



2022 ANNUAL REPORT

In 2022, as society emerged more broadly from the Covid-19 pandemic, Friends of the Dunes saw a resurgence of people looking to reconnect with each other and with nature. With your support, we stepped forward to provide innovative, dynamic, and inclusive programs to meet this growing demand for meaningful connection with nature. This was the 40th year that Friends of the Dunes has been serving northern California's diverse communities and protecting its bio-diverse coastal environments.

In 2022, we continued to work with our partners and with you, our community, to steward the beautiful Samoa Dunes and Wetlands Conservation Area. Working with partners, we removed more than 5,000 pounds of trash from this property in 2022, and we introduced hundreds of people to Humboldt Bay's newest conservation jewel. The long-term future of this land, and all conserved coastal lands and waters in Humboldt Bay, looks bright.



© Bob Wick

Sunrise over Wigi (Humboldt Bay) at Ma-le'l Dunes South: part of a larger conserved landscape.

WORKING TOGETHER FOR OUR CONSERVATION FUTURE

In 2022, Friends of the Dunes continued conversations with partners including the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the Wiyot Tribe about the long-term future of Samoa Dunes and Wetlands Conservation Area. At the same time, we worked in partnership with the Wiyot Tribe, Cal Poly Humboldt, and Humboldt Baykeeper on a historic land back project at Mouralherwaqh, near King Salmon. In July of 2022, the Wiyot Tribe completed the acquisition of Mouralherwaqh's 46 acres of culturally significant coastal forest and wetlands in this historic and inspiring land return project.

The next land back project in Humboldt Bay will involve Friends of the Dunes donating some portion of the Samoa Dunes and Wetlands to the Wiyot Tribe. In 2022, we continued to work with the Wiyot Tribe and an expanding coalition of partners to articulate and promote the vision of connecting the 357 acres of Samoa Dunes and Wetlands with other conservation lands in Humboldt Bay as part of a new, proposed national monument. This new Wigi National Monument would be designated at the federal level, and would allow greater collaboration among the BLM, the US Fish and Wildlife Service, Friends of the Dunes, and the Wiyot Tribe. The Wigi National Monument could also provide more resources for managing the remarkable lands, cultural resources, and connected ecosystems of Humboldt Bay. Wigi is the name for Humboldt Bay in Wiyot language, Soulatluk.

COMMUNITY EDUCATION

Connecting people with nature is a core part of our work, and in 2022 we offered a diverse array of programs for community members of all ages to connect with our local coastal environments. Thanks to an Explore the Coast grant from the State Coastal Conservancy, we were able to add new programs that are designed to serve community members who typically face barriers to accessing the coast. In 2022, we:

- Coordinated **20 free guided walks** with **166 participants**.
- Offered **8 Nature Newbies** workshops with **84 participants**.
- Organized **3 Family Nature Events** with **224 participants**; Spring Equinox Celebration, Bee-Day Party, and the Spooky Dunes Tour.
- Offered **7 Explorando Juntos (Exploring Together) outings** with a total of **187 people attending**. These family-friendly programs in Spanish are designed to make nature more welcoming to Spanish-speaking community members.
- Hosted a winter **Naturalist Notes webinar series**, with a total of **68 participants across 5 webinars**. Video recordings of the webinar series are posted to our YouTube channel as a free educational resource.
- Coordinated the **Know Your Dunes Webinar**, which served as the 2022 Humboldt Coastal Dunes Cooperative Public Meeting: 30 community members participated live and the YouTube video has since had 51 views.



SCHOOL EDUCATION

In 2022, Friends of the Dunes offered **3 environmental education programs** for school groups: Bay to Dunes, Kids Ocean Day, and Coastal Stewards. In total these programs served **1,162 students** ranging from kindergarten through 12th grade. Bay to Dunes served 893 students from 22 schools, and Kids Ocean Day had 627 students from 12 schools. Coastal Stewards is a much smaller program for 6th-12th grade and served 142 students from 6 schools. Overall, **34 volunteers** contributed a total of **895 hours** to ensure that these programs could happen. Funding from grants, individual donors, business partners, and fundraisers allowed Friends of the Dunes to waive **\$3,166 in field trip fees**, and award **\$9,892 in bus scholarships**.



"I strive to integrate local studies into each unit I do with my students. We often read about, discuss and complete lessons about native plant life, local species, and discuss how to be good stewards of the land. Our Waldorf inspired curriculum also emphasizes lessons for head, heart, and hand. The Friends of the Dunes staff did a stellar job, including a varied program with so much practical, hands-on learning. Students came away with a strong understanding of how to care for our local area and so much more!"

- Jenny Hales, Teacher at Coastal Grove

LAND STEWARDSHIP

In 2022, in total we trained, mobilized, and empowered **299 individual participants** to contribute 998 **hours of service accomplishing coastal dune habitat restoration**. We hosted 16 Dune Ecosystem Restoration Team (DERT) workdays that contributed 642 volunteer hours, and our dedicated Volunteer Restoration Technicians contributed 146 volunteer hours. As part of our stewardship program, we assisted our partners with restoration workdays at the Bureau of Land Management's Ma-le'l Dunes South.

In 2022, Friends of the Dunes' restoration program successfully treated **6.03 acres** of invasive plants and restored native habitat in these areas for native plants and pollinators at Ma-le'l Dunes South. On our Humboldt Coastal Nature Center property, we successfully treated **6.89 acres**, removing invasive species in these areas to restore native habitat.



At the Samoa Dunes and Wetlands Conservation Area, we worked with our partners at the California Department of Fish and Wildlife and Redwood Community Action Agency to remove more than 5,000 pounds of trash in 2022, putting this land on a clear trajectory for long-term conservation.

"Community-based stewardship of the Samoa Dunes and Wetlands has transformed this remarkable land into a place where families can go to learn, grow, and gain inspiration from nature. The next step in its evolution is to reconnect this land with the Wiyot People through land return."

- Mike Cipra, Executive Director

SPONSORED PROGRAMS

Friends of the Dunes continues to support a variety of ambitious allied projects on the North Coast as a fiscal sponsor. One of these sponsored programs is the Humboldt Coastal Resilience Project, a multi-year dune geomorphology study that is looking at the potential impacts of sea level rise and climate change to Humboldt's coastal dune systems and examining the role of restoration in creating resilience for dune ecosystems. In 2022, project partners held a series of meetings for community members and decision-making groups to share the preliminary results of the Vulnerability Assessment and gather feedback to ground the research in local context. Additionally, PhD candidate Zach Hilgendorf published a peer-reviewed research article entitled *Dynamic restoration and the impact of native versus invasive vegetation on coastal foredune morphodynamics, Lanphere Dunes, CA*. This research found that restored dunes recovered faster from erosion events and had a higher increase in height, width, and volume than unrestored control plots.

Another significant sponsored program is the Tolowa Dunes Stewards, who work on coastal education and stewardship programs in Del Norte County. Tolowa Dunes Stewards were very active in 2022, continuing their amazing work restoring native plant and animal habitat in the Tolowa Dunes near Lake Earl and engaging diverse northern California communities in environmental education and stewardship programs. We are proud to continue to support their work as a fiscal sponsor!

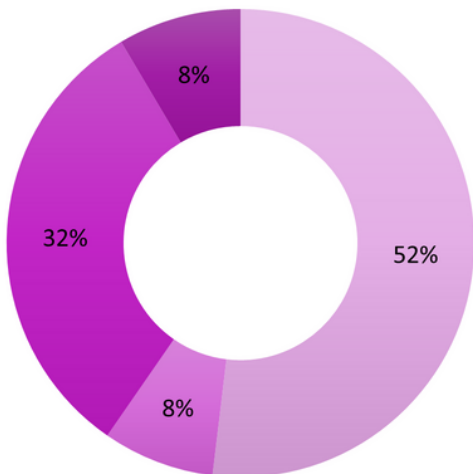
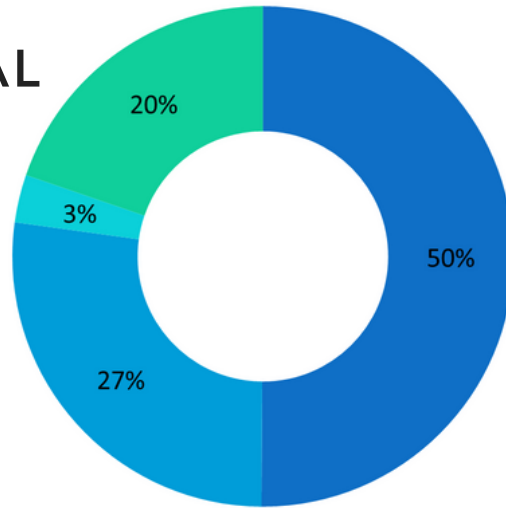
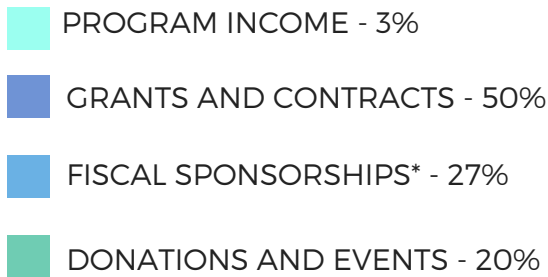
HUMBOLDT COASTAL NATURE CENTER

The Humboldt Coastal Nature Center was open to the public throughout 2022, even during surges of Covid-19, and hosted thousands of visitors, serving its unique role as a hub of natural history education and the gateway to Humboldt Bay's coastal dunes. Thank you to our wonderful Nature Center volunteers who helped us welcome our many visitors from around the world. The Nature Center's dunes habitats and trails were open every day in 2022, as a refuge for people seeking comfort, joy, and inspiration in nature.

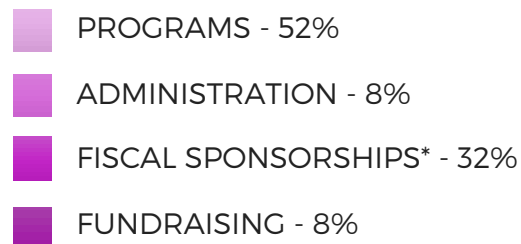


2022 PROGRAMS & OPERATIONS

INCOME: \$519,267 TOTAL



EXPENSES: \$431,599 TOTAL



*INCLUDES HUMBOLDT COASTAL RESILIENCE PROJECT & TOLOWA DUNES STEWARDS

THANK YOU 2022 BUSINESS PARTNERS!
 Support us by supporting our Business Partners



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