



2021 ANNUAL REPORT

In 2021, Friends of the Dunes re-opened the Humboldt Coastal Nature Center to the public and worked within shifting public health conditions to resume our education and stewardship programs. The Covid-19 pandemic continued to force us to adapt our programs, and we rose to the challenge with creativity and with your support. This was the 39th year that Friends of the Dunes has been serving northern California's diverse communities and protecting its coastal environments.

In 2021, we worked with our partners and with you, our community, to steward Humboldt Bay's newest conservation jewel, the Samoa Dunes and Wetlands Conservation Area. Working with partners at the California Department of Fish and Wildlife, we removed more than 4,500 pounds of trash from this property in 2021, and we established a corps of volunteer trail stewards to assist in management. The long-term conservation future of this land, and all conserved coastal lands and waters in Humboldt Bay, looks bright.



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LANDSCAPE-LEVEL CONSERVATION IN WIGI (HUMBOLDT BAY)

In 2021, conversations with partners including the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the Wiyot Tribe about the long-term future of Samoa Dunes and Wetlands were inspiring and productive. Through these discussions, Friends of the Dunes advanced hand-in-hand with our partners toward permanent transfer of the western parcels of Samoa Dunes and Wetlands to the BLM, and the permanent transfer of the culturally significant eastern portions of this property to the Wiyot Tribe.

Working on the Samoa Dunes and Wetlands conservation project--with its 357 acres of coastal maritime forest, sweeping open parabolic dunes, foredunes popping with native wildflowers, rich coastal wetlands, and its many collaborative partners who together manage thousands of acres of connected habitats--motivated us to think bigger. In 2021, we began exploring what it might look like to connect the conservation lands in Humboldt Bay as part of a new, proposed national monument. The idea gathered momentum as it gained support from the Wiyot Tribe, particularly around opportunities for Tribal co-management. We emerged from 2021 with a diverse coalition in support of a new, proposed Wigi National Monument that would provide greater protection for the remarkable lands, cultural resources, and connected ecosystems of Humboldt Bay. Wigi is the name for Humboldt Bay in Wiyot language, Soulatluk.

COMMUNITY EDUCATION

We love connecting our community to the wonders of coastal environments, and in 2021 we continued to adapt our programs to meet changing public health conditions and guidelines (often putting limits on numbers of participants per in-person program and coordinating more overall programs) while connecting our community with coastal conservation in creative new ways. In 2021, we:

- Coordinated **39 free guided walks**, with **318 participants**.
- Offered **5 Spanish-language events** to make nature more welcoming to everyone, including Nature Story Time programs and Spanish-language family-friendly explorations, with a total of **64 people attending**.
- Piloted the first-ever **Naturalist Notes webinar series**, with themed webinars on a variety of diverse topics, from ethnobotany to pinnipeds, which collectively provided distanced learning opportunities during the pandemic to a total of **106 participants across 6 webinars**.
- Successfully organized an in-person, 8-week **Coastal Naturalist Training** that **trained 16 new Coastal Naturalists** who earned their California Naturalist certification and were eligible for academic credits through UC Extension.
- Coordinated an online **Know Your Dunes Webinar**, which served as the 2021 Humboldt Coastal Dunes Cooperative Public Meeting: 53 community members participated live and the YouTube video has since had 41 views.



SCHOOL EDUCATION

In 2021, Friends of the Dunes offered **4 environmental education programs** for school groups: Junior Naturalists, Kids Ocean Day, Bay to Dunes, and Coastal Stewards. In the spring, students were still mostly learning remotely, so the Junior Naturalist and Kids Ocean Day programs were offered virtually. For **Junior Naturalists** we provided interactive zoom presentations for **326 students from 12 different schools** and the modified **Kids Ocean Day** program reached **487 students from 16 schools**. For the Fall season, we were able to start offering in-person field trips again. We held an Environmental Education Training for 4 volunteers, 2 of whom remained for the school season. Together they contributed 20 hours to our school education programs. They primarily assisted with the **Bay to Dunes** field trip serving grades K-5, which reached **146 students from 5 schools**. Our **Coastal Stewards** field trips designed for grades 6-12 served an additional **46 students from 4 different groups**.



“In our program, students learn science standards on ecosystems and local [habitats]. It is important for students to experience hands-on activities outside to make real connections to concepts and develop their real world observation skills. The lessons and games were excellently prepared to give my students this experience.”

– Michele Gilbert, Teacher at Six Rivers Montessori

LAND STEWARDSHIP

In 2021, despite the pandemic, in total we trained, mobilized, and empowered **96 individual participants** to contribute **554 hours of service accomplishing coastal dune habitat restoration**. We hosted 15 Dune Ecosystem Restoration Team (DERT) workdays that contributed 282 volunteer hours, and our dedicated Volunteer Restoration Technicians contributed 222 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 2021, Friends of the Dunes' restoration program successfully treated **13.3 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 **5.8 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 the Backcountry Horsemen Redwood Unit Wilderness Riders to remove more than 4,500 pounds of trash-- some of it packed out on mules!



"Partnership with our community is the way we do education, restoration, and stewardship in the dunes. When we embrace partnerships, we're keeping faith with our community, and with the land itself. We're deeply grateful to every single one of you for going on this long-term conservation journey with us. You realize what an incredible community we have, when everyone pulls together for the common goal of conservation."
– Mike Cipra, Executive Director

SPONSORED PROGRAMS

Friends of the Dunes continues to support a variety of ambitious allied projects on the North Coast, serving as a fiscal sponsor for these projects. One of these sponsored programs is the Humboldt Coastal Resilience Project, a multi-year dune habitat and geomorphology study that is looking at the potential impacts of sea level rise and climate change to coastal dune habitats and examining the role of restoration in creating resilience for dune ecosystems. In 2021, project partners completed the final year of data collection to monitor foredune height and movement along the entire 32-mile littoral cell and issued a report on the established dune transects with data for all study sites, a summary of trends, and preliminary conclusions suggesting increased resilience in restored versus invaded dune ecosystems. Work began on a vulnerability assessment for the ecosystems and communities that are adjacent to the dunes along this littoral cell.

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 2021, 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!

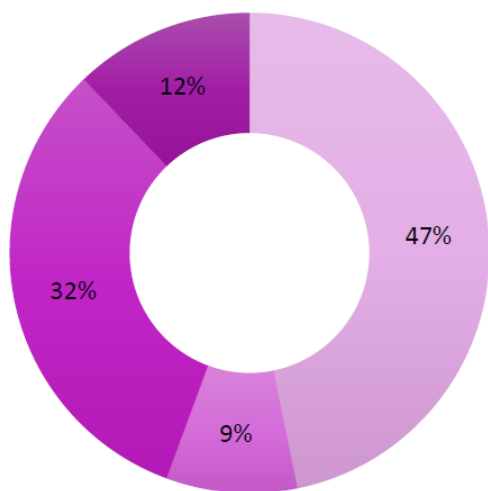
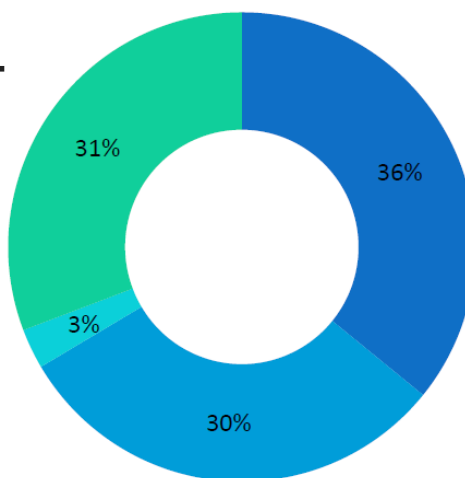
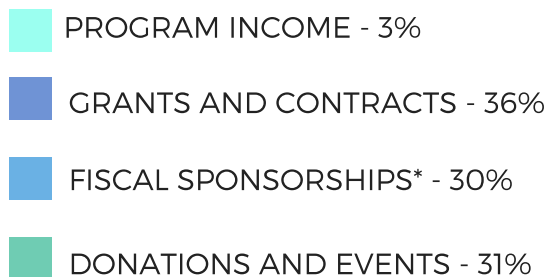
HUMBOLDT COASTAL NATURE CENTER

The Humboldt Coastal Nature Center re-opened to the public on May 18, 2021, after our employees and volunteers had received vaccinations against Covid-19. We were able to maintain the property and its trails open every day in 2021, as a refuge for people seeking comfort, joy, and inspiration in nature. The Nature Center remained open from May through December, and hosted thousands of visitors, again serving its unique role as a hub of natural history education and the Gateway to Humboldt Bay's coastal dunes!



2021 PROGRAMS & OPERATIONS

INCOME: \$426,248 TOTAL



EXPENSES: \$339,345 TOTAL



*INCLUDES HUMBOLDT COASTAL RESILIENCE PROJECT & TOLOWA DUNES STEWARDS

THANK YOU 2021 BUSINESS PARTNERS!

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