



SONOMA LAND TRUST

Protecting the land forever



Our start:

In the early 1970s, when Sonoma County was still predominantly rural and natural, a small group of people in the Sonoma Valley foresaw an impending wave of development forever changing the land they loved.

In 1976, this group, which included the well-known Otto Teller and his wife Anne, founded the Sonoma Land Trust. Soon after, the Tellers donated their wild 300-acre Secret Pasture property to the Land Trust. In 1985, Anne Teller donated a conservation easement over the 700-acre Oak Hill Farm, and later another easement over Old Hill Ranch, a 100-year old vineyard growing commonly referred to as California's "first famous Zinfandel."

With over 48,000 acres of land protected, the Trust's focus shifted to emphasize protection of entire ecosystems, watersheds, trail systems, and wildlife corridors as well as agricultural lands and working landscapes.

What we do:

Sonoma Land Trust began in Sonoma Valley. Now we are increasing our focus on the Valley for three important reasons: the threatened closure of the Sonoma Developmental Center (SDC), the need to protect the Sonoma Valley Wildlife Corridor – a critical wildlife passage connecting the Mayacamas to Sonoma Mountain, and the opportunity to restore the historic spawning habitat for steelhead trout in Stuart and Sonoma Creeks.

The Trust is uniquely qualified to help lead a new coalition fighting to retain the SDC's health care services and protect its open-space lands. Our decades of experience saving land and caring for our preserves in the Sonoma Valley give us the resources, ecological know-how, and the determination to carry out complex, large-scale projects, such as protecting the Sonoma Valley Wildlife Corridor and restoring steelhead to Stuart Creek.

A single story:

Sonoma Valley's open spaces have expanded. The Board of Supervisors recently approved the purchase of 29 acres owned by the Curreri family along Highway 12 in Glen Ellen as an addition to Sonoma Valley Regional Park. Acquisition of the Curreri parcel is a critical component of Sonoma Land Trust's overall strategy to protect the Sonoma Valley Wildlife Corridor stretching east to west across the Valley, connecting more than 9,000 acres of wildlife habitat in the Mayacamas and on Sonoma Mountain.

The Curreri property offers new trail connections to the Regional Park that boast panoramic views of the Sonoma Valley, Sonoma Mountain, the Mayacamas Range, and San Pablo and San Francisco Bays. It also harbors iconic oak woodlands, grasslands, a seasonal wetland, and a year-round spring-fed pond that offers habitat and a travel corridor for wildlife. Because the 29 acres have been maintained in their natural state, the threat from development was very real. This property was highly vulnerable to estate and vineyard development, the dominant land uses in the area.

According to Paul Curreri, his father Norman bought the land in 1948. "My grandmother was the one who started buying property out here in Sonoma during the 1940s," said Curreri, who explored the property as a child. "For my family, this is a legacy issue. Our land is really more valuable as a place where children can connect with nature and wildlife can continue to roam."

Our future:

Sonoma County's landscapes are changing, and the Trust is responding and adapting to these changes. Our vision of Sonoma County focuses on the land but embraces the entire fabric of our community. To borrow Wallace Stegner's phrase: We aspire to a society to match the scenery.



**Impact100 Sonoma
awarded an Impact
Finalist Grant of**

**\$20,000 to Sonoma Land Trust in support
of their *Transforming the Sonoma
Development Center* efforts (2014).**