

Dryden Wilson Bequest Update

By Bruce Conklin, Project Manager



North Star House, back, facing east.

Photo by David McKay

In 2002, the Land Trust entered an agreement with the County of Nevada to seek park and open space lands at the North Star property and Loma Rica Ranch. While the future of a park or open space project at Loma Rica looks good, we are awaiting the owners' new plans.

The new owner of the North Star property, Sandy Sanderson, has agreed to make a very generous gift of land to the Land Trust. The initial site includes the North Star House designed by Julia Morgan, the Hague House, Gardener's Cottage, Assay Office, and stamp mill footings. Eventually, a second site including the Main Shaft, Mine offices, and the Allison Ranch Road stamp mill ruins could also be transferred. Both sites are south of

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From the President's Desk *Being Politically Neutral Is Not Easy*

The Nevada County Land Trust Board of Directors prides itself on remaining politically neutral as a critical responsibility to serving all of Nevada County. Board members from many backgrounds share the belief that the Nevada County outdoors is spectacular, and that even in the face of fierce political debates, we should all work hard together on the conservation projects that we can agree upon. But being politically neutral doesn't come easy in Nevada County. We feel we've done a good job with this despite what you may be hearing.



We have worked in partnership with dozens of landowners crafting land conservation arrangements to help them fulfill their property goals. At the end of those deals, the land owner was smiling as widely as we were. We have clearly learned that voluntary conservation, totally honoring private property rights, is the only way to go. This work unites us on issues instead of dividing us.

The Dryden Wilson bequest certainly came with numerous issues and challenges. First, the gift came with specific priority projects: North Star and Loma Rica. Second, the amount of the gift is just a fraction of the estimated total project costs. Third, and even more problematical, once the projects were completed, the Land Trust would need to find a suitable entity to which to turn the parks over for management.

In many other counties in the State, this would not be an issue. Other counties have open space programs, or even their own recreation and park programs, to handle park and trail construction and management. This is not the case in Nevada County.

Although parts of Western Nevada County are served by special park districts (Western Gateway and Bear River), the greater County areas surrounding Grass Valley, Nevada City, and North San Juan have no park districts. In fact, Nevada County basically owns no parkland, except the ball field behind the Rood Center. That leaves the cities of Grass Valley and Nevada City carrying the load for parks services for huge numbers of County residents. The County has allocated developer fees to expand City parks from time to time, but there is no ongoing, reliable revenue stream.

After years of study by two citizen formation committees, the decision to continue Park District formation efforts came to the Board of Supervisors last year. From this point until election morning, projected costs to the County are in the neighborhood of \$150,000. The Board of Supervisors had committed to allocate general fund monies to this effort, with the provision that the park district would pay the general fund back, if formed. Meanwhile, the State budget crisis is coming to the County in full force. Advancing these funds at this time is particularly difficult. Recent polls commissioned by the County indicate that a majority of people favor the districts, or at least the ability to vote on the subject. Ultimately, the people will decide whether to form the districts and whether to assess themselves a parcel charge.

After much consideration, the Land trust Board determined that partnering with the County in the Park Districts formation process would be an appropriate use of part of the Dryden-Wilson grant funds. A regional park district could create a revenue stream to help not only with these projects, but also with other park projects throughout the County. This expenditure for the park district formation vote was clearly consistent with our mission and with our County contract, as it would provide the very entity needed for long-term management and oversight of the parks once completed.

So there you are. We remain totally committed to working for the public benefit, upholding private property rights, and maintaining political neutrality. Although we were in an awkward political situation, we stuck with our values and our Board of Directors made its decision based on our founding and enduring principles.

We greatly appreciate the relentless support of our volunteers and members. Remind your friends and neighbors that the local, highly contested elections are over. It's time to move on. Please join us as we press on to serve all Nevada Countyans by ever searching for, and capitalizing upon, those win-win conservation opportunities that benefit the public.

Gerri Vanderveer Bergen, President

Nevada County Land Trust

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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:

Friends Missed and Remembered

By Cheryl L. Belcher, Executive Director



The past month I attended two memorial services that honored two extraordinary women, Ilsa Barnhardt and Frances Burton. I was honored to have known both of these extraordinary women through NCLT. Although they were very different, they were both inspirational

role models for me.

Ilsa began volunteering for the Land Trust when we needed her the most. Our work load was increasing, but we still lacked funding to hire additional staff. She stepped in to do whatever was needed around the office, and really helped us through a very difficult time. She worked on the Treks program, helped us get the newsletter out, or helped us with events, and always with a smile and a kind word for everyone. Although she never was the one to bring it up, I soon learned that Ilsa had a very long career in public service, first as a County Supervisor, then as Council Woman for Nevada City, and then as a Nevada City Planning Commissioner. She was a devoted wife and mother, she was devoted to her community, and if that wasn't enough, she was a musician, as well. She taught me that no matter how busy and stressed you become, you should never lose the ability to appreciate all that is good in your life.

Frances Burton was a librarian in Nevada City before retiring to her home on Lake Vera Road. She loved history, children, the out-of-doors, and taking her dog on walks around her large, forested parcel. An avid hiker, she and a group of lady friends used to hike regularly around the County.

When Frances began to think about the future use of her property, she made a special provision that the land she loved so long and well should become a park where children could learn about the environment, and where people could walk their dogs. Her property is just two miles from downtown Nevada City, so when we have secured adequate funding for facilitation, this will be a jewel of a park. Frances showed me the power of complete focus and determination! Most of the projects I work on for the Land Trust take up to a year or more to accomplish. Once she had decided what she wanted to do with her land, she and her attorney completed the gift in just three months.

We will miss Ilsa and Frances, but their gifts to all of us will be remembered. ❁

Trustworthy News

Hey Buddy, Can you Spare Some Time?

We are pleased to announce that Marlee Chamberlain has stepped up to the plate to become our Volunteer Coordinator and work on our Volunteers In Action (VIA) Program. Marlee will try to find the perfect job match for all of you volunteers who so generously donate your time and expertise. She has held many volunteer positions in outdoor oriented groups over the years, and was most recently the Volunteer Coordinator for a mountain biking group in the Bay Area.

Marlee will be working with office staffer Stephanie Lorensen, so if you have time to spare and want to make projects happen, please contact them at 530-272-5994.

Sierra Cascade Land Trust Council Growing

NCLT is a founding member of the Sierra Cascade Land Trust Council (SCLTC). SCLTC is a group of local land trusts and other associated organizations working in the Sierra Nevada and Cascade regions of California and Nevada to assist member land trusts and conservancies to achieve their natural and cultural resource protection goals within their individual communities.

SCLTC representatives met May 7 in Auburn for a full-day session. The program was varied and informative. Presenters included Chuck Mills and Dave Sutton from the Trust for Public Land, Shawn Garvey from The Sierra Fund, Steve Frisch from the Sierra Business Council, and SCLTC Coordinator, Kerri Timmer. Member land trusts have protected 31,767 acres of land in the "Range of Light" for the past 10 years. Working alone or in partnership with other agencies and land trusts, this grass-roots effort has been little short of amazing.

Ironically, although more than 60% of the State's water comes from the Sierra/Cascade mountains, and this is an important recreational destination area, for vacationers across the nation, the Sierra only receives a small percentage of State funding available for land conservation and water protection. Through education and outreach, the Council hopes to highlight the importance of the Sierra to the entire State. ❁



We mourn the passing of our dear friend, Trieve Tanner. A tireless community supporter, and outdoor enthusiast, Trieve brought passion, intelligence, commitment, and a good sense of humor to every project he undertook.

Summer Treks Lineup Best Yet

Trek v. To make a slow, arduous journey.

Webster's Dictionary describes trekking as slow and difficult, but the Land Trust treks lineup this summer offers unique experiences for all ability levels. Celebrate the special historical and natural features of your region, make new friends, and enjoy warmer weather outdoors. Support the Land Trust's important work in our community. Bring a friend or family member along to discover these benefits, too!

For further details, call the office at 530- 272-5994.

Quail Easement Ranch Dinner with Highland Dancers

Saturday, June 7

\$35 members / \$40 nonmembers



"Rome" Powerhouse

"Rome" Powerhouse and Birth of PG&E, with Dale Johnson

Saturday, June 7

\$10 members / \$15 nonmembers

You Bet Mining District, with Jerry Pressler

Saturday, June 14

\$10 members / \$15 nonmembers

Camptonville Tiger Lily Tour (below), with Leland Paul

Sunday, June 15

\$10 members / \$15 nonmembers

Loney Meadows to Rock Lake with Bill Nickerl

Tuesday, June 17 and Sunday, June 22

\$10 members / \$15 nonmembers

Malakoff Diggins Town Tour, Barbecue and Campfire

Saturday, June 21

\$20 members / \$25 nonmembers

Trabucco Ranch Member's Tour, with Bill and Anna Trabucco and Cheryl Belcher

Saturday, June 28

Free to members / \$10 nonmembers

Martis Valley - 3000 Years of Human Use, with David Beesley

Sunday, June 29

\$10 member / \$15 nonmember

Willow Tree Ranch Dinner with Music and Hike

Saturday July 12

\$25 members / \$30 nonmembers



Grouse Ridge

Donner Pass Emigrant Route, with Bill Nickerl

Tuesday, July 15 and Sunday, July 20

\$10 member / \$15 nonmember

Big Trees / Duncan Peak Lookout

Saturday, July 19

\$10 members / \$15 nonmembers

Grouse Ridge Vernal Pools, with Randy Oliver

Saturday, July 26

\$10 members / \$15 nonmembers

Four Horse Flat to Salmon Lake, with Bill Nickerl

Tuesday, August 12 and Saturday, August 16

\$10 members / \$15 nonmembers

Star Gazing at Feld Ranch, with Alan Stahler (light dinner and hike included)

Friday, August 22

\$20 members / \$25 nonmembers

Old Downieville Turnpike, with Leland Pauly

Sunday, August 24

\$10 members / \$15 nonmembers

Treks continue through October. Call the office for all current Treks listings at 530-272-5994. ☎



Camptonville Tour

Kids Camp 2003

Still Time to Sign Up

The Land Trust Kids Camp will start its fourth season this June. Camp Director Lynn Campbell will continue our morning outdoor "Land Trust Kids Camp" from June 16-20 at Burton Park in Nevada City. Children grades 3-6 will have fun learning about pond ecology, animals, trees and plants, birds, Native American games and crafts, and art in the wild. The \$75 fee includes materials and healthful snacks.

Lynn is quite excited about "Helping Hands Program" that she will introduce this year. This camp experience is for students aged 13 to 17. They will participate in field studies and projects with restoration and agency experts, including assisting with pond or creek restoration and park projects, talking to scientists and learning how to create change for the good of the natural environment. The \$75 fee will also include materials and healthful snacks.

For sign-up sheets or to make your reservation, call the office at 530-272-5994. ❀



Special Thanks to Special Volunteers and Supporters

Bob and Gail Bakker

Josh Black

Marlee Chamberlin

Sue Goodenough

Marlene Hayes

Brendan Hodge

Eric Jorgensen

Tom and Dorothy Kane

Larry MacMillen

Sue Melvin

Shanna Moran

Clarence Motter

Bill Nickerl

Joey Norton

Christy Sherr

John Taylor

Mike and Becky Thompson

Kathy VanZunk

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. ❀

Upcoming Special Events

Save These Dates

New! Japanese Tea Ceremony

The Tea Ceremony will be held in September (day to be determined) 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.

Date ; \$100 each reservation.

This unique, intimate experience will be available for just 10 attendees. Please call the office for reservation information.

Sunday, September 21

Litton Trail Celebration

Join local trail enthusiasts as we celebrate the extension of Litton Trail from the 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, Noon - 4 p.m.

Art Gala and Auction, "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



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

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

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Grass Valley and will eventually be connected to the Fairgrounds, Grass Valley, and the new North Star neighborhood by a network of trails.

The famous North Star House and its uphill neighbor, the Hague House, are both in very poor condition. The Land Trust is taking immediate steps to protect them, but it will require millions of dollars and thousands of volunteer hours to fully restore them. Three families reside on the historic site.

While the Land Trust is working toward eventual public access to a safe and restored North Star Historic District, it is inappropriate and illegal for anyone to go to the site uninvited. Even those who are invited to tour or work at the site will be required to sign a liability waiver before they are admitted.



North Star House, front, facing west.
Photo by David McKay



Loma Rica Ranch

While we are still in the early planning stages, it is not too early to volunteer or donate to this important project. We need volunteers who can help with everything from fund raising to gardening, from event planning to carpentry, from drafting to plumbing. We are building a database of volunteers. It's too late to be the first to volunteer, but it is certainly not too late to join in.

To donate, send earmarked checks directly to Nevada County Land Trust, 10175 Joerschke Drive, Suite R, Grass Valley, CA 95945. Donations to the Land Trust are fully tax deductible. ♻️

To volunteer or for more information, call the Land Trust office or Project Manager, Bruce Conklin:

530-272-7230 or FAX 530-272-5997

Dryden_Wilson@hotmail.com

northstarhouse.org

You Can Leave A Legacy

This Memorial Day many of us take time to remember those who have gone before us—by remembering special people who have made a difference in our lives and are now absent. This Memorial Day, we ask that you also consider all the wonderful nonprofit organizations in our County which also make a profound difference in our lives. Most of us can recall being touched by the work of some of these nonprofit organizations, which depend on the generosity of the community for their existence.

It is estimated that 77% 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. Consider that it is typically at our death that we transfer the largest

portion of our wealth to others. Imagine the effect we could have if a significant number of us made provisions to include our favorite nonprofits in that transfer.

We've been told that one of the reasons people like supporting the work of the Land Trust is that the conservation work we do is forever. It benefits all of us today, and then will go on to benefit our children and their children to come.

If you've made supporting the Nevada County Land Trust a part of your life, please consider a memorial gift to our Endowment Fund that will help support conservation work for future generations. The Nevada County Land Trust is a member of the Leave a Legacy for Nevada County, which promotes charitable giving through a will or from an estate for local nonprofits. For more information, call Cheryl Belcher at 530-272-5994. ♻️

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

Part II

Early Organization: Some Nuts and Bolts, 1990-1993

By David Beesley

Following the early organizational activities that led to a decision to create a Nevada County Land Trust in 1990, a few key initiatives dominated the founders' time. These actions required overcoming some significant obstacles before any work of conserving land, establishing parks, or building trails could begin. First came the work of obtaining non-profit status or incorporation for the proposed land trust. Next was the generation of revenue for the new group, including the creation of a large dues-paying membership. Third was the establishment of an active and committed board that would represent the county in a broad way. Failure in any one of these areas might have doomed the group to failure and a quick trip to the organizational graveyard.

Of the three, the earliest and most frustrating was the establishment of the new group's non-profit status. David Palley and Pat Hamilton provided the legal leadership, based on their experience and legal training. They worked closely with Lynn Campbell. In the original 501 (c) (3) application for the new land trust, the number of the section in the federal Internal Revenue code that described nonprofit organizations was difficult and time consuming to shape. Frustration and delay dampened some of the enthusiasm of the organizers.

While waiting for the granting of this nonprofit status—and not willing to let the legal delays stop things in their tracks—the group sought the assistance of Sequoia Challenge. It was an already successful local organization dedicated to making old hydraulic ditch lines into trails that were accessible to wheel chair users. Believing that the expressed goals of the newly proposed land trust were compatible with theirs, the Sequoia Challenge board helped the NCLT to open a bank account for the deposit of funds. By being “sheltered” under Sequoia Challenge's “umbrella” as a “Special Project,” the Land Trust organizers could begin to act as a non-profit group while still awaiting action from the Internal Revenue Service. The cooperation of Sequoia Challenge was invaluable at this early point, and illustrated the broad base of community interest that existed for the creation of a working land trust for the western part of Nevada County. Umbrella status began in September of 1990. In January of 1992 the NCLT was granted a charter and began operating on its own.

The promotion of membership and fund raising went forward even before the official incorporation was accom-

plished. As early as the summer of 1990 several ad hoc committees had been created from the early working group. The purpose of these committees was to devise ways to build a dues-paying membership that would give the NCLT a financial base for its operations. Numerous initiatives were attempted to publicize the trust and reach out to potential members. A speaker's bureau was established to introduce the group to the public and to community organizations, asking those interested to sign on and pledge financial support. Contacts with the local news media led to publicity that introduced the new group's goals to the county public, and was also intended to dispel any misconceptions about the organization's purposes and membership.

In 1993 the “Treks Through Time” program was created as a fund raising venture. The program utilized experts in local history or natural history to lead members to places of interest in the county. This long-term program has proven useful in raising funds, and also acts as an effective recruiting program, introducing the Land Trust to a new group of interested persons.

The creation of an effective working board of directors committed to the ideals of the group was seen as imperative to the founders. The goal to create a board that would represent the community as a whole was a natural outgrowth of the early commitment to a nonpartisan stance for the group. During that early formation period and continuing on to the present, promoting diversity in view points among board members was deemed to be very important. Over time board members have been chosen to represent conservation interests, to bring business experience, to represent agricultural producers, to provide marketing skills, and any number of useful talents. Practical skills of program management were also part of the selection committee's recruitment commitment—all for the purpose of helping the group achieve its goal of promoting protection of open space, developing trails, and creating parks in western Nevada County.

That first land trust board included Lynn Campbell, a teacher; Rick Dejesus, a realtor; Pat Hamilton, an attorney; Hilary Hedman, a merchant; Sandy Jansen, who sold packaged cedar homes and solar electric products; Steve Lund, a C.P.A. and first president of the Land Trust; William Nickerl, who did real estate acquisitions for the Bureau of Land Management; Allen Ostrofe, a Certified Financial Planner; David Palley, an attorney; Jim Pyle, a landscape and general contractor; Ted Toal, a computer programming consultant; and David Wright, an architect.

The first newsletter in 1991 introduced these new board members by saying: “The goal in selecting our first board of directors was to elect members from all segments of the community. As such, the directors represent a broad spectrum of political, environmental, and philosophical views.” ❁

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