

FED, STATE, LOCAL LAND TRUST PERMANENTLY CONSERVE MARTIN FARM NEAR WINTERS FOR AGRICULTURE

SACRAMENTO – Yolo County farmer Tony Martin believes his property near Winters “is probably some of the best in the world.” And now it is permanently preserved for agricultural use after state, federal and local agencies partnered to create an agricultural conservation easement on the Martin Farm.

“This ranch has so many things that make it special,” Martin said. “The land was once home to the co-founder of the town of Winters, Theodore Winters. He had a horse racing stable and race track and grew tobacco and other field crops over 150 years ago.”

And why does Martin claim that his 237 acres is some of the world’s finest land for farming?

“The soil and water quality are excellent and so is the climate,” he said. “It’s also Putah Creek-front property. This is as good as it gets. I don’t want to see it turned into blacktop and cut up into home sites. That’s not the legacy I want to leave. This is some of the finest land in the world and now it will remain this way.”

The farm is only one mile east of the City of Winters Sphere of Influence, near the I-505/Highway 128 interchange. The California Department of Conservation (DOC), USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) and the Yolo Land Trust agreed there was a significant potential for conversion to nonagricultural use, and worked together to acquire the easement.

“We are delighted to have helped Tony and Dorothy Martin complete their dream of preserving their farm for future generations of farmers,” said Michele Clark, Executive Director of the Yolo Land Trust. “We hold other conservation easements between Winters and Davis, and this is an important conservation project due to its excellent soil, water sources and location.”

Mr. Martin purchased the five parcels that make up the 237 acre farm over the course of about 25 years. He then worked with the Yolo Land Trust to place one conservation easement over all five parcels. The farm is planted to walnut and plum (prune) orchards on prime soils.

Another feature of the property is one-half mile of frontage along Putah Creek, including 19 acres of riparian habitat. The creek provides wildlife habitat for both common and protected wildlife species such as the Swainson's Hawk and steelhead trout, and is the subject of the famous [Credence Clearwater Revival](#) song "[Green River](#)."

"There was significant pressure to develop rural ranchettes on this outstanding piece of farmland, and we're glad it will remain in agricultural production in perpetuity," DOC Director Mark Nechodom said. "We encourage other Yolo County landowners to consider the agricultural conservation easement option for their property as well." The property will continue to be privately owned by Martin and on the Yolo County property tax rolls.

"NRCS is proud to have worked with the Martins and conservation partners to preserve this historic property in Yolo County," said Carlos Suarez, NRCS California state conservationist. "The Martin Farm is a local agricultural treasure and is a great fit for our Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program, which protects properties for continued agricultural production."

About the Yolo Land Trust: Founded in 1988, the Yolo Land Trust conserves farm and ranchland by providing farmers and ranchers a viable financial alternative to selling their land for development. Conservation easements can help keep farmers farming, and ranchers ranching. Yolo Land Trust also supports habitat protection for plants and animals that depend upon farmland and the adjacent sloughs, creeks and rivers for survival. The Yolo Land Trust has permanently preserved more than 10,000 acres of land dedicated to agricultural use. For more information, visit <http://www.yololandtrust.org/index.php>.

About the Department of Conservation's California Farmland Conservancy Program: Begun in 1996, the CFCP has provided more than \$83 million in funding to permanently shield more than 55,000 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.

About the USDA/Natural Resources Conservation Service's Farm and Ranch Lands Protection Program (FRPP): The federal FRPP is a voluntary easement program that protects productive agricultural land by providing funds for the purchase of conservation easements to limit conversion of farm and ranch lands to non-agricultural uses. NRCS partners with state,

tribal or local governments, and non-governmental organizations to fund the acquisition of conservation easements or other interests in land from landowners. More information is available at www.ca.nrcs.usda.gov.

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