



THE MCKINLEYVILLE LAND TRUST NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2021/2022 NUMBER 38

Thirty two years living near Mad River Bluffs - By Duncan McNeill

August 1990 found Vicki and I buying our home on Hiller Road near the Hammond Trail. It was a tense summer with lots of attention on the timber industry and logging. Our neighbor's house had signs in their front yard proclaiming "This Family supported by Timber Dollars" and "Nuke Arcata & HSU". Not quite welcoming! We just had a baby, so we got a puppy also. As we explored the neighborhood, we soon discovered the gem of undeveloped land across the street that would soon become the Mad River Bluffs property of the McKinleyville Land Trust.

Vicki and I have always been enthralled with mother nature, and having a native pine/spruce forest right in our back yard gave us the chance to share this infatuation with our children. There were frequent before or after dinner walks to view the Mad River and the wild blue of the Pacific beyond. There were easy tranquil days where you can see everything reflected in the calm waters of the Mad River; wild days of winter with flood waters racing by, muddy and carrying trees and branches down to the ocean; crazy windy days when you can see the waves crashing beyond the slice of sand dunes that separate the river and the sea. Those windy days were also days to be very careful walking through the trails as trees creaked, groaned, and occasionally fell.

There was the year when the Mad River breached the spit of sand right opposite one of the property's overlooks. The breach did not last as it took only a few years for the mouth to march back to Clam Beach. The overlooks are great spots to watch wildlife. We have seen grey whales cavorting in the waves, and watched harbor seals and sealions chasing and eating salmon and steelhead. The estuary is a great spot to see all kinds of birds as well. One of my favorite times are when the Caspian Terns show up in late summer. They are also a sign for me to start looking for salmon and steelhead coming up the river with the tides.

Some of our most fun times have been the evening walks right at dusk. Sometimes owls hoot, and we walk the trails trying to find them. Usually, they are Great Horned owls. They are easiest to find in the spring, when the owlets are noisy begging to be fed. If you keep your eyes to the ground you could find owl pellets, the regurgitated remains of voles and gophers in a neat little package of fur and bones. If you're lucky, you will get to see other impressive birds of prey. We have seen many different hawks and falcons, but our favorite sighting is always a bald eagle or a peregrine falcon.

This forest was finally and fully protected from housing development in 2000. With the foresight of the local community and the California Coastal Commission, this unique coastal forest is now here for us all to enjoy. Come see the Mad River Bluffs. It is always different and interesting. A little spot, where mother nature can do her thing only slightly inconvenienced by us humans, and it's right here in our backyard in McKinleyville.



INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- 2 DOW'S PRAIRIE
- 2 VOLUNTEER TRAILS
STEWARDS
- 3 ATTN:DOG OWNERS
- 3 CHAH-GAH-CHO
UPDATE
- 4 NATURAL HISTORY
CORNER
- 4 MRB UPDATE
- 5 TREASURE'S UPDATE
- 5 THANK YOU
- 6 PRESIDENT'S MES-
SAGE

GETTING STUDENTS BACK OUT TO THE DOW'S PRAIRIE EDUCATIONAL WETLAND -

Emily Teraoka and Nanette Kelley



Things have been pretty quiet for the McKinleyville Land Trust Dow's Prairie Educational Wetland since schools were shut down in 2020/2021. However, schools are back in person and the warmer weather this winter has allowed some classes to get out to visit the wetland adjacent to Dow's Prairie Elementary School.

We have been thrilled to have students from the Pathmaker's Program (run by the Blue Lake Rancheria Tribe) venture out to the wetland to learn about indigenous STEAM (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math). The first-grade students learned about the "evil" scotch broom plant, what the word invasive means, and how invasive plants can impact the wetland ecosystem. The students were then offered a

solution for utilizing the invasive broom around the home – scotch broom brooms, without the seeds of course! The exercise was threefold: The kids learned how to identify the invasive plant, how to remove it from the ground, and how to make a broom!

The Dow's Prairie Educational Wetland is located on the unceded ancestral lands of the Wiyot Tribe and is the land trust's only restricted (non-public) access parcel. Available by appointment only or for use by Dow's Prairie Elementary School, it provides the opportunity for traditional ecological knowledge (TEK) indigenous education studies and an outdoor classroom space where students can easily socially distance while learning about the sensitive ecosystem.

For more information about the Dow's Prairie Educational Wetland, please message Nanette Kelley (@Nanette Kelley) on the MLT Facebook page or visit our website.

VOLUNTEER TRAIL STEWARDS - Vicki Ozaki

The McKinleyville Land Trust has partnered with the Humboldt Trails Council's Volunteer Trail Stewards (VTS) to hold volunteer trail workdays at MLT properties. The VTS organization (<https://humtrails.org/>) coordinates volunteers to help maintain local trails and make them safer. We look forward to this new collaboration and connecting to and building a community of volunteers at our MLT properties.

This year, MLT volunteer trail workdays will alternate between the Mad River Bluffs and Chah-GAH-Cho properties. We have plenty of projects to work on including: maintaining trails, pulling invasive plants, building/replacing handrails and much more. We plan to have 4 workdays this year on January 23, April 24, July 24 and October 23 on the third Sunday of the month from 10 am - 12 pm.

Our first volunteer trail day was held on January 23, 2022 at Mad River Bluffs. We had a very successful turnout with 15 volunteers and accomplished a lot in 2 hours. The group cut back vegetation on both sides of the Baduwa't Trail (East/West trail connects to the Hiller Park), removed encroaching limbs and vegetation from the south stairs, and removed a truck load of invasive English and cape ivy.

We want to thank Julie Neander who will be helping coordinate our MLT trail workdays. Volunteers like you can help make a significant difference in keeping our trails open and safe for all our trail users. Please join us on one of our workdays. Contact us at info@mckinleyvillelandtrust.org if you would like to be on our Volunteer Trail Stewards email list. Hope to see you on the trails!



ATTENTION DOG OWNERS: YOU ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR DOG AT ALL TIMES -

Emily Teraoka

The Mad River Bluffs and Chah-GAH-Cho trails both allow dog owners to walk their dogs off leash if they are under voice control. But what does under voice control mean? Voice control means that your dog will come when called, heel immediately on command, and refrain from barking. Your dog must be able to ignore other dogs, people, and wildlife and instead listen and obey you. This is not easy for many dogs. I know my dog can't do it!

The trails managed by the McKinleyville Land Trust are multi-use trails. This means you might encounter joggers, walkers, children, strollers, people with limited mobility, and even bikes and horses on any given day. If you are on the trails with your dogs, please remember the following:

Be respectful of other trail users – Keep your dog from jumping on people or strollers.

Keep our trails clean – Pick up your dog's waste and dispose of it in a trash can.

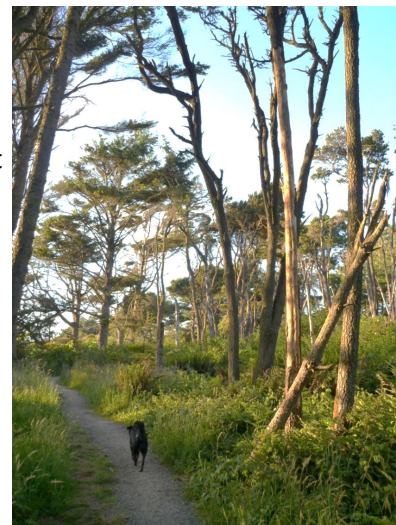
Your dog must be under voice control – Off leash does not mean out of control.

Maintain visual sight of your dog – if you can't see your dog, how do you know if they are under control (or if there is poop your need to pick up)?

Not all dogs are as friendly as yours – when passing non-dog walkers on the trail or another dog on a leash, reign in your dog or put on their leash.

Protect wildlife – Keep dogs close to you on all trails at all times.

The McKinleyville Land Trust properties are for everyone. Please help us keep them a safe and enjoyable place for the entire community.



WHAT'S HAPPENING AT CHA-GAH-CHO - Garry Reese

Over the last year, we have continued our partnership with John Shelter and his company, New Directions, for the oversight and maintenance of Chah-GAH-Cho (CGC). New Directions monitors CGC on a regular basis to pick-up trash, clear illegal encampments, and maintain vegetation. The efforts by New Directions have made CGC a more inviting space for community members to hike, relax, and enjoy the beautiful view of the Arcata Bottoms. For those who are not familiar, New Directions is a company that uses a non-adversarial and harm reduction approach to outreach to individuals experiencing homelessness and residing in illegal encampments. As part of their outreach efforts, the company offers resources and opportunities and educates the campers on ecological impacts and appropriate environmental stewardship. If you wish to know more about John Shelter and his New Directions group, you can visit their Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/thepeopleofnewdirections/>.

This last year has also seen a number of community members pitch in to help maintain CGC at work events put on by MLT and on their own. Pat and John Kulstad and others have been visiting CGC on a regular basis and helping with picking up trash and providing regular reports to the board about any issues at the property. This support from the community during the pandemic has been instrumental in ensuring that CGC remains a beautiful natural area. We look forward to scheduling more work events this year and introducing more community members to this unique open space. If you would like to know more about CGC and the future plans for habitat restoration and recreation improvements, you can visit the MLT website.

Natural History Moment- Leonel Arguello

Barred Owl

Barred owls are large, stocky birds only slightly smaller than the Great Horned Owl. They have rounded heads, no ear tufts, and medium length tails. Native to eastern North America, the fossil record indicates that they have been present for at least 11,000 years. Barred owls have been migrating west across the upper Midwest and Canadian provinces, assisted by planted tree corridors. This attractive owl, recently seen at MRB (see photo), have brown eyes and brown-and-white-striped plumage, and can pass completely unnoticed as it flies noiselessly through the dense canopy or roosts on a tree limb. Mostly active at night, it may hunt and call during the day as well. It mostly feeds on small mammals but has been known to feed on rabbits, other birds, snakes, salamanders, and fish. In the wild they normally live up to 10 years. The Great Horned Owl is their most serious predatory threat. Barred owls in turn are locally displacing the Northern Spotted Owl, a threatened species, through aggressive behavior and hybridization.



WHAT'S FLOWERING - Osoberry

One of the earlier, showier native plants to bloom here on the north coast is osoberry (*Oemlaria cerasiformis*). Native throughout most of California it is found near creeks but also in forested/woodland areas. It is an attractive deciduous shrub to small tree, usually between 10-20 feet tall. Osoberry flowers at the same time as Ribes species (Feb to Apr). Osoberry can be found at both Cha-GAH-Cho and Mad River Bluffs. The crushed foliage is reminiscent of green watermelon. The inch long fruits aren't especially dense but the flavor is somewhat like a mix of cherry, blueberry, olive, and cucumber, but sometimes can be astringent. This shrub is an excellent wildlife plant and you would do well to plant it in your yard. Waxwings and robins eat the fruit, and Anna's hummingbirds use the nectar. Allowed to grow into a thicket, osoberry provides cover and nesting sites. It is a valuable restoration plant and can sucker along streambanks easily. The name "oso" means bear in Spanish and the plant was named osoberry because of bear's fondness for the fruit.



What's Happening at MRB - Vicki Ozaki

During the pandemic, the trails at Mad River Bluffs have provided a beautiful and popular outdoor refuge for our community. It has been wonderful to see people enjoying the trails and the river access points at the north and south ends of the property. With the high use on these multi-use trails, there have been some conflicts between users. We ask that bike riders slow down on the trails and be courteous to trail walkers, and dog walkers are asked to control their dogs around other trail users. A new *Dog Walker's Rules of Behavior* will be posted soon at MRB to encourage good dog etiquette. We recognize that the majority of the dog owners are very responsible and courteous, but would like to reach those who are not as attentive.

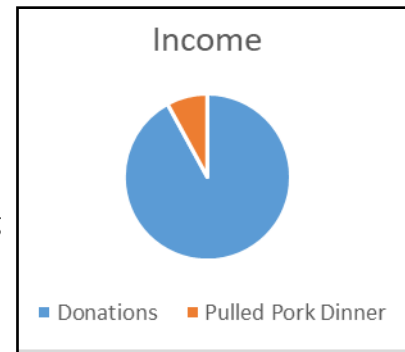
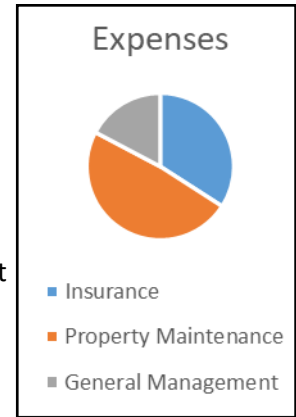
This year we were able to rebuild the south stair access that was in dire need of upgrading. Thanks to Steffen Allen for his work fixing the stairs and trail access. The north stairs continue to be in good shape. We cleared vegetation encroaching on the stairs to the river and the handrails were replaced. Unlike past years, 2021 was a quiet year for use by the unhoused population and plants are growing back in places that were heavily used. Unfortunately, ivy, pampas grass and other invasive plant species continue to gain ground, so there is plenty of work for volunteers who like being outdoors an improving habitat for McKinleyville's native plants and wildlife. We hope to host some invasive plant pull days this year.

TREASURER’S UPDATE - CINDY WILCOX

We would like to thank all of our outstanding 2021 donors and volunteers during this trying COVID year. Yet again, both our annual dinner and North Country Fair gyro booth were cancelled. So, this year we tried something new - a “take-out” pulled-pork dinner that was well supported by the community. It was a great fundraiser, but only provided a portion of the funds needed for the year. Thankfully, our 2021 donors (see list below) stepped up to bat, and gave us enough donations this year to cover our annual expenses. A home run! With these donations, we were able to complete some much needed work at all our properties including:

- Repairing both sets of stairs on our Mad River Bluff property
- Continuing working with New Directions to help pick-up garbage and negotiate with campers to find more adequate camping sites than at our Cha GAH Cho property,
- Continuing our ongoing battle with Scotch broom removal at DPEW

We were also able to pay our insurance, taxes, upgrade our website, and send out our newsletter. How can you help support the McKinleyville Land Trust? One of the easiest ways is to make a one-time, or better yet, recurring donation using the PayPal button on our website You can also send checks to: MLT, P.O. Box 2723, McKinleyville, CA 95519. Follow us on Facebook and Instagram to get notices about upcoming MLT fundraisers and events!



THANK YOU TO OUR VOLUNTEERS & DONORS

Steffen Allen, Callie Almand, Leonel Arguello/Laura Bridy, Julian Barbash, Sarah Maninger and Don Barry, C.M. Brugaletta, Lynne Bryan, Greg & Teri Bundros, Carol Lawrence and Thomas Cockle, Maya Conrad, Nancy Correll, Neal and Suzanne Crothers, Linda Doerflinger, Dave Erickson, Robert and Joanne Fornes, Tracy Jordan French, Sylvia-Don-Ben-Jason Garlick, Judy & Pete Haggard, Robin Hamlin, Chris Heppe, Irene and Hugh Holt, Lee and Chris House, Humboldt Sanitation, Pete and Judy Haggard, Greg Jaso, Jennifer Kalt, Nannette Kelley, Joyce King, John Kulstad, Leo and Nancy Leer, Julie Neander and Gordon Leppig, Tom Lisle, Nadia Lynn, Joan Marino, Debbie Marshall, David and Madeline McMurray, McKinleyville Area Fund, McKinleyville Sheriffs Office, Ken Miller, Duncan McNeil, Ben and Amanda Moorehead, Francis Nicolini, Lois Nipkau, Felicia Oldfather, Vicki Ozaki, Javan and Alexandra Reid, Jerry and Gisela Rohde, Richard Ridenhour, Gina Rimson, Diane Ryerson, Joann Schuch, Emily and Jason Teraoka, Kurt and Cynthia Werner, Cindy Wilcox, Mark Wilson, and those that we may have missed !

MCKINLEYVILLE LAND TRUST BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2021

- President: Leonel Arguello
- Vice President: Emily Teraoka
- Treasurer: Cindy Wilcox
- Secretary: Garry Rees
- Board Members: Joyce King, Vicki Ozaki, Duncan McNeill, Judy Haggard

MISSION STATEMENT

The purpose of the McKinleyville Land Trust is to conserve local open spaces for ecological, historical, agricultural, educational, recreational and scenic values.
For Everyone—Forever.

This newsletter is published on 100% recycled post consumer waste paper by the McKinleyville Land Trust, a 501(c)(3) non-profit corporation.

Phone: 707-839-LAND
E-mail: info@mmlandtrust.org

Designers: Laura Bridy/Leonel Arguello
Image Credits: MLT Board Members
Printed by: Bug Press



McKINLEYVILLE
LAND TRUST

P.O. Box 2723
McKinleyville, CA 95519

PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Well 2021 was bittersweet for the Board as two of our longtime Board members, Nancy Correll and Tom Lisle, stepped down in the summer. They both served on the Board for many, many years. Their collective knowledge of the MLT was very deep and rich in its history and community connections. Nancy served in every capacity as an officer of the Board, truly keeping us grounded in organizational management, providing counsel and expertise when confronted with varying challenges related to the administration of our programs. Tom provided a steady hand on the Board, likewise serving in many roles, and bringing a wizened perspective and intelligence to the Board with humility and good dose of humor. While we miss their sage advice and counsel, their legacy will persist and the McKinleyville Land Trust is a much better organization on account of their efforts over their many years on the Board.

To our community of friends, I know we had a difficult year in 2021. Just when the pandemic seemed to be on the wane, and our hopes for better days seemed to rise, the coming of new variants took the wind right out of our sails in the second-half of the year. For the McKinleyville Land Trust, that meant pinning our hopes on your generous donations to help sustain our properties and programs. Thankfully, and with deep appreciation to you all, I'm happy to report that we exceeded our fundraising goals for the year! I am sincerely humbled by the generosity that you all continue to demonstrate, giving during times of hardship and uncertainty, to support our organization. While we were able to host one fundraising event in November, your contributions provided over 90% of the Board income in 2021. I want to extend the Board's heartfelt gratitude to you all and to wish you, your family and your friends, and given recent global news, everyone peace, health, and safety in 2022. Take care.