

SPRING 2012

NORTHCOAST REGIONAL LAND TRUST



Riparian to Pasture

Michael Guerriero

Port Orford Cedar Forest Protected in Willow Creek

In late April 2012 landowners of the 1,622-acre Miller Forest property, located five miles west of the town of Willow Creek, completed a conservation easement protecting productive forest land and critical ecological resources in perpetuity. The conservation easement was granted to the Northcoast Regional Land Trust (NRLT) to ensure that the property will remain undivided and that the economic potential for commercial forestry will be conserved. The easement creates riparian and forest preserves, totaling 25% of the total property acreage, on sensitive areas with high habitat and ecological values. These riparian protections ensure water quality conditions that will benefit downstream salmon populations in Willow Creek and the Trinity River.

Landowners Steve Miller and Yvonne Schell initiated this project in 2008 to protect healthy stands of Port Orford cedar (POC) on their property. The property was purchased by Mr. Miller's father in the late 1930's for the POC resource, the wood of which was used as a component in batteries

due to its acid resistance. After the use of POC in batteries was phased out, a strong demand for the decorative wood came from Japan where the wood was used in sacred spaces and temples. The medicinal and ceremonial role of Port Orford cedar has historically been valued by many native tribes in our region. Ecologically, POC is an important component of streamside and riparian zones where it provides bank structure, stability and watercourse shading.

Port Orford cedar is restricted to a narrow geographic range covering only 220 miles from southwest Oregon to northwest California. Within this range it occurs in relatively small, scattered populations on our North Coast. POC reaches its southern-most extent as an isolated population in the lower Trinity River watershed, which coincides with the Miller Forest and adjacent U.S. Forest Service reserve areas. Recent research suggests that this southernmost stand comprises a genetically distinct population from those located farther north.

Port Orford cedar forests in Northern California are currently threatened by the invisible and lethal non-native root pathogen, *Phytophthora lateralis*. This disease develops from water-borne spores that come into contact with tree roots and are often spread by vehicle tires. Once in a stream course,

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thank those who have taken leave.*

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

From the Executive Director

As I step into my fourth year as the Executive Director of the Land Trust, I am looking forward to one of the most incredible years in NRTL's history.

This year we anticipate closing conservation easements on three more ranches bringing the total of conserved lands to over 25,500 acres! This lush and productive landscape encompasses over 1,200 acres of preserved riparian corridors, maintaining our cool and healthy streams; over 17,000 acres of privately owned productive forestland; and 7,000 acres of rolling grasslands and oak woodlands, providing critically important habitat for plants and wildlife. It is through the generosity of private landowners that these lands will forever be protected from subdivision and development. We are also grateful for the many partnerships with funders and our community that have made this conservation success possible.

In recent months, NRTL has acquired two pieces of property. Though generally we prefer not to be in the business of owning property, the purchase of the Martin Slough Conservation Land and the Freshwater Farms Nursery provided unique opportunities. In the coming years we will preserve the agricultural uses on these fertile plains while expanding the restoration of critically important wetland habitat for salmon, waterfowl and a host of other species. Also, by reuniting the nursery property with our Freshwater Farms Reserve, we look forward to expanding our plans for the publicly accessible Freshwater Nature Trail.

In March, NRTL successfully completed an effort to build a new voluntary, incentive-based program for Humboldt County landowners towards the conservation and restoration of oak woodlands. Special thanks to our 12-member advisory team which made this an incredibly strong effort that garnered wide support across many constituencies.

Also this year, we hope to become the first Land Trust on the North Coast to become formally accredited through the Land Trust Alliance. Of the 2,000 land trusts nationally, less than 200 have achieved this seal of distinction. Accreditation will recognize NRTL for upholding the public trust while meeting national standards for excellence in our conservation work.

Lastly, I'd like to extend a special thank you to departing board members, Ann King Smith, John Lima and Jason Pelletier. Ann's six year term as a board member (including acting as Board President for two-years) catalyzed many new things for NRTL and set us on the path to accreditation – thank you Ann! John's fresh perspective helped to flesh out many NRTL projects during his time with us and his valuable input will be missed. Jason kept us connected beyond the redwood curtain and we will miss his broad vision. With their departure however, I am happy to welcome Greg Blomstrom and Andy Elsbree to our Board. Both are foresters with broad community connections and will be tremendous assets to NRTL.

As we look ahead, NRTL's funding for our work is shifting – by both necessity and design – from outside support to local support. While this presents new fundraising challenges, it also provides an opportunity for greater local partnership, and gives NRTL more capacity to advance community values. With your help we nearly doubled our income from local donations last year!

Your support is instrumental to our success. We hope you will continue to join us as we embark on this exciting year!

Sincerely,

Lindsay Magnuson



Thank you, John, Ann & Jason! (not pictured)

Dialogues and Oak Woodlands

Collaborative Effort Reaches a New Milestone

Over a two-year period beginning in 2008, NRLT spearheaded a series of conversations involving farmers, ranchers, foresters, planners, real estate agents, environmental advocates and others. These North Coast Dialogues were aimed at increasing our collective understanding of working lands issues in Humboldt County and at helping our community to determine new ways to cooperate in maintaining working lands.

One of the strongest themes that emerged from the Dialogues was the need for improved incentives and policy support for private landowners trying to maintain viable working lands. A partnership involving NRLT and many others has been carrying this theme forward through a collaborative, incentive-based effort to help private landowners restore and maintain oak woodlands on their properties.

An important milestone was reached when the Humboldt County Board of Supervisors formally adopted the Humboldt County Oak Woodlands Management Plan/Resolution in March.

Developed by NRLT with substantial help from local partners, the resolution promotes the stewardship of oak woodlands by giving local landowners the opportunity to apply for project funding under the California Oak Woodlands Conservation Program. Such funding is needed to support the voluntary, labor-intensive efforts of private landowners who wish to manage for the long-term viability of true oak woodland stands.

The resolution was advanced with support from a 12-member advisory group as well as the Humboldt County Farm Bureau, Humboldt /Del Norte Cattlemen's Association, Humboldt Association of Realtors, Yager/Van Duzen Environmental Stewards (YES), and the North Coast Chapter of the California Native Plant Society, among others.

Both the oak woodlands resolution and a status report entitled Oak Woodlands of Humboldt County: A Report on Their Use, Distribution, Diversity, Ownership and Conservation can be found on our website at: www.ncrlt.org.

Oak woodlands have been declining on the North Coast since at least 1850. While fire was historically used by Native Americans, and later by ranchers, to help maintain oak woodlands, it has become increasingly difficult to use fire as a management tool in California. Without regular burning, young conifers have moved in and overgrown many oak woodland stands. It is estimated that about a third of the county's oak woodlands acreage has disappeared since 1850, and at least half the remaining oak woodlands may be lost within the next several decades without intervention.



Donor Voices:

Dan and Marty Vega

Major Donors, Lifetime Members and Legacy Supporters

Dan and I grew up in Los Angeles. In the 1930's and 1940's it was a nice place to live. Over the next 40 years we watched farm land, ranches, dairies, orange groves, and open spaces disappear. They were replaced with housing tracts, strip malls, office buildings, and parking lots. We do not want to see this happen again in this lovely part of California that we have chosen for our retirement. We've long supported The Nature Conservancy and their methodology. When they mentioned NRLT in an article, we checked their website and discovered that this organization, in our own back yard, was working to protect the local area from being covered with asphalt and concrete. Conservation allows our lands to be productive, while preserving the ecology; that is why we are supporters.

Celebrate the Land and Its Stewards!

This year's NRLT Annual Celebration has been set for **Sunday, October 7th** at the Fortuna River Lodge. Enjoy delicious food from local producers and an exciting silent and live auction. Last year had nearly 300 attendees with over 75 auction items! To contribute to the event or auction, or to buy tickets, please send an email to: s.pilkington@ncrlt.org.

PORT ORFORD CEDAR FOREST PROTECTED IN WILLOW CREEK

Continued from page 1

the pathogen quickly spreads downstream infecting riparian stands along its path. The Miller Forest property, located at the headwaters of Willow Creek tributaries (and part of the Trinity River watershed), is currently uninfected by the lethal root rot disease, which has ravaged populations in other areas to the north and east. The conservation easement project will help the long-term preservation of Port Orford cedar on the Miller Forest and downstream private property and will provide an ecological buffer on the adjacent U.S. Forest Service POC management area.

The easement was funded through the California Wildlife Conservation Board

and matched by a significant donation from the landowners. This project is a part of the ongoing Six Rivers to the Sea conservation easement initiative, a public-private partnership of which NRLT is a member. It seeks to protect privately-owned working landscapes and wildlife habitat from the Six Rivers National Forest to the Pacific Ocean. To date over 20,000 acres, including eight working ranches in Humboldt and Trinity Counties, have participated in this program. We are looking forward to the completion of two additional Six Rivers to the Sea projects totaling over 8,400 acres, the Charles Mountain Ranch Phase II and Chalk Mountain Ranch Phase II conservation easement projects, which are scheduled to be presented to the Wildlife Conservation Board for funding in May 2012.



NRLT PURCHASES FRESHWATER FARMS NURSERY PROPERTY

In April 2012, NRLT acquired the 20-acre Freshwater Farms Nursery property to protect its agricultural productivity and wetland habitat. A historic landmark on the Myrtle Avenue/Old Arcata Road corridor and located just west of Three Corners Market, the property was managed as a native plant nursery for over two decades. The opportunity arose for NRLT to purchase the property and reunite it with the adjacent 54-acre Freshwater Farms Reserve, owned by NRLT since 2005. We look forward to continuing our multiple-

use management of the property, including cattle grazing, wetland habitat management (with a new 10-acre wetland restoration project currently under development), and the construction of the 3/4-mile Freshwater Nature Trail. The trail will provide public access as well as interpretive and recreational opportunities on the property. This acquisition was generously funded by the California State Coastal Conservancy, California Department of Fish & Game, Redwood Region Audubon Society, The Nature Conservancy, and private donations.



REMEMBERING TOM ROWE, 1948 -2011

NRLT would like to honor with gratitude and warmth the life of Tom Rowe. Tom was an Advisor and long time supporter of NLRT and was a colleague and friend to many in our community. As a true leader, lover of the natural world and devoted community advocate, he inspired many. His adventurous and caring spirit, open-mindedness, and sincere passion for conservation will remain with us. Thanks to the generous donations made in honor of Tom we will be placing a locally made bench on our soon to be Freshwater Nature Trail in his memory.



Partnering for Conservation

NRLT is excited to have formed a new partnership with the Redwood Region Audubon Society (RRAS), a local non-profit conservation organization based in Eureka with members encompassing Humboldt, Del Norte, and western Trinity Counties. NRLT thanks RRAS for helping fund the acquisition of the Freshwater Farms Nursery. We are looking forward to partnering with RRAS on upcoming projects!

NRLT Rises to the Highest Standards

In 2011, NRLT decided to pursue accreditation through the Land Trust Alliance. This program recognizes land conservation organizations that meet national quality standards for protecting important natural places and working lands forever. As a part of the application process, we welcome input from the public in relation to how NRLT complies with national standards. Please stay tuned to the NRLT website on how and when to provide your comments.

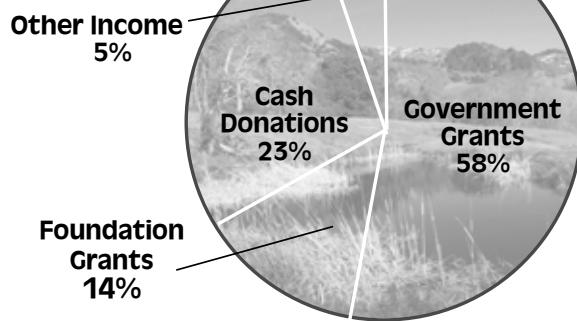
ANNUAL REPORT 2011

The Northcoast Regional Land Trust is pleased to provide our members with organizational and programmatic accomplishments for 2011:

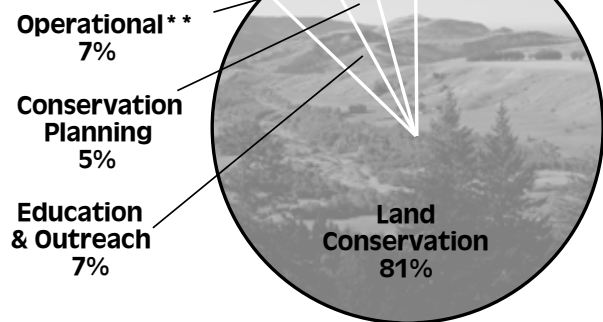
- Charles Mountain Ranch Phase I conservation easement was completed in March, 2011, permanently protecting 2,900 acres of productive ranch and forest land from development and loss of resource values.
- Working with a diverse group of local stakeholders, we facilitated the completion of a 100-year *Working Lands Vision* for Humboldt County. The production and culmination of this living document marks an important milestone in the North Coast Dialogues Project.
- In October, 2011 over 275 people came to celebrate the land and its stewards. The Annual Celebration raised approximately \$27,000!

- In December, 2011, we purchased the Martin Slough Conservation Land, approximately 40 acres on the south side of Eureka which will undergo a two-phase fish passage improvement, wetland enhancement, and flood reduction project, while maintaining agricultural use.
- Through our *Building Community through Conservation* program, over 1,000 students participated in our events, got out on the land and learned about ecology and stewardship.
- We formed a new partnership with the Yager/Van Duzen Environmental Stewards, which is helping to facilitate greater conservation successes in our region.
- In 2011, our fundraising was exceptional! In an effort to build our membership, we significantly increased the amount of income from individual donors and raised \$60,000.

INCOME



EXPENSES



INCOME

2010

2011

	2010	2011
Government Grants	\$177,707	\$153,175
Foundation Grants	\$150,870	\$36,259
Cash Donations	\$41,477	\$60,029
Other Income	\$21,702	\$13,690
Restricted Donations*	\$65,012	\$57,654
In-Kind Donations	\$793	\$4,040
Investments	\$32,207	-\$70,960
TOTAL	\$489,768	\$253,887

EXPENSES

2010

2011

	2010	2011
Land Conservation	\$329,960	\$280,961
Education & Outreach	\$11,461	\$22,690
Conservation Planning	\$1,787	\$16,183
Operational**	\$29,847	\$24,849
TOTAL	\$373,055	\$344,683

*Restricted donations are made to our stewardship fund which allows for the ongoing monitoring and stewardship of our easement properties.

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

THANKS TO OUR SPONSORS:



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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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CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Freshwater Farms Interpretive Walks: May, July, August, October TBD

Experience firsthand, beautiful, restored tidal salt marsh, slough habitat and pastureland at the Land Trust's 74 acre Freshwater Farms Reserve.

Canoe-the-Slough: June 2 (Moonlight Paddle) and September 21 (Equinox Paddle)

Paddle Humboldt Bay and the Freshwater Slough with a NRLT naturalist. Learn about the Bay's natural environment and the changes it has seen throughout the decades.

Annual Celebration: Sunday, October 7, Fortuna River Lodge

Come and celebrate NRLT's work in the community at our annual gathering at the Fortuna River Lodge. A delicious meal, live auction and other entertainment will be included in the festivities.

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.

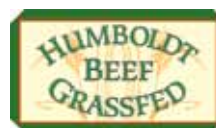


Tidal Search

COVER ARTIST—MICHAEL GUERRIERO

Michael Guerriero was raised in Livingston, a farm town located in the center of California's San Joaquin Valley. He was encouraged by his family and teachers to study art, which to this day has captivated his interest. Michael studied printmaking, painting and sculpture through college, earning a B.A. from California State University at Stanislaus and a M.F.A. from Western Michigan University at Kalamazoo. He and his wife Rosemarye moved to the North Coast in the fall of 1977, eventually finding their place in the forests near Bridgeville. Drawing inspiration from the scenic beauty of the area, Michael has been producing serigraph editions throughout the years. Rosemarye and Michael have two children. Both Gabriel and Celeste are living and working in San Francisco.

Also thanks to:



A special thanks to these sponsors for underwriting this issue:

