

Marin Agricultural Land Trust Records Management Policy

Records Management refers to the systematic control of information and documentation that is required in the administration and operation of an organization. By assuring that valuable records are preserved and readily available, records management promotes economy and efficiency. Records management involves determining what records should be retained; how long those records need to be retained; who in the organization is responsible for the records; whether the records are to be retained in an office or transferred to an off-site archive; and whether the records should eventually be destroyed.

Official records constitute original text documents, photographs, recordings, faxes, emails, or any form in which data are held, that are created, received and used by an organization in carrying out its functions. Draft editions of records may be helpful in documenting the decision-making process, though they are generally not considered records.

The purpose of this Records Management Policy is to ensure that authentic, reliable, complete and usable information and documentation that MALT generates and receives in the course of its business are properly managed and maintained in an effective and secure manner for as long as they are required. The objectives of the policy are to:

- ensure the preservation of records of permanent value
- maintain continued access to and readability of historical records
- preserve long-term transparency in the decision-making process
- ensure that all records that have regulatory, statutory or business value are effectively stored and protected against damage, loss, tampering, or unauthorized access for appropriate periods of time
- uphold confidentiality of information pertaining to MALT documents and conditions on private properties

Off-site Storage

The storage needs for each record type covered by this policy depend on factors such as the nature of the record, the type of media used, and access requirements. MALT's offices provide sufficient security and protection for most of our needs, but records that require longevity with a higher degree of protection from fire and environmental factors may be archived at appropriate facilities away from MALT's offices. Unless otherwise indicated, the following locations and procedures will be used for off-site archival storage.

A and P Records Management

Location: 111 Hamilton Drive, Novato, CA 94949; 415-884-7720, 883-2391

Designated Manager (DM) of records at this site: Tony Nelson, Stewardship Coordinator

Condition of stored materials is to be examined every 6 months.

Materials must be clearly identified with the name and title, including signature, of the creator and the date the record is created or updated.

All materials must be signed in and out with the DM. The DM will maintain a record sign-in and access sheet.

Access to records at this site is limited to the DM, Executive Director, Associate Directors, and Office Manager.

Bank of Petaluma

Location: 11400 State Route One, Point Reyes Station, CA 94956; 415-663-1713

Designated Manager (DM) of records at this site: Julie Evans, Membership Director

Digital/electronic media stored at this site are updated monthly. The DM coordinates updating with staff.

Media must be clearly initialed and dated by the creator when created or updated.

Access to safe deposit boxes at this site is limited to the DM, Executive Director, and Office Manager.

Bank of Petaluma registers date and name when access occurs and maintains these records until seven years after the box account is closed.

A. Computer Backup

- All computers used by staff are automatically backed up every evening onto a central server housed in the annex building (with Stewardship and Education department offices).

B. Administration

1. Incorporation documents, bylaws, policies, and related
 - Final drafts of these records are maintained in perpetuity at A and P. A copy is kept on file in MALT's offices.
 - These documents are printed or copied onto archival, acid-free paper. Office copies are on plain paper.
 - Access is not limited.
2. Tax-exemption documents (application Form 1023, IRS determination letter, related)

Federal law requires that copies of these documents be held at MALT's headquarters office, and that they be made available for public inspection upon request.

 - Originals of these records, on plain paper, are kept on file in MALT's offices.
 - Copies on archival, acid-free paper are kept at A and P.
 - Access to office copies is not limited. The public must request access from Executive or Associate Directors.
 - Regular backup is not required and these documents should not be destroyed.
3. Board meeting agendas, minutes, and related

These records document MALT's decisions and organizational history. Pertinent records should be included, but care should be taken to retain only necessary

information. The Office Manager has primary responsibility for copying these documents and maintaining records in the office.

- The current years records are maintained in file drawers in MALT's offices. At the end of the fiscal year, they are compiled and transferred to A and P and kept perpetually. Copies of records from all years are maintained on file in MALT's offices.
- Records to be kept at A and P are copied onto archival, acid-free paper. Office copies are on plain paper.
- Access is limited to staff and Board members.
- The records at A and P will be recopied as needed to ensure integrity.

4. Easement Documents

After easement documents are signed, the landowner has it recorded by the County. MALT is then given the original copy. Along with the easement document, title insurance policies and documents created during acquisition, such as draft easements and correspondence, are also important to retain.

- The original copy of the easement document and the title insurance policy are archived at A and P and a copy of each is retained in the "Legal" file in MALT's office. Additional copies can be acquired from the office of the Marin County Recorder.
- All copies are on plain paper.
- Easement documents include MALT's address and phone number, landowner information, and dates signed and recorded.
- Accessible by all staff and Board members. Access by others restricted without Executive Director or Associate Director approval.
- Regular backup is not required and these documents should never be destroyed or altered.

C. Finance

1. Source Documents

These records include items such as invoices, canceled checks, and investment statements. The Office Manager has primary responsibility for managing these documents.

- MALT files source documents for the current year alphabetically in a cabinet drawer. At the end of each fiscal year, all source documents are put into file boxes and stored in MALT's offices for at least 7 years.
- These records are generally on plain paper.
- Access to these records is limited to MALT staff and Board members.
- Backup is not required. After 7 years, the source documents will be either recycled or destroyed by the Office Manager

2. Annual Audits

An independent accountant audits MALT's finances annually. Board members receive copies of the final audit, and granting agencies are provided copies of the most recent audit on request.

- Audits are retained by the independent accountant for 5-7 years, as professional standards require. MALT retains audits in perpetuity.
- Audits are printed on plain paper and kept in file boxes in MALT's offices.
- These records are accessible to all persons, though prior communication with Executive Director is required for access by the public.
- Backup is not required, except when documents begin to color or fade.

3. Forms 990

These forms are filed with the federal IRS annually. The public has a right to access portions of the forms and schedules.

- Forms for each year are filed in boxes with source documents as described in #1 above.
- Forms are printed on plain paper and will be kept for 7 years.
- These records are accessible to all persons, though prior communication with Executive Director is required for the public.
- Backup is not required. After 7 years, these records will be either recycled or destroyed by the Office Manager.

D. Easement Stewardship

1. Baseline Documents

Baseline Documentation Reports ("Baselines") record the condition of easement properties when an easement is conveyed. They are created by the Stewardship Coordinator and the information should be available in perpetuity. Baselines have a standard format and include text, maps, aerial photographs, and photographs. Baselines may play a vital role in defending an easement in legal proceedings. (Refer to the Easement Stewardship Handbook.)

- The landowner is given one copy. MALT keeps two copies: one is managed in the Stewardship Coordinators office for routine use, and one is archived at A and P.
- Prior to 2002, all copies were made on plain paper. Beginning in 2002, MALT copies are on acid-free, archival quality paper. Landowner copies are on plain paper.
- All baselines are labeled with standard title pages and covers, and include property name and date.
- Accessible by all staff and Board members. Access by others restricted without Executive Director, Associate Director, or Stewardship Coordinator approval.
- Regular backup is not required and these documents should never be destroyed or altered.

2. Baseline Photograph Negatives

Photos are taken when the baseline is created and are re-taken approximately every ten years. Negatives must be kept as long as possible.

- Only one set of standard 35mm photo negatives exists for each year they are taken.
- All negatives are archived at A and P in archival quality, acid-free sleeves.
- Sleeves are labeled with Easement name and date.
- Access by Stewardship Coordinator, Executive Director, and Associate Director is allowed. Access by others restricted without approval by one of the above.
- Backup is not required and these records should never be destroyed.

3. Baseline Original Photographic prints

Photos are taken when the baseline is created and are re-taken approximately every ten years. Prints must be kept as long into the future as possible.

- One set of 4"x6" 35mm prints exists for each year they are taken. Beginning in 2002, photographs are also scanned onto CD-R disks by the developer.
- All original prints are archived at A and P in archival quality, acid-free sleeves. Prints are labeled on the back with easement name, date taken, subject, photo location and number, and photographer initials on archival quality labels.
- CD's and an index print for photos taken after 2001 are stored in binders in the Stewardship Coordinator's office for routine use. Easement name and date are labeled directly onto the CD's.
- Access by Stewardship Coordinator, Executive Director, and Associate Director is allowed. Access by others restricted without approval by one of the above.
- Backup is not required and the prints should never be destroyed or altered.

4. Easement Aerial Photographs

Photos are ordered from commercial aerial photography sources that maintain stock inventory for easy re-ordering. Many of these are large and would be awkward and expensive to store off-site. Copies of the aerial for each property, with infrastructure and pertinent information drawn on them, are included in the baseline documents stored at A and P.

- Original aerial photographs and all copies made are maintained in a metal, oversized cabinet within MALT's offices.
- Original photographs are labeled by the aerial photograph company with their name and address. Property name, date, and approximate scale are also labeled on each photograph.
- Access is restricted to staff and Board members. Original photographs do not leave MALT's office and are never written on or altered.
- New aerial photographs for a given property are acquired approximately every ten years.

5. Annual Monitoring Reports

Each property encumbered by a MALT easement is examined by the Stewardship Coordinator every 1-2 years. A standard paper form is used to record observations, and copies of aerial photographs or maps with notations may be included.

Monitoring reports may play a vital role in defending an easement in legal proceedings. (Refer to the Easement Stewardship Handbook.)

- Original monitoring reports are stored at A and P for a minimum of twenty-five years. Copies of reports are maintained in the Stewardship Coordinator's office for routine reference.
- All reports are on plain paper.
- Each monitoring report is labeled with property name, date, and monitor name or initials. The Executive Director initials the report after reviewing findings.
- Accessible by staff and Board members. Access by others restricted without Executive Director, Associate Director, or Stewardship Coordinator approval. Landowners are not given a copy of the monitoring report.
- Backup is not required, except if documents begin to color or fade, and these documents should not be altered.

6. Annual Monitoring Photographs

Photographs may be taken during monitoring visits to document pertinent observations. Monitoring photographs may play a vital role in defending an easement in legal proceedings.

- One set of original, 4"x6" 35mm prints are stored at the Stewardship Coordinators office in archival quality, acid-free sleeves or file box. Each print is labeled with property name, date, subject, and photographer's initials on archival quality labels.
- Photos taken after 2001 are also scanned onto CD-R disks by the developer. CD's and an index print are stored in binders in the Stewardship Coordinator's office for routine use. CD's are labeled with easement name and date photographs are taken. CD's are kept for their useful life but are not backed up.
- Annual monitoring negatives are stored at A and P in archival quality, acid-free sleeves in perpetuity. Sleeves are labeled with easement name and date photographs are taken.
- Accessible by staff and Board members. Access by others restricted without Executive Director, Associate Director, or Stewardship Coordinator approval. Landowners are not given a copy of the prints.
- Regular backup is not required and these materials should never be destroyed or altered.

7. Easement Stewardship Handbook

The handbook describes established policies and protocols for managing easements through time, including property evaluations, baseline and monitoring program guidelines, and easement violation procedures. It is important to maintain the handbook in order to establish formal, consistent practices, to document decisions regarding stewardship, and to inform future staff members.

- A copy of the handbook is archived at A and P. One copy is managed in the Stewardship Coordinators office for routine use. Electronic files are also backed up monthly.

- The copy at A and P is created on acid-free, archival quality paper. The office copy is on plain paper.
- The handbook is labeled with MALT's name and address and title. Pages are printed with date of creation in the header.
- Access not limited.
- Regular backup is not required and these documents should never be destroyed. Updated versions of the handbook will be sent to A and P as soon as practical. Older versions will be retained with the newer version.

8. Stewardship Assistance Program (SAP) Landowner Agreements

The SAP provides grants to easement landowners of up to \$25,000. When a grant is accepted, MALT and the landowner enter into a ten-year agreement that documents the project undertaken, the amount of funds granted, and any required management activities.

- Original agreements are stored at A and P. One copy of each agreement is maintained in the Stewardship Coordinator's office, and one copy is given to each landowner that receives a grant.
- All agreements are printed on plain paper and should be retained for a minimum of 15 years.
- Accessible by staff and Board members. Access by others restricted without Executive Director, Associate Director, or Stewardship Coordinator approval.
- Backup is not required.