



THE MCKINLEYVILLE LAND TRUST NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2011 NUMBER 28

THE MAD RIVER BLUFFS TRAIL IMPROVEMENTS ARE FINISHED!

By Emily Teraoka

The trail improvement project at the Mad River Bluffs that was started last fall has been completed – and it is incredible out there! Thanks to a grant from the California River and Parkways Program (Proposition 50), the McKinleyville Land Trust (MLT) partnered with the Redwood Community Action Agency (RCAA) to improve nearly 5,600 feet of trail, construct four overlooks above the Mad River, and build a new staircase down to the river bank.

Trail improvements, begun in the fall of 2011, were done by the California Conservation Corps, under the direction of Kevin Wright of RCAA. In addition to the upgraded trails, the crews installed a new staircase leading to the Mad River, created a gravel parking area at the foot of Ocean Drive and Hiller Road, and decommissioned several informal trails dissecting the native coastal pine forest. (Continued on page 2...)



New North Stairway above Mad River and Pacific Ocean.

WHAT IS A LAND TRUST?



By Tom Lisle

A conservation land trust is a private, nonprofit organization that actively works to conserve land by undertaking or assisting in acquisition of land or conservation easements, or by stewardship of such land or easements. The goal is to preserve sensitive natural areas, farmland, ranchland, water sources, cultural resources or notable landmarks forever.

Although conservation (Continued on page 3...)

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Looking at the Big Spruce during the opening celebration plant walk.

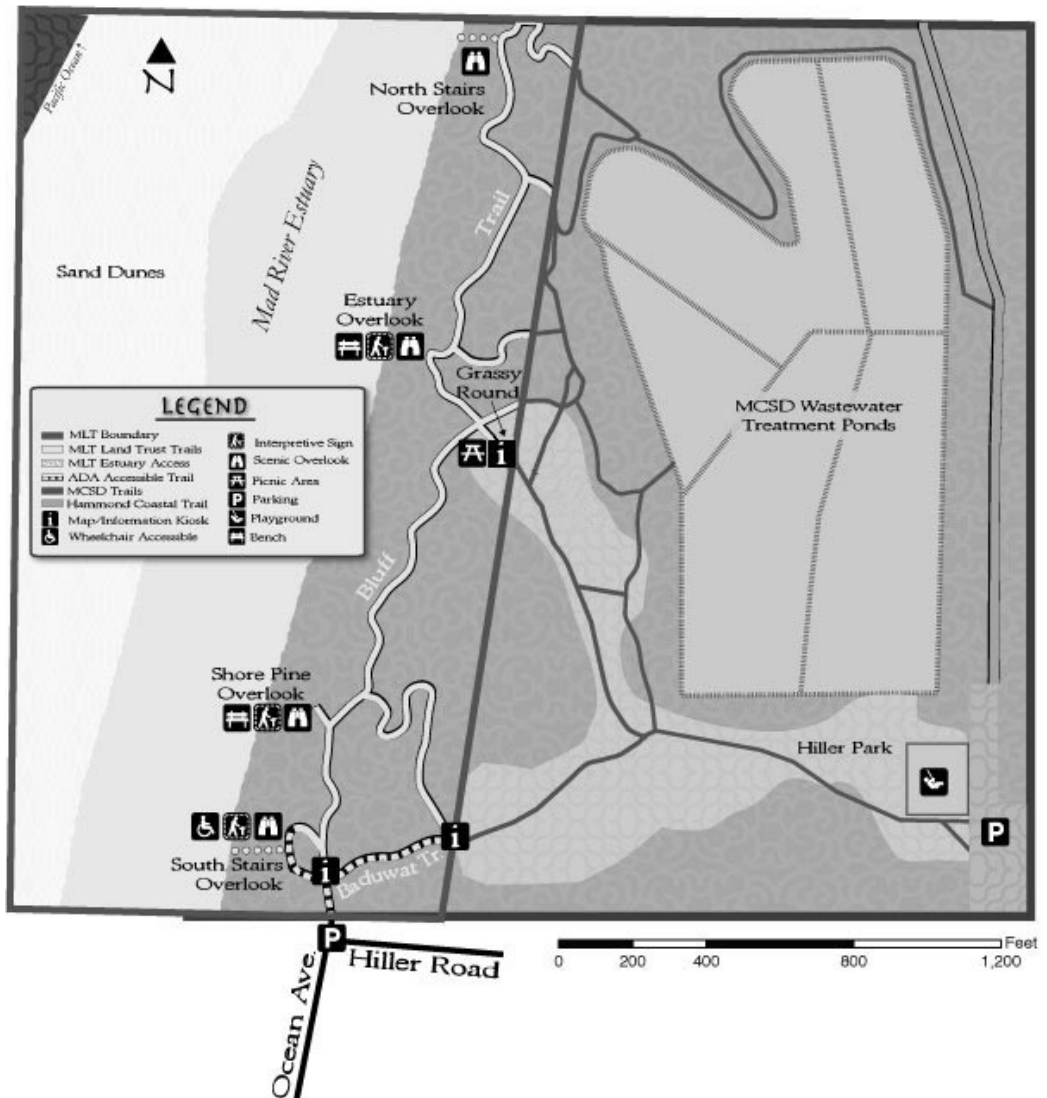
MAD RIVER BLUFFS TRAIL (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

The MLT and community decided to decommission some of the informal trails throughout the property to protect the sensitive habitat that was being impacted. Some informal trails cause soil erosion, especially along the steep bluffs. Others were closed to encourage sensitive native plants and animals to flourish. Please encourage people you see at Mad River Bluffs to use only

the designated trail system in order to help protect our beautiful ecosystem.

Several interpretive signs have been installed throughout the property, as well as two picnic tables, trash cans, and doggie pot stations. The Baduwat Trail (Wiyot name for Mad River), that runs from the parking area at Ocean Drive to the adjacent Hiller Park property, has been (Continued on Page 6...)

Mad River Bluffs Trail Map



Enjoying the bench and North Stairs Overlook.

WHAT IS A LAND TRUST? (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

land trusts have been in existence since 1891, it is only in the last two decades that they began to proliferate, and they now form one of the fastest-growing and most successful conservation movements in American history.

They include enormous international organizations such as The Nature Conservancy, as well as smaller organizations that operate on national, state/provincial, county, and community levels.

Land trusts use many different tools to protect conservation values. They may acquire land by sales or donations and retain ownership in perpetuity, or sell the land to a third party. This third party is often the government, which will usually add the land to an existing protected area, or create a new one entirely. Land trusts may also sell land to private buyers, usually with a strict conservation easement attached. Keeping the land under private ownership has the added benefit of maintaining the land on local property tax rolls, providing income to the local government.

A land trust may also obtain a conservation easement on private property to preclude development, or purchase any mining, logging, drilling, or development rights on the land. A landowner selling or donating a conservation easement gives up some of the rights associated with the land, but can gain satisfaction for perpetuating conservation values and may obtain some tax advantages. For example, he or she might give up the right to build additional structures, while retaining the right to grow crops, graze grasslands, or manage timber in a sustainable manner. Through easements, land may be opened up in a

limited way for hiking, hunting, fishing, camping, wildlife observation, water sports, or other outdoor activities that have little impact on the land.

Conservation easements offer great flexibility. An easement may apply to all or a portion of the property, and need not require public access. Each conservation easement is carefully crafted to meet the needs of the landowner while not jeopardizing the conservation values of the land.

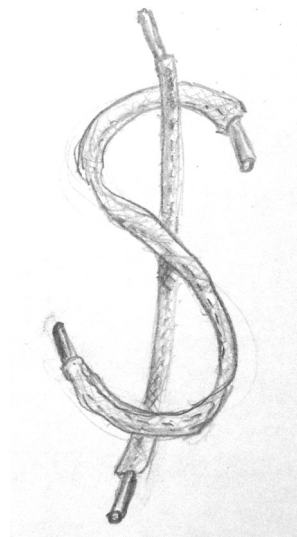
Future owners will be bound by the conservation easement's terms. The land trust is responsible for making sure the easement's terms are followed. This is done through annual or more frequent monitoring of the land.

As non-profit organizations, land trusts rely on donations and grants for operating expenses and for acquiring land and easements. Donors often provide monetary support, but it is not uncommon for conservation-minded landowners to donate an easement on their land, or the land itself. Some land trusts also receive funds from government programs to acquire, protect, and manage land. Some trusts can afford to pay employees, but many others such as the McKinleyville Land Trust depend entirely on volunteers.

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View from "Chah-GAH-Cho," a land trust property. This relatively unknown, publicly accessible, jewel of McKinleyville is located behind the Mill Creek (Kmart) Shopping Center.



A LITTLE GOES A LONG WAY... HELP US LENGTHEN OUR SHOESTRING (BUDGET)

by Gina Rimson

Donations and volunteers are the essence of the McKinleyville Land Trust. We are a small tax-exempt nonprofit run entirely by a volunteer board without a staff or an office. Despite its barebones nature, the organization manages three properties and monitors several conservation easements in our community. On top of the tasks board members do as land stewards, they also raise funds to cover the MLT's expenses each year; the largest being the cost of liability insurance needed to keep our properties open to the public.

Asking for donations and putting on fundraisers is a large part of the work of any nonprofit board – but many land trusts have a director and other paid staff to carry out managerial and day-to-day operations. The McKinleyville Land Trust board and other volunteers do it all themselves. We have a very small operating budget and rely on residents in our community to support our projects through volunteering and making donations. Our annual income consists primarily of approximately \$2,500 in donations, \$2,500 from the food booth at the North Country Fair, and another \$1,200 from our annual dinner. Donations make up 35% of our annual income! We manage to leverage a lot of conservation efforts with, after fundraising expenses, an operating budget of about \$6,500.

Where does our money go? The MLT's greatest expense is our liability and volunteer insurance. With three properties totaling more than 85 acres open to the public and hundreds of volunteer hours spent working on our

projects, we must maintain this coverage, which costs about \$2,300 per year. We also spend funds on repairs, mowing, newsletter printing, and membership dues to the Land Trust Alliance, the California Council of Land Trusts, and the California Northern Region Land Trust Council.

Your support of the McKinleyville Land Trust is vital. We need your contributions to help pay for the continued maintenance and repairs of our properties:

The Mad River Bluffs trails and river access were improved this past year using about \$250,000 in state park bond funds received in cooperation with the Redwood Community Action Agency. This wonderful addition to the community will need money spent each year to maintain these amenities and improvements.

The MLT also hopes to be able to develop a small trail system at Chah-GAH-Cho, our 9-acre site behind the Mill Creek Shopping Center. Until that time, the MLT spends money and lots of volunteer hours each year at the site to clear invasive blackberries, keep the meadows open, and remove trash.

The MLT is continuing to improve the Dow's Prairie Educational Wetland by completing trail improvements that were begun in 2011, removing invasive species, planting native vegetation, and constructing an interpretive sign at the site.

In addition to the money spent on insurance and property improvements, the MLT is a (Continued on page 5...)

WITH LOW OVERHEAD COSTS, A DONATION TO MLT GOES FAR. NO FUNDING GOES TOWARD SALARIES, BENEFITS, ETC. VOLUNTEERS DO IT ALL.

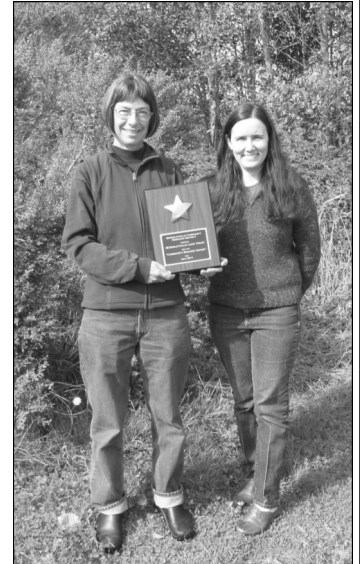
BUDGET (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4...)

member of the national Land Trust Alliance and the statewide California Council of Land Trusts. Belonging to these professional organizations gives the MLT and other small land trusts access to considerable materials, information, and experts involved with land trusts, conservation easements, and stewardship policies and practices. The MLT budgets \$600 annually for dues to these organizations.

The MLT has several recommended donation amounts, but does ask for a minimum of \$25 for those wishing to receive the newsletters. In the past, the MLT has received average donations of \$50 from individuals, but several others send in larger checks, with a small group of supporters donating up to \$500 each year. Getting a three-

figure donation is cause to celebrate! You can donate today, or make plans to include the MLT in your estate. Several years ago, one McKinleyville resident, who wished to remain anonymous, donated some of her bank stock upon her death. That \$10,000 gift helped give the MLT a reserve account, the majority of which it still has today.

The federal government has recognized the public benefit of land trusts and has acknowledged this by making the MLT a 501(c)(3) tax-exempt nonprofit. Take advantage of this opportunity today and make a tax-deductible donation to the McKinleyville Land Trust, PO Box 2723, McKinleyville, CA 95519. Your money will be put to good use for our community.



Our Community Builder Award shown by board members Nancy Correll and Laura Bridy. See more about it on the last page.

A GIGANTIC **THANK YOU** TO OUR VOLUNTEERS!

We couldn't do it without you! Nanette Kelley, Jen Kalt, Frank Bickner, David Powell, Darci Short, Kevin Wright, Mimi Morgan, Pat Dougherty, Jeff Dunk, Haleigh Dunk, Bill Zielinski, Laura Bridy, Dorothy Klein, Gina Rimson, Emily Teraoka, Travis Bullock, Maya Bickner, Allison Hartley, Johnny Calkins, Larry Hand, Rhonda Farro, Kristin Schmidt, Greg Jaso, Cindy Wilcox, Julie Neander, Gordon Leppig, Lyn Bryan, Jason Teraoka, Pat Evans, Silvie Leppig,

Danielle Davis, Trent McGowan, Dana Lester, David Couch, Judy Haggard, Carmen Arguello, Leonel Arguello, Chris Heppe, Adele Nitkau, Katie Farro, James Mills, Loren Fennell, Tom Lisle, Nancy Correll, Jason Garglick, Katelyn Wilcox, Jack Rimson, Tavish Kelley, Pete Haggard, Richard Duning, Allen Bird, Joyce King, David Kelley, Brady Anderson, Mathew Jenkins, the wonderful group of volunteers from the McKinleyville Church of the Latter-Day Saints, and more.

A BATTY DINNER!

Save the date! Our Annual Dinner is scheduled for March 31, 2012 at 6 pm. The speaker will be Ted Weller, a biologist specializing in bats. We look forward to a stimulating evening with good food, good friends, a raffle and the opportunity to participate in and support the local community and MLT.





New Board Member Laura Bridy.

PRESENTING OUR NEW BOARD MEMBER...

Laura Bridy recently joined the board of the McKinleyville Land Trust. She has a wide variety of environmental and natural resources related training and experience. After she earned a Bachelor of Arts degree with honors in Biology and Psychology from the University of California at Santa Cruz, she worked for the National Park Service, performing educational nature programs; fish, wildlife, and amphibian surveys; data management; and archiving. Currently, she works as an Assistant Project Manager at a local non-profit, Pacific Coast Fish, Wildlife and Wetlands Restoration Association, performing grant-writing, project tracking, invoicing, website development, and reporting to support habitat restoration

projects.

Passionate about protecting the open space and rural charm of McKinleyville, she has helped at various Land Trust events such as site clean-ups, speaker dinners, and the North Country Fair fundraising booth for the past 6 years. She is looking forward to being more deeply involved in the organization. On the artistic side, she is helping develop the Land Trust website, newsletters, and utilizes digital video and still cameras to help document Land Trust events.

In her spare time, she enjoys exploring and photographing the natural areas of our region with her rescued border-collie mix, Molly.



Botanist Jen Kalt describes the botany of the Bluffs during the trail opening celebration.

MAD RIVER BLUFFS TRAIL (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2)

made ADA accessible and leads to a stunning overlook above the Mad River and Pacific Ocean.

A Mad River Bluffs Trail Opening Celebration was held on Saturday, June 11th at the site's big grassy area. The MLT board was there to discuss the history of the site and local naturalists Jen Kalt and Pete Haggard led a walk throughout the bluff property. The celebration was well attended by the public and since then, many first-time

trail users have been seen wandering around the trail system having a great time.

The Mad River Bluffs trail network is located just west of Hiller Park, and can be accessed directly from the parking area just north of the junction of Hiller Road and Ocean Drive.

Come on out and enjoy the beautiful views of the Mad River, the ocean, the forest, and the meadows. It's a wonderful place to walk!



SUPPORT MLT AND GET YOUR MUG TOO!

Mugs designed by Dorothy Klein are available! Tastefully done in cobalt blue, sky blue, or green glass with silver trilliums, they are \$8 (including tax) and would make a great gift. The mugs can be ordered by calling MLT at 839-LAND or purchased at Blake's Books in McKinleyville.

RESTORATION OF AN EDUCATIONAL WETLAND

Eighty-eight native plants were installed at the Dows Prairie Educational Wetland by half a dozen volunteers in late October.

A grand time was had by all. A rich mixture of local species were planted along the upper bank, open areas, and existing vegetation boundaries. Species included hazelnut, twinberry, Oregon crab apple, shore pine, Sitka spruce, cascara, Nootka rose, western azalea, red currant, and red elderberry.

Thank you to Suzanne Isaacs at the Humboldt Fish Action Council for planning and supplying the vegetation. And thank you to the invaluable volunteers who supplied their labor of love and levity!

The Dow's Prairie Wetland is located just west of the Dows' Prairie School and provides educational opportunities for students. It is open to the public by appointment only, due to the sensitive nature of the plantings.



Volunteers helping at the planting party

MCKINLEYVILLE LAND TRUST BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2011

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Emily Teraoka

Laura Bridy

MISSION STATEMENT

The McKinleyville Land Trust is a non-profit, public benefit corporation. The McKinleyville Land Trust promotes voluntary conservation of land for nature, timber, agriculture, education, recreation, history, and scenery. The Trust is a way for people to donate land or conservation easements in perpetuity as a means of accomplishing their personal conservation goals.

The McKinleyville Land Trust is a member of the Land Trust Alliance, the California Council of Land Trusts and the California Northern Region Land Trust Council.

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Phone: 707-839-LAND

E-mail:
info@mckinleyvillelandtrust.org

Editor: Nancy Correll

Designer and Editor: Laura Bridy

Image Credits by Pages:

Laura Bridy 1, 3, 4, 6 (Mug), 7, 8

Richard Duning 2, 5, 6 (Overlook)

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P.O. Box 2723
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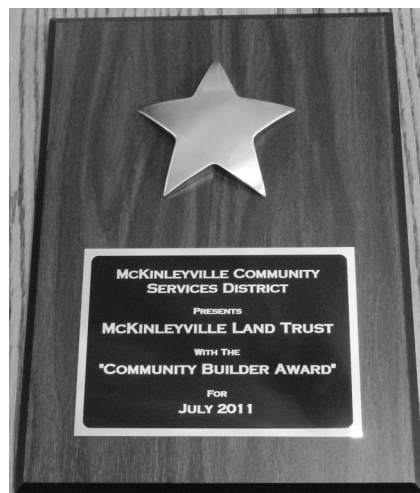
AWARD BESTOWED UPON US!

The McKinleyville Land Trust was honored with the Community Building Award from McKinleyville Community Services District (MCSD) this year. The award was presented at the July 20 meeting of MCSD, by Chairperson Helen Edwards.

The Land Trust is gratified to have our work over the years recognized and appreciated by the District, especially in light of the several projects in which we have collaborated with the District. The Mad River Bluffs project (see p. 1), particularly, required working closely with MCSD staff, to coordinate trail construction and create a seamless fit between our trail system and that of Hiller Park.

Our community, like any other, needs opportunities to be outdoors, in a natural environment. MCSD's

Recreation Committee has built a great program of activities and athletic facilities, which help people find positive ways to exercise, to learn, to participate in activities with others, and to enjoy the outdoors.



The McKinleyville Land Trust would like to work with the MCSD to protect open spaces such as streamside areas, small farms, working forests, and wetlands that still remain in and around McKinleyville. Together with a system of bike and hiking trails, beaches and parks, we can enhance McKinleyville as the town between the ocean and the forest.

We look forward to continuing our collaboration with MCSD in maintenance of the Mad River Bluffs trails and facilities, as well as management of vegetation on both properties.