

Spring 2024



NORTHCOAST REGIONAL LAND TRUST



Looking to Centerville from the Ferndale Fairgrounds

Andrei Hedstrom

Expanding Corridors of Privately Conserved Land

Since its founding 24 years ago, the Northcoast Regional Land Trust has worked towards the vision of a connected network of public and privately conserved lands from the expansive Six Rivers National Forest to the Pacific Ocean. With each passing year we are realizing this vision. It is inspiring to see what started as a handful of conservation projects grow into expansive corridors of protected wild and working lands that support rural livelihoods, protect diverse habitats, and maintain the open spaces we all cherish.

Conserving corridors of private lands for their natural resource and wildlife habitat values is a win-win effort. Not only does it protect vital agricultural and forest lands from development, but it also enhances biodiversity by providing refuge and movement routes for wildlife. From the hedgerows that provide shelter and nesting sites for birds to the riparian buffers that protect waterways and provide habitat for aquatic species, our region's ranches and

forestlands – and those who steward them – are intricately connected to the health of our region.

One such conservation corridor started taking shape in the mid-2000's thanks to two families who worked with NRLT to place easements on their beautiful Chalk Mountain and Charles Mountain Ranches in the Van Duzen River watershed. This led to NRLT's work with the Dunn family to conserve their Diamond D Ranch, located immediately between Chalk and Charles Mountain. The momentum continues to build as we are working with three neighboring landowners and funding partners to conserve the Butte Creek Ranch, Cottrell Ranch, and the Little Van Duzen Headwaters Forest properties. With the eventual completion of these conservation easement projects, the properties together will form a nearly contiguous, privately conserved corridor of more than 30,000 acres.

Turning our attention to the South Fork Eel River – a watershed known for its important salmon streams, productive

redwood forests, and a not-too-distant history of irresponsible land use – numerous organizations, landowners, and agency partners have demonstrated that a concert-

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From the Executive Director

Amidst an impressively busy and productive time for land conservation in our region, one theme that keeps coming up in conversations about NRLT's future is how fortunate we are to have such amazing supporters – from volunteers, business and agency partners, landowners, board members, advisors, and donors like you! As our board president noted in our last newsletter, this organization manages to do so much because of the many people who care deeply about protecting the special places in our region that sustain rural livelihoods, provide important habitats, and comprise the open spaces we all benefit from.

As we were in the process of putting this newsletter together, one of NRLT's long-time supporters (and founding members) swung by our office to donate a wonderful painting for this year's Annual Celebration, Boots & Birkenstocks (coming up on October 12). We caught up briefly about exciting projects in the works and discussed how wonder in this world can be sparked by creatures that some may not see as particularly charismatic. He noted one such creature, the western pearlshell mussel, which plays an important role in Pacific coast waterways. We also talked about how much good can happen with commitment over time – and the importance of building bridges between people, a tenant that is central to the work of this organization. More than two decades since its founding, those connections have created bridges at a landscape level through a network of conservation easements.

We are very excited to be entering the homestretch on four fully funded conservation easement projects, with another three having secured full funding since our last newsletter. Come this year's end, we will have a lot to celebrate, so stay tuned and thank you for being part of the effort to protect the wild and working lands of this region.

With gratitude,



Dan Ehresman, Executive Director

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Summer Celebration at Freshwater Farms Reserve: *Saturday, July 20, 4 pm - 8 pm, Freshwater Farms Reserve (5851 Myrtle Ave., Eureka CA).* Help NRLT raise money and awareness for conservation in our region, while enjoying music by Huckleberry Flint and Canary & the Vamp, local food and drink vendors, and family friendly activities. This event sells out every year – get your tickets online at [givebutter.com/huckflint2024!](https://givebutter.com/huckflint2024)

Annual Celebration - Boots and Birkenstocks: *Saturday, October 12, 5pm - 9 pm, Fortuna River Lodge (1800 Riverwalk Dr.).* Celebrate community and conservation at our annual gathering. Enjoy a locally produced dinner, open bar, music, and live and silent auctions. More information will be available at nrlt.org/events.

Stewardship Days: Join us and the Humboldt Trails Council every third Sunday of the month through October to steward the trails at Freshwater Farms Reserve. Safety equipment, tools, and coffee provided. **June 16, July 21, Aug. 18, Sept. 15, Oct. 20**

For more information and the most up to date calendar, check our website nrlt.org and social media (Facebook and Instagram) periodically.

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.*

Funding Secured for Lost Coast Redwood Creek Conservation Easement

With support from the California Natural Resources Agency's (CNRA) Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation (EEM) grant program, the Northcoast Regional Land Trust is excited to announce that we have secured full funding for the Lost Coast Redwood Creek Conservation Easement project and will work to complete the project in the next couple years.

This 895-acre working forest, nestled amidst the breathtaking landscapes of southern Humboldt County, encompasses most of the headwaters of the Redwood Creek watershed. This area plays a vital role in sustaining the health of the South Fork Eel River and serves as crucial habitat for endangered steelhead trout, Coho salmon, and Chinook salmon populations.

This project aligns with California's ambitious 30x30 initiative to conserve at least 30

percent of the state's land and coastal waters in their natural state by 2030. By removing subdivision rights, restricting development, increasing riparian buffers, and designating all forested areas as late seral reserves, NRLT and the property owners are committed to preserving the integrity of this landscape and the many ecosystem services it provides within the Eel River watershed.

We are proud to work in partnership with the landowner and the CNRA to safeguard this special place for generations to come.



CNRA Representatives and key stakeholders visited the Lost Coast Redwood Creek in November 2023 as part of the project evaluation process.

Collaborations Create Fire Protection for Rural Communities

Reflecting on conservation easements completed in the past 24 years, we are inspired to see landowners continue mindful stewardship across multiple generations and in collaboration across property lines. Completed in 2008 in partnership with CALFIRE and NRLT, the Valley View Ranch Conservation Easement keeps intact over 1,500 acres of forest, woodlands, and range along the Mattole River. The easement was made possible thanks to the late Francis Sweet, whose family acquired the ranch in the early 1940's and continues Francis' legacy of conservation to this day.

Work is underway at the Valley View Ranch and several neighboring properties in southern Humboldt County, where field crews from the Mattole Restoration

Council (MRC) are thinning forests as part of a larger fuels reduction project. Spearheaded by Hugh McGee, the Ecosystem Restoration Program Director at MRC, and Jill Demers, Executive Director of the Humboldt County Resource Conservation District (HCRCD), the project is a collaborative initiative intended to improve fire resilience and forest health in this rural region.

"Yes, it's a fuels reduction project, but it's also a whole landscape level, habitat and ecosystem restoration project," says Hugh. The project involves various components, including fuels reduction, reforestation, pest management, stream loading with Large Woody Debris, grassland and native plant restoration, invasive plant removal,

and commercial thinning in collaboration with Humboldt Redwood Company.

One significant aspect of the project is the collaboration with several landowners, including the Sweet family. Francis was involved in the project from its early visioning, agreeing to treatment plans for a "ridge-to-road" shaded fuel break on the Valley View Ranch.

Thanks to private landowners, MRC, HCRCD, and CALFIRE, the rural communities in and around Petrolia will benefit from reduced fire hazards and healthier forests and streams in the coming years. We are grateful to Francis Sweet and his family for their legacy of conservation that will continue to be seen in the Mattole Watershed for generations to come.



Mattole Restoration Council crew members expand their skills at a s-212 chain-saw safety class held at the Valley View Ranch. These training days also give senior crew members an opportunity to impart their skills to new crew members.



NRLT annually monitors the productive and ecologically important Valley View Ranch as part of the terms of the conservation easement on the 1500+ acre property.

Expanding Corridors of Privately Conserved Land

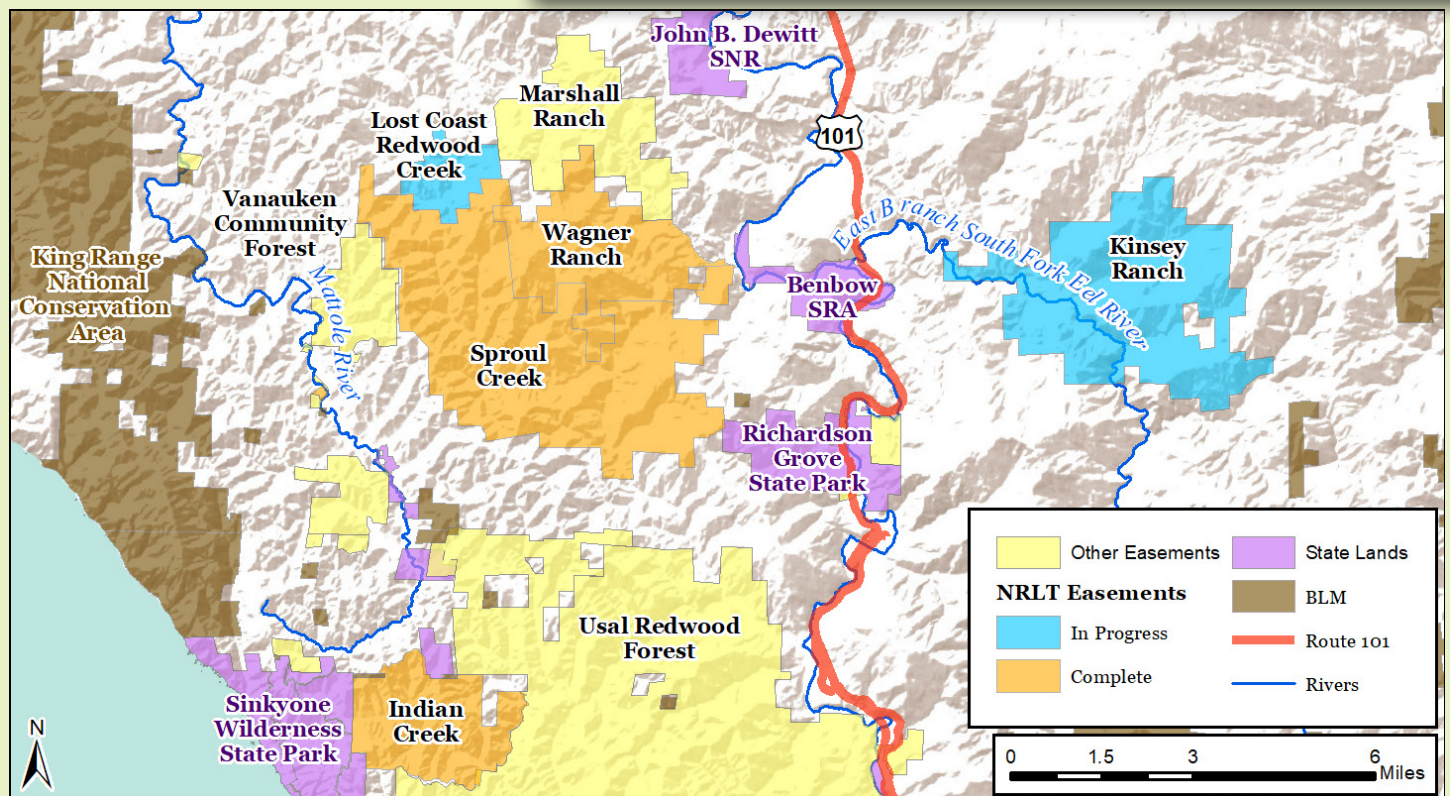
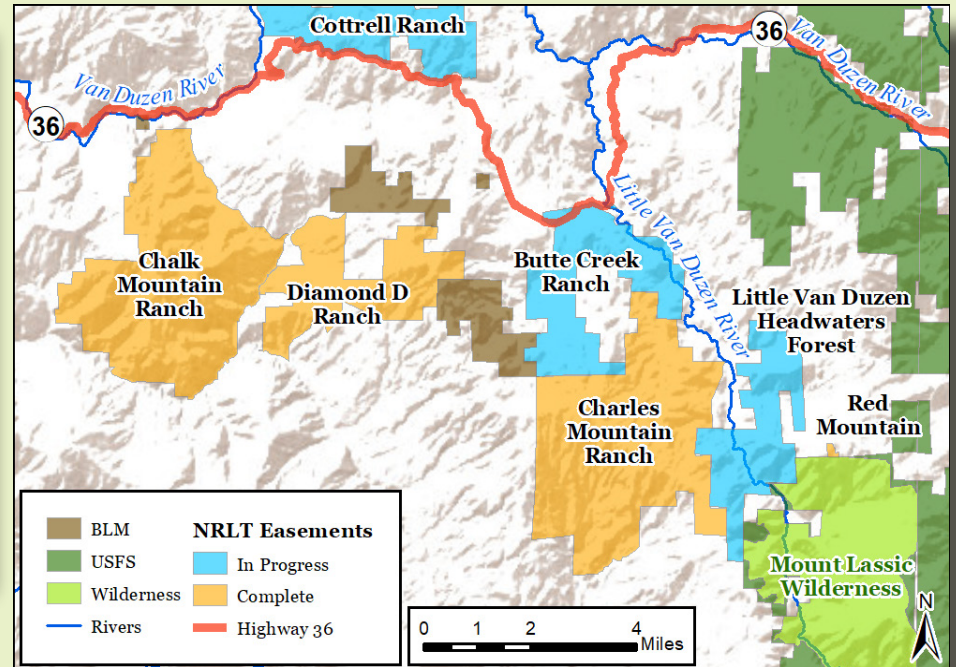
Continued from page 1
 ed conservation push can make a big difference. Following the establishment of the 50,000-acre Usal Forest in 2007, organizations including NRLT, Sanctuary Forest, and California Rangeland Trust completed a network of privately conserved lands that bridges the expansive public lands on the coast with public lands along the South Fork Eel River. These projects helped set in

motion work on another two conservation easement projects: Kinsey Ranch (on track for completion this year) and Lost Coast Redwood Creek (for which NRLT is proud to report was just awarded full funding thanks to the California Natural Resources Agency's EEM Program, see article on page 3). This complex of public and privately conserved lands amounts to more than 200,000 acres!

We are excited to continue working with you, our supporters, landowners, and agency partners, as we protect the places that sustain us all and add onto the growing network of conserved lands. Thank you all for being a crucial part of this work! Stay tuned for stories about the individual conservation projects that we will be completing this and early next year.



Looking to Sproul Creek from the Wagner Ranch in the South Fork Eel River watershed. Both properties are protected by NRLT conservation easements.



It takes a village to teach the stewards of tomorrow

For over 10 years, NRLT's Cows & Cattails field trip program has provided opportunities for 3rd-6th graders to explore the intersection of sustainable agriculture and conservation at Freshwater Farms Reserve. In 2023, the program reached more than 750 students from 14 schools in Humboldt and Trinity Counties. Additionally, our high school Biological Monitoring program continued its second year with Alder Grove Charter School, and students assisted in vegetation monitoring along the restored sections of Wood Creek – contributing real and useful data about the plant communities on the property over time!

It takes a village to run these programs, and we are grateful for our dedicated volunteer Field Trip Guides who come out to lead hands-on activities for multiple field trips in a season. Rain or shine, these volunteers bring bright energy and make each school's field trip feel like the unique and inspiring opportunity it is for our students.

A great many thanks to our partnering teachers, stellar volunteers, Clif Family Foundation, The Dean Witter Foundation, The Maxwell/Hanrahan Foundation, McLean Foundation and supporters like you! Learn more about our education programs on our website, or email n.vanlynn@ncrlt.org to find out how you can get involved. Stay tuned for information regarding the next Volunteer Field Trip Guide Training this fall.



Thank you, 2023 volunteer Field Trip Guides: Natalie Calderon (pictured left), Malcolm Ridings, Tricia Tillotson, Noah Ramsey (pictured below far right), Adelai Herrera (pictured below right), and Marion Lauter. You made a big impression on the next generation of land stewards in Humboldt and Trinity counties!



Donor Voices: Rees Hughes

I've been an avid backpacker and hiker my whole life, and so my retirement has been an extension of that – advocating for and supporting the incredible landscapes that I love. I value our wonderful public lands (especially wilderness). I also appreciate the productive, responsibly stewarded private lands which are a critical part of the equation.

It is amazing how quickly years pass, but I've been involved with the Northcoast Regional Land Trust for fifteen years now. NRLT has always been a perfect mix of things I value – people finding common ground around the land and land use, and the notion of doing things with a long-term perspective.

Conservation easements protect the land in perpetuity, and I'm consistently impressed by the mix of people who come to the table at NRLT to make that happen. To me, the name of the Annual Celebration gatherings, Boots & Birkenstocks, is a wonderful mantra that captures the essence of the organization – landowners, environmentalists, and other community members coming together to protect the lands we love.

When I served on NRLT's board, I was chair of the committee that initiated accreditation through the Land Trust Accreditation Commission. They asked a lot of big questions about NRLT's philosophy, mission, and purpose, and the supporting structures that make it happen. The value of going through the accreditation process is that it builds organizations that last. I think we've done a good job of that.

NRLT's work is ongoing, and so I became a member of the Steward's Circle (NRLT's monthly giving club) as soon as I got involved. Since NRLT is about perpetuity, I'm committed to making my contributions ongoing, too. From an organizational perspective, I know having a dependable resource coming in makes it easier to plan financially. And for me, it's convenient – I can set the monthly contribution, not think about it, and know that I am making an investment in the future of our region.

You can often find Rees with his hands-on-the-land, as he's seen here, weed whacking at Freshwater Farms Reserve.

NORTHCOAST REGIONAL LAND TRUST presents

SUMMER CELEBRATION
AT FRESHWATER FARMS RESERVE

JULY 20 2024

Featuring **HUCKLEBERRY FLINT**
and *Canary & the Vamp*

Family Friendly Fun, Local Food & Drink Vendors, and More!

MORE INFORMATION AT www.NCRLT.org

ANNUAL REPORT 2023

ACHIEVEMENTS

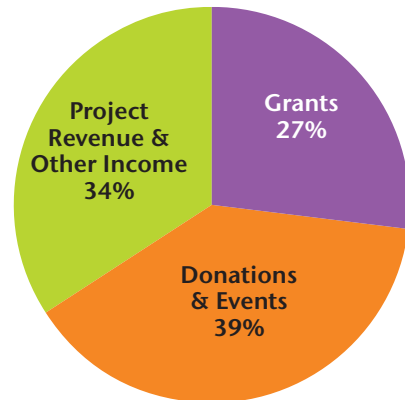
The Northcoast Regional Land Trust is working on more concurrent conservation easement projects than ever before – five of which are slated for completion in 2024 and early 2025. This work is not possible without the partnership of so many individuals, organizations, funding partners, landowners, and other supporters like you! Together in 2023 we:

- Continued work on eight conservation easement projects spanning over 40,000 acres in Humboldt and Trinity Counties.
- Began work on three new conservation easement projects covering 15,000 acres.
- Oversaw monitoring and stewardship of 20 conservation easements comprising over 60,000 acres of rangeland, forests, and other diverse habitats.
- Completed 500 acres of oak woodland restoration at the Hunter Ranch.

- Began fundraising for the Wood Creek Phase III Restoration project that will restore stream and wetland habitats at Freshwater Farms Reserve and the neighboring Felt Ranch.
- Hosted 17 community events at our ambassador property, Freshwater Farms Reserve; including our biggest Summer Celebration yet!
- Engaged more than 150 volunteers who assisted in 11 stewardship and trail work days and 19 field trips.
- Taught over 750 elementary students about the compatibility of wildlife habitat and agriculture through hands on field trips and classroom visits.
- Engaged Botany and Environmental Science students from Alder Grove Charter School to monitor plant species and water quality at Freshwater Farms Reserve through our High School Biological Monitoring educational program.
- Celebrated another big year for conservation at our Annual Celebration, Boots and Birkenstocks!

REVENUE & SUPPORT *

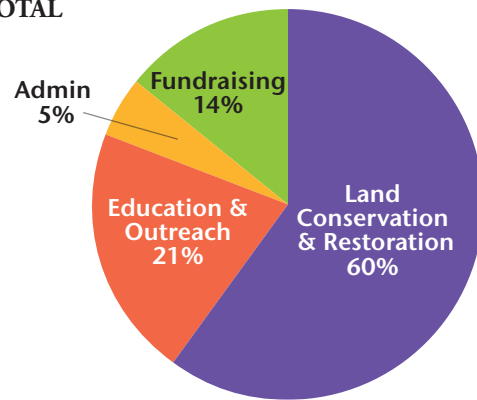
Grants	\$150,050
Donations & Events	210,723
Project Revenue & Other Income	187,539
TOTAL	\$548,312



*Income reported above pertains to operational income. NRLT also received \$272,892 in realized/unrealized gains, primarily as interest earned from donor-restricted stewardship contributions that are placed in an investment fund, allowing for the ongoing monitoring and stewardship of conservation easements.

EXPENSES

Land Conservation & Restoration	\$372,729
Education & Outreach	134,300
Administration	32,889
Fundraising	84,661
TOTAL	\$624,579



DONORS 2023

Thank You NRLT Supporters! We are grateful to the following who gave grants, donations, or support in 2023.

Agencies & Foundations

Americorps Watershed Stewards Program
The Buckeye
CA Coastal Commission
CA Conservation Corps
CA Council of Land Trusts
CA Department of Conservation
CA Department of Fish & Wildlife
CALFIRE
CA Forest Legacy Program
CA Native Plant Society - North Coast Chapter
CA Natural Resources Agency
CA State Coastal Conservancy
CA Wildlife Conservation Board
Cal Poly Humboldt
Clif Family Foundation
County of Humboldt
The Dean Witter Foundation
iEchale Garas!
Eureka Rotary Club
Feather River Land Trust: Learning Landscapes

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Humboldt Trails Council
Kids in the Hive
Land Trust Alliance
Latino Outdoors
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Northern Region Council of Land Trusts
Redwood Community Action Agency
UC Cooperative Extension
Umoja Center for Pan African Student Excellence
US Fish & Wildlife Service
USFS Forest Legacy Program

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Does not include auction item donors.
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 Jeannie and Steve Smalley
 Zeke Smith
 Scott Smith
 Amy Smith

Rondal Snodgrass
 Frances Sokolowski
 Dan Spencer
 Julie Stark
 Will Startare
 Howard and Rebecca Stauffer
 Clarene Stephens and John Butler
 Roger Sternberg
 Alex Stillman
 John Stokes
 Joe Stoltz
 Jack Stooob
 Thomas Stover
 Tom Strobel
 Maya and Matthew Stuart
 Carolyn Taberner
 Ross and Anya Taylor
 Steven and Lori Taylor
 Judy Tengbom
 Robie Tenorio and Gil Gregori
 Donna and Ronald Thompson
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 Andrea Tuttle
 Mark Valtenbergs
 John and Nancy VanSpeybroeck
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 Diane Venturini
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 Susan Vogt Butch
 Joe Wagenbrenner
 James and Sharyl Walker
 Denise Walker-Brown and Justin Brown
 George Waller
 Joan and Michael Watanabe
 Coral Waters
 Buzz and Judy Webb
 Jennifer Wheeler and Jonathan Lynn
 Bill and Janet Wickman
 Ann and Larry Wieland
 Susan Wilburn
 Melissa Wilcox
 Jana and Lynn Wilkins
 Jesse Willor
 Jane and Paul Wilson
 Malcolm and Marcia Witter
 Stephanie Witzel
 Christine Wuoltee and Lindsey McWilliams
 Sharon Wyche-Frei
 Mark Youdall
 Cheryl Zuber

In Honor Of

Kirby Bay, Sr.: John Woolley
Beth Bray: Carrie Grant
Maya Conrad: Nancy Noll
Nancy Diamond: Tom Conlon
Susanna Gallisdorfer: Rondal Snodgrass
Rees Hughes: Buzz and Judy Webb
Ann King-Smith: Corinne Frugoni
David McMurray: Buzz and Judy Webb
Matthew Morassutti: Shelley and Jean-Marc Morassutti
Kathleen & Allan Pelley: Maya Conrad
Martha Spencer: Dan Spencer

In Memory Of

William A. Brueske: Carol Brueske
Barry Collins: Judy Tengbom
Kevin Ebbert: Erik and Toni Jansson
Rich Hess: John and Debbie Kelly
Melanie Kubnel: Ron Kuhnel
Don Miller: Kelly and Ross Miller
Lionel Ortiz: R. Uwe and Zuzana Gellner
Dave Stockton: Margaret and John Plant
Rusy Stooob: Jack Stooob
Mike Wallace's Father: Kirsten Rohrbach
Yettey, the Queensland Heeler: Sherman Schapiro

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Featured Artist – Andrei Hedstrom

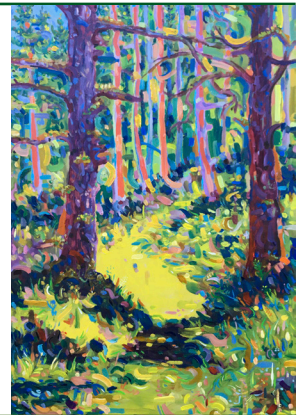
In his life, Andrei aims to create uplifting experiences through art, relationships, and daily pursuits. He views art as nourishment for the spirit, a form of meditation, and a means of fostering community and connectedness. While Andrei paints primarily for personal fulfillment, he also aims to uplift viewers, sharing the joy and beauty of both the art and the landscapes they represent.

His painting process is guided by five key elements: color, mark-making, balance, scale, and an

open style. Color brings joy and experimentation, while mark-making serves as a rhythmic, expressive dance on large canvases. Inspired by the balance found in natural ecosystems, Andrei seeks equilibrium in his compositions. Scale is manipulated to invite varied interpretations, and an open style allows for both abstraction and representation, bringing simultaneous complexity and openness to his works.

You can find more of his works throughout Humboldt County and at www.andreihedstrom.com.

Spruce Grove Above the Wildcat by Andrei Hedstrom



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