



NORTH COAST DIALOGUES

Update

May, 2009



Greetings from the North Coast Dialogues project!

The purpose of this newsletter is to provide an update on the progress of the project since our kickoff event last November. Since then NRLT has been working with you individually and on a small group basis to begin translating that vision into action. This approach has enabled us to launch the more technical aspects of the project, providing a substantive foundation for our future conversations about working lands in Humboldt County. We look forward to re-engaging you as a larger group in the coming months.

Although quiet, we have not been idle. In January, twelve members of the Working Group gave a joint presentation to the Board of Supervisors to share our collective vision statements and other outcomes from 2008. The mix of voices and the particular sentiments shared provided a powerful and inspiring statement. Since then, NRLT staff and the Dialogues Steering Committee have been meeting on a monthly basis to develop and implement a work plan for 2009. The details of that plan are outlined below, along with other recent and related activities.

Working Lands Strategy

NRLT and its collaborators (including many 2008 Working Group members) have initiated a landscape-level analysis of land use patterns and

other factors related to the viability of forestry, agriculture, and fisheries in Humboldt County. The purpose is to establish a shared understanding of the current situation around resource lands (considered as a whole) and to provide an objective basis for deciding what actions are needed to maintain the viability of those lands and waters over time. The analysis will attempt to quantify our county's capacity for resource production and to evaluate the relative impact of various constraints on that capacity.

We are planning to present the findings of the analysis at a public forum, to be held in the fall. That event will foster community discussion and hopefully new insights that guide us in developing quantitative resource and land use goals for our county. Such goals might eventually provide a new basis for productive discussion and decision-making on key issues affecting working lands.

Once goals are developed, we will begin identifying and prioritizing conservation financing options, stewardship and regulatory incentives, and development options that reflect those goals.

This work is being guided by the North Coast Dialogues Steering Committee, conducted by NRLT staff and its partners, and reviewed and revised by our diverse multi-stakeholder working group.

Collaborative Vision Statements

For the next 100 years...

Locally-based agriculture, forestry, and fisheries are integral to and positively contribute to Humboldt County's economy, natural landscapes, and rural way of life and are supported by our entire community.

Agriculture, forestry, and fisheries are economically and environmentally viable and sustainable.

People are living and working on resource lands, using traditional and evolving knowledge of stewardship and management, providing opportunities for future generations.

Resource lands, in addition to their economic value, provide fish and wildlife habitat, open space, and are recognized as essential to Humboldt County.

Transitions Workshops

On a related note, NRLT recently held two well-attended interactive workshops entitled Communities in Transition: Exploring the Link between Change and Strong Communities. These workshops introduced the Transitions Framework, a theory of change and human response to change, and explored how this lens can be used to build or maintain key elements of community strength. Participants had an opportunity to apply the thinking to current and ongoing changes occurring in our community. A subsequent meeting is being planned to continue the conversation with interested workshop participants. Based on the positive response we received, we are likely to host workshops on this topic again in the future.

Website

We are currently building a website where information on the project and its various components will be

stored. You are encouraged to use this as a resource. Simply go to www.ncrlt.org and click on the "North Coast Dialogues" tab.

Funding and the Future of the Dialogues Project

The North Coast Dialogues is an evolving initiative and the Working Lands Strategy is now only one facet of a more comprehensive effort. The Dialogues may soon serve as an organizing hub for a variety of projects that share a common vision and a commitment to collaboration.

Recent conversations regarding future funding for the project have been encouraging. We are cautiously anticipating sufficient funding to carry our work through calendar year 2010, and hopefully far beyond.

Learn More

To learn more about the North Coast Dialogues project, please visit our website at www.ncrlt.org or call Lindsay Magnuson at 822-2242.

