



The new future of McNamara Dairy

When negotiations for the sale of the McNamara Dairy in Orick took place last year, the Northcoast Regional Land Trust was approached by several entities to see if we were interested in acquiring and managing the property. The land trust's board of directors unanimously agreed that it was a natural fit for our nonprofit organization. So in March, thanks to Western Rivers Conservancy, the California State Coastal Conservancy, and the McNamara family, the land trust now owns the 77-acre property, located on the north bank of Redwood Creek.

Thanks, also, for those who came out to welcome us for our first public gathering at the McNamara Dairy. Several of our new neighbors, Orick community members, and county and state representatives joined us for a tour of the property. The lively discussion before and during the tour gave the land trust the opportunity to talk about the purchase of the dairy and to share our plans for its future.

MY WORD

Lindsay Magnuson

With any land transaction of this type, it's only natural for people to speculate about the Northcoast Regional Land Trust as the new owners and the deal that transpired to bring it about. Funding, in the form of taxpayer dollars, to purchase the McNamara Dairy was provided by the Coastal Conservancy. The land was assessed at \$7,000 per acre for just the land, and including the structures on the property, at \$10,000 per acre. The land trust is not a government agency; as a nonprofit organization, we apply for grants and, hopefully, receive funding from government entities to support, protect and restore working landscapes in Humboldt, Del Norte and Trinity counties. With this vision, the land trust was seen as the logical choice to receive the McNamara property. Coastal Conservancy staff reported that "The [Northcoast

Regional Land] Trust's approach to conservation [is] consistent with the protection of working landscapes and their cultivation of working relationships with landowners is long overdue in Humboldt County and warrants the Conservancy's full support. [It] has demonstrated that it has the expertise, local public support, and administrative capability necessary to commence and complete the project in a timely fashion."

The land trust's mission to protect and enhance farms, forests, rangelands, and wild areas in perpetuity involves finding ways to help keep farmers and ranchers on the land and continue to work our region's rich, fertile soils. The McNamara Dairy is no exception. Our long-term goal is to keep the land in agricultural production. We will work closely with the current, and any future tenants (lessees), to restore and maintain the land, and associated infrastructure, for optimal yields. Protecting agricultural land from subdi-

vision and development and keeping it in sound working condition is essential to produce the food, wood products and clean water necessary for a vibrant and sustainable local economy.

The land trust has several capable and knowledgeable directors and staff members to manage the property, but we understand that until we get to know the land and its capacity to produce, we are in for a steep learning curve. We hope we can turn to the local farming community for consultation and advice. We appreciate the warm reception we received at the recent celebration, and we look forward to a strong and long-lasting relationship with our neighbors while promoting the farming tradition and our unique way of life on the North Coast.

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Opinions expressed in My Word pieces do not necessarily reflect the editorial viewpoint of the Times-Standard.