



*View of Tualatin Valley from  
NW Bishop Road*

*Photo by Cherry Amabisca*

# Helvetia

## Our Sustainable Treasure

# What is Sustainability?

# What is “sustainability”?

- ❖ The quality of not being harmful to the environment
  - ❖ Not depleting natural resources
  - ❖ Supporting long-term ecological balance
- 
- ❖ Source: [dictionary.reference.com](http://dictionary.reference.com)

# Where is Helvetia?

- ❖ Exit 61 - North of US-26 (Sunset Highway)
- ❖ West of Cornelius Pass Rd
- ❖ East of Jackson School Rd.
- ❖ South of Skyline Blvd.



*Exit 61 to Helvetia  
Photo by Cherry Amabisca*

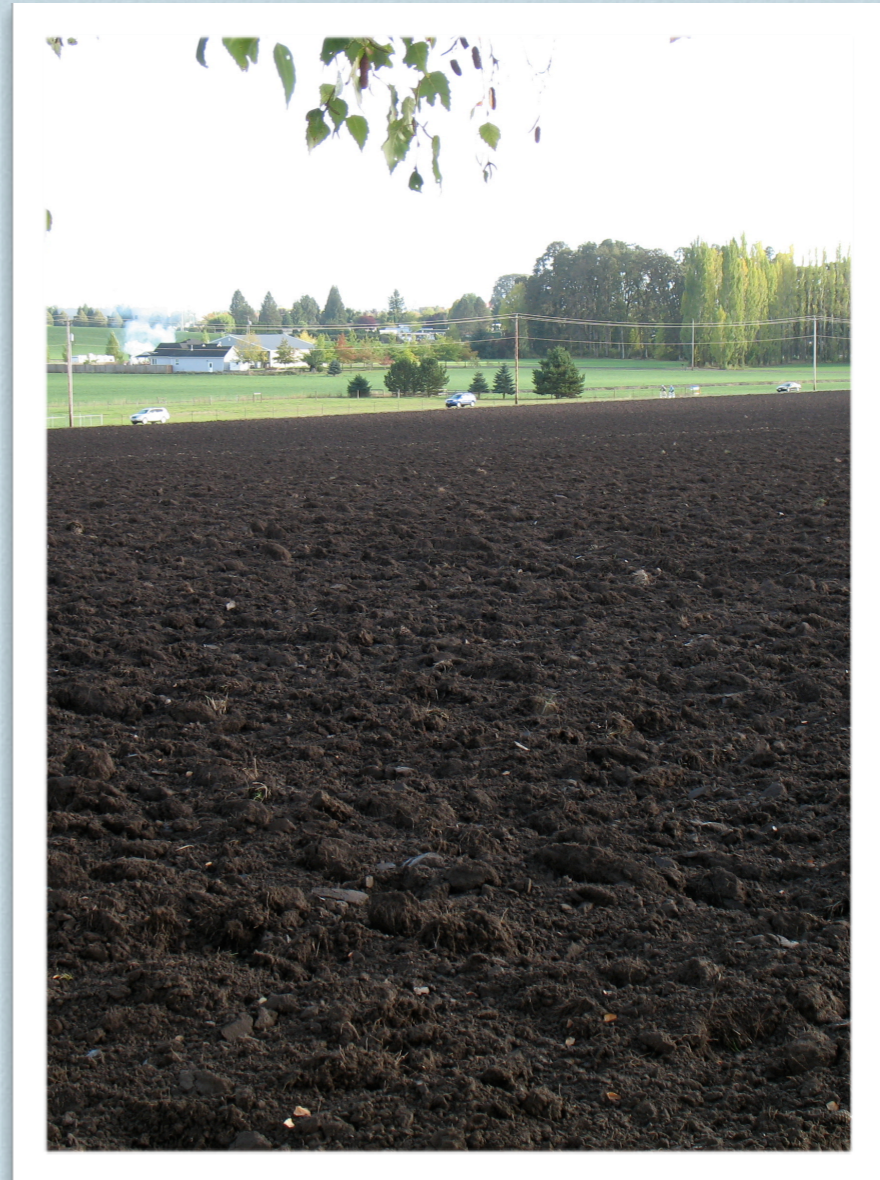
# What Contributes to Helvetia's Sustainability?

## ❖ SOIL

- ❖ Hydrology/Drainage
- ❖ Careful management: crops and environment
- ❖ Balance between humans and habitat
- ❖ People

# Helvetia's Premier Soils

- ❖ All soils worldwide are classified by capability
- ❖ Range from Class 1 (BEST) to Class 8 (WORST)
- ❖ An area will rarely have all one type - usually a %
- ❖ Helvetia has rare high concentration of Class 1 - 28%



*Willamette Silt Loam soil on NW Helvetia Road  
Photo by Cherry Amabisca*

Why are Helvetia soils so  
productive?

# It Started in the Last Ice Age

- ❖ Periodic sudden ruptures of the ice dam on the Clark Fork River that created Glacial Lake Missoula in Montana.
- ❖ Evidence of at least 25 massive floods between 13,000 and 15,000 years ago.



*Ice age floods: Suicide Point - Hells Canyon, ID  
[iceagefloods.blogspot.com](http://iceagefloods.blogspot.com)*



# Missoula Flood Path

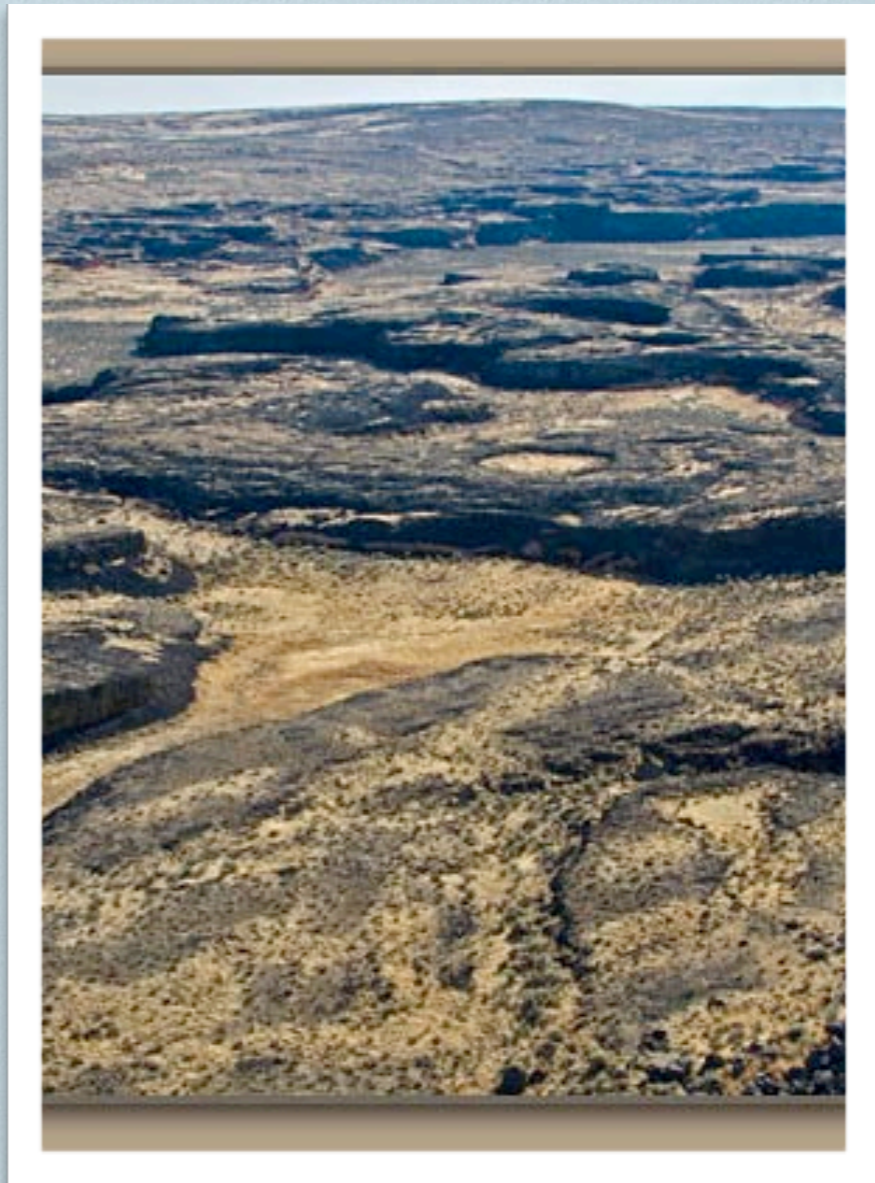
- ❖ After each ice dam rupture, waters rushed down the Clark Fork (ID) & the Columbia River (OR)
- ❖ Flood waters scoured much of Eastern Washington and Oregon's Willamette Valley



*Ancient Lake Missoula and the Missoula Ice Age Floods*  
[geology.isu.edu](http://geology.isu.edu)

# What Washington State lost...

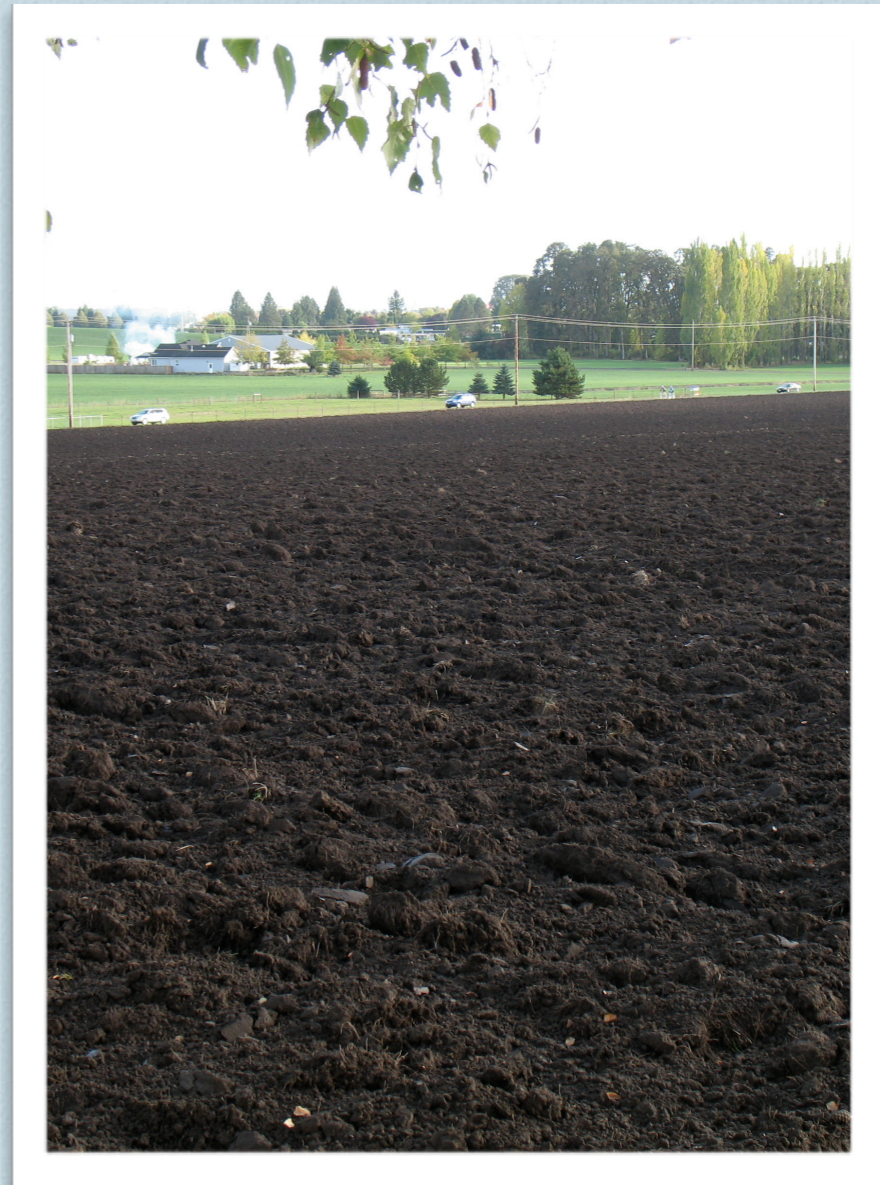
- ❖ Missoula Floods carried away eastern Washington's Class 1 and 2 soil, leaving "scablands"



*Scabland Channel cut by Glacial Lake Missoula  
floodwater. [hugefloods.com](http://hugefloods.com)*

# ...Oregon gained

- ❖ Missoula Floods deposited premier Class 1 and 2 soil throughout the Willamette Valley - the best in the world!



*Willamette Silt Loam soil on NW Helvetia Road  
Photo by Cherry Amabisca*

# What are the benefits of Helvetia's Class 1 & 2 Soils?

- ❖ Excellent tilth (suitability for sowing seeds)
- ❖ Excellent water retention
- ❖ Higher yields per acre
- ❖ Diverse crops



*Wheat growing on NW West Union Road  
Photo by Adrian Amabisca*

# What Contributes to Helvetia's Sustainability?

- ❖ Soil
- ❖ HYDROLOGY/DRAINAGE
- ❖ Careful management: crops and environment
- ❖ Balance between humans and habitat
- ❖ People

What is “hydrology”?

# What is “hydrology”?

- ❖ Greek “hydro” = water
- ❖ Greek “logos” = study
- ❖ The study of the movement, distribution and quality of water on Earth and other planets.
- ❖ Includes the hydrologic cycle, water resources and environmental watershed sustainability
- ❖ Source: Wikipedia

# Helvetia's Streams

- ❖ Helvetia's four creeks are part of the Dairy-McKay sub-watershed which drains into the Tualatin River Watershed:

Jackson  
Waibel

Storey  
Holcomb

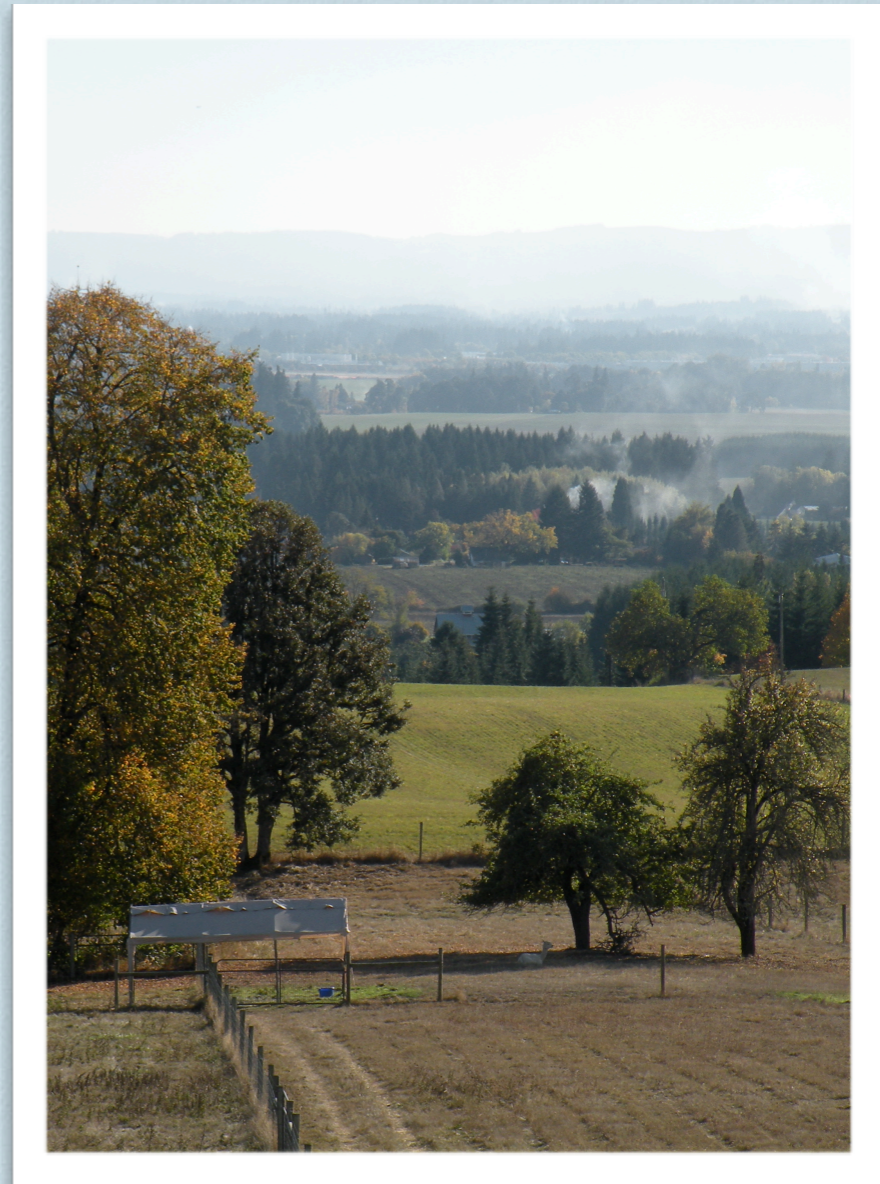


*Jackson Creek on NW Jackson Quarry Road  
Photo by Cherry Amabisca*



# Helvetia's Topography

- ❖ Gentle, south-facing slopes
- ❖ Rain water drains southward from the Tualatin Mountains



*South-facing fields slope down from the Tualatin Mountains. Photo by Cherry Amabisca*

# Helvetia's Field Tiling

- ❖ Farmers have installed sub-surface drainage system over past 80 years
- ❖ Originally clay tubes - now perforated plastic
- ❖ Significant capital investment
- ❖ Interconnected system crosses property lines



*Field Tiling being installed in trenches  
Photo by Cherry Amabisca*

# The Benefits of Field Tiling

- ❖ Effective way to drain thousands of upland acres
- ❖ Reduces “wet feet” for crops
- ❖ Eliminates flooding
- ❖ Optimizes crop production



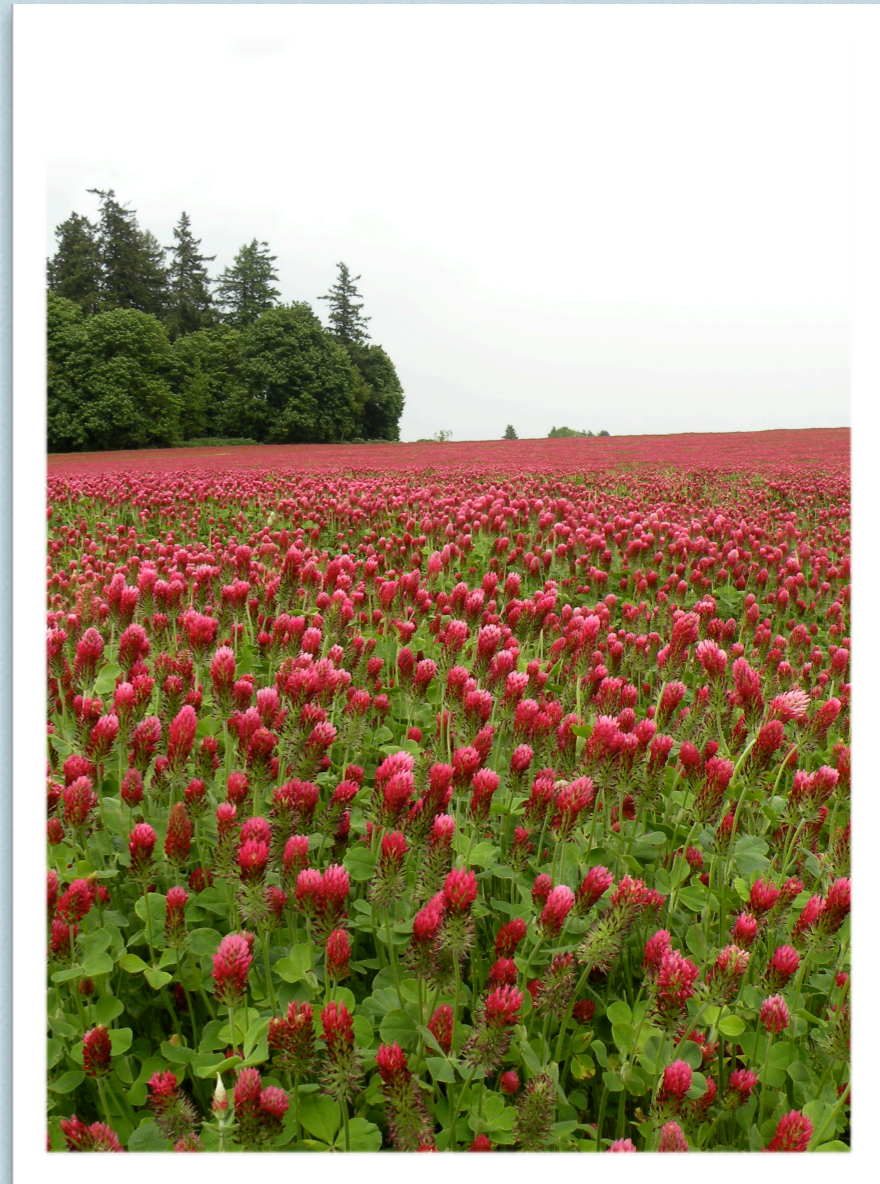
**Map of field tiling north and south of NW West Union Road - Intel site lower right**

# What Contributes to Helvetia's Sustainability?

- ❖ Soil
- ❖ Hydrology/Drainage
- ❖ CAREFUL MANAGEMENT: CROPS and ENVIRONMENT
- ❖ Balance between humans and habitat
- ❖ People

# How Do Helvetia Farmers Practice Sustainability?

- ❖ Conserve water resources
- ❖ No irrigation - less energy inputs - smaller carbon footprint
- ❖ Rotate crops
- ❖ Plant cover crops to restore nutrients to soil



*Red Clover planted on NW Helvetia Road  
Photo by Adrian Amabisca*

# Helvetia's Diverse Crops

- ❖ *Wheat*
- ❖ *Clover*
- ❖ *Grass Seed*
- ❖ *Hay*
- ❖ *Nursery Stock*
- ❖ *Fruits and vegetables*
- ❖ *Hazelnuts*

# Helvetia's Sustainable Farms

- ❖ Helvetia farmers have been productive over 150 years
- ❖ Over 40 farming families make their living solely by farming (5,000 acres)
- ❖ Six Century Farms within 2 miles:, Batchelder, Bishop, Gates, Guerber, Pieren, Yungen



*Gates family Century Farm - NW West Union Road - 309 acres. Photo by Cherry Amabisca*

# Helvetia's Sustainability = Nature + Nurture

- ❖ Class 1 and 2 soils, nutrient-rich topsoil
  - ❖ South-facing slopes, enabling earlier crop ripening, drainage
  - ❖ Ample natural water
- +
- ❖ Sustainable, creative soil management:
    - Integrated drainage system (field tiling)
    - Crop rotation
    - Cover crops



# How We Benefit from Helvetia's Sustainability

- ❖ World class quality of crops
- ❖ Long-term productivity - 150 years
- ❖ Highest yields in valley
- ❖ Local availability of fresh foods
- ❖ Maintain natural resources



*Steve Radtke, CSA farmer, Helvetia  
Photo by Mishelle Radtke*

# How We Benefit from Helvetia's Sustainability

- ❖ Milk (Dairygold)
- ❖ Hazelnut Bread (Franz Bakery)
- ❖ Fresh fruit & vegetables
- ❖ Swiss bread and pastries
- ❖ Hazelnut milkshakes (Burgerville)



*Swiss breads from Sweetrock Bakery,  
vegetables from local CSA's. Photos by Faun  
Hosey*

# Sustainability Example: Helvetia Hazelnuts

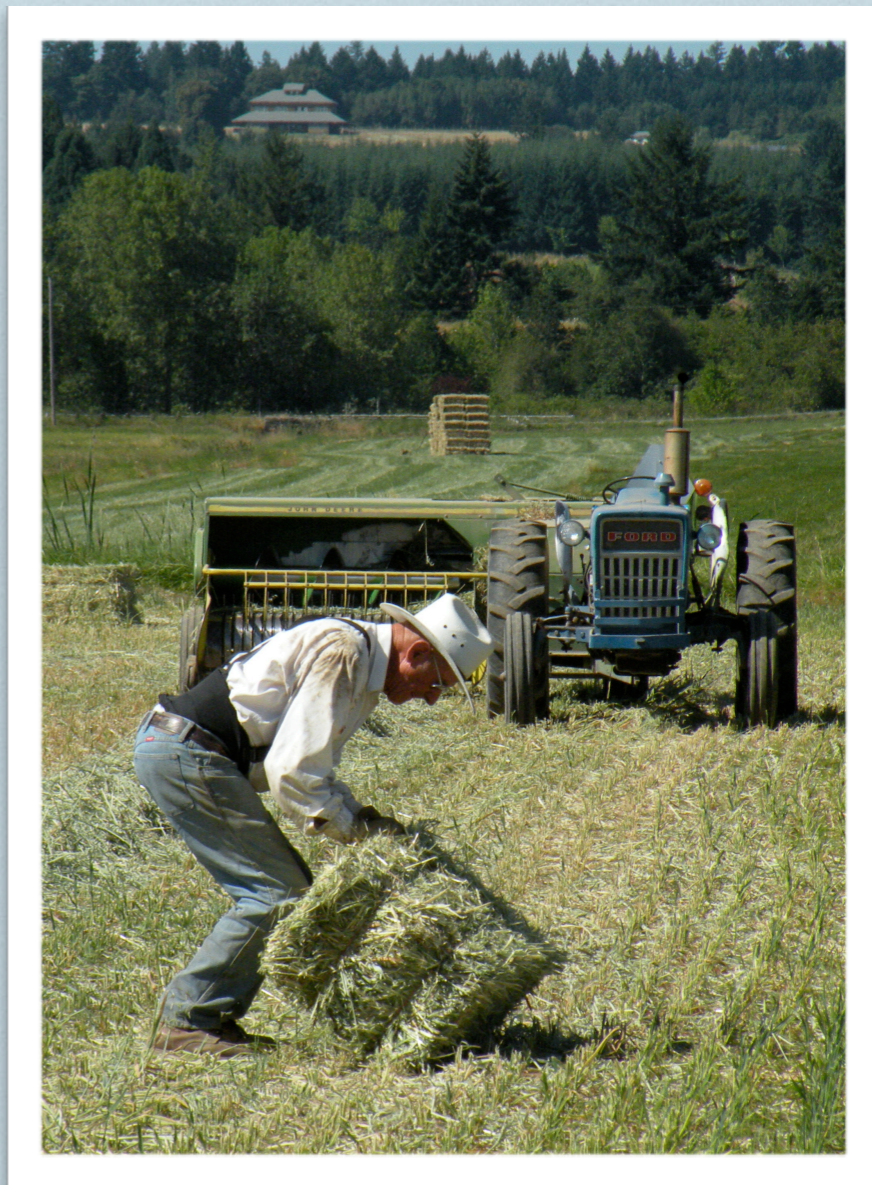
- ❖ Orchards planted in 1940's, still producing after 70 years
- ❖ Replanting with new OSU variety to avoid blight
- ❖ Hazelnuts take 16 years to mature
- ❖ Will continue producing for 150 years



*Don Schoen, Rollin' Acres Hazelnut Farm - 2nd generation. Photo by Cherry Amabisca*

# Sustainability Example: Diverse Crops

- ❖ Crop rotation: clover, wheat, grass seed, hay
- ❖ Use natural rainwater
- ❖ Plant cover crops
- ❖ Channel excess water underground
- ❖ Productive for over 100 years



*Elmer Grossen, 90+ years old, 4th generation  
Photo by Adrian Amabisca*

# Sustainability Example: Local Foods

- ❖ CSA's (Community Supported Agriculture) offer subscriptions
- ❖ Membership fee allows farmers to pre-plan crops
- ❖ Fresh fruit & vegetables provided all year round
- ❖ Members know how their food is grown



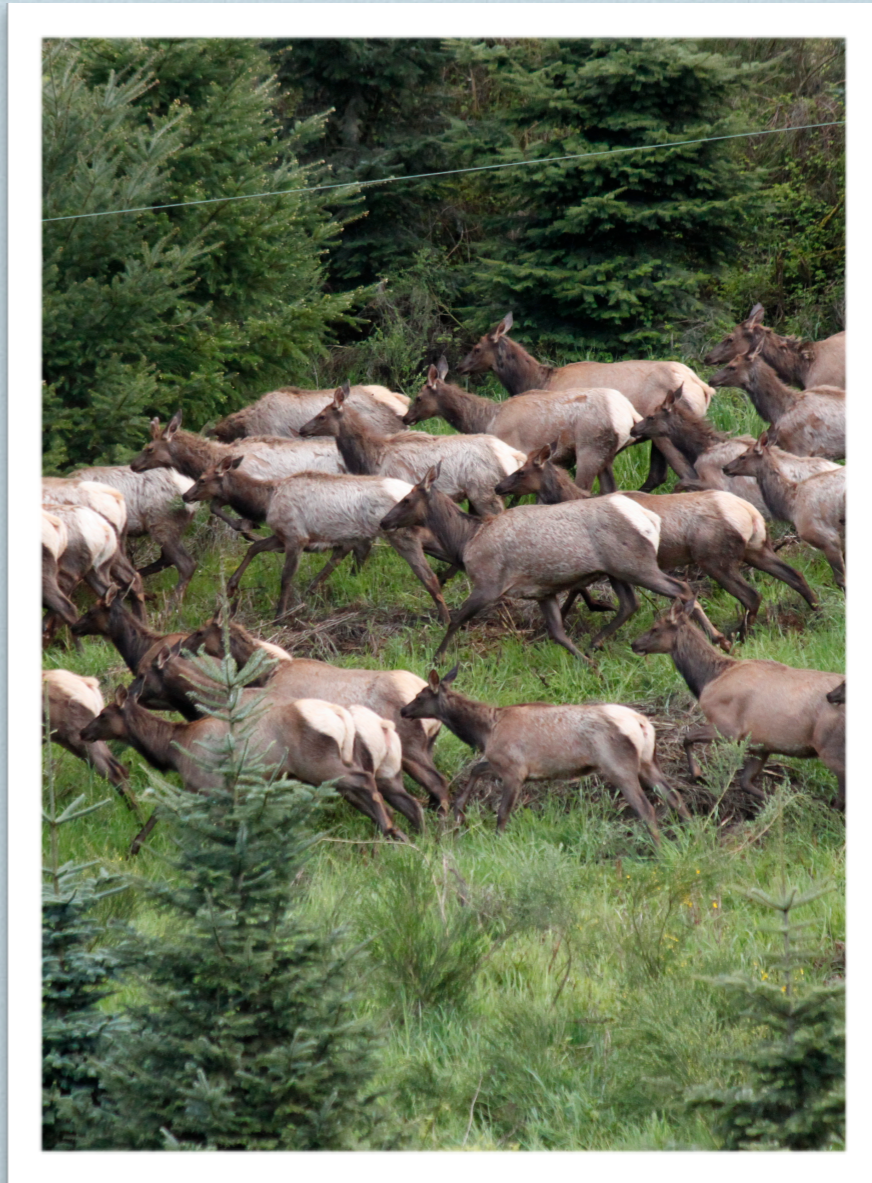
*Lyn Jacobs and Jacob Argueta of La Finquita del Bubo CSA. Photo by Cherry Amabisca*

# What Contributes to Helvetia's Sustainability?

- ❖ Soil
- ❖ Hydrology/Drainage
- ❖ Careful management: crops and environment
- ❖ **BALANCE BETWEEN HUMANS and HABITAT**
- ❖ People

# Helvetia's Natural Resources

- ❖ 100+ herd of Roosevelt elk use Helvetia as habitat
- ❖ Depend upon Helvetia for food, forage, shelter and calving
- ❖ Range up to 50 miles a day
- ❖ From Forest Park to Coast Mountains



*Roosevelt elk herd near NW Yungen Road  
May, 2012. Photo by Adrian Amabisca*



*Baby elk unable to jump fence; left by herd  
Photo by Adrian Amabisca. July 21, 2009*



*Helvetia elk spooked by UPS truck on NW Yungen Road  
Photo by Adrian Amabisca. May 4, 2012*

# Conflict with humans

More fencing and more traffic reduce habitat; leads to stress and failure to thrive. Foraging on cover crops causes farmers to lose soil nutrients.



# Helvetia's native Oregon White Oak trees

- ❖ Some as old as 500 years, most about 250 years old, about 5,000 in Helvetia
- ❖ Less than 1% of historic Willamette Valley native oak habitats still exist
- ❖ Metro regards Oregon white oak savannas and woodlands as “habitats of concern”



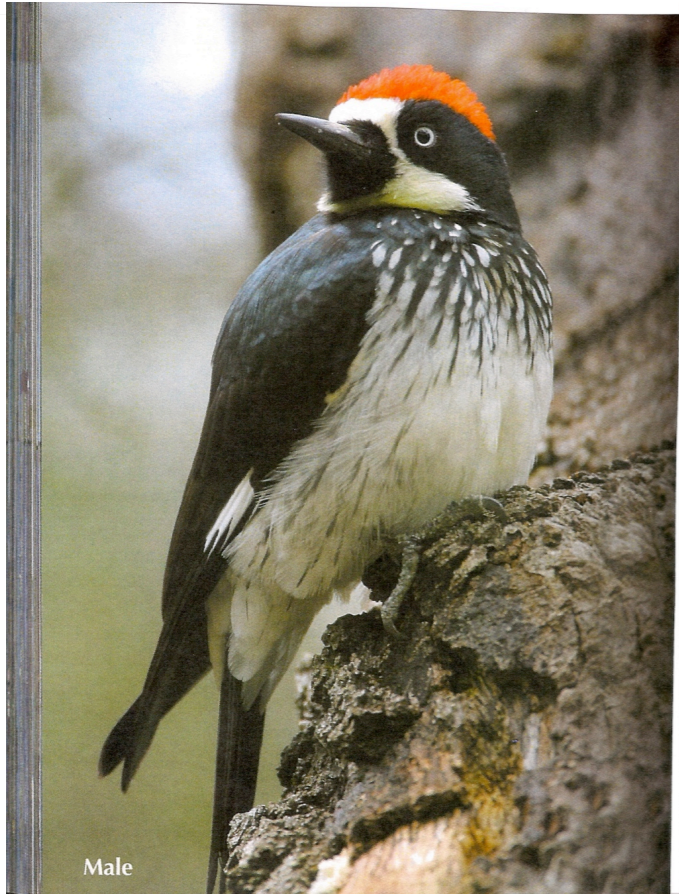
*Native Oregon White Oak savanna on NW Helvetia Rd. Photo by Cherry Amabisca*



*Oregon white oak cut down for development  
at Jacobson Road, inside UGB, across from  
Credence/IEP  
About 150 years old*

# Habitat Conversion

Biggest threat to Oregon white oaks is conversion to urban uses, leads to island habitats, unsuitable habitat



***Acorn Woodpecker***  
***(Melanerpes formicivorus)***



***White-Breasted Nuthatch (Sitta***  
***carolinensis aculeata)***



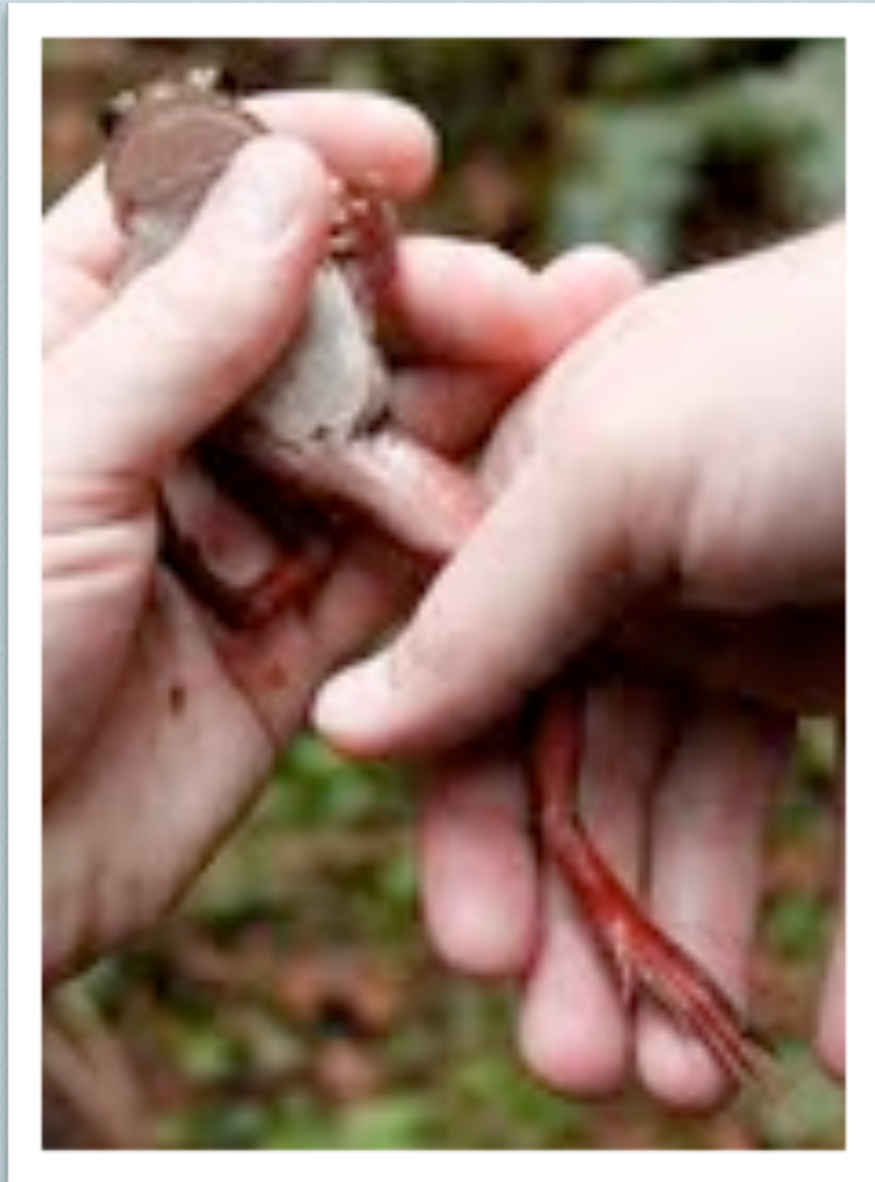
***Western Bluebird (Sialia mexicana)***

# Vulnerable Species

These species depend upon Oregon white oak for habitat (survival). Population/habitat threatened.

# Helvetia's Red-Legged Frogs

- ❖ State listed as sensitive species (population in decline)
- ❖ Disbursed over wide territory
- ❖ Need room to “breathe”
- ❖ Threatened by development, loss of habitat



*Red Legged frog found off NW Bishop Road  
Photo by Adrian Amabisca*

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# Atfalati (Tuality) People

- ❖ Pre-European settlement tribes used Helvetia for seasonal encampment
- ❖ Chatakuin “place of big trees” (Five Oaks)
- ❖ Their trails to Columbia River became Cornelius Road, Bishop Road, Logie Trail



***Panel from display at Five Oaks, Jacobson Road  
Photo by Cherry Amabisca***

# Atfalati nurtured Helvetia's natural resources

- ❖ Nurtured growth of Oregon white oak - 3 generations for acorns
- ❖ Ground up acorns from Oregon white oaks for mush
- ❖ Revered the feathers from the Acorn Woodpecker and elk teeth



*Chief Kennedy of CTGR at 2012 Helvetia Culture Fest. Photo by Adrian Amabisca*

# Atfalati left imprint in Helvetia

- ❖ Thousands of artifacts found in Helvetia (Boehler, VanDomelen collections)
- ❖ Farmers: Best time to find artifacts - plow after rain
- ❖ Decimated by disease
- ❖ Atfalati forced to join Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde in 1855



*VanDomelen collection on display at 2012  
Helvetia Culture Fest. Photo by Faun Hosey*



# Atfalati heritage interpreted

- ❖ Atfalati heritage is maintained by CTGR (Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde)
- ❖ CTGR co-sponsors annual Helvetia Culture Fest
- ❖ Perform traditional tribal songs and demonstrate crafts, interpret artifacts



*Tribal representatives from Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde participate in annual Helvetia Culture Fest. Photo by Faun Hosey.*

# Pioneers Homestead in Helvetia - 1840's

- ❖ West Union School established in 1851
- ❖ West Union Baptist Church founded by David Lenox in 1844, Captain of 1st wagon train to cross Rockies. National Register of Historic Places
- ❖ Chambers house (1865)



*West Union Baptist Church est. 1844  
Photo by Adrian Amabisca*

# Swiss discover Helvetia, Oregon - 1870's

- ❖ Swiss immigrants arrived in several migrations between 1870's to 1890's.
- ❖ In 1892, they coined the name "Helvetia", meaning "Switzerland" in Latin.
- ❖ Helvetia Community Church built in 1899

*Photos by Cherry Amabisca*



# Swiss Families you may recognize...

**Badertscher** Bauer Berger **Bishop** Buehler Claus Danzer  
Dapp **Dick** Dysle Feuerstrom Frantz Fuegy Gaus Grand  
**Grossen** Guerber Gutschmidt Gyger Haefliger Hager  
Hanson Heitzenreter Hemmy Hildbrand Hoffman Jaggi  
Jossy Kamp Kaufman Kestek Korn Kunrad Kuralti  
Lauber Linder Losli **Meier** Nussbaumer Paegel Petersen  
Pezoldt Pieren Rahn Reichen Ritter Rufener Schiewe  
Schmidt Schneider Schreiber Settgast Siegenthaler  
Staehle Stauss Stoller Stucki Toelle Tschabold Tunstall  
Waefer Walters Wenger Whitten Wismer Wolf **Yungen**  
Zahler Zimmerman Zumkehr Zurcher

# Swiss Traditions Continue 4th & 5th Generations



Schwingfest (Swiss  
wrestling)



Helvetia Alpengluehn  
Singing Society  
since 1889

# Burning of the Boogg



The faster the Boogg's  
head explodes, the hotter  
summer will be!

*Photos by Adrian Amabisca*

# Swiss Independence Day



*Photos by Cherry Amabisca*

# Helvetia Culture Fest



*Photos by Faun Hosey*



# The Swiss built 'em STRONG to last LONG



19-year-old Fred Bischoff (Bishop) built barns and homes throughout Helvetia in the late 1800's. Barns built WITHOUT nails (morter & tenon) and still in use today.

*From left: Pieren, Bishop, Yungen barns  
Can be seen along NW Helvetia Rd.  
Photos by Adrian Amabisca*

So, everything's good in  
Helvetia, right?

Not.

# Helvetia faces *constant threats*

- ❖ Over the past 30 years, Helvetia has been coveted for *industrial* uses incompatible with agriculture and natural resources.
- ❖ Helvetia land is near the freeway, flat and has plentiful water - developers, city, county see more \$\$.



***Warehouses/Distribution Centers built on Class 1  
and 2 Soils - former Helvetia farmland  
Photo by Cherry Amabisca***

# Helvetia land is *at risk*

- ❖ 1970's - County **DUMP SITE** threatened Jackson Falls - private citizens bought the Falls to protect it.
- ❖ 1980's - State wanted four sites for **LANDFILLS** - threatened water quality - citizens banded together as "Helvetia-Mountindale Coalition" to oppose. Citizens won.

# Helvetia Land is *at risk*

- ❖ 1990's - State planned to build two **PRISONS** on agricultural land near Groveland Road. Farmers form "Tualatin Lands Coalition" to defeat proposal.
- ❖ 1990's - Private company planned to ship **SHEEP CARCASSES** from New Zealand to bury on Helvetia farmland across from West Union Elementary School. Citizens defeat proposal.

# Citizens say okay to jobs

- ❖ 2004 - City of Hillsboro lobbies Metro for **1200 acres of Helvetia farmland** south of West Union Road for jobs. Intel promises to bring in 700 R&D high paying jobs. Includes Liberty High School site. Citizens approve new UGB (Urban Growth Expansion) on *promise of jobs*.
- ❖ 2004 - present. Farmers sell out to speculators. Some development occurs in new UGB. Intel does not build. Hundreds of acres left for weeds.

# Vacant Industrial Lots

# Inside UGB s. of West Union Rd

(UGB Expansion approved in 2004)



*Photos by Cherry Amabisca  
March 12, 2013*

# Citizens say “NO” to giving up more Helvetia farmland

- ❖ 2009 - City of Hillsboro and Washington County target **7,000 acres of Helvetia farmland for Urban Reserves** for warehouses/distribution centers and medium density housing
- ❖ 2009 to 2013 - **Save Helvetia supporters testify in opposition** at more than 50 hearings before Washington County Board of Commissioners, Metro, Land Conservation and Development Commission (LCDC/Salem). Urban acres reduced to 800 in Helvetia, with 673 acres west of NW Helvetia Road in best Helvetia farmland.



# The “best of the best” Helvetia land still in jeopardy

- ❖ 2012 - Urban Reserves not finalized yet City of Hillsboro requests 440 acres of Helvetia land for UGB expansion from Metro. Denied after opposition from Save Helvetia supporters.
- ❖ 2013 - 9 groups file appeals with the Court of Appeals about Reserves process.



*Urban Reserves in Helvetia as far as the eye can see. Class I soil, 100 yr. floodplains, Waibel Creek, Oregon oaks. Photo by Cherry Amabisca.*

How do we protect Helvetia  
for our next generations?

# Two-pronged approach to protect Helvetia

- ❖ **PREMISE:** Recognize that Helvetia is a *regional* resource
- ❖ **SOLUTION:** Develop two groups who work to:
  - ❖ Protect Helvetia's natural resources and farmland
  - and*
  - ❖ Share Helvetia's heritage for all to appreciate



*View of Pieren barn, Helvetia  
Photo by Adrian Amabisca*

# Save Helvetia

[www.SaveHelvetia.org](http://www.SaveHelvetia.org)

- ❖ Mission: To advance policies, leaders and actions that protect Helvetia's treasured resources.
- ❖ Non-profit organization 501(c)(4)



# Save Helvetia projects



- ❖ Challenge UGB *industrial* expansions onto Helvetia farmland.
- ❖ Advocate for road and transportation projects that minimize urban traffic next to Helvetia farmland.
- ❖ Oppose legislative bills that weaken Oregon land use law.



*Senator Merkley and Congresswoman Bonamici meet with local farmers. July 6, 2012. Photo by Cherry Amabisca.*

# Helvetia Community Association (HCA)

- ❖ Mission: To inspire understanding and enjoyment of Helvetia's people, land and history.
- ❖ Non-profit cultural and educational organization 501(c)(3)



*Design based on Pieren barn*

# HCA Educational Projects



- ❖ Helvetia Culture Fest
- ❖ Educational bike rides
- ❖ Farm tours/history tours
- ❖ Digital mag "Our Helvetia"



*Photos by Cherry Amabisca*

# HCA Preservation Projects



- ❖ Habitat restoration
- ❖ Liberty H.S. students planted 1100 native trees & shrubs
- ❖ USDA/NRCS provided trees through EQIP Project (Environmental Quality Incentive Project)



New in 2013!  
HCA receives FIRST  
Conservation  
Easement Donation

*Liberty High School students planting native trees. Photo by Faun Hosey*



What can YOU do to help  
Helvetia?

# Get Informed - sign up for email

- ❖ Save Helvetia/HCA for local issues and events  
[www.SaveHelvetia.org](http://www.SaveHelvetia.org)

- ❖ WCCAN (Washington County for county-wide issues  
[www.wc-can.org](http://www.wc-can.org)

- ❖ 1000 Friends of Oregon for state  
[www.friends.org](http://www.friends.org)

*Elizabeth Furse (Hevetia Vineyards) and Juvencio Argueta (La Finquita del Bubo) discussing issues with Congresswoman Bonamici  
Photo by Cherry Amabisca*



work)

# Take a Stand

- ❖ **Vote** for officials who support agriculture and rural needs.
- ❖ **Email**, call or write to legislators to oppose ordinances and legislative bills that weaken land and agriculture.
- ❖ **Testify** with us - it's not too scary



*Members of Save Helvetia attending oral arguments  
before the Oregon State Court of Appeals for the Reserves  
appeal - January 16, 2013*

# Buy Our Stuff

- ❖ Buy our Helvetia t-shirts, hooded sweatshirts, hats. 100% goes to HCA goals.
- ❖ Support Helvetia growers and businesses - fruits & veggies from U-Picks & CSA's, Christmas trees, lavender products
- ❖ Buy products locally with Helvetia ingredients



*Helvetia products available at  
[www.HelvetiaCommunity.org](http://www.HelvetiaCommunity.org)  
Click on "Market"*

# Volunteer with our digital magazine

- ❖ Our Helvetia digital magazine launched December, 2012 - quarterly
- ❖ We need help with:
  - Guest Editor - 250 words
  - Selling advertising
  - Writing articles
  - Photography
  - Graphic design
  - Editorial planning



# Volunteer with Helvetia Culture Fest - September 23

- ❖ Our major fundraiser and community gathering
- ❖ We need help with:
  - Graphic design for booklet
  - Selling advertising
  - Publicity
  - Sign placement
  - Merchandise sales
  - Ticket sales



*Joe and Allison volunteering with Pie Walk sales  
Photo by Cherry Amabisca*

# Join our NEW Committee & gain non-profit experience!

- ❖ Come up with creative ways to involve students in preservation and education efforts about Helvetia
- ❖ Work under the guidance of HCA Board of Directors
- ❖ Select the projects you want to work on



*Megan Parra selling her custom designed poster of Helvetia  
Photo by Cherry Amabisca*

Thank YOU for caring  
about Helvetia!

May 10, 2013

Cherry Amabisca

[www.HelvetiaCommunity.org](http://www.HelvetiaCommunity.org)

[www.SaveHelvetia.org](http://www.SaveHelvetia.org)