

**VISALIA | TULARE**

# choices

## **Kaweah Land and Arts Festival to celebrate nature**

Niki Woodard • Arts • August 28, 2009

When was the last time you took a minute to observe the landscape around you? Go ahead and take a look. You may be surprised to find that even the monotonous brown tones of late summer offer a unique sense of beauty, distinct to this region.

How does this landscape affect the way we think, the kind of art we create and the way we interact with the world around us?

### **Celebrate the land**

Sequoia Riverlands Trust, as the regional land trust representing the area from Fresno to Kern Counties, would like to invite you to celebrate this unique land with us.

We are proud to organize a three-day festival Nov. 6-8 to call our community's attention to the diverse landscapes that surround us: from the productive agricultural lands of the valley floor on up to the stunning peaks of the Sierra Nevada.

The first Kaweah Land and Arts Festival will present a range of stories from various artistic, poetic, cultural, agricultural and historical perspectives beginning with an artists' opening of Matthew Rangel's lithographs and John Spivey's photography at Arts Visalia.

Saturday's events welcome the community to Kaweah Oaks Preserve for two live entertainment stages, nature walks, food vendors, children's activities and plein air painting.

On Saturday evening, the Land and Arts Symposium, held at the College of the Sequoias, will dive into the deeper meaning of the landscape and how it has inspired the work of our regional artists and cultural leaders.

Sunday will provide a broad menu of opportunities to attend various art and culture events dispersed all over the region (times/locations to be announced).

### **Prestigious humanities grant**

The Kaweah Land and Arts Festival has been recognized by one of the state's most preeminent cultural funding sources, the California Council for the Humanities.

Through their Story Fund grant program, the Council has awarded Sequoia Riverlands Trust a

\$10,000 grant to plan this groundbreaking land and arts festival. SRT is one of just 21 organizations to receive this distinguished grant, which was even more competitive than usual. The Council received an unprecedented 171 applications this year.

According to the Council's executive director, Ralph Lewin, they selected a diverse set of projects that will "add depth to our understanding of the richness and complexity of the state."

Sequoia Riverlands Trust feels extremely honored to be giving volume to the voices of our valley's cultural leaders, and we hope that the entire region can share the honor with us. This grant marks the first time in nearly a decade that the Council has funded an arts project in the great expanse between the two major urban centers of our state.

As we in the southern San Joaquin Valley are all aware, our region is far from a cultural wasteland. Rather, we have simply lacked a spotlight to shine on our creative stage. With this festival and the Council's support, it seems the spotlight is on.

By drawing attention to the land, we hope to raise the community's awareness of our unique valley so we can perpetuate more homegrown art and become better caretakers of these natural lands.

SRT is grateful to our festival sponsors and partners: California Council for the Humanities, Southern California Edison, Kawneer, Arts Visalia and College of the Sequoias.

For more information check our web site: [www.sequoiariverlands.org](http://www.sequoiariverlands.org).

*Niki is the communications director for the Sequoia Riverlands Trust.*

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