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## Farm Land West Of Lompoc Now Protected Under Conservation Easement

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By Janene Scully, Noozhawk North County Editor | [@JaneneScully](#) | **UPDATED**



Unique agreement with Land Trust for Santa Barbara County prevents development on 800-acre Jordan property

Nearly 800 acres of farm land is now permanently protected from residential development under a first-of-its-kind agricultural conservation easement in the Lompoc Valley.

The [Land Trust for Santa Barbara County](#) and [The Trust for Public Land](#) have protected the 780-acre Jordan property under an agricultural-conservation easement, the organizations announced Wednesday.

"This is a terrific opportunity to protect, in perpetuity, one of most productive farms in the Lompoc Valley, due to its significant size and the fact that it is prime agricultural land," said Chet Work, executive director of the Land Trust.

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The property, which is surrounded on three sides by [Vandenberg](#) Air Force Base, is now permanently protected under the agreement. The land, roughly 4 miles east of the ocean, is bordered by Ocean Avenue, the Santa Ynez River, Renwick Avenue and Union Sugar Avenue.

"The Jordan family has long contemplated placing an agricultural easement on this property," said Steve Jordan, who runs the farm. "We are extremely pleased that this long-term goal of keeping our property in agricultural use permanently has been brought to fruition."

The process spanned more than two years, Jordan told [Noozhawk](#), adding that he is "just working for the future."

"We're passing down to the next generation," said Jordan, noting he has worked the land for decades. "They want to conserve it and I want to conserve it so that's why we did this — for the next generation to make sure everything keeps going the same direction."

Crops grown on the farm, which includes a variety of flowers, fruits and vegetables such as Brussels sprouts, artichokes, broccoli, cauliflower and lettuce, supply restaurants, grocery stores and farmers' markets.

"Our intention is to farm high-quality vegetables for as long as we can see," Jordan added.

An agricultural conservation easement is a legal document that means the land must be used for ag purposes in perpetuity, with the requirement remaining even if an owner sells the property.

The nonprofit groups hope the Jordan's easement will provide an incentive to other area property owners to protect their agricultural land.

Funding came from federal sources, including the [U.S. Department of Agriculture's](#) Natural Resource Conservation Service Agricultural Conservation Easement Program (ACEP), and the [Pentagon's](#) Readiness and Environmental Protection Integration (REPI) program, which protects land near military bases.

The \$1.5 million in funding went to the property owner as compensation for giving up the rights to the land for anything but ag purposes. Private donations helped create a stewardship for the organizations to ensure the easement is followed.

"I am very pleased that federal funding has made the difference in the completion of this project, which will protect local agricultural lands and contribute to the beautiful open space and rural atmosphere of the

Lompoc Valley," said [Rep. Lois Capps](#), D-Santa Barbara.

"Protecting the Jordan Farms property will not only permanently protect 780 acres of prime farmland adjacent to the Santa Ynez River, but it will also provide an important connectivity opportunity for future land conservation projects in the area.

"I am hopeful that this is just the first of many similar agricultural protection projects in the Lompoc Valley," Capps added.

"Not only is this permanent agricultural easement on the Jordan property a step in the right direction toward protecting agriculture in the County, but it is also critical to preserving the agricultural heritage and rural character of the Lompoc Valley," said [Santa Barbara County Supervisor Doreen Farr](#), who supported the project since its inception.

The Trust for Public Land, which is based in San Francisco, hammered out details of the permanent easement, which will be monitored by the Land Trust for Santa Barbara County.

The nonprofit Land Trust for Santa Barbara County, which was founded in 1985, is dedicated to preserving and enhancing Santa Barbara County's natural resources, open spaces and agricultural heritage. The trust has helped to preserve nearly 24,000 acres of natural resource and agricultural land and has assisted landowners in placing conservation easements on 43 properties totaling more than 16,000 acres in Santa Barbara County.

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