



# REDWOOD COAST LAND CONSERVANCY

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

## RCLC PLANS OUTREACH TO LOCAL LANDOWNERS TO HELP PROTECT LOCAL ENDANGERED SPECIES

In a major new project, RCLC is planning a large-scale outreach to more than 425 local landowners to identify and help preserve habitat for two local endangered species, the Behren's Silverspot Butterfly and the Point Arena Mountain Beaver.

Preserving habitat for endangered species is critical to their survival, and RCLC plans to partner with landowners who wish to help in this effort. Landowners who have existing populations or suitable habitat for these species can benefit in many ways by participating in this voluntary program.

Funds for this project are being provided by the U.S. Department of Fish and Wildlife, which has funds to preserve habitat for endangered species but does not have staff to contact landowners who might be interested in this program. RCLC has stepped forward to coordinate this outreach effort.

RCLC has already partnered with landowners Peter Dobbins and Mark Chapell, whose combined properties form the Hathaway Creek Conservation Easement which protects the population of Point Arena Mountain Beavers living on their land.

Over the next several months, RCLC will be talking with other landowners in the Point Arena area, which is prime habitat for the two endangered species. Both the Behren's Silverspot Butterfly and the Point Arena Mountain

Photo: Kim Fitts

Point Arena Mountain Beaver



Beaver have a very restricted range along the Mendocino and Sonoma County coast. The aim of the conservation program is to preserve sufficient habitat to allow the populations of both species to recover and eventually be removed from the Endangered Species list. (See page 3 for further information about these two species.)

Photo: Gordon Pratt



Behren's Silverspot Butterfly

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## ROSEMARIE HOCKER RECOGNIZED BY GRWC

The Gualala River Watershed Council (GWRC) recently honored longtime RCLC Board Member Rosemarie Hocker and her late husband Robert by dedicating the R&R Hocker Salmon Crossing on Pepperwood Creek in recognition of their work.

Rosemarie and her husband were founding members of the GRWC and she served as the organization's President for several years, where she focused on building consensus between landowners, environmentalists, and local residents.

The new crossing spans Pepperwood Creek, which feeds into the Gualala River. The GRWC has partnered with Henry Alden, manager of Gualala Redwoods, Inc. to restore the creek and provide a suitable habitat that will enable Coho salmon to return to that part of the river.

The GWRC was originally a project of the RCLC and became an independent organization in 1997.

## PRESIDENT'S CORNER

As we end this year, RCLC can look back on several accomplishments. This spring we plan to hold grand openings to celebrate the completion of two RCLC projects, Cooks Beach and Hearn Gulch Headlands. We are embarking on a major new project to help protect the habitat of the Point Arena Mountain Beaver and the Behren's Silverspot Butterfly.

We are completing arrangements with landowners who plan to donate their properties to RCLC to help meet our goals and theirs, and we have begun the lengthy process of land trust accreditation, which will be an important requirement for land trusts in the years to come.

RCLC also faces several challenges. As we complete our other public access projects, help landowners establish conservation easements and accept land donations, our thoughts turn to long-term stewardship of these properties. RCLC now has responsibility for monitoring and maintaining these easements and donated properties.

Staff member Louisa Morris has enabled RCLC to substantially increase our collaboration with other organizations, identify potential new funding sources, and work more effectively with landowners. She will be coordinating the major landowner outreach to protect local endangered species. However, due to the absence of State funding, she is currently working less than 40 hours a month, which has significantly restricted RCLC's ability to pursue new opportunities.

RCLC relies on our members for the annual financial support that enables us to acquire and provide stewardship for donated land and conservation easements. Without State funding, your support this coming year is more important than ever and will be greatly appreciated.



RCLC President Laurie Mueller

### 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.*



# HABITAT PROTECTION NEEDED FOR TWO LOCAL SPECIES

*RCLC's outreach program will help locate and set aside suitable sites for habitat protection and restoration.*

## Behren's Silverspot Butterfly

*(Speyeria zerene behrensii)*

The Behren's Silverspot is a medium-sized butterfly, with a wingspan of approximately two inches. The upper surfaces of the wings are golden brown with numerous black spots and lines and the under surfaces are brown, orange-brown, and tan with black lines and distinctive silver and black spots.

The Behren's Silverspot Butterfly is federally listed as endangered. It only occurs in coastal



*Behren's Silverspot Butterfly caterpillars feed on Viola adunca*

California, with its historic range extending from Mendocino south to Salt Point State Park. The Point Arena-Manchester area supports the largest known silverspot population.

Behren's Silverspot Butterflies inhabit coastal terrace prairies which contain early blue violets (*Viola adunca*) and have nectar

plants available from late June through September. Unfortunately, few of the remaining coastal prairie sites have sufficient blue violet populations to support Silverspot Butterfly populations.

Surveys are needed to determine the butterfly's distribution and population status and the distribution and density of violets and nectar plants in order to identify suitable habitat that can be managed for the species' conservation.

Since moderate grazing can reduce invasive woody plants and maintain suitable prairie habitat for Behren's use, livestock grazing studies are also needed to determine optimal grazing levels for maintaining and restoring Behren's habitat.

## Point Arena Mountain Beaver

*(Aplodontia rufa nigra)*

Mountain beavers are the only remaining member of the family *Aplodontidae*, and are considered the most primitive living rodents.

Mountain beavers are stout, compact and have a broad massive skull. They average about one foot in length and two to four pounds in weight. They have small eyes, rounded ears, and a distinctive cylindrical stump of a tail. Although there is a superficial resemblance, mountain beavers are not closely related to true beavers, which are semi-aquatic.



The Point Arena subspecies is only found within a scattered, 24-square mile area in western Mendocino County. Burrows are typically located on moist and steep north-facing slopes or gullies with well-drained soil. Point Arena mountain beavers (PAMB) are found in a variety of habitat types including coastal scrub, northern dune scrub, the edges of conifer forest, and riparian plant communities.

They spend much of their time in underground burrow systems, but forage above ground on vegetation. Habitat loss and fragmentation, the primary reason for PAMB decline, is due to development, conversion to agricultural use (farming and livestock grazing), and construction of transportation and utility corridors. Rodent control activities, domestic pets, invasive plants, and fires also pose threats.

A network of protected occupied sites which enable populations to disperse to other locations must be established before the PAMB can be removed from the endangered list. This may require that some currently unsuitable sites or travel corridors be restored to suitable mountain beaver habitat.

# GRAND OPENINGS PLANNED FOR COOKS BEACH AND HEARN GULCH HEADLANDS

Grand openings are planned this coming spring for Cooks Beach and Hearn Gulch Headlands, two RCLC projects which provide much needed public access to local coastal bluffs and beaches in southern Mendocino County. The grand openings for Cooks Beach and Hearn Gulch Headlands will be held next May, when the weather and wildflowers are at their best. Watch for the date.

Photo: Karen Tracy



Cooks Beach is a beautiful crescent beach just north of Gualala enjoyed by many local families and visitors to our area. RCLC volunteers have significantly improved the Bonham Trail down to the beach to provide easier and safer public access. Recent work included installing railing on the stairs and putting in a small fence along the overlook to the beach.

Now that this delightful beach is more accessible, the word has quickly spread. This Labor Day weekend, more than 60 people were seen on the beach in just one afternoon.

Volunteers have logged over 550 hours on the Cooks Beach project, which was funded by a State Coastal Conservancy grant to the RCLC. All that remains to do is place an official sign and possibly install a bench on the overlook. RCLC volunteers will continue to monitor and maintain the trail and stairs.

Photo: David Windsor



*Cooks Beach is located two miles north of Gualala. Turn off Highway One onto the Old Coast Highway, across from Glennen Drive, and drive to the north end of the road.*

*Scenes from Cooks Beach contributed by local residents.*



Photo: Karen Tracy





Hearn Gulch Headlands offers visitors both an expansive bluff top view of the ocean and a small pocket beach sheltered among the craggy rocks. When RCLC purchased the property in 2001 with funds from the Coastal Conservancy, the bluff top was a barren rutted patch of land, and the trail down to the beach was steep and difficult to descend.

With the help of grants from the Coastal Conservancy and the Community Foundation of Mendocino County, RCLC volunteers protected the bluff top from further damage and restored it to its natural state. Volunteers have also built a new trail out to the bluff edge and made the existing trail down to the beach much easier and safer to use. An area defined by bollards and chains was built along Highway One, providing easy parking for visitors.

RCLC is now working with nearby landowners to explore the possibility of acquiring land or easements to protect property adjacent to Hearn Gulch from possible development.

*Hearn Gulch is located just north of Iverson Road on Highway One. Look for the chains and bollards. You can take a trail out to the headlands or the trail down to the small pocket beach.*

Photo: Leigh Mueller



Photo: Bob Rutemoeller



*Spring wildflowers along Hearn Gulch bluffs and trails*



## IMPORTANCE OF THE RCLC STEWARDSHIP FUND

As part of our mission to preserve and protect our local natural environment, RCLC works with local landowners to establish and maintain conservation easements. Through easements or outright land donations, landowners can set aside all or part of their property for future generations and protect it from logging or other development. Landowners who establish conservation easements or donate land to the RCLC are making a generous contribution to the local community. However, they may not have the financial means to provide a stewardship endowment for the care and protection of the easement.

### Why a Stewardship Fund is needed

RCLC has established a Stewardship Fund to meet the costs of maintaining conservation easements and donated land under its care. Creating an easement is just the first step in protecting a piece of land. Whenever RCLC accepts a conservation easement, we are accepting the responsibility to monitor and enforce that easement in perpetuity. While we welcome this responsibility because it is an important part of our mission, accepting an easement means permanently committing to stewardship of the land it protects.

As the agency responsible for managing the easement, RCLC regularly monitors the property and notes any threats to the preservation of the land the easement was designed to protect. In some cases, RCLC might also participate in the physical maintenance or restoration of land within the easement. RCLC must also be prepared to enforce the terms of the easement if necessary.

RCLC is also responsible for land it has purchased or has received as a donation. Stewardship responsibilities for these fee lands include the preparation and implementation of management plans, monitoring the property, maintaining the property by removing non-native plants and restoring damaged areas to their natural state, providing and maintaining trails, parking areas, benches, signs and other facilities in public access areas, and paying for any permits, taxes or legal costs associated with the property.

RCLC is currently working with property owners who have expressed interest in donating land to RCLC or in creating conservation easements to protect important habitat. When these properties become part of RCLC's responsibilities, we will need help from our members to maintain and protect them. If you are interested in contributing to the RCLC Stewardship Fund, please send your donation to RCLC Stewardship Fund, P.O. Box 1511, Gualala, CA 95445-1511 or use the enclosed envelope.

Photo: Laurie Mueller



## 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

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from John & Jackie Petersen

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from Anne Hendricks

Mary Sue Ittner  
from Nell Susalla  
Denny Gold

Foxie the trail lovin' dog  
from Harmony & Sus

# GUALALA BLUFF TRAIL COMPLETION STILL ON HOLD

RCLC continues to wait for the Coastal Commission to complete its review of property owner John Bower's proposal to build a 400-foot retaining wall system along the bluff face behind the Surf Super.

The Commission began its review of the application in April 2008, finding that there were substantial indications that Mr. Bower's proposal did not conform to the Local Coastal Plan. Because the construction of Mr. Bower's project, if approved, would require tearing up part of the trail, RCLC volunteers have been waiting for a ruling by the Commission before they complete work on the segment which would be most affected.

In the meantime, volunteers and a part-time contract worker continue to maintain completed parts of the trail, including the removal of invasive weeds and the tending of recent plantings which are not yet fully established.

Mary Sue Ittner, who has resolutely continued building the trail toward completion despite many frustrations and setbacks, has decided to step down after serving for six years as the Gualala Bluff Trail Project Manager. RCLC and the community can thank the persistence and hard work of Mary Sue, Ray Jackman, and the faithful band of volunteers who have built this beautiful trail step by step with shovels, pickaxes, and countless wheelbarrow loads of dirt and gravel.

The Project Manager not only plans and supervises trail construction and maintenance, but interacts with County officials, the

Coastal Commission, the Coastal Conservancy and landowners who own property along the trail. If you would be interested in helping with the management of the Gualala Bluff Trail, please contact RCLC at 884-4464.

*Photo: Bob Rutemoeller*



*Mary Sue Ittner, Dard Hunter, Jim Suhr, George Marshall and Ray Jackman take a break from setting new plants in place along the Gualala Bluff Trail.*

*Photo: Mary Sue Ittner*



*The Coastal Commission has required Mr. Bower to repair this 100 foot retaining wall which failed in February 2006, taking part of the trail easement with it. He has proposed to replace it with a 400-foot-long retaining wall system along the full extent of the bluff face, which he believes will be of greater benefit to his plans for future development.*



# ROZANNE RAPOZO PHOTO WINS RCLC AWARD

Rozanne Rapozo's love of photography started the first moment she saw an image emerge from a blank piece of paper in a college darkroom. Although she deeply enjoyed taking photographs, her professional career and a busy travel schedule kept her out of the darkroom for the majority of her adult life.

Upon retiring, she renewed her interest in photography. She learned the importance of patience, waiting for the right light, understanding animal behavior. She says, "Sometimes I happen to be there just when Nature decides it is time for someone to take a picture."



*Surf's Up* – This engaging photograph of a young harbor seal received RCLC's Environmental Award at this year's Art in the Redwoods Festival.

#### PLEASE CHECK YOUR NEWSLETTER LABEL

The number to the left of your name indicates the date of your most recent contribution to RCLC. An "09" means that your last gift was during this year. If there is or an "07" or "08" (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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