When gold was found in 1848, California had been part of the United States for just two years, after the Mexican-American War. Prior to gold discovery, there were 2,735 American immigrants in California. Between 1849 and 1860 approximately 200,300 gold seekers made their way to search for their fortunes in California.

Many were originally farmers who sold their farms to embark on an ambitious plan to become rich. Some did. Most didn’t. Instead, what many found was the chance at new farming opportunities.

So when US Congress passed the Homestead Act of 1862, allowing individuals to claim 160 acres, many failed miners took the opportunity. It comprised three steps: file a claim, improve the land, and file for the deed of title after five years. Under this plan, many gold seekers claimed new farms and ranches in California.

“...The hardships and privations of a life in the mines were great, and many an unfortunate miner abandoned the pick and shovel for the spade and plow. Agriculture will grow and improve as the population increases and the demand for farm produce becomes more urgent.” Excerpt from Reproduction of Thompson and West’s History of Nevada County, 1880.

The earliest pioneer families farmed and ran cattle on the lush native grasses. Now generations later, many of these families remain and are ranching and farming on the same land. They even use the same brands. (See page 4.)

In 1880 there were 206 registered ranches in western Nevada County, with 93,000 acres cultivated. In addition to meat cattle they ran dairy cattle and sheep. These animals wintered on the family ranches, then were herded to mountain allotments for summer grazing. Today these mountain allotments are maintained by BLM and Tahoe National Forest.

In addition to animals, the pioneers established orchards including peaches, apples, pears, apricots, plums, cherries, prunes and quince. Records also indicate miscellaneous vegetables, potatoes, grain crops, grape vines, and the production of wine, beer and brandy. There are even records of 129,000 mulberry trees established to feed silk worms, but this enterprise was.
President’s Message  
Why Join Nevada County Land Trust?

1. **We’re integral.** Land is where the various environmental, agricultural and recreation communities meet. Our unique function is to preserve land for habitat, watershed, ranching, farming and recreation. Once land is dedicated for these purposes, only land trusts can accept and enforce conservation easements. As Western Nevada County’s own land trust, we enjoy broad public support. We collaborate with many other groups to which you may belong.

2. **We are about the future.** We focus on preserving for future generations the natural and agrarian environment which has nurtured our species, thus the human spirit.

3. **We’re independent.** NCLT is a meeting place for different and differing viewpoints. No one wants our region to resemble Roseville, and we provide common ground for all political opinions to work together to reach this mutually agreed goal.

4. **We’re effective:** We have 5,000 acres under protection, a figure that is likely to double as we complete pipeline projects and acquire PG&E lands designated for conservation. We collaborate with local, regional and national groups. We play a key role in local trail building and maintenance. Our certification by the national Land Trust Alliance testifies to our success.

5. **We’re fun.** You will enjoy our varied treks programs, camp and youth programs, trail building, educational seminars, concerts and volunteer opportunities. Our goal is to get you outdoors through a variety of activities and events.

6. **We’re you.** This is a grass roots, community-supported and run organization. We only exist because residents believe we are necessary. 100% of all donations and memberships stay right here in Western Nevada County.

7. **We need your support now.** Please renew your memberships at the level you can afford. Please also consider asking friends and family to join or making gifts of memberships to them. The gift of the outdoors is truly unique and meaningful.

*Thank you!*

Dave Palley  
Board President

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This Holiday Season  
**GIVE THE GIFT OF Preserved Landscapes**

Making a donation to the Land Trust in the name of someone important in your life is a special way to show you care: about our land, about our community and about them.

You can do this with a gift membership. Gift memberships or donations will be listed in our quarterly newsletter and a special acknowledgment card will be sent to the new member of our organization. They’ll get a free Trek pass and all the benefits of membership.

You can also give other types of Land Trust gifts; camp scholarships, Treks, benches on trails, trail naming, commemorative Land Trust prints and other merchandise. Just visit our website for more ideas.

[www.NevadaCountyLandTrust.org](http://www.NevadaCountyLandTrust.org)
Fall Treks Report

Another interesting summer and fall season of Treks has just about come to an end. Still to look forward to on November 6th is our annual Sutter Buttes Bragg Canyon Hike with the Middle Mountain Foundation – a “must do” trek for it’s historical, geological, and spiritual significance.

If you haven’t yet come out for one of our treks, please do (and invite your friends). They are a great way to get outdoors, meet new people, and learn some cool stuff! Our Trek leaders are informative, interesting, and knowledgeable – so you’re not just getting some good exercise and exploring our amazing countryside, you also get to hang out with folks who are generous in sharing their passions and expertise.

This past season we explored the Grouse Ridge with Naturalist (and beekeeper) Randy Oliver, hiked to the top of Castle and Basin peaks with Jim Dodds, trod through Van Norden Meadow where indigenous peoples and immigrants traveled with Hydrologist John Cobourn, got the Maidu perspective of life before the gold rush with Maidu Cultural Director Grayson Coney, and visited both the Rome Powerhouse (the birthplace of PG&E) and the Colgate Powerhouse with historian and retired PG&E employee Dale Johnson.

We’re just beginning to line up some interesting winter ArmChair Treks – so stay tuned! Email announcements will keep you posted. If you have a trek idea or an area of expertise you’d like to share with us, please contact Melony Vance at melony@nevadacountylandtrust.org and let’s see if we can make it happen. Happy Trails!

Marty Coleman-Hunt
Executive Director

EquiTrek Update

Horse Lovers

In September a small group of EquiTrekers toured the beautiful private land of Carpenter Valley, located in the high country of Nevada County. “The whole area is gorgeous, reminding me, among other things, of the incredible diversity of trees and plants we are so privileged to have in the Sierra. Good company, hours on horseback, spectacular views and country. It doesn’t get much better,” said Bill Trabucco, a participant in the Trek on his Peruvian “Rico.”

The ride began in the Euer Valley and was led by Fran Cole on her Tennessee Walking Horse “Stella.” Fran made the observation that “the Carpenter Valley land stewardship practices have made a huge difference. It is undisturbed and pristine, and it absolutely sparkles in the afternoon fall sunlight. The owners should be commended for their careful land stewardship.” Co-leader Jeryn Byrne, who rode her Missouri Fox Trotter “Merlin,” said, “I imagine that Carpenter Valley looks very much like it did to its earliest animal and human inhabitants.”

Upcoming EquiTrek: Nov. 6th

On November 6 we will hold a public EquiTrek on the protected conservation easement at Linden Lea Ranch on Bitney Springs Road. This two-hour ride will venture through a historic 865-acre working cattle ranch. The beautiful private land, owned by Anna Reynolds Trabucco and Bill Trabucco, features a special Blue Oak preserve, creeks and springs, pioneer home sites, and amazing vistas overlooking the South Yuba River canyon. Cameras are a must on this trip.

EquiTreks are outings on Land Trust properties and privately owned lands, for those interested in access to sites rarely available to the public for riding use. This is a unique opportunity to learn about local lands projects, view beautiful landscapes, and enjoy the freshness of nature, from the comfort of a saddle.

Melony Vance
Treks Coordinator

Turkey Trek: Nov. 26th

Get off of the couch, grab your family, and hike off your Thanksgiving dinner with the Nevada County Land Trust “Turkey” Trek! We’ve got a brand new trail we’d like you to see – it’s close in to Nevada City, it’s fairly flat, fairly short – and easy to get to. The Turkey Trek will be on Friday, November 26th, the day after Thanksgiving, from 10:00am to 2:00pm on the new Hirschman Trail. Join us - it will be a fun family activity! Look for details in a forthcoming email announcement.

The Hirschman Trail is now complete. It goes partly around the Hirschman Pond, a remnant of the hydraulic mining days, and through some loving forested areas filled with vernal pools (turtles have been spotted crossing the trail). The trail is a little over 2 miles, one way, with an optional partial loop at the Indian Trail Road end. The trail can be accessed from either Cement Hill Road (just across from the Rood Center), or Indian Trail Rd.

Melony Vance
Treks Coordinator

Visit us online for more information at www.NevadaCountyLandTrust.org or call our office 530-272-5994
abandoned due to lack of a viable market for the silk produced.

Over the generations, much of the land has changed hands. Some early ranchers went out of business or moved away. Others remained. The Sweets, Robinsons, Browns, Sanfords, Readers, Rondonis, Coughlins, Brownings and Nichols (Smiths) are still doing business in the same manner as their pioneering ancestors, leaving multiple generations in their wake. Ronda Rose Alt of the Black Family shared, "When you put the watermelon in the same stream to cool for multiple generations, the way you do things begins to take on symbolic significance."

Today these ranches represent a unique opportunity for historical, cultural, agriculture and open space preservation. These are often the last large, undeveloped parcels of land in an area that is facing increasing development pressure. Long perceived as foes, today ranchers and conservationists have aligned interests to preserving the unique heritage of our region. We have already helped the Smith family preserve the historic Nichols Ranch for future generations of farming and are working with the Rondoni family today to do the same.

Luci Wilson
Americorps Member

Since June we have monitored 1,520 acres, including three forest easements. As I reviewed where I’d been, I paused for a moment to contemplate why this time period included all of the forest easements, and it’s a story all about climate.

Our forest easements, totaling 670 acres, all occupy the lower montane plant community occurring between 2,000-4,000’ elevation. The 160-acre Round Mountain easement north of Nevada City averages 2900’. The Jonathan Witworth Butts Forest near Downieville, another 160-acre easement, is slightly higher at 3500’. The 350-acre Roth easement at the eastern end of San Juan Ridge, is higher at 4500’, but is somewhat temperate given the elevation.

Increasing elevation brings with it lower temperatures, increasing precipitation, shallower soils, lower concentrations of oxygen and carbon dioxide, higher winds and sometimes more unstable geology. These changes are gradual, and so are the changes in vegetation which accompany them.

The shift we see in dominant vegetation between 2000-4000’ elevation is the shift from foothill woodlands of mixed oak species and gray pines to lower montane forests, and vegetation that is better adapted to the colder and wetter winter conditions.

These accessible lower montane forests were logged a century ago, so much of our forests, including our forest easements, are now comprised of second- or third-growth timber. The trees harvested most for Sierra timber production are ponderosa and Jeffrey pines, Douglas-fir, incense cedar, some white fir and giant sequoia, all of which occur in these mid-elevation forests.

continued on page 5
Agricultural Resources

NRCS
www.nrcs.org
The National Resource Conservation Service (formerly Soil Conservation Service) is a federal agency that works with landowners through conservation planning and assistance designed to benefit the soil, water, air, plants, and animals that result in productive lands and healthy ecosystems.

NCRCD
www.nrcrd.org
Nevada County Resource Conservation District provides assistance to over 1,000 landowners, annually. The NCRCD assists with natural resource issues including erosion control, pond management, invasive weed control, fuels management, wildlife improvement, pasture, orchard and vineyard management, and rangeland and forestry health improvement.

Nevada County Grown
www.nevadacountygrown.org
Nevada County Grown is a non-profit marketing organization created to strengthen the connection between local farmers and ranchers and the larger community and to foster a sustainable local agricultural economy by making the community aware of locally grown agricultural products.

Ag Advisory Commission
The AAC works on various issues aiding in the growing and marketing of agricultural products and the conservation of agricultural land for production and makes recommendations to Nevada County’s Planning Department.

Farm Bureau
www.nevadacofb.org
The Farm Bureau is a grassroots organization where farmers have the opportunity to join together in a variety of aspects and work on common issues, such as legislation affecting taxes, education, water, private property rights, energy, labor, pesticides, transportation and commodities.

High Sierra Resource Conservation and Development Council
www.highsierrarcandd.org
The High Sierra RC&D Council will provide regional leadership and assistance to communities to strengthen the local economy, rural heritage, and the conservation and management of our natural resources.

UC Cooperative Extension – Nevada County
UC’s 64 Cooperative Extension (CE) offices are local problem-solving centers. More than 400 campus-based specialists and county-based farm, home, and youth advisors work as teams to bring the University’s research-based information to Californians.

Stewardship Update (continued)

Despite the history of logging, many of the forests of the Sierra Nevada have proven resilient. Our three forest easements are now being sustainably managed, with an overall emphasis in managing for old-growth forest. During our stewardship visits with the owners, we walk among the tall trees, discussing everything from bark beetles and snags densities to strategies for old growth management.

Luci Wilson
Americorps Member

Saving Rondoni Ranch

It is the oldest ranching operation in Nevada County and has been held in one family the entire time. The 575-acre ranch is currently used as grazing land, irrigated hay crop growing, and non-industrial timberland. It is a model for cattle grazing in a sensitive watershed habitat.

The land rises to a crest, where drainages to the west meet Dry Creek and to the east, the Bear River. Family member and landowner Bill Tanner has worked extensively with Natural Resources Conservation Service on a spring restoration and vegetation management program. Extensive spring improvements were made including the installation of water tubs to monitor water quality and screen sediment and fencing to keep livestock away from sensitive areas. NRCS also worked with Tanner on brush clearing and seeding of important areas to manage the flow of watercourses. Grazing rotation is managed to reduce soil disturbance on the range where water resources are located and to secure spring areas.

In addition to providing critical watershed functions (including filtration, groundwater recharge, and storage and safe release), and other ecosystem services, these working lands provide important economic benefits, wildlife habitat, scenic vistas. These resource benefits are, in part, dependent upon continued, well-managed agricultural and silvicultural production. Supporting working landowners with income through a conservation program allows them to continue doing this important work in the watershed. These working lands, and the benefits they provide, are threatened by fragmentation and development. As working lands are developed, watershed function can be impaired by increasing impervious surfaces, increasing chemical and nutrient loading (from landscaping and other uses), increasing fuel loads, and other problems.

Nevada County Land Trust is working with Sierra Nevada Conservancy and other funding sources to help save Rondoni Ranch and keep it as a heritage, pioneer cattle operation for generations to come.

Marty Coleman-Hunt
Executive Director
Eco-Kids Ecology Fair: Nov. 7th

This year at the beautiful Burton Homestead property, the Nevada County Land Trust is hosting the 8th Annual Eco-Kids Ecology Fair on Sunday, November 7th. Bring the whole family and enjoy this annual event together.

There will be many fun, hands-on, interactive activities, presentations and booths for Eco-Kids of all ages to participate in. This year, we have Friends of Deer Creek doing a local water ecology activity, Children’s Haute Trash performing a kids fashion show with recycled materials, and Wild Life Rehabilitation and Release bringing a Great Horned owl, a Red Tailed hawk and other birds of prey. Dexter the cow and calf will be there, as well as two local 4-H clubs, showing us their favorite animals and teaching us the best ways to take care of our critters. Dan Warden will build a giant, interactive nature sculpture and Rick Berry is leading his Tom Brown inspired Earth Skills activities. The onsite Tsi Akim Maidu Bark houses will be open for traditional storytelling and cultural education. The Friendship Club will present a hands-on activity about pollution and the Bitney Springs School will present a cool science project. AmeriCorps has Luci Wilson leading a native plant walk and Audubon will make birdhouses with the kids. We’ll have a local garden project, worm bins, nature crafts, face painting, music, food and more.

The Eco-Kids Ecology Fair was held in the past at the Imaginarium in Nevada City with the Deep Ecology Institute. Many of the science based youth activities that were held there have had to come to an end due to its recent closure. Nevada County Land Trust chose to partner with the Deep Ecology Institute in order to ensure the continuation and success of the popular Eco-Kids Ecology Fair that had over 200 families attending last year. Having it at the beautiful Burton Homestead property this year is a great way to get kids and adults into the outdoors to celebrate, explore and interact with our natural environment and local community. We are also planning to expand the Eco-Kids to a year round Eco-Kids Club.

Eco-Kids Ecology Fair

Date and Time:
Sunday, November 7th, 12pm to 4pm
Place:
Burton Homestead
16200 Lake Vera Purdon Rd.
Off of North Bloomfield, Nevada City.
Cost:
Kids $1, adults $5

Contact Stacy Prater-Vigil, Youth Program Coordinator at 530-272-5994 x7 or go to www.NevadaCountyLandTrust.org for more information on any of Nevada County Land Trust’s youth programs.

Stacy Prater-Vigil
Youth Programs Coordinator

Paper or Digital?

The Land Trust staff has had an ongoing discussion on whether we should, or when we should consider moving to digital/online publishing of our newsletter and other member communications. Do we transition to digital for everything, right now? There are a lot of things to consider, but at the center is “what do our members want?” Do you want to read Land Times on a computer? Do you prefer to renew your membership or sign up for a Trek via the Web? Can we reduce our carbon footprint, save trees, and save money this way?

Well, instead of a cold-turkey switch to digital we are going to migrate. Today you have an option to renew memberships, make donations, give a gift, or sign up for a Trek or camp via our website.

www.NevadaCountyLandTrust.org

It’s fast, easy and safe. Now we are beginning to distribute our Fall and Spring Land Times via email. However, we will continue printing and mailing our Winter Land Times and Annual Report, and our Summer Land Times, plus we will mail other program and member communications on request. We’d like to hear your opinion. Let us know what you think.
The big news this year is that miles of new trails are being constructed by Nevada County Land Trust and other partners. The projects highlighted here are the ones that are currently being worked on.

**Hirschman Trail**

Two miles of new trail have been completed land owned by the City of Nevada City on the Indian Trails and Hirschman Pond property just outside of Nevada City. The Hirschman Trail project is a joint effort between the City of Nevada City and Nevada County Land Trust, funded through a Recreation Trails Program grant. The contractor, Sierra Engineers, completed the trail over the summer. The new trail extends from Hirschman Pond to Indian Flat Road, just east of “The Willo”. The trail includes one bridge, two trestles, and a puncheon and several hundred feet of turnpike (raised trail) to insure that it will remain usable through the winter and spring months. During those months, the trail passes by and over a number of ponds that last into early summer and produce thousands of tadpoles and other aquatic life.

Work on the last ½ mile of the Hirschman Trail will begin shortly with an accessible trail from Cement Hill Road to Hirschman Pond. This trail will have a compact, smooth surface, and will meet accessible trail standards. The trail winds through a landscape modified by hydraulic mining, passing huge boulders, large pines and several seasonal ponds ending at the edge of Hirschman Pond where the 2-mile trail begins.

**Deer Creek Tribute Trail**

Construction of ½ mile of trail from the Newtown Ditch to Deer Creek has started. Trailscape, Inc., a trail construction contractor, has been selected to build the trail for Nevada County Land Trust. Funding of the trail is from grant funds obtained by Friends of Deer Creek and the Land Trust is assisting by constructing the trail element of the grant. The trail should be complete by early winter this year.

The grant is also funding construction of a trail bridge over Deer Creek. The bridge design and engineering has been completed and the contractor selected to build the bridge. Completion of the bridge will provide year long access to the south side of Deer Creek where the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) is planning to construct a loop trail on BLM land south of Deer Creek.

**Kenny Ranch Trails**

Trail construction along Ridge Road and Rough and Ready Highway is planned for this fall, beginning with trail construction training by the Trail Care Crew from the International Mountain Bike Association (IMBA) on November 6 from 9:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m.

Training will start indoors at Twin Cities Church and continue in the afternoon with hands-on trail construction of Land Trust trails on the Kenny Ranch property. For more information, and to register, see the Bicyclists of Nevada County website, www.bonc.org

Bill Haire
Trails Coordinator

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Sandra Rockman
At Home in the Woods, At Last

How did Sandra Rockman come to be a member of Nevada County Land Trust back in 2005? “Leon Russell,” said Sandra. It’s true, lots of people have learned about the Land Trust through the annual Stars benefit concert series. For Sandra, though, it’s so fitting: for the last 4 years she went from concert-goer to avid volunteer, to Concert Coordinator of the Stars concerts.

Coming from a New York City urban childhood, Sandra was taught to be afraid of everything natural and out-of-doors. She got over those fears of bugs and dirt and the vulnerability of sleeping in a tent. She and her husband Tony are avid walkers, hikers, backcountry skiers and general tree huggers (particularly the vanilla-scented Jeffrey Pines). They’re proud to be Land Trust members and hope to enjoy many of the upcoming treks.

“What I respect and have wanted to help foster is the organization’s mission of keeping Nevada County beautiful by protecting open spaces, ranchland, farms, hiking trails, woodland habitat and wildlife corridors,” Sandra said. “All of this figures prominently in my love for this area, a place I have surprisingly called home for over 30 years now.”

Most of those of you reading this already know the value and importance of your participation in Nevada County Land Trust. For those who don’t, Sandra suggests thinking about why you choose (and are lucky enough) to live here in this very special place on the west slope of the Sierras. The Land Trust works hard to preserve this remarkable piece of the planet.

Jean Gilbert
Operations Manager

Cherished Lives

Dellalou Swan
Dellalou Dunbar Swan was born in Palo Alto and lived most of her life on the Peninsula before moving to Grass Valley in 2008. As a child, she loved spending time enjoying nature on the family’s coastal property. Later she became a docent at the Rancho del Oso Nature Center, part of Big Basin Redwoods State Park in Santa Cruz County. Dellalou was an avid birdwatcher and life-long nature lover, even taking up horseback riding at the age of 83 after moving to Nevada County. She was active with Dances of Universal Peace and the Unity church group that met once a week in Eskaton. As an artist and art therapist, Dellalou welcomed others into her creative space. She was instrumental in organizing and creating many groups. Remembered by friends as elegant, gracious and wise, she will be missed by all.

William Coleman
William was born and raised in Detroit, Michigan and later attended Henry Ford Trade School in nearby Dearborn. A WWII veteran, he was lead navigator on a B-24 Liberator in the 755th Bombardier Squadron stationed in Norwich, England. After the war, he continued on with operations in North Africa. In all, he flew 23 missions, receiving the Air Medal with Three Clusters and Three Battle Stars. He returned home and went to work as an automotive engineer for Ford Motor Company for 42 years in Indianapolis and Dearborn. William and his wife Gerry retired to Green Valley, Michigan where they lived for 23 years. He had a great singing voice and participated in the church choir and in Barbershop competitions. He also had an active interest in astronomy. In his later years, William spent time visiting his children and grandchildren. His daughter Marty Coleman-Hunt is Executive Director of Nevada County Land Trust.

Jean Gilbert
Operations Manager

New Members
Katy Alvey
Glenn Arima
Carol Bader
Sara Brownwood
Julie Clark
Donna Dekker
Diane Durkin
Kate Dwyer
Don Vojtech
Debra and Doug Wagner
Nick and Amanda Wilcox
Regine and Ward Wilson
Coreen Young

GIVE A GIFT of the Outdoors
www.NevadaCountyLandTrust.org