

Brentwood
AGRICULTURAL LAND TRUST
est. 2002

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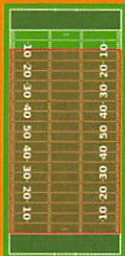
STAFF

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Executive Director

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How Much Water is An Acre Foot?

An acre-foot of water is enough water to cover one acre of land with one foot of water – about 325,851 gallons.



An acre compared to a football field.

BALT | Brentwood Agricultural Land Trust

Working with farmers and the community so that future generations in the Bay Area will have a local source of food.

July 2015

Pressure of drought increases! Brentwood farmers face cut-off of irrigation water

As California suffers the fourth year of a severe drought, farmers are grappling with reduced or a complete loss of water, regardless of how senior their water rights are. Farmers in East Contra Costa irrigate their orchards and fields with water from the Delta. Farmers who farm land next to the Delta and draw water straight from the rivers have the most senior rights – riparian rights – that date back over 100 years. In May, Brentwood farmers with riparian rights joined with other Delta farmers to voluntarily reduce their water usage by twenty-five percent. BALT Chairman, Tom Bloomfield, joined the coalition, planting less thirsty annual crops and leaving some ground fallow to save water for orchards and perennial crops that cannot survive without summer irrigation.



Two irrigation districts – the East Contra Costa Irrigation District and the Byron-Bethany Irrigation District (BBID) – provide water to most Brentwood farmers. Because the districts were formed before California's water law was enacted in 1914, they have another category of senior rights. The two districts have provided farmers with a reliable source of irrigation water for over 100 years at inexpensive rates of about \$20 an acre foot. However, in June California completely cut off the water to some of these senior water rights holders, including BBID. The district serves 160 Brentwood area farmers, including Frog Hollow Farm.

Brentwood farmers are particularly vulnerable because they do not have access to other sources of irrigation water. Significant acreage in BBID is planted in orchards that need summer irrigation to survive. Popular with u-pick visitors, these orchards represent a long-term investment for the farmer. It can take twelve years for an orchard to become profitable. Younger orchards are most vulnerable to a water cutoff because the trees haven't developed deep roots. Janet Caprile, UC Cooperative Extension Farm Advisor and BALT Board member, estimates that about fifty percent of the orchards in BBID are young orchards that will not survive without irrigation.



Ironically, the more modern, low-volume irrigation systems used by growers to conserve water exacerbate the problem since they encourage smaller root systems.

BBID is seeking to purchase water from other districts so that farmers can keep their orchards alive. It's anticipated that the purchased water will cost as much \$650 an acre-foot, a cost that will be passed on to the farmer and could impact the ability of local farms to survive.

Join us on Facebook and we'll keep you posted about Brentwood farms as the summer progresses.



Frog Hollow Farm – Farm to Fork with Zero Waste and Healthy Soil!

Frog Hollow Farm brings organic stone fruit straight from its Brentwood orchards to consumer's plates – fresh from the tree, cooked in jams and pastries and served at Frog Hollow Café in San Francisco. Beginning with 13 acres in 1976, Farmer Al Courchesne has built a nationally renowned 200-acre organic stone fruit farm parcel by parcel. Frog Hollow Farm markets the organic fruits, vegetables and olive oil produced on the farm through farmers markets, Happy Child CSA, specialty markets and online. With a commercial kitchen on-site and a café in the San Francisco Ferry Building Marketplace, Farmer Al makes use of all fruit grown on the farm. Food waste from the Ferry Plaza Café comes back to the farm to be used in the on-site compost and vermiculture operation. Farmer Al views composting is a critical part of Frog Hollow Farm's organic and sustainable farming practices. The compost, which is produced on the farm, builds up the soil, creates a healthy balance of beneficial microbes and recycles garbage into nutritional soil additives. The healthier soil has strengthened the "immune system" of the trees, allowing them to fight off potential infections. To learn more about Frog Hollow Farm, visit www.froghollow.com

"The Brentwood Agricultural Land Trust provides real financial support to local community farmers," says Al Courchesne of Frog Hollow Farm. "Their work supports this community's desire for fresh, local food and a thriving local economy. I am confident that BALT has good values and the best interest of farmers at heart."

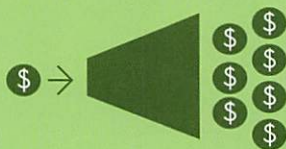
- Al Courchesne "Farmer Al"



SUPPORT US IN PROTECTING MORE FARMLAND!

BALT needs your support to protect an additional 1,500 acres of East Bay farms. Help us accomplish this goal with a donation to BALT. You can be part of the efforts to protect our local source of food - one acre at a time.

Donate online at www.brentwoodaglandtrust.org or by returning the enclosed envelope. Thank you for your support!



For you every \$1 you donate to BALT, we raise \$7 to permanently protect local farmland and promote agricultural enterprise.

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Summer Recipe

Rice Salad with Pancetta & Grilled Apricots.

This delicious recipe is from our friends at Frog Hollow Farm.

Ingredients:

- 1/4 lb pancetta, sautéed until crispy
- 1/2 lb apricots, grilled
- 1/4 lb kale, torn leaves
- 1 cup Basmati Rice
- 1 tbsp of shallots, minced
- 3 tbsp of champagne vinegar
- 1 tbsp honey
- 1 tbsp of Dijon mustard
- 1/2 cup olive oil
- Pinch of salt, to taste.



Make dressing: Combine shallots salt and vinegar and let sit for 5 minutes. Whisk in mustard honey and olive oil. Add salt to taste.

Rice: Cook Basmati rice according to package instructions. Do not over cook rice; it should be able to hold its shape without becoming mushy.

Salad: Slice pancetta into thin strips and sauté over medium heat until golden brown and crispy. Set aside on cooling rack. Grill apricots until they have sear marks. De-stem kale, Tear leaves into about 1/2 inch pieces or chop them into tiny ribbons. Then, massage kale to tenderize the leaves. Coarsely chop apricots and pancetta. In a stainless steel mixing bowl combine the rice, salad ingredients, and dressing. Gently mix until ingredients are well combined and rice is seasoned. Serve at room temp.

A WWOOFer in Farmer's Clothing

For some of you, the word WWOOFer might evoke thoughts of your neighbor's pesky pet and the barking that disrupts your day and wakes you up at night. However, if you're familiar with the Worldwide Opportunities on Organic Farms (WWOOF), WWOOFer evokes images of an environmentally conscious, globe-trotting, community-contributing, possibly nomadic 20-somethings.



WWOOFing began in 1971, when Sue Coppard, a London secretary, wanted to provide people in her hometown with an opportunity to participate in the countryside's organic farming movement. Since WWOOF was established in the U.K., the program has expanded to more than 100 countries, offering a wide range of farm-stay opportunities to adults.

WWOOF-USA® has a host farm directory of more than 2,000 organic farms and gardens in the United States, where potential WWOOFers pay a nominal annual membership fee to participate in the program. At California's 207 host farms and gardens, WWOOFers receive room, board, and opportunities to grow vegetables, keep bees, build straw bale houses, work with animals, make wine and much more.

In East Contra Costa, First Generation Farmers (FGF) has made effective and rewarding use of the WWOOF program since Spring 2014 when co-founders Alli Cecchini and Christian Olesen identified the WWOOF program as a perfect fit for their nonprofit community farm. "We started the farm with the intent of doing everything by hand," explains Alli. "We intended to utilize volunteers who were interested in community farming. We didn't even have a tractor." However, the quick growth of FGF had quickly overwhelmed the pair's ability to keep up with projects on the farm when they came across WWOOF-USA. Admitting slight hesitation at the thought of having strangers living on the farm, FGF became a registered WWOOF member and began taking in WWOOFers a year ago.

"They do it for the communal aspect and for being part of the mission of moving this farm forward . . . and once they go they've left a footprint."

—Alli Cecchini explaining the motivation of WWOOFers who choose First Generation Farmers.

FGF and WWOOFing have been the perfect partnership, and this Knightsen farm quickly rose up the list of desirable destinations for prospective WWOOFers. "We started with three WWOOFers and are now up to 10 at a time," says Alli, who believes that their farm's popularity is partly due to its unique position as a mission-driven farm. It also doesn't hurt that the farm owners are 20-somethings themselves who treat their farm like a start-up.

Some of the projects WWOOFers have contributed to FGF include an in-depth study of beneficial insects, the creation of a unique but popular free library at their farm stand, and the development of a composting system so fruitful that FGF no longer needs to purchase soil. To learn more about the WWOOF program and FGF, visit www.wwoofusa.org and www.firstgenerationfarmers.org.

Inside BALT

New Board Members

BALT has added two additional board members. Join us in welcoming our new directors.



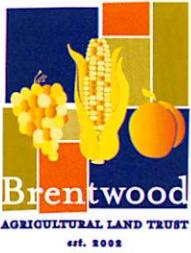
Taylor Bell, Director

Taylor is a Vice President and Commercial Banking Officer for ECC Bank. Taylor and ECC Bank are committed to preserving East County's small farmers and their agriculture community. Taylor also sits on 1st Tee of Contra Costa's Executive Board, is co-chair of the Concord Rotary Club's International Committee and is actively engaged in African projects to support an orphanage for AIDS orphaned young girls in Ethiopia and providing clean water in remote villages in Burkina Faso. He also enjoys spending time with his wife of 33 years and playing golf.



Jim Gwerder, Director

Jim is a real estate broker with extensive experience in mitigation and conservation properties, easements and credit sales. At last count, he has been instrumental in the sale of at least 8,000 acres of land for conservation purposes, in addition to thousands of acres of land used for agriculture and other purposes. Jim is an air force veteran and a proud husband/father/grandfather with a lovely wife, three sons, two daughters-in-law and three grandchildren. Jim has a 3rd degree black belt in Taekwondo, is an avid mountain biker and a lifelong musician, who performs keyboards and vocals for solo gigs and as part of an active band.



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"BALT has advocated for 'farmer-friendly' policies that allow farmers to make value-added products like jams and jellies, operate expanded roadside stands by sourcing local products directly from their neighbors that don't have the capacity to operate a stand themselves," says Ken Hagan, u-pick farmer and former Harvest Time President. "By connecting farmers with urban neighbors, BALT works to bring the healthy fruits and vegetables grown by local farmers into our schools, hospitals and cities."

- Ken Hagan, Bacchini's Fruit Tree