

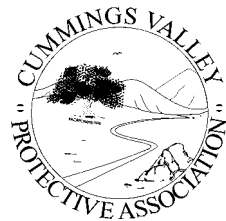
PLEASE, DON'T FORGET NEXT MEETING, November 8th, 7:30 at SSCSD meeting room

Joseph McIntyre, the facilitator for the Tehachapi Ag Futures Alliance, will give us his perspectives on the potential for preserving and stimulating agriculture throughout the Tehachapi area as a means of preserving a valuable food resource as well as maintaining the rural quality of life. He will by then have spent two days touring the area and meeting growers as well as sizing up the commitment of attendees at two AFA meetings.

CVPA has invested \$14,000 of its treasury to fund the first year of the AFA process. **Please attend this meeting to offer your thoughts about the AFA effort, and to let Joseph know that CVPA members are committed to the AFA concept for the benefit to the community of preserving agriculture and open space.**

Oregon Juncos Return

Just about on cue, Juncos were spotted around the fourth of October on Longhorn Lane. You can't set your clock with them, though; their arrival has varied by as much as two weeks at this location over the years. Cousin, Rufus, (Sided Towhee) has yet to appear this season.



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Conservation Easements

While conservation easements have been around for many years, a new bill signed into law by President Bush on August 17 makes easements donated in 2006 and 2007 much more attractive because of greatly enhanced tax benefits.

An agricultural conservation easement is a voluntary, legally recorded agreement between the landowner and a qualified conservation organization. It restricts land to agriculture and open space uses. The easement generally prohibits any subdivision or development or any practice which would damage the agricultural value or productivity of the farm or ranch land. For tax benefits, the easement must be in perpetuity.

Donating a conservation easement to a qualified nonprofit organization can significantly reduce Donor federal and state income taxes, local property taxes, and estate and inheritance taxes. The tax benefits result from the difference between the value (as determined by qualified appraisers) of the land without the conservation easement restrictions and the value of the land after the restrictions have been applied and the development rights removed. This difference can be treated as a charitable donation for tax purposes.

The new law increases the yearly deduction from 30% of Adjusted Gross Income (AGI) to 50% of AGI, and increases the number of years the deduction may be taken from six to sixteen. This allows Donors to recapture all or most of the donation amount, depending on current income levels. Certain "qualified" farmers and ranchers may deduct 100% of AGI for up to 8 years.

CVPA is enlisting the help of the American Farmland Trust, the California Rangeland Trust, other organizations, and tax experts to provide information to local landowners who are interested in this opportunity. This could be a wonderful means of preserving agriculture and open space. Time is of the essence in that the law will revert to prior terms after 2007 unless extended by Congress. For more information, call 822-3478.

General Meeting November 8

We depart from our normal meeting schedule of the first Thursday in order to hear our Ag Futures Alliance facilitator, Joseph McIntyre, speak on his perceptions of the viability of sustaining agriculture in the Tehachapi area. Joseph has taken a two-day tour of the area, viewing agricultural activity and meeting growers. He will have facilitated his third Tehachapi AFA meeting on November 8.

Joseph McIntyre is the Executive Director of Ag Innovations Network, a non-profit organization dedicated to creating a sustainable Food System. He joined Ag Innovations in 2001, and over the past five years has headed the expansion of the Ag Futures Alliance – a project that brings together growers, environmentalists, and community leaders to find local solutions to agricultural sustainability.

Joseph is a skilled facilitator with MAs in Organizational Development and Economics. His experience with agriculture and sustainability began in the early 70's when he attended the University of the Pacific in Stockton. There he was exposed to the rich farming heritage of California and the work of sustainability advocates.

The meeting will be at 7:30 PM in the Stallion Springs CSD meeting room.

Ag Futures Alliance

We continue to promote interest in the AFA in our effort to preserve agriculture in the Tehachapi area. In the sixth meeting on October 4 it was decided that a primary step toward the goal of preserving agriculture will be *“To create a vibrant local food economy that promotes farming, a healthy environment, and provides quality food for the community”* The initial focus is expected to be on supporting the Tehachapi farmers market and promoting the growing of food locally.

AFA Small Grower Task Force (SGTF)

Shown below are the responses from the questionnaire in the last newsletter. We thank all the generous folks who volunteered. It is encouraging that so many offers to help were made by CVPA members. At the next SGTF meeting on October 19 we will consider ideas of how to pursue the mini-mission statement above, how to best employ volunteers, and whether to try to expand the worker base by tapping Smart Growth Tehachapi Valley (SGTV) or the general public through local papers.

If you missed the opportunity to volunteer, and would like to help, cut out the section below, check or circle the appropriate category(s), and return it.

- **Research Directors:** Alex Kosich, Chuck McCollough
- **Operations Managers:** Alex Kosich, Chuck McCollough
- **Compost and Organic Fertilizer Manager:** Rick/Barbara Kieffe, Craig Fox
- **Workforce:** Rick/Barbara Kieffe, Lynne Wolfe, Craig Fox, Sally Fox, Chuck McCollough, Shirley Fuller, Andi Ferrari, Marlene Davis, Geo/Anne Marie Novinger, Alex Kosich, Dr. Bonnie Rettgers
- **Marketing Manager:** Alex Kosich
- **Farmers Market Booth Staffers:** Rick/Barbara Kieffe, Lynne Wolf, Andi Ferrari, Marlene Davis, Geo/Anne Novinger, Don/Sandy Erickson, Dr. Bonnie Rettgers
- **Local Produce Coordinator:** Sally Fox
- **Grants Managers:** Alex Kosich

New Recording Secretary

Unfortunately, Barbara Zervas, our excellent and faithful recording secretary, has found it necessary to resign. Sally Fox has agreed to step into the job on a trial basis. We thank Barbara for her outstanding contributions to CVPA.

Souzas Again Host Annual Barbecue

In 1888 Elijah Stowell built a Victorian farmhouse for his bride, Chloe Brite, and he could not have imagined the venue it would become! When Patty and Bob Souza bought the ranch in 1990, it was in an abandoned state. They have worked tirelessly over these years to transform the former wheat and barley farm to its storybook quality of today.

Through the last decade the Souzas have generously shared the Souza Ranch and Vineyard with the CVPA, not only hosting the barbecues, but offering refreshments and tours of their beautifully restored and redecorated Victorian home for the bi-annual bus tours of Cummings and Brite Valleys. Patty and Bob further contributed to the CVPA’s mission of keeping Cummings Valley agricultural by planting the first commercial vineyard of 3000 Primitivo Zinfandel grape vines in 2002, and this summer they celebrated the release of their first wine under the two labels of **Tehachapi Wine and Cattle Company** for local sales and **Quattro Stagioni** (Italian for four seasons) for wider distribution. The already acclaimed red wine is available at Applegate Garden Florists, and is being featured in several restaurants. How thrilling to have Cummings Valley now wine country!

Seventy-eight members and guests enjoyed the deep pit barbecued pork and beef created by Chuck McCollough and Bob Souza. Jo Anne Huckins and her committee served wonderful dishes to accompany the barbecue. These included roasted red potatoes, barbecued beans, coleslaw, and rich macaroni and cheese! Chips and salsa were featured ahead of time while people enjoyed the wine and beer, and for dessert there were two kinds of cake and coffee. The beautiful evening was enhanced by DJ Jaime Phillips’ memory music. Thanks to all the members who made this occasion special. If you didn’t make it this year, we hope to have as lovely a barbecue next year!

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Information on Proposition 90

Under the guise of protecting us from government eminent domain takings, this measure is actually an attempt by property rights advocates to undermine the ability of the State and counties to implement land use policies effectively. Similar initiatives are being pushed in six western states.

Here is what one non profit organization has to say: “Hidden in the fine print of California’s Proposition 90 are unrelated and far-reaching provisions that will undermine land use regulation such as zoning, thwart beneficial environmental laws, and cost taxpayers billions of dollars each year.

Prop 90 would energize sprawl and uncontrolled development around the state. Sound government planning is a key part of preserving the open spaces and rural character, yet growth control measures, land use plans, and even zoning would require huge payouts to landowners if Prop 90 passes.

For example, if a developer claims a property could hold more homes than county rules allow to be built, the developer could sue and taxpayers would be on the hook for paying the value of the property at the denser level, even though the community did not want such a development.

Beneficial environmental rules would be undermined as well. If agencies couldn’t afford to pay for protections, they could be left with no choice but to allow harmful action.”

More information can be found at www.noprop90.com

MEMBERSHIP RENEWALS

If your mailing label shows a year earlier than 07, it is time to send your check for one or several years at \$12 per family per year.

We need your support now more than ever as we face challenges to the rural qualities we came here to enjoy. CVPA may again find it advantageous to provide some financial support along with other contributors to continue the Ag Futures Alliance into the second year. Member numbers and money may be critical as we strive to preserve the integrity of the area.

Please complete the membership form and return it with your check. We would hate to lose you, if you haven’t kept up with your dues, but we feel we should drop members who are more than two years in arrears. A check for the current membership year (July 1, 2006 to June 30, 2007) will put you back in good standing.

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Cummings Valley Protective Association, Inc.
Membership Application - July 1 through June 30

Name(s) _____

Local Address _____ Phone () _____

Mail Address _____ Phone () _____
(If not same as local)

Check Appropriate Area

<input type="checkbox"/> Alpine Forest Park	<input type="checkbox"/> Country Oaks	<input type="checkbox"/> Golden Hills	<input type="checkbox"/> Oak Knolls	<input type="checkbox"/> Stallion Springs
<input type="checkbox"/> Bear Valley Springs	<input type="checkbox"/> Cummings Valley	<input type="checkbox"/> Hidden Oaks	<input type="checkbox"/> Old Town	<input type="checkbox"/> Tehachapi
<input type="checkbox"/> Brite Valley	<input type="checkbox"/> Fairview Ranches	<input type="checkbox"/> Indian Hills	<input type="checkbox"/> Sand Canyon	<input type="checkbox"/> ? _____

e-mail addr: _____

Annual dues are \$12 per family.
Please check one:
 One year \$12 Two years \$24 Three years \$36

Mail with payment to:
Cummings Valley Protective Association
P.O. Box 1020
Tehachapi, CA 93581-1020