

LAND NEWS

Trails, Parks, and Open Space for Our Community

Wetherall Endowment Will Fund Local Trails

By Dave Carter

In memory of his late wife, Orene (right), local attorney and Land Trust member William B. Bill Wetherall has given a \$30,000 endowment to the Nevada County Land Trust to be used for trail development and upkeep. The Orene Wetherall Memorial Endowment honors a longtime Nevada County resident who was raised on a farm in northern Idaho, developing a love and respect for nature and the outdoors.

"Orenes character was deeply rooted in those early years of her life," said Bill Wetherall. She lived and worked among people who depended on each other, who helped each other, and who were grateful for what they had. Those early life experiences deepened her love of people, her love of animals, and her love of the good earth.

Orene Wetherall died August 9, 2003, at the age of 89. She and Bill were married for 65 years, raising three children; their two sons hold Ph.D. degrees and their daughter is a registered nurse.

The Wetheralls settled in Grass Valley in 1955, and Bill has practiced law here ever since. Even at 92, he continues his part-time practice at home. For 10 years, from 1959-1979, Bill served as the city attorney for the City of Nevada City, writing the city's innovative historical ordinance, which led to preservation of the historical district. With their children, the Wetheralls enjoyed hiking, camping and the outdoors, so when it came time to honor wife and mother it was decided that the Nevada County Land Trust would be used. "It all came together. We love this area," said Bill.

In making the bequest last November, Bill specified that an endowment be created and that income generated by the investment be used for acquisition, construction or maintenance of trails. As an attorney who worked on bequests such as this, he left open the possibility of other use, as determined by the Land Trust governing board. "I didn't want to tie them down too much," Bill said.



"With our population growth and interest in the outdoors, we desperately need to add trails," said Land Trust Executive Director Cheryl Belcher. "Its hard enough to find funding to build trails but nearly impossible to find funding to maintain them. We hope the community will join in the spirit of this gift and donate to the endowment. What a great legacy!"

Even at today's interest rates, the interest on the \$30,000 will create a perpetual gift of at least \$600 a year for our trails. It is a gift that will last forever!" Belcher concluded. ❁



Deer Creek Landscape A Boon for Wildlife

Last December, anonymous donors put some very choice Deer Creek acreage under a conservation easement to ensure the habitat will stay natural and beautiful forever. Rising above the alluvial flood plain some 300

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From the President's Desk *Progress in '03, Challenges in '04*

I have the privilege of serving as President of the Board of Directors for the Land Trust this year. I've believed in the Land Trust since I first became a member in 1991. It is an organization in which Nevada Countyans of all opinions and political persuasions can happily work together on voluntary land conservation, parks, and trails. I express my deepest appreciation to my predecessor, Geri Bergen, who was president during 2003, an exciting and challenging year. We accomplished much last year under Geri's leadership.



We made much progress under Nevada County's grant funding on North Star House. Funding has been used to partially arrest the decay of this historical, Julia Morgan designed building. The new roof should be completed shortly and the house has been tarped during storms. Most importantly, the Land Trust made a decision to accept a generous gift of outright ownership of the North Star House and grounds. Please see the article in this issue for more information.

We are very excited about our trails program. We employed Bill Haire part time last May. He retired from the Forest Service after 34 years and is a trails expert in every respect. Combined with our previous volunteers, Bill has worked in partnership with many organizations, agencies, and individuals to finish many new trails, including new segments at Litton Trail, Alta Sierra, and Banner Cascade Canal. Whether he is negotiating trail easements, planning a major trail project, or digging out stumps, Bill is equally poised and enthusiastic. Please mark your calendar for March 26th, when we will have our annual membership luncheon, where we hope to feature a presentation on trails progress by Bill.

We were also pleased to accept a key conservation easement along the Deer Creek watershed. We express our deepest gratitude to the donors, whose generous conservation gift will benefit our community perpetually. Their gift illustrates a primary purpose of the Land Trust: *To facilitate the incredible philanthropy of our community.* When I think back on all the gifts of conservation easements, park lands, and trail easements, I am overwhelmed. Before the Land Trust, there was no entity willing or able to accept and steward such gifts.

This year, while we tend the irons that we have in the fire, we will look for ways to promote the agriculture of Nevada County. The combined agricultural industries of Nevada County are an incredible asset. The County's agricultural land owners and operators provide us with food, employment, habitat conservation, pastoral views, and community income. We applaud their hard work and we are pleased to continue to offer our conservation easement services to the agricultural community.

We have established a special fund for agricultural conservation easement transaction and stewardship costs. We invite the community to send tax deductible donations which can be earmarked for this fund. We will also continue to explore public and private funding sources for transaction costs, stewardship endowments, and outright conservation easement acquisitions.

My thanks to you, our members, for your continued monetary, volunteer, and moral support. Without you, we would be nowhere. We welcome your ideas and feedback throughout the year. See you on March 26th for lunch.

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
Design: Frank Schmidt

Executive Notes: Planning for the Future

By Cheryl L. Belcher, Executive Director



The Nevada County Land Trust Board and staff just concluded our annual strategic planning session. Setting priorities, establishing realistic business goals, planning our fund raising, allocating resources to support our conservation programs—all part of the day's agenda. It was at once exhilarating and

challenging. By the end of the day, we had stretched our minds, agreed on our direction, and all agreed it was the best session we have ever had. We have a good and strong partnership between our board, staff and supporters, and a strong sense of purpose for this coming year.

The key challenges for us: there is a great deal to do, and limited time and funding to accomplish our goals. No surprises here. Under NCLT's mission, we work on a wide array of conservation projects—trails, parks, productive lands, wildlife habitat, stream corridors, forest lands. Our projects are as varied as our landscape. Our supporters and partners have donated land, easements, and funding to help make our projects come to life. The window of conservation opportunity is decreasing with our increasing population and with transfer of land ownership from our parents and grandparents.

Yet, we can still make a difference in our community by defining what our land ethics are, and acting accordingly. The choices made today will affect how our County looks in 10 years. If this sounds like a commercial for conservation easements, you're right. You can make far-reaching and priceless contributions to the future of our County by arranging to set aside land under an easement. Define how you want this place you call home to look for your grandchildren and their grandchildren, and work with us to make that a reality. If you like trails, volunteer on a committee or contribute to the Orene Wetherall Trail Endowment fund. If you own land that you love, work with us to conserve it. With our supporters' help we have already conserved more than 5,000 acres of land. Now we need your help as we begin work on the next 5,000 acres. 🌿

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

Chaz Abernathybettis	Marlene & Steve Hayes
Jerry Angove	Dorothy & Tom Kane
Kathie Bain	Joan Laue
Brenda Barr	Mike Maxey
Joe Bartle	Paul McKee
John Bilheimer	Carole Miller
Arren Bryars	Shanna Moran
Linda & Paul Carlson	Bill Nickerl
Julie Carville	Wendy Olenick
Marlee Chamberlin	Andrew Pawlowski
Jim Dodds	Tim Peterson
Bill Drown	Bill Roach
Gary Farlow	Jerry Sakai
Nelda Gallego	Christy Sherr
Sue Goodenough	Doug Smith
Dave Gray	Susan Snider
Joyce Haire	Bruce VanZee
Linda Hansen	Marilyn Yerkes

Volunteers Make Trails Happen

Thanks to all who helped work on the connector trail at Banner Cascade Trail. We finished more than 400 feet of trail! The volunteers working on this part of the trail were: Jim Dodds, Susan Snider, Marlee Chamberlin, Kathie Bain, Joyce Haire, and Jerry Sakai. Special recognition goes to Joyce and Jerry who worked the entire four hours, from 10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Working conditions were good, but at this time of the year, if it gets too wet, we will have to postpone additional work.

Rotary Helps Maintain Mathis Pond

January 17th was another work party for the Mathis Pond Project. Ten Nevada County South Rotary Club members arrived at 8 a.m. to whack and clean the pond area. By 10 a.m. our crew had finished the work. The ten Rotarians were: Gary Farlow, Bill Roach, Dave Gray, Mike Maxey, Chaz Abernathybettis, Jerry Angove, Paul McKee, Bill Drown, Andrew Pawlowski, and Tim Peterson.

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



Glenn Osterlander Memorial

A donation of funding to plant trees was made in honor of the memory of Glenn Osterlander by friends and associates of his daughter, Gay Morgan. The trees will be planted on one of NCLT's wildlife preserves.

If you would like to remember a special person or occasion, what better way to honor those who appreciate the Sierra Foothills than by helping to protect the natural diversity that makes this area so unique and by helping to create parks and trails. We accept donations in honor of birthdays, graduations, marriages, anniversaries, and other holidays, as well as donations in memory of loved ones. The honoree or their family will be notified of your contribution, so please include a clearly written address. ❀

Marlee Chamberlin: NCLT's Volunteer Coordinator



Without the help of the wonderful volunteers who do such important work for NCLT, this organization would not be able to do all we have done. There are nearly two-hundred volunteers working for the Trust. The job of coordinating the activities of many of these volunteers has been carried out since last summer by Marlee Chamberlain, herself a volunteer. Marlee's association with the Land Trust began three years ago when

she moved to Nevada County from the Bay Area.

As with many volunteers, she began her association with the Land Trust by attending several of the *Treks Through Time* events after she moved to Nevada County. She had also heard of the land trust movement in general from a friend who lived in Colorado, and who introduced Marlee to the valuable conservation work that such groups perform. Because Marlee already was a mountain biker and a hiker, it seemed natural to make a commitment to help the Land Trust in its trail and open space work.

When Marlee was still living in the Bay area, she coordinated the activities of volunteers for a mountain bike group. Thus it was natural for her to carry out similar activities for the NCLT. Marlee devotes about two days a week for her work as volunteer coordinator. She helps track volunteer hours, interviews prospective volunteers, and coordinates volunteer needs for construction and cleanups.

Thanks Marlee for your hard work and commitment. And thanks to all the volunteers who work with her. ❀

Chris Owen: The Land Trust's Newest Board Member

While it is probably an exaggeration to say that Chris Owen is the best known, best liked, and most energetic person in western Nevada County, it is not too much of a stretch to make that exalted claim. After having taught for 26 years at Nevada Union High School and another 10 years at Sierra College and the County's adult education programs, his standing among teachers and students during that time is legendary. In addition, because of his many years of competition in tennis and bicycling events, another group of county residents include him in their favorite person category.

Chris has been invited to join the Board because of his proven ability to raise funds to help the Land Trust meet its financial goals. He is primarily responsible for the successful musical fundraiser last August, *Strings Under the Stars*. Now that he has joined the board, it will be his job to stage bigger and better events such as this in the future. While he is quick to thank the many sponsors and volunteers who worked on this event, it was Chris who was the driving force that made the event come off as successfully as it did. Chris says that for years it has been his dream to promote a major musical event for the community. By working with the Land Trust, that dream has been fulfilled. As to future performances and promotions the sky is the limit!

Chris is hard at work planning for future events, and is beginning to contact performers. Are you listening Jackson Brown? Are you listening Neil Young? Who knows? ❀

We'd like to welcome the following new members of the Land Trust family. Thank you for joining and sharing our goals.

Cathy & Todd Asher	Mark Miller
Jim Bair	Clark & Jean Moore
Don Baker	Judy Nichols
Peter & Wendy Beesley	Tom Osypowski
Sue & Willie Brusin	Barbara & Peter Parrott
Kevin Collins & Gaylene Knezovich-Collins	Ronnie Paul & Jeff Kane
Danny Counihan	Wes & Judy Peters
Ginny Dix	Jo Lynn Pine
Pat & Deane Dvoracek	Diana & John Privara
Larry & Barbara Friedlander	Anita Rossovich
Robert Hoey	John Saathoff
Rick & Lynne Hoskins	William & Diane Salter
Erma Jewett	Susan Snider & Percy Michael
Rob & Rhonda Martens	Phillip & Patricia Wagner

The North Star House Legacy

By David Wright, AIA –Dryden Wilson project steering committee

The community of Nevada County has secured a treasure of historical importance. After decades of vandalism and neglect, the Julia Morgan designed North Star House has been acquired by the Nevada County Land Trust, and will eventually become a stellar member of the local cast of historically significant buildings.

The premier remaining architecture belonging to the North Star Mine Properties, located south and adjacent to the City of Grass Valley, is the North Star House (also known as the mine superintendent's house and the Foote Mansion). This imposing, over 10,000 sq.ft. structure, with three other historically significant buildings dating from the 1800s on thirteen acres of land, have been donated to NCLT by the current owner "Sandy" Sanderson, owner of Sanderson Company, Inc. Mr. Sanderson enthusiastically donated the buildings and land, known as the North Star Historic District, to the Land Trust which was the "Designated Recipient" by the city of Grass Valley. This project marks the first time the NCLT has activated the historical element of its charter.

Julia Morgan was California's first woman architect. She was responsible for the design of Hearst Castle, Asilomar, and other important early twentieth-century California buildings. She was influential in creating a vital organic element of California regional architecture. Because most of her design drawings were destroyed, many examples of her work remain somewhat unknown. Educated at the Ecole Des Beaux Arts of Paris in the late 1800s, Morgan returned to San Francisco, drawn by friends and the continuing dynamic developments taking place at the end of The Gold Rush, Industrial Revolution, and Age of Manifest Destiny. The commission to design the North Star House in 1905 was one of her early projects as a trained architect.

The North Star House design is interesting as an architectural style. It is a fine example of Arts and Crafts or California bungalow style architecture. Free of elaborate decoration, often favored up to that time, the structure incorporates organic indigenous materials: cedar shingles, redwood trim, plain log columns, and crude mine rock tailings masonry. Once the funding is obtained the Land Trust intends to restore the building to its original simple elegance as visualized by Julia Morgan.

During the past 50 years, since the mine's closure in 1956 and the Foote family moving out in 1968, the house and other structures have fallen into disrepair, subjected to vandalism, and poorly conceived modifications and additions. The Land Trust was granted access and permission to work on the building in mid-2003, and ownership at the end of 2003. Significant progress has been made in stabilizing and weather proofing the building. The unwieldy additions, made when the building was used as a

children's home in the 1960s, have been removed, uncovering the original lines of the structure. During the preparations for replacing the original roof, the brick chimneys were repaired, "eyebrow" vents reinstalled, and serious structural rot repaired. The house has been secured by a perimeter fence and squatters evicted from the property. Work is now progressing to clean up and repair the grounds and other buildings.

All this work has been carried out under the direction of a board-appointed committee and funded by a grant through the County of Nevada from the estate of the late Dryden Wilson. Mr. Wilson left several hundred thousand dollars to Placer and Nevada counties to be used for acquiring, preserving or enhancing the natural, cultural and recreational elements of the area. This historic district, which will ultimately become a vital part of the public historical legacy, is a timely and important use of these funds.

The Historic District's property title has been acquired for the benefit of the people of Nevada County, the deterioration has been stopped and repairs made, plans are forthcoming for a program to renovate and restore the grounds and buildings for future use as an historical community use facility. But most of all, a magnificent part of California's architectural history, designed by the most important woman architect in the history of the state, has been saved from probable oblivion.

Bravo to Dryden Wilson, the County of Nevada, and the Nevada County Land Trust for making it all happen in a short period of time. The project has just begun; stay tuned for future developments. Volunteers and donations are needed to make the North Star Historic District a functioning legacy. For information, call the NCLT office at 530-272-5994. ✎

North Star Update

There is much we can do while we begin plans to raise funds to restore the buildings. The Land Trust will hold a series of weekend cleanups beginning with Leap Weekend and ending with Spring First Weekend. Volunteers may give a few hours, a few days or whole weekends.

North Star Spring Cleanup Weekends:

Leap Weekend: Feb 28 and 29th

Marching Fourth Weekend: March 6 and 7th

Middlemarch Weekend: March 13 and 14th

Spring First Weekend: March 20 and 21st

To volunteer, please call or e-mail the office:

530-272-5994

www.NevadaCountyLandTrust.org

(Continued from page 1, Deer Creek Landscape)

feet are incremental rock benches covered in grasses, oaks and chaparral. The donors have indicated they will phase in gifts of easements on additional acreage in the future as part of a larger holding. The easement was donated as well as a stewardship gift for long-term management.

“These days, many landowners are looking at meeting multiple goals of land conservation and estate planning by putting a conservation easement on their property. This is especially important when landowners want to make sure the land will pass to their children,” said Land Trust executive director, Cheryl Belcher. The owners gain the assurance that their vision for future use of the land they love will be fulfilled.

Yet the benefits don't stop there, because the public will be able to enjoy a scenic watershed vista, coyote and fox retain places to den and hunt, grazing lands are kept open for productive use, and the oak woodland habitat provides feed and cover for wildlife who are increasingly



NCLT's newest conservation easement property overlooks a scenic stretch of Deer Creek.

constrained by human development. The Land Trust is grateful for the donors vision and action in protecting the rich resources of our Sierra foothills. ❀

Change in Renewal Procedures

The Nevada County Land Trust is a going and growing concern! As with any business, we have to continually evaluate and improve the way we conduct our work. This past quarter, NCLT staff has been searching for ways to become both more efficient and productive, but without adding hours to our work schedule. We have learned that many other land trusts have saved a great deal of staff time by changing from monthly to quarterly supporter renewal procedure. We think this might be worth a try. The way it would work is that if you became a member in the first quarter of the year, (January, February or March) your new renewal date will be in February. Second-quarter renewals will now be in May, third-quarter renewals in August, and fourth-quarter renewals in November. Starting in January 2004, we will begin changing over to this schedule. We hope our members will understand our need to streamline our office administration, and support the change. If you have any questions, please call Stephanie or Chris at 530-272-5994.

E-mail Addresses

If you provide us with your e-mail address (and let us know when it changes), we will keep you informed on up-to-the-minute happenings at the Land Trust via an *OCCASIONAL* e-mail message. E-mail not only saves trees but also saves the Land Trust money that would be spent on paper and postage.

We absolutely *DO NOT* share e-mail addresses with anyone. If you would prefer to not receive e-mail messages from the Land Trust, please let us know.

Please send your current e-mail address to:
chris@nevadacountylandtrust.org. ❀

Treks 2004 Lineup Preview:

The Treks Through Time 2004 season will begin in March and continue into October. The first Treks brochure will be mailed later this month. Space is always limited, so advance registration is a must.

This year, our own hiker extraordinaire, Bill Nickerl, will lead a series of 12 hikes along the South Yuba River beginning at Bridgeport and progressing to the headwaters of the South Fork at Mount Judah. The hikes are on Saturday and will be repeated the following Tuesday. This series will present a challenge to anyone who wants to be able to say they made it to Mount Judah the long way! The series begins March 20th and will run through September 14th. Bill has been on the NCLT board for 12 years, and really knows our County's streams and valleys. For a real treat, sign up for one of Bill's Treks. ❀

Special Gifts

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

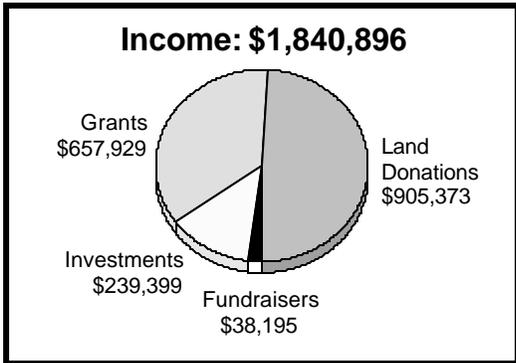
Alta Sierra Property
Owners Association
Mervin & Patricia Baker
Sue & William Geisler
Kate Horton
Mildred Rosensteil

Nevada County Land Trust Summary Report of 2003 Financial Activities

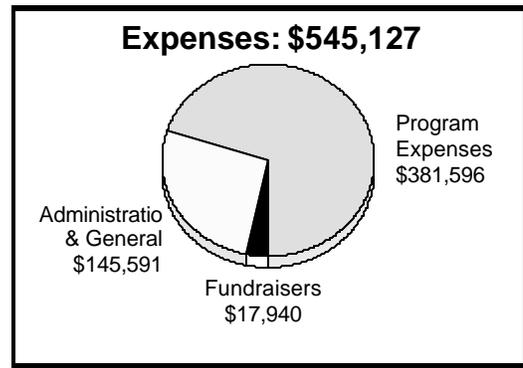
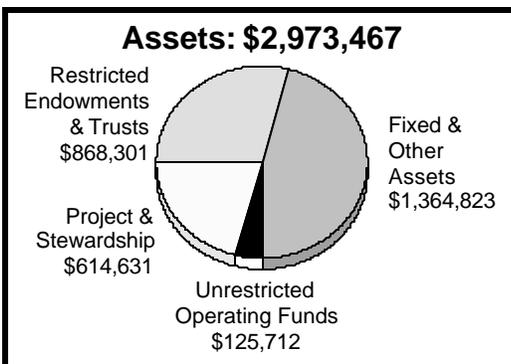
By Ron Mathis, Treasurer

The year 2003 was very challenging and rewarding for the Nevada County Land Trust. The following are some highlights that are reflected in the above summary report.

- Two major parcels of land were donated to the Land Trust with an estimated value of \$800,000. These donations are shown under land donations.



- Three major grants were received in 2003: \$558,000 for the Dryden Wilson program through the County of Nevada, \$15,000 from Forest Reserve Funds for trails development and \$20,000 from the Packard Foundation to support development of a fundraising program. In addition, a \$30,000 Endowment was received for the support of trails programs.
- With the prior receipt of Endowment and Trust funds, investment income has become a major contributor to Land Trust operations, resulting in income of \$42,130 and gains of \$180,309.
- The growing strength of the Land Trust financial position has allowed improvements in paid staff, both in numbers and qualifications, supporting operations, fundraising and programs.



- A large part of the program expenses incurred in 2003 related to acquiring and mothballing the North Star House. The mothballing activity was directed toward protecting the structure from further damages from weather and vandalism. Most of the cost of this activity resulted in capital improvements that are shown as an asset for Buildings (Work-In-Progress) of \$284,275.
- The Land Trust has truly become a Trust, with total assets of \$2,973,467 as of the end of 2003. Only \$125,712 of this amount is available as Unrestricted Operating Funds. The balance of the assets are restricted as follows:
 - designated by the donor and restricted for specific projects (\$321,056),
 - reserved for the conservation easement stewardship programs (\$293,575),
 - legally restricted Endowment or Trust funds (\$868,301), and
 - restricted Buildings, Land and Other Assets (\$1,353,613).

You Can Leave A Legacy

Most of us have been touched personally by the work of nonprofit organizations, such as the Nevada County Land Trust, which depend on the generosity of the community for their existence. Approximately 75% of Americans donate money and time to charitable organizations during their lifetimes. However, *only 8% of us remember to include a gift to a nonprofit in our estate plans or wills.* Think of the impact if a significant number of people made provisions to include their favorite local nonprofit in their will or trust. The Nevada County Land Trust is a member of Leave a Legacy for Nevada County, a program to promote interest in charitable giving through a will or from an estate.

For more information on this program, call Cheryl Belcher at 530-272-5994.

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Membership Luncheon Preview

Join us for our annual Membership Luncheon and get an update on our projects and plans for 2004. You will also be able to meet our board members and the staff of the Nevada County Land Trust. The luncheon will be held on Friday, March 26, from 11:00 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. at the Elks Lodge on Hwy. 49.

The lunch is \$21 per person, with a choice of chicken marsala or vegetarian lasagna. Raffle tickets are \$2 each or 6 for \$10. Invitations will be sent out the first week of March; but go ahead and mark your calendar for this event.

Hope to see you there!