



## Media Release

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### **DO NOT RELEASE BEFORE 7:00 P.M., JULY 22, 2010**

The San Luis Obispo County Native Tree Committee is proud to award Karl & Sue Luft with the 2010 Native Tree Stewardship Award. The Native Tree Stewardship Award recognizes the importance of natural resource conservation and education within agriculture in San Luis Obispo County. The Lufts will be presented the award at Cattlemen and Farmers' Day on Thursday, July 22 at the Paso Robles Mid-State Fair at 6:45p.m.

Karl & Sue Luft were chosen for the award as great examples and leaders in sustainable agriculture and native tree protection. Their property is east of Templeton and has four acres of zinfandel winegrapes, a straw-bale home powered by solar panels, a streambed with native oak woodland, and open land. Not only are Karl & Sue highly involved with organizations like Central Coast Vineyard Team, the Native Tree Committee, the Land Conservancy of SLO County and the Upper Salinas – Las Tablas Resource Conservation District, but they are intricately connected to their land and have a heightened awareness of ecological processes taking place.

Since Karl and Sue are both retired engineers, they integrate science and technology into their vineyard practices. Their vineyard is Sustainability in Practice (SIP) Certified.

Oak seedlings were beginning to sprout up in their vineyard rows, where the vegetation is mowed or sprayed to reduce the competition for water. With this practice, the oak seedlings are mowed as well. Karl & Sue committed to transplanting the seedlings to areas where they would not be disturbed. However, they wanted to do more. They embarked on a restoration project.

Hundreds of acorns were collected from their property and in January of 2007 they were planted at over 100 different planting sites on the Luft's open land. In June of 2010 they hosted an on-site 'tailgate' where they encouraged winegrape growers to incorporate oak plantings on their property. Topics also covered at the tailgate included oak regeneration, wildlife corridors, oak ecological structure and how native woodland can help with vineyard pest management.

Karl and Sue Luft are great examples to other growers and landowners. Their stewardship, knowledge, and love for their land should be observed and commended.

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