

STATE, AG LAND TRUST PERMANENTLY SET ASIDE PAMMA-LARKIN FARM NEAR GRIDLEY FOR AGRICULTURE

SACRAMENTO – State and local organizations have partnered to permanently set aside for agriculture a Butte County ranch potentially in the path of development. The California Department of Conservation (DOC) and the Northern California Regional Land Trust (NCRLT) have created an agricultural conservation easement on the Pamma-Larkin farm one mile outside of Gridley’s sphere of influence, working with the family to ensure it will never be developed.

“My parents migrated from India in 1972 and worked as farm laborers, picking peaches until they saved up enough money to buy their own farm,” said Amarjit Pamma, who now farms the land with his brother Gurvinder. “They farmed this property for over 30 years before my brother and I took over. It’s a valuable piece of land for farming and we like to keep it in agriculture for future generations.”

The Gridley area is known for its peach, prune and walnut orchards. The 96-acre Pamma-Larkin property is home to five different types of peaches: Stanislaus, Bowen, Andross, Arakelian and Late Ross. Harvested peaches are sold to two nearby canneries, Del Monte and Pacific Coast Producers.

The proximity of the communities of Biggs and Gridley, State Routes 70 and 99, and many small lots and rural ranchettes have put development pressure on the farm, a portion of which is along the Feather River. The farm is located on Larkin Road, hence its name, Pamma-Larkin.

“We are very pleased to see another farm protected forever,” said NCRLT Land Projects Coordinator Zach Mendes. “These projects wouldn’t be possible without the invaluable partnerships between the landowners, the DOC, and the land trust.

“Land Trust members, supporters, and the north state community also provide essential financial support for our work, and we couldn’t have done this without them.”

The Pamma-Larkin farm is the third placed into a conservation easement as a result of NCRLT efforts supported by a California Farmland Conservancy Program (CFCP) planning grant.

This is the first conservation easement that CFCP has helped fund in the Biggs/Gridley area and the second it has funded in Butte County.

“We congratulate the Northern California Regional Land Trust and the Pamma family on the creation of this conservation easement,” Department of Conservation Director Mark Nechodom said. “We appreciate the work the land trust does to preserve the productive farmlands of Butte County and to help maintain a viable agricultural economy in the region. We’re very pleased to be a partner in this effort.”

About the Northern California Regional Land Trust: Founded in 1990, the NCRLT currently holds 27 conservation easements in Butte and Tehama counties covering over 15,500 acres. Its smallest easement is 0.39 acre, while its largest acquisition, Llano Seco Rancho, is 4,235 acres. The organization is dedicated to promoting the conservation and preservation of Northern California's open spaces, agricultural lands and natural resources with cooperation between the community, private landowners, public agencies and other nonprofit groups. For more information, visit <http://www.landconservation.org/>.

About the Department of Conservation’s California Farmland Conservancy Program: Begun in 1996, the CFCP has provided more than \$81 million in funding to permanently shield more than 56,000 acres of the state’s best agricultural land from development. For more information, visit: www.conservation.ca.gov/dlrp.

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