

Winter 2024



NORTHCOAST REGIONAL LAND TRUST



Two Way Water

Stock Schlueter

Sustaining a Culture of Stewardship

As we look to our Land Trust's 25th Anniversary in 2025, we are deeply grateful for the community that has supported our mission to conserve the wild and working lands of northwestern California.

Our strength comes from you – a network of supporters comprising a diverse array of backgrounds and beliefs. Over the years, we've seen how our shared love for the land brings people together, no matter our differences. Whichever way the political headwinds blow, our work remains the same. Together we will continue to protect the open spaces, wild places, and productive landscapes that we all depend on.

Since NRLT's founding, we've worked with landowners, agency partners, and

supporters like you to protect over 63,000 acres through conservation easements on 21 properties throughout the region. From forests and rivers to farms and ranches, each property tells a story of care and commitment to the land. Our collaborative efforts ensure future generations benefit from the abundant natural resources, clean water, and beautiful viewsheds that define our unique region.

Together, we are committed to conservation that endures. Over these nearly 25 years, we have been humbled to work with land stewards across multiple generations as values of land conservation and stewardship are passed down with the land. And even when family succession isn't the

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From the Board President

Another year almost gone! I understand now what my grandfather meant when he told me time flies. This was a terrific year for the Northcoast Regional Land Trust, with progress made on so many projects.

We were delighted to recognize the Butte Creek Ranch Conservation Easement completion at our Annual Boots and Birkenstocks Celebration in October. The recording of this easement in June 2024 and the imminent Butler Valley Ranch Conservation Easement, will bring our total acreage conserved to over 65,000 acres!

At Boots & Birkenstocks, we also enjoyed an informative presentation from Zach Johnson (Wagner Forest Conservation Easement) about family history on the property and insights as to how easement properties are proactively managed to keep conserved acreage in production. It was a wonderful evening to reconnect with friends and to gather and celebrate NRLT.

Likewise, the Summer Celebration was fantastic! What a great day to relax, play some games, get our faces painted, enjoy delicious food and listen to terrific music. The weather was perfect as well.

Of course, none of this would be possible without the awesome staff who make it happen: our Executive Director, Dan Ehresman, Stewardship Project Manager, Zach Wenderott, and Outreach & Development Manager, Nadia Van Lynn; big kudos to you all for keeping NRLT moving forward this year with a smaller team. And welcome to our three newest team members, Project Managers Connor McGuigan and Lily Pendley, and Admin. & Community Engagement Manager, Riley Martel-Phillips, we're so glad to have you aboard!

And my how time does fly, next year will be the 25th anniversary of NRLT. This milestone would not be possible without the financial assistance and support of our board members, advisors and all of you reading this newsletter. To the folks who join our workdays at Freshwater Farms Reserve, the many volunteers at our events, the businesses and individuals who donate so much – on behalf of our board of directors, thank you!

We look forward to the next 25 years! Wishing everyone a wonderful holiday season ahead.

Warmest Regards,

Susan Moranda



Connor McGuigan



Lily Pendley



Riley Martel-Phillips

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Holiday Party and Open House: *Friday, December 13, 4 pm - 7 pm, NRLT Office (901 Samoa Blvd. Arcata).* Join NRLT board members, advisors, staff, and other partners in conservation as we celebrate the holidays and a big year ahead!

MLK Day of Service: *Monday, January 20, 9 am - 12 pm, Freshwater Farms Reserve (5851 Myrtle Ave., Eureka).* Join Cal Poly Humboldt and College of the Redwoods for a day of service at various sites throughout the community, including at Freshwater Farms Reserve. This is a wonderful opportunity for college students, staff, and the greater community to contribute to local organizations while commemorating the life and legacy of Dr. King. More information available at ncrlt.org/events.

25th Anniversary Events: We are excited to offer additional events in 2025 to celebrate 25 years of wild and working land conservation on California's North Coast! Keep an eye on our website for more details to be posted.

For more information and the most up to date calendar, go to ncrlt.org/events or follow us on social media! You can also subscribe to our mailing list by emailing info@ncrlt.org.

Butte Creek Ranch Conservation Easement Protects a Family Legacy

We're thrilled to share that the Northcoast Regional Land Trust in partnership with the Cottrell family has completed a conservation easement on the Butte Creek Ranch – a stunning 3,079-acre property nestled in the Larabee Valley. Following generations of stewarding lands in the region, Gloria Cottrell and her daughter Leslie Moore have worked hard to put the family ranch back together. They brought the Butte Creek Ranch back into the family fold in 2021, and shortly after began work on a conservation easement with NRLT.

Leslie and her husband, Wes, are taking a long-range approach to land management, and the completion of this conservation easement solidifies their commitment to protecting this ranch for future generations

The ranch is a mosaic of working forests, oak woodlands and rangeland that supports up to 225 cow-calf pairs for half the year. The conservation easement will ensure that the property stays intact as a working ranch and that its forest, agricultural, and wildlife values are protected forever.

Butte Creek Ranch also links with several other protected properties, creating a corridor of privately conserved working lands and wildlife habitat in the Van Duzen River watershed. Additionally, with nearly 10 miles of streams, the easement will help protect vital habitat for endangered and threatened salmon and steelhead populations.

Funds for Butte Creek Ranch were made available through the California Strategic Growth Council's (SGC) Sustainable Agricultural Lands Conservation Program



Thanks to the completed conservation easement on the Butte Creek Ranch, it will remain an intact working ranch for generations to come.



(SALC) in collaboration with the Department of Conservation. SALC is part of California Climate Investments, a statewide initiative that puts billions of Cap-and-Trade dollars to work reducing greenhouse gas emissions, strengthening the economy, and improving public health and the environment – particularly in disadvantaged communities.

NRLT is thankful to the Cottrell/Moore family, the SGC, California Climate Investments, the California Department of Conservation, and to our dedicated supporters in northwestern California and beyond for making this conservation easement a reality. Together, we're building a legacy of protected working landscapes and resilient ecosystems across northwestern California.

NRLT Renews National Accreditation

NRLT is proud to announce that we have successfully renewed our accreditation with the Land Trust Accreditation Commission, an independent program of the Land Trust Alliance. This means we continue to meet the highest national standards for protecting land and ensuring our work endures.

Accreditation with the Land Trust Alliance is a rigorous process that evaluates our practices across several critical areas, including land stewardship, financial management, and organizational governance.

“Renewing our accreditation emphasizes our ongoing commitment to ensure the wild and working lands in our region are

protected. This means special places like the Wagner Forest and Butte Creek Ranch will be conserved for current and future generations,” said Susan Moranda, NRLT Board President. “As an accredited land trust, the Northcoast Regional Land Trust employs policies and practices to assure our conservation work is permanent.”

We are proud to continue as part of the distinguished network of over 450 accredited land trusts across the nation, representing the highest level of excellence in land conservation. Only 37% of land trusts in the United States have achieved this mark of distinction, and we are honored to be among them.

A Mark of Distinction

The accreditation seal **AFFIRMS** national quality standards are met.



- ✓ SOUND FINANCES
- ✓ ETHICAL CONDUCT
- ✓ RESPONSIBLE GOVERNANCE
- ✓ LASTING STEWARDSHIP

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.

Sustaining a Culture of Stewardship

Continued from page 1

case, the conservation easement remains in place for any new stewards who take on a property.

This year we celebrated the completion of the Butte Creek Ranch Conservation Easement which adds to a growing corridor of public and privately conserved lands and will support the continued family stewardship of the property (see story on page 3).

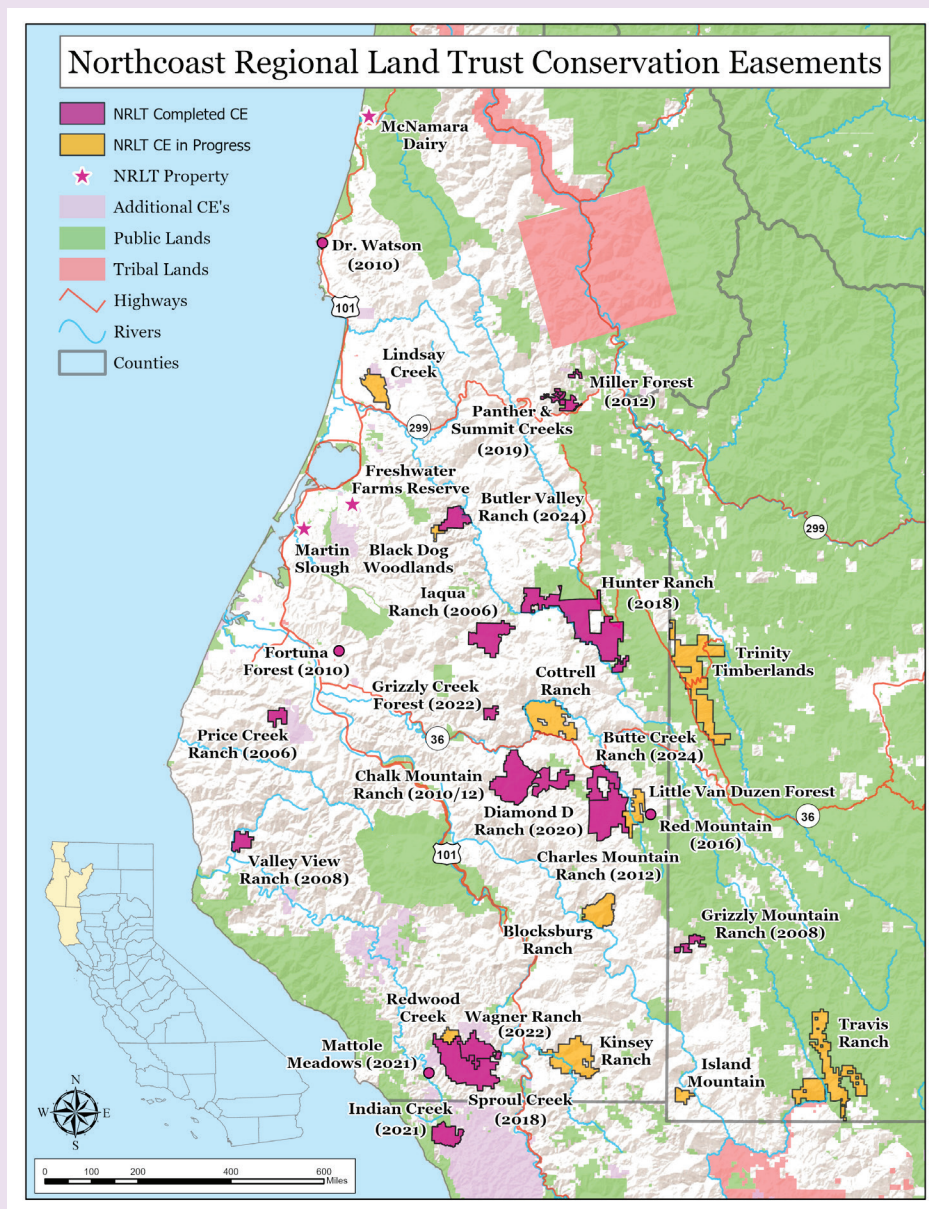
We are also excited to announce the imminent completion of the Butler Valley Ranch Conservation Easement, which will keep whole approximately 2,440 acres of

forest and open rangeland along the Mad River. Made possible thanks to Francis and Carole Carrington, with support from the Strategic Growth Council and the California Department of Conservation, it is special to be part of a project that will help carry on the family's connection and care for a remarkable place, and its continued management for agricultural production. Be on the lookout for an official press release about the completion of this project VERY soon!

Looking ahead, our Land Trust is excited to have full funding for another five conservation easement projects that we aim to

complete in 2025. Thanks to your support, this will protect an additional 29,000 acres of diverse habitats, productive range and forestlands, and key waterways important to salmon and other species.

As we celebrate these achievements, we know the work doesn't stop here. Conservation is about taking care of the land today and for the future. It's about coming together to protect the places we all depend on. We are excited to celebrate 25 years together in 2025, and look forward to another 25 years of conservation on the North Coast with you.



The Butler Valley Ranch Conservation Easement will protect 3.5 miles of the Mad River, ensuring clean water for fish, wildlife, and people.

25

As we approach our **25th anniversary**, we want to celebrate not just the land but the people who love it. Do you have a story, poem, photo, artwork, or other creative expression that captures your connection to the land? We'd love to see it! Your reflections could help us mark this milestone year in honor of the landscapes we all cherish. Send your contributions to info@nrlt.org.

Since NRLT's founding, our rate of conserving lands has accelerated as our support and trust has grown. Together we have protected more than 65,000 acres to date!

Grants Secured for Wood Creek Phase III Restoration Project

Thanks to supporters like you, NRLT is thrilled to share that we have secured the majority of funding for the Wood Creek Phase III Restoration Project that will restore invaluable salmon habitat in one of the most important tributaries of Humboldt Bay! After two phases of restoration in the lower reaches of Wood Creek on Freshwater Farms Reserve, we are excited to be moving upstream to the Felt Ranch.

Thanks to Felt Ranch landowners Sean and Kathy O'Day and to an amazing team of professionals who have led the planning, permitting, and design, construction is slated to begin in the summer of 2025 and be completed by autumn of 2026. The project will create over 7,500 feet of fish bearing stream habitat, restore 12 acres of wetland, and improve wildlife habitat and surrounding grazing land.

This project will be made possible with support from Point Blue Conservation Science's Roots Program, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW)'s Cannabis Restoration Grant Program (CRGP), and donors like you!



This young coho salmon was found in the Phase II restoration area of Wood Creek.

Landowner Lens: Kathy O'Day

“I was so thrilled that we could be part of helping salmon habitat. This is something Sean and I have always wanted, it was just a matter of funding and partners. We couldn't do this on our own. There is strength together, and credit is due to the people who are working hard to make this happen – NRLT, the Buckeye, Michael Love, Thomas Gast, and the rest of the project team. We get a lot more done with everyone on the same simple page: making things better and moving towards sustainability.”



Sean and I have talked about legacy and what it means for the future of the lands we steward, so when funding became available for this project we knew we couldn't lose. This is what we want to leave behind, because these are the things people are going to care about 200 years from now. They aren't going to care about Sean and me. They aren't going to care about our family. They're going to care about what was preserved or made better.”

YOU'RE INVITED TO NRLT'S OPEN OFFICE

Holiday Party

Appetizers & Refreshments Provided

No RSVP Required - Friends & Family Welcome!

FRIDAY, 13 DEC 2024
 4:00 PM TO 7:00 PM
 THE NRLT OFFICE
 901 Samoa Blvd., Arcata

More information at www.NCRLT.org

Donor Voices: Richard Hansis



Richard publicly announced his decision to donate his property to NRLT at this year's Annual Celebration on October 12.

For many years, I've been involved in environmental conservation, both personally and professionally. Caring for the land is part of my family history. Though I didn't know about it until later in my life, my grandfather used to take kids on hikes and teach about pollution in streams as early as the 1920s. That impacted my father, who then influenced me.

In 2001, I acquired a 160-acre property near Berry Summit. From the beginning, I've sought to reduce wildfire risk, protect the landscape's natural functions, and support

the wildlife that depends on it. I had a general idea about how to do that, but I learned a lot along the way. Of the 160 acres, I've selectively thinned about half of it to reduce fire risk and promote healthier forests. I've also worked to maintain 40 acres of true oak woodlands. But now, as I get older, I can't manage it as I once did.

That's why I've decided to donate my property to the Northcoast Regional Land Trust now.

I could have waited, keeping this donation a bequest for after my death, but I realized I'd get more satisfaction knowing and seeing what NRLT can do with the land while I'm still here to witness it.

I've been a long-time supporter of NRLT, and I know they're the right organization to donate this property to. They have the expertise and dedication to conserve the land's ecological functions and ensure that my efforts to create a more fire-resilient landscape are not lost. Should NRLT decide to sell the property, I know that the proceeds will support the land trust's conservation mission and that the impact of this

donation will be felt across the region.

As I've grown older, I've come to realize how finite life is and how meaningful it is to give to what you believe in. Beyond food, shelter, and opportunities for learning—what else do I need? For me, donating this land is a way of ensuring that the beauty and biodiversity of our region remain intact, not just for us, but for future generations.

I hope my decision to donate this property will inspire others to consider what they can give to support conservation. Whether it's land, resources, or time, we all have something to contribute. NRLT is doing incredible work to protect the beauty and biodiversity of our region, and I'm proud to be a part of it.



NRLT staff and advisors joined Richard for a tour of the property this November.

WhaleTail Grant Supports Connections to the Land

Thanks to a generous WHALE TAIL® grant from the California Coastal Commission, we are continuing to engage people of all backgrounds in conservation at Freshwater Farms Reserve (FWFR). WhaleTail support has enabled us to offer free, hands-on opportunities for people to connect with the land, learn about coastal ecology, and contribute to the ongoing stewardship of FWFR.

In 2024, we hosted several events thanks to WhaleTail funding and community partnerships:

- **Monthly Volunteer Trail Stewardship Days** (April–October): Thanks to volunteers and the Humboldt Trails Council, trail maintenance and invasive plant treatments got the ongoing attention they need!
- **Canoe the Slough with Latino Outdoors:** Participants enjoyed a guided kayak tour on Freshwater Slough, experiencing coastal ecology first-hand, as we paddled (many for their first time!) with the tides from Humboldt Bay to Freshwater Farms Reserve.
- **Spanish-language Family Walk and Nature Scavenger Hunt:** In partnership with

Friends of the Dunes, families connected with nature in a fun and educational way, and brought cultural heritage to FWFR with a dance performance by Ballet Folclórico Infantil de Arcata.

In addition to these and other events, we're excited to highlight the ongoing



Volunteer Trail Stewards maintain the nature trail on the levy along Freshwater Slough.

community-driven projects at FWFR, including the installation of three new benches along the nature trail which were provided with support from Deborah Fitzpatrick, Bob Battagin, Eureka Rotary Club, and Monument Settings. We are also glad to have a new owl nesting box on the North side of the Graham-Long Dairy Barn, built and installed by Gary Falxa, an NRLT advisor and supporter.

Thank you to our community partners, volunteers, participants, and funders for helping us protect and grow this special place!



Scan here to watch the Latino Outdoors Humboldt Canoe the Slough video!

Celebrating the Wild and the Working: Boots & Birkenstocks

This year's Boots & Birkenstocks Annual Celebration at the Fortuna River Lodge on October 12th solidified once again that our community comes together for conservation. It is wonderful to celebrate our shared values, our commitment to neighbors helping neighbors, and our deep care for the lands that sustain us.

The evening was a heartfelt tribute to the landowners, supporters, and volunteers whose dedication makes this work possible. We were proud to honor Gloria Cottrell and family of Butte Creek Ranch, and Zach Johnson and family of the Wagner Forest, for their commitments to responsible land management. Zach generously presented to attendees about his family's legacy, and the importance of a conservation easement that was completed in partnership with NRLT in 2023. And Richard Hansis announced his forthcoming donation of land, which you

can read more about on page 6 of this issue.

A delicious dinner from Dorris and Daughter Catering and Pete Bussman, and live music from All Wheel Drive, set the tone for a night of connection and abundance. Our live auction, led by Lee Mora and Jen Rice, featured unique experiences and locally sourced items generously donated by our community. The silent auction also showcased the incredible spirit of support from businesses and individuals who understand the importance of local conservation.

Thanks to all who contributed, we raised an incredible \$65,000 for our conservation programs. These funds will support the protection of critical habitats, working landscapes, and watersheds that sustain our communities.

We are deeply grateful to all the landowners, farmers, business partners, board members, volunteers, staff, and supporters who make this work possible. You are the heart of

what we do, and your support ensures that future generations will continue to benefit from these irreplaceable lands.

Thank you for standing with us to protect our region's beautiful and bountiful landscapes. We couldn't do it without you, and we look forward to all we will accomplish together in the momentous year to come!

A special thanks to our event sponsors:

American AgCredit, Green Diamond Resource Company, Humboldt and Mendocino Redwood Companies, Hunter, Hunter, & Hunt LLP, Michael Love & Associates, North Fork Lumber, Points West Surveying Company, RWE, Vineyard Offshore, Wildberies Marketplace, PG&E, Harbers Insurance Agency, Omsberg & Preston, Hubbard's German Auto, Stillwater Sciences, Erin Kelly and Randy Terra, Hjerpe Law, LLP, Humboldt Area Foundation, Planwest Partners, and Redwood Capital Bank.

▼ Many land managers showed up in support of NRLT, including Ralph Johnson who is a ranch manager at Kinsey Ranch, and NRLT Board Member Todd Fulton who runs a small cow-calf operation and works security for Green Diamond Resource Company.



NRLT Supporters bid on local goods and experiences in the live and silent auctions.



Pete Bussman and Aleda Cloud serve up a locally sourced beef dinner.

A Timeless Way to Protect Special Places: Legacy Giving

Legacy gifts to the Northcoast Regional Land Trust are an opportunity for you to protect the region's rolling hills, watersheds, and working farms and ranches for future generations. Donating land or a conservation easement to NRLT is a profound act of conservation. Legacy gifts can also be made in the form of a bequest, life income or endowment gift. It can be as easy as naming NRLT as a beneficiary on a bank account or leaving a bequest in your will. Gifts can also be made using charitable trusts, qualified retirement account assets, real estate, and life insurance policies.

Find out how to meet an important community need while protecting land you

care deeply about. Contact your financial advisor for details, or for basic information, go to nrlt.org/ways-to-give/planned-giving.





NORTHCOAST REGIONAL LAND TRUST

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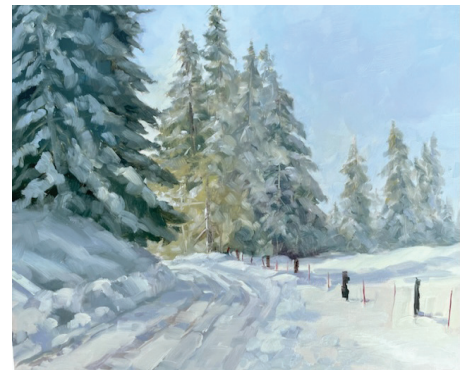


YouTube

Featured Artist – Stock Schlueter

Stock Schlueter is an NRLT supporter and lifelong artist rooted in northwestern California. Born in Oakland and raised in Willow Creek, Stock's artistic journey began with watercolor before he transitioned to oil in 1985. His work – showcased nationally and throughout California – reveals an enduring commitment to observing the natural beauty of the land. As he says, "Observation and the act of painting are their own statement. Creating something of beauty and sharing it just might do some good in this world."

With his wife Rachel, also a painter, Stock often embarks on extended camping trips to remote landscapes, embracing the physical challenges of carrying gear, setting up, and painting on location. His art is not only a celebration of the land but also a reflection of a life lived in connection with it. You can find more of his work at stockschlueter.com or at the Schlueter Gallery at 330 2nd St. in Old Town Eureka.



Snow Corner

Thanks to our current business partners

Aalfs, Evans & Company, LLP; BBW & Associates; Coldwell Banker Cutten Realty; Edward Jones – Hec Wood; GHD, Inc.; Humboldt Area Foundation; Kelly-O'Hern Associates; LACO Associates; Maya Conrad, Realtor; North Coast Co-op; Pacific Mindfulness; Pierson Building Center; Planwest Partners; Redwood Capital Bank; Renata's Creperie; Roy E. Corsetti, CPA; Samara Restoration

Learn more about our Business Partner Program at www.nrlt.org/ways-to-give/business-partners.