



DEPARTMENT OF CONSERVATION

Managing California's Working Lands

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SUTTER COUNTY RICE FARM PERMANENTLY SET ASIDE FOR AGRICULTURE, WATERFOWL HABITAT

SACRAMENTO -- A collaboration involving state government, Ducks Unlimited and a local landowner has permanently preserved a Sutter County rice farm for agricultural use and wildlife habitat.

“Rice feeds much of the world’s population and is one of California’s most vital agricultural commodities,” California Department of Conservation (DOC) Director Mark Nechodom said. “Projects like this help us to protect California’s prime farmland and keep it productive, fruitful and prosperous well into the future.”

Two separate but intertwined easements will permanently shield the 189-acre Tealbrook Farm from development. DOC’s California Farmland Conservancy Program (CFCP) provided the bulk of the funding to preserve the 121-acre portion of farm used to grow rice. Match funding came in the form of bond funds from the California Department of Fish and Game (through the American Basin Working Landscape Grant), and a donation from the landowner. The property is owned by Tealbrook Farms, LLC; Robert Hughes is the managing shareholder.

The creation of the agricultural easement facilitated the permanent protection of the rest of the farm, 68 acres, as wetland and riparian habitat. Ducks Unlimited applied for the state funding to create the easement, and Wetlands America, an affiliate of Ducks Unlimited, will serve as steward of the land.

Tealbrook Farm is located three miles northwest of the city of Lincoln. Adjacent parcels are being sold in 40 to 80 acre parcels and converted into rural residential/horse property ranchettes.

“Conserving California’s farmland is a prudent investment, helping to ensure food security and economic opportunity,” said John Lowrie, acting director of DOC’s Division of Land Resource Protection, which oversees the CFCP. “The CFCP is designed to protect important farmland in the path of development, and there’s a fair amount of ranchette development here. Protecting this property will benefit the agricultural economy and stability of this region, so we are very happy to be a part of this project.”

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Sutter County land set aside for agriculture, habitat 2-2-2

Begun in 1996, the CFCP has provided more than \$77 million in funding to permanently shield more than 52,000 acres from development. Landowners and trusts are encouraged to contact DLRP for information about the program and potential funding. For details, visit www.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp.

Over the past 15 years, Ducks Unlimited has worked with individual farmers to provide the support necessary to preserve and protect productive agriculture through the Conservation Easements for Agricultural Land (CEAL) Program. This program has built strong relationships with owners/operators, local, state, and federal resource managers, county planners, and government representatives to help build long-term strategies to keep the Valley's agricultural economy strong.

“We are greatly indebted to the Departments of Conservation and Fish & Game for supporting these important conservation projects,” said Chris Unkel, Director of Public Policy for Ducks Unlimited. “Key wildlife habitat and farm land which had been under-protected is now permanently secure.”

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