

SPRING • SUMMER 2007

NORTHCOAST REGIONAL LAND TRUST



Forest Prairie in the Fog (oil on canvas)

Kathy O'Leary

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Letter from the Executive Director

NRLT Moves Ahead

Since our last newsletter, I am happy to report to you, our friends and supporters, that the Northcoast Regional Land Trust is forging ahead with the work needed to continue to grow and strengthen our position as a regional land trust.

We recently completed a donation of 320 acres of land in Whitethorn in Southern Humboldt (see feature article) to the Bureau of Land Management for public use and enjoyment and are working on additional conservation projects with public and private partners throughout the region. Four of these conservation projects are additions to our Six Rivers to the Sea Initiative—large working ranches—which will together retain more than 19,000 acres of working lands for the future.

Moving ahead as a regional land trust has guided us to other works related to our mission. NRLT continues to play an expanding role with the California Council of Land Trusts—the organization representing land trust work statewide. This is a role we hope to expand further. As part of this work, NRLT hosted a Conservation Incentive workshop in March for more than 80 people from throughout the region.

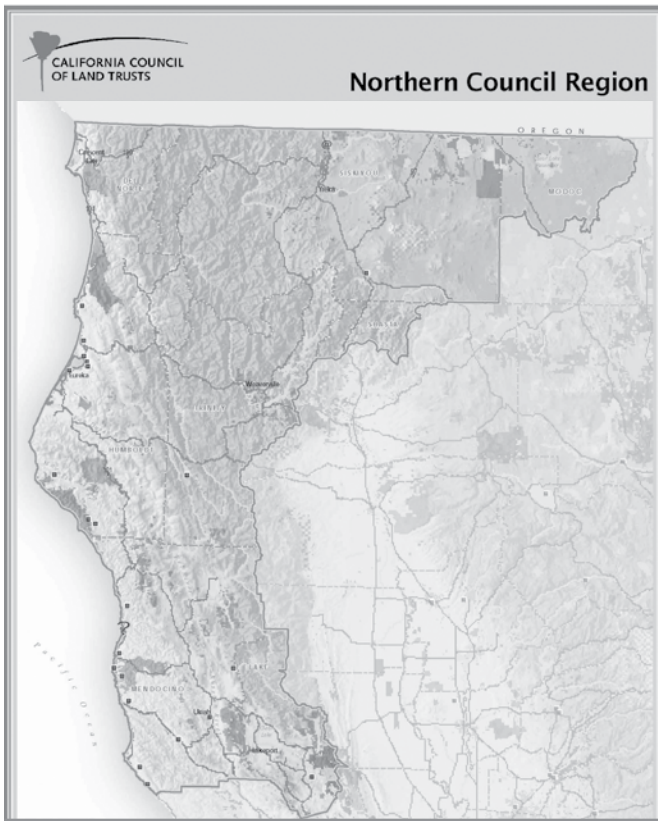
To assure our ability to continue to expand our conservation work we are also concentrating on long term financial stability and going through some exciting organizational growth. Our staff and board are actively exploring new avenues to promote and fund our work. I thank all involved in this endeavor.

All of this is fine work, but goes nowhere without the people needed. So we have spent time bringing in some excellent new board and staff members, adding to expertise in areas where we needed it. While we had a strong board a year ago, it is now a powerful coalition of committed people with skills and talents that will lead us forward. Let me introduce some of the new members (more information about each is included on the next page): George Yandell, North Coast Project Director for the Nature Conservancy; Bill Bragg, Attorney; Lee Mora of Humboldt Auction Yard and Humboldt Grassfed Beef; Dennis Rael, as co-owner of Los Bagels; Yvonne Everett, Humboldt State University natural resource professor; and Maya Conrad, former NRLT Executive Director. And, coming on our projects staff, is Ben Morehead, a longtime conservation advocate. With this new suite of skills, our team is stronger than ever before.

All of our successes to date on conservation acquisitions and easements are something of which we should all be proud. Without you it would not have been possible. To continue to expand this work we will need your continued support and assistance. We will also need to add to the ranks of those who support this critical work. Help us there when you can—talk about us to others. The best way to grow is through word of mouth!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Jim Petruzzi". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

“Thinking Like A Region” • June 15-16, 2007



The First Annual Northern California Regional Council Conference

Calling all Land and Water Conservation Professionals, Volunteers, and Interested Citizens!

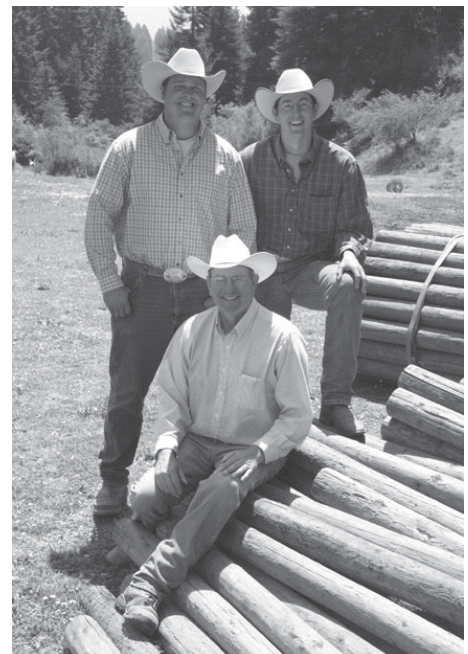
Join us as we organize ourselves as a region in order to highlight the extraordinary conservation values found here and attract more resources to achieve our collective conservation goals. Be there as the conservation community convenes in a historic effort to strengthen the conservation possibilities of the Northern Region. The conference will offer opportunities for training, professional growth, planning, and fundraising—and a chance to simply get to know one another. We will share our stories and success, and work towards developing a cohesive regional voice that can represent our conservation interests and needs at the state level. Please join us as we learn from each other and explore the development of a Northern California Regional Council to be that voice.

The Northern Region is one of six geographic areas outlined by the California Council of Land Trusts, and includes Mendocino, Lake, Humboldt, Trinity, Del Norte, Siskiyou, and portions of Shasta and Modoc counties (see map at left).

To Pre-Register contact: Renee Crowley, reneecrowley@attglobal.net, or David McMurray, mcmurray42@hughes.net. Find more information, a schedule, and registration information on “Thinking Like a Region,” by visiting www.ncrlt.org.

Welcome New NRLT Board of Directors Members

NRLT is pleased to announce six new board members that bring a diversity of backgrounds and ideas, not to mention a wealth of experience and longevity in the community! Welcome to: George Yandell, North Coast Project Director for the Nature Conservancy, who brings his expertise and the partnership of TNC to the mix. Bill Bragg brings his years as an attorney and his family connections to working ranches. Bill’s advice and counsel has already assisted us with many projects. Lee Mora brings needed business expertise as owner of Humboldt Auction Yard and Humboldt Grassfed Beef. Lee wants to help landowners keep their properties in sustainable production. Dennis Rael, owner of Los Bagels, contributes his entrepreneurial skills, which are critical to current organizational planning. Bringing connections from HSU is Yvonne Everett, a natural resource professor and planning expert. And finally, Maya Conrad, former executive director of NRLT, brings her knowledge of the work along with her biologist and land agent expertise.



New NRLT Board Member Lee Mora (seated), with his nephew (left), and son (right).

NRLT Donates Critical Forest Lands to the

Five years ago NRLT completed its first conservation project—the purchase of 320 acres in the headwaters of the Mattole—and this spring NRLT has taken steps to ensure the permanent public access and protection of this land by donating the property to the Bureau of Land Management (BLM). Located in Southern Humboldt County and named for three features on the property—Vista Ridge, Vista Ridge Grove, and Virgin Grove—the 3V's property consists of mixed tan-oak, douglas fir and redwood forests (including approximately 60 acres of old-growth), a salmon spawning stream, and abundant wildlife.

The property is within only a few miles of the BLM's King Range National Conservation Area which recently gained federal designation as wilderness. The location of the land also provides a crucial link in conceptual designs of hiking trail networks between other public lands in the watershed. NRLT found BLM to have a strong stewardship ethic and reputation in the Mattole. With a recorded agreement on the title to manage the land for its natural values, restricting any development or exploitation of its resources, this donation of land will provide robust protection while offering increased public access opportunities.

"We are very happy with this generous donation from the Northcoast Regional Land Trust, and are grateful to all the partners involved in its protection over the years" said Lynda Roush, Arcata Field Officer for the BLM "This property fits very well within our operations and management plan for the King Range area which emphasizes the protection of land for its wildlife and natural values."

The property was purchased in 2002 from Barnum Timber Co. and Sanctuary Forest Inc. with funds from the State Coastal Conservancy and a bargain sale by Sanctuary Forest Inc. "With its high quality anadromous fish habitat and stable forested slopes, this property has been an important addition toward maintaining healthy north



Baker Creek flowing through the beautiful "3Vs" property in the headwaters of Southern Humboldt County's Mattole River watershed. Photo by Erik Wilson.

coastal watersheds and resources for the people of California" said Su Corbaley of the State Coastal Conservancy. "The Northcoast Regional Land Trust has been a very important partner in protecting this beautiful property over the past five years."

"We are very pleased to be transferring this property to the public trust" said Jim Petruzzi, Executive Director for NRLT. "The upper reach of the Mattole River is an extraordinary place. It is a critical area for permanent conservation not only because of its

healthy forests, plentiful fish and wildlife, and wilderness characteristics, but also for the thousands of people that live around and visit the lost coast every year."

The Mattole River's fish habitat has been damaged by years of sediment being washed from deforested slopes and poorly maintained roads, but this property protects sections of clear, cool spawning and rearing habitat. The sediment buildup experienced in other parts of the watershed can suffocate eggs of spawning steelhead and salmon, which has pushed their numbers dangerously low. Keeping

this property protected for its natural values includes keeping the headwaters clear and cool, with acceptable nutrient levels, stable banks, and a safe habitat for juvenile fishes to mature. The protected uneven aged stands of forests along the stream corridor also help keep the water at the cool temperatures necessary for fish.

Major restoration efforts have taken place to enhance fish and wildlife habitat since NRLT assumed ownership. More than a mile of former logging roads has been decommissioned, returning the slope to its original contours, so that the fine sediment runoff and other erosion caused by them is eliminated. The Mattole Restoration Council has also replaced a culvert and removed tons of sediment buildup and trash from an impaired drainage on the property.

The property has been a key component in the Upper Mattole River and Forest Cooperative (UMRFC), comprised of public agencies (including the BLM and the Sinkyone Wilderness State Park), nonprofit organizations, and private landowners, who operate under a memorandum of understanding to develop cooperative land management plans and practices.

State Park officials are supportive of this transfer. "The Bureau of Land Management has an exceptional reputation for their responsible land management in the Mattole, and we have a very good relationship with them in the UMRFC," said Steve Horvitz, North Coast Redwoods District Superintendent for CA State Parks. "We are grateful for the good work of the Northcoast Regional Land Trust in protecting and managing this property for public benefit. Their stewardship and long-sightedness helps to insure that special places like the Mattole are preserved. We look forward to working with the NRLT on future projects."

"This agreement demonstrates yet another way local land trusts have been able to produce real benefits to the public - we work with private and public partners to creatively protect and manage the vital land and water resources we all need and care about" said Petrucci.

Freshwater Farms Update

1st Monthly Land Use and Environment Interpretive Walk

Sunday, June 3rd, 2:30 - 4:30

Put on some sturdy footwear and join a naturalist for a walk through the meadows, wetlands, and estuary of the Freshwater Farms Reserve. Take part in fun activities and learn about the natural history of the bottomlands, and about the historic and current land use practices around the bay. Families are encouraged. Rain or Shine—dress appropriate for weather conditions. Walks will be approximately a mile over uneven terrain. No bathrooms on site.

Monthly walks are being scheduled for the first Sunday of every month—call for additional details.



Canoers and kayakers on Freshwater Slough, spring 2007. Photo by Erik Wilson.

Father's Day Canoe the Slough at Freshwater Farms Reserve!

Sunday, June 17, 11am - 2:30pm

\$45/adult, \$35/kids 4-18 (3 and under paddle for free)

Join naturalists and other supporters of NRLT on a mid-day paddle all the way up Freshwater Slough to Freshwater Farms Reserve. Starting at the Eureka Marina, we'll follow the tide on a natural history tour of the bay and bottomlands, and we'll conclude with a walk on NRLT's Freshwater Farms Reserve. All boats and gear will be provided by HumBoats, and part of the proceeds will go to NRLT's land protection work.

Space is limited, contact NRLT to make your reservation: 707-822-2242.

These events are part of our efforts to establish a recreation and education program based on the Freshwater Farms Reserve, and it is made possible by a grant from the Humboldt Bay Recreation Enhancement and Water Quality Fund and the Hans Olsen Trust, funds of the Humboldt Area Foundation.

Restoration Project Planned for Summer 2008

The restoration project at the Freshwater Farms Reserve just keeps getting better. The project partners and NRLT have taken the original concept of removing a tidegate and simply flooding a portion of the pasture and made it even more attractive for fish and wildlife habitat. The current designs, which are now being used to apply for all the necessary permits, include wood structures, freshwater pools, and a series of slough channels that will be dug throughout approximately 15 acres on the west end of the property. These habitat features are included especially for the recovery of the endangered Tidewater Goby and Coho Salmon. Construction for the project is now scheduled for the Summer of 2008.

NRLT and TNC Form Collaborative Relationship

California's North Coast is known for lush green forests, rolling oak woodlands, plentiful rivers and streams and working farms and ranches. But pressure is mounting to convert natural areas into housing developments or "ranchettes." To counter this threat, The Nature Conservancy has teamed up with the Northcoast Regional Land Trust (NRLT). George Yandell, The Nature Conservancy's North Coast Project Director, joined the NRLT Board of Directors in December 2006.

"Protection of the North Coast's rich natural resources is important to California's future," says George Yandell. "We're excited to work with NRLT and with ranchers, farmers and landowners to safeguard these valuable riches."

The Nature Conservancy and NRLT are well known to each other, having worked together since 2004 on regional conservation efforts, including the Six Rivers to the Sea Initiative. Last year, the Conservancy offered its expertise in real estate transactions and scientific planning to help NRLT purchase easements on two Humboldt County ranches covering nearly 6,000 acres. This summer, the two organizations will begin drafting a conservation action plan for the region.

"The Nature Conservancy has a broad understanding of conservation in California and how the North Coast is important in that larger context," says Jim Petruzzi. "Working together means we can share our strengths and resources."

George Yandell agrees. "Our organizations have similar missions and a shared vision for conservation in the North Coast. By pooling our resources, we can be more effective at protecting this spectacular landscape for both wildlife and people."

Humboldt County Helps Conserve Six Rivers to the Sea Ranches



Fog and mossy oaks lend an air of mystery to Chalk Mountain Ranch. Photo by Diana Pachmayer.

The Humboldt County Board of Supervisors recently approved funding for conservation easements on four of the Northcoast Regional Land Trust's Six River to the Sea projects—Valley View, North Fork, Chalk Mountain, and Charles Mountain Ranches. Their decision to help protect more working ranches on the North Coast follows successful conservation easements placed on more than 6,000 acres in 2006.

Humboldt County funding will help to secure more than 3,700 combined acres on the Valley View and North Fork Ranches in the Matolle River watershed. Forming the visual backdrop for the town of Petrolia, the properties contain stunning pastoral scenes for human enjoyment. Heavy cottonwood and willow thickets line the North Fork of the Mattole River; diverse tree species cover slopes and gullies; and, on long stretching alluvial flats, sheep, cattle, and wildlife graze perennial grasslands. Several shaded waterways cut through the scenery, harboring wild salmonid

species including populations of steelhead, cutthroat, and coho.

To the east, the 7,276-acre Chalk Mountain and 8,222-acre Charles Mountain Ranches are located in the Larabee Creek and Van Duzen River watersheds near the town of Bridgeville.

The scene is expansive and wild for both properties: Deep creek-incised gorges; extensive, verdant grasslands dappled with spring wildflowers; resplendent oak woodlands; dark and green conifer forests with occasional craggy old-growth trees; and spectacular grassland balds are often snow-capped during the winter months.

County funding (\$40,000) for conservation easements on these more than 19,000 acres will allow watersheds to recover, and maintain water quality. Native plant, wildlife, and fish will flourish free from threats of division and development. And, saving the rich quality of life here will ensure that generations can work these ranches without interruption long into the future.

Thank You NRLT 2006-2007 Major Supporters!

Agencies & Foundations

California Coastal Conservancy
California Department of Conservation
California Department of Fish & Game
California Department of Forestry and Fire Protection
California Wildlife Conservation Board
Columbia Foundation
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Fred Neighbor, Attorney at Law
George Yandell

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Francis & Carol Carrington
Maya Conrad & Charlie Tripodi
David & Heidi Hodges
Jack & Rita Limmer
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NRLT Mission

The Northcoast Regional Land Trust is dedicated to protecting and enhancing our region's farms, forests, rangelands, and wild areas in perpetuity. Our vision of the future includes vibrant communities, sustainable economies and healthy landscapes.

Cover Art Kathy O'Leary



Wetlands Walk - Humboldt Bay (oil on canvas)

Kathy O'Leary began serious study of art in college in the mid 1960's. However her focus on "Commercial Art" brought disenchantment with the whole field of art. Eventually she put away her pencils and brushes and directed her efforts toward other studies, work, and raising a family. In the late 1980's she returned to her art and has been working at it full time ever since.

Plein air painting has become her favorite painting experience. "There my work comes as a response to my total environment as I paint the scene—the bird and insect sounds, the smell of the plants and the earth, the feel of the wind." Although she completes numerous larger studio pieces each year, she also continues to paint outdoors locally and travels throughout California and beyond to find new and beautiful places to paint.

Kathy's work can be seen at the Elliott Fouts Gallery in Sacramento (featuring a solo exhibition of her work, "California Light" through the month of May), the Cody Pettit Gallery in Eureka (in June featuring a group show of Yosemite paintings from this year's trip by 10 local artists), the Piante Gallery, Eureka (in a July "Anniversary" group show), by appointment with Humboldt Artworks, and in Pasadena, in the California Art Club's Images of Water exhibit. She will also open her studio to the public during the first weekend in June for "OPEN STUDIOS."

