



THE MCKINLEYVILLE LAND TRUST NEWSLETTER

WINTER 2019/2020 NUMBER 36

FORESTS IN PERIL

By Joyce King

California forests are in trouble. Scientists report that our forests are undergoing unprecedented climate stresses, including unusually severe wildfire, pest and disease outbreaks, heat, and drought.

These stresses can spell big trouble ahead for all of us, as forested lands are the largest land-based carbon sink, storing atmospheric carbon in living cell structures and forest soils, making deforestation a major contributor to climate change.

In California, wildfire burn rates have jumped from an average of 600 thousand acres/year from 2000 to 2011, to nearly 1 million acres/year in the seven years from 2012-2018. Compared to the last century, 15 of the 20 largest fires in California history have burned since 2000. CalFire now estimates that California has 78 more annual "fire days" than it had 50 years ago. In the last 9 years, more than 129 million drought-stressed trees, primarily in the Sierra Nevada, have died as insects and forest pathogens spread unabated during a prolonged drought. It is estimated that nearly half of California's 33 million acres of forests need some form of restoration, but budget allocations for restoration are limited and increasingly diverted for firefighting needs.

Like the other rainforests of the Pacific Rim, forests on the North Coast of California have the highest carbon densities of all US forests and are habitat for 80% of land plants & animals, and essential to the availability of clean fresh water for all of us. Here in Humboldt County, uniquely blessed with our moisture, moss, and mold, we have less to fear from wildfires and bark beetle outbreaks, but should probably take serious responsibility for keeping our forests healthy and abundant to offset the calamities elsewhere.

The main threats to Humboldt County forests are fragmentation and ecosystem destabilization from overharvesting and monoculture timber management, marijuana growing, residential development, forest pathogens, and invasive species.

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

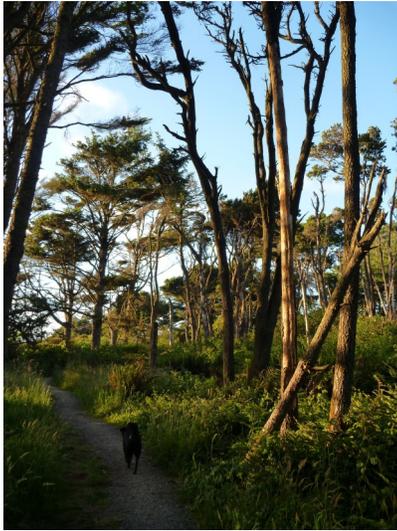
- 2 MRB UPDATE
- 2 WHAT IS A LAND TRUST ANYWAY?
- 3 CHAH-GAH-CHO UPDATE
- 3 DPEW UPDATE
- 4 NATURAL HISTORY CORNER
- 4 NEW MEMBERS
- 5 FUNDRAISING — THANK YOU
- 6 SAVE THE DATE FOR MARCH 8 DINNER!

Land trusts have an important role in the protection and revitalization of forest lands, especially in the North Coast ecoregion, where private ownership predominates. One of the action goals of California's 2018 Forest Carbon Plan is to:

- By 2030, increase the acreage of forestland protected by conservation easements by 10 percent with a focus on areas that are threatened by development.

Through establishment of conservation easements focused on forest protection, we can effectively improve a forest's ability to sequester and store carbon to limit atmospheric CO₂, while providing the more localized benefits of protecting wildlife habitat, watershed values, and supporting forest ecosystem health and resiliency.

Deforestation and other threats to our wildland ecosystems grow more frequent and alarming. For example, there have been reductions of 60% of Earth's wild land animals and 30% of wild birds in the US in the last 50 years. The beautiful Monarch butterfly has endured declines of up to 90% of its population in the last 20 years. Therefore, it is crucial that we all commit to some ongoing work on behalf of the land we love and depend on. The McKinleyville Land Trust gives thanks to you for your ongoing support and participation.



What's Happening at MRB- Joyce King

McKinleyville Land Trust is fortunate to have a mature coastal Sitka spruce forest at Mad River Bluffs. "Because of its rarity and limited distribution in California, this forest type is designated a Sensitive Natural Community" in the California Natural Diversity Database (CNDDDB). Thus, on top of its value as an accessible scenic treasure for local nature-lovers and dog-walkers, our spruce forest may have state and even global ecological importance.

Sitka spruce communities are given state and global rankings according to level of rarity and imperilment of their associations with other plants, such as false lily-of-the-valley, salmonberry, and sword fern. In many areas of Mad River Bluffs, false lily-of-the-valley (*Maianthemum dilatatum*) is being overrun by the invasive English Ivy. Invasive species are among the top 5 causes of disruption to forest ecosystems, and is a priority concern in keeping the Mad River Bluffs forest ecosystem healthy and resilient.

This ecosystem also suffers impacts to vegetation, soil, and wildlife from illegal camping, off-trail use, dog feces, and campfires. Volunteers have been especially active this year - patrolling, hauling out hundreds of pounds of trash from illegal campsites, pulling ivy, clearing downed trees from main trails, and barricading social trails. We depend heavily on this help from the community. If you would like to join this effort, please call Joyce King 707-267-5409 or Vicki Ozaki 707-496-6861.

What is a Land Trust Anyway?- Nancy Correll

Most of you know that the McKinleyville Land Trust (MLT) owns three properties in McKinleyville. But what does our slogan "For Everyone, Forever!" actually mean?

Land trusts operate on the belief that if we as a community want to keep some of the land in its natural state, or keep it as a farm, ranch or forest resource, it doesn't work to "save" it temporarily. We have to use methods that will save it forever. We all know that once a structure is built in a natural area, the structure itself and the activities associated with it will change (usually disrupt) the natural ecosystem. And we know how hard it is to turn that process backwards, re-creating the "natural" or agricultural values of land that has been changed.

So, land trusts, as non-profit organizations, have been created to conserve land "in perpetuity", through legal documentation into the foreseeable future. How do they do this?

One way is simply to buy a piece of property. In doing so, a land trust, as custodian of land for the public benefit, must promise never to sell that land (fee property) to a private owner. If a land trust dissolves, it must turn that fee property over to another non-profit, such as another land trust, or to a government agency (county for instance). The land trust also must be able to provide stewardship of the land it owns.

A land trust can also enter into an easement with a willing landowner, protecting public benefits of the land, such as a redwood grove or a ranch, with the provision that the easement provide significant benefit and that it must be held in perpetuity. This means that it has to be a large enough or have a significant enough area that provides valuable natural habitat, or it needs to be connected to additional protected habitat. If it's a farm or ranch related easement, it must continue to operate as such into the foreseeable future. Even though easements are on private property, and often do not include public access, they provide habitat or other value that is important to the community as a whole. A land trust "holds" an easement, ensuring that the requirements of the easement are fulfilled. This is usually done with annual monitoring visits and discussion with the property owner. Significant long-term monitoring, as stipulated in the easement agreement, is usually negotiated with the original landowner entering into the easement.

If you wish to know more about the MLT mission, properties, or easements, please feel free to reach out to us at www.mlandtrust.org or call us 707-939-LAND (5263).

What's Happening at Chah GAH Cho - Nancy Correll

If you've visited Chah GAH Choh (CGC) in the last few weeks, you have noticed some changes; the trashcan is gone, replaced with small receptacles for full doggie bags located at the doggiepot bag dispensers. There may be some trimming of low vegetation around the kiosk, and along the parking area.

What's going on? It's becoming clear that simply building trails is not enough to discourage inappropriate usage at CGC: primarily camping, illegal drug use, and dumping of household garbage. So the CGC committee now has a plan to open up the secluded areas, increase sight lines into the forested areas, and keep vegetation trimmed. CGC's blackberry thickets will be opened up, although we expect there will continue to be good berry-picking in the summertime, which is an activity that we encourage!

About the trashcan: we believe that it was put to good use by visitors to CGC, who often picked up scattered trash and left it in the trashcan. However, there have been frequent instances in which the trash was obviously from a household. This was not the intended use of that trashcan, and it stretched the ability of the Board to keep it clean. We hope that the small doggie-trash receptacles will be sufficient for their purpose, and possibly small bits of litter. And, we encourage visitors to pack out their trash!

As we open up sightlines, we may encourage visitors to walk the eastern side of the property, which goes all the way to Central Avenue. There is a dense stand of alder, thickets of brush, and even a small seasonal wetland. Another project is to do a controlled burn in the pasture, followed by planting of native plants with ethnobotanical significance to our area.

In short, we are beginning to treat CGC more like an urban park than a natural area. The emphasis will be on encouraging appropriate use of the space: for recreation, a place for people to be outdoors, enjoy the view and especially enjoy a natural environment in close proximity to where we all live.

Besides walking the dog, strolling the trails, bringing your lunch out to enjoy on a quiet bench, contemplating the Mad River valley...What else might folks do at CGC? Fly kites? Watch birds? Plein-air painting? Teach your children about native and invasive plants? What would YOU like to do at CGC? Please let us know! Ideas are welcome. You can reach us at 839-LAND or info@mlandtrust.org.

What's Happening at Dow's Prairie - Monica Bueno

The Scotch Broom infestation at DPEW was treated this year. We held a workday in April with local volunteers and another one with an inmate crew to clear a large area of broom in the southern part of the property. Unfortunately, Scotch Broom is a formidable foe and we still have a lot of work to do.

From a community standpoint, the MLT hosted a Project Learning Tree (PLT) workshop at the Dow's Prairie wetland on May 9. The workshop enhanced environmental education with outdoor activities and introduced the importance of local Indigenous cultural contexts to environmental studies. Educators from the McKinleyville School District, Klamath Trinity Joint Unified School District, Laurel Tree Charter School, Northern Humboldt District, Northern Humboldt Indian Education, and student teachers attended the workshop.

Community Partners who contributed to the workshop included Rachel Sundberg, Marlene' Dusek, David R. Narum, Liisa Schmoele, Denise Seeger, Haley Davis, and Monica Bueno. The next "Project Learning Tree in the Classroom" workshop will be held at the Dow's Prairie School Library. Contact Nanette at nanette.kelley@yahoo.com for more information.

Natural History Moment

DID YOU KNOW? - Judy Haggard

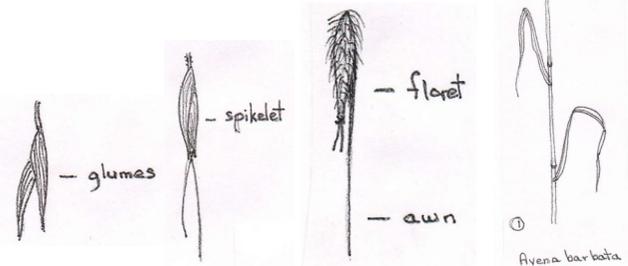
The grey fox (*Urocyon cinereoargenteus*) is the only fox native to our area. It is also the only American canid that can climb trees. Although the grey fox has red fur, it can be differentiated from the red fox by the stripe of black hair that runs along the middle of the tail, and often by the "grizzled"-looking fur dominating the upper parts of its body. The grey fox ranges along the west coast of the Americas from southern Canada to northern Columbia. Mating is in the spring with 1-7 pups produced per litter. Mating pairs show a high degree of fidelity to each other. Their primary diet is small mammals and birds although they are not averse to eating fruits. Grey foxes may live from 6-10 years in the wild.



WHAT'S FLOWERING? - Elaine Allison

At this time of year, blooming wildflowers are pretty scarce, so this would be a good time to look at grasses. Many of them can be very difficult to identify, but a few are unmistakable. Wild Oat is the easiest of all, and will start to bloom before long. The plant is tall, up to four feet in height. The flowering parts, called spikelets, are quite large and hang downwards from the tip of their stalks. Two to three florets are hidden inside two leaf-like structures called glumes, and each has an awn - a stiff bristle-like structure as long as the glumes - protruding from the tip of the spikelet.

There are two species of wild oat, *Avena fatua*, which usually has three flowers, and *Avena barbata*, which usually has two flowers. Both are non-native species here on the North Coast but are commonly seen on MLT properties. They are closely related to *Avena sativa*, the cultivated oat of breakfast fame.



Welcome to our Newest Board Members

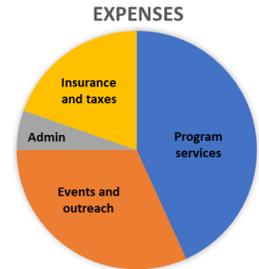


The McKinleyville Land Trust is happy to welcome 3 new Board Members: Cindy Wilcox, Vicki Ozaki, and Duncan McNeill. Cindy has lived in McKinleyville near Dow's Prairie School since 1998 and has two grown children. She has a bachelor's degree in geology from HSU and a master's in soil science from Washington State University. She has worked with SHN Consulting Engineers and Geologists since 1996. She's excited for the opportunity to give back to the community.

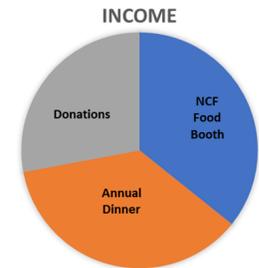
Duncan McNeill and Vicki Ozaki both have science backgrounds and would like to contribute to the stewardship of all the McKinleyville Land Trust properties. Vicki works in natural resource management at Redwood National Park and Duncan is a territory manager for a soil manufacturing company. MLT is thrilled to have all three on the Board!

TREASURER’S UPDATE BY EMILY TERAOKA

What does it take to run a land trust? That varies greatly depending on the size and mission of each organization. The MLT is an all-volunteer organization so we rely entirely on volunteers for the day-to-day operations and on donations and fundraising to pay to manage our properties. Even without paid staff – taking care of our properties takes money! Insurance, dues, and fees makes up a large part of these costs, but the largest cost we have on our properties is for general upkeep. Maintaining trails, signs, and benches, replacing doggiepot bags, removing hazard trees over trails, mowing, invasive plant removal and disposal, and cleaning up trash are just some of the costs associated with our publicly-accessible properties.



We couldn’t do all this without you! Community donations and local fundraising events, such our upcoming Annual Dinner (see back page), the North County Fair food booth, and Pints for Non-Profits, allow MLT to continue to meet our mission. One third of our annual income comes from community donations which means YOU can make a big difference! Please consider donating to the McKinleyville Land Trust today. 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. Follow us on Facebook to get notices about upcoming MLT fundraisers and events!



THANK YOU TO OUR VOLUNTEERS & DONORS OF 2019

Steffen Allan, Leonel Arguello, Julian Barbash, Jamie Bellerman, Rick & Sally Botzler, Laura Bridy, Lynne Bryan, Monica and Aiden Winkle-Bueno, Greg & Teri Bundros, Bruce Campbell, John Caulkins, Carol Lawrence and Tom Cackle, Ron Coffman, Nancy Correll, Neal and Suzanne Crothers, Lori Dengler, Linda Doerflinger, Sabra and Jeff Dunk, Richard Duning, Linda Evans, Bob and Ginny Felter, Sylvia-Don-Ben-Jason Garlick, Judy & Pete Haggard, Healthsport, Irene Holt, Lee and Chris House, Humboldt County Sheriffs SWAP, Humboldt Sanitation, Pete and Judy Haggard, Jill and Kenny Haworth, Chris Heppe, Linda and Bailey Ives, Greg Jaso, John Jaso, Artie Skeeter & Julie Jonte, Juniper Ridge LLC, Kmart, Jennifer Kalt, Nannette-Tavish-David Kelley, Jeff Kelly, Paul and Barbara Kelly, Joyce King, Dorothy Klein, Kmart, John Kulstad, KMART, Tony LaBanca, Katherine Layton, Nancy and Leo Leer, Debbie Marshall, 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, Revocable Trust, Meighan O’Brien, Katherine O’Connell, Felicia Oldfather, Vicki Ozaki, Brenda & George Pease, Bruce Moore & Laura Petersen, Ramone’s, Javan Reid, Richard Ridenhour, Gina Rimson, Dave Roemer, Diane Ryerson, Samara Nursery, Six Rivers Brewery, Morguine & Chad Sefcik, Emily Sinkhorn, Mark & Martha Sinkhorn, Darci Short, Emily, Amaya & Jason Teraoka, Ed & Aiko Uyeki, Kurt Werner, Jennifer & George Wheeler, Ashley Woodford, Melissa and Bill Zielinski, and more!

MCKINLEYVILLE LAND TRUST BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2018

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- Secretary: Nancy Correll
- Board Members: Cindy Wilcox
- Joyce King
- Greg Jaso
- Monica Bueno
- Steffen Allan
- Vicki Ozaki
- Duncan McNeill

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

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



MCKINLEYVILLE
LAND TRUST

P.O. Box 2723
McKinleyville, CA 95519

SAVE THE DATE—MARCH 8 ANNUAL DINNER



PLEASE MARK YOUR CALENDARS FOR THE MLT ANNUAL DINNER AT AZALEA HALL IN MCKINLEYVILLE AT 5PM ON MARCH 8, 2020. DINNER INCLUDES YOUR CHOICE OF CHICKEN CACCIATORE OR BAKED EGG-PLANT 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 FACEBOOK PAGE OR IF YOU KNOW A BOARD MEMBER ASK THEM FOR A TICKET! PLEASE COME OUT AND SUPPORT THE MCKINLEYVILLE LAND TRUST AND ENJOY A GREAT MEAL, FANTASTIC SPEAKER, AND RECONNECT WITH FRIENDS ALL FOR A GREAT CAUSE!