



THE MCKINLEYVILLE LAND TRUST NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2012 NUMBER 29

DOW'S PRAIRIE STUDENTS LEARN WHILE PLAYING IN THE MUD WITH BUGS

By Tom Lisle and Nanette Kelley

This is no ordinary classroom: With no floor, roof, nor walls, it's open to the sky, and it's full of dirt, mud, and bugs.

The Dows Prairie Educational Wetland (DPEW) - located right next to Dows Prairie School - is the only local certified US Fish & Wildlife Service Schoolyard Habitat. This 2.5-acre site, owned by the McKinleyville Land Trust (MLT), contains a seasonal pond, and is the best surviving example in McKinleyville of a natural wetland. DPEW is a rare resource for natural history education, and with the help of Schoolyard Habitat funds, Nanette Kelly (MLT's liaison), and community members, the Dows Prairie School is taking full advantage of it.

This was the year that school programs for the Dows Prairie Educational Wetland really got underway.

(Continued on page 2...)



Second graders learn about local mammals from Humboldt State University student teachers.

HARBRINGERS OF SPRING: TRILLIUMS



By Leonel Arguello

While we soak in the depths of our Humboldt County winter, we are not far from the first strikingly beautiful flowering plants of spring, the Trilliums! As February rolls to an end, the search can begin for wakerobins, who unfurl their leaves of three and delicate white/purple petals in the earliest days of spring, whispering a promise of more wildflowers to come.

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Second graders intensively search for bugs in the grass.

DOW'S PRAIRIE ED. WETLAND (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

Last May, Dows Prairie Student Council leaders Lydia Kenyon and Adrienne Washington happily cut the Pacific Chorus frog green ribbon with former Principal Jane Rowland, officially opening the school's garden gate into DPEW. The gate was paid for by the McKinleyville Union School District to provide student and staff safe access to DPEW by avoiding the traffic of Grange Road. It also permits easy access from the school garden, where native plants are being propagated for the Wetland. Attendees at the garden gate ribbon cutting included MCSD Director John Corbett, who initiated and nurtured the creation of the Wetland, MLT Dow's Prairie Educational Wetland Liaison Nanette Kelley, Fish & Wildlife Service Supervisor Paula Golightly, McKinleyville Union School District Superintendent Dena McCullough, Dows Prairie Principal Jane Rowland, Dows Prairie Student Council, and Mr. Culps' 5th grade class.

An ongoing series of educational specialists in local ecology, history, cultural studies, and art got underway last winter.

On February 3rd, the third grade classes gathered around two anthills (the larger close to 4 feet in height) for a talk with MLT board member Tom Lisle about the habits and lifecycles of "thatch ants." Although Lisle's vocations and volunteer work are rooted in the earth sciences, his love of ants was inspired by his own child. "I've always been interested in natural history and started studying ants after helping my son with a Science Fair project about 15 years ago," said Lisle.

On May 10th as the multipurpose room lights were dimmed, the bats came out! With the aid of a vivid large screen presentation, bat ecologist Ted Weller of the USDA, Forest Service Pacific Southwest Research Station in Arcata spoke to Dows Prairie School first graders about bats. Weller educated the students about local bat populations, feeding habits, social behavior, roosts and habitat. The students were extremely enthusiastic about the topic, asking so many questions the lecture went into overtime.

On November 18th, Wiyot Cultural Director/ Tribal Historic and Preservation Officer Briannon Fraley visited with the fourth grade classes at Dow's Prairie School. Her presentation "History, Culture & Now" was highly interactive and conversations with the students included discussions of Indian stereotypes, Wiyot history and traditional territories, and uses of natural resources including plants indigenous to traditional Wiyot territory.

This fall, outdoor education went into high gear as DPEW became the classroom for Humboldt State University Recreation Administration lecturer Jennifer Ortega and her thirty-two Environmental Education student teachers. Ortega's group worked with first, second and third graders. This spring, MLT liaison Nanette Kelley will be coordinating outdoor wetland activities and lecturers for the remaining grades.

Second graders learned about the wetland ecosystem and its importance by studying wetland soils and the nutrient cycle. They looked for macro invertebrates, local mammal skulls, tracks and (Continued on page 9...)

TRILLIUMS (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1)

Every species of the genus *Trillium* (named for their three leaves) known from California can be found in our local area, and they are all quite striking in their way. The most common trillium with a stalked flower is *T. ovatum*. Known variously as the Pacific, western, white, or common trillium or wakerobin, it can be found in many locales of Humboldt Bay, including MLT properties in McKinleyville. Its white flowers, held above the leaves, age to pink. Watch for it at Mad River Bluffs and Chah-GAH-Cho.

The rest of our local trilliums have sessile flowers—they sit right on top of the whorl of three dark-mottled leaves—and can be harder to tell from one another. The giant white wakerobin (*T. albidum*) has white flowers (but sometimes they're purple). The giant trillium (*T. chloropetalum*) often has dark purple flowers (unless they're yellow, and of course sometimes they're white). *T. angustipetalum*, the narrow-petal wakerobin, also has dark purple flowers. These may or may not occur in our local community, but you are certain to see them in the local forests of Humboldt and Del Norte counties.

One of our smaller trilliums, and the least often seen, is no longer in the genus *Trillium*. The brook wakerobin (formerly *T. rivale*) has been reassigned to a monotypic genus, *Psuedotrillium* (now *P. rivale*). This species is endemic to the Siskiyou Mountains of southern Oregon and northern California, usually on serpentine soils. In addition to its small stature, the brook wakerobin can be identified by its leaves—stalked with silvery venation. The white or pale lavender flowers, on stalks as well, often

seem to nod along with the chuckling of the nearby stream.

Trillium seeds can be spread by ants or other insects. At maturity, the base and core of the trillium ovary turns soft and spongy. Trillium seeds typically have a fat-rich organ-like appendage called an eliasome that attracts ants. The ants extract the seeds from the decaying ovary and take them to their nest, where they eat the elaiosomes. Then, the remaining seed, now scarified, is taken out of the nest (ants are rather fastidious housekeepers) and deposited in the potassium-rich ant garbage dump, called a midden. Trillium seeds germinate readily in this environment.

The notoriety of trilliums has led to two frequently asked questions: “If you pick a trillium, does it really take seven years for it to bloom again?” and “Do we have any rare trilliums locally?” No, and no. While they do usually take five to seven years before blooming the first time, most older trilliums have a store of energy in their bulb-like root that will enable them to bounce back from damage—but they are fragile in those first several years. If you see a wakerobin, photograph it, admire it, but leave it be for the enjoyment by others and as food for our native ants! As for rare trilliums, a subspecies of *T. ovatum* (*ssp. oettingeri*) called the Salmon Mountains wakerobin grows in the high-elevation (4000'+) Klamath Region. Not being “listed” doesn't make trilliums any less special, though. Seems like they are as fleeting as spring itself, so enjoy them while they last, and know that more wildflowers are right around the corner.



WILDFLOWERS
ARE RIGHT
AROUND THE
CORNER.



PLANNED GIVING: FOR EVERYONE – FOREVER

By Nancy Correll

“For Everyone – Forever”

Have you ever wondered why this is the motto of the McKinleyville Land Trust (MLT)?

The reason is this: when a land trust protects land, either by accepting a conservation easement or by acquiring it as a fee property, that land trust has committed to protecting that land in perpetuity. That means forever.

It means, for instance, that succeeding generations of land trust board and staff will monitor each easement annually, will make sure the requirements of the easement are carried out, and will defend the easement against possible legal challenges... forever. Land that is owned by the land trust will be taken care of and made available for public use and enjoyment... forever.

If for any reason, the land trust should go out of existence, it must turn over its property and easements to another non-profit or government organization, which is then charged with protecting that land... forever.

To make this promise, a land trust needs to plan ahead. The MLT, for instance, needs to accumulate funds which will help in the future to monitor, steward, and protect lands from possible legal challenges. To do this, MLT has two funds:

The MLT Conservation & Heritage Fund and the Lewis Klein Environmental Fund are both held by the Humboldt Area Foundation, which invests the principal and disburses funds to the MLT for its non-profit purposes.

You, too, can help us protect the natural areas held by the MLT far into the future. A gift to either of these two funds can help the MLT accumulate an endowment to fund ongoing stewardship in the future.

You may want to plan ahead, as you think about your legacy for future generations. Consider a planned gift from your estate. A gift of funds, property, or stocks can help assure ongoing protection of these open spaces that we protect.

The Humboldt Area Foundation, in addition to accepting donations for the MLT funds, can help you plan. Their bequest officer is Christine Witt, Director of Donor Services. She can be reached at 442-2993.

Land Trusts offer a unique way to give to future generations the gift of beautiful, healthy, open space. These protected lands provide natural habitat for native plants and animals. They are also places for people to enjoy the bounties of nature, to study the natural world, to be in beautiful natural places. Plan your legacy far into the future with a donation to MLT's reserve funds. And know that you have done your part to preserve the beautiful places for all of our children.

WE ENCOURAGE &
ACCEPT DONATIONS
OF TIME, EXPERTISE;
ANY CONTRIBUTION
NO MATTER HOW
SMALL OR LARGE
DOES A GREAT DEAL
TOWARDS HELPING
MLT AND OUR
GREAT LITTLE
COMMUNITY!!!

WE NOW HAVE AN EVEN
EASIER WAY TO GIVE:
OUR NEW SECURE ONLINE
DONATION BUTTON AT
[WWW.MLANDTRUST.ORG/
DONATIONS](http://WWW.MLANDTRUST.ORG/DONATIONS)

MONETARY
CONTRIBUTIONS ARE TAX-
DEDUCTIBLE.

2012 FINANCIAL OVERVIEW

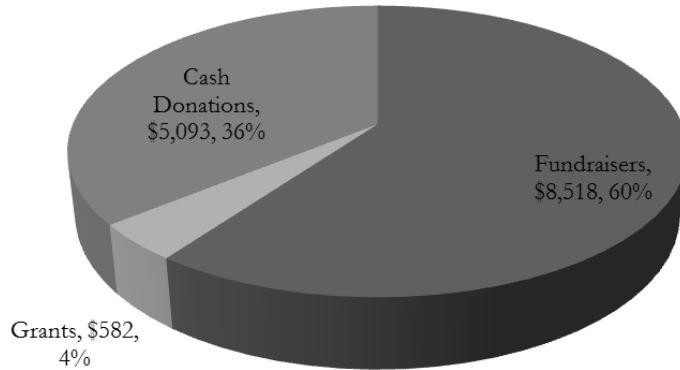
By Brenda Pease, Treasurer

MLT's income is predominantly from cash donations and fundraisers, as shown in the chart to the right.

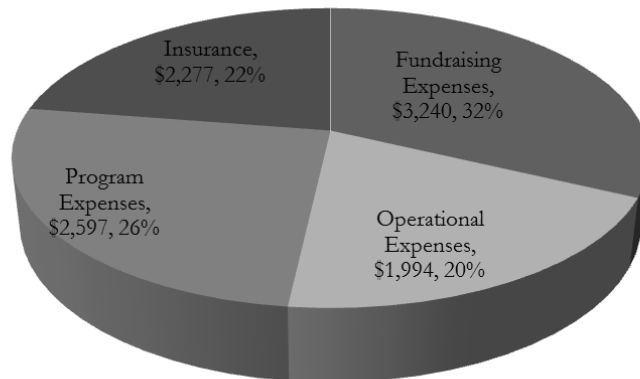
MLT operates on \$10,000 a year, and the chart to the bottom right is how it breaks down.

Operational and insurance expenses are what we need to exist as an organization. Program expenses include Dow's Prairie Educational Wetlands trail improvements, Chah-GAH-Cho mowings and preparations for a trail project. As an all-volunteer non-profit organization, all the Fundraising, Operational, and Insurance expenses are simply the minimum needed to maintain the existence of MLT. The program expenses (and a great deal of fundraising) are done with volunteer labor. Last year, the combined Board and other volunteers contributed over 1,800 hours of work. With this bare bones budget, we can steward three properties for the public benefit, and also monitor land protected with conservation easements.

INCOME



EXPENSES



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

We couldn't do it without you! Adele Nipkau, Adin Shy-Sobol, Aiko & Edwin Uyeki, Alison Hartley, Allen Bird, Almquist Lumber Co., Andrea Christenson, Barbara MacGregor, Bill Zielinski, Brian Gregg, Bruce Heart Dancing, Caelidh Liddell, Carmen Arguello, Carol Suarez, Cate Be and the members of the Natural Resources Club at Humboldt State University, Cathy Deyo, Clara Bolster, Clarence & Deborah Hostler, Courtney Blake, Curves, Cypress Grove, Danielle Orr, Danielle Davis, Darci Short, David Couch, David Kelley Woodworking, David McMurray, Diane Ryerson, Dick Taylor Chocolate, Don & Sylvia Garlick, Don Juans, Dorothy Klein, Emma Held, Explore North Coast, Fieldbrook Winery, Figuredios, Flora Barbash, Frank Bickner, George Pease, Gina & Jack Rimson, GoGreen Club at McKinleyville High School, Gordon Leppig, Greg Bundros, Greg Jaso, Guy on Broom, Haleigh Dunk, Healthsport, Humboldt Sanitation, Irene & Hugh Holt, Jason and Emily Teraoka, Jimmie Stuckey, Jean Reichert, Jeff Dunk, Jerry Dinzes, Johnny Calkins, Joyce King, Judy Haggard, Julian Barbash, Julie Neander, Katie Farro, Katie White, Ken Miller, Kim Orbik, Kim Tellez, Kokotat, Kristin Schmidt, Kyle Copp, Larry & Sandra Margler, Larry Hand, Laura Bridy, Leonel Arguello, Liam Doherty, Linda Evans, Living Earth Landscapes, Lori Dengler, Lynne Bryan, Macauley Mathieu-Busher, Mad River Gardens, Mark, Cindy & Forrest Wilcox, Maya Bickner, Maya Morales, Meredith Pease, Mikaela Butler, Miller Farms, Mirador Glass, Molly Moonbeam, Monica Bueno, Mr. & Mrs. Felter, Nancy Correll, Nanette Kelley, Northcoast Horticulture, Orchids for the People, Pat Dougherty, Paul Warner, Penny Brogden, Pete Haggard, Peter Naveen, Plaza Grill/Moonstone, Rachel Shea, Ramone's Bakery, Rebecca Rimson, Redwood Yogurt, Rhonda & Mitch Farro, Richard Dunning, Robert Goodman Wines, Robin Hamlin, Ryan Alyward, Sam King, Samara Restoration, Sarah McGuire, Sarah Pilkington, Shirley Bird, Singing Tree Gardens, Silvie Leppig, Six Rivers Brewery, Sun Valley Floral Farms, Sweeper, Tango del Sol, Tavish Kelley, Ted Weller, Teri Bundros, The North Coast Co-Op, Tom Lisle, Victor Dumlao, Wildberries Marketplace, and more.



Exploring the trails of
Chah-GAH-Cho

CHAH-GAH-CHO

By Leonel Arguello

Chah-GAH-Cho (CGC), the first property acquired by the McKinleyville Land Trust (MLT) in 1996, refers to a former Wiyot village reported to have been located nearby. This 9.5 acre parcel of land is located behind the Kmart store and Healthsport Fitness center.

Formerly a pasture for cattle and horses as recently as 20 years ago, this parcel is now home to predominantly a regenerating spruce-alder dominated forest. After acquisition, the MLT received a grant to develop a Habitat Restoration Plan. In 1997 the plan was completed and had as its primary goals to enhance habitat value while maintaining/enhancing public access. Many McKinleyville residents are unaware that this property has one of the best publicly accessible views of the Mad River as it winds through the Mad River Bottoms. The MLT Board is currently in the planning phase for improving access to this property both for educational and recreational purposes as envisioned in the 1997 plan.

The CGC property is bounded on the east by Central Ave, on the northeast side by the Mill Creek Market Place, on the northwest side by private land, on the west side by farmland grazed by cattle, and on the south by a private residence within the Mill Creek corridor. The eastern 2/3 of the property can be characterized as a coastal spruce-alder dominated forest with significant understory of California blackberry and coyote bush. The western 1/3 of the property can be characterized as open pasture affording the spectacular view of the Mad River Bottoms. The Habitat Restoration Plan call for a mix of strategies and actions to allow for

native forest recovery, exotic species control, maintenance of the pasture and view to the west, and improved community access.

It was originally envisioned that planting of native tree species would be needed to assist the parcel in recovering a coastal forest. Over the last 15 years, however, mother nature has done the job most successfully for the McKinleyville Land Trust. Despite planting just a few trees, a native forest has come roaring back on its own onto the parcel, so much so that the Board is even considering thinning some areas of very dense tree stands to allow for understory growth and to reduce tree competition. Some options are being discussed for thinning some of the trees and generating a firewood sale for the community. To be sure the Board wants to keep the current footprint of tree cover as it currently exists, but along the western edge of the forest and within the pasture, the Board may remove some trees periodically to maintain a more open feel. We will be seeking volunteers from the community to help us with this project as more concrete plans are made.

Invasive species control was discussed in the 1997 plan as well. While many of the species discussed have not become a serious problem for the parcel, jubata (aka pampas) grass has become problematic. This invasive species requires attention to control and several jubata removal days will likely be scheduled to effectively control this aggressive exotic grass species. Another problematic species is English ivy. This plant grows extensively along the southern boundary of the parcel and (Continued on page 7...)

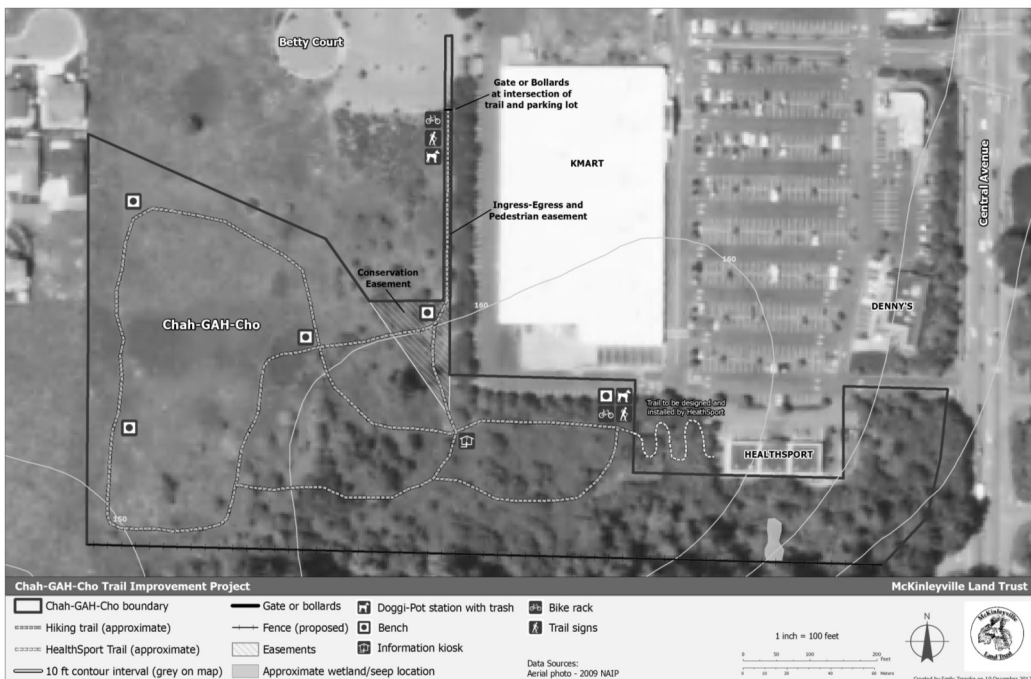
CHAH-GAH-CHO (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6)

will require regular control activities to keep it from encroaching into CGC. The native California blackberry has come to occupy much of the central area of CGC, climbing up into trees in an attempt to maintain access to the sun. A few of the thickly vined areas may be managed to keep it growing on the ground and not upwards into the trees, particularly in those areas where we may thin out some of the trees – nearest the pasture. Most of the California blackberry vine areas, however, will be left to grow in peace.

Part of the infrastructure envisioned by the plan and Board to entice community use and access is a series of graveled loop trails in the existing forest and pasture for visitors, young and old, to stroll. A couple of entry points will be created that will access the proposed trail system. Benches will be provided at strategic locations to allow visitors to rest and relax, while taking in the view. We envision a place for the community members to visit and recharge their bat-

teries in relative peace. Taking in a morning stroll or watching a fall sunset from the pasture, will be encouraged while visiting this quiet corner of McKinleyville. With sufficient funding, we will strive to ensure that some of the trails in the pasture are ADA accessible, so that all community members are able to take in the vista of the Mad River Bottoms and enjoy this parcel equally. We will be seeking donations, volunteers, and assistance to help us achieve this vision.

The Board is very excited for the plans taking shape at Chah-GAH-Cho. We very much look forward to working with and seeking input from the community on how to create a wonderful place for all of us to visit, escape from our daily stresses, and take in the scenery and solitude that is Chah-GAH-Cho. If you are interested, please call 839-LAND, and leave us a message on how best we can reach you and we'll call you back. See you at Chah-GAH-Cho!



The latest draft plan for the Chah-GAH-Cho Improvement Project.



New Board Member
Leonel Arguello



New Board Member
Brenda Pease

CHANGES TO THE BOARD OF DIRECTORS

We would like to share an update with you regarding a few changes to our Board of Directors.

Gina Rimson left the MLT board in April, after serving two separate terms as Treasurer. She also has been the powerhouse organizer of our main fundraising events, the Annual Dinner and the Gyro booth at the North Country Fair. Gina took the lead in restoration and development of Dow's Prairie Educational Wetland. Gina continues to contribute substantial organizing work on the fundraisers, and we look forward to every opportunity to work with her.

Allen Bird has served for 15 years, including 6 years as President of the Board. Although he is greatly missed, his many beautiful photographs of the MLT properties will continue to grace our publications for years.

Brenda Pease became our Treasurer in April. She is the Accounting Manager of The Danco Group in Arcata. She holds a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration with an em-

phasis in accounting, from Humboldt State University. She resides in McKinleyville with her husband George and their three children.

Greg Jaso, DDS, has been involved in a few projects of MLT for the last few years, notably putting in great effort to find and remove trash, and trimming questionable trees at Mad River Bluffs. He appreciates the opportunity to keep a healthy balance between nature and public enjoyment for the McKinleyville area.

Leonel Arguello, a resident of McKinleyville, received both his undergraduate and graduate degrees in Ecology and Botany, respectively, at Humboldt State University. He is a botanist at Redwood National Park, supervising the Vegetation Management program since 2001. He has volunteered with MLT in the past, and we welcome his expertise.

We are soon looking forward to sharing more detailed bios of our board members on our website.

MCKINLEYVILLE LAND TRUST BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2012

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Nancy Correll
Vice President:
Tom Lisle
Secretary:
Dorothy Klein
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Brenda Pease
Joyce King
Judy Haggard
Emily Teraoka
Laura Bridy
Greg Jaso
Leonel Arguello

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.

For Everyone—Forever.

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WWW.MLANDTRUST.ORG

DOW'S PRAIRIE ED. WETLAND (CONTINUED FROM PAGE 2)

scat. They also played “Little Professor” where the students teach by holding up cards or puppets and reading to their peers about the wetland inhabitants such as bats, deer, thatch ants, frogs, spirea, silverweed, egrets and song birds.

The McKinleyville Land Trust will continue to seek community partners to help maintain this rare community resource. With funding from the McKinleyville Area Fund, a 600-square-foot gravel staging area will be constructed in DPEW to provide a place for students and instructors to meet, talk, and work. This winter, a new crop of invasive Scotchbroom will be attacked with weed wrenches and shovels.

We continue to rely on volunteers including students, parents, teachers, MLT board members, and natural resource organizations such as the California Conservation Corps and the Go Green Club, to do this necessary maintenance.

Our next community work party date is scheduled for January 12, 2013, starting at 9AM with an educational activity for all ages mid-day to be announced. If you would like to help with this and future workdays, please keep up to date on our website and our Facebook page.

Due to the sensitive nature of plantings, the Wetland is not open to the public, but interested parties and educational groups can contact the Land Trust and schedule a visit.

We owe the success of DPEW to the community and all the people mentioned above, but who really keeps it going is Nanette Kelley— the MLT-DPEW liaison— and the administrative staff at Dows Prairie School. Special appreciation goes out to retired MLT board member Gina Rimson for her indefatigable work. Gina, who has seen this through from the purchase of the Wetland in 2002 through the opening of the Dows Prairie School garden gate last May, will truly be missed.



The Americorps Youth Service celebrates a day of invasive plant eradication last Martin Luther King Day.

OUR NEXT
COMMUNITY
WORK PARTY AT
DOW'S PRAIRIE
IS
JANUARY 12,
2013

DINNER DATE WITH A RARE AND ELUSIVE CREATURE

Save the date! Our Annual Dinner is scheduled for March 9, 2013 at Azalea Hall in McKinleyville. It will feature a presentation on “Understanding and Conserving a Unique North Coast Carnivore: the Humboldt Marten” by Keith M. Slauson, a wildlife biologist with the Forest Service, pursuing his PhD. We look forward to an enjoyable evening with excellent food, great friends, a raffle and the opportunity to learn about, participate in and support the local community and MLT.





MCKINLEYVILLE
LAND TRUST

P.O. Box 2723
McKinleyville, CA 95519

CALLING ALL MAD RIVER BLUFFS LOVERS!

By Emily Teraoka

It's been a busy year out at Mad River Bluffs. The trails are getting a lot of use; we are thrilled to see all the people out enjoying this terrific property, just to the west of Hiller Park. The wildlife has been thriving; we have seen owls, and ground nesting bird nests. And the plants have been growing. Oh, have they been growing.

We have had three groups of volunteers, the Go Green Club from McKinleyville High School, the Natural Resources Club from Humboldt State University, and Humboldt Trail Stewards come and spend some time pulling invasive ivy from the woods around the Baduwat Trail. They were incredible and we brought over 800 pounds of ivy to green waste!

We have had to remove several trees that fell on the trails during last winter's storms and are ready to tackle what this year's weather may bring. We have also had several garbage clean-ups this year removing waste left by some illegal campers. Humboldt Sanitation has been wonderful in taking all of the garbage and green waste that we have removed from Mad River Bluffs for free! We are truly thankful for that and the hard work of all the volunteers. We will have some more volunteer opportunities in the coming months.



We are starting a "**Friends of Mad River Bluffs**" email/phone list. This is intended to be a group of people who regularly visit or just love Mad River Bluffs. This list will be used to keep people informed of trail updates, guided walks, and work days (weed pulls, clean-ups, and trail maintenance).

We would also like for the **Friends of Mad River Bluffs** to keep the McKinleyville Land Trust Board updated about any questions, suggestions, or problems regarding this great community resource. This could be ideas for improvement, alerts about graffiti, empty doggi-pot containers, downed trees, illegal camping, etc. The members of the MLT board visit Mad River Bluffs as much as possible, but we are a fairly small group and the more people involved, the better!

Mad River Bluffs is *your* property, and we need your help keeping it in the condition we all want and love.

If you are interested in joining the **Friends of Mad River Bluffs**, or if you have anything to communicate, please send an email to: emily@mmlandtrust.org or call 839-LAND and let us know!

Thanks and Happy (Mad River Bluffs) Trails!