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THE
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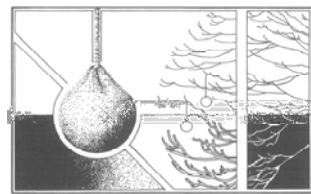
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DEDICATED TO THE PRESERVATION AND RESTORATION OF OUR UNIQUE RURAL LANDSCAPE WITH ITS ABUNDANT NATURAL RESOURCES FOR THE BENEFIT OF FUTURE GENERATIONS.

GOOD DIRT

The Newsletter of the Anderson Valley Land Trust, Incorporated
 Fall 2010

Anderson Creek Protection
 By Karen Altaras

In 2006, the AVLT board developed a long-term project of identifying and protecting properties in the ecologically significant area of the confluence of the three primary creeks (Rancheria Creek, Anderson Creek, and Indian Creek) that merge to form the Navarro River. (Also see Board Notes and map on page 2.) Once such area identified, due to its proximity to the confluence area, was a parcel owned by Jed Pogram and Gary McGregor. When we met with Jed and Gary to explore the possibility of a conservation easement to protect the riparian environment on their property, they expressed a desire to not only protect a significant portion of Anderson Creek but to also protect and encourage native flora and fauna on all of their property. The development of the easement had to be put on hold for a time, but in 2009 the easement was completed and recorded with the county.

Over the years Pogram and McGregor have been very conscientious stewards of their property. They have identified long lists of the native plants and birds on their property and have enjoyed propagating and planting appropriate native grasses, shrubs, and trees while working to eliminate invasive plants. It is this love of nature that inspires their wish to protect this piece of land for future generations. Their easement focuses on restoring and enhancing native plant and wildlife habitat and the removal of non-native species, especially in the area along Anderson Creek.



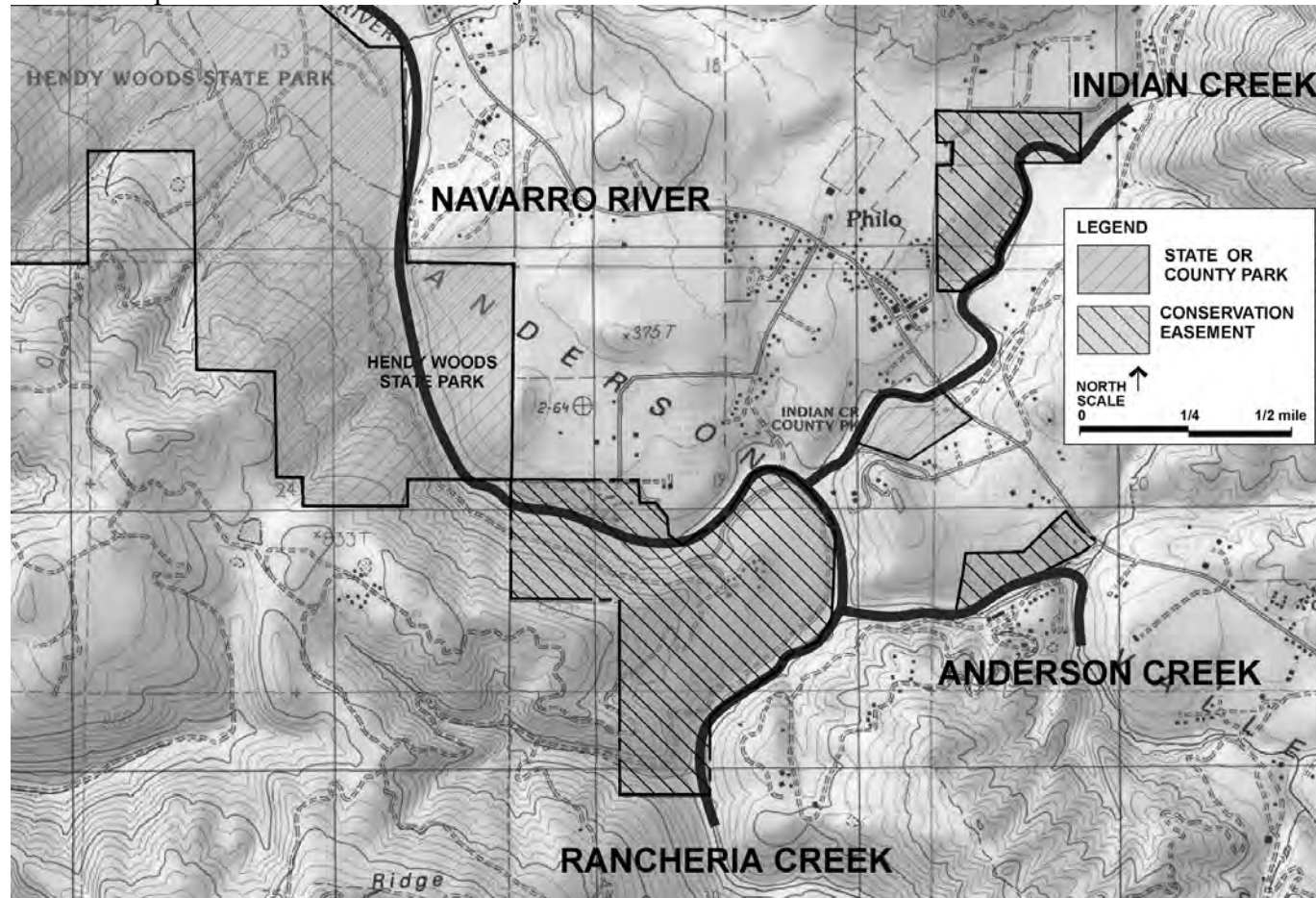
Looking up stream - Anderson Creek near its confluence with Indian and Rancheria creeks. Photo by Steve Snyder *(continued on page 5)*

SAVE THE DATE: April 23, 2011, for a spring wildflower walk to the Galbreath Wildlands Preserve

AVLT Board News

From the far reaches of the Yorkville hills, Anderson Creek winds its way through our beautiful valley, joining Rancheria and Indian Creeks to form the main stem of the Navarro River. Both the synergy of these three creeks coming together and the significant amount of land protected in this area makes the confluence of the Navarro a very vibrant place. We are extremely happy to feature the completion of the Pogran/McGregor easement (see pages 1 and 5), located on Anderson Creek in the nexus of this confluence. I love maps! I think the one below will tell the story much better than a page of words. AVLT is also honored to be working with three more landowners to complete significant Confluence Project pieces that will permanently contribute to the protection of more and more of this vital riparian zone.

Current Map of AVLT's Confluence Project:



Map by Patrick Miller

AVLT's conservation work with our volunteer board would not be possible without our community's support. Please consider using the enclosed envelope to join our email list for our interpretive hikes/events, to volunteer, to make a monetary contribution, and/or to talk with us about protecting your own land. Every tributary counts!

Barbara Goodell, Board President

Planning Ahead: On April 23, 2011, we are sponsoring a **spring field hike** to the **Galbreath Wildlands Preserve** along the headwaters of Rancheria Creek in the upper Navarro River watershed. Attendance will be limited to 40. If you are interested in signing up early, please call our office at 895-3150. And please do mark that date on you calendars.

Thank You to our recent donors who make our conservation work possible!

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Announcement

We are very fortunate to be able to announce that Alice Bonner is joining us as our new, wonderful **Volunteer Coordinator**. Volunteers are needed for: our field walk programs; serving on a revamped Outreach Committee; assisting in annual monitoring of our 25 easements; and any number of office assignments. Or you may have suggestions. You may call Alice directly at 895-2545 or leave a message for her at our office at 895-3150.

Pogran-McGregor – continued from page 1

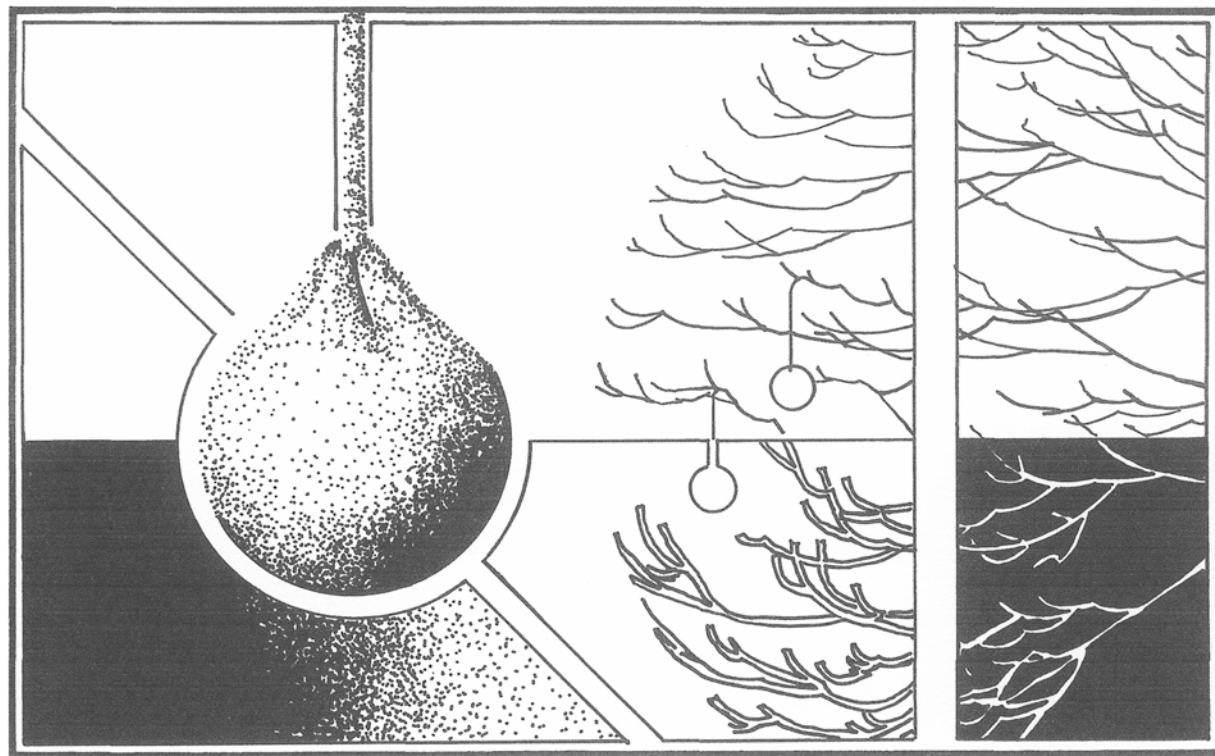
Most conservation easements consist of several zones of activity, such as a Residential Zone, a Garden Zone and a Conservation Zone, each with different uses and protections. Jed and Gary's easement has these zones, but in addition they have a Riparian Protection Zone. This zone was developed to encourage the long-term viability of the creek. Jed and Gary decided to dedicate all water in their portion of Anderson Creek to in-stream flow and, as mentioned previously, to seek to encourage the growth of native riparian vegetation such as willows and alders. Since no one knows what natural event in the future may affect this portion of Anderson Creek, it is fortunate that conservation easements can both protect a property's important conservation values and provide the flexibility to respond to natural conditions as they evolve.

In the confluence area, AVLT has now developed easements from Hendy Woods to Rancheria Creek and portions of Indian and Anderson Creeks as they approach the Navarro. While we have conservation easements that include riparian protection on many of the tributaries in the valley, including the headwaters of the Rancheria, the confluence area is critical. In terms of acreage, this little gem is one of our smaller easements, but it has added significant protection for the health of the Navarro watershed. As Jed has stated, "Of all the aspects of our land, the one that seems most important to protect is the riparian habitat. Perhaps other people who have waterways on their property will consider doing the same and conservation corridors can be created."

Aesculus californica
California Buckeye
 By Jane Miller

The California Buckeye is abundant in Anderson Valley, inhabiting dry slopes, canyons and stream banks. Up to about thirty or more feet tall, this tree usually has a shrubby, multi-branched form, adorned from early spring into summer with distinctive leaves each divided into five (occasionally seven) leaflets. This native plant thrives in mild climates featuring wet winters and dry summers. *Aesculus californica* enters dormancy by shedding its foliage in response to limited water availability rather than cold temperatures and shortening day length. It is an easy tree to spot as early as July in years of scant rainfall, as brown and falling leaves reveal its identity. Even more dramatic in winter, the Buckeye's sculptural silhouette of light-colored lines is enhanced by decorative, hanging, pear-shaped fruits. Each fuzzy capsule holds a large, glossy brown seed with a lighter-colored "eye" which probably explains the tree's common name. In fact, this fruit is pretty enough to be favored for dried flower arrangements. Seeds sprout readily from the moist earth of spring. The balance of the year, *Aesculus californica* plays a different ornamental role. Often as early as February, and usually by March, it unfolds new, apple green, palmately shaped leaves evocative of the horse chestnuts so familiar in the eastern United States and Europe. In May and June, it displays spikes of showy, pinkish-cream flowers, lending it the appearance of a huge candelabra. In a seemingly strange twist of nature, California Buckeye's flowers are reputed to be toxic to honeybees. In addition, the fruit is widely recognized as poisonous in its raw state. Native Americans were careful to leach or otherwise treat it before culinary use, but they generally only took the trouble during years of poor acorn harvest. They also used ground seeds to stupefy fish.

The California Buckeye's dangling seed pods, so reminiscent of modern holiday tree decorations, are nature's way of playfully gracing the California landscape and announcing the upcoming season. For Californians, the native Buckeye is our own special tree for all seasons, but particularly for this one.



Drawing by Patrick Miller

Andy Balestracci Joins AVLT Board of Directors

We feel very fortunate that Andy accepted an invitation to be on the AVLT board last February. He brings a wealth of knowledge and fourteen years of experience in small-scale sustainable agriculture and local food production; a strong faith in community; and a great sense of humor. He has a sincere desire to work to preserve Anderson Valley's rural beauty and economic viability now and for future generations. Andy has lived in Anderson Valley for ten years and is currently employed at Thanksgiving Coffee as the Director of Operations.



Both encouraged and excited to be on the AVLT board, Andy wants to help farmers produce healthy local food and to create more agricultural preserves to help make land more affordable for those who want to grow food. Andy's end goal is to keep local farms economically viable. He is looking forward to working with board members from such varied backgrounds to "...protect more of the precious gems of the Valley."

Dean Titus will be featured in our Spring *Good Dirt*.

First Annual Sustainable Landscape Discoveries

We adventured and we discovered. On a beautiful Saturday in August, a very fortunate group participated in the maiden voyage of *Anderson Valley Sustainable Landscape Discoveries*, a new program of the Anderson Valley Land Trust. It was success! Why? Because of the participants . . . and because of the cordial presentations and outstanding information about sustainable agricultural practices on their land provided by: Tom Brewer and Pam Armstrong at Chestnut Ridge Ranch; Pam Laird at Blue Meadow Farm; and Randy Schock and Linda MacElwee at Handley Cellars. And in the center of these discoveries was a wonderful organic lunch with locally grown ingredients at Table 128 in the Boonville Hotel (Thank you, Johnny), in a setting so wonderful it was hard to leave for our next destination! We thank you all.

We are planning next year's event right now. It promises to continue the journey of learning about soil, water, microclimate, timing, wildlife management, cloning, hybridizing, finding the right plant varieties, recycling, and experimentation, and how they're all included in the recipe of Anderson Valley sustainability. Look for details in the Spring issue of *Good Dirt*. For current details on all AVLT events, please visit www.andersonvalleylandtrust.org or send your email address to avlt@mcn.org.



Photo by Patrick Miller
 Discovering in the rows at Blue Meadow Farm.