

# Novato Live Well Network

*Growing a healthy community from the ground up!*

## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:**

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## **Novato Community Garden Project Discovers Aquifer on Site**

**NOVATO, CA, January 13, 2010--** The Novato Community Garden (NCG) Committee has determined that a water aquifer exists on the proposed site for its community garden. The discovery of the aquifer significantly reduces NCG's projected costs to develop the garden, and allows the group to move negotiations forward with the City of Novato for site plan approval and lease initiation.

Prior to drilling a water well, the NCG Committee estimated a cost of more than \$150,000 to obtain a new municipal water service for the proposed garden. The NCG now estimates that well costs should not exceed \$50,000.

Clear Heart Drilling, located in Santa Rosa, donated staff time, labor, and equipment to drill a well at the site located at O'Hair Park on Novato Boulevard, a half mile west of San Marin High School. Gary Soden, owner of the family-owned company since 1986, has donated the business's services to support many community projects. "Access to clean water and healthy food are two necessities in life. We are glad our drilling was successful in locating an underground water source," said Soden, who is presently in Thailand where he has worked for more than nine years with the Thai people advocating for the humane treatment and preservation of Asian elephants, an endangered species. Soden added, "We are happy to support community projects like this one and look forward to hearing of the success of the community garden in providing a place where people can learn and grow their own food."

"We are truly indebted to Mr. Soden and his staff for their generous donation and services, and thrilled with the discovery," said Veronica Valero, Chair of the Novato Community Garden Project. She added, "We also are grateful to Diet Stroeh, founding partner of CSW/Stuber-Stroeh Engineering Group, Inc., for his continual guidance, encouragement, and financial support—it was his idea we should drill."

Don Foster, NCG Committee member who oversaw the drilling, added, "In addition to having our own on-site water source, we are planning to utilize a photovoltaic solar panel system for our irrigation and power needs, making this community garden a truly self-sustaining off-the-grid ecosystem."

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The next step for the project is to have the site plan approved by the City of Novato and begin the lease process.

Valero says that the NCG Committee is proceeding in the spirit of the December 13, 2009 Novato City Council approved General Plan Update vision statement. "The statement includes text to promote community gardens," Valero points out. "It reads: As we look to the future, we wish to encourage and promote... creation of public gathering places, parks, recreational facilities *and community gardens (emphasis added)* that provide a sense of community, and allow enjoyment of our natural amenities..."

The NCG Committee is planning an Outreach-Fundraising event titled: "Building a Healthy Community from the Ground Up." It will be held February 25, 2010, 7-9 PM at the Novato Unified School District Offices. It estimates needing \$100,000 to \$150,000 to build the garden, and hopes for in-kind donations to reduce costs. In addition to an update on the project and a fundraising raffle, a panel of guest speakers from other community gardens in Marin and Sonoma Counties will share how they have built their community gardens and the positive impact they have had on their communities. For more information and to make a donation visit [www.NovatoLiveWell.org](http://www.NovatoLiveWell.org) or call 415-897-2302.

*The Novato Community Garden Project is project of the Novato Live Well Network. **Our Mission** is to: build and support a network of local community gardens that enable people from diverse backgrounds to grow food and foster community in a sustainable manner; work with and educate families, schools, and our community about the positive benefits of choosing sustainable ways of eating, gardening and living, by providing programs that support nutrition education, our local food-shed, and school and community gardens.*

*The Novato Live Well Network is a sponsored project of MarinLink ([www.MarinLink.org](http://www.MarinLink.org)) a California nonprofit corporation, exempt from federal tax under section 501(c)3 of the Internal Revenue Code, as amended.*

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