



WINTER 2022

NORTHCOAST REGIONAL LAND TRUST



Pine Ridge in Snow

Andrew Daniel

A Legacy of Forest Stewardship

slated for completion by the end of 2022, the Wagner Forest Conservation Easement in Southern Humboldt County will permanently conserve over 3,300 acres of working forestland in the South Fork Eel River watershed. The easement solidifies the legacy of the Wagner family after more than a century of stewardship on the property. Acquired in 1901, the land was initially managed for harvest of tanoak trees to supply the tanbark industry in the region. Over the generations that followed, members of the family have been award winning leaders in forest management. The third generation of the family on the property was led by Charles C. Wagner who was a pioneer in tree breeding research in Humboldt County, served on the Save the Redwoods League board of directors, and was the founding director of Forest Landowners of California. Charles C. was named California Tree Farmer of the Year in 1977 and in 2006 had a memorial grove dedicated in his honor by Save the Redwoods League. The patriarch of the fourth generation of

the family, Charles W. Wagner, received The Buckeye Stewardship Award in 2007, recognizing exemplary care and management of ranch resources balancing ecology, economics, and natural beauty.

With the forest now being managed by the sixth generation, the family is committed to continuing their legacy of responsible forest management, habitat restoration, and family tradition. The conservation easement held by the Northcoast Regional Land Trust helps make these goals possible by keeping this tract of forestland whole, restricting development, and designating

nearly 600 acres (approximately 17% of the property) as a forest reserve that will increase protections within critical riparian areas and promote mature forest habitat.

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“ *While the purpose of our Humboldt property has grown and evolved, the sentiment behind the land has never wavered. Our property is more than just land to us. It holds some of our deepest and most cherished family memories.*
– the Wagner Family ”

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From the Board President

As the seasons shift once again, I'm reminded that change is everywhere. Geese fly south, critters wild and domestic ready for the winter ahead, and daylight shortens. The Northcoast Regional Land Trust experienced several changes this year, most notably, welcoming three fabulous new staff members. Joining us in April as our newest project manager, Douglas Page hit the ground running. Together with Zach Wenderott, who has served as project manager for nearly two years now, they are heading up NRLT's work on an ever-increasing number of conservation easement projects. In July, Nadia Van Lynn and Matthew Morassutti joined our team as Education Manager and Community Engagement Manager respectively – and they are both doing a great job representing the Land Trust to people of all ages.

The NRLT team is stronger than ever and continues to do outstanding conservation and education work. Even so, with an increasing number of completed conservation easements to steward, with more prospective projects coming in weekly, and with more on-the-ground stewardship opportunities to manage, organizational growth will be a necessary focal point for the organization in the coming months and years.

Some changes this year thankfully took us back to pre-pandemic times. I hope everyone enjoyed the return to in-person gatherings and I, for one, am thankful some things stay the same; the Summer Celebration wouldn't be the same without Huckleberry Flint and we are grateful to continue to have many key people step up to put on our Boots & Birkenstocks Annual Celebration!

We are so fortunate to experience generous continued support from donors, landowners, project partners, and other community members who believe strongly in the importance of conserving the wild and working landscapes that make this region of California so special. We can't do this work without you! Warmest Regards,



Susan Moranda

Susan Moranda, NRLT Board President



Douglas Page



Matthew Morassutti



Nadia Van Lynn

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Martin Luther King Jr. Stewardship Day: Monday, January 16, 9 am – noon, Freshwater Farms Reserve. Remove invasive vegetation along the nature trail in partnership with the Cal Poly Humboldt Umoja Center for Pan African Student Excellence.

Freshwater Farms Reserve Interpretive Walks and Stewardship Days: Dates to be announced – Stay in the loop through our email list or social media pages. Join NRLT Projects staff, guest speakers, and volunteers at Freshwater Farms Reserve for wetland restoration, trail maintenance, invasive plant removal, and informational talks. Email info@ncrlt.org to sign up for our mailing list.

NRLT's Mission *The Northcoast Regional Land Trust is dedicated to the protection and economic viability 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.*

The Sky's the Limit **It's a bird! It's a plane! It's NRLT's newest tool for monitoring and stewardship!**

Earlier this year, NRLT project manager, Douglas Page, oversaw the addition of a new tool to NRLT's toolbox: a Small Unmanned Aircraft System (SUAS or commonly "drone"). Drones are lightweight, portable, and can remotely capture high-resolution images and video that are not possible to collect from the ground or when monitoring properties with few roads or unsafe terrain. Having an aerial perspective of a property helps document conditions and track changes over time since satellite imagery of rural areas is not collected frequently and is not available at higher resolutions. A drone also makes possible the ability to take funding agencies,

project partners, and other supporters on virtual tours of a property no matter where they are, showing features that would be difficult to highlight even in person.

As an FAA-licensed drone pilot, Douglas has put the machine to work. This monitoring season, NRLT got out on the land with a DJI Mini 2 drone, which is small enough to fit in a backpack and launch from your hand! This new tool has already saved time and effort by allowing staff to collect photos of areas that were not easily or safely accessible by foot. We look forward to utilizing the new technology to track landscape changes over time such as conifer encroachment in oak woodlands, post-fire regenera-

tion, and progression of restoration work to better assist us in conserving the places we love and care for.



NRLT began using a small drone for monitoring this season.



Drones can help document changes in a timber harvest area over time.



NRLT staff send up a drone to monitor the Iaqua Ranch Conservation Easement near Kneeland.

Donor Voices – Gary and Jan Friedrichsen

We were first introduced to the concept of land trusts by Bill Thompson and Bob Wunner in the 90s when they invited us to get involved with the Jacoby Creek Land Trust. We were inspired by the possibility of saving land in this community that we care about and spent time serving on the JCLT Board of Directors. When the North-coast Regional Land Trust was established in the early 2000s, we were attracted to the organization's wider regional footprint and ability to bring people from different parts of the community together through a shared commitment to the land.

Having both grown up in urban areas, we deeply value the open spaces of Humboldt County and the surrounding area and want to ensure they stay that way in perpetuity. We also like that it isn't NRLT's intention for land to sit idle. The properties they conserve stay in production and NRLT makes it possible for people to get out on the land through field trips, canoe trips, and guided hikes.

Over the past 15 years, we haven't been the biggest donors to the Land Trust, but we care deeply about the work and give what we can. We've made year end gifts, attended events, donated to the auction, and even designated a gift to NRLT in our estate plans. There are many ways to support NRLT and we encourage others to join us in donating to this worthwhile organization that's committed to conserving land for the next generation.



A Legacy of Forest Stewardship

Continued from page 1

From a landscape connectivity standpoint, completion of the Wagner Forest easement creates a contiguous block of privately conserved forestland of over 15,000 acres which includes the adjacent Marshall Ranch Conservation Easement, held by the California Rangeland Trust, and the Sproul Creek Conservation Easement, held by NRLT. These privately conserved holdings add to over 120,000 acres of protected public lands stretching inland from the Pacific Ocean in southern Humboldt and northern Mendocino Counties. The easement will also support continued partnership with agencies and organizations to move forward projects that protect and enhance streamflow in creeks, as well as reestablish native conifers and safeguard old growth redwood trees on the property.

This project is made possible thanks to the Wagner family, CAL FIRE's Forest Legacy Program and California Climate Investments, and the California Department of Fish and Wildlife's Proposition 1 Watershed Restoration Grant Program.

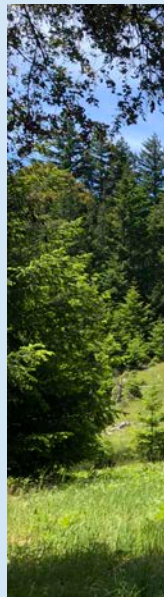


Standing on top of Rose Peak (the highest point on the property at 2,018 ft) with three generations of the Wagner family, it is clear how much they all care deeply about this place. The Northcoast Regional Land Trust is proud to be part of ensuring the Wagner Forest stays in one piece.



The property features old growth redwood trees, including this one, fondly referred to by the family as the Nonie and Grampie Tree.

The Wagner Family at the Wagner Forest property, 1978



Members of the family at one of the many open meadows on the Wagner Forest property.

Where Does Our Food Come From?

“Where is our food from?” is the opening question for the Cows & Cattails pre-lesson the Northcoast Regional Land Trust conducts in local 3rd-5th grade classrooms before the students attend their in-person field trip. And the answers are...interesting. “Bread comes from trees,” concluded one student, while another class struggled to guess the origin of cheese.

The question is a great conversation starter and helps students recognize the importance of farms and ranchlands for sustaining our communities. A new addition to our existing education program, the pre-lesson primes students to investigate the link

between healthy environments and people during their field trip to Freshwater Farms Reserve.

Thanks to the generosity of the Dean Witter Foundation, NRLT was able to conduct a significant revision to our field trip curriculum last year, resulting in updated lessons, improved relevance to state standards, and increased instructional time with students.

NRLT’s Cows & Cattails field trips now include a pre- and post-lesson in the classroom, which significantly deepens the impact of our program. While the pre-lesson asks students to consider their food

and the health of the place it comes from, the post-lesson encourages them to reflect on the field trip and develop an action plan to maintain or improve their own environments.

Ultimately, the Cows & Cattails program aims to build our community for conservation by allowing students to see sustainable working lands in action. Students investigate the health of Freshwater Farms Reserve’s soils and water to help them see that healthy farms and wildlife habitat can co-exist, and they also walk away knowing more about the places that feed and sustain them.



Third grade students from Morris Elementary School in McKinleyville explore the question “Where is our food from?” with Education Manager Nadia Van Lynn during their Cows & Cattails field trip pre-lesson.



Students attending a Cows & Cattails field trip go on a “micro hike” by exploring the biodiversity of a small area.

Celebrating at Freshwater Farms Reserve



Photo by Mark Larson

The fourth annual Freshwater Farms Summer Celebration, held on July 16th, was a resounding success with nearly 400 people coming out to enjoy the sounds of Wild Abandon and Huckleberry Flint. We’re grateful to all who supported NRLT by participating in this event!

Expanding a Conservation Corridor

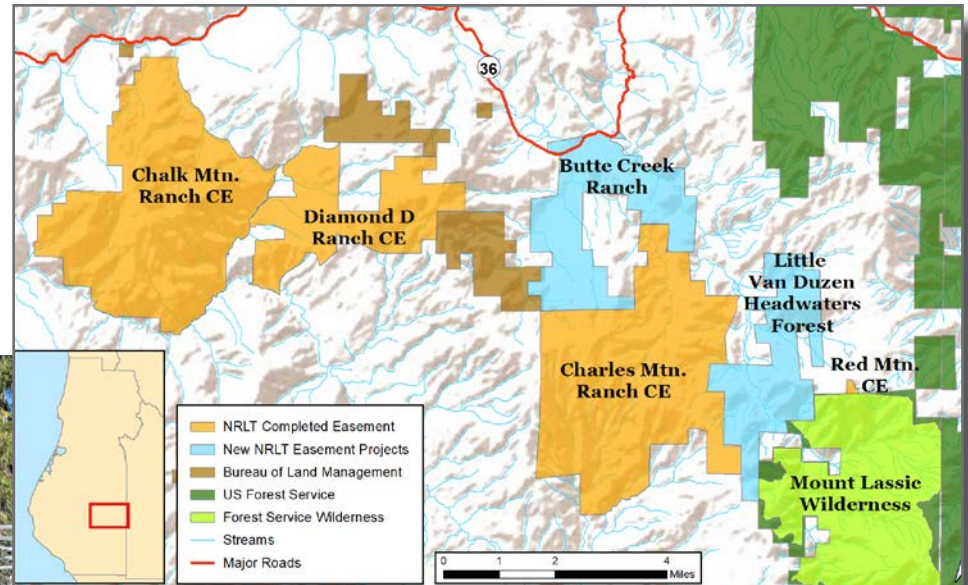
This year NRLT's Board of Directors approved beginning work on two new conservation easement projects that, when complete, will add an additional 5,800 acres to an already significant corridor of conserved land in eastern Humboldt County. Butte Creek Ranch, owned by the Cottrell/Moore family, is made up of just over 3,000 acres of working ranch land supporting cattle grazing, timber management, and wildlife habitat. About 1.9 miles of the Little Van Duzen River runs through the property and these reaches include spawning habitat for federally threatened steelhead populations. The property partially straddles Hwy 36 to the north and connects to the existing Charles Mountain Conservation Easement to the south. To the west, the Butte Creek property borders BLM land which provides further connectivity to Diamond D Ranch

and Chalk Mountain Ranch, two properties previously conserved by NRLT.

A second project, the Little Van Duzen Headwaters Forest, is 2,700 acres of working forest managed by EFM Investments & Advisory. This forestland is unusually productive for its inland location and includes scattered residual old-growth Douglas-fir and hardwoods. The conservation easement will support the protection of the Little Van Duzen River headwaters, including spawn-

ing habitat for threatened steelhead. Due to its location between privately and publicly conserved lands, the property also provides opportunities for fuels reduction efforts that curtail the spread of catastrophic wildfires. When complete, this project will adjoin the Charles Mountain Conservation Easement to the east, effectively connecting a number of previously conserved properties with the Mount Lassic Wilderness and other surrounding public lands.

Cattle at Butte Creek Ranch



Autumn at Butte Creek Ranch



Springtime flows on the Little Van Duzen Headwaters Forest property

Back Together Again!

The mood was quite festive at the River Lodge during this year's Boots and Birkenstocks Annual Celebration on October 8th as people happily greeted each other after missing two years of in-person events. From perusing the auction items to gathering around the firepit, attendees at the annual fundraiser celebrated a mutual love and respect for the land while enjoying each other's company. The event kicked off with live music by Patrick Cleary and Friends and everyone enjoyed a delicious dinner by Dorris and Daughter Catering featuring barbeque by Pete Bussman. Board members Mike Miles and Erin Kelly took time to remind us of all the reasons we show up to support the Land Trust's conservation work, then Lee Mora led a lively auction from the stage with help from Natalie Arroyo. Some wonderful items were auctioned off, including experiences on the land, locally produced meats and veggies, local art, and much more.

Sponsors and event participants were very generous, with the event raising over \$60,000 to support NRLT's conservation



Auctioneer and NRLT Advisor, Lee Mora, led an exciting live auction.

projects and programs. A special thank you to everyone who participated and donated, to the NRLT Friend and Fundraising Committee and Board of Directors, and to our event sponsors - Wildberries Marketplace, American AgCredit, Humboldt Mendocino Redwood Company, North Fork Lumber, Omsberg & Preston, Green Diamond Resource Company, Points West Surveying, Baldwin, Blomstrom, Wilkinson & Associates, Inc., Hubbard's German Auto, LACO Associates, Harber's Insurance Agency, Coast Central Credit Union, Lone Star Ranch, Planwest Partners, Ramone's Bakery and Café, Stillwater Sciences, Erin Kelly, the North Coast Co-op, Hunter, Hunter, and Hunt, and Pierson Building Center.

We're already looking forward to next year!



Sarah Pilkington, Peter Bussman, and Aleda Cloud serve beef barbequed by Bussman and donated by Humboldt Grassfed Beef.

A great team of volunteers headed up the bar at this year's event.



All photos by Jose Quezada

Attendees at this year's event enjoyed celebrating around the fire.



Give to the Next Generation

Have you thought about how you can ensure that open spaces, wild places, forests, meadows, and farms will be there for your children and grandchildren?

Please consider including the Northcoast Regional Land Trust in your estate plans (will, trust, retirement plan, life insurance policy) to ensure these special landscapes are protected for generations to come.

For more information, contact **Beth Bray, Operations and Development Dir.**, at b.bray@nrlt.org or (707) 822-2242.

Thank you to these 2022 business partners!

Aalfs, Evans & Company, LLP; Coldwell Banker Commercial Pacific Partners; GHD Inc., GR Sundberg, Inc., Humboldt

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Featured Artist – Andrew Daniel

Andrew Daniel has been painting in Humboldt County for 25 years, always experimenting with new ideas and mediums and cross pollinating his experiments to see how they can build off each other. He studied art at Humboldt State University and the University of Maine where he learned both abstract painting and landscape painting. His work has always been about the search for an authentic voice. Color has been a vehicle for poetry. Composition a spell to be woven.

The paintings featured in this year's newsletter are digital images "painted" using Photoshop and Adobe Fresco on the iPad. Andrew shares that his initial impulse when creating digital images was to reinterpret the landscape paintings he had been doing in oil paint. The cover piece *Pine Ridge in Snow* came from interpreting multiple photos he took when out with his family on a winter adventure. It was not a good day for setting up to paint for three hours and letting his family sit in the cold car waiting so when he returned home, he decided to "paint" an image digitally in Photoshop.

Horse Mountain is a painting of one of Andrew's favorite views from Horse Mountain, a place he goes each winter with other artists to paint snowscapes. He appreciates the rich reds and angular shapes of the trees in this spot. Andrew particularly enjoyed creating this piece because he got to move things around and layer lots of textures with Adobe Fresco. The hard part was knowing when to stop!



Horse Mountain

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