



Wilson Hill Road Ranch, protected by MALT in June. Photo: Paige Green.

Minutes From Petaluma— Now Protected Forever

The top of Wilson Hill Road invites a pause. This is the edge of Petaluma that is actually in Marin County and from here a quilt of farmland stretches east across the Sonoma County line and north, south and west over the rolling, oak-dotted hills of Marin.

Walt and Arleen Jacobsen, high school sweethearts who grew up in Petaluma, bought the ranch that slopes southward down from the road's peak in 1950. Walt ran a cow/calf and beef cattle grazing operation on this 491-acre ranch for nearly 60 years before leasing it to a neighboring dairy farmer in 2007.

Now in their 90s, the Jacobsens worried in recent years about their ranch's future. Rightly so: This quiet, scenic spot is just 10 minutes from Petaluma, putting it at high risk of development. "East Petaluma—that was all farmland and ranches in

our day, and now it's just houses," said Arleen. "We love our ranch and open space, and we want to keep it this way ... always in agriculture."

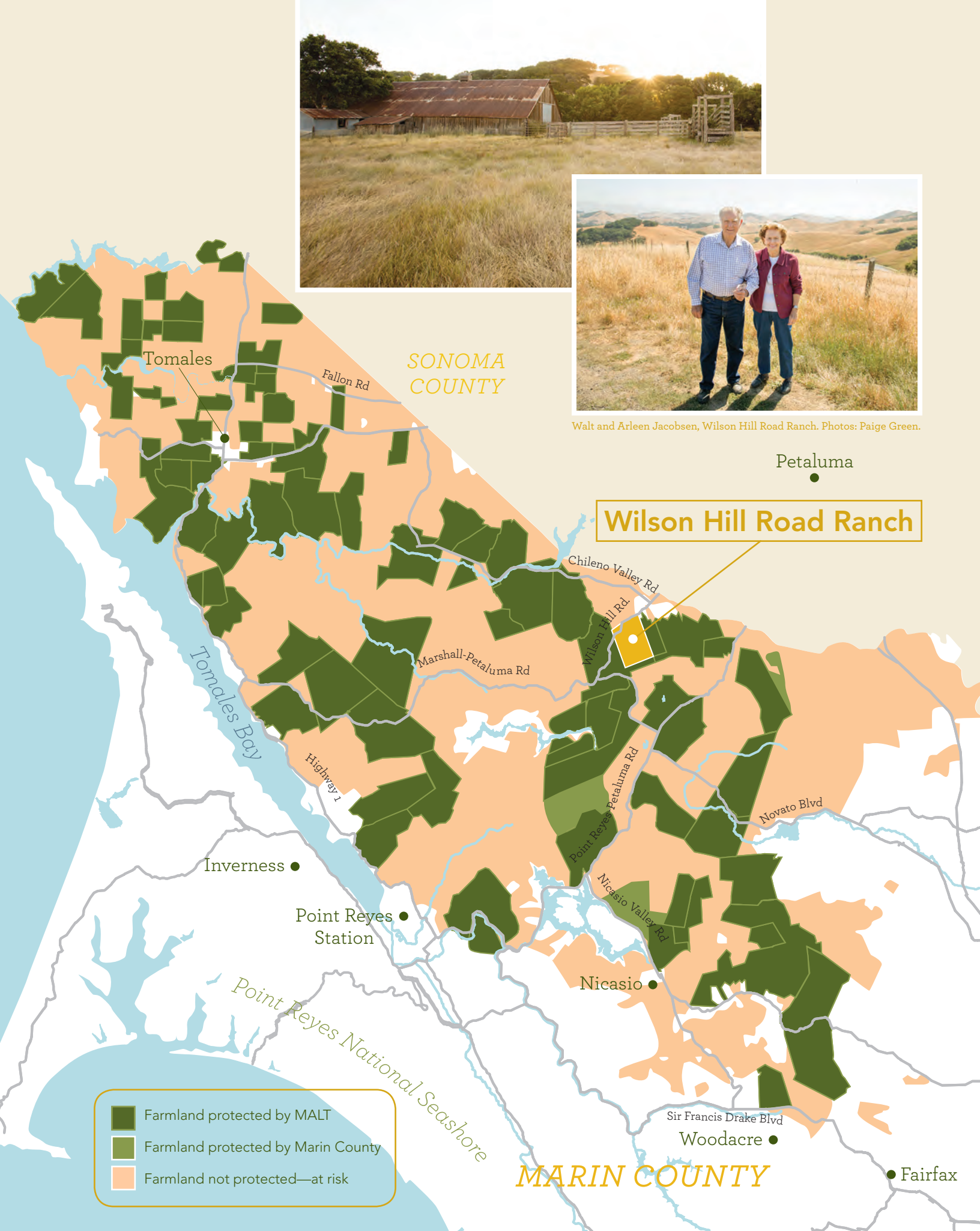
In June MALT bought an agricultural conservation easement on the Jacobsens' Wilson Hill Road Ranch, protecting it for farming forever.

The ranch is home to several large tracts of mature oak woodlands and a stand of redwood trees. Serpentine grasslands and soil outcroppings host incredible plant diversity, including nearly 100 special broadleaf grasses and wildflowers. If you've been on MALT's annual spring Wildflower Walk at Leiss Ranch you've witnessed this bounty: The two ranches are next-door neighbors.

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Walt and Arleen Jacobsen, Wilson Hill Road Ranch. Photos: Paige Green.



Minutes From Petaluma— Now Protected Forever

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There's no shortage of MALT neighbors here. Wilson Hill Road Ranch joins a large swath of 20 other protected farms and ranches stretching from the Sonoma-Marín county line northwest up Chileno Valley and southwest to Nicasio. At nearly 13,000 acres, this permanent agricultural corridor protects the region's vibrant food and farming economy, a scenic working landscape, and wildlife's ability to roam.

"Strategic protection of large blocks of farmland and wildlife habitat is the surest way to counter the threats of loss and fragmentation," said MALT Executive Director Jamison Watts. "By protecting the Jacobsens' beautiful ranch, we're allowing both farming and wildlife to continue to thrive in our region."

Included in the MALT agricultural conservation easement, which protects the land in perpetuity, is a Mandatory Agricultural Use (MAU) agreement stipulating that the land must continue to be used for commercial agriculture forever, regardless of change in ownership. The MAU also lowers the value of the land, making it more affordable for farmers to sell land to other farmers.

"We love our ranch and open space, and we want to keep it this way ... always in agriculture." – Arleen Jacobsen

The \$2.23 million easement acquisition was funded by gifts to MALT from private donors and a matching grant from the Marin County Farmland Preservation Program, created in 2012 by Measure A, a voter-approved quarter-cent sales tax. Thus far, program funds have supported the purchase of MALT conservation easements on four ranches, totaling 1,630 acres of farmland.

What Puts a Ranch at Risk?

When considering which farms and ranches to protect first, one of the factors MALT considers is how likely a property is to be converted to nonagricultural—particularly residential—use. Risk factors include:

- A family financial situation that puts the property at risk of sale to the highest bidder
- Proximity to a population center like San Rafael, Novato or Petaluma
- Multiple legal parcels that could support nonagricultural development
- Lack of Williamson Act protection
- Location along a main road with direct access from the road—no access agreements with neighbors required
- Neighboring nonagricultural residential use
- Desirability of property for residential development, e.g., coastal or bay views, abundant water and other natural resources, and/or private building sites

Thanks to its new MALT easement and the donors and voters who made it possible, Wilson Hill Road Ranch will remain a working ranch for a new generation. In the near term Walt and Arleen's grandson, Eric, plans to take the reins. Yet no matter who owns it, this special spot will continue to be farmed and to inspire those who travel over Wilson Hill.





Donor Profile: Natalie Lewis

As children growing up in San Francisco and Marin, Natalie Lewis and her brother were allowed to camp by themselves overnight anywhere on Mount Tam as long as they didn't

light any fires. "The only rule was that we had to be home by 4 o'clock Saturday afternoon," laughs Natalie.

"My grandmother's family was one of the first four in Ross and from the time I was a small child I was taken for drives around the county, to look at it and love it," she says. "So I have many happy, loving memories of this county."

After 18 years of moving her family around with the Navy, Natalie and her late husband, John, settled in Nicasio and stayed put for 30 years. From her West Marin vantage point Natalie joined Environmental Forum of Marin and got to know Phyllis Faber and Ellen Straus as they were building the

nation's first farmland trust, essentially joining MALT before MALT even technically existed. "She just has been a booster from the outset," says Phyllis.

While MALT is fortunate to have well over 200 members who have been giving to MALT for more than 20 years, Natalie's commitment is unparalleled: She has donated at least once a year since MALT's inception, volunteered, attended many events, and joined MALT's Legacy Giving Circle, having included the organization in her estate plans.

From Natalie's long view—she is 96—of Marin, MALT has helped retain her beloved county's farms, rural character and beauty. "We had hopes that we could save it and of course we've lost a lot of it. But I think on the whole we've done a good job."

Though she now lives "over the hill" in San Rafael, West Marin still has Natalie's heart.

"My number one love is ranches," she says.

Make a Match!

Does your employer match your charitable giving?

If you're not sure or want to know how, use our online lookup tool to find your company—you could double your support for Marin farmland.

www.malt.org/corporate-matching



Local and Organic in Point Reyes

Head to West Marin Saturday mornings for the Point Reyes Farmers Market, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. through November. Featuring local, organic farm-fresh food, plus chef demos, live music and kids' activities.



Sponsored by MALT

SF Cheese Fest *Saturday, September 17*

While not a MALT event, we'll be there talking about how protecting farmland helped give rise to Marin's incredible cheeses. Barinaga Ranch, Bleating Heart Cheese, Cowgirl Creamery, Nicasio Valley Cheese, Point Reyes Farmstead Cheese and Tomales Farmstead Creamery will offer tastes of MALT-protected terroir.

Time: 6–9 p.m.

Place: SF Social Hall, San Francisco

Cost: \$84, register at www.sfcheesefest.com

Age Appropriate: Ages 21 and up



Carbon Cowboys

Sunday, September 18

In the new Wild West of climate change, Marin ranchers are leading the way not only to adapt to changing weather patterns but also to be part of the solution. See how rancher Loren Poncia is managing his MALT-protected land to grow more grass, retain soil moisture and capture carbon.

Time: 1:30–4 p.m.

Place: Stemple Creek Ranch, Tomales

Cost: \$20 MALT members/
\$25 nonmembers

What to Bring: Hat, water, sunscreen,
layered clothing, walking shoes

Age Appropriate: Ages 10 and up



MALT Member Hike

Saturday, October 1

One of the benefits of being a MALT member is getting out on the land you've helped protect! Current MALT members are invited to a 4-mile hike on one of MALT's newest ranches.

Time: 2–4 p.m.

Place: Announced to members via email. Contact development@malt.org if you don't get MALT emails.

Cost: Free to current members \$40+

What to Bring: Hat, water, sunscreen,
layered clothing, walking shoes

Age Appropriate: Ages 10 and up



MALT Day at the Pumpkin Patch *Sunday, October 16*

It's pumpkin season at Nicasio Valley Farms! Pick an organic pumpkin and stay for tons of kids' activities on this MALT-protected organic farm, dairy and cheesemaker. The pumpkin patch is open all month, but a portion of pumpkin sales from this special day goes to MALT.

Time: 10 a.m.–4 p.m.

Place: Nicasio Valley Farms, Nicasio

Cost: Free admission,
no preregistration required

What to Bring: Hat, sunscreen

Age Appropriate: All ages



For the Love of Cheese, Cows and Farm Life

Sunday, October 30

Vivien Straus will guide you to the friendly heifers and stunning Tomales Bay views on the ranch where MALT cofounder Ellen Straus hatched a plan to save Marin farms. A local cheese and wine tasting in the garden of the restored farmhouse follows.

Time: 2–5 p.m.

Place: Straus Home Ranch, Marshall

Cost: \$65 MALT members/
\$75 nonmembers

What to Bring: Hat, sunscreen,
walking shoes, layered clothing

Age Appropriate: Ages 21 and up



Preregistration is required for most events. Register at www.malt.org/events or call (415) 663-1158.



Black Mountain rises beyond Living Seed Company's corn rows. Wild West Ferments and Table Top Farm are also growing food on the ranch.

Grown on Black Mountain

Cattle have grazed on the slopes of Black Mountain, an iconic feature of West Marin, for generations, but until recently other agricultural operations have been few and far between.

A new generation of Osborns, the family that owns Black Mountain Ranch, looked at the needs of the local community to diversify the ranch's use. By providing land to entrepreneurial young farmers with an eye on closed-loop sustainability, the ranch's food system is beginning to thrive.

And you can taste it. Certified organic in 2015, the 1,192-acre ranch is now home to a maturing food forest (fruiting trees planted with a layered understory of edibles), a chicken egg co-op and five local companies specializing in natural and organic products.

Table Top Farm

Arron Wilder of Table Top Farm grows organic tomatoes, squash, peppers, okra, basil and more, all of which can be found at Table Top's farm stands in Point Reyes Station, inside their CSA boxes and on the menu at local restaurants.

Wild West Ferments

Arron's row plots and greenhouse have come in handy for Maggie Levinger and Luke Regalbuto of Wild West Ferments,

who are growing cabbage, pickling cucumbers and herbs for their kimchee and sauerkraut, sold at Bay Area grocers and farmers markets.

Living Seed Company

Also sharing these plots is Living Seed Company, an organic and heirloom seed research and distribution company based in Point Reyes Station dedicated to increasing the genetic diversity of our local food. In addition to growing for seed, Matt and Astrid Hoffman are trialing rare and unconventional varieties and species for our coastal climate.

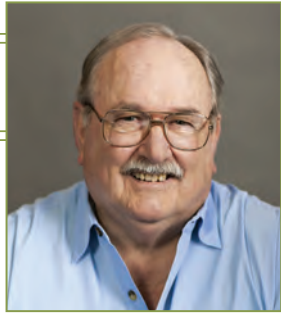
Fibershed

Rebecca Burgess, founder of Fibershed, a global organization that works to strengthen regional and regenerative textile and clothing production systems, has an indigo plot used for natural dyes.

Stemple Creek Ranch

Stemple Creek Ranch, in an effort to rotate herds and regenerate native grasses, is leasing land on Black Mountain Ranch for beef cattle, which are currently grazing on the lower slopes of the mountain. Stemple Creek Ranch beef can be found in many local restaurants, grocers and farmers markets.

MALT Welcomes Two New Board Members



Gary Giacomini

Gary was elected in 1972 to represent the 4th Supervisorial District of Marin County, which includes all of West Marin and all the agricultural areas of Marin County, and served six terms for 24 years. Always an advocate for both conservation and agriculture, Gary helped

establish A60 zoning in West Marin, which limited development on farmland to one house per 60 acres and stopped plans for freeways and subdivisions dead in their tracks. MALT built upon that zoning to protect both the land and its continued use for farming and ranching.

“I am so proud of the magnificent accomplishments by MALT in preserving, in perpetuity, tens of thousands of acres of Marin’s agricultural lands,” said Gary. “I am excited to return to the board as MALT lays plans to protect all the remaining ag lands in the county.”

Gary lives in San Geronimo and is a partner at Hanson Bridgett law firm.



Paul Martin

A third-generation dairyman, Paul Martin and his wife, Jill, owned and operated their own dairy in Two Rock for 30 years before Paul became director of environmental services for Western United Dairymen in 1999. He was appointed a deputy director in California Gov. Jerry

Brown’s Office of Business and Economic Development in 2012.

Paul has been particularly effective throughout his career in helping farmers and regulatory agencies work together on issues like air and water quality. He is also well versed in climate-beneficial practices on farmland. Though officially retired, Paul continues to serve the agricultural community as an associate director of the Sonoma Resource Conservation District’s board and an advisor on the U.S. EPA’s Farm, Ranch, and Rural Communities Federal Advisory Committee.

“I have always been interested in protecting farmland so that it remains available for productive farming and ranching uses,” says Paul. “MALT is a recognized leader in this endeavor and I hope to do my share to contribute to its continued success.”

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Co-Founded by Phyllis Faber and Ellen Straus

MALT news is published quarterly by Marin Agricultural Land Trust, a nonprofit tax-exempt organization.

Editor: Marisa Walker

Graphic Design: shirleycreative.com

Printed on 100% recycled paper containing soy inks





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Point Reyes Station
California 94956

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Thank you for joining MALT on the land this spring and summer!

MALT members get discounted tickets to many of our events and members-only invitations as well—see our latest offerings on page 5. Use your membership or join today and we hope to see you on MALT-protected farmland soon.



Marin Agricultural Land Trust is a member-supported, nonprofit organization created in 1980 to protect Marin County farmland. Some of the Bay Area's most highly acclaimed meats, dairy products and organic crops are produced on farmland protected by MALT totaling more than 48,000 acres on 78 family farms and ranches.

To learn about Marin's working farms and ranches and the food they produce, visit www.malt.org