



**sacramento valley  
conservancy**

*open space. for all.*

## Organization History

The Sacramento Valley Conservancy (SVC) was formed as a non-profit, public benefit corporation in 1990 with its primary purpose being preservation, protection, and/or enhancement of land in its natural, scenic, historical, agriculture, forested and/or open space condition of the greater Sacramento Valley California area. SVC was founded by a group of concerned citizens who had participated in an open space planning task force convened by Sacramento County in the late 1980's. This group of citizens, led by Robert Slobe, Ann Kohl and others, felt that a private, non-profit land trust could help provide innovative solutions and services to assist with public and landowner efforts to preserve open space.

Robert Slobe of the North Sacramento Land Company was the first president, and led SVC through its first organizational development efforts, including strategic planning and hiring of several part-time executive directors, the most recent and current being Aimee Rutledge. Holding this position through 1997, Slobe and the Board of Trustees accomplished several park acquisitions in conjunction with the city of Sacramento, including Sally Hudson Park (0.5 acres of valley oaks in South Natomas), Marconi Kenwood Park (nearly 11 acres of oaks along Hagginwood Creek in North Sacramento), and a nearby 10-acre additional to Johnston Park in North Sacramento. SVC also started working to assist with the acquisition of the Snipes-Pershing Ravine in Orangevale, and the Dry Creek Parkway in Rio Linda-Elverta.

Dick Troy, having retired from the position of Chief of Operations at California State Parks, took over as president from 1998-2000, and, in conjunction with the Board and staff, helped SVC develop its 21<sup>st</sup> Century Open Space Vision for Sacramento County and surrounding areas. This vision indicated several "essential open space resource areas" in which SVC would focus its preservation efforts over the next several years. These priority areas included the Dry Creek Parkway, The Sacramento Prairie Vernal Pool Area in Southeastern Sacramento County, the lands around the Costumes River Preserve, and the East Sacramento County oak woodlands and rangelands bordering El Dorado County, among others.

Chris Unkel, a senior field representative of The Nature Conservancy, became president at the end of 2000 and continued as president to the beginning of 2003. He has worked with the board of Trustees and staff to help implement SVC's 21<sup>st</sup> Century Open Space Vision. As of January 2003, SVC had directly assisted, through purchase of property or holding of conservation easements, with the protection a total of 3107 acres of land, including approximately half of the Deer Creek Hills property (1760 acres) in the East Sacramento County oak woodlands and rangeland area. Deer Creek Hills remains a working cattle ranch with docent-led public tours. In the Sacramento Prairie Vernal Pools area, SVC had acquired and helped to preserve over 2000 acres, which contain unique vernal pool and upland habitats that are home to several endangered and threatened species and many types of native plants. SVC had also helped to acquire and preserved hundreds of acres of open space in the Creek Parkway for the purpose of habitat preservation, public recreation, flood control and agriculture. SVC had also supported California State Parks effort to purchase the 35-acre Snipes-Pershing Ravine and local agency and community efforts to purchase the 4.5- acre Fair Oaks Bluff property, both along the American River bluffs. In 2013 the State Lands Commission purchased Camp Pollock from Mother Load chapter Boy Scouts of America and assigned SVC to run the 11-acre property, including the 1924 Lodge hosting a variety of functions. Camp Pollock operates under the American River Parkway and is open to the general public and open dawn to dusk. Camp Pollock hosts overnight youth camping, the lodge and courtyard can be rented for special events. Public gatherings such as music festivals are open to the general public.

SVC continues to work to protect additional lands and to accomplish land and to accomplish the 21<sup>st</sup> Century Open Space Vision. SVC believes that protection of open space is necessary to maintain a high quality of life for future generations.