New Conservation Easement Protects Working Forest Land

Working in partnership with landowner Scott Roth, the Nevada County Land Trust has permanently protected 356 acres of working forest land east of North San Juan. The conservation easement, which was completed in late December, provides for the sustainable harvest and management of the timber resources on the property. It also protects key habitat for a wide variety of wildlife species.

Roth, who donated the conservation easement in memory of his mother, says, “Now cresting after 200 years of the industrial age, we’ve taken a long term loan from the ‘earth bank,’ and it’s time to start paying it back.” Roth took advantage of a recent change in federal tax laws that provides greater incentive for donating conservation easements. The new rules allow a landowner to take a larger charitable donation when donating a conservation easement.

“This conservation easement represents a healthy balance between protecting habitat and open space while providing for the active management of the timber resources on the property,” says Dan Macon, NCLT’s Director of Conservation Programs. “It sets the stage for working with other working forest landowners.”

Scott Roth, who currently lives in Southern California, intends to live on the property in the future. The conservation easement allows...
President’s Message
New Five-Year Strategic Plan

Toward the end of 2006 the Land Trust Board of Directors for developed a comprehensive five-year strategic plan. The year-long planning process began by gaining input from a variety of local experts. I’d like to personally thank everyone who helped us comprehend the breadth of precious assets we have in Western Nevada County.

Next, through a series of work sessions the Board developed a new mission and charter that expresses our commitment to protect and care for our open land. Working groups were formed to develop strategies for the coming year. As a result, the Land Trust’s new strategic plan will focus more resources on conserving three target areas: foothill oak woodlands, important farmland, and the higher elevation mixed conifer belt. In addition, we will expand our community outreach, education and recreation programs that grow and enrich a deeper community connection with our lands.

We have strengthened staff and Board expertise, added a new advisory committee, and created a new trails and recreation working group. We are also welcoming back past Board members on a new strategic plan. The new Board Members will be held in early June.

Mission:
Nevada County is endowed with a rich mosaic of beautiful landscapes, healthy forests, historical treasures, and small towns. The land sustains life and replenishes the spirit. Our towns comfort us with timeless charm. Our farms and ranches feed our communities. The quality of life here is tightly connected to these precious resources.

Since foothill communities are changing as open landscapes fill in with housing and businesses. Our vision is to retain the distinct identity of Nevada County’s communities for future generations. Our commitment is to care for our open land, to sustain our natural resource-based economy, and to retain the rural character that has been the source of our prosperity.

The Nevada County Land Trust exists to create a balance between nature and the needs of the people who make a life and a livelihood here. This is our home. Our mission is to enrich a deeper community connection with our land – today, tomorrow, and forever.

Sincerely, John Taylor
for the continued sustainable management of the timber resources on the property, as well as for potential agricultural production (including livestock and orchards).

While conserving the property forever, Roth also recognized the need for flexibility in terms of the future economic uses of the land. Roth will be hosting a Land Trust trek on the property on August 11, 2007.

According to Macon, working landscapes (farms, ranches and working forest lands) are a critical part of NCLT’s new land conservation strategy. “Privately owned farms, ranches and forests are important to Nevada County for their economic contributions,” he explains, adding, “They also provide critical habitat and watershed values.”

New Trek Leaders Join the Team

We are happy to announce four new Trek leaders

• Pacific Crest Trail enthusiast and photographer Kris Wakefield will provide an experience on an alternate and more intimate approach to waterfalls, meadows and oak woodlands of Spenceville Wildlife Refuge.

Of course we again offer Treks with our rich and diverse Trek leaders Bill Nickler, David Lawler, Karen Callahan, John Olmsted, Dale Johnson, Randy Oliver, Chuck Scimcema and Su DeCourte. For a real challenge come with us into the Sutter Buttes.

There is something for every trekking ability and interest so call 530-272-5994 for a brochure with detailed Trek descriptions of visit our website at www.NevadaCountyLandTrust.org.

We would like to acknowledge and thank those who have given donations in memoriam:

In Memory of Georgina Else
Kathy Chikazawa
Jim & Margaret Else
Doris Langford
Joanne & Bill Peacock
Stuart Zola

Roth Easement -- from page one

The trek destinations this year are as diverse and challenging as the inhabitants contributing to the rich mosaic of Sierra Foothills living.

For reservations or to receive a detailed Treks Through Time brochure, call Stephanie at 530-272-5994 or visit the Land Trust online at www.NevadaCountyLandTrust.org.

New Trek Leaders Join the Team

We are happy to announce four new Trek leaders to the Treks Through Time team.

• Author, retired Forest Supervisor and well-known outdoorsman John Skinner will lead his group to Ford’s Bar and an 1850s town site. Later he’ll lead a group to Five Lakes Basin.

• KVMR radio personality Larry Hillberg, who has backpacked 2,650 miles of the Pacific Crest Trail, and trails historian Jay Shuttleworth will lead a Trek along the 1860s era Steven’s Trail.

Thoughts and Thanks

It has been said that “volunteerism is the willingness of people to work on behalf of others without the expectation of pay or other tangible gain” and the Land Trust is the grateful and humble recipient of such willingness.

Our volunteers exemplify the simple value that people committed to the process of helping others end up helping themselves. It is with the help of our volunteers that we have been able to develop a solid and cohesive trust with our community, which is essential to the overall success of our mission.

Why not try it? Give me a call. 530-272-5994

Stephanie Lorensen

Three Cheers for Volunteers

• Sterling Warr-Pryer and David Lawler for their Arm Chair Trek on “Evolution”

• Chet Blackburn for his Armchair Trek “An I-5 Safari”

• Rose Wood, Grayson Coney, Roberto Garcia, Michael Ben Ortiz and Don Ryberg for their Armchair Trek “Who Are the Maidu?”

• Jim Sindt for graphic designs and photography

• Richard Gorman and KVMR Radio for our Community Service Grant

• Tracy Corris of KNCO Radio, Larry Hillberg, Skip Alan Smith and Michael Ben Ortiz of KVMR for airtime interviews covering our upcoming events

• Eagle Scout Cameron Cook for securing the Hague House for future renovation

• Nevada Union Kiwanis Key Club for “bringing down the wall!” at the North Star House

• Lynn Campbell and Lori Gubera-Stengel for the Stewardship Conference

• Rita DeQuercus and the Local Food Coalition team for producing “Come Home to Eat Banquet and Ball” celebrating our local farmers and ranchers

• Ana Acton, Ed Andreas and Patrick Kennally for consultations and partnership on Treks for Health wheelchair walk

• The RSVP Program and its wonderful team of workers

In Memoriam

Thoughts and Thanks

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Anyone who has called the Land Trust office has been greeted by the ever-cheerful and enthusiastic voice of Stephanie Lorensen. If you are having a blue day, just call Stephanie and she’ll cheer you up in a split second.

It was a natural decision to appoint Stephanie as the new Volunteer Programs Coordinator. If you are interested in joining a work party of any kind – from bush whacking a trail, to staffing a booth, to helping answer the phones, just call Stephanie. She’ll get you connected to a super group of people who have a passion for the Land Trust mission and just plain like to have a good time together while helping a great cause.

Meanwhile, thanks to the many volunteers who have worked to help protect our lands in Nevada County over the past few months. And many thanks to Stephanie for organizing it all.

Marty Coleman-Hunt

Stephanie Lorensen

Why not try it? Give me a call. 530-272-5994

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Marty Coleman-Hunt

Stephanie Lorensen
All About Treks

It’s a great way to get expert advice from an experienced enthusiast as you make your vacation and hiking plans.

Reservations are not required so join us at the Library for this colorful evening of outdoor travels. Call Stephanie at the Land Trust office for more information...and later this month, dust off your hiking boots to join us for John’s outdoor Trek to Ford’s Bar and an 1850s town site on April 28.

Trek Through Time 2007 Begin April

Spring! At last we have behind dark mornings, snowy roads, barren trees and look to unfolding growth. The *Trek Through Time* program is also growing and this season we offer new challenges for the adventurous spirit as well as revisiting the “old growth” of past favorites.

Regardless of your age and hiking ability there is something tailored just for you. Trek program guides include local experts in history, mine engineering, ornithology, astronomy, archeology, botany, biology, entomology, geology and ecology. Some are well-known authors and all are qualified -- and sometimes colorful individuals in whose capable hands you will enjoy an enriching outdoor experience.

You will venture into some of the most intriguing areas of Nevada County including vernal pools, prehistoric gardens, pioneer trails, mountain streams and lakes, and remnants of long past historical sites. Continued on page four

Armchair Treks: Plan Your Summer Hiking Ventures

Armchair Treks are back again and occurring at the Madelyn Helling Library Community Room. On May 17 at 7 p.m. pull up a chair, have a seat and follow along as John Skinner takes us on a virtual tour of what to do outdoors in our Sierra wonderland.

John is a retired Forest Supervisor of the Tahoe National Forest and has done freelance writing since his retirement. He writes for Sierra Alive and Sierra Heritage plus another half-dozen local and regional periodicals. He is also the author of the publication “Sierra Outdoors” which features more than 200 trails, 100 lakes, 125 camping and picnic areas, and 14 pages of easy-to-use maps.

John offers guides to more than a dozen activities covering public lands in the Tahoe National Forest, portions of the Plumas and El Dorado National Forests and seven California State Parks, recreation and wildlife areas. His slide show presentation will provide tips and insights about hiking, camping, picnicking, rock climbing, mountain biking, scenic driving, OHV roads, hunting, boating, underwater diving, fishing, whitewater kayaking and rafting.

Long acknowledged as a leadership trail development, the Land Trust has expanded its focus to include unmet outdoor recreation opportunities.

NCLT’s Technical Advisory Committee identified outdoor dispersed recreation -- hiking, equestrian and mountain bike trails, outdoor education facilities -- has a critical need in western Nevada County. During NCLT’s strategic planning process, the organization convened a group of recreation experts from local agencies and organizations. Among agencies represented include:

- City of Nevada City Parks
- City of Grass Valley Parks and Recreation
- NID
- State of California Parks and Recreation
- County of Nevada Parks

According to NCLT’s trails coordinator Bill Haire, the new focus on expanded recreation opportunities will create new opportunities for collaboration.

“The new diverse, multi-agency committee will work to identify unmet outdoor recreation needs,” Haire said. “One of the first areas of focus will be looking for opportunities to create connectivity between trails and other programs that cross municipal and county boundaries.”

Haire will chair the new committee.

Dan Macon
follow old road grades, plus nearly a mile of new trail, much of it following an abandoned ditch grade above Rattlesnake creek.

The Adop-A-Trail program continues with a number of groups caring for the trail system. Work becomes more intense now that growing season is upon us, cutting back brush, berries and grass, and pruning.

If you are interested in helping construct or maintain these or any other Land Trust trails, please give us a call and we will contact you when we have a need for volunteers...530-272-5994.

Planning A Local Hike? Here Are Some Great Choices

More Trails on the Way

The Land Trust trail program is moving forward on several fronts: securing grants for new trail construction, planning and constructing trails, obtaining easements for trails, and maintaining the trails we have already built.

• We have approval from the City of Grass Valley, County of Nevada, and North Star/Grass Valley, LLC to construct a trail from Glenn Jones Park south for over a mile paralleling Wolf Creek. After months of study and negotiation, a suitable route has been identified and the project can get under way very soon.

• The Land Trust is working with Nevada City, Nevada County and others to develop a grant application for a trail connecting City property along Highway 49, Hirshman’s Pond, through the Rood Center, and on to Coyote Street and offices along Sierra College Drive. It provides a two school as well as numerous businesses and medical facilities.

• NCLT is assisting Friends of Deer Creek in their plans to construct a trails system that will follow existing and abandoned roads and canals, or on public land.

• NCLT is working to construct a trails system at Rattlesnake Ridge Estates. Most of the trails are in the process of being surveyed and may be ready as early as Spring.

Litton Trail

Litton Trail provides non-motorized access to two schools as well as numerous businesses and offices along Sierra College Drive. It provides a place for students and employees to get outdoors and take a break from their daily routine, and for people to escape from the urban environment without leaving Grass Valley.

Future plans include extending the trail west to Devere Mautino Park and beyond to the Gilmore/Scotten Schools and Condon Park. To the east, plans are to take the trail along Ridge Road and then north to Seven Hills School in Nevada City.

Memorial Park Segment -- Memorial Park to Brunswick Trail

The trail is one mile long, extending from Race Street to Empire Street. The trail climbs, through lands disturbed by mining, up into a dense forested area before crossing Empire Cross Road. From there, the trail climbs again, ending at the overflow parking lot across from the main visitor parking lot at Empire Mine State Park.

Special Local Trails Pull-Out Guide

Banner-Cascade Canal Trail

The five-mile segment on the downhill bank of the Lower Cascade Canal between Gracie and Red Dog Roads has been one of the most popular area trails for years. This segment of the canal makes up the Banner Cascade Canal Trail Project.

The segments at either end are easy to use; however the middle segment, at Little Deer Creek, can be difficult to negotiate where the canal is dug through the hillside. The segments at either end are easy to use; however the middle segment, at Little Deer Creek, can be difficult to negotiate where the canal is dug through the hillside.

Thiesen Trail

This loop is located on the 40 acre Adam Ryan Preserve southwest of the intersection of Dog Bar Road and Alta Sierra Drive. The loop trail is approximately one mile in length.

Beginning at the corner and heading west, the Alan Thiesen Trail passes through a forest of California black oak and ponderosa pine through hillside covered with blackberry, poison oak, and Scotch broom, to the top of the hill. Near the top is located a huge madrone tree. The trail then begins to wind its way down through forests of manzanita, pine and oak. Doubling back, the trail drops down through a grassy area that turns to the north, to the starting point. One may also turn south and follow the foot path to Mathis Pond.

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Dan Macon joined the Land Trust as Executive Director a year ago to help create a closer relationship with farmers and ranchers, who are facing significant decisions about their working lands. Macon, a farmer himself, also worked with the local farm community to expand agricultural tourism and local marketing programs. Macon’s new roles will be as Director of Conservation Programs, where he will broaden his focus to work with landowners on all types of land issues.

The Technical Advisory Committee was convened to provide input to the Land Trust on area land issues. The TAC comprises experts in a variety of disciplines who will assist in providing specialized assessments, give advice on land management issues, and broaden volunteer expertise made available to the community through the Land Trust.

The staffing changes are designed to increase the capacity of the Land Trust to reach out to the community, both in terms of creating a dialog on needs and in providing specialized expertise on lands conservation issues.

Marty Coleman-Hunt has been named Executive Director, and Dan Macon is moving to the newly created position of Director of Conservation Programs. In addition, a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) has been formed, which is made up of 30 local and regional professionals in a variety of specialized disciplines. The purpose of the TAC is to lend expertise and counsel to the Land Trust on issues such as land use, riparian restoration, expertise made available to the community on needs and in providing specialized expertise on lands conservation issues.

Marty Coleman-Hunt is a five-year resident of Nevada City. She has a passion for Nevada County and the high quality of life we enjoy as a rural community. Coleman-Hunt brings strong business management skills from her 30 years in corporate business and marketing management, and has worked as a member of several non-profit boards. Coleman-Hunt plans to build closer ties between the Land Trust, its membership, and the community.

Coleman-Hunt Named Executive Director as Macon Moves to New Director of Land Conservation Programs

In a move to expand its focus on land conservation, the NCLT Board of Directors have made changes in executive management. Marty Coleman-Hunt has been named Executive Director, and Dan Macon is moving to the newly created position of Director of Conservation Programs. In addition, a Technical Advisory Committee (TAC) has been formed, which is made up of 30 local and regional professionals in a variety of specialized disciplines. The purpose of the TAC is to lend expertise and counsel to the Land Trust on issues such as land use, riparian restoration, habitat protection, agriculture, forestry, recreation and others.

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A Conversation Among Land Owners

In March, at the Holbrooke Hotel in Grass Valley an unusual mixture of people came together to talk about the land. The first annual Land Stewardship Conference, hosted by the Nevada County Land Trust and the Yuba Watershed Institute, was a huge success with more than one hundred engaged attendees.

Friday evening featured Dan Dagget, author and speaker. Dagget spoke of the premise that the land has lived with “two-leggeds” for a long time. The landscapes can benefit from and be restored by activities such as bringing cows in tightly pocketed bunches onto eroded slopes and abandoned mine sites. The cows trample, fertilize and plant native seeds as they feed on scattered alfalfa. Dagget showed before and after photos where the technique successfully restored a previously damaged landscape. He views the application of such restoration activities in the Foothills would work well, where areas have been damaged by past mining practices. Dagget explained that the landscapes has evolved with such ungulates (hoofed animals) as antelope and bison. Grass cropping and “pulse grazing” stimulates plants to grow by tilling and fertilizing the soil. Dagget encouraged analysing the history of the land, and looking at each area specifically. There is not a generic solution to restoration problems.

Saturday featured a day of sixteen workshops and a field session. Subjects included invasive plant control, soils and construction best-management practices, water quality assessment and testing, forestry, farming and ranch conservation practices, land use planning, conservation easements, fire, native plants and lessons and stories from the local Tsi Akim Maidu tribal members.

For the most part, instructors leading the workshops were local residents and agency personnel donating their time and expertise to facilitate picking through the “nuts and bolts” of working with the sometimes overwhelming day-to-day issues of land use and restoration in the Sierra Foothills.

The Land Trust and the Watershed Institute would like to thank the workshop instructors and all who came to the conference. In the words of a participant: “This conference helped me to gain a greater perspective on the importance of diversity (in the landscape) enterprise stacking and grazing practices.”

The Calfed Bay-Delta Watershed Program was responsible for funding of the conference. Next year the funding will not be available, but the organizers hope to present once again, somehow.

Lynn Campbell