

HUMBOLDT NORTH COAST LAND TRUST

Newsletter - September 2009

Humboldt North Coast Land Trust is a non-profit organization dedicated to protecting for the public benefit the natural beauty and character of Humboldt County from Little River to Big Lagoon

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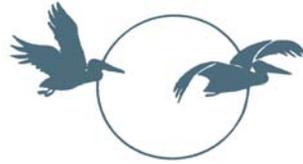
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Annual General Meeting October 4 at new Trinidad Museum

Everyone is welcome to join us for our annual general meeting on Sunday, October 4 at 4:00 p.m. at the new Trinidad Museum building.

Appetizers and drinks will be served. We will be celebrating the opening of the new museum and native plant garden. Land trust directors will present an update of recent activities and guest speakers will share updates on the new museum, the Trinidad Library fundraising efforts, and proposed new city park. The entire property was donated to our land trust by local community philanthropists Glenn and Janis Saunders. Guest speakers include library fundraising lead Patty Fleschner, Trinidad city manager Steve Albright, and museum board director Roland Johnson. Please bring family and friends for this meeting and celebration of Trinidad community partnerships.

Board President's Update

Greetings and happy end-of-summer to you all. My name is Ben Morehead and I am the current President of the HNCLT Board of Trustees. I have been quite busy this past summer volunteering with the land trust and I wanted to share a brief update on the latest happenings.

First a quick introduction: my family has lived in Westhaven for eleven years my three children attend Trinidad School. I have been both a volunteer and paid employee to several local land trusts for the past 14 years (wow, time flies!). I enjoy surfing, coaching sports and exploring our local nature trails. This past year I have helped the

Humboldt North Coast Land Trust update our land trust conservation project policies and develop both property files and annual monitoring reports on all our properties. We currently hold conservation easements and fee-title ownership on 14 local beach access trails and nature reserve properties, all in the greater Trinidad area. As stated on the top of this newsletter, our land trust focuses on protecting, for the public benefit, coastal land from Little River to Big Lagoon. Thus our board of trustees is currently discussing the possibility of changing our organizational name to the Trinidad Coastal Land Trust. Why?, because there is confusion about our name in the agency and funding circles as well as with the general public. Let us know what you think by mailing back the attached ballot.

Annual trail maintenance and restoration continue at Houda Point, Baker Beach trail and Martin Creek trail. We are identifying specific areas on our properties for trail improvements and non-native plant removal. We are also working with the landowners of Scotty's Point towards donating a conservation easement which will dedicate almost 50 acres of coastal bluff and tide pool beach for public access and benefit. Finally, thanks again for your annual donation support, as well as considering us in your will. A solid financial endowment will ensure continued progress on our part to protect these local natural treasures that we all love.

Partnership in Progress

The land trust is currently involved in numerous partnerships in the hopes of getting more good

work done. First and foremost, the Saunders land donation and park / museum / garden / library project involves numerous local community members and organizations working together to overcome both bureaucratic and financial obstacles for a great multi-use community center. Learn more about this at our Oct. 4 public meeting. Also, the land trust has recently joined with the California Coastal National Monument Trinidad Gateway Committee in hopes of furthering the effort to protect coastal resources and educate the public. There are new interpretive displays at both our Houda Point / Camel Rock property and down the road at the Luffenholtz County Park, overlooking the beach.

In addition, the land trust will be partnering with the Humboldt Surfriders organization to install doggy bag trash bins, as well as updated signage, at both Moonstone Beach and Houda Point properties. We have been working with Sam Merryman, owner of the Moonstone Beach parking lot, to develop a commercial users agreement for groups that use the parking lot for commercial business. Finally, one of our long-term goals is to help connect the California Coastal Trail from Patrick's Point State Park to the Hammond Trail at Clam Beach. This will require access over the Little River. Interested partners on this project include State Parks, CalTrans, Redwood Community Action Agency, Green Diamond Resource Co., our land trust, as well as others. With your support, more progress will be made on these partnership projects.



HNCLT Property: Baker Beach

Donations and Endowments

HNCLT, a non-profit 501(c)3 charitable organization, has a fund with the Humboldt Area Foundation (HAF) where individuals can make a

donation and or one can create a bequest in one's will or trust to benefit HNCLT. For example, when long-time Trinidad community member and land trust founding member Herman Iverson past away several years ago, his family set up the Herman A. Iverson Memorial (Endowment) Fund with HAF. Our land trust receives a donation payment from this fund based on the annual interest generated from the fund's principle. This helps pay for annual expenses like property insurance and newsletter mailings. Please contact myself (Ben Morehead, 677-0177) or Alex Reid at HAF (442-2993) for more information about how you can create a lasting legacy through a donation or bequest.

Federal Law Gives Tax Benefit for Donation of Conservation Easements

If you own land with important natural resources or public benefits such as coastal access, donating a voluntary conservation easement can be one of the smartest ways to conserve the land you love, while maintaining your private property rights and possibly realizing significant federal tax benefits. Donating a conservation easement is a major financial decision, and the federal income tax deduction that may come with a donation helps make easements possible for landowners in our community. The legislation improves the tax incentive for conservation easements by allowing conservation donors to:

- Deduct up to 50% of their adjusted gross income in any year
- Deduct up to 100% of their adjusted gross income if the majority of that income came from farming, ranching or forestry
- Continue to take deductions for as long as 16 years

The national Land Trust Alliance led a coalition in urging Congress to approve this law. The Alliance is an organization that sets national standards for conservation organizations like ours, provides training and networking opportunities, and represents the land trust community in Washington, DC. Our Humboldt North Coast Land Trust is a member of the Land Trust Alliance.

Conservation Options For Landowners

If you own land that is open space and you want to preserve the beauty and feel of this open space... how do you do it? There are two primary

ways to preserve and protect open space in perpetuity. One is a Land donation (a fee title transfer) to the HNCLT. With this transfer of title, the HNCLT owns and maintains the land. The second option is to grant the Land Trust a Conservation Easement. With a Conservation Easement, the family continues to own and maintain the land but gives up the development rights and could allow for public coastal access. With both options, there are several different ways to proceed to the goal of preserving open space. Both land donations and Conservation Easements provide tax strategies that will often serve to benefit your family. It is important to meet with an attorney and or tax specialist to determine the exact tax benefit in each situation. Often the total value of the gift is tax deductible whether against income tax, capital gains or in an estate plan. Next Step: Contact us. The HNCLT meets monthly to review potential properties and to assist families in their desire to preserve and protect open space.

Leave A Lasting Legacy

Are you concerned about protecting the natural beauty and character of our Humboldt North Coast for present and future generations? Please consider making a charitable gift in your will or living trust to benefit the Humboldt North Coast Land Trust. A planned gift (land and/or financial assets) allows us to respond quickly to protect threatened lands, and to secure and restore public trails and beach access under our care. Planned gifts help to ensure the long-term financial strength of the Humboldt North Coast Land Trust. No matter how large or small, a planned gift will continue your dedication to conservation beyond your lifetime. If you already have a will or living trust, you can easily amend that document to add a beneficiary. Depending on the method and timing of your gift, you may: reduce your income tax, capital gains, and / or estate taxes while retaining control of your assets. If you would like to find out more, please contact myself (Ben Morehead, 677-0177) or Alex Reid at the Humboldt Area Foundation (442-2993), or a financial planner or attorney for more information about how you can create a lasting legacy through a donation or bequest.

If you are considering naming the Humboldt North Coast Land Trust in your will the following language may be helpful:

“I give the Humboldt North Coast Land Trust, a 501(c) (3) Nonprofit Corporation, Tax ID# 94-2552913 incorporated in the State of California, and having its principal offices at PO BOX 457, Trinidad, CA 95570 the sum of \$_____ (or alternately, _____ percent of the residuary of my estate), for its general purposes to protect and conserve land and water resources for public benefit.”



North Luffenholtz Beach

Property Holdings Reviewed

Our Humboldt North Coast Land Trust was formed in 1978 by local citizens to help create public access to our coastline and beaches without taking private property rights. The land trust was created from the threat of government takeover of private property towards making a national / state park from Big Lagoon to Clam Beach. Instead of forced public acquisition of private property, locals organized to create one of the first land trusts in California with the hopes of both securing public access to local beaches while keeping land in private ownership. Over the years, land has been donated to us or state funding has been used to acquire land from willing sellers. From Moonstone Beach to downtown Trinidad, our land trust has helped create a network of trails and reserves for all to enjoy.

We currently hold fee-title ownership on seven properties and additionally hold conservation easement agreements on seven more private properties. The land trust holds a public access conservation easement on a portion of the otherwise privately-owned Moonstone Beach parking lot. Sam Merryman, owner of the parking lot, beach house and restaurant, works with the land trust to support the public use and public

responsibility on the beach; thanks to Sam for generously donating his time and money to grade the parking lot. Walking north along scenic drive, the land trust owns the Pilot Point nature reserve. Pilot Point is the large rock jetting out at the north end of Moonstone Beach. Donated by Glenn Berry in 1981, this property is admired by scientists as this property is one of a very few marine rock units that preserve vertebrate fossils that are under 2 million years old (i.e. are roughly equivalent with the Pleistocene, or ice age). Additionally, the Moonstone Beach formation is the only known source for fossils of an extinct sea otter named *Enhydra macrodonta*. This property is currently not open to the public but we are clearing brush and working towards opening a limited access public trail. Moving north along the coast, our most popular property is Houda Point (a.k.a. Camel Rock). This eight acre property and trails are maintained by land trust volunteers and local surfers. Besides being one of the most scenic vistas and best surf spots in Humboldt County, Camel Rock is home to the largest breeding colony of Leach's Petrels in California. Fork Tailed Petrels, Least Petrels, Pigeon Guillemots, Western Gulls, Pelagic Cormorants, and Black Oystercatchers also nest on the offshore rocks along our coastline. In 1979 the land trust purchased the North Luffenholtz Beach property from Georgia Pacific Lumber Company. This property adjoins the county beach park to the south and is a fantastic family and surf-fishing beach. Moving up the coast we also own the scenic and less visited Baker Beach property and hold conservation easements protecting forests and open space on the adjacent Baker Ranch subdivision. Annual trail work on all our beach trails is provided by land trust volunteers. Again, heading north along Scenic Drive towards Trinidad you pass through an enchanting redwood forest grove. This two acre property we call the Bruno Growth Grove was donated by Herman and Ann Iverson in honor of a longtime community member Bruno Growth. We hope to start non-native ivy removal project in the near future. The land holds both ownership of and conservation easements along the trail to Old Homestead Beach (a.k.a. Indian Beach), which can be accessed from the city of Trinidad's Parker Creek Trail, as well as accessed from our most controversial coastal access trail, the Wagner Street Trail in Trinidad. Our most recent conservation easement is the Martin Creek Trail just north of Trinidad along Stagecoach Road. This private property protects both wildlife and a

variety of native plants and flowers, plus access to secluded beach. The trail is undeveloped and requires the cooperation of the public in maintaining both its privacy and access.

A map of these properties and additional information can be found on our website: www.hnclt.org

Last but definitely not least, our land trust has been gifted a wonderful parcel in Trinidad where in partnership with the city, Trinidad Museum Society, Friends of the Trinidad Library and numerous volunteers we are building a community center including the museum, proposed new library building, a native plant garden and a new city park. Thanks to Glenn and Janis Saunders for their land donation and to building contractor Charles Netsow for his dedication and attention to detail on the construction of the new museum.

Again, our annual meeting will be held here on Sunday October 4 at 4pm. All are welcome to attend.