

SPRING 2016

# NORTHCOAST REGIONAL LAND TRUST



*Snowcamp*

*Thomas Bethune*

## This Place We Call Home: Land Trust Works to Conserve 33,000 More Acres

Conservation of wild and working lands takes time. We choose to invest this time because we are building long-term partnerships with people who care about what happens to the land. We listen to our North Coast stewards. We learn from our partners. We build agreements by understanding how the land has been cared for, and how the next generation plans to keep this land productive and intact. Then, we work with everyone – including you – to find ways to keep the land healthy and whole.

These beautiful open and productive spaces are why many of us live here, work here, play here, and raise our families here. If we can continue to work together, this place we all call home will continue to thrive with clean flowing rivers, rolling oak woodlands, abundant wildlife, prolific pastureland, and healthy forests.

Conservation of wild and working lands takes a lot of different forms, and each project has its own life, joys, challenges, and timelines. With summer arriving, we thought it was time to open up the windows and give you a breath of fresh air and a clear view into many of the projects that the Land Trust is advancing.

### **Hunter Ranch Conservation Easement**

By collaborating with a private landowner and the State of California's Wildlife Conservation Board, we are making significant progress toward completion of the largest land and water conservation project in the history of the Northcoast Regional Land Trust. Hunter Ranch is a 15,576-acre working ranch and forest located on the middle-Mad River next to the Six Rivers National Forest. This working ranch encompasses mature Douglas-fir

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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

The first time I ever heard the word "stewardship," I was planting sugar pines with my grandfather. To give our little saplings a head start, we watered them with buckets of water we carried by hand up a steep hill. I was young, and I struggled with the heavy buckets. I asked my grandfather why we had to work so hard.

Grandpa said, "Work is the way we connect with the land. When you're working hard, and thinking about the next generation, that's called stewardship."

He's since passed on, but I still think every day about the lessons my grandfather taught me. Whether we're picking up shovels to build our new nature trail at Freshwater Farms Reserve, or building long-term partnerships with private landowners that help protect thousands of acres of wild and working land, at the Northcoast Regional Land Trust we pursue that clear-eyed definition of stewardship: work hard and think about the next generation.

We know you share this care for our community, our kids, and the bountiful land we love. It was heart-warming to see so many of you and your families at the grand opening of the Freshwater Nature Trail on May 1. We heard from you about the importance of continuing to offer outdoor education programs at Freshwater Farms Reserve, where our kids can get their boots dirty while learning how restoration and agriculture work together.

You're a steward because you want land to stay whole and healthy. It breaks your heart when our working forests and ranches are split up and subdivided, when salmon-bearing streams are sucked dry, when herds of black-tailed deer and Roosevelt elk are chased away due to development. You're a steward because it upsets you that we're losing our oak woodlands, while a quirk in the law makes it difficult for private landowners to do the right thing and restore the oaks, their connected grasslands, and the rich habitat these majestic trees provide.

You're a steward because you're willing to work side by side with us to ensure we give our kids and grandkids a healthy, productive, and rich North Coast. While some days it can seem difficult – like carrying buckets of water up a hill – when those saplings grow into trees, you realize that it was a privilege to do this work all along. You, our community, are the inspiration and reason for our work. Thank you.



## The Heart of Our Work

People are always at the heart of our work. In January, long-time staff member Shayne Green stepped out of his role as Projects and Stewardship Director. While we will miss Shayne's leadership in this role, Shayne continues to work part-time as a Projects Consultant for NRLT, providing guidance to the organization on a number of projects. We also bid farewell to Board members Jeff Slack and Mark Moore, both of whom added thoughtful perspectives as multi-generation Humboldt County residents and land stewards.

Dan Ehresman joined the NRLT staff in January, and is serving as Project Manager on a number of exciting land conservation, planning, and stewardship projects. Dan brings over 15 years of experience working in the non-profit sector with numerous conservation-based organizations in Northern California. We also welcome new Board member Peter Jermyn. Peter was born in rural Pennsylvania and raised in a farming community where he witnessed the conversion of farmland to development projects. Peter has built many successful local businesses, is a longtime member of the Arcata Economic Development Corporation and has served on numerous boards. We're excited to have both Dan and Peter join our committed team!



*Welcome Dan and Peter!*



# Preserving Oak Woodlands through Partnership and Policy



the mid-1900's, conifers have been encroaching on, out-competing, and slowly killing older California Black Oak and Oregon White Oak stands.

To address this threat, the Land Trust is currently partnering on two initiatives aimed at providing private landowners the tools they need

financial contribution – please reach out to our office staff.

Along with policy, NRLT is also lending our expertise to support on the ground restoration. Thanks to leadership from the University of California Cooperative Extension, our region just got a boost of \$2.6 million through the Natural Resources Conservation Service Regional Conservation Partnership Program to assist private landowners with oak woodland restoration activities.

The Land Trust is proud to be working with UC Extension on the North Coast Oak Woodland Conservation Project in partnership with Cal Fire, the Watershed Research and Training Center, U.S. Fish and Wildlife, the Mattole Restoration Council, Yager/Van Duzen Environmental Stewards, and the Mendocino County Resource Conservation District.

If you've spent time away from the coast – in places like Kneeland, Benbow, or Redwood National Park's Bald Hills – you are probably familiar with our region's treasured oak woodlands. For the better part of the past decade, the Northcoast Regional Land Trust has worked with private landowners and agency partners to raise awareness and protect this ecologically significant habitat type.

Oak woodlands support an extremely high level of biodiversity, provide forage and shade for livestock, and because of their drought and fire adapted nature, are resilient to the impacts of climate change. Since fire suppression became the norm in

to protect and restore our wondrous oak groves. As it stands today, oak woodland restoration is largely out of reach for small landowners who cannot afford the significant expense of preparing a Timber Harvest Plan to remove young conifers with little commercial value.

Introduced by Assemblymember Jim Wood and co-sponsored by NRLT and the Buckeye, Assembly Bill 1958 will provide landowners a lower-cost path to habitat restoration. The legislation is currently making its way through State Assembly and we expect it to reach the Senate this summer. If you'd like to help with this initiative – whether through a letter of support or a



Photos by Thomas Bethune

## Leaving a Legacy

Virginia Elizabeth Hansis (April 4, 1915 – August 16, 2015)



At the closing of 2015 Richard Hansis, a long time NRLT supporter, made an incredibly generous and thoughtful gift in honor of his mother, Virginia Hansis. Virginia,

a small landowner and lover of the land, wanted some of her estate to support an organization that sustains what her fam-

ily deeply believes in: conserving working lands. She had a strong passion for sustainable forestry, which can be seen through her son's lifetime of work, particularly with oak woodlands. A special thank you to this family for recognizing the importance of conserving land for future generations!

If you are interested in learning more about leaving your own legacy or making a planned gift, please contact us at 707-822-2242.

## Donor Voices

**Ardene Janssen** – NRLT Major Donor and Supporter of Family Ranching

I support the Northcoast Regional Land Trust because their organization works to protect a landscape and way of life that is deeply important to me and my family. My daughter, Dina Moore (NRLT Advisor) and her husband, Mark Moore (a recent NRLT Board Member), operate Lone Star Ranch. The Land Trust partners with families like theirs to make sure they can stay in production and continue taking care of the land. I am very proud of my family and care about things that will continue to support their well being, livelihood, and happiness.

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## This Place We Call Home: Land Protection through Conservation Easements

### Continued from page 1

stands, spawning habitat for Coho salmon, Chinook salmon, and steelhead trout, thousands of acres of black oak and white oak woodlands, open prairies, a rich cultural history, and healthy wildlife habitat for animals like goshawks, black-tailed deer, and Roosevelt elk. Maintaining cattle and timber management is central to the long-term future of this ranch, and extensive oak woodland restoration and forest health enhancement activities are planned. We anticipate completing this historic land conservation project as early as February of 2017.



### Red Mountain Conservation Easement

In March of 2016, the Northcoast Regional Land Trust collaborated with native plant enthusiasts to complete a 25-acre conservation easement that will forever protect a globally rare plant population living on this special property, located on the shoulder of Red Mountain in southeastern Humboldt County. The conserved land includes a unique geological formation that is inhabited by the cryptic two-flowered pea (*Lathyrus biflorus*). This plant species is restricted to the slopes of Red Mountain, with about 95% of its entire population occurring on the now-protected parcel. The Land Trust's partnership with multiple landowners led to a conservation easement that protects the rare two-flowered pea, the property's unique geology, and associated forest habitat. Special thanks to the visionary landowners who brought this project to life: Dave and Colleen Imper, Carol and C.J. Ralph, Sydney Carothers, and Jane (Sawyer) Cole.

### Bessette Ranch Conservation Easement

Imagine the rolling hills surrounding the Klamath River peppered with 5-acre trophy homes. Now envision that land – with its picturesque forests, wetlands, and productive pasture – protected in perpetuity. The Land Trust is partnering with landowners Tom and Nancy Bessette to place a

conservation easement on over 120 acres of important coastal habitat and prime agricultural land overlooking the mouth of the Klamath. After years of effort and patience, we are happy to announce that we have secured significant funding and are advancing this project to completion. Tom and Nancy have worked hard to restore their ranch since they purchased it in 2000. The easement will ensure that the Bessette Ranch remains intact, vital salmon habitat is protected, agriculture production carries on, and the landowners can continue their exemplary stewardship of such a special place. We thank the CA State Coastal Conservancy for supporting this project, with a special thanks to Joel Gerwein, Project Manager, for his collaboration. We are also grateful to Tom and Nancy – their commitment to sustainable land management is extraordinary.

### Diamond D Ranch Conservation Easement

Diamond D Ranch lies in eastern Humboldt County – an area with rolling grasslands, dense conifer groves, and oak woodlands in the Eel River watershed. This pocket of the county is ripe with rural residential development and cannabis cultivation. Diamond D Ranch landowners and siblings, Trenton and Jennifer Dunn, are fourth generation ranchers who want to keep their family ranch intact. Combined with the previously completed conservation easements on Chalk and Charles Mountain Ranches, the 2,960 acre Diamond D Ranch will connect thousands of acres of wild and working land.



During the 2015 Forest Legacy grant cycle, Diamond D Ranch was one of two projects in California to advance to the national level. We are very hopeful for the future funding of this project.

### Lost Coast Redwood and Salmon Initiative at Indian Creek

This land and water conservation project on private working forestland will forever protect 2,690 acres along Indian Creek, connecting the Sinkyone Wilderness State Park with acres of private conserved lands. The Lost Coast Redwood and Salmon Initiative also ensures abundant stream flows in Indian Creek, a critical cold water refuge for the South Fork Eel River's Coho and Chinook salmon as they spawn and rear. This project will halt parcelization of forestlands under significant development pressure and will reverse some of the subdivision and conversion that has occurred on these lands already, assembling parcels and bringing them back into active, sustainable timber production. This conservation project gained another key partner this year, as the California Natural Resources Agency recognized the project's high conservation value by awarding it \$500,000 through its Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation Program.



## This Place We Call Home: Freshwater Farms Reserve & Wood Creek Restoration



*Photos by Mark Larson*

The Northcoast Regional Land Trust owns Freshwater Farms Reserve, a beautiful 74 acre piece of land that represents what the Land Trust works to protect: wild and working landscapes. This property has it all - a ¾ mile interpretive nature trail, a canoe/kayak launch, the Kneeland Glen Farmstand, rich pasture with cows grazing, rows of healthy crops, historically significant buildings, and a restored salt marsh. Now, this property will be open to the public, for you and your family to enjoy.

### Freshwater Farms Reserve Nature Trail Grand Opening

On May 1st nearly 1,000 community members gathered to celebrate the Freshwater Farms Reserve Nature Trail. The grand opening highlighted what this property



### Freshwater Nature Trail Stewardship

Looking to get involved in the trail? Consider becoming a Freshwater Nature Trail Steward. Tasks include routine maintenance at your convenience, interpretation opportunities, and periodic work days. Visit [humtrails.org](http://humtrails.org) or contact Kerry at [K.McNamee@ncrlt.org](mailto:K.McNamee@ncrlt.org).

represents – the compatible uses of agriculture and restoration. With the sun shining, people explored the property while enjoying a BBQ and potluck featuring locally produced food.

Some of the top local landscape artists in our area joined the celebration, painting along different parts of the trail, capturing the scenic and pastoral beauty of the property. The gathering also included live music by Thursday Night Bluegrass & Josephine Johnson.

We thank everyone who helped to make this special event happen including the plein air artists, musicians, presenters, volunteers, and our event sponsors, Emerald City Laundry Company and the Land Trust Alliance. We also thank the California State Coastal Conservancy and the many other generous supporters and work partners who have helped bring this trail to life.

### Freshwater Farms Reserve Barn & Nursery Rehabilitation

We are gearing up to rehabilitate the historic dairy barn and milking parlor on the property so that they can continue to function as an integral part of the property's agricultural heritage.

Built in 1910 from old growth redwood, the Graham-Long Dairy barn has weathered earthquakes, floods, and major storms. We plan on starting work this summer to keep the barn standing and functional.

The adjacent milking parlor – which was later adapted to function as a native plant nursery under Rick Storre's ownership – will also be receiving some attention in the



coming months to prepare it for the next phase in its life. We plan to have the nursery space operational by 2017.

We are extremely grateful to the numerous individuals who lent their expertise to the rehabilitation project

planning and to all of the volunteers who worked preparing the buildings for construction. We would also like to honor Susie Van Kirk, a long time Land Trust partner, who recently passed away. Susie compiled the historical and cultural information for us on Freshwater Farms Reserve and made extraordinary contributions to our local community and environment.

### Barn Raising

We need your help! We have been working hard to raise money to rehabilitate the historic Graham-Long Dairy Barn, but are still needing some special supporters to help make this dream a reality for our community. If interested, please contact Sarah at [s.pilkington@ncrlt.org](mailto:s.pilkington@ncrlt.org).

### Wood Creek Restoration

Building from the successes of the Wood Creek Phase I restoration completed in 2010, NRLT is actively preparing for the second phase of restoration in upper Wood Creek set to break ground this summer. The second phase of restoration will create approximately 5.4 acres of habitat for salmonids and waterfowl through the creation of stream channels, wetlands, and planting hummocks. The restoration will also include some management practices aimed at restoring high marsh native vegetation, alleviating flooding on our agricultural land, and enhancing in-stream habitat features.



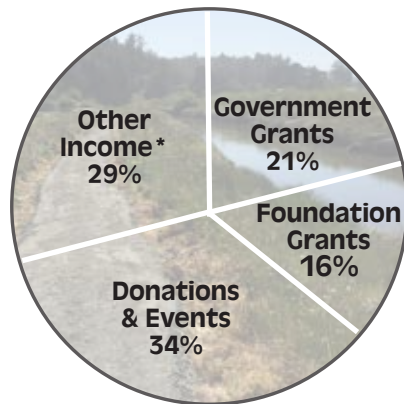
# ANNUAL REPORT 2015

The Northcoast Regional Land Trust is pleased to provide our members with an accounting of organizational and programmatic accomplishments for 2015:

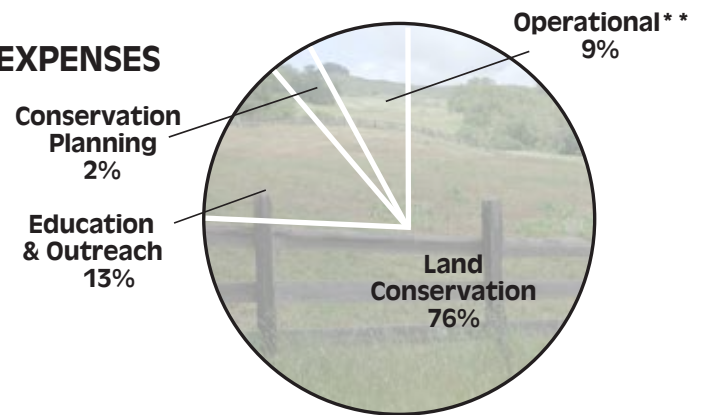
- We focused much of our time advancing conservation easement projects in 2015, working to conserve 33,000 more acres of wild and working land in our focus area. This landscape level conservation will more than double the amount of land we have protected. To learn more about these amazing projects, see page 4.
- Freshwater Farms Nature Trail was completed, connecting our community to a beautiful and unique piece of land that demonstrates the compatibility of agriculture and restoration.
- With funding secured, we prepared for the second phase of the Wood Creek Enhancement Project on Freshwater Farms Reserve, acquiring permits to begin work this summer to restore over 5 acres of important estuarine habitat.

- At Freshwater Farms Reserve we worked to secure funding to rehabilitate the old native plant nursery and secured partial funding to rehabilitate the historic Graham-Long Dairy Barn. By working on these two projects we hope to create a vital community space and restore the property in a way that's true to its historic character and agricultural heritage.
- Through partnerships with Friends of the Dunes, Community Alliance with Family Farmers, and Six Rivers Charter School, over 500 students participated in our Cows and Cattails, Farm to School, and Biological Monitoring programs, getting kids out on the land to learn about their environment, where their food comes from, and how they can be our future stewards.
- To get people connected to the land, we led multiple community events outside, including interpretive walks with special guest presenters on native plants, birding, and coho salmon. We also hosted a solstice Canoe the Slough, where participants paddled from Humboldt Bay, up Freshwater Slough to Freshwater Farms Reserve.

## INCOME



## EXPENSES



## INCOME

**2014**
**2015**

Government Grants	\$19,461	\$78,557
Foundation Grants	103,400	57,500
Donations & Events	122,265	126,000
Other Income*	61,614	108,314
Investments	47,659	34,577
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$354,399</b>	<b>\$404,948</b>

\*Includes fee for service and property leases.

## EXPENSES

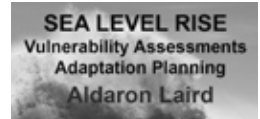
**2013**
**2014**

Land Conservation	\$205,149	\$295,592
Education & Outreach	32,934	52,213
Conservation Planning	24,162	6,666
Operational**	49,141	33,036
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$311,386</b>	<b>\$386,507</b>

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



**CHRIS BELL**  
Appraisal Associates



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, 2015 through March 31, 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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*We graciously thank our donors that gave up to \$99. For a full list visit: [nrlt.org/partners](http://nrlt.org/partners).*

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*Virginia E. Hansis:* Dick Hansis  
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*Brian L. King:* Arnold King  
*Kelly R. McAdams:* Claire McAdams  
*Randy W. Moore:* Rusty & Alverna Moore  
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*Heidi Bourne:* Kathleen Stroup  
*Bud Burke:* Diane Sutherland Montoya  
*Xiaozhen Chen:* Cynthia & Earl Noel  
*Maya Conrad:* Russell Conrad  
*Lindsay & Shayne Green and Seth & Kristen Magnuson:* Cindy & Mike Jeffress  
*Martha Hunkins:* Jan Turner  
*Cindy Jeffress:* Lindsay & Shayne Green  
*David & Madeline McMurray:* Jeff & Edith Schwartz, Rondal Snodgrass  
*Larry McMurray:* David & Madeline McMurray  
*Rebecca Stauffer:* Mike & Katy Yanke  
*Erica Upton:* Chris & Sheila Rocker Heppe

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*Doesn't include Annual Celebration*

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## Our Business Partners

**Make our community strong. Please support the following businesses:**

*(Does not include Annual Celebration donors.)*

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## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**Canoe-the-Slough Solstice Paddle:** *Sunday, June 19, time TBD*  
 Paddle Humboldt Bay and Freshwater Slough in a canoe or kayak. Learn about the Bay's natural environment and the changes it has seen throughout the decades.

**Freshwater Farms Interpretive Walks:** *Saturday, July 9, August 6, October 22, November 12, times vary. Visit [nrlt.org](http://nrlt.org) for details.*  
 Join us at Freshwater Farms Reserve with special guest presenters on these topics: history, restoration, birding, and Longfin Smelt. FREE.

**Folie Douce Fundraising Dinner:** *Monday, July 25, 5:00 - 9:00 pm.*  
 Come have dinner with us! Folie Douce offers a once a month prix fixe dinner on Monday evenings for \$50 per person. Profits from this dinner will be donated to NRLT.

**Annual Celebration – Boots & Birenstocks:** *Saturday, October 8, 5:00 - 9:00 pm, Fortuna River Lodge.* Celebrate community conservation at our annual gathering. Enjoy a locally produced meal, open bar, music, and silent and live auction.

**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.*

## COVER ARTIST – THOMAS BETHUNE

Thomas has been interested in photography most of his life. He started taking photographs when he was eight years old. His early subjects were trains and engineered structures, as well as landscapes and family portraits. Thomas took courses in art and photography in high school and college and earned a bachelor's degree in photography from Humboldt State University. Thomas' vision is such that he sees the mystery that may be hidden within. To see more of his work: [www.thomasbethunephoto.com](http://www.thomasbethunephoto.com).



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

