

## SBALT NEWS

# Spotlight on San Benito County Conservation at the Nyland Property

By Lynn Overtree

In late October, eighty land managers, public agencies, researchers, elected officials, and community members, gathered at SBALT's Nyland property for the Pajaro Compass Network Fall Stakeholder Meeting. The Pajaro Compass was developed in 2015 to bring together people who share an interest in the Pajaro River watershed, to learn, connect, and engage in efforts to maintain the health and productivity of the region. Participants sat on straw bales while listening to presentations for the first hour, and then the group walked to the lower reservoir for presentations on the animals and plants that live on the ranch, the Amah Mutsun Land Trust's plans under their cultural easement, and the structure of the acquisition of this keystone property.

San Benito County is growing in the awareness of those who live in the surrounding, larger counties. I felt such pride in our county as I watched the captivated audience listening, learning, and asking questions about our achievements.

We are a small, rural county with a rich agricultural economy. The spectacular land-



Pajaro Compass Network Meeting participants at the Nyland property's tin building listening to Amah Mutsun descendant, Vera Powers, speak of her people's connection to the land. Photo by Dan Brumbaugh

scapes that inspire visitors are predominantly ranches and farmland owned and managed by people with knowledge, re-

spect, and love for their land. SBALT is honored when landowners choose to partner with us to permanently protect their land



San Benito Agricultural Land Trust

from conversion to non-agricultural uses. They know that without agricultural land, we will not have an agricultural industry.

The participants at the Pajaro Compass meeting who came from surrounding counties spoke of the days when they had expanses of orchards, rangeland down to the valley floor, or rich farmland where there is now concrete. They have also seen a decline in wildlife, or oak forests, or vistas without houses. As you reflect on how you want to give this holiday season, please consider a gift that helps keep San Benito County an agricultural county by donating to SBALT at [www.sanbenitolandtrust.org](http://www.sanbenitolandtrust.org) or to your favorite local conservation group. ■