



Bodega Land Trust



Newsletter

"...When we see land as a community to which we belong, we may begin to use it with love and respect." ... Aldo Leopold (1886-1948), *American Forester*

Four Baseline Studies Completed

by Sandy Sharp

We are very pleased to announce the completion of our baseline studies on three "forever wild" conservation easements* in the Salmon Creek watershed. The easements protect riparian corridors 200 to 300 feet wide along approximately 18,000 feet of creek side on Finley and Coleman Valley Creeks.

Bodega Land Trust completed the studies with the help of a matching grant from the Bay Area Open Space Council to whom we are very grateful.

Baseline studies were required by the terms of the conservation easements, in accordance with the standards established by the Land Trust Alliance, the national organization of land trusts. The baselines establish the status quo of a piece of land against which future changes in the protected areas can be measured. The Bodega Land Trust will monitor the corridors once a year to make sure that the conditions of the easements are being met. If they are not, then remedial action must be taken. Baselines include studies of the topology, hydrology, flora and fauna of the protected areas. They also include maps, an aerial photo and photos of all pertinent features.



Coleman Valley Canyon

Photo: Sandy Sharp

Conservation easements are written to the landowner's specifications, subject to the easement holder's (BLT's) approval. They can cover the whole property or just a part. They can allow any usage already allowed under the property's zoning. The owners of these riparian corridors have chosen the "forever wild" designation, which prohibits any development or logging, but allows some hiking and nature study with the owner's permission.

You can find out more about land trusts and conservation easements, and/or become a volunteer monitor, by calling the Bodega Land Trust at 876-3422 or 876-1806. 🏠

* see BLT Newsletters, Vol. II, No.3, and Vol. IV, No.2.

Bodega Land Trust

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Member: Land Trust Alliance

Good Food Blends Community

by Laura Sauter

It's a Saturday night in early November, and Gary and I head on down to the firehall for the annual Bodega Land Trust dinner. It's rainy and cold and McCaughey Hall is a welcoming whirlpool of light and activity, drawing us in. The room is full of good smells. Half a dozen people are wedged into the kitchen chopping and stirring and frying. The tables are set with china, glassware and silver – the Land Trust doesn't use paper or plastic – and Stacy Woods has decorated them with autumn leaves and branches of paper lanterns. It is, as always, a festive homey scene. "This is my favorite community event," Delia Moon says to me.

I place our jackets on a couple of chairs at a table near the back. Gary heads into the kitchen to say hello to the cooks – Nicholas Peck, Barbara Peterson and crew. They put Gary to work, sautéing a big pan of mixed vegetables and garlic. I decide to check out the items for the silent auction. The table in the middle of the room is piled with donations. I notice a beautiful child's sweater, hand-knit and donated by Hazel Flett (who also happens to be the arch organizer of the dinner), tickets to the San Francisco Museum of Modern Art, a bag of garden tools, a carved wooden dragon and a watercolor by Bill Wheeler. I bid on the watercolor and go sit down. Several years ago, at this same event, I was lucky enough to score a watercolor by Bill Morehouse, and I'd really like to add to my collection of Sonoma County artists.

I spend the time before dinner is served chatting with old friends, people I only see five or six times a year. We all lament the fact that our lives are so busy and agree that one of the best things about the Land Trust Dinner is the chance it gives us to visit. I see Andrea Granahan, Jim Tischler, and Sandy Sharp; also Lorene Warwick and Michael Davis, who have just gotten married in Las Vegas. Mary Biggs and I exchange hugs. I marvel at the size of

people's children and talk about books with Sue Head. Steve Killey is selling tickets, looking dapper in a silver tie. Patty Karlin of goat-cheese fame sits down at our table, but the noise level has gotten so high we can only smile and wave at each other. I see Ralph Burke and Ruth McCaughey Burke, whose father built McCaughey Hall, and think how things in Bodega seem to have changed a lot since then, but are still, in essence, the same. Bodega is still, at the beginning of the 21st century, a closely-knit small town, and those of us who live here, however different our views may be on some things, all agree that we like it that way.

Dinner is served by a phalanx of local kids. Doing a great job, attentive to everyone's needs. The food is delicious. A creamy pumpkin soup for starters, followed by shepherd's pie with lamb (or without, for vegetarians) and an organic green salad. I uncork the bottle of cabernet I brought with me and pass it around the table. There is a slight drop in the decibel level as everyone pays attention to dinner. A choice of wonderful homemade desserts and coffee finish off the meal. I go back to check on my watercolor. Several people are bidding against me. And they call themselves friends. I up the last bid by five dollars and sit down next to Jonas and Isolde to listen to Mary's speech thanking everyone. The cooks and servers are applauded and Laird Sutton presents a slide show illustrating some of the good work the Bodega Land Trust does, in this case preserving parts of the watershed along Finley, Coleman Valley and Fay Creeks.

The auction isn't over yet, but it's been a long day and I have to go home. I say good-bye to people and go back for a last look at the Wheeler. Someone has upped the bids again, so I add five more dollars and leave, thinking that I've lost the contest. The next evening Sandy Sharp comes by my house with the painting. "Everyone decided you wanted it the most," he says, "so they quit bidding against you after you left." I write out a check to Bodega Land Trust. Is this a great town, or what? 🏡



Our waitresses: Michelle Travinsky, Isha MoyaZoog, Lindsey North, Tierra Presley, Morgan Graves, Shannon Killey. Not shown: Kate Mundell, Gina Watts and Julayne Ringstrom.



Mary Biggs,
BLT President

143 volunteers conspired to make the Bodega Land Trust

dinner a financial and social success. Efforts ranged from the donation of foodstuffs, a home-baked dessert, or a silent auction item, to the petitioning of businesses for items, gathering and displaying them, decorating and setting tables, washing dinnerware, planning a menu, chopping, washing, cooking food, waitressing, organizing, making phone calls, picking up rentals, supervising, taking photos, creating invitations and fliers, serving/selling wine, cleaning up and washing dishes for storage. Thank you to all the following, and please accept our sincere apologies for anyone's name we have forgotten.

Ace Hard Cider * Actors' Theater * Alice's Restaurant * Artisana * Artisan's Coop * Auric Blends *
 Eleanor Baker * Alice Benjamin * Belladonna * Benziger Winery * Mary Biggs * Alistair Bleifuss *
 The Boat House * Bodega Goat Cheese * Bodega Pastures Sheep * Branscomb Gallery * Cathi Bruton * Matt & Tess
 Burnham * Davis Bynum Vineyard * Eli Bynum * California Academy of Sciences * Ann Cassidy * Cinnabar Theater * Nancy
 Conkle * Alyssum Cowley * Chateau Saint Jean * Copperfield's Books * The Dressmaker * Michael Eschenbach * Joy
 Fibben * Fiesta Market * Bill & Judith Fink * Terre Flemming * Hazel Flett * Frizelle-Enos *
 Galleria * G & G Market * Gourmet au Bay * Marlo Granahan * Morgan Graves * Hand Goods * Happy Woman Jewelry *
 Cody Harlan * Hat in Hand * Harmony Farm Supply * Sue Head * Hearth Song Toys * Barbara Hoffmann Pottery *
 Benedicta Hutchinson * Iron Horse Vineyards * Gay Jacobsen * Jenner Inn * Joy Ridge Pottery * Steve Killey * Shannon
 Killey * Robert Kourick * Mary Kursa * Laguna Farms * Landmark Gallery *
 Leapin' Lizards! Fun Store * Local Color Gallery * Maureen Lomasney * Madrone Chapter Audubon Society * Eric
 Menez * Buffy Menez * MeSH Gallery * Milk and Honey * Gloria Molica * Sarah Molica * Norma Molica * Mostly
 Nature * Joan & River Mortenson * Kate Mundell * Betsy Mundell * Stacey Murtha * Heather Mylek * Naturalmente * The
 Bodega Bay Navigator * Lindsey North * Northern Light Surf Shop * Occidental Arts & Ecology Center * Occidental
 Choir * Ocean Waves Styling Salon * Orchard Farms * Osmosis Enzyme Bath & Massage * Pacific Shores Gift Shop *
 Nicholas Peck * People's Music * Barbara Petersen * Tierra Presley * Quicksilver Mine Company * Honey Reis * Julayne
 Ringstrom * Roadhouse Coffee * Rose & Thorn Gift Shop * Rosemary's Garden * San Francisco Museum of Modern Art *
 Santa Rosa Symphony * Gary Sauter's 3 Penny Farm * Jonas Sauter * Laura Sauter * Linda Sauter * Sea Gull Antiques *
 Sebastopol Hardware Center * Sharon's Garden * Sandy Sharp * Slice of Life * Jay Sliwa *
 Charlotte Smith * Sally Smith * Kathy Snyder * Sonoma County Repertory Theater * Sonoma Coast Villa * Loni
 Spillman * Strauss Family Creamery * Peter Stull * Darrell Sukovitz * Laird Sutton *
 Lori Spillman * Taylor Maid Organic Farms * Topolos Winery * Trader Joe's * Traditional Medicinals * Michele Travinsky
 * Trinity Herbs * Valley Ford Hotel * Valley Ford Store * Village Bakery * Vintage Gardens * Vira @ Never Ends * Lorene
 Warwick Photography * Gina Watts * Western Hills Rare Plants * Whole Foods * Wild Flour Bread * Wild Things *
 Windwalkers Designs * Wishing Well Nursery * Maralee Wisewomyn * Stacy Woods * Mike Zahradnik * Isha Moya Zoog



Some of the kitchen crew who plan, shop and cook the BLT dinner: (right to left) Matt Burnham, Mike Zahradnik, Barbara Petersen, Nicholas Peck, Alyssum Cowley, Jay Sliwa and Honey Reis.

Living in a Community Land Trust

by John Cutler, founding member and secretary/treasurer of the Sweetwater Community Land Trust and GIS Director for the Ozark Regional Land Trust

Background

Sweetwater Community Land Trust (SCLT) stewards 480 acres of rural land on the headwaters of the Gasconade River in southwest Missouri (Ozarks Bioregion). The land was purchased in 1981 by a group of seven of us folks who already lived in a small community. We owned 19 acres, but it was "slicked off" — all pasture, no woods, no flowing water. We wanted a larger and more "natural" piece of land with a stream (swimming hole), spring (watercress patch!), plenty of woods and wild life, and a few acres of farmland.

We purchased the new land as "joint owners" with several people's names on the deed. As often happens in a group, there soon arose personal and philosophical disputes that threatened to sabotage the whole venture. Three members bailed out and, taking their angry feelings with them, vowed to see the rest of us (and the investment in the land) go down in flames.

In about 1983, I met Gregg Galbraith, the founder and Executive Director of the Ozark Regional Land Trust. He suggested that creating a Community Land Trust — to hold title to the land — would avoid the problems we faced with multiple owners. With the land belonging to a CLT, members could come and go without affecting the "ownership stability" of the entire project. It was an offer we couldn't refuse!

I began the task of creating articles of incorporation, bylaws, land use plans and maps, lease documents, and so on. Gregg provided copies of documents from other land trusts that I could cut/paste/rewrite to fit our situation and he got us through forming our non-profit in the State of Missouri: Sweetwater Community Land Trust, Inc. He turned us into a 501(c)2 tax-exempt organization.

Then each of us signed a quit claim deed transferring our personal interest in the land to Sweetwater Community Land Trust, Inc. in return for a renewable 99-year lease on a 10-acre leasehold.

Aside from some paperwork to keep the CLT going, it's been smooth sailing ever since. We are required to send copies of our Coordinating Council (Board of Directors) minutes, along with an annual one page financial report, to the Ozark Regional Land Trust (I believe ORLT needs it for the IRS). Because SCLT's income is so low, we are exempt from filling out an IRS Form 990, but once a year we do have to send money and fill out the paperwork to re-register our Non-profit Corporation with the State of Missouri.

Organization

We hold all of our 480 acres in common (through the CLT), but everything else is privately owned — houses, shops, cars, tools, gardens, animals, and businesses.

Many of us have commune experience, so we could have set things up that way. However, the private property model seems to better fit the "typical American mind-set" and has certain advantages:

(1) Within the environmental limitations imposed by our leases (more below), each family can determine its own economic situation and lifestyle — I don't have a TV, but my neighbor has two. I opted for a cistern and no plumbing; several of the other families drilled wells. I have a big vegetable garden; my neighbor prefers flower gardening. I live in a 600 square foot building (which includes my business); other folks with big families have 3000 square feet. Some of us have on-site businesses, others work outside the community. In the absence of a charismatic leader or spiritual path or philosophical dogma to bind us together, I believe that this kind of flexibility is essential to our survival as a group and as a CLT.

(2) Related to this, each leasehold manages its own affairs. There's no need for regular community-wide planning and coordination, or labor schedules and quotas, or group workdays, and so on. We are "social anarchists" in the good sense of that phrase — we work out voluntary cooperative arrangements among equals. We have no "government" in the sense of power hierarchies and "cops."

(3) We regularly share tools and vehicles. In my experience, people tend to be a little more careful with something that belongs to someone else than they are with something that belongs to "everyone" (the group). If a tool comes back damaged, we work out how it will get fixed — it doesn't just get abandoned in the corner of a shed somewhere.

(4) Since we are living in separate private dwellings (rather than communal housing), we are free to be as social or reclusive as we wish.

Our land use plan allows for fourteen 10-acre leaseholds. Within the limits of the land use plan, the remaining land is available to whoever has a "project." For about 10 years I operated a 15-acre Christmas tree farm. Other projects

on community land included a black walnut orchard, animal pasture, and wild fruit harvesting. We all swim in the river and hike in the woods.

Governance

Because we are a 501(c)2 organization, we are inseparably tied (by IRS rules) to the Ozark Regional Land Trust, which is a 501(c)3. Gregg has studied the legal aspects of this and has written a detailed paper on it (which is available from ORLT — contact information below).

However, even though we are "officially" part of ORLT, in practice we are autonomous in many respects. Our non-profit (SCLT, Inc.) holds title to our land — it is not owned by ORLT. We are in complete charge of our financial affairs and have control of our day-to-day functioning. Substantial changes in our Land Use Plan or leasing policies require an "OK" from ORLT's Board of Directors.

Technically, there is an ORLT board member on our Board of Directors (Coordinating Council) — but if Gregg has ever attended a meeting, it was a long time ago! However, there is on going communication between the two organizations. I was an ORLT Board member for 9 years, and I am currently part of ORLT's paid staff.

SCLT's sole purpose is holding title to the land and seeing to its well being — we view Sweetwater as a "480-acre live-in conservation area." SCLT's Council accepts new leaseholders and maintains community "assets" — power line clearings and roads that are not on someone's leasehold. The Council is responsible for overseeing the responsible use of all 480 acres — both leaseholds and "common" lands. One hundred acres of our "common land" is set aside as a non-developable "wild" area — it can be used only for hiking, camping, harvesting wild fruit, and so on.

The Coordinating Council (Board of Directors) of the CLT is officially composed of a representative from each leasehold, but typically all the adults (currently 11) participate in the meetings. The young folks (also currently 11) find that riding horses, playing in the river, and eating potluck food is much more fun than meetings!

Meetings are typically very short and very few in number. Our bylaws require a minimum of three Council meetings a year, but there is rarely any business to conduct. The occasional issues get worked out and policies get established over a period of time by general visiting and conversation around the community — then we schedule an "official meeting," say "yep, this is what we're gonna do," and write up the minutes. Decision-making is typically by consensus, though our bylaws allow for voting in specific situations (in 14 years as a CLT, we've never "voted" on anything).

For much of SCLT's history, new leaseholders have mostly been people that we already knew from somewhere else (old lovers, ex business partners, friends). By now, we've pretty much used up all our friends, so we've had to work out strategies for accepting leaseholders who are unknown to us.

Our two-pronged approach has been (a) to develop a "short-term lease" arrangement where potential lessees can "rent" a leasehold for an indeterminate period of time (up to several years) so that (b) we can get to know each other well enough to say "yes, we can live with each other." At that point, their "rent" gets applied to the cost of a regular 99-year lease. If a prospective lessee doesn't work out, the "rent" stays in our mortgage-payment account and we part company.

From a prospective leaseholder's viewpoint, there's a downside to this: while a departing leaseholder is free to haul away any personal property (e.g., a house built during the short-term lease period), this may not be physically possible. The departing person is free to sell the house and other assets to an incoming leaseholder, but in practice houses have remained vacant for years before someone else came along who wanted that leasehold — by which time we may have lost track of the former owner. If we cannot find the former owner, the Coordinating Council declares the building "abandoned" and passes it along to the new leaseholder. (I'm not talking about half-million-dollar houses here — just small buildings.)

There are no building codes in the county where we live. We originally considered specific requirements for incorporation in the lease — a minimum of R-19 insulation, certain materials, and so on. We eventually settled on "performance-based" standards. Some examples from the lease:

- * property must be brought to, and kept at, a high standard of soil fertility, water quality, and ecology;
- * buildings must be durable, safe and energy-efficient;
- * sewage systems must be at least ecologically sound as a toilet system that composts waste to humus;
- * toxic chemicals and artificial fertilizers must be used and stored in an environmentally responsible manner;
- * SCLT retains the power to determine what is responsible use and storage.

Leaseholds Vs. Parcel Ownership

The primary reason we chose leaseholds at SCLT involves "keeping the land in one piece." If we sell a parcel to someone, and that person drifts away, fails to pay taxes, or gets into legal troubles, that 10 acres could be lost to SCLT.

The second reason hinges on some legal advice. Our legal counsel pointed out that it's much easier to get rid of someone who violates the terms of a lease than it is to rid ourselves of someone who owns a 10-acre parcel. Incoming leaseholders sign an agreement that contains a very specific land use plan and a three-page list of environ-

mental and performance covenants. If they pour dioxin in the creek, clear-cut their 10 acres, cause major erosion, start a confinement hog-feeding operation, and so on, it's relatively straight-forward to send them down the road. Luckily, none of this has happened! We're as careful as we know how to be in getting to know and accepting prospective leaseholders.

Financial

In 1981 we were a group of individuals all chipping in to pay the mortgage, and some folks had more money than others. We managed to scrape up enough money each month to meet the mortgage payment, but sometimes there was only pocket change left. From the beginning, I kept books on who paid in how much, with the idea that eventually we would even it all up.

Implementing the CLT didn't change this. As before, I gathered up whatever money was available and sent it each month to the note holder (the land was owner-financed).

The price of a lease at Sweetwater was calculated as 1/14th of the estimated total cost of the land (including principal and interest on the notes, legal costs, etc.). Because we still have not leased all 14 of the 10-acre parcels, long-time leaseholders have now paid-in more than the cost of their lease — but the mortgage payment still had to be made! We're treating these "overpayments" as "notes payable" by SCLT. We finished paying the main mortgage note in 1998; in roughly a year, we will pay off the last personal loan. At that point, lease payments made by more recent lessees will be used to meet SCLT's "notes payable" to earlier leaseholders.

Maintaining the land (roads and related equipment, real estate taxes, legal costs, trash collection, etc.) was, until recently, privately financed by whomever had the money. Sometimes these costs were entered in our book-keeping, sometimes not. In 1998, we instituted a "maintenance fund" that collects \$20/month/leasehold.

We have an arrangement with the County whereby each leaseholder is billed for taxes on his/her buildings. The annual tax bill for the land itself is paid out of the "maintenance fund."

Is there a downside to living on a CLT? Offhand, I can't think of anything except maybe the paperwork.

Available Documents

For \$5 we will send a complete set of SCLT documents (articles of incorporation, bylaws, lease/land use plan, short-term lease option, memorandum of lease). Most of these also exist as Microsoft Word 97 documents. Write Sweetwater Community Land Trust, 2435 Sweetwater Lane, Mansfield, MO 65704. Phone: (417) 741-7363 Email: jcutler@getgoin.net (for Word files as attachments). For the IRS 501(c) 2/3 study by Gregg Galbraith write ORLT, 427 South Main St., Carthage, MO, 64836.

Local Community

by Eli Bynum

I once had a conversation with an acquaintance of mine from the city who told me that she hated small town living because she felt that everyone lived in each others' pockets and that everyone knew everyone else's business. "No privacy," she said. I told her that what I hated about living in the city was the anonymity, the feeling that you were alone and never really knew anyone, that no one cared about you. We agreed to disagree but that conversation has stuck with me the last 30 years and my initial feelings have only deepened since.

I live in an intentional community within a little larger small town rural community in the West County. Since I moved here 30 years ago I've gotten to know many people, to lesser or greater degrees, and I've been awe-struck by the amazing diversity inherent in these communities. I've no need to read the classics any more because I feel those great mythical heroes and heroines surround me on a daily basis. There are those who stand out prominently, who dedicate themselves to our volunteer fire department, maintaining vehicles, responding to emergencies or donating countless hours towards fund-raising. There are the other heroes too, that I think of often, who are rarely recognized but are the backbone of our community. Parents raising

children in an increasingly complex world, trying to instill values that civilize us as adults. Artists of various sorts who bring beauty and understanding and challenge our ideas about things. Carpenters and nurses and ranchers and people who do everyday things that we take so much for granted. People whose experiences and personalities make up a constantly evolving palette of community colors that we can thrive in because we are in fairly constant contact with each other. We recognize and validate and support each other in a way that rarely happens in the larger community of the big city.

There is the community of the natural world, too, that surrounds and enriches me. A short walk or bicycle ride and I'm immersed in the plant and animal communities that I feel give me time and space and a sense of being in touch with something far greater than myself or my human world. There is a sense of change and yet permanence to this world that grounds me and gives me a great feeling of peace.

I love these communities and I would never change places with my long-ago acquaintance. I can only hope that she's found the fulfillment and peace that I have. Sometimes I picture myself as an old dog rolling around in the dirt on his back in the summer sun, tongue lolling out of his mouth, a big grin on his face, content.

Home Ownership Via Community

by Anne Greenfield

A Community Land Trust (CLT) is a legal non-profit model that offers private home ownership at affordable rates and community control over homes, services and land use.

The CLT model was developed 30 years ago by the Institute for Community Economics (ICE) of Springfield, Massachusetts as an approach to sound land use and social justice. Within the same legal parameters, however, CLTs look very different: a number of homes dispersed throughout a suburb; a unified urban neighborhood of homes and businesses; rural acreage maintaining agricultural and open space while providing homes for a small group of people; an artist's cooperative in one building. Across the nation, 31 states boast the existence of CLTs, a total of 118 operating or developing as of 1999.

The efficacy of a CLT lies in its separation of land and home ownership. Property is bought by or donated to, and thus owned by, the non-profit CLT. Homes are either subsequently built by the CLT or already stand on the property and are then sold to private individuals. An individual, in purchasing only a home and not the land, has greatly reduced his/her cost. Usually, CLTs are created for people of moderate to low income.

A contractual agreement between the CLT and its homeowners is in the form of a renewable 99-year ground lease, which can be sold or handed down to children. Various restrictions may be part of the agreement, but will be unique to each CLT. For example, the resale price may be limited to keep housing available for future generations; owner-occupancy may be required; or land use practices may be delineated, such as specific erosion-control measures or restrictions on timber harvesting.

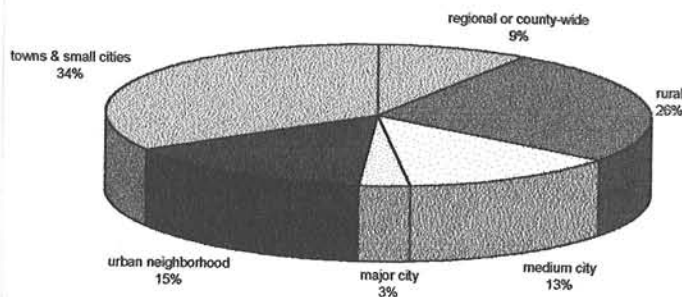
CLTs may require membership of all residents; in this lies the opportunity for self-governance and community connectedness. On the other hand, to assure continued affordability and appropriate land use, the CLT Board of Directors is balanced between "occupant members" (normally 1/3) and members of the larger community who may be affected by the CLT.

Any charitable 501(c)3 non-profit organization that includes community and housing as one of its goals can also create these revolutionary home ownership programs. A conservation land trust can be such an organization. In this case, the land trust can create or support CLTs as subsidiary organizations (which are then legalized as 501(c)2s). The CLT, comprised

of land residents, will be held to the tenets of the mother land trust and kept in check by the balanced land trust Board. Title to the land may be held by either the land trust or the CLT. Sweetwater Community Land Trust, described in John Cutler's article on page four, is set up as subsidiary to a larger land trust.

Cooperation between a conservation land trust and a community land trust is especially appropriate for rural areas, where a perspective on preserving open space, natural resources and agriculture is combined with an effort at providing homes and land use to a local community.

CLT Distribution Nationwide



Age-old land inequities still exist and land reform programs are still necessary. Where landowners, centuries ago, exacted crop tithes from tenants, today landowners or money lenders hold money power over residents. Ruled by the competitive market, land prices soar and rental fees leap upward. People of moderate to low income pay an exorbitant percentage of their incomes for housing or are forced to move out of their community of choice. In our local Bodega community, as elsewhere, equal land rights are not available to people in occupations essential to a community: land workers, service people, childcare workers, artists, and teachers. Children of the community are forced to move out. Aspiring farmers cannot afford land. The CLT is a promising model for accommodating these low-to-moderate income community members.


Financial help is available for CLT set-up, land acquisition, building projects, and for owner home purchase. The aforementioned ICE maintains a

revolving loan fund dedicated to CLTs, currently of \$14 million. In addition, ICE has been able to help CLTs develop strong relationships with money lenders and is currently redesigning more loan products.

CLTs will often include some commercial development as part of their residential scheme in order to create ongoing revenue for the CLT. Ground lease fees with homeowners yield a small revenue.

City governments have been successfully lobbied for money. Affordable housing as an issue has reached the public eye and both private and government monies are available. Federal loans through the Affordable Housing Program (AHP) can be obtained through owner application at local banks. Assistance may also be obtained through the USDA Rural Development Program, the Federal HOME and CDFI (Community Development Financial Institutions) programs and through California housing tax credits and CHFA (California Housing Financing Agency). A more difficult obstacle than the money is the harnessing of community energy and cohesiveness.

The Bodega Land Trust, since its beginnings, has seen community development as one of its goals. BLT could well be an organization fostering the creation of CLTs. However, at the moment it is limited by a fully volunteer Board extremely busy with conservation easement work. For BLT to extend itself in a CLT direction, additional volunteers perhaps forming an auxiliary committee would be needed, or funds could be raised to pay an executive director.

A Community Land Trust can be started, nevertheless, from scratch, by any one or number of people with a vision: of people working together to create their homes, their community structure and their relationship to the land. 

Anne Greenfield, a past Board member of the BLT, has been researching CLTs for several years. She is willing to share her information, references and contact persons. Call (707) 876-9499.

The Institute for Community Economics offers handbooks and videos and will answer questions: 57 School St., Springfield, MA 01105-1331; iceconomic@aol.com; www.iceclt.org; (413) 746-8860.

"Homes and Hands: Community Land Trusts in Action," a video co-produced by ICE and Women's Educational Media, can be rented from Take-5 Video in Bodega. This is a well done and inspiring portrait of three CLTs, covering their creation and on going process. Rental fees will be donated to BLT.

www.com or watery woven web. community

by Michael Presley, Land Steward for
Taylor Maid Farms

Well, it didn't take long for the parched-dry remnants of summer drought 2001 to fill and overflow with the abundant wetness of our early winter storms. Now as the sound of water is heard nearly everywhere it is a good time to go for walks through the forests and fields, to communicate with nature and ruminate about community in all of its diverse shapes and forms.

By exploring the fibers of community through water, fuel and food we discover the patterns and weavings that form the very fabric of our existence, our safety nets, both in the native-natural worlds and in our human-domestic worlds. Within the Salmon Creek watershed, roughly half the land is comprised of second growth successional forests and half is pasture, horticulture and human settlement. Our West County has the potential for a balanced relationship between wild land-based communities and human cultural communities and thus still carries the hope of a stable and peaceful future; yet there is much work to be done to achieve this.

My *Websters Collegiate Dictionary*, circa 1947, defines community as: com mu'ni ty, n.; pl.-ties.

1. A body of people living in the same place under the same laws; hence, an assemblage of animals or plants living in a common home under similar conditions. 2. Society at large; the public, or people in general; restrictedly, the people of a particular place or region; hence, the region itself. 3. Joint ownership or participation; as, a community of goods. 4. Common character; likeness.

We have certainly expanded these definitions over the past 50 years, through microbiological and ecological discoveries. On the microbiological scale, boundaries between species become so intricate and entwined that community may be viewed as one multi-specied organism. In the human realm, the sense of community has broadened through global migration, economic trade, religion and technology; indeed, we all seem to be part of many communities. The concept of community has also been reduced to a commodity-based reality, a .com, one big consumer community. Back to original definitions, even the community of our

region and individual family communities are not well expressed by drawing circles around them but by seeing a living web, a maze of pathways, materials, energy and types of people, cultures and organisms. Every location and thing plays a connecting role in the fabric of community. What is the "stuff" which weaves us together? All that we do, create and use, therefore, all that we share – land, water, fuel, nutrients, awareness, music, art, shelters and compost.

Water, the blood of the land, brings life to all it touches. Water not only runs off or soaks into the land but spins through cells and membranes of many organisms, expanding and growing every fiber of our land community. The slower the water goes the more life grows from it. The water journey in our hills begins on our ridgetop "crown" forests. Collecting summer fog precipitation and absorbing winter rainfall, these forests are the heart of our land community, allowing water to penetrate deep into the soil-rock tissue and pumping up the aquifer.

The clearing of these "crown" forests for grazing, grapes, homes and roads has created a compacted water runoff regime that does not allow water to slow down and do its work. Our job is to slow this water down, filter sediments, and allow our lower forests and riparian zones to capture nutrients and store the water for the entire community to benefit from.

If water is the weave of the community then fire is the warp. Our human community invests more money, time and energy in fire, in all of its forms, than in any other thread of existence. Fuel to burn for transportation, heating, electricity, tools, building materials, packaging, food production and on and on. Our relationship with fire within our regional community extends right into the forest. The threat of wildfire, although over for this season, looms huge over all in-

habitants during the dry months. Forest management, including firebreaks, thinning, replanting, grazing and control burns are needed for long-term security and health. Harnessing solar energy for heat and electricity is good for the whole community.

Like a huge petroleum fungal web we have woven a social and cultural hunger for fire, which is parching nearly every community on the planet. Changing directions in the middle of a raging fire is difficult, but preparing for a slower, sustainable fire community is a safer more peaceful path.

The fresh local food community is our strongest web of community life-support. Weakened incredibly over the last few decades by industrial food marketing, our local organic garden and farm cultures are making a comeback. Demand for locally produced foods exceeds supply and purchasing locally grown meats, vegetables, dairy, eggs, herbs and medicines strengthens the agricultural fabric of our region. Home gardening and landscaping which conserve native species, enhance water absorption and storage, create food and fuel forests and evolve natural genetic diversity for future generations are the solutions to many of the problems facing our regional community.

Working together is fundamental to community success. Communication, communion, cooperation are essential tools for working the weave of community. The forest is our greatest example of a multimillion-year-old community still getting along. It is a giant web, which captures water, light and fertility, providing an abundance for thousands of species. Walking through forests I'm always reminded how important it is for us to conserve, restore, and interact, even cultivate, with this vital community. Let's all plant more trees! 🌲

Winter Haiku

The fire's soft fluttering
mingles with cat purr.
The gray morning lengthens.

--Kate Fenton

Bodega Land Trust is a group of people working to preserve and restore our land and its communities

“Basins of Relations”

by Kurt Erickson


The Bodega Land Trust generously sponsored five \$100 scholarships to an information-packed watershed workshop held last July 27-30 at the Occidental Arts & Ecology Center. Led by Brock Dolman, “Basins of Relations” is designed to promote and support the creation of, and offer training to further the work of, Sonoma County community-based watershed groups. Out of last year’s workshop came the West County Watershed Network. This is a loose-knit group of the local watershed councils sharing all types of grant information, scientific research, and good events.

This year’s “Basins” training topics included: watershed processes; salmonid ecology; water quality monitoring; in-stream bio-engineering restoration; uplands erosion control; road restoration; native habitat restoration; sustainable forestry; community group process; and watershed-group funding opportunities.

All that – and it was a residential course besides! While those of us from the area didn’t use that option, consider how great it would be to stay at OAEC, dive into an important training and eat the wonderful food from their gardens. The OAEC environment is a powerful nurturing medium for community-based, environmental education, protection and restoration efforts.

During the workshop we took a field trip to the Bohemia (Waterfall Park) Ranch and felt the rolling dips of the road restoration done by Pacific Watershed Associates. The culverts they installed follow the natural slope of the existing grade to minimize erosion. By looking out over the broad hillsides and valleys, I could see and understand the importance of disconnecting the road from sheet flows: let water run down the original contours, rather than intercepting and collecting through ditches, which channel the water into a concentrated erosion-inducing flume of high velocity.

Katie Burdick was a new addition this year to the workshop. She had just the right knack for helping with one of the most difficult environmental problems facing any group: the environment amongst ourselves. She offered solid ideas on avoiding burn-out, dealing with a difficult group member, group facilitation and consensus building.

“Basins of Relations” is one of the most inspiring, motivating, community-oriented workshops around. The positive effects will be seen in our watersheds, rebounding and echoing across the ridges to other watersheds for a long, long time. Let’s make every day a watershed event! 

BLT To Offer Sheep Guard Dog Grants

Predators are a major problem for sheep ranchers in the West County, as they are up and down the coast. Several years ago, the government outlawed the use of commercial poisons for coyotes. Since then they have proliferated. There used to be very few south of the Russian River, but now hundreds of lambs and even adults are lost in our area every year. Mountain lions, coyotes, bobcats and wild dogs can be trapped by the county trapper, but his office is much too busy to do an effective job. As the coyotes move inland from the coast more and more people are moving to the West County bringing more and more dogs. It is important for dog owners to understand that a rancher has the legal right to shoot a dog he finds running loose on his property. The current rate of livestock loss combined with the loss of the federal wool subsidy and rising costs has convinced some sheep ranchers to quit the business.

Guard dogs such as Great Pyrenees are one way of alleviating the predator problem. A dog trained to sheep costs about \$500. After consulting with several ranchers Bodega Land Trust has decided to subsidize the purchase of two dogs by offering two grants of \$250 each. If they work out well we plan to offer more grants in the future.

To find out about the grants please call 876-3422 or 876-1806, or write to us at P.O. Box 254, Bodega, CA 94922.

Announcements

BLT Walk: a steep mile-long hike, but to a vast 360 overview of the Bodega area. See current developments in our watershed's southern end. Robert Franceschi hosts on his property along the Estero Americano – Saturday, January 5, 2-3 hours. Meet at Bodega Post Office, 10 a.m.; bring water and lunch.

BLT Talk: "Nature's Guardians," a talk, poetry reading, and question/answer evening with Gloria Armstrong, Miwok poet and painter, of Graton Rancheria, McCaughey Hall, Bodega, Wednesday, January 23, 7 p.m.

The Potluck Cookbook: Bodega Cooks for the Bodega Land Trust has had its fourth reprinting and is currently available in Bodega at Roadhouse Coffee, Made in Bodega, and Artisan's Co-op; at Hand Goods in Occidental and in Sebastopol at Copperfield's, Frizelle-Enos, Quicksilver Mine Company and Whole Foods Market. (*The Cookbook* was chosen as one of the best cookbooks in the state and invited to contribute recipes to the *Best of the Best from California* cookbook, published by Quail Ridge Press and available from Bodega Land Trust and at Roadhouse Coffee and Artisan's Co-op in Bodega.

"Wild Plants of the Salmon Creek Watershed," BLT's 8 notecards, have been reprinted and can be purchased at some of the above locations, as well as at Natural Connections in Occidental.

LandPaths (Land Partners Through Stewardship), a local group aimed at education, and networking for public access to land, offers guided hikes and cooperative land management ventures. Visit: LandPaths-Outings@sonic.net or call (707) 524-9318.

Marin Agricultural Land Trust (MALT) hosts a presentation by UC Davis educator Al Sokolow: "What motivates ranchers and farmers to give up development rights and convey permanent conservation easements on their land?" Sunday, January 27, 4-6 p.m., Dance Palace in Point Reyes Station. Admission \$10 (\$8 MALT members); wine and cheese reception following.

The Trust for Public Land encourages your vote for Proposition 40 on the March ballot: The California Clean Water, Clean Air, and Safer Neighborhood Parks and Coastal Protection Act of 2002. For more info and/or a copy of the bill contact The Trust at 1107 9th St., Suite 1050, Sacramento CA 95814 or fax (916) 557-1675.

The Yellow Starthistle is a highly invasive weed to California, but not yet to western Sonoma County. Be on the watch for it and report immediately to the Sonoma County Ag Commissioner's office. The young plant can be identified by the large, triangular lobe at the tip of each leaf. In May and June, the plant sends up elongated stalks that produce spiny flower heads with bright yellow pigment that fades as the plant ages.

Broom (either Scotch, French, or Spanish) is an aggressive, noxious and all-too-familiar weed in Sonoma County. How to understand the plant and how to control it is thoroughly explored in a 2-part series in the *Forestland Steward*, a newsletter of the California Forest Stewardship Program. Check out the summer and fall 2001 issues on "Getting a Handle on Broom" at <http://ceres.ca.gov/foresteward> or call (916) 653-8286.

Been looking for a way to join BLT? Here's your big chance!

I would like to join or continue my membership at: ☐ \$10 ☐ \$20 ☐ \$50 ☐ \$100 ☐ Other

Please mail to: B.L.T., PO Box 254, Bodega, CA 94922

All donations are tax deductible

I am interested in being involved as:

- ☐ an interest group participant
- ☐ an advisor
- ☐ a Board member
- ☐ an occasional volunteer
- ☐ other

My special interests are:

My special skills are:

A project I would like to see the Bodega Land Trust consider is:

B.L.T.'S NOTECARDS CONTINUE TO BE POPULAR

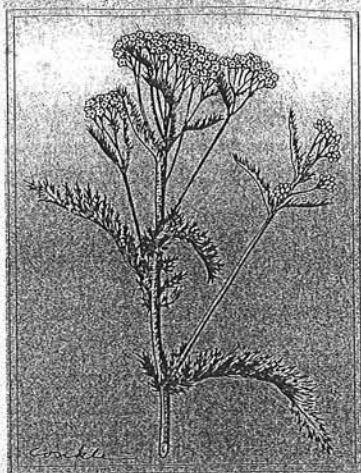
One of eight drawings in the series "**Wild Plants of the Salmon Creek Watershed**". They are available as sets of notecards, at the following locations:-

Bodega: Bodega Landmark Studio;
Artisans' Co-op; Northern Light
Surf Shop

Occidental: Natural Connections

Sebastopol: Wild Things

Proceeds support B.L.T.



Yarrow (*achillea millefolium*) —

Native to Europe, but fully naturalized here, yarrow can be seen along most county roads. It is also a popular decorative garden plant, with its white or pink flowerheads that bloom throughout summer.

Called "allheal" in traditional medicines, yarrow's entire above-ground portion is useful as a tea for fevers, head colds, or urinary or menstrual problems; or as a poultice to stop bleeding.



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