

# Coast View

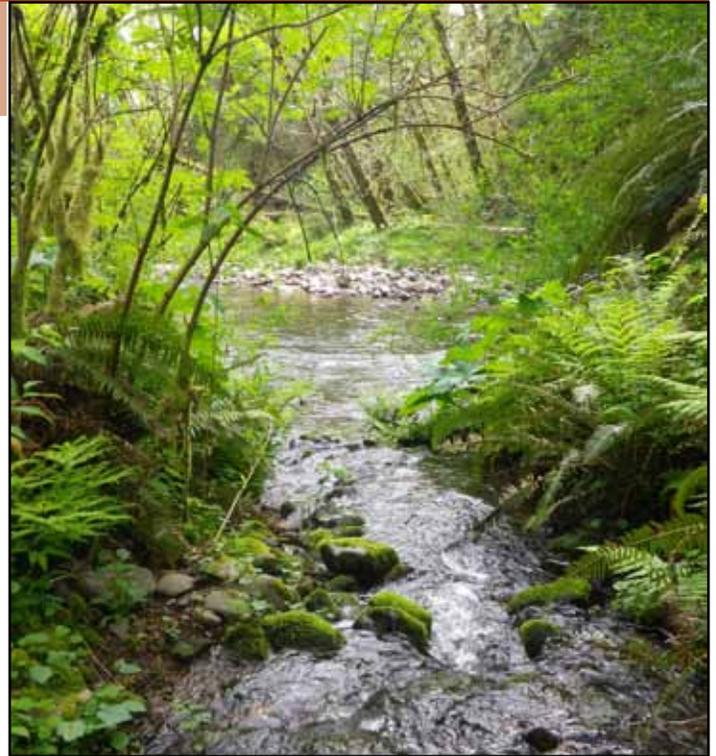
The North Coast Land Conservancy Newsletter

Fall 2012

## Inspiration Conservation NCLC celebrates Soapstone Creek Easement

Since 1998, the nonprofit literary organization Soapstone has provided residencies for some 375 women writers at a hand-crafted cabin perched above Soapstone Creek, a tributary of the North Fork Nehalem River. Board members and residents have ranged from names you know—Ursula Le Guin, Cheryl Strayed—to lesser known but accomplished writers, for whom a residency at Soapstone was a rare opportunity to focus undisturbed on their writing for a week or more. In 2010 the board of directors decided to move Soapstone in a different direction. The cabin and the 22 acres of forest that surround it are now for sale—but with a conservation easement with NCLC in place, ensuring that regardless who owns the land, it will continue to be stewarded with the same thought and care it had under Soapstone’s ownership.

Under a conservation easement, the property owner retains ownership of the land but NCLC is the holder of the easement which limits development and habitat disturbance forever. The easement is attached to the deed in perpetuity, through any future transfers of ownership. Conservation easements are a key conservation strategy used by NCLC but one not well understood by many people—including Soapstone’s board members, who serendipitously learned about this option in the midst of their decision-making about the property’s future. *cont. p.3*



NCLC Administrative assistant Allison Wilski, Executive Director Katie Voelke and volunteers Jeanne Henderson and Penny Paulsen unpack Stephen Anderson’s latest delivery of Hastie Boots.

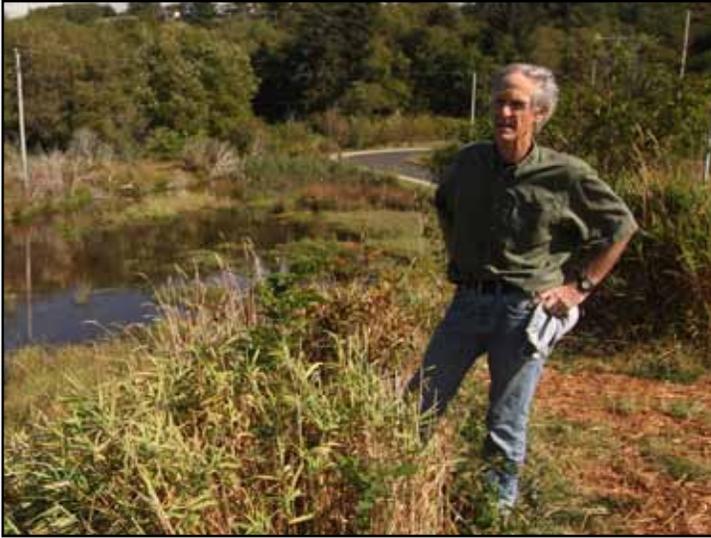
## ‘Hastie Boots’ keep volunteer feet dry

Hardly a day goes by when one or two or a whole cadre of NCLC volunteers isn’t outside pulling invasive purple loosestrife on one property or planting willows on another, photographing a restoration-in-progress or leading a guided walk. These “boots on the ground” are essential to fulfilling the land trust’s mission. And boots—sturdy waterproof boots—are essential to that work, particularly as winter approaches.

Enter Stephen Anderson of Eugene. He’s been scouring garage sales and secondhand stores for rubber boots in a range of sizes that he then donates to the land trust—over 20 pairs, at last count—to ensure that volunteers, especially youth crews, can keep their feet dry should they arrive for work unprepared for the conditions. He’s doing it in honor of his friend Bill Hastie of Salem, a nationally prominent marine educator who died last May. Bill was a friend of NCLC and its founder, Neal Maine; every fall Bill would show up in Seaside for his “coastal fix,” Neal says. Stephen, too, is an admirer of NCLC, particularly of the land trust’s work partnering with beavers to restore coastal wetlands.

“Bill is so missed,” says NCLC board member Doug Ray, “but boots on the ground, to help people learn the wonders of the land, is an appropriate memorial to him. Stephen’s gracious investment reminds us that there are myriad ways to support NCLC and our mission while honoring the people who support us.”

## NCLC Site Stewards set their own pace



Stewardship Saturdays aren't for everyone.

Take Jeff Roehm of Portland, for instance. He's a committed NCLC supporter, and he enjoys giving his time to the land trust as well. But the retired community college administrator's schedule doesn't always line up with NCLC's Saturday Morning Stewardship volunteering schedule.

So last spring, Jeff signed up as site monitor for two NCLC properties in Seaside: Wahanna Marsh and Salmonberry Knoll. Like his fellow site monitors Penny and Jay Paulsen and Art Limbird, Jeff agreed to visit the sites four times a year, walking the boundaries and the interior of the properties and taking pictures at established photo points, allowing NCLC to document changes over time. He looks for incursions of non-native plants and notes changes such as downed trees or new stream channels. He may chat with the neighbors—or anyone else who happens by. Jeff also volunteers as a site steward at Thompson Creek and Stanley Marsh, where he spends hours pulling out invasive plants.

Such volunteering lightens the load for NCLC's full-time stewardship director and summer land steward. "They've got 45 properties and they can't do them all," Jeff says. "So I've taken two of them off their hands." And it helps Jeff stay connected with his hometown: land he played on as a kid and, years later, walked on while visiting his father. "I'm really connected with those places and would love to see them not go away," Jeff says. "You could go to Seaside and look at all the building and feel bad. Or you can do something, like NCLC is."

"They're very appreciative people," Jeff says of the NCLC staff, "but it's me that ought to be thanking them. I really believe in it."

**Are you interested in getting trained to become an NCLC site steward?**

Contact NCLC Stewardship Director Celeste Coulter at [celestec@nclctrust.org](mailto:celestec@nclctrust.org) or (503) 738-9126 for more information on NCLC's Site Steward program.

## Saturday Morning Stewardship September 2012-April 2013

Volunteer work parties begin at 9 am and end at noon except where noted. Bring gloves, sturdy boots, rain gear, and water, NCLC will supply the tools needed. We will not normally have access to public restrooms. Work continues in the afternoon, so if you want to make a day of it, pack a lunch and stay!

For more information and directions to the work site, please call NCLC Stewardship Director Celeste Coulter at **503-738-9126** or e-mail [celestec@nclctrust.org](mailto:celestec@nclctrust.org).

### October 27 Neacoxie Forest Invasive Plants

Nestled along the banks of Neacoxie Creek, Neacoxie Forest supports ancient groves of crabapple and Sitka spruce and open grassland habitat for birds and butterflies. We'll spend the day cutting and pulling holly and Scotch broom to make way for the native plants that provide critical habitat for wildlife. Please join us we continue efforts to protect this forested wetland.

### November 17 Stanley Marsh Beaver Habitat

Last summer we laid the foundation for beavers to colonize the lower marsh. This fall we'll add the finishing touches by planting and stacking willows around several beaver lodges. At the land trust, we learn what is best for the land by patiently observing nature; this time we'll take our cue from the flat-tailed, furry engineers that make this place their home. Please join us for this unique construction project!

### January 26 Reed Ranch Wetland Habitat

We'll be adding to our migratory bird habitat development from last year by planting more willows and other wetland shrubs. Birders beware – you'll be sure to find many distractions here such as American bitterns, rufous hummingbirds, black phoebes, white-fronted geese, and if we're lucky, whimbrels!

### February 23 Stanley Marsh Beaver Habitat

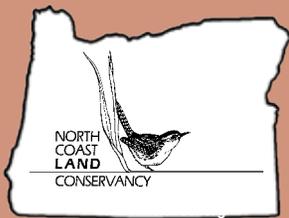
We're working to create habitat for resident beaver colonies by providing foundation points for dam construction in Stanley Creek, excavating old pasture to create permanent wetlands, and providing denning habitat for beaver families. Join us as we add the finishing touches to the beaver kit houses by planting and stacking willows around the openings and walls of the lodges. We will also continue efforts to plant additional wetland scrub-shrub species to provide food and shelter habitat for beavers.

### March 2 Nehalem Bay Cleanup 8 am - 4pm

We're joining our friends at the Lower Nehalem Community Trust, Lower Nehalem Watershed Council, CART'M Recycling, SOLV, Western Oregon Waste, Nehalem Bay State Park, and the City of Wheeler for the 8th biennial Nehalem Estuary cleanup this month. This great event clears a huge amount of trash out of Nehalem Bay, and we are excited to be helping out! Join us for all or part of the day, and help make a difference in this critical ecosystem. *Please note the date and time of this event!*

### April 20 Earth Day at Circle Creek

Join North Coast Land Conservancy as we celebrate Earth Day by hosting a community tree planting festival at NCLC's Circle Creek Conservation Center. Spend an afternoon of planting in the historic Necanicum River floodplain and help leave a legacy for future generations.



**Our Mission:**  
*The North Coast Land Conservancy will serve as a resource for Northwest Oregon coastal communities and landowners to conserve and protect land in perpetuity for its ecological and cultural values.*

### Board of Directors

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Doug Green

**Vice-president**

Tammi Lesh

**Treasurer**

Ron Logan

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Katie Voelke

**Conservation Director**

Jon Wickersham

**Stewardship Director**

Celeste Coulter

**Outreach Coordinator**

Teresa Retzlaff

**Administrative Assistant**

Allison Wilski

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**Seaside, OR 97138**

**(503) 738-9126**

**[www.nclctrust.org](http://www.nclctrust.org)**

*Title Photo: Wild Geese in Flight  
 ©PacificLight Images/Neal Maine*

# NCLC Transitions

## A Bittersweet Farewell

It's uncanny. Ask almost anyone how they first got involved with North Coast Land Conservancy, and chances are the name Doug Ray will work its way into the conversation. "The first project I ever worked on for NCLC was a volunteer planting along the Necanicum River with Doug Ray," remembers NCLC Executive Director Katie Voelke. "Spent one day with him and I was hooked! I knew NCLC was going to be an outlet for my passion for conservation."

Board member Randall Henderson agrees. "Doug has shared so many of the north coast's special places with me and many others, from the back side of Saddle Mountain to the interdunal lakes and swamps of the Clatsop Plains-places made more accessible through Doug's special knowledge and willingness to share."

Ray, a native Oregonian, has lived on the North Coast for most of his life. He was drawn to the brand new land trust by his former High School science teacher and one of NCLC's founders, Neal Maine. He joined the board in 1993 and has been working his special brand of recruitment and fund raising magic ever since. In NCLC's early days, Doug cheerfully volunteered to do whatever was needed to keep the young land trust moving forward. "And it was a 'two-for-one' deal too!" Doug laughs, as he recalls how his wife Kirsten joined him in spending hundreds of hours whacking invasive plants on NCLC lands. "Kirsten often did all the envelope stuffing and stamping for early fund raising efforts that kept NCLC alive at the time," Ray recalls. "We couldn't have done it without her."

Ray's passion for the beauty and wildlife of the coast gradually grew into a career as a wetland ecologist, searching for the best solutions on how to preserve and keep connected these critical coastal ecosystems. He has volunteered tirelessly on behalf of NCLC, encouraging others from groups like the Rainland Flycasters and Trout Unlimited to help plant thousands of trees on NCLC lands. He has led inspiring interpretive walks that have been known to bring people to tears, cut thousands of willow whips to plant for beaver habitat, and passionately made the case for conserving land on Oregon's North Coast to anyone from a random stranger met on the street to the Governor of Oregon.

"I know that we will continue to work together towards NCLC's mission in new capacities," Voelke observes, "but still, it is with tears in my eyes that I say farewell to him as a board member. We will be hard pressed to find anyone who will serve with as much heart and dedication as Doug has for nearly half his life."

Mere words seem inadequate, but they are all we've got: **Thank You, Doug Ray!**



## Executive Director plans for winter hibernation

NCLC Executive Director Katie Voelke clearly feels confident that the Oregon Coast has a bright future because she is planning to welcome another child into the world! Any day now, Katie, her husband Scott, and their four year old son August, will be adding a new member to their family. While on maternity leave, Katie has asked Jon Wickersham, Conservation Director, to serve as interim director in her stead, and knows she is leaving the land trust in the capable hands of staff and board members. Katie will be back part time in February and full time in the spring, once again working towards the future legacy of a healthy Oregon coast.

## New support staff for NCLC

This summer NCLC welcomed a new part-time staff member to our team. Allison Wilski has taken on the essential role of Administrative Assistant for the land trust, and we're already feeling the improved flow of on-the-ground accomplishments since her arrival. Find out more about Allison at our NCLC staff page [www.nclctrust.org/staff](http://www.nclctrust.org/staff)



## Hardest working fisherman on the coast

If you spend time along coastal estuaries or freshwater creeks, it's hard to not see a kingfisher (*Ceryle alcyon*)—or at least hear its loud, rattling cry. They're so common, they're easy to dismiss. NCLC founder Neal Maine, who has spent many hours observing and photographing this year-round coastal resident, thinks they deserve a little more respect. For instance, take a closer look at that oversize head and dagger-like bill, built to fish, and that coloration, so different front and back, and the female (not the male) kingfisher's extra flash of red across her breast.

Then there's that work ethic: when not evading hawks or other predators, kingfishers are fishing, fishing, fishing. They will eat crayfish, amphibians, mice, mollusks, lizards, and fruit, but 90 percent of their diet is fish 3 to 4 inches long. A kingfisher will spend long minutes perched on a limb hanging over the water, looking for just the right-sized fish to snatch, which she'll carry to her favorite battering site—a particular tree limb—to bash before swallowing. Adult kingfishers teach their young to fend for themselves by dropping dead fish into the water.

Kingfishers are territorial about their perch sites; they'll defend an area up to 2 miles around a perch. And they are creatures of habit, often following the same "trapline" in the same order as they hunt up a stream or along an estuary, then going back and doing it again. Like humans, they recognize boundaries—but not the same private/

public property boundaries we observe. In that way, the kingfisher is yet another poster animal for the connectivity and wildlife corridors NCLC seeks to establish and enhance through its land acquisitions, conservation easements, and stewardship.

*Inspiration Conservation cont. from p.1* "We wanted to make sure that the new buyer shared our conservation values and would not do anything to the property that so many people had loved and cared for," says Ruth Gundle, a founder and former director of Soapstone. "The folks at North Coast Land Conservancy were absolutely wonderful, and we were delighted that they agreed that it was valuable enough to be worth conserving."

Those values include a bedrock stream that hosts spawning habitat for Chinook and coho salmon, cutthroat trout, steelhead, and Pacific lamprey, running through a forest with virtually no invasive plants, explains NCLC Stewardship Director Celeste Coulter. "They've really treated it with respect," she says. The forest was logged in the 1920s, "but they've been really conscientious about leaving the land alone, and for that reason, it's coming back in this really great way. It's a multi-age stand from young Sitka spruce seedlings to towering cedar trees, and there are some great downed legacy logs. All the components of an old growth forest are there; it just needs time. That's not easy to find."

Gundle says Soapstone's board is aware that having a conservation easement on the land may shrink the pool of prospective buyers. "But we're fine with that, because we really only want to sell to someone who would appreciate it and care for it as we have. Doing a conservation easement was very much part and parcel of what we've been about all along." [www.soapstone.org](http://www.soapstone.org)

## Where Community and Nature Intersect



From tsunami debris to dragonflies, our two winter speaker series' will keep you engaged and informed about all forms of life and how they connect here on Oregon's north coast.

Please join us!

### Listening to the Land

Third Wednesdays, October - April 6pm  
Seaside Public Library

### Nature Matters

Third Thursdays, September - May 7pm  
Fort George Brewery, Astoria

More info at [www.nclctrust/events-programs](http://www.nclctrust/events-programs)