

BRENTWOOD AG LAND TRUST, STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT SHIELD HISTORIC CONTRA COSTA COUNTY FARMLAND FROM DEVELOPMENT

BRENTWOOD, Calif. – Ron Nunn has agricultural operations in several California locations, but the 132-acre Nunn Kami-Grigsby farm just outside Brentwood is special.

“My grandfather, George, came from Mendocino County in the mid-1880s and sharecropped some of the old Grigsby property,” Nunn said. “Another of the parcels here was owned by a Japanese farmer. He was sent to a detention facility at the start of World War II and came back and farmed it afterwards. So there’s a lot of history here. Plus, it’s excellent farmland.”

Nunn Kami-Grigsby farm will remain as farmland for future generations now that Nunn and the Brentwood Agricultural Land Trust (BALT) have placed an agricultural conservation easement on the property, forever shielding it from development.

“My father, Stanley, was a farmer, I’m a farmer, and my family will continue to farm here,” said Nunn, 78 and a lifelong resident of the Brentwood area. “I’ve seen a lot of changes around here the last 20 years. Before that, it was a very quiet area. Up until a couple of years ago, there was a lot of new development. The edge of town is less than a mile away now.”

Funding for the project was provided by the California Department of Conservation (DOC) through the bond-funded California Farmland Conservancy Program (CFCP) and from the city of Brentwood.

“Brentwood values its agricultural heritage,” said Paul Eldredge, City Manager of Brentwood. “Preserving the Nunn Kami-Grigsby farm was a key part of our long-term strategy to protect and revitalize farmland in our community.”

Added Kathryn Lyddan of BALT: “Brentwood farmers have been growing food for the Bay Area since the 1880s. We’re excited to be able to permanently protect urban-edge prime farmland like the Nunn Kami-Grigsby farm.”

Planted in tomatoes, corn and bell peppers, the Nunn Kami-Grigsby farm is half a mile from Brentwood’s city limit. Between 1984 and 2008, about 42,000 acres of agricultural land, including more than 14,000 acres of prime farmland, were converted to urban and other non-

agricultural uses in Contra Costa County. The easement on Nunn Kami-Grigsby farm, together with three other BALT easements, creates a 558-acre contiguous block of permanently protected farmland east of Brentwood.

“We’re always pleased to help protect outstanding farmland like this,” said Brian Leahy, chief of the state’s Division of Land Resource Protection, which administers the California Farmland Conservancy Program. “But in an era when there’s a growing awareness of the value of fresh, locally grown food, it’s especially gratifying to be involved in preserving farmland in such close proximity to the Bay Area. We congratulate the Nunn family, the city of Brentwood, and the Brentwood Agricultural Land Trust on the creation of this conservation easement and encourage other Contra Costa County landowners to explore the easement option for their property.”

About the Department of Conservation’s California Farmland Conservancy

Program: Since 1996, the CFCP has provided \$77.4 million in funding to permanently shield 52,293 acres of the state’s best and most vulnerable agricultural land from development. Landowners and trusts are encouraged to contact the Division of Land Resource Protection for information about the program and potential funding. For details, visit www.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp.

About the city of Brentwood’s agricultural mitigation program – The city enacted its program in 2002. The city’s ordinance requires that developers who build on farmland must pay a mitigation fee. The city holds the fees to fund agricultural conservation easements and other programs to support the local agriculture industry. The program also provides for a transfer of density from farmland to development within Brentwood. The city has collected more than \$12 million in agricultural mitigation fees and has helped to fund easements preserving about 750 acres of local farmland – more than any other community in California. More information is available at www.brentwoodca.gov.

About the Brentwood Agricultural Land Trust – The nonprofit BALT permanently protects farmland from development by acquiring agricultural conservation easements from farmers. While farmers continue to own and farm their land, the conservation easement prohibits future subdivision or development of the property. BALT has acquired conservation easements on eight Brentwood farms since 2005, and anticipates completing several additional easements this year. BALT also works closely with local governments to develop

agricultural enterprise zoning, permitting and policies so that Contra Costa farmers can develop agricultural tourism, value-added processing and expanded roadside stands. For more information, visit <http://www.brentwoodaglandtrust.org/index.html>.