



## This edition of Focus on Farmland features:

- Winterport Farm Preserved in Amador County
- Panfiglio Ranch Preserved in Marin County
- Espinoza Farm Preserved in Merced County
- CFCP / DOC News Updates
- Other News and Upcoming Events

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## Winterport Farm Preserved in Amador County

Winterport Farm will remain in agricultural use forever under a just-completed arrangement between the California Department of Conservation (DOC), the landowners and the Sacramento Valley Conservancy. Through the California Farmland Conservancy Program (CFCP), DOC provided \$670,625 to fund the conservancy's purchase of an agricultural conservation easement on the property. The landowners contributed \$120,750 in the form of a bargain sale price. The Port family will continue to own the farm and control the agricultural operations, but the land's development potential is permanently extinguished.



*Winterport Farm is currently being used for grazing and hay production*

The 180-acre Winterport Farm is located in Amador County just south of Highway 104, within half a mile of the City of Lone's Sphere of Influence. The Winter family started farming in the area in 1867. It is currently being used for grazing and hay production, but has been intensively farmed in the past – producing melons, vegetables, pumpkins and Christmas trees – and is likely to be again. The landowners have encouraged educational and other tours of the property over the years.

Although Lone – known in the Gold Rush era as “Bedbug” and “Freezeout” – is about 30 miles from either Sacramento or Stockton, there is development pressure: a residential developer recently purchased 16,000 acres just north of Winterport Farm and there a golf course residential development exists between the city limits and the farm.

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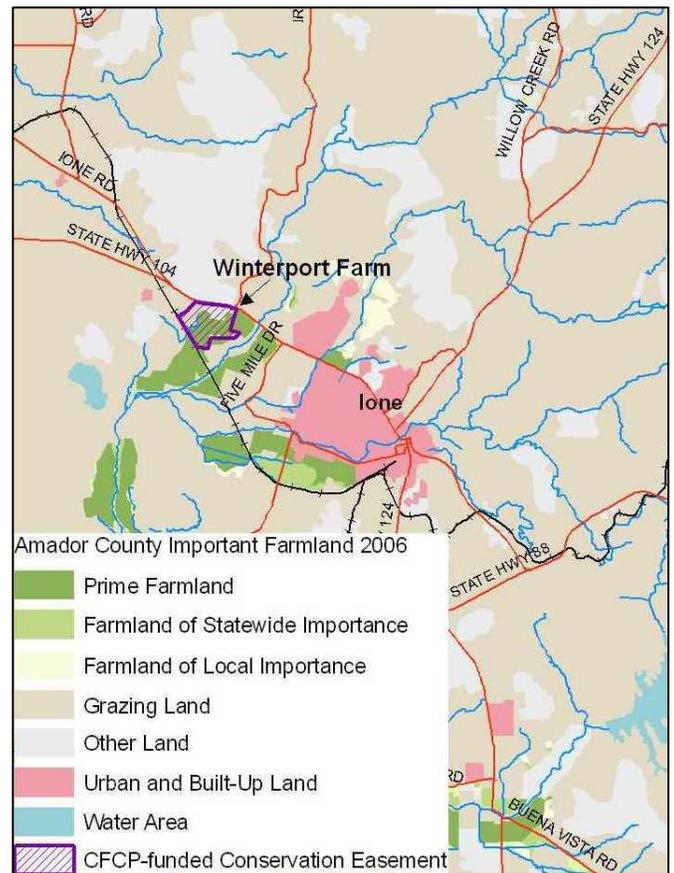
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Noting the potential for sprawl, the CFCP awarded a planning grant to the Sacramento Valley Conservancy in 2004 that resulted in the development of the Winterport project. The planning grant also assisted in developing a partnership between the conservancy and the Mother Lode Land Trust, including joint conservation priorities, and development of cooperative conservation easement projects in the East Sacramento County Blue Oaks Hills Rangeland area and Western Amador County.

“The housing market has cooled down, but at the time there was a lot of interest in development,” owner Dan Port said. “Our little town had already approved the construction of something like 1,000 new houses. That’s why we wanted to put an easement on our property now. We’re in the path of development and we’re trying to encourage them to go the other way.”

“We’re very pleased to have shielded this fine farmland from future development,” said Brian Leahy, head of DOC’s Division of Land Resource Protection. “This farm has a long-term connection with the local community, but there would have been intense development pressure if the landowners were not so committed to farmland preservation. We realize that development is inevitable, but we strive to direct the growth away from prime farmland when possible.”

Aimee Rutledge, executive director of the Sacramento Valley Conservancy said “We applaud the Port family for its outstanding stewardship of the land and for taking steps to keep it in agriculture. Our organization was founded in 1990 on two basic principles – that our quality of life depends in part on open lands and that we must care for the land today so future generations may enjoy it tomorrow – so the completion of this project is very gratifying. We welcome interest from other landowners in the community who may wish to follow the Ports’ example.” More information about the Sacramento Valley Conservancy, including the East Sacramento Blue Oak Hills Area project, the Sacramento Prairie Vernal Pool Area, the Dry Creek Parkway, and other projects can be found at [www.sacramentovalleyconservancy.org](http://www.sacramentovalleyconservancy.org).



*The 185-acre Winterport farm is located in Amador County near the town of Ione*

## Espinoza Farm Preserved in Merced County

The CFCP and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) provided funding totaling \$273,000 that allowed the Central Valley Farmland Trust to purchase an agricultural conservation easement on the 39-acre Espinoza Farm. The Espinoza Farm is located just outside the unincorporated town of Delhi in Merced County and owned by brothers Rodrigo and Juan Carlos Espinoza. Previously, their cousin and uncle (Espinoza family) sold agriculture conservation easements on two parcels totaling 77 acres on either side of the newly protected Espinoza Farm to the land trust.



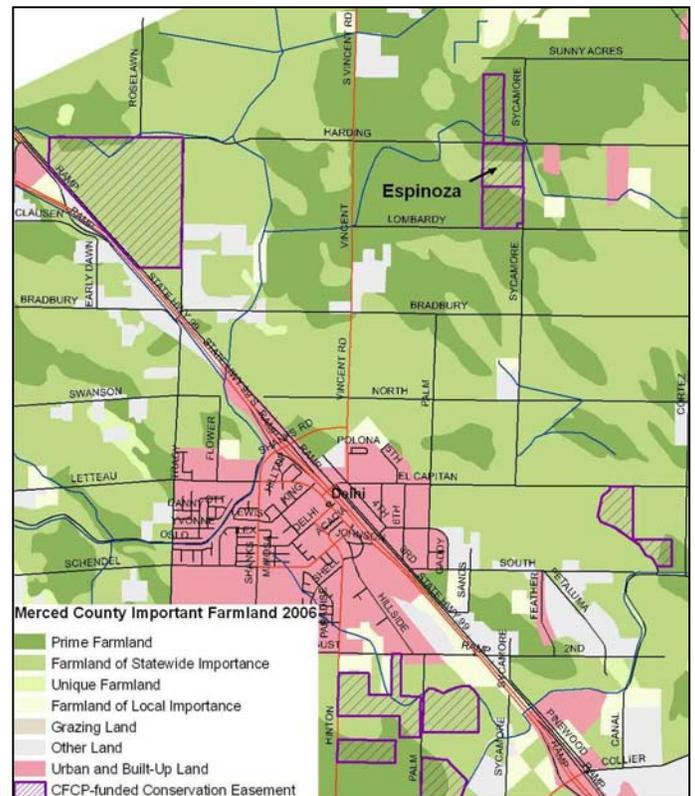
*Peach and interplanted almond trees awaiting spring on the Espinoza Farm.  
Photo by Tom Scharffenberger*

The farm is planted in peaches and almonds and is located three-quarters of a mile from the Delhi 2020 Community Preferred Growth Plan boundary. A large subdivision has been proposed nearby and rural ranchette development is evident in the area.

“There is significant interest among other nearby landowners in exploring the agricultural conservation easement option, and we're hopeful that they will follow the outstanding example of land stewardship set by the Espinoza family,” said Bill Martin, executive director of the Central Valley Farmland Trust.

“This is the ninth agricultural conservation easement in the Delhi area since 2000,” said Brian Leahy, head of DOC's Division of Land Resource Protection. “While these are generally small properties totaling about 600 acres, the commitment of the landowners to agriculture in the face of development is encouraging. Most people are familiar with the term ‘infill development;’ this is an example of an ‘infill easement.’”

The CVFT is a private, nonprofit, regionally-based land trust working with landowners who want to conserve their farmland for future generations. The organization works with landowners in Sacramento, San Joaquin, Stanislaus and Merced counties. For more information, visit [www.valleyfarmland.org](http://www.valleyfarmland.org)



*The 39-acre Espinoza Farm is the ninth easement in the Delhi area since 2000*

## Panfiglio Ranch Preserved in Marin County

Marin Agricultural Land Trust (MALT), with financial assistance from the CFCP, has purchased an agricultural conservation easement on the productive and scenic 810-acre Panfiglio Ranch. Located north of Point Reyes Station near Highway One, the easement links two other ranches protected by MALT easements, providing a permanent wildlife corridor. It becomes part of a continuous band of protected lands totaling more than 7,600 acres. The property also serves as part of the headwaters of Grand Canyon Creek and Walker Creek.

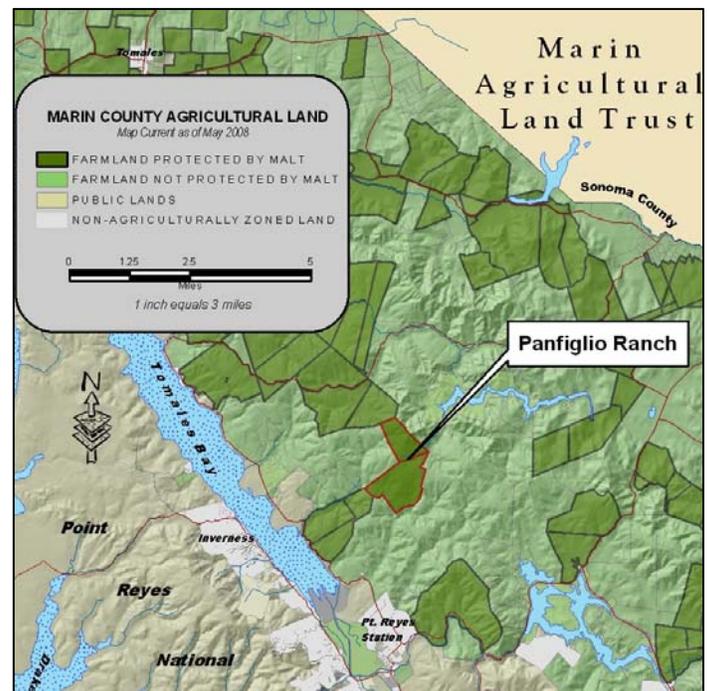


*The scenic grazing lands of Panfiglio Ranch support a beef cattle operation. The Ranch is located north of Point Reyes Station in Marin County*

Brothers Dante and Carlo Panfiglio purchased the property in 1955 and raised Holstein replacement heifers there. When Carlo died, Dante's son Joe purchased his uncle's share. Now the sale of a conservation easement to MALT enables Joe and Dante to build up their herd and make infrastructure improvements to the ranch. It also protects the property from the threat of ever being developed and ensures that the Panfiglio family ranching tradition will continue. Joe's three adult children—son J.D. and daughters Christa and Carla—all are involved in agriculture in Marin and Sonoma counties and will eventually take over the ranch.

The Panfiglio Ranch is located in a unique area on Three Peaks, a 1,160-foot formation that is visible from Inverness and Point Reyes National Seashore. Though Three Peaks and the lands surrounding it may be unknown to most Marin County residents, the mountain is among the tallest in the area. Part of the Rancho Nicasio Mexican land grant, the lands overlook Tomales Bay and also drain into Soulajule Reservoir. They have provided rich grazing lands for generations of families who contributed to the growth and prominence of the Marin County dairy industry, including the Panfiglio family. The ranch now supports a beef cattle operation.

Without the sale of an easement, the ranch, with its



*The Panfiglio Ranch easement links two other ranches protected by MALT easements and resulted in the formation of a continuous band of protected lands totaling more than 7,600 acres. Map courtesy of MALT*

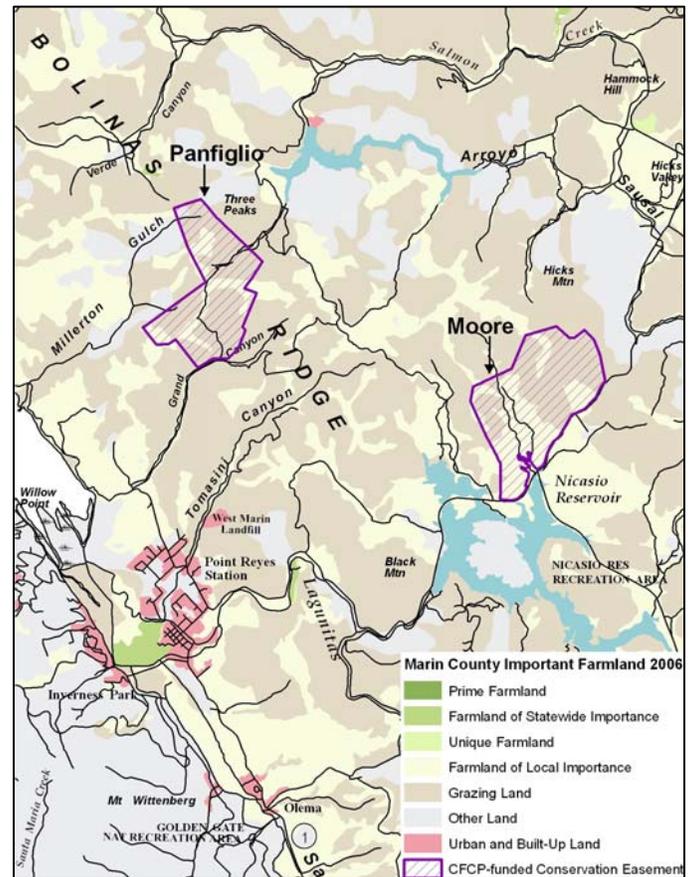
appeal as a site for a country estate, might have been targeted for development. The conversion of farmland in this way is one of the greatest threats facing the agricultural community in Marin County. The conversions can price out an agricultural buyer and lead to a reduction in total number of agricultural producers.

“Even in today’s market, demand still exists for estate ranchettes and large-acreage holdings,” said MALT Executive Director Robert Berner. “We are pleased to be able to provide a conservation option to the sale of the property to the Panfiglio family and help them keep the land in productive agriculture.”

MALT paid the appraised value of \$1,160,000 for the easement. The Department of Conservation provided a grant to MALT of \$750,000 for the project. The remainder of the funds were raised from MALT members and supporters. In 2004 a similar partnership between the Department of Conservation and MALT resulted in the permanent protection of the 1,007-acre Moore Ranch, which is shown in the map at right.

“We congratulate the Panfiglio family and Marin Agricultural Land Trust on the completion of this important agricultural conservation easement project,” said DOC Director Bridgett Luther. “Since 2003, the California Farmland Conservancy Program has provided MALT with six different easement grants totaling more than \$4.5 million to help ensure the continuation of the county’s agricultural economy and lifestyle. We hope that other local landowners will, like the Panfiglio family, explore the easement option for their own property.”

Marin Agricultural Land Trust is a member-supported, nonprofit organization created in 1980 by a coalition of ranchers and environmentalists to permanently preserve Marin County farmland. Some of the Bay Area's most highly acclaimed dairy products and organic crops are produced on farmland protected by MALT conservation easements, which total more than 40,000 acres on 62 family farms and ranches. To learn more about Marin’s family farms and the food they produce, visit [www.malt.org](http://www.malt.org).



*The 810-acre Panfiglio Ranch is located in a unique area on Three Peaks, a 1,160-foot formation that is visible from Inverness and Point Reyes National Seashore*

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## Other News:

**Federal Tax Deductions:** The 2008 U.S. Farm Bill, which Congress enacted on May 22, 2008, with an override of President Bush's veto, renews a powerful tax incentive which has helped conserve over one million acres of farms, ranches and natural areas across the U.S. The incentive had expired January 1, 2008, but is now retroactive to the beginning of the year and will last through 2009. The incentive, which applies to a landowner's federal income tax, will:

- Raise the annual deduction a non-farming or ranching donor can take for donating a qualified voluntary conservation agreement from 30 percent of their adjusted gross income to 50 percent;
- Allow qualifying farmers and ranchers to annually deduct up to 100 percent of their adjusted gross income, based upon the value of their qualified donation; and
- Increase the number of years which a donor can carry over deductions from five years to 15 years.

**California Climate Change Portal:** California has unveiled a newly redesigned Web portal to help centralize state climate change activities and research. The newly redesigned Web site allows businesses, consumers, government officials and the environmental community to easily access information about California's progress in meeting its aggressive climate change goals. The climate change portal's reorganization provides information about climate-related activities of state agencies, the efforts of the Climate Action Team and the research and work of other organizations such as universities and national laboratories. California's climate change portal is available at: [www.climatechange.ca.gov](http://www.climatechange.ca.gov).

**ARB releases Draft Scoping Plan:** The Air Resource Board released its Draft Scoping Plan (DSP) on June 26, 2008, which begins to lay out the implementation of AB 32, the landmark climate change legislation enacted in 2006. In the area of agriculture, the DSP encourages voluntary approaches for the capture of methane from dairies and other facilities, and the use of methane digesters. More specific efforts in the areas of land use and sprawl are discussed in the DSP as well. The DSP is available from the ARB at [www.arb.ca.gov/cc/scopingplan/document/draftscopingplan.pdf](http://www.arb.ca.gov/cc/scopingplan/document/draftscopingplan.pdf)

## CFCP / DOC News Updates:

The CFCP is pleased to announce the hiring of Mr. Todd Kawate as a Research Analyst. Todd will be assisting the CFCP in the mapping of conservation easements and the reporting of ongoing land conservation efforts. Todd received his B.A in geography from California State University, Sacramento.

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## Upcoming Events:

The **Land Trust Alliance's Rally 2008:** Mark your calendars for the National Land Conservation Conference in Pittsburgh, PA, on September 18-21. Each year, more than 2,000 people attend Rally, including land trust professionals, landowners and local conservation leaders - all dedicated to protecting farms, forests, trails, parks and natural areas in their communities. For more information please visit [www.lta.org/learning/rally/rally](http://www.lta.org/learning/rally/rally).

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The California Farmland Conservancy Program, administered by Department of Conservation's Division of Land Resource Protection, is designed to ensure that the state's most valuable farmland can be preserved. Through the program, local governments and nonprofit organizations can receive grants to purchase development rights from willing landowners, thus creating permanent conservation easements.

We hope you've found this issue of *Focus on Farmland* useful and informative. Please contact us with any questions or ideas you have for future editions. Feel free to forward this email to other interested parties.

If you wish to be added to or removed from this mailing list, email [cfcf@conservation.ca.gov](mailto:cfcf@conservation.ca.gov).

### **California Farmland Conservancy Program**



**Manager:** Charles Tyson  
(916) 324-0850  
[cfcf@conservation.ca.gov](mailto:cfcf@conservation.ca.gov)

Department of Conservation  
801 K Street, MS 18-01  
Sacramento, CA 95814  
[www.conservation.ca.gov](http://www.conservation.ca.gov)

