

SPRING 2018

# NORTHCOAST REGIONAL LAND TRUST



Grasslands: Hunter Ranch

Nick Robinson, Forester

## NRLT's Largest Easement Gets the Go Ahead

Encompassing over 15,600 acres in the remote reaches of the middle Mad River in eastern Humboldt County, the Hunter Ranch and its vast mosaic of working forest, grassland, and wildlife habitat will soon be permanently conserved.

At their February 22, 2018 meeting, the California Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) approved the allocation of \$3 million for the completion of the Hunter Ranch conservation easement. The Northcoast Regional Land Trust is extremely grateful for the support of the WCB as well as the generosity of the landowner who is donating nearly \$2 million in easement value towards the completion of this significant project.

NRLT has since its founding prided itself on safeguarding both wild and working lands – Hunter Ranch is an outstanding example of both. The easement will permanently protect this expansive property from subdivision while preserving its working

lands, conserving unique habitats, and protecting waterways critical for fish and human communities alike.

Walking alongside towering Douglas-fir trees, amongst majestic oak woodlands and through prairie in bloom – with the craggy tower that is Pilot Rock in view – the land tells a story of abundance and succession, forming a pattern that stretches back through the centuries.

“ NRLT has since its founding prided itself on safeguarding both wild and working lands – Hunter Ranch is an outstanding example of both. ”

Hunter Ranch is as rich in cultural history as it is in natural resources. The property is located within the Pilot Ridge Archaeological/Historic District which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. The Pilot Ridge area was tradition-

ally used as a seasonal hunting ground and includes what are thought to be some of the earliest human settlements in the region.

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*The Northcoast Regional Land Trust is a member of the Land Trust Alliance, California Council of Land Trusts, Northern Region Council of California Land Trusts & Northern California Assoc. of Non-profits.*

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## From the Executive Director

This past March, our Board and staff gathered for our annual retreat in a historic farm house overlooking Humboldt Bay where we spent the day learning from one another and taking the time to connect. To help guide the day's discussion, we each shared what we thought makes the Northcoast Regional Land Trust unique. A similar sentiment was echoed across the room: this organization unites individuals with a wide-range of perspectives, and channels that strength towards the shared goal of land conservation. In this way, unity is really what sets our organization apart.

With politics on the national stage seemingly more and more polarized, it is refreshing – and, I believe, necessary – to take part in work that cuts across the political divide.

We are entering the homestretch on several significant conservation easement projects that will preserve working forest and grassland, protect important drinking water sources, maintain our region's prized open spaces, connect with other conserved lands, and protect fish and wildlife habitat. We couldn't have gotten this far without you!

I'd like to thank outgoing board members Mandy Marquez and Clif Clendenen for lending critical support to the organization over the years. We are fortunate that both Clif and Mandy will continue to serve with NRLT in an advisory capacity – and we thank them for the other ways they continue to support the organization.

We'd also like to extend a warm welcome to our newest Board member, Susan Moranda, who brings a passion for conserving working lands, a longstanding knowledge of the region, a sound understanding of finances, and experience working with other regionally-based organizations.

It has been one year since I stepped into the role as Executive Director and I am, with each passing day, increasingly inspired by all of you who make possible far-reaching, landscape-level conservation projects in this special part of the world.

Thank you!



*Welcome Susan!*

Dan Ehresman



## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

### Freshwater Farms Reserve Thistle Removal Day:

*Saturday, June 23, 10 am – 1 pm.*

Help remove invasive thistle, allowing native plants to thrive. Bring gloves and water and wear long pants.

### Folie Douce Fundraising Dinner:

*Monday, June 25, 5–9 pm, \$50 per person.*

Come have dinner with us and support the Land Trust. Profits from this dinner will be donated to NRLT. Reservations can be made by calling (707) 822-1042.

### Canoe-the-Slough:

*September 9, 1 pm – 5 pm.*

Paddle Humboldt Bay and Freshwater Slough with NRLT.

### Annual Celebration – Boots and Birkenstocks:

*Saturday, October 13, 5–9 pm, Fortuna River Lodge.*

Celebrate community and conservation at our annual gathering. Enjoy a locally produced meal, bar, music, and silent and live auctions.

For more information and the most up to date calendar, visit  
[www.nrlt.org/content/upcoming-events](http://www.nrlt.org/content/upcoming-events)

## Freshwater Farms Reserve: A Growing Community

The Northcoast Regional Land Trust's Freshwater Farms Reserve (FWFR) property has blossomed into a rich community resource with public trail access, education programs and events, sustainable agriculture, and ongoing habitat restoration. Partnerships with the Kneeland Glen Farmstand, the North Coast Chapter of the Native Plant Society, and Freshwater Gardens are a big part of what make the property such an inviting place to visit.



*CNPS plants for sale at Kneeland Glen Farmstand*



*Kathy Mullen, Farmstand Owner*



*"Freshwater Farms Summer Bloom" by Paul Rickard*

“ Every day here is pretty magical. You know, I have to say: there isn't one better than the other. It changes your life to be out here, even if it's an hour a week. We're all here for the same reason and it's for the betterment of this land – I love it, I truly love it. – Kathy Mullen ”

**Mark your calendar:**

Paul Rickard's vibrant Freshwater Farms Reserve plein-air watercolor (left) will be auctioned at NRTL's Annual Celebration on October 13th!



*Tammy Southard, Owner of Freshwater Gardens*



*CNPS hoophouse in full swing*

“ Freshwater Farms Reserve has provided a place for me to grow my business—Freshwater Gardens—literally from the soil! I am so grateful for this place and what it represents in our community. ”

– Tammy Southard

“ The hoop house gives us an indoor place to better grow our plants as well as an area in which to work in wet weather and being able to sell native plants year round through Kneeland Glen Farmstand enables us to reach a broader audience. ”

– Chris Beresford, North Coast Chapter, California Native Plant Society ”

## Hunter Ranch Soon to Add 15,600 Acres to NRLT's Protected Lands

### *Continued from page 1*

Historically, Hunter Ranch benefited from the rejuvenating effects of traditional burning practices. The completion of this easement sets the stage for the restoration of thousands of acres of oak woodlands that have endured decades of conifer encroachment in the absence of fire. The landowner, NRLT, and assorted other partners are prioritizing and implementing conifer removal projects that will help native oak stands recover.

Building on the success of the Six Rivers to the Sea conservation initiative, the Hunter Ranch helps to link millions of acres of Six Rivers National Forest to a variety of protected lands across public and private ownerships. These landscape-level protections enhance our region's resilience to climate change by preserving essential ecosystem functions and maintaining the ability of forests and grasslands to sequester carbon and keep it out of the atmosphere.

The land of Hunter Ranch, and the waters that flow through it, have long sustained both people and wildlife. The completion of this project will forever safeguard these critical natural resources as a permanent benefit to the Ranch's diverse inhabitants, the people and wildlife downstream, and the generations to come.

We are fortunate to work with a dedicated landowner and the WCB in permanently protecting this place of immense natural, cultural, historic, scenic, and economic value. Stay tuned for the celebration!



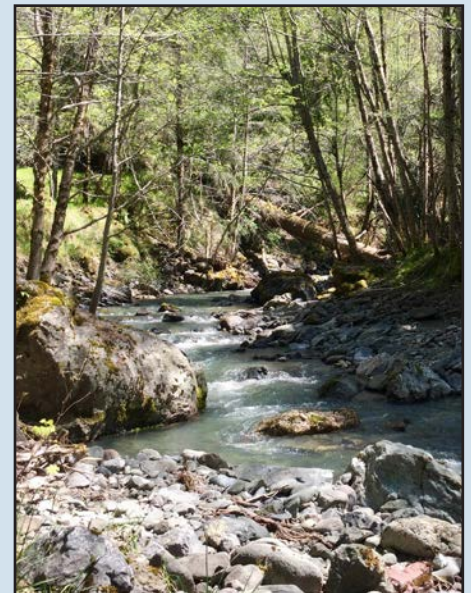
*Diverse habitat types, from dense forest to rolling grassland, stretching across the landscape*



*A glimpse of Hunter Ranch's 5,000 acres of oak woodlands*



*Iconic Pilot Rock, historically used as a landmark to guide travelers*



*Deer Creek, rushing through the forest*

## Breaking Ground at Martin Slough

After years of anticipation, the Martin Slough Habitat Enhancement Project is breaking ground this summer! Martin Slough, a downstream tributary to Elk River, is a prominent feature of our 44-acre agricultural property of the same name. Monitoring data from the CA Department of Fish & Wildlife has, over the last ten years, shown that Martin Slough consistently supports one of the highest numbers of juvenile coho salmon among all Humboldt Bay tributaries. The Enhancement Project will expand and enhance available coho salmon habitat through the creation of two ponds and complimentary marsh plains, channel widening, and removal of undersized culverts. Most of the Martin Slough property will remain in agricultural production, continuing to support the healthy herd of dairy cattle that graze its pastures.



*Martin Slough, a tidally influenced tributary to the Elk River estuary, known for its high juvenile coho habitat values, in its pre-construction state. Enhancements planned for this summer 2018 include expanded marsh plains and ponds to improve habitat and upstream flood control.*

## Learning on the Land: Cultivating Future Stewards

Our education programs help youth foster a sense-of-place and provide an opportunity to connect more intimately with land, wildlife, and locally produced food.

### Cows and Cattails

In a partnership with Friends of the Dunes, students visit Freshwater Farms Reserve to participate in Cows and Cattails, a series of activities highlighting tidal and



*Exploring FWFR's wetland during Cows and Cattails*



*Students reflect on their experience through art.*

“My favorite part was seeing a frog hop across my foot and watching the praying mantis.”

freshwater wetlands, watersheds, sustainable agriculture, habitat restoration, wildlife, and sensitive species such as coho salmon. Through these activities, students learn about wetland restoration that balances human land uses with healthy wildlife habitat.

For many students, particularly the younger participants in the outdoor education program, this is their first intimate experience with a natural environment, and the transformational impact of this kind of experience is inspiring to witness.

### Know Your Farmer

In a collaboration with the North Coast Grower's Association, Know Your Farmer field trips bring local students into the fields of working, mixed-crop farming operations to learn about organic farming, healthy food, and sustainable food systems.

By the end of the program, students are more familiar with the act and fruits of farm labor; have a deeper understanding of the biological systems at work on a farm; and are excited to identify and try new fruits and vegetables.

### Biological Monitoring

The Biological Monitoring Program provides high school students at Six Rivers Charter School real world experience collecting data on the vegetation, wildlife, and soils of the restored salt marsh at Freshwater Farms Reserve. Students are engaged and focused during the field work portion of this program, highlighting the impact of participatory outdoor education programs.



*High school students surveying grass species at FWFR*

## ANNUAL REPORT 2017

The Northcoast Regional Land Trust is pleased to provide our partners in conservation with an accounting of accomplishments for 2017.

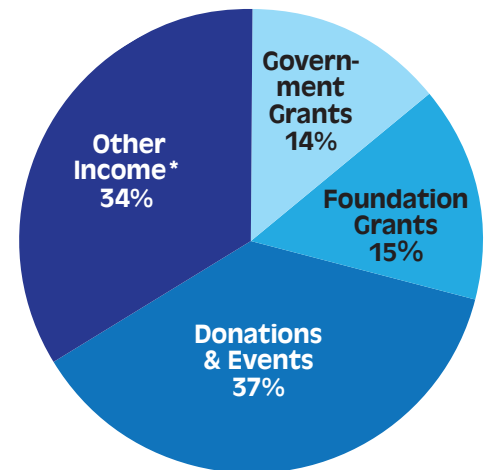
- Staff and our landowner and agency partners diligently worked on three conservation easement projects that, when completed this year, will permanently protect an additional 18,000 acres of wild and working lands.
- At Freshwater Farms Reserve, we completed the rehabilitation of the historic Graham-Long dairy barn which has already proven to be an immensely useful space in supporting restoration events, Kneeland Glen Farm Stand storage, and onsite agricultural production.
- We completed rehabilitation of the nursery building and hoophouse at Freshwater Farms Reserve. We are excited to announce that, with some great volunteer power, the North Coast Chapter of the California Native Plant Society is settled in to the hoophouse and nursery yard and is currently selling plants through the Kneeland Glen Farm Stand. Stay tuned for their first big native plant sale on the Reserve this September!
- Nearly 200 volunteers came out to steward the Wood Creek Restoration Project and Freshwater Farms Reserve property through planting days, trail stewardship, and invasive plant removal.
- Our education programs, Cows and Cattails, Know Your Farmer, and Freshwater Farms Biological Monitoring, provided learning opportunities for over 450 K-12 students.

Thank you for being part of this very successful year!

## REVENUE &amp; SUPPORT

Government Grants	\$52,861
Foundation Grants	57,500
Donations & Events	136,445
Other Income*	125,008
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$371,814</b>

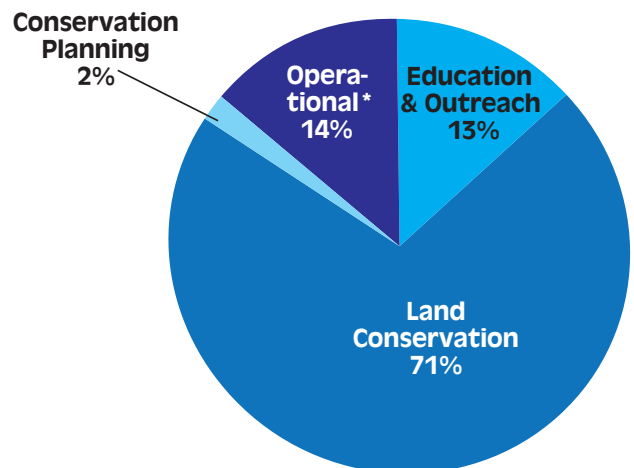
\*Includes fee for service & property leases.



## EXPENSES

Land Conservation	\$289,320
Education & Outreach	54,289
Conservation Planning	7,884
Operational*	57,485
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$408,979</b>

\*Includes administration, fundraising, staff development & board expenses.



# THANK YOU NRLT Members and Supporters!

The Northcoast Regional Land Trust is grateful to the following who gave grants, donations, or support in 2017.

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Estelle Moskowitz: Stuart Moskowitz  
Sue Parks: Rob and Zhao Parks  
Tom Rowe: Jana & Lynn Wilkins, John Stokes  
Doug Smith: Bob Battagin & Deborah Fitzpatrick  
Richard J. Wolf: Lorraine Miller-Wolf

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Maya Conrad: Nancy Noll  
Dan Ehresman: Russell Conrad  
Shayne & Lindsay Green and Seth & Kristen Magnuson: Mike and Cindy Jeffress  
David McMurray: Lisa Hoover, Marilyn Montgomery, Jeff & Edith Schwartz  
Leland Mora and Family: John and Jean Montgomery  
Sarah Pilkington: Maya Conrad, Fred Neighbor and Joyce Hough, Rondal Snodgrass  
Bill Rice: Allen Swank and Melinda Haynes Swank  
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\$10 / month provides  
 100 grass plugs for wetland  
 restoration.

\$20 / month pays for a Steward-  
 ship work day at Freshwater Farms  
 Reserve.

\$50 / month funds one  
 conservation easement work-  
 shop for landowners.

To sign up visit [nrlt.org](http://nrlt.org)

**NRLT's Mission** *The Northcoast Regional Land Trust is dedi-  
 cated 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 landown-  
 ers on a voluntary basis to promote stewardship of Northern California's  
 healthy and productive resource base, natural systems and quality of life.*

## FEATURED ARTIST – PAUL RICKARD

A lover of California and the Great Northwest, Paul Rickard is a plein-air watercolorist from Humboldt County. His original watercolor paintings draw from the natural beauty of the windswept and fog drenched landscape. He hosts a community "paintout" open to all every Sunday. Rickard studied art briefly in New Zealand and wood sculpture in Indonesia, graduated from UC Berkeley, and served in the Peace Corps with his wife, Nancy. Rickard is a career educator and currently serves on the faculty of Humboldt State University. He lives with his family on a hand-built homestead atop Fickle Hill in Arcata. Rickard's art may be viewed currently at the Morris Graves Museum and at [paulrickard.net](http://paulrickard.net).



*Spruce & Coastal Range at  
 Freshwater Slough*