



THE MCKINLEYVILLE LAND TRUST NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2015/2016 NUMBER 32

LOCAL TEACHERS PLUNGE INTO WETLAND EDUCATION

By Nanette Kelley

On October 22nd, Dow's Prairie Elementary teachers were schooled on outdoor education using the adjacent Dow's Prairie Educational Wetland (DPEW) as a model outdoor classroom. The McKinleyville Land Trust acquired the 2.5-acre parcel that includes the seasonal wetland in 2008. A unique educational resource for this region, DPEW is an official Schoolyard Habitat recognized by U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service (USFWS) and functions as an outdoor classroom for Dow's Prairie School and other local schools.

Says Paula Golightly USFWS coordinator for the Schoolyard Habitat program, "Out the backyard of a school, right next door, that's a unique part of a true outdoor classroom; it has native habitat characteristic of local coastal prairie wetlands... The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has several initiatives to connect people and kids to the outdoors."

During an evening workshop, teachers from Dow's Prairie and Trinidad schools, HSU Environmental Education, and Pre-service students learned to engage kindergarten-through-2nd-grade students in place-based environmental education. Participants were introduced to three education resources: 1) the Growing Up WILD activity guide, an early childhood education program that invites children to explore wildlife and the world around them; 2) the Education and the Environment Initiative (EEI) Curriculum, a free, state-sponsored K-12 curriculum that enables teachers to teach science, history, and social science through an environmental lens; and 3) the California Regional Environmental Education Community (CREEC) network, which connect teachers with local environmental education resources.



This workshop was done in cooperation with Carolyn Kulstad and Paula Golightly (USFWS) and facilitated by Allison Poklemba (Project WILD, North Coast CREEC Network, and Humboldt State University Redwood Science Project), Jennifer Ortega (HSU Department of Environmental Science and Management), Elizabeth Soto (Project WILD Facilitator), and Nanette Kelley (McKinleyville Land Trust Dow's Prairie Educational Wetland Coordinator, Site Team Leader & Liaison).

For more information about the Dow's Prairie Educational Wetland, call 707-839-LAND; for information about CREEC, visit <http://www.creec.org/>, and for information about the USFWS Schoolyard Habitat program, visit <http://www.fws.gov/cno/conservation/schoolyard.cfm>.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

- 2 WOODY DEBRIS
- 3 CHAH-GAH-CHO
- 3 FAREWELL TO BRENDA PEASE
- 4 REGIONAL LAND TRUSTS
- 4 MAD RIVER BLUFFS
- 5 THANK YOU & PUBLICATION INFORMATION
- 6 SAVE THE DATE FOR MARCH 6 DINNER!

IN PRAISE OF WOODY DEBRIS

By Leonel Arguello

The McKinleyville Land Trust (MLT) owns and manages three properties. The largest of these is the Mad River Bluffs (MRB). Located between Hiller Park on the west and the Mad River on the east, this 74-acre parcel affords spectacular views of the Mad River, dunes, coastline, and Pacific Ocean.

Mad River Bluffs is dominated by coastal pine and spruce that accumulates woody debris on the forest floor, creating a rich tapestry of dead wood and living plants. The woody debris ranges in size from whole fallen trees to limbs and twigs blown out of trees. While living vegetation is valuable in providing food and habitat, many may not realize the value of downed wood as a keystone element of the forest. As a consequence, collecting wood is seen as having no real repercussion. Forest ecosystems, however, benefit from the full cycle of growth, death, and decay of trees. The benefits of downed wood can be broadly summarized as follows: nutrient cycling, habitat, and soil stabilization.

Nutrient Cycling - Nutrients such as carbon, potassium, and nitrogen are released from decomposing wood into the soil through the action of insects, bacteria, and fungi. Woody debris supports organisms that help fix nitrogen, a key nutrient necessary for plant growth and development. The action of fungal colonies on dead wood influences soil characteristics and composition, rebuilds soil nutrients, facilitates nutrient uptake into the surrounding ecosystem, and improves forest health. Decay and decomposition of wood also sequesters carbon in the upper soil for long periods of time, particularly in coastal forests such as the MRB that do not often experience carbon releasing disturbances such as fire.



Wildlife Habitat - Dead wood plays numerous roles in habitat for a variety of invertebrate, vertebrate, and plant species. It is a source of food for some invertebrates. For others, reproductive success is dependent on the availability of woody debris in specific stages of decay. In turn, many birds, small mammals, and other secondary predators rely on productive invertebrate communities as a food source. For small vertebrate species, woody debris provides protection from predators and environmental extremes, as well as sites and construction material for nesting, brooding, overwintering, and hibernation. Salamanders use the diverse supply of downed wood in moist environments such as the MRB to forage, lay eggs, and find cover.



Large logs can serve as nurse logs or seed beds for the germination and development of bryophytes, lichens, and flowering plants. You'll often see native plants growing on large decaying trees.

Soil Stabilization - Dead wood provides physical structure to the ecosystem. It helps prevent soil surface erosion in rainy environments, stabilizes soil on steep slopes, and protects plants by acting as a thermal buffer in cold air drainages. Dead wood provides opportunity for plants to germinate above the litter fall zone, where access to nutrients may be diminished.

The next time you're visiting the MRB forest, we hope you enjoy the vistas, the sights and sounds of the river and ocean, and the opportunity to enjoy a rich tapestry of life adjacent to the urban landscape. But we hope you also take pleasure in knowing that the dead wood you see on the forest floor, whether a fallen tree or small limb, is as important to the landscape you're enjoying as its living components. Please help us protect the MRB forest by leaving undisturbed all parts of this wonderful forest ecosystem.

MLT IS ONLINE!

Check us out on our website and Facebook page for the latest info!

WWW.MLANDTRUST.ORG

WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/MCKINLEYVILLELANDTRUST

WHAT'S NEW AT CHAH-GAH-CHO

By Nancy Correll and Emily Sinkhorn

Since our last newsletter, MLT partnered with Redwood Community Action Agency (RCAA) on a successful grant through the Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation Program of the California Natural Resources Agency. This grant will enable the development of formal trail system at Chah-GAH-Cho (CGC), signage and trailhead improvements, and



vegetation management - activities that MLT has been looking forward to implementing for years! The trail system will include 0.68 miles of gravel trail, an informational kiosk and trailhead signs, doggie-pot stations, and several benches. In addition, there will be a wildlife-friendly fence on the southern boundary.



Although the CGC property was integral to the founding of the McKinleyville Land Trust, it has taken many years to secure easements for public access, community donations, and grant funding. MLT and RCAA will partner with the California Conservation Corps to complete the trail work, which will start in the spring of 2016. McKinleyville Boy Scout Troop 99 has already started to plan and construct the main informational kiosk. By next fall, most of the work should be completed and we will be celebrating the opening of the improved trails! CGC promises to be an attractive and accessible open space for neighborhoods in southern McKinleyville and beyond.

Please come visit CGC! Take a look at the vegetation management near the pasture. Although some of this looks rough now, it will allow a diversity of native plants to flourish and discourage illegal camping. Walk the trail corridors, and think about what you would like to do in this space: Go on nature walks? Have lunch at one of the benches? Organize school outings? Go for a hike or jog? Walk your dog? Help start a native grassland? Plein-air painting, photography, or other art projects?

The Friends of CGC, which includes Boardmembers and community volunteers, is working hard on the trail project, but is also looking for community projects. The Committee welcomes anyone who would like to help or has ideas for projects as the trail system is built. Come and help shape CGC for the community!



FAREWELL TO OUR TREASURER

This past year we said goodbye to our friend and treasurer Brenda Pease. Brenda served on the Board of the MLT for 3 years, using her skills and expertise with numbers to wrangle the MLT budget. Her efforts helped Boardmembers understand how the various accounts relate to projects and properties, and how in sum they create the financial picture for the land trust. Brenda, beyond her obvious skill set with numbers, helped make our fundraising efforts more successful. Her logistical acumen were instrumental in improving revenue for both the annual dinner and North Country fair. She will be missed by all members of the Board and we wish her well in all her future endeavors. Thanks Brenda!

REGIONAL LAND TRUSTS JOIN FORCES!

By Nancy Correll

We're not the only land trust! Whether large or small, volunteer or professionally staffed, local land trusts have protected thousands of acres of land. Natural areas in northern Humboldt County are protected by several land trusts: Jacoby Creek Land Trust, who helped us get started back in the early 1990's; the Trinidad Coastal Land Trust, which owns and maintains some of the beautiful coastal areas north of us; and the Northcoast Regional Land Trust which protects working ranches using conservation easements. And there are more: Friends of the Dunes, Sanctuary Forest, and Mattole Restoration Council, just in Humboldt County!

All of us have joined with others from Sonoma to Siskiyou Counties to form a loose council of land trusts and partner organizations - the Northern Region Council (NRC).

The NRC was organized to provide a unified voice for land conservation, help develop policy and funding for this region, provide a way for land trusts to communicate and collaborate effectively with each other, and coordinate training and technical support. We've organized conferences and workshops. We produced a monthly radio spot. We work together to lobby legislators in Sacramento. We meet together at least once or twice a year to network, share ideas, find better ways to protect land. The NRC is guided by the Northern Region Coordinator, Carol Vander Meer, and a Steering Committee.

The NRC began as one of several regional councils in California under the California Council of Land Trusts (CCLT). The CCLT tracks and helps to shape legislation that is beneficial to land trusts, and organizes statewide conferences to hone skills and share knowledge about funding, tax law, and building better organizations. NRC partners include Save the Redwoods League and Trust for Public Land. NRC accepts individual memberships, as well. If you would like to get involved, or find more information, call Carol at 707-834-4113.

MAD RIVER BLUFFS NEEDS YOU

By Joyce King

The MLT's Mad River Bluffs, with its winding, densely forested paths, stunning vistas of river and ocean, is a remarkably well-preserved coastal spruce/shore pine ecosystem, that lends a sense of solitude and wildness easily accessible to McKinleyville's urban refugees. Dog-owners from as far away as Eureka enjoy having nature-walking opportunities right next to the Hiller dog park.

But the growing popularity has both upsides and downsides. On the upside, we are seeing less illegal camping and trash as public presence increases. Greater public use improves our eligibility for grant funding for trails, interpretive signs, and other stewardship and education needs. A growing cadre of community volunteers are helping battle invasive species and keep tabs on unsafe trail conditions and behaviors.

On the downside are proliferating dog waste; off-trail use by humans and dogs which threatens wildlife habitat and erodes bluffs; and occasional uncomfortable confrontations regarding trail use between walkers, dogs, bikes, and horses. An ongoing problem, not necessarily a result of increased visitation, is the unauthorized removal of large quantities of plant materials and downed wood, which is addressed in another of this newsletter's articles.

Love of this scenic and biological treasure is drawing together a stewardship committee willing to tackle these problems as well as helping with ongoing needs such as regular patrols and meetings, trail maintenance, litter and invasive species removal, and natural history tours. Interested? Please contact Joyce at [samonly@gmail.com](mailto:samonely@gmail.com). We need you.



FUNDRAISING SUCCESSES

This year's Annual Dinner and Auction, and North Country Fair Gyro booth were two of MLT's most successful fundraising events, thanks primarily to the hard work and dedication of our incredible supporters and volunteers. We truly appreciate not only the volunteers working behind the scenes, but the people who come to support us at these events. There are many ways you can help the MLT. We always are in need of volunteers at our work events, committee meetings, and fundraisers. If you are interested in finding out more about how you can get involved you can email info@mlandtrust.org or call 839-LAND (839-5263). You can also find out more about the MLT and what we are doing by following our Facebook page or going to our website www.mlandtrust.org. Of course your monetary donations are always welcome and we provide an envelope to use for this purpose.

Finally, the MLT has just joined as a charity on AmazonSmile. If you select us as your charity, we will receive donations from AmazonSmile with all eligible purchases. Just visit www.smile.amazon.com and search for McKinleyville Land Trust. This a great way to give a little extra to the MLT.

THANK YOU TO OUR VOLUNTEERS & DONORS OF 2015

Abruzzi's, Adele Nipkau, Alan and Shirley Bird, Alan Deybo, Alison Hartley, Annika Ragsdale, Barbara Georgiana, Beverly & George Allen, Brenda- Noah - Holly - Kristen and George Pease, Carol Wilson, Chris Heppe, Christine Angell, Darci Short, Dave Couch, Dave Roemer, David Coelho, David McMurray, Denise & Michael Kroemer, Dorothy Klein, DPEW Interns 2015 (Akira Brathwaite, Andrew T. Bronte, Brittney Goldie, Cody Laton, Eric Bloom, Fernando Rodriguez, Jimmie Stuckey, Nathan Fisch, Nicole Woodrow, Sam Thall, Zoe Lacoco), Edwin & A. H. Uyeki, Emily & Jason Teraoka, Emily Sinkhorn, F.R. & V.A. Felter, Felicia Oldfather, Frank and Maya Bickner, Gail & Julian Barbash, Gina and Rebecca Rimson, Gordon Leppig, Greg Bundros, Greg Jaso, Greg and Kristin Schmidt, Haleigh and Jeff Dunk, Healthsport, Holly Largent, Humboldt Sanitation (for taking over 250 pounds of ivy), Humboldt County Sheriffs SWAP crew, Irene and Hugh Holt, Jennifer & George Wheeler, Joann Fornes, John Corbett, John Crater, John Kulstad, Johnny Calkins, Joyce King, Julie Neander, Justin Ly, Ken Miller, Kmart (for accepting many bags of trash from CGC), Kurt Werner, Laura Bridy, Leonel Arguello, Lee and Chris House, Lori Dengler, Lost Foods, Lynne Bryan, Mad River Brewing Co., Marilyn Wieman, Maya Conrad, McKinleyville Area Foundation, Meighan O'Brien, MH Segal, Mike Meng, Monica Bueno, Monty Caid, Nannette and Tavish Kelly, Nancy and Leo Leer, Nancy Correll, Neal & Suzanne Crothers, North Coast Chapter Native Plant Society, Pacific Watershed Associates, Paul & Barbara Kelly, Penny Brogden, Pete & Judy Haggard, Ramones Bakery, Rays Grocery Store, Redwood Animal Hospital, Rhonda Farro, Richard Duning, Richard Ridenhour, Rite-Aid, Ryan Alyward, Sally Botzler, Samara Nursery, Sarah Pilkington, Singing Trees Garden, Steve Lundin, Sue Mossman, Sylvia & Don Garlick, Terry Myers, the HSU Ecoclub, The Lois Nipkau Revocable Trust, Threadbare Dancewear, Tom Lisle, and more!

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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 non-profit corporation.

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SAVE THE DATE—MARCH 6 ANNUAL DINNER

Mark your calendars for the MLT Annual Dinner on March 6, 2016. The dinner will be held at Azalea Hall in McKinleyville, with doors opening at 5 pm. This year we are excited to have two speakers, Chris West and Tiana Williams, who will present an informative slideshow on the reintroduction of the California Condor to the North Coast of California. Both speakers work for the Yurok Tribe, Chris as a Biologist and Tiana as a Wildlife Technician. Once widespread in the Pacific Northwest and the northern California coast, the last wild condor to fly over Humboldt County was killed near Kneeland in the early 1900s. The Yurok Tribe is spearheading the effort to reintroduce the condor or “pre-go-neesh” in traditional language. The Tribe recently received funding to study the feasibility of reintroducing this majestic bird back to our local skies. Stay tuned for more specific information about this program.



