

AUTUMN 2016

# NORTHCOAST REGIONAL LAND TRUST



*Freshwater Farms Plein Air – Jim McVicker*

## Cows, Coho, and Community

You probably drove on Myrtle Avenue past Freshwater Farms Reserve this summer. Maybe you even stopped to buy farm-fresh vegetables at Kneeland Glen Farmstand or enjoyed a walk on the newly installed Freshwater Nature Trail. If so, you most likely also noticed the immense amount of work and energy being put into the property, creating some historic changes to this wild and working landscape. This year, with the support of our community and many wonderful partners – including you – we have been able to accomplish two unique and ambitious projects on this special piece of land.

During the summer and fall we worked on rehabilitating the historic Graham-Long Dairy Barn, to restore this symbol of our shared agricultural heritage and prepare this gorgeous barn to serve our community at Freshwater Farms Reserve for another 100 years. The structure was originally built in 1910 of old-growth redwood, which means another barn of its kind will

never be built again. We can't let something this unique fall down, and our partners and donors have agreed – working together, we can honor agriculture and our shared history.

Out on the land at Freshwater Farms Reserve, we have just completed a successful habitat restoration project on Wood Creek that created channels and rearing pools for juvenile coho salmon, while improving conditions for both native plants and for the adjacent pasture where dairy cows graze. The first monitoring reports have just come in showing that young coho salmon are thriving in the rich habitat that we and our partners created. We didn't do this work alone – it was a huge collaborative effort that made this historic habitat restoration possible.

Cows, coho, and community – that's our vision at Freshwater Farms Reserve. Achieving a balanced blend of agriculture, restoration, education, and recreation on one piece of land is an ongoing challenge, but we are proving it can be done. This

property reminds us that we can come together around what inspires us. It is a labor of love, which you have supported for years. Thank you for joining us on this journey. See detailed stories and pictures of both projects on pages 4 and 5, and we'll see you out on the land!

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 P.O. Box 398, Bayside, CA 95524  
 Phone: 707.822.2242; Fax: 707.822.5210  
 info@ncrlt.org; www.ncrlt.org

## From the Board President

**A**s I write this, the first major storm of the year is bearing down on Humboldt County. In honor of this season, the fall, my column will be one of reflection and bounty – looking back on a year of great accomplishments and monumental projects. We couldn't have done any of this without our cooperating landowners, agency partners, donors, and staff, so I will begin by thanking all of you.

We started the year by accepting a request from Assemblyman Jim Wood's office to sponsor Oak Woodlands legislation (AB 1958) to create a program that would allow private landowners to affordably protect historic oak woodlands from encroaching conifers. Currently, we work with several landowners that have existing conservation easements where this policy could put to the test. Governor Brown signed the legislation on September 24, 2016, giving land stewards more tools to effectively conserve this significant habitat type.

We're also making substantial progress with funding the largest conservation easement in our history on the 15,000 acre Hunter Ranch, located along the east side of the Mad River, south of Maple Creek, extending all of the way up to Pilot Rock. This is a big, beautiful piece of land, with critical ecological and working lands components. We expect to finalize this project early in 2017.

Our Wood Creek Phase II restoration project at Freshwater Farms Reserve has been ably steered toward completion, and is now connected to the waters of Humboldt Bay! The project includes restoring additional coho habitat in Wood Creek, while simultaneously transforming part of the property that was salt ponds into functional high salt marsh habitat and productive pastureland.

Meanwhile, also at Freshwater Farms, the Graham-Long Dairy Barn rehabilitation is underway and looking great! We have a highly skilled construction team, and we have been doing our best to maintain the agricultural and historical aspects of the building. The foundation has been secured, and a new roof is on. With so many barns in our area falling down, it is hopeful to see this progress.

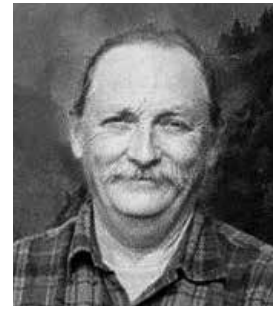
Our Annual Celebration (Boots and Birkenstocks) took place on October 8 at the River Lodge and was packed to the rafters with landowners, supporters, sponsors, and a lot of wonderful volunteers. We sold out again and brought in over \$68,000! This event has become a signature gathering in our community, one representing how a diverse group of people can come together around what they agree on.

I would like to welcome two new board members: Pete Jackson, Land Surveyor at Green Diamond Resource Company and Robert Vogt, Senior Environmental Analyst at Humboldt County Public Works. Both have extensive experience in forest management and conservation and have already contributed in many meaningful ways to our work.

Finally, I want to especially thank three long time board members, Lee Mora, Martha Spencer, and Jill Hackett, who are departing the NRLT board around the new year, each after serving for about a decade. This is the kind of dedication our organization attracts, because we are a group of people deeply committed to the land – and the stewardship of land is ongoing and takes time. Without Lee, Martha, and Jill, NRLT would not be what it is today, an organization that is respected and loved by an incredibly diverse group of supporters.

Thanks to all of you, the many voices and people, who support our shared work in conserving our wild and working lands.

– Greg Blomstrom  
Board President



Welcome Bob and Pete!

## Oak Woodland Restoration Ahead

The last few months have brought some very exciting news for our region's treasured oak woodlands.

On Saturday, September 24, Governor Edmund G. Brown Jr. signed AB 1958 updating the Forest Practice Act to allow for restoration of northern California's oak woodlands. The bill was introduced by Assemblymember Jim Wood and proudly co-sponsored by the Buckeye and the Northcoast Regional Land Trust.

Prior to the passage of AB 1958, if private landowners wanted to restore oak woodlands by removing the encroaching conifers, state regulations required replanting of these same conifers subsequent to timber harvest. The new law clarifies that removal of encroaching conifer trees from oak woodlands does not constitute a conversion of forestland. It also creates a seven year pilot exemption to the Timber Harvest Plan (THP) process that allows landowners to harvest smaller diameter conifers removed as part of oak woodland restoration activities. Although the oak exemption is now law, landowners will likely have to wait another year or so for the Board of Forestry to adopt their enabling language. If all proceeds as planned, the exemption should be on the books by January 1, 2018. In the interim, this is a great time for land managers to begin thinking about, and planning for, oak woodland restoration activities.

Coupled with the legislation, this summer a "special prescription" for oak woodland management was adopted by the California Board of Forestry. This special prescription provides a THP pathway for landowners who are interested in restoring oak stands that are being outcompeted by

larger-diameter conifer trees. With this special prescription all the basic THP preparatory requirements are required including: wildlife surveys, archeological surveys, and geologic review. This prescription eliminates the requirement to replant the stand with conifer seedlings by allowing post-project stocking to be met with two oak species: Oregon white oak and California black oak. The oak special prescription will be available on January 1, 2017.

Taken together, the legislation and the special prescription represent a holistic policy package that is the culmination of many years of work by ecologists, foresters, and other oak advocates that will give land stewards the ability to more easily and affordably restore and protect our region's beautiful and ecologically important oak woodlands. As more landowners learn

about these new tools, it is exciting to think about the potential in conserving the biodiversity, cultural significance, economic value for rangeland, and climate resiliency that is inherent in this unique habitat type.

We are grateful to Assemblymember Jim Wood and his staff for introducing and guiding AB 1958 through the process. We also want to recognize and thank Yana Valachovic and her team at U.C. Cooperative Extension, Lauren Sizemore and the Buckeye, and Mike Miles and the Board of Forestry. A very special recognition goes to the landowners and the many oak advocates out there for their leadership, research, and outreach on the importance of oak woodland conservation. To learn more about our commitment to protecting and restoring oak woodlands, feel free to call us at 707-822-2242.



*Oak woodlands conserved by NRLT at Chalk Mountain Ranch.*



Brian and I have both lived in Humboldt County for nearly 40 years, and have owned and operated Ramone's Bakery & Café since 1981. One of our favorite

## Donor Voices: Berit Meyer & Brian Ferguson

NRLT Business Partners, Major Donors, and Lifetime Members

things about this area is the vast open space that surrounds us, much of which is family ranches that have been productive for generations. We appreciate landowners that want to keep their properties as working entities.

We drive by Freshwater Farms Reserve often and have been delighted to see the rehabilitation of the barn. Who doesn't want to preserve an old historic barn?

I have also had the opportunity to ride

my horse for many years on Chalk Mountain Ranch (a property that NRLT helped to conserve) during an annual event that the landowners graciously allow. Their property is spectacular, and we all benefit by keeping working ranches healthy and large areas of land intact. We know it is a group effort to keep our way of life here sustainable, and we are grateful to the Land Trust for the critical work they do in conserving the places we all love.



## Wood Creek Restoration Comes to Life

Restoration projects take a lot of time and commitment to prepare for – partners need to create a shared vision, funding needs to be found, permits need to be secured, designs need to be created...and then at last, the ground work can begin! The construction on the Wood Creek Phase II Enhancement Project has just been completed. Remarkably, approximately 15 acres of land was sculpted, shaped, and/or excavated within 4 weeks' time, well before our construction deadline in mid-October. As we write this article, we see swirling clouds of grey and white outside, while trees and bushes shiver with powerful wind gusts; rain is coming and winter is imminent. The Wood Creek project site is well prepared to swell, absorb, and adapt to the wet winter weather ahead, serving its purpose as the highly sought after slow flowing, off-channel coho salmon habitat in the seasonally flashy Freshwater Creek watershed.

According to a landowner and rancher that we work with, Humboldt Bay tributaries were once 'littered with fish'; however, times have changed. Most tributaries to Humboldt Bay do not support a viable population of salmon anymore; however Freshwater Creek still supports one of the largest coho salmon runs in Humboldt Bay. As many as 2,000 adult coho salmon have been estimated to migrate upstream during the fall to their natal reach of stream to give life to the next generation of fish. Consequently, many thousands of baby

and juvenile coho salmon rear within the Freshwater Creek system as they prepare to enter the ocean after approximately one year. As the winter rains dump, the flows in Freshwater Creek ramp up dramatically, leaving juvenile salmon expending a lot of energy in order to fight the current rather than prematurely washing downstream towards the ocean. The Wood Creek restoration project provides juvenile coho salmon the opportunity to rear and grow in a slow flowing off-channel system, where they can escape high winter flows.

The Wood Creek Phase II restoration project broke ground on August 15th. The landscape shifted from a thick cattail forest to a clear open plain, where the designed channels, flood plain, pools, shallow wetland, and planting hummocks would be constructed. It was a finely orchestrated operation, skillfully implemented by our contractor GR Sundberg Inc. Excavators were digging, trucks were hauling earthen material, and the pasture was being disked and prepared. The project area was kept separate from the mainstem of Wood Creek through two sediment plugs at the designed points of connection, ensuring the project area would remain dry and workable. Over the next few weeks, the channels were cut and graded, the planting hummocks slightly raised between the network of channels and pools, approximately 100 cubic yards of wood was inserted into the channels to enhance habitat, and the pasture area was seeded with native seed to restore high brackish marsh vegetation.

On September 13th, following seeding and mulching, the sediment plugs were removed on an incoming tide allowing water to enter the network of channels for the first time. We were joined by project partners and thrilled to have News Channel 3 there to cover the spectacle (coverage available on their website through the search tab "Wood Creek"). On October 12th, NRTL staff and Humboldt State University senior ecological restoration students planted over 225 grass plugs, shrubs, and trees in an outstanding and efficient group revegetation effort. The project site is "buttoned up" for the winter with monitoring technology in place. Our first monitoring report showed that numerous young coho salmon have found the rich habitat that was recently created. We are all eagerly anticipating their continued growth in this new habitat.

The Wood Creek Phase II restoration project was a collaborative effort between our wonderful project partners: NOAA Habitat Conservation Restoration Center, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, CA Department of Fish and Wildlife, CA Coastal Conservancy, and the Natural Resources Conservation Service; funded through the USFWS National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program, the USFWS Coastal Program, and the California Coastal Conservancy. A special thank you to Conor Shea (USFWS), Paula Golightly (USFWS), Bob Pagliuco (NOAA), Joel Gerwein (CA Coastal Conservancy), and Mike Wallace (CDFW) for their dedicated effort and expertise.



Wood Creek restoration antennae detecting tagged fish using new habitat.



HSU ecological restoration students planting in revegetation effort.

## Barn Again: Historic Graham-Long Dairy Barn Rehabilitation



For those of you who have visited or driven by Freshwater Farms Reserve within the last three months, you probably noticed the substantial rehabilitation project currently underway to restore the property's historic Graham-Long Dairy Barn. Our contractor, Ryan Sullivan, and his crew have done a wonderful job stabilizing the structure and bringing the sagging roofline back to what it once was. By the time you are reading this we will have finished removing two layers of old-growth redwood shakes and shingles from the roof that have come to the end of their functional existence after protecting the barn for a century, and will have installed a new metal roof. Over the next month we also hope to replace the barn's redwood siding with the anticipation that this rehabilitated structure will last for generations to come, supporting existing and future planned agricultural and educational activity at Freshwater Farms Reserve.

This project is a true community barn-raising and we are grateful for the generous advisors, donors, and sponsors who have put their time and resources into rehabilitating a structure that represents our region's shared agricultural heritage. We would specifically like to thank: California Coastal Conservancy, T.S. and K.D. Glide Foundation, McLean Foundation, Almquist Lumber, Humboldt/Mendocino Redwood Company, Green Diamond Resource Company, Judy Hinman, Schorr Berman, Claire McAdams, Bill Hole, and the many individuals who

pledged their support at this year's and last year's Annual Celebration.

In a county where many barns of this kind are falling down, this rehabilitation is a unique way to help preserve an important historic and cultural piece of the North Coast. We are getting closer to meeting our fundraising goal for this capital improvement project, but we need one more push to get there. Major donors who give support will be honored in various ways, including sign recognition on the property near the historic barn. Cash gifts or in-kind contributions of building materials will allow us to finish the siding and large sliding doors on the gable ends of the structure – including a face-lift for the hard-to-miss side facing Myrtle Avenue. Pledging your support today will help us achieve a rehabilitated barn that could be in use by early 2017! If you are interested in helping with this historic project, please call us at 707-822-2242.



*Historic Graham-Long Dairy Barn under construction.*

## Boots & Birkenstocks: Working & Wild

The Northcoast Regional Land Trust would like to thank and acknowledge our incredibly generous community for coming out to our Annual Celebration, "Boots and Birkenstocks," on October 8. Nearly 400 people from all different walks of life attended to celebrate the land, and hundreds of others donated auction items or food to this unique, fun, and successful fundraiser.

This event represents what our organization has embraced and become known for: the core idea that by working together and focusing on our shared values, we can do more for our community. On this special night, you can see the diversity we represent in the room and that our partnerships have made us stronger and more effective in our common goal: conserving the land we love.

Our community's commitment to the land is strong and inspiring. Because of all who contributed, we were able to raise more than \$68,000. We thank everyone who gave in this special way and those who work every day to steward our region's wild and working landscapes. This gathering would not be possible without the producers, farmers, landowners, businesses, board members, advisors, staff, volunteer organizations, and various individuals who give their time, resources, and care.

We'd also like to thank our event sponsors: Humboldt Redwood Company/Mendocino Redwood Company, North Coast Co-op, Pierson Building Center, The Land Man, American AgCredit, Baldwin, Blomstrom, Wilkinson & Associates, Emerald City Laundry, Green Diamond Resource Company, Stillwater Sciences, Harbers Insurance Agency/The Shaw Group, Ramone's Bakery and Café, Stokes, Hamer, Kirk & Eads, LLP, Wildberries Marketplace, Katherine & Frederick Morehouse, Chris Bell and Associates, Conservation Partners, Greenway Partners, Humboldt Grassfed Beef, Alexandre Family EcoDairy Farms, Clendenen's Cider Works, Ferndale Farms, and Los Bagels.



Hydesville 4-H event helpers.



Lee Mora, event auctioneer. Photos: Catherine Wilkes

**SAVE THE DATE! NRLT Annual Celebration  
Saturday, October 14, 2017, River Lodge, Fortuna**

### Thanks to event supporters & volunteers

*Additional thanks to our Barn Raising donors & auction winners (p.7)*

Alan Sanborn  
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Lee & Eileen Mora  
Lee Figas  
Leslie Scopes Anderson  
Lisa Landis  
Lisa Marie Waters  
Liscom Hill Pottery Works  
Little River Farm  
Living Quarters  
Los Bagels  
Lost Coast Brewery  
Lost Whale Inn  
Mad River Brewing Company  
Madison Peters  
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Maureen McGarry  
McKenzie Riverside Cottages  
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The Northcoast Regional Land Trust is forever grateful to the following who gave cash grants, donations or support from October 16, 2015 through October 15, 2016.

*The Northcoast Regional Land Trust is a tax-exempt, nonprofit, 501(c)(3) organization listed with the Internal Revenue Service under EIN #68-0456290. All donations are tax deductible.*

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Northern California Association of Nonprofits  
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Redwood Region Audubon Society  
Retired & Senior Volunteer Program  
T.S. & K.D. Glide Foundation  
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U.S. Bank  
U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service Coastal Program  
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Anonymous (2)  
Rick Cipra

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*Carolyn Bugenig:* Mike & Cindy Jeffress,  
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## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**Land Trust Holiday Party:** *Friday, December 9, 4-7 pm, NRLT Office.* Join landowners, conservation specialists, board members, advisors, staff, and our members as we celebrate the holidays.

**Humboldt Bay Tributaries Restoration & Spawning Tour:** *Saturday, January 14, 9 am-4 pm, \$55.* Join us as a part of Humboldt Steelhead Days for this exciting new tour including stops at NRLT's Freshwater Farms Reserve, the Freshwater Fish Wier, and Morrison Gulch. Limited space – sign up at [humboldtsteelheaddays.com](http://humboldtsteelheaddays.com).

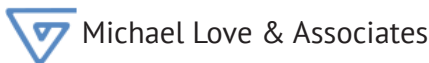
**Arts Arcata! Wine Pour:** *Friday, May 12, 6-9 pm, Garden Gate.* Enjoy a night on the Arcata Plaza, with a special stop at Garden Gate to join us for a glass of wine. All donations go to NRLT.

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

**Canoe-the-Slough:** *Visit [ncrlt.org](http://ncrlt.org) for Spring Dates.* Paddle Humboldt Bay and Freshwater Slough with NRLT.

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



Katherine & Frederick  
 Morehouse



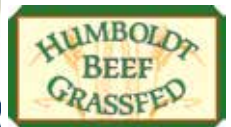
## COVER ARTIST – JIM MCVICKER

In 1975, at the age of 24, McVicker decided to become a full time painter. Jim was drawn to this region by the beauty, art community, and chance to live a quieter, more rural life. In 1984, he met his wife and fellow artist, Terry. Today they live a wonderful life in Loleta, California, where they both have studios on their property. Jim paints daily, following his passion for painting from life, trying to capture the light, space, atmosphere, and mysterious beauty all around us.



*From Hawks Hill*

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