



## ONE OF A KIND COLLABORATION CONSERVES OREGON'S BIGGEST FEN

*Sundew and bog cranberry are both native to Butterfield Fen.*

What is now North Coast Land Conservancy's largest contiguous habitat reserve—more than 500 acres—owes its existence to a walk NCLC co-founder Neal Maine took in his backyard more than twenty-five years ago. He and his wife, Karen, had just finished building their house at the edge of a wetland at the northeast end of Gearhart—

**“I THOUGHT,  
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CHARTS!”**

“Neal's \$60,000 bird blind,” Karen called it—and it wasn't long before Neal was exploring what he discovered was a boggy expanse of Sitka spruce and stunted pines, home to a herd of elk and legions of chorus frogs, with songbird and osprey nests in the trees and native cranberry growing in the spongy sphagnum moss underfoot.

“Once I started hiking around out there and looking at it,” Neal recalls, “I thought, *This is off the charts!*” North Coast Land Conservancy was in its infancy—it hadn't yet completed a land transaction of any kind—so in April 1990 Neal formally invited “individuals and agencies interested in wetlands and their protection” to join him for a buffet lunch and a visit to what he called Butterfield Marsh, after the old Butterfield train stop. Within months, The Nature Conservancy's Oregon office was issuing an urgent appeal to its supporters to help preserve 47 acres of the “Gearhart Bog.” That successful effort was followed in later years by donations from Willamette Industries of conservation easements on adjacent lands totaling 466 acres.

From the beginning, North Coast Land Conservancy supported The Nature Conservancy's stewardship of what they ultimately named the Gearhart Fen by monitoring the land and the groundwater observation wells TNC installed early on to study the Fen's hydrology. By 2012 NCLC itself owned 20 acres in the Fen—7 of them donated by Neal Maine. Last October all the privately conserved lands in the Fen were consolidated under a single land trust when The Nature Conservancy transferred its holdings there to North Coast Land Conservancy. In turn, NCLC has renamed the habitat reserve the Butterfield Fen, in honor of early Clatsop Plains resident Charles Butterfield and the train stop here that bore his name for a half-century. (*Turn to WHEN IS A BOG REALLY A FEN, Page 3*)

## FLOODPLAIN RESTORATION EFFORTS COME FULL CIRCLE

January rains pounded the western slope of the Coast Range, swelling side creeks and turning the Necanicum River into a brown, rushing torrent. But rather than spilling its banks over Highway 101 south of Seaside, the river spilled into the floodplain at Circle Creek: dropping silt to nourish the forest, giving refuge to young coho salmon, and letting the traffic flow. Win-win!

Our work to enrich the floodplain habitat at Circle Creek continues. In February, volunteers and a contracted crew planted some 20,000 native shrubs—willow, goatsbeard, twinberry, ninebark, cascara, and elderberry—along with big leaf maples, adding to the 10,000-plus conifers planted there last winter. This summer we'll be pulling out yellow flag iris, policeman's helmet, Canada thistle, teasel, and any other weeds we see in an attempt to keep the lid on the spread of invasive species: a normal side effect of allowing the floodplain to flood. We will be cleaning up the Circle Creek Trail in May to welcome visitors. Later this summer we hope to complete a more ambitious trail project, one that takes visitors further into the Sitka spruce swamp on a raised boardwalk.



*Volunteer Christian Avila plants willows at Circle Creek.*

# A PRISTINE JEWEL: WHALE COVE

**“WHALE COVE HAS A  
NATURAL COMPLEXITY  
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ALMOST MAGICAL.”**

*Photo by Erin Moran*

**M**ost of the sea cliffs and coastal forest surrounding pristine Whale Cove south of Depoe Bay are now preserved in perpetuity, thanks in large part to ten years of tireless work by North Coast Land Conservancy and the Bryce Buchanan family.

After an attempted housing development failed at the site in 2005, Neal Maine—then NCLC’s executive director—began working with representatives from Oregon State Parks, state and federal highway agencies, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, and Whale Cove-area homeowners to explore ways to protect the edge of what one marine scientist calls “the only virgin cove in Oregon.” One of those homeowners—Bryce Buchanan—stepped in, bought the property, and began working with NCLC to design a conservation acquisition plan.

“Seldom do you find an Oregon citizen like Bryce who not only intentionally buys land for the purpose of conservation, but then has the patience and fortitude to work for more than a decade with multiple government agencies to achieve the goal of preservation,” Neal said.

North Coast Land Conservancy secured \$450,000 in funding from Oregon State Parks and \$650,000 in federal scenic byway funding. The property was valued at \$2.25 million; the Buchanans accepted \$1.1 million for it, in effect making a \$1.15 million donation to conserve the land. Finally on Dec. 14, 2014, 14 acres surrounding Whale Cove—virtually all the land fronting the cove but for one small neighborhood of houses—became part of Oregon Islands National Wildlife Refuge. The US Fish and Wildlife Service agreed to take ownership of the property and manage the site in perpetuity for its habitat value.

“Whale Cove has a natural complexity to it that is rare and almost magical,” said NCLC Executive Director Katie Voelke. “It was a pleasure to work with the Buchanans and our partners to make this a federally protected treasure.”

There is no public access into the cove, but you can see it from adjacent Rocky Creek State Scenic Viewpoint.

## OREGON’S BEST PROTECTED SHORELINE

In addition to designating Marine Reserves and Marine Protected Areas in the nearshore ocean, Oregon protects special areas along its rocky shoreline with three levels of protection. Seven places, including Haystack Rock at Cannon Beach, are designated *Marine Gardens*, where it is illegal to collect any marine invertebrate (except single mussels for bait). Seven more sites are deemed *Research Reserves*, where scientists may be issued permits allowing them to collect certain species of animals or plants. The highest level of protection is found in a *Habitat Refuge*, where no marine fish, shellfish, or marine invertebrates of any kind may be taken in any circumstances. Whale Cove is the only such Habitat Refuge on the Oregon Coast.

NCLC is offering a naturalist-led trip to view Whale Cove this summer. For details or to register, visit [NCLCtrust.org](http://NCLCtrust.org).

## GALLERY OWNER WILD ABOUT NCLC

When Eeva Lantela opened Dragonfire Gallery in Cannon Beach, she looked forward to the day when things would slow down and she would have time to volunteer for organizations she is passionate about.

Fourteen years later, she's still waiting for that day to arrive. So the busy gallery owner found her own way to volunteer. She now dedicates a corner of the gallery to what she calls "Wild: Fundraising Through the Arts." There she displays note cards, T-shirts, books, and artwork in support of her favorite causes. She gives 100 percent of the proceeds from the sale of these items to, among others, North Coast Land Conservancy, which received more than \$1,200 from Dragonfire Gallery last year.

"It makes me feel good, because I don't have time to volunteer—this is my volunteering," Eeva says. "As I get older, I find myself wanting to give back to the community and to the land. 'Wild' is a win-win for everyone. Employees like that we do this, customers feel good knowing their purchase is supporting something important, and NCLC gets some needed funds for its important work. It's amazing how it adds up."



**DONOR SPOTLIGHT**  
*Eeva Lantela and Charlie*

Having grown up in a commercial fishing family on the British Columbia coast, Eeva has always been attuned to salmon and their need for quality habitat. She had long been aware of North Coast Land Conservancy, but it was NCLC's flood mitigation project along US 101 in Seaside that really got her attention. "I thought, I really want to give back somehow," she says. Now even the coins that kids throw into the gallery's water fountain are donated to NCLC.

"I'm just a lover of nature," Eeva says. "It's one of the reasons I moved here. I still can't believe I get to live in such a beautiful place."

## WHEN IS A BOG REALLY A FEN?

*(Continued from Page 1)* A detailed study conducted by The Nature Conservancy in 1995 led what had been called the Gearhart Bog to be reclassified as a *fen*—a type of wetland distinct from a bog in several respects. Fens are less acidic than bogs and have higher nutrient levels. They can support a more diverse animal and plant community, including insectivorous plants; the bog cranberry and insect-eating sundew shown on the cover are among more than 200 plant species observed in the Butterfield Fen. Fens are typically fed by mineral-rich surface water—water "perched" above the local groundwater table. Fens are also characterized by an abundance of sphagnum moss. Absorbent and aseptic, dried sphagnum moss has traditionally been used to staunch wounds. During World War I, women from the Red Cross chapter in Astoria made regular trips by train to the Butterfield Fen to gather moss, which they cleaned, sorted, dried, and placed between sheets of sterile gauze to make wound dressings that were sent to the front in Europe.

Fens directly benefit humans by reducing the risk of flooding and improving water quality. The Butterfield Fen, which stretches from Cullaby Lake south to Gearhart, is the largest contiguous fen remaining on the Oregon Coast.

## FOCUS ON WILDLIFE

### SMALL AND MIGHTY: PYGMY OWL



That was the message this northern pygmy owl seemed to be telegraphing to photographer Neal Maine after he spotted it this winter in the forest above Arch Cape, a portion of the area we call the Coastal Edge under consideration for conservation. Unlike other owls, the 7-inch-tall pygmy (smaller than a robin) is active in the daytime, hunting in forest clearings for large insects, small mammals and reptiles, and songbirds—even birds its own size or bigger. Clearcuts may offer hunting opportunities, but removal of snags during clearcutting limits the bird's reproductive success; pygmy owls rely on abandoned woodpecker holes for their nest sites. Visit this website to hear the pygmy owl's distinctive *toot-toot* song: [macaulaylibrary.org/audio/140258](http://macaulaylibrary.org/audio/140258).



### INTERESTED IN SEEING A FEN FOR YOURSELF?

NCLC plans to offer a botanist-led visit to the Butterfield Fen this summer. For details or to register, visit [NCLCtrust.org](http://NCLCtrust.org) for the complete list of On the Land outings.



Preserving the Oregon Coast Forever

North Coast Land Conservancy is a nonprofit land trust dedicated to safeguarding Oregon's vital coastal landscapes. Working with a wide-range of community partners, we acquire strategic lands and manage a living network of coastal habitats—from Astoria to Lincoln City—necessary to support abundant wildlife and diverse community needs, now and forever.

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A new season of On the Land outings will kick off in June: join us! These guided trips, most of them two hours long, reveal hidden corners of our conserved lands on Oregon's north coast: habitat reserves that, because of safety or accessibility issues, are not normally open to the public.

This year's new outings include a visit to the Butterfield Fen—our largest preserve—and a walk on Whalen Island in Sand Lake, north of Pacific City in Tillamook County, near where we now own and conserve nearly 215 acres. We will be exploring the land-sea connection where Oswald West State Park and Cape Falcon Marine Reserve meet north of Manzanita, where we are increasingly focusing our conservation efforts. And we'll revisit some favorite sites in the Seaside-Warrenton area to check in on our on-going habitat enhancement efforts.

The outings are free, but preregistration is required so we can keep groups small. This year, registration will be staggered by month: for example, registration for July outings will open on June 1. Find detailed descriptions and register for Summer 2015 On the Land outings on our website, NCLCtrust.org. Join our e-mail list to receive reminders about these and other events.

### NEW STAFF MEMBER



## DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR HAS DEEP ROOTS

Lorraine Ortiz of Nehalem has joined the North Coast Land Conservancy team as development director. She says her work helping fund nonprofits such as NCLC is driven by a passion for the people, places, and projects of this region. "When I moved to the Nehalem Bay area in 1990, I was looking for a change in lifestyle," said Lorraine. "What I found was the place where I wanted to spend my life. And now, what an honor to join the NCLC team!" Lorraine has served as director of development for the Columbia River Maritime Museum, Lower Nehalem Community Trust, and CARTM in Manzanita. Welcome, Lorraine!

### JOIN OUR E-MAIL LIST

If you only receive newsletters from us in the mail, you're only getting half the picture. North Coast Land Conservancy also sends out monthly e-newsletters (just once a month, not more than that) with breaking news, upcoming events, and blog posts focused on seasonal changes and wildlife on the Oregon Coast.

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