

NORTHCOAST REGIONAL LAND TRUST

The Formation of the NRLT



NRLT Board of Directors and Technical Advisors: Top row, left to right: Kim Browning, Blake Alexandre, David McMurray, Wes Anderson, Rondal Snodgrass, Tempira Board. Middle row: Steve Hackett, Ben Morehead, Michael Smith, John LaBoyteaux, Sandra Jerabek, Sabra Steinberg. Front row: Ruth Blyther, Annette Holland, Melissa Bukosky, Carrie Grant.

by Carrie Grant, NRLT Secretary

In the Fall of 1999, Rondal Snodgrass, past Executive Director and founder of Sanctuary Forest (an upper Mattole watershed land trust), assembled a broad and diverse mix of representatives from the Northcoast to discuss the need for a regional land trust. We realized that certain individual watersheds and small areas were currently served by existing land trusts, such as the Jacoby Creek and McKinleyville Land Trusts, but large tracts of open space were left vulnerable to development in Humboldt, Del Norte and Trinity Counties.

Our group was indeed diverse, and among the earliest discussions was the need to create balance, a bridge, non-extremism, and a common vision. He wanted to protect farmland. She wanted to preserve pristine forests. He wanted to ensure long-term family ownership and management of family ranches, farms and dairies. She wanted to protect wildlife habitat. He wanted to provide public trails. He wanted to ensure economic stability on timberlands. We struggled, we squirmed to stretch beyond our individual

ethics and personal goals to incorporate and respect each other's needs and priorities.

As perspectives and visions were expressed over the first three feasibility study meetings, it was determined that we all wanted to protect open space, whether it be ranch land,

He wanted to protect farmland.
She wanted to preserve pristine forests.

timber land, riparian corridors or forest preserves. We were passionate about maintaining open space. Vistas. Unpaved land.

As we developed our original Board of Directors in 2000, with David McMurray as our first President, we looked to the future and found that ultimately our goals were the same. Through debate, argument, understanding and laughter, we

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BOARD OF DIRECTORS

President

David McMurray

Retired University Administrator

1st Vice President

Ruth Blyther, RCAA Co-Director

2nd Vice President

Wes Anderson, Appraiser/Rancher

Secretary

Carrie Grant, Artist/Photographer

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John LaBoyteaux, Farmer

Blake Alexandre, Dairyman

Kim Browning, Resource Timber Manager

Melissa Bukosky, Biologist/Geologist

Annette Holland, Jacoby Creek Land Trust

Sandra Jerabek, Nature & Heritage Tourism

Ben Morehead, Nonprofit Consultant

Michael Smith, Natural Resource Professor

Sabra Steinberg, Wildlife Biologist

BOARD OF GOVERNORS

James Able, Forestry Consultants, Inc.

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Tom Brundage, Geologist

Dennis DelBiaggio, Building Contractor

Nancy Diamond, Attorney

Jeff Dunk, McKinleyville Land Trust

Zuretti "Zuey" Goosby

Field Representative, Senator Wesley Chesbro

Dr. Steve Hackett, Professor, Business & Economics

Steve Hackett, Rancher

Kevin Hartwick, CPA, Cholwell, Benz & Hartwick

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Laura Mayo, Smith River Rancheria

Lee Mora, Humboldt Auction Yard owner; Rancher

Kathy Moxon, Humboldt Area Foundation

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Gary Reedy, Fisheries Biologist

Tom Rowe, Attorney

Rondal Snodgrass, Land Counselor

Bill Thompson, Jacoby Creek Land Trust

Yana Valachovic, UC Cooperative Extension

Patricia Vernelson, Director,

Del Norte County Children & Families Commission

Arnold Whitridge, Sawyer

Katherine Ziemer, Humboldt County Farm Bureau

TECHNICAL ADVISORS

Rondal Snodgrass, Land Consultant

Ben Morehead, Projects Assistant

Shayne Green, Administrative Assistant

Tempra Board, Grant Proposal Writer

Newsletter design by Tempra Board & Carrie Grant

Letter from the President



Your gift to the Northcoast Regional Land Trust is really a gift to the land, streams, wildlife and unique culture of the Northcoast of California. It is our intent to protect open lands, farms, forests and viewsheds for their natural, educational, scenic and historic value. We will ensure, using your contribution, that the diverse needs of the people, wildlife, and land of the region are represented.

Since the NRLT was incorporated in September 2000, we have raised a substantial amount in local grants and individual donations. With increased funding, we will protect more land and provide more services to landowners, land trusts and others in our region. Thank you for your support to our growing organization.

There are several primary roles a tri-county land trust can fulfill in support of smaller, community-based land trusts: 1) Provide political, fundraising and educational support locally, regionally and state-wide; 2) Create regional dialogue and planning; and 3) Support watershed-based organizations through board training and vision, and planning creative and joint funding opportunities.

Although there are a number of land trusts in Del Norte, Trinity and Humboldt Counties, 90 percent of this tri-county land area is unrepresented by a land trust's area of influence. The NRLT acts as the primary land trust for those parts of the counties.

If you would like information about Planned Giving, including us in your will, or utilizing our services please do not hesitate to contact us. We're planning on being here protecting the Northcoast for the long-term, and we need *your* help to do that!

P.S. We are pleased to announce that the NRLT has opened a new office in Arcata (854 9th St, Suite 200). We are requesting donations of the following items: newer computer, printer and copier equipment; desk chairs; and file cabinets. Please contact us at 822-2242 if you can provide any of these items, and use the enclosed envelope to make a gift to the future of the Northcoast.

David R. McMurray

Tri-County. Perpetuity. Bridge.

Artist Susanna Gallisdorfer Snodgrass elegantly captured the elements and values of the Northcoast Regional Land Trust in her design of our new logo. Thank you Susanna!



Our Mission: The Northcoast Regional Land Trust is dedicated to the protection of working landscapes, farms, forests and grazing lands, and to the preservation and protection of land for its natural, educational, scenic and historic values. We work with landowners on a voluntary basis to promote stewardship of Northern California's healthy and productive resource base, natural systems and quality of life.

Winter-Spring 2003

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BUILDING BRIDGES

Local Land Trusts and the NRLT

by *Sabra Steinberg*



A number of “local” land trusts have been doing good work on the Northcoast for years. They co-exist in harmony with each other and with the NRLT because they operate in different areas or on different scales. All the land trusts except the NRLT operate on a relatively local scale—within a watershed (e.g. Jacoby Creek Land Trust) or within a community or localized area (e.g. Humboldt North Coast Land Trust in Trinidad and the McKinleyville Land Trust).

Prior to the establishment of the NRLT, there were gaping holes in coverage on the Northcoast, and many landowners for whom there was no appropriate local land trust with which to establish conservation easements. Given the number of inquiries to local land trusts from areas outside their parameters, it became clear that a large-scale umbrella organization in the form of a regional land trust could help fill the many gaps.

With this in mind, the NRLT was established with a range covering the entire area within Humboldt, Del Norte, and Trinity counties. In many ways, the NRLT is similar to the local land trusts— it is dedicated to working with landowners to promote voluntary land conservation, and using conservation easements as a primary tool to meet that objective. However, as a larger-scale organization, one of the NRLT’s objectives is to support the local land trusts’ efforts (through technical, legal and other assistance). Another objective is to represent

regional interests and efforts at the state and national level.

NRLT’s founders intended to foster partnerships among local land trusts and the regional land trust that provide mutual support. One measure of the close interaction that has already formed between local land trusts and the NRLT is that several current or former directors of local land trusts in

the area now also serve on NRLT’s Board of Directors or Board of Governors. We hope this partnership grows and that community members will continue to support *both* their local land trust (if one exists in their area) and the regional land trust. See pages four and five for highlights and stories from several local land trusts.

NRLT Hosts 2nd Annual Land Trust & Governor’s Roundtable

by *Annette Holland*

Northcoast area land trust board members and NRLT’s Board of Governors met on November 14, 2002 at the Humboldt Area Foundation for the Second Annual Land Trust and Governor’s Roundtable. Fifteen NRLT Governors were in attendance, who brought with them a wide range of valuable professional experience.

After introductions, Melissa Bukosky, fundraising chair for the NRLT, reported on the organization’s progress toward our goal of becoming self-sustaining. Annette Holland presented a summary of the 10-year history of the Jacoby Creek Land Trust as an illustration of what can be accomplished by a small land trust staffed primarily by volunteers. John LaBoyteaux reported on the status of farmland in Humboldt and Del Norte Counties, emphasizing the pressures towards conversion of these farmlands

and the ways farmland can benefit surrounding communities. Jim Able, a local forester, then spoke about the importance of sustainable timberland, which is in his opinion more valuable per acre than subdivided, developed land.

A break-out session for land trust board members was led by NRLT Board member and technical advisor Ben Morehead. Mark Wheatley gave a presentation on assistance that can be provided by the Department of Fish & Game. The Buckeye Conservancy reported that they will host a workshop on Fish & Game assistance for coho salmon recovery on March 7 (see page five).

The Board of Governors will make significant contributions to the Northcoast Regional Land Trust by offering their unique perspectives and the benefit of their wide-ranging experience.

In Brief

In each issue of the Northcoast Regional Land Trust newsletter, we will feature local land trusts and their upcoming events and projects. We will also have a longer article on one land trust in each issue.

Friends of the Dunes Land Trust

Friends of the Dunes is dedicated to conserving the beauty and biological diversity of coastal dune environments through community-supported education and stewardship programs. We can facilitate the conservation of coastal properties in perpetuity by developing partnerships with landowners. Our emphasis is on properties that support coastal or bayland habitats, are adjacent to or near lands already under protection, and include distinctive features such as intact maritime forest and dune plant communities. We look forward to working alongside the Northcoast Regional Land Trust and being part of a movement to protect the qualities that make this part of the world unique. To learn more about the Friends' Land Trust, call 444-1397.

McKinleyville Land Trust

The McKinleyville Land Trust, incorporated in 1994, promotes the voluntary conservation of land for its ecological, historical, agricultural, educational, recreational, or scenic values. Currently, MLT monitors seven conservation easements and also owns two properties open to the public in McKinleyville: the 73-acre ocean-front Mad River Bluffs (west of Hiller Park) and the 9.5-acre Chah-GAH-Cho property (near Mill Creek). MLT is also working with other groups and citizens to establish the Dows Prairie Educational Wetland Project. Upcoming events include the Annual Dinner for supporters (April 12) and a pancake breakfast in May (date TBA). For more information, call 839-LAND, write to PO Box 2723, McKinleyville CA 95519, or email mlt@mckinleyville.net.

Protecting a Watershed Jacoby Creek Land Trust

by Annette Holland



When the Jacoby Creek Land Trust was formed a little over ten years ago, its founders decided to keep the focus small. JCLT was set up with a mission of protecting land, primarily within the 17-square mile watershed of Jacoby Creek, for scientific, ecological, historic, and open space values. We acquire conservation easements or fee title to land to be managed for agriculture, for wildlife, and for educational or recreational uses beneficial to the public interest.

The first project, completed in 1992, involved a generous donation of a conservation easement protecting ten acres of land bordering Jacoby Creek. This easement, a gift from Bill and June Thompson of Bayside, is designed so that half of the land is used for organic farming, and the other half – which has been replanted with native vegetation – is protected as a riparian area along the creek.

Our next three projects involved properties outside of our watershed, in areas where no land trusts existed at the time. In 1993 and 1994, we accepted title to a 9.2-acre mitigation property in McKinleyville, near Mill Creek, which we agreed to hold until the McKinleyville Land Trust could be incorporated. In 1995, we were given gifts of two conservation easements, totaling 27 acres, in the Elk River watershed.

We then turned our attention to long-range planning. Opportunities for land conservation projects in our region are enormous, and as a small, watershed-based land trust, we needed to prioritize. We identified protection of the riparian corridor along Jacoby Creek as our primary goal, followed by protection for other salmon-bearing streams, agricultural and forest land.



Upper Jacoby Creek

Photo: Carrie Grant

UST HIGHLIGHTS



Male coho salmon charging up Morrison Gulch in the Jacoby Creek Watershed in early December 2002. The removal of a culvert under South Quarry Road has enabled fish to come back to spawning grounds that were previously blocked.

Photo: Thomas B. Dunklin

In 2000, we were given a gift of just over one acre of land on a tributary of Jacoby Creek, and in 2001 we received donations of two conservation easements. One of these, the Hawkins Easement, protects two acres of redwood forest on a small stream south of Washington Gulch. The other easement, donated by Forster-Gil Corporation, protects one-and-a-half acres of large, second growth trees on a strip of land along Jacoby Creek.

In 2001, we also completed our first large project involving a purchase of land. With the help of many small donations and major support from the California Department of Fish and Game's Wildlife Conservation Board, we acquired the 63-acre Freitas Dairy, which includes about one-half mile of frontage on Jacoby Creek. On this property, JCLT plans a major restoration effort to be carried out in conjunction with the restoration of other properties along Jacoby Creek. We plan to replant and widen the riparian corridor, leaving the remainder of the land in agricultural use.

In 2002, we acquired a conservation easement protecting over nine acres of land bordering Jacoby Creek, downstream from the Freitas Dairy, and we also acquired a 25-acre property located upstream, also with stream frontage. For both of these projects, we received generous support from the Wildlife Conservation Board, which recognizes the importance of Jacoby Creek for coho salmon and other native species. On our new property, as on the dairy, we will combine agricultural use of a portion of the property and restoration of the riparian corridor with educational and scientific use of the area.

JCLT has been contacted by a number of other landowners who are interested in working with us, and we are exploring opportunities for protecting more of the riparian corridor along Jacoby Creek. We are grateful for the wonderful, ongoing support of our local community, which makes this work possible.

Buckeye Conservancy

The Buckeye Conservancy is a non-profit organization of landowners with membership representing 300,000 acres of family ranches, farms and forests in Humboldt County. Our mission is to promote better awareness of the fact that half of all rural land is family held, that families are leaving the land due to regulatory, tax and economic disincentives, and to formulate and advance solutions to keep family stewardship alive. Buckeye is hosting a one-day workshop March 7th, entitled "Coho Listing/ Recovery - Tools for the Small Landowner," at the River Lodge Conference Center in Fortuna. To RSVP or for more information call 786-9662.

Humboldt North Coast Land Trust

The Humboldt North Coast Land Trust has been actively managing coastal property since our inception 24 years ago. Our properties are in the Trinidad area. Some of these are very popular and used by the public, including Baker Beach, Houda Point, and the Merryman easement at Moonstone Beach. In addition, we hold several easements that are part of the City of Trinidad's coastal access trail system. The HNCLT can be reached at 677-0716, PO Box 457, Trinidad, CA 95570.

Middle Mattole Conservancy

The Middle Mattole Conservancy encourages and provides for responsible stewardship of our land and waterways through outreach, education and conservation. Come to the "Spring Equinox Boogie" on March 22 from 6 - 12 p.m. at the Mattole Grange. Music by the Non-Prophets & Clan Dyken. Dinner and drinks; \$12 donation; sliding scale. Contact Trees Foundation at 923-4377 for more information. And coming in 2003 from the MMC: tree planting, community scoping sessions concerning the Gilham Butte Recreational Plan, guided walks, and a newsletter. Contact Gabrielle at 223-0044 or email us at middlemattole@asis.com.

PROJECT UPDATES

NRLT Protects Old Growth and Coho

by *Rondal Snodgrass*



To protect old-growth trees and good tributaries for spawning coho salmon and steelhead, while filling a gap between two parts of the Sinkyone Wilderness State Park, the Coastal Conservancy in April 2002 granted \$1,231,000 to the Northcoast Regional Land Trust. The NRLT then purchased 320 acres from Sanctuary Forest, Inc. and Barnum Timber Company and is now conveying the land to State Parks. The creeks and forestland are in the Mattole River headwaters at the Humboldt-Mendocino County border about four miles from the coast.

The Mattole River's anadromous fish habitat is the homeland for wild salmon recovering from the rapid removal of old growth and miles of logging road building following WWII and through the 1980s. Great damage occurred from sediment washed from deforested slopes and roadcuts after major storm events in 1955 and 1964. The acquisition of the headwaters properties for conservation ensures that tree cover can be maintained to protect water quality and prevent sediment from building up in river channels and suffocating eggs of spawning steelhead and salmon.

Future plans being considered for the area could give people a trail to a magnificent vista ridge, a chance to view ancient Douglas fir forests, and flat, open and sunny land ideal for streamside camping.

Conserving Private Land for Long Term Benefits in Del Norte County

by *Rondal Snodgrass*

Far up the South Fork of the Smith River is Indian Bar, a remarkable piece of land. There sits 111 acres of riverfront property, mostly flat, rich in wildlife, and for hundreds of years, if not thousands, a gathering place for the Tolowa people. It is surrounded by the Smith River

Recreation Area and the first private land downstream from the Siskiyou Wilderness. The present owners Joseph Romero, Maura Gallagher, Corbin Brashear, and Kris Knight are prepared to donate a conservation easement that would protect in perpetuity the natural beauty, cultural resources, and bio-diversity of this property. They consider themselves "stewards" more than "owners" and want to guarantee that their love and appreciation, and their light footprint



Over-summering salmon and steelhead hole on the South Fork Smith River, protected by private land owners with over a half-mile of river frontage. Photo: Greg King/Smith River Project, www.smithriverproject.org

on the land will continue for generations to come.

The Northcoast Regional Land Trust is presently assisting in the development of a conservation easement for this property. The NRLT goal is to insure that these private landowner's personal goals can be accomplished while at the same time providing clear public benefits of further protection for the widely appreciated and much treasured Smith River.

Thank You

The Northcoast Regional Land Trust would like to thank these foundations, agencies and businesses that are supporting our organization with grants and inkind services. We would also like to thank our many individual donors and founding friends.

California Coastal Conservancy
Cal. Department of Fish & Game
Columbia Foundation
Humboldt Area Foundation
Humboldt County Farm Bureau
Humboldt County RCD
Humboldt Creamery Association
Humb./Del Norte Cattleman's Assoc.

Mel & Grace McLean Foundation
Natural Resource Services, RCAA
through LEAP
The Nature Conservancy
Times Printing
Trinity County Farm Bureau
UC Cooperative Extension

RESOURCES • REFLECTIONS

NRLT Hosts Conservation Easement Workshops

Del Norte & Trinity Counties

The Northcoast Regional Land Trust will expand its outreach into Del Norte and Trinity Counties by presenting a conservation easement workshop in each county during 2003. The first workshop is scheduled for March 14 in the town of Smith River (north of Crescent City at the Smith River Community Hall) and the other for April 5 in Hayfork (at the Hayfork Fairgrounds).

Basic information on conservation easements and their usefulness to private landowners will be provided. Presenters will describe how landowners can utilize conservation easements to protect their working farms, forests, and ranches, as well as

other lands having ecological, educational, scenic, or historic significance. The interactive workshops will be geared towards landowners who want to better understand the potential benefits and drawbacks of placing conservation easements on their natural resource lands.

The workshops offer a unique opportunity to have your questions about conservation easements answered. All are invited and encouraged to attend. More detailed information will be made available as the projects develop in the coming weeks. For questions or to sign up for a workshop, contact Shayne Green at the NRLT office at 822-2242.

Formation of the NRLT

Continued from Page One

reach for the bridge, while maintaining our diversity. I've witnessed—and taken part in—the storming and reforming each time we've added to and increased the diversity of our Board of Directors and new Board of Governors.

We've witnessed speculation from other land trust's members who feared that we would compete with their efforts for funding and projects. I know, from the start, that our intention has been to collaborate with and provide assistance to existing land trusts and conservation organizations. From our first brainstorming sessions, the goal was – and is – to serve areas in our combined tri-counties that are not currently being served by a land trust. We will continue to give existing land trusts the opportunity to complete projects brought to us that are in their jurisdiction, but we want to ensure that our region is not without the service of a land trust.

Amongst our combined boards of 13 Directors and 23 Governors (see page two), there is a member who represents your interests and shares your perspectives. Call us. We are here to serve you.

Notes From a Founder



I confess that I did not know what a land trust or a conservation easement was when first asked to join in the September 1999 feasibility study group that would evolve into the Northcoast Regional Land Trust.

The realization of protecting land in perpetuity, through the tool of a conservation easement, brought profound satisfaction to me through the evolution of my work. As a landscape photographer, no longer were my efforts to inspire protection of the open landscape that I love restricted to placing photographic images in front of my buying audience, as decoration for their homes and offices.

With this new-to-me tool, I saw that my work (now as office administrator of the NRLT) could evolve beyond mere portrayal of the landscape to actual and permanent protection of it.

Despite the many hours detained in the office as NRLT's secretary, when I remind myself of the word "*perpetuity*," I settle back into my chair, assured that whether behind a camera lens or a computer screen, the motivation for my work is the same. My passion remains doing the work required to protect the great open spaces of the landscape.

- *Carrie Grant*



NORTHCOAST
REGIONAL
LAND TRUST

5601 S. Broadway
Eureka, CA 95503

Nonprofit Org.
US Postage Paid
Ferndale, CA
Permit # 3



Kinnan Pond

acrylic by Jimmie Fay Beal Mattila

The land belongs to the future - that's the way it seems to me. We come and go, but the land is always here. And the people who love it and understand it are the people who own it - for a little while.

Willa Cather