

Magic and Stars at the Ridgetop 2004

It may be a cliché, but you really had to be there to appreciate the magic. More than 700 people heard Leo Kottke, Mary Youngblood, and Tuck & Patti blend their musical genius with the light from the stars shining over Chris Owen's ranch in a hugely successful fund raising event. In addition other fine artists—Billy Bensing, Erin Gailsdaughter, Michael Logue, Kimberly Bass, Mikail Graham, Tom McDonald, Steve Holland, the Loose Acoustic Trio, the Penumbra Choir, Jonathan Meredith, and Eileen Wheeler provided additional entertainment either at the Rood Government Center parking lot or at the concert site. Magic indeed!

This was the second year that the Land Trust team of Susan Kane, Chris Owen and Greg Fenner and their intrepid band of volunteers organized this major Land Trust fundraiser. Tickets for the event were sold out weeks ahead, and many unfortunate late would-be buyers failed in their attempts at bribery and whining to gain special entrance.

Susan Kane of the Land Trust staff gave untold hours of her time to organize the event. She had to bring together the myriad concert details that make for a smooth event—vendors, underwriters, budget, contracts, licenses, programs, and organize bus transfer from the Rood Center to the concert site and back.

Executive Event Producer and Board Member Chris Owen provided a long list of the necessary actions he and his helpers took that made this year's concert so success-



A good time was had by all.



Leo Kottke captivated audience with his rhythmically complex, innovative guitar sounds.

ful. These included expanding the stage and adding a full canopy cover. In addition, the crew aided in the installation of lighting in trees in the amphitheater. A 30-foot "Eurostone" retaining wall was constructed for the sound

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From the President's Desk *Oak Tree Mitigation and Agricultural Stewardship*

The Land Trust continues to be in great need of funding to assist in the acquisition and stewardship of agricultural conservation easements—our number one open space priority. One funding option that we are considering is facilitating oak tree mitigation banking.

One of the many reasons that the Land Trust prioritized conservation easement acquisition on agricultural lands is to provide for the conservation of oaks. As pointed out by the California Department of Fish and Game web site, “oak woodlands provide habitat for more than 300 species of wildlife, moderate temperature extremes, reduce soil erosion, and sustain water quality. Moreover, oak woodlands facilitate nutrient cycling and provide forage for numerous wildlife species.” The web site also points out that 80 percent of oak woodlands are on private property and few properties are protected by conservation easements. We have been fortunate in that most of these areas have been managed well by private property owners—so far. But as growth pressures continue, more oak woodlands will be converted to development areas.

Nevada County ordinances require preservation of all oaks over 36 inches in diameter, and of oak groves where the canopy coverage is 33 percent or more. The County's ordinance strives for complete development avoidance of oak woodlands, but allows some intrusion if mitigation is provided. Mitigation typically means planting new oak woodlands on-site or off-site, and nurturing these plantings until they become well established.

Several years ago, Jon and Judy Hess developed the Record Connection site in Glenbrook and became one of the first land owners to be required to provide oak mitigation. They provided a cash deposit to the Land Trust for oak mitigation and were allowed to proceed with their project. The Land Trust found a suitable site on the Pioneer Dawson Nichols Reserve, and is now undertaking an oak revegetation program. The Record Connection funds helped to make the Pioneer Dawson Nichols Reserve possible by subsidizing transaction fees and stewardship funding.

The Land Trust needs to find funds for transaction costs and stewardship for agricultural easements. At the same time, property owners need to find feasible methods of offsetting oak tree loss. There are no formal mitigation banks in Nevada County for such purposes. Using the Record Connection model, the Land Trust is continuing to work with land owners and local government in an effort to fund agricultural conservation by providing a viable mitigation option that will keep mitigation benefits local—where they belong.

Andy Cassano, Board 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
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Executive Notes

Park District Formation:

How Would The Land Trust Fit In?

By Cheryl L. Belcher, Executive Director



Although there has been very little publicity about this, the formation of the Nisenan and North San Juan districts will be on the November ballot. Even if voters approve their formation, they will also have to approve a parcel charge to help fund the districts' work or they will not be formed. Finally, the

voters will need to approve a board of directors to oversee the work of the district or the Board of Supervisors will appoint a park district board.

Our county has no recreational or open space program. There has never been the funding to set one up. However, the County's population keeps growing and many of our residents need park and recreation amenities. Grass Valley and Nevada City have their own parks, which all can use—and they get very heavy use. For example, it is always hard to find enough fields for all the teams who want to play baseball and soccer.

The Western Gateway Park is the best example of what can happen when a park district is formed. After dedication of park land by the developer of Lake Wildwood, residents voted to form and fund a park district to install, operate, and maintain ball fields, play areas, and other improvements. The district is managed by a very hard working board of directors. Using funds from a very modest parcel charge, the board has been able to offer their residents a wonderful local park that recently added the county's first free-run dog area.

The nice thing about park districts is that they reflect the wishes of the residents within their boundary. Locals decide which amenities they want and are willing to pay for. Do they want trails? Ball fields? Picnic areas? The locals decide. Local boards govern.

I have received several calls from members asking: How such districts might work with NCLT? Do we even need a district if the Land Trust is working on park and natural area conservation? Good questions. While NCLT is uniquely positioned to work with private landowners who may want to leave their land for public benefit purposes, or who want to make trail easements available for public use, we prefer to turn active park management over to entities set up for that purpose, that have a reliable revenue stream. Two good examples of this are the

Burton and Salter (future) Parks, which were entrusted to the Land Trust for very specific purposes by the donors. Burton Park will be a place for children's outdoor education, with safe trails for walking dogs. Salter Park will be set up as a dog park, as well, with trails and exercise areas. A park district would be hard-pressed to raise the funds to purchase such prime lands, but might be able to gain support for a parcel charge or find other revenue sources to fund management and maintenance, bringing their residents more amenities, and at a much lower cost. A win-win partnership.

Requiring a parcel charge for park districts to be formed is very important. Several years ago, the Bear River Parks District was approved by the voters, but without a funding mechanism. It has struggled ever since to try to bring recreational amenities to their residents.

Whether the district formations pass or not, Nevada County Land Trust will continue its efforts to enhance open space and recreational opportunities through volunteer efforts, donations, and available funding sources. I hope all of you will take the time to become informed about park district formation, and will make your voice heard by voting in November. ♣

We would like to acknowledge and thank those who have given donations in memorium.

In Memory of Paul Shewell:

Jacquelyn Wilson

Ray and Elizabeth Boedecker

Volunteer Opportunities

- We will have a work party at Burton Park to paint the house and work on grounds on September 12 (Sunday from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m.). We also have a garden committee that meets monthly and can always use extra hands.
- We have ongoing work parties at the North Star Saturdays and Tuesdays from 8 a.m. to 12 noon. We are doing house and grounds cleanup, brushing, paint removal, and pruning. Check in with Bart Hayes if you want to help.
- We have ongoing work at Salter park. Brushing, fire reduction work, and dismantling an old trailer. Call the office for dates and times.
- Our trails projects are going in to high gear this fall. If you want to help build new trails and help us maintain the ones we have, please call the office for work days and times.

Call Stephanie at the Land Trust office to get directions and more information, 530-272-5994. ♣

Kids at Camp

By Camper/Reporter, Alexa Simpson (age 12)

The Summer Restoration Camp, Helping Hands, was a fun and educational way to place nature back in its natural state. We had a chance to learn about local plants and animals and what they need to survive. The camp was a fun and really neat way to learn about the nature surrounding us. Everyday we went to a different site, such as the Burton Homestead, Mathis Pond and Deer Creek. We



cleared non-native plants and found out about the native plants and animals living in those habitats. Bill Haire from the Land Trust really made things interesting for us at Mathis Pond where we did a lot of work. Next year I plan on being there again and hope that even more kids find out about this program so they can come too! Speaking from a kid's point of view, I feel wonderful about being given the chance to make such valuable contribution

to my own future in Nevada County at such a young age and I plan on making many more. After all, it is up to the kids to make a difference and Nevada County is the place to do it in!

By Camper/Reporter, Buie Redford (age 11)

This year I attended the Children's Nature Studies Camp at Burton Park. With the help from Ann Westling of the Forest Service and John Olmstead, we learned about birds and their feathers, calls and behaviors of birds living at the Burton Homestead. We also learned about water



insects, did many fun art and craft projects, and found out a lot about Native American ways and got to do some of their crafts. There were a lot of kids, and we all had a great time, thanks to Lynn Campbell. Wendy Olenick, my mom, made sure everyday that we had plenty of good and healthy snacks. ✨

Blue Oak Regeneration: Seeking T-Posts

Several years ago NCLT worked with a private developer who had to provide mitigation for loss of blue oak trees on his project. The developer had other options but chose to work with the Land Trust to satisfy the County mitigation requirements. This was the start of our oak mitigation and regeneration program.

This year the abundance of blue and valley oak seed enables the Land Trust to move ahead with our current oak regeneration plans. Seed will be collected this summer and a planting day has been set for Saturday, December 4. Specially designed translucent tree shelters will protect and spur seedling growth. To hold the shelters, the Land Trust is seeking medium and heavy steel T-posts.

If you have extras you can donate, or if you're interested in project participation, call the Land Trust office at 272-5994, and talk to Stephanie. ✨

Wish List

- A 25 foot trailer in livable condition that can be moved (easily and cheaply) to the North Star site for our on-site manager to live in.
 - Metal Fence posts for our Oak Regeneration Program (see Eric Jorgensen's article in this issue for full details).
 - Pywood sheets in good condition to board up the broken windows at the Hague House at North Star.
- Please call the Land Trust office at 530-272-5994. ✨

Sierra Cascade Conservancy Bill

Since the March newsletter when we last reported on the progress of two bills proposing the creation of a Sierra Cascade Conservancy, much has happened. In an unprecedented show of support for the conservancy, the bill's two authors, Assemblymen Laird and Leslie, came together to support a joint bill. I was an observer at the Senate Resources Committee meeting when they both walked in the door, arms around each other's shoulders, and informed the chair that they were here and ready to present AB2600. Later, they both spoke in favor of the bill. It was a wonderful day!

Many compromises later, the joint bill AB2600 is now going through final approval processes by the legislature. The Governor should sign this within the next month, at the close of this legislative session.

The conservancy will not have regulatory powers, nor have the power to condemn or take land under eminent domain proceedings. The Conservancy will not hold fee title to land, but can grant funding to land trusts or other agencies to purchase land. All transactions will be on a willing seller basis only. The make up of the 13-member conservancy board will include 6 county supervisors, one from each subdistrict in the conservancy. The county governments will self select their representatives. The

other seven members will be appointed by the Governor.

As a grass roots land trust, the Nevada County Land Trust knows first hand the problems of inequitable distribution of State funds for conservation projects. We look forward to more funding coming to our "Range of Light" in the coming years, to help us fund our conservation work. ❀



Quotable

"Julia Morgan should be given her rightful place here in our community. She must be smiling down on us right now. If we were to lose this (North Star Mine House), it would be a great tragedy."

Rena Marundee

Julia Morgan, California's first female architect, designed and built the North Star Mine House in 1905 for the mine manager and his family.

The "Star"

By Lyn Hayes, North Star Volunteer

On Old Auburn road, nestled on 14 acres of old orchards and natural vegetation, sits a lost treasure, the North Star Mine House. It was abandoned but not forgotten, thanks to the Nevada County Land Trust.

It's a house that has many stories which adds to its mysterious hold on those who have volunteered to clean and restore the house and grounds to its original grandeur.

The house was designed and built in 1905 by California's first female architect, Julia Morgan, for the North Star Mine manager and his family. Ms. Morgan's design was influenced by the "Arts and Crafts" movement of the time period. She used natural materials found in the area. The house exterior is constructed of stone from the mine and cedar shingles. Giant cedar tree trunks were used as pillars on the second floor balconies.

However, the architect's interest in cement as a plaster on all the interior walls became evident when volunteers ripped out other walls that had been built to divide rooms into small dormitories during the years the house was used as a residential school. The cement over chicken wire was a departure from the old lathe and plaster used at that time period.

Redwood paneling was used in the first floor living quarters. Now visitors are shocked at the extent of the graffiti. Other vandals destroyed fireplaces, windows, bathrooms and kitchen fixtures. Some say the vandals were looking for gold. The damage is extensive and would be overwhelming, if it were not for the passion of volunteers.

Without exception, the house and its history have inspired each volunteer. They intend to clean up and restore this magnificent building and grounds to its original beauty. Already they have mowed down and burned the blackberries. The drive to the house is now beautiful. Workers have pruned the Hawthorn bushes revealing a beautiful canopy that provides shade for the visitors. Rock walls have been uncovered and fallen rocks have been returned to the walls. Broken glass, pieces of metal, unusable building materials have all been collected and taken to the dump. Usable materials have been saved, nails removed, and the materials stacked and stored for future use. Interior rooms are being cleaned of trash, birds and beehives.

The volunteers are from all walks of life. All love the history of this place and work on Tuesday and Saturday mornings. Progress is amazing and must be seen to appreciate the excellence of the volunteers. It's magical. ❀

Adopt-A-Trail Program

By Bill Hair, Trail Coordinator

The Adopt-A-Trail Program is an essential part of the Land Trust Trail Program. If more trails are to be provided, we must have a way to maintain the trails we have. Property owners are reluctant to grant a trail easement unless there is assurance that the trail will be properly maintained. If you have a favorite trail that you use regularly, please ask what you can do to keep the trail in good condition.

The Land Trust Adopt-A-Trail Program is off to a good start with six individuals or groups taking part. The first two individuals to sign up were George Morin and Deane Dvoracek. They adopted the two ends of Litton Trail. We still need two or three people to adopt the section through the Sierra College campus.

Cindy Mackey adopted the Cascade Canal Access Trail from Gracie Road to the canal. This new 1/3-mile-long trail provides access from a large parking area on Gracie Road, through public land managed by the Bureau of Land Management to the canal.

Save Our Historic Canals (SOHC) has adopted the segment of Cascade Canal on which the Land Trust has a trail easement at Woodpecker Ravine and over the Howard property.

Joe Chavez and his son, Joey, have adopted a segment of the Narrow Gauge Railroad Trail near Chicago Park, where the Land Trust has a trail easement and an encroachment permit for a trail on the abandoned railroad bed. Joe is looking for other Chicago Park area residents to help with maintenance of the trail. 🌿

We'd like to welcome the following new members of the Land Trust family.

Vince Alcantar
Jim Coufos
Susan Dunn
Susan Flynn
Robert and Jude Hudson
Tom and Jean Jacobs
Laverne and Douglas Leach
Charles JaffeeMarvina Leranka
Stan and Donna Levin
Cindy and Phil Mackey
JaniceMcGregor
Margaret Meagher
Bob Moore
Christina Sabin
Arlie and Nancy Thompson
Melodie Yun

Thanks to our dedicated volunteers who have helped us get the mail out, build trails, cut brush, lead treks, and so much more.

Louise Baerresen	Peter Graff	Michael McGahan
Jim Bailey	Pat Grason	Steven McIntosh
Ruth Bailey	Pat Green	Dave McKeen
Gail Bakker	Vern Gross	Jean McKeen
Barbara Barr	Bill Haire	Carole Miller
Brenda Barr	Joyce Haire	David Miller
Cheryl Belcher	Francis Hamilton	Glenn Miller
Tim Bentley	Ed Hansen	George Morin
Lawrence Black	Linda Hansen	Jason Morriarty
Sherry Brooks	Glenn Harvey	Clarence Motter
Aaron Bryars	Bart Hayes	Tom Newmark
Ray Bryars	Lynn Hayes	Jim Norman
Doug Caldwell	Kristanne Heaton	Wendy Olenick
Lynn Campbell	Amber Higgins	Chris Owen
Chip Carmen	Mike Higgins	John Paul
Marlee Chamberlin	Bill Holman	Don Pierce
Joe Chavez	Brian Hoobler	Chris Postlewaite
Bruce Conklin	Robert Hudson	Diana Privara
Gary Corbin	Jeff Hunt	John Privara
Bob Cross	Jim Hurley	Jay Schuff
Penelope Curtis	Bob Husk	Don Scoles
Hailey Cushman	Scott Ingram	Alexa Simpson
Jack DeJong	Emma Jewett	Amanda Sparks
Joan Denzler	Susan Kane	Sue Sparks
Jason Diver	Chris King	Lori Stengel
Ryan Dowling	Rob King	Jean Stice
Larry Dulmage	Sally Knutson	Curt Sutliff
Deane Dvoracek	Anthony Koenn	Arlie Thompson
Marty Earhart	Zachary Kostik	Tiffany Tomlinson
The Elliots	Mark Larroque	Lenny Vlum
Gary Emanuel	Bob Lemmon	Dale Volker
Greg Fenner	Miriam Limov	Dorothy Volker
Jon Fisher	Jim Longnecker	Matt Waldron
Jessica Foley	Susan Luhman	Phil Weber
Anthony Frizzel	Cindy Mackey	Susan Weisberg
Randy Frizzel	Marge MacMillen	Dean Williams
Bob Goar	Ron Mathis	Grayson
Sue Goodenough	Kevin McDonald	

We apologize if we have omitted your name. Please let us know so we can thank you in our next issue. 🌿

Special Gifts

We would like to thank the following people for giving special gifts to the Land Trust.

Alta Sierra Property Owners Association

Mervin and Patricia Baker

Sue and William Geisler

Kate Horton

Mildred Rosensteil

(continued from page 1)

mixing area, where Sweet Spot Sound orchestrated the concert's sound. To keep the dust down at the amphitheater, 130-cubic yards of wood chips were spread by the thirteen 10-

wheelers pressed into duty for the task.

Chris and Land Trust President,

Andy Cassano, were announcers for the night's program.

Dane Petersen, Executive Music Producer, was responsible for lining up the great musicians. He also volunteered to organize the pre-concert music and entertainment.



Grammy Award winner Mary Youngblood enchanted the throng with her Native American music.



Tuck (Andress) & Patti (Cathcart) thrilled audience with their unique music and vocalizations.

A variety of food was offered by SuMo Kitchen, Bella Vista at Creekside, Asia, Way Sum Sushi, I Dream of Jeannie's Catering, Hawaiian Shaveice, and Lazy Dog Ice Cream. Wine was provided at a

reasonable price by eight local wineries: Sierra Starr, Indian Springs, Double Oak, Sierra Knolls, Nevada City, Lucchesi, Iron Mountain, and Burch Hall. Beer was generously supplied by the folks at Sierra Nevada Brewing.

The concert provided a big boost in the fund raising activities of the Land Trust, and will definitely set the stage for another concert next year. Thank you all who attended. And a special thanks to all who worked to make Stars at the Ridgetop a successful and magical night. 🌲



We are grateful to the following sponsors who helped make this year's fantastic Stars at the Ridgetop possible.

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Keep On Trekking

If you haven't received your Fall T brochure, please call the office. The list below is just a reminder of the great outings starting next month. To sign up, you can send in the tear-off form on the brochure, or call Stephanie at 530-272-5994, for reservations or more information.

- *Saturday September 11:* Donner Pass to Roller Pass with Bill Nickerl, David Beesley and Albert Earl
- *Saturday September 18:* Geology Field Trip through the Glacier Country of the Sierras with Geologist Sterling Warr-Pryer
- *Sunday September 19:* Sun Schemes: A Passive Solar Architecture Tour with David Wright
- *Saturday September 25:* Martis Valley – 3000 Years of Human Use with David Beesley
- *Sunday September 26:* Chalk Bluffs with David Lawler



Saturday October 2: Lola Montez Lake Trek with Joan Laue

Saturday October 9: Trabucco Ranch Members Tour

■ *Saturday October 23:* Basque Tree Carvings with Local Author David Beesley

■ *Sunday October 24:* Henness Pass (a fantastic panorama of the Sierra Nevada) with Bridgeport Ranger Chuck Scimeca

Saturday October 30: Sutter Buttes Ridge Top Trek

- *Saturday November 6:* Sutter Buttes Ridge Top Trek
- *Saturday November 6:* Sutter Buttes Summit Challenge
- *Saturday December 4:* Pioneer Ranch Oak Tree Planting
- *1st and 3rd Saturdays of the Month:* North Star's Julia Morgan House Tours