



The Humboldt Trails Council serves as a unified voice to support development, maintenance, connection to, and use of trails for recreation and transportation throughout Humboldt County, California.

Please Join the Volunteer Trail Stewards at Freshwater Farms Reserve



NORTHCOAST REGIONAL LAND TRUST



MONTHLY TRAIL WORK EVENT



KICK OFF EVENT
APRIL 16, 2023
9 AM - NOON

Help maintain the nature trail!



FRESHWATER FARMS RESERVE
5851 MYRTLE AVE

THIRD SUNDAYS
APRIL THRU OCTOBER

MADE
POSSIBLE
BY GRANT
FUNDING
FROM



Join the Northcoast Regional Land Trust and the Humboldt Trails Council Volunteer Trail Stewards at **Freshwater Farms Reserve** (5851 Myrtle Ave, Eureka) on **Sunday, April 16, from 9 AM to noon**. This is the kickoff monthly trail work event for the Nature Trail, happening on the third Sunday of each month, starting in April until the end of October.

Help re-route the nature trail and restore wetland connectivity! NRLT is making some updates to the trail and will be installing a puncheon bridge. First, we need your help to re-route and grade the trail. In case of rain, we will shift to removing invasive three-cornered leek and English ivy near the trailhead.

All tools, gloves, and safety equipment will be provided. Be sure to wear long pants and closed-toe shoes. Snacks, tea, and hot coffee will be provided; thanks, Kinetic Koffee!

Freshwater Farms Reserve is NRLT's ambassador property, showcasing the value of conserving wild and working lands. Freshwater Farms Reserve is home to a restored tidal wetland that supports endangered coho salmon, steelhead, and tidewater goby and working pasturelands for cows and goats. Along Freshwater Slough, the Nature Trail provides views of both land uses and includes a non-motorized boat launch, open daily from 9 AM to 6 PM.

Have questions about this event, or want to get involved with other aspects of NRLT's work? Send Matthew a message at m.morassutti@ncrlt.org

Article by Matthew Morassutti

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Humboldt Trails Summit – Skips this Year



No Trail Summit in June this year. However, we do want you to mark your calendar for June 1, 2024. More details later.

September 2022 Trails Summit - Photo by K. Underwood

Join the Master Planning for the Great Redwood Trail

The first community meeting for the Great Redwood Trail Master Plan took place at River Lodge in Fortuna the evening of March 22nd. That meeting featured opportunities for community members to interact with engagement activities, to ask questions, and to give input to staff on their preferences for the trail. Over one hundred folks showed up, and it was an active evening with everyone having many opportunities to contribute their ideas. This was a first opportunity to get informed and have your voice heard!



Photo by K. Underwood

If you missed the in-person meeting there is a virtual community meeting the evening of April . To RSVP for future events view the events calendar at <https://greatredwoodtrailplan.org/#events>.

The Vision: From Bay to Bay, the Scenic Way

The Great Redwood Trail (GRT) is a 316-mile rail-trail project that will eventually connect California's San Francisco and Humboldt Bays. Once completed, it will be the longest rail-trail in the United States and will travel through scenic landscapes including old-growth redwood forests, oak woodlands and vineyards, and the dramatic Eel River Canyon. The GRT will connect the many vibrant communities of Marin, Sonoma, Mendocino, Trinity, and Humboldt Counties, creating a transformational economic engine and boosting healthy recreation for all in the North Coast region. This master planning process focuses on the stretch of trail north of Cloverdale, through Mendocino, Trinity, and Humboldt Counties.



Photos by K. Underwood

What Is a Master Plan?

The Great Redwood Trail Master Plan will serve as a road map for planning, constructing, and managing the future Great Redwood Trail. The Plan will be informed by community input including tribal engagement, in-person and virtual meetings, small group meetings, and tabling events. A robust community engagement plan will inform the master plan, capturing community desires, concerns, and ideas about development of the Great Redwood Trail. The process of developing the master plan is underway now and will conclude in 2024. Once complete, the master plan will serve as a guiding document to address issues including but not limited to trail user experience, trail design, wayfinding signage, operations and maintenance, habitat restoration, project priorities, funding, and management of the trail.



Photos by K. Underwood

Get Involved!

Want to get involved, but don't know how? Start by visiting <https://greatredwoodtrailplan.org/> to learn more about the project, take an online survey, or contact the project team.

Singletrack Summit 2023 Recap

The Redwood Coast Mountain Bike Association (RCMBA) hosted the Singletrack Summit held March 18. The Summit was a sequel of the inaugural Jefferson State MTB Summit, which was hosted by the Redding Trail Alliance in February of 2019. Eight northern California and southern Oregon regional trail advocacy organizations were represented at the collaborative event, with presentations on advocacy progress and trail development. They focused on the benefits of connecting our communities through trails, including the economic health they bring to our areas. The Humboldt Trails Council was invited to attend along with other vested stakeholders; as board members, Korina Johnson and Peter Carlson attended to learn about some of the work these organizations are doing to promote trails and engage the community. As a second part of the summit, on Sunday, March 19th, a smaller group of trail volunteers were hosted for an introductory trail building workshop including work on a new trail in the McKay Community Forest. Below is a summary of some of the information shared on the groups' community engagement in trail development and enjoyment.



Redwood Coast Mountain Bike Association (<https://redwoodcoastmtb.org/>)

RCMBA has grown a lot since starting in 2014, with 42 members. Following trail building on Hatchery Ridge in Blue Lake, in 2018 there were 150+ members and in 2020 over 350 members. Recent numbers include about 530 local members and 180 members that live >50 miles away, indicating the draw of the variety and quality of bike trails and recreation in the area. Current plans for trail work include the McKay Community Forest in Eureka and the new McKinleyville Community Forest.

Redding Trail Alliance (<https://www.reddingtrailalliance.org/>)

The RTA was founded in 2016 by a group of trail biking enthusiasts, and works to advocate for, build, and maintain trails. They work collaboratively with several agencies including the Bureau of Land Management to make trails available to the community. Following the 2018 Carr Fire, which affected over 90% of the trails within its footprint, there was a large outpouring of community support for trail maintenance and fundraising, demonstrating the need for the trail systems for the community.

The Watershed Research and Training Center (<https://www.thewatershedcenter.com/>)

Based in Hayfork, Trinity County, the Center engages in a variety of projects related to land and watershed management with a mission which includes "through partnerships with communities, organizations, and public agencies we steward our landscape, create and sustain quality jobs, and connect people to the land and each other." Locally, the Center works with the U.S. Forest Service, Bureau of Land Management, and local organizations to build and maintain trails. An important component of this is the Youth Conservation Crews, which since 2001 has engaged high school youth in stewardship work, including trail maintenance, and learning skills in land management and outdoor recreation. Engaging youth in outdoor recreation and trail work is important for community health and was discussed by several of the attending organizations.

California Mountain Biking Coalition (<https://camtb.org/>)

CAMTB is a coalition of nonprofit trail stewardship and advocacy organizations which engages with large land managers and provides a unified voice for the biking community across the state. New this year is the CAMTB Teen Ambassador program,

which “aims to educate student-athletes about the world of cycling advocacy”. Included in the 2023 cohort of seven Teen Ambassadors are Nicolo Costanzo and Sierra Paliaga, both with the Humboldt Composite High School Mountain Bike Club. The north coast is well represented by young trail advocates!

Humboldt Composite High School Mountain Bike Club (<http://hcmthb.org/>)

Started in 2015 with 4 students, the club peaked in 2021 with 60 members and currently consists of 31 students along with 21 coaches. Important components of the cycling program includes trail work and building community through cycling. Having 2 CAMTB Teen Ambassadors highlights the success of their program.

Bigfoot Trail Alliance (<https://www.bigfoottrail.org/>)

Many of you may have heard of the Bigfoot Trail, and some may have hiked portions of it. The route was proposed by Michael Kauffmann in 2009 to navigate through a large portion of the Klamath Mountains with a focus on the biodiversity of the region, including an amazing 32 species of conifers along the 360 mile route. Beginning in the remote Yolla Bolly-Middle Eel Wilderness, the route continues north through the Trinity Alps and Marble Mountains to the Red Buttes on the CA-OR border where it heads west into redwood country, ending near Crescent City at the Pacific Ocean. The BFTA was started in 2015 to support the establishment and maintenance of the trail, given the lack of maintenance in some areas for many years. While much of the trail is in wilderness or backcountry National Forest land (including five national forests), about 100 miles are along little used Forest Service roads, thus providing some opportunities for biking. Michael discussed options for areas to build associated bike trails, the importance of collaborating among organizations to accomplish goals, and the success of collaborating with agencies like the U.S. Forest Service, which now provides BFTA with funding for trail work. With many areas needing maintenance, the BFTA is hosting 6 volunteer work sessions (from 3 to 7 days) throughout this spring and summer. The Bigfoot Trail Youth Stewardship Project is another important program, providing curriculum and field trip opportunities for schools in rural communities connected by the trail.

Wild Rivers Coast Mountain Biking Association (Bandon, OR, <http://wrcmba.com/>)

Founded in 2015 due to the lack of bike trails in the southern Oregon coast region, WRCMBA works to establish, maintain, and promote responsible bike trails in the region between Brookings to Coos Bay, OR. The Whiskey Run Trails near Bandon are a highlight and provide a variety of trails from family friendly to black diamond descents. The club hosts regular volunteer trail work parties at Whiskey Run and other areas. Details on a study examining the large economic benefits to the region due to bike trails was shared. The Association was successful in negotiating a cost-share agreement with the U.S. Forest Service which allows the club to do maintenance on trails on USFS lands.

Del Norte Trail Alliance (<https://sites.google.com/view/delnortetrailalliance/>)

The Del Norte Trail Alliance recently celebrated their 5th anniversary, making them the youngest of the organizations participating in the Summit. While they have a focus on mountain bike trails, they also help maintain hiking trails in the area due to the need for stewardship work. One such area is the Devil’s Punchbowl, a unique area in the Siskiyou Wilderness. Monthly volunteer trail work parties are a large part of their efforts. They have partnered with the U.S. Forest Service to begin development of a mountain bike trail system at Hurdygurdy Mountain in the Smith River National Recreation Area. Along with other organizations, they would appreciate having extra hands to help with the trail stewardship in the area – as well as having fun biking and hiking the trails.



Author Peter Carlson is a new HTC Board Member.

The next Big Grade for the Great Redwood Trail

Now that the GRT has been railbanked from Willits to Samoa, Carlotta, and Korblex at the NE edge of Arcata, we are safe to begin building a master plan for the development of the trail. The attorneys looking for business from landowners who had previously held reversion rights on the old NCRA right-of-way will be taking their clients to Federal Court for compensation. Since the Federal government, through the Surface Transportation Board (STB), decided this rail corridor should be protected for potential future railroad activity and interim trail use, the Great Redwood Trail Agency (GRTA) is free to move forward.

The Sonoma Marin Area Rail Transit (SMART) is responsible for building out the GRT from Cloverdale to Larkspur alongside their commuter trains. That leaves the section from Willits to Cloverdale to be built by the GRTA. This track was closed by the Federal Railroad Administration in 1998 due to major safety concerns, and has never been repaired. For the GRTA to follow their legislative mandate to convert this section to trail they need to have the STB railbank it.

However, the STB has a policy not to approve abandonments/railbanking if another STB regulated railroad would be left without a connection to the interstate rail network. The Skunk Train in Willits, now owned by Mendocino Railway (MR), fits this criterion even though it is believed it has not operated as a common carrier railroad in many years. The Skunk excursion train has not even been able to operate between Willits and Fort Bragg since their Tunnel #1 collapsed in 2015.

The GRTA recently began filing with the Surface Transportation Board motions toward ending the STB regulation of Mendocino Railway since it has been so many years that it actually functioned as a railroad. This would leave the Skunk excursion train in its current state, but allow for the railbank request for Willits to Cloverdale. However, MR claims that it is still functioning as a common carrier and intends to fight GRTA's motions.

Then the grade gets a little steeper. Not potentially coal train steeper, but significant. A group headed by an ex NCRA Director, calling itself North Coast Rail With Trail Coalition, has filed with the STB and claims it has potential shippers for the Willits to Cloverdale section and that they intend to fight the railbanking of this section. They will have to try and prove that they have enough capital to repair the line and enough customers to make it a financially viable operation.

Trails built alongside rails can take twice as long and cost twice as much per mile, not counting actual repairing of the the

tracks. Once again it will come down to a couple of critical decisions by the STB after all the motions and letters of support are filed. In Humboldt we are good to go to the Skunk train depot in Willits, but the number of visitors traveling to Humboldt to experience the GRT will be affected by whether or not it connects SF Bay to our Bay.



Photo by K. Underwood

Article by Bruce Silvey

Save The Date!!! Save The Date!!!

Humboldt Trails Council will be the featured nonprofit organization at Redwood Curtain Brewery's Arcata taproom on Wednesday, June 7th, just in time to celebrate National Trails Day! The Pints for Nonprofits program highlights the contributions of various nonprofits in our community, and HTC is the featured group for June! For the whole day, \$1 from every pint and goblet purchase at the Redwood Curtain in Arcata will go towards HTC's mission to develop and maintain trails. The evening will feature music by Tyger Byle; a local band that describes their music as acoustic, good times /country inspired bring a nickel stamp your feet music.

There will be plenty of trail information, trail conversations and HTC swag to keep the trails community happy, engaged and enlightened. HTC will have a table with information about our organization and our Volunteer Trail Stewards (VTS) program.

There will be an opportunity to sign up to be a volunteer (either for trail workdays or for committee work).

So stop by, have a drink or two, listen to some nice music and learn more about trails in Humboldt County. We promise you will have an eventful National Trails Day!

PINTS FOR NONPROFITS

JOIN US ON
WED. JUNE 7
TO CELEBRATE
NATIONAL TRAILS DAY

REDWOOD CURTAIN BREWING
550 SOUTH G STREET ARCATA



Ted Humphry's Trail Notes From Redwood National and State Parks; Pure and Unfiltered Observations From the Trail

3/23/2023 - LBJ and Trillium Falls Trail.

In the morning I walked counterclockwise around the loop at the Lady Bird Johnson (LBJ) grove. In the afternoon, with Bob Farrar, we walked the Trillium Falls Trail loop in a clockwise direction.

The **LBJ loop trail** is easily passable.

Likewise, **Trillium Falls Trail** is easily passable.

Both trails have been recently cleared. (Thank You Trails!)

The LBJ Grove is on top of a ridge, and I couldn't walk 10 feet along the trail without seeing more evidence of the trauma that has been inflicted on RNSP this winter. Starting in the parking lot. Look at the amount of limbs, stems and foliage piled up on the far end of the asphalt..



Continuing around the trail, before the loop.....



Then on the loop.....





Notice how the tanoaks are all bent over to the northeast.





I wonder if they will recover to a more upright posture....Some tanoaks didn't survive.



Here is another large area of flattened ferns with a huge hole in the canopy overhead.



This effect must be due to heavy snow.

Near the dedication site I met a middle-aged woman who said she came to see the memorial.



She said her father was the REDW Superintendent in the 1980s, and he met Lady Bird when she returned for a visit to her grove.

Through the trees you can see the cones on Bald Hills Road just beyond LBJ parking.



Note also the sawed off trunks that were overhanging Bald Hills Road in the center of the photo.

On Trillium Falls Trail there was much less evidence of wind damage. Here is a patch of skunk cabbage.



And, of course, oftentimes found trillium.



And I like the big, big leaf maple in winter mode at Trillium Falls.



Ted

Ted is a retired pediatrician who volunteers at Redwood National and State Parks.

OUR MISSION

The Humboldt Trails Council serves as a unified voice to support development, maintenance, connection to, and use of trails for recreation and transportation throughout Humboldt County, California.

OUR VISION

The Humboldt Trails Council envisions a well-maintained network of accessible community pathways traveled by walkers and riders of all abilities, ages and means in the pursuit of unfettered kinetic joy. We are advocates, educators, and coordinators working to enhance the county's active transportation and recreation options, community wellbeing, economic vitality, visitor captivation and appreciation of open spaces.



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