



CALIFORNIA
COAST & OCEAN
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**SAVING
PLACES**

**INSIDE THE
LAND TRUST BOOM**

WINTER BEACHCOMBING

**AMERICORPS:
FINDING STREAMS
AND ONESELF**

Mike
200



Coastal Conservancy

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Cover artist Mike Lee was a second-grader at Camelot School in Annandale, Virginia, last year when he created *The Drinking Pelican* for the River of Words Poetry and Art Contest. We wish we could reproduce it in full color.

Back cover by Marquise Brown, Grade 8, Rowland Middle School, Rowland North Carolina.

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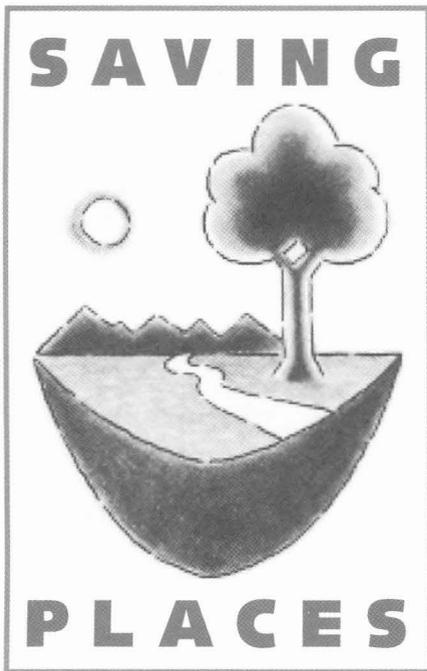
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CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS



WE HAVE ALL HAD THE EXPERIENCE of returning to a landscape we have known for years only to find that it's no longer there—hills, valleys, and towns have been reshaped or obliterated, and the once-familiar place is now noplacé. All those new highways, malls, and subdivisions are connected only to the freeway, not to the natural landscape.

As California's population continues to grow, must our communities lose their identities and natural features? If so, who will we be, coming from noplacé?

In this issue we tell of citizens who are working for a different future, one in which we protect and treasure the places we inhabit and share them with many other forms of life. We focus on local land trusts, which are growing in California at twice the national

rate and challenging forces that many people perceive as too powerful to resist. Land trust members know and love the places they fight to protect, and that knowledge and love, put to work, gives them power. Tina Batt of the Martinez Regional Land Trust took me up to a Contra Costa County ridgetop that her small group is trying to buy and protect. "When I get depressed and don't know what to do, I come up here," she told me.

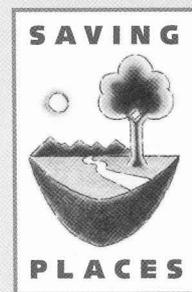
Edward O. Wilson, professor of science at Harvard University, writes that human beings have an innate need to be connected to nature. He calls this need biophilia, "the innately emotional affiliation of human beings to other living organisms." Tina Batt is connected to that ridgetop as John Muir is to Yosemite, Paul Ehrlich to butterflies, Kathleen Goddard Jones to the Nipomo Dunes—to name but a few. In becoming familiar with natural places, some AmeriCorps members are discovering a deeper sense of themselves (p. 22). Surfers launched a clean-water education program in ski country after they saw the connection between the mountaintops and the waves they ride offshore (p. 20). But it isn't always easy to know what to do, as the dolphin-tuna story shows (p. 27).

Children don't need to be told about biophilia. They often have more affinity for other living creatures than they do for noplacé humans. Just look at the poems and pictures created for the River of Words Poetry and Art Contest (p. 40, cover).

"We are shaped by the earth," the philosopher René Dubos has written. "The character of the environment in which we develop conditions our biological and mental being and the quality of our life. Were it only for selfish reasons, therefore, we must maintain variety and harmony in nature."

A Home-Based Force for Conservation

JANET DIEHL



PHOTOS: WILLIAM L. RUKYSER

This "photo opportunity," staged by Audubon Society chapters and other advocates, helped the Peninsula Open Space Trust to buy Bair Island. POST, however, had nothing to do with this event. The Japanese banner reads: "Mr. Kumigai, help us to save our beautiful San Francisco Bay." See page 17.

A reporter called me recently for background on a story about land trusts in California. "Is it true," he asked, "that the reason more and more land trusts are being formed these days is that government agencies are out of money, so if people want new parks, they have to do it themselves?"

Instinctively, I began to agree. I started rattling off the old line about "dwindling



Looking northeast from Sky Ranch toward Carquinez Strait; Franklin Hills at near left

government funds” and “the increasing need for public/private partnerships.” But before I got to “1,000 points of light,” I stopped to think.

Yes, government agencies are low on funds these days, especially parks and wildlife protection agencies. By all means, we need land trusts to supplement our efforts. But is that really why new land trusts are springing up all over? If, suddenly, we agencies got a billion-dollar cash infusion, would there be no more new land trusts?

Of course not, and here’s why: Land trusts have grown in number because the need for land protection has become so great and so widespread. Where 25 years ago there may have been 30 areas in California where people were feeling the pinch of urban and suburban growth strongly enough to organize and oppose it, now that pinch is being felt almost everywhere.

Growth that would have been hard to imagine a decade ago threatens the pleasant way of life in small oceanside towns like Gualala, quiet beach communities like Cambria, mountain retreats like Truckee, even “ordinary” towns like Livermore, Chino Hills, and Escondido. In all these places and many more, land trusts have risen to preserve as much as possible of what is dear to them—some greenery, some historic buildings, some stretches of the river or coast.

Change is racing through California so fast that only the people who live in a place can act quickly enough to “save” it. State and federal agencies—even funded at top dollar—can’t possibly be everywhere at the right time.

That’s what I ended up telling that reporter: There are more and more land trusts these days because there is more and more growth. People aren’t willing to see their communities get gobbled up, so they organize. A land trust is a way they can protect land permanently, be it as open space, park, farmland, or wildlife preserve. By choosing projects strategically, land trusts can, to some extent, control their communities’ growth.

What’s changing in the land trust world is that the numbers are getting bigger. Bigger numbers of land trusts, bigger price tags on the properties in need of protection, bigger budgets to raise, and more competition for public funding. The good news is that most of the state’s land trusts are rising to the challenge.

Reaching for the Sky in Martinez

EIGHT YEARS AGO, my colleagues and I stood in front of 15 or so excited but slightly apprehensive people who had given up their Saturday to be “trained” to become the Martinez Region-



MARTINEZ REGIONAL LAND TRUST

al Land Trust. The Coastal Conservancy, working with the Trust for Public Land (TPL), has put on dozens of training workshops for fledgling land trusts. Some of these groups go on to do great things; some don't.

The Martinez Regional Land Trust did. Those same people whom we coerced into performing a few awkward "approach-the-landowner" role-plays in that stuffy room in 1989 are now talking with real landowners and making real deals—for sums totaling close to \$700,000. They've hired an executive director and completed two land transactions, with a third acquisition under option. They're running an education program for local school kids. They've helped to create a community garden. And most important, they're setting higher and higher goals for themselves—and meeting them.

The Martinez land trust arose when a group of citizens came together a decade ago during a controversy about a large subdivision plan. They saw that major residential development was about to begin in their area and organized to defend their landscape of rolling hills, scenic ridgelines, orchards, and ranches. Their current project is their biggest challenge yet: they need \$685,000 by June 1998 to buy the 242-acre Sky Ranch, atop Franklin Ridge. This purchase would provide a key connection in the Bay Area Ridge Trail and link larger,

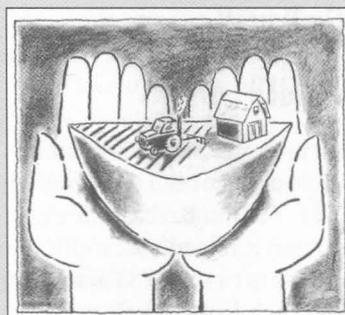
WHAT A LAND TRUST IS—AND ISN'T

OF THE MANY TYPES OF NONPROFIT ORGANIZATIONS that work to protect the environment, only a narrow band can be called land trusts. Here's how a land trust differs from all the other groups:

- Its goal is to acquire property from willing landowners for permanent protection, rather than to influence land regulation or set public policy.
- It focuses on a region, not just one piece of property.

While many land trusts also do what other nonprofit groups do—public education, wetlands restoration, environmental research, and more—it's the focus on acquisition and the regional range that distinguish a land trust from its nonprofit cousins.

Michael L. Fischer, former executive officer of the Conservancy and now program officer for environment at the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, has observed that land trusts are effective because they offer beauty rather than fight ugliness, rely on voluntary cooperation rather than compulsion, and allow citizens to take direct action "to protect the homeplace"—an ancient and powerful motive.



Speaking to the Napa County Land Trust last year, he said land trusts are growing in number because of several highly attractive features. They are fueled by "love, not anger," and their projects are place-based, tangible, and permanent. "The phrases 'easements in perpetuity' and 'fee ownership' have a certain satisfying ring to them," Fischer noted. "You can imagine your grandchildren appreciating your work."



JOHN MOLONEY

The historic Sedgwick Ranch in the Santa Ynez Valley, with the San Rafael Range in the background

permanently protected, open spaces to the north and the south.

"Sky Ranch is exactly the type of project we dreamed of doing when we first came together," said Nancy Schaefer, a founding member of the land trust. "The board has taken on a tremendous challenge, but the significance of Sky Ranch has attracted more volunteers and resources, so that we will be able to tackle even larger projects in the future." (See p. 15.)

Big Risk, Big Payoff in Santa Barbara

QUADRUPLE THE NUMBERS ON SKY Ranch, and you've got the challenge that the Land Trust for Santa Barbara County recently met when it raised \$3.2 million in less than three years to save 783 acres of the Sedgwick Ranch from development. The property was up for sale. If it went, the future of the entire 5,896-acre historic

ranch would have been at risk.

"This is one of the most beautiful scenic areas of the central coast," said David Anderson, an attorney who is a board member of the land trust. "It includes the headwaters of two major streams and has been named by the Nature Conservancy as one of the eight top sites along the California coast in terms of species diversity."

The original owners, Duke and Alice Sedgwick, had bequeathed 5,113 acres to the University of California, the remainder to their five children. Their will made no provision for inheritance taxes, so in 1994 the children decided to sell their 783 acres.

The heirs' parcel was critically important to the university: it contains access to the land left to the university, the buildings and roads. Unless it acquired this parcel, the university estimated that it would have to spend \$2 million or more to make use of its bequest—a sum it could not afford. The university began to consider selling its acreage.

Thus the future of the entire ranch was at stake and, with it, the future of the sur-

rounding region. There was much support within the community and the university for preserving the ranch as a nature reserve. The Land Trust for Santa Barbara County decided to buy the Sedgwick children's land and donate the property to the university, on condition that the university immediately add its ranchlands to the University of California Natural Reserve System.

Was the land trust up to the challenge? It had a few acquisitions under its belt, true, but nothing approaching the scale of this one. "We had to agree to take on \$1.5 million of debt to make the purchase, realizing that each of us might be held personally responsible for some of that," said Anderson. "We had a short option period and had to purchase the land before funds had been raised. Each board member had to consider: Are we willing to put our own personal finances on the line? It was a scary prospect, and it made everyone realize the importance of what we were getting into." Board members weighed the risk, accepted it, and achieved their goal.

"We were lucky," said Anderson. "We had a lot of talent, a superb grant writer, and we used all our contacts. There was tremendous community support. People held events that brought in \$5 and \$10 contributions that kept the fires going. People who couldn't donate volunteered at fund-raising events. And every board member worked on fund raising."

Of the total \$3.2 million raised, \$2,236,500 was public money from the state: \$800,000 from Proposition 70 funds, an equal amount from the Wildlife Conservation Board, \$336,500 from the University of California, and \$300,000 from the Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation Program. Foundation grants, corporate gifts, and individual contributions made up the rest.

Saving the Sedgwick Ranch would have seemed an unattainable dream to the Santa Barbara County residents who gathered 15 years ago to try to preserve what they could of their landscape. What is now the Land Trust for Santa Barbara County grew out of two nonprofit organizations: the Santa Ynez Valley Land Trust in the northern, inland part of the county, which formed in an effort to protect agricultural land from development; and the Carpinteria Valley Land Trust to the south,

which organized to save a coastal marsh (story in next issue of *Coast & Ocean*). They merged in 1985, in hopes of becoming a countywide force. And they've done just that.

"We've now got a well-balanced board, with directors ranging from rural Santa Maria in the north to Carpinteria in the south, plus some from the 'big city' [Santa Barbara]," Anderson said. "The idea is that when a project comes up in any given area, we have a board member who lives there

THE COASTAL CONSERVANCY AND LAND TRUSTS

OF THE \$180 MILLION THAT THE COASTAL CONSERVANCY has spent in the past two decades on coastal protection projects, \$40 million—more than one-fifth of the total—has gone directly to nonprofit organizations, especially local land trusts. By helping about 100 such groups to achieve their goals, the Conservancy has been able to carry out conservation work that benefits the general public, coastal agriculture, coastal industry, and wildlife.

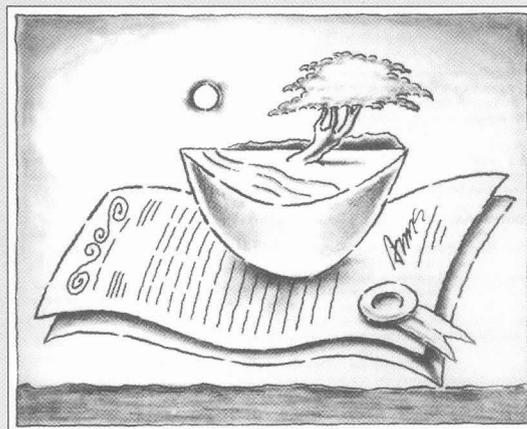
With financial and technical help from the Conservancy, land trusts have preserved and restored natural habitat, opened public access to the shore, redesigned inappropriate subdivisions, renovated urban waterfronts, preserved coastal farmland, and acquired and held key sites that might otherwise have been lost to public use and enjoyment.

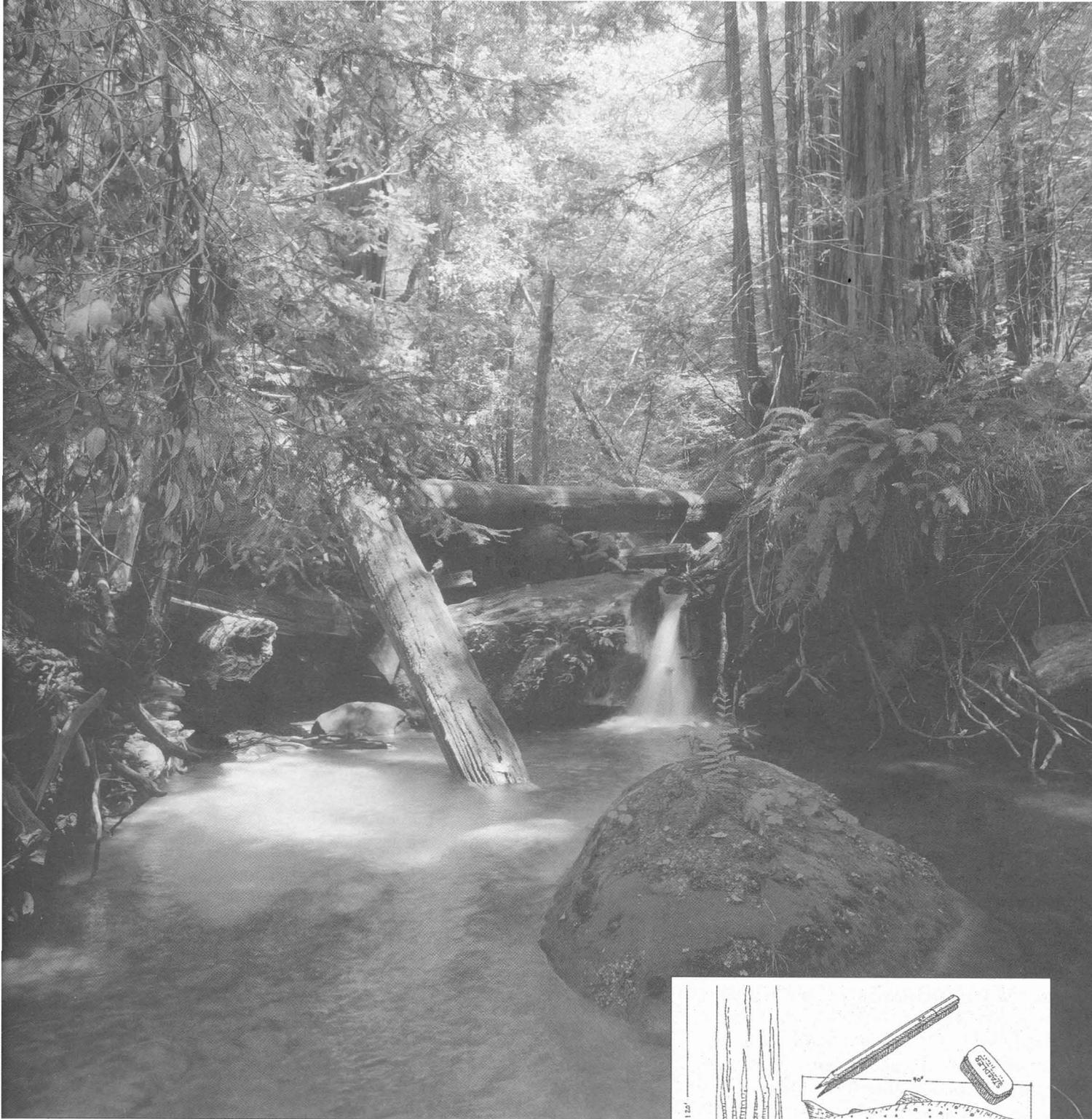
The Conservancy works closely with its partners, bringing both funds and technical assistance to projects it undertakes with them. If land is being purchased, the Conservancy can often help the land trust learn negotiating skills. If there are bureaucratic snags, it can help to undo them. It can also help a nonprofit group to keep good records and practice sound financial management techniques.

The Conservancy has helped to establish two regional councils of land trusts, which meet quarterly. The agency also offers workshops in its partners' communities, as well as publications of both general and specific interest. It also helps local groups to organize as land trusts.

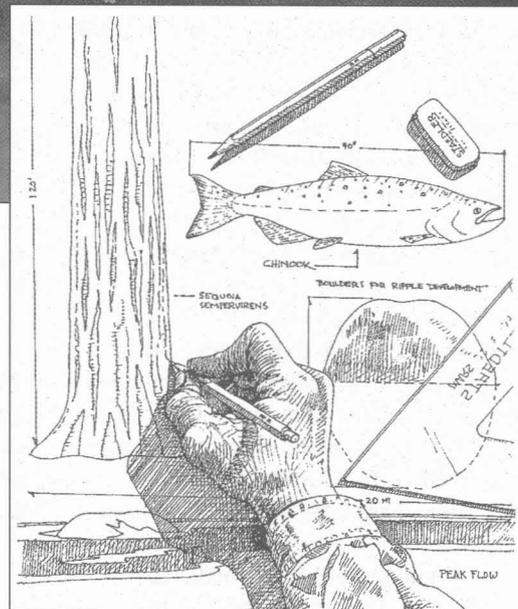
To qualify for Conservancy assistance, local groups must be tax exempt under Internal Revenue Code Section 501(c)(3); their projects must be on the coast, in coastal watersheds, or on San Francisco Bay; and they must be in keeping with the Conservancy's specific goals.

For a copy of the Conservancy's enabling legislation, its nonprofit-oriented publications, or to get on our mailing list, please write: Janet Diehl, Nonprofit Program Manager, Coastal Conservancy, 1330 Broadway, 11th Floor, Oakland, CA 94612.





This redwood forest along Gazos Creek in San Mateo County has been purchased by the Sempervirens Fund, to be added to Butano State Park. Habitat for endangered coho salmon and marbled murrelet is included in the two parcels, of 431 and 389 acres. This acreage will connect Butano Park with Año Nuevo State Reserve and the Peninsula Open Space Trust's coastal Cloverdale Ranch, and come within one-half mile of Big Basin Redwoods State Park. This is the largest purchase to date by the state's oldest land conservancy.



ROBERT BUELTEMAN, COURTESY SEMPERVIRENS FUND

JOHN WEHRLE

and who knows those people. We hope that makes us a known and trusted entity throughout the county. Or at least that we're equally distrusted throughout the county!" he added with a laugh.

What would cause distrust? Who would complain about citizens who buy up land at fair market price so as to leave it open, to everyone's benefit? Relations with the county planning department have been rough at times, Anderson said, and "negative advocacy" has come from conservative taxpayer associations that want to make sure property stays on tax rolls and from rural landowners who harbor a general distrust for environmental activists. For example, an effort by the Coastal Conservancy and the land trust to create a resource management plan for the Santa Ynez River watershed failed because of strong opposition from landowners suspicious of "management by outsiders." (See *Coast & Ocean*, Summer 1996.) In the soul-searching that followed, it was decided that perhaps the problem was that the land trust had moved too quickly, without first building a strong base of support among ranchers upstream as well as in more urbanized downstream communities.

Diversity and Controversy in San Luis Obispo

AS THEY HAVE GROWN IN SIZE and importance, many land trusts have expanded and diversified both their capabilities and their activities. The 13-year-old Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo boasts a staff of four, an annual operating budget of \$220,000, a flashy web site (www.slonet.org/vv/land_con), and an unusually diverse list of projects. Not only does it buy land and conservation easements, it also undertakes research, planning, and restoration projects. It raises about a fifth of its budget by providing consulting services.

Under contracts with the county and others, this land trust has mapped countywide development trends, drafted a Transfer of Development Credits (TDC) ordinance, and produced large-scale watershed management plans. Such undertakings have thrust it into controversy. Critics have charged that the TDC ordinances still allow landowners to develop—if not in one place,

then in another; hence, a land trust that supports TDCs encourages development. The Land Conservancy's Fall 1996 newsletter noted: "Adopting the ordinance was not easy, and involved the Land Conservancy in more controversy than was desired. Only time will tell if the controversy was worth it."

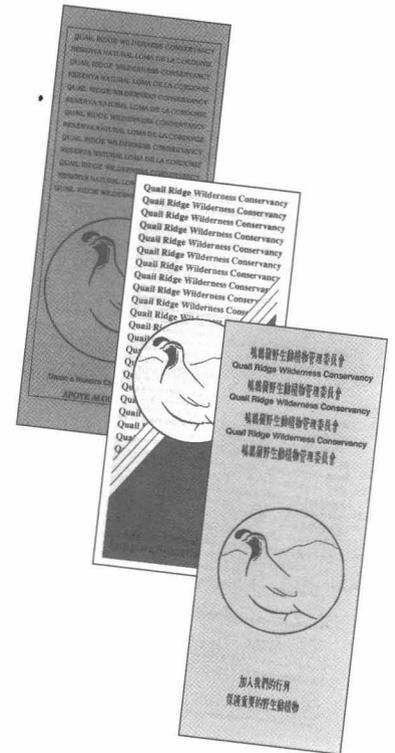
Other projects generate only good feelings, however. Who could object to a creek cleanup? The land trust's 1996 Creek Day brought 700 people to pick up trash along San Luis Obispo Creek, the pride of downtown San Luis Obispo. The Land Conservancy's objective was to draw new people to the creek, then draw them into at least one of its other programs. Fifty people signed up that day to be regular inspectors of the creek's vital signs, under the land trust's monitoring program. Twenty sponsors and as many exhibitors supported the event.

Big and Small—Won for All?

LAND TRUSTS ARE GROWING IN every state, but in California they have grown at twice the average national rate. Of at least 1,100 land trusts in the United States, 120 are in this state, two-thirds created within the past 15 years, according to a 1994 survey by the Land Trust Alliance. They range in size from the tiny all-volunteer Mill Creek Watershed Conservancy (see p. 12) to powerful regional organizations such as the Peninsula Open Space Trust (see p. 17) and the venerable Sempervirens Fund. The Trust for Public Land and the Nature Conservancy are national conservation organizations rather than local land trusts, and they too buy millions of dollars worth of land in California every year. Both these big organizations also foster the development of local land trusts.

The big training event of the year, though, is the Land Trust Rally, organized by the Land Trust Alliance to bring together delegates from land trusts across the country to learn from one another. Almost every year the gathering has grown. In 1996 more than 1,000 people attended the rally in Burlington, Vermont, and dozens more were turned away for lack of space. In September a similar number came together in Savannah, Georgia.

Almost always during these conferences, someone stands up to point to the glaring



Quail Ridge Wilderness Conservancy brochures come in English, Spanish, and Chinese. This Napa County land trust offers guided walks on the 2,000-acre Quail Ridge Reserve and wheelchair accessible boat tours of Lake Berryessa. Call Frank Maurer at (916) 758-1387.

lack of ethnic diversity among those present. The land trust movement is predominantly white and middle to upper class, and this fact is reflected in the sea of white faces at the rally. Special sessions are held each year to discuss "social justice" and ways to diversify land trust membership. The next year the same discussions are held by the same people, with little change resulting.

This lack of ethnic diversity in the land trust movement reflects a demographic reality: Property-owning residents in beautiful places with open space around them are unlikely to be poor or members of minority groups. Land trust members point out, however, that the land they protect is for the benefit of all people—either indirectly, by providing a healthier environment with more wildlife habitat and productive farms, or directly by creating parks and trails that are open to all. And many land trusts make a special effort to invite people from poorer communities onto their properties, particularly schoolchildren from distressed districts. Some groups, like the Quail Ridge Wilderness Conservancy in Davis, work hard to reach as many population groups as possible. Its brochures come in English, Spanish, and Chinese.

Pressing Palms in Marble Halls

THE ONE ISSUE THAT UNITES all land trusts—indeed, all nonprofit organizations—is the need for public funding. "Because land is so expensive in California, public money is almost always needed to supplement land trusts' private fundraising efforts," said Corey Brown, governmental affairs director for the Trust for Public Land's western region.

A close look at California land trusts' newsletters shows that a good chunk of their project money comes from the government—either from direct grants or from selling the property that they secure to a public agency. The most effective land trust folks, in fact, are just as familiar with the halls of Sacramento—and even Washington—as are the government officials they work with. After all, they need to make sure that there is public money to pay for at least some of the acreage they want to protect.

As private citizens, land trust members are ideally situated to give a small push to bills and bond acts that provide public money for land conservation. They just call up their legislators and ask them to support a particular funding bill, pointing out the benefits to their district. Because these folks live and vote in that district, their call is important to the elected official. And as long as their "attempts to influence legislation" are limited to an "insubstantial degree" of their overall work—and there are complicated formulas to tell you just what that means—land trusts are in compliance with Internal Revenue Service regulations for 501(c)(3) tax-exempt nonprofit corporations.

When land trusts and public agencies agree on goals, it's "public/private partnership" at its best. Conflicts can arise, of course, as when land trust members push for money for a project that an agency doesn't find particularly compelling. But that's democracy.

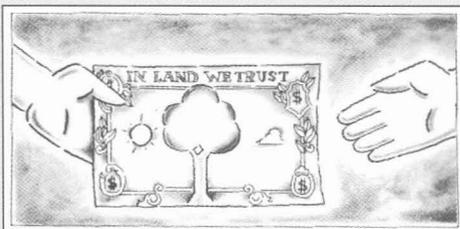
For the agencies, working with land trusts is worth the occasional disagreement over priorities. Bair Island, a 1,600-acre wetland on San Francisco Bay, is a good example. Federal and state resource agencies had hoped for years to buy this property, but when the opportunity finally came, only the savvy Peninsula Open Space Trust could act quickly enough to

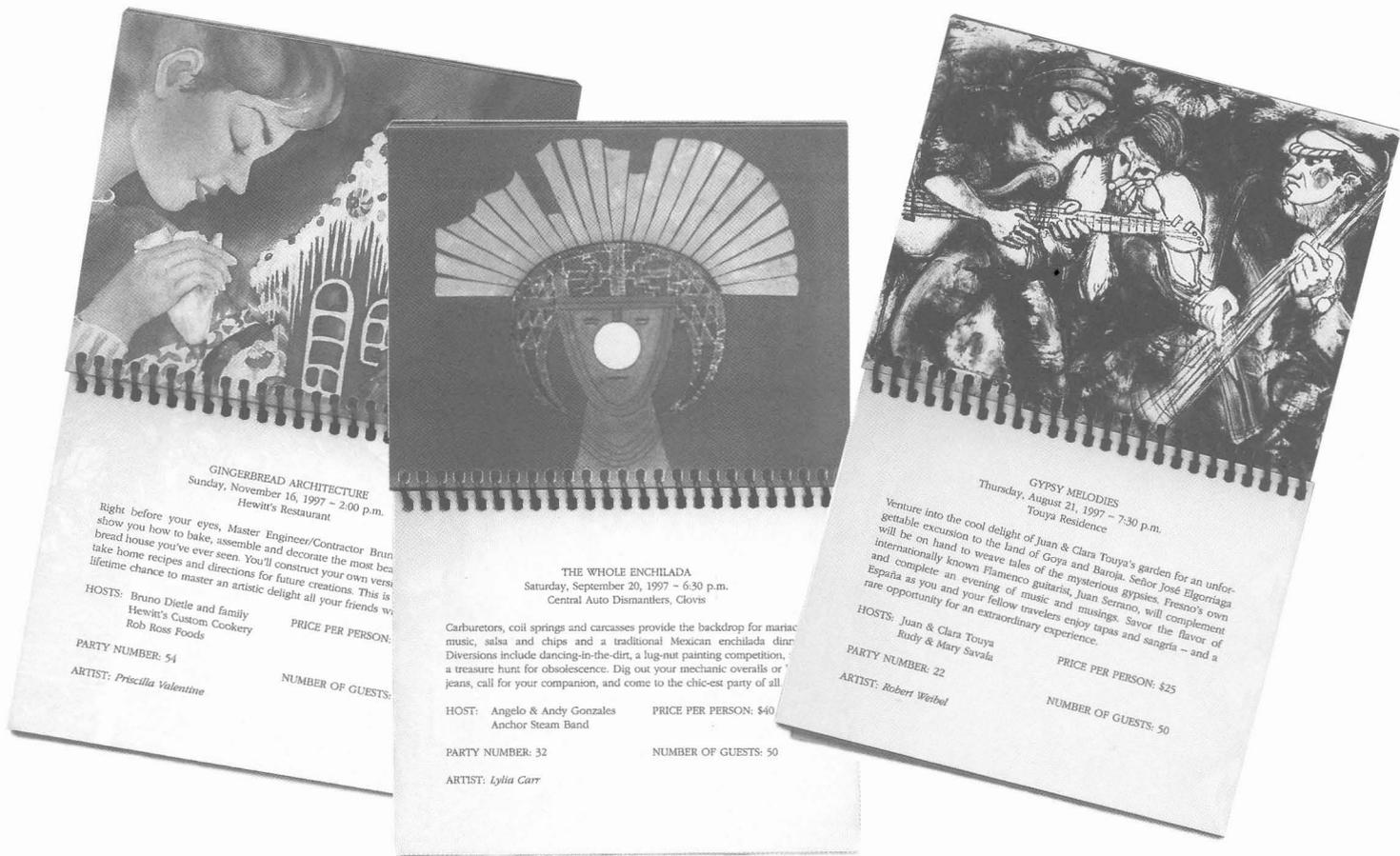
"SYSTEM ERROR?" WHAT'S THAT?

MANY LAND TRUSTS AND OTHER ENVIRONMENTAL organizations have invested heavily in e-mail, the Internet, fax-on-demand, and related electronic technology—only to continue as before to rely on the mail, telephone, travel, and deliveries.

This information was turned up in two surveys by the Telecommunications Cooperative Network (TCN), a member-owned communications technology cooperative. It prompted the W. Alton Jones Foundation, along with three other foundations, to sponsor a conference for selected groups to coax them into the electronic era. After the 1995 conference, organized by TCN and the Center for Strategic Communications, the Jones Foundation sponsored a "circuit rider"—a consultant dispatched among a group of allied advocacy organizations to help them improve their communications.

More information is available from the web sites of the Jones Foundation (www.wajones.org) and TCN (www.tcn.org). Both offer various consulting services, as well as links to the foundation's grantees and TCN's member organizations.





give the landowners what they needed—money, at the right moment. (See p. 17.)

“California has one of the most sophisticated, most well-organized, and most effective land trust communities in the nation,” said Corey Brown, who often rallies land trusts to promote bills that would provide money for land conservation. Even so, California’s land trusts have not scored a major collective victory for land conservation funding in many a year.

Between 1976 and 1988, over \$1 billion in bonds was allocated for acquisition and restoration of state and local parks and scenic and environmentally sensitive properties. It’s been a drought since then. The last statewide bond act that gave government agencies—and, indirectly, their land trust partners—money for buying land was Proposition 117, passed seven years ago. That ballot measure banned trophy hunting of mountain lions and established a \$30 million annual Habitat Conservation Fund, but created no new funding sources; it just rearranged existing funds. So far, the act has preserved 150,000 acres state-wide, many of which were included in land trust projects.

Government parks and wildlife agencies have seen their budgets spiral downward, even as the state population grows and they are pressed to do more. Year after year, land trusts and resource agencies have been scanning headlines and election results, looking for a sign that this, at last, could be a good year for a bond act. Year after year, hopes have risen—then fallen.

Now, at last, the economy is booming. Consensus has it that, yes, it looks like a good year for a bond act. There’s great hope that the 1998 ballot will contain legislation that will give parks and wildlife agencies a big new pot of money. If and when it does, land trust members around the state will join with their counterparts in public agencies and throw one heck of a party, complete with fireworks—or maybe just 1,000 points of light. ■

Janet Diehl, manager of the Coastal Conservancy’s Nonprofits Programs, works with land trusts to buy and/or restore natural land and to develop access to the shoreline. Before joining the Conservancy staff in 1989, she worked with local land trusts at the Trust for Public Land.

The San Joaquin River Parkway and Conservation Trust raises money by putting on a string of “Parties for the Parkway.” An enticing booklet, illustrated by artists of the region, describes wildly different events and includes a form for making reservations. The 1997 series of 57 parties ranged from a Spanish dinner in a garden, with live flamenco guitar (50 guests, \$25 per person), to a mountain house weekend on a lake (6 guests, \$100 each) to a bash at Central Auto Dismantlers in Clovis, with “dancing-in-the-dirt, a lug-nut painting competition, and a treasure hunt for obsolescence” (50 guests, \$40 per person). On November 16 you can learn how to bake and assemble a gorgeous gingerbread house for just \$30. For more on these parties, call Larry Balakian (209) 439-4411.



Delivering coho salmon yearlings to Mill Creek



A Tiny but Tenacious Land Trust

FREEMAN HOUSE

THE MOST CASUAL VISITOR, driving down into the lower Mattole Valley from Cape Mendocino, can't help but notice the Mill Creek Forest on the far horizon. The shades of green are deeper, richer, and the trees tower above the second growth you see between the coastal prairies everywhere else in the valley. The remnant forest gives

only a hint of how the valley might have appeared 150 years ago.

For Rex and Ruth Rathbun, who live on a narrow alluvial flat squeezed between the river and the steep slopes of the old growth towering above them, the forest is the source of their weather and their water. The deep shade of the trees keeps the road in front of their home frozen for a

good part of the winter; the water they draw from Mill Creek at its confluence with the Mattole, on the western edge of their property, remains 15 degrees cooler than the shallow river water all summer long. The creek and the tall trees were among the reasons they moved here in the early 1970s, taking an early retirement from Rex's successful contracting business in Marin County.

In the 1980s, the Rathbuns' place became the operational headquarters of the Mattole Salmon Group, which worked for years to reestablish coho salmon populations in Mill Creek—the last habitat in the lower Mattole Valley watershed for that increasingly rare creature. The Salmon Group took on the restoration of the salmon run as a community effort when it became apparent that no one else was going to step forward to do the job. The self-reliant ethos of this remote valley had likewise drawn the Rathbuns to choose it as the place to spend the years of their maturity.

The old forest was owned by Eel River Sawmills, based in Fortuna. It didn't take a think-tank economist to figure that in the normal course of events it was only a matter of time before the trees would come down. In the mid-1970s, the Rathbuns began to talk to their neighbors about how the forest might be preserved. In 1978 Rex wrote a letter to Huey Johnson, then California's Secretary of Resources—a letter that launched so large a volume of correspondence with various state, local, and federal agencies that it now fills a four-drawer filing cabinet in the Rathbun kitchen.

Rex and his neighbors began to monitor many of the species that make the 220-acre ancient forest their home. They saw coho salmon, northern spotted owl, golden eagle, tailed frog, and torrent salamander. Through a telescope on their front porch, the Rathbuns observed an active golden eagle nest. Their kitchen served as a communications center for the valley, and the many folks who stopped by got into the habit of checking on the eagles' progress too. The fate of the forest rapidly became a community concern.

In 1985, with the help of Janet Diehl, then at the Trust for Public Land, the Rathbuns and some of their neighbors founded the Mill Creek Watershed Conservancy, a community-based land trust dedicated to

the acquisition of the forest as its highest-priority goal, and began to negotiate with the timber company. The negotiations went on for twelve years. Although the process was filled with twists and turns and difficult pressures on both parties (including the threat of a timber harvest plan), the land trust somehow held together until 1997, when the land was moved into the public domain.

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The dozen years of discussion demanded more than talk. Money was required—a great deal of it. In 1988, the Mill Creek Forest became a candidate for acquisition under the terms of Proposition 70, the California Wildlife, Coastal, and Park Land Act. A small cadre of land trust members traveled to Arcata and Eureka to sit for hours at card tables in front of grocery stores, collecting thousands of signatures that helped to get the initiative on the ballot.

The bond issue passed, with \$500,000 allocated to the Coastal Conservancy for the acquisition. When the ballot measure was drawn up, that sum had seemed more than

The kitchen of Rex and Ruth Rathbun became operational headquarters for the Mattole Valley Salmon Group.



COURTESY MILL CREEK WATERSHED CONSERVANCY



Ali Freedland and student poets
at Mill Creek Forest dedication

adequate. By the time it went into effect in January 1989, however, rising timber prices had put the property out of reach once more. As the prices continued to soar, the little land trust realized it was in for a long struggle. Friends and allies came to the rescue to cover operating expenses. Carrie Grant, a local gallery owner and photographer, mounted one of the most successful art auctions in Humboldt County's

history. Hardly an artist in the region failed to donate a piece to support the effort.

Another boost came from a neighbor friendly to the land trust, who bought a logged-over parcel that connected the Mill Creek Forest to Bureau of Land Management

(BLM) holdings adjacent to the King Range National Conservation Area. His sole aim was to hold the land until he could sell it back to the Mill Creek Conservancy after the forest was acquired. Although ten years passed before he was able to do so, that parcel was a key to success.

In fact, that 160-acre parcel made it possible for the BLM to add the Mill Creek Forest as a core area of old-growth refugia to the northern end of the conservation area. The purchase of the forest and the logged-over parcel together fit in with the BLM's strategy for buying up inholdings and expanding large parcels of old-growth habitat. In the opinion of most conservation biologists, large contiguous areas offer the best hope of survival for species that depend on old growth. BLM State Director Ed Hastey elevated the acquisition of Mill Creek Forest to a top priority.

The price for the forest and the connecting parcel together had risen to \$2.5 million. The Coastal Conservancy had about \$450,000 to put in, the Department of Fish and Game another \$50,000. The BLM came up with \$2 million and, with help from the American Land Conservancy, bought the two properties.

On May 2, 1997, the land trust hosted the dedication of 550 acres—with the Mill Creek Forest as its heart—to the public trust. Speeches by state and federal officials who had helped along the way were seamlessly embedded within a community celebration that included song, dance, and poetry by young people of the valley.

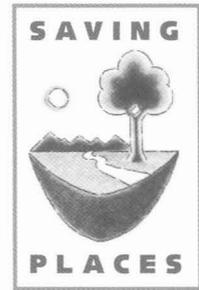
Unfortunately, the final deal was not free of troubling implications for the maintenance of biodiversity in northern California. The BLM and the American Land Conservancy found it necessary to sell three "surplus" BLM parcels to raise the money to buy Mill Creek Forest. With Congress resisting the release of new conservation funds in recent years, the BLM has had no other way to pursue its management strategy than by selling smaller isolated parcels.

As is the case with many "big science" strategies, local values can be easily lost or overlooked. One of those "surplus" parcels was a 160-acre stand of old growth on the North Fork of McCoy Creek, an important salmon-bearing tributary of the Eel River. The sale could result in the last stand of ancient forest in that drainage being cut. People living in the McCoy Creek drainage have formed a new land trust, the Wild Rivers Conservancy, which is trying to buy the property back. Ironically, the new owner of McCoy Creek has been cited in the past by the California Department of Forestry for logging practices that damaged a salmon-bearing tributary of the Mattole.

The work of the Mill Creek Conservancy is not finished. What began as a tiny local effort nearly 20 years ago has grown into a regional concern as the Mill Creek Watershed Conservancy seeks alliances with other local land trusts in search of more effective strategies for the conservation of biodiversity in northern California. Meanwhile it is working to build a cooperative management agreement with the Bureau of Land Management for the newly acquired lands. The success of the grassroots land trust, equipped with little more than staying power, serves to illustrate the instrumental role that residents can play in the health and survival of their home regions. ■

Freeman House is a writer, a longtime resident of the Mattole Valley, and one of the original board members of the Mill Creek Watershed Conservancy. He provided critical leadership in the final stages of the acquisition.

Raising Our Sights Toward the Hills



TINA BATT

TEN YEARS AGO, WHEN WE organized our land trust, no one in this community realized what a major effect it would have on the future of Martinez. We ourselves have been amazed, but—like a mountain climber who looks up rather than back to maintain sure footing—we keep moving.

Martinez is a city of 36,000. It started as an Italian fishing village at the turn of the century and grew to a thriving town, the county seat. Although it is only 20 minutes from Berkeley when traffic is light, it was bypassed during the period of urban growth that plopped subdivisions and shopping centers onto the hills and into the valleys where cows had grazed in much of Contra Costa County. Now, however, more and more new local residents commute from here to the San Francisco metropolitan area.

The home of John Muir, a National Historic Site, stands in Martinez, and although his orchards have been replaced by streets and houses, the hills have remained open, stretching north toward the glittering waters of the Carquinez Strait, southwest toward the San Francisco Bay Bridge.

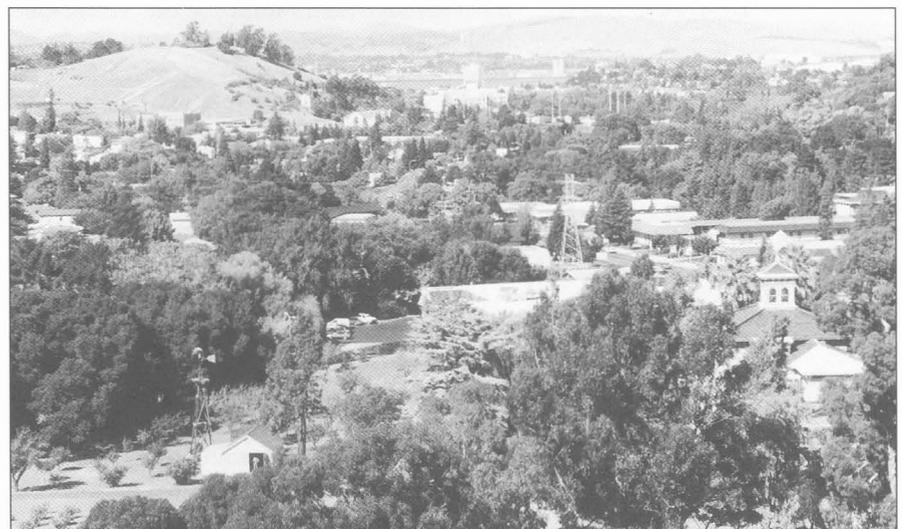
Many local residents feel blessed by what remains of the natural landscape. For them, the Martinez Regional Land Trust promises a future that includes hills covered with grass and wildflowers, and tree-shaded creeks that flow freely toward a healthy bay. The land trust also nourishes a growing sense that citizens are the driving force behind the preservation of their environment.

We came together with a modest goal: to protect the open space within a planned subdivision, Stonehurst, in the Alhambra Valley. Our success in that venture emboldened us to take on something bigger. In 1992 the National Park Service was trying to acquire 325-acre Mt. Wanda, a hill that had been part of John Muir's property, to

add to the historic site. The Park Service had about \$3 million but needed \$150,000 more. The East Bay Regional Park District contributed half of that sum, but with \$75,000 still missing, the project was in jeopardy, along with a key section of the



MARTINEZ HISTORICAL SOCIETY



DEWEY SCHWARTZENBURG

John Muir property seen from Franklin Ridge circa 1892 (top) and today.

Bay Area Ridge Trail planned across Mt. Wanda.

We offered to raise the missing \$75,000, though we were by no means sure how we would do so. Money came pouring in, in amounts ranging from dollar bills to an anonymous \$12,000 donation. With the contributions came letters of thanks. We began to learn that a land trust has power to move a community from resignation to positive action. Our vision expanded.

When you hike up Mt. Wanda, passing five varieties of oak, you arrive at a spot that offers clear views across an open landscape. Visitors are often astounded. To the east stands solemn Mt. Diablo, one of the highest peaks in the region, while northwest a blanket of grassy hills billows toward Port Costa on the Carquinez Strait, through which the waters of the Sacramento and San Joaquin Rivers flow to San Francisco Bay.

Just beyond 500-foot Mt. Wanda, Franklin Ridge rises to a height of 1,000 feet. It's the top of our watershed. Franklin Creek flows from its northern slopes to Alhambra Creek, which flows through downtown Martinez en route to the

We began to learn that a land trust has power to move a community from resignation to positive action. Our vision expanded.

Carquinez Strait. Vaca Creek descends the other side of Franklin Ridge into the Alhambra Valley, joining Alhambra Creek as it curves north. Along the top of Franklin Ridge lies Sky Ranch—our biggest and most recent preservation project. The eventual fate of this 242-acre ranch will likely determine the future not only of the land trust but also the entire region. If we succeed in preserving the ranch, the Bay Area Ridge Trail will run across it, mountain lions and deer will roam through it, and the future of ranching and farming will be more secure.

Much of the land within miles of Sky Ranch is already protected, either in parks or, less securely, as part of the 60,000-acre Briones Hills Agricultural Preserve, established in 1988 by agreement among 12 surrounding municipalities and the county. The agreement—unprecedented nationwide in terms of its size—provides that no growth-inducing water or sewer systems

are to be installed within the preserve's boundaries. As pressures for urbanization grow, it will be sorely tested.

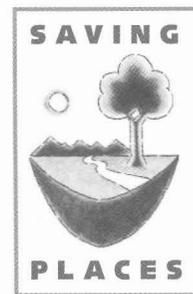
Such pressures are mounting. In 1993 a Taiwanese development company bought the Franklin Canyon Golf Course, at the foot of the ridge, and proposed to privatize it and build a conference center and 1,100 residences. That plan, scaled down to 830 units, was put before voters in the City of Hercules, who turned it down. No new plan has been submitted thus far. Meanwhile, another developer, based in the Philippines, bought Sky Ranch sight unseen, then placed it on the market for close to \$1 million. The new owner soon learned that developing Sky Ranch would not be easy, due to issues of access and water, along with community opposition. The land stayed on the market for three years.

In 1996 our land trust approached the owner, Mercury Marketing Corporation, with an offer. We settled on a purchase price of \$685,000 and an option period of 18 months, which expires June 20, 1998. By October 1997 we had secured more than \$285,000 from Shell Martinez Refining Company, Tosco Refinery, East Bay Regional Park District, the J. M. Long, Leshner, and Strong Foundations, and many individuals. We have a long way to go in the next eight months.

When I lose heart I walk the old stagecoach road that winds along Franklin Creek to the ridge. I sit awhile in this place where the sky seems closer than a curtain. Land and time reach toward distant horizons.

John Muir wandered the grasslands of Mt. Wanda, perhaps as a respite from his responsibilities cultivating 860 acres of orchards that he owned with his father-in-law. He surely crossed Sky Ranch and hiked the ridge, just as mountain lions cross it now to travel between Mt. Diablo and Briones Park. A mountain lion was seen up there not long ago. No one claims to have seen John Muir on Sky Ranch, but we like to think we are continuing his work by setting this land aside as a special place for wildlife as well as people. Those who support our efforts are touched not only by this wilderness but also by the hope it inspires. ■

Tina Batt is the executive director of the Martinez Regional Land Trust. She is well acquainted with Alhambra Creek, for during winter storms it has more than once overflowed into her basement.



POST Plays Cool and Fast for High Stakes

FOR YEARS THE U.S. FISH AND Wildlife Service and conservationists had tried to acquire Bair Island, a 1,600-acre tidal marsh next to the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Reserve. This highly valuable wetland was also at the top of the acquisitions list for the Peninsula Open Space Trust.

Yet POST took no part in the many lobbying campaigns to win protection for Bair Island, nor in efforts to impose land use regulation. To get involved in the political process would have compromised one of its most important assets: the trust it enjoys among people of varied political persuasions, and its ability to play for high stakes in the private marketplace. POST was watching for the moment when the owner might be willing to negotiate a sale quietly and swiftly.

That moment came a year ago. With astonishing speed—it took only four meetings—the corporate owner agreed to sell Bair Island to POST for \$15 million. This was a dazzling accomplishment for POST, which prides itself on having helped to protect 35,000 acres in an area where a house lot goes for \$500,000 or more.

Few local land trusts can play in this league. "The concept of secrecy and the competitive edge is essential to our work," says executive director Audrey Rust. "Our goal is the top of the pyramid. Then we bring smaller donors along. We've spent our time cultivating people who pack a powerful punch at the top of the pyramid."

POST had been talking with the landowner, Kumigai Gumi Co., Ltd., for several years, without success. "We knew they wanted out," Rust said. "Almost all their work in Redwood Shores (an



ROBERT BUELETEMAN

adjacent development) was done, the Japanese stock market was down the tubes and their stock with it, and Japanese companies were pulling out of American real estate. They had bought high, the market had dropped, and they found themselves with investments that weren't being realized."

The problem was getting to the right people, ones whom Kumigai Gumi trusted and who could provide the necessary introductions. "A local developer found us the right people to talk to, so that when we were scrutinized it was through a developer—a business vouching for another business," Rust said. "We were introduced by an attorney who used to be partners with one of their attorneys. In any business/nonprofit deal you have to have money, experience, and professional knowledge, but none of these work if you don't have the contacts."

Above: Very few of the people who travel daily along Highway 101 past Bair Island have even a faint idea of what they are passing.
Below: Snowy egret



PETER LATOURETTE



POST team members on the western levee of Middle Bair Island

Meanwhile, the local chapters of the Audubon Society and other advocacy groups orchestrated a campaign to persuade the landowner that his best option was to sell Bair Island at a fair price.

Kumigai Gumi is Japan's seventh-largest construction corporation and the largest in overseas projects. On its world map this wetland on San Francisco Bay, so precious to local residents, would be no more than a pushpin.

"We had to figure out an aikido move so their strength would work against them," said William L. Rukeyser, communications consultant to the Bay Area Audubon Council at the time.

Rukeyser devised a strategy. He would work through Japanese media to make the Bair Island story news in Tokyo and so reach the landowner. "Japanese companies, and Kumigai in particular, don't particularly like publicity, unless they make it themselves," he explained.

In June 1996 a photo opportunity for Japanese media was arranged on Bair Island. Demonstrators held up huge banners, in English and Japanese. On October 8, a full-page ad appeared in the West Coast edition of the *New York Times*, which circulates in Japan and along the Pacific rim, where Kumigai has many projects.

The ad had been prepared with the help of experts in Japanese culture, and in particular its corporate culture. It was an open let-

ter to Mr. Kumigai and was signed by environmental groups both in the U.S. and Japan. It told Mr. Kumigai that he would never be permitted to build on Bair Island and that selling the wetland at fair market value would benefit U.S.-Japanese trade relations.

"We made sure that this was a fair business proposition, not a plea for charity," Rukeyser said. "And that it was not a U.S.-Japan conflict but a David and Goliath issue." A photograph of Mr. Kumigai—bought, after a long search, from an agency in Britain—accompanied the letter, as well as a photograph of Bair Island.

The following day, *Yomiuri Shin Bun*, the largest daily newspaper in Japan, ran a front page story. Immediately after, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service received a call from the company, and so did POST.

"We did not collaborate on [the advocates' strategy], not at all," said POST's Rust. "If it worked, Kumigai Gumi wouldn't like the people who made it work."

By keeping out of the public debate, POST had maintained its position as a trustworthy entity that could negotiate with the landowner without further embarrassment to the company.

Audrey Rust took the call from the landowner's representative. "His first question was: 'Are you on a land-based phone?'" she recalled. "As opposed to what? I thought, Ship-to-shore radio? Of course he meant a cell phone, so I said yes." Confidentiality was obviously important.

The negotiations began. The purchase price had to be low enough to be acceptable to the appraiser for the Fish and Wildlife Service, for Bair Island was eventually to become part of the reserve. "We do all the tricks negotiators do," Rust said. "It's a dance, and it has its dramatic moments. We practice in the office, with each other. No matter what, you should literally, physically flinch when money is mentioned. You have to remember that for everything you give up, you get something."

The deal was made. Bair Island is safe now for wildlife and POST is engaged in still bigger campaigns. It is working to raise \$28.5 million for further conservation challenges. ■

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RESOURCES FOR LAND TRUSTS (AND WOULD-BE LAND TRUSTS)

Organizations

AMERICAN FARMLAND TRUST is a national nonprofit membership organization working to preserve the nation's agricultural resources and to promote environmentally sensitive farming practices. It provides programs in public education, technical assistance in policy development, and direct farmland protection. Contact: Davis Field Office, 1949 5th St., Suite 101, Davis, CA 95616; (916) 753-1073.

CALIFORNIA COASTAL CONSERVANCY offers financial and technical assistance to nonprofit organizations, as well as publications including *The Nonprofit Primer*. Contact: Janet Diehl, Coastal Conservancy, 1330 Broadway, 11th Floor, Oakland, CA 94612; (510) 286-1015.

LAND TRUST ALLIANCE is the national organization of local and regional land trusts. Its mission is to strengthen the land trust movement and help land trusts save land by providing information and education, fostering supportive public policies, and building public awareness of land trusts and their goals. Contact: Land Trust Alliance, 1319 F St. NW, Suite 501, Washington, DC 20004; (202) 638-4725.

RIVERS, TRAILS AND CONSERVATION ASSISTANCE PROGRAM, part of the National Park Service, provides technical assistance to states, local governments, and citizen groups to protect and restore river corridors and to establish trail systems. Contact: Western Region, National Park Service, 600 Harrison St., Suite 600, San Francisco, CA 94107; (415) 744-3975.

THE TRUST FOR PUBLIC LAND, a national nonprofit organization based in San Francisco, provides land acquisition assistance and land trust training. The Western Regional Office of TPL also coordinates quarterly meetings of the California Land Trust Council. Contact: Elizabeth Byers, Trust for Public Land, Western Regional Office, 116 New Montgomery St., Suite 300, San Francisco, CA 94105; (415) 495-5660.

Publications

CALIFORNIA COAST & OCEAN, published by the Coastal Conservancy in cooperation with the California Academy of Sciences, is the only magazine dedicated to conservation issues on California's coast. It often features articles useful and interesting to land trusts. See insert card to subscribe.

CALIFORNIA TODAY is a bimonthly newsletter published by the Planning and Conservation League, a membership organization and alliance of conservation organizations

devoted to the passage of sound environmental and planning legislation in California. Contact: Planning and Conservation League, 926 J St., Suite 612, Sacramento, CA 95814; (916) 444-8726.

COMMON GROUND, a bimonthly newsletter of the Conservation Fund, regularly covers funding issues. Contact: Conservation Fund, 1800 N. Kent St., Suite 1120, Arlington, VA 22209; (703) 525-6300. The Conservation Fund also publishes *Land Letter*, a biweekly newsletter covering national land policy for natural resource professionals in government, nonprofit conservation organizations, and the private sector. Call: (703) 522-8008.

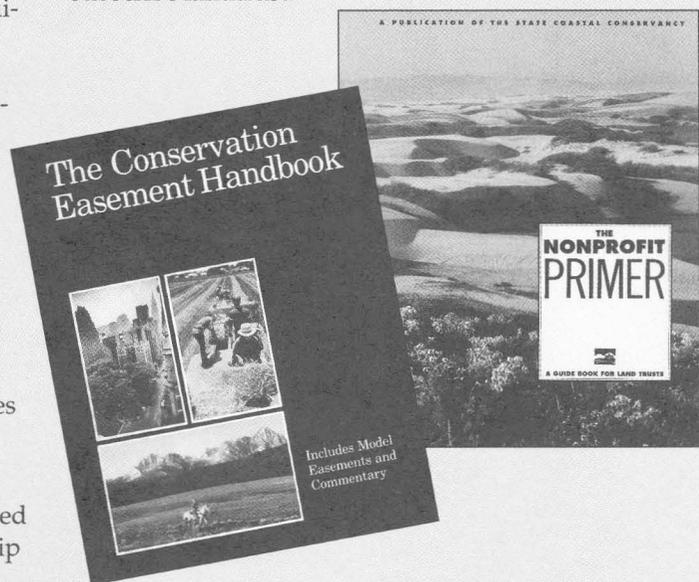
EXCHANGE, a quarterly magazine published by the Land Trust Alliance, features articles by and about land trusts across the country. Contact the Land Trust Alliance. (see listing above).

GREENSENSE: FINANCING PARKS AND CONSERVATION, reporting on parks and conservation funding nationwide, is a quarterly newsletter published by TPL. Contact: Trust for Public Land, 116 New Montgomery St., 4th Floor, San Francisco, CA 94105; (415) 495-4014; or call: (800) 714-LAND; web site: www.tpl.org/tpl.

ON SAVING LAND is a bimonthly newsletter for California land trusts which regularly covers funding issues. Contact: Trust for Public Land, (see listing above.)

Internet

LAND TRUST MAILING LIST, an e-mail information exchange among some 300 land trust staff and members across the country. To subscribe (it's free), address an e-mail message to majordomo@indiana.edu, leave the subject line blank, and for the message just write, "subscribe landtrust."



Clean Snow for Clean Surf

LISA OWENS-VIANI

PIERCE FLINN AND HIS friends, most of whom are surfers, head for the ski slopes in the winter. A few years ago they started noticing a certain lack of respect for the environment up there. "We saw a lot of trash being dumped

on the hills, cigarette butts and lift tickets, for example," said Flinn, who as executive director of the Surfrider Foundation is keenly aware that what's on top of the watershed flows down toward the shore. "A lot of the younger kids were bashing

MIKE BONNIE



into trees with their snowboards, using the mountains as amusement parks."

Granted that the very presence of ski resorts damages the watershed, he said, there's no need for people to add to the damage by careless behavior. "We see kids fixing cars on the side of the road and cars dripping oil in parking lots. All that stuff comes down the mountain in the spring."

Surfrider has long been active in clean water efforts along the shore. Now, clearly, more had to be done. Flinn and his friends set out to raise consciousness in the upper watersheds by launching the Snowrider Project three years ago. The aim is to reach as many people as possible among those who go to the mountains for recreation—starting with surfers, about 60 percent of whom also do snow sports, according to Flinn. "We want them to know that whatever goes on 'up there' ends up 'down here,'" he said.

As part of the Snowrider Project, Surfrider has placed ads in snow sports magazines and posters in ski shops and resorts; it has produced public service announcements and a brochure that describes the water cycle and points out connections between snow in the mountains and water in rivers, streams, and ocean waves. This brochure is being distributed through manufacturers of winter sports equipment, retailers, and mountain resorts.

Surfrider has also teamed up with the snow sports industry to get the Snowrider message across in a way that appeals to the high energy crowd. In the November 1996 issue of *High Maintenance*, a snow sports magazine, Steve Barilotti's "Downstream Theory 101" described



MIKE BONNIE

the "Snowboarder Water Cycle":

Starting at the top of the food chain, take one pitcher of tasteless mass-market American lager purchased at a hideously inflated price from the Bear Butt Lodge atop Mount Whatever. Process through one snowboarder. Flush. In time, that largish stein of prole ale—after having passed through Mr. or Ms. Boarder's kidneys—will filter down the mountain to the ocean to be picked up as evaporation and sprinkled over the mountains as snow to be carved, ripped, slashed, whipped, and flayed by legions of snowboard enthusiasts.

The project has progressed to a second stage in Colorado, where Surfrider is sponsoring mountain cleanups and working with resorts in Vale and Aspen to start recycling programs and to manage ski slopes better by revegetating them in the spring with native wildflowers and grasses, which help absorb runoff and avoid erosion.

"This project is particularly interesting," says Steve Rogerson of Patagonia, Inc., "because I don't think many people think about the connection between the snow that falls in the mountains and what ends up in the oceans, and there is an interconnectedness. [It's] also a way to reach a little bit younger crowd—the set that I think is more likely to heed this message because it's snowboard-oriented." ■

Lisa Owens-Viani writes from Richmond, CA.

Finding Streams and Finding Oneself

JULIE BRUSH

I NEED FIVE VOLUNTEERS, please," I announce, and eager hands thrust toward the classroom ceiling. I choose five of the third-graders and arrange them in a semicircle facing the class. "Okay, we need the tallest in the middle, the shortest on the ends. Good! Now, the tops of your heads are mountain peaks, and all of you

together are a watershed." I turn to the rest of the class: "Now imagine you are a drop of rain falling from the sky. You land on the mountaintop and flow down the face of the mountain into . . . Help me out here!"

"Streams?" one student ventures.

"Good! Then the drop flows into . . ."

"Rivers," several voices chime.

Kimberly Jackson and students mark storm drains in Fortuna.



COURTESY, AMERICORPS WATERSHED STEWARDS PROJECT

"Exactly! Then the rivers may flow into the bay, and finally into . . ."

"The OCEAN!" The class understands now.

I smile triumphantly, "That's right! This is a watershed."

Only two years ago, when I was tucked away in a lab in Nebraska working on my senior research project (searching for a genetic basis for dyslexia), I would not have imagined myself teaching children about watersheds. Nor would I have envisioned myself examining northern California streams for habitat value to salmon or organizing public meetings to encourage better natural resource management. Yet during the past two years I have been immersed in such work for the AmeriCorps Watershed Stewards Project.

As a biology student at Creighton University in Omaha, I had initially aspired toward medical school. By the time I was a senior, though, I knew that I first wanted to work in the field of biology, preferably in ecology. Work opportunities were abundant in business and computers, but jobs related to the natural sciences proved harder to come by. When I heard about AmeriCorps through my university's career center, I decided to look into it. I knew that there was much good work to be done by a domestic Peace Corps, and I had time and energy to contribute.

AmeriCorps is part of President Clinton's 1993 National Service Initiative. Its motto is "Getting things done," and its goal is to help communities meet education, public safety, human, and environmental needs. More than 26,000 volunteer members now serve in hundreds of AmeriCorps programs nationwide, 2,300 of them in California. They earn a living stipend of \$5.75 an hour (\$900 a month for full-time service, with health insurance), and also receive an educational award of \$4,725 a year, which can be used to attend any accredited academic or vocational institution or to repay any guaranteed student loan. AmeriCorps members range in age from 17 up (there is no upper age limit) and serve for up to two years. Each AmeriCorps project is developed to meet a particular set of needs within a community. The Watershed Stewards Project is helping agencies collect information, coordinate cooperative planning efforts, and find



COURTESY AMERICORPS WATERSHED STEWARDS PROJECT



JULIE BRUSH

Far left: Debbie Crockett shows how salmon "dress for success."

Left: A student dresses up to learn about salmon survival adaptations.

Below: Kimberly Jackson (left) and Toni Ouradnik help repair a trail at Arcata Marsh and Wildlife Refuge.



JULIE BRUSH

the funding to improve natural resource management in northern California.

I was one of 49 AmeriCorps members (and three paid staff) working in nine agencies under the guidance of resource professionals, known as mentors. Most of us entered the program with college degrees. Our task was, broadly, to assess, monitor, and enhance watersheds between Santa Cruz County and the Oregon border. Cooperation with local landowners, businesses, and industries is essential to our success.

We conducted stream habitat surveys, biological and aquatic sampling, road system inventories, and watershed information exchange. We built and evaluated

“It suddenly hit me how much I have learned, and what an honor it is to work with a person whose work I deeply respect.”

structures in streams to provide better habitat and migration pathways for salmon. Of a member's 1,700 hours of annual service, 100 are spent in direct community outreach. We taught schoolchildren about salmonid life cycles, sound land use practices, and watershed processes; participated

in community restoration projects; and coordinated community conferences.

An AmeriCorps member encounters a wide range of challenges and has a chance to shoulder real responsibility. Last year Joe Mateer and I, serving with the Coastal Conservancy, helped organize the Humboldt Bay Symposium, a two-day community forum designed to encourage residents of the Humboldt Bay watershed to envision

the region's future and begin planning for shared goals. We and other AmeriCorps members staffed the event, took notes, got the local schools involved, and helped write the proceedings.

Our project moved forward. During the summer we worked in pairs surveying 1,200 miles of streams. In the winter months we entered the data we had gathered into computers. When analyzed, these data provided information about stream and watershed conditions and helped us develop watershed plans and restoration projects.

Each of us remembers special moments when we were struck by the value of AmeriCorps service. Toni Ouradnik, serving with the Institute for Fisheries Resources in San Francisco, recalls a phone conversation with Mark Reisner, author of *Cadillac Desert*, who had called with a question she was able to answer. “It suddenly

Danny Gainok

IF YOU HAD TOLD ME three years ago I would be doing salmon restoration, I would have laughed you out the door. I came up to Humboldt State from San Diego because I liked what I saw here—the incredible amount of environment that wasn't cemented over. I was planning to go into high school teaching, with a coaching minor (I played soccer). Then I started taking biology and, because I didn't have much experience with streams and rivers, started volunteering at sites where some of the Watershed Stewards were working. The more I heard of what they were doing, the better it sounded, with opportunities to learn and teach at the same time. So before starting my fifth year at the university I applied for the program.

I was accepted and assigned to the Humboldt Fish Action Council, a small non-profit group in the community of Freshwater. It started in 1969 as a group of citizens, including fishermen and businesspeople, who were alarmed at the decline of salmon and steelhead in local waters. Now it is doing a lot of projects, from rearing salmon to putting on workshops.

My first task was to become real familiar with Freshwater Creek. In the winter, my partner and I walked the creek, looking for adult salmon, redds (spawning areas), carcasses, and anything unusual. It wasn't easy. There was a lot of rain and flooding that year, and sometimes the water was too muddy to see what was going on in the creek. We also assisted in trapping fish to measure them and record the sex, species, and any injuries. That was tricky at first, particularly when it was stormy and dark. We had to learn to handle the fish and get them back into the stream as quickly as possible. We also trapped chinook to be artificially spawned. The hatchlings had a better chance of making it through the fingerling stage with us. The Fish Action Council had done the same thing with coho for years, until the population seemed stable enough to carry on without this kind of help.

Now my year is over and I'm excited about going back to finish my undergraduate education. I have a very good idea of my direction and feel a lot more confident that I can handle challenging situations. I'm interested in policy and advocacy, and plan to apply for graduate school in environmental science and public affairs. But I also always want to be on the ground, involved with community projects and people who care.

hit me how much I have learned," she said, "and what an honor it is to work with a person whose work I deeply respect."

For some of us, AmeriCorps has opened doors we did not know existed. "When I was growing up in East Los Angeles, it never dawned on me that I could have a job in the woods," says Yesenia Renteria, serving with the U. S. Forest Service in Eureka. She planned to be a social worker until, traveling by train through Europe a few summers ago, she suddenly realized she would rather have a job outdoors. She remembers the moment: "It was in Switzerland. The train went through a seven-mile tunnel. When we came out we were on the other side of the mountains."

Renteria transferred to Humboldt State University and graduated with a degree in forestry. Last summer she spent a week in Saratoga leading groups of urban fifth-graders on forest hikes. "They are disconnected from nature," she said. "I would start talking to them and they would get excited that I grew up in L.A. and could speak Spanish with them. Then they really listened to me. We need to give these kids role models—to show them 'I'm just like you, you could do this too!'"

For others, the Watershed Stewards Project has been the key to doors they had earlier tried but could not open. Tony Llanos, 25, who graduated from Humboldt State University last year with a degree in environmental engineering, found himself trapped in a frustrating loop when he went in search of employment: he needed experience to get a job, and a job to get experience. AmeriCorps gave him a way to break out of that loop. He is now at the Six Rivers National Forest Watershed Analysis Center, working with hydrologist Carolyn Cook to develop a methodology to estimate the volume of sediment in tributaries of the South Fork of the Trinity River. During his second year of AmeriCorps, he will work to develop a long-term monitoring plan for the river.

"The Watershed Stewards Project is an opportunity to see what people in the field are doing and thinking—something which is difficult to achieve without an 'in' such as this," Llanos says. It also sometimes provides an inside track to career opportunities. "Members get a chance to network with professionals, find out where jobs



Kemset Moore

I HAD A BACHELOR'S DEGREE in Biology and another in environmental resource engineering (which it took me 12 years to get, since I was studying part-time with two small kids), but I knew that would not be enough to find full-time employment. The competition for jobs in natural resources is fierce in Humboldt County because there are so many competent people, and for me moving was not an option. It had been 16 years since I had worked in a professional capacity (as a crew member on a research ship). I needed a sense of my own competence. So I joined AmeriCorps.

I really enjoyed it. It was fun. We got to develop projects, working with really interesting people who like to do different things. My mentor was Michael Furniss, a Six Rivers National Forest hydrologist. He gave me increasingly complex tasks. I started with data entry and word processing, but by the time my two years were up, in December 1996, I was analyzing software for culvert design on forested lands. I'm continuing that project now, as a full-time hydrologist with the Forest Service.

PHOTOS COURTESY AMERICORPS WATERSHED STEWARDS PROJECT



Lisa Campbell

IN SEPTEMBER I STARTED my second year of service, as team leader on a project I worked on during my first year—surveying creeks and categorizing habitats. We're working on Salmon Creek, which starts in the Headwaters Forest and drains into Hookton Slough at Loleta, in the Humboldt Bay National Wildlife Refuge. It's 11 miles long and we're eight miles in so far. I can't wait to get into the Headwaters Forest, to see those giant trees. We have permission from Pacific Lumber. I was drawn here by the redwoods and the coast. After I graduated from Humboldt State, in 1994, I worked for State Parks for three summers. In between times I survived as a waitress and volunteered for Friends of the Dunes. It's hard to find a position up here that's more than just seasonal. You have to have more schooling, know someone, have more experience. The AmeriCorps stipend is just barely enough to live on, and I still take banquet jobs now and then—but it's great to get paid to hike up creeks. I've been to places few people have ever seen; and I'm collecting data to improve fish habitat. Someone will use the data. It's a worthwhile thing we do.

One of the most rewarding things I've gotten to do so far is to go into a lot of classrooms. Sandy Miles and I developed a Watershed Stewards Project curriculum for grades 3 through 6. The teachers and the kids all loved it. What's after this year? We'll see. But now that I've lived here, if I were to go somewhere else for a job it would have to be a very good job.

are open, and to prove themselves," says project director Michelle Rose.

Of the 112 people who have participated in this project so far, 43 have moved on to entry-level professional positions in natural resources, Rose said. Of the rest, 18 are completing undergraduate work, 12 have entered graduate programs in the natural

sciences, seven are in programs preparing them for teaching, two have joined the Peace Corps, and 13 are doing a second year with AmeriCorps.

For the communities in which participants serve, the benefits far exceed any costs. "I don't think some of the work members do would ever get done without them," says Michelle Rose. "In Mendocino County, where up to 95 percent of the land is privately owned, resource professionals are so taxed they seldom have the time it takes to work with individual landowners toward changes in land use practices. With AmeriCorps we can do that. We have the people."

Of the services we perform, our work in the schools is perhaps most widely known and appreciated. We draw not only from our service experience, but also from recent academic studies to come up with classroom presentations and activities that are instructive and meaningful. Project participants tend to be very enthusiastic about this aspect of the program.

As for me, I am now looking into a graduate program in ecosystem management. I had been attracted to a holistic approach to medicine and now realize that this approach can be applied to natural resource management as well. All things in nature are interconnected. This I knew before, in the abstract, and now I have experienced it. I have a far better idea now of where I want to go and can see pathways that can take me there. I believe that AmeriCorps programs are a good investment in our country and hope that others will continue to have this opportunity to serve well into the future. ■

AmeriCorps programs nationwide are funded in large part through the National Community Services Trust Act of 1993, which is presently up for reauthorization. The Corporation for National Service funds the educational award, up to 85 percent of stipend and health insurance costs, and up to 67 percent of other project costs. The rest of the funding comes from participating state and federal agencies and nonprofit groups in the communities where the AmeriCorps members serve. The California Commission on Improving Life through Service reviews each AmeriCorps project annually to determine whether to refund it. The Watershed Stewards Project is one of the few in California already to have been approved through the year 2000.

Michelle Rose

BY LUCK, AMERICORPS CAME up at a time when we really needed it. I was designing data bases and doing data analysis at the Department of Fish and Game.

A couple of others and I were running summer field crews of college graduates and students for data collection. That wasn't a very satisfying approach. Many of the crew didn't have the necessary skills, they didn't know how to analyze data, and they weren't getting a clear picture of what the data were for. At the same time, our budgets were being cut, yet critical decisions still had to be made about resource use.

So Gary Flosi and Scott Downie, who were also at Fish and Game, and I took concepts embodied in that summer program and in the mission of the California Conservation Corps, expanded them, and designed the Watershed Stewards Project. The California Commission on Improving Life through Service—the state commission that oversees AmeriCorps programs in California—granted funding in August 1994, and in October work began.

We teamed up each AmeriCorps member assigned to the project with a mentor, a natural resources professional. Almost all the mentors are biologists and hydrologists who have good reputations in their fields and are community-minded. I wanted to be sure that the members' first experience would be inspirational.

Why do people join AmeriCorps? When you ask them, they say it's to get work experience. But many sign up for a second year, despite the very small stipend. Why? The job fulfillment more than compensates for the lack of money. They're working with people they respect and with peers; they're fired up with good ideas, ready and able to do all kinds of things. When they look at their mentors, they see them pretty stressed, bogged down—they're not ready for that yet. If they stay on for a second term they really become part of a community. They develop a community ethic that will serve them for life. I don't know of any other internship program that does that.

The Watershed Stewards Project is a lot more technical than others in AmeriCorps, and most participants have four-year university degrees. Some thought when they started that they already had the skills to do the work, but they didn't realize what was required. We asked them to rate their computer skills and 80 percent said they were strong—and in their minds they were. But it turned out that only 10 percent actually were able to sort by field, clean up text, do basic data analysis. They knew word processing. We put them through an intense training program. The learning curve is steep here, for everyone.

I'm really pleased that many later decide to go into teaching, for they will bring years of experience in science—chemistry, physics, wildlife biology—into classrooms. To know they will go into schools, it's exciting.

—Michelle Rose, Watershed Stewards Project co-founder and coordinator

Congress Writes a New Act for the Tuna-Dolphin Drama

WESLEY MARX

WHEN YOU SHOP FOR canned tuna in the future, you may have to decide between a can with a dolphin-safe label and one that is cheaper—but lacks the label.

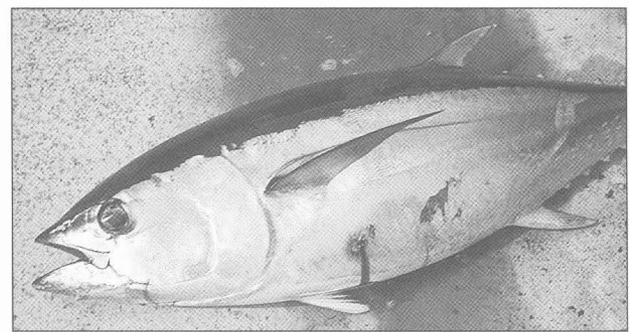
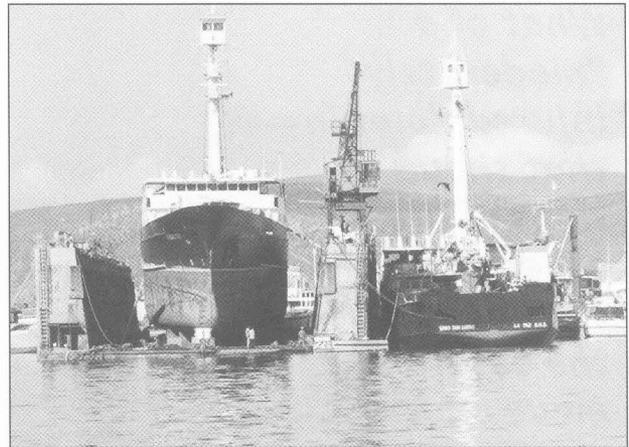
This choice will arise because Congress passed legislation in July to deal with a hotly contested issue: the killing of dolphins in tuna nets. In the eastern tropical Pacific Ocean, the region stretching from California to Chile and west to Hawaii, mature yellowfin tuna associate with dolphins in mixed schools. More than 30 years ago, the tuna fleet learned that by encircling dolphins in huge purse seines (“setting on dolphins”), it could catch tons of yellowfin tuna. Dolphins, which are marine mammals, must surface to breathe. As dolphin-set fishing gained in popularity, growing numbers of spotted, spinner, and common dolphins drowned—up to 500,000 a year.

In 1972, Congress passed the Marine Mammal Protection Act (MMPA), which requires the U.S. tuna fleet to reduce this carnage to levels near zero mortality and gives the Secretary of Commerce the power to impose a ban on tuna imports from countries that do not cooperate. The U.S. fleet did manage to reduce its dolphin kills dramatically, but some Latin American countries continued to account for excessive dolphin mortality. In 1990, the U.S. banned tuna imports from Mexico and other nations that were continuing to show a high dolphin bycatch. That same year, responding to continuing public concern, U.S. canneries decided to refuse to can tuna caught by setting on dolphins. Fish not caught in this manner began to be packed in cans carrying a dolphin-safe label. The canneries’ action had the effect of a marketing ban, which impacted not only the Latin American fishing industry, but also U.S.

fishermen who had already reduced their dolphin take to comply with the MMPA.

Hit hard by U.S. sanctions, Mexico, Colombia, and Venezuela worked to reduce dolphin kills. In 1996, the total number of dolphins killed in tuna nets dropped to 2,600, reflecting the effectiveness of fishermen’s efforts.

Now the Latin nations want to be readmitted to the U.S. market. They want the issue of dolphin protection to be decided on a regional or multinational level rather than through unilateral sanctions. They argue that it is unfair to single out dolphin setting for special sanctions, for other methods of tuna capture have bycatch (also known as “gear interaction” or “incidental kills”) drawbacks as well. This view is shared by the U.S. tuna fleet. “Log setting,” which takes advantage of the fact that tuna tend to congregate around logs and other floating debris, can capture immature tuna as well as sea turtles, billfish, and sharks. Longlines that deploy thousands of baited hooks likewise rack up high bycatch rates. Whereas dolphins caught in purse seines can usually be released alive, animals caught by longlines are often dead by the time they reach the surface. Critics have also argued whether protection of dolphin should be accorded a higher priority than protection of other species.



PHOTOS BY WESLEY MARX

Top: Tuna clippers in drydock in Ensenada
Above: Yellowfin tuna caught off Mexico

**How will . . .
“seriously
injured” be
interpreted?
What of a
“moderately”
injured dolphin
that shows
signs of life,
at least until
the boat and
the observer
move on to
another
dolphin-set
location?**



Environmental organizations have split over the controversy. Some groups—Greenpeace, the World Wildlife Fund, the Environmental Defense Fund—have supported a multinational approach to dolphin protection and other bycatch problems. Others, including Earth Island Institute and the Humane Society, want to retain an outright ban on dolphin sets.

In 1994, a special panel of the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) ruled that the U.S. ban on foreign tuna was illegal and contrary to free trade. Although it is not bound by this ruling, the Clinton administration—confronted by both an environmental and a trade issue—came out for a multinational approach.

The House of Representatives passed a bill making this change, but California’s Senator Barbara Boxer threatened a filibuster unless a provision was included to require a scientific study prior to any redefinition of the dolphin-safe label. Thus amended, the International Dolphin Conservation Program passed and was signed by President Clinton. It requires that an International Dolphin Conservation Program be established, to be administered by the Inter-American Tropical Tuna Commission, a regional fishery commission based in La Jolla. The Commission was founded in 1949 to research and recommend catch limits for tuna stocks in the eastern Pacific.

The new program will set annual limits on the dolphin take on a species-by-species and vessel-by-vessel basis, with the overall goal of “eliminating dolphin mortality.” Nations that agree to participate in the program will be permitted to export tuna caught by purse seining in the eastern Pacific to the United States, but without the dolphin-safe label.

Meanwhile, federal agencies will conduct a study to determine if purse seine fishing still has a “significant adverse impact” on depleted dolphin populations. The study, to be completed by March 1999, must incorporate dolphin abundance surveys and dolphin stress studies, including “an experiment involving the repeated chasing and capturing of dolphins by means of intentional encirclement.” If no adverse impact is evident, the dolphin-safe label can be redefined to include tuna caught in a purse seine set in which no dolphins are killed or seriously injured. Independent observers aboard each tuna vessel are supposed to verify compliance with this provi-

sion. The new law also calls for measures to reduce bycatch in other tuna capture methods, including log sets.

This compromise law, which will not be easy to implement, is sure to be closely watched by all contenders. How will “significant adverse impact” and “seriously injured” be interpreted? What of a “moderately” injured dolphin that shows signs of life, at least until the boat and the observer move on to another dolphin-set location? If the many hurdles standing in the way of successfully implementing the new law are overcome, it could turn out to be a model for similar accords in other ocean regions.

Mexico catches about 40 percent of the tuna taken in the eastern tropical Pacific and obviously stands to benefit from this new law. Ensenada, home port for tuna clippers and a site for tuna canneries, is less than two hours away from San Diego by truck. However, if the redefinition of the dolphin-safe label is delayed or modified, Mexico may have to decide whether to export to the United States without this label.

Ironically, the U.S. import ban has benefited the Mexican public. With U.S. markets closed, Mexican canneries increased the promotion of canned tuna in the domestic market. Sales reached a record level of 1 million metric tons a year, according to the National Marine Fisheries Service. Impressed, Spanish and Thai canners began to export their own inexpensive tuna packs to Mexico. If Mexican canneries turn to exporting, Mexican consumers may see tuna prices rise.

Since 1983, when the tuna catch in the eastern Pacific declined, much of the U.S. tuna fleet shifted its effort to the western Pacific, where the tuna schools don’t mix with dolphin. There is some expectation that the fleet may return to and operate out of San Diego once again, sparking a revival in tuna vessel repair and service activities.

Scientists cannot explain the tuna-dolphin bond in the eastern Pacific. There is one aspect of this relationship, however, that generates little debate. When you see thousands of tuna and dolphin churn the blue Pacific into a white froth and watch dolphin catapult into the air, you are witness to a stirring celebration of life on this planet. ■

Wesley Marx, a frequent contributor to Coast & Ocean, has written widely on ocean conservation issues. His books include The Frail Ocean and Acts of God, Acts of Man.



PHOTOS BY ROBERT SOMMER

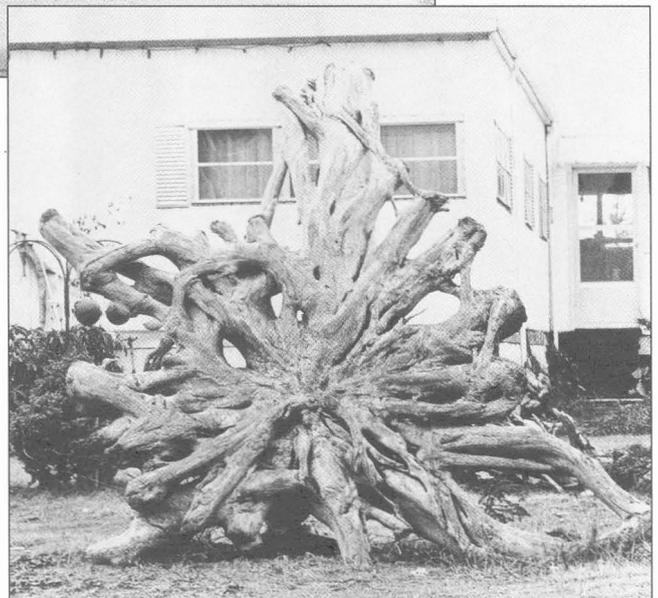
Driftwood Yard Decorations of the North Coast

ROBERT SOMMER

CAST UP ON SHORE BY WIND and wave and bleached by the sun, driftwood takes on shapes that call to the imagination. Painters, photographers, and poets are drawn to it, as are children playing on the beach. Most people are content to leave it behind as part of the seascape, though they may take home an interesting piece or two as souvenirs. But among coastal dwellers on the northern coast, drift-

wood is a favorite material for yard and fence decoration.

From the Russian River north along the Pacific Coast Highway through Oregon, Washington, and British Columbia, you will see ocean logs combined with sea shells, fishing nets, root stumps, and other flotsam to create front yard minibeaches. As this narrow, winding highway follows the jagged contours of the shoreline, you



Top: A driftwood extravaganza in Mendocino
Above: Roots—Greyland, Oregon



PHOTOS BY ROBERT SOMMER

Culling driftwood near Crescent City for creations such as the one above, in Little River

come upon "Driftwood" motels, "Driftwood" restaurants, even "Driftwood" laundromats, all decorated with weathered logs and odd pieces of gray wood. Curio shops sell driftwood wind chimes, mobiles, and collages, as well as lamps embedded in driftwood bases. In front of houses and mobile homes there are pieces to amuse and please the eye. Driftwood is part of a regional decorative style.

The major rivers of the Pacific Northwest are sinuous lumber highways. Tugboats pull log booms to mill and market. Break-away logs and root stumps line the shores of rivers and bays, and drift out to sea and downcoast. Most southern California beaches are bare of driftwood because waves and currents do not carry it that far.

You don't have to go to the beach to look for fallen wood, of course; there is plenty of it along the rivers in timber country. But only on the gray fog-shrouded coast is driftwood yard decoration common. The stark gray tree trunk that serves as a centerpiece among dead low grass in a coastal yard would be lost among verdant lawns and shrubs inland. Wood lying along stream banks is also less suitable for decorative use. It may have branches and roots still attached, and show marks of beaver teeth or the trails of crustaceans that lived in the mud beneath it. Unlike sea wood, river wood does not get salt-cured and sun-bleached to a silvery sheen.

When ocean wood collectors set out on a foraging expedition they seldom have specific forms or features in mind. They pick up a piece that strikes their fancy, take it home, put it out in the yard until the shadows stop moving and they can judge whether to keep or discard it. Logs are generally left in their natural state, though some people carve animal forms into them, as in the dragon centerpiece of the Surfside Motel in Depoe Bay, Oregon, or the chainsaw sculptures displayed in Orrick, California.

Many front yard minibeach sculptures are the work of retired men who live alone in small houses or mobile homes or, if married, whose wives control the interior, leaving outside areas to their husbands for personal expression. Every so often you come across a novel functional use of beach wood, such as the collage around the electric meter and the grave marker along a lonely coastal promontory in Little

River, the latter inscribed "To your dreams, my darling."

There are two schools of thought among collectors about altering a natural material in the interests of art and decoration. The naturalist feels that to polish, carve, or embellish found wood is to betray its intrinsic qualities. The craftsman sees the wood as material for creating something beautiful. If this means that the original form is submerged in a larger sculptural entity, or a superfluous branch is severed for the sake of perceptual clarity, this is not only permissible, it is required. To release the spirits from the wood, nature must yield to art. There are various compromise positions between these two extremes.

On the beaches of the Pacific Northwest, where rivers drain a great lumber region, driftwood seems to be a renewable natural resource. But that does not mean that its removal is without consequence. Piled up on the back beach it forms windbreaks that

reduce erosion and provide shelter to plants and animals. Taking a special piece home may cause no harm, but removing large quantities can severely damage beach ecology. In state parks, signs are posted if collecting is permitted.

As long as driftwood decoration is limited to the area along Highway 1, supply and demand are likely to remain in balance. The collector is one of many types of beach scavengers. If what is essentially a vernacular regional style should spread inland, bringing an increase in demand, the consequences for the beaches would be serious. Fortunately, the gray sheen of ocean wood is out of place on grassy turf amid shrubs and leafy trees. More than rules and regulations, aesthetics restrict its use as a landscape material to those places where it is most abundant. ■

Robert Sommer, chair of the art department at the University of California, Davis, has been documenting driftwood decorations for 25 years.

Many... are the work of retired men who live alone in small houses or mobile homes or, if married, whose wives control the interior, leaving outside areas to their husbands for personal expression.

Crafting a Driftwood Living

TO BOB KELLER, a botanist and craftsman, driftwood is a source of livelihood. He forages on the beaches of Mendocino County for pieces to use in building chairs, benches, and tables. He combines it with locally milled wood and, sometimes, with hunks of marine plywood from crashed boats that wash up at Noyo Harbor—"driftwood with a human history," he calls it.

There is plenty to choose from. "Everything that grows in the woods can be found on the beach," Keller says. "There's a river every mile or so of coast, and in the winter they flush out their accumulated loads. The other day I found a piece of California nutmeg. It's a rare tree, related to the Pacific yew, and it's hard to spot in the woods, but it's yellow on the beach. It has dormant buds in the base, so it's good for tabletops with 'bird's eyes.'"

Keller sells his creations, along with work by other local craftsmen, at Sticks, his shop in the town of Mendocino, and it's a living—not a luxurious living, to be sure, but people don't move to the north coast to get rich, they come for the wild beauty. "I'm an urban refugee," Keller says. Four years ago, he was running two natural history shops in Sacramento.

"I just got tired of commuting on the freeway and feeling like an insect," he says. Now "driftwood takes about a fourth of my time. I can do this and can also continue my botanizing. In spring I see calypso orchids and trillium. I can take my little canoe up the Big River—it's tide-



BOB KELLER

water for seven and a half miles, and the other day I paddled right through a pod of sea lions."

Driftwood is a resource for many people on the north coast, Keller says. State Parks regulations permit the taking of up to 50 pounds a day. Last winter, however, there was so much at Navarro Beach that the limit was lifted for January and February. "A lot of women forage for firewood at Portugese Beach. Kids build these most wonderful forts, and then sometimes homeless people sleep in them. Some people use it for making things, others just put it out on their decks. Everyone forages with a different aesthetic." Two local boys, Ryan Brown and Kai Berkich, both 13, have been foraging since they were 10 and building chairs. Keller sells these too in his shop. "They're the ones who are famous around here," he says.

Winter Beachcombing

GAIL BUTLER

CALIFORNIA BEACHES, I THINK, are at their best and most dramatic in winter. Beaches become the domain of seabirds and those few hardy souls who brave the cold winds, salty dampness, and enshrouding mists to enjoy the relatively deserted sandy strands with their austere gray-on-gray beauty.

The best time to visit any of the Califor-

nia beaches specifically to collect beach treasures is just after a storm. This is when you are most likely to find a plethora of newly deposited shells, mineral marvels, driftwood, and coins. A heavy surf not only brings new goodies to the beach but excavates and turns over long-buried items, redepositing them within the beachcomber's sight and grasp.

Coastal bluffs at Jalama Beach



JOHN SCHUYLER

Among the many California beaches, one of my favorites is Jalama Beach, between Point Arguello and Point Conception on the northern Santa Barbara County coast. It's a great spot to camp and collect treasures. I love Jalama for its wild beauty, especially in winter when coyotes come down onto the sand because so few humans are present. Owls nest in burrows in the cliff-face, and temporary tidepools give the visitor a rare peek at creatures that generally live out of view of all but divers.

Jalama Beach is farther from a main highway than many California beaches and thus is not well known. Shells, fossils, and agates are among the natural treasures to be found there. Several summers ago a friend and I were heading to northern California for some gold prospecting and made a detour to spend several days camping at Jalama. In our equipment were a couple of metal detectors used for locating gold nuggets. We used them on the beach—not to find gold, but to locate coins dropped by visitors. We were well rewarded for our efforts, as we were the only visitors using detectors. On many other beaches, detecting is a popular pastime.

This winter should be a great one for collecting along the California coast. Just remember that the best time is *after* a storm. El Niño storms arrive with high surf and waves that may be roiling with such dangerous debris as pilings and uprooted trees. Being cautious will help to ensure that your beachcombing adventures have happy endings.

Also keep in mind that beaches are not only the natural abode of myriad wild creatures, but also places where we can go to rest and renew our souls. At that magical juncture where sea meets sand the compounded stresses of urban living simply melt away. When collecting beach treasures, make sure that you put your own litter in proper receptacles or pack it out for disposal at home. In this way we assure that these places of beauty and repose remain so, not only for our own future visits, but for generations of beachcomers to come. ■

Gail Butler lives in Upland, California, just south of Angeles National Forest in San Bernardino County. After 20 years as a deputy sheriff in Los Angeles County, she retired to concentrate on gold prospecting and writing. Her grandfather taught her how to pan and

CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS



Agate hunting at Patrick's Point State Park

process gold when she was 10 years old. She is a contributing editor for Rock & Gem Magazine, where she describes her adventures exploring for gold, minerals, and fossils. Her book, The Rockhound's Guide to California (Falcon Press, Helena MT, 1995; 190 pp., with maps and black-and-white photographs, \$12.95 [paper]), describes 75 collecting sites, eight of them along the coast. Here are three excerpts.

Agate Beach, Patrick's Point State Park, Humboldt County

To find the site: from U.S. Highway 101 take the Patrick's Point exit and head west about one-half mile to the beach. This site yields beach-washed agate. When I was

Agate Beach

JIM WOODWARD, CALIFORNIA STATE PARKS



there last, there were restrictions on how much of the agate could be collected.

["Small amounts may be collected for personal use only," a State Parks spokesman says. This 632-acre park has 123 campsites and much more to offer. Explore! —Ed.]

Jalama Beach, Santa Barbara County

To find the site: from Highway 1 coming from Lompoc, turn right at a sign indicating Jalama Beach. Be watchful, the sign is small and easily missed. If you are coming from the Buellton area, you will make a left turn onto Jalama Road. Head toward

the coast through hilly cattle country for 12 miles until you see the beach.

This is a fantastic site for either tent or RV camping. One may elect to camp on the beach or high on the cliff above, where the view is fabulous. Cement pads are provided for RV beach camping. Bring your own water, as the water sources at the beach are not suitable for drinking.

Here one can find tidepools, and the beachcombing is great. Translucent root-beer-brown agate with white veining is plentiful. The sedimentary cliffs lining the beach yield fossils and marcasite, a metallic crystalline form similar to pyrite. One may also gather seashells, abalone shells, and driftwood. Look for these other gem treasures—travertine, jade, and chert.

[Jalama Beach is only 23 acres in size and has only a half-mile of beach. Once you're on the beach, however, you can walk north or south at low tide. All the beaches are public below the mean high tide line. To the north is Vandenberg Air Force Base, to the south is the private Cojo Jalama Ranch. You can walk south for about five miles before the cliffs stop you. Don't climb the cliffs: you'll be trespassing. —Ed.]

Palos Verdes, Los Angeles County

To find the site: from Interstate 405 exit onto Western Avenue and head south approximately 10 miles. Turn right on 25th Street, which will become Palos Verdes Drive from there to the lighthouse, approximately six miles. Park and walk down to the beach on one of the numerous paths down the cliffs. Be careful when descending to the beach. Some paths are steeper than others.

At the bases of the beach cliffs below the quarry is the best area to collect barite-covered rocks, which erode out of the seacliffs. The barite crystals are white to beige, generally translucent, and form in the coxcomb habit. They will generally fluoresce a cream color under an ultraviolet lamp. The best time to collect is during the winter months, when winter storms have eroded out the cliff material. This is also the best time to collect fossil whalebone on the beach.

[Don't be a rock hog! A stone may dazzle you when you pick it up but lose its appeal out of context. Taking a few is generally acceptable—hauling away too many is not only inconsiderate, it may get you into trouble. —Ed.]



Shoreline access trail at Palos Verdes, between Point Vicente and Long Point

TONY BARNARD

**NEW MONEY FOR ACCESS,
PROTECTION FOR MARINE LIFE**

AS OF JANUARY 1, 1998, coastal development permit fees collected by the Coastal Commission will go to the Coastal Conservancy for use in improving public access. Instead of being deposited into the state's general fund, this income—currently about \$500,000 a year—will enable the Conservancy to help local governments and nonprofit organizations to open new trails and to maintain existing trails.

This new source of funding for access is provided in a bill by Senator Bruce McPherson of Santa Cruz, SB 72, one of ten bills that Governor Pete Wilson signed on October 8. That same day the governor also signed legislation that requires warning signs to be posted when beach waters fail to meet bacteriological standards; places moratoria on the taking of white sharks and on commercial fishing for abalone, and requires that the Fish and Game Commission adopt regulations to protect and manage the squid fishery at a sustainable level. The bill regarding squid, by Senator Byron Sher of Redwood City, also establishes permit fees that will fund a three-year study of the impact of fishing on California's squid.

The governor left unsigned legislation that provided tougher enforcement of water quality standards and monitoring of polluted runoff into state waters.

Among bills vetoed is AB 241, by Assemblyman Ted Lempert, which



DRAWING BY KEN DOWNING

New state funding will help local citizens to open new accessways.

would have appropriated \$6.26 million for the Southern California Wetlands Clearinghouse, to establish a regional wetlands conservation strategy, and for a pilot project to set up a mitigation bank on San Francisco Bay to mitigate damage to small wetlands.

**STEPS TOWARD RESTORATION
OF HUGE NAPA-SONOMA MARSHES**

WITH OVER \$200,000 authorized by the Coastal Conservancy in July, technical studies have been begun to prepare for the restoration of 10,000 acres of marshlands near the mouth of the Napa River on San Francisco Bay. These wetlands are part of a 40,000-acre complex of wetlands that includes more than nine miles of bay shoreline. "When restored, the Napa-Sonoma marshlands will become the largest and most productive tidal wetlands on the west coast," says Conservancy chair Robert Kirkwood.

Most tidal wetlands in this area have been diked for salt farming or converted to hay fields or grazing lands. The first area to be restored consists primarily of lands purchased in the last decade by state and federal agencies, particularly by the California Department of Fish and Game and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. Other areas

being studied are owned by individuals who are willing to sell to public agencies when funding becomes available.

Migratory waterfowl and shorebirds use these marshes. Endangered species include the California clapper rail, California black rail, San Pablo song sparrow, salt marsh harvest mouse, Sacramento River winter-run chinook salmon, Sacramento splittail (a fish), and Mason's lilaeopsis (a plant).

Technical studies are necessary to understand the area's key physical and biological functions. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the U.S. Geological Survey will use the Conservancy funds, together with their own monies, to measure water depths, movement, salinity, and quality in Napa River, Sonoma Creek, and the salt ponds of the marsh complex. The Fish and Wildlife Service and the Department of Fish and Game will contribute to the overall effort, in which more than 15 government agencies are involved. The total funding required for the preliminary technical studies is about \$1.2 million.

Major restoration work will likely begin within three years and is expected to be completed within 10 years. Full ecological recovery depends on natural processes that may take a few decades.



JOE DIDONATO

Long-billed curlews and marbled godwits

MARSHES IN SAN JOAQUIN RESERVE TO BE RESTORED

IN SEPTEMBER the Coastal Conservancy approved the spending of \$1,925,000 to restore wetlands and uplands in the San Joaquin Freshwater Marsh Reserve, near the University of California, Irvine. These wetlands cover over 200 acres and are among the few remaining freshwater wetlands in southern California. Exotic vegetation will be replaced by native plants, and habitats will be reestablished. Marshes that have filled with sediment will be dredged, and a new water delivery system from San Diego Creek will be developed. Sediment in the creek will be trapped to keep it out of the reserve's marshes and Upper Newport Bay.

Funding for these improvements includes \$700,000 from the Coastal Conservancy, \$700,000 from the League for Coastal Protection, \$400,000 from the San Joaquin Hills Transportation Corridor Authority, and \$125,000 from the Irvine and Clarke Foundation. The Huntington Beach Wetlands Conservancy will manage construction. The University of California Natural Reserve System, which owns the reserve, has contributed to the project's design and will be closely involved with long-term operation and maintenance.

ANOTHER BOOST FOR CARLSBAD AGRICULTURE

WITH \$650,000 OF new funding approved by the Coastal Conservancy in June, the Carlsbad Agricultural Grant Program will continue to help agriculture in north San Diego County to survive through at least the year 2000.

Since the program began in 1992, 32 agricultural projects have received a total of \$700,000. The grants are demonstrating the value of agriculture to the community. They have helped to establish the farmers' market in downtown Carlsbad, to build a new greenhouse for Mira Costa College, to

Indians Complete Sinkyone Purchase

IN MID-AUGUST the Intertribal Sinkyone Wilderness Council completed the purchase of nearly 4,000 acres of redwood land within the Sinkyone Wilderness, in Mendocino County. The property, which will become the nation's first intertribal park, was acquired from the Trust for Public Land, with the Lannan Foundation putting up most of the \$1.4 million purchase price. The deal was partly made possible by a \$2 million grant from the Coastal Conservancy to the Pacific Forest Trust to acquire a strict conservation easement. This grant effectively lowered the cost to the InterTribal Council. The Conservancy had steered this project through rough waters for over a decade. (See *Coast & Ocean*, Autumn 1996.)



DANIEL HOFFMAN, COURTESY THE TRUST FOR PUBLIC LAND

support research for composting farm and municipal green wastes, and to enable elementary students to raise earthworms and cultivate school gardens. When the giant whitefly invaded San Diego County in 1992, damaging both commercial crops and residential gardens, the grant program quickly responded by funding a study to determine how the pest could be controlled through biological means.

The Resource Conservation District

of Greater San Diego County administers the grant program, using funds provided by the Coastal Conservancy. The funds originated from farmland conversion fees collected from Carlsbad developers in the early 1980s.

MUCH BETTER CREEK CROSSING

IF YOU FOLLOW the Coastal Trail from Montara to McNee Ranch in San Mateo County, you have to cross Martini Creek. Until now, this has

meant you climbed down a steep bank, forded the creek, and climbed up on the other side. A new 85-foot bridge, supplied by the State Parks Department and installed with funds from the Coastal Conservancy, will soon make this crossing much easier. The bridge will accommodate hikers, bicyclists, wheelchair riders, and horseback riders, and will be maintained by State Parks, the San Mateo County Department of Parks and Recreation, and the McNee Ranch Volunteers. The county and the volunteers will also repair and maintain the 1.5-mile trail from a parking lot in Montara to the bridge, and from the bridge to a picnic area in the state park.

North of Montara the Coastal Trail follows the old San Pedro Mountain Road, built in 1915 as the main road between San Francisco and Half Moon Bay. It was superseded in 1937 by Highway 1, and was closed to auto traffic after World War II. In the 1960s an automobile bridge across Martini Creek was found unsafe and removed, but hikers continued to use the old route.

BART BUYS RANCH FOR ENDANGERED SPECIES

ON SEPTEMBER 11, 1997, the Coastal Conservancy sold the 240-acre Steele Ranch property in coastal San Mateo County for \$900,000 to the San Mateo County Rapid Transit District (Samtrans), which was acting on behalf of the Bay Area Rapid Transit District (BART). BART will protect and improve habitat on the ranch to mitigate the impacts of habitat damage that might occur when BART constructs its extension to the San Francisco International Airport.

Endangered and threatened species on the ranch include the San Francisco garter snake and the California red-legged frog. The Conservancy is retaining a conservation easement over the property to prevent any subdivision and to ensure that wildlife

habitat and natural resources are permanently protected.

The Conservancy bought Steele Ranch in 1986 to prevent the six parcels that make up the property from being developed. Because the ranch is west of Highway 1 and adjoins Año Nuevo State Reserve, its development would have obstructed views from the highway to the ocean and damaged the area's natural character.

ARMING SAN PEDRO POINT AGAINST THE STORMS

RACING TO BEAT THE coming winter to the punch, the Pacifica Land Trust is installing erosion control measures on San Pedro Point, a dramatic headland in San Mateo County that has been badly damaged by off-road motorcycles. With the help of \$25,000 authorized by the Coastal Conservancy in July, the all-volunteer land trust is building waterbars, a temporary diversion swale, and a culvert, and is installing erosion-control mats on bare patches of soil.

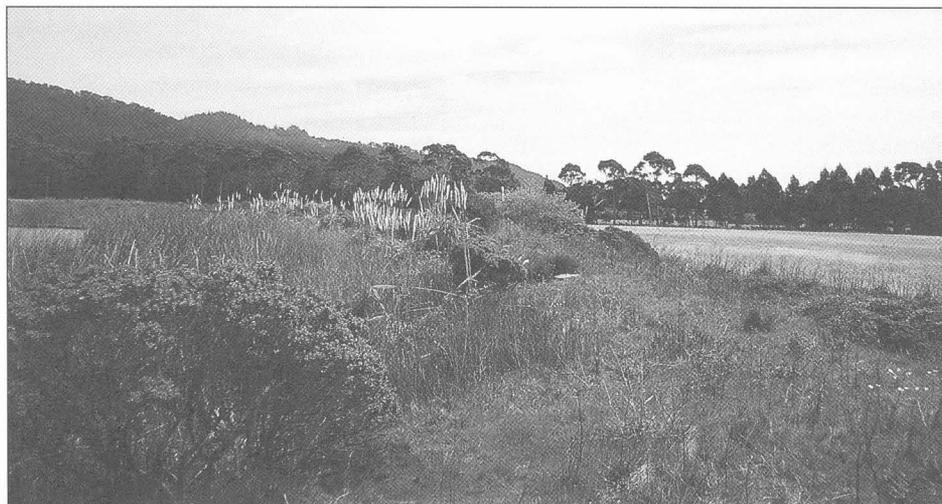
Off-road motorcyclists used this headland for several years before the City of Pacifica bought 148 acres of it, with \$615,000 from the Conservancy, in 1992. Slopes have been denuded and trails are rutted. In 1996 the Conservancy bought another 98 acres. Eventually, the headland is to become a park.

CREATIVE PROTECTION FOR SALINAS RIVER LAGOON

THE COASTAL CONSERVANCY authorized \$50,000 in September for projects to protect farmland along the Salinas River Lagoon while improving wildlife habitat at the river's mouth. The funds will be used by Creative Environmental Conservation, a non-profit organization, to initiate a program designed to demonstrate how environmental restoration can help to control flooding and reduce soil erosion. Many private landowners took part in planning the program, and its success will depend on their continued voluntary participation.

Native vegetation will be planted on 1,100 feet of river frontage, using a plan developed, in part, by the Watershed Institute at California State University, Monterey Bay. In 1995 floods caused severe erosion of farmland here, and the river's banks were denuded. Several types of habitat near the lagoon support more than 280 species of fish and wildlife.

Many wetlands in this area were diked and drained in the late 1900s. More recently, the lagoon's water quality has deteriorated because of pollution, upstream water diversion, and by the breaching of the sandbar at the lagoon's mouth in an effort to prevent flooding.



Steele Ranch will be protected by BART.

DICK WAYMAN

Blueprint for a Sustainable Bay Area, by Urban Ecology, Inc., Oakland, CA, 1996. 144 pp., with color and monochrome photos and illustrations, \$27 (wire-bound paper).

THE GOAL OF URBAN Ecology's *Blueprint for a Sustainable Bay Area* is to establish a clear, strong, positive vision to help keep the San Francisco Bay Area livable, prosperous, and equitable—in short, sustainable. Based on years of study and discussion, it systematically presents and analyzes problems and challenges on different scales of living—homes, neighborhoods, urban centers, and the region as a whole. It offers specific recommendations for action, as well as case studies and examples as models.

Well aware that too many hopeful plans languish on shelves, Urban Ecology, a nonprofit organization dedicated to developing innovative approaches to urban planning and building, has undertaken a campaign to keep the discussion alive. It offers a 45-minute slide-show based on the *Blueprint*,

presented by planners, designers, architects, and community leaders who belong to Urban Ecology's Speakers Bureau. To arrange for such a presentation, contact Kate White at (510) 251-6330.

From *Blueprint*:

- Between 1975 and 1990 the area of developed land in the Bay Area increased by 43 percent, yet . . . the population increased by only 19 percent. As development spreads people are more dependent on the car. . . . The amount of driving increases faster than the population.



PHOTOS: EDWARD CALDWELL

Above: The San Francisco Embarcadero with the Ferry Building and Bay Bridge
Left: Alameda Creek flows through Niles Canyon toward San Francisco Bay.

- As density decreases, gasoline consumption increases. The Bay Area has a long way to go before it can become as car-independent as cities like New York, Paris, or London.
- We need to link the sites used for living, working, shopping, and recreating and make them accessible via transit, bike, and foot. . . .
- Does it make sense that a single person requires the power of 275 horses and a couple tons of steel, glass, and plastic just to mail a letter or rent a video?

The Voyage of the Frolic: New England Merchants and the Opium Trade, by Thomas N. Layton. Stanford University Press, Stanford, CA, 1997. 245 pp., \$24.95 (cloth).

ENVISION FINDING IN AN archeological dig what at first appears to be an Indian shell bead. A second look reveals the blue and white pattern of early chinaware. The temptation for

most of us would be to cast it aside as the amateurish effort of some latter-day wannabe Indian. That was anthropologist Tom Layton's first impulse, too, when he found such a bead at what came to be known as Three Chop Village while conducting a dig in Mendocino with students of San Jose State University.

When his students came upon more such beads, and arrow points chipped from green bottle-glass, Layton examined the beads more closely. He wondered where on earth the Pomo Indians could have come upon enough such material to work it into beads and arrowheads.

Before he had found the answers, the clue had led him not only to the wreck of the fastest Baltimore clipper of her day, but also on a merry research chase from Boston and Baltimore to Bombay, Singapore, and Hong Kong. The clue also revealed some singular events in the history of Mendocino County.

The clipper ship from which the beads had come was the *Frolic*, under command of a man lauded by Richard Henry Dana in *Two Years Before the Mast*. "Captain Faucon was a sailor, every inch of him," Dana wrote. "He knew what a ship was, and was as

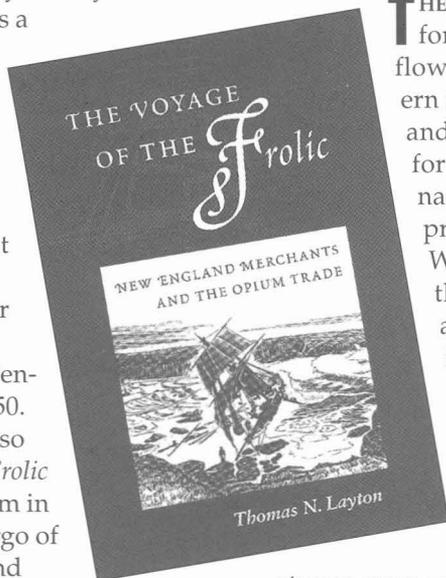
much at home in one as a cobbler in his stall. I wanted no better proof of this than the opinion of the ship's crew, for they had been six months under his command, and knew what he was, and if sailors allow their captain to be a good seaman, you may be sure he is one, for that is a thing they are not always ready to say."

High praise, indeed. Digging a little deeper, Layton discovered that no blame clung to Captain Faucon for the wreck, which occurred off the Mendocino coast in 1850. But the research also revealed that the *Frolic* was carrying opium in addition to her cargo of China porcelain and silk. Opium was legal in the United States at the time, but that didn't prevent at least one of the captain's descendants from trying to hush it up much later to keep the captain's good name intact.

This carefully researched and beautifully illustrated book takes the reader into the intricacies of boat building, international trading, the patterns of Indian life, and the origins of Mendocino logging. Generously, the author gives full credit to the hobby divers who first brought up artifacts from the *Frolic* off Point Cabrillo. It is a book that history buffs, sailing buffs, and anyone interested in the mysteries that lie offshore of California will want to add to their library. For libraries and universities it will be indispensable.

—Margot Patterson Doss

A free exhibition called "Found! The Wreck of the *Frolic*—A Gold Rush Cargo for San Francisco" will be at the San Francisco Maritime Museum from February 7, 1998 to January 1, 1999. For information call (415) 556-3002.



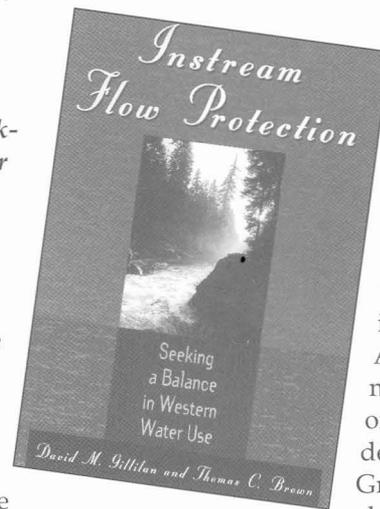
Instream Flow Protection: Seeking a Balance in Western Water Use, by David M. Gillilan and Thomas C. Brown. Island Press, Washington, DC, 1997. 417 pp., \$30 (paper).

THE AUTHORS argue for more instream flows in our western rivers for fish and wildlife and for maintaining the natural forms and processes of our rivers. Who can quarrel with that? Unfortunately, just about everyone involved in watershed planning. Water "rights" give preference, at least for now, to those who impound and divert river flows to off-

stream uses, such as farmland irrigation, municipal use, hydroelectric plants, and industrial needs. In the end, little water is left for rivers and streams, and what does flow runs intermittent and hot, killing off fish and wildlife that depend on minimum flows for survival.

David M. Gillilan and Thomas C. Brown, in a book rich with detail, describe the historical and legal context in which water "rights" were acquired and how they have (or have not) changed over time. They also describe the consequences of this nation's "first come, first served" approach: scarcity of water and numerous demands on rivers and streams are turning formerly rich lands into deserts.

"Western rivers of all sizes have been heavily developed. The entire flow of many western rivers has been legally claimed for offstream uses since the turn of the century, or even before. Some of the West's major watercourses that are now dry or virtually dry during substantial portions of the year include the Snake River below Milner Dam in Idaho; the Gila



River and, below Theodore Roosevelt Dam, the Salt River in Arizona; the Powder River in Oregon; the Arkansas River near the Colorado-Kansas border; the Rio Grande below Elephant Butte Reservoir in New Mexico; and the San Joaquin River below Friant Dam in California."

Unless there is a drastic change of policy, the time may come when we see water in rivers only after major storms.

For a country whose literature and culture are steeped in rivers and streams, this situation is a national embarrassment. How much inspiration and natural heritage can we find in rivers without water?

Gillilan and Brown's book should be a wake-up call to action. My only criticism is that they indulge in wishful thinking. They believe the situation is going to improve because of changing demographics and income levels. As someone who works on several watersheds in California, I don't see these factors contributing to a rise in "demand for the integrity of the natural environment, including instream flows." Watershed planning processes are battlegrounds for balancing water and land uses, and so far, fish and wildlife have been outgunned by those who have claimed priority rights. It will take more than an affluent urban population with disposable income and leisure time to make instream flows a priority. The nation must recognize that rivers are important and that maintaining baseline flows for fish and wildlife isn't only a good idea, it's an imperative.

Reed Holderman is a program manager at the Coastal Conservancy and has been involved in the Santa Clara, Santa Ynez, and Garcia River watershed projects.



River of Words Poetry and Art

IN THE PAST TWO YEARS, SCHOOLCHILDREN across the country have been writing poems and making pictures for the *River of Words National Environmental Poetry and Art Contest*. Thousands of youngsters have explored the contest's theme, "Watersheds," and recorded their observations creatively. The contest is being held again this school year and is open, free of charge, to anyone between the ages of 5 and 19. "We're encouraging children to explore their neighborhoods, schoolyards, creeks, and imaginations," says Pamela Michael of the International Rivers Network, co-founder of the River of Words project with Robert Hass, U.S. Poet Laureate from 1995 to

1997, and with the Library of Congress Center for the Book. Hass says, "The project strives to give children a sense of place and belonging."

Deadline for submissions is February 15, 1998. Eight grand-prize winners and their parents will win trips to Washington, D.C., to be honored at the Library of Congress next spring. For entry forms and contest guidelines, or to order the 50-page Teacher's Guide (\$6), contact International Rivers Network, P.O. Box 4000-J, Berkeley, CA 94704; voice mail: (510) 433-7020 (24 hours); FAX: (510) 848-1008; e-mail: row@irn.org; web site: www.irn.org. Here are six selections from the past two years.

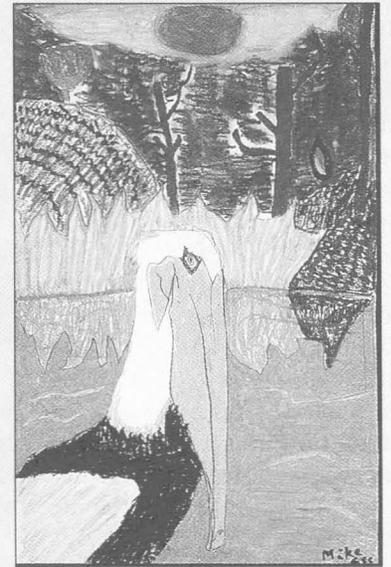


▲ Marquise Brown—Grade 8
Rowland Middle School
Rowland, North Carolina
Teacher: Kay Bradsher
1997 Finalist

Oh Pointy Birds

Oh pointy pointy
you go to the lake edge
the silky water
touches your feet

Alice Zell—Grade 3
Greenwood School
Mill Valley, California
Teacher: Mrs. Devika Brandt



▲ Mike Lee—Grade 2
Camelot School
Annandale, Virginia
1996 Finalist
Teacher: Laura Harmark
Title: The Drinking Pelican

What if you were a creek
and you liked to
run with the other creeks and play.

Ashley Jamison—Grade 2
Eel River Charter School
Covelo, California
Teacher: Alice Hawley

Creek

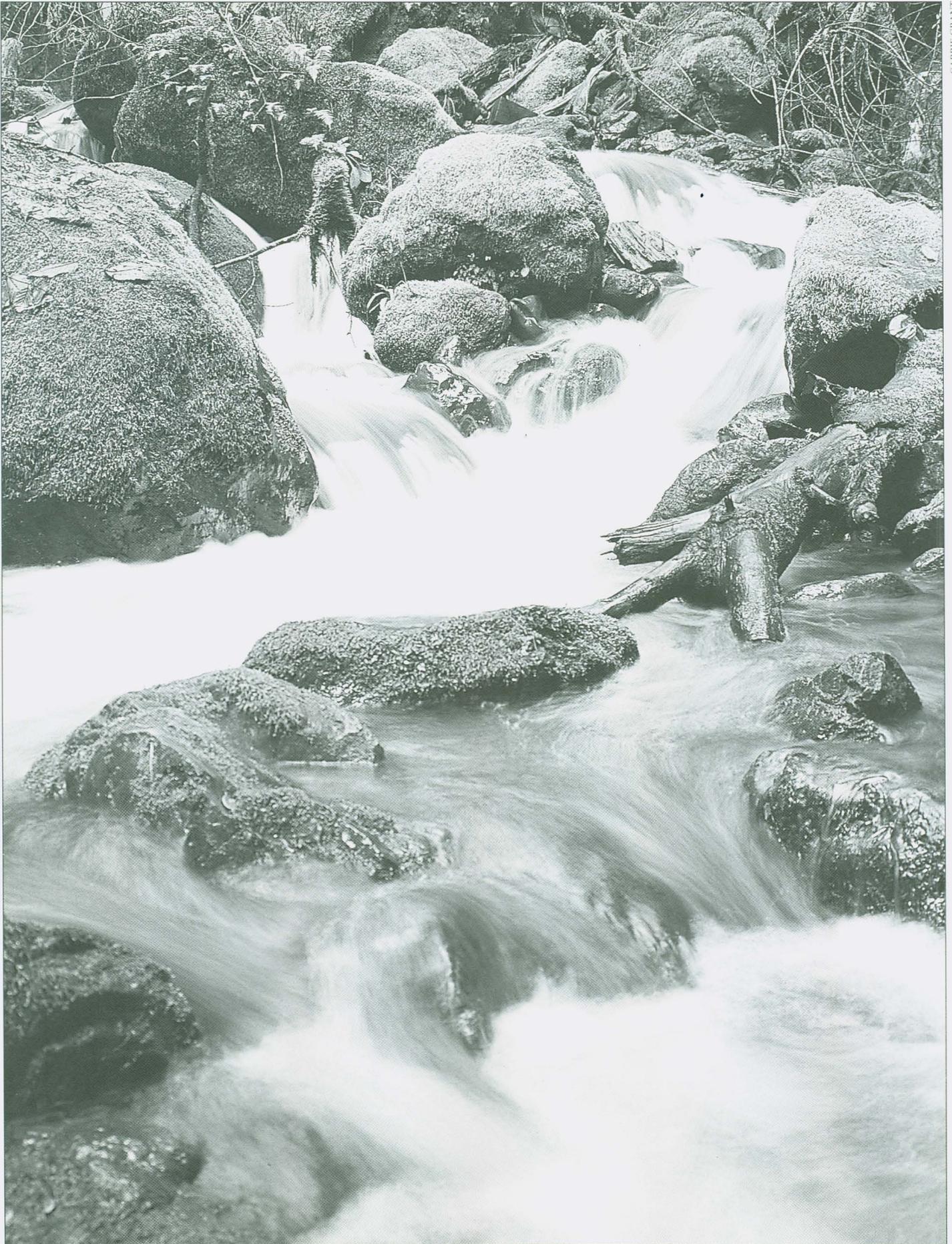
The flowing creek
Drifted.
Drifted past
Mountains high.
Drifted through
Meadows long.
Past the swaying trees
Through oceans
Big and wide.
And fish
glide
through the water.

Rachel Mueller—Grade 2
Buena Vista, Colorado
Avery-Parsons School
Teacher: Kathy Keidel



◀ Kathy Codega—Grade 7
Barrington Middle School
Barrington, Rhode Island
Teacher: D. Viveiros
1997 Grand Prize Winner
(Grades 7-9)
Title: Where Flows the River,
Flows Life

All artwork © 1997
International Rivers Network
River of Words Project™



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