

NRS/RCAA Fall 2024 E-Newsletter



Promoting healthy communities
and healthy watersheds since 1983



Fall has descended upon Humboldt County once again, filling these early October days with beautiful light and warm sunshine. The Natural Resources Services Division (NRS) is making the most of the nice weather and squeezing in our final community events of the year before we inch closer to the solstice. Most recently, the Active Living team led a bike tour showcasing the Samoa Peninsula's newest murals and hosted a 'Trash and Treasure' cleanup as part of California Coastal Clean-up days. Both events are a part of the Peninsula Beautification event funded through Caltrans. Read on for more details and awesome photos.

Over in Watershed, the Restoration Field Crew (RFC) continues to grow, with close to 40 members working diligently on many restoration projects in our community. In addition to restoring salt marshes all over Humboldt Bay, the RFC has been busy in Six Rivers National Forest, hiking on former fire break lines and surveying invasive plants. The RFC also works hard on the Coastal Dune Restoration Project, removing invasive species, restoring dune

processes, and making our coastline more resilient to climate change on more than 160 acres.

Read on to hear about an exciting new watershed project in Ryan Creek that will improve habitats for Coho salmon and restore the Ryan Creek watershed and surrounding wetlands. Also, check out our "Scenes from the Restoration Field Crew" section for a glimpse of the beautiful landscapes and wildlife they regularly encounter while on the job.

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Sincerely,
The NRS Team

Little River Splash



Little River Splash! was funded by the CA State Coastal Conservancy's 'Explore the Coast' grant funding. Over the summers of 2023 and 2024, RCAA staff coordinated naturalist-led coastal experiences for youth from supported summer school programs (targeting low-income, under-resourced youth, and their families). RCAA trained Cal Poly's student leaders to help facilitate a series of Moonstone Beach explorations of 'Barnacle Rock,' 'Dragon Cave,' 'Secret Spring,' and the Little River beach environment. In the summer of 2023, an additional kayaking trip in the Little River was offered to youth participants and their families. In the summer of 2024, the youth enjoyed an additional tour of Humboldt Bay salt marshes aboard the Madaket. Approximately 150 elementary school-aged youth were served in addition to many family members.



Student exploring Barnacle Rock | Denise Newman



RCAA staff with Cal Poly student interpreters | Denise Newman





Students aboard the Madaket | Maddie Ho



Family Fun Day 2023 | Denise Newman



Peninsula Beautification



California Coastal Cleanup Day 2024

The Peninsula Beautification Project is wrapping up its final activities and will conclude at the end of the year. This initiative, funded by the Clean California Local Grants Program through Caltrans, aims to enhance the Samoa Peninsula by reducing litter, beautifying public spaces, and increasing the number of areas the public can safely enjoy. The Redwood Community Action Agency is partnering with the Humboldt Bay Harbor Recreation and Conservation District to implement the project.

This grant has completed twenty-one murals, creating welcoming spaces for the community and reducing graffiti and vandalism. By the end of October, the final five murals will be installed in Samoa, the Fairhaven Fire Station, and the Humboldt Bay Social Club. The rest of the murals can be found at various locations scattered throughout the Samoa

Peninsula. Below are some of the murals completed over the summer of 2024.



Artist Tony Diaz | Playground at the Phyllis Rex Samoa Townhomes



Sophia Levesque and students | Peninsula Union Elementary School in Samoa



"Bee Here Now" by Blake Reagan | at Peninsula Union Elementary School in Samoa



Lucas Thornton | Community Services District's Crop yard, Manila



Laci Dane | Manila Community Services District, Manila



Before mural | HBMWD Overflow pipe New Navy Base Road



Tony Diaz | HBMWD Overflow pipe New Navy Base Road

Over the past weekend, RCAA hosted a bike mural tour to showcase all the new murals as part of our ongoing efforts to connect people with their community. Check out the photos below!



The mural tour begins with Ben Goulart's mural at Manila Community Park



On to Laci Dane's underwater mural at the Manila Community Services District's office



Checking out Josh Overington's mural at Redwood Coast Montessori & biking along Vance Ave in Samoa

If you would like to organize your own mural tour, visit our [StoryMap website here](#) for a complete map of all murals and other project work.

In addition to murals, several community and historical signs are being developed, including a new kiosk sign at Manila Community Park and various signs highlighting historical features throughout the peninsula.



Look out for our campaign signs around the Peninsula!

Remember to follow our [keepthepeninsulabeautiful](#) Instagram page to stay connected, hear about our final mural celebration and grant events, and spread the message of our anti-litter campaign to keep the Samoa Peninsula safe and trash-free!

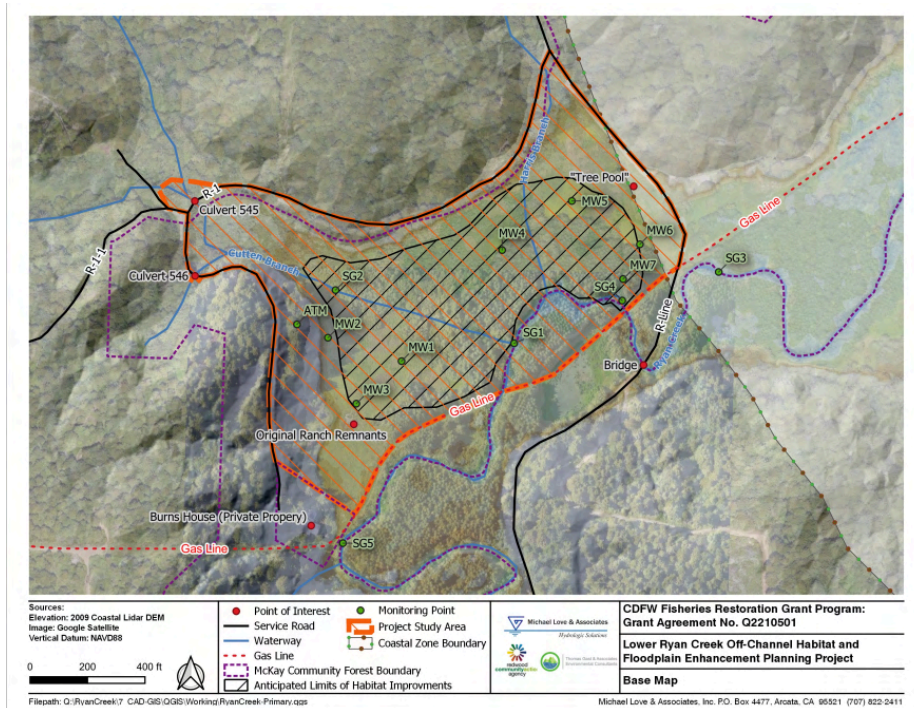
Recently, NRS held a Trash and Treasure Cleanup event on Saturday, September 21st, as a part of California Coastal Cleanup Days. In addition to cleaning up the beach, volunteers hunted for treasure and discovered several glass floats created by Soul Fire Arts!





Volunteers hunting for treasure while cleaning up trash in the Samoa Dunes!

Lower Ryan Creek Off-Channel Habitat and Floodplain Enhancement Planning Project



We're excited to share the details of the Lower Ryan Creek Off-Channel Habitat and Floodplain Enhancement Planning Project! This important initiative aims to create thriving habitats for juvenile Coho salmon while improving the health of the entire Ryan Creek watershed. The project site is located about five miles upstream from Humboldt Bay, featuring the winding lower section of Ryan Creek and the small tributary Cutten Branch.

This area, managed by Humboldt County within the McKay Community Forest, is easily accessible, allowing us to effectively restore and enhance crucial habitats for salmon and other wildlife. Together, we can make a positive impact on our local ecosystem!

In 2020, five potential sites for off-channel rearing habitats were identified, with Ryan Creek being a key focus. By 2021, the Redwood Community Action Agency (RCAA) and Michael Love & Associates had successfully submitted a proposal to the Fisheries Restoration Grant Program (FRGP) to enhance this vital habitat.

Our project has two main goals: first, to improve the flow of water between lower Ryan Creek, its tributaries, and surrounding freshwater wetlands, which will help prevent fish stranding during the winter months. Second, we aim to enhance the habitat for Coho salmon while also supporting the health of local plants and wildlife.

This initiative aligns with the Final Recovery Plan for Southern Oregon/Northern California Coast (SONCC) Coho Salmon, focusing on creating off-channel wetland features and improving connectivity within the ecosystem. The project will provide year-round habitats for juvenile Coho salmon through the construction of an off-channel wetland pond and improved connections between streams, tributaries, and floodplains.

Our plans build on previous assessments that highlighted Ryan Creek as a top priority for immediate benefits to Coho salmon. During our planning stage, we held meetings with technical experts, conducted biological surveys, mapped the area, and ensured compliance with environmental regulations. As we near the end of this phase, we are beginning to seek potential funding opportunities for project implementation.

Freshwater Community Farm



Garden Manager Matt Drummond working hard in the artichokes and a frog friend in the berries!

NRS and the North Coast Community Garden Collaborative (NCCGC) are excited to announce our new community farm project at the North Coast Regional Land Trust's Freshwater Farms Reserve on Myrtle Avenue in Eureka. The community farm is named Flying Pig Farm! In the last year we have planted 60 blueberry plants, 30 artichokes, 24 raspberries, flowers, cucumber, potatoes, and several native plants. We plan to open the farm during the summer of 2025 for u-pick berries and flowers and we are currently open on Thursdays for compost drop-off and u-pick flowers. U-pick produce, and flowers are available for a sliding scale donation, making our produce affordable for all income levels.

A portion of the produce grown on site is donated to RCAA programs, Food for People, Betty Chin Day Center, and Cal Poly's Oh Snap! Student Food Program. We recently donated over 100 pounds of potatoes and cucumber to Oh Snap! Student Food Program, which provides Cal Poly Humboldt students with free produce.

Flying Pig Farm now offers a free Compost Drop-off Program on Thursdays from 11am – 2pm. We accept up to 5 gallons of kitchen food waste from each participating household. We turn these food scraps into compost for the farm and divert thousands of pounds of food waste from the landfill for more information on the compost drop-off program call (707) 269-2071.

NRS plans to host garden workshops and community events at the community farm in the coming years. We will offer interesting garden workshops and events like seed and plant giveaways and farm fundraisers. Follow us on Facebook (www.facebook.com/NorthCoastGardens) or Instagram ([nccgc_humboldt](https://www.instagram.com/nccgc_humboldt)) to stay up to date on our community farm events.

We are looking for volunteers to help keep the farm running. If you are interested in getting involved, email Matt Drummond at mdrummond@rcaa.org. We want input from the public about the new community farm project. Please send emails with your feedback. We are also looking for monetary donations to help sustain our farm. Please email us for more information on how to donate to this exciting community food project.



Frog friend in the Marigolds & Flying Pig Farm's compost system

Field Crew Spotlight



Meet Carson Shulz, who's been on the RFC since July 2023. Carson has really made her mark as a site lead over the past year, and it's no surprise that she's thriving in this role. For her, the great outdoors isn't just a workplace—it's a sanctuary. Carson is all about soaking in the serenity and stunning views that come with working in nature.

She's passionate about restoration work and loves every chance she gets to dive deeper into the world of plants, animals, and ecosystems. If you ask Carson, her favorite spot is Friends of the Dunes. There's something truly special about witnessing the direct impact of her hard work there.

And here's a little exciting news: Carson is gearing up for a big milestone, as she's set to get married in October 2025! Congratulations, Carson, and keep up the amazing work!

Scenes from the Restoration Field Crew



Compass Jellyfish at White Slough | Photo by Sidney Cisneros

Our crew works diligently on various projects, often in challenging conditions. Their efforts take them to some truly beautiful locations throughout Humboldt County. Along the way, they encounter a range of fascinating sights and experiences. Here are some of their observations from the field.



Calf and Rattlesnake in Six Rivers National Forest | Photo by Brook Douglass



Silver Bee on Yarrow at Friends of the Dunes | Photo by Claire Durbin



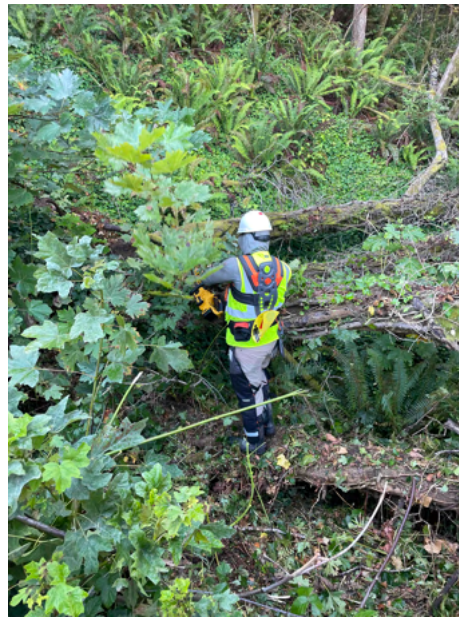
Acmon Blue Butterfly on Beach Buckwheat and Silver Bee on Seaside Daisy at *Friends of the Dunes* | Photo by Claire Durbin



Kayaking to work at White Slough | Photo by Josh Pollard



Trapdoor Spider at Friends of the Dunes | Photo by Lucy Wetzel



Trail clearing in Blue Lake | Photo by Uriah Richardson



Orange frog at Friends of the Dunes | Photo by Chloe Pieper





Wallflower at Friends of the Dunes | Photo by Uriah Richardson

“Start by doing what’s necessary, then what’s possible; and suddenly you are doing the impossible.”

— St Francis of Assisi



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