

# Caspar Community News

February 2018

## Headlands Grubbers' Journal

Fourth Saturday in January dawns greyish but recent rains have loosened the soil, and today should be good for some Broom Grubbing on Caspar's precious Headlands State Reserve. Two decades ago, cattle roamed this big parcel, and I used to think that they were enjoying a most interesting reincarnation: what a beautiful place to be a cow! Eight decades ago, this was a bustling industrial site of artificially flattened terraces used for lumber drying. Today, it's a wide open space leading to the wider ocean beyond.

Many neighbors and visitors enjoy walking our sweeping Headland, but maintaining trails is a constant battle with the weeds that want to occupy the open space represented by a trail. Especially now, with Spring hinting its arrival, experienced Headlands walkers often carry clippers to snip the Blackberries overarching the path. I swear you can almost see them grow!

Lumbermen, cattle, and years of neglect have left the native flora struggling against aggressive exotics – weeds – like Gorse, Broom, Eucalyptus, Himalaya Blackberry, Heather, Pampas Grass, thistles, and a spectrum of European grasses brought in as cattle feed. Maybe 10% of the vegetation is native ...and it's those gentle natives we're working for this morning.

Sienna comes by for the big loppers and



## Sunday, February 18th 4PM COMMUNITY MEETING: Caspar Headlands Potluck Dinner Afterwards

heads down to the big open area where re-emergent Broom threatens to take over the clearing made by a Cal-Fire crew in 2016. Carolyn and I have joined her previously, but I find the scope of that clean-up discouraging. I take the smaller loppers and head for an outlier clump of Broom that I started working on last month – it's more my size.

We have both learned a lot about invasive exotic weeds in the four years since we began giving every Fourth Saturday morning to the Headlands. They're hardy adversaries. Gorse, our most deplorable adversary, will resprout from a broken root, from a seed, even from a clipping left on the ground. Broom, while tough, gives up if clipped close enough to the ground

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...but if a little bit of green trunk or branch is left, it will resprout. Unfortunately, the big clearing effort by CalFire chain-sawed the Broom stems at a convenient chainsaw height, and resprouting is already taking back the field.

Land managers have been facing, and arguing over, methods for reclaiming land overgrown with exotic invaders for more than a century, since home-sick immigrants imported favorite plants to create a sense of home; Caspar's Gorse and Heather are examples. Other exotics were unthinkingly brought in as ground cover to counter erosion caused by development like the levelling of the Headlands to create soil-poor flats for lumber storage: Broom, Himalaya Blackberry, and Pampas Grass. All proved hardier than those who brought them. As present-day stewards of the land, it falls to us to restore the land to "what it wants to be."

We'd all like to solve the problem with one easy, sweeping solution, the proverbial Silver Bullet. But not so fast: poisons are out, because many of our neighbors object. The dramatic 2016 clearing of an acre of Broom thicket by the fire crew turns out to be a mixed blessing. In the words of Australian land managers Fuller and Barbe, conventional large-scale clearing operations "will fail because large exposed and disturbed areas will become re-colonized by new weeds." In their article documenting "[The Bradley Method](#)" these antipodean authorities describe the modest but effective work of a pair of sisters, the Bradleys, who

At the [CasparCommons.org website](http://CasparCommons.org), you will find plentiful information about our struggle with Gorse and other invasives, and Shamli Tarbell's proposed "Design Considerations" for the Reserve. A new [Headlands Interactive Map](#) allows you to visualize the history, trails (both active and lost), and exotic vegetation on the Headlands.

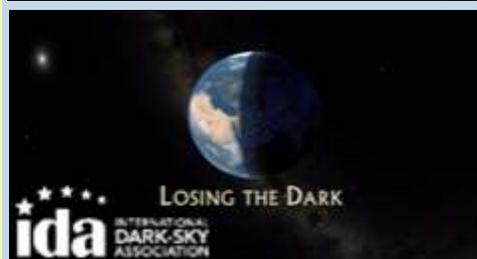
have patiently cleared a forty-acre reserve. One sister writes, "My sister takes the dog for a walk on most mornings. and I do the same in the afternoons. On these walks we might average, between the two of us, about three-quarters of an hour spent actually pulling up weeds."

Latter day Bradleys, Sienna and I devote two hours a month – nowhere near enough – but nevertheless, with a few friends joining from time to time, have made noticeable progress. Following the Bradley Protocol, we

1. Work to prevent deterioration of better areas.
2. Identify and improve the next best.
3. Hold the advantage gained.
4. Cautiously move into the really bad areas, with advice from State Parks.

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New lights on the stairs: light where we need it, with dark skies above.



Our Milky Way nights are so precious. IDA's [Losing the Dark](#) is a short video about why light pollution matters.

~ SMP



#### Headlands Grubbers' Journal concludes

This may look like heroic work, but it isn't. It is, for me, more like a meditation on unintended consequences and their mitigation. I am tired at the end of two hours, but the pile of clipped and uprooted weeds is more palpable evidence of my efforts than many things I undertake. There is a charm and thrill to working together to improve a resource shared in common with my neighbors. Often, I wonder why it's just Sienna and me out there, because it is such rewarding work. True, during a few months when the soil is friable, wrenching Gorse and Broom up by the roots is indeed heroic, but that is work for younger, stronger backs than mine – if you know any willing, send 'em along! In addition to seasonal opportunities and cautions – weed wrenching when the soil is wet, but no cutting during seeding time – every little clip helps. A shared community strategy of enlightened clipping (know your adversary!) could quicken our progress. (Bring your clippers!)

Usually, while at work on the Headlands, we think about what's to become of this land. Since 2001 when we Casparados caused its acquisition by State Parks, a massive and very successful Eucalyptus clearing reduced the fire danger to neighboring homes, and the fire crew worked the lower northern flat. Otherwise, Caspar's front yard has been neglected for nearly two decades.

Should there be a bench or two placed strategically, perhaps in one of the spots where the Headland's history is most remarkable ...like the head of the wire chute

where lumber and passengers were set on board coastal schooners plying between Caspar and San Francisco Bay? Should the lost trails, some of them historically important, be cleared? Should we pester AT&T to underground the telephone wires that deface the view? Should there be some explanatory signs telling visitors what was happening here less than a century ago? Should we raise money amongst ourselves for more large-scale weed clearance?

Two decades after Caspar's residents identified these Headlands as "sacred space," we are invited by State Parks to collaborate in the Reserve's master planning. The first gathering to do so will take place on Sunday, February 18<sup>th</sup>, starting at 4pm – an hour of discussion, followed by a potluck. This kind of planning is something we Casparados do superbly well – consider our Community Center, its new kitchen, and these Headlands and Caspar Beach. Join us.

If you can't make the meeting, put on stout shoes, get your gloves and loppers, and join us in restoring our Headlands on every Fourth Saturday.

~ Michael Potts



## This edition of Caspar Community News was laid out by Sienna M Potts

Photos by Sienna M Potts except where noted. Submissions of activities, events, or information of interest to Casparados is invited. Send them to

[lists@casparcommons.org](mailto:lists@casparcommons.org)

**We**  **Caspar**

## A Little Headlands History

Two decades ago, on February 21, 1998, 80 folks from Caspar met in the rain with community design professional Randy Hester to walk around Caspar and discuss the future of the community. We were just starting to become Community — most of us didn't even know each others' names!

The next day, Randy urged us to imagine our most sacred places in Caspar, those spots full of resonance of what we truly loved about our home town. There we were with our eyes closed, what the New York Times described as a "group of arty, aging back-to-the-landers and urban refugees," imagining our future.

We rated Caspar Headlands as the most sacred of places, followed by the duck pond. What mattered most to us? The night sky!

Nine monthly meetings later, Caspar had an enormous map showing the Caspar Headlands as public open space, along with a map full of the our dreams —community center, bakery/grocery store, post office, work-force and other houses, a fire station, and more!

In December 1998, armed with a firm belief in the power of our most sacred place, Caspar Community initiated an alliance with the San Francisco-based Trust for Public Land, along with the Mendocino Land Trust and the Coastal Conservancy, to find \$3.5 million in State and CalTrans funds to purchase the 71 acres of headlands and riparian land north of Caspar Creek. In May 1999 TPL negotiated a three-month option to purchase this land. On December 19, 2000 the purchase was complete, with the Mendocino Land Trust taking title for two years before State Parks was able to accept ownership of it.

Concurrently, in July 1998, the Coastal Conservancy purchased the 74 acres comprising Caspar Beach, riparian land south of Caspar Creek, the cemetery, and uplands area with \$1.8 million from a member's request from State Senator Pat Johnston of San Joaquin County. TPL deeded this land to the Mendocino Land Trust in August 1999.

By May 2002, our beautiful Caspar Headlands officially became part of Caspar Headlands State Reserve. We celebrated, complete with bag-pipes, a parade of Gertie-the-Gorse Monster led by Susan and Jerry Juhl, speeches by Mike Dell'Ara, Caspar Board President, and luminaries from the state, the Trust for Public Land, State Parks, and the Mendocino Land Trust. Afterwards, at the old schoolhouse in Caspar recently purchased by the Community, champagne flowed and Deb Dawson provided a legendary feast for hundreds of celebrating lovers of Caspar.

~ Judy Tarbell

photo by Judy Tarbell



## New Neighbors: Heidi Tarver and Raleigh Duncan

In the early days of our Caspar newsletter (which we started in 1988), we often ran interviews of townspeople. With so many new folks in town (eleven properties sold in 2017 alone!) , it seems it's time to run some interviews again.

Sitting in the warmth of Heidi and Raleigh's living room, it is exciting that this delightful couple made their way to downtown Caspar. They hail from North Berkeley, from another old house and a life filled with kids and grandkids, as well as for Heidi her work as an artist and garden designer, and for Raleigh the challenges of running his fast-growing business, Clearlight Infrared Saunas.

Heidi says: "Raleigh is warm, playful and

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**New Neighbors** concludes

creative and great at fixing things (if you have a man around the house he might as well be one who can fix things).” Raleigh says: “Heidi is a triple Scorpio — the most creative, interesting, complicated person I ever met, with a zest for life and her feet firmly on the ground.”

Feet on the ground turns out to be literal — Heidi often hikes nine miles in the woods. Once, hiking in the Branscomb Preserve wearing flip flops, she met a rattlesnake. More recently she walked east through Jughandle Reserve on a longer than expected jaunt that deposited her at the far end of Caspar Orchard Road as the light faded — no rattlesnakes, but what about mountain lions?

Raleigh flies around a lot — mostly to China where his infrared saunas are built, but also to Canada, Latin America and Europe for meetings and healing conferences. Heidi calls him “A flight of Fancy!” He loves gypsy wagons and people of all sorts.

A sociologist (PhD from Berkeley) turned artist, Heidi paints complex patterns — similar to Islamic mosaics — on furniture and creates intricately patterned sculptures from paper and wire mesh. Those who



photo provided

saw her fish sculptures at the Caspar Curiosities opening will remember the beauty of her work.

Raleigh is a Doctor of Chiropractic and founder/CEO of Clearlight Infrared Saunas. When he talks about the physics and healing qualities of infrared therapy one realizes the depth of his knowledge and commitment to health. My personal testimonial: He loaned us an infrared pad which rescues Jim and me at the end of a vigorous day.

Their landing in Caspar was singularly romantic. Following a 12-year-long engagement, they married in December 2017 and honeymooned in Mendocino when they first looked at the house. The purchase closed on

Valentine’s Day!

They both feel fortunate to have landed in such a beautiful house. Heidi remarked that the previous owners did a great job of maintaining the character of the original house while adding twenty-first century amenities.

Heidi manages to split her time between Berkeley and Caspar, while Raleigh heads north every chance he gets between business trips and running his company. The end goal for Raleigh: building that gypsy wagon in the back yard. Caspar Community is fortunate they came here — Raleigh is a great dishwasher and Heidi a fine server!

~ Judy Tarbell

**Preparing for an Emergency Means Preparing for the Unexpected!**

The Emergency Prep group meets on the fourth Monday of every month — come join us on **February 25, 7 pm**, at the Caspar Community Center.

When I wrote an article for this newsletter on Emergency Preparedness last September I had no idea the first use of our emergency supplies would be for refugees fleeing the fire and smoke in the Redwood Valley area. When Fortunate Farm became the coastal shelter, Caspar Community was able to help with cots and bedding. Fortunate Farm had tents, flashlights, heaters, abundant food, and a score of organized, compassionate, and creative people to pull off 10 days of caring for a moving group of traumatized people. The core team of Gowan Batist, Jef Schultz, Dana Levy, and Ui Wesley worked through many sleepless nights helping scores of people.

The emergency prep group is moving down three paths:

It is preparing the Caspar Community Center to become an emergency shelter. Annie Lee has been talking with the Shul Board about how they might assist Caspar Community as a shelter. Caspar Community bought a cargo trailer which Star Decker and Gene Parsons towed over from Willits last week. We’ll install shelving for our



photo by Judy Tarbell

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**Emergency Prep** concludes

shelter supplies which are currently stored in Miriam Davis and Peter Keat’s travel trailer. We still need to purchase a satellite phone, food, first aid and emergency sanitation supplies.

The group is also establishing a protocol for people to take care of themselves in their homes in case of an emergency. Recently 40 people came to the Center to pick up their pickle barrels, ordered at Disaster Fest, complete with necessities for their survival for at least three days in the event of an earthquake, tsunami, or fire. If you were not among those 40 people, and are ready to create your own barrel, go to [casparcommons.org](http://casparcommons.org), scroll down to [Resilience](#), and click on “[January 2017 Disaster Barrel Instructions](#)” for a complete list of what to purchase and store in your barrel. Pickle barrels are available at local hardware stores and at the Mendocino Garden Shop and Dirt Cheap.

Thirdly, we must find a way to know enough about our immediate neighbors that we can be of assistance when an emergency happens. We have unsuccessfully tried in the past to create neighborhood hubs which will share among themselves information about the location of propane tanks, water and electrical turn-off valves, water storage tanks that fire trucks can hook into, wells with hand pumps, people with a backhoe and other machinery, ham operators, people with medical issues who will need help, and animals who will need help, especially if their owners are not at home.

A list of neighbors with medical, search-and-rescue, and communication skills could be life-saving in an emergency. Some people are reluctant to share this information, but perhaps if we work in small, confidential groups, we can overcome our reluctance and prepare for our mutual safety and well-being. Knowing your neighbors is the most important component of community resilience.

Assuming that it is still standing, the Caspar Community Center will be the hub of the response to a disaster. The team of people there could act more effectively if they had access to similar information. Perhaps people willing to share their resources with the broader community would let the neighborhood leader share their information with the Emergency Prep point person.

Two trainings are happening in the coming months which will greatly help our community take

care of itself in the event of a disaster. Please consider taking the CERT training and Amateur Radio License Training classes noted below.

CERT (Community Emergency Response Teams) teaches people how to help in times of disaster. It is offering a course on three Saturdays – April 7, 14, and 21 at the Old Recreation Center at 213 Laurel Street in Fort Bragg. This is a FREE course and we urge everyone to sign up by calling North Coast Opportunities at 462-1959. For more information go to [mendocert.com](http://mendocert.com). You’ll see that the training teaches disaster preparedness, survival skills, rescuer safety, team work, fire safety and suppression, basic disaster medical operations and light search and rescue, first aid, and organizational skills.



Amateur Radio License Training: The Mendocino County Office of Education is offering five FREE classes on Amateur Radio License Training – Tuesday nights on March 13, 20, 27, April 3 and 10, from 6 to 7:30. For more information call Steve Turner at 467-5021.



~ Judy Tarbell

**UPCOMING EVENTS**

**Pop-up Dance Party  
Wood & Steel**  
Saturday, February 17, 7-10 pm

**Sunday, February 18th 4PM  
COMMUNITY MEETING  
Potluck Dinner Afterwards**

**Sunday, February 25, 9 - 11 am  
Caspar 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday Breakfast**

A complete schedule can be found at our website.

If you would like to receive email about hometown Caspar events, email your request to [lists@casparcommons.org](mailto:lists@casparcommons.org).