



DUNESBERRY

NEWSLETTER OF FRIENDS OF THE DUNES

FALL/WINTER 2020 | VOLUME 39 | ISSUE 2



Samoa Dunes and Wetlands Conservation Area

YOUR CONSERVATION LEGACY

Thanks to you and your support, Friends of the Dunes and our many partners have completed a historic conservation acquisition to forever protect the Samoa Dunes and Wetlands Conservation Area, an ecologically important 357-acre coastal dune and bayfront property that includes the former Dog Ranch. These stunning dunes include 139 acres of Sitka spruce and shore pine forest—the furthest southern extent of this forest type in the world, and a diverse wonderland that you can explore on existing routes and trails. The Samoa Dunes and Wetlands Conservation Area abuts the Manila Dunes Recreation Area, which connects to the Humboldt Coastal Nature Center, Ma-le'l Dunes, and the Lanphere Dunes, creating a contiguous protected area of more than 1,600 acres managed for habitat conservation and appropriate public access.

This project fulfills a conservation legacy—yours. Your support of coastal dune conservation and Friends of the Dunes, both this last year and over many years, is what made this project possible.

The origins of this landmark conservation deal stretch back more than a decade, when Friends of the Dunes initially sought to purchase the northern portion of this property with the support of the California Coastal Conservancy. A conservation deal was lined up, until Friends of the Dunes was outbid at the 11th hour by Security National.

(Continued on page 2)

This time around, Friends of the Dunes worked collaboratively with Security National, the Humboldt Bay Harbor District, the California Coastal Conservancy, the Wildlife Conservation Board, and the California Natural Resources Agency to forge a conservation deal that could benefit the land and our community.

“In conservation, we rely on solid, trust-based partnerships, and there were so many incredible partners in this project,” said Mike Cipra, Friends of the Dunes’ Executive Director. “In addition to the funding agencies, there was really strong leadership from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Coastal Conservancy, the Harbor District, our Humboldt County Supervisors Virginia Bass and Mike Wilson, and the Wiyot Tribe. By working together, we have conserved a profound coastal dune forest, diverse wetlands, healthy habitat for wildlife and for rare native plants, and a truly special place where people can find inspiration in nature.”

Friends of the Dunes will serve as the interim landowner and steward of this special place while we work with our partners at the Bureau of Land Management, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, the Humboldt Bay Harbor District, Humboldt County, the Coastal Conservancy, and the Wiyot Tribe to determine what ownership or management is in the best long-term interests of this land and our community. We do not plan to do any development of trails, parking areas, or restoration activities during our time as interim land manager.

Fortunately for our community, there is an extensive network of already-existing routes and trails on the Samoa Dunes and Wetlands Conservation Area for those interested in hiking or riding horses on the property (for resource protection, ATVs and bikes are not allowed—for a more detailed outline of property guidelines and temporary regulations, visit our website at friendsofthedunes.org/property and click on the



Admiring old-growth Douglas fir in the forest of Samoa Dunes and Wetlands Conservation Area.

[Samoa Dunes and Wetlands FAQs](#)—you can also download a map of the property). The property’s existing network of routes and trails can be accessed via the Waterline Trail from either the north at Manila Community Services District or the south at the Power Poles beach parking area in Samoa.

Friends of the Dunes has already started leading small-group tours of the Samoa Dunes and Wetlands Conservation Area, in alignment with public health guidance. Check our calendar or our email newsletters in order to sign up for one of these guided tours. And if you’d like to help us steward this land, we can use your help! To learn more about becoming a Trail Steward for the Samoa Dunes and Wetlands, email us at info@friendsofthedunes.org. If you’d like to help out with a donation to the Samoa Dunes and Wetlands Stewardship Fund, those contributions are greatly appreciated.

The Samoa Dunes and Wetlands Conservation Area is the product of years of work, partnership-building, and keeping faith with our community. It’s the culmination of years of your thoughtful support of Friends of the Dunes and coastal conservation. Together, we’ve created a legacy. Let’s continue the work to explore, restore, share, and steward our amazing coastal dunes.



Menzies' Wallflowers are abundant on the open dunes of this newly established conservation area.



Coastal Naturalist Training 2020: Adapting to a Changing Social Landscape

Suzie Fortner, Programs & Operations Director

Adaptation: the act or process of changing to better suit a situation.

Adaptation has always been a key term in our nature education programs, whether those programs are for K-12 students or adults. I've discussed adaptations of certain plants and animals countless times while teaching students of all ages about our diverse coastal ecosystems. This year, adaptation has a whole new significance to me as a Program Director. We've had to adapt to new ways of interacting with one another that were unimaginable a year ago. But like many species found in our coastal dunes, we are resilient. We are finding new ways to engage our community in coastal conservation during a time while many are seeking solace in nature.

This year's Coastal Naturalist Training is just one of many ways in which Friends of the Dunes has been adapting to a changing social landscape. Thanks to our partners at the Trinidad Coastal Land Trust, we

were able to offer the Coastal Naturalist Training in a new and experimental format. "Classroom" sessions took place over Zoom and featured virtual lectures from an impressive line-up of local experts. Field sessions took place in "pods" (the Orca Pod and the Beach Pea Pod) each consisting of 8 participants and a Teaching Assistant who wore masks and maintained distance from each other and from the guest field instructors. Over the course of six weeks, program participants were immersed in Humboldt's coastal environments with a wide range of topics including Indigenous Traditional Knowledge & Stewardship, Geology, Intertidal Ecology, Flora of the Dunes, Pinnipeds of the Northcoast, Coastal Resiliency to Sea Level Rise, and much more.

(Continued on page 4)



Naturalist Notes

Awesome Stuff

By Cassidy Thorpe

I learned so much awesome stuff
About how life in nature's rough
So all the organisms have to be tough
They can adapt
Because they are tapped
Into Earth, it's all about death and rebirth

Take those seabirds who
Lay eggs specially designed to
Stay on the rocks
So they don't get lost

But those rocks aren't just rocks
They're a monument
Look along the coastline
They are prominent
Over 20,000 sea stacks
Constantly being wracked
By waves
And forming caves

See that organism it has two holes
One where things come
And one where thing go
And that barnacle
I used to think it was terrible
But now I know it's cool
And that the rule
Of the intertidal zone
Is that if you can find space you can make
your home

I saw two rocks that looked kind of the
same
But hardness is the name of the game
Green chert is really hard
But greenstone is so soft it could be cut by
lard
And I already knew blue goo was cool
But now I know it has another name too:
Franciscan Melange is what its called
Next time I get it on me I wont be appalled

And then I discovered spores
Those tiny cells are bored
Into my brain
I sure hope I retain
All the awesome stuff

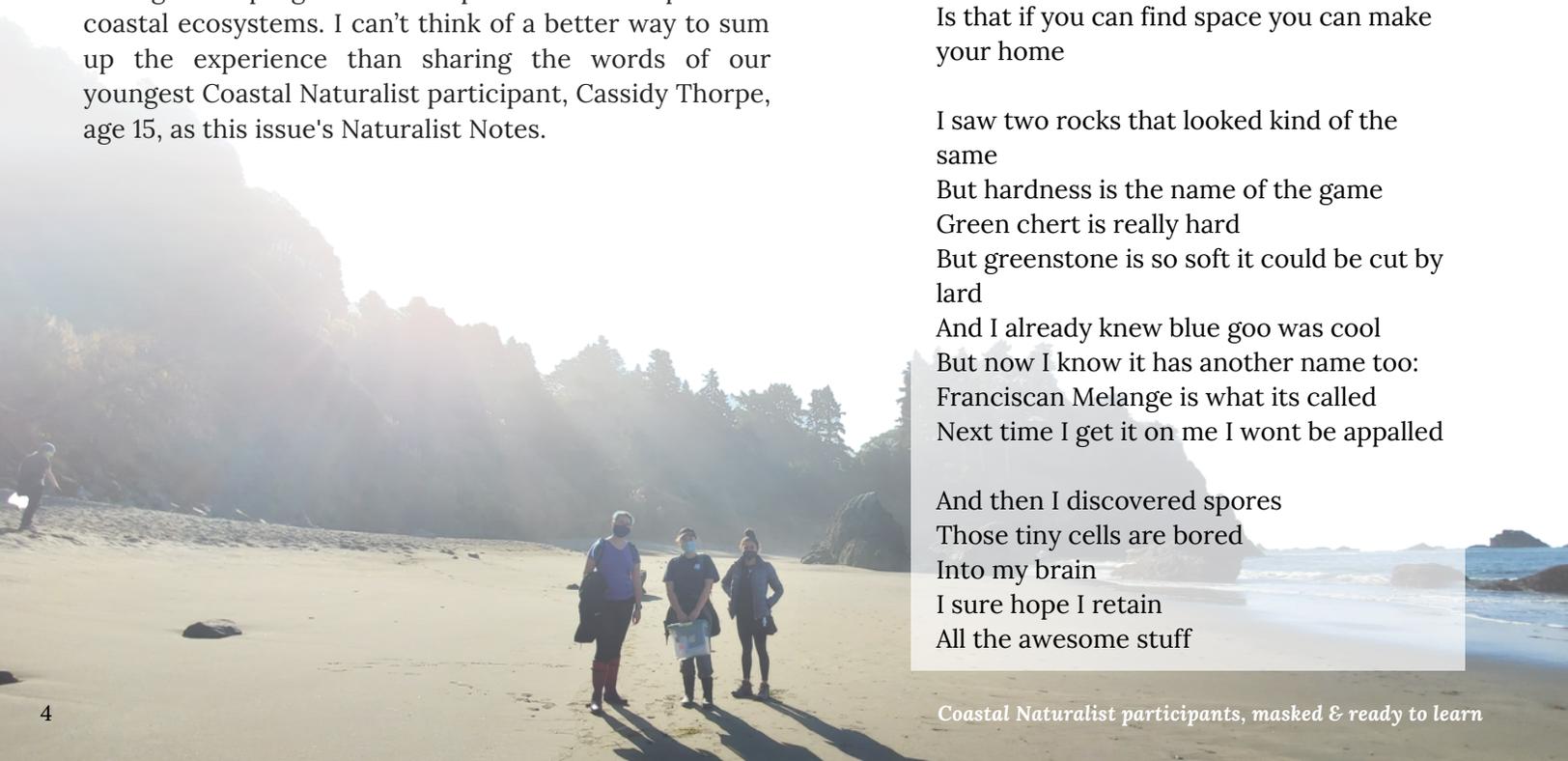


Adam Canter, Botanist with the Wiyot Tribe, leading an Ethnobotany hike at Ma-le'l Dunes North

Despite circumstances that prevented us from crowding around an interesting plant or sharing binoculars, this year's cohort of naturalists were excited to engage with each other, with local content experts, and with the natural world around them.

Like all of our programs, this one would not be possible without the help of volunteers. All of our Guest Lecturers and Field Guides volunteered their time to share their knowledge and expertise with our programs participants. Thank you! Our partnership with the Trinidad Coastal Land Trust allowed us to offer the program at a minimal fee and to provide several scholarships to People of Color.

Despite the challenges of 2020, I am grateful that we were able to continue connecting people with nature through this program that inspires stewardship of our coastal ecosystems. I can't think of a better way to sum up the experience than sharing the words of our youngest Coastal Naturalist participant, Cassidy Thorpe, age 15, as this issue's Naturalist Notes.



A SEASON OF CHANGE



Twentytwenty, painting by Matt Beard

Events in the Time of COVID

By Sophie Hamann, Outreach Manager

Our last newsletter found us all in the early months of COVID, when we were still scrambling for toilet paper, and thinking that this thing would be a distant memory by summer. Eight months in, and you'd think we'd be expert at online events, right? The truth is, we are all still learning to adapt to this new way of reaching you, our members.

We have all become increasingly reliant on technology, be it daily Zoom calls, excel spreadsheets, or social media. Although these were all handy in the before times, now it is our main mode of communication and the most important tool in our tool box. When it comes time to plan our events, we have to acknowledge that COVID is the shadow that lurks in the corner, attempting to prevent us from moving forward. But the crafty use of technology, teamwork, pure determination, flexibility and a lot of hand sanitizer is what empowers us to continue our mission and resume our events, education programs, and restoration workdays.

The real test came mere weeks ago, in the form of Wine by the Screen, previously known as Wine by the Sea.

Many things were the same-- the wine, the music, the art-- but the execution and setting were very different. In planning this event, we came to realize that technology would be both a barrier and a saving grace. After acknowledging our technological shortcomings, we decided to hire outside help, which ultimately led to the success of our first online event. The Spindrifters performed beautifully from the empty Nature Center, and Matt Beard painted a masterpiece from atop the dunes, all the while we broadcasted live to your homes as you enjoyed local wine and food from our Pour and Restore Care Packages.

Wine by the Screen would not have been possible without our generous supporters, donors, and business partners. We want to give a special thank you to all who donated to our online silent auction, and to the wineries and businesses that donated items to fill the Pour and Restore Care Packages.

Although online events can never fully replace what comes with gathering and celebrating coastal conservation in person, we sure can try! Our beloved dunes, members, and volunteers are the foundation of Friends of the Dunes, and with your continued support we remain resilient.

A SEASON OF CHANGE



School Education: Adapting Bay to Dunes

By Daisy Ambriz-Peres, Education Coordinator

The million-dollar question is: how do we adapt outdoor field trips to online work? The truth is, there is no substitute for a child going outside, getting their hands dirty, and playing in the natural world around them. The only thing we could do from our side of the screen is initiate that vital spark of curiosity of what lives beyond their computer. And so, the quest of creativity began! We gathered with a committee to brainstorm our next course of action. We decided to create a rising new nature *YouTube Star*, me! The next Steve Irwin! Forget the Kratt Brothers, it's Monarch Daisy to the rescue. It was a golden idea and then the camera started rolling.

One, two, three, go! "Oh hi there, my nature name is Monarch D...D... Oh no, I forgot my name!! Cut the camera!"

Stuttering over my own name was a little disheartening but I continued on with a smile. After some much needed editing, we finished our first video of the Jr. Naturalist series where I teach children how to keep a Nature Journal and how to make their own using household supplies.

We are currently working on our next video which will feature shorebirds. I will teach children about bird adaptations, migration, field guides and how to birdwatch in their own backyard.

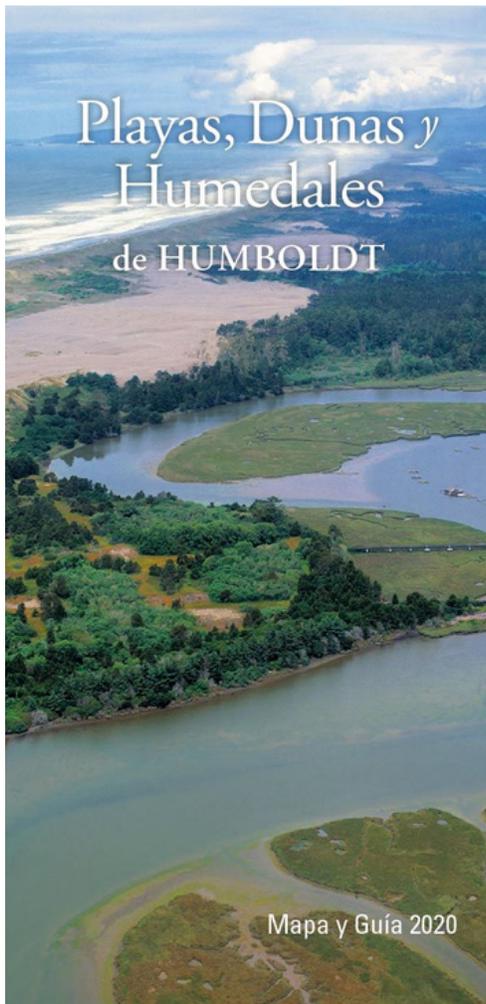
In every video of the series, we will connect overarching ecological themes with activities that children could accomplish exploring their own urban green space. These videos will be distributed to our local elementary schools for teachers to share with their students. Friends of the Dunes will be creating accompanying Naturalist Kits that teachers or individuals can check out for days at a time. These Kits will contain bird guides, tracking guides, binoculars, magnifying glasses, dip nets, and more. These items will further enhance a child's ability to discover and observe the natural world around them. We hope that looking at a roly poly under the magnifying glass will spark a curiosity for ecology and will nurture a lifelong love for nature.

If you have little ones at home, subscribe to our [Friends of the Dunes YouTube Channel](#) and stay tuned for more Jr. Naturalist videos! Explore with them, and remember, stay curious.

A SEASON OF CHANGE

Playas, Dunas y Humedales

The Humboldt Beaches, Dunes, and Wetlands Map & Guide will now be available in Spanish! We have translated this guide to Spanish, thanks to support from the Redwood Community Action Agency, in order to better help our community connect with coastal environments. This map and guide highlights coastal properties managed for public access and conservation, with land managers and use regulations listed for each site. An interpretive panel on the back of the guide acknowledges the past and present significance of these coastal lands to the Wiyot people and delves into beach, dune, and wetland ecology. Learn about endangered species, coastal habitat restoration, and tips for responsibly enjoying coastal environments. To obtain a Spanish version of Humboldt Beaches, Dunes, and Wetlands Map and Guide, please email info@friendsofthedunes.org.



Playas, Dunas y Humedales Mapa y Guía

¡El Mapa y Guía de las Playas, Dunas y Humedales de Humboldt ahora estará disponible en español! Hemos traducido esta guía en español, gracias al apoyo de Redwood Community Action Agency, para ayudar a nuestra comunidad a conectarse con los entornos costeros. Este mapa y guía destaca las propiedades costeras administradas para el acceso público y la conservación, con administradores de tierras y regulaciones de uso enumeradas para cada sitio. Un panel interpretativo en la parte posterior de la guía reconoce la importancia pasada y presente de estas tierras costeras para la gente de la tribu Wiyot. Aprenda sobre especies en peligro de extinción, restauración del hábitat costero, consejos para disfrutar responsablemente de los ambientes costeros, y ecología. Para obtener una versión en español del Mapa y Guía de Playas, Dunas y Humedales de Humboldt, envíe un correo electrónico a info@friendsofthedunes.org.

Keeping Our Distance and Invasive Plants at Bay

We have begun hosting socially distanced workdays, accommodating up to 9 volunteers per leader. Each group meets masked and remains masked until reaching the pre-setup worksites, which have been spaced at least 12 feet apart.

There, participants may de-mask if they feel comfortable. Ma-le'l Dunes South workdays continue to take place on the second Sunday of each month, and starting in January 2021, every second Saturday at the Humboldt Coastal Nature Center. Please email Dante@friendsofthedunes.org to RSVP or for more information.



Physically distanced restoration at Ma-le'l Dunes South

VOLUNTEER HIGHLIGHT

Carol Ralph

Carol Ralph loves native plants, and she has a passion-- and a talent-- for sharing that love.

“One of my favorite native plants is dune knotweed,” she said. “It became one of my favorite dune plants when I learned that it blooms all year round—that it can give the native bees pollen at any time of year.”

This admiration for the generosity of nature is reflected in Carol’s own generosity as a community volunteer for the California Native Plant Society (CNPS), and in her volunteer naturalist-led walks for Friends of the Dunes.

Carol serves as the longstanding President of the CNPS North Coast Chapter, a strong partner and sister organization of Friends of the Dunes. (“They joke and say I’m President-for-Life,” she confided. “I’m pretty sure that’s not a good idea.”)

As a volunteer docent for Friends of the Dunes from the beginning--she attended our very first docent training-- Carol’s combination of botanical and ecosystem knowledge, and her ability to share native plant discoveries large and small make her programs among the most popular we offer. It was fitting that the first program Friends of the Dunes offered after getting approval from Humboldt County Public Health was Carol’s remarkable orchid walk, as the dune orchids rose from the sand and bloomed in early August.

“The best part of volunteering for Friends of the Dunes is the people who come on the walks—they’re always so interested and interesting,” Carol said. “After the walk, I feel excited by those interactions, whether it’s a new question to follow up on or a new way of seeing a plant.”



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Carol and her husband CJ Ralph have been part of the Friends of the Dunes family since the very beginning of our organization. The Ralphs moved to Humboldt County in 1982, when The Nature Conservancy owned the Lanphere Dunes. Carol participated in one of the early Lupine Bashes—there’s photographic evidence—while CJ served as the Friends of the Dunes’ first treasurer, long before this organization was an incorporated nonprofit.

“I’ve always said that Friends of the Dunes is my favorite local nonprofit, because it is so good at communicating,” said Carol. “Whether it is through community education programs, or school education programs, or by organizing restoration workdays, Friends of the Dunes is really good at bringing people together for conservation.”

We at Friends of the Dunes know that the main reason we’re good at communicating is because of special volunteers like Carol Ralph.

THANK YOU

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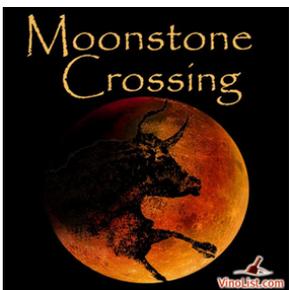
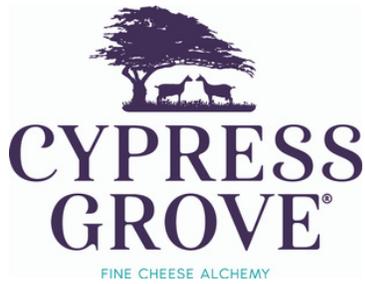
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UPCOMING EVENTS

- 12/5** Lanphere Dunes Guided Walk
10 a.m. - 1 p.m.
- 12/13** Humboldt Coastal Resilience
Project King Tide Walk
9 a.m. - 12 p.m.
- 12/13** Ma-le'l Dunes South Restoration
10 a.m. - 1 p.m.

RSVP Required for all programs. Email info@friendsofthedunes.org to reserve a spot.

Visit friendsofthedunes.org/calendar for a complete list of upcoming programs.

Join our email list for updates about guided walks, restoration days, and school programs.

Would you like to see the Dunesberry in color?
Contact info@friendsofthedunes.org to receive Dunesberry by email, or view it in color at friendsofthedunes.org/about.

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