

NRC Face-to-Face 5/18-5/19 2018 – Hosted by Sanctuary Forest

Friday- Social and Meeting in Whitethorn at David McMurray's Cabin

Present: Jen Kuzmar (Sonoma Open Space), Darla Guenzler (Wildlife Heritage Foundation), Galen Doherty (Sanctuary Forest) Val Nixon (Board President, Lake County Land Trust), Connie Low (NCRLT Admin) April Newlander (Executive Director Sanctuary Forest), Tom Smythe (Executive Director, Lake County Land Trust), Nancy Correl (McKinleyville Land Trust, David McMurray (NCLT) Renee Crowley (Sanctuary Forest Board Member, Carol Vander Meer (NRC Coordinator, Trinidad Coastal Land Trust, Yvonne Everett, Board member North Coast Regional Land Trust.

Friday Night Gathering:

Members checked-in and were invited to share challenges and innovations with the rest of the group.

Carol-Working as a contractor with the Trinidad Land Trust. Trinidad Land Trust is looking at some very big projects for a small land trust. Strawberry Rock, Luffenholtz Beach Park, Little River Trail. It is a challenge to do it all and Ben and Carol have been looking at some possibilities of shared leadership. Wondered if others had experience/ideas.

Jen- Jen sees a focus on resiliency and how their work may help communities be more resilient. She mentioned the Bay Area Resilient by Design as doing some great work <http://www.resilientbayarea.org/> Sonoma Open Space will be transferring a few thousand acres to the County Planning Department to free up more capacity to work on additional open space projects.

Renee-(Sanctuary Forest Board Member) Her message is to encourage all land trusts to be visionary and think about the future.

David- Commented that the NRC wouldn't be here without Darla and thanked her. David sees sea level rise and water issues. Water is the oil of next year.

Nancy- (McKinleyville forest Board Member) one of the challenges MLT deals with is homelessness. Carol commented she is interested in exploring this topic a little further and noted that the BLM has started to factor in social justice issues in their land planning.

Tom- Working to update their conservation priority plan. They are a small organization and working on following LTA standards, but probably won't get accreditation. They have just 3 half-time staff people.

Connie-(NCRLT Administrative Staff) She is eager to talk about ideas that can help share resources with land trusts.

April- Her challenges are around leadership and sharing more with program directors. She appreciates the ED forums that are available, commenting that being an ED can be isolating. Challenges including recruiting board members, Fundraising, working on the Van Arken project, and the tension between vision vs. fear.

Val-Very excited to see young people involved. She finds the gatherings helpful and is interested in how to structure board meetings and make them more interesting, roles of the board vs. staff, creative strategies for money.

Kerry- Commented that NCRLT recently did a Strengths Based Leadership exercise that might be useful for board members.

Anna- (Sanctuary Forest) very excited about their hike programs, working on fundraising is a challenge- trying to pull off the VanArken miracle. Interested in different possibilities for land trusts. Green Burial, Tributary Collectives, - working on figuring out the best way to organize.

Galen- (Sanctuary Forest) Interested in looking at conditions that affect the region. Humboldt county is coming out of peak land prices- end of the Green Rush. He sees plenty of boom and bust cycles. Timber is on a 5 year high. Population growth due to cannabis, but what is going to happen now? Excited about Tributary collectives and how to keep good stewards on the land. They now have 15 farms that have the blue fish, indicating landowner's membership in their storage & forbearance program.

Darla (Wildlife Heritage Fund) They actually have 5 properties in the Santa Rosa area. She is working on institutionalizing knowledge in the organization. Board members are being asked to do more. She is particularly interested in bringing conservation to underserved population and communities of color.

Kerry-(NCRLT) Wondering about the economy. Land Trusts are coming to their door because land prices are going to drop. They have an unprecedented number of projects and new easements. Hence the need to hire more project staff. Looking for help on doing title report investigations, easements and acquisitions. Wondering how you deal with the need for legal expertise. Jen Kuzmar mentioned she could share their conservation easement policies.

Breakfast discussion: a brief history of the Northern Region Council

History highlights- David, Darla and Renee shared how the Region was formed back in 2006. The shape of the region resulted in larger part based on what groups worked well together. The region hosted three years of conferences starting in 2007, 2008, 2009, then took a break and had two more conferences in 2013, and 2014. David commented that the conferences were lots of work, and never attracted more than 45 participants.

There was a strategic plan done in 2010 and updated in 2011. (Carol will try to get copies in the archive on the NRC website: northernregioncouncil.org)

In 2013/14 a cohort of NRC land trusts in the Humboldt area initiated a Durable Collaboration exploration, looking for ways to collaborate and share resources. Carol will post the notes from the initial meeting the document archive. This project did not yield and significant results and there were some challenges in working with the consultant.

In 2015/16 the NRC explored the possibility of a collaborative Northern Region Land Trust trail guide. We were unsuccessful in securing funding and tabled the project. The NRC has also provided letters of support for projects. Carol has put together quarterly e-newsletters but has not done so in 2018. Very few land trusts submitted information for the e-newsletter.

The NRC has continued to host annual Face-to-Face meetings that continued to be well received. There is a website with a calendar, document archive and membership information. In

2017, Noah organized a meeting with funders in Sacramento and several members of the NRC attended.

May 19 Field Trips:

Moring: Baker Creek

Tasha McKee led the Baker Creek Groundwater Recharge Project Tour along with Galen Doherty from Sanctuary forest. The work on Baker Creek encompasses both instream and upslope approaches for restoring groundwater needed to sustain summer flows. The Baker Creek has down cut considerably, dropping the water table and reducing the ability of the land to hold water and raise up ground water levels. The instream reach hosts a range of instream woody debris work begun in 2012 with the objective of increasing groundwater levels, improving instream habitat, and reconnecting historic floodplains. Salmon have been impacted by depleted stream flows, lack of instream habitat, and poor floodplain connectivity. Restoration work was initially focused on raising the channel bed to improve floodplain and groundwater connectivity, in addition to improving instream habitat complexity. More recently, efforts have focused on enhancing groundwater retention along the adjacent alluvial terraces through creation of a series of seasonal wetlands. Our tour was able to view a couple of those ponds and more will be added. The methodology is based on scientific studies and groundwater and rainwater harvesting techniques from the Mattole and other parts of the world, including the work of Tarun Bharat sangh in Rajasthan, India, a grassroots group who revived the centuries-old technique of installing johads (check dams) in the streams and ponds in swales to capture rainwater and recharge groundwater.

Lunch Discussion: Where has the NRC been and where do we want to go?

Comments included:

1. Continue Face to Face meetings. Perhaps Mendocino in 2019?
2. Develop a summary of what NRC does, including how many total acres do we protect, both through conservation easements and fee title. Make it clear that the northern region is the lungs and the kidneys of California. **ACTION:** All land trusts to send Carol a description of how many acres they protect through both conservation easements and fee title. (Including the Rocky Mt. Elk foundation.)
3. **ACTION:** Carol will provide info about NRC land protection to Yvonne Everett by the end of August for a possible project for her planning students. Her students could validate any info on Green info (California Protected Lands Database) or possibly take info provided by members as needed to build a map that can be used to make clear our case the significant role we play in statewide conservation.
4. Use the NRC summary (described in #1 above) as a template for support letters for other projects in the region.
5. **ACTION:** Carol will put old strategic plans on the NRC website so that folks can have access to past history, plans, accomplishments.
6. Everyone was supportive of additional meetings with funders (like the one Noah helped to facilitate last year). We need to keep advocating for funding for our region.

7. Yvonne recommended developing white papers on items we can agree on as a region, to use as a tool when advocating for policy or talking with funders. For example, advocating mimicking beavers in water projects, conserving land has an impact on stream flow, etc..
8. Contact David Kohler (CCLT board member for our region) about advocating for policy and legislation for the region (**ACTION**: Jen will reach out to David and possibly have him as a guest at the next conference call.
9. Create a letter template for use in supporting regional projects.
10. Rather than an e-newsletter, look into establishing a Slack group as a way to communicate on specific topics.
11. Continue with every other month conference call, taking the summer off. NEXT
CONFERENCE CALL: September 25, 2pm
12. No to conferences- piggy back on others
13. Yes to special topics on conference Calls- example: Green Burial (Darla may have some info)

Afternoon Field Trip:

Field Trip Whitethorn Grove: The 40-acre “Whitethorn Grove” property was protected through a grant from the Wildlife Conservation Board in 2002. As owner of the property, Sanctuary Forest has worked to make this a stewardship demonstration property. In 2015 SF conducted a light touch commercial timber harvest, as well as road upgrades and non-commercial forest thinning for reduced wildfire risk and improved forest health. In 2016/17 SFI installed 11 instream LWD salmon habitat structures. The site was a great opportunity demonstrate how the land trust can create habitat improvements while doing some timber harvesting.