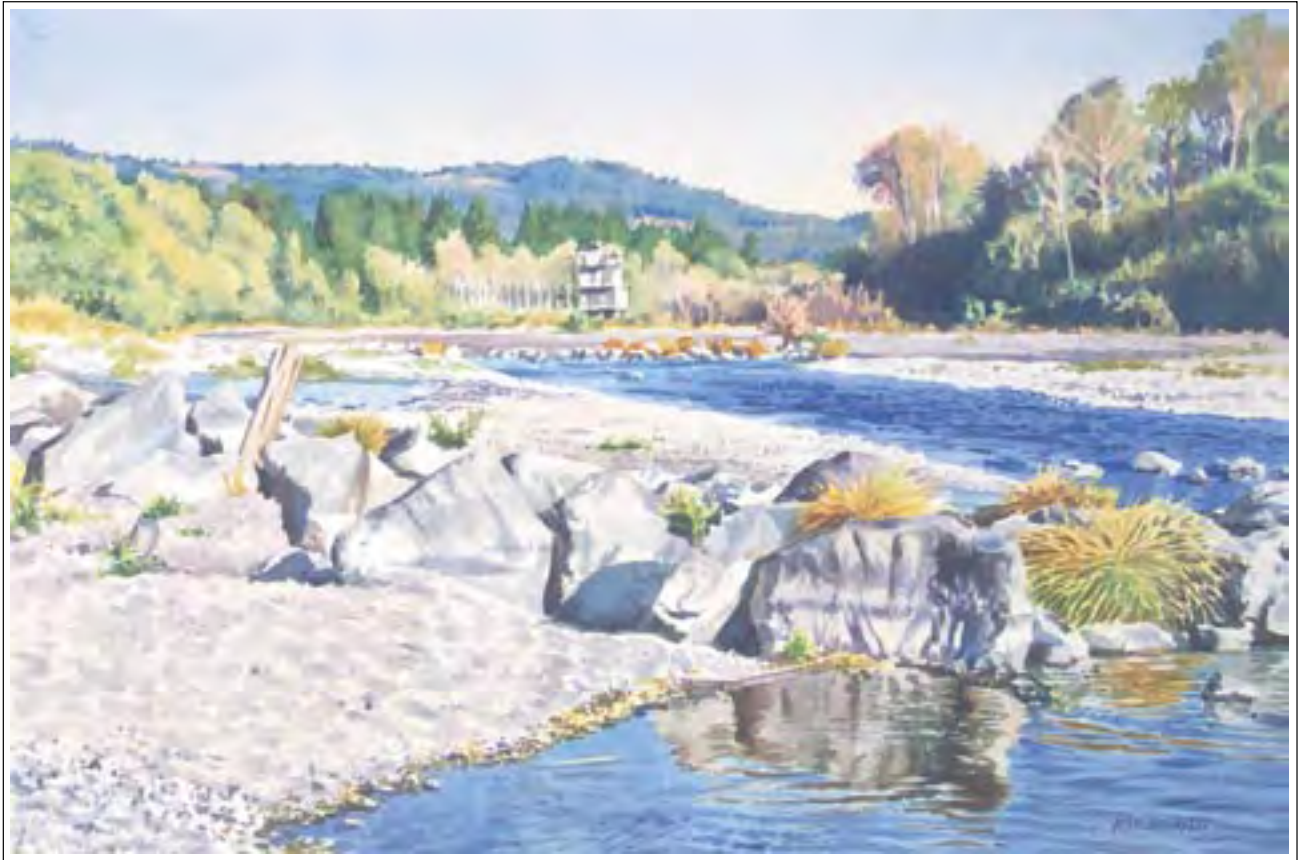


FALL 2004

NORTHCOAST REGIONAL LAND TRUST



October Afternoon, Mad River

Eric Fjeldland

Acquafresca Promotes Colorado Conservation Incentives Locally

By **Ben Morehead**

During the week of September 16th, the Northcoast Regional Land Trust hosted a visit and two workshops on land conservation policies featuring Steven Acquafresca. A former Colorado legislator and orchard farmer, Steven's affiliations with the Colorado Farm Bureau, Republicans for Environmental Protection and his current role as a land protection specialist with the Mesa Land Trust allow him to contribute to the protection of wildlife habitat and agricultural landscapes.

"Great Outdoors Colorado" is a state lottery funded program that generates millions of dollars for open space conservation, including working ranch conservation easements. The Colorado "Transferable Tax Credit" program allows landowners who donate conservation easements to get compensated directly through a program that transfers state income tax

credits to wealthy individuals who prefer to give their state tax dollars to land conservation projects.

While visiting Humboldt County, Steven led conservation policy and funding discussions with local land planners and interested community members. Participants in the discussions shared opportunities, concerns and visions for how conservation programs and policies can be applied locally in our region. A primary objective of the workshops was to address the feasibility of different land conservation policy alternatives. The Humboldt County General Plan update process was discussed, as were a purchase of development rights program, a transferable development rights program, and promoting the concept of a transferable conservation tax credit program for California. A fact sheet and article on Steven's work is available from our office.

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Letter from the Executive Director

If you are reading this newsletter, you, like me, are a conservationist. We care about the North Coast and all of our rivers and natural areas. We hope our children and our grandchildren can afford to live and work here too. Each of us may define conservation a little bit differently, but no matter. It is time to put our differences aside about how and why we protect natural and working lands and work together to save what we've still got. And hopefully make it even better for future generations.

As a biologist who spent years studying threatened and endangered species in northern California and beyond, what becomes increasingly evident to me is that if we want to preserve our North Coast ecology, we need to keep large tracts of our private forest, farm and ranch lands whole. As California's population swells, employing different strategies for protecting our natural resources is imperative, depending on where you live. What works in some areas does not necessarily work here. For example, a Bay Area-based economy, with millions of residents, can better support public acquisition of parks and wilderness areas in nearby recreational destinations such as the Sierra Nevada.

On the North Coast, we are fortunate to already have many public lands available for recreation and other natural uses. In Humboldt, Del Norte and Trini-

ty counties, public ownership – National Forest, National and State Parks, Bureau of Land Management lands and other public lands – comprise roughly 50%, 75% and 90% of our counties, respectively. These lands provide essential fish and wildlife habitat, including wild and scenic river corridors, redwood forests, oak woodlands and Bald Hills prairies.

In addition to these public conservation lands, we also still have thousands of acres of contiguous forested vistas backing our coastal communities to the east. Our towns and cities are distinguished by adjacent fertile farmland. Family-owned ranches, spanning thousands of acres of grazing lands and productive forests, are still numerous. Together, our public and private lands provide scenic and recreational opportunities, in addition to their ecological and economic value. All of these factors continue to draw people here, increasing land values and the pressure to subdivide.

There are a plethora of ways that we can care for natural lands and express our conservation ethic. Regardless of whether we believe that our bountiful natural resources must be actively managed or left untouched, I ask you to join me in striking common ground in how we preserve both our ecology and economy. People here need jobs. Salmon

Continued on page 3



The NRLT Team



The NRLT team stands in front of our new office, the Kokte House, in Bayside: (back row, left to right) Intern Holly Lockwood, Projects Manager Ben Morehead, Grantwriter Tempra Board, Projects Manager Shayne Green. (front row, left to right) Office Manager Diana Pachmayer, Executive Director Maya Conrad.

Continued from page 2

need miles of clean rivers. Wildlife, such as elk and mountain lions, need large expanses to forage. I believe that the key to meeting all of these needs is by keeping whole as many large tracts of privately owned lands as we can.

Those of you who live and earn your living off of the land naturally have a strong commitment to land stewardship. Those of us who want to see diverse species thrive here also care deeply about

our surroundings. The opportunity to protect our diverse lands is immense, but it requires that we come together as a community, compromise a little on how we personally define "conservation," and seize the moment. If we have both private and public, contiguous timber and ranch lands, that's how we're going to maintain both ecology and our natural resource-based economy.



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Thomas C. Brundage
Registered Geologist

Local Land Trust Contacts

The Buckeye Conservancy

P.O. Box 5607 • Eureka, CA 95502
Johanna Rodoni, Executive Director
(707) 786-9662
www.buckeyeconservancy.org

Friends of the Dunes Land Trust

P.O. Box 186 • Arcata, CA 95518
Lisa Hoover, Land Trust Chair
(707) 444-1397
www.friendsofthedunes.org

Humboldt Northcoast Land Trust

P.O. Box 457 • Trinidad, CA 95570
Gail Kenny, President
(707) 677-0716
kenny@saber.net; www.hnclt.org

Jacoby Creek Land Trust

P.O. Box 33 • Bayside, CA 95524
Susan Ornelas, Executive Director
(707) 822-0900; jclt@sbcglobal.net

McKinleyville Land Trust

P.O. Box 2723 • McKinleyville, CA 95519
Jeff Dunk, President
(707) 839-LAND
mlt@mckinleyville.net

Middle Mattole Conservancy

P.O. Box 73 • Honeydew, CA 95545
Gabrielle Roach, Director
middlemattole@asis.com

Northcoast Regional Land Trust

P.O. Box 398 • Bayside, CA 95524
(707) 822-2242
Maya Conrad, Executive Director
www.nrlt.org

Sanctuary Forest

P.O. Box 166 • Whitethorn, CA 95589
Eric Goldsmith, Executive Director
(707) 986-1087; sanctuary@asis.com

Siskiyou Land Conservancy

P.O. Box 157 • Orleans, CA 95556
Greg King, President
(530) 627-3377
gregking@sisqtel.net

South Fork Trinity River Land Conservancy

P.O. Box 36 • Mad River CA 95552
David Rose, Executive Director
(707) 574-1077
wildriver.trinity@starband.net

Leaving a Legacy for the Old & New NRLT Board Presidents Speak About

In preparing this article, I sat down with two of NRLT's long-term members, one of whom is transitioning from the role of board president and another who is moving into that role - David McMurray and Blake Alexandre. David and Blake in many ways represent the strength and power of the diversity that has defined NRLT since its inception.



David McMurray

David is a counseling psychologist by training, as well as an experienced consultant, committee member and board member for many non-profit organizations, including Internews, Sanctuary Forest, the Land Trust Alliance and currently the California Association of Land Trusts. His experience and personality have been crucial to NRLT's early formation as the organization grappled with bringing such a diverse group of people together and finding common ground.

Blake owns and operates Alexandre Dairy and EcoDairy Organic Farm in Del Norte County, and owns pasture land in Ferndale as well. He is active in several organizations, including the California Farm Bureau, Ducks Unlimited, the California Waterfowl Association, and the California Cattlemen's Association.

Blake's direct and goal-oriented style has resulted in his thriving business, and will now play a key role as NRLT moves into a new phase in its development.

As you'll read on page six, NRLT is on the brink of protecting several thousand acres of land through 10 projects in Humboldt, Del Norte and Trinity counties. Timing is critical right now, and all of NRLT's energy is focused on seeing these projects through to completion. This is where you come in. NRLT's donors have been the cornerstone of our success. We depend on you to keep us in business while we seek and obtain grants from foundations and agencies to move our projects forward.



Blake Alexandre

I asked David and Blake to tell me about why they are involved in the land trust, and how our donors can help keep the momentum

going in the coming years. I found their words inspiring, and I think that you will, too. We spoke about planned giving, which is "a method of making a charitable contribution in which some or all components of the gift are only distributed, or have their ownership finally resolved, after some event or some period has passed" (from the Online Compendium of Federal and State Regulations for U.S. Nonprofit Organizations). The definition sounds technical, but planned giving can be simple - and effective. If you currently have a will, you can easily add a codicil (an amendment) to include a bequest (a gift in your will) to the Northcoast Regional Land Trust. If you don't have

a will, now is a good time to prepare one. Remember that your will is fully revocable while you live. You retain control and can easily make revisions should your circumstances change. Bequests can be used as leverage for obtaining other funds through foundations, grantmakers, and other potential donors. They can also be used to fund an endowment that will continue to net the organization funds year after year. This is a true legacy - a gift for our community in perpetuity.

David explains how the land trust is a perfect fit for those interested in conserving North Coast landscapes and in planned giving. "The NRLT has the unique opportunity to help landowners make planned gifts and achieve conservation goals. There are people who want to donate easements but can't afford to do

it now. A conservation easement can be placed, with some of the stewardship funds to monitor that easement, coming in the form of a planned gift." This may be an economic incen-

"My parents left a small amount to each church they were a part of. In the same way, my commitment is to protect the land. For me it's like a religious commitment. It's at that same level."

-David McMurray

tive for those who would like to donate a conservation easement and see their land protected in perpetuity.

So why do people make planned gifts? David and his wife, Madeline, have already included a local conservation organization in their will. I asked what prompted David to make such a bequest:

"One of the most common and easiest methods of planned giving is to leave a small amount to an organization in your will. My parents left a small amount to each church they were a part of. In the same way, my commitment is to protect the land. For me it's like a religious commitment. It's at that same level. I am leaving a gift to Sanctuary Forest in my will because we have property in the Mat-

CAT KOSHKIN,
Attorney & Counselor at Law
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for the next generation

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North Coast Why It Matters

By **Tempra Board**

tole Valley, both Madeline and I have been on the board of directors, and we have a long-term relationship with Redwoods Monastery, which is at the heart of that community. We are also setting up a conservation easement with them, and part of our endowment fund will come in the form of a planned gift.”

Planned giving is an intensely personal act that has huge, long-term benefits for the greater community. It is a beautiful act of giving to something outside of yourself, but comes from a place deep within. David was president of NRLT for three and a half of its first four years. I asked him how he became involved with NRLT and what his hopes are for its future:

“I grew up on a farm, in a rural area – Odell, Oregon, a town of 700 people – and I have a strong appreciation for the importance of community, and sense of community. I grew up with a BB gun, walking in the back pasture. I have memories of smells, tastes, chickens in a hayloft. All of this plays into why the NRLT has taken on such an important part of my life. My upbringing fostered a strong desire in me to fight, to keep this sense of community.

“For the future, I want to be involved in figuring out how we can keep our urban areas urban and keep timber areas timber and rural areas rural/agriculture. We’re not saying ‘no growth’ or no low-income housing, but rather, we’re asking how we can make good use of existing residential lands and put easements on those lands that separate rural areas from urban.” David adds that one of the challenges for NRLT will be to maintain the balance between various philosophies, values, and backgrounds, and maintaining an open environment where “conflict is something to be worked through – not avoided.”

When I spoke to Blake, NRLT’s new board president, it was amidst the



Mouth of Redwood Creek, Orick, California. A conservation agreement will enable enhancement of this estuary and the fish and wildlife habitat that it supports, while maintaining a working dairy.

bustling atmosphere of NRLT’s new office in Bayside, the Kokte House, which it shares with the Jacoby Creek Land Trust. I asked Blake how and why he became involved in NRLT: “My friend Steve Hackett, the first NRLT president, invited me to a meeting, which led to my joining the board. I have a genuine interest in our community, as a landowner in Humboldt and Del Norte Counties. Whatever I do while I have control of my land, my goal is to leave it in a better state than when I found it. I instill these values in my kids and in my employees at my company. Being a part of the NRLT fits right in with that.” Planned giving often arises from the desire to pass these values from generation to generation.

Blake is taking to his job seriously. He has a set of goals in mind for NRLT, and he acknowledges that we have to navigate our way – finding that balance that David speaks of, and enabling us to continue on the path. “I want to utilize my leadership skills to move us forward. We all share some of the same core values of protecting land and community. We are moving into the phase of our organization where we need to perform – to make tough and wise decisions. This is a challenge during a time when funding is scarce. My goal is to help the NRLT give con-

sideration to everyone’s opinions and then to ultimately lead us in the right direction.”

You Can Leave a Legacy

You can help NRLT to protect North Coast lands by making a planned gift. A simple bequest can take many forms. Here are some examples in appropriate wording:

A *general bequest* is for a certain dollar amount of property, usually cash: “I give to [legal name of nonprofit] located in [city, state] the sum of \$ [the amount to be given.]”

A *residual bequest* designates all or a portion of whatever remains after all debts, taxes, expenses, and other bequests have been paid: “I give [legal name of nonprofit] located in [city, state], [fifty percent (50%)] of the rest, residue and remainder of my estate, to... [Legal name of nonprofit].”

Please contact NRLT if you would like assistance with estate planning considerations, or if we can provide you with more information at (707) 822-2242.

NRLT Projects Update

NRLT's project managers, Shayne Green and Ben Morehead, have been working on several exciting conservation projects in recent months. Here are some of the details of these evolving projects:

- *Six Rivers to the Sea.* Progress continues in our partnership with five Humboldt County ranches totaling 17,000 acres. NRLT is currently raising funds and conducting the pre-conservation easement work that will eventually protect essential timber and ranch lands, containing miles of salmon-bearing streams and diverse wildlife habitat.

- *Redwood Creek Valley.* NRLT continues to raise funds for purchase of a dairy in Orick, CA. This key conservation project will protect agricultural land from residential development in a scenic coastal area and aid in estuary enhancement vital to salmon and steelhead.

- *The Northcoast Farmland Conservation Study.* This study will identify highly productive and at-risk agricultural lands and outline conservation strategies to protect them.

- *South Fork Trinity River.* NRLT and the South Fork Trinity River Land Conservancy are developing a conservation easement with a family committed to preserving river frontage and corridors, oak woodlands, salmonid habitat, and mature forests along the wild and scenic South Fork.



Oak woodland habitat on the Laqua Ranch, a keystone property in NRLT's Six Rivers to the Sea conservation project.

- *Freshwater Slough.* Restoration of brackish marsh habitat of this Humboldt Bay tributary and support of local agriculture are the primary goals of this conservation project. Public canoe access and education opportunities will also be available.

- *Humboldt Bay Bottoms.* We are currently exploring an agricultural easement that will protect highly productive dairylands from residential development.

- *Van Duzen River Tributary.* We are working with California Department of Fish and Game on two adjacent stream easements containing nearly 3,000 feet of steelhead spawning habitat. The project would aid these conservation landowners' efforts

to continue K-12 education and riparian restoration.

- *Trinity Alps Wilderness.* We are assisting a Trinity County property owner who is exploring a donated conservation easement to protect wildlife habitat and forest values on a 130-acre property located adjacent to the Trinity Alps Wilderness.

- *Regional Planning and Humboldt County General Plan.* NRLT testified to the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors stressing the importance of protecting working farms, forests and ranches in addition to public access areas in the General Plan update. Through well-planned development, we can protect our local natural resource-based economy and residents' quality of life. We continue to collaborate with many local groups on long-range conservation planning.

Other projects are underway too. Stay tuned for more details!



Brackish marsh habitat for salmon and bird species will be enhanced with a conservation project on Freshwater Creek Slough.

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The Northcoast

This is a rugged land where
mountain ranges cut by many
rivers drop in folds of deep
green forest to the sea,

a place where salmon,
tattered from long voyages,
still find familiar streams,
swollen with rain,

a place where towns
still have their edges,
circled by the working land,
by field and farm.

A few last rivers still
run wild and free here.
Stands of ancient trees
still reach the sky.

If places can be left
on earth for breathing space,
for life to celebrate,
may this be one.

The great blue heron
flies beside the freeway.
Grey whales breach and
catch a glimpse of shore.

May they live to make
many more journeys,
finding this coast
as it was before.

~ Annette Holland



NRLT Mission



A Six Rivers to the Sea property in the Van Duzen River watershed.

Photo by Diana Pachmayer

The Northcoast Regional Land Trust is dedicated to the protection of working landscapes, farms, forests and grazing lands, and to the preservation and protection of land for its natural, educational, scenic and historic values.

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Humboldt Land Title Company



**CHARLIE TRIPODI
THE LAND MAN**

