

AUTUMN 2018

# NORTHCOAST REGIONAL LAND TRUST



*Looking East*

– Jimmie-Fay Beal Matilla

## Fulfilling the Promise at Martin Slough

**N**RLT's 44-acre Martin Slough property, located just south of Eureka, consists of fertile pastureland, and is crisscrossed by one of Humboldt Bay's most important fish-bearing tributaries, Martin Slough. This fall, a major phase of the long-planned Martin Slough salmon habitat enhancement, agricultural improvement, and flood control project was completed.

Years of monitoring by the California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) show that juvenile coho salmon use the freshwater ponds on the Eureka Golf Course immediately upstream of our property to grow as fast as anywhere on the North Coast – resulting in healthy fish that are more likely to survive when they move to the ocean.

The focus of the decade-long Martin Slough Enhancement Project, which has been supported by our partners Redwood Community Action Agency, California State Coastal Conservancy, NOAA Restoration Center, the City of Eureka, PG&E,

CDFW, GHD, Mike Love & Associates, Figas, SHN, and Gene Senestraro, has always been to protect and enhance this incredibly rich salmon habitat while managing flood risk and enhancing the productivity of prime agricultural grazing land.

During construction this summer, the slough channel was expanded on NRLT property to reduce flooding and improve fish passage. In addition, two ponds were created that will significantly enhance habitat, and repairs were made to a vulnerable dike along Swain Slough in order to prevent saltwater inundation of agricultural land. The final phase of the work on our property involves planting native wetland and salt marsh plants in restored areas. In spring of 2019, project partners will shift the focus to the Eureka Golf Course where three additional ponds will be created or expanded for juvenile coho salmon to rear, feed, and grow strong.

Completing this project has required more than ten years of partnership, problem solving, and perseverance, but for

cows, coho, and community, the results are worth the wait. Most of all, it has required a long-term commitment to the vision we share with you: that our bountiful land allows us to find a healthy balance between agriculture and habitat.

*Photos on page 4*

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**Lance Spece**, Project Manager  
**Sheri Harrison**, Outreach & Development Assistant  
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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 Land Trusts & Northern California Assoc. of Non-profits.*

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## From the Board President

Fall and the changing of seasons are upon us once again. The drop in temperature, the first rains, a change in lighting, new colors and smells, all signal a time of preparation for the coming winter months. I like to think about the ranchers, farmers, loggers, and fishermen among us, and what the change in seasons means to them. Similarly, the flora and fauna, how each living thing must react to the seasons. It seems life does not wait upon us – rather it demands action. And thus, we move with the seasons as we care for and work the land that provides for us, encouraged by the beauty and abundance found here on the North Coast.

The core of the Northcoast Regional Land Trust's mission is to ensure the conservation of some of our region's most treasured and productive farms, forests, and ranches. As such, it is exciting to report the Land Trust plans to protect more than 27,000 acres over three easements by the end of this year. To offer some perspective, this will more than double the total number of acres NRLT has conserved to date.

In addition to our easement projects, NRLT is excited to announce the conclusion of a significant restoration project at our Martin Slough property in south Eureka that restores ten acres of coastal wetland habitat, decreases upstream flooding, and enhances agricultural use of the property.

Reaching such conservation milestones does not come easy and, after years of hard work, we are extremely thankful for this year of accomplishment and for all who put in the hours and provided support.

This fall finds me excited about where we are today and about the future to come. NRLT is fortunate to have such committed staff, project partners, and supporters like you whose perseverance and dedication bring far-reaching projects to fruition. Such work supports the economic, environmental, and social qualities that make our North Coast a unique and beautiful place to live. Thank you for being such an instrumental part of this work to conserve important resource lands for the benefit of all.

Warm regards,



Mike Miles

## Three New Staff Join the Team

We welcomed three new team members to the Northcoast Regional Land Trust this summer who each bring unique skills, experience, and perspective. Project Manager Lance Spece graduated from Humboldt State with a BS in Environmental Science and Management and completed an internship at the Mendocino Land Trust sponsored by the California Council of Land Trusts. His work at NRLT focuses on conservation easement projects, including monitoring easement properties, writing baseline conditions reports, and working his mapping magic. Project Manager Karlee Jewell also graduated from Humboldt State and went on to be a California Conservation Corps member and a Watershed Stewards AmeriCorps Volunteer. Karlee works on restoration projects, manages NRLT owned properties like Freshwater Farms Reserve, and organizes stewardship events that give people the opportunity to get out on the land. Outreach and Development Assistant Sheri Harrison earned her MA in Environment and Community from Humboldt State University, writing her thesis about the identity of loggers as the industry changes. She brings experience in communications and fundraising to her role at NRLT.



**Welcome Lance, Karlee and Sheri**



# 2018 Easement Project Updates



## The Hunter Ranch

On September 28, NRLT completed our largest easement to date with over 15,600 acres on the middle Mad River in eastern Humboldt – the Hunter Ranch! Our easement keeps this expansive wild and working property whole, with thousands of acres of beautiful oak woodlands, mature Douglas-fir forest, rolling grasslands and miles of frontage on the Mad River, the source of drinking water many of us live by. Many thanks to the generous landowner and to the Wildlife Conservation Board for making the completion of this significant conservation project possible!

## Indian Creek

On August 30, NRLT was officially awarded the final piece of funding for our Indian Creek conservation easement – which will conserve over 2,700 acres of forestland and critical salmon habitat in the South Fork Eel River watershed. We are scheduled to close this project by the end of this year. Thanks to our landowner partners and project partners at the CA Wildlife Conservation Board, CA Department of Fish and Wildlife, CA Natural Resources Agency, and National Fish and Wildlife Foundation!



## Diamond D Ranch

On July 27, NRLT was awarded full funding for the Diamond D Ranch conservation easement – which we have been working on for several years with landowners Trenton, Macy, and Jennifer Dunn. The Diamond D easement will bridge our previously conserved Chalk Mountain Ranch and Charles Mountain Ranch easements. Together, these lands will form a privately conserved corridor connecting to the public lands of Six Rivers National Forest. Thanks to CAL FIRE for supporting this project through their Forest Health grant program. We hope to celebrate completion of this amazing project this time next year!



### Thank you to these business partners:

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## Fulfilling the Promise at Martin Slough *Continued from page 1*



*Martin Slough restoration includes widening and deepening the channel and sculpting wetland benches to improve fish and wildlife habitat, decrease upstream flooding and enhance agricultural production. (Left – before, Right – after)*



*Newly constructed ponds and the installation of wood structures will provide vital off-channel habitat for threatened and endangered fish species including juvenile coho salmon and tidewater goby. Off-channel features such as the pond pictured here provide a place away from the faster moving water of the main channel where young salmon can eat and grow – something that is critical for surviving the challenging conditions of life in the ocean (left).*



*Volunteers planted nearly 1,000 Lyngbye's sedge, a native salt marsh species and threatened plant in California, along a recently enhanced portion of the Martin Slough channel. The planting of native riparian, wetland and salt marsh plants in restored areas will promote healthy riparian and wetland habitats (right).*



## Landowner Lens – Dennis Grandy, Owner of Price Creek Ranch

I have been here [Price Creek Ranch] my whole life. My dad and uncle inherited a 360 acre parcel, and then my dad bought out my uncle, bought additional parcels, and built the property up to what it is now. My dad had us working on the ranch early on. My brother, sister, and I were the dogs when we had sheep, and I loaded my first load of logs when I was eleven years old. The ranch was originally centered on sheep, but eventually predators ran us out and we shifted to cattle. I have done a lot of work with NRCS (National Resources Conservation Service) in the past five or six years building fences and pasturing areas, which has made it a lot better as a cow ranch. Ranching is what I love to do and I was born and raised here. It is all very important to me.

I owe a lot to my dad. If it wasn't for him I wouldn't be able to do what I do. The conservation easement has given us a better chance of keeping the ranch in the family



*Dennis Grandy during his 2018 Monitoring visit at Price Creek Ranch*

because it can't be subdivided, and I really like that. Hopefully we will keep it in the family and pass it down a generation. My youngest son Aiden is really interested in the ranch and the cows. I think down the road, he'll be doing what I'm doing. That is my hope.

Everyone involved in the easement has been good to work with. They understand what our needs are and they work with us. At first I didn't know what to expect, but after years of dealing with everyone, it has been good. There really are no disadvantages from what I have seen.

## Annual Monitoring Visits Strengthen Partnerships with Landowners

Each year, NRLT staff is tasked with getting out in the field for monitoring visits to connect with landowners and ensure that easement agreements are being upheld. Staff visit each property to deepen relationships with landowners, document changes from the past year, and learn directly from landowners about successes and challenges on the

land. This year, our two new Project Managers visited fourteen of NRLT's conserved properties. Here are their first impressions of monitoring.

"It was early July when I joined the staff at the Land Trust and I was excited to dive in. NRLT has many on-going projects and one I was especially looking forward to was

the annual monitoring of NRLT conserved properties. It's an honor to have landowners welcome NRLT staff and volunteers into their homes, landscapes and lives. It was somewhere in between hearing the history of these places and connecting with landowners that I realized how powerful conservation easements are. While they certainly help conserve working landscapes, they are also the catalyst for community building rooted in trust."

– Karlee Jewell, Project Manager



*Lynne Zeleney, owner of the 13-acre Dr. Watson Property in Trinidad shows Karlee Jewell, NRLT Project Manager, around her property during the annual monitoring visit.*



*Tim Pricer, the owner of the 8,200-acre Charles Mountain Ranch, and Lance Spece, NRLT Project Manager, take a look at a landslide on Pricer's property during the annual monitoring visit.*

"The thing that struck me most during my first year of easement monitoring is just how reliant I am on the NRLT staff that came before me, in both previous years monitoring reports as well as the impressions they left on landowners. Multiple landowners mentioned the strong relationships they had built with staff on previous monitoring visits. Knowing about these positive experiences made me feel more at ease and welcome during my own visits. Also, the well-prepared monitoring reports from previous years were so helpful in gaining insight into a property. I was able to arrive on-site thoroughly prepared because of the hard work done in previous years. All of this motivates me to leave my own positive impressions and set the right path for those who come after me."

– Lance Spece, Project Manager

## Boat Carts Back In Action



Maybe you've been out at Freshwater Farms Reserve recently and noticed the boat carts were missing? Not anymore – the boat carts are back and ready for action! Each cart is individually locked at the Nature Trail locking station. Visit [ncrlt.org](http://ncrlt.org) to submit an online boat cart sign-out and request for lock combination to receive the combination. See you along the Slough!

*Kayakers enjoying Freshwater Slough after launching at Freshwater Farms Reserve during our annual Canoe the Slough event*

## Stewardship Spotlight

The Northcoast Regional Land Trust appreciates each and every one of our volunteers for their dedication of time and energy toward protecting and promoting our region's working landscapes. Here are two of our stewardship volunteers and their thoughts about working with NRLT:

### Volunteer Maddie Hicks

**Q.** *What does stewardship mean to you?*

**A.** Stewardship is an opportunity to give back to the land that gives endlessly to us. By being a steward of the environment and encouraging others to be stewards too, it creates a sustainable community that helps to ensure the longevity of these natural lands for people to be able to appreciate for many generations to come.

**Q.** *What motivates you to volunteer with the Northcoast Regional Land Trust?*

**A.** NRLT fosters a sense of hope that I find inspiring. They continue to have profoundly positive impacts not only on the land but on the community as a whole. Taking part in that through volunteering fills me with optimism for a more environmentally forward-thinking future.

### Volunteer Roger Schroder

**Q.** *What does stewardship mean to you?*

**A.** Stewardship means taking care of the land for current and future generations. I believe through community stewardship we are able to explore and strengthen the synergy that exists in Northern California between community, agricultural production, environmentalists and land lovers.

**Q.** *What motivates you to volunteer with the Northcoast Regional Land Trust?*

**A.** I agree with NRLT's mission of promoting and preserving working landscapes. I believe it's important to preserve lands in their current state, and NRLT's ability to work with private landowners to keep lands the way they are is one of the reasons why I'm committed to volunteering with NRLT.



*Maddie (left) and Roger (right)*



## JOIN THE STEWARD'S CIRCLE!



\$10 / month provides  
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Stewardship work day at Freshwater  
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\$50 / month funds one  
conservation easement work-  
shop for landowners.

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

# Celebrating Conservation Together

Supporters of the Northcoast Regional Land Trust (NRLT) gathered at the Fortuna River Lodge on Saturday, October 13th to celebrate the conservation of wild and working landscapes, farms, forests, ranches, and watersheds. The Annual Celebration, fondly referred to as Boots and Birkenstocks, brings together people from across our region who share a common goal – conserving this special place we call home.

There was much to celebrate this year with NRLT on track to more than double the amount of land that the organization has conserved in the region since its founding. Highlights of the evening included music by That Buckin' String Band, a fabulous dinner by Dorris & Daughter Catering featuring ingredients from many local producers, dessert by Clendenen's Cider Works Bakery, an exciting live auction led by Lee Mora of the Humboldt Auction Yard, and a silent auction featuring items generously donated by individuals and businesses from across the region.

The Alexandre family, of Alexandre Family Farm, received the Visionary award in recognition of their commitment to community and land stewardship. The Alexandre's have played a critical role in conserving wild and

working lands on the North Coast through their involvement and support of NRLT.

We would also like to thank our generous event sponsors: *American Ag Credit, Barry Smith Construction, Humboldt Redwood Company/Mendocino Redwood Company, North Coast Co-op, Pierson Building Center, The Land Man, Green Diamond Resource Company, Hubbard's German Auto, Planwest Partners, GHD, Greenway Partners, Harbers Insurance Agency/The Shaw Group, Ramone's Bakery & Café, REMAX/Humboldt Property Management, Stillwater Sciences, Tosha Yoga, Conservation Partners, Alexandre Family Farm, Clendenen Cider Works, Humboldt Grassfed Beef, and Los Bagels.*



*Visionary Award Recipients, Blake and Stephanie Alexandre*



*4-H Youth during the live auction*



*Trenton and Macy Dunn, owners of Diamond D Ranch*

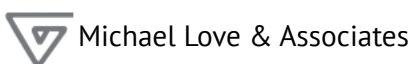
## Thank You NRLT Supporters!

A full listing of supporters for the past year will be included in our Spring Edition of the Newsletter as part of the Annual Report.

### Thanks to Event Supporters & Volunteers

- |                              |                                |  |                                     |                                      |                          |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|--|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------|
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| Barry Smith Construction     | Dina and Mark Moore            | Infinite Design                                    | Lynn and Gary Baker                 | Pierce Family Farm                   | Thomas Dunklin           |
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Note: Auction winners will be included in our Annual Report donor listing in Spring 2019.





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## Cover Artist – Jimmie-Fay Beal Matilla

Humboldt County native and world traveler, Jimmie-Fay Beal Matilla, has been painting Humboldt County landscapes and ranching scenes for many years. Her work depicts life on working lands in our region and features sweeping landscapes, livestock, and the ranch family. A long time member of the Humboldt/Del Norte Cattleman's Association, Jimmie-Fay ranches in Ferndale with her husband, Charlie.



*Miller's Horses*

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**Holiday Party: Friday, December 14, 4-7 pm, NRLT Office.** Join landowners, conservation specialists, board members, advisors, staff, and our members as we celebrate the holidays.

**Freshwater Farms Interpretive Walks:** Visit [ncrlt.org](http://ncrlt.org) for Spring Dates. Each walk features a guest speaker.

**Stewardship Sundays:** Stay in the loop through our mailing list or Facebook page. Join NRLT Projects staff and volunteers at Freshwater Farms Reserve for wetland restoration, trail maintenance, and invasive plant eradication. Email Karlee at [k.jewell@ncrlt.org](mailto:k.jewell@ncrlt.org) to sign up.

**Lay of the Land:** Upon request. NRLT presentation that gives an overview of what NRLT is doing to protect our region's wild and working landscapes. Contact Beth at [b.bray@ncrlt.org](mailto:b.bray@ncrlt.org)

**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.*

*Special thanks to these sponsors for underwriting this issue:*

