

Partners and community come together with the Rancho Ventura Conservation Trust

BY LISA CAREY

The most rewarding partnerships are everlasting, forged in trust and respect. It is such a bond, family deep, that brought the Rancho Ventura Conservation Trust into being, as a legacy returning to its roots.

Providing stewardship to 6,000 acres of working landscape in Ventura's foothills, the Rancho Ventura Partners with the local community as nature's accessible backyard while teaming up with local businesses that share the same vision and respect for the land.

The partnership with the Lloyd Family is where it all began in 1979. That was when 19-year-old Richard Atmore found his life's calling as a ranch hand on the Lloyd Ranch in the hills framing his hometown. "I felt most alive working in nature, and with animals. There was no going back," says the sixth generation Ventura native. "During my 35 years with the Lloyd Family I was fortunate to apprentice under Heroclio 'Rocky' Esparza and J.A. 'Toots,' who had 106 years of combined experience in land management above the hills of Ventura. They passed along to me what they learned from the stewards before them, who learned from the Spanish vaqueros before them, who learned from the Chumash Native Americans before them."

When the Lloyd Family decided to divest in portions of the land first owned by Ralph B. Lloyd in 1885, they wanted to find a way to conserve the land and keep it in ranching. The long-standing relationship between Richard Atmore and Lloyd provided a gateway to stewardship honoring the land's predecessors. Lloyd generously donated 860 acres of the 1600 plus acres to Rancho Ventura and Richard and Bonnie Atmore are raising funds to acquire the



Caption here

Wine & Food
experience
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The VC Star Wine & Food Experience,
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remainder of the ranch through a purchase and sale agreement with Lloyd. Thus, almost like coming home, the Rancho Ventura Conservation Trust was created, protecting the land for generations to come.

With reverence, Richard Atmore carries on the vision of the Lloyd Family, while his wife Bonnie brings her expertise and passions together to build alliances that open doors to the community.

Bonnie believes, "People selectively choose their partners to work alongside and invest their influence, time, and resources in. If they're giving so much of themselves, they

must share a mutual respect and a quotient for giving back." Rancho Ventura provides the opportunity for local enterprises to come together as an integrative and organic part of something greater.

Since the Rancho Ventura Conservation Trust was formed in 2014, over 2,800 friends from all over have visited the protected hillsides to enjoy a hike, yoga, mindful meditation, bird watching, photography tour, or a class field trip tour since the Thomas Fire. Says Bonnie, "We have a steady group of kids, families, scout packs coming up to enjoy the land and see first-hand how a

working landscape is sustainable in harmony with nature and so beneficial to our urban communities."

According to Todd A. Stevens, President and CEO of the California Resources Corporation, "CRC is very proud of our partnership with the RVCT and our newly implemented Wildlife Habitat Council Certification Project at the conservancy. As a proud California company, CRC is dedicated to giving back where we live and work to ensure that our communities have a vibrant and sustainable future by all measures – environmental, economic and social."

Rancho Ventura is also fast becoming an excellent venue and gathering place to refresh, relax and celebrate. The recent MadeWest Brew & Hike hosted on Father's Day brought revelers together for good times, great brews and awesome views. Organizers pooled their talents and resources to create a rewarding event that benefitted programs and projects for the conservatory and even included a new signature brew.

Richard and Bonnie agree, "All this outreach has allowed us to gather our community as we continue to move forward with restoration after the fire. Recovery efforts help us refresh our minds, hearts, and soul. Nature is the most honest reminder of how connected, how resilient and strong we can be together."

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To become a partner or to get involved:
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The mission of the Rancho Ventura Conservation Land Trust is to protect the natural diversity, scenic open space and agricultural vitality of our Ventura County ranch and coastal areas.

Join us in conserving these hillsides forever.

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