



REDWOOD COAST LAND CONSERVANCY

Dedicated to protection of open spaces and natural resources from the Navarro to the Russian rivers

GRAND OPENINGS HELD FOR COMPLETED RCLC PROJECTS

This spring, RCLC celebrated the completion of two public access projects with grand opening ceremonies attended by funders, government officials, RCLC members and volunteers.

After many years of planning and shovel work by RCLC volunteers, both the Hearn Gulch Headlands and the Bonham Trail to Cooks Beach projects have been completed.

These two RCLC projects provide visitors and residents alike with two beautiful spots where they can enjoy the bluffs and beaches along our stretch of the coast.



Photo: Irene Leisher

RCLC celebrates the official opening of the Bonham Trail to Cooks Beach.

Standing with key RCLC project volunteers, Hearn Gulch Project Manager Dave Scholz describes the history of the project at the opening ceremony for Hearn Gulch Headlands. From left to right: Harry Lutz, Fred McElroy, Jon Thompson, John Moelter, Ray Jackman and Dave Scholz.



Photo: David Torres

Hearn Gulch Headlands

Grand opening ceremonies in May celebrated the completion of RCLC's Hearn Gulch project. RCLC has restored the Hearn Gulch Headlands to its natural beauty by protecting the bluffs from vehicles and allowing the native vegetation to return. RCLC has also improved the trail down to the Hearn Gulch beach by placing steps and railings for easier access.

Redwood Coast Land Conservancy

Local residents devote their time and expertise to help RCLC protect our coast.

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RCLC is a member of the National Land Trust Alliance, California Council of Land Trusts, and the Redwood Coast Chamber of Commerce.



PRESIDENT'S CORNER

This spring marks the completion of two of RCLC's public access projects, important milestones in our 18-year history. Both the Cooks Beach and Hearn Gulch projects have slowly progressed through the lengthy planning, permitting, and trail-building stages, with the goal of providing visitors and local residents with easy access to beautiful bluff top vistas and sandy beaches.

The Bonham Trail to Cooks Beach and the Hearn Gulch Headlands trails are the result of thousands of volunteer hours and the generous continuing support of RCLC members. Without that continuing support, these projects could not have been completed.

Now, with your help, we are looking forward to completing other projects, including the Gualala Bluff Trail, which is awaiting the pending Coastal Commission decision on the proposed retaining wall system along the bluff edge. (See page 5.)

We continue to work with the United States Fish and Wildlife Service to identify and conserve habitat for the Point Arena Mountain Beaver and the Behren's Silverspot Butterfly. We have recently undertaken a very special memorial project which will provide public access to a beautiful coastal terrace north of Anchor Bay. (See page 4.) We also offer our support to other local conservation efforts such as the recent Stewarts Point purchase.

RCLC needs to raise about \$30,000 each year to make steady progress on the development and maintenance of our conservation and public access projects. The State Coastal Conservancy and other agencies and foundations have provided major funds for land purchases and trail development because our members and other local residents have demonstrated their strong interest in preserving local coastal lands. Member donations provide the "seed" money to explore and consider new projects and to do the basic groundwork to assure a successful project. Once we have the project underway, we can approach potential major funders for their support.

If you value the work that is being done by RCLC and haven't contributed recently, please consider using the enclosed envelope to make a gift to preserve our coastlands.

NEW PUBLIC ACCESS BROCHURE

RCLC has recently produced a color brochure describing the Bonham Trail access to Cooks Beach and the trails to the Hearn Gulch headlands and pocket beach. The nearly completed Gualala Bluff Trail is also featured.

Volunteers needed

We are looking for a volunteer or two to organize the distribution of brochures in local vacation rentals, motels, restaurants and other places where tourists and local residents are likely to see them. If you would like to volunteer or would like copies for your place of business or friends and neighbors, please contact Bob Rutemoeller at 884-4426.

GRAND OPENING OF THE BONHAM TRAIL TO COOKS BEACH

by Irene Leidner, Cooks Beach Project Manager

After weeks of intermittent rain and gusting winds, April 16, the designated Bonham Trail to Cooks Beach Dedication Day, dawned clear and promising. While the unseasonably wet and cool spring had delayed the full bloom of wildflowers, a few managed to show some color for the ceremony. About 50 people gathered on the bluff top just above the trail, admiring the view from behind the split rail fence.



Photo: Irene Leidner

The Bonham family attend dedication of Bonham Trail

RCLC Vice President Charlie Murphy began with introductory remarks about RCLC and its collaborations with the Coastal Commission, the Coastal Conservancy, the Building and Planning Department of Mendocino, and of course the landowner, Dr. Bonham, whose donation of the land provided the impetus to construct the trail and steps for public access to Cooks Beach.



Photo: Bob Rutemoeller

Plaque honoring Dee Dee Bonham



Photo: Bob Rutemoeller

Stairs from Bonham Trail down to Cooks Beach improve beach access

Charlie then introduced Irene Leidner, who became project manager for the Bonham Trail following Ray Van de Water, one of RCLC's founders, who had seen this beach and trail as one of Gualala's finest opportunities for coastal access. Irene acknowledged the various agencies and organizations mentioned above, as well as the contractors who built the concrete steps and numerous volunteers who had donated over 500 hours to bring this dream to reality. Small stone tokens inscribed with "Cooks 2010" and a dolphin were awarded to those dedicated volunteers, and a photographic record of the progress of the trail was presented to Dr. Bonham.

In November of 2001, Dr. Bonham donated two parcels of land to provide public access to the bluff top viewing area and a trail to Cooks Beach. It was his wish to dedicate this property to his late wife Dee Dee Bonham, who

had been executive director of the California State Parks Foundation. Because the beach itself was already officially listed as Cooks Beach by the USGS, Dr. Bonham agreed to designate the trail to the beach as the Bonham Trail, with placement of a memorial plaque at the top of the trail.

The unveiling of the memorial to Dr. Bonham's wife was the focus of the opening ceremony. The inscription, "Nature Always Amazed Her", was suggested by Dr. Bonham. A ribbon-cutting ceremony (seaweed stretched across the top of the trail) followed. The plaque will serve as recognition of the Bonhams' wish to provide public access to this special beach.

If you have not yet visited this scenic spot, you have missed a surprising corner of the coast here in Gualala. To get there, take Highway north to Highway One mile marker 3.14, turn left onto route 526 (the old coast highway) and park near the fence, on the west side of the road.

LAND DONATED FOR WILLIAM CRAIG WHITELEY MEMORIAL

The idea that I could, in my lifetime, act to preserve a place on earth such as this by putting it in a forever land trust was the best tribute I could imagine to make to Will's memory.

—Rita Milhollin

A scenic expanse of coastal terrace north of Anchor Bay has been donated to Redwood Coast Land Conservancy as a memorial to William Craig Whiteley, whose family and friends shared many vacations together in this strikingly beautiful spot.

RCLC is working with his mother Rita Milhollin and her family to create Will's Rest, a permanent memorial which will be open to the public "to afford others the opportunity to share the beauty, majesty, and solace of this lovely place." Plans call for benches, a walking path, and subtle barriers to protect the public from the steep cliffs and dangerous tides along this part of the coast. The final piece of the park will be a memorial marker, dedicating the conserved land to Will and his love of this place. The marker will also display the names of Will's family and friends who help fund the project.



Photo: Harry Lutz

Louisa Morris and Lois Lutz (standing) check for survey marker during visit to Will's Rest memorial site.

The Redwood Coast Land Conservancy has created a special fund for the development and continuing stewardship of the memorial. Contributions are tax-deductible and will help ensure the conservation of this site.

BEHREN'S SILVERSPOT SURVEYS PLANNED

by Louisa Morris

In a major project started earlier this year, RCLC is working with the US Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) to help identify and preserve habitat for the Behren's Silverspot Butterfly, an endangered species unique to our local area. Over twenty landowners between Albion and Jenner have volunteered to have

Behren's Silverspots have distinctive wing patterns with prominent silver spots on the underwing



Photo: Asa Spade, Spade Natural Resources Consulting

their property surveyed for the endangered Behren's Silverspot Butterfly this summer. State Parks biologist Angela Liebenberg will conduct this fieldwork funded by the USFWS.

Unfortunately, until the fog lifts and sunny days arrive, the surveys will be on hold. Butterflies generally don't like to fly in windy, rainy, or foggy conditions; they like idyllic sunny coastal days for feeding and flying. We're hoping for lots of sunny weather on the coast before the end of September, which is the end of their flying season, so we can complete these surveys in partnership with local landowners.

Behren's Silverspot Butterflies are found between Mendocino and Salt Point State Park on coastal terrace prairies containing the blue violets (*viola adunca*) on which the Silverspot caterpillars feed.

If you would like more information on this project or are interested in having your property surveyed, please contact project manager Louisa Morris at 707 937-6217 or louisamorris@comcast.net.

COASTAL COMMISSION RULES ON RETAINING WALL

by *Charlie Murphy*

At its May 12 meeting, the California Coastal Commission approved the application by Bower Limited Partnership (BLP) to construct a 105-foot-long Geoweb retaining wall along the bluff behind the Surf Supermarket. This parcel contains a 25-foot-wide public access easement on which RCLC has built a section of the Gualala Bluff Trail. Construction of the wall will disturb and necessitate temporary closure of the Trail in that area.

The wall will replace a 70-foot-long wooden retaining wall that failed during 2005–2006 winter storms. The Commission approved that wall in 1983 to protect the easement because the supermarket had been built closer to the bluff edge than permitted.

Photo: Mary Sue Ittner



Southern end of new wall design will include replacement of the temporary ramp built to enable RCLC volunteers to work on the trail.

Special Conditions

Among the special conditions established by the Commission, BLP will be required to restore any damage to the Bluff Trail and adjoining areas caused by construction of the Geoweb wall. BLP will also be required to consult with RCLC in the preparation of the wall construction plans, and the southern and northern ends of the wall shall be designed to accommodate Bluff Trail crossings in their existing locations. BLP must also submit to the Commission for final approval soil stabilization and drainage improvement plans prepared in consultation with RCLC, the local chapter of the California Native Plant Society and the Mendocino Coast Cooperative Weed Management Area.

Since the approval of the permit, RCLC representatives have met twice and had several follow up communications with John Bower and George Rau, his project engineer, regarding plans for the Geoweb wall and their impact on the Bluff Trail. These interactions have been productive and consistent with the Commission's requirements for consultation between RCLC and BLP.

We are particularly pleased that BLP, in response to RCLC's recommendation, has retained a prominent landscape architect to devise conceptual plans for connecting the southern end of the wall to the Trail in a natural but functional way. We look forward to continuing to work diligently and cooperatively with BLP, so that the Gualala Bluff Trail can finally be completed and fully enjoyed by the public.

Photo: Laurie Mueller



Coastal Commission approves replacement of failed retaining wall

Decision on Extending the Wall Postponed

At the May hearing, the Commission postponed consideration of an appeal to BLP's County permit to extend the Geoweb retaining wall across the bluff top of the adjacent northerly BLP parcel. We expect that the Commission will hear this appeal at its scheduled meeting in either September or December.

Through correspondence to the Commission prior to the meeting, RCLC addressed potential impacts of the proposed wall on public access to the Trail and recommended at the meeting that the wall's construction, if approved, be subject to various conditions.

Memorial and Commemorative Gifts

Many donors contribute gifts to RCLC in memory of friends, family members and colleagues or to honor significant events in people's lives. These gifts are used to enhance public enjoyment of our coastline and are a wonderful legacy for those who wish to preserve the beauty of our natural environment.

In Memory of

Ray and Florence Van de Water
from Ken & Marian Brown
Richard & Roberta Van de Water
Mark Van de Water

Dolly Miller
from Jim & Diane Cunningham

Louise Beebe
from Janann Strand

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Gifts from June 2009 through June 2010

RCLC wishes to thank the following people and organizations for their contributions.

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HISTORIC STEWARTS POINT RANCH PURCHASED

Save the Redwoods League and The Pacific Forest Trust (PFT) have recently completed the purchase of Stewarts Point Ranch, an 871-acre coastal redwood property just to the south of The Sea Ranch. The working ranch, purchased for \$11.25 million, will eventually be funded by several public and private agencies.

PFT is developing a plan for limited public access that will be compatible with the conservation of the property's sensitive resources and its continued management as a working ranch. Further information about the project is available on the PFT website at www.pacificforest.org/services/stewarts-point-ranch.html

COMMUNITY RECOGNIZES MARY SUE ITTNER FOR HER WORK AS BLUFF TRAIL PROJECT MANAGER

by Irene Leidner

On May 31, RCLC members, friends and volunteers of the Gualala Bluff Trail gathered to recognize the accomplishments of the trail's longtime project manager, Mary Sue Ittner. Mary Sue has been involved from the very beginning in the planning, building, maintenance and stewardship of this Gualala landmark.

After many years of concentrated dedication to the Bluff Trail, Mary Sue gave herself permission to relinquish the task. Although the second phase is not completely finished, recognition of Mary Sue's commitment seemed well overdue. At noon, about 50 people gathered at the parking area by the Gualala Watershed signs to acknowledge Mary Sue's contributions to the Bluff Trail.

The group then followed the trail to the bench at the southern end to unveil a bronze plaque honoring Mary Sue, where she was also presented with a photo

Photo: Harmony Susalla



Ray Jackman, Mary Sue Ittner and Bob Rutemoeller admire new plaque honoring Mary Sue's work on behalf of the Gualala Bluff Trail

album, organized by Harmony Susalla, showing construction of the trail, particularly Bluff Trail II.

The group then hiked across the bridge to the northern end of the trail, enjoying the spectacular wildflowers and views along the way.

Photo: Harry Lutz



New plaque on Gualala Bluff Trail bench

Those who walk the Bluff Trail know they are privileged to enjoy one of the most rewarding sights along the southern Mendocino Coast. The creative native plantings were designed and installed by Mary Sue, and carefully tended so that today one can sit on one of the trail benches and delight in a unique view over the Gualala River Estuary and sand bar to the ocean beyond.

To end the celebration, the group assembled at the Gualala Arts Center to share a delicious potluck lunch, courtesy of Harmony and Sus (including tablecloths by Harmony Design).

Thanks again, Mary Sue— it was a magnificent day on the Gualala Bluff Trail, enjoyed by all.

Special lunch held at Gualala Arts Center following walk along the Gualala Bluff Trail

Photo: Harry Lutz



Photo: Irene Leidner



View of Hearn Gulch Headlands and sea stacks

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The number to the left of your name indicates the date of your most recent contribution to RCLC. A "10" means that your last gift was during this year. If there is or an "08" or "09" (or no number) to the left of your name, please consider making a gift to support the work of the RCLC. A contribution form is printed on the return envelope in this issue.



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LAND CONSERVANCY

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