

# REDWOOD COAST LAND CONSERVANCY

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

<u>Pedestrian Bridge Is Next Step</u>

## Work on Gualala Bluff Trail Continues

by Mary Sue Ittner

Bluff trail volunteers have continued to work on Bluff Trail Two every Monday from 9 to 12, weather permitting. Early work focused on creating a safe and attractive way to design the trail where the easement crosses between the Surf Super and the Breakers. Much of the drainage of downtown Gualala is funneled to this ravine where water runs down rocks, creating a waterfall during the



Bluff Trail volunteers put railing for steps into place. Photo by Mary Sue Ittner

wet season. Completion of this part of the trail will have to wait until after the construction of a pedestrian bridge behind the Breakers.

The trail from this area to and from the rock outcrop has been weeded twice and built. We plan to add stainless steel railing fabricated by Kentucky John soon to this area. Viewing from this area is spectacular and it is also somewhat protected from the wind. We also hope to add a bench in this area once the trail is open so that people will be able to linger here and enjoy the view.

We are awaiting the necessary approvals from the agencies involved to change some of the materials of the pedestrian bridge so that it will last longer and require less maintenance. This and the continuous wet weather

have both caused delays. Over several weeks in February volunteers constructed drilling platforms for the driller to use once we are able to begin work on the bridge.

The trail connecting to where the bridge will end on the other side has been dug out, and weed cloth and

shale added. This section along the Breakers Inn winds attractively ending at stairs that descend to the trail behind Oceansong.

The trail behind Oceansong has been created with rocks and railroad ties added to reinforce the bank and form stairs to the south end of the trail. Some of the beautiful rocks in



Volunteers test drilling platform.

Photo by Mary Sue Ittner

this area were dug out and rearranged to create steps and volunteers added a beautiful and functional railing to make the descent easier.

If you would like to help with this project, please contact Ray Jackman at 785-3831 or Mary Sue Ittner at 884-4824.

See related articles on page 3.



Ray Jackman (kneeling), Jim Suhr and John Petersen smile after finishing rock wall along the trail. Photo by Mary Sue Ittner



RCLC President Shirley Eberly

# President's Corner

Spring may have come late this year, but the abundance of wildflowers is a wonderful effect of the many months of heavy rain we experienced this winter. Sprinkled throughout this issue of our newsletter you will see many references to the season's steady downpour along

our coastline. You will also see references to the many other challenges RCLC faces as we work to complete our four public access projects.

The Gualala Bluff Trail still faces legal hurdles and the rain has delayed some of the major construction. Both Bonham Beach Access and St. Orres Access Trails present unique and challenging engineering problems. Coordinators of the Hearn Gulch project have been anxiously awaiting county permits to begin work on planned improvements for trails and parking.

However, there has also been encouraging news of progress on each of our projects. Every step we take brings them closer to completion. Energetic and capable volunteers continue to appear just when we need them. Support from our donors remains strong.

Together we can take pride in what has been accomplished and look forward to the day when our community can visit these wonderful places and enjoy the landscape, the views, and wildflowers.

## GUALALA COMMUNITY ACTION PLAN

On April 29, more than 50 local residents participated in planning sessions designed to make Gualala a more "walkable" community. The sessions were the first phase of a planning process which will result in recommendations for improving visibility, traffic flow, and pedestrian access along Highway One from the bridge to Pacific Woods Road.

The Gualala Bluff Trail, which connects to Highway One via easements, will be an integral part of the plan and will provide the public with an excellent opportunity to enjoy the scenic views along the estuary.

The planning process builds on the objectives outlined in the Gualala Town Plan. Once a community action plan is developed, grant money will be sought to make the recommended improvements.

The next step in the process is for the project coordinators, RRM Design Group, to present an Ideas and Options Workshop for public input and comment on June 14<sup>th</sup> from 6:30 to 8:30 pm at the Gualala Arts Center. Everyone will be invited to participate, so mark your calendar if you'd like to attend.

# RECYCLING FOR RCLC

For a number of years now the Thursday Ramblers hiking group has collected glass and plastic bottles and aluminum cans along the roads and trails where they hike. The money the Ramblers receive from recycling is saved and donated to RCLC.

The amount of money donated has increased every year as more members of this group save their personal recyclables and donate this money as well. Since 1994 they have donated a total of \$266 in recycling money to RCLC.

The Physical Gym is also setting aside bottles used at the gym to be recycled so that the money can be donated to RCLC.

Our thanks for such a thoughtful and appropriate use for recycling money.

# "TASTE OF SPRING" EVENT A SUCCESS

RCLC's "A Taste Of Spring" slide show and desert fundraising event in January was a great success. More than \$8,000 was raised with admissions, the silent auction and sales of plants donated by the CNPS.

"Sit-upons" made out of organic cotton designed and donated by Harmony Susalla also proved to be a very popular item at the event. Every single one made has now been purchased! Thanks to Harmony for donating this very beautiful fabric and to Mary Hunter, Michele Marshall, and Mary Sue Ittner who cut out the fabric and created the sit-upons. And thanks too to all of you who purchased them.

Summer 2006

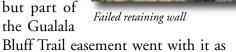
Trail work may be delayed

## RETAINING WALL ALONG BLUFF FAILS

During the winter storms, the retaining wall behind the Surf Market, which had been in a state of disrepair

for a number of years, finally gave way under the heavy rains. Not only did most of the old wooden wall disappear down the cliff, but part of the Gualala

well



RCLC will not be able to work on this section of the trail until the retaining wall is replaced A new retaining wall is

needed to protect the Bluff Trail and the Surf Super Market from further erosion.

Any work

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project



Photo by Laurie Mueller

coordinators are talking with the owner, Mr. Bower, about his plans for the wall and the drainage through the parking lot area. 🖡

#### BLUFF TRAIL VOLUNTEERS

Thanks to the many volunteers who have worked on the Gualala Bluff Trail

Ray Jackman Don Mahaffey Iim Suhr Irene Leidner Bill Davy Dorothy Ruef Chris Howard Chuck Howard Chad DeGarmo Wayne Lusk Bob Rutemoeller Mary Sue Ittner Ray Comeau Dave Scholz George Marshall John Moelter Frank Healy Harry Lutz George Anderson Kathie Anderson Walt Davenport John Petersen Robert Juengling Harmony Susalla Gail Taylor Paul Nordstrand Dard Hunter Mary Hunter Richard Knarr Ken Holmes Colleen Jackman Phil Simon Fred McElroy Rob Feraru Mike Lane Donna Lane Lois Lutz

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Trail Monitors at work

## BLUFF TRAIL ONE IMPROVEMENTS

The completed section of the Bluff Trail extends from behind the Sea Cliff Center to the south end of the Surf Motel. Many local residents and tourists alike enjoy the walk along the bluff and the picnic benches at each end.

#### BLUFF TRAIL MONITORS

Each week RCLC volunteers monitor Bluff Trail One to make certain that the trail is neat and clean.

Paula Gordon Mary Sue Ittner Nancy Killian Bob & Sue Lease Cora Lee Seale Gail Taylor Jan Venolia

Heinz Gewing John & Jackie Petersen Chris Howard Kathleen Sandidge Harmony Susalla Kathie Anderson Elizabeth Redfield Amie Heath

RCLC has been able to make several improvements to the trail with a grant from the Coastal Conservancy. With the funds, trail workers were able to cut back shrubs, dig out the trail, and add new shale.

Sheep fencing has been added for increased safety, and we have recently installed a brand new sign to replace the old weathered one. The addition of a plastic bag dispenser at the south end of the trail so that visitors can pick up after their dogs has also proved popular.

Each week RCLC's trail volunteers monitor the trail and make certain that it looks its best. Although the trail was neatly manicured early this spring, once the rain stopped, the weeds burst forth in profusion. Volunteers will soon be organizing a work party to tackle the new growth.

We invite you to come and enjoy the trail. And if you would like to volunteer as a trail monitor, please contact Cecelia Moelter at 785-3735.



New trail sign installed Photo by Laurie Mueller



Wildflowers fill in rutted areas on the Hearn Gulch Headlands Photo by Laurie Mueller

# UPDATE ON HEARN GULCH PROJECT

The permit application for RCLC's Hearn Gulch Preservation and Public Access Project continues to proceed through the Mendocino County permit process.

In mid-May, Project Coordinators Dave Scholz and George Anderson met at the site with County Planner Rick Miller, Deborah Hurst from the Coastal Conservancy and Corinne Gray from California Department of Fish and Game to review the proposed project.

Among the items they discussed was the need to eradicate invasive plant species and the possibility of providing a handicapped-parking space.

Everyone was pleased to note that an endangered plant species, the purplestemmed checkerbloom, had already sprouted in profusion on the rutted terrain where RCLC had posted "Area Under Restoration" signs to protect native plants.

After staff reports and recommendations on the project are filed, a hearing will be scheduled, hopefully by late summer.

## WINTER WEATHER AT BONHAM BEACH

The winter storms have taken their toll of the rock foundation built by Joel Chaban, one of our local volunteers (see Fall 2005 Newsletter for picture and details), but Joel has persevered and rebuilt the rock pile. The little stream that gently flowed down from the road above has become a

more substantial creek, with a small waterfall flowing into a pool just to the side of the proposed steps. The larger creek to the north of the trail is still freely flowing. The beach itself presents a serene and secluded shelter from which to watch surf crashing against the surrounding rocks.



A small waterfall cascades into pool at Bonham Beach Photo by Irene Leidner

# BONHAM BEACH VOLUNTEERS

Joel Chaban Fred and Fran Ducey Marcia and Don Heimburger Jean and Chris Jewel Eric Wittig

### CAL TRANS MAKES EMERGENCY REPAIRS

The rainstorms this spring have kept Cal Trans crews busy along Highway One.

Quite a bit of slippage occurred along the cliffs above the beach at Hearn Gulch, requiring emergency repairs. Cal Trans crew and heavy equipment are at work placing rip-rap (small boulders) to stabilize the hillside and protect the road from further erosion.

Cal Trans work is not expected to affect Hearn Gulch Beach or RCLC's plan to improve the trail down to the beach.



Cal Trans crews work to stabilize cliff. Photo by Leigh Mueller

Summer 2006

St. Orres and Bonham Beach

## RCLC Works on Building Two Coastal Access Trails

by Irene Leidner

The California Coastal Conservancy has awarded \$100,000 to RCLC for development of two coastal access trails: one for Bonham Beach and another for the small beach across from St. Orres.

Bonham permit still in process

While we had hoped to begin construction of the trail down to Bonham Beach early this year (when the rain stopped!), we are still working with the Mendocino Planning and Building Department staff for final approval. Since they are unfamiliar with the type of cable steps that RCLC has proposed for access to the beach, they want an engineering review. Locating an engineer familiar with such construction to review the design is pre-

senting a challenge to both RCLC and the P&B Department.

This little blip, however, does not prevent an increasing number of beachgoers from using the existing trail and temporary steps,

and help is being sought from California State Parks, which has designed and constructed similar steps in other areas in Mendocino County.

Saint Orres Project

The St. Orres project has been submitted to the Mendocino County Department of Planning and Building Services for approval, and RCLC is working on the surveys required



Looking south on Bonham Beach.

Photo by Irene Leidner

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by the Department before a building permit can be issued.

Botanical Survey

Jon Thompson, a local biologist, has begun his survey of the St. Orres access trail. He will monitor the wetland plants and terrain for a period of approximately 6 months to determine whether any plants on the endangered species list would be affected by the proposed trail, and if so, to work with the trail designer to eliminate or mitigate any loss or threat of loss for that particular plant.

#### Geology Report

Local geologist Mike Lane will provide a review of geologic and topographic conditions relevant to future trail construction for St. Orres. Mike's experience as a consulting geologist, using computer software to portray surface topology, is ideal for this particular project. His report will be used to help determine the best way to construct an access trail at St. Orres.

Once RCLC completes these surveys and acquires the permit, a safe trail can be built, and St. Orres Beach will be another beautiful spot along the coast for the public to enjoy.



Driftwood after winter storms on St. Orres Beach.

Photo by Irene Leidner

WARNING: St. Orres Beach is known locally by abalone divers, but the difficult and steep path, combined with a relatively small beach area, except during minus tides, currently makes access to the beach very dangerous. Winter storms have almost obliterated much of the trail, and the creek is still flowing heavily, making it necessary to climb over rocks and huge logs to reach the beach.

### THANKS TO OUR DONORS

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#### 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.

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

#### PLEASE CHECK YOUR NEWSLETTER LABEL

An "06" in front of your name means that your most recent contribution to RCLC was during this year. If there is no number to the left of your name or an "04" or "05" (indicating that your last gift was in 2004 or 2005) please consider making a contribution for this year to support the work of the RCLC. A contribution form is printed on the return envelope in this issue.

Summer 2006

#### Profile: Irene Leidner

RCLC Board member Irene Leidner is project coordinator for RCLC's Bonham Beach and St. Orres public access projects. She and her husband Bill Davy live in Gualala.

# Were there early influences that put you on the path toward land trusts?

My earliest influences were growing up in rural New England. Vacations were not expensive travels, but building, then living in vacation homes. I particularly loved the ocean, and always lived where I had plenty of places to walk or ride a bike with friends. I was lucky enough to go to camp in the summer -first as a camper, then as a counselor, where I learned to love the outdoors even more.

#### Vocation and avocational pursuits?

I always loved math and science. I was a Chemistry major at Wheaton College – back for my 50th reunion this spring. I started as a chemist with a company that later moved to California, which was quite an experience, especially for a New England puritan – but I loved it and soon felt right at home.

After the children were out of high school, I chose computer programming as a new career. I was in the right place at the right time, just as Silicon Valley was starting to explode; I worked for 12 years for Digital Equipment Corporation, in software engineering and support. I met my current husband as I was doing onthe-job work experience at NASA in Mountain View.

# Tell us about living here on the Redwood Coast.

My husband loved the mountains, I loved the coast, so we planned to re-

tire to his cabin in the Sierras, with a "small place" on the coast somewhere. We found this area and bought two acres in the redwoods in 1983. From 1983 to 1990 we'd come and camp on the property, planning where and what we would build. Engineer Bill didn't understand the concept of a "modest sometime place", so this turned out to be a fortress that will withstand an 8.9 earthquake. After I retired in 1991, we moved here permanently, and we're still building! Love the ocean, the river, the beach, the trees, the people, the weather (including the fog), even the dirt road we live on that gets all muddy in the winter and makes a mess of the cars, the dogs, and us.

# How did you become interested in RCLC?

As Bluff Trail One was being completed. It's one of the first places we take visitors. I was impressed by the fact that an all-volunteer organization made that happen, and when I heard that two trails were being planned for our immediate neighborhood, I approached Ray Van de Water about helping out in some way. After attending a few RCLC meetings and talking with Ray, I decided RCLC would be a great place to contribute whatever I could.

Little did I know! Since joining the Board, I have had crash courses in land trust issues, Coastal Conservancy issues, County Planning and Building Department issues, cable step and trail building issues, and that's only the beginning.

#### Special places and special interests?

One of the things I did when I first came to Gualala before we ever bought any property was to jog on Gualala Point Beach - that is such a



Photo by Bill Davy

great place! I don't jog anymore, but I still love the Park and work with Bea Aker to coordinate the 30 volunteers who keep the Visitor Center open. I also do volunteer work for Shamli hospice and the Coast Community Library – and play handbells with the

# Why do you support the work of RCLC?

Ernest Bloch Bell Ringers.

I'd like to see more public access forest and coastal, in this very special place. Every time someone stops to see a whale, seal, or river otter, or walk a trail on the bluff, or in the shade of a huge redwood or madrone, wouldn't it be something if they would make a pledge to make our little spot of Paradise a better place - not just by contributing money (which is always welcome) but also time - picking up a piece of trash, pulling a weed on a gravel trail, attending a meeting to say how much they appreciate what has been done and is being done, or even better, contributing their time and talents to RCLC for preserving undeveloped places.

# GUALALA ARTS SHOWS: INVITATION TO ARTISTS

The Redwood Coast Land Conservancy will present a \$100 award to the best work representing the natural coastal environment at each of the following shows. Independent judges will determine the winners.

#### Art in the Redwoods

Gualala Arts Members only show. Membership is \$30

Show dates: August 18-20

Forms available: www/Gualalaarts.org and Gualala Arts Center

Fee per entry: \$10

#### **Annual Environmental Art Show**

Gualala Arts Members only show. Membership is \$30

Show dates: Fall 2006

Forms available: www/Gualalaarts.org and Gualala Arts Center

Fee per entry: \$20 Commission: 30%



Photo by Bill Perry, winner of RCLC AIR Award



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