

**Final Report for the  
North Coast Dialogues  
Phase 1**

**(December 2007 – May 2008)**

**Prepared  
August 2008**

**Findings, Outcomes and Action Plans**

**Facilitated by the Northcoast Regional Land Trust**



## **NORTH COAST DIALOGUES PHASE 1 A FINAL REPORT**

### **INTRODUCTION**

In late 2008 the Northcoast Regional Land Trust launched a new initiative to develop a 100-year vision for the landscapes, communities, and economies of the California North Coast. Phase 1 of the project focused on Humboldt County and involved over 30 county residents representing a broad range of perspectives on land use. The project's short-term goals and objectives, design, and participant list was established by a 10-member Steering Committee. The Steering Committee set the following goals to guide the project's early development:

1. Help our community to collectively determine how to maintain privately-owned productive working lands in Humboldt County.
  
2. Create a forum that:
  - a) informs decision-making
  - b) establishes a collaborative atmosphere
  - c) achieves a shared understanding of the issues and effects on all stakeholders
  - d) encourages open communication
  - e) respects diverse perspectives, and
  - f) engages a broader community.
  
3. Address the tension between public and private interests.
  
4. Find ways for the forum to inform other processes (eg. General Plan Update; Prosperity's regional economic development strategy).

## **North Coast Dialogues Phase 1 A Summary of Findings and Outcomes**

*Note: The following pages summarize results of the Phase 1 goal-setting and action planning sessions, as well as the working group survey results upon which those discussions were based.*

### **Collective Vision Statements**

*Note: The following statements were developed and approved by a diverse 30-member Working Group using a consensus-based approach.*

#### **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.

### **Private property/Production Vision Statements**

*Note: The following statements were developed and approved by individuals from the Working Group that identified themselves as associated with private property or production of resources.*

For the next 100 years.....

Privately-owned productive working lands (agriculture and forestland) are both environmentally and economically viable and sustainable.

People living and working on resource lands, passing down knowledge of stewardship and management for present and future generations.

Sustainable agriculture, forestlands, and fisheries remain the core to Humboldt County's economy, natural landscapes, and rural way of life.

Good stewardship based on incentives that work, minimizing the need for regulation.

Public lands contribute to the working landscape.

## Public Resources Vision Statements

*Note: The following statements were developed and approved by individuals from the Working Group that identified themselves as associated with public resources.*

For the next 100 years...

Locally-based Fish, Food, Fiber, and Timber Production are Integral To Our Social, Economic and Cultural Identity and Supported By our Community.

Aquatic and Terrestrial Habitats Are Maintained, Enhanced and Expanded and Are Recognized for Their Public Benefit.

The Marijuana Industry's Impacts on Resource Lands and Importance to the local economy is Acknowledged.

Our beautiful and rural quality of life is supported by land stewardship that promotes and insures open space, outdoor recreation, public use and access.

## Problem Defining and Solving

*Note: Participants were asked to identify (1) issues and challenges around maintaining productive working lands in Humboldt County; (2) approaches to attaining their vision for productive working lands; and (3) beliefs and behaviors that would be needed (or that would need to change). A summary of survey findings is as follows:*

### ISSUES AND CHALLENGES

#### Priority issues and challenges to maintaining productive working lands in Humboldt County:

##### **Regulations**

- High cost of compliance
- Uncertainty/instability of regulatory system
- Lack of an objective, scientific basis

##### **Conversion and Development pressure/High real estate values**

- Large lot rural residential eroding the resource land base
  - o Marijuana Industry
  - o Economic, Environmental and Social impacts
- Local planning and public policy issues
- Balancing private property rights and the public good
- Government acquisition and restoration

##### **Economic Factors**

- Poor market conditions
- Maintaining/increasing infrastructure
- High transportation costs
- Need to diversify resource land uses

##### **Succession**

##### **Community polarization/poor communication/Lack of Trust**

## **APPROACHES**

### **Action Themes:**

- State and federal regulatory reform
- Local planning policy—Subdivision/development/enforcement
- Education—Linking landowners and the public
- Objective research
- Conservation financing and stewardship incentives
- Business, estate, and succession planning
- Address impacts of the marijuana industry
- Economic strategies—Value-added and diversification
- Retain infrastructure
- Collaborative communication, visioning, and problem-solving

## **BELIEFS AND BEHAVIORS**

### **Beliefs and behaviors that are needed:**

- Trust
- Respect
- Listening
- Long-term thinking
- Being open to new ways
- Willingness to balance economy and environment
- “Can do” attitude by regulators
- Regulations aren’t always the best way to get the job done/Unintended consequences

## **Action Planning Committees**

*Note: Working group participants self-selected into the following action planning committees to address action themes they were most interested in or passionate about. Important action themes are given below each committee name. See Appendix I for detailed description of action planning sessions.*

### **Local Planning Committee**

- Minimize/redirect future subdivision and development of resource lands
- Conservation financing
- Address impacts of the marijuana industry

### **Stewardship Committee**

- State and federal regulatory reform
- Stewardship incentives
- Objective research supporting scientific, results-based management

### **Collaboration Committee**

- Communication, visioning, and problem-solving

## **North Coast Dialogues and Agenda – Phase 2 Action Plan**

*Developed by the Northcoast Regional Land Trust and the Dialogues Steering Committee.*

### **Activities and Events**

- A. Present “North Coast Dialogues Phase 1 Findings and Outcomes” to the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors. Emphasize the vision statements, action themes, collaborative intent, and the Phase 2 action plan. Provide regular updates to the Board as appropriate.
- B. Develop quantitative benchmarks (especially acreage) describing land use patterns necessary for maintaining agriculture, forestry, and fisheries in Humboldt County and possibly the entire North Coast, and as consistent with Phase 1 vision statements. Use infrastructure (mills, processing plants, etc.) as a basis for the analysis.
- C. Create a forum to address the issues and challenges we face in attaining/maintaining the identified land use benchmarks. Incorporate quantitative data into the qualitative discussions initiated during Phase 1.
- D. Develop a prioritized list of regulatory reforms, desired development patterns, conservation financing options, stewardship incentives, and other approaches that would be most beneficial in attaining the benchmarks. Strategically plan for the implementation of each approach.
- E. Convene a discussion group to explore the prospects for a regional or statewide regulatory reform initiative.
- F. Employ collaborative principles in all the above activities.

### **Organizational Structure**

- Northcoast Regional Land Trust (Spearheads the effort, provides coordination and labor, initiates fundraising activities)
- Steering Committee (Provides guidance to Project Director)
- Working Group/Leadership Team (Diverse community members endorsing the effort, providing input, political weight and networking capacity as needed; many will serve as technical team members)
- Technical Teams (Provide technical advice and problem-solving capacity for challenging issues)

### **Operating Procedure**

Staff advances the project with the goal of attaining full support for outcomes by the individuals comprising the Steering Committee, Working Group/Leadership Team, and Technical Team. Input will be solicited and communications will be conducted accordingly. If and when group decisions are necessary, the Steering Committee will act an Executive Committee.

## North Coast Dialogues Personnel

**Kevin McKernan**

Executive Director  
Northcoast Regional Land Trust

**Shayne Green**

Project Director  
Northcoast Regional Land Trust

**Lindsay Magnuson**

Project Coordinator  
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**Consultants:**

**Meghan Clarke, M.A.**

Certified Transitions Consultant  
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**Rev. Dr. Kenneth Downes**

Certified Transitions Consultant

**Mary V. Gelinas, Ed.D.**

Gelinas James, Inc. /  
Cascadia Center for Leadership

## **APPENDIX I: Action Planning Sessions**

### **Local Planning and Policy Action Plans**

#### **Action Item: Vision shared with Supervisors**

##### **Specific next steps:**

- Visions shared with Supervisors sometime during the next 3-4 months—then again after November elections
- Evaluate statements and refine to a useful level for Supervisor’s review
  - Add to statements for clarification if necessary; e-mail to Working Group for review and approval
- Outreach to groups w/ common Vision
  - Farm Bureau, Buckeyes, Cattlemen’s Assoc. largely agree
  - Become allies
- Poll across districts for extra support
- Show how four visions fit into GPU

##### **Ideas brainstorm**

- Community-based planning
  - Non-governmental groups that work on policy
  - Urban areas affect rural areas
- Public policy to determine regulations that keep resource lands intact
- Consolidate development within existing communities
- Shared Visions to guide General Plan process
  - Community consensus
  - Not competing
- Incentives for landowners to maintain value of landscape
  - Why stay in Williamson Act and TPZ?
  - Focus development in suitable locations
- Form committee which will “give teeth” to visions and draft recommendations
- Spread Vision throughout community
- Unify voices with same Vision
- Address public vs. private debate
- Sell the problem (e.g. impacts of government land acquisition on local agriculture) and shared vision
- Full community acknowledgement of loss
  - Consequences of doing nothing
- Education linking producers and the public
- Show people how much they already agree
- Vision and ideals that inform local decision-makers in planning process

##### **Points of Resistance:**

- Where was your group 2 years ago?
- Change original structure of report
- Not incorporating public comments

## Stewardship Action Plans

### **Action Item 1: Regulatory reform**

Passion Points: Burden of over-regulation

#### **Specific next steps:**

- What Resources and/or Information are needed to move forward?  
Research laws regarding 1600 permits, how to streamline and improve regulations
- What Specific Next Steps are needed to move it forward?  
Engage policy-makers and local organizations interested in regulatory reform  
*Ideas:* provide a volume discount for permits, evaluate other ways to encourage rather than discourage stewardship.
- Who Stands to Lose What? Status, turf, routines/structures, identity, etc.?  
Cal Fish and Game receives revenue from 1600 permits
- Are there Incentives that you can offer to help people make this change? Are there ways to Soften or Replace losses?  
Sell the benefits of increased implementation of restoration projects.
- Who should be taking the lead for this?  
Local policy makers in partnership with state officials and local organizations
- Who else needs to be Consulted or Invited to join our team?  
Patty Berg, Pat Wiggins, Buckeye Forest Project, CLFA, possibly Sanctuary Forest.
- What is the Time Frame?  
Long-term, start the conversation now.

### **Action Item 2: Education**

Passion Points: Increased public awareness is necessary to achieve our overall vision

#### **Specific next steps:**

- What Resources and/or Information are needed to move forward?  
Develop educational partnerships / collaborations
- What Specific Next Steps are needed to move it forward?
  1. Begin developing educational workshops about land stewardship
  2. Develop a disclosure agreement for realtors in relation to land management
  3. Develop technical support for forest / watershed management including:
 

|               |                               |                |
|---------------|-------------------------------|----------------|
| Water rights  | Setbacks (wetlands & streams) | Permit process |
| Water quality | Environmental concerns        | Regulations    |
- Who Stands to Lose What? Status, turf, routines/structures, identity, etc.?  
Realtors may stand to lose sales as increased buyer education may decrease willingness to buy.
- Are there Incentives that you can offer to help people make this change? Are there ways to Soften or Replace losses?  
Increased risk of lawsuits or long-term effects of an uneducated public outweigh any losses by increased education.

- Who should be taking the lead for this?  
Local realtors, NRLT (community education), agencies willing to participate in educational workshops (i.e. CEQA, NEPA workshops etc.)
- Who else needs to be Consulted or Invited to join our team?  
NRLT, State officials, Cal F&G, Water Quality Board, Environmental Health, UC Coop extension, HSU professors, NOAA, USFWS, CalFire etc.
- What is the Time Frame?  
NRLT activities in the fall, other activities to be planned.

### **Action Item 3: Innovative conservation tools**

Passion Points: New ideas are necessary to accommodate our changing economy and landscape.

#### **Specific next steps:**

- What Resources and/or Information are needed to move forward?  
Research innovative conservation tools for land management  
*Ideas:* Conservation easements, commons lands, cluster development, co-housing
- What Specific Next Steps are needed to move it forward?  
Engage the county to support sustainable development initiatives  
*Ideas:* Provide incentives for cluster development or other sustainable development  
Low interest loans to support sustainable forestry and good stewardship  
Low-cost supplies for stewardship / restoration  
Recycle infrastructure for development and restoration projects  
Provide incentives for cooperative management that is working towards a single product  
Provide tax incentives for private property improvements for public resource values  
Explore wetland / open-space banking  
Development credits for sustainable development
- Who Stands to Lose What? Status, turf, routines/structures, identity, etc.?  
Landowners may perceive a loss of land-use rights  
County may lose some tax revenues
- Are there Incentives that you can offer to help people make this change? Are there ways to Soften or Replace losses?  
Long-term benefits of sustainable development plans will outweigh any immediate revenue losses.
- Who should be taking the lead for this?  
The county, NRLT (easements and educational programs) and local policy-makers / concerned citizens.
- Who else needs to be Consulted or Invited to join our team?  
County planners, local concerned citizens
- What is the Time Frame?  
Soon, should inform the GPU.

#### **Brainstormed Action Ideas**

- Innovative programs that work to expand on existing programs
- Incentives for cluster development
- Low interest loans to support sustainable forestry and good stewardship

- Low-cost supplies for stewardship / restoration
- Recycle infrastructure for development and restoration projects
- Provide incentives for cooperative management that is working towards a single product
- Allow landowners to conduct their own monitoring (allow volunteer monitoring)
- Streamline programmatic permitting
- Provide free educational seminars for private landowners.
- Break up large land ownerships for new agriculture opportunities
- Get more people involved in resource production (possibly by promoting co/ops)
- Provide better local marketing opportunities
- Provide collective investment opportunities (green or otherwise)
- Bond-issuing / TIMO's
- Allow for cooperative THP and/or PTIER plans
- Local policy and regulation should support innovative stewardship
- Provide regulatory relief for participants in watershed planning
- Provide tax-breaks for water tanks
- Provide tax-breaks for private property improvements for public resource values
- Carbon credits?
- State incentives for forest management and watershed management
- Explore wetland / open-space banking
- Utilize conservation easements
- Need more funded stewardship projects
- Mainstream marijuana industry (legalization?)
- Provide technical support for forest management

## **Collaborative Communication, Visioning and Problem Solving Action Plans**

### **Action Item 1: Communicate Vision to Decision Makers**

Passion Points: Connection, Leadership, Respect, Understanding and Community

#### **Specific next steps:**

- What Resources and/or Information are needed to move forward?
  1. Identify Decision makers
  2. Understand the process to contact them
  3. Have a succinct and clear message that is repeatable
  4. Hand out materials, stump speech, press release and website
- What Specific Next Steps are needed to move it forward?
  1. Identify, recruit and organize ambassadors (across all constituents) – i.e. Buckeye Forest Legacy project
  2. Schedule meetings (w. decision makers and ambassadors)
  3. Take a risk to engage with people from across identity groups
- Who Stands to Lose What? Status, turf, routines/structures, identity, etc.?
  1. Ego, Control, Leadership Status/identity, respect, spot-light/attention
- Are there Incentives that you can offer to help people make this change? Are there ways to Soften or Replace losses?

Selling points: preservation of resources, ensure land rights, economy, Broader Understanding, popularity, pick most credible spokesperson to for each particular leader, communicate broad support

- Who should be taking the lead for this?

Pick most credible spokesperson to approach leaders – representative of all constituents

- Who else needs to be Consulted or Invited to join our team?

Leadership's staff members, land trust staff, any interested participant

- What is the Time Frame?

Begin immediately – and continue for the next 3 months

Factors: June 3<sup>rd</sup> election, General Plan Update

**Action Item 2: Seek 1<sup>st</sup> to Understand (take Three breaths) – Get Curious (Shift in Culture)**

Passion Points: Sense of Community; Culture

**Specific next steps:**

- What Resources and/or Information are needed to move forward?

1. Cascadia leadership tools
2. Open ended questions
3. Training on how to seek understanding
4. Training on communication

- What Specific Next Steps are needed to move it forward?

1. Setting ground rules for community meetings
2. Own the problem
3. Take the time to listen

- Who Stands to Lose What? Status, turf, routines/structures, identity, etc.?

Identity, Status, Friends, Business (clients)

- Are there Incentives that you can offer to help people make this change? Are there ways to Soften or Replace losses?

1. Create opportunity to build relationships and foster empathy
2. Creative ways to integrate cultures
3. Sharing our passions
4. Build social time into meetings (especially at the beginning)
5. Bring food to meetings!
6. Humor (ability to laugh)

- Who should be taking the lead for this?

All of us

- Who else needs to be Consulted or Invited to join our team?

1. 3<sup>rd</sup> party facilitator
2. Community Leadership
3. People with deep connections to identity groups

- What is the Time Frame?

### **Brainstormed Action Ideas**

#### **Ways to create cultural shifts in our community:**

- Don't react
- Alternate format for County Process (and/or opportunities for dialogue outside of this process)
- Education on appropriate process esp. for contentious issues
- Democratic Process
- Create healthy fear = engagement
- No personal attacks
- Remove the emotion
- Take a risk to talk to people of different views
- Seek first to understand
- Respond sensibly – take 3 breaths
- Get curious – ask questions
- Not act in “Type Cast”
- Focus on Commonalities
- Take a Risk!
- Communicate our message with respective constituents and across them (non-constituents)
- Can Do Attitude
- Newspaper
- Continue dialogue across line
- Create better process & use it!
- Communicate vision to Decision makers
- Create Ground Rules
- Foster relationships
- Trust
- Land Trust = creating trust around land
- Building on Common Ground
- Stop accusations and name calling
- Own the Problem