

CARNEROS LAND STEWARDSHIP FOUNDATION

Press Contacts:

Steve Sangiacomo, Carneros Land Stewardship
707-696-5242

Sheri Cardo, Director of Communications
Sonoma Land Trust
707-526-6930 ext 111

**CARNEROS LAND STEWARDSHIP FOUNDATION AND
SONOMA LAND TRUST PARTNER TO RESTORE
TOLAY CREEK RIPARIAN HABITAT**

CARNEROS, CA (December 7, 2010): The Carneros Land Stewardship Foundation and the Sonoma Land Trust have partnered in a multi-year initiative to restore the native habitat along 2.5 miles of Tolay Creek adjacent to Highway 121 near the southern border of Carneros. The project is expected to restore the ecological functioning of Tolay Creek and also provide youth education and job training.

Tolay Creek flows through Sonoma Land Trust's Tolay Creek Ranch, connecting the upstream and adjacent Tolay Regional Park with thousands of acres of protected wetlands downstream, creating a unique ecosystem of freshwater lakes, creeks and tidal wetlands.

A grant of \$20,000 has been made by the Carneros Land Stewardship Foundation to the Sonoma Land Trust to underwrite a portion of Phase I of the project. The transformation of the lower stretch of Tolay Creek is expected to take two years. The riparian fencing is now in place. Over the next few months, the Conservation Corps North Bay crews will begin to remove the invasive Himalayan blackberry from the creek, and cut and plant willow stakes to restore the riparian habitat. They will then collect native plant seeds for propagation, and plant 1,600 native shrubs and trees, such as native blackberry, coffee berry and rose, buckeye and valley oak.

“The Carneros Land Stewardship Foundation (CLSF) is thrilled to partner with the Sonoma Land Trust on this exciting project,” said Steve Sangiacomo, chair, CLSF and owner, Sangiacomo Family Vineyards. “It is a wonderful opportunity for both parties to work together on our common goals of restoring and preserving local vital ecosystems. The Tolay Creek restoration project is protecting some

of the most critical habitats in the Carneros region and we are pleased to be a part of this important environmental initiative.”

The Tolay Creek Ranch restoration project is an example of how many individuals, foundations and private and public organizations are working together for the benefit of our community and our future,” said Bob Neale, SLT stewardship director. “The Sonoma Land Trust is so pleased to begin this new partnership with the Carneros Land Stewardship Foundation.”

The highly visible Tolay Creek Riparian Enhancement Project (through its proximity to Highway 121), is expected to provide vivid access to the site’s restoration progress, providing an unheralded opportunity to expand environmental education programs for schools, the community and the public-at-large.

Owned by the Sonoma Land Trust, the Ranch possesses a variety of unique characteristics including serpentine grasslands, oak woodlands and riparian habitats. Among the species found in these habitats are golden eagles, red-legged frogs, western pond turtles, and northern burrowing owls, as well as the more common coyote, deer, hawks, songbird and garter snakes.

The southwest corner of the property contains serpentine soils that offer a vibrant array of native wildflowers every spring. Humans have been present on the property for thousands of years, leaving their traces in many places, from petroglyphs to remnants of the property’s early ranching history.

About the Carneros Land Stewardship Foundation

The Carneros Land Stewardship Foundation is a 501c(3) organization promotes the education, conservation, preservation and restoration of the land, wetlands, creek beds and ecological habitat in the Carneros region of Northern California, bordering one of the country’s most critical areas and marshlands. For more information: www.carneroslandstewardship.org

About the Sonoma Land Trust

The Sonoma Land Trust preserves scenic, natural, agricultural and open land for future generations. Since 1976, the Sonoma Land Trust has protected more than 25,000 acres of beautiful, productive and environmentally significant land. For more information about the Sonoma Land Trust, please visit: www.sonomalandtrust.org.