

Solano County



SKY VALLEY-CORDELIA HILLS OPEN SPACE

Solano County is distinguished by its inviting mix of rural and suburban environments and the diversity of its working landscapes. Its open lands range from extensive marshes along San Pablo and Suisun bays, to the western slopes of the Blue Ridge Mountains, to vast, rolling farmland that extends into the edge of the Great Central Valley. New development is largely confined to seven scattered cities, each bordered by a greenbelt and retaining a unique personality reflecting its history and setting.

POPULATION: >420,000

SIZE: 582,016 acres

PROTECTED LANDS: 71,662 acres

CONSERVANCY PROJECTS: >40

CONSERVANCY FUNDING: >\$13 million

The Coastal Conservancy has helped to protect almost 10,000 acres of the County's marshlands and rolling hills and open many of these and other areas for people's enjoyment. We have also helped cities restore their waterfronts to serve both local communities and visitors. This work has added immeasurably to the quality of life for the people who live here and has greatly benefitted the birds, fish, and other wildlife that depend on healthy natural lands to survive.

The Conservancy has worked with the people of Solano County for more than 30 years to sustain the area's quality of life and economic viability. We will continue that work to:

- Provide outdoor recreational opportunities for a growing and diverse population
- Restore and improve the health of creeks, marshes, and open hills
- Keep farmland in production
- Meet the challenges posed by a rising sea and a changing climate.

Greenbelt Protection

The Conservancy has worked with local communities, the Solano Land Trust, and many other organizations to acquire and open large swaths of natural lands in Solano County. The focus has been on expanding and connecting a network of protected open space, with regional trails and continued cattle grazing, in the County's central and western portions.

- The 2012 purchase of the 1,500-acre **Rockville Trails Estates** property followed from the Green Valley community's desire to protect scenic oak woodlands and rangeland that had been slated for development of some 350 homes.
- The 3,956-acre **Sky Valley-Cordelia Hills Open Space** buffers the cities of Fairfield, Vallejo, and Benicia between Interstates 80 and 680. The property is habitat for several endangered species and offers the opportunity for many miles of public trails with spectacular views.
- The 2,070-acre **Rush Ranch**, just south of Suisun City, is a regional treasure on the edge of Suisun Marsh. Miles of trails on the ranch are open to the public and a nature center and restored farmstead showcase the natural and human history of the area.



BENICIA WATERFRONT

Lewis Stewart

Wetlands and Creek Restoration

The Conservancy has long worked to protect and restore Solano County's wetlands and creeks—valuable habitats that are critical to the survival of birds, fish, and other wildlife—and has supported nature education and volunteer programs to engage communities' participation in building trails and restoring these habitats.

- The 1991 purchase of the 1,493-acre **Cullinan Ranch** on Highway 37 allowed its restoration to tidal marsh and associated wildlife habitats. The property now borders 10,000 acres of former salt ponds being restored in the Napa-Sonoma Marsh.
- The 688-acre **Miens Landing** across from the Grizzly Island Wildlife Area in Suisun Marsh was purchased for wetlands restoration.
- After years of planning, restoration of about two miles of habitat is underway along **Suisun Creek**, one of the most promising Bay Area streams for restoring populations of the threatened steelhead trout.
- More than 180 projects conducted with landowner assistance improved thousands of acres of waterfowl habitat in **Suisun Marsh**.
- With Conservancy support, the Solano Resource Conservation District has coordinated several **volunteer activities** to restore creekside habitats and improve public trails.
- Conservancy funding enabled establishment of the volunteer-maintained **Forrest-Deaner Native Plant Botanic Garden** overlooking Southampton Bay in the Benicia State Recreation Area.



RUSH RANCH'S VIRGIL SELLARS

Rush Ranch Educational Council



EXPLORING NATURE AT RUSH RANCH

Natalie DuMont

Urban Waterfronts

The Conservancy has helped revitalize urban waterfront areas, enabling new visitor-serving uses and supporting local economies.

- Improvements to the base of **Benicia's First Street Pier** made it far more accessible to visitors and better linked it to the historic



VOLUNTEERS BUILD A TRAIL AT LYNCH CANYON

Photo Credit: left page



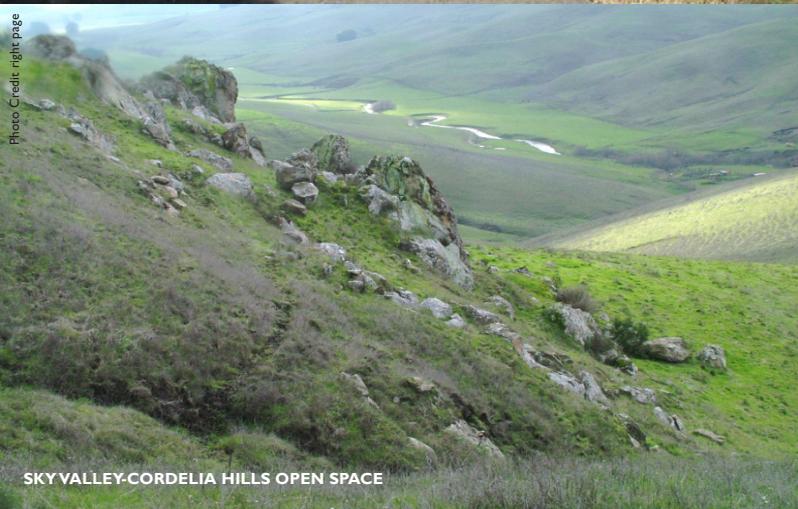
RUSH RANCH NATURE CENTER



ROCKVILLE TRAILS ESTATES



BLUE ROCK SPRINGS CORRIDOR, VALLEJO



SKY VALLEY-CORDELIA HILLS OPEN SPACE

Melanie Denninger

Melanie Denninger

Urban Waterfronts *continued*

downtown. A new master plan for the waterfront will address management of sea level rise and storm waters and the addition of new improvements to a 15-acre area, including a segment of the **San Francisco Bay Trail** and a launch site for the **San Francisco Bay Water Trail**.

- The Conservancy supported redevelopment of the **Suisun City Waterfront** with funding for comprehensive planning, acquisition of key waterfront parcels, shoreline stabilization, and construction of Harbor Plaza, a one-acre park specially designed to accommodate large crowds for waterfront events.
- A 55-acre former U.S. Navy dredge material disposal area on the **Mare Island Strait** in Vallejo was improved with trails and wildlife habitat and plans were developed for additional park improvements.
- The Conservancy is assisting with engineering for the **Rio Vista Waterfront Promenade** to help it withstand shoreline erosion and the effects of sea level rise.

Regional Trails

The Conservancy has long supported the development of public trails in the County to provide opportunities for outdoor recreation and help people discover the beauty and wonders of the nearby natural lands. Much of the Conservancy's work has focused on extending the **San Francisco Bay Trail** and the **Bay Area Ridge Trail**, and efforts are underway to establish the **Bay Area Water Trail** and the **Great Delta Trail**.

- Construction of a 1.65-mile segment of the Ridge Trail along **McGary Road**, which parallels Interstate 80, opened a safe route for bicyclists and pedestrians between Fairfield and the end point of the Solano Bikeway at the Vallejo city limits.
- New segments of the Bay Trail and the Ridge Trail at **Glen Cove Park** on the Carquinez Strait have greatly improved access within the park and will become important components of the planned 50-mile Carquinez Scenic Loop Trail.
- A 2.4-mile joint segment of the Bay Trail and Ridge Trail linked **Glen Cove Park** with the **Benicia State Recreation Area**, and an Interstate 780 pedestrian and bicycle overcrossing enabled safe passage between the recreation area and the northward extension of the Ridge Trail.
- Plans and studies are underway for major additions to the Ridge Trail in **Rockville Trails Estates**, **Sky Valley-Cordelia Hills Open Space**, along the **Benicia waterfront**, and in the **Jameson Canyon** area.

“The Coastal Conservancy was first in line to support some of the Solano Land Trust’s biggest projects, attracting the support of others and ensuring our eventual success. The Conservancy’s skill at finding solutions to daunting problems has greatly benefited our work.”

Nicole Byrd, Executive Director
Solano Land Trust



ROCKVILLE TRAILS ESTATES

The Coastal Conservancy is a State agency, established in 1976, that protects and improves natural lands and waterways, helps people get to and enjoy coastal areas, and sustains local economies along California's coast. The Conservancy works along the entire length of the coast, within the watersheds of rivers and streams that extend inland from the coast, and throughout the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area. The Conservancy is non-regulatory and achieves its goals by joining forces with local communities, nonprofit organizations, other government agencies, businesses, and private landowners.

CONSERVANCY PROJECTS :

- Protect, restore, and improve natural areas and wildlife habitat
- Help people get to and enjoy the outdoors by building hiking and biking trails, acquiring and improving parks and beaches, and creating campgrounds and hostels
- Keep our waterways clean and healthy for people and wildlife
- Help communities revitalize their waterfronts
- Support floodwater management and integrate flood-control projects into the life of a community
- Conserve commercial fisheries, working farmland, and forests.

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