

THE AG LAND TRUST

MAGAZINE

SPRING
2025



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PRESERVING FARMLAND SINCE 1984

Our Mission Statement

It is the purpose of the Ag Land Trust to assist in the preservation and protection of all productive and important agricultural, open space and historical lands in Monterey County (and adjacent areas). Such action will contribute directly to the social, cultural, environmental and economic well being of the County while enhancing its unique character as a desirable place to live and work.



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The Boggiatto Ranch
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*Photos by William Tovar:
Cover & pages 1,5,6,8,9 and 10.*



PRESERVING THE CENTRAL COAST'S AGRICULTURE FOR FORTY YEARS



Marc Del Piero,
CEO & MANAGING DIRECTOR,
AG LAND TRUST

DID YOU KNOW?

Over

20

Salinas Valley landowners

have approached our staff since the last edition of our Ag Land Trust Magazine was published.

They were all interested in protecting their invaluable prime farmlands from urban sprawl.

Forty years ago, a number of local farmers, landowners, and lifetime residents of Monterey County joined together and formed the Ag Land Trust (ALT) to limit the irreparable adverse impacts of municipal annexations on the agriculture industry of the Central Coast.

They recognized, that without protections, the resulting incurable traffic congestion, air pollution, underfunded police and emergency services, and under-performing schools were the inevitable results of poorly planned, developer-driven subdivisions that permanently consumed the prime and productive farmlands upon which our local agricultural industry is founded.

Since that time, their vision of preserving Salinas Valley open spaces, on-farm jobs, and agri-business as our bedrock local industry has now spread as a priority across all levels of our communities and our populations. Everybody dislikes traffic jams.

ALT and our Board of Directors have had an unbelievably busy winter and early spring season addressing all of the inquiries from Monterey County landowners who are personally committed to preserving the "Salad Bowl of the World". Over 20 landowners have approached our staff since the last edition of our Ag Land Trust Magazine was published. They object to the massive urban sprawl that has consumed the remaining farmlands of Santa Clara and San Benito Counties. All of them wanted information on legal and financial strategies that are regularly used to preserve farmlands while maximizing their ongoing economic returns.

On January 31, 2025, the Ag Land Trust filed five new grant applications with the California Department of Conservation to fund permanent farmland conservation easements on over 1,300 acres in the Salinas and Pajaro Valleys. From King City, to Gonzales, to Salinas, to North Monterey County, those applications will fund the purchase of permanent agricultural conservation easements which will significantly compensate landowners for committing themselves to continue to farm and to preserve their productive farmlands for the future of the agri-business industry in our county.

Additionally, by the time this edition of the Magazine is published, ALT will have completed the **purchase** of the Nunn Ranch in southern Monterey County. ALT has an on-going contract with the U.S. Department of Defense to preserve open spaces adjacent to Camp Roberts. At over 1,300 acres, the Nunn Ranch was owned by Mrs. Marguerite Nunn who was a friend of the Ag Land Trust. She and her husband, Tom, were long-time ranchers who wanted their property permanently preserved as a cattle ranch without the continuing threat of the land being subdivided into "ranchettes". Working with Mrs. Nunn's brother-in-law, Scott Nunn, and representatives of the U.S. Department of Defense (National Guard Bureau), ALT has the "fee purchase" of the ranch in escrow and will honor Marguerite's desires to permanently protect her ranch from development.



-YEAR IN REVIEW-

A LOOK INTO ALT'S 2024

Photos (L to R) Laurence London and Son at Salinas Airshow 2024 / Salvation Army - Share Your Holiday 2024 Donation / David Gill Speaking at Salinas Soccer Complex Phase 2 Celebration / Camille Polson Graduates Grower Shipper Foundation's AgKnowledge Class XVI / Aaron Johnson at 2024 Salinas Rodeo presenting the winning buckle for the Mascot Race / Marc Del Piero receives Defender of the Trust Award for Mono Lake / San Jose State Class at our Azevedo Ranch

JANUARY – MARCH



- **January**
South County Farm Day (King City, Jan 25)
- **February**
Monterey Farm Day (Feb 29)
- **March**
California Council of Land Trusts Conference (March 18-20),
Annual Appreciation Dinner (March 23)

APRIL – JUNE



- **April**
Salinas Chamber Annual Awards Luncheon (April 11)
- **May**
Salinas Valley Fair (May 16-19)

-AG LAND TRUST-

QUESTIONS & ANSWERS

Q Who can benefit from the grant programs of the Ag Land Trust?

A: Monterey County landowners are the primary beneficiaries of the programs and services administered by the Ag Land Trust (ALT). ALT is a non-profit organization that was created to help landowners to permanently preserve their farms and ranch lands, AND to help them to receive substantial financial benefits, including cash payments, in the process.

Q How does ALT operate its grant programs?

A: The Ag Land Trust operates as a 501c3 non-profit organization that receives grant funds from BOTH the federal government and the State of California. ALT acts as an impartial conduit

organization to deliver those funds and additional tax and financial benefits to landowners when they agree to protect their farms from subdivision development and urban sprawl. Both the U.S. Government and the State of California have passed laws and instituted long-standing grant programs to preserve the most productive farmlands in our state. The Salinas Valley is the beneficiary of these public programs that were created with broad bi-partisan support over 20 years ago.

Q How do landowners realize additional tax benefits from working with ALT?

A: Besides receiving and delivering grant funds directly to landowners in exchange for agricultural



JULY – SEPTEMBER



- **July**
Salinas Rodeo (July 18-21)
- **August**
Monterey County Fair (Aug 29-Sep 2)
- **September**
LTA Rally Conference, Providence (Sep 25-29),
Marc Mono Lake Award (Sept 27-29),
First Tee – Boots, Bottles & BBQ sponsorship
(Sep 7), Salinas Airshow (Sep 27-29)

OCTOBER – DECEMBER



- **October**
San Jose State class at Azevedo Ranch for
crop education (Oct 24)
- **November**
Board Retreat (Nov 14-15), Camille to graduate
Grower Shipper AgKnowledge Class XVI (Nov 15)
- **December**
Share Your Holiday Donation (Dec 3), Salinas Soccer
Complex Phase 2 dedication (Dec 6)

Q & A

conservation easements (ACE) on their farms, ALT's non-profit status allows landowners to maximize the financial benefits of the sale of an ACE. ALT always encourages landowners to have their CPAs and their attorneys help with the establishment of an ACE because each person's financial situation is different. Besides receiving cash, landowners can spread tax reductions realized from their transaction over as many as 7 years, depending upon their financial circumstances.

Q Do only large landowners qualify for ALT's programs?

A: Since 1984, ALT has been committed to preserving Central Coast farmlands that are agriculturally and economically viable for future food production. ALT has worked with landowners on parcels as small as 20 acres and on ranches of

over 5,000 acres. We have helped small and large landowners to permanently protect over 50,000 acres of farmlands from urban development, and we have more landowners (who are committed to preserving agricultural open spaces) approaching us every week.

Q How many employees does ALT have?

A: ALT has only three full time employees, and a number of extremely competent professional consultants who help landowners to achieve their financial and preservation goals. The ALT Board of Directors is very prudent in keeping our costs of operation low. And, because we are a non-profit organization, any excess funds to we receive are put back toward helping landowners with their future farmland protection projects.



SAVING THE SALAD BOWL OF THE WORLD – ONE RANCH AT A TIME

The Central Coast is one of the most agriculturally productive places on Earth. The Ag Land Trust is working to complete the purchase of a number of agricultural conservation easement projects that have been grant-funded by the State of California.

Each of the landowners of these ranches has agreed to voluntarily participate in the California Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program (SALC) because they believe in preserving their agricultural lands and open spaces. They are committed to permanently protecting the prime farmlands of the Salinas Valley for generations to come. The following are brief summaries of just three of our current projects:

The Boggiatto Ranch (Castroville)

The 260-acre Boggiatto Ranch in North Monterey County has been in the Boggiatto Family for nearly a century. Mr. Michael Boggiatto and his son, Geno, are the current owners. The beautiful property is located less than a mile southeast from Castroville and consists of three contiguous parcels that are farmed as a unit. Normally farmed for the cultivation of artichokes, due to its unique micro-climate, crop rotations on the farm also include lettuce, “cold crops” (broccoli and cauliflower), and other row crop vegetables. The Monterey County General Plan and CA. Department of Conservation soils maps designate the three parcels as “prime farmlands” and the Monterey County zoning designation is “F-40” (Farmlands – 40-acre minimum). The three parcels

contain farm labor rental housing and agricultural buildings that are intrinsically part of the active agricultural pursuits on the Ranch. By their voluntary sale of an agricultural conservation easement, Mike and Geno and their family will have made a tremendous, multi-generational commitment to the preservation of their invaluable prime farmlands and the protection of Monterey County’s scenic open spaces.

The Franscioni Ranch (Old Stage Road)

Ray Franscioni is a well-known farmer, landowner, and farmland conservationist in both Monterey and San Benito Counties. Moreover, for years, he consistently has demonstrated his commitment to the permanent protection of the prime and productive farmlands of the Central Coast from urban sprawl. Mr. Franscioni voluntarily pursues the protection of his farms





through the use of agricultural conservation easements. Ray's 200+ acre farm on the Old Stage Road is located east of the unincorporated community of Chualar in Monterey County. The entire property is fully subject to cultivation with a variety of row crops, including lettuce, cauliflower, broccoli and mixed vegetables. The applicable General Plan is the Monterey County Central Salinas Valley Area Plan, and the Monterey County zoning designation is F-40 (Farmlands – 40-acre minimum). Ray is also in discussions with the Ag Land Trust on future farmland protection projects in the Salinas Valley.

The Wimer Ranch (North of Gonzales)

Farmers Michael and Alice Hitchcock and David and Susan Gill and their families have long recognized that, without the protection and preservation of the prime farmlands of our area from ever-expanding urban sprawl, the future of the agri-business industry in the Salinas Valley is at great risk of being lost. That is why they are pursuing the protection of their Wimer Ranch through the use of an agricultural conservation easement funded by the state and facilitated by the Ag Land Trust.

Their 138+ acre Wimer Ranch is located between the unincorporated community of Chualar and the City of Gonzales, in the Central Salinas Valley. The Ranch is also adjacent to CA. State Highway 101 and is entirely cultivated prime farmland, producing virtually every kind of vegetable crop grown in the Salinas Valley. The Monterey County General Plan, the Central Salinas Valley Area Plan, and the soils maps of the CA. Department of Conservation all designate the Ranch as prime and productive farmlands. The current Monterey County zoning on the property is F-40 (Farmlands – 40-acre minimum). Their permanent protection of their ranch for farming purposes will preserve their legacy as conservation visionaries who understand that agriculture in the Salinas Valley cannot continue without the permanent protection of its single most important resource – the prime farmlands of Central California.



HOW TO CONTACT THE AG LAND TRUST – **WE ARE LOCAL**

The Ag Land Trust is 40 years old. Founded by Monterey County private farmers, agri-business professionals, CPAs, attorneys, and retired governmental officials, ALT was created to help landowners and farmers to preserve their farms and the way of life for which Monterey County is known. We are working to keep the Salinas Valley in agriculture for future generations to come.

The Ag Land Trust is located in our brick building at the corner of Blanco Road and Padre Drive in South Salinas (1263 Padre Drive). Our phone number is **831-422-5868**. Or you can visit our website at **www.AgLandTrust.org**.

We have been “Saving Farmlands and Serving Farmers” since 1984.





-FROM THE PRESIDENT-

HEATHER GOLDEN JENSEN



During the past five months, we have been unbelievably busy at the Ag Land Trust (ALT) for several exciting reasons.

Our efficient hard-working team made up of 3 staff members Marc, Camille, and Madison, and other very talented consultants have been busy throughout the winter months working diligently with landowners to preserve and protect “The Salad Bowl of the World”. ALT is currently “in escrow” to purchase 1,300 acres of ranch lands adjacent to Camp Roberts as part of our commitment to protecting the military readiness and mission of the U.S. Department of Defense at the southern end of Monterey County. Additionally, in January, our staff finished filing grant applications to purchase five new agricultural conservation easements.

The grant funds for those purchases will come from the State of California’s Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program (SALC) which is administered by the CA. Department of Conservation. Those funds will benefit and be paid directly to some of our long-time landowners/farmers from Salinas to Gonzales to King City, all of whom are making a commitment to protecting their farms from being part of future urban sprawl, traffic jams, and air pollution.

Collectively, those 2025 applications will allow ALT to purchase permanent agricultural conservation easements on over 1,000 acres of the most productive farmland in our nation. The grants are paid directly to landowners and farmers to guarantee their long-term economic health and to guarantee that our food production capacity is not diminished by short-sighted development decisions. Additionally, the voluntary sale of these protective agricultural conservation easements does not adversely affect the landowner’s rights to continue farming their lands. The participants in ALT’s farmland protection programs have a vision of preserving the economic vitality of our agri-business industry on the Central Coast and beyond for generations to come.

The Ag Land Trust (and our all-volunteer Board of Directors) was founded here in Monterey County over 40 years ago. We exist to protect our farmers and landowners and their businesses and ranches. We intend to be here 40 years from now, continuing in our efforts to preserve our vibrant and economically successful agricultural industry and our way of life for generations to come.

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Thank you to all who support Ag Land Trust!

Heather Golden Jensen
PRESIDENT, AG LAND TRUST



-OUR DEDICATED-
DIRECTORS & STAFF



Marc Del Piero, CEO & Managing Director

Our CEO/Managing Director was our Founding President in 1984. A former county Supervisor, an attorney, and a past member of the State Water Resources Control Board, his family has farmed in Monterey and Santa Cruz Counties for four generations.



David Gill, Vice-President

Our Vice-President is the co-owner of Rio Farms. A South County resident, he oversees farming on over 14,500 acres in the Salinas Valley.



Heather Golden Jensen, President

Our Board President is the principal owner of Golden Ag Assistance, LLC. She holds a California Real Estate license and has provide detailed technical consulting to hundreds of ag clients in Central California.



Anker Fano

Director Fano, a native of Monterey County, is the President and CEO of Pacific Valley Bank. He regularly provides detailed financial assistance and business banking services to the largest agri-business firms in Central California.



Aaron Johnson

Our Past Board President is the Senior Attorney and Shareholder at Aaron Johnson and Associates, Attorneys-at-Law. He specializes in land use, agricultural business law, complex real property transactions, and family law.



Louis Frizzell, Treasurer

Our Board Treasurer has been a licensed CPA for over four decades and provides financial planning services to numerous major farming concerns and landowners.





-OUR DEDICATED-
DIRECTORS & STAFF



Laurence London, Secretary

Our Board Secretary is an independent ag consultant and the owner of Fitotec Consulting, LLC.

He has been licensed as a Pest Control Advisor, a Certified Crop Advisor, and served as an adjunct Professor of Ag Innovation at Hartnell College.



Robert Roach

Director Roach served county farmers for 31 years. He was the Assistant Agricultural Commissioner for Monterey County. He holds a Bachelor's and a Master's degree, and is an expert in pesticide and plant quarantine issues and farmland protection.



Mike Novo

Director Novo holds a degree in Geography and served as the Director of Planning for Monterey County for over a decade. He was responsible for ALL land use decisions within the 3,771 square miles of the unincorporated area of Monterey County.



Tom AmRhein

A lifetime resident of the Pajaro Valley, Mr. AmRhein spent 40 years in the strawberry industry and was President of the Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau. He retired as Vice-President of Naturipe Berry Growers, Inc., the oldest Strawberry marketing organization in California.



Richard Nutter

Our Past Board President, is famous throughout California after his 27-year tenure as Monterey County's Agricultural Commissioner. He is recognized as an expert on farmland protection issues, pesticide/fertilizer regulations, and statewide ag policies.



Camille Polson, Director of Finance and Property Management

Director of Finance and a native to the Salinas Valley, she has worked for Ag Land Trust since 2017 and sits on the Board of Directors for the Monterey County Film Commission and is an active member of CA Women for Agriculture.



Madison Creech

Our newest employee, Madison Creech is our Administrative Analyst. A recent CSUMB grad, Madison was our student intern and now brings remarkable map making skills to ALT.





MEET OUR BOARD MEMBER

The Ag Land Trust Board of Directors has long-time members whose professional careers have been dedicated to helping the landowners, farmers, and agri-business professionals of the Central Coast.

Louis Frizzell

One of our most dedicated and astute board members is our Treasurer, Louis Frizzell, CPA. Louis Frizzell has been a Certified Public Accountant (CPA) for nearly fifty years in the Salinas Valley. A native of Monterey County and a financial planner, his practice includes advising farming concerns and farmland owners.

Mr. Frizzell became interested in the Ag Land Trust when he was helping clients plan their estates to preserve their major real estate assets and to improve their long-term financial positions, given the frequently fluctuating produce markets affecting Central Coast agri-business. Since joining the Ag Land Trust Board of Directors in 2007, Mr. Frizzell has been the Treasurer of the Board of Directors and helps to manage the Ag Land Trust's finances, including serving as the chief liaison for audits. His deep knowledge of the tax code and his financial expertise have resulted in millions of dollars of cash flow and tax benefits to his clients and to Ag Land Trust donors.



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-PUBLIC NOTICE-

STAKEHOLDER NOTIFICATION

The land trust accreditation program recognizes land conservation organizations that meet national quality standards for protecting important natural places and working lands forever. Ag Land Trust is pleased to announce it is applying for accreditation. A public comment period is now open.

The Land Trust Accreditation Commission, an independent program of the Land Trust Alliance, conducts an extensive review of each applicant's policies and programs. After 40 years of successful farmland conservation projects protecting over 50,000 acres, the Ag Land Trust's continuing pursuit of professional excellence now includes our goal of accreditation by the Land Trust Alliance Commission.

The Commission invites public input and accepts signed, written comments on pending applications. Comments must relate to how Ag Land Trust complies with national quality standards. These standards address the ethical and technical operation of a land trust. For the full list of standards see <http://www.landtrustaccreditation.org/help-and-resources/indicator-practices>.

To learn more about the accreditation program and to submit a comment, visit www.landtrustaccreditation.org, or email your comment to info@landtrustaccreditation.org. Comments may also be mailed to the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, Attn: Public Comments, 36 Phila Street, Suite 2, Saratoga Springs, NY 12866. Comments on Ag Land Trust's application will be most useful by March 24, 2025.



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