

NORTHCOAST REGIONAL LAND TRUST

2008 Program Accomplishments

The Northcoast Regional Land Trust is pleased to provide our members with an accounting of organizational and programmatic accomplishments for 2008.

In January of 2008 Kevin McKernan started his tenure as Executive Director. The Board of Directors is pleased to report that Kevin quickly came up to speed with all he is charged with: government and public relations, fiscal and staff oversight, and easement negotiations. Board and staff appreciate the calm presence and sense of humor he brings to all of his successful undertakings.

NRLT has found an invaluable asset in Lindsay Magnuson. Hired in January, her position as NRLT's Education and Outreach Coordinator has included leading interpretive walks and kayaking trips as well as instructing high-school students in outdoor classrooms. However, this does not illustrate the many other duties she has undertaken, including editing in- and out-of-house documents, easement preparation and coordinating activities of our Dialogues program.

Landscape Conservation

Six Rivers to the Sea: Completion of a conservation easement on Valley View Ranch outside of Petrolia, CA boosted the total of land protected under the *Six Rivers to the Sea Initiative* to 11,220 acres. NRLT thanks landowners, Francis and Lorana Sweet, their representatives and our agency partners for Valley View's success.

NRLT project staff also monitored Iaquia and Price Creek ranches for compliance under their 2006 easement terms, with agreeable results. We worked on easements for two other *Six Rivers to the Sea* projects – Chalk Mountain and Charles Mountain Ranches. Activities included writing grants and other fundraising, facilitating title work, hosting tours for agency officials and members, drafting preliminary easements, and preparing for appraisals. We expect conservation easements to be placed on these properties, totaling more than 15,000 acres of productive forest and rangeland and abundant habitat for wildlife and fish, within the next two years.

Additional easement projects: NRLT staff fielded more than 30 inquiries by landowners wishing to know more about protecting their properties in perpetuity. NRLT is working diligently on four of those projects, amounting to nearly 3,000 acres, which promise conservation and economic values that are consistent with sustaining the North Coast's rural landscape.

Freshwater Farms Reserve: Working with our project collaborators, the final project design for restoration activities on 35 acres of our 54-acre *Freshwater Farms Reserve* property was completed in April. The sixth and final permit needed to begin construction was granted at the very end of 2008. Work to restore this



Photos, top to bottom: Valley View Ranch protected in 2008; Charles Mountain Ranch consultation; the first monitoring completed for Iaquia Ranch; restoration on Freshwater Farms starts in 2009.

former tideland includes, increasing estuarine rearing habitat and providing winter high-flow refugia for salmonids and other living marine resources.

The amount and nature of required public review and inter-agency procedures gave project staff the fortitude and foresight needed to guide landowners through similar processes in the future. NRLT also continued with a grazing lease on the property and intends to evaluate future agricultural opportunities on the property after the restoration project is implemented. Restoration work commences in August 2009.

Regional Planning

NRLT's work on a Conservation Action Plan (CAP) to target conservation projects with the greatest impact on our region made great strides in 2008. Enlisting the services of HSU's Natural Resources Planning Department, we focused our work primarily on an oak woodlands component of the CAP. The resulting background report will be used toward the development of an Oak Woodlands Conservation and Management Plan for Humboldt and Del Norte Counties. We also established an ad hoc advisory committee to provide scientific and technical input at various stages of the project.

North Coast Dialogues

The first phase of our Dialogues project saw the formation of 10-member steering committee and a 30-member working group. These diverse leaders of our community developed a set of 100-year vision statements for productive working lands in Humboldt County. The project culminated with these committed individuals beginning to explore how more of the community can bring these visions to life. Based on our accomplishments thus far, we were granted continuation funding for this project and the second phase of Dialogues begins in November 2008.

Education & Outreach

2008 marked the completion of our pilot education program for NRLT. This included a beautiful moonlight paddle that was attended by more than 20 people, various interpretive walks, and informational presentations to local community organizations. In addition, an outdoor education program was initiated with Six Rivers Charter School that offered 10th grade high school students the opportunity to practice scientific inquiry in the field. We have vigorously pursued funding in hopes of expanding this program to include field trips that will expose K-12 students and at-risk youth to wetland ecology, sustainable farming, and the dynamic interactions between working lands and sustainable landscapes in the North Coast region.

