

Van Kerkoerle Property Life-Estate

Many of you reading this will be friends and acquaintances of Anneke and Peter Van Kerkoerle. You will already know that the Van Kerkoerles have been active participants in—and supporters of—numerous social and environmental initiatives, both locally and beyond.

Through the years, Peter and Anneke have supported NALT in many ways: financially, as hosts of our summertime picnics, and as a home to the *Natural Abundance Native Plant Nursery*. They have also sought a way to protect the land they have loved and cared for more than 45 years, and to provide for it beyond the years of their personal stewardship. With NALT, they have explored different avenues to achieve this goal. The agricultural values of the land are already offered some protection as part of the Agricultural Land Reserve (ALR). However, The ALR regulations restrict use of ALR land to agricultural purposes only – or those activities that allow the land to be easily returned to agricultural use. One unintentional side effect of ALR status is that, other than in exceptional circumstances, it precludes registering a Conservation Covenant on property title to protect the conservation values of the land. NALT has communicated with the governing body of the ALR, the Agricultural Land Commission, and has been denied an allowance to place a Conservation Covenant over the natural areas of the Van Kerkoerle property. NALT has promised the Van Kerkoerles that we will watch for changes in the requirements of the ALC, and try again in the future.



Anneke and Peter Van Kerkoerle

For now, Anneke and Peter have crafted a two-part solution for protecting the natural values of their property. First, the Van Kerkoerles and NALT have developed and signed off on a Voluntary Stewardship Agreement. This document holds many of the purposes of a Conservation Covenant without being able to be registered on title. That is to say, the Agreement is with the current owners of the land only, and does not obligate subsequent owners. The second part of this stewardship plan has been the process of granting of a Life Estate for ownership of the land to NALT. When a Life Estate is granted by the current owners of a property to a new owner, the property title is transferred to the recipient of the Life Estate (in this case, NALT), while the granter of the Life Estate (the Van Kerkoerles) continue to reside on, care for, and enjoy the land they love exactly as they always have.

We at NALT are humbled by the generosity of Anneke and Peter that has prompted them to gift their land to our organization—with the confidence that we will manage it into the future with the same care and considerations for the natural values as they have demonstrated with such love and commitment for so many years. NALT accepts the responsibility of stewarding the natural values of the Van Kerkoerle property, and will enthusiastically abide with the wording of the Voluntary Stewardship Agreement—while continuing to seek a binding Conservation Covenant which can be allowed under the ALR status of the property. We hope that time will arrive in the not-too-distant future.

Peter and Anneke are very special people and pillars of our community, demonstrating for all of us the ways to give back to both community and the land—in both word and deed. Thank you.