Trail construction resumed in earnest this summer, with the granting of over a mile of trail easement through Loma Rica Ranch. We are most grateful to Carville-Sierra and the Loma Rica Ranch, grantors of the trail easement. As of September 15, we have built one mile of trail from Loma Rica Drive to Idaho Maryland Road. The Loma Rica segment is a key section of a trail extending from Memorial Park in Grass Valley to the Glenbrook Basin. When completed, the trail will be between 5 and 6 miles in length.

Nineteen volunteers have already assisted in constructing this portion of the trail; clearing brush and debris in preparation for building the trail tread (the part you walk on). Although the trail tread has been built, finishing touches must wait until sufficient rain has fallen to achieve proper compaction and grading of the trail surface. Until then, the trail is not yet open to public use.

In addition to the trail easement, encroachment permits were obtained from the County of Nevada and Nevada Irrigation District for additional trail improvements. The trail will cross the D-S Canal and a bridge will be built for trail users. In addition, a portion of the trail will follow Brunswick Road on County right-of-way. A second bridge will be required to cross Wolf Creek.

If you are interested in helping out this fall, please call the NCLT office and have your name added to the trail volunteer list. ----cont’d Page 3
President’s Message
Nevada County Farmlink
Linking those who want to farm with those who have the land

In previous issues of Land News, I’ve discussed how those of us who are farmers and ranchers provide Nevada County with food and fiber, open space and views, wildlife habitat and community-sized fire breaks. I’ve also explained that, as a farmer, I only get paid for the food and fiber – the rest are provided at no cost to the community (although it does cost us to produce them). As long as we farmers are receiving a socio-economical benefit from owning and operating our farms and ranches, we will continue to provide these four items. However, with the average age of a farmer in Nevada County approaching 60 years, who will continue our work and love of the land? Most of our kids love the land, but they look at the hard work and opt for a different occupation. Only 2 percent of all farmers and ranchers in Nevada County are younger than 35!

Despite this trend, there are many young adults who would love to farm but cannot due to the high cost of land and equipment. To address this need, the Nevada County Land Trust is exploring the creation of a new, experimental program called Nevada County Farmlink. This program would connect willing landowners with those who would like to farm. We believe that this program would provide meaningful revenue for the landowner, jobs and income for those who would like to farm but are under-capitalized, and more locally grown food for Nevada County residents.

We believe that land that is making money is less likely to be sold and divided into smaller parcels. By helping to make farming profitable, Nevada County Farmlink could help conserve farmland. In combination with traditional conservation easements, we hope this program will expand the tools available to landowners who want their land to remain in agriculture. Contact the Land Trust office for more information!

Sincerely, Rich Johansen

Local Agriculture
Equals
Local Food

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Mission:
Nevada County is endowed with a rich mosaic of beautiful landscapes, historical treasures, healthy wetlands and forests, and small towns. The land sustains life and replenishes the spirit. Our towns comfort us with timeless charm. Our working lands – farms and ranches – feed our communities. This is our home.

The quality of life in our community is tightly connected to these precious resources. The Nevada County Land Trust exists to create a balance between nature and the needs of the people who make a life and a livelihood here. Our mission is to enrich the deep community connection with our land – today, tomorrow, and forever.

Land News
Published for Nevada County Land Trust Members
Editor: Susan Kane
Design and Production: Chris Postlewaite
During the course of the summer, we have started a new tradition at our monthly Board of Directors’ meetings. At the beginning of each meeting, we recognize the contributions of a volunteer. Without our volunteers, the Nevada County Land Trust would cease to exist!

Some of our volunteers serve in very visible roles. In June, we recognized the contributions made by Robin DeNegri, our Treks coordinator. Robin is the driving force behind this incredibly successful program. She handles everything from organization to registration to publicity. Despite all of these tasks, she even finds time to attend most of the Treks. Sadly, Robin has decided to retire as Treks coordinator at the end of this season. We will certainly miss her.

Other volunteers serve behind the scenes. In August, we thanked Jim Sindt. Jim does most of the layout work for our Treks brochures. You’ve seen Jim’s photographs on our website, in our brochures and in previous issues of Land News. Jim and his wife Mary typically fold every brochure that gets mailed from our office. He also helps to organize and co-lead Treks.

Many volunteers wear multiple hats. In July, we expressed our appreciation to Wendy Olenick, a volunteer who seemingly never says no. Wendy helped prepare the food for our membership barbecue at Burton Park in June. She also works tirelessly each year to help organize our children’s camps at Burton. If you came to Stars at the Ridgetop in August, you met Wendy as you exchanged your tickets for wristbands.

Speaking of the Stars at the Ridgetop, this event was only possible because of the 95-plus volunteers who made it happen. Volunteers did everything from managing the stage and providing the site to overseeing transportation and seeking sponsorships. We want to thank everyone who volunteered to make this event happen.

If you haven’t volunteered in the past, we’d like to invite you to consider doing so. As you’ll note in this edition of Land News, we are seeking new volunteers to work on our Treks programs in addition to special events. We think it’s a great way to learn more about what the Nevada County Land Trust does in our community. We also know that we wouldn’t exist without the dedication and energy of our volunteers. Thank you!

If we preserve local agriculture we not only get fresher food we also get the equally important benefit of open space.

Loma Rica --- Continued from Page 1

Other Trail News

Finishing touches have been made on the trail segment between Memorial Park and Empire Street; this one mile long trail provides non-motorized access to the visitor center and the trails in Empire Mine State Park. Because of the nature of the soil at the lower end of the trail (extremely slippery, sticky clay when wet) a layer of crushed rock has been added to the surface; this should make the trail much safer and more enjoyable when the fall rains arrive.

Wish/Need List

1. Construction foreman to supervise construction of a 15 foot span pedestrian/bicycle bridge over D-S Canal.
2. Engineer to design Trail Bridge (approx. 16 ft span) over Wolf Creek.
3. Fence posts, clips, & barbed wire for building fence, iron pipe 2” to 4” diameter.
4. Treated lumber for retaining walls (4x4, 4x6, 2x6, 2x8, 2x12, etc.)
5. Clean fill dirt, mixed fill dirt, crushed rock, drain rock, etc.
6. Culvert, 24” diameter.
7. Gasoline powered hedge trimmer.
8. Graphics person to draw trail maps.
As a small farmer in the central Sierra Nevada region of California, I have difficulty finding information about equipment that is appropriate for my vegetable and livestock production systems. As an aspiring mule-powered farmer, I have even greater difficulty finding information and equipment that meet my needs. While large-scale farmers can see new equipment at places like the Tulare Farm Show, I have little use for a 150 horsepower tractor and a 20 foot offset disc.

Last summer, I had the opportunity to attend Horse Progress Days for the first time. While many readers of the Small Farmer's Journal are familiar with the event, it was a revelation for me. This gathering of serious horse farmers featured actual demonstrations of new and refurbished horse-drawn equipment – everything from vegetable transplanter to logging arches.

During my trip back to California, I realized that my region of California needs an event like Horse Progress Days. Other growers would benefit from field demonstrations of appropriate equipment. With rising fuel costs, many farmers would benefit from an informed discussion and demonstration of alternative traction sources (including horses and mules). By the time my plane landed in Sacramento, the basic concept of the first annual Sierra Nevada Small Farm Progress Days was born.

The first annual Sierra Nevada Small Farm Progress Days will be held at Loma Rica Ranch Organic Farm in Grass Valley, California, on October 20. It will feature field demonstrations of tillage and cultivation equipment, manure and fertilizer spreading equipment, planting and transplanting implements, harvesting equipment, farm-scale logging equipment and portable mills, livestock equipment, and irrigation systems. We’ll also demonstrate a variety of appropriately scaled traction systems, including small tractors, walking tractors, horses and mules. The event will also feature grower workshops and a tradeshow. On the following day (October 21), Loma Rica Ranch Organic Farm will hold its second annual Harvest Festival.

The event is being organized by a diverse steering committee, including representatives from Loma Rica Ranch Organic Farm, the University of California Cooperative Extension, the USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Nevada County Farm Bureau, the California Draft Horse and Mule Association, the High Sierra Resource Conservation and Development Council, the Nevada County Land Trust and small growers. We’ve already received assistance from a variety of sources, including the Small Farmers Journal, Midwest Leather, Pioneer Equipment and I & J Manufacturing. We’re now in the process of searching for sponsors.

As a grower, I’m excited about the opportunities to evaluate a broad range of equipment and to talk with other farmers. As a lifelong resident of the Sierra Nevada foothills, I’m excited about the encouragement this event will provide to aspiring farmers.
MEET PETER ARNOLD

Our newest Board member, Peter Arnold, is a Registered Professional Forester in the State of California and a member of the California Licensed Foresters Association. He has a bachelor degree in Plant Sciences and Forestry and a masters in Forest Management. He is currently semi-retired as a consulting forester in Northern California to private and industry clients in timber inventory, appraisals, and management.

Peter has been extremely active in our community over the past 20+ years. He was a founding member of the Board of Directors for Briar Patch Co-op and Nevada City Winery. Currently, Peter is Secretary for the Nevada County Fish and Wildlife Commission.

Peter lives on 40 acres off of Lime Kiln Road with his wife, Sarah, three dogs and a cat. He leases irrigated pasture to local cattlemen and runs a 3.5 acre vineyard growing cabernet franc and syrah for Nevada City Winery. When not consulting or working in the vineyards, he enjoys fly fishing, bird shooting, and photography.

Volunteering is good for the body and the soul!

Here are a few volunteer opportunities that would provide us with much needed assistance:

- Bulk mailing: volunteers to assist with bulk mailings throughout the year
- Special events: assist with coordination, oversight, and volunteer recruitment for harvest dinners and annual concert
- TREKS program: assist with coordination of hikes with area geologists, archeologists, and naturalists.

We would like to thank the following people for becoming members of the Land Trust

DID YOU KNOW?

American Dippers

The American Dipper (Cinclus mexicanus) was John Muir’s favorite Sierra bird. He called it by its old name “Water Ouzel,” which he described as “…mountain streams’ own darling, the hummingbird of blooming waters, loving rocky ripple-slopes and sheets of foam as a bee loves flowers… among all the mountain birds, none has cheered me so much in my lonely wanderings” (Muir 1878).

Dippers are a familiar sight in our mountains, where they are easily observed along most of Nevada County’s perennial streams such as the South Yuba, Deer Creek, Wolf Creek, and Dry Creek. Their sharp chatters rise above the noise and mists of swift-flowing water as they flit nervously from rock to rock. When flying, they skim low over the water, forsaking all shortcuts over land. These plump, sooty-gray birds bob incessantly up and down on bended knees while flashing their white eyelids. When feeding, they cling to precipitous rock faces, dive beneath foaming waters and reappear some distance downstream. Their powerful legs, long toes and streamlined bodies allow them to walk with ease over mossy boulders or beneath cascading rapids. They do not have webbed feet but occasionally swim across still pools like tiny ducks. Dippers have evolved many specialized adaptations to suit their aquatic lifestyles such as enlarged oil glands for waterproofing their outer feathers, a thick undercoat of down, and specialized flaps over their nostrils and eyes (nictitating membranes) to protect them from the pounding spray. On deep dives they “fly” under water using their short, rounded wings as flippers and flattened, stubby tails as rudders.

American Dippers can be found from the Aleutian Islands and northeastern Alaska, south through the mountainous regions of western North America and the highlands of Mexico to western Panama. This species is one of five members of its family (Cinclidae) that all have similar habits and form. The similar White-capped Dippers (C. leucocephalus) and Rufous-throated Dippers (C. schulzi) occur in mountain streams of South America, White-throated Dippers (C. cinclus) are found in Europe, western Asia, and extreme northern Africa, and Brown Dippers (C. pallasii) inhabit central and eastern Asia.

Dippers remain in mountain streams all year. The surrounding landscape can be buried by snow and nearly empty of other bird life, but Dippers still frolic in the icy waters. Only when the highest streams freeze do Dippers venture down slope.
---Cont’d on Page 7
According to studies in Colorado, winter is the critical survival period for Dippers; some may migrate downstream to avoid the heavy snow zone, and some of those that brave the winter in the high country die due to limited food and a lack of protected roosting sites at a time when energy costs to stay warm are high.

Although solitary for most of the year, males and females pair for the breeding season, from early March to late June. The males sing long, wren-like courtship calls in early spring. These songs are unfamiliar to most Sierra visitors because they usually cease before the spring snowmelt and are hard for human ears to hear above the waters’ roar. The females, which look just like the males, build bulky nests of mosses and grasses that are about one foot in diameter-- usually cradled on inaccessible rock ledges above streams or behind waterfalls where mist keeps the moss green, providing good camouflage. Dipper nests also can be found occasionally on log jams, beneath dense vegetation along rushing streams, and under bridges. The female lays 4-5 white eggs, which she incubates alone for 15-17 days. Both parents feed their spot-breasted young for 24-25 days until they leave the nest. Dippers prefer fresh, unpolluted waters that support caddisflies, stone flies, mayflies, midge larvae, other insects and their larvae, snails and fish fry. Let’s hope that the purity and clarity of our snowmelt streams continues so that Dippers will grace our waters for generations to come.

Ted Beedy

YOU CAN MAKE A DIFFERENCE

If you drive around western Nevada County or hike a local trail you have probably seen the result of the project work we have been doing for the past fifteen years. We have conserved family farms and working ranches, protected natural areas, and built ten miles of trails in our community.

How do we do all this? With the help of people like you. Please give some thought to your estate planning needs. A charitable bequest will not take effect unless you state your intention in your will or living trust. Many people set aside a specific dollar amount. Some choose to leave real estate.

Long time member Nina Allen has gifted her property to us in her estate planning. She has this to say about her decision:

“Nature to this day is my spiritual home. I am acutely aware of how easily we humans can destroy our natural world and how we suffer from this destruction. I have committed myself to protect and care for a gorgeous stretch of Deer Creek where I live, by putting the parcel, minus the envelope around my straw bale home, into a conservation easement. I want to inspire other owners of Deer Creek property to do likewise so that we create a substantial riparian corridor protected from logging and development. We all need wild buffer zones especially along water courses for our health and the health of the beings we share this beautiful land with.”

In Memoriam

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

In Memory of Sandra Hargreaves
    Patricia Green

In Memory of Bill Dise
    David & Louise Beesley
    Peter & Susan Graf
    Patricia Green
    David & Jean McKeen

A FOND FAREWELL

What a great two years I have had coordinating the Treks program but it is time for some new ideas and new energy. I will be leaving the position of Treks Coordinator at the end of the year and plan on doing more traveling, camping and hiking.

I have enjoyed introducing trekkers to the trails, lakes, historic towns and sites, wildflowers, bees and geology. All are favorites but a few sit high on the list: Table Mountain wildflowers, swimming in Loch Leven, Grouse Ridge and snowshoeing. The reward of organizing the treks is getting to go on them, not by myself but with interesting and fun people. Land Trust members are special.

The men and women who donate their time to lead the Treks Through Time events are such outstanding people to work with and make the job of coordinator so fulfilling. The staff members here at the Land Trust are all involved in the Trek’s program and couldn’t be more supportive and helpful.

So thank you to all. Happy Trails, Robin

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Nils Lofgren and America Brought Down the House
At the 4th Annual Stars at the Ridgetop Benefit Concert
by Marty Coleman-Hunt

The concert took place on Saturday, August 5 at the Yuba Ridge Amphitheatre. About 900 people celebrated the Land Trust at the event, which featured performances by guitar virtuoso, Nils Lofgren, and the 1970’s pop icon band, America.

The grounds were stunningly beautiful, especially as the sun dipped below the ridge and the stars came out. Wine and beer flowed liberally and the foods were delicious. The new dance floor was packed. The Wildlife Rehabilitation and Release had a booth this year, and several birds of prey were displayed. At the end of the concert, the lights were dimmed, the crowd quieted and two rehabbed owls were released back to the Yuba River Canyon where they were born.

Many thanks to all of the volunteers who worked – some days in 100 degree-plus heat, to prepare the site for the concert. Huge thanks go to the many donors who contributed money and materials for the concert and to be used for NCLT operations throughout the year. And finally, many thanks to those of you who attended. Once again, 100% of the ticket price goes to fund NCLT operations for the next year.

Photos Courtesy of Ron Calef & Jim Sindt

Thanks to Our Local Sponsors
GOLD
Placer Title●Coldwell Banker, Grass Roots Realty●Mountain Peoples Wine Distributing●Hill’s Flat Lumber●HBE-Hansen Brothers Enterprises●Rocky Mountain Exterminators●Gold ‘n’ Green Rentals●KVMR 89.5 FM

SILVER
YubaNet & Spiral Studios●Nevada County Mortgage●Shari Barley, Coldwell Banker, Grass Roots Realty●Cheryl Rellstab, Keller Williams●Quick Response●Rare Earth

BRONZE
Annual Project Update – September 2006

• **Land Conservation:** The Land Trust has conserved more than 5,600 acres of forestland, farmland, natural areas and recreation land through conservation easements and fee title transactions. All of these lands have been conserved through the voluntary, proactive actions of private landowners. We are currently in negotiation with numerous landowners to conserve an additional 2,500 acres of precious Nevada County land this year.

• **Local Agriculture:** Farmland in Nevada County is under threat of extinction. The Land Trust is working to enhance the economic viability of family farms and ranches in Nevada County. This includes support for the local food coalition and High Sierra Beef, as well as helping to organize the first annual Sierra Nevada Small Farm Progress Days to be held October 20 at Loma Rica Ranch Organic Farm.

• **Environmental Education:** The Land Trust conducts two environmentally focused summer day camps at our Burton Homestead location near Nevada City. More than 50 kids each year attend the Native American Studies or the Nature Studies programs.

• **Treks Program:** This popular program attracts upwards of a thousand people each year who participate in more than a hundred guided treks of various types. Guides include local experts in history, mining engineering, ornithology, astronomy, archeology, botany, biology, entomology, geology and ecology. Weekend *Treks Through Time* venture into some of the most intriguing areas of Nevada County including vernal pools and pioneer trails. The *Treks for Health* series of short walks on Tuesday mornings is designed for people who are looking for good exercise on trails through our beautiful community landscape. The *Armchair Treks* held throughout the bad weather season are entertaining and educational lectures, slide shows and movies. Several were standing room only at the Madelyn Helling Library.

• **Trails Program:** Working with willing landowners, the Land Trust has secured easements on more than **10 miles of trails** throughout western Nevada County. Trails are designed, built and maintained through volunteer work parties from Land Trust members and other organizations such as the Boy Scouts, homeowners associations and local businesses. After months of negotiation, a route has been agreed upon, and an easement granted so that the Land Trust can construct a trail through Loma Rica Ranch. In fact, work has already begun to clear brush on the trail site.

• **North Star Historic Conservancy:** The Land Trust has founded the North Star Historic Conservancy, an independent nonprofit organization, to oversee the restoration and administration of the historic North Star property.

• **Salter Dog Park:** The Land Trust Board of Directors has voted unanimously to create the Al Salter Fund for Animals to benefit dogs and their owners in western Nevada County. The proceeds from the sale of Mr. Salter’s property will be used to establish this fund.

---

2005 NCLT Income & Expenses
Where it comes from and where it goes

![Income Pie Chart]

**Income - $487,151**

- Contributions and Membership
- Endowments and Investment Income
- Fundraisers
- Grants

**Expenses - $448,562**

- Administration
- Fundraising
- Conservation/Open Space
- Historic Preservation
- Other
Another Successful Year at Burton Homestead Children’s Camps
by Lynn Campbell

The summer of 2006 started off with a bang for kids and teachers at the Burton Homestead Children’s Camps. Just as the weather really warmed up in June we welcomed the kids for three days of Maidu stories, hikes, crafts with Starlight, cultural activities and games. The time seemed too short for all that Wendy Olenick and her daughter Corrine Mills dreamed up, so that now we will plan to have a five-day camp next summer! We especially benefited from the cedar bark house that is now nestled into the trees (as though it has always been there). Next year: “Walking Softly”.

The Nature Camp was full to the brim but everything went smoothly due to the excellent work of our four counselors and the good will and helpfulness of everyone involved. The weather was hot, but we cooled off in the sprinklers every chance we got. Our teachers were “hot” too- we had a fantastic birds lesson by Ann Westling (Forest Service), Randy Oliver and Roger McGehe shared the kids for aquatic studies and forest ecology, our own John Olmsted sang for us as John Muir and took us on plant walks, we explored the woods with tracker Patrick, made fossils with Michael Rasch, enjoyed stories and jokes with a giant squirrel (Michael Bend) and peeped at the heavens with Alan Stahler on our campout. We tied together our week with Diana Pasquini making lovely and colorful weavings. Our thanks go once again to Frances Burton in memory, and the Ghidotti Foundation for their generous yearly gift.

We had a great time and hope to see you all next summer!

There is a way that nature speaks, that land speaks. Most of the time we are simply not patient enough, quiet enough, to pay attention to the story.

-Linda Hogan

MERGENCY IN OUR WATERWAYS

On Saturday and Sunday August 19 & 20 an historic event, entitled “Mercury in our Water, our Fish and our People: A Tribal Convergence” took place at the Burton Homestead. Hosted by the Tsi-Akim Maidu Tribe and co-hosted by the International Indian Treaty Council, The Sierra Fund, Nevada County Land Trust and South Yuba River Citizen’s League, this event brought together representatives from 17 northern California tribes with community organizations and federal land agency representatives to talk about the problem of mercury. Presentations included information on human and environmental effects of mercury exposure, clean-up technologies, projects underway in the region, and policy issues that need exploration.

The weekend produced an outpouring of information about how mercury contamination has affected the humans, wildlife and plants of the gold country. Out of this session has come a working group of tribal representatives, and a resolution seeking action on the problem. The Tsi-Akim Tribe is now working with others to seek tribal ratification of this document and build community support for action. When the resolution is finalized it will be made available to the public.

The Burton Homestead is a 37 acre parcel that was gifted to the Land Trust by Frances Burton in 1997.
Remembering a Dear Friend

Over the past three years, the Land Trust has seen many dedicated volunteers spend their Tuesdays or Saturdays – or both – working on the grounds of Julia Morgan’s North Star house. One of these volunteers was Bill Dice, a quiet, soft-spoken person who soon became a leader of sorts.

Pat Green, another dedicated volunteer, got to know Bill over the past two years as he became one of a small group that consistently showed up for both Tuesday and Saturday work sessions. “I can’t say that he actively told anyone what to do, but I would say that we all followed his lead, and that he could make good suggestions if we were at a loss as to where to concentrate our efforts. He was much liked and respected by everyone and was always pleasant to be around.”

“When Bill used to tell me about all the activities he enjoyed – tennis, bicycling, horseshoes, travel, being an Elk – I remember thinking he was someone truly enjoying his retirement, in addition to contributing so much to his community. We all wish he could have had a little longer to enjoy his retirement.”

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In This Issue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Loma Rica Trail .......................................................................................... 1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>President’s Message-Nevada County Farmlink ............................................ 2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Executive Notes............................................................................................. 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small Farm Progress Day ............................................................................. 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Meet Peter Arnold-New Board Member .......................................................... 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>VolunteersNeeded ......................................................................................... 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welcome New Members ................................................................................... 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Did You Know-American Dippers ...................................................................... 6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eagle Scouts-Burton Homestead ...................................................................... 7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>You Can Make A Difference .......................................................................... 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Robin DeNegri-A Fond Farewell ..................................................................... 8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stars at the Ridgetop ..................................................................................... 9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Project Update ............................................................................................... 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCLT 2005 Income &amp; Expenses ...................................................................... 10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Children’s Camps .......................................................................................... 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mercury in Our Waterways ........................................................................... 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remembering a Dear Friend .......................................................................... Back</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>