

A COLLABORATIVE PROJECT OF



CREATED & DIRECTED BY
jesikah maria ross
jmross@ucdavis.edu

restore restory

A PEOPLE'S HISTORY OF THE CACHE CREEK NATURE PRESERVE

AUDIO TOUR INTERVIEW WITH

Lynnel Pollock

STOP 1:

The Overlook



Stop 1: The Overlook

Can you tell me your name and a little bit about your farm; what you grow and how many acres you've got, stuff like that.

My name is Lynnel Pollock and my husband and I have been farming in Yolo County for a number of years. His family has been here since the 1890s. His great-grandfather started farming just a little ways from the Cache Creek Nature Preserve actually in the Willow Oak area and today we farm a variety of crops. We are diversified. We're a family operation and our two sons farm with us.

That's so great. What are some of the first things you yourself did when you got involved in farming? What kinds of things did you grow and plant or learn to grow and plant?

I've been involved with the farming operation ever since I married it many, many years ago, but we lived on the farm so there was always agriculture going on right outside our front door and I spent time out in the fields actually working on the tomato harvester when we would not have enough employees to cover the machine at times during harvest. Our sons were of course involved with various youth activities like 4-H and FFA so we usually had animals around.

I want to ask you again, what do you like most about farming?

I think there's many things that I really like about farming, but part of it is being connected to the land. We have the wonderful soil here in Yolo County, wonderful climate, abundant water to water our crops, so it's just very refreshing every year to begin again with a new crop, new seeds in the ground and watch that crop grow and take it to harvest.

Besides being a farmer you had a bunch of other official positions. Can you tell me a couple of the different jobs you've had in addition to being a farmer?

Other positions that I have taken on, and most of them were related to our primary work of farming in Yolo County, but I was very active in Farm Bureau which is an agricultural organization and many years ago I served as the statewide chairman for the Farm Bureau Women and so I also sat on the California Farm Bureau Federation Board of Directors and attended many meetings and provided a leadership role to those working on the farm.

Did you ever have any kind of elected positions?

I've also been elected to some offices. I served on the Yolo County Board of Supervisors for eight years ending in 2004 so that's been a recent part of past history.

What do you think, speaking of history, most people don't know about the Cache Creek Nature Preserve's ag history?

The Cache Creek Nature Preserve actually does have an agricultural history, a very long agricultural history in fact starting probably in the early 1800s, 1840s when William Gordon settled here and started raising livestock and growing some grain crops. So this land has been in agricultural production for well over 100 years.

The Overlook, continued (p.2 of 3)

You mentioned this to me before and I'd like to talk about it again. Can you recount for me the first time you came here, why you came and what you were doing?

The first time I came to the Cache Creek Nature Preserve was before it was actually a nature preserve, but the land was going to be dedicated to Yolo County and I was a board member of the Cache Creek Conservancy and the conservancy was going to restore the land and manage it and so as a board member I came out here with some other board members to see what we were getting into.

And what was it like that day? What do you remember most about that day?

The first time I saw this land of course it was late in the afternoon, it was hot, it was dry, there were weeds everywhere, it needed a lot of work out here and it was like this is going to be a big job, but I think we can handle it.

How do you think that that first visit led to the job you have today if at all?

The first visit here was because I was a board member and I think because I was a board member and very involved in the development of both the conservancy as an organization and the Cache Creek Nature Preserve as the place, led me to this job. The board asked me to step in as executive director when our former executive director passed away suddenly and so I was an interim position for about six months and decided I really love this place, I love the job, I love working with the people and the work we were doing so I told them I would be willing to stay.

So where is your farm in relation to where we are now?

Our farming operation and where I live is actually very close to the nature preserve. We are about four miles downstream of this site. We live on the banks of Cache Creek. We farm that area plus other areas in Northern Yolo County, but our primary place is on Cache Creek so I'm personally and from a standpoint of our own life, very connected to Cache Creek.

Great, thanks. My last question for this area is how would you describe the preserve kind of in broad brush strokes to a friend? What would you say? What is this place? What's it like?

The preserve is a very unique spot nestled here on the north bank of Cache Creek, but it also lies in very close proximity to agricultural fields, to a golf course, to a housing development and it's just a very precious slice of nature tucked in here where animals can roam, birds can fly and nature is preserved for people to come out and visit.

Where are we now and what is it like?

Right now we are standing, looking out on the wetlands to the west of us and beyond that the Coast Range Mountains which provide the water that comes down Cache Creek, but we do see our beautiful wetlands that are home to many birds, a lot of wildlife.

JESIKAH MARIA ROSS INTERVIEWS LYNNEL POLLOCK
Cache Creek Nature Preserve • August 30, 2011

The Overlook, continued (p.3 of 3)

What's it feel like and smell like? What do you see?

I see a hawk soaring up above the wetlands. The breeze is blowing slightly so the leaves on the trees rustle every once in a while and once in a while you might hear a fish plop in the water out in front of us because it is fairly deep and there's quite a fish population here.

Nice. Okay. Let me stop here.