

# Summer 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.**

## **The Golden Lawnmower**

The beginning of Spring brought the birth of a new trail in the McKay Community Forest. Under the direction and guidance of veteran trailblazer and builder Dennis Houghton, several Volunteer Trail Stewards showed up, signed in, and hiked to the site where MM-01 is being realigned and converted into a narrow, single-track trail. The new stretch is nicknamed "The Lawnmower Trail" because of a stranded lawnmower which was dragged in and left behind many moons ago. The legend is that someone brought it in to mow grass along the lower stretch of trail in the spring. It sat along the trail edge for many years. Someone painted it gold about six or seven years ago. At one point, there was even a small plaque, but it disappeared.



Photo by Dennis Houghton

On the first Saturday of each month, and on every Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday throughout the month, Volunteer Trail Stewards will be hiking deep into the forest to forge this new trail. Houghton guided the first group in to scrape the trail, which curves and travels through natural elements, winding around trees and through brush, creating a course which adds interest and variety to the trail user's experience.

"It makes it more fun and more adventurous to hike on a narrow trail with contours around stumps and trees than walking along a wide logging road. We try to avoid straight lines in the design," says Houghton. "Trail-building is an art form."

After that stretch of trail was established across a slope, more VTS volunteers attending another workday used trail-building hand tools to sculpt the trail, gently shaving the upward side of the slope, often dragging soil across the trail to build up the other side, always keeping in mind the direction and flow of water on and off the trail.

For many decades, Bernie Casarez worked at local lumber mills. Now retired, he and his wife walk on the trails in the forest at least twice a week. “I found Houghton and a crew working and decided to join as a volunteer,” says Casarez. “Working in a lumber yard is very different than being out here in the forest building trails.”



*Trail Crew Leader Dennis Houghton instructs VTS volunteers in the McKay Community Forest about building a bench trail on a slope.  
Photo by Maureen McGarry*

One of the important considerations when building a multi-use trail is accommodating the needs of all the users. The width of the trail on the ground does not need to be very wide, even for horses, but must be wider higher above ground. Brush and branches that could hinder horses and their riders need to be removed or cut back.

On a workday in early May, Anna Riedl joined the group. She works as a veterinarian in Ferndale, providing care for small and large

animals, including horses. “I enjoy learning how to do trail-building on my days off. Dennis is a good teacher.”

For more information about volunteering in the McKay Community Forest with Volunteer Trail Stewards, contact Dennis Houghton at [dbhedm@gmail.com](mailto:dbhedm@gmail.com) , or email [vtscordinator@humtrails.org](mailto:vtscordinator@humtrails.org) . Join in and see if you can find your way to the golden lawnmower in the forest.

Article by Maureen McGarry

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## **2026 Trail Summit Connects Trail Enthusiasts to Trails on the Horizon**

On May 30th, the Humboldt Trails Council convened the 10th county-wide Trail Summit in the last eleven years. More than 170 people attended the morning gathering to hear about the future of local trail development and interact with 18 different tabling organizations that are involved with local trails. And for the first time, the afternoon offered eight different guided trail hikes into areas that are in planning or construction for new trails. 120 people joined the different hikes from Loleta in the south to Little River in the north.



*Photo by K. Underwood*

Supervisor Natalie Arroyo started off the morning presentations and introduced Elaine Hogan, Executive Director of the Great Redwood Trail Agency. The GRTA has just completed its Master Plan for the Great Redwood Trail from Arcata to Cloverdale utilizing the old NCRA railroad corridor, and the plan, which is just 738 pages, is available online or in your local library soon. South of Cloverdale the rest of the GRT is being built by the SMART commuter train next to its tracks all the way to San Francisco Bay. The GRTA has been allocated 50 million in Prop 4 funds for the development of the trail, as well as the cleanup of toxic railroad hazards in the Eel River Canyon and the preservation of native cultural resources. The GRTA is building staff and is anxious to move forward with the first priority sections of the trail.



*Photo by K. Underwood*

Hank Seemann, Humboldt County Public Works Deputy Director, talked about the popular North Bay Trail section that opened last year and completed the trail between Eureka and Arcata. Last June, the automatic counters counted 15K users on the trail, and last week the trail was connected to the now finished Indianola Cutoff undercrossing. The County is also the lead agency building 31 miles of woodland trails in the McKay Tract with the assistance of a very active Volunteer Trail Stewards crew supported by the Humboldt Trails Council. The County has also joined forces with the GRTA to extend the GRT further south from Humboldt Hill to connect King Salmon and Fields Landing all the way to College of the Redwoods. This trail is at the 30% design level but could take up to four years to complete.

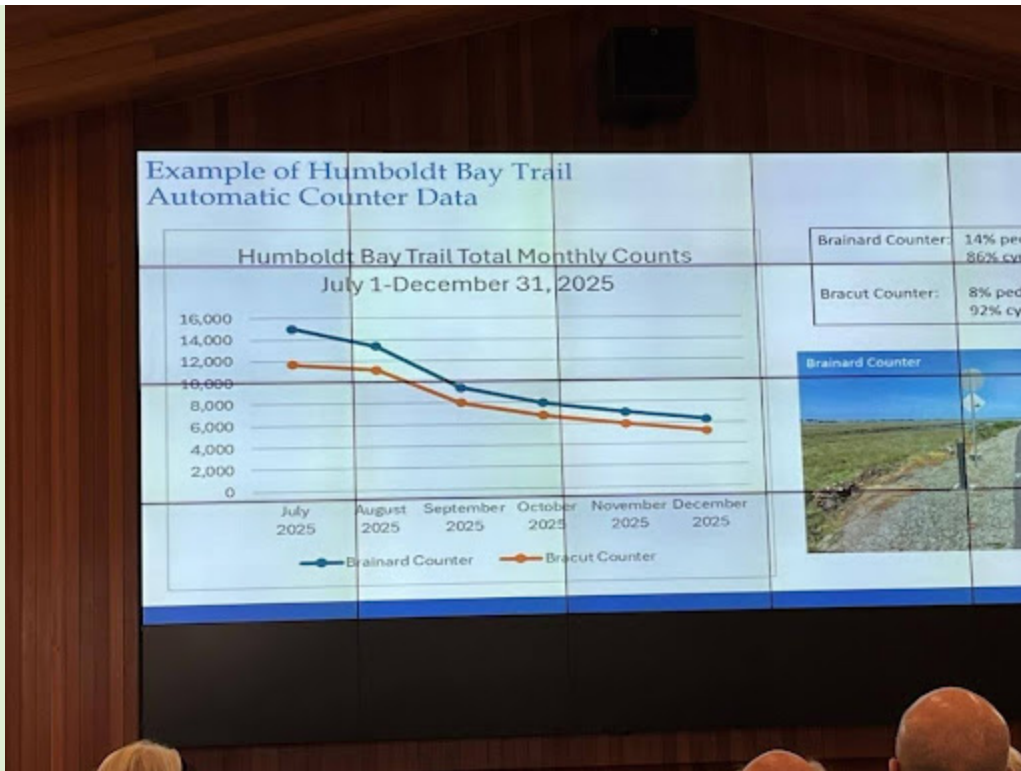


Photo by K. Underwood

Supervisor Steve Madrone, who is stepping down from both the County Board of Supervisors and his role as a Board member of the GRTA, was honored with a Lifetime Achievement Award for his work with trails dating back to the beginning of the Hammond Trail. A commemorative plaque is planned at Widow White Bridge on that trail.

Of the afternoon guided hikes, the GRT trail in Loleta was the most popular. It is no wonder since the GRT corridor comes into town through a tunnel on the north, runs through the middle of town by the park (and an excellent ice cream shop), and runs south out of town over a trestle. Most of this GRT property is closed to the public without a GRT guide until it is safe. The trail to College of the Redwoods was also popular, and 22 hikers made the trek from Fields Landing along the tracks to about the CR exit on 101 through an area that is normally closed to the public. With sea level rise it

was easy to see why this 4-mile extension might take four years to complete.



*Photo by K. Underwood*

The people who joined the Arcata Annie and Mary extension to the Water District Park on the Mad River in NE Arcata were able to walk the two miles of trail construction with their guides to the Park. This trail extension of the GRT and Bay Trail should open this summer. The new McKinleyville Community Forest had 15 participants to check out the new trails being established there, and those who joined the Little River hike had a chance to see how the very north end of the Hammond Trail at Clam Beach is being designed to cross the river and connect to Scenic Drive.



*Photo by K. Underwood*

When Steve Madrone spoke at the Summit to accept his award, he acknowledged many trail developers in Humboldt County, but he took a moment to say that the Volunteer Trail Stewards in our county are unique and the backbone of our trail development. Construction money is easy to get next to maintenance money, and without the VTS maintaining the trails, new construction would be difficult. If you have a day a month to contribute to a VTS crew on 'your' trail section, go to [humtrails.org](http://humtrails.org) to join a crew.

By Bruce Silvey, Humboldt Trails Council

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**Tablers at the 2026 Humboldt Trail Summit**

One of the highlights of the Trail Summit is the many Tablers. On Saturday, May 30th, we had 21 tables staffed by the many trail partners that are involved in Humboldt County's trail community.



*Photo by K. Underwood*

We want to thank the following trail partners who shared their time and expertise with us:

The cities of Arcata, Eureka, and Rio Dell, McKinleyville CSD, County of Humboldt, the Great Redwood Trail Agency, Wildlands Conservancy, Volunteer Trails Stewards, Bureau of Land Management, Redwood Coast Mountain Bike Assoc., Northcoast Land Trust, Humboldt Bay Marathon, Friends of the Dunes, Humboldt County Public Health Substance Use Prevention program, Humboldt Bay Trail Fund, Bigfoot Alliance, Coalitions for Responsible Transportation Priorities, Da Gou Rou Louwi' Cultural Center, Bike Month Humbolt Coalition, and Michale Proulx for sharing historical information on the Hammond Trail.



*Photo by K. Underwood*



*Photo by K. Underwood*

Article by Karen Underwood, HTC Board Member

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## **Accessibility: 20 on 20 Trails**

Trails are notoriously viewed as difficult to manage for individuals with mobility disabilities. The hope for the future is that the trails will be accessible for all in the community. ADA bylaws provide specific structural design requirements for new buildings, sidewalks, parking lots, and more; however, trails and nature can be a bit more fickle to manage in this regard. Due to the differences within nature settings, the ADA works with the ABA to develop recommendations and standards for trail access, trailheads, turnouts, and so much more.

Through my work with Tri-County Independent Living and my assignment as a Board member on the HTC committee, I am working with the trail committee to ensure that trails that are newly established are accessible for all of Humboldt County's residents. This means gaining insight and information from those that experience the trails, those who wish to experience the trails, and developing plans to maintain accessible trail heads, breaking points with benches, possible loaner wheelchairs, proper slope and turnout spots as designated by the ADA/ABA trail standards.

With your support, we can make Humboldt trails beautiful, accessible, and an amazing tourist attraction that does not limit access to all of the residents, guests, and future visitors to Humboldt County. By providing information on this accessible trail survey, we can not only see where there are discrepancies in accessibility, but also where the accessibility features already established are working. Please help us make the trails the best they can be and accessibility for all users. And remember, accessibility supports everyone's needs.



Jessica Warrick, Board member of the HTC and Systems Change Advocate at Tri-County Independent Living. Jessica is an advocate for ADA accessibility in the community of Humboldt. She works with the HTC board in developing accessibility within the existing trails and ensuring the new ones are up to code. With her efforts and the efforts of TCIL, we have been able to see great change within the Humboldt County region when it comes to trails, beaches, roads, sidewalks, as well as public and private spaces.

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## **A Small But Important Addition to the Bay Trail**



Recently, a Bay Trail access point was put in at the newly completed Indianola Undercrossing. Previously, a deep ditch along with an active construction site meant one had to go to Eureka or Arcata to safely access the trail. This is how it looked before:



Having a trailhead at the midpoint of the Bay Trail opens it up to more commuters and recreationalists!

*Photos by Korina Johnson, text by Steve Jones*

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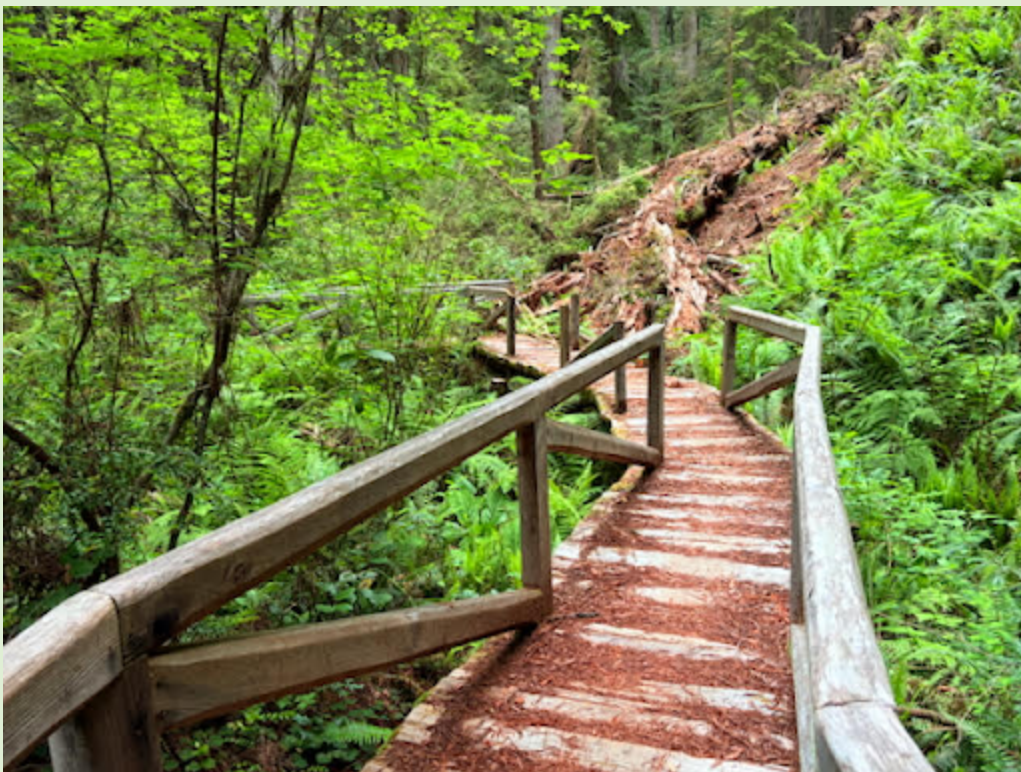
## **Ted Humphry's Trail Notes From Redwood National and State Parks; Pure and Unfiltered Observations from the Trail.**

### **6/18/2026 - Ten Taypo, Hope Creek, and Karl Knapp Trails**

Good morning, I parked along the Parkway, and usually I go up Hope Creek Trail, but this day I went up Ten Taypo Trail first and down Hope Creek Trail. Then I drove to Big Tree and walked north on Foothill Trail. Then I crossed the Parkway and returned to Big Tree on the Karl Knapp Trail. Ten Taypo and Hope Creek Trails are obstruction-free and easily passable for visitors. The segment of Foothill Trail I was on is easily passable. The section of the Karl Knapp Trail I was on has a 4-foot-diameter log across the trail. It is passable by going off trail to the left.



On the Ten Taypo bridge across Hope Creek, the tree debris has been cleared. The bridge deck is solid, and easily passable.



The Ten Taypo - Hope Creek Loop Trail has many flowers. There were multiple rhodies in bloom.



And many tiger lilies.



And a plethora of Clintonia.



Additionally, there were Douglas iris, wildflowers, and many tiny starflowers.



These poor rhodies don't have much of a future.



Hope Creek Trail has a walk-through tree.



Small sections of the Karl Knapp Trail could use a brushing.



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

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### **Our Mission**

The Humboldt Trails Council serves as a unified voice to support development, maintenance, and connection to, and use of the 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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