

Pioneer Dawson Nichols Ranch Easement

At the close of 2002, NCLT recorded a donated agricultural conservation easement protecting 553 acres of land.

The owners have named the easement the Pioneer Dawson Nichols Ranch in honor of the pioneering rancher who first settled on the ranch in 1850s. This



Pond area on Pioneer Dawson Nichols Ranch Easement.

working cattle ranch is situated in the core of a large agricultural region in western Nevada County. It is a water-rich ranch with a perennial stream, wetland area and two large ponds. The terms of the easement allow for a wide range of agricultural uses to support the future economic viability of the ranch.

The property contains extensive, mature communities of blue and valley oaks, which provide support for the area wild life. One of the unique elements of this easement is that the family elected to include a provision that prohibits cutting living oaks except for safety and forest health reasons.

The family also opted to allow a two-acre innovative blue oak regeneration program to be sited on the ranch. (We will write about this program in the next issue of the *LandNews*.)

The property is adjacent to the 11,280-acre Spenceville Wildlife and Recreation Area (SWRA).

The Spenceville WRA and agricultural areas in the vicinity are notable for their concentration of birds of

prey, and have good documentation of the many special status raptor species that have occurrence potential as resident or seasonal stopover species on the Pioneer Dawson Nichols Ranch. These include nine species of special concern: Cooper's hawk and sharp-shinned hawk (both observed during surveys), white-tailed kite, northern harrier, ferruginous hawk, golden eagle, merlin, prairie falcon, and long-eared owl. Three other species that may use the property for foraging are the state-threatened Swainson's hawk, bald eagle, and state-endangered American peregrine falcon.

NCLT is now partnering with five ranching families who have opted to keep their lands in productive use.

Although this easement was donated, we are grateful to the gifts and grants from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, The Nature Conservancy, and a private anonymous donor who provided the transaction and stewardship funding for this project. ♻️



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From the President's Desk 2003 Brings Challenges and Opportunities

This year, 2003, is the twelfth year of the Land Trust's existence. I have been associated with it half of that time, and I know it wouldn't be successful without our members, supporters, donors, and volunteers — people like you. I am proud of our accomplishments. Just last year we were successful in conserving more than 1,200 acres of land, bringing the total protected to more than 5,000 acres. We acquired conservation easements on 723 acres of land, and worked with the Trust for Public Land to acquire the 493-acre Robinson Ranch, since transferred to the State Department of Fish and Game to become a valuable addition to the Spenceville Wildlife Management Area.



Even more challenging are our prospects for 2003. Some time ago, a public-spirited citizen of Auburn, the late Dryden Wilson, left a sizable bequest to Nevada and Placer Counties, intended to be used for open space and public recreation. Late last year the Nevada County Board of Supervisors made grants from these funds to the cities of Grass Valley and Nevada City, several Park Districts, the Truckee-Donner Land Trust, and NCLT, with specific projects for use of the funds. NCLT was asked to take on two projects of major scope: the stabilization and restoration of the Julia Morgan-designed North Star House, and the acquisition of land for a regional park at the Loma Rica Ranch property. We agreed to do so, and have a signed contract with the County to accomplish these projects.

Under the contract, the County granted us \$508,000 as "seed money" only, with the expectation that we will need to seek additional funds through grants to accomplish the larger purposes envisioned for both projects. The North Star House alone will take several million dollars to protect, restore, and make ready for safe public access and enjoyment. Ultimately, we will be looking for an entity or organization to take over ownership and management of the North Star House and related buildings and grounds. The purpose of the Loma Rica project is to work with the owners to purchase lands for a regional park, and again we expect to need to raise additional funds. Both of these projects are on privately owned land, and will require the cooperation of the land owners if we are to succeed. NCLT continues to work only with willing donors and sellers. To be successful, the projects will require community involvement as well, and the help of volunteers and contributed services.

Our intent is that these projects must not detract from our basic mission of protecting and conserving lands in western Nevada County — working landscapes, open space, natural habitats, and ecologically sensitive lands. Conserving land, along with our major trails projects — the Banner-Cascade Ditch trail and the Narrow Gauge trail, is our top priority. Because the North Star project is outside of our usual scope of work, and it and Loma Rica will take a considerable amount of time, we have gone through a competitive hiring process to hire a project manager to oversee these two projects.

We developed a formal "Request for Proposal," and advertised for a Project Manager. After sending out 38 proposals, we received 14 applications. A selection committee reviewed these applications against a previously developed set of evaluation criteria, and rated them separately. When the ratings were grouped, four candidates stood out on top as highly qualified for the job of project manager. Our executive committee interviewed the candidates and recommended hiring the most qualified applicant, Bruce Conklin. His knowledge of the projects, high level of skills, and previous work with volunteers clearly made him the most qualified of all the candidates. Both Bruce and NCLT have excellent working relations with the owners/developers of both properties, and we expect to be able to work amicably toward the successful completion of these projects.

Other projects will be coming along this year, including a renewed emphasis on acquisition of trail easements. 2003 is really a year of challenges and opportunities for the Nevada County Land Trust!

Geri Vanderveer Bergen, President

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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

Published Quarterly for Nevada County Land Trust members

Editor: Cheryl L. Belcher

Design: Frank Schmidt

Executive Notes:

Future Focus — Dreams to Reality

By Cheryl L. Belcher, Executive Director



We need your help on Saturday, May 10. The late Al Salter left the community an incredible gift. He chose to bequest his 36-acre parcel to the Land Trust to be developed into a future trails park. His dream was to provide a beautiful site where owners could safely walk

their dogs, away from dangerous roads. The property is just seven miles from down-town Grass Valley, providing easy access to a large population base once it is facilitated.

Now the hard part begins! Good projects need vision, leadership, planning, volunteers, and adequate funding to become a reality. Al provided us with the vision. Board member John Taylor, as Project manager, will ably assume the leadership role. Now, before site planning can begin, John needs to do a great deal of site preparation, including vegetation removal and clearing.

Become a volunteer on this project and help us to make Al's dream into a reality. John will lead the first work party at the site on Saturday, May 10.

If you want to help, please call the NCLT office at 530-272-5994. ✿



Trustworthy News

Meet Stephanie Lorensen, NCLT's New Staff Assistant

Every once in awhile your path crosses with a person who makes a special impact on your life. We have met such a person here at the Land Trust and her name is Stephanie Lorensen. Stephanie came to us in mid-September to help by volunteering in the office. She has been a tremendous asset to the Land Trust, helping with the Treks program, providing administrative support, and stepping in to help where ever needed. As funding became available, we asked Stephanie to officially join the team.



With her love of the outdoors and hiking, she is the perfect compliment to work with Christy Sherr on our Treks Program and will be providing support for several other programs as well. We are happy to have Stephanie on board!

Welcome, Bill Haire!

Bill Haire didn't give himself much of a break between retiring from the Tahoe National Forest in March and joining NCLT in April as our first Trails Coordinator.

The Land Trust received a Forest Reserve Funds grant to fund a two-year program for securing trail links to

pubic lands. But the grant had no staff funding.

However, thanks to generous donations from Save Our Historic Canals and the Banner Mountain Homeowner's Association, we have met our first year's staffing budget.

Bill brings a wealth of trail and recreation experience to this two-day per week job. When asked what his ideal job would be, Bill replied, "I like projects with tangible results; building trails is a good example." Trails are for everyone, and benefit our whole community.

To join our Trails Group, call the NCLT office at 530-272-5994.

Dryden Wilson Bequest

Former County Recreational Planner J.P. Tindell presented Land Trust President Geri Vandereer with a check for \$558,000 from the Dryden Wilson Bequest for work on the North Star House, a Loma Rica park project, and a park project within the Western Gateway Park District. ✿

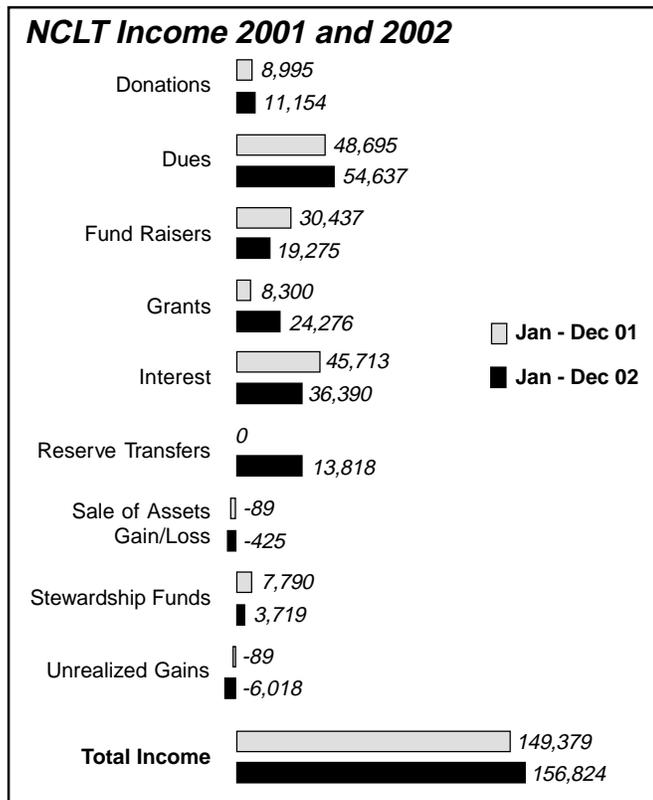


It Was A Very Good Year!

Annual Report by Ron Mathis, Board Treasurer

The year 2002 was a banner year for the Nevada County Land Trust. There was a significant increase in Dues Income for the year, with more than \$54,600 received compared to a budget of \$46,100. While Interest Income was lower than originally expected, the shortfall was more than made up from grants held in reserve from 2001 which were applied to offset selected expenses in 2002. Our overall financial position was strengthened with income from two major endowments in 2001.

Expenses ended the year at a total of \$145,800, substantially below the Board of Directors' adopted budget of \$156,700. With overall income meeting expectations and savings on budgeted expenses, we were able to increase the Land Trust's Unrestricted Reserves to over \$76,800. This represents a very solid foundation for the future, allowing us to plan for projects that we could not even consider a few years ago. 🌿



Help Wanted

We are looking for volunteers to help with our bulk mailings. Typically, we do 2-3 mailings a month. Duties include stuffing, folding, labeling, sorting, etc. If you are interested in helping behind the scenes, we'd be very grateful! Contact Stephanie at 530-272-5994. 🌿

Treks Through Time — A Unique Opportunity!

Would you like to meet new friends, get some exercise, and discover many of the unique and beautiful aspects of our local natural and cultural history, and support the Land Trust at the same time? Go take a hike.

This spring's Treks include the following – please join us!

April 26

Spenceville Wildlife Refuge with Friends of Spenceville

April 27

Sutter Buttes – Ridge Top and Brockman Challenge

May 3

Kayaking Consumnes Preserve with Wolf Creek Wilderness

Linden Lea Ranch Dinner and Passive Solar Design with David Wright

May 4

Chalk Bluffs with David Lawler

May 13 & 17

Humbug Creek from Goodyear's Bar to Indian Valley with Bill Nickerl

May 14

Round Mountain / Bobcat Woods Member Tour with Cheryl Belcher

May 17

Empire Mine Bicycle Trek with Tour of Nevada City Bicycle Shop

June 7

Quail Easement Ranch dinner and Highland music and dancing

June 8

Old Downieville Turnpike with Leland Pauly

June 10 & 14

Loney Meadows-Rock Lake with Bill Nickerl

Treks continue through October; call the office for all current Treks listings at 530-272-5994. 🌿



New Camp Offerings for 2003

Land Trust Kid's Camp

June 16-20

Join Camp Director Lynn Campbell for our fourth year of our morning outdoor Kid's Camp. New location is at the Bennett Street Grasslands, in Grass Valley. Kids aged 8-12 will have fun learning about stream ecology, birds and animals, trees and plants, and art in the wild.

Fee: \$75/week; includes materials fees and healthy snacks

Helping Hands Program

June 23-27

This is new this year! For students aged 13-17. Participate in field studies and projects with restoration and agency experts. Assist with creek restoration and park projects, talk to real scientists and learn how to create change for the good of the natural environment.

Fee: \$75/week; includes materials fees and healthy snacks

If you would like to reserve your child's place, receive more information or would like to be on the mailing list, please call the office at 530-272-5994. ♻️

Wish List

Can you help? We could use your tax-deductible donations of the following items to help us in our project work.

- Hard metal rakes
- McLeod rake
- Pulaski axe
- Pole saw
- Limbing saw
- Electronic postage scale
- Electric stapler
- Transcription machine

*Please bring donations to
10175 Joerschke Drive, Suite R, Grass Valley,
or call 530-272-5994. ♻️*

Gifts That Keep Giving

We hope you will consider the Nevada County Land Trust when you think about your estate planning. Memorial gifts and bequests are placed in our endowment fund so that these gifts can permanently support conservation in western Nevada County and the surrounding area. We welcome inquiries about bequest at 530-272-5994. ♻️

Special Thanks to Special Volunteers and Supporters

Becky Anderson

Jim Bailey

Ruth Bailey

Rocky Broadway

Everett Butts

Paul Castro

Alysha Dieteren

Marlene Hayes

Kate Horton

Wallace Judd

Mike Lockhart

Stephanie Lorensen

Larry MacMillen

Phyllis Miller

Kaity Platner

Chris Postlewaite

Lowell Robertson

Christy Sherr

If your name has been omitted or listed incorrectly, please accept our sincere apologies and notify us so that we can correct our records. Call 530-272-5994. ♻️



We asked for shovels and Kate Horton heard us! The Land Trust is now the proud owner of 10 brand-new shovels, donated by Kate. These will come in handy with our trails projects this year.

Creating A Land Heritage: A History of The Nevada County Land Trust

Part I: Getting Started

Why don't we start a land trust for Nevada County? This question, raised in 1990 during a meeting of a small group of Nevada County Citizens, marked the first step in the creation of the Nevada County Land Trust. Little did those who considered the challenge at that time realize how much hard work would be needed to make something real out of that early naive inquiry. But also, little did those who took up that challenge realize how successful their efforts would turn out.

It has been thirteen years since that first consideration of whether a land trust for the preservation of part of the county's landed legacy was needed. The Nevada County Land Trust has become a reality. Its commitment to a nonpartisan program of land preservation had led to broad-based public support in Nevada County. By the tenth anniversary of NCLT in 2001 it had more than 2,600 acres of conservation and agricultural easements, wildlife and wild plant preserves, and bird sanctuaries under its care. It had also created one park and was working toward the creation of another. It had constructed two popular public trails, attracted a growing membership, developed a strategic plan, and established a solid financial foundation under its feet.

The idea for a land trust that could help shape how western Nevada County would grow came from an unlikely source, considering the generally politically conservative nature of the region. The concept arose during a meeting of the local Nevada County Sierra Club leadership committee. They were discussing ways to effectively commemorate the tenth anniversary of Earth Day in 1990. One member suggested that a way to celebrate that first decade of growing national environmental awareness was to create a lasting organization — a land trust — to preserve some of the local area's natural beauty. The proposition did not gain much support, but it was decided to take it up at the next general meeting of the local Sierra Club group.

At that meeting the suggestion for a land trust was discussed. A clipboard was circulated, and individuals were invited to sign up to work on the project. Only a few responded. It was decided by these to initiate an organizing effort that would be separate from the Sierra Club. Information was circulated throughout the local area, and a public educational and organizational meeting was held on April 17, 1990. The idea of creating a county land trust was introduced, explained, and discussed. Other meetings soon followed. Out of those attending these early meetings, a core of people dedicated to the creation of a local land trust was assembled. It

was clear to those involved at that early stage, that a diverse group with interests broadly representative of the county's citizenship would have to be assembled if the proposed land trust was ever to be successful.

For those attending the first organizational meetings, the potential for the new land trust stimulated hope and enthusiasm. The land trust idea had already drawn wide support across the nation by the 1980s. Almost everyone attending these early meetings believed that the group should work to preserve land while at the same time drawing support from all sides of the county's political spectrum. The group was committed to seeking voluntary donations of land, remaining scrupulously nonpolitical, and ensuring that its actions not involve government condemnation of land.

Regular monthly meetings were held through 1990, with up to seventy or more individuals attending at various times. The reasons for commitment of time and energy by these early supporters were often very personal and individual, but all shared concern over how Nevada County was going to grow. All agreed that the county population would grow and land would be developed. What they wanted to do was play a role in shaping how that growth would occur. Their diversity of interests and viewpoints contributed not only to eventual success, but also forged the identity of the Nevada County Land Trust. It was to be a nonpartisan organization dedicated to the creation and preservation of trails, parks, open spaces, and areas of historic significance in the county. The land trust could not be just another environmental group. While born out of a Sierra Club meeting, the trust would have to truly represent the broader community. This would include business, agriculture, recreational, as well as conservation or environmental interests. To succeed, it would have to be trusted by those who owned land, especially ranchers and other long-time residents. Most believed that getting their support could assure success.

The Nevada County Land Trust was thus a hybrid organization from its inception. Many land trusts have narrowly defined purposes, such as focusing on protection of open space in a specific area. The NCLT, instead, developed its own unique persona — one that represented the diverse views of its founders. Early discussions were spirited and feelings were strong. Out of those discussions came a commitment to three main goals: establishing small parks, creating public trails, and preserving open space in western Nevada County. This more inclusive program was expected to draw support from a diverse county population. This multiple purpose gave the NCLT a broad and popular base to build on, and one that has been successful in reaching effectively into the local community. ❄️

Next:

The Nuts and Bolts of Creating a Working Land Trust

Nevada County Land Trust
Upcoming Events in 2003 — Mark Your Calendar Now!

Call the NCLT office at 530-272-5994 for sign-up information.

Saturday, May 3

Linden Lea Ranch Dinner

4:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Take a hike around this working landscape, tour the passive solar design house with architect David Wright, enjoy a festive barbecue featuring ranch raised beef and enjoy being serenaded by a local choral group.

\$40 members; \$50 nonmembers

Saturday, June 7

Quail Easement Ranch Dinner

4:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Enjoy relaxing on the patio overlooking a lake on this 1,059-acre working ranch. Watch the sun set over the magnificent rolling hills. Featuring locally produced food and entertainment by Scottish highland dancers.

\$35 members; \$40 nonmembers

June 16-20

Land Trust Kid's Camp

Join Camp Director Lynn Campbell for our 4th year of our morning outdoor Kid's Camp. New location this year at the Bennett Street Grasslands, in Grass Valley. Ages 8-12 will have fun learning about stream ecology, birds and animals, trees and plants, and art in the wild.

Fee: \$75; includes materials and healthy snacks

June 23-27

Helping Hands Program

For students age 13-17. Participate in field studies and projects with restoration and agency experts. Assist with creek restoration and park projects, talk to real scientists and learn how to create change for the good of the natural environment.

Fee: \$75; includes materials and healthy snacks

July 12

Willow Tree Ranch Dinner

4:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

Tour this 650-acre working cattle ranch and enjoy locally produced food at the ranch BBQ along side the pool. Walking tour available to special area of the property that has been coined "Stonehenge West." Featuring toe-tapping music, great food and spirits..

\$25 members; \$30 nonmembers

New event to be held this summer:

Japanese Tea Ceremony

The Tea Ceremony will be held on a Sunday afternoon at Greg and Sue Fenner's newly completed "Shoji House." Sample Japanese hors d'oeuvres, a sake tasting, and a formal kimono-clad Japanese tea ceremony. Learn the significance of each movement in the choreographed 2000-year-old ceremony. Event date to be announced in May.

Sunday, Sept. 21

Litton Trail Celebration

Join local trail enthusiasts as we celebrate the extension of Litton Trail from Sierra College to Ridge Road. Dedication ceremony, bicycle demonstrations, food, music, raffle and information tables about hiking, biking and trekking opportunities in our community. At the Sierra College Grass Valley Campus.

Fee: \$10

Sunday, September 28

Art Gala and Auction

12 p.m. – 4 p.m.

"Painting and Protecting Nevada County." Fifteen active artists from Nevada County Plein Air (open air) Painters will be exhibiting, donating, and selling their work. Live and silent auction with wine and hors d'oeuvres. Watch some of these artists work on location at various Land Trust Treks and Properties throughout the spring and summer.

Fee: \$20

WIN A TRIP TO PARADISE!

Pali-Hai is a secluded, romantic 1940's style 3-bedroom cottage on the island of Oahu; sleeps 6. It is surrounded by fruit trees and tropical flowers. Situated on a point, you can walk down to the ocean or the bay.

To see what you might win, visit the Pali-Hai web site at www.pali-hai.com.

Raffle tickets \$5 each.

Available at The Book Seller, Harmony Books, Nevada City Postal Company, Odyssey Books, and Nevada County Land Trust office.

Drawing to be held on September 21 at Litton Trail Celebration.

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Linden Lea Ranch Dinner

Here is your opportunity to see why protection of agricultural lands is a win-win-win situation — and enjoy dinner with friends at the Linden Lea Ranch.

Before dinner hike around this working landscape, tour the passive solar design house with architect David Wright, enjoy a festive barbecue featuring ranch-raised beef, and enjoy being serenaded by a local choral group.

Saturday, May 3, 4:30 p.m. – 8:30 p.m.

\$40 members; \$50 nonmembers.

Space is limited; for reservations, call 530-272-5994.