Owning land has never been a long-term goal of the Northcoast Regional Land Trust. When NRLT purchased a 54-acre parcel hemmed in between Myrtle Avenue and the Freshwater Creek Slough in 2005, the primary impetus was to help local partners restore a tidewater refuge for juvenile salmon in the lower watershed. However, the property quickly took on a greater significance for board and staff members charged with its stewardship. Jointly managing this expanse of bottomland has cultivated an understanding of each other and helped to flesh out and define NRLT’s collective “sense of place,” particularly in the coastal plains around Humboldt Bay. Freshwater Farms Reserve has become a working ground to discover what we stand for as individuals and as an organization working together on behalf of the land.

Viewing management as a microcosm of our own diverse values, we have labored to enhance the multiple benefits the property can produce for our community and society. Working with partners and the generous support of donors, we have restored fish habitat and rehabilitated productive pastureland. We have created recreational opportunities (such as canoeing the slough) and made the property a learning ground for local schoolchildren. We have turned the reserve into a natural laboratory for aspiring scientists from local high schools and colleges, while offering resource professionals opportunities to observe and learn from this dynamic restoration project. Now we hope to do more.

Continued on page 4
From the Executive Director

This spring we celebrate our 13th year at the Northcoast Regional Land Trust. In this short time NRLT has worked with our partners to conserve over 25,000 acres of working ranchlands and timberlands; a vast and beautiful expanse of open space that will benefit us all for many generations to come. 25,000 acres!

This work requires “all hands on deck”, and these projects can take years to complete. I credit much of this success to the caliber of people among our partners and within NRLT. We have a busy little shop of three-and-a-half (amazing) staff, with an organizational budget of less than $400,000. With you, our partners and supporters, we are a passionate group, dedicated, and, (dare I say,) tenacious. Great things can be accomplished with a team like ours!

We are very lucky to have such courageous landowners willing to explore perpetual conservation options on their properties. We rely on our partners to help us pull these complicated projects together, and we rely on our supporters to help us finance the early stages of a project and to meet gaps in financing that would otherwise stall an important conservation opportunity.

A special thanks to one member of the NRLT-team: Leland Mora. Lee recently finished his two-year term as Board President of NRLT. Through much patience and integrity, Lee has taught me enormously about the complexities of our resource economies and the inextricable link between economy and open space. Thank you, Lee; I look forward to continuing to learn from you in your role as a board member, and as a friend.

I am thrilled to begin working with our new Board President, Martha Spencer. Currently a Humboldt County Planner, Martha’s enthusiasm, critical mind and skills at moderating difficult conversation will help NRLT continue to thrive. Welcome Martha! Welcome also to new board member Aaron Newman. Aaron is a local commercial fisherman, active in the community and currently serving on the Humboldt Bay Harbor Commission (among many things). We are lucky to have his expertise!

In my nearly six years with NRLT, it has been my privilege to work with the landowners who have voluntarily decided to take the leap and to protect their lands, forever. Your support as a landowner, a partner, a member, and as an advocate for this work in our community remains absolutely critical to the success of land conservation in our region.

I look forward to continuing to work with you as we juggle owning our three fee properties, initiate new conservation easement projects, and advocate for voluntary incentive-based programs that support land stewardship. I know how much we all care about this place and the character of our communities; we each have a role to play to ensure they continue to be as vibrant tomorrow as they are today.

We thank you for your support. We most certainly couldn’t do this alone!

The Northcoast Regional Land Trust is a member of the Land Trust Alliance, the California Council of Land Trusts, and the CA Northern Region Land Trust Council

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Welcome Aaron!
I just got back from a month long trip visiting land managers in Victoria, Australia to learn about “Landcare”, a national movement focused on supporting groups of landholders who voluntarily work together on land degradation problems to address the triple goal of enhancing incomes, strengthening community relations and promoting environmental conservation.

Working lands stewardship is a constant challenge. Among the toughest issues are those that go across property boundaries and affect the landscape as a whole. In Australia these include salinization, drought, soil-erosion, pest control, water resource conservation and wildlife corridors. A landholder may apply best practices but fail to improve a landscape-scale problem because other managers are not addressing it adequately.

In Landcare, local land managers with support from government paid facilitators and technical experts work in groups to develop plans to address locally identified issues. Then they and other community volunteers work together to fix the problem. On an appointed day everyone, from tens to hundreds of people depending on the project and location, shows up to plant trees or hunt down rabbits (a major problem for ranchers in Australia). Whatever the task may be, people come together to get work done and celebrate at the end of the day with a BBQ. A month or two later, a different landowner will have an opportunity to host their own event to meet their management and conservation goals. Thousands of miles of fences, millions of trees and growing friendships later, there are noticeable improvements on the land and in many communities.

Perhaps here in Northern California we can glean ideas from this approach to help solve some of our cross boundary issues including controlling sudden oak death, managing deer herds or reducing fuels for wildfire management. Effective collaboration is a huge part of NRLT’s work and this model could potentially benefit landowners, wildlife and the community at large.

For more information see the Landcare Australia Ltd. website at www.landcareonline.com.

Donor Voices:

Tim and Jacquelyn Pricer, Doris Fearrien
Charles Mountain Ranch Landowners

Jackie and I have been living on and running the ranch for around 17 years. From the very start we realized we had something special and needed to find a way to keep it special. We’ve seen properties all over the county get subdivided and developed, taken out of meaningful agricultural production. Many times wildlife suffers from this process. When we got involved with the Northcoast Regional Land Trust we were looking for a way to save our ranch from ever being split up. They stepped up and did an amazing job to help us achieve our goals. Knowing that their mission is to preserve working landscapes here on the North Coast, we will continue supporting them into the future.

THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS:
Continued from page 1

Last year’s addition of 20 adjacent acres has joined two parcels making up a historic 74-acre farm. The expansion of the reserve presents new possibilities and has energized efforts to make this special place even more beautiful, diverse, productive, and useful to people and wildlife.

NRLT and many supportive community partners are currently working on a variety of projects while collectively creating a vision to transform this former dairy (and more recently a nursery) into a model of compatible uses.

Developing a nature trail
We have planned (with much help from our neighbors at Redwood Community Action Agency) and are now permitting trail improvements that would increase the accessibility of the property for recreationists and school groups. Planned improvements include a designated parking area, interpretive signs, a boat launch, and a viewing platform. A special thanks to our primary funding partners: CA State Coastal Conservancy, Pacific Coast Joint Venture and the Humboldt Bay Recreation Enhancement and Water Quality Fund (HAF).

Improving rangelands
NRLT and its lessee continue developing infrastructure and implementing grazing practices to increase pastureland productivity. Livestock will increasingly be used to shape vegetation patterns in ways that support other uses of the property.

Planning another round of restoration on Wood Creek
NRLT is working with agency partners to design a second phase of the Wood Creek restoration project. Early conceptual designs will explore constructing new ponds, extending historic stream channels, increasing fish access to upstream reaches, establishing riparian forest stands, and alleviating undesired winter-time flooding.
Many Hands at Work

One rainy Saturday last December, a group of NRLT staff, board members, volunteers, and California Conservation Corps members gathered to remove tons (literally) of garbage and assorted junk that had filled up the barn and adjacent buildings over the years. In one day we hauled 7½ tons of garbage to the dump, piled a mountain of metal for recycling at the scrap yard, incinerated a seemingly endless stream of organic burnables, salvaged items of apparent value, and recycled other materials. At day’s end, indoor areas had been transformed from dumping grounds to blank slates of possibility. We extend our deep thanks to the many volunteers and especially the 16 CCC members who labored hard to make this first-of-many clean-up days a huge success!

Barn Renovation

Nothing tells a story quite like an old barn. We are hoping to save the turn-of-the-century barn that sits on the property, which has fallen into disrepair in recent decades. The building needs to be weatherized and stabilized. We are working with College of the Redwoods, contractors, and local farmers to evaluate options.

Exploring the Possibility of an Onsite NRLT Office

NRLT is exploring the feasibility of turning the old milking barn (more recently used as a nursery facility) into its future office, perhaps doubling as an educational facility focused on agriculture and wetlands. While many logistical and regulatory challenges exist, this site has a lot of appeal as a future home for the land trust and the important work NRLT does in the region.

You Can Help!

Freshwater Farms Reserve Wish List

You can become a part of bringing this amazing property to its full potential! Below is a list of what we need to get started:

• shipping container
• rider/tractor mower
• lawn mower
• brush mower
• gas weed eaters
• chainsaw
• wheelbarrows
• hand pruners
• sledge hammers
• shovels
• complete tool kit

To donate any of the above items (or to make a cash donation) please contact Shayne at s.green@ncrlt.org.
The Northcoast Regional Land Trust is pleased to provide our members with an accounting of organizational and programmatic accomplishments for 2012:

- Together, we reached 25,000 acres conserved through conservation easements, protecting 1,500 acres of riparian habitat, 60 miles of streams, 17,000 acres of forestland, 2,300 acres of oak woodlands, and 7,200 acres of grass/rangelands.
- In April, the 1,622 acre Miller Forest property conservation easement was completed, permanently protecting over 350 acres of endangered Port Orford Cedar reserves. In September, Charles Mountain and Chalk Mountain Phase II conservation easements closed, conserving over 15,000 acres of working landscapes forever!
- We acquired the 20-acre Freshwater Nursery property, reuniting it with the adjacent 54-acre Freshwater Farms Reserve, to protect the wetland habitat and agricultural productivity.

THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS:

- The Northcoast Regional Land Trust is pleased to provide our members with an accounting of organizational and programmatic accomplishments for 2012:
- Through partnerships, we took over 1,000 students out on the land with our Farm to School, Cows and Cattails and Biological Monitoring programs.
- We continued strong regional collaborations by acting as the fiscal sponsor for the CA Northern Region Land Trust Council and helping to coordinate restoration projects with the Yager/Van Duzen Environmental Stewards.
- With many partners, we facilitated an effort that led to the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors passing an Oak Woodlands Resolution and Management Plan enabling landowners’ access to new funding for oak woodland restoration and conservation.
- Thanks to your help, our fundraising efforts were a great success! We raised nearly $90,000, with $20,000 coming from an exciting matching campaign at our Annual Celebration.
THANK YOU NRLT Members and Supporters!
The Northcoast Regional Land Trust is forever grateful to the following who gave grants, gifts or support from April 1, 2012 through March 31, 2013. The Northcoast Regional Land Trust is a tax-exempt, nonprofit, 501(c)(3) organization listed with the Internal Revenue Service under EIN 68-0456290. All donations are tax deductible.

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- Audubon/Toscano, TogetherGreen
- CA Department of Fish and Game
- CALFIRE
- California Conservation Corps
- CA Northern Regional Land Trust Council
- CA State Coastal Conservancy
- CA Wildlife Conservation Board
- Community Alliance for Family Farmers
- County of Humboldt
- Dean Witter Foundation
- Friends of the Dunes
- Humboldt Bay Recreation Enhancement & Water Quality Fund, Humboldt Area
- James Tanket Fund
- Land Trust Alliance
- Natural Resource Conservation Service
- NOAA Fisheries
- Nutrocks Wildlife Foundation, Inc.
- Pacific Coast Joint Venture
- RCAA Nontidal Resources Services
- Redwood Region Audubon Society
- S. D. Bechtel Jr. Foundation
- The Nature Conservancy
- Umpqua Bank
- U.S. Bank
- U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service
- U.S. Forest Service, Forest Legacy Program
- Yager/Van Duzen Environmental Stewardship

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A special thanks to three members who have continued to sustain NRLT. See a full list of Lifetime Members at: ncrlt.org/partners.
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**NORTHCOAST REGIONAL LAND TRUST • SPRING 2013**
**Cover Artist—Madeleine McMurray**

Therapist, artist, writer, seminar leader and guest lecturer, Madeleine McMurray has lived and worked in Humboldt County for over thirty years. As a licensed Marriage and Family Therapist, she works from the perspective of Archetypal Psychology and much of her art reflects this outlook. For Madeline there is a mythic quality in the creative process no matter the subject or the medium. Madeline is a painter and a mask maker as well as an author of two books, *Beyond Heroics: Living Our Myths* and *Illumination: Art as Healer*. Madeline is the wife of NRLT co-founder and advisor, David McMurray.

**Leave a Legacy** There are a number of ways that you can help ensure this beautiful landscape and our unique way of life is conserved forever. The Land Trust can be remembered in wills or living trusts through cash or property bequests. Go to www.ncrlt.org/leavealegacy or call 822-2242 for more information.

**Also thanks to:**

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