



COMMUNITY REPORT 2023



WELCOME



Since Redwood Coast Land Conservancy's last community report in 2021, I can attest, as a volunteer back then now serving as RCLC president, that much has changed.

In 2021, the newly acquired Mill Bend Preserve seemed more an idea than a place for an afternoon's walk. Today the Preserve now offers the River Rail and Toyon Trails, with plans continuing for an extension of the California Coastal Trail from the Gualala Bluff Trail to the Highway 1 bridge.

Invasive plants, once dominant in areas scarred by lumber mill operations, are yielding to volunteers with weed wrenches, shovels, strong arms and backs. Cleared areas are infilling with native plants.

No single effort, however, outshines the ongoing restoration of the Gualala Cemetery. An overgrown and nearly forgotten sacred space has again become a beautiful place of contemplation and remembrance. No other accomplishment better exemplifies what's possible when our RCLC community unites.

Mark Escajeda
President, Board of Directors



RCLC is experiencing a growth spurt, despite its 30-year-old age. With Mill Bend Preserve secured in 2021, and the State Coastal Conservancy-funded Conservation Plan delivered in the fall of 2022, RCLC is now actively restoring native habitats and designing an expanded trails network, including natural and cultural history interpretation. The cemetery revitalization team is putting finishing touches on its makeover efforts.

Recognizing the workload and opportunities ahead, RCLC hired me as its first full-time executive director last year. Having devoted my professional life to land conservation, I was able to jump right in and get to work.

RCLC is building its future on a foundation of already-beloved projects. Cooks Beach and Hearn Gulch continue to provide access to rugged Mendonoma coastlands. The Gualala Bluff Trail still invites residents and visitors alike to pause and absorb nature's grandeur.

Please read on and learn why we're so proud of our community land trust. If you're a longtime companion in this effort, thank you! If you're new to RCLC, come join us!

Jim Elias
Executive Director

CONNECTING COMMUNITY

AT RCLC, CONSERVATION IS A COMMUNITY EFFORT. OUR GROWTH AND SUCCESS HAVE RESULTED FROM PARTNERSHIPS WITH SO MANY OTHERS WHO ALSO VALUE NATURE.

TIRELESS VOLUNTEERS STEWARD TRAILS, REMOVE INVASIVE PLANTS, REPAIR DAMAGED FACILITIES, AND EXPAND RCLC'S PUBLIC OUTREACH.

NATURALISTS SHARE THEIR KNOWLEDGE OF BIRDS AND PLANTS, SCIENTISTS CONDUCT GUALALA RIVER WATER STUDIES, AND EDUCATORS INTRODUCE KIDS TO OUTDOOR ADVENTURE.

PEOPLE ARE THE BACKBONE TO RCLC'S SUCCESS AND CONSERVATION ACCOMPLISHMENTS.



MILL BEND PRESERVE

MILL BEND PRESERVE WILL HEADLINE RCLC'S RESTORATION EFFORTS FOR QUITE SOME TIME. NATURE HAS BEGUN TO HEAL ITSELF, THOUGH IT COULD USE SOME HELP. MILL DEBRIS AND RUSTING VEHICLES REMIND US OF MILL BEND'S BRIEF BUT IMPACTFUL INDUSTRIAL PAST.

INVASIVE PLANTS FOUND A FOOTHOLD, UNDERMINING NATIVE SPECIES AND RAISING WILDFIRE CONCERNS FOR THE NEIGHBORING COMMUNITY. AND GUALALA'S HISTORIC CEMETERY FELL VICTIM TO NEGLECT AND OCCASIONAL VANDALISM.

On-the-ground restoration efforts are well under way. Together with energetic volunteers, we have removed more than 50 tons of downed debris and invasive jubata and broom plants. Sea Ranch "Hot Shots" rebuilt the River Rail Trail, following the original Highway 1 alignment to the corridor where trains once carried logs to downstream mills. And skilled craftspeople have fully renovated the Gualala Cemetery, honoring and providing a glimpse into the lives of those at final rest there.

COMING SOON



Expanded native habitat restoration, thanks to a \$268,000 State Coastal Conservancy Wildfire Resilience Program grant, accelerating the removal of invasive plants and downed debris, benefiting wildlife and the community alike.



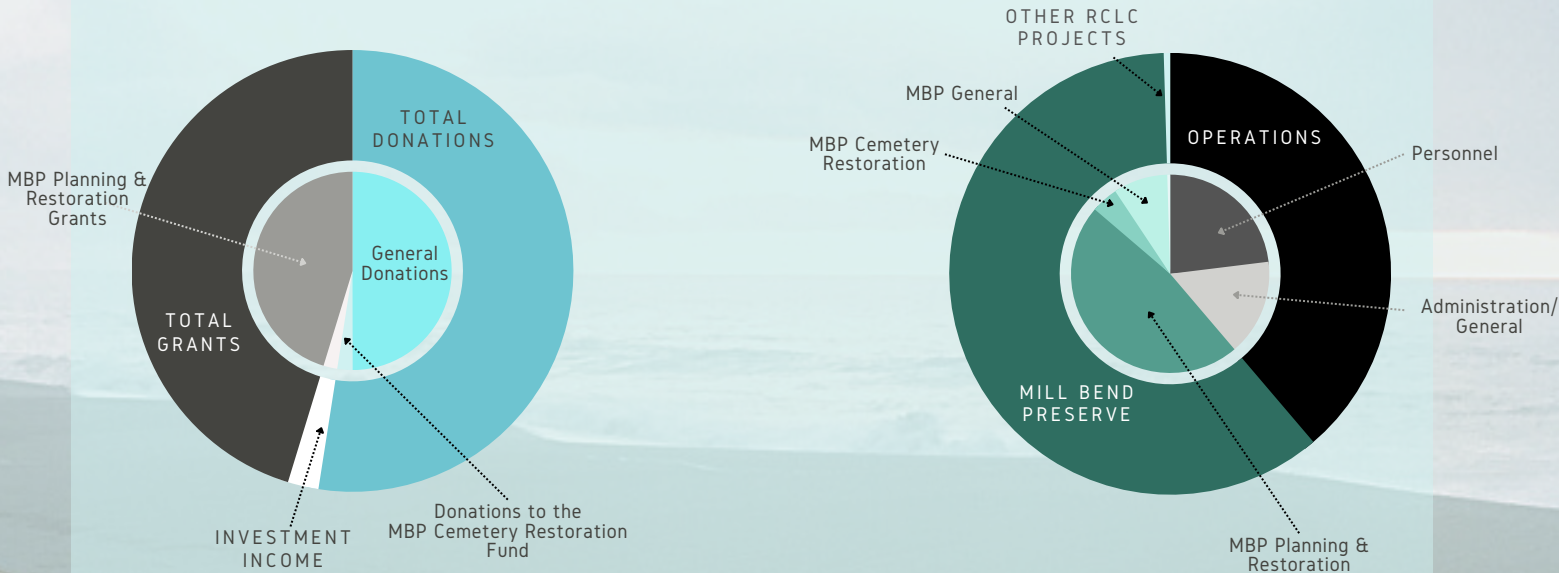
Salmonid habitat restoration, funded by a \$404,000 California Department of Fish and Wildlife grant. Our partners at Prunuske Chatham, Inc. will design a road map for using woody debris, deepened pools, and braided river channels to improve coho salmon and steelhead trout habitats.



Public access and trails master plan. RCLC is applying for a \$1.3 million State Coastal Conservancy grant to guide future trails, scenic sitting areas, and interactive natural history education. With Prunuske Chatham, Inc. as technical partners, we will extend the California Coastal Trail beyond the Gualala Bluff Trail and through Mill Bend, plus add interior trails. Lower Preserve designs will include an elevated walkway and a river viewing platform.

2022 FINANCIALS

RCLC is on strong financial footing. Individual donors and businesses support more than half our work. Public agency grants fund Mill Bend Preserve habitat restoration and trails development. Looking forward, RCLC plans to grow staff and outreach capacity to advance conservation goals, while applying the same prudent fiscal management principles that have guided RCLC for more than 30 years.



REVENUE: \$433,467

EXPENSES: \$305,209

NET INCOME: \$128,258

HOW YOU CAN HELP

REDWOOD COAST LAND CONSERVANCY RELIES ON COMMUNITY SUPPORT. NO GIFT IS TOO LARGE OR SMALL.

We welcome online donations at rclc.org/give/donate or scan below to give:

Checks may be mailed to:
 RCLC
 P.O. Box 1511
 Gualala, CA. 95445-1511



Supporters can donate stocks, mutual funds, IRA/retirement distributions, and personal property. Email rclc@rclc.org for more information about these and other options, or if you are considering including RCLC in your estate plans.

RCLC also invites your gift of time. To learn how you can join a work party, provide pro bono professional services, or help us reach out to the Mendonoma business community, email volunteers@rclc.org.

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