



Bolinas farmer Peter Martinelli of Fresh Run Farm. Photo: Paige Green

At the Confluence of Farming and Fisheries

On its way from the hills of Point Reyes National Seashore to Bolinas Lagoon, Pine Gulch Creek meanders year-round through the 235-acre Martinelli Family Ranch, known locally as Paradise Valley Ranch. The ranch is home to 25 acres of organic row crops and another 70 acres of organic orchards and ranchland that constitute Fresh Run Farm, run by Peter Martinelli. Another 140 acres of the ranch are pristine riparian and woodland habitats supporting coho salmon, steelhead trout, northern spotted owl, California red-legged frog and other significant species. The property is bordered by Point Reyes National Seashore on two sides, and it's hard to tell where park ends and farm begins.

This lush stretch of Marin County is home to some of California's oldest organic farms, providing a bounty of fruits and vegetables to farmers' markets, restaurants and retailers. The farmers who work this land value it not only for its rich, dark soil but also for the life that calls it home.



A pair of steelhead trout spawn in Pine Gulch Creek, February 2014.
Photo: Jeff Stump

Message from the Executive Director



As our feature article about the Martinelli Family

Ranch shows, MALT is committed to protecting not just farmland, but also its natural resources. MALT's work with the Marin Carbon Project takes us a

step further, addressing global climate change by sequestering carbon on farmland. This partnership includes landowners, local resource conservation districts, the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Natural Resources Conservation Service, UC Cooperative Extension, UC Berkeley research scientists, MALT and other local nonprofits.

A year into testing this innovative concept, I'm proud to report that it's not only sequestering carbon, it's also improving agricultural productivity and protecting natural resources—a triple win.

On-the-ground implementation began last fall with a huge delivery of compost to three demonstration farms: Corda Ranch, Stemple Creek Ranch and Straus Dairy—all protected by MALT easements. After baseline soil samples were collected, landowners spread the compost over rangelands to kick-start the carbon cycle. Project researchers are finding that soil treated with compost stores even more carbon than we'd hoped: one ton of atmospheric carbon permanently sequestered per hectare (2.47 acres) of rangeland.

Over this past winter of record-breaking drought, the other benefits became clear: the grasses were taller, healthier and greener on the pastures where compost had been spread because the amended soil retained more water. And in this land of grass-fed beef and dairy cattle, grass is gold.

Drought resilience, greener pastures, better bottom line for farmers. We're working to enable landowners who follow this practice to sell carbon credits, too—an unconventional farm product that could diversify their income.

The Marin Carbon Project is proving the concept here and developing a template to share with other agricultural regions. It's exactly the type of local, community-based solution we need to tackle climate change, the biggest environmental challenge of our time. I'm proud of MALT's leadership in putting Marin farms at the forefront of climate change innovation, and equally proud to support the farmers who steward this land.

Jamison Watts

At the Confluence of Farming and Fisheries *...continued from page 1*

Farmers for Fish

Pine Gulch Creek rushes through three of these farms, including Peter Martinelli's Fresh Run Farm. In its high-flowing winter waters, Peter witnesses steelhead, sometimes over 30 inches long, spawning on his land. The creek's banks are festooned with tags left by Park Service fish monitors, each tag indicating a sighting of a redd, a depression in the gravel where a pair of fish has spawned.



Pine Gulch Creek runs through Martinelli Family Ranch. Photo: Jeff Stump

All three farms have historically had riparian water rights, which allow them to draw water directly from Pine Gulch Creek to irrigate farmland along its banks during the spring

"This is a unique project where our farmers are actually dedicating their summer riparian water rights to an endangered fish."

—Nancy Scolari, Marin Resource Conservation District

and summer growing season. Though the farmers and fish had coexisted for decades, in 1998 the Park Service approached the farmers to collaborate on a plan that would provide abundant water for both the row crop farming and the coho and steelhead in the creek during the low-flow summer months, when both fish and farmers need the water most.

"All three farmers, the Park Service, and around nine different state and federal agencies have fought hard to bring this project into reality," said Peter. "Storing high-flow winter water for use in the dry season seems like a no-brainer, but it has taken a tremendous amount of effort, convincing agencies, working through habitat studies, and finally obtaining permits and funding."

The Marin Resource Conservation District has taken the lead

on this innovative water project. All three farmers will build ponds on their properties, into which they will pump water while the creek is flush from winter storms. The farms will stop drawing water in the early summer and leave it in the creek to support fish populations as creek levels drop, irrigating from the ponds instead.

“This is a unique project where our farmers are actually dedicating their summer riparian water rights to an endangered fish,” said Nancy Scolari, executive director of the Marin RCD. “It will be an important model to other farmers in the state who are struggling with water rights and the protection of fisheries.”

Even with widespread support from local fisheries and resource agencies, along with a grant from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to fund construction of the ponds, the project hit a snag when federal regulations regarding wetlands changed. The final permit from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers hung just out of reach.

Protecting Farmland to Protect Habitat

Several years into this process, the Martinelli family asked MALT to help protect the property from development. The pressure to convert the fields of organic beans, kale, pumpkins and strawberries to nonagricultural use in pricey Bolinas is a constant threat, but the family is committed to preserving the region’s unique agriculture and habitat. They are so committed, in fact, that the Martinellis offered to donate more than half the value of the easement.



Fresh Run Farm bounty. Farmer Peter Martinelli irrigates his row crops with water from Pine Gulch Creek. Photo: Rob Brodman

“My family and I want to see the ranch remain unchanged for generations to come,” said Peter. “As a farmer, I see the rich bottom land, climate and water resources in the Pine Gulch drainage as an agricultural resource that is the ultimate gift to leave to future generations of Marin residents.”

The rich habitats of the Martinelli Family Ranch led MALT to request grant support from the California Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB). With the requested \$1.5 million from WCB and \$1 million already raised from generous Bolinas

“As a farmer, I see the rich bottom land, climate and water resources in the Pine Gulch drainage as an agricultural resource that is the ultimate gift to leave to future generations of Marin residents.” –Farmer Peter Martinelli

community members and MALT donors, MALT would have enough cash to purchase the conservation easement. But the agricultural component of the project was outside the normal scope of WCB’s work, so the request languished for more than a year.

A Confluence

In many agricultural landscapes, wildlife conservation and farming are deeply at odds. But along the banks of Pine Gulch Creek, they reach a confluence. MALT’s challenge was to demonstrate to the agencies involved that the two could work hand-in-hand and, thanks to the protections of a MALT easement, would do so in perpetuity.

Every MALT easement includes plans for protecting habitat as well as agriculture, backed by professional staff who monitor and enforce both elements. With assurances of these permanent protections and an offer to extend MALT’s monitoring and enforcement to cover pond operations, the Army Corps and other involved agencies finally agreed to move forward and issue the necessary permits for the water project.

MALT’s combined proposal of the water project plus the permanent habitat protections provided by the easement convinced the Wildlife Conservation Board that the fisheries of Pine Gulch Creek would reap long-term benefits despite the working farm along its banks. Now the easement funding is just one WCB vote away from approval, with all signs pointed toward success.

This fall, after all of the funding approvals are in hand, the easement document and associated management plans are approved, and the baseline documentation report is finalized, MALT will purchase a conservation easement protecting the Martinelli Family Ranch forever. And next year, when the pond project is complete, the fingerling coho salmon and steelhead trout in Pine Gulch Creek will breathe a little easier in its deep, cool pools, ready to repeat a cycle that has been happening in this same spot for thousands of years.



Linda Blackwood Volunteer and Donor

Like many MALT supporters, Linda Blackwood, a retired biology professor, appreciates the local food and open spaces that MALT helps sustain. But since she started volunteering for MALT four years ago, she's gotten to know the farm-

ers and ranchers who produce the food and care for the land. "Now it's personal," she says.

Originally from near Pittsburgh, Penn., Linda has called the Bay Area—first San Francisco, now Marin's San Geronimo Valley—home since 1981. "I like the accessibility in Marin of things I want to do, like hike or visit local lakes and the ocean. I don't want to go somewhere for a weekend—I want to live there!" explains Linda.

These days she skips the coast route on her way to volunteer days in the northwest corner of the county, opting instead for Chileno Valley Road, where the hillsides are dotted with cattle and sheep. "Driving through farmland is calming and restful to me," says Linda. Farms weren't part of her childhood, but

she's made them part of her life.

Linda's volunteer experiences, including taking children on Farm Field Studies tours and assisting MALT's stewardship staff via the Weed Rangers crew and a stream restoration project, put a face and a story to the landscape.

"Farmers have passion for the land; they're great stewards. It's a lifestyle that has to be preserved," she says. "Can you imagine if you were a fifth-generation farmer and lost the family farm on your watch?"

To Linda, MALT is central to protecting Marin's farming community. "I support MALT because they're doing the right thing and doing it well." Her support includes not only

"Farmers have passion for the land; they're great stewards. It's a lifestyle that has to be preserved."

time and money, but also enthusiasm for telling others about MALT and the farmland the organization has protected.

Linda is inspired by the young farmers, like Marissa Thornton, continuing and evolving their families' multigenerational farming legacy, and by those who have come to farming more recently and balance working the land with urban jobs.

"These are people who have vision, courage and commitment."

HAVE YOU BEEN TO THE POINT REYES FARMERS' MARKET?

Come for all-organic, all-local food—stay for music, chef demos, contests and kids' activities.

Saturdays 9 a.m.–1 p.m. through November 8 in downtown Point Reyes Station.

Sponsored by MALT

Kyra Epstein



We Need a Field Vehicle!

MALT's Stewardship staff depends on reliable four-wheel-drive cars to carry out its monitoring and agricultural assistance programs. If you have a vehicle that fits the bill and wish to donate it to MALT as a tax-deductible gift, please contact Director of Conservation Jeff Stump at jstump@malt.org or 415.663.1158.



Michael Woolsey

Field to Fork: Italian Harvest Supper *September 13*

Gather on a MALT-protected ranch for an afternoon of hands-on Italian burrata cheese-making with the SF Milk Maid, pour a glass of vino and sit down to a harvest supper cooked on-site by Italian chefs Andrea Giuliani (Piazza d'Angelo) and Donato Scotti (Desco, Donato Enoteca, La Strada).

Time: 4–9 p.m.

Place: Moore Ranch, Nicasio

Cost: \$225 MALT members/
\$265 nonmembers

Age Appropriate: 21 years and up

Guest Limit: 50



Debbie Wilson

Vintage Car Drive to Thornton Ranch *October 12*

Vintage-car enthusiasts, grab the keys to your favorite classic and join “CNET on Cars” host Brian Cooley for a country drive to Tomales for a meet-up on historic Thornton Ranch. Brian will share some of the history of the 40-plus MALT-protected ranches we’ll pass along the way.

Time: 8:30 a.m.–2 p.m.

Place: Starts in Corte Madera. Final destination Thornton Ranch, Tomales

Cost: \$45 MALT members/\$55 nonmembers/\$15 kids under 12

Age Appropriate: All ages

Guest Limit: 50



Greg Smith

MALT Day at the Pumpkin Patch *October 19*

Pick an organic pumpkin, make your own cheese, taste local Marin wine and beer, let the kids go crazy with crafts, and pick up a locally sourced lunch from The Farmer’s Wife and Stemple Creek Ranch.

Time: 10 a.m.–4 p.m.

Place: Nicasio Valley Farms Pumpkin Patch

Cost: Free and open to the public

Age Appropriate: All ages



Paige Green

Campfire with Owls *October 25*

Have a close encounter with live owls with MALT and the Hungry Owl Project. We’ll gather around a campfire on the hills of MALT-protected Stubbs Vineyard and keep warm with hot chocolate for kids and a Stubbs Vineyard wine tasting for adults.

Time: 6:30–8 p.m.

Place: Stubbs Vineyard

Cost: \$30 MALT members/
\$40 nonmembers/\$10 kids under 12

Age Appropriate: 6 years and up

Guest Limit: 50



Register or more info: www.malt.org/events or 415.663.1158. Preregistration required for all ticketed events.



We’re already thinking about next year’s events! Sign up for MALT emails at www.malt.org/enews and be among the first to see the new 2015 schedule of hikes, tours and tastings. Remember, MALT members save up to 25% on event registration.



Photos: Julie Mikos



Ranches & Rolling Hills Landscape Art Show and Sale *May 17-18, Nicasio*

A delightful weekend of art and food from the farms of Marin. With special thanks to the artists for sharing their time and talent.



Photos: Michael Woolsey



Members Hike at Barboni Ranch *June 14, Hicks Valley*

More than 100 MALT members explored beautiful MALT-protected Barboni Ranch.

Field to Fork Summer Supper at Thacher Ranch *June 28, Chileno Valley*

Fire-cooked dinner with chef David Wilcox on a ranch MALT is working right now to protect.



Photos: Erin Wrightsman



Tour de MALT *July 12, Nicasio*

There's no place more breathtaking to ride than West Marin—especially when you're going up the Marshall Wall.

Miss one of these great events? Be the first to know—sign up for MALT's eNews at www.malt.org/enews.

The Land of Milk and Honey



MALT and Three Twins Ice Cream

"Three Twins has supported MALT from our early days because we believe in its mission and love its impact," says Three Twins Ice Cream owner and founder Neal Gottlieb.

Started in San Rafael in 2005, the company now churns out ice cream from its facility in Petaluma. Milk and cream

come from within 17 miles of the factory. "I started Three Twins in Marin County with milk and cream sourced from Marin County," says Neal. "This was made possible in part by the conservation work that MALT facilitates."

Neal joined charitable corporate giving program 1% for the Planet in his first year of business, despite the challenges of getting the company off the ground and turning a profit, because he wanted his company to have a positive environmental impact.

"Statements like 'we give a portion of our proceeds to charity' mean nothing," explains Neal. "Three Twins Ice Cream is a member of 1% for the Planet because it is a promise to our customers that we will give 1% of our sales, regardless of profitability, to environmental nonprofits."

By selecting MALT as a 1% recipient, Three Twins supports the local land, people and community that give rise to great food. "The land that MALT preserves is a gift not just for the beauty of open spaces but also for the bounty that those open spaces can produce," adds Neal.



**FOR THE
PLANET**

NONPROFIT PARTNER

MALT is proud to announce our partnership with 1% for the Planet, an alliance of over 1,300 member companies that give one percent of revenues to environmental causes.

Three Twins Ice Cream and Partisan Arts are current 1% member companies that support MALT.

Started in 2002 by Yvon Chouinard, MALT member and founder/owner of Patagonia, and Craig Matthews, 1% for the Planet has funneled over \$100 million to over 3,000 nonprofits worldwide. In the words of Chouinard, "The intent of 1% for the Planet is to help fund these diverse environmental organizations so that collectively they can be a more powerful force in solving the world's problems."

MALT is honored to be a part of this partnership.

If you'd like to know more about how your business can support MALT through 1% for the Planet, please contact Noelle Moss, Annual Fund Manager, at 415.663.1158, ext. 312.

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Your legacy... *Farmland forever*

Through MALT's Legacy Giving Circle, you can forever protect the beauty, productivity and history of Marin County farmland. Contact Kristine Ball, Director of Development, at 415.663.1158, ext. 318, for more information about the benefits of including MALT in your estate plan.

Paolo Vescia

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 dairy products and organic crops are produced on farmland protected by MALT agricultural conservation easements, which total more than 46,000 acres on 72 family farms and ranches.

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