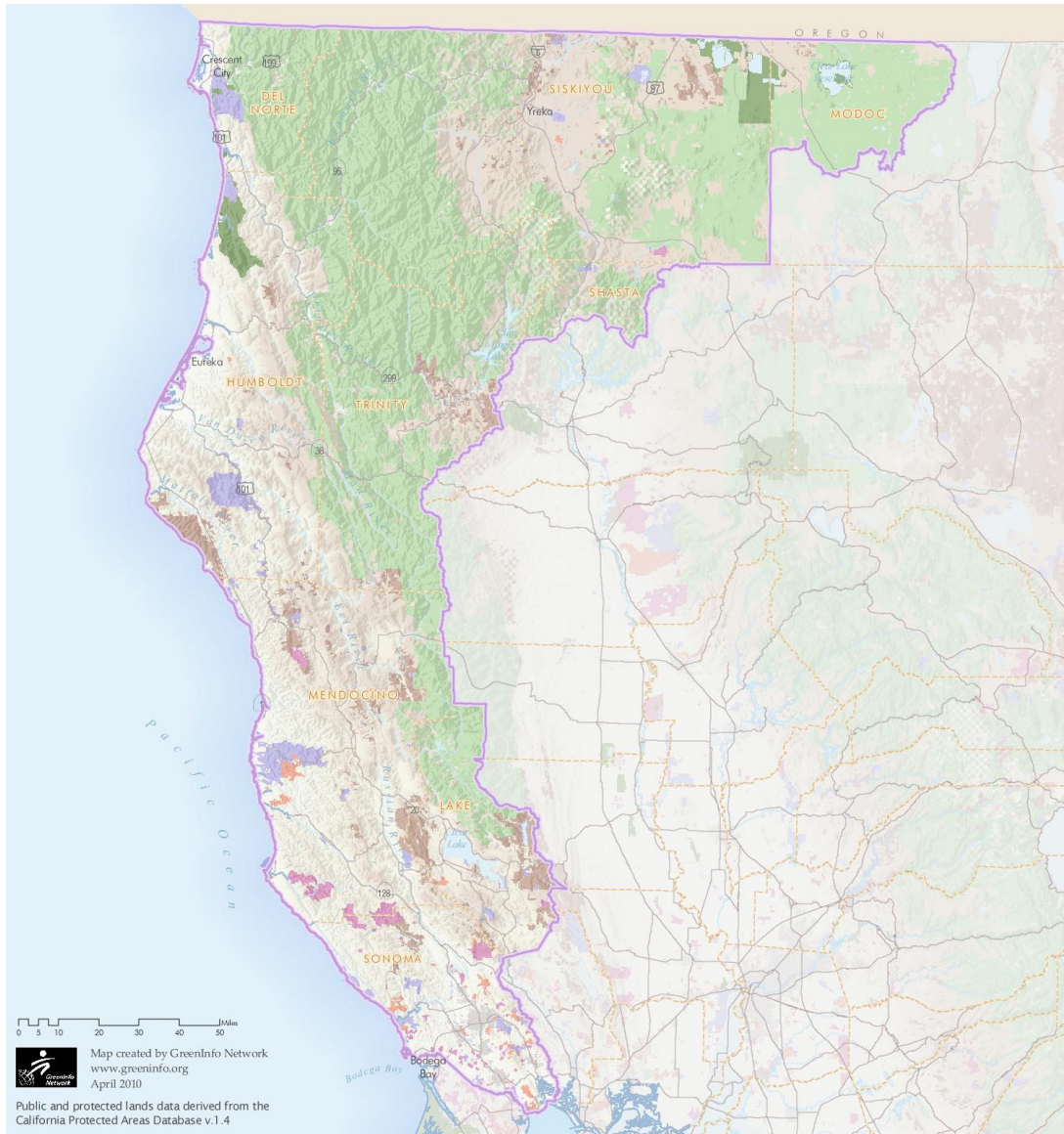


California Northern Region Land Trust Council

A STRATEGIC PLAN



September 2011

INTRODUCTION

The mission of the California Northern Region Council of Land Trusts (CNRCLT) is *to improve conservation of land and water resources of the Northern Region through strategic planning, training sponsorship, network opportunities, capacity building and public policy advocacy*. CNRCLT was formed to serve member organizations by performing the following functions:

- Creating a unified voice for conservation which will promote statewide attention to the region and its issues;
- Fostering policy development and conservation funding opportunities directed to the region;
- Improving communication among land trusts in the region and thus improving consistency, scales of efficiency, reducing duplication and facilitating shared opportunities;
- Improving communication with public agency and conservation organization partners;
- Coordinating training and technical support; and
- By affiliation, demonstrating both locally, regionally and at the state level that the whole (alliance as a Council) is more than the parts (smaller organizations acting independently).

Values that guide the work of the Council include the survival and diversity of species, the resilience and vitality of communities, and the sustainability of working lands. The top conservation priorities of member organizations include:

- Forests (esp. redwood forests, large intact forests, and forested watersheds)
- Rivers and streams and salmon
- Natural areas and viewsheds surrounding communities of people
- Unique habitats/biodiversity
- Water quality and quantity
- Wetlands (esp. estuaries)
- Working lands (esp. highly productive ag lands)
- Shorelines and coastal areas
- Trails
- Oak woodlands

The Council's work to maintain these values is served by local knowledge and expertise; commitment, consistency, and persistence; partnership and collaboration; and professionalism.

SETTING PRIORITIES FOR COUNCIL ACTION

The California Northern Region Land Trust Council held a strategic planning retreat on August 24, 2011 at the river lodge in Fortuna, CA. The purpose was to define challenges and opportunities currently facing the council, and to identify top priorities for council action over the next 1-5 years. Retreat participants affirmed the importance of the Council as a vehicle for sharing information, ideas and resources—a function that enables member organizations to be as effective in their work as possible. Participants also acknowledged that funding

has been more difficult to secure than originally anticipated and this has posed constraints on the Council’s ability to serve in its originally intended roles. With these considerations in mind, retreat participants sought to refine the short-term (1-5 years) priorities of the council and to update member commitments to action.

STRATEGIC ACTIONS

Priority actions were established for the council starting in 2011 and extending through 2015. Teams were established, tasks were assigned, and preliminary timelines were developed as a starting point for work on each of the “starting year 1” action items in the table below (see Appendix A). Priority actions for the Council over the next five years are as follows:

Action	Purpose	Timeline
Hold an annual conference ¹	To build the capacity of member organizations through information, networking, and training	Starting year 1
Maintain a regional coordinator position	To coordinate organizational activities	Starting year 1
Sponsor workshops and training events ²	To build the capacity of member organizations around shared functions and topics of interest	Starting year 1
Meet periodically (esp. face to face)	To build the capacity of member organizations through the sharing of information and ideas.	Starting year 1
Raise operating funds	To build the capacity of the organization to conduct the activities described in this strategic plan	Starting year 1
Build and maintain a website	To provide information on the council, its work, and its member organizations;	Starting year 1
Produce periodic newsletters	To provide regular opportunities for member organizations to stay apprised of each other’s work; to provide a forum for sharing information, ideas, and experiences.	Years 2-5
Conduct joint networking ventures	To build relationships with legislators, policy makers and funders	Years 2-5
Launch collaborative projects (esp. on the themes of landscape connectivity and community forests/forest conservation)	To direct the collective capacity of member organizations towards unique conservation opportunities (esp. those that are regional in scope)	As opportunities present themselves

¹ CNRCLT is co-sponsoring forest conservation conference being organized by the Sonoma Land Trust for 2012. A committee was established to explore possibilities for a subsequent conference.

² The Mattole Restoration Council, in partnership with other CNRLTC member organizations, will be holding two workshops on Programmatic Timber Environmental Impact Reports in the region during the coming months.

MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS

As of September, 2011, the following organizations have signed on as members of the Council:

Friends of the Dunes

Jacoby Creek Land Trust

Lake County Land Trust

Mattole Restoration Council

Mendocino Land Trust

Mckinleyville Land Trust

Northcoast Regional Land Trust

Redwood Forest Foundation, Inc.

Sanctuary Forest

Siskiyou Land Trust

Sonoma Land Trust

Trinidad Land Trust

CONCLUSIONS

During the next five years the focus of CNRCLT will be to coordinate the sharing of information, ideas and resources among member organizations. Maintaining a regional coordinator position and holding at least one regional conference each year will be top priorities. This streamlined agenda will enable to Council to serve its most valuable function with the limited financial resources currently available to it. If and when more funds are secured, the council can expand its range of functions to include policy, development, and publicity work, all of which can benefit member organizations in their efforts to conserve the land and water resources of the region.

Appendix A

California Northern Region Land Trust Council Strategic Plan Retreat Workgroups

August 24, 2011

Conferences, Workshops and Trainings

2012 Forest Conservation Conference

Lead: Amy

Team: Kiah, John & Renee

2012/2013 Annual Northern Region Council Conference

Lead: Lindsay

Team: Noah, Ann, Nancy

Additional participants: David, Kiah, Lisa, Judy (1 hour commitment)

Annual Conference Ideas and Thoughts

- Choose theme(s)/topic(s) (ensure they are useful topics)
 - CCLT could do a regional tour to train local boards in basic Land Trust skills
 - CCLT and LTA updates
 - Field trips
 - 2012 Forest Conservation Conference
 - One full day of Landscape Connectivity
- Use Salmon Restoration Foundation as a model
- Choose date/location
- Invite speakers and develop structure/layout
- Help generate attendance (and “buzz”) among staff, board, landowners, funders, other stakeholders and partners (develop a wide audience)
- Allow conference to include substantial round-robin time
- Must be financially self-supporting
- Organize volunteers
- Get donations
- Assemble supplies/equipment

Workshops & Trainings Ideas & Thoughts

- Schedule annually based on capacity of group to organize/participate (e.g. one in spring, one in fall)
- Look to groups to take the lead (perhaps rotating groups, topic dependant)

- Member organizations are presenters
- Video conferences & webinars
- Determine the audience (land trusts member organizations, staff, volunteers, stakeholder groups)
- Fold networking/workshops/annual conferences together
- What topics are a priority (content?)
- How can we not overlap with other trainings (CCLT, LTA etc.)

Fundraising

2012 Forest Conservation Conference

Lead: Kiah (3 hours/mo)

Team: Lisa, Amy

Additional participants:

David, 1 hour plus writing PG&E and CWGF grant applications

Lindsay, 1 hour, plus drafting a restructuring of member dues

Nancy, Noah and Cathy, 1 hour commitment (+)

Fundraising Ideas and Thoughts

- Restructure membership dues
 - Raise membership dues
 - Entertain expanding: Our Land Trust focus is the core goal but bring in agency, industry, and other partners (and their membership dues) which in turn might garner more funding for partnership
- Maintain funds for low-level regional coordinator/facilitating: our networking will poise us to collaborative opportunities (and funding for those projects) in the future
 - Develop applicable funding sources (grants?) to foster regular coordinator position
 - Perhaps package along with workshops or conference
- Grant funding:
 - Always ask for Northern Region Council money when seeking our own funding
 - Share our land trust grant funds (at a percentage rate)
 - Focus on funders based on personal/professional relationships
 - Coordinate joint fundraising trips to foundations and agencies
- Develop strategy for coordinated fundraising. In particular, finding ways to utilize member funding sources for joint goals (how can member land trusts help other members accomplish their own grant deliverables?)
- Generate small list of individual donors to solicit
- Business underwriting for conference
- Revive Master Document

Periodic Meetings

Schedule of Periodic Face-to-Face Meetings

Lead: Amy

Team: John, Cathy

Additional participants: Lindsay (develop annual calendar)

Periodic Meetings Ideas and Thoughts

- Set meeting schedule (2x per year? 4x?)
 - Alternate between North, South, West and East
 - Consider video conferences and/or Skype
 - Project tours?
 - Who wants to host the next face-to-face meeting (Amy will...)
- Invite regional stakeholders to discuss a regional issue as a focal topic
- Define purpose, expectations, agenda, format etc.
- Time to share what each member is working on to “cross-pollinate” and guide topics for conference and workshops
- Networking sites:
 - Develop a Facebook page for NRC
 - Consider LinkedIn for NRC
- New format and schedule for phone meetings
- No matter what the topic, there must be serious “check in” time
- Need annual calendar

Regional Coordinator

Develop Job Description for Regional Coordinator

Lead: John, Renee, David

Team: Lindsay, Kiah

Regional Coordinator Ideas and Thoughts (primary/priority functions of a coordinator)

- Contact database management
- Take minutes and disseminate
- Write and/or support others to write grants to support position
- Develop agenda for and schedule regular meetings (face-to-face and calls)
- Fund management/Budget management
- Coordinate and track grants/projects
- Maintain mailing lists
- Attend Executive and Steering Committee meetings and other meetings

- Coordinate conferences and workshops
- Coordinate ad-hoc partnerships on projects to help them get going
- Keep us coming back, and we do everything else
- Formatting reports/documents
- Coordinate annual member survey regarding current and upcoming projects/stumbling blocks