

# Marin County



ZIMMERMAN RANCH ON TOMALES BAY, PROTECTED BY MALT CONSERVATION EASEMENT

*Marin County is widely recognized as being among the best places to live in the world. It's also a great place to visit, with millions of people every year flocking to its sandy beaches, majestic redwoods, and the incomparable landscape of Point Reyes National Seashore. Although the great majority of residents live in highly urbanized areas, they have repeatedly demonstrated their commitment to protecting the farmland and natural lands that are intrinsic to the County's appeal.*

**POPULATION:** >255,000

**SIZE:** 332,998 acres (land only)

**PROTECTED LANDS:** 190,471 acres

**CONSERVANCY PROJECTS:** >100

**CONSERVANCY FUNDING:** >\$76 million

The Coastal Conservancy has worked with local communities for more than 30 years to protect and improve Marin County's scenic natural lands and open them for people to enjoy.

Although highly urbanized, the east side of Marin County contains natural areas that are treasured by residents and critical to the well-being of fish, birds, and other wildlife. Bayside wetlands also provide a buffer to protect neighboring residential and commercial areas from rising seas.

In West Marin, the Conservancy has provided considerable assistance to restore streams and other wildlife habitats and to build trails and visitor-serving facilities that help people get to and enjoy beaches, parks, and coastal lands. Endangered coho salmon have particularly benefited from restored rearing habitats and the removal of migration barriers that had kept them from miles of spawning streams. The Conservancy has also been a strong supporter of the Marin Agricultural Land Trust since its earliest days and has contributed more than \$10 million for MALT conservation easements that have protected more than 10,000 acres of farmland.

# Natural Lands Protection

The Conservancy has long supported the acquisition of natural lands in Marin County that are key habitats for wildlife. Many of these lands have since been opened for people to enjoy. Acquisitions include:

- The Marin Audubon Society's purchase of the 641-acre **Bahia** property near the mouth of the Petaluma River in Novato, a unique mix of uplands and wetlands that support more than 120 species of migratory birds. The Conservancy also helped the Society purchase properties in its nearby **Simmons Slough Wildlife Corridor**, **Petaluma Marsh**, and the **Triangle Marsh** in Corte Madera.
- The 737-acre **Burdell Ranch** next to the Marin County Airport, now part of the State's **Petaluma Marsh Wildlife Area**.
- The **Marin Islands** off San Rafael, for which the Conservancy organized multifaceted support that led to the islands' purchase and creation of the Marin Islands National Wildlife Refuge.
- 44 acres adjacent to Bolinas Lagoon that are now part of the County's **Bolinas Lagoon Open Space Preserve** and include the popular Bob Stewart Trail.

# Wetlands, Creek, & Reef Restoration

The Conservancy has been a leader in the restoration of habitats that are essential for the survival of fish, birds, and other wildlife in the County. It has directed and supported restoration of wetlands on the Bay and the ocean, the removal of barriers to salmon and trout migration in many creeks, and efforts by farmers and other landowners to reduce soil erosion and improve creekside lands.

- At the former Hamilton Army Airfield in Novato, the Conservancy organized community and organizational support and made more than \$24 million available to restore the 648-acre **Hamilton Wetlands**, one of the largest tidal marsh restoration projects in the Bay. A neighboring 1,600 acres in Bel Marin Keys, purchased by the Conservancy in 2000, is slated for future restoration.
- The Conservancy provided significant funding to the Marin Audubon Society to restore hundreds of acres of wetlands along the **Petaluma River** and at Novato's **Bahia Lagoon**.
- Just offshore from San Rafael, an artificial reef has successfully grown more than two million native Olympia oysters. The one-acre pilot reef—part of the Conservancy's **San Francisco Bay Living Shorelines Project**—was installed to determine whether natural protective barriers can be combined with habitat restoration to protect the shoreline and minimize problems caused by sea level rise.
- With Conservancy support, the Point Reyes National Seashore restored more than 610 acres of the **Giacomini Wetlands** and **Olema Marsh** at the south end of Tomales Bay.
- The Conservancy has funded the Marin County Resource Conservation District's work to help ranchers reduce soil erosion and improve water quality in the watershed of **Tomales Bay**.
- The Conservancy helped fund the massive restoration of lower **Redwood Creek at Muir Beach** and has supported efforts to improve other lengths of the creek.



BARBONI RANCH, PROTECTED BY MALT CONSERVATION EASEMENT



BRIDGE AT MUIR BEACH ON THE CALIFORNIA COASTAL TRAIL



OYSTER BEDS FORM A LIVING REEF OFF SAN RAFAEL



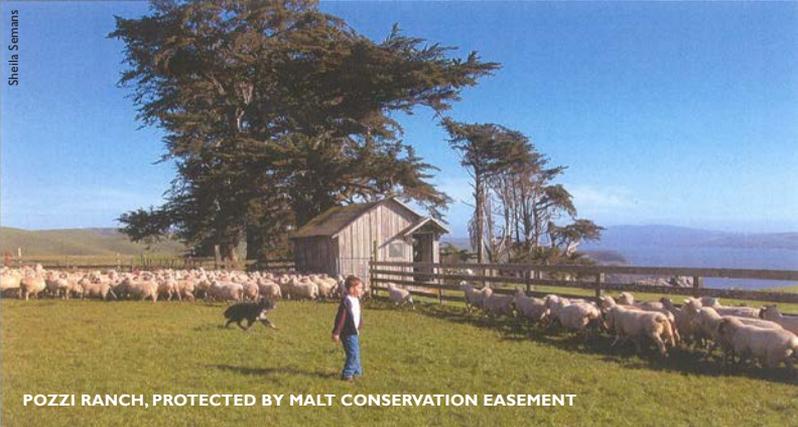
MARIN ISLANDS NATIONAL WILDLIFE REFUGE



CARL DUNPHY PARK, SAUSALITO



WETLANDS UNDER CONSTRUCTION AT THE FORMER HAMILTON ARMY AIRFIELD



POZZI RANCH, PROTECTED BY MALT CONSERVATION EASEMENT



A YOUNG CREW WORKS ON THE MT. TAMALPAIS GATEWAY ON LAGUNITAS CREEK



DEER ISLAND OPEN SPACE PRESERVE IN THE PETALUMA RIVER DELTA

## Wetlands & Creek Restoration *continued*

- The Conservancy has helped the County and local government agencies restore many bayside and coastal waterways—including **Rush, Novato, Corte Madera, Stemple, Walker, Lagunitas, Pine Gulch,** and **Woodacre creeks**—to reduce flooding and improve habitats for salmon and other wildlife.

## Farmland Protection

The **Marin Agricultural Land Trust** has used Conservancy funding to protect 16 West Marin farms with conservation easements that have helped keep farmland in production. The Conservancy helped MALT get started and develop into a model for the rest of the country. Thanks largely to MALT, the family farms of West Marin are likely to remain in production well into the future.

## Outdoor Recreation

The Conservancy has joined with local communities in acquiring parkland, building trails, and improving visitor-serving facilities in many parts of the County. Conservancy projects include:

- Planning for and construction of additions to the **San Francisco Bay Trail** and spur trails between the **Petaluma River and Highway One**, at the **Hamilton Wetlands** in Novato, in **China Camp State Park**, in San Rafael's **Shoreline Park**, along **San Rafael Canal**, on **Richardson Bay** in Tiburon, along the **Sausalito shoreline**, and in **Fort Baker**.
- An addition to Sausalito's **Carl Dunphy Park** that more than doubled its size and connected it to the San Francisco Bay Trail.
- Assistance with the County's purchase of 21 acres on **San Geronimo Ridge**, which provided opportunities for new public trails into the **Gary Giacomini Open Space Preserve**.
- Reconstruction of part of the **Dias Ridge Trail**, a portion of the **Bay Area Ridge Trail** that connects Panoramic Highway to Highway One just east of Muir Beach.
- An addition to National Park Service lands adjacent to **Tomales Bay State Park** at Millerton Point, offering an excellent opportunity for extension of the **California Coastal Trail**.
- Rehabilitation of the popular **Elephant Seal Overlook Trail** in the Point Reyes National Seashore.
- Improved visitor accommodations at the **Point Reyes Hostel**.

*“Without the partnership and support from the Conservancy we simply could not have achieved the level of protection of Marin’s farms and ranches that we see today. We are very grateful that the Conservancy continues to believe in MALT’s mission by continuing to invest public funds to leverage the generous contributions from our donors and other funding partners.”*

Bob Berner, Marin Agricultural Land Trust  
Executive Director 1984-2012



The Coastal Conservancy is a State agency, established in 1976, that protects and improves natural lands and waterways, helps people get to and enjoy coastal areas, and sustains local economies along California's coast. The Conservancy works along the entire length of the coast, within the watersheds of rivers and streams that extend inland from the coast, and throughout the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area. The Conservancy is non-regulatory and achieves its goals by joining forces with local communities, nonprofit organizations, other government agencies, businesses, and private landowners.

#### CONSERVANCY PROJECTS :

- Protect, restore, and improve natural areas and wildlife habitat
- Help people get to and enjoy the outdoors by building hiking and biking trails, acquiring and improving parks and beaches, and creating campgrounds and hostels
- Keep our waterways clean and healthy for people and wildlife
- Help communities revitalize their waterfronts
- Support floodwater management and integrate flood-control projects into the life of a community
- Conserve commercial fisheries, working farmland, and forests.

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