



## BUILDING BRIDGES FOR CONSERVATION

In an effort to improve safety and fish habitat, North Coast Land Conservancy worked with local partners and neighbors to replace a bridge over Butte Creek in late October. The bridge—located on NCLC’s Butte Creek Habitat Reserve in Tillamook County—was more than 50 years old and showing signs of significant wear.

Neighbors expressed concern

that a major storm event could cause flooding and wash out the old bridge. Additionally, it rested on pilings that had been placed directly into parts of Butte Creek, which was constricting the channel width and negatively impacting fish passage.

“If the bridge collapsed, which was inevitable eventually, it would have negative habitat impacts and also human-safety impacts,” Stewardship

Director Melissa Reich says.

After hearing concerns from the neighbors, NCLC started looking for grant funding to help cover the cost of the bridge replacement and reached out to the Nestucca, Neskowin & Sand Lake Watersheds Council. They procured a grant of approximately \$82,000 from the Oregon Department of Fish and Wildlife (ODFW) to

*(continued on page 3)*

## CELEBRATING 10 YEARS OF OREGON’S MARINE RESERVES

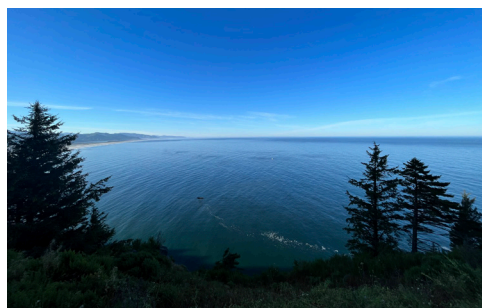
In 2022, the Oregon Marine Reserves Program, managed by ODFW, celebrated a decade of conservation, scientific research, and connecting community members to these biodiverse coastal ecosystems.

The marine reserves system is the first long-term nearshore ocean conservation and monitoring program executed by the state.

“We’re generating new knowledge that’s relevant to making better man-

agement decisions,” says Dr. Lindsay Aylesworth, ODFW’s Marine Reserves Program leader. That includes “trying to understand how ocean conditions are changing, how biological communities are changing, how fisheries are changing, and what’s driving those changes, and then identifying what we can do about it.”

Cape Falcon Marine Reserve—the centerpiece of NCLC’s marine program—is the northernmost marine re-



serve site, located in the Pacific Ocean off Oswald West State Park,

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## PROTECTING THE COAST'S NATURAL RESOURCES

Coastal residents Catriona Penfield and Jeremy Rust have a similar view on conservation. As Jeremy says, it “is protecting a resource and making sure it’s available for generations.”

And “stewardship,” Catriona adds. “Not just keeping it the way it is—even enhancing it.”

The couple, who live in Gearhart and work as attorneys in Seaside, have a deep-rooted connection to environmentalism.

Jeremy grew up in Eugene, between the ocean and the mountains. With his father—who was from Missoula, Montana, by way of St. Paul, Minnesota—he started hunting and fishing at a young age. He sees those activities as positively contributing to conservation, adding they involve “taking care of a resource, making sure it’s there for years to come,” which is why he also supports nonprofits like Ducks Unlimited and the Rocky Mountain



Elk Foundation. In college, Jeremy majored in biology, with a minor in chemistry, before attending law school.

Catriona spent her childhood in Sacramento, which is also nestled in the valley, between the mountains and the Sacramento—San Joaquin River Delta. She grew up spending time in Sacramento’s ample greenspaces and visiting the estuaries in Central California and

the beach.

“It was always a favorite place for our family to go,” she says, adding they also made trips to Oregon. As a result, “being able to live by the ocean was always a draw.”

The couple, who met in law school at the University of Oregon, moved to the coast in 2010. They were introduced to North Coast Land Conservancy through outdoor programming—

such as a geological nature walk near the Necanicum Estuary—and learned about the organization’s conserved lands and stewardship projects taking place nearby. Established in the 1980s, NCLC has been conserving land on the coast for nearly 40 years, through land purchases and donations.

“It’s positive to have an organization like [NCLC] that is surrounding, literally, this community,” Jeremy says.

For both him and Catriona, it’s important that conservation work be tailored to a specific region, balancing the protection of resources with unique community needs, and they’ve witnessed NCLC’s efforts to take that approach when undertaking new projects.

“You just have to work with the community to find out what works for that specific community,” Catriona says.

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## ACTIVE RESTORATION WORK CONTINUES AT BONEYARD RIDGE

NCLC’s stewardship team continues restoration work at Boneyard Ridge Habitat Reserve that is intended to set the forest on an accelerated path toward becoming a healthy, functioning system. This winter’s project includes selective thinning on about 40 acres of a 115-acre unit.

“We’re cutting the smaller, younger trees, or in areas where no trees were able to get large, because it was so

Read the full story at [NCLCtrust.org/restoration-boneyard-ridge-2022/](https://NCLCtrust.org/restoration-boneyard-ridge-2022/)

densely planted,” Stewardship Director Melissa Reich says.

Reducing the tree volume will set this portion of Boneyard Ridge on a trajectory to transforming from a tree farm to a healthy forest. All trees are staying on-site for large wood habitat that is used by an assortment of wild-



*Dense stands of over-planted trees versus a healthy forest with a thriving understory.* NCLC is also planting new trees to increase species and structural diversity.



*The Hawk Creek Watershed surrounds Neskowin's drinking water source.*

## **PRESERVING A WATERSHED IN NESKOWIN**

The Neskowin Regional Water District is completing the first phase in a long-term vision of acquiring the part of the Hawk Creek Watershed that surrounds the community's drinking water source.

The district, with facilitation support from NCLC, is purchasing approximately 50 acres of forested property from private land owners, Mike and Lana Kowalski.

The land sits above the outtake for the district's water plant, at the confluence of Hawk Creek and an unnamed tributary.

The water district has been investigating the advantages of owning and controlling the Source Water Area (SWA) for more than 15 years, an interest that's picked up momentum in the past five years because of changes in land ownership; concerns about the impacts of climate change on the water supply; and advisories from Oregon's Department of Environmental Quality.

NCLC became involved in the project about a year ago. In a facilitation capacity, NCLC is providing a variety of administrative

services, from connecting the district with an appraiser and exploring funding options to title work and writing the deed.

"We believe the drinking watershed should be controlled by the local citizens, and in these cases, the best manager is the water district," Associate Director Jon Wickersham says. "When we can marry water protection, water security, and conservation of critical habitat together, it makes sense."

According to the water district, research shows that protecting watersheds has a range of benefits, such as lowering costs for drinking water treatment, minimizing damage from natural disasters, and increasing adjacent property values.

This acquisition is part of a broader vision: protecting the whole watershed, which spans about 1,200 acres and is divided among several private landowners.

"This is just the first phase," Jon says, adding NCLC will continue to help facilitate the project through the upcoming phases.

Read the whole story at [NCLCtrust.org/facilitation-neskowin/](https://NCLCtrust.org/facilitation-neskowin/).

## **BUTTE CREEK**

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install a new, longer bridge that spans a more natural channel width, accommodating higher flows in winter without impacting fish passage.

In a collaborative spirit, neighbors of the reserve pitched in donations for the remaining \$10,000 to cover the total cost of the project. Meanwhile, the watersheds council managed the bridge replacement.

"Each entity in the project was really critical—we were all needed," Melissa says. NCLC approaches projects "from a collaborative perspective whenever we can."

The Butte Creek Habitat Reserve originated in 2016 through a generous land donation from longtime resident Sue Gabriel, who passed away in March 2022.

Sue was on a first-name basis not only with HeShe—a spectacular Sitka spruce growing in the forest—but many of the other plants and creatures who inhabit the land. She named the gooseberry plant she loved Mama Goose, and all the slugs were named Esmerelda. She monitored the monthly rainfall, how the water was draining, and other natural occurrences and changes.

Her generosity inspired her friends and neighbors, Jane and Jack Casey, to donate an adjacent 10-acre property in 2018. The creek runs through this grove of forest as well, and the entire three-part reserve lies within 1.5 miles of the ocean shore.

Read more at [NCLCtrust.org/butte-creek-bridge/](https://NCLCtrust.org/butte-creek-bridge/).

## **The Forest Remembers**

11 a.m. Saturday, April 29

Circle Creek

Conservation Center

Details at [NCLCtrust.org/event/the-forest-remembers-2023/](https://NCLCtrust.org/event/the-forest-remembers-2023/)





*Helping to conserve  
Oregon's coastal lands,  
forever.*

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## MAILING ADDRESS

*P.O. Box 67  
Seaside, OR 97138*

## PHYSICAL ADDRESS

*2609 N. Roosevelt Drive  
Seaside, OR 97138*

## CONTACT US

*503-738-9126*



## MEET OUR NEW STAFF

### NCLC WELCOMES RHIANNA AND COLIN TO THE TEAM

North Coast Land Conservancy has brought on two new team members over the past couple months.

Rhianna Thurber started in November as the Marine Program Manager. In this capacity, she oversees the Marine Reserve Program of NCLC, enabling her to apply her knowledge of the Oregon Coast and the marine environment, as well as her passion for community science, advocacy and education.



In January, NCLC also hired Colin Meston as an additional Land Steward. Colin, who has volunteered with NCLC several years, will be supporting all aspects of the stewardship program, with a focus on forestry projects and properties.

## MARINE RESERVE

*(continued from page 1)*

between Arch Cape and Manzanita. It is also the youngest, as monitoring began in 2014 and restrictions were implemented in 2016. Along with the reserve, the site includes two marine protected areas (MPAs).

"There's a really good land-sea connection at Cape Falcon," Lindsay says, adding the importance and popularity of Oswald West translate into "a high recreational value," with people using the beaches for surfing, tide-pool activities, walking and swimming. "It does provide an access point for a lot of people to be able to enjoy the beauty of the marine reserve."

The marine reserve sites are often described as "living laboratories," dedi-

icated to conservation and scientific research. ODFW scientists and partners gather data, monitor ecological changes, and explore the economic, social, and cultural dynamics of the Oregon Coast and coastal communities in relation to marine resources.

Last year, as part of the 10-year anniversary, ODFW released a report to share about the development of the marine reserves program, the challenges faced, accomplishments made, and new understandings and insights. The report underwent an external university review, and it will be submitted to government officials for review in the 2023 Legislative Session.

Read more at [NCLCtrust.org/oregon-marine-reserves/](https://NCLCtrust.org/oregon-marine-reserves/).



### Whiskey, Wetlands and Wildlife

*Tickets are on sale for our upcoming fundraiser!*

**Date:** Sunday, March 19  
**Time:** 3:30 to 5:30 p.m.  
**Venue:** Blaylock's Whiskey Bar  
Astoria, OR

Visit [NCLCtrust.org/event/whiskey-wetlands-and-wildlife-fundraiser/](https://NCLCtrust.org/event/whiskey-wetlands-and-wildlife-fundraiser/)



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