

SPRING 2015

NORTHCOAST REGIONAL LAND TRUST



Summer in the Hills

Kathy O'Leary

Land Trust & Landowner Launch Project to Conserve Hunter Ranch

The Northcoast Regional Land Trust is working with the owner of Hunter Ranch to permanently protect over 15,000 acres of vast oak woodlands, grasslands, mature Douglas-fir forest, and wild, year-round creeks in the Mad River watershed. The goal of the project is to keep the expansive Hunter Ranch intact and protected from subdivision, while maintaining cattle and timber operations, enhancing forest health, and restoring streams that support fish and wildlife. This bountiful ranch, once protected, will be an important part of the extensive network of private ranch lands that NRLT, local landowners, and agency partners have worked in partnership to conserve in recent years – lands that connect the Six Rivers National Forest to the Pacific Ocean.

Hunter Ranch is a critical part of the middle-Mad River drainage. Numerous cool-water tributaries drain the slopes of South Fork Mountain from its ridgeline down to the Mad River canyon bottom, where the streams join the main stem of the Mad. Coho salmon, Chinook salmon, and steelhead trout migrate onto the property to spawn.

Hunter Ranch includes thousands of acres of white and black oak woodland stands. If left untended, these oak woodlands will be replaced by more common, shade-tolerant, and aggressive Douglas-fir trees over time, displacing an important and disappearing habitat type in our region. The landowner is already planning restoration efforts needed to retain oak woodlands as a common feature on this historic landscape. In combination with

Continued on page 4

IN THIS ISSUE

| | |
|-----------------------------|---|
| From the Executive Director | 2 |
| Learning on the Land | 3 |
| Hunter Ranch | 4 |
| Indian Creek West | 5 |
| Donor Voices | 5 |
| 2014 Annual Report | 6 |
| NRLT Supporters | 7 |
| Calendar of Events | 8 |
| About the Artist | 8 |

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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 Executive Director

Size matters. If you're a coho salmon and you're too small when you enter the ocean, you'll be eaten. That's why coho need places like Indian Creek and Freshwater Farms Reserve to grow quickly – it's a question of survival, of being able to pass on life to the next generation.

If you're a rancher, you need a large enough rangeland to make your operation viable. If the family ranch gets cut into small parcels, you can't survive on the land anymore or pass on that way of life to your children.

Whether you're talking about habitat, or about working ranches and forestland, protecting large pieces of connected land is what we do. What inspires us – and perhaps inspires you – is that we still have some of the healthiest, most productive and beautiful intact land and rivers in the world, right here on the North Coast.

We're honored to be working with landowners to protect Hunter Ranch and Indian Creek, not just because these properties are big, totaling over 18,000 acres, but because these are amazing places. Picture rolling grasslands and oak woodlands, with goshawks flying overhead, and Pilot Rock rising up next to you – that's Hunter Ranch. Picture a wind-swept vista of redwood forest meeting the rugged ocean on the Lost Coast – that's Indian Creek.

This summer, we're also moving ahead with a community project at Freshwater Farms Reserve that will build a public nature trail, restore a historic barn built in 1910, and rehabilitate a native plant nursery. The purpose of this work is to create an inspiring place where you can bring your family to connect with land and see firsthand how restoration and agriculture can work together to support places we all care about.

In serving our community, we understand that working with people and land is critical. In conserving what is essential – whether we are working with small kids in our educational programs, or big regional landscapes – all of it matters. Your support means we can protect these world-class wild and working lands for everyone, at every scale.

We hope to connect with you and yours in the coming months. Thank you again for all you do.



Michael Cipra

New Additions to the NRLT Team

People are always what make our work meaningful. In January, our Administrative Assistant Debbie Marshall retired, while Board member Aaron Newman resigned. We'd like to extend a heartfelt thanks to both Debbie and Aaron for the years of commitment and hard work they invested in the Land Trust.

We'd also like to welcome some wonderful new additions to our team. Nancy Stevens, our new Administrative Assistant, who joined NRLT in January, has worked in our community for years in business administration and event planning. We also welcome two new Board members: Jeff Slack and Mike Miles. Jeff is an attorney with Janssen Malloy LLP and a Board member of the Yager-Van Duzen Environmental Stewards; his roots in the community go back 5 generations. Mike is the Director of Forest Science at Humboldt/Mendocino Redwood Company and a member of the Board of Forestry and Fire Protection; we look forward to having his unique experience and perspective on our board. Finally, we welcome two new Advisors: Peter Jackson and Lee Koffler. Peter is a Land Surveyor for Green Diamond Resource Company and Lee is a Financial Services Director – their professional expertise and dedication to our mission of protecting wild and working land is deeply appreciated. The success of NRLT is a direct result of the many committed and passionate people who contribute – thank you all!



Welcome Nancy, Jeff and Mike!

Learning on the Land

Take a minute to think about why you believe in conserving land. For most of us, this belief is rooted not only in our minds, but also in our hearts, because we have been fortunate enough to have a personal connection to nature at some point in our life. Whether you have grown up in a ranching family working the land or in a city where occasionally you would go on a camping trip to the mountains – most of us have a story about what makes us come alive in these wild and working places.

We understand that people are often not connected to a place without this story, without experiencing firsthand what it is like to tromp through a clear green river on a fishing trip, or to dig your hands in the dirt harvesting food your family grew, or to look into a sky full of stars and whisper to your friends about the mysteries of space.

Many studies are showing that the millennial generation is not ranking the environment as a top concern or priority moving into the future. We believe this is not because youth do not care about their surroundings, but because they are not meaningfully connected to their surroundings.



The Northcoast Regional Land Trust's Stewards of Tomorrow program addresses this problem head on: we bring kids on the land so that they can learn about their environment and build their own story around it. People only protect what they care about, and we are working to ensure that the next generation, our future stewards, will want to conserve this beautiful place we call home.

Cows and Cattails

Thanks to a wonderful partnership with Friends of the Dunes, this Land Trust education program takes elementary students out to our Freshwater Farms Reserve property to explore the amazing critters and unique plants that live in a wetland, while discussing the beneficial and compatible relationship between working lands and this beautifully restored natural landscape.

In order to keep these programs alive, we need your support!

Freshwater Farms Reserve is the perfect outdoor education classroom, and with the upcoming improvements on the property (including a wet weather classroom in the historic barn), we plan on expanding our education efforts. Bringing kids to the land cannot happen without the wonderful education partners mentioned, as well as our cur-

Farm to School

This valuable program, which is run through the Community Alliance with Family Farmers, has been active in Humboldt County since 2002. The curriculum aims to revitalize agricultural, environmental, and nutritional education through engaging, hands-on activities that excite Humboldt County elementary students about food and farming. The Know Your Farmer program includes a farmer visit to the classroom, a local food systems lesson, and a field trip to a local farm.

Biological Monitoring

In partnership with Six Rivers Charter High School, this program that began in 2009 allows biology students to put the scientific method to work. Participating students learn about wetland ecology, compatible uses of agriculture in restored sites, and practical field methodology. Students collect data each year regarding the hydrology, water quality, soil chemistry, topography, vegetation and wildlife of Freshwater Farms Reserve.



rent generous funding partners: Clif Bar Family Foundation, McLean Foundation, New Belgium Brewing Company, Pierson Building Center, U.S. Bank, and many individual community donors. If you would like to join this community of caring people, organizations, and businesses that help inspire and educate our next generation of North Coast stewards, please contact NLRT at 707-822-2242 or go to www.nrlt.org to contribute.

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Renata's Crêperie

Land Trust & Landowner Launch Project at Hunter Ranch

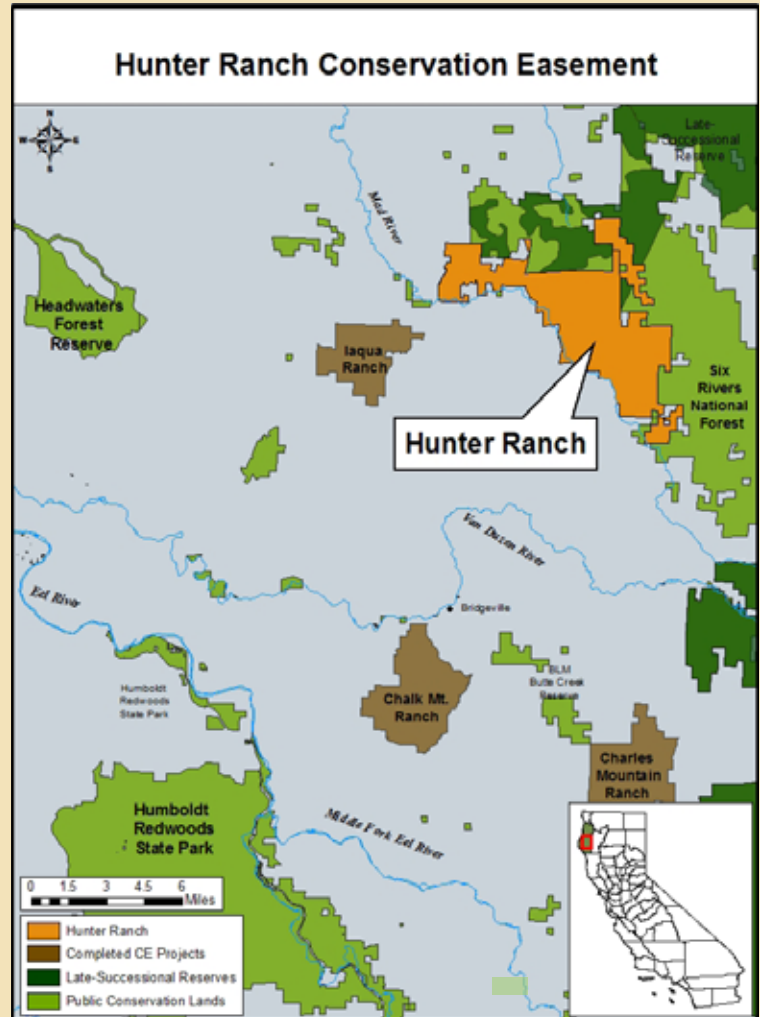
Continued from page 1

the open prairies, these oak woodlands help to support herds of deer, Roosevelt elk, and other wildlife that frequent the ranch's open slopes.

Much of the Hunter Ranch forestlands are mature (90+ years old), fast-growing, well-stocked stands. These areas are capable of sequestering a significant amount of carbon, sustaining an impressive level of timber output, and providing a diversity of forest habitats for wildlife.

The Hunter Ranch has a rich cultural history as well, including Native American use and a section of the historic Carlotta-Weaverville pack trail. Iconic Pilot Rock is located on Hunter Ranch and portions of the ranch are included within the Pilot Ridge Archaeological/Historic District, which is listed on the National Register of Historic Places. Artifacts found along South Fork and Pilot Ridges during construction of USFS Route 1 suggest that this area included some of the earliest human settlements in the region, pre-dating coastal settlements by thousands of years.

Though still in its early stages, the Hunter Ranch conservation easement project promises permanent protection for these inspiring lands located in the natural, cultural, historic, and economic heart of the rangeland belt of northwestern California. NRLT is grateful to be working with another dedicated landowner to bolster and preserve our region's traditional agricultural economy, natural systems, and quality of life for this and future generations.



Indian Creek Conservation Easement

Indian Creek winds across the rugged forestland of northern Mendocino and southern Humboldt County, connecting the Lost Coast at Sinkyone Wilderness State Park to the South Fork of the Eel River just below Richardson Grove State Park. Indian Creek is one of the most productive streams in this region for endangered salmonid species, including coho salmon.

The native redwood and fir forestlands that cover the land here are among the most productive in California for timber as well as for salmon. The ancient interdependent relationship of salmon and forest once created a vast, ecologically rich old-growth forest from the inland Eel River to the ocean. Recently, there has been subdivision and conversion of portions of this unique landscape – notably, for marijuana production. This has led to serious impacts on streamflows and water quality in the South Fork Eel River watershed – a key stronghold for threatened and endangered steelhead and salmon.

The Indian Creek conservation easement project is currently being developed to address and reverse this trend of diminishing timber productivity, fragmentation of ownerships, conversion to non-timber uses, and subsequent degradation of key salmon-bearing streams. The project we are pursu-

ing with a private landowner would forever protect more than 2,600 acres along Indian Creek. When complete, this landscape-scale project will conserve some of the most critical coho habitat in the region from further dewatering and sedimentation; it will also protect these historically productive redwood, Douglas fir, and hardwood forestlands, ensuring that they remain in long-term sustainable timber production.

Not only will this project halt subdivision and parcelization of these forestlands, it will actually reverse some of the conversion that has occurred on these lands already, and bring them back into active, sustainable timber production. In that sense, it represents a rare example of “putting Humpty Dumpty back together again,” by permanently rejoining and protecting previously subdivided land.



Donor Voices: Sarah Mora

NRLT Business Partner, Humboldt Grass-fed Beef and Humboldt Auction Yard



Growing up on the North Coast, one can't help but recognize how the production from our renewable natural resources are connected to the economic well-being of our region. This first source wealth creation comes from the responsible management of the natural resources on our private lands. Our timber, dairy, ranching, fishing and farming industries are the sources of that production. Economic studies have shown that this wealth creation circulates through our economy seven times. It helps generate support industries and jobs, which in turn allows our community to have sustainable schools,

hospitals and all the social networks we depend on. The significance of the loss of these working lands and its effect on other local businesses cannot be overlooked.

Our family's livestock auction market and my niche grassfed beef company are dependent on the productive viability of these working lands. While we currently do not have a conservation easement on our property, we recognize that it can be an effective tool in the overall management toolbox a landowner can use to maintain the productive value of a property.

This past January our family was blessed to welcome three new little girls into our lives. As a proud Aunt I have thought a lot about the kind of legacy I want to leave for these new family members. My investment in the Land Trust is an investment in keeping our natural resource economy vibrant and providing jobs into the future, while protecting the legacy I want to leave for the next generation. This is why we, Humboldt Auction Yard and Humboldt Grassfed Beef, support the Northcoast Regional Land Trust, and why we encourage other businesses and individuals to do so as well.

ANNUAL REPORT 2014

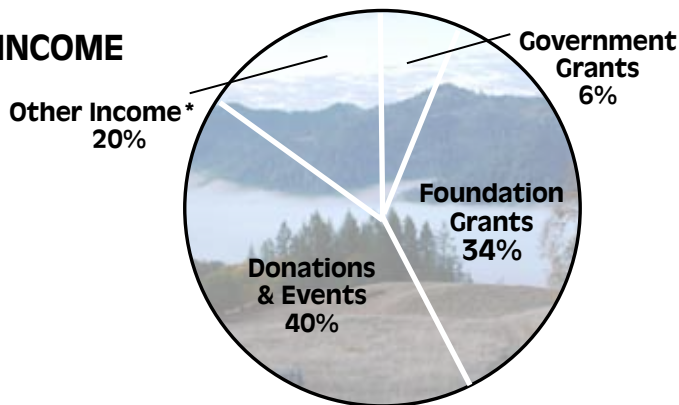
The Northcoast Regional Land Trust is pleased to provide our members with an accounting of organizational and programmatic accomplishments for 2014:

- We worked to advance many great conservation easement projects this year; most of them are new, including Hunter Ranch, Panther & Summit Creek, Bessette Ranch, Indian Creek West and Red Mountain. When completed, these will cover more than 18,000 acres of newly conserved wild and working land.
- The Martin Slough fish passage improvement, habitat restoration and flood control project made huge steps forward with the installation of a new tide gate, demonstrating how agriculture and healthy rearing habitat for salmon and other species can exist on the same property.
- In the five years since the restoration of Wood Creek at Freshwater Farms Reserve, NRLT has worked with partners to monitor progress towards the goal of increasing available rearing and overwintering habitat for juvenile salmonids. Since 2009, there was a

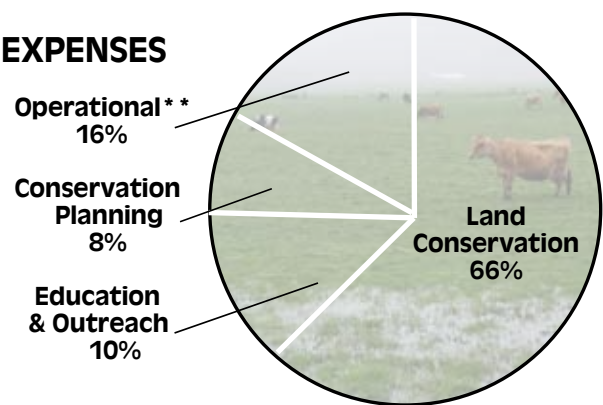
five-fold increase in native plant cover at the site and partners have observed a significant increase of coho use in Wood Creek. With funding secured, we look forward to expanding the restoration project with a second phase to provide more habitat.

- NRLT worked with Humboldt County to implement a cost-share program that helps rural landowners reduce fire-prone vegetation on their property. As part of the Fire Adapted Landscapes & Safe Homes (FLASH) program, landowners can receive financial assistance to help reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfires that cause loss of life, property, and wildlife habitat.
- Through partnerships, over 500 students participated in our Stewards of Tomorrow programs, getting out on the land to learn and discover, while enhancing their ecological literacy – learning about how agriculture and conservation can work together.
- With your help, we raised more donations in 2014 than any other time in our history. Over 40% of our total income came directly from individuals and businesses in our community. Thank you!

INCOME



EXPENSES



INCOME

2013
2014

| | | |
|--------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Government Grants | \$16,541 | \$19,461 |
| Foundation Grants | \$122,530 | \$103,400 |
| Donations & Events | \$109,532 | \$122,265 |
| Other Income* | \$49,209 | \$61,614 |
| Investments | \$140,962 | \$47,659 |
| TOTAL | \$438,774 | \$354,399 |

*Includes fee for service and property leases.

EXPENSES

2013
2014

| | | |
|-----------------------|------------------|------------------|
| Land Conservation | \$181,593 | \$205,149 |
| Education & Outreach | \$34,140 | \$32,934 |
| Conservation Planning | \$76,111 | \$24,162 |
| Operational** | \$67,180 | \$49,141 |
| TOTAL | \$359,024 | \$311,386 |

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



CHRIS BELL
Appraisal Associates

Aldaron Laird
Environmental Planner



The Harland Law Firm LLP



THANK YOU NRLT Members and Supporters!

The Northcoast Regional Land Trust is forever grateful to the following who gave cash grants, donations or support from April 1, 2014 through March 31, 2015.

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

Jitter Bean Super Hero Program: *Saturday, June 20, all day, all locations.* Support a local business and NRLT! A portion of Jitter Bean's proceeds on this day will be given to the Land Trust.

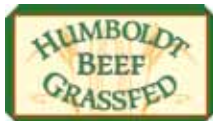
Canoe-the-Slough Solstice Paddle: *Sunday, June 21, time TBD* Paddle Humboldt Bay and Freshwater Slough in a canoe or kayak with a NRLT naturalist. Learn about the Bay's natural environment and the changes it has seen throughout the decades.

Pints for Non-Profits: *Wednesday, July 15, 3:00 pm to 12:00 am, Redwood Curtain Brewery.* Come have a beer with NRLT board members, advisors, staff and supporters to celebrate conservation. \$1 of each beer sale goes to NRLT. Live music.

Annual Celebration: *Saturday, October 10, 5:00 – 9:00 pm, Fortuna River Lodge.* Celebrate NRLT's work in the community at our annual gathering at the Fortuna River Lodge. A delicious local meal, live auction and other entertainment will be included.

Freshwater Farms Interpretive Walk: *TBA, at nrlt.org*
 Join NRLT and special guest Michael Furniss to learn more about climate change and potential impacts on Freshwater Farms Reserve. FREE.

Special Thanks to these sponsors for underwriting this issue:



COVER ARTIST – KATHY O'LEARY

Painting beauty is the theme of all my work. My subject matter covers still life, the figure, and landscape. However, I am currently focused on the landscape and the natural beauty of California.

I take several trips a year throughout the state gathering resource material, photographs and field studies. I work exclusively in oil, en plein air, and on large studio pieces from my field studies and my digital photography. My work is available in several California galleries, on line, and in regional and national exhibitions.



Coastal Bluffs in Morning Light

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.*

Also Thanks to:

