



'Helping acquire, protect, preserve, and maintain stables, trails, pastures, staging areas, and horse camps in the San Francisco Bay Area.'

REGIONAL E-NEWS FROM 'BAY AREA BARNS AND TRAILS'

September 2006 (1 of 8 pages)

San Jose's Alum Rock Stables Sold for Over One Million Dollars

August 8, 2006

Dear Mr. DeTar,

Mr. Mark DeTar: Intero Real Estate Services - Main: 866.334.7356 - customerservice@interorealestate.com

I received an e-mail from Judy Thompson regarding your firm's effort to sell the Alum Rock Stables property for your client, Don Hamilton.

As you know from Judy, our non-profit organization has been interested in preserving the property for several years. I've attached our Bay Area Barns and Trails 2003 Newsletter which describes why our non-profit land and trail trust is interested in acquiring this historic property. (pp 3 & 4)

We are members of the Land Trust Alliance and are guided by LTA 'Standards and Practices' which are quite specific and very much in the public interest. BABTT must conform to a precise and complex due diligence process...especially since we would be seeking public funds to assist with purchase. Our lawyer has prepared preliminary materials that will guide us in this endeavor should it be possible for BABTT to acquire the property for its' conservation value.

When may I call you to discuss the future of Alum Rock Stables?

Best regards! (and...Happy Barns and Trails!!)

Barbara Weitz, Executive Director, Bay Area Barns and Trails

P. O. Box 2435, Mill Valley, California 94942-2435

415-383-6283 www.bayareabarnsandtrails.org

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Tri-Valley Trailblazer's Annual Poker Ride & Lunch - Sunday October 8, 2006

BENEFIT CABALLO LOCO HORSE CAMP: Bay Area Barns and Trails will match \$ raised up to \$1,000...

Del Valle Regional Park in Livermore at Caballo Loco Horse Camp.

Check in 8:30am-9:30am; Ride out 9:30am-10:30am; Lunch 12-1pm; Raffle 1 pm.

\$\$\$\$ Poker cash prizes \$100-\$50-\$25.

BJR Photography on the trail to photograph you and your horse during the trail ride.

The ride is about 6 miles. Fees are \$30 for Adults, \$20 for Juniors (age 10-17),

plus park entrance fee is \$10 at kiosk unless you have an EBRPD parks pass.

Entry fee includes lunch & poker hand. Fee of \$10 added for anyone not registered by Oct 1.

Registration form on line at www.TriValleyTrailblazers.com

Questions? Dawn Johnson 925-484-4684, Barbara Hoffman 510-537-0314.

- August 2006

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Concord Naval Weapons Station Grounds Tours: Contra Costa County

Equestrians needed to get involved in the planning process - this is a huge land area, providing a great opportunity to establish connecting trails from outer Martinez to Mt. Diablo.

Two-hour tours of the inland area of Concord Naval Weapons Station.

Concord City Council's outreach to the community for participation in the development plan for civilian reuse of the property. Meet at the main gate, off Port Chicago Highway, Concord.

Space is limited, first-come, first-served

Saturday, August 26 - 9 a.m., 1 p.m. and 3 p.m.

Wednesday evening, Aug. 30 - 5:30 p.m.

Saturday, Sept. 9 - 9 a.m., 1 p.m. and 3 p.m.

RSVP required.

Contact Concord Community and Recreation Services Department at (925) 671-3404 to rsvp.

- August 2006

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Update: Day 905: 'Golden Gate Park Stables could reopen in 2009'

After five years of waiting to find out when the Golden Gate Park horse stables will reopen, District 1 Supervisor Jake McGoldrick learned from city officials last week that a potential date has been set: fall 2009. That's how long it will take to complete an environmental review and design and construct the new stables, Yomi Agunbiade, general manager of the city's Recreation and Park Department, told the Board of Supervisors' City Operations and Neighborhood Services Committee.

After several tipsters asked when the 1930s-era horse stables, which had been closed since 2001, would reopen, ChronicleWatch wrote about them in February 2004. Attempts by the Park Department to forgo a \$100,000 environmental survey on the facility failed, delaying renovations. City Planning Department staffing shortages then created a paperwork backlog and the request to begin the process was on a waiting list for nearly a year. In September, the Planning Department assigned a manager to the project, and for six months the Park Department worked on hiring a private consultant to do the review, which finally began in March, according to park officials. The result was the outline given at last week's committee hearing. "I think there's progress and a road map to getting the stables done," said tipster John Cummings, chairman of the San Francisco Stables Foundation, which will work with the city to raise funds for the estimated \$4.1 million project. "I think everyone is focused on looking forward, not looking backward."

Who's responsible: Yomi Agunbiade, general manager of San Francisco's Recreation and Park Department, (415) 831-2700; yomi.agunbiade@sfgov.org

CHRONICLEWATCH Update/Working for a better Bay Area: Becky Bowman

August 14, 2006 (SF Chronicle)

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Metropolitan Equestrian Preservation Society (MEPS) presents a proposal to work with Parks and Recreation and the City of Oakland to rehabilitate the Oakland City Stables

City Stables and MEPS —The MEPS Proposal MEPS is presenting a proposal to work with Parks and Recreation and the City of Oakland to rehabilitate the Oakland City Stables barns and corrals so that they will be safe for horses and people and so that horses can return and programs can begin. MEPS will develop a Site Plan to maximize the potential of City Stables to serve the public's need for equestrian activities. MEPS will detail a three-year plan for repair and renovation of the facility along the lines of the Master Plan utilizing, in part, the grant funds available for the stables. The MEPS proposal is based on the long-range plan developed by the City Stables Advisory Council working with the staff in Public Works. Maps will design and implement programs which will contribute to the upkeep of the facility and run a financially sound operation. MEPS seeks public and private funding for capital improvement and quality, programs that will include affordable, low cost or free programs for qualified city youth and adults. MEPS is affiliated with Friends of Oakland Parks and Recreation a 501 (c)(3) non-profit, tax-deductible corporation. ID #94-2751052

How to help? www.oaklandcitystables.org

The MEPS Board of Directors includes Founding members of Citizens for Oakland's Open Space (COOS) (1990 Bond Measure K), representatives from HEIA and PEIA (adjacent homeowners associations), members of the City Stables Advisory Council, and local equestrians. The MEPS board is broad based in experience and includes business and professional people as its members. The board has the know how and talent needed to make the stables operational and safe, and to extend its role as a valuable asset to the city

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Extension of sales tax for open space up to Sonoma County voters

Amid little public opposition, Sonoma County supervisors put measure on Nov. 7 ballot

'Hearing overwhelming praise and scant complaint, Sonoma County supervisors decided Tuesday that extension of the quarter-cent sales tax funding open space preservation should go to voters in November. "I expected to hear more of the negative comments today," said Supervisor Valerie Brown. "I think what we heard is that for \$25 a year this has been a great buy," she said, referring to the average per-person cost.

The tax, administered by the county Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District, raises about \$17 million annually. During its first 15 years, the district has spent more than \$200 million on purchases or easements on 142 properties totaling almost 70,000 acres.

Some opponents have complained that the district has spent too much for some properties, has bought others that are inaccessible and has been too eager to grab some that were under no development threat. But during a two-hour public hearing attended by about 70 people, dozens of community leaders spoke in support of the tax, saying it has saved greenbelts from development, has preserved ecologically important wildlife areas, has jump-started urban recreation projects and has given dairymen the means to continue farming. "It has been a victim of its own success," said Jim Harberson, a former county supervisor who led the 1990 campaign. "What people are saying is that they want more, and this tax provides them with a way to do that."

Only two people objected to the tax extension: Bill Pisenti, a perennial critic of government spending and head of the Redwood Empire Taxpayer's Committee, and Bill Bisso, who waged a decade-long legal fight with the county over the cleanup of his debris-littered ranch near Schellville. Bisso complained that the district's high-priced acquisitions were driving farmers out of business. Pisenti said the district's purchases were akin to private property confiscation as outlined in the Communist manifesto. "This all sounds good, but having 8-10 people walking on Taylor Mountain paid for by taxpayers is nonsense," Pisenti said. ... "When asking what benefits people are getting for their quarter-cent sales tax, it is critical for them to know that only this way protects the land in perpetuity," he said. Although the tax doesn't expire until 2011, supporters say assurance of continued revenue is necessary when attractive land comes on the market... The tax extension will appear on the Nov. 7 ballot, likely alongside a new quarter-cent tax funding a Cloverdale-to-Larkspur rail line, which directors of the Sonoma-Marin Area Rail Transit board are expected to approve today. Thirteen state bond measures are headed for the same ballot. ...

July 19, 2006 Santa Rosa Press Democrat: BLEYS W. ROSE

Livermore Area Recreation and Parks District (LARPD) approves the bid by Gowan construction to build the 150'x300' Robertson Park indoor arena. Bid came in under budget there will be no fund raising required.

The following message comes from Kelly Albrecht - Ms. Persistence!!

'My main involvement with this project has been since January of this year with the goal in mind to both resurrect and win approval. While this project has been attempted on numerous occasions with the work of many others and we are grateful for their foundation work.

I would like to send out a special thanks to those who helped me most in this last phase. There have been many individuals that have put up with my ranting and ravings to bounce ideas off of, both online and off:

-Equestrian Committee for their research and support.

-Dale Turner, LARPD Director, thru all phases the last umpteen years pro our cause, helpful and nice about it.

-Lee Savoy was instrumental in working with the building and fire depts. cutting a # of costs including \$140,000 for a sprinkler system. If that cost alone had to remain we would not be bringing you this happy news.

-Stacy Labrucherie, arrived on the scene a bit on the 10-11th hour side, but none the less hung in there diligently to the end. This was actually a very good thing because she took over the roll of communication with LARPD which at that point couldn't stand me anymore. (I had made a few enemies). They liked dealing with her. She chaired our committee.

-Kathy Chase was with me from the word go (she might not like to make that association). Along with her own research, contractor contacts, board member wooing.....she was always there for me with advice, encouragement, grammar corrections, etc. While we all made mistakes of numerous and varied types she made it thru 'blunderless' and dignified.

-My daughter Tiffany Albrecht who was their every step of the way

-Everyone who showed up for the Board meetings.

I can't stress enough how important it was to display this community interest directly. It was one of the big deciding factors on the sway to "vote yes" of the majority of the Board Members voting. It was also, or lack there of, a big deciding factor for the loss of funding last October.

Donations of celebratory champagne for all at the Christening will be gratefully accepted.

KellyAlbrecht [\[mailto:kellyliz0143@sbcglobal.net\]](mailto:kellyliz0143@sbcglobal.net)

August 31, 2006

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Marin County equestrians, hikers and open space advocates dissatisfied by Supervisors' plan; may seek 'prescriptive rights' to historic trail

The Dickson Ridge Fire Road/trail has been used by hikers and equestrians for over 30 years. Continued trail access is fundamental to the safety of riding programs at Nicasio Valley Arabians and visitors from near and far.

Want to learn more? Allison Houston www.savedixontrail.com

"The compromise bypass trail, presented by Mease's lawyer during the hearing, involves routing the 2000-foot trail through Open Space land along the western edge of their property. The bypass will cost the county an estimated \$70,000 to \$100,000. The county has two and a half years to complete the trail. Mease said he will grant a license for public use of the disputed road for five years. Once the license has expired, Open Space can either construct a second phase of the trail on the eastern side of Mease's property or replace the expired license with a permanent easement for an amount determined after appraisal seven and a half years from now. Mease later said the easement could be purchased in other ways by the county, however. "It's more likely it would be swapping of favors," he said. Such swapping could include a property exchange in which the county granted Mease construction benefits that zoning doesn't allow in return for the easement. Pamela MacNeily, San Geronimo planning group chair, said she was disappointed with Tuesday's decision. She had hoped the county would use the power of eminent domain to possess the Mease's property as a public easement. "I feel like the county really backed down on this one," she said.

Continue to Page 5 for more ...

The Nicasio/Mease trail compromise: If the county moves the trail, the public gets a license to use the new trail and may be able to purchase an easement

"Fearing the county's use of eminent domain to take a popular trail across their property in Nicasio, David Mease and Catherine Salah entered into a compromise agreement with the county on Tuesday, giving the county permission to build a bypass trail leading away from a disputed section of fire road that crosses their property. The fire road is part to a ridgetop trail system running from the San Geronimo Valley and lands east to the ocean. Hikers, bikers and equestrians use the Meases' property to access Dixon ridge, Roy's Redwoods and Samuel P. Taylor Park. The county board of supervisors voted unanimously for the compromise trail and land swap. The Meases will receive parcels of land now owned by the county in exchange for Mease property where the open space district will construct the trail. The county will have two and a half years to build the trail and will be granted a five year license to use the trail, after which the country can purchase the easement for appraised market value. Public has used the trail for decades. The public has had access to the fire road section now crossing the Mease property for decades. Public hearings began last November. San Geronimo Valley residents and county parks officials unsuccessfully pressured the Meases to grant a trail easement. Although the Meases kept the fire road open, they were unwilling to give up ownership of the road in case they had to restrict future access, they said. Then, at a planning commission meeting in March, the Meases were granted rights to build a home on the property. Members of the planning commission had hoped to require them to grant public ownership of the trail as a condition of the approval, but found there was no legal basis for the move and instead threatened to seize the land using eminent domain.

Three ways to get a trail

There are three options for gaining permanent public use of the fire road. First, the Meases can grant the public an easement to use of the trail. The Meases would maintain ownership, but the public would have the right to use the trail. Second, the county could seize the trail for public use with the power of eminent domain -- the ability of a government to seize private land for public use -- so long as the owner is paid fair market value. Third, San Geronimo residents can sue for prescriptive rights. The public can sue for prescriptive rights to private land if they have used it for more than five years before legislation barring the practice went into effect in 1972.

The compromise trail

The compromise bypass trail, presented by Mease's lawyer during the hearing, involves routing the 2000-foot trail through Open Space land along the western edge of their property. The bypass will cost the county an estimated \$70,000 to \$100,000. The county has two and a half years to complete the trail. Mease said he will grant a license for public use of the disputed road for five years. Once the license has expired, Open Space can either construct a second phase of the trail on the eastern side of Mease's property or replace the expired license with a permanent easement for an amount determined after appraisal seven and a half years from now. Mease later said the easement could be purchased in other ways by the county, however.

Swapping favors

"It's more likely it would be swapping of favors," he said. Such swapping could include a property exchange in which the county granted Mease construction benefits that zoning doesn't allow in return for the easement. Pamela MacNeily, San Geronimo planning group chair, said she was disappointed with Tuesday's decision. She had hoped the county would use the power of eminent domain to possess the Mease's property as a public easement. "I feel like the county really backed down on this one," she said. But if the country had used eminent domain, the action "would trigger deeply contentious debate within the private layer of the Marin County Community about the priorities of the open space district," supervisor Steve Kinsey said. Private property owners threatened to block public access to their own trails if the Meases' land was possessed using eminent domain, said Kinsey.

Continued from page 5: The Nicasio/Mease trail compromise: If the county moves the trail, the public gets a license to use the new trail and may be able to purchase an easement

Nicasio: Compromise Trail is Very Steep (continued from page 5)

MacNeily, Horseman's Association member Delos Putz, and Diana Dougherty, owner of adjacent Dougherty Arabians stable all rejected the deal struck at the meeting, citing steep slopes that at some points reach a 70 percent grade. With nothing to prevent horses or people from falling off the cliff edges, the route could be dangerous, said Putz. (Jim Jacobsen, the renown Forest Knolls trailbuilder who designed the proposed bypass, said there are already popular trails in West Marin that are 5-feet wide. These include Big Rock trail off of Lucas Valley Road, which he constructed retaining walls for and said he knows is popular for horseback riding. "To my knowledge, no one's fallen off and died yet," Jacobsen said. ** Reviewer's comment: 'this is hardly a standard by which to evaluate the safety of a trail'* Kinsey said the cliffs along the trail only reach a 70 percent grade in a few areas, and the 5-ft width is only a minimum and could be expanded on flatter areas. Recognizing the steep grade, Mease proposed a second trail entry further west on his property.

What the trails are like

The hike along the current fire road is a slippery roller coaster, the ground rising and falling in breath-shortening irregularity. The rocky surface, loosely scattered with knee-skinning gravel, is forgotten in a glance across the edge of the ridge where San Geronimo is spread out in endless forest below. For many citizens at Tuesday's hearing, the bigger issue was losing a fire road with so much history in their community, said Putz, who is also an attorney working pro bono to help residents sue for prescriptive rights of the fire road. "This trail is consistently and substantially used by the public, by hikers, by riders, by bicyclists, by boy scouts and girl scouts and summer camp kids and is essentially a public highway from the valley to Samuel P. Taylor park," Putz, said. Two other local attorneys, also hikers and equestrians, MacNeily said, are also helping prepare a legal case without pay. Although court fees could amount to six or seven thousand dollars, MacNeily expects the community would help fund the endeavor. Kinsey said he supported community members' rights to sue for prescriptive rights, but was still pleased with Tuesday's compromise. "I consider that my eyes are on the larger prize, which is maintaining historic routes," he said, "and I think we've done that."

POINT REYES LIGHT: Alecia Warren

Jun. 22, 2006

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2007 Grant Program To Advance the Ridge Trail: www.ridgetrail.org

The Bay Area Ridge Trail Council and the San Francisco Bay Area Program of the Coastal Conservancy are pleased to announce the availability of up to \$450,000 in funds to accelerate the development of the Bay Area Ridge Trail. Funding will come from Proposition 40: The California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Act of 2002. Funds will be made available for projects through a competitive grant program administered by the Bay Area Ridge Trail Council and the Coastal Conservancy. This grant program is intended to encourage government agencies and qualifying nonprofit organizations to plan, acquire, and construct new segments of the Bay Area Ridge Trail.

Bern Smith, the Council's South Bay Trail Director notes that "We want to fund some great projects, ones that will extend the Ridge Trail considerably, and the Coastal Conservancy partnership is an outstanding opportunity." For more information or for questions about projects in Marin, Sonoma, Napa, and Solano counties: Dee Swanhuysen, North Bay Trail Director 707-823-3236, or nbay@ridgetrail.org For Contra Costa, Alameda, Santa Clara, and San Mateo counties: Bern Smith, South and East Bay Trail Director 415-561-2595, or sbay@ridgetrail.org

Bay Area Ridge Trail Council and Coastal Conservancy [Grant Program PDF](#)

8/28/2006

Napa Valley Land Trust sets sights on \$20 million-dollar Wildlake Ranch

'Even as a blanket of clouds hung over most of Napa Valley, Wild Lake shone in the sun, a bright mirror of forest greens. At about 2,500 feet in elevation, the air up there is slightly crisper than on the valley floor. And it's quieter. Grass swishes. Occasionally a leaping fish splashes and songbirds chatter.

"This is God's country," Randy Dunn said while standing at Wild Lake's edge, taking a moment to admire the large shaded pond as he's done many a time over the years.

As far as the graying Howell Mountain grape grower can remember, Wild Lake and its surrounding 3,045 acres of canyons, ridges and creeks have always been wild. That's the way Dunn and a growing coalition of land conservationists hope the largest remaining patch of open space in Napa Valley will stay.

For decades the Douglas fir and oak-studded property belonged to the Duckhorn Hunting Club -- a private club whose 13 members hail mostly from St. Helena. **Dunn was not a member, but as a neighbor to the property he and his children often enjoyed the privilege of horseback riding through Bell Canyon and Dutch Henry Canyon, and along rocky Rattlesnake Ridge that juts up between the two wooded valleys.**

Dunn hopes the public can soon share the joy of rambling the grassy hilltops, oak woodlands, conifer forests, and lush creeks of Wildlake Ranch. Or perhaps newcomers will be awed by the land's many historical traces -- remains of an old homestead down one trail, or what appear to be old Native American grindstones along Bell Creek. The property is also home to the headwaters of three creeks and five year-round springs, two of which feed Bell Creek that flows into Bell Creek Reservoir -- St. Helena's water source.

Dunn, along with others from the Land Trust of Napa County, have been working the phones daily in an effort to raise the \$20 million needed to buy and preserve the 15-mile landscape that stretches from the summit of Mt. St. Helena nearly to the town of Angwin.

"Some of my most treasured times were with our daughter, Jennifer, riding through those hills and forests," Dunn said, referring to his late daughter and longtime horseback riding partner. "Is preserving this area a personal goal for me? I guess that judging by my emotions, yes. But this dramatic 3,000-acre property must be saved not for my memories, but for the future memories of others that should walk or ride these lands."

So far the Land Trust has amassed \$15.5 million of the \$20 million needed to purchase the property, said John Hoffnagle, executive director of the Land Trust. According to an agreement between the Land Trust and the Duckhorn Hunting Club, the Land Trust has until July 11 to produce the remaining \$4.5 million and complete the sale. If the Land Trust succeeds, Wildlake Ranch would become the largest contiguous protected landscape within Napa Valley.

The long-term goal would be to incorporate Wildlake Ranch into Robert Louis Stevenson State Park that lies to the northwest of the property, Hoffnagle said. The Land Trust is also looking into acquiring the undeveloped acreage west of Wildlake Ranch in order to create a contiguous wilderness corridor and eventually expand Robert Louis Stevenson Park from its current 5,200 acres to 13,000 acres.

Hoffnagle said the drive to raise \$20 million in just a few months is extremely ambitious, but he believes it's possible.

"Nobody has ever done something of this scale in such a short time," Hoffnagle said. "Some people would say you can't do a \$20 million campaign in even six months but we're doing it because there are people who love the Napa Valley and want to protect it."

Embarking on such a mammoth fundraiser is a "big risk" for the Land Trust because the organization must still raise funds to stay solvent after this land acquisition is done, Hoffnagle said. Even when the \$20 million land purchase closes, the Land Trust will seek to collect another \$5 million to acquire adjacent properties and keep up Wildlake. For nature preservationists, Wildlake Ranch holds rich value due to its diversity of plant and wildlife, its striking viewshed overlooking Napa Valley, and its proximity to other large open spaces, namely the neighboring state-owned "school lands" and Robert Louis Stevenson Park.

Napa Valley Land Trust sets sights on \$20 million-dollar Wildlake Ranch (continued)

Hoffnagle said there's no question the vast tract would be vulnerable to vineyard or housing development if ever advertised on the real estate market. Comprising of 18 legal parcels, Wildlake is well-suited for estate home sites. In Pope Valley, which flanks Wildlake to the east, there have been several multi-million dollar land sales in recent months: Aetna Springs Vineyard sold for about \$11 million, Juliana Vineyards for about \$40 million, and the Aetna Springs Resort for about \$10 million.

"There's vineyards on every side of the property and some of it is 30 percent slope or less," Hoffnagle said. "There's a lot of risk there for vineyard development."

Dunn, the man who spearheaded the effort to preserve Wildlake Ranch, owns a 35-acre vineyard on Howell Mountain. A conservationist at heart, Dunn has single-handedly bought other parcels in and around Angwin to preserve pieces of the northern valley's skyline.

Last spring when Dunn heard through the Angwin grapevine that the Duckhorn Hunting Club was gearing up to sell Wildlake Ranch, the vintner began what he called his own "underground" effort to buy the land and keep it in its natural state.

"I had aspirations I could pull it together myself, not as an individual, but with a group of people. I tried to stay underground with it because there are lots of people in this valley with money to play around with," Dunn said. "But I thought I can't go on like this forever. So I got allied with the Land Trust."

Now the land-conservation group is in the last lap of fundraising. The \$15.5 million it's gathered so far has come largely from three contributors: the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation with \$5 million; the Coastal Conservancy with \$2 million; and Dunn, who's donating \$5 million that he's borrowing through a low-interest bank loan.

"As I said to my wife, retirement is not in my vocabulary," Dunn said. "What am I going to do? Go to Florida and play tennis once a day?"

Meanwhile, Paul Woodworth, one of the longtime members of the hunting club, said he hopes the Land Trust is able to pool together the money because he wants Wildlake Ranch stay as he's always known it -- wild.

"It's going to get sold eventually," Woodworth said on a recent morning while mowing a large patch of lawn near the property's entry-gate. "All the members have a share in the trust, and as people die away that trust gets diluted. We want to sell while we still have control of it as an entire property. It's the right thing to do. Otherwise it'll get developed."

Napa Valley Register

By JULISSA MCKINNON, Register Staff Writer

May 29, 2006