

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Prop 84 Funding for City Slicker Farms Brings Land Security to West Oakland's Urban Agriculture Movement.**

City Slicker Farms is awarded \$4 million dollars to purchase land in West Oakland to create a Community Market Farm and park.

*Oakland, CA (November 10, 2010)*—On Monday, November 8, 2010 City Slicker Farms was awarded \$4,000,000 for a “West Oakland Park and Urban Farm” project. The funds come from Proposition 84, a California bond initiative approved in 2006, which reserves 5.4 billion dollars in bonds for projects involving water quality and access, park improvements, and natural resources and park preservation. The funds will be used to purchase a vacant lot in West Oakland at 28<sup>th</sup> and Peralta Streets and construct a farm and park there. At 1.4 acres, this will be City Slicker Farms’ largest farm site; greatly increasing their ability to grow and distribute food for the West Oakland community. City Slicker Farms conducted a three-month long community design process with West Oakland youth, seniors, and families to determine what they wanted in the new park. The design was submitted and, after a lengthy and competitive review process, City Slicker Farms was selected to receive a grant. There were 475 applicants from throughout California, and only 62 were chosen for grant awards. The “West Oakland Urban Farm and Park” was the second highest award in Alameda County and the 22<sup>nd</sup> largest award in the state.

Since 2001, City Slicker Farms has been successfully partnering with thousands of West Oakland residents to transform vacant lots and hundreds of backyards into food-producing gardens, growing over 20,000 pounds of food each year. This exemplifies a successful, resident-driven movement to utilize urban agriculture as a means to get needed food on the table. West Oakland is an 8.2 sq mile industrial area bounded by three major freeways, and it is home to the 5<sup>th</sup> busiest port in the country. The neighborhood struggles with poverty, environmental pollution, and a lack of access to fresh, affordable healthy food. Thirty-two percent of residents live below the poverty level, and mortality rates for diabetes and heart disease are 1.5 times above the county rate. The lack of access to safe open space and healthy foods contributes to chronic illnesses. This new project will address these issues in a greater capacity by more than doubling City Slicker Farms’ operations and programs.

“This is a huge boon for the West Oakland community,” said Barbara Finnin, Executive Director of City Slicker Farms. “Of the seven market farms we operate, this will be the largest and only one owned by City Slicker Farms. We will be creating a legal structure to ensure that this park remains an open maintained space for all community members to enjoy in perpetuity.” The “West Oakland Urban Farm and Park” will contain an abundance of new open space as well as new recreational and educational opportunities. The community has requested that this park include lawn space (to provide ample room for youth of all ages to run, play, and exercise), a vegetable growing area, a community garden, a fruit orchard, a chicken coop, a beehive, a dog run, and a tot lot. It will be open seven days a week, from morning until night without charge. City Slicker Farms will collaborate with other community-based groups and individuals to provide ongoing programs and opportunities for the community at the site.

The land itself was home to a paint factory for 50 years and is currently owned by Peralta Street, LLC. For the past five years, the site has been vacant and fenced off. In 2005-06, the site underwent a thorough Brownfield cleanup process. Under the supervision of the State of California Department of

Toxic Substances Control (DTSC), the site was exhaustively tested, analyzed and ultimately cleaned up. In December 2006, DTSC issued a Certificate of Completion acknowledging successful completion of the cleanup. In partnership with Peralta Street, LLC, City Slicker Farms will conduct ongoing assessments and maintenance of groundwater and soil. Peralta Street, LLC and City Slicker Farms will start the Purchase and Sale Agreement process in early 2011. A community engagement and construction schedule will be announced after the purchase is completed.

### **About City Slicker Farms**

City Slicker Farms supports food self-sufficiency in West Oakland by creating organic, sustainable, high-yield urban farms and partnering with residents to transform their yards into food-producing gardens. These spaces provide healthy, affordable food and improve the environment. City Slicker Farms seeks to serve all West Oakland residents, prioritizing people who have the least access to healthy food. The farms and gardens demonstrate the viability of a local food-production system; serve as community space; empower children and adults who want to learn about the connections between ecology, farming and the urban environment; and support tools for self-reliance and empowerment.

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