easement Incentive Renewed Through 2011*

*Generous landowners who donate voluntary conservation easements to a land trust are inspired by many things: they love the Tri-Valley, they feel connected to their land, and they wish to leave a legacy for future generations. This inspiration is central to our work to permanently protect valuable natural resources. But for almost all landowners, donating a conservation easement is a major financial decision, and the federal income-tax deduction that comes with a donation helps make easements possible for landowners in our community.*

Congress recently renewed a 2006 incentive that enables family farmers, ranchers, and other moderate-income landowners to get a significant tax benefit for donating a conservation easement on their land. The legislation allows easement donors to:

- Deduct up to 50% of their adjusted gross income in any year (up from 30%);
- Deduct up to 100% of their adjusted gross income if the majority of that income came from farming, ranching or forestry; and
- Continue to take deductions for as long as 16 years (previously 6 years).

This invaluable conservation tool has helped protect thousands of acres since it was first enacted in 2006. Landowners who act quickly to conserve their land 2011 can now enjoy these benefits, but unless Congress acts again, those benefits will be dramatically scaled back after December 31st, 2011.



North Livermore

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# Welcome to Our New Directors

This year on January 13th TVC welcomed two new Directors to the TVC board.

We offer congratulations to the following new members:



**Connie Campbell** was appointed to the Board of the Tri-Valley Conservancy in 2011 by the County of Alameda and is currently serving on the Resource Development Committee.

Connie's father, former Alameda County Supervisor Ed Campbell, was a founding member (1993) of the South Livermore Valley Agricultural Land Trust Steering Committee. Connie's passion for land preservation stems from her father's vision. She hopes to further the goals he originally helped to establish for the Valley.

She is actively involved in the community and has served as a Director on the Alameda County Fair Board since 2007 and she is a member of the Martin C. Kauffman 100 Club.

Connie received her Juris Doctorate from University of the Pacific - McGeorge School of Law. She practices law in the area of criminal prosecution. Connie has been a resident in the Tri-Valley for ten years. She enjoys hiking, skiing, and spending time with family and friends.

**"In the end we will conserve only what we love; we will love only what we understand; and we will understand only what we have been taught."**

**– Baba Dioum**



**Norman Petermeier** was appointed to the TVC Board in 2011 by the Friends of the Vineyards and is currently serving on the Finance Committee.

Norm was born and raised on a small Iowa farm, a farmer at heart. He received a BSEE from Iowa State University, an MSEE from San Jose

State University, an MBA from Santa Clara University and most recently an AS in viticulture from Los Positas College.

He lived in Silicon Valley starting in 1963 and moved to Pleasanton in 1996. He was a practicing design engineer before becoming a company executive. For 11 years, he taught part time at San Jose State University in the graduate school of engineering (computer architecture). Norm co-founded an electronics company in Pleasanton/Livermore in 1989 which he took public (listed on the NASDAQ) in 1994. Norm co-holds 35 US patents and has served as a director on 5 electronics companies. Norm and his wife of 44 years, Stephanie (an avid LV Opera board director), really enjoy the Livermore Valley and all that it has to offer. He has a very small vineyard, owns his own wine making operations – Villa per Due – and currently works as an enologist for the Ruby Hill Winery.

He enjoys golf, bicycling, gardening, traveling, and family activities. His two daughters and grandkids live in the Bay Area – Pleasanton and Redwood Shores.

## Thank You to Our Officers

Serving as an officer of the Tri-Valley Conservancy is an honor and a tremendous responsibility. We offer best wishes to the following Directors who were installed into office on January 13, 2011: Jean King, Chair; Mary Roberts, Vice-Chair; Karl Wente, Treasurer; and Christopher Schlies, Secretary. You may read all about them on our website – [www.trivalleyconservancy.org](http://www.trivalleyconservancy.org).

## With Gratitude to Our Retiring Directors

As we welcome new directors to our board, we also wish to recognize those who are retiring from the TVC board. Their leadership helped to direct the destiny of this land trust, and our best wishes go with them. They leave the conservancy in excellent shape and ready to reach new heights in the future.



RETIRING BOARD MEMBERS JIM PERRY, MIRIAM MILLER, AND MARK EATON

**Mark Eaton** – For the past eleven years it has been my privilege to serve as a Director of the Tri-Valley Conservancy. When I first took my seat the Conservancy was named the South Livermore Valley Agricultural Land Trust. Most of my fellow directors were original members of the Board. They were an impressive group who had taken an infant organization and shepherded it from a conceptual model to a viable and successful organization. From an historical perspective I learned a great deal from those fine men and women.

The past eleven years has seen the Conservancy grow and mature. Of course the acquisition of thousands of acres of easements and the expansion of its working area from South Livermore to encompass the entire Tri-Valley has been paramount. However, I am particularly proud to have seen to it, along with the staff and my fellow directors, that an adequate endowment be set aside. When prudently invested, the endowment will ensure that the valuable open spaces which the Conservancy has protected will be preserved forever.

I pass the baton to a new generation of directors who, I firmly believe, led by our outstanding staff, will move the Conservancy towards the attainment of all of its goals. I wish them well and will be available in the future to serve on committees or in any other capacity to assist the Conservancy.

**Miriam Miller** – Four years is not a long time in the life of an organization, yet four years on the Board of TVC has represented an opportunity to make an impact on the land surrounding where I have lived for many years. Trying to preserve open space for succeeding generations has seemed to me to be an effort worth engaging in ever since I first came to Livermore in the late fifties and, through the League of Women Voters, understood what was

happening to the orchards around San Jose.

When I was asked to represent Friends of the Vineyards on the TVC board, I recognized this could be a way to help make a difference in the footprint of my community. What I wasn't aware of at the time was how professional this organization really was. My own experience in administering a large not-for-profit and being on boards of other non-profits is that much of an agency's success is related to the leadership and commitment of their board members. Looking back after four years, there is no question in my mind that TVC's board is among the most professional I have encountered. I believe this is because they are truly engaged in our mission, and understand what it takes to operate an organization in perpetuity, which is a very long time.

Having been an executive director, I am grateful for the extensive expertise and leadership of TVC's staff. It is the synergy between board and staff that keeps leading this organization forward. We have been and are very lucky in the combination.

I want to thank all of you for giving me the opportunity to work with you for the past four years, and I look forward to seeing easements in the near future over all of our priority lands.

**Jim Perry** – When I attended my first meeting, I was really dismayed and thinking, what did I get myself into? After a few meetings I understood what was going on, both in director personalities and board agenda. Today I can't believe that it has been over eight years since that first meeting. As the years rolled along, the board got in sync with each other, and we began to do things that were in the best interest of the Tri-Valley Conservancy ( at that time we were still the South Livermore Valley Agricultural Land Trust), and also in the interest of the people of the valley. Even though some of our directors are appointed by political entities, we all still seem to do what is best for all.

Over the past few years I would say that our board has turned out to be one of the best functioning boards that I have served on. We have attained easements and in some cases property and I think all have been very good for the South Livermore Valley and have helped work toward our TVC goals and have stayed within our mission. I have made some new friends, forged new relationships, and most of all I have gotten satisfaction for the job we have accomplished.

I plan on staying active with the TVC, by working on committees and watching our board do the best job possible. It has been great working with the many directors and the great staff.

# Enhanced Easement Incentive Renewed Through 2011

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Lapses in the enhanced incentive hamper our strategic conservation efforts and are frustrating for landowners. That's why Tri-Valley Conservancy is working so hard to help enact legislation to make the enhanced incentive permanent.

Under the prior law, an agricultural landowner earning \$50,000 a year who donated a conservation easement worth \$1 million could take a total of no more than \$90,000 in tax deductions. **Under the new law, that landowner can take as much as \$800,000 in tax deductions** – still less than the full value of their donation, but a significant increase.

Land conservation takes a team to be successful. We thank our conservation easement landowners and our Congressional delegation for their invaluable contributions.

To learn more about the enhanced incentive visit [www.lta.org/easementincentive](http://www.lta.org/easementincentive).

## Board of Directors

**Jean King**, Chair

**Mary Roberts**, Vice-Chair

**Christopher Schlies**, Secretary

**Karl Wentz**, Treasurer

**Connie Campbell**

**Jon Christensen**

**Kathy Farrell**

**Matt Ford**

**Michael Fredrich**

**Rik Hansen**

**Norman Petermeier**

## Staff

**Sharon Burnham** – Executive Director

**Laura Mercier** – Associate Director

**Monica DePalmo** – Stewardship

**Barbara Graham** – Office Manager

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