

LAND NEWS

Trails, Parks, and Open Space for Our Community

Forest Lands Protected

by Everett Butts

On March 21, Nevada County Land Trust's first Sierra County conservation easement was recorded. The protected 160 acres of mixed confers and oaks lies 3.5 miles E-NE of Downieville. It is watered by the New York Ravine, plus two perennial springs and a seep, and several seasonal springs. My wife Marilyn and I, with our son Jonathan, acquired it in early 1991. Jon died suddenly at age 30 in July 1995.

He served for five years as computer programmer engineer in the California Department of Forestry, Office of Emergency Planning. Jon helped his mentor-supervisor, David Sharp, initiate a lightning strike detection system statewide. This first step in a fire-weather data acquisition system was next augmented with remote automatic weather stations. Jon was given primary credit by the National Weather Service at Sacramento for integration of the system with their (NWS) computers. This meant better weather reports statewide. A chief meteorologist



Marilyn and Everett Butts

(NWS, retired) colleague asserted, "Jon's work enhanced the health and safety of every person in California." David Sharp, Jon's former scoutmaster-mentor and supervisor, invited Jon into CDF and deeply appreciated his creative professionalism and other fine qualities, as did other colleagues. (David Sharp made many creative contributions to CDF and deserves much credit.) David died at the age of 50 two years before Jon's demise; responsibility for the systems fell to Jon.

Jon and Marilyn outweighed my conservative, negative vote to buy this land. Jon's values would have favored a conservation easement. We met with Cheryl Belcher, NCLT Executive Director, on September 9, 1995, to find a way to memorialize our son, to do the work he would have done. The process came to fruition last March.

We lost Marilyn in October 2000. She and Jon would have thanked all those who give life to the NCLT, as I do now with deep feelings of gratitude. 🌿



The late Jonathon Butts, finding corner markers on the 160-acre forest parcel that has been protected in his honor.

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From the President's Desk . . .

It is almost impossible to write about the Nevada County Land Trust without considering the efforts and contributions that have gone into the achievements of the past ten-plus years. As I work on our annual report for 2001, a number of major items jump out to emphasize the positive nature of our work and the impact it has on people close to us.

Two of the people close to the Land Trust passed away in the past two years. Their commitment to preserving open space for the future of Nevada County was reflected in bequests that will serve to support the expanding role of the Land Trust through endowments which will forever carry their names. Richard Nickel, a friend of our Executive Director Cheryl Belcher, established a trust to support operations and enable acquisition of additional open-space easements. Richard Padgham, a friend of our former President and longtime Director Jim Dodds, established an endowment to provide operational support from the income to be generated through investment of the principal. While we grieve the passing of these two supporters and friends, we will make sure that their names and generosity are remembered forever through the programs their thoughtful bequests will enable.

The Land Trust has made very good progress toward assuring that funds are managed prudently and the terms of each bequest is followed. The Board of Directors recently adopted revised Endowment Regulations to assure that the principal of each endowment is protected and the income is applied in accordance with the bequest. Our Investments Committee has developed guidelines to assure that each fund is prudently invested in an appropriate mix of securities to maximize long-term returns, while providing the best practical safety. Our thanks to the members of the Investments Committee – Joan Girdler, Jack Crombie, Sharon Fairclough, Morgan Stoltz, and Robin Van Zee – for the efforts they have put into this program. Thanks also to Jim Maxwell, a retired CPA, for making a limited review of Land Trust financial operations and providing suggestions on improving reporting and control processes. Jim Ward deserves recognition for his continuing role on our Finance Committee with his help on clarifying and guiding some of the changes that have to be made. William Enoch, our Treasurer this year, is already starting to bring better structure to the financial management process. Add to this our newly hired bookkeeper, Estelle Barber, who is bringing experience to a critical operations area.

I am very proud of the team we have brought together to bolster the financial management of the Land Trust. The structure and procedures that are in place and being strengthened will provide added confidence to all of our friends who may be considering a bequest to the Land Trust, a legacy that will live forever.

Warm regards,
Ron Mathis



Long-time friends Jim Dodds (left) and Richard Padgham on a trip to Greece several years ago. Last year, Richard left a major bequest to NCLT endowment fund.

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Mission:

The Nevada County Land Trust promotes voluntary conservation of our natural, historical and agricultural resources through protection and enhancement of trails, parks, and open space to provide a lasting community heritage.

Land News

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Editor: Cheryl L. Belcher
Design: Frank Schmidt

Feld Family Protect Dry Creek Habitat

Bob and Diana Feld own three parcels containing particularly scenic and pristine sections of Dry Creek with extensive oak woodlands. With funding from the Packard Foundation Grant and a matching grant from The Nature Conservancy, NCLT was able to work with the Felds to protect not just the stream corridor, but an additional 34 acres.

The largest of the three parcels (18 acres) has a restrictive easement prohibiting future home construction, making it wonderful animal habitat forever. The site is just downstream from the 41-acre Hannan Wildlife Preserve. ❀



*Rhododendron in bloom along Dry Creek.
Photo: Diana Feld*

Trustworthy News

By Cheryl L. Belcher

LTA Regional Conference in April

Staff members Susan Kane, Eric Jorgensen and Cheryl Belcher attended the sold-out conference in late April, held at Fallen Leaf Lake in the Sierra. Rand Wentworth, new LTA President, addressed the group and urged us to keep a high priority on land conservation. The classes offered full and half-day classes on a variety of subjects from special issues writing conservation easements, to GIS, to membership development. Thanks go to LTA Regional Director, Patty McCleary, for providing this very worthwhile training opportunity.

Children's Camp at Burton Park

From June 17-21 we held the annual children's outdoor education camp at Burton Park for children in grades 3-6. Studies include birding, pond ecology, plants, zoology, Native American games and food, and art. Camp Director Lynn Campbell reports that the sold-out program received accolades from children, staff and parents. If you would like to be on the camp mailing list, please call Kristin at the office, 272-5994.

Marc Smiley Training a Success

NCLT Board and staff attended a special Strategic Planning training program by Marc Smiley in early June. Well-known in the land trust community, Marc is in demand nationally for his training seminars on Board

Development, Strategic Planning, and Organizational Management.

Anne Hendrickson Attends Fund Raising Seminar

Board member Anne Hendrickson attended a one-day seminar in San Francisco in June on all aspects of fund raising. Anne is chair of our Litton Trial Faire this year, and is always ready to learn how to better support NCLT.

Annual Monitoring Nears Completion for Year

All lands held under conservation easement are visited (monitored) at least once a year. This is not just a legal requirement, but is a great pleasure as well. It is a chance to revisit all our protected sites, walk the land with the owners, and reaffirm what this land trust work is truly all about. We have been fortunate to have new staffer Eric Jorgensen working on the monitoring program this year. Eric has improved our monitoring procedures and taken them to a new level of excellence. Partnering with intrepid volunteer Marlene Hayes, the project notebooks, off-site and on-site files, and photos will have been reviewed and updated upon completion of the program.

Thanks to Carole Miller

Carole Miller, Membership Chair for the past three years, will leave the Board at the end of her term in June. Carole has done a great job, and will be a hard act to follow! She still plans to stay connected with NCLT project work. ❀

Membership Luncheon a Hit!

Each March Nevada County Land Trust holds its annual Membership Luncheon at the Miner's Foundry. Organized by Membership Chair Carole Miller, the luncheon features good food, a raffle, and silent auction.

Author, photographer, historian and trails expert, Hank Meals, provided our keynote address. This year, we were also pleased to be able to introduce Anna Reynolds Trabucco and Bill Trabucco to the assemblage.

Anna and Bill recently protected their 320-acre ranch under a "working landscape" conservation easement.

A key to the success of this event is a special slide show presentation by Andy Cassano, Lands Committee Chair. Andy introduced NCLT members to our new projects. The underlying message of this event is to say thanks to all our members who make it possible for NCLT to do its work. ♣





We are grateful to the following Nevada County individuals and businesses who have so generously contributed to the wonderful success of our benefit auction and raffle.

Silent Auction Donors

Animal Behavior Clinic

Double Oak

Indian Springs

Ken Krogler, TransPac Software, Inc.

Nevada City

Palley & Palley, Attorneys at Law

Sierra Star

Benefit Raffle Donors

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Peaceful Valley Farm Supply

Posh Nosh

Royal Gorge

Sierra Cinemas, Inc.

Sierra at Tahoe

Randy Silver

Steve Solinsky

Sorensen's Resort

Sugar Bowl South Pine Café

Wild Birds Unlimited

Wolfdale's Unique Cuisine



Agriculture in Nevada County: A Brief History

by David Beesley, Ph.D.

Beginnings 1851-1920s

While the Chamber of Commerce and about every third business in Nevada County seems to use the phrase “gold country” somewhere in their promotions literature, another part of the county’s economic history has largely gone unheralded. Agriculture – including the raising of fruit, grapes, vegetables – field crops such as hay and the grazing of livestock has also had a long history in the county. In fact, it could be argued that the feeding of miners very early on made it possible for the more stable phases of mining, especially hydraulic and quartz operations and the towns they created, to prosper. Today, even though the amount of arable land in the county devoted to agriculture is diminishing because of its conversion to housing development, agriculture continues to prosper, especially with growth in fruit and grape production. Livestock production also manages to hold on as well.

The two major histories of Nevada County, Thompson and West, and Lardner and Brock, provide basic information on the patterns of agricultural growth in the county, beginning with its origin in 1851 and stretching into the 1920s. The prosperity of mining provides the key to understanding this pattern. As long as placer and hydraulic mining were important elements in the county economy, general agriculture and livestock raising were widespread, serving the camps and towns that those industries helped create. With the decline in population that occurred after hydraulic mining effectively ended

with the Sawyer Decision of 1884, so did the general agriculture in the county decline. However, agriculture in the county recovered as a shift to specialization in production of apples and pears occurred in the early twentieth century. The key to success in the production of fruit in the county was access to good transportation and water for irrigation.

The transportation problem proved to be the easier to solve. In 1876, the Nevada County Narrow Gauge Railroad was completed, creating a valuable tie to the Central Pacific at Colfax. Fruit from what historian M.J. Brock called the “Fruithills” now made its way into wider markets. In 1915, for example, Nevada County Bartlett pears won first prize at the San Francisco World’s Fair.

The problem of developing water for irrigation proved to be more complex. It required the county’s farmers to organize into an effective lobbying group to draw state assistance. In 1917 this was accomplished with the creation of the Nevada County Farm Bureau. Further organizational work led to surveys of watersheds in the county, and with state support, County supervisors placed a measure creating a Nevada County Irrigation District proposal on the ballot. In August 1921, county voters approved the creation of this new water district. The future of agriculture in Nevada County was assured. ❀

(Dr. David Beesley is working on an in-depth history of agriculture in Nevada County which will be available soon. This article is an excerpt from his work.)

Treks Through Time - Part 2

New Treks Chair, Christy Sherr, is making it easier for us to have fun and “Go take a Hike!” The second part of our Treks Through Time program began earlier this month and will run through August. Hike destinations include Penner Lake, Sugar Pine Point, South Yuba Canal Historic Ditches, Humbug Creek Falls, Donner Pass emigrant routes, Grouse Ridge Vernal Pools, Andrasite Peak and Sand Ridge Lake, Five Lakes Basin, and the historic town of Dutch Flat. A new offering this year is the August 10 Malakoff Diggins Loop Trail and Campfire Program with Christy and her husband Doug. Call the office (530) 272-5994 if you would like more information or to make a reservation. ❀

Board member and environmental historian David Beesley (center) led a March snowshoe Trek to the Donner Family Winter Campsite.

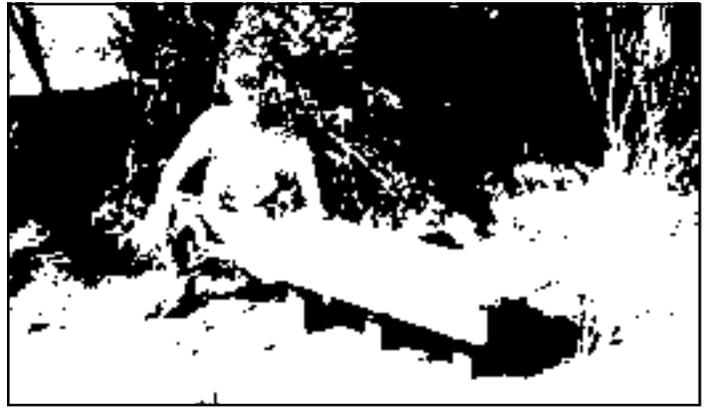


Eagle Scout Builds Benches

Billy Fritz earned his Eagle Scout badge by designing, building and installing three benches on the popular Litton Trail – Sierra College. Billy is in Unit 727 in the Golden Empire Council, under leader Randy Bunnell. This process involved working with NCLT Project Managers, Sierra College, and the team of helpers Billy pulled together for the project. Thanks Billy! 🌿

Proud Eagle Scout Billy Fritz kneels next to one of the new benches he designed and built for Litton Trail

Photo Credit: Randy Bunnell



State Park and NCLT Acquire 40-Acre Meadow

On May 15 Empire Mine State Historical Park and NCLT announced the acquisition of a 40-acre parcel along East Bennett Street, just outside Grass Valley.

The land, which now becomes part of the state park, includes 32 acres of meadows, including the largest section of native grasses in the area, a riparian corridor along the south fork of Wolf Creek, and a grove of old-growth madrone trees.

The native grasses at the site are among those that led settlers to name Grass Valley 150 years ago.

Ray Patton said he expects a master plan to be prepared for the site, which would maintain the native grasses and manage the stream corridor. The site may be appropriate for educational field trips and studies.

The land was purchased from previous owners Tim Roark and Pat O'Brien, who were supportive of the acquisition and credited for their patience during the three-year process.

"This is a very sensitive piece of property and it needed to be in the hands of some kind of conservator," said Roark, a Grass Valley real estate broker who held ownership in the property for more than 20 years.

Roark said the land, identified as light industrial in the Nevada County General Plan, has been considered for various uses over the years including softball fields, mini-storage, senior housing, and a senior center.

Using \$50,000 in grant funds from the Nature Conservancy, NCLT purchased a conservation easement to a portion of the property.

This allowed State Parks the time to budget funds and acquire the property over a two-year period. Total cost of the acquisition was \$700,000.

Cheryl Belcher, executive director of NCLT, said the transaction demonstrates how valuable open space lands can be preserved for future generations through cooperation of the public and private sectors. 🌿

Thank-You to All Our Volunteers

The Board of Directors and staff of the Nevada County Land Trust gratefully acknowledge our wonderful volunteers who help in so many ways – in the office, on our trails and preserves, with special projects, events, and treks. We couldn't be as effective without you! 🌿

Becky Anderson	Marlene Hayes	Bill Nickerl
Jim Bailey	Steve Hayes	Anne Padget
Ruth Bailey	Ellen Huebner	Jean Peck
Dan Barth	Dale Johnson	Lee Pemberton
David Beesley	Russ Jorgensen	Chris Postlewaite
Christine Belcher	Chris Krugler	Frank Schmidt
Linda Carlson	David Lawler	Christy Sherr
Paul Carlson	Michael Lockhart	Gregg Sheer
Paul Castro	Robyn Mallgren	Russell Towle
Carolyn Chainey-Davis	Kerry McCalden	Michael Wise
Janaia Donaldson	Phyllis Miller	
	Bernice Moody-Falk	

If your name has been omitted or listed incorrectly, please accept our sincere apologies and notify us so that we can correct our records.



Rich Johansen Joins NCLT Board

Rich Johansen recently joined the Board of Directors of NCLT. Rich is the owner/operator of Johansen Farms with operations in Orland and Penn Valley. A fourth-generation farmer, his family came to Nevada County in 1850, at which time they were engaged in mining and logging operations. Rich has a degree from U.C. Davis in Agricultural Economics and Business Management. His wife, Mila, is Artistic Director and founder of the Nevada County Performing Arts Guild.

Rich's expertise, background and help will be especially appreciated as we work on projects protecting ranch and farmlands in the County. 🌿