

# REDWOOD COAST LAND CONSERVANCY

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

*Gualala Bluff Trail to Continue!*

## GETTING READY FOR PRIME TIME:

### GUALALA BLUFF TRAIL PHASE II *by Cecilia Moelter*

You may wander or watch whales, whitecaps and whimbrels...when you walk alone or with friends along the Bluff Trail today. Tomorrow think about an Autumn 2003 extension from the Surf Motel south to Oceansong Restaurant. The Gualala River will be visible from benches and viewing sites along the way. Stairs and a bridge will take you to a beautiful rock outcropping just above the river, where seals and river otters are visible right here in "downtown."

Driving through Gualala on Highway One a tourist might be forgiven for believing that it's a retail stop. With attractive gift shops, art galleries and restaurants, the question is, "Where's the sea?" The answer is, "Walk west to the bluff and enjoy the outstanding views of the Gualala River and the Pacific."

In March, RCLC applied to Mendocino County for a 700 foot continuation of the trail.

Several thousand vacationers and locals use the Bluff Trail annually. Each week a member of Redwood Coast Land Conservancy monitors the trail for upkeep of the landscaping, evaluation of the path condition, removal of debris and visitor counts. Picnic tables and benches behind the Surf Motel provide views of the beach and offer lunch break opportunities under the cypress trees.

A chance to rest during a stroll will be provided with the installation of a bench with a perfect view, between Seacliff and the bluff on the north end of the trail. Bring a book or lunch and relax from this vantage point. This bench is a memorial gift welcomed by the landowner and RCLC. 🌲

*Help Conserve For The Future:*

## THE STEWARDSHIP FUND

*by Bob Rutemoeller*

After the Redwood Coast Land Conservancy accepts a conservation easement, or is given real property, its protection of the land has only just begun. From then on, in perpetuity, the Land Trust has the legal obligation to regularly monitor the use of the land and to enforce the restrictions of the easement.

To carry out RCLC's stewardship role, we must visit the site at least once a year to determine the consistency of the use of the land with the easement's restrictions. For the Gualala Bluff Trail, we monitor and maintain it more frequently, usually weekly.

We request a contribution to our Stewardship fund to provide funds for our obligations. To make a donation to this fund, please indicate that in a note or check our box on our reply-envelope. Thank you for helping. 🌲



*Panoramic photo of the Gualala River Estuary and the Pacific Ocean. Dave Scholz, a recent visitor to this proposed extension of the Bluff Trail, observed a seal eating dinner in these waters. Ray Van de Water calls it "one of the best places along the coast to observe nature in action." Photo from RCLC archives.*

## REDWOOD COAST LAND CONSERVANCY

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 TRAIL MONITORS: Shirley and Dwight Eberly, Kristen Drake, Mary Sue Ittner, Sue and Bob Lease, Cecilia Moelter, Bob Rutemoeller and Flo and Ray Van de Water  
 CONTRIBUTORS to this issue include David Scholz, Cecilia Moelter, Laurie Mueller, Rosemarie Hocker, Bob Rutemoeller

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

### RCLC OBJECTIVES

The specific purposes of this corporation include, but are not limited to:

- The conservation of lands for recreational, educational, ecological, agricultural, scenic and open space opportunities. Conservation of lands shall be accomplished by acquiring real property or partial interests therein, including conservation easements as defined in California Civil Code Section 815.2, and recording appropriate instruments necessary to protect in perpetuity the physical environment of the area for wildlife, ecological and aesthetic purposes beneficial to the public interest;
- To promote, activate and develop public coastal accesses to the ocean, rivers and other natural or scenic features, including developing trails, paths and walkways;
- To study, project and develop plans for future needs in respect to public recreational lands, accesses and facilities;
- To determine open space and conservation needs in the coastal areas of Mendocino and Sonoma counties and to arrange for necessary stewardship and conservation by easements, agreements or other mechanisms;
- To publicize local needs of the type mentioned above and to raise funds by public subscriptions, grants or other means as necessary to meet such objectives.

### PLEASE CHECK YOUR NEWSLETTER LABEL

If there is a "02" or "03" in front of your name, that means you have sent RCLC a contribution or membership donation for that year. If there is no number to the left of your name, or if it shows a contribution for 2002, please consider helping us this year. A contribution form is printed on the return envelope in this issue. Thanks for your help.

## A WALK ALONG THE GUALALA BLUFF TRAIL: CLOSE-UP AND PERSONAL *by Ray Van de Water*

Directly below the trail lies the Gualala River estuary and summertime lagoon, where the river meets the sea. Here is one of the best places along the coast to observe nature in action. Something is always going on among the wild life, all "doing their thing" in this natural and bountiful haven. Large flocks of sea gulls and pelicans gather to feed, rest and play. Harbor seals, otter and osprey frequent these waters, which contain a great variety of fish and other underwater eatables.

It's a perfect place for birdwatchers: birds wheeling and diving for prey is

an exciting scene. During the winter season of the fast-flowing river, the gulls amuse themselves for hours riding the current downstream, then flying back at the last minute in the ocean surf to rejoin the ride, an exciting scene. 🌲



*Photo from the RCLC archives*

## A PERSONAL EXPERIENCE ON GBT II *by Dave Scholz*

After picking up a copy of a map from RCLC Board Member Cecilia Moelter showing the new southern extension of the Gualala Bluff Trail (GBT II), I walked behind the Surf Super to see just how this addition was going to work. At one point along my exploration I stopped and peered over the bluff edge, looking almost straight down into the Gualala River estuary twenty feet below. It was a clear and windless day. The water in the estuary was calm, transparent and fairly shallow. Suddenly to my immediate right there was a disturbance in the water. It was three leopard-spotted seals. They appeared to be playing: diving, then breaking the surface, doing intertwined barrel rolls and nipping at each other. I seemed close enough to count their whiskers.

Because of my elevated location, they were totally oblivious of me. It was just like being in a silent, floating hot air balloon, positioned directly overhead;

a unique view, to say the least.

Just then, in a fraction of a second, two of the seals took off in a straight line for about thirty feet, culminating with one of them doing a flip turn so fast along the bottom that it stirred up a cloud of sediment. They returned to my right. One of them surfaced. There was a bright silver fish in its mouth! The fish seemed to be 12 to 18 inches long, perhaps a juvenile Steelhead. The seal's companions made a few attempts to dislodge the catch but soon gave up and all participants quietly disappeared from view.

It all took no more than three minutes.

Now, where else along the entire coast of California could one see so clearly and completely such a wildlife experience? Where else but along the Gualala Bluff II Trail, coming to you courtesy of the hard work of the Redwood Coast Land Conservancy! 🌲

## RCLC PROFILE - Laurie Mueller *by Rosemarie Hocker*

Laurie, who has a professional background in non-profit management for environmental organizations, currently serves as RCLC's president.

Laurie and her family have been visiting the redwood coast for more than 20 years. She and her husband Leigh moved here fulltime two years ago. "The breathtaking beauty of the coastline, the brisk ocean air, the abundant wildlife and the dramatic changes of the seasons were a wonderful refuge from our busy lives in the Bay Area", she says.

"Now that we have moved here fulltime, living surrounded by redwoods and ocean vistas has given us the sense of place and calm center that eluded us down in the Bay Area. An unexpected bonus has been the pleasure of living somewhere where you know your neighbors and can build a real sense of community".

When Laurie was a child, her family spent many summers camping in Big Basin Redwoods State Park, Big Sur and Richardson Grove. "I remember walking among the giant redwoods and feeling a sense of awe at their towering beauty. When I later learned about the ecology of the redwood forest and how little of the old growth remained, I was thankful that people had the foresight to set aside some of the forest for future generations".

Laurie graduated from UC Berkeley and received a master's degree in broad-

cast journalism with a specialty in environmental studies. As a reporter for the public radio station in Washington, DC., she covered the first Earth Day and other environmental stories.

"When I returned to the Bay Area, I felt I had come full circle by working as public relations director for the Sempervirens Fund, a land trust working to preserve redwoods in the Santa Cruz Mountains. My proudest achievements there were leading the land campaigns for Sempervirens Point and the Rancho Ano Nuevo addition to Big Basin Redwoods State Park."

She then pursued her interest in public broadcasting by working for several years as development and marketing director for KTEH, San Jose's PBS station. "I believe that PBS and NPR are among the strongest voices we have for preserving our natural heritage," she says.

Most recently she served as the Executive Director of the Peninsula Conservation Center Foundation, which runs a large environmental center with a library, offices and meeting rooms where environmental groups and other residents meet and work to preserve and protect the local environment. "The PCCF emphasized collaboration rather than confrontation to bring people with varying points of view together to develop sound environmental solutions" notes Laurie.

When asked why she supports the



Laurie Mueller. Photo by Wendy Platt

RCLC, she says "RCLC offers an excellent way for our community to preserve the natural scenic and wild places that are special to us. As a small, volunteer-run land trust that focuses exclusively on our local coastal lands, the RCLC provides the essential link between funding agencies and landowners interested in protecting all or part of their land from the pressures of development".

"Landowners who care about making sure that the natural features they love will be protected can set up a conservation easement which the RCLC will oversee for them. The property owner benefits by setting aside what he or she values - often with the added benefit of a tax deduction. The community benefits because that property is not lost to development or logging. It's a classic win/win situation".

"I would encourage everyone who values our coastal land and ocean vistas to become a member of the RCLC and take part in preserving our coast for future generations". 🌲

## 2002 FINANCIAL REPORT

*by Bob Rutemoeller, Treasurer*

Income:

Donations	\$12,474
Grants	670
Other	297
Total Income	\$13,441
Total Expenses	\$4,854
Stewardship reserve	\$8,587

## RCLC RAFFLE WRAP UP *By Bob Rutemoeller*

On January 12, 2003, we held our Annual Raffle drawing at the Sundstrom Mall in Gualala. Local businesses, artists and many other supporters donated an impressive array of gifts to help RCLC accomplish its mission. A full list of donors and prizes can be found on our website [www.rc-lc.org](http://www.rc-lc.org), a beautiful gift in its own right. (Please see related article.) Thanks to our many donors who gave prizes and to all who donated funds for raffle tickets. Please send us an email ([rclc@mcn.org](mailto:rclc@mcn.org)) or a note if you would like to donate a prize for our next event. 🌲

## WEBSITE NOTES *by Dave Scholz*

*Dave's heading up efforts to update and improve the RCLC website.*

Thanks to the technical and artistic skill of **Ivan de la Garza**, RCLC has a dramatically enhanced Internet presence. Take a look! In addition to Ivan's donated contribution of time and talent, recognition and special thanks are also extended to: **Bill Perry** for his beautiful photos and **Ken and Wendy Bailey** at Sea Dreams for their services in digitalizing Bill's work; **Wendy Platt** for converting our newsletters into an electronic format suitable for the website's archive section; **Charlotte Scholz** for editorial and scanning assistance.

Thanks, too, to **Darrell Paige** and **Joan Hallberg** who gave us our initial introduction to the value of having an Internet website.

RCLC's enhanced website ([www.rc-lc.org](http://www.rc-lc.org)) serves a number of purposes, among which are quick, efficient communication and education.

One example of timely communication was the posting earlier this year of the winning participants in our annual fund raising raffle. We hope to further utilize our website as a dynamic, as well as static, resource.

Education (and communication) regarding all aspects of natural resource conservation will be further served by new web pages, now in final development, depicting a number of RCLC's conservation projects. Location, description and photos will introduce web visitors to these ongoing RCLC preservation efforts.

As with anything new, we are still learning how best to use this wonderful medium. Comments and suggestions from our members are welcomed and solicited. Check it out and let us hear from you. 🌲

## *In Memory & Honor*

For showing your love and appreciation with a gift in memory or in honor, RCLC thanks you. RCLC received donations in memory of:

**Iola Cabassi** from Jay Faulkner

**Frank Ittner** from Jan Sprague.

**Judith Stronach** from Margot and Perry Biestman

**Warren Tann** from Philip and Ann Graf

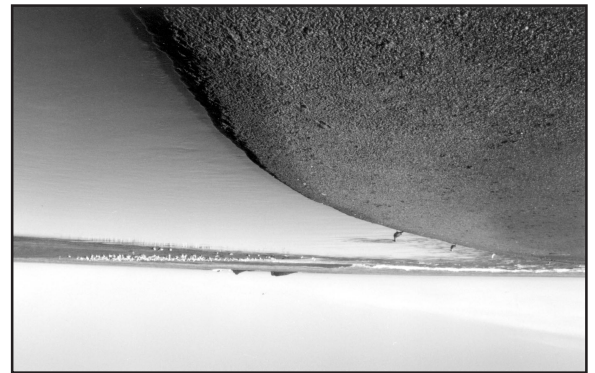
RCLC received a donation "In appreciation of sharing your botanical expertise." honoring **Mary Rhyne** from Rex and Charlotte Burnett. 🌲

## ART IN THE REDWOODS

RCLC is pleased to encourage artists to submit works for the RCLC Environmental Award competition. Please contact the Gualala Arts Center, 884-1138, for information about the annual AIR August show, award categories and requirements. 🌲



*Gualala River opens to the Pacific. Photo by Rosemarie Hocker*



## Return Service Requested

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