



THE MCKINLEYVILLE LAND TRUST NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2018/2019 NUMBER 35

Reflecting on Homelessness in our Community

By Tom Lisle

On patrol on a cold wintery day, I approach a cheap tent draped in camo in a secluded spot at Cha-Gah-Cho. I'm grumbling at the prospect of confronting this person or persons and probably cleaning up a mess whenever they pack up and leave. Or, if they don't, I will have to return with a deputy sheriff to see that they do.

"Hello the tent!" My next line would be something like "This property belongs to the McKinleyville Land Trust, and we do not allow camping". Instead, I hear a deep cough—a very sick cough. My confrontational approach wilts and I ask how he is. Not too good. I go to Rays and return with a carton of hot stew and a crusty roll. I tell him that he need not move until he's up to it, and that I would check on him later. Two days later, he's gone without a trace of litter or any indication of how he fared.

This incident is among many that we encounter with the homeless at Chah-Gah-Cho and Mad River Bluffs. I relate it here because it indicates the gamut of reactions we as Board members have, and the fact that these encounters are unique and personal. At gut level, we may feel disgust, resentment, or depression, especially after carting off bags and bags of garbage to the dump. But after hearing a camper's story, we may feel sadness, compassion, or responsibility. My experience is that our campers are locals, not feral kids, vagabonds, nor trimigrants. I have never felt threatened by them. Last month, I found toddler-size clothing and toys at an abandoned camp. What was the story behind that?

How we deal with the homeless is a hot-button issue in our community and one that our Board wrestles with from a variety of viewpoints. The policy of the McKinleyville Land Trust is abundantly clear: We do not allow camping on any of our properties or easements. The purpose of Chah-Gah-Cho and Mad River Bluffs is to provide a variety of light-impact, recreational and educational activities during daylight hours and to preserve natural habitats. These purposes are not compatible with camping. When we find an active camp, we act to have the camp cleared promptly, although we may allow some leeway during foul weather.

We manage our properties to discourage camping. Undergrowth is cleared to expose hidey spots. Weekly patrols by volunteers and board members discourage long-term camping, and keeping our properties trash-free encourages more people to use the trails, thus disinclining people to camp nearby.

We are helped by community businesses, organizations, and neighbors. K-Mart opens their dumpsters for bags of garbage, and when the load is great, we deposit it at Humboldt Sanitation for free. Our neighbors have also cleared underbrush and cooperate with us to discourage camping. Deputy sheriffs stationed in McKinleyville are available to expel persistent campers. Working together, we have decreased the incidence of camping, and those camps that appear are small and transient.

Nevertheless, the county-wide homeless problem continues to come to roost on MLT properties. When we ask a camper to move, we have nothing to offer as an alternative. Displacement does not add to a larger solution. Heroic efforts are being made by people in our county and here in McKinleyville to house, feed, and treat the homeless. However, shelters, regulated campgrounds, low-cost housing, and programs to transition people out of homelessness remain limited. While we manage our properties diligently, lasting improvement awaits the resolve of the leaders and citizens of Humboldt County.

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MLT WETLANDS



Did you know that each of the three properties owned and managed by the MLT has a wetland? In addition to the majestic Mad River flowing through the middle of the property, Mad River Bluffs has a seasonal wetland that appears each winter. As the rains collect at the base of the giant spruce on the southern end of the property, this wetland often submerges the trail and creates quite a challenge to get across. Cha-GAH-Cho's seasonal wetland has dense vegetation and is very hard to access. Situated in the woods in the middle of the property, it is a vegetated seep at the base of a steep slope. The recently-developed trail system was designed to avoid this wetland feature and protect the sensitive wetland habitat. Finally, the Dow's Prairie Wetland

property has a beautiful seasonal pond surrounded by a dense population of Douglas spiraea. The pond can fill to several feet deep in the winter and is home to a variety of aquatic insects and all life stages of Pacific chorus frogs. In the summer, however, the water slowly recedes until it is completely gone. By October, the pond is dry and quiet, waiting for the rains to start and the seasonal wetland cycle to start over again.

The MLT will be hosting work days this winter and spring to help manage the scotch broom and other invasive weeds at the property. If you would like to be notified of these events, please email info@mmlandtrust.org or call 707-839-LAND.



Fond Farewell and Best Wishes to Emily Sinkhorn

This coming February the MLT Board of Directors will bid farewell to Emily Sinkhorn, our Treasurer. Emily is a skilled and diligent employee of RCAA, who wrote the grant proposal and largely directed the trail project for CGC, completed in 2013. As our Treasurer, she initiated a process for creating the annual budget, streamlined the banking process, all while contributing her time and energy to a myriad of other MLT projects. She will be missed. However, one thing this all-volunteer land trust has learned is that there are many good people in our community willing to help out. See our list of donors & volunteers, page 5! We're sure that someone will appear to take Emily's place on the board.

Being a Board member is not necessary in order to help out this land trust. We depend on volunteers to help with our fundraisers (the fair and annual dinner). We also depend on neighbors to use and enjoy our properties, Chah-Gah-Cho and Mad River Bluffs, participate in workdays, and notify us of problems. Joining the committees of one of our properties is a great way to help.

Students at HSU routinely do projects on our properties that help us understand what is happening there. Other potential projects include digitizing our records to comply with national Land Trust Alliance standards, creating and updating "scrapbooks" that document events, participating in annual monitoring of our fee properties, organizing educational walks and other community participation events. And one of the simplest and best ways to volunteer is to adopt a plot of English Ivy (see the Mad River Bluffs article: "Ivy-free by '23!"). What would you like to do? If you are interested, talk with a Board member (see the names on page 5), call our phone at 839-LAND and leave a message (someone will get back to you), or email us at info@mmlandtrust.org.

What's New at DPEW



The Dow's Prairie Educational Wetland is getting spruced up. We weeded the bench area and will be re-graveling the trail in December. We also removed the large pile of scotch-broom that had been pulled over the last two seasons and now have a nice clearing for planting native grasses and other plants. In 2019 the Land Trust will continue restoring the wetland by hosting several work-days to uproot the invasive scotch broom, clear weeds that have grown up around our previous plantings, and plant big leaf maple, cascara and other native species.

A few years ago, the McKinleyville Area Fund awarded the MLT a grant to purchase the first set of native plants to be used as part of a Native American traditional plant use curriculum at the wetland. The plant species were suggested by the Wiyot Cultural department (with permission by the tribal council) and Trinidad Rancheria. Many native shrub, tree and herbaceous species were planted in the wetland and in the Dow's Prairie School garden beds for propagation. Nanette Kelley, the wetland's educational team leader, has been working with the Dow's Prairie School, local tribes, and Indian Education to create environmental-cultural education opportunities at the wetland. Her efforts have produced an indigenous cultural plant guide specific to the wetland that will be ready for publication this spring. Guest speakers from the local tribes will soon be coming to the school to speak about traditional plant use, and the children will continue to have opportunities to explore the wetland throughout the seasons with hands-on learning activities.

McKinleyville Land Trust Volunteer Trail Stewards

The Volunteer Trail Stewards is a county wide collective of volunteer groups operating with the Humboldt Trails Council and numerous community volunteers. Their efforts include trail maintenance, trash cleanup, invasive species management, and native species planting. The McKinleyville Land Trust has a VTS group designated to serve its two trail properties; Chah GAH Cho and Mad River Bluffs. Thanks to a small but robust group of dedicated community volunteers, over 2,000 pounds of invasive species and 600 pounds of trash have been removed from the two properties in the last year! The group meets on the third Saturday of every month, from 9:00-11:00, at Chah GAH Cho and Mad River Bluffs alternately. If you're interested in participating, please contact Steffen Allan at ragnus707@gmail.com for more information. For more information about VTS as a whole or other trail news, please visit Humboldt Trails Council's website at humtrails.org.



Mad River Bluffs - Ivy Free by 23

Which is the worst problem at our property at Mad River Bluffs (MRB)? Dog feces? Dog/bicycle encounters? Bluff erosion? Illegal trails? Camping? Vandalism? Drugs and firearms? Falling trees? Difficult, right?! All are important problems at this scenic and much-visited place – some infrequent but perilous, some constant and damaging more to the ecosystem than to humans.

How about English Ivy? Although it seems relatively harmless, it is a major invasive villain, a tough fast-growing perennial which can shade out native understory and topple trees with its weight, turning ecosystems into ivy deserts, unable to perform the ecosystem services essential to native wildlife.



But, paradoxically, it also offers the opportunity to address the other issues. Volunteer ivy-bashers create a presence at MRB which help discourage illegal and damaging activities. Areas that were too dense to view become more open and visible. The newly freed areas bloom with lovely native plants and flowers. But in spite of annual volunteer ivy bashes, in the last few years, ivy seems to have taken a logarithmic leap.

Thus, the birth of our new campaign – *Ivy Free By '23!* We want to recruit individuals and groups to adopt specific patches of ivy, to monitor and eliminate over the next 5 years. This year, we hope to create a map of the ivy at MRB, dedicate a page on our website to tracking ivy, and enlist individuals and groups willing to adopt their very own soon-to-be ivy-free patch of MRB. Please help us get this started and lend us your talents. Email Joyce at [samonly@gmail.com](mailto:samonely@gmail.com)

Chah-GAH-Cho



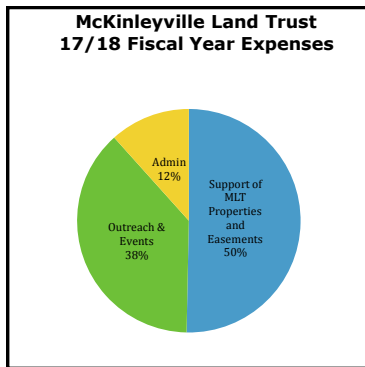
Things are quiet at Chah-GAH-Cho this time of year. The alders and shrubs are slowly losing their leaves as they wait for the winter rains to arrive. The birds are quietly foraging for food. The trailside vegetation, mowed in August, remains low, leaving the trails clear. Only the berry bushes – mostly native blackberry – continue their inexorable process of covering every unshaded spot.

Dogs bring their owners for a leisurely walk along the trails, and the chance to see the best view in McKinleyville across the Mad River floodplain to the dunes at Lanphere. It's a tranquil, quiet time at Chah-GAH-Cho.

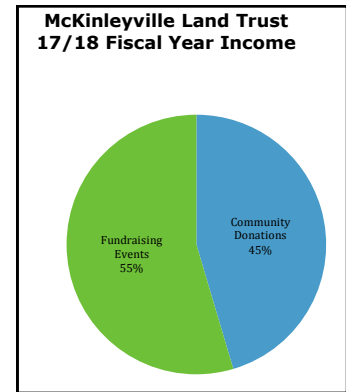
Plans are in the works to clear underbrush from trees and create a more open, park-like effect. Another major project is a proposed controlled burn on part of the open grassland, which would be revegetated with native plants. The plan is to try to recreate something like a native grassland environment. Meanwhile, English Ivy is slowly invading, especially on the southeast section, and will need to be controlled.

If you are interested in any of these activities, not to mention the continued trash pickup, there are ways to be involved. The Volunteer Trail Stewards help out on the 3rd Saturday morning of every other month, which would make the next VTS day December 15. Look for upcoming events on the back of the kiosk; and as always, The MLT Board appreciates any input on problems, possible projects, and questions. You can email us at info@mlandtrust.org, or call us at 839-5263.

FISCAL AND FUNDRAISING UPDATES



MLT depends upon contributions from our community in order to continue to ensure vital open space habitat and access to our public lands in northern Humboldt County. Community donations and local fundraising events, such as MLT’s Annual Dinner, North County Fair food booth, and Pints for Non-Profits, allow MLT to continue to meet our mission. This means YOU can make a big difference! Consider making a donation to your local community land trust today and keep an eye out for upcoming MLT fundraisers. If you wish to donate to the MLT, you can donate via the PayPal button on our website, www.mlandtrust.org, or you can send checks to: MLT, P.O. Box 2723, McKinleyville, CA 95519. MLT is also a part of “Amazon Smile” – sign up as an Amazon Smile consumer, specify MLT, and a portion of your order can go to us. MLT greatly appreciates your generosity.



The distribution of MLT’s expenses demonstrate our commitment to caring for our fee properties, monitoring conservation easements, conducting community outreach, and ensuring the sustainability of our organization.

THANK YOU TO OUR VOLUNTEERS & DONORS OF 2018

Steffen Allan, Leonel Arguello, Julian Barbash, Jamie Bellerman, Rick & Sally Botzler, Laura Bridy, Lynne Bryan, Monica and Aiden Winkle-Bueno, Greg & Teri Bundros, John Caulkins, Carol Lawrence and Tom Cockle, Nancy Correll, Neal and Suzanne Crothers, Lori Dengler, Sabra and Jeff Dunk, Richard Duning, Linda Evans, Bob and Ginny Felter, Sylvia-Don-Ben-Jason Garlick, Healthsport, Irene Holt, Lee and Chris House, Humboldt County Sheriffs SWAP, Humboldt Sanitation, Pete and Judy Haggard, Chris Heppe, Linda and Bailey Ives, Greg Jaso, John Jaso, Juniper Ridge LLC, Kmart, Jennifer Kalt, Nannette-Tavish-David Kelley, Jeff Kelly, Paul and Barbara Kelly, Joyce King, Dorothy Klein, John Kulstad, KMART, Tony LaBanca, Katherine Layton, Nancy and Leo Leer, Julie Neander and Gordon Leppig, Tom Lisle, Randal Lundberg, Mad River Brewing Co., Debbie Marshall, Kate McClain, David McMurray, McKinleyville Ace Hardware, McKinleyville Area Fund, Mckinleyville Sheriff Office, Ken Miller, Matthew Morrasutti, Duncan McNeil, Ben and Amanda Moorehead, Madeline Myers, Adele Nipkau, Lois Nipkau Revocable Trust, Meighan O’Brien, Katherine O’Connell, Vicki Ozaki, Richard Ridenhour, Gina Rimson, Dave Roemer, Diane Ryerson, Samara Nursery, Six Rivers Brewery, Greg and Kristin Schmidt, Morguine & Chad Sefcik, Emily Sinkhorn, Mark & Martha Sinkhorn, Darci Short, Emily & Jason Teraoka, Ed & Aiko Uyeki, Kurt Werner, Jennifer & George Wheeler, Ashley Woodford, Melissa and Bill Zielinski, 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.

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MCKINLEYVILLE
LAND TRUST

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SAVE THE DATE—MARCH 3 ANNUAL DINNER

PLEASE JOIN US

18TH ANNUAL DINNER AND AUCTION

MCKINLEYVILLE LAND TRUST (707) 839-LAND

SUNDAY, MARCH 3 AT 5:00 PM

AZALEA HALL 1620 PICKETT ROAD MCKINLEYVILLE, CA 95519

Please mark your calendars for the Annual Dinner which the MLT will be hosting at Azalea Hall in McKinleyville on March 3rd, 2019. Dinner includes your choice of chicken cacciatore or baked eggplant with pasta, fresh salad, Co-Op Bakery bread, dessert, and tea or coffee. Beer and wine will be available for sale. This fundraiser and community event includes a silent auction and raffle. Tickets will be available at the door or you can purchase in advance by calling 839-LAND, visiting our website (mlandtrust.org), or by speaking with a board member. Please come out and support the McKinleyville land trust and enjoy a great meal, fantastic speaker, and visiting and reconnecting with friends.