

IMPACT REPORT 2022-2023

# *EMPOWERING LOCAL AGRICULTURE*



*BUILDING UPON OUR  
COMMUNITY IMPACT*



**Dear friends,**

Reflecting on my first year as MALT's executive director, I'm struck with a deep sense of gratitude for all that we've accomplished together. In this past fiscal year, we conserved more than 1,200 acres near Tomales, building upon an 11,000-acre block of contiguous MALT-protected agricultural land that extends across Marin County. It's an achievement made possible by your support.

Today we celebrate having protected, in total, more than 55,700 acres of farm and ranchland — collectively one of the largest areas of conserved lands in the entire Bay Area. Amid the climate change and biodiversity loss crises, I find hope in the impact of our shared effort and in the possibility of what we can achieve when we come together as a community.

Each passing year is a step closer to achieving MALT's vision of a thriving and inclusive agricultural community in a healthy and diverse natural environment. We couldn't be more thrilled with our progress in the last year. With your help, during the 2022 – 2023 fiscal year, we:

**Launched new strategic pillars,  
five areas of focus that honor our  
past work and respond to the  
needs identified by our community.**

**Protected the 723-acre McDowell  
Ranch and the 539-acre Duncan  
Ranch, ensuring they remain in  
agricultural production in perpetuity.**

**Celebrated the two year anniversary  
of our Drought Resilience and  
Water Security (DRAWS) initiative.**

None of these accomplishments would be possible without the unwavering commitment of caring people like you. Your donations, volunteer hours, and community support have played a pivotal role in amplifying our impact. Thank you for your generosity in helping empower local agriculture, we couldn't do it without you.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Lily Verdone". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Lily Verdone, *Executive Director*

# *CELEBRATING OUR NEW* *STRATEGIC PILLARS*



Forty-three years ago, Phyllis Faber and Ellen Straus — a botanist and a dairy farmer — brought together local ranchers and conservationists to protect family farms from mounting development pressures in Marin County. We can all find inspiration in their audacity, in the courage of forming the first agricultural land trust in the nation, and in their ability to rally our community around a common cause.

Honoring the legacy and vision of our founders, we are excited to embark on the next chapter of our work, which builds on their foundation of success. To help guide these efforts over the next few years, we are organizing our work around five strategic pillars, a pivotal juncture in our organization's mission to "protect agricultural land for agricultural use."

Consistent with our origins, these new strategic pillars embody a holistic and forward-looking approach to agricultural conservation. We recognize today that our success is dependent upon our ability to continue to innovate, nurture community bonds, and champion a more equitable and just food system, as well as further build our organizational capacity.

While these pillars have been fundamental for much of our success to date, there has never been a more important time to double down, sharpen our focus within these key areas, and build upon our tremendous legacy.

Discover more: [malt.org/our-strategy](https://malt.org/our-strategy)





### **PRESERVING AGRICULTURE**

Conserve the most important farmland to support a thriving, economically viable agricultural community in Marin.



### **PROTECTING BIODIVERSITY**

Protect, restore, and improve agricultural lands to benefit wildlife habitat, landscape connectivity, soil health, and water quality.



### **BUILDING CLIMATE RESILIENCE**

Incentivize and accelerate climate-smart agricultural practices and nature-based solutions that deliver climate resilience.



### **CONNECTING OUR COMMUNITY**

Inspire and build a constituency to increase awareness of the public benefit of protecting agricultural land.



### **STRENGTHENING OUR ORGANIZATION**

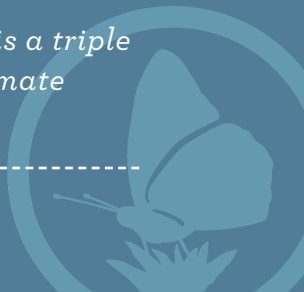
Invest in the people, technology, and processes that support the foundation of our organization.



# MCDOWELL RANCH

723 ACRES | PROTECTED FOREVER

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*The conservation of the McDowell Ranch is a triple win protecting agriculture, mitigating climate change, and enhancing biodiversity.*  
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**In August of 2022, we protected the 723-acre McDowell Ranch east of Tomales and near the Marin and Sonoma county line. By acquiring an agricultural conservation easement from the Wilson family, the ranch owners, we ensured this land's verdant, organic-certified grasslands are safeguarded from the threat of development and will forever remain in agricultural production.**

The Wilson family has depended upon this land — first a dairy, now home to organic beef cattle — since owner Kenny Wilson's great-grandfather, an Irish dairyman, purchased the ranch in 1900. Today, nearly every acre of this property has been deemed "Farmland of Local Importance" by the California Department of Conservation, indicating its critical role in contributing to Marin County's robust food economy.

The ranch also harbors a 1.5-mile stretch of Stemple Creek. As one of the main waterways in the northern portion of the county, the creek offers refuge for a host of special status species including California freshwater shrimp, northwestern pond turtle, tidewater goby, Myrtle's silverspot butterfly, and California red-legged frog. As an artery for wildlife in this landscape, the careful stewardship of this habitat is key to sustaining these threatened species.

You don't need to have visited this ranch to appreciate its value. Chances are you have enjoyed a view of its expansive grasslands while driving the Tomales-Petaluma Road. With the successful protection of this ranch, we have built upon the iconic backdrop for all North Bay communities and safeguarded a critical ingredient to the quality of life for millions of Bay Area residents.

Beyond its local significance, the conservation of the McDowell Ranch is also a big win in our efforts to mitigate climate change. The science has grown increasingly clear over the years and is now backed by public policy — natural and working lands provide a triple win when supporting agriculture, capturing and storing greenhouse gasses, and protecting biodiversity while mitigating further impacts of climate change. Protecting agricultural landscapes like the McDowell Ranch extends beyond our local responsibility, it is now a global imperative.

Learn about our complimentary land protection work at the Duncan Ranch — next page.





# ***DUNCAN RANCH***

539 ACRES | PROTECTED FOREVER

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*This land offers refuge for a host of vital plants and wildlife and is essential in our work to build regional climate resilience.*

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**Building on our success with the McDowell Ranch (previous page), in March we protected the adjacent 539-acre Duncan Ranch. Through a second agricultural conservation easement with the Wilson family, we preserved this landscape's ecological richness and bolstered one of the largest contiguous areas of protected land in the Bay Area.**

The protection of these two ranches builds upon a block of more than 11,000 acres of contiguous MALT-protected land, stretching from the county border to the mouth of Tomales Bay. This large block of protected land offers refuge for a host of vital plants and wildlife and is essential in our work to build regional climate resilience.

The expansiveness of this swath of MALT-protected land is best realized from the top of the Duncan Ranch, with sweeping vistas across a landscape that showcase West Marin's unique habitats. Descending from the ridgeline, the ranch's verdant grasslands are decorated with gnarled oaks and dramatic rock outcroppings. Each bend and twist across the landscape offers a unique microclimate for a host of native plants and the cornucopia of life they support — both wild and domestic.

Our land protection efforts would not be possible without the continued generosity of our donors and the support of Marin County voters. Funding for the protection of both McDowell and Duncan ranches came from two sources: half from private donations to MALT and half from Marin County's Farmland Preservation Program — funded by Marin County's Measure A, a quarter-cent sales tax devoted to preserving Marin County's parks, open spaces, and agricultural land.

Since its initial passage in 2012, Measure A has allowed Marin County to invest \$16.4 million in farmland preservation, enabling MALT to protect 13 farms and ranches totaling 7,953 acres through the acquisition of agricultural conservation easements. We are tremendously grateful for this ongoing support and look forward to leveraging more opportunities to protect Marin's farm and ranchland for the benefit of all.

Learn more at [malt.org/land-protection](https://malt.org/land-protection)



# *BUILDING DROUGHT RESILIENCE*



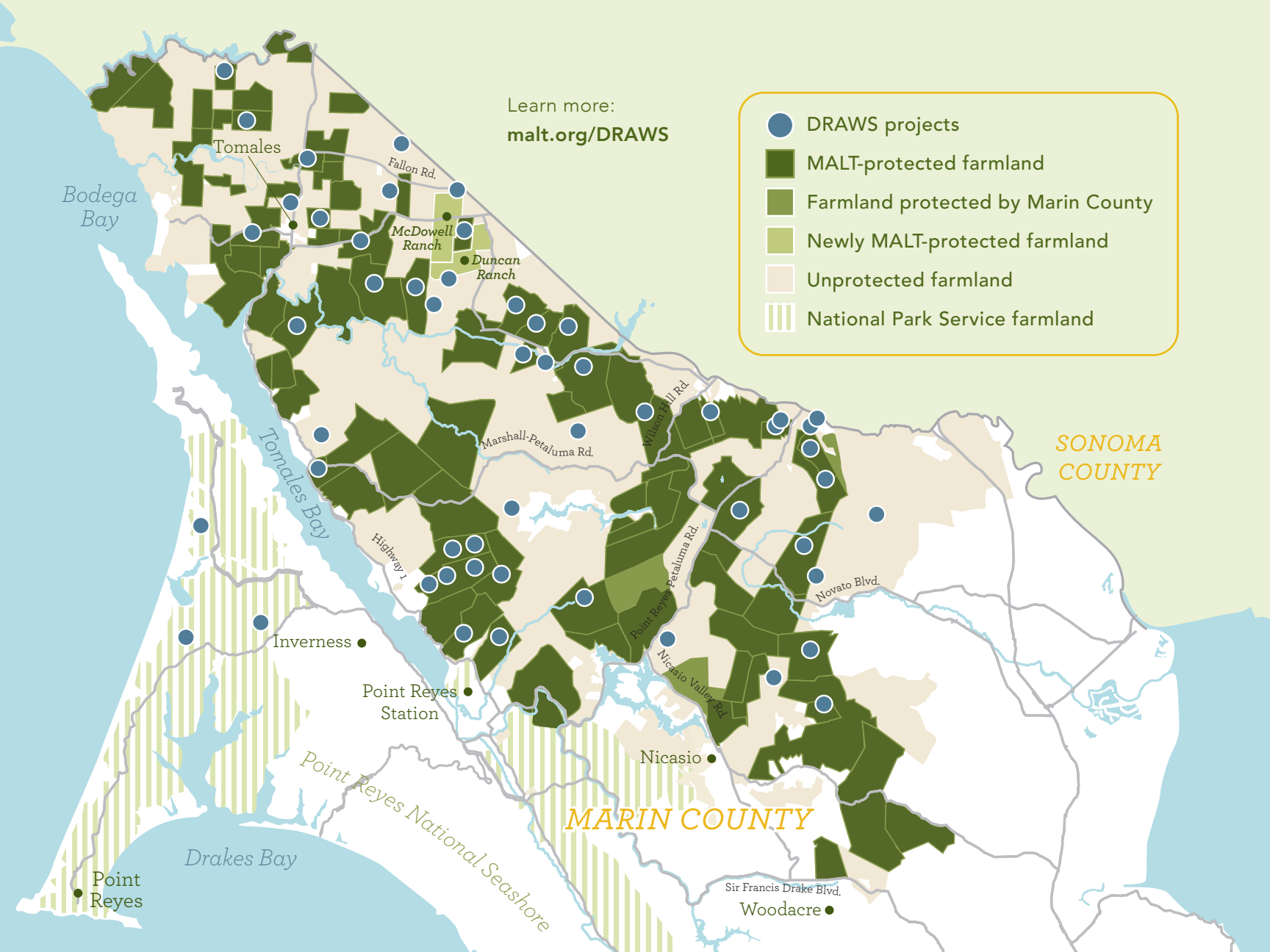
From the fall of 2019 through 2022, California experienced one of its worst droughts in recorded history. Marin County's agricultural community was on the front lines of this extreme weather as water for their operations began to run dry.

Responding to our community's need, in the spring of 2021, MALT launched the Drought Resilience and Water Security (DRAWS) initiative to help all Marin County ranchers and farmers with emergency drought relief. Through the DRAWS initiative, all Marin County agricultural producers were eligible for \$15,000 grants for projects that developed water sources, added water storage, and increased water distribution.

This past fiscal year — with the drought conditions finally eased — we paused this emergency program, celebrating having committed more than \$916,000 to 75 water projects over two years that build long-term resilience against the impacts of climate change. The success of DRAWS is a testament to the value of a small grants initiative well-tailored to the needs of our community and our ability to quickly adapt and support that need.

Taking the lessons learned from this emergency initiative, this August we launched a new small grants program that further supports local agriculturalists in the implementation of proactive and innovative climate solutions. Through this new funding mechanism, our team now has an additional resource to continue strengthening our community resilience amid a changing climate, safeguard a critical part of our local economy, and sustain the vibrancy of our local food system.





# YOUR IMPACT

## *Since our founding*

**55,721**

acres protected

**93**

conservation easements

**\$98,280,595**

invested in protecting  
Marin farms & ranches

**\$1,670,000**

invested in  
stewardship projects

## *2022–2023 accomplishments*

**1,262**

acres protected

**\$485,000**

invested in 25 SAP projects\*

**\$272,000**

invested in  
23 DRAWS projects\*

**48**

grants to local  
agriculturalists

## *To date, MALT farms and ranches support:*

**45** beef cattle operations

**18** dairy operations

**11** sheep operations

**3** goat operations

**10** wool producers

**8** fruit & vegetable producers

**5** egg producers

**4** artisan cheesemakers

*\*Number of projects and amounts approved for the 2022–23 fiscal year.*





## *Strengthening the Organization*

### **OUR INDIGENOUS COMMUNITY**

MALT's working area lies within the unceded ancestral lands of the Coast Miwok people of present-day Marin County. We recognize the centuries of attempted erasure, displacement, and genocide these communities have endured and that many inequities exist to this day. We honor with gratitude the land itself and celebrate the ongoing relationship between the Coast Miwok people and their traditional territories. Learn more: [\*\*malt.org/native-land\*\*](https://malt.org/native-land)

### **OUR COMMITMENT TO EQUITY, INCLUSION, & JUSTICE**

Our staff and board are committed to advancing social and racial justice in all aspects of MALT's mission. We believe that having an organization of diverse gender, race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, physical ability, age, and other distinctions along with varied skills, perspectives, and experiences, contributes to a balanced and effective nonprofit — one that is well-positioned to address the changing needs of the communities we serve. Learn more: [\*\*malt.org/equity\*\*](https://malt.org/equity)

### **OUR TRANSPARENCY & GOVERNANCE**

MALT exemplifies a model of transparency, achieving a greater standard than the requirements of our accreditation through the Land Trust Alliance. We continue to strive to set an example, both locally and nationwide, for all nonprofit organizations and their management practices. Learn more: [\*\*malt.org/transparency-and-governance\*\*](https://malt.org/transparency-and-governance)

# FINANCIALS

We are proud to report another successful year at MALT. This progress toward our vision of a thriving and inclusive agricultural community in a healthy and diverse natural environment would not be possible without your support and commitment. Thank you for your belief in our mission of protecting Marin's agricultural land for agricultural use — it's not possible without you.

## REVENUE

Contributions	\$3,756,447
Government grants	\$3,150,000
Program revenue and other	\$80,909
Investment revenue	\$1,888,759

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<b>TOTAL REVENUE</b>	<b>\$8,876,115</b>
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## EXPENSES

Purchase of conservation easements	\$6,326,898
Stewardship and other program expenses	\$1,977,739
Fundraising	\$1,902,564
Management and support services	\$1,369,704

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<b>TOTAL EXPENSES</b>	<b>\$11,576,905</b>
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**For audited financial statements, please visit: [malt.org/finances](https://malt.org/finances)**

*\*This report reflects unaudited financials from July 1, 2022 – June 30, 2023*





## ABOUT MALT

Marin Agricultural Land Trust is a nonprofit organization created in 1980 to protect and steward Marin County farmland. Some of the Bay Area's most highly acclaimed meats, dairy products, fiber, and organic crops are produced on farmland protected by MALT's 93 agricultural conservation easements, totaling more than 55,700 acres.

To learn about Marin's working farms and ranches and the food they produce, visit [malt.org](http://malt.org)

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

***Thank You for Protecting the Future of Farming in Marin***

You make it possible to protect this vital landscape. We couldn't do it without you.

