



# MORRISON

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Morrison Principal Ana Klein details the five key steps to consider when restructuring.



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### CLIENT CORNER

There is always something new going on, so get caught up with our latest client news.



# YOLO LAND TRUST

Yolo Land Trust (YLT) has one simple and vital mission: to conserve farmland in Yolo County. Talk to anyone connected to the organization and you will quickly learn that this is not simply a catchy tagline, but a passion.

Land trusts are non-governmental private nonprofit organizations whose purpose is to protect and preserve important land resources for public benefit. YLT, founded in 1988, is one of the oldest land trusts in the Central Valley and the only nonprofit in Yolo County whose mission is to conserve farmland. YLT is one of approximately 1,700 organizations that work at the local, regional, national, or international level to protect important land resources. These resources are defined by the needs of the community or region and may include working lands (farms or ranches), wetlands, wildlife habitats, watersheds, threatened ecosystems, open space, scenic landscapes and historic or cultural sites.

Since its founding, YLT has permanently preserved 12,917 acres of farmland, ensuring that agricultural productivity will continue, wildlife will be sustained, open space will be preserved, and the county's rural quality of life will be safeguarded.

YLT works tirelessly to conserve land by helping landowners preserve their property's resources with conservation easements, of which YLT currently has 77 in place. These easements provide

landowners with peace of mind that their property will be preserved as they wish. YLT also works to ensure strong public policies that enhance long-term farmland protection and promote public awareness of the importance of agriculture and the need to preserve it. YLT serves as a strategic advisor in providing technical support to help local partners in Yolo County.

YLT is an example of an organization that is small but effective. Their staff is directed by 10 highly experienced board members, all of whom have strong ties and a deep connection to agriculture in Yolo County.

As fall 2022 approached, a representative of the YLT Board reached out to learn more about Morrison's Executive Recruiting practice, seeking support in leading the search efforts for their next Executive Director. After nearly 15 years of service, their Executive Director, Michele Clark, was set to retire.

Finding someone to continue the great work that Michele had done with YLT was not going to be an easy task, but given Morrison's unique approach to relationship development and executive recruitment, it was a project that Morrison was excited to tackle.

This engagement was much more than simply finding someone to fill an open position; it was an opportunity to play an important part in helping to equip YLT to fulfill their mission

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of conserving agricultural farmland by finding an Executive Director who would embody the ethos and purpose of the organization and be trusted to increase the organization's overall portfolio, thus leading to even more protected farmland. The next Executive Director would be the person to help keep Yolo County's rural heritage alive, work toward fostering a healthy community, help to generate good jobs by supporting working farms and ranches, preserve wildlife habitats, and maintain the agricultural landscape of Yolo County.

After conducting an extensive national search, a strong leading candidate rose to the top.

Longtime conservationist, water manager,

and farmer John Currey was that person. Currey has deep family connections to agriculture in Yolo and Solano Counties. Currey studied Agricultural and Managerial Economics. After he completed his degree at University of California, Davis, he was licensed as a Real Estate Broker and is an Accredited Farm Manager.

When a job description is written and a search is conducted the hope is to find a candidate that meets 80% of the desired qualifications; Currey surpassed this by far and was selected as YLT's next Executive Director. The President of the Board was quoted as saying, "John's exceptional

background and experience makes him uniquely qualified to guide the YLT Board through the next level of growth for the organization."

It was said many times throughout the recruitment process that YLT was approaching the search with enough speed to make sure there was an effective hand-off from one Executive Director to the next, but slow enough to ensure that just the right person was identified as the next leader for such important work. Morrison was honored to partner with YLT in helping to identify John Currey as their next Executive Director. We are excited to watch him lead this important work for many years to come.