



Dairy cattle on Gallagher North Bend Ranch, with neighboring Black Mountain in the background. Photo: Paige Green.

MALT Protects Point Reyes Station Ranch for Farming

Gallagher North Bend Ranch takes its name from the sweep of Lagunitas Creek as it skirts the foot of Marin's iconic Black Mountain. For over a century, the Gallagher family has tended the fertile flatlands, pastures and woods that roll up from the south bank of the creek.

But for much of the last 20 years, the ranch's future was uncertain, as the Gallaghers faced mounting pressure to sell, complicated by shared ownership among five cousins. "We thought we didn't have a chance of hanging on to it," said Paul Gallagher, who now owns the ranch along with his brother, Kevin. "If not for MALT, the ranch would have been sold out of the family."

MALT purchased an agricultural conservation easement from the Gallaghers this spring, guaranteeing that the ranch will never be subdivided or developed, and that it must remain in agricultural use forever. Paul and Kevin and their wives, Deanna and Katy, put proceeds from the sale of the easement toward purchasing their cousins' share of the ranch.

A Long History

The Gallaghers have been fixtures of the tight-knit Point Reyes community for four generations. Edward Gallagher came to the United States from Ireland in the mid-19th century and traveled West in a covered wagon. He arrived in West Marin in the 1860s and, in 1893, purchased land along Lagunitas Creek to start a dairy. *continued on page 2*

Message from the Executive Director



When we talk about sustainability,

we mean more than organic or pasture-raised. Sustainable agriculture conserves natural resources, is profitable over the long term and benefits the local community. It's not enough

for MALT to protect the land—we must also support our farmers and ranchers in innovating and diversifying their operations. These men and women can only continue to work the land if they can make a living at it.

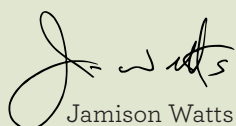
That economic piece of the sustainability triad means that MALT supports agriculture beyond the boundaries of our easements. That's why MALT stands squarely in support of the ranchers in Point Reyes National Seashore, whose future is now threatened by a lawsuit aimed at phasing out ranching in the park.

These historic ranches account for nearly 20 percent of the agricultural production in Marin County. If they disappear, so may many of the support services—veterinarians, feed suppliers and all the other businesses that keep a farm running—that rely on a critical mass of customers.

In addition to their economic importance, Seashore ranches represent a significant portion of the county's managed coastal grasslands, which provide vital environmental benefits for the region. Grazing in Point Reyes National Seashore and elsewhere—first by native grazers and more recently by livestock—has been shown to help maintain grassland habitat and conserve native plant and animal species.

Finally, this is about supporting our community. Many of the 24 ranching families in the park—who sold their land to create the National Seashore decades ago—are part of the fabric of Marin's agricultural heritage. Many of them tend land outside the Seashore as well, including MALT-protected land.

Thank you for standing with MALT and the farmers and ranchers who feed us and care for Marin's spectacular working landscapes. We'll continue to update you on the status of the lawsuit and tell you how you can help support agriculture throughout our county.


Jamison Watts



Gallagher North Bend Ranch is tucked between MALT-protected Black Mountain Ranch (background right) and Golden Gate National Recreation Area land. Photo: Paige Green.

Protected: Gallagher North Bend Ranch

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Following World War II, Edward's twin grandsons, George and Bob, returned to the family's ranch and got the dairy back up and running. Bob operated the ranch until he passed away in 2002. George served as the postmaster in Point Reyes Station for nearly 40 years, but he often helped his brother around the ranch. George's sons, Kevin and Paul, inherited half of the ranch from their father, while Bob's children inherited the other half. Today, Kevin and Katy live on the ranch, and Paul and Deanna live just down the road in Point Reyes Station.

Big Trees, Clean Water

Half of the ranch is grassland, currently leased to a local rancher for grazing cattle. Eighteen acres of flat, fertile farmland are newly leased to Marin Roots Farm for organic vegetables, an addition since MALT protected the ranch. The rest of the property is a shady forest sheltering Lagunitas Creek, which borders the ranch for nearly two miles.

Gallagher North Bend Ranch is part of an important regional wildlife corridor, a swath of undeveloped land that allows animals to travel more freely across their natural ranges in search of food, shelter and mates. Lagunitas Creek is a



particular stronghold for regional biodiversity, harboring critical habitat for endangered coho salmon, steelhead trout and other aquatic species that thrive in clear, cold water. River otters, spotted owls and mountain lions are among the species that make their homes on this spectacularly diverse ranch.

In Jeopardy

Until it gained the protection of a MALT easement, the ranch's fields and forests were at grave risk. Just an hour north of San Francisco, the scenic ranches around Point Reyes Station are frequently targeted for luxury estates. The Gallaghers' ranch is situated along a main road just a few minutes from town, and it backs right up to a national park, all of which made it especially attractive.

"There weren't too many options until MALT came along." –Paul Gallagher

The Gallaghers put their family's land up for sale as they sought a solution to the burdens of joint ownership. On the open market, this extraordinary property generated interest from nonagricultural buyers from as far away as New York, but the Gallaghers—not yet willing to let the ranch pass out of their family's care—rejected several offers.

"It was a complicated situation," acknowledged Paul. "A lot of times, when families need to buy each other out, there are disagreements or feuds. There was nothing like that here. Our cousins needed to sell, and we understood that, but we just wanted to find a way to keep the ranch in the family. There weren't too many options until MALT came along."

A New Future

"MALT has done a really great job working with us," said Paul. He noted that his cousins stood to make more money by selling on the open market, but opted to sell an easement to MALT instead.

"We're just happy that we were able to hold on to the ranch and keep it in the family," said Paul. "We thought it was important that the ranch be kept working. Now we know that future generations will be able to enjoy it, and to start and grow something here too."

MALT was able to protect Gallagher North Bend Ranch with grants from the California State Coastal Conservancy, the Marin County Farmland Preservation Program (Measure A), California's new Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program and generous donations from MALT supporters.



Photo: Michael Woolsey.

Legacy Giving Circle Members: Kimbel and Debra Stuart

Kim and Debie Stuart were living in Colorado when they met, but they visited Northern California often and regularly drove out to West Marin to enjoy the scenery. “One of these days, this is where I want to live,” Debie remembers saying. “This is Nirvana.”

In 1987, the Stuarts fulfilled that dream, buying a ranch in Nicasio and moving in. Now they have two horses on their beautiful, hilly acreage along Nicasio Valley Road, and Debie and Kim ride often. They connected with MALT 12 years ago, after coming as guests to a MALT barbecue with friends who were members. “Our interest in MALT is in preserving all these beautiful ranches,” says Debie. “If it weren’t for MALT, they would all be subdivided. We ride our horses and enjoy all the open land.”

Debie grew up in Colorado, with a father who came from a ranching community and was deeply committed to environmental causes and the preservation of open space.

“The beauty of Marin is that you can go over the Golden Gate Bridge, and you’re here in this beautiful place, with all this open land,” she said.

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Kim, who grew up in San Francisco, seconds those beliefs, particularly in regard to protecting where you live. Their family foundation spends approximately 65 percent of its annual donation budget in Marin, predominantly on health and education projects. The Stuarts decided to become MALT Legacy Giving Circle Members and include MALT in their estate plans in order to continue their support of local causes and land preservation for as long as possible.

After 28 years of enjoying life in West Marin, Kim says, “I feel it is our responsibility to protect what we have to ensure this way of life exists for generations to come.”

Take a drive through West Marin history...

COW HEAVEN

Saving the Family Farm

A GPS-enabled audio tour of Marin farmland featuring the ranchers and others who fought to protect it.

www.malt.org/drivingtour



DONATE YOUR CAR, SAVE FARMLAND

MALT has partnered with CARS, a car donation management program used by nonprofits across the United States, to allow you to turn your old vehicles into cash to protect farmland.

To find out more, go to
www.malt-cardonations.org
or call (415) 663-1158.



Farm Supper at Long Meadow Ranch *Saturday, July 9*

Join us at the table on MALT-protected Long Meadow Ranch, known locally for its herd of long-horned Highland cattle. The Hall family's organic, full-circle farming methods produce grass-fed beef and lamb, fruits and vegetables, honey, world-class wines and olive oil for their St. Helena restaurant, Farmstead. Executive

Chef Stephen Barber, known for his outdoor fire cooking techniques, will highlight the ranch's own products in our supper on the land.

Time: 5 p.m.

Place: Long Meadow Ranch, Tomales

Cost: \$245 MALT members/
\$265 nonmembers

What to Bring: Layered clothing

Age Appropriate: Ages 21 and up



Tour de MALT *Saturday, July 23*

A farm-to-farm cycling event through West Marin farmland, featuring some of Marin's best eats. Each route features tasty refueling stops, including wood-fired pizzas at Toluma Farms & Tomales Farmstead Creamery, and breakfast sandwiches at Point Reyes Farmstead Cheese Co. Celebrate your finish with a farm-to-table lunch from Thistle Meats at Nicasio Valley Farms. Choose a 40-mile or 60-mile route.

Time: 8 a.m.

Start & Finish: Nicasio Valley Farms, Nicasio

Cost: \$85 MALT members/\$125 nonmembers (ride support and lunch included)

What to Bring: Bike, helmet (required), water bottle

Age Appropriate: Ages 15 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 climate change solution. See how rancher Loren Poncia is putting practices—both time-honored and innovative—to use on his MALT-protected land to grow more grass, retain soil moisture and capture carbon.

Time: TBD

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 Day at the Pumpkin Patch *Sunday, October 16*

Pumpkin season is coming to Nicasio Valley Farms! Pick an organic pumpkin and stay for tons of activities for the kids at this MALT-protected organic farm, dairy and artisanal cheese company. The pumpkin patch is open throughout October, but a portion of pumpkin sales from this very 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



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



MALT Farmer Launches New Brand, Pasture Fresh Eggs



In 2011, Jessica McIsaac was living a full and busy life on the MALT-

protected farm in Tomales, caring for twin baby boys with her husband, Neil, and producing pasture-raised eggs, which were sold through the Red Hill Farm label. Then Red Hill Farm was shut down by new owners, and the five family farmers whose eggs they sold had to find a new outlet. In response, McIsaac, a determined organizer with a drive to succeed, started Pasture Fresh Eggs. "I saw it coming," she said. "I had cartons in production. I really had to take action."

the egg business is going strong. Among those four is the Lafranchi Ranch in Nicasio, another diversified, MALT-protected family property that also produces organic milk and row crops, and is home to Nicasio Valley Cheese Co.

McIsaac's chickens are certified organic and live entirely outdoors, housed in pasture coops and protected by Great Pyrenees livestock guardian dogs. The beautiful eggs they produce are delicately colored, exceptionally nutritious and hand-gathered.

And life on the ranch just keeps getting busier. McIsaac and her husband have since had another child, a daughter, and McIsaac is poised to start another outlet for local pastured eggs, Organic Proud, to sell to independent stores.

"I needed to do this," she said, "because there's no other option. I want to keep all the producers going, which is hard because I can only take as many eggs as I can sell. I foresee this as increasing my margin down the road and also offering an outlet to keep other West Marin egg farmers in business."

Look for Pasture Fresh Eggs at Whole Foods Markets throughout Northern California. Learn more at www.pasturefresh.net.

Originally, McIsaac was inspired to add chickens to the family's dairy farm at the time when they were transitioning the farm to organic. "Organic is an opportunity," she said, "and diversity is critical for the sustainability of a family farm."

Now Pasture Fresh Eggs sells the eggs of four farmers exclusively through Whole Foods in Northern California, and



MALT Welcomes Barbara Boucke to Board of Directors

Barbara Boucke has been a Stinson Beach homeowner since 1985 and a member of MALT since its early days—and now she is one of the newest members of MALT's board of directors.

Barbara has a lot of experience working for other not-for-profit organizations and being on boards, and she said, "I just really, truly think that this is the most professional, effective organization I've experienced. The MALT board is amazing, the staff is amazing. This is an organization that is extremely capable and efficient, but also enjoys life and has fun. And that's such a treat."

For Barbara, the thing MALT does best is to help keep the land it protects active, useful and viable. "What's most important in West Marin is that you can't just have this land, all these beautiful hills, and set it off to look at it," she said. "You have to use it. MALT provides economic resources to West Marin. That's critical."

(Wild) Life on the Ranch



Citizen scientists documented 235 plant and animal species on Millerton Creek Ranch on Tomales Bay during an Earth Day bioblitz hosted by MALT and the California Academy of Sciences. The day offered a deeper look at the incredible diversity on this cattle ranch, the only private, working land on which the Academy's Citizen Science team has gathered data. Observation highlights:

- Harlequin lotus, a plant with limited distribution in California
- Oneleaf onion, which has not been documented in this part of Marin, according to the Calflora database
- Newts and frogs, both signs of a healthy ecosystem
- An incredible 57 species of birds, largely observed by an early-rising team from the Audubon Society

All these observations go on the scientific record and help MALT and the ranchers protect the land's habitat and diverse plants and animals. Just a year and a half ago MALT bought Millerton Creek Ranch from a developer and secured the future of this special place.

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Tour de MALT

JULY 23

A farm-to-farm cycling event through West Marin farmland, featuring some of Marin's finest eats. Best of all, your ride helps protect more of the farms and food you love. See page 5 for more details.

This ride sells out, so register now: www.malt.org/tourdemalt



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 77 family farms and ranches.

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