



NORTHCOAST REGIONAL LAND TRUST

The Martin Slough Story

Located in the scenic bottomlands just south of Eureka, the Martin Slough property showcases a unique partnership between productive working lands and vital wetland habitat. Here, 43-acres of fertile pastureland is crisscrossed by one of Humboldt Bay's most important fish-bearing tributaries, Martin Slough. Northcoast Regional Land Trust has set out to improve and restore this landscape by balancing both agrarian and riparian values. Extensive modifications to the slough over the past century have severely diminished the functional capacity of the property: the installation of tide gates at its confluence with Swain Slough has restricted fish passage while vegetation disturbance resulting from channel realignment has resulted in a reduction in California native salt tolerant species. Adjacent pasturelands are subject to frequent flooding, reducing their productivity for grazing. Through the Martin Slough Enhancement Project, NRLT seeks to restore wetlands and riparian vegetation, enhance salmonid habitat, and improve the productivity of the approximately 82% of the property that will remain in agriculture.

This project was first set in motion in 2008, when NRLT was approached by the Redwood Community Action Agency's Natural Resource Services Division (RCAA - NRS) and the California State Coastal Conservancy (SCC) to become a partner in the multi-phase project. In December 2011, NRLT purchased the property and, in partnership with RCAA, SCC, the Humboldt Bay Harbor Recreation District, the CA Department of Water Resources, the City of Eureka, and engineering consultants began to plan and design six separate phases of the project which focus on restoration, enhancement, and flood reduction.

The onset of the restoration project involved the replacement of an undersized and defunct tide gate with a larger and more fish-friendly tide gate. After years in the making, late Summer of 2014 saw the successful installation of the new, state-of-the-art tide gate at the confluence of Martin Slough and Swain Slough.

With the tide gate installed, the next phases of the Martin Slough Enhancement Project are able to proceed. Significant research, planning, and collaboration went into designing the remaining phases of the project, which will enhance available salmon habitat and improve flood containment. Both of these goals will be met by expanding the slough channel in strategic locations on NRLT property, creating a series of ponds (three located upstream on the Eureka Municipal Golf Course, and two downstream on NRLT property), expanding an existing pond which consistently supports a high number of juvenile coho salmon annually on the Eureka Municipal Golf Course, repairing a vulnerable dike along Swain Slough, and the planting of native riparian, wetland and salt marsh plants in restored areas. Thanks to the efforts of the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, the high use of the existing pond as rearing habitat for juvenile coho salmon is well documented and serves as a model of the quality of habitat future ponds should embody. While providing enhanced habitat, the additional ponds will increase the capacity for floodwater retention, a feature that will increase the number of days on which the golf course is playable and agricultural fields are available for grazing. Concurrently, NRLT will complete the installation of riparian exclusion fencing by the

close of construction, which will help to protect in-stream water quality.

Northcoast Regional Land Trust would like to thank our partners at [Redwood Community Action Agency](#), [California Coastal Conservancy](#), [National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration](#), [Natural Resources Conservation Service](#), [Mike Love & Associates](#), [GHD](#), for the planning, design and dedication to the Martin Slough Enhancement Project.