

2012 Clarence Burch Award Winners

Joe Morris

Joe Morris and his wife, Julie, have owned and operated Morris Grassfed Beef since 1991 when Joe took over the management of his grandparent's 200-acre ranch near San Juan Bautista, just south of San Jose, California. Today, they lease an additional 7,000 acres and run 250 cows to serve their grassfed beef direct marketing business, as well as approximately 1,800 stockers.

Joe comes from a lineage of ranchers stretching back five generations, the most recent of whom was his grandfather who ranched into the 1980s.

Joe has been inspired and educated by ranchers, biologists and community builders from around the world, including experts in holism, decision-making, business management, livestock and horses, and consensus building. The primary common quality of these educators is that they incorporate practices that produce peacefulness, harmony and thriving communities. One of the specific methods he uses is holistic grazing planning, a practice he learned from Allan Savory. The result has been a widespread resurgence of native perennial grasses on his grasslands where he has seen a shift from European annual grasses to perennial bunch grasses and oaks as well as a greater water-holding capacity of his rangeland soils.

For the past 20 years, Joe has used holistic decision-making to direct his ranching tools toward his vision of a thriving community. For example, he uses conventional fencing and water systems to manage large, dense herds of cattle and goats to mimic the grazing patterns of herds of herbivores as they co-evolved with California's native grassland ecosystems over millennia. By intensively and adaptively managing water and grazing patterns, he gets higher rangeland utilization, maximal forage productivity and enhanced ecosystem health.

One of the most important vehicles for raising awareness about the role of livestock in maintaining

healthy land is the Community Supported Agriculture (CSA) aspect of the Morris Grassfed operation. The business currently serves about 800 members in the greater Bay Area and increasingly in Southern California. It also direct markets its meat at seasonal farmers markets in Monterey, San Benito and Santa Cruz counties. Joe views the direct marketing business as both an opportunity to educate consumers about their interconnections with ranchers and the ecosystems they steward, and an indicator and reflection of what the community needs, wants and will support in their food system.

Over the past decade, Joe has hosted perhaps two thousand people at the ranch, including researchers, students, conservationists and individuals interested in food issues and food systems. For example, he hosted a tour for about 130 people at the Spring 2011 annual meeting of the Central Coast Rangeland Coalition (of which he is a founding member) which focused on rangeland management and the water cycle. Later that year, he hosted a workshop for approximately 75 participants in which Peter Donovan of the Soil Carbon Coalition discussed

the impacts of Holistic Management on soil carbon sequestration.

With his portion of the Clarence Burch Award, Joe plans to invest in two interrelated projects with the goals of expanding his educational impact and of using his cattle to more effectively manage the land for carbon sequestration, water infiltration and beauty. First, he wants to start an intern program to train young people in Holistic Management. Second, he plans to expand his collaboration with Peter Donovan (Soil Carbon Coalition) by adding more soil carbon monitoring transects on his land as well as continuing to raise awareness among ranchers about opportunities to achieve multiple benefits from more effective management of their role in the carbon cycle.



Joe Morris. (Photo by Dean Eyre)

Taos County Economic Development Corporation



Pati Martinson and Terrie Bad Hand

Terrie Bad Hand and Pati Martinson are the founders and directors of Taos County Economic Development Corporation (TCEDC), a community-based organization that has supported the food, land, water and cultures of the peoples of Northern New Mexico for 24 years.

Terrie and Pati's lifelong work has focused on maintaining equity and ownership for land-based people; overcoming poverty; and providing access to education, business and other opportunities for ranchers, farmers and food-sector entrepreneurs. They have quietly and efficiently provided resources in this historically agrarian region to land-based people striving to hold on to their traditions, culture and quality of life while maintaining ownership and stewardship of their land and water.

Their work exemplifies Quivira's dedication to building economic and ecological resilience on Western working landscapes. Their work on community food systems at TCEDC has been successfully replicated in tribal and other land-based communities of color. Their model of Kinship and Extended Family Development led to the creation of a Small Business Incubator, the Taos Business Park and the Taos Food Center as well as the unique and illustrative Mobile Matanza described here.

The Mobile Matanza is a processing facility on wheels. (A "matanza" is a traditional celebration of the livestock harvest.) It provides an important opportunity for small-scale ranchers who do not have the option of slaughtering livestock for commercial sale to get a USDA-regulated-and-certified organic slaughter service brought directly to their ranch. The Matanza eliminates the need for ranchers to purchase their

own transportation equipment and haul their livestock hundreds of miles to sale barns and Contained Animal Feeding Operations. The Matanza serves ranchers in a 100-mile radius of Taos and is equipped to harvest cattle, bison, goats, pork, sheep and yak. It can handle as few as one and as many as 18 animals in a single visit.

Before the day of the Matanza visit, animals are preselected by the rancher and separated from the rest of the herd so they can be harvested individually without being traumatized by the transport process or by their proximity to other animals being harvested. The actual slaughter is done in a humane manner. If the rancher is interested in commercial sales of the meat, the USDA inspector travels with the Matanza and certifies the entire harvest process. The meat is prepared on-site for processing and hung in the refrigerated compartment of the Matanza to be transported to the TCEDC's cut-and-wrap facility at the Taos Food Center.

The rancher makes arrangements to have the meat packaged and labeled with their ranch name and logo for sales, or custom wrapped for family use. By using the Matanza, the rancher saves fuel and transportation costs and ultimately has a value-added product—the cut, vacuum-wrapped and labeled meat products—that he/she can sell at a much greater profit than by taking the animals to the auctions and selling them by the pound on the hoof.

The Matanza is just one example of Terrie and Pati's commitment to social justice, institutional change and leading by example.

Terrie and Pati, who are of mixed Native American ancestry and from diverse backgrounds of challenge, are able to move successfully between many worlds with consistency and with integrity.

Working in a "shared leadership and kinship" style, they have organized their communities to challenge systems that perpetuate injustice by creating policy and demonstrating practical models that work.

