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Redwood Coast News

June 2023

In this Issue...

Youth Group Overnight: Work, Recreation and Education

What will RCLC Properties and Gualala Look Like in 2123?

**Featured Volunteer:
Perk Perkins**

One Family's History from the Mill Bend Preserve Cemetery

Kids in Kayaks on the Gualala River - our Future Stewards



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Youth Group Overnight: Work, Recreation and Education

by Mark Escajeda

In an RCLC first, a youth group overnighted at Mill Bend Preserve, enabling teenagers to intimately experience the 113-acre property. Four Scouts from Troop 58 in Santa Rosa,



led by Scoutmaster Andy Kiehl, camped, canoed, and removed invasive plants over the course of a mid-April weekend, returning home early enough, as Mr. Kiehl explained, to complete their homework.

Saturday was clear and warm, allowing the Scouts to enjoy a springtime paddle down the Gualala River. With the estuary still open to the Pacific Ocean, the usually calm drift ran quickly. The troop wisely took the advice of local kayak concessionaire Efi Benjamin of Adventure Rents and kept close to the right bank at Mill Bend to avoid missing the landing.



The troop explored the gravel and willow-lined estuary before refueling for an afternoon of invasive plant eradication. First, the energetic young men tackled Cape ivy at the kayak launch, led by CIA team lead Nicole Forte and Preserve caretaker Joaquin Jacobs. Returning to the uplands, the troop worked with Mark Escajeda on French broom, fennel and cotoneaster in a roadside opening planned for a future native garden.

Before returning home on Sunday, Troop 58 walked the Gualala Cemetery with Kay Martin, RCLC's vice president and cemetery steward. An anthropologist with decades of experience, Kay interpreted the pioneer graveyard with the teens and leaders, capping an enormously successful first use of Mill Bend Preserve as an educational laboratory.





Photos by:

Andy Kiehl, Anne Hanlon, Mark Escajeda

What Will RCLC Properties and Gualala Look Like in The Year 2123?

by Joel Chaban



Have you ever wondered what Mill Bend, Cooks Beach, or Gualala might look like 100 years from now? That question was put to the test with the help of Microsoft Bing Images, an artificial intelligence (AI) engine and online app that creates images from textual descriptions. For example, the following text was entered into Bing's AI engine:

“What will Cooks Beach in Gualala, California, look like in the year 2123 with rising sea levels, existing concrete stairs and a railing that goes down to the beach?”

It then created the above image, along with three other possible images, of how Cooks Beach might appear 100 years from now.

If you've been to Cooks Beach, you'll see that the above photo is a fairly good representation of how Cooks Beach and the adjoining shoreline

might evolve over the next 100 years. Somehow, Bing's AI engine figures out the flora and fauna of Gualala and is able to create a pretty good, but not accurate, conception of what Cooks Beach might look like. In this case, however, the AI engine does not really know what Cooks Beach looks like or what Gualala looks like.

Yet in the case of Mill Bend, when you view the images here and click the link below to view many more images, you'll see that some of the images are pretty good representations of Mill Bend. It appears that Bing's AI Image creator has access to some aerial photos of Mill Bend as the images show Mill Bend as being on the estuary of the Gualala River. That information is not in the textual descriptions used to create the images. So somehow, that information must have been derived from online information and images that Bing's AI Image creator is able to access.

Remember, when you look at the images, they are a vision of what things **might** look like 100 years from now. They are not RCLC projections, and they might not reflect what you would imagine. It's simply a bit of fun, playing with AI, seeing what AI – in its nascent developmental stage – can create, and possibly start a conversation about how the world might evolve considering climate change.

For more AI generated photos, click [here](#).



AI generated image of Mill Bend in 2123

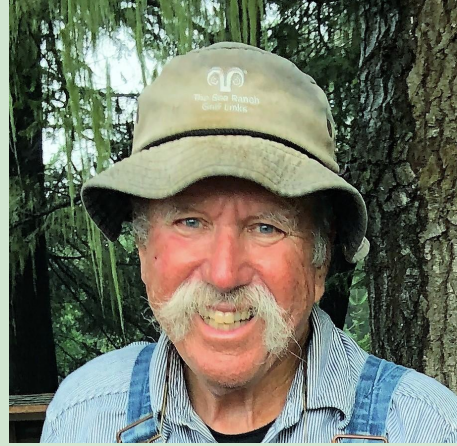


AI generated image of the town of Gualala in 2123

Featured Volunteer: Perk Perkins

Perk has been an integral member of our Cemetery team from Day One, and is the person responsible for all the restoration work on the cemetery monuments and plots with metal work. He recently completed the restoration of

the Ward family plot, which included the rediscovery and literal excavation of a lost grave marker for Joseph Ward (1841-1890).



What brought you to the North Coast?

In the early 1970's, diving brought me to this area. My wife, Joyce, and I liked it so much that in the mid 1970's, we bought property and built our retirement home in the late 1970's. I retired in 2009, so we have been full timers since.

Why are you giving your time to RCLC?

I like to keep busy and when Kay Martin asked me to help with the Gualala Cemetery project, I jumped at it.

What are a few of your favorite things to do in your free time?

In my spare time I do volunteer work, play golf and do anything involving beer.

One Family's History from the Mill Bend Preserve Cemetery

by Kay Martin

The Gualala Cemetery is a local landmark where historic preservation and genealogy meet. Its restoration is a two-pronged effort to both reestablish the site's original landscape features and to document the lives of people buried there through written records and the memories of living descendants. Unfortunately the grave markers for several persons have disappeared over the decades, leaving their actual onsite burial locations unknown.

This was the case for local pioneers **James and Lavonia Whitmore** until genealogical research facilitated connections with local descendant Tracy DuPont, the couple's great granddaughter. She was able to draw



James Whitmore

upon childhood memories to identify the historic family plot location, the borders and markers of which have now been restored.

Tracy's ancestors were intimately connected to Point Arena history. James Whitmore (1858-1942) immigrated from Nova Scotia to the Mendonoma Coast sometime between 1882-1888 to work in the lumber industry. Lavonia Dixon Whitmore (1875-1927) moved with her family from Utah to Point Arena in the late 1800s, where her father, Daniel Dixon, served as Superintendent of the Point Arena Wharf, and her grandfather, John Johnson, as the town's shoemaker.



James Whitmore and daughter Gladys

James and Lavonia married in 1902 at the Point Arena home of her parents, and subsequently lived in Salt Point, Del Mar, Gualala, and Point Arena. They had one child, Gladys, Tracy's grandmother, who was born in a house that still stands at the Point Arena Wharf.



Lavonia Whitmore and Tracy's mother Dolores

They had one child, Gladys, Tracy's grandmother, who was born in a house that still stands at the Point Arena Wharf.

Tracy Dupont is shown here with her family's restored cemetery plot.



Kids in Kayaks on the Gualala River - Our Future Stewards

by Nicole Forte



On May 22, we had a crowd at the kayak launch! Almost 30 participants including students from Point Arena Elementary, their teacher Cristin Allen, parents, Adventure Rents employees and a lifeguard came together to begin their kayak experience on the Gualala River.

It was a gorgeous fog-free day and the river was clear, smooth and most importantly closed to the Pacific Ocean. When the river is open to the ocean it makes for strong currents that can be hard to manage for the kids. This gathering was a concerted effort by many (including John Forte, our Volunteer School Outreach Coordinator for RCLC and Efi Benjamin from Adventure Rents) and it was worth it! The screams and laughter of happy kids learning to kayak for the first time was joyous.

RCLC stewards the Mill Bend Preserve property where Adventure Rents stages their kayak business from May through September. The RCLC agreement with

Adventure Rents allows schools to bring groups of students free of charge to the Gualala River to enhance their science lessons about watersheds and ecosystems.

Timmarie Hamill, who works with schools (through the Whale Tail grant from California Coastal Commission), sees the students becoming “*Clean Water Science Ambassadors*”. Students have even mapped the flow of water from their school yard to understand about storm water pollution prevention. Cristin Allen, the teacher for this group of students, notes that she has been bringing students to the Gualala River for 10 years. She sees the program as a way for students to learn about the watershed and endemic species and as a form of physical education.



Two other schools participated this year: Horicon Elementary and Pacific Community Charter. bringing the total number of kids in kayaks to 43 for 2023. We are happy to be giving this experience to our local students.

Photos by Nicole Forte

Events and Updates

Second Saturday Open Houses at Mill Bend Preserve

Saturday, July 8, 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM

and

Saturday, August 12, 10:00 AM - 2:00 PM

**Where: 46902 Old Stage Rd, Gualala, CA
95445**

This summer come visit Mill Bend Preserve during Second Saturday Open Houses on July 8 and August 12. Learn about prehistoric Mendonoma, Gualala's timber mill



years and RCLC's current efforts to repair and rejuvenate the estuary and surrounding forests.

Walk newly restored trails (sturdy shoes recommended), tour the pioneer-era Gualala Cemetery and enjoy views and sights not accessible to the public prior to our community-supported acquisition of the 113-acre property in 2021.

Docents will be available between 10 am and 2 pm to answer questions, suggest activities and guide short walks on request.

Parking is available on the right inside the gate (it's a short walk from there to the docents, the Gualala Cemetery and two trailheads). Limited parking is available at the Cemetery for people needing access accommodation. Picnic tables are available, bicycles must remain on roadways, and dogs are welcome, but must be leashed.

Photo by Peter Sidell

The Stream Team's next monitoring event is coming up soon!



Join our volunteers to collect water quality surveys in the Gualala River.

Saturday, June 17, 9:00 AM to 11:00 AM

Upper Mill Bend Preserve, 46903 Old State Highway, Gualala (gravel road right turn 400 feet from Highway 1).

Visit the Stream Team [Facebook](#) Page for more information and to sign up.



Come join our Outreach Team!

Our non-profit organization has a volunteer **board of directors**. RCLC also has many ambitious community volunteers who work on projects from public outreach and social media campaigns to fundraising and natural habitat restoration. Broader

Mendonoma actively supports environmental preservation.

RCLC's community outreach team is looking for volunteers to engage with the larger community and other public and non-profit organizations.

Activities include all aspects of community engagement activities, both virtual and in-person, including the following:

- Conduct research, find resources, and propose new ideas to help make informed and impactful decisions about event opportunities, achieve event team buy-in
- Event planning, coordination with community partners, prepping of event materials
- Design basic visuals to support events and promotional efforts (event fliers, online images, etc.)
- Assist volunteers with planning and logistics, as needed, and track activity results
- Support the coordination of volunteer outreach programming, attend volunteer meetings
- Coordinate school programs, special events and projects, gardening and other special projects; welcome visitors
- Volunteer recruitment

If you would like to get involved, please email Tanuja at tgairola@rclc.org

Our Wish List

Can you help by providing any of the items below or donating funds to help purchase?

Redwood Coast Land Conservancy is in need of the following items. ***(Many thanks for the items recently donated!)*** If you have something to donate, please contact us at the information below. Thank you!

Equipment/Tools needed

- Digging and pitchforks
- Loppers and clippers
- Mattocks
- McLeod fire rakes
- Weed Whacker (battery operated)
- Wheelbarrow
- Watering can 5-gallon backpack sprayers
- Hand-pump water sprayer
- Yard cart (4-wheel with dump feature)

If you would like to contribute toward a purchase of one of these items or have an item to donate to RCLC, please contact us at (707) 884-4426 or by email at rclc@rclc.org and leave a message. If you come to a work party at Mill Bend, feel free to bring your donated item.

Thank you for sharing your excess tools and equipment to help us maintain our conservation properties!



**Donate
Today!**

REDWOOD COAST LAND CONSERVANCY
Web: www.rclc.org | Email: rclc@rclc.org

