

# ***GOOD DIRT***

The Newsletter of the Anderson Valley Land Trust, Incorporated  
Fall 2013

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## **Intergenerational Transfer of Farm and Ranch Lands** **By Barbara Goodell and Glynnis Jones**

Successfully transitioning land from one generation to another can be a huge challenge. How can family farms and ranches be kept productive and sustainable while the interests of both senior and succeeding generations are fully served? AVLT's November 22<sup>nd</sup> Farm and Ranch Succession Planning Workshop addressed these difficult questions.

Roughly three quarters of the farms and ranches in the US will change hands over the next decade. Such change affects our food system, as it opens the possibilities of land division and development, both of which can result in removing significant amounts of land from agriculture.

The AVLT workshop brought these issues home to 75 participants, including a multi-generational group of 47 farmers and ranchers. The workshop delved into the basics of succession planning--how to structure a farm or ranch business to keep it in the family, what to include in a will/estate plan and how to avoid unnecessary taxes. The dynamics of family communication, including how to run a family meeting, were also explored.



Photo by Patrick Miller

The senior generation voiced concerns about:

- When to retire and how to finance it;
- Keeping their legacy going;
- Fears about the changes the new generation would want to institute;
- Being fair to all of their heirs, including those having no interest in the farm/ranch;
- Teaching their heirs farming/ranching skills;
- Providing for their farms or ranches when they had no direct heirs;
- Protecting the sustainability of their land; and
- Learning to gracefully relinquish the role of decision maker.

*(continued on page 4)*

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**President's message:**

Even after months with no rain, it's a knockout autumn. The trees are wearing their best colors. Even though I have to spend hours trying to get them out of our ditches and culverts, I love watching the leaves fall gently to the ground. Those of us who live in the Anderson Valley are fortunate to experience the seasonal changes and the natural beauty we have here.

I just attended the all-day Succession Planning Workshop coordinated by board members Barbara Goodell and Glynnis Jones, and I was very impressed by the professional and all-encompassing information presented by the speakers. The workshop was attended by 50 people representing 25 families, all united in the goal of educating themselves on how best to pass their property on to future generations.

The rest of this year's Anderson Valley Land Trust events were a veritable celebration of the seasons. In April we had our yearly Wildflower Walk, an educational and visual observance of our valley's spring flower display. Our fundraiser at Goldeneye Winery was a rousing success as we spent a beautiful summer evening eating delicious food, sipping fine wine and listening to music. On a hot September day the annual Sustainable Discoveries event took our participants on a daylong whirlwind tour of three local properties where they learned how the owners care for and enjoy the bounties of their land.

AVLT hopes that you will take the opportunity to attend one or more of our 2014 events. They are publicized, but you may also check our website or call our office for updates. We'll see you out and about in the Anderson Valley.

Sincerely,

Steve Snyder, President

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**Welcome New Board Member!**

Brent Levin, a GIS professional, has very recently joined the AVLT board--the spring/summer Good Dirt will feature an article on our new board member.

**SAVE THE DATE**

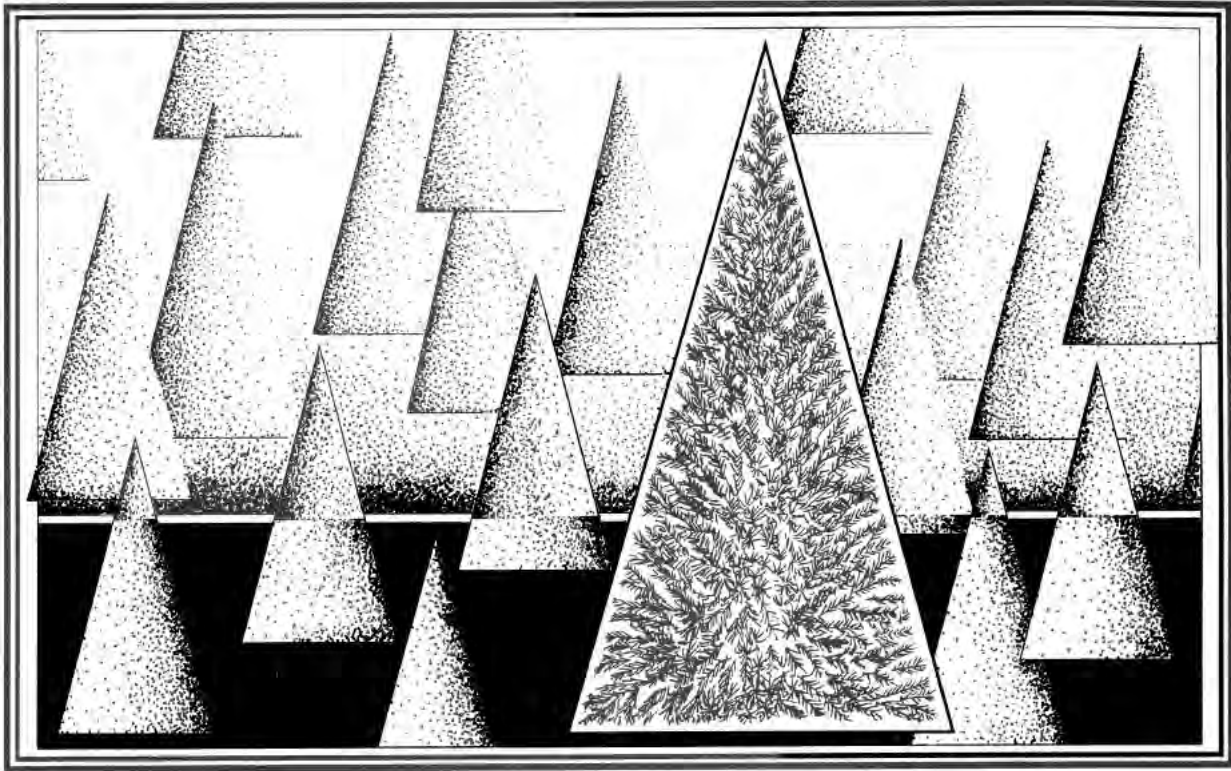
On April 19, 2014, Greg Giusti will host a special AVLT tour of UC's Hopland Field Station's oak woodlands, wildflowers, and projects, including his 3-year study of the turkey vulture. There should be fledglings to view. Watch for an email for the details. If you are not already on the AVLT event email list, please send a note to [avlt@mcn.org](mailto:avlt@mcn.org) to be added.



California Turkey Vulture

\* Be sure to visit our NEW and improved website, [andersonvalleylandtrust.org](http://andersonvalleylandtrust.org), and send us your email address to receive updates on hikes, workshops and events. \*

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*Pseudotsuga menziesii*

**Douglas Fir**

**By Jane Miller**

In our seemingly endless search for perfection, it has recently been fashionable to produce a tightly foliated, cone-shaped tree for holiday display. Thus, the art of topiary has become an increasingly evident presence in the seasonal marketplace. And so we welcome the Douglas Fir. The Douglas Fir is a true character actor, playing both the least and most glamorous of roles with skill and long experience. *Pseudotsuga menziesii* is as likely to be underfoot supporting the deck on which to sip a late afternoon beverage as it is to be gracing a living room dressed up as a holiday tree adorned with festive decorations.

The species is named for the Scottish physician and naturalist, Archibald Menzies, who first documented *Pseudotsuga menziesii* on Vancouver Island in 1791. Abundant in Anderson Valley, Douglas Fir and its several varieties range from mountainous regions of California into British Columbia, east to the Rocky Mountains, and southward into Mexico. A large and long-lived tree, it realizes its greatest beauty and most majestic proportions (up to 300 feet tall) in the Pacific Northwest, where its soft drooping branches and fresh scent are at their peak. The cones are also quite distinctive, composed of thin scales between which protrude small 3-pronged bracts that are said to resemble mouse tails. The Douglas Fir, also known as the Douglas Spruce, ranks among the largest of American trees, surpassed only by California's two species of redwoods. Its lumber is often sold as Oregon Pine, and the name *Pseudotsuga* translates from Latin into "False Hemlock"! It is botanically none of these, not a true fir or spruce or pine or hemlock, but a distinct genus which contains only one other species, *Pseudotsuga macrocarpa*, a tree not found in our valley.

If you have any Douglas Firs in your vicinity, you likely have many, as the tree self-sows at a prolific rate and grows rather quickly. So enjoy its presence as you stroll through its aromatic shade and look for those quirky cones that are likely to be in great supply this fall and winter.

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**Intergenerational Transfer of Farm and Ranch Lands** – *continued from page 1*

The successor generation expressed concerns about:

- Carrying out the wishes of their parents;
- Respecting their parents' lifetimes of hard work, while questioning whether such a lifestyle was for them.
- Deciding whether the farm/ranch business is viable;
- The difficulties of reaching consensus with the family members running the business; and
- Determining whether they actually want to live on the farm/ranch.

The workshop featured presentations by professionals designed to address the questions of both generations and to initiate the process of the transition. Each speaker outlined, within his or her area of expertise, what a successful transition might involve and what options participants might consider for achieving important goals, such as not having to sell or divide the land because heirs cannot agree or do not have the skills to make the business work. Each speaker emphasized that it is never too early to start planning. The presenters who kept this active audience in their chairs all day shared pivotal information in a clear format: Reggie Knox, Executive Director of CA FarmLink spoke on "What is Succession Planning and Why Do It?"; Olivia Boyce-Abel of Family Lands Consulting offered "Meet Your Peers" and "Successful Communication at Family Meetings"; Rod Carter of Northern California Farm Credit Business Consulting presented "Transferring the Business"; Steven Johnson of Mannon, King and Johnson offered "Estate Planning Nuts and Bolts"; and Michael Delbar from California Rangeland Trust outlined "How a Conservation Easement Could Fit the Estate Plan".

During lunch, Mac Magruder and his daughter Grace shared the gauntlet their family had to run in holding on to their ranch. Mac Magruder is the fourth generation to shape his family's property in Potter Valley. His grandparents raised sheep and his father farmed pears and cattle. Mac grew up helping on the ranch, went away to college and graduate school, and returned to Potter Valley in 1976 to take over management of the ranch. Grace now takes part in the successful ranch business and has added new facets.

The Farm and Ranch Succession workshop was the third in a five-part series, A Legacy of Working Lands—Preserving Anderson Valley's Heritage. A low-cost clinic for participants from the 11/22/13 workshop featuring individual sessions with professionals will be held early in 2014. Part two of the Ties to the Land Workshop given by UC Extension with Greg Giusti on timberland succession will be held on January 30<sup>th</sup>. This session will focus on estate planning for timberland owners. If you did not attend part one of the Ties to the Land workshop and would like to register for part two, please call Shelly at 895-3150.

We would like to thank the Community Foundation of Mendocino County for granting us a Community Enrichment Grant to host these workshops at nominal cost to the participants. Additional sponsorship assistance came from the East Bay Community Foundation, Savings Bank of Mendocino, California Rangeland Trust, Mendocino Land Trust, Navarro River Resource Center, Anderson Valley Solar Grange, The Toll House, and the Boonville General Store.

The Farm and Ranch Succession Planning Workshop is built on a model developed by California FarmLink with the Center for Land-Based Learning. Special thanks and appreciation goes to Kendra Johnson, a board member and consultant to California FarmLink, who coached AVLTT and Mendocino Land Trust board members, local professionals, and natural resource agency personnel to host the workshop and to Ariana Reguzzoni, California FarmLink's Northern California Coordinator.

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The presenters have given permission for AVL T to post their PowerPoint presentations from the workshop on our website; we will let you know when they are added. CA FarmLink also has the Farm and Ranch Succession Planning Guidebook and other useful information available online at [www.californiafarmlink.org](http://www.californiafarmlink.org). Please contact Shelly at the AVL T office (895-3150 or [avlt@mcn.org](mailto:avlt@mcn.org)) if you would like more information on how a conservation easement can benefit your estate and/or business plan.

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## **AV Walking and Bicycling Trail**

**By Diane Paget**

You may be able to help make the dream of safe walking and bicycling through Anderson Valley a reality. Over the years there have been a number of efforts to create a safe trail in the valley. The current effort by the Valley Trail Coalition ([www.valleytrail.org](http://www.valleytrail.org)) has made significant progress, receiving a Caltrans Planning grant. The grant is designed to allow Anderson Valley residents to identify the best route for a multi-use trail from the Sonoma County line to Highway 1 at Navarro By the Sea. A team of consultants led by Alta Planning + Design was hired to produce a plan, map identifying possible routes, and estimate the cost of building segments of the trail. In November, Alta held a number of meetings throughout the Valley, including a bus tour along Highway 128, a walking tour of Boonville, and a community meeting at the Fairgrounds to collect our ideas and concerns about the design of the trail. Representatives from Caltrans, Mendocino Council of Governments, and Mendocino County Department of Transportation attended the events to listen to the public. The draft feasibility study will be ready for community comment in April 2014. Once the plan is completed in June 2014, the Valley Trails Association will be in a position to apply for funding to begin building segments of the trail.

The mandate given to the consultants by the Caltrans grant is to design a trail in the public right of way, unless private landowners are interested in granting an easement across their property. State Parks and the Mendocino Redwood Company have already indicated interest in providing easements through Hendy Woods and between the highway and the Navarro River from Flynn Creek to Highway 1. Property owners, commercial, agricultural, or residential, who might be interested in allowing an easement for the Valley Trail to pass through their land are encouraged to contact the Valley Trail Coalition at 707 621-2273 or [info@valleytrail.org](mailto:info@valleytrail.org).



Please go to Mendocino Council of Governments website, [www.mendocinocog.org](http://www.mendocinocog.org), for information on upcoming community workshops in March.

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## SUSTAINABLE “D” 2013

By Patrick Miller

The fourth annual *Anderson Valley Sustainable Discoveries* was held on a Sunday this year, September 8. Although the temperature was a bit higher than we might have preferred, those intrepid souls who braved the heat to participate in the educational day-long tour were well rewarded. Once again, we learned about the very real aspects of agriculture here in Anderson Valley whose bounty we so often take for granted.

Starting at the Yorkville Olive Ranch, we were treated to a most informative talk by Ron Rice. Ron described how he got there, the history of his house (which used to be a hotel and stage stop), what his interests are, what he does, and how he produces his delicious olive oil. We then went out to the orchard to have a close-up look at the trees and all their developing fruit. Ron was very generous in providing everyone with a bottle of his oil - what a delight! We next enjoyed a very tasty lunch under the (thankfully) shady grape arbors at Meyer Family Cellars, graciously prepared by Christina Jones of Aquarelle Café and Wine Bar in Boonville. Next stop was Pennyroyal Farms where we got to pretend we were little kids again by petting the goats and Baby Doll sheep that produce the milk that goes into crafting their award-winning cheeses. Sarah Cahn-Bennett gave us an in-depth tour of the facility and explained all the processes and very hard work that goes into their sustainable endeavor. We were in for another treat when we got to sample the very yummy goods. Finally, we stopped at the Anderson Valley Community Gardens where we were treated - yet again! - to wonderfully refreshing apple juice and ice that were so welcome on that hot afternoon. The gardens are a work in progress and Renee and Tim are making great and impressive advances in transforming the property into a bountiful producer of vegetables, fruits, and animal products. What a wonderful day of learning and discovery! Thank you to all the participants and to all those who so



Goats at Pennyroyal Farms

generously donated their time and expertise to making the day a success.



Lunch under the arbor at Meyer Family Cellars  
Photos by Patrick Miller

If you would like to be notified of upcoming walks and events, please email the AVLT office at [avlt@mcn.org](mailto:avlt@mcn.org).

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## Coastal Cleanup Day on Soda Creek

By Shelly Englert

On September 21<sup>st</sup>, Anderson Valley Land Trust and the Navarro River Resource Center teamed together for International Coastal Cleanup Day. We decided to set our sights on an area of the North Fork of the Navarro River where Coho Salmon have been observed. So, with six eager people, we set out to clean up Soda Creek in Navarro. It just so happened to be the first rainy day of the season, but that didn't deter us. We came away with 6 garbage bags bursting at the seams and a truck piled high with plastic tubing, metal piping, a tire, a porch swing and a very old microwave.

The Coho Salmon are listed as an endangered species in the Navarro watershed. With our help in maintaining clean waterways, we hope to perhaps see Coho spawn in Soda Creek again. The Ocean Conservancy started their Cleanup Day program over 25 years ago as a beach cleanup along the Texas shoreline. Today, there are over 6,000 cleanup sites in more than 100 countries. In California alone, over 51,00 people volunteered to pick up almost 502,000 pounds of trash. For more information on Coastal Cleanup Day, check out the Ocean Conservancy website, <http://www.oceanconservancy.org/our-work/international-coastal-cleanup/>.

Mark your calendars for next year's local CCD, when we will clean up the Navarro River under the Greenwood/Philo bridge, a popular over wintering spot for Steelhead Salmon, listed as a threatened species in the Navarro watershed.

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### Highlights from our Summer Fundraiser, Taste of Anderson Valley



Guests mingling and visiting the auction table



The scenic view at Goldeneye Winery



Auction table  
All photos by Shelly Englert

Thank you to all of our generous auction donors and fundraiser participants!

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***RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED***

**INSIDE DIRT**

**Intergenerational Transfer of Farm and Ranch Lands**  
by Barbara Goodell and Glynnis Jones **page 1 and 4**

**President's Message** by Steve Snyder **page 2**

**Welcome New Board Member, Brent Levin** **page 2**

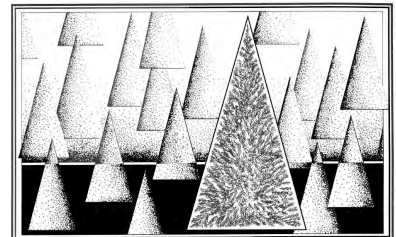
***Pseudotsuga menziesi*** by Jane Miller **page 3**

 **AV Walking and Bicycling Trail**  
by Diane Paget **page 5**

**SUSTAINABLE "D" 2013** by Patrick Miller **page 6**

**Coastal Cleanup Day on Soda Creek** by Shelly Englert **page 7**

**Highlights from our Summer Fundraiser, Taste of Anderson Valley** **page 7**



Newsletter is printed  
on 30% recycled paper

*This newsletter was printed and mailed by Printing Plus in Willits and Express-It Mailing Services in Ukiah  
Thank you Anne, John and Terry  
Layout by Shelly Englert  
Editing by Barbara Goodell, and Jerry Karp*