

NORTHCOAST REGIONAL LAND TRUST

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NORTHCOAST REGIONAL LAND TRUST ANNUAL REPORT 2005

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NRTL Strategic Planning Retreat on the Klamath River. (back row, left to right) John LaBoyteaux, Mark Andre, Blake Alexandre, Michael Smith, David McMurray, Fred Neighbor, Wes Anderson. (front row) Tempra Board, Shayne Green, Laura Kadlecik, Maya Conrad, Melissa Bukosky, Ruth Blyther, Erik Wilson.

Cover Photo: Iaquia Ranch, part of the Six Rivers to the Sea project.



NRLT works with landowners on a voluntary basis to promote stewardship of Northern California's healthy and productive resource base, natural systems, and quality of life.

Our Vision: To create a sustainable community with a vibrant economy and landscape.

Our Mission: The Northcoast Regional Land Trust is dedicated to the protection and enhancement of farms, forests, rangelands, and wild areas in perpetuity.

LETTER FROM THE BOARD PRESIDENT



Balance

Discussion and work on conservation, land use, and natural resources issues in Humboldt, Del Norte, and Trinity Counties are often burdened with divisiveness. Our community continues to be stratified on these issues – environmentalists pitted against loggers or ranchers; developers pitted against preservationists.

This passion, and the open spaces and usable land that inspire it, are part of what makes the North Coast special. I believe, however, that there is always a meeting place that combines the best of two or more perspectives. In this way, the Northcoast Regional Land Trust is about finding the common ground of shared values, about finding balance. In everything we do, every decision we make, every project we undertake,

and every board room discussion we have, I have openness and balance in my mind. And I see this as a model for the North Coast – one that we can use to move forward to improve our quality of life – for everyone – without getting stuck in the divisiveness that may hold us back.

The projects we undertook in 2005 embody the notion of balance: The Freshwater Farms acquisition and restoration project is protecting Humboldt Bay wetlands, enabling restoration of former tidal lands, and still allowing the land to be used for sustainable farming and nursery activities. The Iaquia Ranch conservation easement, a keystone property in our Six Rivers to the Sea project, will protect open space and water quality for wildlife, while permitting sustainable ranching and timber harvesting. Our workshops and forums brought diverse constituents together to discuss contentious issues and plan for future conservation and development.

I would like to thank you for being a part of these projects that promise to keep the North Coast beautiful, productive, and unique – and in being a part of open dialogue and discussion about how to work together for our area's future.

Blake Alexandre, NRTL's Board President, is owner and operator of Alexandre EcoDairy Farms in Del Norte County (ecodairyfarms.com).

THANK YOU NRTL AGENCY & FOUNDATION GRANTORS

California Coastal Conservancy
California Department of Conservation,
California Farmland Conservancy Program
California Department of Fish and Game,
Coastal Salmon Recovery Program
Columbia Foundation
County of Humboldt
NOAA Fisheries
Norcross Wildlife Foundation
Pacific Coast Joint Venture
Resources Legacy Fund Foundation
U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
U.S. Forest Service, Forest Legacy Program



Yager Creek flowing through the Iaquia Ranch.

FRESHWATER FARMS

On April 28, 2005 the Northcoast Regional Land Trust assumed ownership of 54 acres of former tidelands located along the Freshwater Creek Slough near Three Corners (along Old Arcata Road between Eureka and Arcata). NRTL's purchase is an important step in the effort to re-establish natural tidal flow to the property and restore estuarine wetlands that are vital to many resident and migrating fish and wildlife species. The project will also create unique opportunities to enhance agricultural, educational, and recreational values associated with the property and adjacent lands.

Freshwater Farms is one of many ongoing NRTL projects that collectively support wildlife habitat, outdoor recreation, and strong agricultural, fisheries, timber, and tourism economies. Although sometimes pitted against one another, such diverse values together comprise the high quality of life we experience here on the North Coast. Freshwater Farms is notable in that it includes multiple interests in a single package.

NRTL intends to use the Freshwater Farms property to restore estuary habitat considered vital to the recovery of salmon, steelhead, and other fish and wildlife populations that were historically more abundant around Humboldt Bay. In addition to rebuilding fish populations, implementing such projects at strategic locations within regional watersheds will likely play an important role in the recovery of a fisheries economy that was far more robust in years past. Perhaps stories of fish so plentiful "you could walk across small streams without getting your feet wet," will one day be more than just reminiscence by the older generation among us.



Freshwater Slough

OUTREACH & EDUCATION

As a regional organization concerned with land use and conservation planning across the North Coast, NRLT has done more than seek conservation easement and acquisition projects. We have worked to build collaboration and dialogue among and between diverse constituents and stakeholders in our region. We have done this through an organized regional conservation planning program, and through ongoing outreach and education to landowners and others interested in using land trust tools for conservation.

In 2005 we accomplished the following:

- Co-drafted *A Humboldt-Del Norte Conservation Vision* (by The Nature Conservancy, Save-the-Redwoods League, and NRLT) and contributed to the Conservation Fund's Conservation Prospects for the North Coast.
- Collaborated with the Natural Resources Planning and Interpretation department at Humboldt State University to assess the feasibility of a Transfer of Development Rights Program in Humboldt County.
- Hosted a conservation forum involving more than 50 community leaders in which working groups tackled key conservation issues in our region.
- Developed a list of strategic conservation projects and programs to guide NRLT activities over the next five years. These are currently being compiled by NRLT into a regional planning document to be completed this year.
- Provided input into the Humboldt County General Plan Update at a critical time in the development of natural resource protection policies.



NRLT brought landowners together with agency personnel to facilitate funding for the Iaquia Ranch conservation easement.

Yager Creek



Iaquia Ranch

SIX RIVERS TO THE SEA: IAQUA RANCH

The Northcoast Regional Land Trust is working with Iaquia Ranch landowner Francis Carrington to place a conservation easement on the 4,800-acre Iaquia Ranch located near the town of Kneeland in Humboldt County. The Iaquia Ranch is distinguished by its expansive and rich mosaic of native oak woodlands, bald hills prairies, rock outcrops, conifer and riparian forests, ponds, and perennial streams. The vast majority of the Iaquia Ranch landscape drains into the North Fork of Yager Creek, several miles of which runs through the center of the property. This stream supports healthy populations of steelhead trout and Chinook and coho salmon, and is recognized as a primary system of biological significance by The Nature Conservancy. The property's open landscapes provide an outstanding scenic experience for travelers of the county roads running through the middle of it.

The threat of subdivision of Iaquia's 44 patent parcels is high. The Iaquia Ranch is located only 45 minutes from Eureka and Arcata, and year-round access by county road is good. The recent subdivision of the Big Bend Ranch just a short distance away underscores the reality of this threat. A conservation easement is needed to ensure that the Iaquia Ranch remains as intact open space and that many of its significant natural resources are protected in perpetuity. It will continue to be operated as a working ranch that not only supports natural and scenic values, but which also benefits the local economy. NRLT has secured Federal funding to purchase a conservation easement on this property from the USDA Forest Legacy Program (FLP), and state funding from the Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB). The Iaquia Ranch Conservation Easement is included in the Six Rivers to the Sea Project, which FLP has considered to be the top-ranked project in California for the last two years. We anticipate completion of this project in 2006, thereby permanently protecting this 4,800-acre jewel of the North Coast.

DONOR SPOTLIGHT



Robin Kinzer, Dr. Louise Watson, and NRLT Board Member Wes Anderson.

A WOMAN AHEAD OF HER TIME

By Maya Conrad

A lifelong learner, Dr. Louise Watson has wasted no time enjoying and exploring the North Coast, and beyond, her entire life. She has been ahead of her time on many fronts, especially in her naturalist efforts.

After serving as a Naval officer post-Pearl Harbor, Dr. Watson completed her doctoral degree in physical education in 1952 at the University of Oregon. In 1953, she accepted a job offer at Humboldt State University and has made the North Coast her home ever since. In more than 25 years of service as an HSU professor, Dr. Watson also found time to study wildflowers and mushrooms, belonging to local chapters of the California Native Plant Society and the Humboldt Bay Mycological Society. The climate and the coastline have kept Dr. Watson's passion for the area strong and she spent many weekends retreating to the quiet Trinidad region. In the early days of the Arcata Marsh and Wildlife Sanctuary, Dr. Watson also spent many Saturdays as a docent leading hikes through the area.

I asked Dr. Watson where she found the inspiration to pursue so many fascinating experiences. "Grandma Gettis loved to naturalize," she simply replied. Probing deeper, I learned that visiting her grandmother in the Puget Sound during her childhood clearly fostered a sense of wonder for nature, a curiosity for learning, and a quest for living fully.

Dr. Watson realized long ago that her special Trinidad property could be at risk of development. When asked why she decided to gift her property, she shared, "I don't want the land being broken up into a bunch of lots and sold." She has chosen to permanently protect this property by keeping it in a natural state to provide the area's wildlife—foxes, deer, bear, birds, and others—a special, undeveloped place with room to roam. The Northcoast Regional Land Trust will be honored to carry out her wishes.

THANK YOU 2005 NRLT SUPPORTERS!

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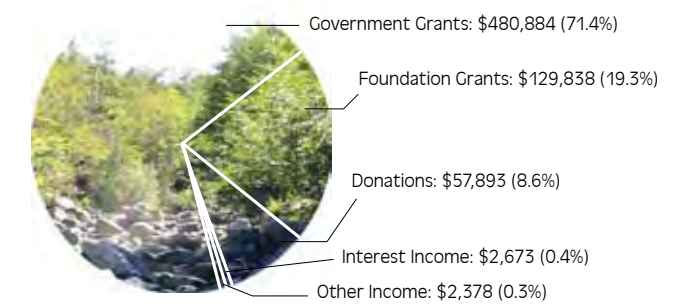
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Revenue: \$673,666*



*Reflects grants allocated for project acquisition.

Expenses: \$357,226

