

# Auburn Journal

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## Ceremony celebrates mandarin orchard preservation

Side Hill Citrus will “stay always as an agricultural opportunity”

By: Gus Thomson of the Auburn Journal



No lot splits. Always destined to stay in agriculture.

A 47-acre ranch in the foothills between Auburn and Lincoln that has been producing mandarins since the 1970s was celebrated this past week to mark the land’s protected status under a conservation easement.

The Side Hill Citrus Farm easement doesn’t mean the foothills parcel is changing hands but does provide guarantees against the land being shifted from agricultural uses.

Owner Richard Ferreira sold the permanent conservation easement in a transaction with Placer County costing \$350,000. The majority of the money came from the Sierra Nevada Conservancy’s Proposition 84 ranch preservation lands grant program, which provided \$185,000.

Bob Kingman, of the Sierra Nevada Conservancy, said the easement to preserve a working landscape was a good fit for funding.

“Investing in projects like the Side Hill Citrus



conservation easement helps to protect water resources and preserve local agriculture,” Kingman said.

Other funding came from the Emigrant Trails Greenway Trust and Placer County Open Space Fund. Placer Land Trust contributed about \$6,000 toward the county’s \$65,000 acquisition-related costs.

Land Trust Executive Director Jeff Darlington said during the ceremony at the ranch on Tuesday that the work of his non-profit group and the county has developed into a successful private-public partnership.

“It’s rare to see a county so actively protect the future of their agricultural economy and rural quality of life,” Darlington said.

The ranch, located on Pleasant Hill Road, contains 2,400 mandarin trees on 24 acres. The organic citrus harvest also includes Meyer lemons and grapefruit for a market that stretches into the Bay Area. In the audience of about 50 people on Tuesday was Alex Ferreira, Richard’s father and a former long-time Placer County Water Agency and Placer County elected official.

The easement is in keeping with several goals of the county’s Placer Legacy open space and agricultural conservation easement program that Alex Ferreira was an early supporter of in the 1990s.

Supervisor Robert Weygandt, whose Lincoln-area district takes in the ranch, said the easement will ensure the farm is preserved for agricultural uses in perpetuity.

“It can’t be split up,” Weygandt said. “It will stay always as an agricultural opportunity.”

#### Keywords:

side hill citrus farm richard ferreira Alex Ferreira sierra nevada conservancy land easement Agriculture mandarin placer county Placer Land Trust jeff darlington Robert Weygandt

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**Robert Vaughan** · Top Commenter

Is anyone wise enough and so foretelling that they know how land should be used in the future? Should we who will be dead and in the grave reach out and limit the use of the land for the living? Should we look into the face of economic principles that use land for its highest and best use and turn those principles aside, saying we know better than our children? When will the number and size of such encumbrances throughout the county be such that we must renege on our promises and use the land for whatever is needed in the future? Is a farming easement really for the people or is the land still considered private? Should we pay \$350,000 to limit the use of the land for future generations when our living seniors need a senior center and our living children need an aquatic center?

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**Cherie Holm** · Top Commenter · Self Critic at Working at Living One Moment at a Time

I support these type of partnerships; we need to preserve our agriculture (home grown) and open space. I am a member of Nature Conservancy and they are proactive in partnering with cities and counties to preserve wildlife reserves, wet lands and agriculture land. I would much rather see Placer county entering partnerships with such, than with Big box stores like Costco.

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**Jon Green** · Top Commenter

The good old boy network strikes again. \$350,000 to the Ferreira family.

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**Don Anderson** · Top Commenter · California State University, Fresno

Curious as to what the new property tax base will be ? Will it be 1 % of the selling value of \$350,000 or something else?

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