

Happy Trails eNewsletter



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.

Volunteer Spotlight: Eureka Wharf Trail Crew



Eureka Wharf Trail Stewards (from left): Stan Wong, John Presley, Rees Hughes, Sally Littleton, Shar Presley, Kim Ervin, Wanda Naylor, Tony Curtis, Gail Popham. Photo by Rachael Garcia.

A devoted team of Volunteer Trail Stewards have embraced the care and improvement of the 1.4-mile segment of the Bay Trail along the Eureka Wharf since 2019 – and the impact is nothing short of amazing. The Wharf Trail stretches from W Del Norte to C St. in Old Town Eureka – where the scenic, beautiful bay can at times clash against a more somber industrial landscape. While it's seen its fair share of challenges, the Wharf Trail has been undergoing a tremendous transformation, all thanks to this dedicated core group of volunteers.

It began with Gail Popham, who initiated the Volunteer Trails Stewards (VTS) program at the Wharf Trail in the summer of 2019 and continues to lead workdays on the first Sunday of each month as well as many Tuesdays and Thursday mornings. I know her as an artist, activist, botanist, bicyclist, and educator who always stands out as someone making a difference through her resourcefulness, creativity, and unwavering dedication to our local trail community.

“It's not just a community with us volunteers, it's also a community of trail users”, Gail said while noting the various ways that everyone contributes, such as a group of dog walkers she'd just met who'd elected to take a trash bag along with them as they continued their stroll. By consistently working on the trail, the Wharf crew has come to know and recognize many of these trail users who serve as “eyes and ears” along the shared path, and also help to bring other trail users on board.

As I gathered with the crew on a cool but sunny morning, my curiosity was drawn to an open flatbed filled with small plants and bags of mulch. I spoke with volunteer Joann Kerns, who showed me some clippings she's been collecting from established plants that are doing well amidst the neighboring wetlands. Among some of the main picks are coyote brush, beach strawberry, and ceanothus. “We're experimenting this winter”, Joann explained that she has more clippings rooting at home that are waiting to go in once the rains start, and Gail credited Lost Foods Native Plant Nursery for having recently donated 44 plants from 9 different species, all native to the surrounding area.

We talked extensively about the crew's ongoing mission to remove invasive plants and replace them with native species, which will then attract native birds, bugs, and wildlife. One small action leads to another, creating an ecological shift over time. “We're committed to giving back to the biodiversity of the area”, Joann stated, while likewise noting the importance of mitigating our personal impacts on global climate change.

Among a few key areas, the Clark Slough has been a recent point of interest, where the crew's cleared out an immense amount of Pampas grass, mustard, and fennel that had overtaken the rock-lined drainage ditch running along the southeastern side of Waterfront Drive. The channel is now clear of most invasives and lined with native grass seed.



(Left) Clark Slough overrun with non-native vegetation in September 2021, compared to improvements made last spring (right). Photos by Jessica Heiden.

Removing invasive plants has taken persistence over the years, and is just one crucial element in the transformative work taking place. Thanks to Gail's initiative and the entire crew's teamwork, the extended green belt west of Costco that stretches from Schmidbauer to Del Norte Street is yet another section that's been radically transformed over the past few years. Gail raised funds to have the green belt graded; rocks, concrete, and industrial detritus were removed by hand; and native plants were placed along the corridor. It is now mowed and maintained, the new plants are weeded and watered, and are thriving!



(Left) The freshly trimmed green belt between 14th St. and Del Norte St., adorned with native plants such as Pacific ninebark (right). Photos by Gail Popham.

When contractors landscape a project, as was done from 'C' Street to Schmidbauer along the Wharf

Trail, and leave it to the City staff to maintain, it is rarely successful. But the Wharf VTS team has been committed to weeding, watering, and mulching the landscaping. As a result, it has remained alive and healthy. It's important that Wharf Trail volunteers never let the area seem untended or let trash accumulate, as it makes people less likely to dump. There have been some challenges because vehicles have been allowed to park along much of Waterfront Drive overnight, and often for long periods of time.

"It's easy to complain, but it's more fun to help solve the problem", commented volunteer Stan Wong when asked about tackling the trail's challenges. Stan mentioned that it's not all dirty work – you can do whatever it is you enjoy doing to help out. Stan credits the trail's visual success to the entire crew's companionship and persistent presence. While the group formally meets every first Sunday, they also assemble on Tuesdays and Thursdays, and occasionally enjoy going out together for coffee, tea, and baked goods after a morning on the trail.

While reflecting on the rewards of working as the Wharf Trail team, both Stan and Gail highlighted the feeling of having a group relationship and holding regular gatherings. Stan added, with a laugh, that volunteering on the Wharf feels "like poker night." We know each other well. We feel like part of a group. And we're making a difference!

The Eureka Wharf VTS crew has demonstrated that through consistent effort, a challenging stretch of trail can truly become a showpiece and a shared space for all to enjoy. Special thanks to the Wharf Trail core volunteers: Gail, Stan, Joann, Wanda, Sally, John and Shar, Tony and Kim, Jessica and Trey, and all who are called to join on occasion. We welcome you to participate in monthly workdays every first Sunday from 9-11am, or to simply wave "hello" next time you see us on the trail!

- Rachael Garcia, Volunteer Trail Stewards Coordinator

Great Redwood Trail Community Event at the Dyerville Overlook

On October 14th, I attended a Great Redwood Trail event, held at the Dyerville Overlook that was open to the public and included guest speakers, as well as informational tabling and activities provided by a variety of organizations and community stakeholders.

Alicia Hamann, Director of Friends of The Eel River, who helped coordinate this event with other community partners, such as the Humboldt Trails Council and KEET TV; welcomed the speakers and the attendees to the gathering, sharing that this was an opportunity to "continue facilitating discussions about the trail and hear from the community about your interests, your concerns".

The speakers at this event were Perry Lincoln, the Executive Director of Native Health in Native Hands; Jason Liles from Senator Mike McGuire's Office; Nikcole Whipple from Save California Salmon and a Round Valley Indian Tribal member; Katie Whiteside from KEET TV; Bruce Silvey from Humboldt Trails Council and Louisa Morris, project manager working at the State Coastal Conservancy on the great Redwood Trail project.

Earlier that morning, the solar eclipse had happened over the Eel River and had been so astonishing that many of us were in awe from our shared experience. What followed were a series of truly heartfelt speeches by each of the participants.

Following the event, Alicia provided me a link and I downloaded the mp3 audio file of the speakers which is linked below. I have listened to it more than once, not only because of my auditory learning style, but because I found the presentations heartfelt and compelling. The presenters included our own Bruce Silvey, who extended an invitation to join us to anyone listening, and recounted how railbanking has been central to our success on the GRT and his personal experiences using trails that were once rails. 55 mins. in length.

Speakers GRT Event: 10.14.23

Audio File

Here is a link to a short video of the eclipse:

Video File



Alicia Presents Golden Spike to Jason Liles



Lincoln Perry



Bruce Silvey



Kemset Moore and Korina Johnson tabling pros!

-Words and photos by Rick Saria

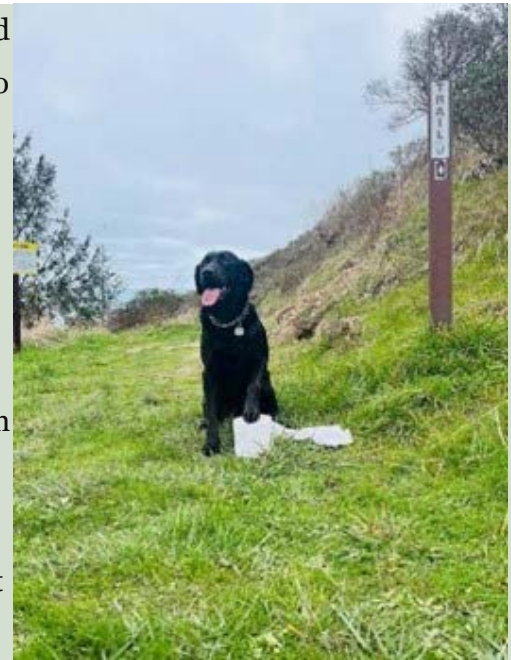
Is Dog Scat Pollution a Problem on Humboldt County Trails?

Dogs are a part of everyday life in Humboldt County. We have so many wonderful places to explore the great outdoors here and many of us take advantage of these recreational opportunities with our furry friends. Nova Garwood, a seventh grader at Jacoby Creek Elementary School, has a black Labrador retriever named Sunny and loves to get outside with him. But on these adventures, she started to notice a large amount of dog poop on the trails she hiked – particularly near the trailheads.

Based on these experiences, she developed and tested a question in early 2023: Is dog scat being

left on trails a serious issue? After rigorous data collection and analysis, her Humboldt County Science Fair project made it to the state level.

Garwood went out and hiked our trails to map the location and amount of dog scat left by humans and compared the amount of scat she found on more popular urban trails to the amount she found on rural trails. She hypothesized that urban trails would have more dog scat than rural trails because they get more use. She also suspected that she would find less scat on trails with doggie bag dispensers and trash cans and that it would be more common to find the scat at the beginning of the trails because dogs would most likely have to relieve themselves early on the trails.

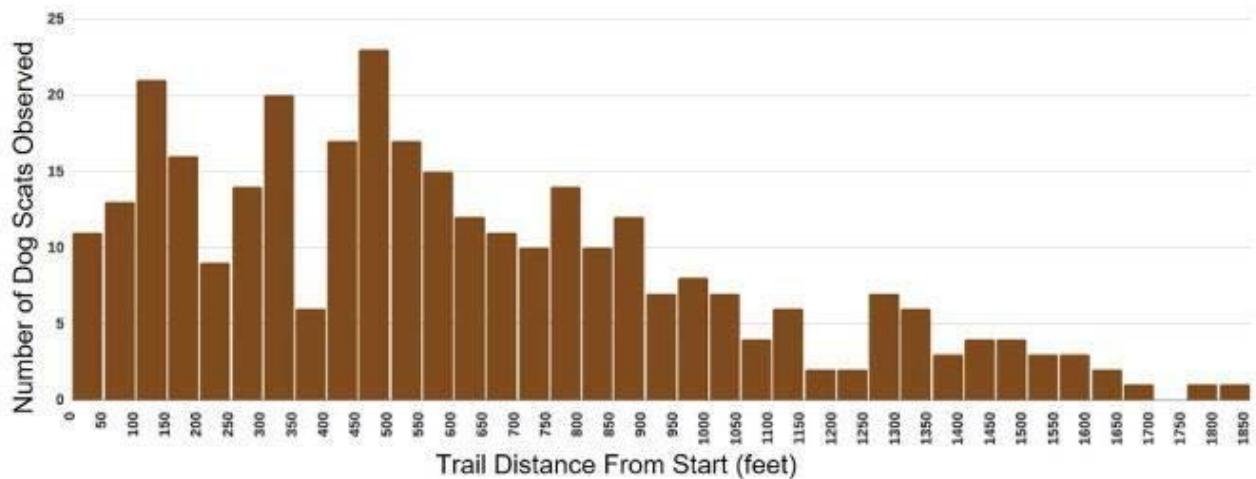


She identified 15 trails across the county and visited them with her family. Upon arrival, she meticulously mapped dog poop on the first third of a mile along the trail, collecting data on number of poops and distance from the trailhead. She then correlated this data with whether or not poop bags and trash cans were available at the trailhead.

Garwood was committed to collecting the most accurate data possible. She was so dedicated that she even returned just over two weeks after her initial surveys to record any new scat that had been left on the trails since she had last visited.



After she concluded her research, she found that most of the dog scat was found on urban trails, which is what she suspected. Surprisingly, even when dog bag dispensers were available there was still a lot of poop. In conclusion, she was able to answer her main question and found that Humboldt County does in fact have a dog scat pollution problem.



“It’s really surprising how many people don’t notice how much there really is on trails, and how big of a problem it is,” said Garwood, when speaking on the issue. She talked about how it takes away from the beauty of nature when you’re having to watch your every step to make sure you don’t step in dog poop. The goal is to get people out into nature and on these trails but when poop is being left all over the trails it makes visitors less likely to want to come back.

Along with making trails less enjoyable to walk on, dog scat poses threats to the health of hikers, their dogs, and the wildlife of the areas. Scat contains harmful bacteria that can have been known to cause diseases such as E. coli, salmonella, giardia, and more. Parasites such as heartworms, whipworms, and tapeworms are also commonly found in dog feces. These diseases and parasites can be transferred to humans, wildlife, and other dogs that come into contact with the scat.

When left on the ground, the waste seeps into the soil and contaminates nearby water sources, which can lead to potential health hazards for both humans and wildlife. Many think that the scat just decomposes into the ground and becomes dirt but many times it washes into watersheds and contaminates the water. The odor can also throw off a predator's sense of smell which allows them to hunt their prey. It can also be harmful to humans if they were to come in skin-to-skin contact with it because of diseases that could be spread.

All of Garwood's hard work paid off when she was awarded at her school's competition and won \$50 for the project related to wetlands category at the county competition as well as being sent to state to be interviewed. "I usually don't win anything so it felt really good especially with a lot of people telling me that I wasn't going to win and that my project sucks," recalled Garwood.

Although not everyone was supportive, Garwood stayed focused on her goal and, with her unwavering determination and the help of her dad Justin and her dog Sunny, she was able to create an amazing project and was awarded for all her hard work. To appease this problem, Garwood proposes several solutions including better signage at trailheads that informs the public of the dangers of leaving so much poop along our trails. She encourages the public to be more diligent in leaving no trace as well. So maybe next time you're walking on a trail with your dog and picking up after them seems too hard, you'll think twice before just walking away.



Poop is Pollution

Dog scat scent confuses wild animals

Dog scat makes trails unpleasant

Dog scat can spread disease

Dog scat is pollution



**Please Be Responsible
Leave No Trace**

By Bella Fratkin, Backcountry Press intern and Senior at Arcata High School

Building Trails is Changing Lives at the McKay



Photo by Robert Vogt

The Humboldt County Office of Education's Court & Community Schools (CCS) program is providing a teen work crew to help with trail building in the McKay Community Forest. CCS serves over 400. students in grades 7-12 at five locations throughout Humboldt County. Students come to the community schools via referrals from the Department of Probation, School Attendance Review Boards, and school districts. Homeless students may also be served. Students in community schools are temporarily in need of a supportive, alternative educational program in order to progress academically and socially. For more information about this program visit the HCOE website: <https://hcoe.org/court-community-schools/>

According to Leigha Evers, Student Services Specialist for CCS, the students on the McKay Community Forest work crew, who are between 16 and 18 years old, are from the Eureka Community School and the Eel River Community School in Fortuna. There are two 12-week sessions in spring (February through May) and fall (September through December); the first workday was September 20. The crew of about ten students works on Wednesdays from 9:45 to 12:30.

The purpose of the trails program is work-based learning. The schools are paying the students minimum wage to work alongside adult volunteer trail stewards. The teens also engage in paid training to learn about employee rights and get wraparound services to create resumes and cover letters using their trail building experience as a base.

The trails internship is designed to motivate students to keep up on their school credits so they can retain their work permits and continue to earn a wage. Per Leigha, this is transformative - the students are able to afford cell phone service, pay off fees or fines, and save for the future. This introduction to outdoors careers is a way for the students to begin taking on responsibility and independence and an opportunity to earn work experience to begin building their resumes and entry-level careers. Most of the students who have applied for the trails experience have not worked a job before, and might not have community or parental support to find those "first jobs", so this is their opportunity to be a part of a working team. The students also can connect with the California Conservation Corps, the Forestry department at College of the Redwoods, and other natural resource/forestry/parks/landscaping careers.

Robert (Bob) Vogt, Humboldt County Senior Environmental Analyst, is in charge of coordinating with the CCS work program. According to Bob, "I can speak first hand that these kids are benefiting from the experience of performing manual labor with a purpose, and also getting exposed to the woods that they live around. In addition, the tools we use during our trail construction work will give them the experience to apply for jobs with Cal Fire, Forest Service or BLM as fire fighters as well as the California Conservation Corps."

By Carol Mayes



Local trail managers collaborated on a regional campaign this summer to promote the safe and courteous use of our expanding trail system. Trails are wonderful public resources meant to be enjoyed, and we need everyone to help keep trails safe, fun, and welcoming. Next time you're out, look for the banners and signs posted at trail entrances and along the trail reminding you to please be courteous to others when using a shared trail. Watch the video put together by the City of Eureka Community Services.

Share the Trail Humboldt

Whether you are walking with the family, biking to work or otherwise rolling somewhere, trails are for everyone. Trail users include people walking, jogging, bird-watching, biking and e-biking, unicycling, roller skating, pushing strollers, and using wheelchairs. Popular shared multi-use paths include the Eureka Waterfront Trail, Humboldt Bay Trail North and soon Bay Trail South, Hammond Trail, Fortuna Riverwalk, and Annie and Mary Trail. These trails are generally paved and used for both recreation and commuter travel.

There are a few easy actions we can all do to make shared multi-use trails work for everyone. First, slow down around others. Once you've lowered your speed, get in the habit of making an audible alert to communicate your approach. Then, move to the left and give three feet of space to pass when possible. If you are a pet owner, please keep your pet controlled and on a leash. It should go without saying, but please pick up and dispose of dog waste. ALL trail users should be mindful of their surroundings. Remember to look up from phones and unplug from headphones. Most importantly- be courteous and kind!

It is frustrating and potentially dangerous when these simple rules aren't followed. Maybe one of these scenes sounds familiar:

It's finally sunny and life is good. You're enjoying a peaceful stroll along the Waterfront and notice a bicyclist ahead fast approaching. You move to the right so there is plenty of space between you, and they zip past, hardly slowing. Your heart rate spikes and in an instant the blissful serenity is lost.

You're riding your e-bike to work on the Bay Trail and are stoked at the time you're making. Up

ahead you see someone walking their dog. You let off the pedal a bit and call out “Behind you, on your left.” They don’t hear you! Earbuds in and unaware, the dog’s owner let the leash extend across the path. You slow to a complete stop, mildly inconvenienced and deflated.

The regional network of commuter trails is becoming more connected, and better connections means more users (tourists, anyone?). With higher use comes the increased potential for conflict - especially at locations like the Boardwalk in Eureka or Hiller Park in McKinleyville that already see a lot of foot traffic.

In addition, e-bikes are an increasingly popular transportation choice for their ability to assist people of all ages in getting around easier and more often by pedaling. This is great for the health and well-being of both people and planet! But e-bike riders do tend to go slightly faster than traditional bikes, and their ease of use can allow less experienced riders to get up to speed quickly. That’s why it’s important for everyone using shared trails to be aware of good trail etiquette, regardless of what technology they’re using.

Want more information? Visit ShareTheTrailHumboldt.com to learn more, including how to report hazards or near misses on streets or trails.

This project was made possible by the Humboldt County Association of Governments (HCAOG), County of Humboldt, City of Eureka, City of Arcata, City of Fortuna, Coalition for Responsible Transportation Priorities, Nathan Sanger, Redwood Community Action Agency, and Advanced Display and Signs.

To Our Dear Supporters of the Humboldt Bay Trail Fund,

For those of you who have traveled between Eureka and Arcata on US 101 lately, we are certain that you will have noticed the final four miles around the bay being constructed! This is just some of 2023’s great news.



Bay Trail South supporters celebrate the formal groundbreaking on May 17, 2023. Trail building began in July, led by Arcata-based McCullough Construction, who built the Bay Trail North in 2017. Construction will include building several new bridges, shoring up the old rail prism, routing the trail along the Brainard levee on the bayside of the old Arcata Redwoods mill site, and improving the Eureka Slough bridge to accommodate both walking and the THA’s Speeder cars. Construction is expected through two construction seasons, to be completed by October 2024.

We are happy to highlight more good news for trails in 2023:

- Early in the year, the City of Eureka extended the Bay Trail south one mile to Tooby Road near Humboldt Hill, along the restored Elk River estuary.
- Arcata's Annie & Mary Connectivity Project is in the design and right-of-way phase. Construction, expected to start in 2025, will extend the existing Class 1 trail another 3.5 miles north from Larson Park to the Humboldt Bay Municipal Water District's Park No. 1 along the Mad River.
- Eureka's Bay to Zoo Trail project received \$10 million to complete design, permitting, right-of-way, and construction. Construction is estimated for 2026-2027.
- The Great Redwood Trail project has initiated significant planning and other developments.

Your donations to the Humboldt Bay Trail Fund have made it possible for us to allocate \$105,217 to trail support over the life of the Fund. Although the value of the Fund fluctuates, it remains just under half a million dollars. Recent allocations contributed to purchasing trash receptacles for the Waterfront Trail, and to supplement local government and private funds (including a major donation from the Rotary Club of Eureka) to purchase a 'flail mower' that is shared by multiple agencies doing local trail maintenance. Funds also continue to support the Volunteer Trail Stewards and the very part-time volunteer coordinator, achieving an active presence along the length of the trail. For the year ending June 30, 2023, alone, nearly 2,000 trail volunteers contributed more than 6,700 hours of service. The VTS have regular workdays at six locations along the trail.

It is so gratifying to all of us to witness the high rates of people using the Bay Trail from Elk River to Arcata. The automatic trail counter installed on the Eureka Waterfront Trail behind Target recorded 200 to 300 daily counts in the spring before it was vandalized in May (prior to the peak summer months).

As you can see, thanks to community support, we are making great strides in developing a network of trails around Humboldt Bay. We so appreciate your past generosity and hope that you might join us again in making a year-end donation, arranging for a regular monthly donation, or donating in the name of a family member or friend during the holiday season. Your contributions help ensure that the Fund will continue to make a significant difference each year in the expansion and long-term maintenance of this wonderful community asset, for all of us and for future generations. Thank you!

Make your tax deductible donation through the Humboldt Area Foundation (HAF) by check or credit card. Be sure and specify the Humboldt Bay Trail Fund -- [Donate through HAF.](#)

The Humboldt Bay Trail Fund Working Group

Take the Eureka CR Trail Survey!

Please provide input for the planning study to extend the Humboldt Bay Trail to the College of the Redwoods. Follow the [link here](#) or the QR code below to access the survey. Thank you! Encuesta del Sendero de Eureka a CR.



TAKE THE SURVEY HERE



ENCUESTA DEL SENDERO



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

11/4/2023-Hike and Bike Day

Good morning,

I parked on NBD Parkway in Elk Prairie, and rode my mountain bike to the Ah-Pah Trailhead, and back to the vehicle.

I was the first person to park on the Parkway at 9:15 AM, and I saw nobody as I







slowly rode my bike to the top of the hill and the Ah-Pah Trailhead. However, riding back down the Parkway, I stopped frequently to talk with people. I saw mostly bike riders, but there were also several joggers and a couple of dog walkers. I saw two ebikes, an elderly couple (I didn't try to engage them) but no skateboarders, roller skaters, or strollers.

About two months ago, the speed limit on the Parkway was lowered from 45 MPH



to 35 MPH. Not a bad plan as some drivers travel the Parkway well over the speed limit.

There is a memorial grove for Newton B Drewry between South Fork Creek and the north end of the Karl Knapp and Rhody Trails, on the west side of the Parkway.



At the northern Karl Knapp Trailhead, a lady from Eureka remarked that there weren't as many people on the Parkway as there were during the pandemic. When I got back to my vehicle about 11:30 AM, I would have to concur. There were only



19 vehicles on the Parkway in Elk Prairie.

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

Humboldt Trails Council announces its Slate of Officers for the Board of Directors

At the October Annual Meeting, the Humboldt Trails Council announced its slate of officers for 2024. The 11-member Board of Directors is comprised of 7 at-large board members and four officers. The officers for 2024 will be:

President - Michael Proulx

Vice President - Bruce Silvey

Secretary - Kemset Moore

Treasurer – To be determined



Humboldt Trails Council Board of Directors



(L-R) Carol Mayes, Peter Carlson, Rachael Garcia, Stevie Luther, Michael Proulx, Korina Johnson, Rick Saria, Kemset Moore, Karen Underwood, Bruce Silvey and Ken Burton.

Photography by Tom Schallert/Article by Michael Proulx

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.