

GOOD DIRT

The Newsletter of the Anderson Valley Land Trust
Fall-Winter 2008

Eremocarpus setigerus

Turkey Mullein

By Jane E. Miller

Known by both the common names of Turkey Mullein and Dove Weed, this annual California native does attract both those avian species, as well as California Quail. All these birds relish the seeds produced so prolifically in the late summer and autumn. Turkey Mullein usually grows from a few inches to a foot tall, but can cover a horizontal area up to two feet across. Although considered by some a weed, one must harbor at least a grudging admiration for a plant that can survive under such adverse conditions as it does – thriving in poor soil, even disturbed sites, with little to no water and displaying its dome of gray foliage in the driest part of our growing season. It is often seen sprouting up along the edges of local roads and highways, especially where exposed to direct sunlight. Each leaf is liberally covered with tiny star-shaped hairs lending the entire plant a soft look that is borne out if one (including the author) leans down to touch it, as Turkey Mullein stays fairly low to the ground. However, potential touchers beware – one source describes the leaves as feeling “harsh”, while another says, “The hairy covering of the stems and leaves is as irritating to many persons as poison oak.” The thick, oval-shaped leaves give off a distinctive scent when bruised or torn. Flowers and seeds are not very conspicuous, but appear as an off-white dusting atop the plants in the fall. But appearances can be deceiving, as these not-so-noticeable seeds are quite viable and produce copious numbers of seedlings.



Drawing by Mimi Kamp

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A letter from the President:

Dear Friends,

The crisp mornings and colors of fall have arrived and as we are busy harvesting and preparing for winter, we look back on this summer and give thanks that the lightning fires are out and extend our heartfelt gratitude to the firefighters. This was a most unusual summer and once again reminds us all that Anderson Valley is a very special place to be valued, appreciated, and protected.

We at AVLT have many people to thank who have given this past year to our conservation efforts. We hosted a Thank You event at Goldeneye (see page 3) this summer to thank our many donors and to give a special thank you to Susan Addison for all she has contributed to AVLT. The work Susan has done will allow us to speed through the newly established voluntary national accreditation process for land trusts in 2009.

Additionally, there are others we need to thank. Bob Abeles has been an invaluable source of computer technical expertise. Bob also worked with Torrey Douglas of Lemon Fresh Design constructing and launching our new website and they were both very generous with their time. A big thank you to our board member Barbara Goodell who spent many hours working on our website, coordinating and assimilating the input of 8 other board members! Please check our website at www.andersonvalleylandtrust.org. Brent Levin helped with a map for our site and also lent his expertise to writing a grant for a GIS mapping program that we just received.

Alan Porter, who last year put a conservation easement on his property, allowed us to conduct a Wildflower walk on his land this last spring. We thank Alan and Claire Wheeler for leading this very enjoyable interpretive wildflower walk. A copy of Clare's book, *A Flora of the Vascular Plants of Mendocino County*, may be checked out from our office.

As we look back at this year and are appreciative of all who have helped AVLT in their efforts to conserve and protect Anderson Valley, we also look ahead to a very busy fall. The board and our very able Administrative Assistant, Shelly Englert, are actively working to complete conservation easements on over 800 acres by the end of the year. As AVLT works at increasing the number of acres protected in perpetuity we know we cannot do this without your help.

Please use the enclosed envelope to renew your support or become a new donor.

Thank you,

Karen Altaras



Navarro Trail Hike,
September 28th

August 16th Goldeneye Event

By Lee Serrie

On August 16th, 2008, the Board of Directors hosted a party to honor our founders, donors, and former AVL T Executive Director and Board Member Susan Addison. The event gave us the opportunity to personally express our deep appreciation for their steadfast interest and support.

The balmy evening and stunning view of the hills that form the confluence of the Navarro River from the Goldeneye patio created a setting conducive for relaxation and enjoyment. We were particularly pleased to have a chance to acquaint ourselves with the new faces who came forward to get to know us. Welcome!



The Land Trust transacts much of its business at a distance by phone, newsletter, and email. So it was fruitful to get together in person with other people who share our interest in preserving the natural resource values of Anderson Valley. Some were people who have practiced conservation in their former communities and know what a conservation easement can do for the land and community. Others were long-time residents. All those gathered at the event are aware that the best of intentions of good stewardship are well served when there is a meaningful mechanism to protect the land.

President of the Board, Karen Altaras, spoke to us about the land trust's recent growth and the newly expanded tax benefits of having a conservation easement (see article on Page 6). One of the important acknowledgements made during the evening was the presentation of a plaque and thank you gift to Susan Addison. (Many of you readers either know her personally, by her telephone voice, or by her consistent presence on our masthead.) For the past 10 years, she has held posts as Executive Director, President, and board member. Her tireless efforts in organizational development helped build AVL T into an organization with the comprehensive set of skills necessary for the creation and enforcement of conservation easements and the organizational strength needed to better implement our conservation mission.

As we were all departing the event, a full moon rose to bear witness to this burgeoning community of people who have dedicated themselves to practicing and advancing the conservation of Anderson Valley.

Thank you Goldeneye, Bob Nye, and Lynn Roman!





You Are Now Entering the Navarro River Watershed

By Linda MacElwee

You may be noticing some new signs posted around the watershed. The Navarro Watershed Working Group (NWWG), the Navarro River Resource Center, and the Mendocino County Resource Conservation District have been collaborating on a sign project to develop watershed awareness in the Navarro through a grant from the State Coastal Conservancy. By strategically placing signs on the state and county roads at the watershed divides, as well as naming many of the creeks, the Navarro River watershed will have a new “identity”. These signs are brown with white lettering. And no, the fish symbol does not appear—we opted to spend the extra funding on more signs, especially to name some unsigned creeks!

There will be “Entering Navarro River Watershed” signs at the ridge crests on the following state and county highways: Highway 253; Highway 128 in Yorkville, as you drop into the Navarro; Highway 1, both north and southbound; Greenwood-Philo Road; Flynn Creek Road; Mountain View Road; and Fish Rock Road.

The following creeks will also be named by a sign facing in each direction: Soda Creek and Anderson Creek on Highway 253; Beebe Creek, Robinson Creek, Mill Creek, Soda Creek, and Flynn Creek on Highway 128; Robinson Creek and Rancheria Creek where they cross Mountain View Road; Rancheria Creek where it crosses Fish Rock Road; and the Navarro River where it crosses at Greenwood-Philo Road.

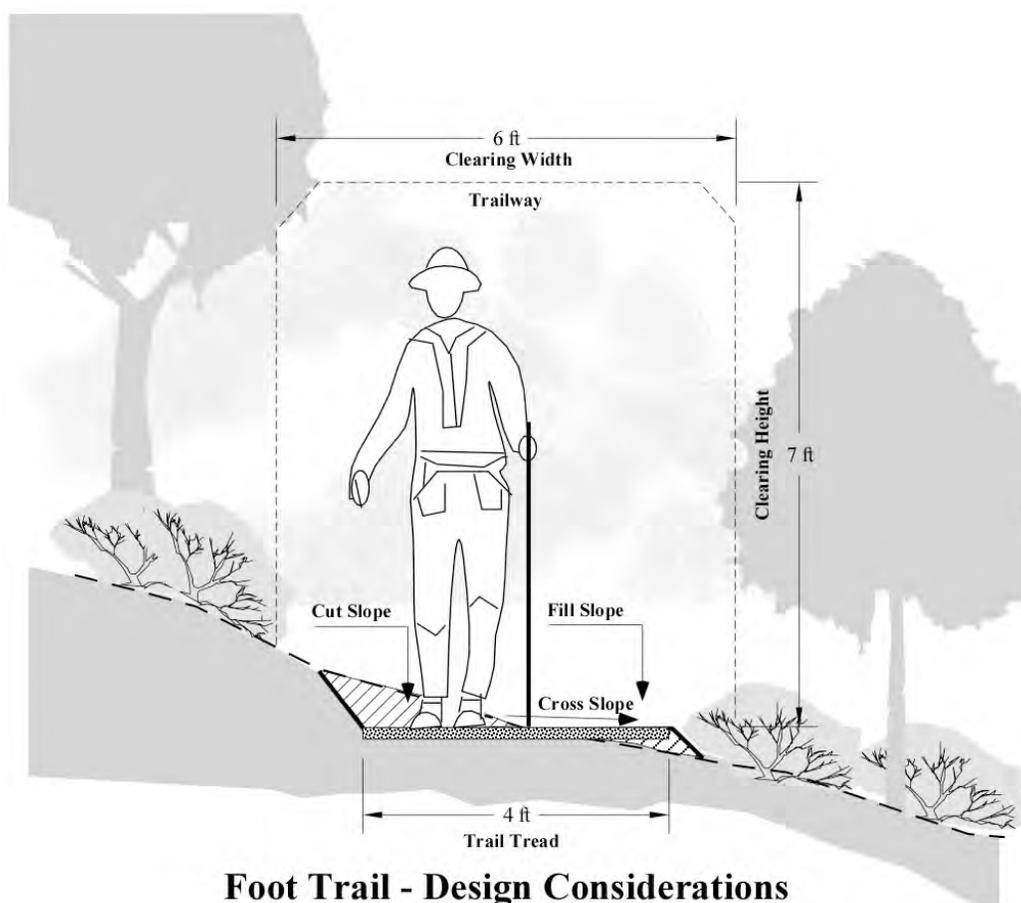
Tremendous thanks goes to the State Coastal Conservancy, which sponsored the project and made it possible. The seed for the idea began in a NWWG meeting at least five years ago. It’s very exciting to finally have those seeds come to fruition! The project was initially coordinated by NWWG members Thembi Borrás and Dianne Chocholak and then, as their careers transitioned to Washington State and retirement (respectively), I was asked to step in and complete the work program. Although it wasn’t easy to coordinate all of the steps, the Mendocino County Department of Transportation and Caltrans have been nothing but supportive—from permitting to accompanying us on site inspections. The California Conservation Corps will install state highway signs, and the county will do those on their roads.

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Trail and Bridge Design Workshop on October 18th

Would you like to take a hike on your property but don't because there is not an easy way to go? Is there a steep hillside or an insurmountable drainage in the way of where you would like to walk? This workshop is for you!

It has been four years since we have had this opportunity. AVLT Board Member Patrick Miller, who is the principal author of the design chapter in the forthcoming book titled *Trail Planning for California Communities* to be published by Solano Press Books, will host a trail and bridge design workshop tailored to Anderson Valley. He and his wife Jane, who has been writing about native plants in the Good Dirt for a number of years, have invited you to come to their property in Philo on Saturday, October 18, from 4 to 6 p.m. We will go on about a one mile walk around their trail system and discuss basic trail and foot bridge design principles and construction techniques that you can use. Participants are then invited to come back to their studio for a glass of wine and information about other land trust activities here in Anderson Valley.



Foot Trail - Design Considerations

Participation will be limited to 25 people so please do call AVLT at 895-3150 (or e-mail us at avlt@mcn.org) to let us know if you would like to come. Please meet us at 3:30 p.m. at the Land Trust Office, 14125 Hwy 128 in Boonville, so we can arrange carpools and give everyone directions. When you call, please let us know if you will not be able to car pool and will be arriving separately so that we can make appropriate arrangements.

USING THE CONSERVATION TAX INCENTIVE

An excerpt from July 2008 Land Trust Alliance brochure

Congress recently extended, through 2009, a Federal tax incentive for conservation easement donations that has helped thousands of landowners conserve their land. If you own land with important natural or historic resources, donating a voluntary conservation easement can be one of the smartest ways to conserve the land you love, while maintaining your private property rights and possibly realizing significant federal tax benefits. The legislation:

- Raises the deduction a donor can take for donating a conservation easement from 30 percent of his or her income in any year to 50 percent;
- Allows qualifying farmers and ranchers to deduct up to 100 percent of their income; and
- Extends the carry-forward period for a donor to take tax deductions for a voluntary conservation agreement from 5 to 15 years.

This is a powerful tool for allowing modest-income donors to receive greater credit for donating a very valuable conservation easement on property they own.

It is important to note that the incentive *only applies to easements donated between 2006 and 2009*.

Please check the Conservation section of our website at www.andersonvalleylandtrust.org for the full brochure or go to www.lta.org/policy/tax-policy.

WANTED: Volunteer Wildlife Biologist

Anderson Valley Land Trust is looking for a wildlife biologist or someone with extensive knowledge of the wildlife of Anderson Valley to help inventory species for our baseline reports. You would assist other board members with the biological aspect of conservation easements.

Please contact Anderson Valley Land Trust at 895-3150 or visit our website at www.andersonvalleylandtrust.org.



Western Fence Lizard

Turkey Mullein – *continued from page 1*

The botanical name is derived from the Greek “erem” which means “a lonely place”; carried further, “eremos” means “solitary” and “carpus” means “fruit”, referring to the production of seeds that are not in groups, but borne singly. However, given the abundance of individual plants often in close proximity to one another, it hardly seems that they would be lonely! In addition to the common names cited above, others attributed to this species are Woolly White Drouth-weed, Yerbe del Pescado, and Grayweed. What is likely an unexpected note to some is that *Eremocarpus setigerus* is related to *Euphorbia pulcherrima*, the rather flamboyant Poinsettia that bears such showy bracts around the holiday season. These two plants are members of the same family, but as in many family relationships, there are often surprises....

Navarro River Watershed – *continued from page 4*

For more information you can stop in at the Navarro River Resource Center (we share an office with AVLT) on Monday and Wednesday afternoons. The River Center has many resource materials for landowners, including *The Handbook for Forest and Ranch Roads* and video, pamphlets on invasive and native plants, and *The Navarro River Guide to Watershed Care and Restoration*. Stop in and say hello, we are available to help you find resources on land stewardship, or call us at 895-3230. Watershed literacy for all!

THANK YOU FOR YOUR WONDERFUL SUPPORT THIS YEAR!

We are able to continue our conservation work in Anderson Valley because of the following loyal donors:

Barbara Alhadeff	Ted and Heidi Lemon
Mary Stuart Alvord	Christopher & Buffy Maple
Eric Anderson	Mac Marshall & Margery Wolf
Mark and Deanna Apfel	Stevie McCray
Rene & Judith Auberjonois	John & Deborah Mefferd
Nicolette Ausschnitt & Steve Krieg	Michelle & Rolf Mehlhorn
James Bernard (Mendocino Land Trust)	John Moffly & Lily Wu
Moira Johnston Block	Marshall Newman
Briana Burns	Jed Pogran & Gary McGregor
Bruce Cakebread/Cakebread Cellars	Peggy Ridley
Mark Casaretto	Roger & Ann Romani
Mary Brandhorst Curtis	Mary Santana
Brian and Janet Davis	Lynne & Tex Sawyer
Dan Dodt & Linda Blacketer	Terry Surles
Neva Dyer & Dennis Mills	Ray & Susan Triplett
Dore & Martha Griffinger	Gaile Wakeman
Laurel Headley & Cathy Garrett	Gary Wandrey
Morris & Charity Hirsch	Clare Rolph Wheeler
Rebecca Husband	John Wiley & Sons, Inc.
Patricia Jeffery	Toni & Dale Wise
Robert Jones	Donation in honor of George Rau
Mike Lawler	Donations in honor of Susan and Michael
Christine & George Lech	Addison's 50 th wedding anniversary

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Reflections of a Navarro River Hike

On a hot September Sunday morning a dozen energetic hikers drove over Mouse Pass and descended to the main stem of the Navarro River catching spectacular views of the forested north slope of Greenwood Ridge. The hike upstream began at the Cape Horn picnic area in the redwoods where fringes of the fall colors of deciduous trees now dot the edges of the riverbed. Though Floodgate Creek and other tributaries were dry, the Navarro River maintained at least minor above-ground flows on this stretch. Blue Rock revealed shallow pools. We learned that names like Cape Horn and Blue Rock came from past fishermen who frequently came to fish in these spots.

The land encompassing this portion of the Navarro River is owned by Mendocino Redwood Company and they have given AVLT permission to lead scheduled hikes. If you would like to receive email notice of future interpretive walks, hikes, or events please call the AVLT office (895-3150) or email us at avlt@mcn.org. You can also visit our new website at www.andersonvalleylandtrust.org and go to Events. Of course, you can also drop by our office on Monday or Friday mornings and give your email address to Shelly.

SAVE THE DATE: October 18, 2008, Trail and Bridge Design Workshop
See page 5

Please check out our new website www.andersonvalleylandtrust.org
