



Conserving the natural and agricultural legacy of the southern Sierra Nevada and San Joaquin Valley



Scott Spear (left) accepts the Sierra Nevada Lighthouse Award from Tracy Grubbs of the Sierra Nevada Alliance (right), while Johanna Lombard and Gina Velasco look on. Kendra Weistar - Synergia © 2006

## Land trust receives prestigious award

This summer, Sequoia Riverlands Trust received the prestigious Sierra Lighthouse Award, presented by the Sierra Nevada Alliance at their annual conference in Lake Tahoe, California. This award goes to an organization that is a 'bright beacon of hope' in the Sierra Nevada, has achieved impressive conservation victories, is a statewide leader and offers successful strategies for other Sierra groups to follow.

"This recognition is truly an honor," said Scott Spear, president for Sequoia Riverlands Trust. "Only through strong partnerships with landowners, agencies and other conservation groups have we been able to accomplish so much over the past few years. We are particularly grateful to The Nature Conservancy and Resources Law Group for their mentorship and continued support of our efforts." Spear also recognized the land trust staff and former director, Carole Combs, in his speech.

During the award presentation, Sequoia Riverlands Trust was recognized for protecting over 7,300 acres in a short period of time and for their networking role for other organizations in the region as they look to the land trust for leadership. In particular, the demonstration of a successful ecologically-based mine reclamation at the trust's Dry Creek Preserve, a first in Tulare County, was mentioned as a main factor for the land trust receiving this award.

"Sequoia Riverlands Trust is a true leader for this region. May all Sierra Nevada Alliance groups one day be as accomplished, healthy and capable" said Joan Clayburgh, executive director for the Sierra Nevada Alliance.

## New tax benefits for you!

This past August, President Bush signed the Pension Protection Act of 2006, which will help family farmers, ranchers and other landowners get a significant tax benefit for making the extraordinarily valuable donation of a conservation easement to a community-based charity like Sequoia Riverlands Trust. *The new law allows:*

- landowners who donate a conservation easement to deduct up to 50% of their adjusted gross income in any given year;
- qualifying farmers and ranchers to deduct up to 100% of their adjusted gross income; and
- donors to spread tax deductions for donating a voluntary conservation agreement over 15 years.

This unique opportunity will only apply to conservation easements donated in 2006 or 2007. Call Soapy Mulholland, executive director, at 559.738.0211 to inquire about donating a voluntary conservation agreement for your family farm, ranch or special property to Sequoia Riverlands Trust. Please consult your tax advisor as well for further information.

**"Sequoia Riverlands Trust is a true leader for this region."**

## VISTAS

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The Sequoia Riverlands Trust (SRT) is a local, community-based, 501 (c)(3) non-profit conserving the natural and agricultural legacy of the southern Sierra Nevada and San Joaquin Valley. A copy of the latest financial statement and registration filed with the Registry of Charitable Trusts may be obtained by contacting the SRT office. Contributions are deductible to the extent allowed by law.

### SPECIAL NOTE:

Sequoia Riverlands Trust restructured their fiscal year to match the calendar year. This means you will receive the annual report during spring 2007 instead of this fall. Look for a special mailing in November to update you on the land trust's most recent accomplishments.

## Sierra Nevada Conservancy tours region



SRT © 2006

*Working with Tulare County Supervisor Allen Ishida, Sequoia Riverlands Trust proudly hosted the new Sierra Nevada Conservancy for a tour of our beautiful area this past summer. Supervisor Ishida represents the southern Sierra on the Conservancy's Board of Directors. The Nature Conservancy, St. Anthony Retreat and the Visalia Convention & Visitor's Bureau generously sponsored this tour. Sequoia Riverlands Trust advisor Bill Tweed (right) spoke on the uniqueness of this region to tour participants.*

### It's time to vote!

This November, your vote can make a difference in land and water conservation. Two important propositions are being listed on the ballot: one that supports conservation and one that could be harmful to the environment. Information about each proposition follows below. Please take time to vote this fall. Your vote of yes on Prop 84 and no on Prop 90 will make a difference for Sequoia Riverlands Trust.

#### Yes on Prop 84

Prop 84 authorizes the State of California to borrow up to \$5.4 billion dollars for water quality, wildlife habitat restoration, parks, nature education centers, sustainable communities and other important conservation projects. In particular, the bond will:

- help ensure safe drinking water & a reliable water supply
- protect and restore California's parks, natural beauty and working farms & ranches
- protect California's rivers, lakes and streams
- provide needed flood control improvements

Funds generated through Prop 84 will enable groups like Sequoia Riverlands Trust to be granted money for projects that conserve and restore this region's resources, protect water quality, provide recreational opportunities and encourage economic growth. **Vote yes on Prop 84!**

#### No on Prop 90

Prop 90 attempts to reform eminent domain, but would cost taxpayers billions of dollars each year with many detrimental effects. This proposition will:

- prevent voters and state and local agencies from enacting environmental protections
- drive up the cost of infrastructure projects like schools, traffic relief and flood control
- jeopardize funds for police, fire and other critical local services
- make it more difficult to enact new consumer protection and anti-crime laws
- undermine the authority of local communities and local voters

Hidden in the fine print of this measure are extreme provisions that would erode the ability to pass laws that protect natural resources, wildlife and habitat, ensure water quality and adequate water supplies and promote well-planned growth. Additionally, this proposition is harmful to the financial health of local government and to agriculture in California. **Vote no on 90!**

## Wanted: your special skills

Sequoia Riverlands Trust has a few exceptional volunteer opportunities and is looking for the right folks to get the job done.

**Videographer:** Put your creative skills to work producing a short promotional video that will premiere at the Cosby comedy event in March 2007.

**Business Plan Writer:** Use your financial skills to draft a business plan addressing special and commercial uses on land trust preserves.

**Fundraisers:** Bring your people, event, grant writing or fundraising skills to the land trust's development committee.

**Docents:** Become a trail guide in SRT's education program for local students at Kaweah Oaks Preserve.

**AmeriCorps Volunteer:** Spend a year in a volunteer stewardship or education position. We have two positions for 2007, but you must apply by November 1, 2006 through [www.sierranevadaalliance.org/programs](http://www.sierranevadaalliance.org/programs)

*Interested? Contact Jane Caputo at 559.738.0211 x 1#. In addition to these unique opportunities, community and service groups are encouraged to call and find out how to help in a special way on events, restoration projects and more.*

## Preserve project updates

### Blue Oak Ranch expands

This summer, Sequoia Riverlands Trust added 196 acres of pristine blue oak woodland and chaparral to Blue Oak Ranch, located five miles north of Springville. Nestled among substantial public lands, including Giant Sequoia National Monument and Sequoia National Park, the 1,147-acre ranch allows wildlife to move between the high elevation forests and the Tule River and valley floor below. Purchased with a generous loan from The David and Lucile Packard Foundation, this additional conserved land brings the total protected along the North Fork of the Tule River to almost 3,000 acres.

### Dry Creek Preserve goes native

Under the leadership of land steward Nathan Higgins, Sequoia Riverlands Trust began developing a nursery of native grasses, shrubs and trees this year. Hosted at Dry Creek Preserve, plants grown in the nursery from locally-collected seed will be used in restoration efforts at Dry Creek and other preserves, like the James K. Herbert Wetland Prairie Preserve. Currently home to 12,000 plants, Sequoia Riverlands Trust aims to also sell nursery-grown grasses and trees to community members in the future. "I get a lot of questions from other landowners and businesses about growing native

plants," said Higgins, adding "Sequoia Riverlands Trust can definitely serve as a resource to others who want to restore their own properties."

### Kaweah Oaks Preserve on fire

While fire is a natural part of valley oak riparian forests and grasslands, it has been absent at Kaweah Oaks Preserve for over a century, leading to unnaturally high fuel levels. To reduce the threat of catastrophic wildfire that could cause damage to valuable oak trees, Sequoia Riverlands Trust is re-introducing low-intensity, managed fire to a plant community adapted to this natural disturbance. This summer, the land trust ignited 39 acres at the preserve to remove dead plant material, recycle nutrients to the soil and open up the under story for new oak trees.

Sequoia Riverlands Trust coordinates all prescribed burns with the San Joaquin Valley Air Pollution Control District, Tulare County Sheriff's Office, California Highway Patrol, California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection and Cal-Trans. This burn is part of a 10-year restoration project, generously funded in part by an Environmental Quality Incentives Program grant from the Natural Resources Conservation Service.



Bobby Kamansky, John Kamansky, Teri Van Huss and Rob Hansen (left to right), ignite non-native grasses at Kaweah Oaks Preserve.

## Save the date

### Exciting events

**Saturday, March 10, 2007 4:00 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.** (two performances)

Hear comedy legend and master storyteller Bill Cosby at the L.J. Williams Theater in Visalia during this benefit for Sequoia Riverlands Trust. Tickets, \$45, \$55, \$75, \$155 (includes private party), available November 24, 2006 at [www.gorillatix.com](http://www.gorillatix.com) or by calling 1.888.388.1288. SRT members can pre-order tickets by calling Donnie Ludekens-Clark at 559.738.0211 x 6#.

### Explore your backyard

We invite all ages for fun nature walks up to two miles long. Please dress appropriately, wear sturdy shoes and bring water and a friend. Field guides or binoculars optional.

*Donation:* \$5 members, \$10 non-members or join Sequoia Riverlands Trust that day and attend for free!

**Saturday, October 28 8:30 – 10:30 a.m.**

Restoration accomplishments & native plant nursery tour at Dry Creek Preserve

**December 2006 Date and time TBD**

Christmas bird count in partnership with Tulare County Audubon Society at Kaweah Oaks Preserve

**Saturday, January 27, 2007**

Time and destination TBD

**Saturday, February 17, 2007 1:00 – 4:00 p.m.**

Rare flowers at Lewis Hill Preserve

**Saturday, March 24, 2007 8:30 – 10:30 a.m.**

Wildflowers & sycamores at Homer Ranch



SRT © 2005

Tour participants look for rare flowers at Lewis Hill Preserve.

**Saturday, April 14, 2007 8:30 – 11:30 a.m.**

Vernal pools & restoration at the James K. Herbert Wetland Prairie Preserve

### Teacher's corner

**Through December 15, 2006**

Educational tours for students offered at Kaweah Oaks Preserve

Please check [www.sequoiariverlands.org](http://www.sequoiariverlands.org) for current information and additional programs or call 559.738.0211.

### Send us your email

If you would like to be notified about special events, tours, volunteer opportunities and breaking news from Sequoia Riverlands Trust, please send your email address to [info@sequoiariverlands.org](mailto:info@sequoiariverlands.org) and ask to be added to our email news list.

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