

# MATTOLE

## RESTORATION COUNCIL

### 2020 Annual Report

*Our mission is to protect and restore natural systems in the Mattole watershed and maintain them at sustainable levels of health and productivity, especially in regards to forests, fisheries, soils, and other native plant and animal communities.*



Looking West over the lower Mattole Valley. Photo by Hugh McGee

Mattole Restoration Council  
P.O. Box 160  
Petrolia, California 95558

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### Membership

Now is the time to renew your MRC membership. Members play an important role in our operations by nominating and voting for our Board of Directors. To be eligible to vote for the 2021 Board of Directors, you must be either live or own land in the Mattole. Be sure to **renew your membership by January 30**. You can send a check with the enclosed envelope, or head to our website: [www.mattole.org](http://www.mattole.org). Sliding scale memberships are always available.



California oat grass at the nursery. Photo by Veronica Yates

### Board of Directors

We are currently accepting nominations for our Board of Directors. If you or someone you know is interested in running for the Board, email [vroom@mattole.org](mailto:vroom@mattole.org) before our annual meeting on January 30.

Anyone with an interest in the health of our community and local ecosystems is eligible for a nomination. Only current MRC members can nominate or vote for a Director, so make sure your membership is up to date.



Prosper Ridge Prairie Restoration Project. Photo by Hugh McGee

## The Big Burn

There's no way to talk about 2020 without discussing the disastrous wildfire season that affected so many and scorched over 8 million acres in the West. We send our hearts out to folks who lost so much. We here at the MRC have been on the forefront of community wildfire safety for years, providing fuel reduction treatments and fire safety planning for our community. Our commitment to intersectional and thoughtful fire safety is stronger than ever as we look forward to 2021. We are planning large scale watershed-wide assessments to help guide our fire prevention and forest health projects in the next decade. Prescribed fire, Lidar analytics, and the latest fire ecology will all guide our efforts to support and restore healthy, fire safe forests and communities.

## Native Grasslands Enhancement

The Native Grassland Enhancement program seeks to better understand the current state of grassland ecosystems in the Mattole watershed, and to preserve, enhance, and re-establish native grass populations. In recent years, we have focused our efforts on the Prosper Ridge area. In 2020, we completed phase 7 of the Prosper Ridge Prairie Restoration Project. To date we have treated over 350 acres, installed over 1000 lbs. of native seed, and planted over 150,000 native grass plugs. Project sites will begin to be maintained through prescribed fire.

Our nursery sells native plants and seed! Contact Veronica Yates: Veronica@mattole.org



An autumn sunset over the Native Plant Nursery and Seed Farm. Photo by Veronica Yates

## Working Lands and Human Communities

The MRC works to encourage Mattole residents to manage their land for overall ecosystem health. In particular, the MRC works to promote vigor in our forests by advocating for management that increases the percentage of older forests across the watershed over time.

## Forest Practices

For years, the MRC has played an active role in monitoring timber harvest plans in the watershed. This spring we organized a tour of Humboldt Redwood Company's forestlands.

## Oak Woodland Enhancement

The goal of this program is to gain a better understanding of the current distribution/health of black and white oak woodland ecosystems and promote their conservation. This year, we worked to restore existing stands by removing encroaching Douglas-fir over 10 acres of oak woodland on private property in the Mattole Valley. We also completed 3 oak woodland conservation assessments and designs.



WSP members lending a hand on the Lost Coast. Photo by Lisa Hintz

## Native Plant Materials

The Native Plant Nursery produces 45,000-50,000 native plants annually, including bunchgrasses, wetland plants, herbs, shrubs and trees. While most of these plants are grown for our restoration projects, we are continually expanding our uncontracted, retail plant sales. In addition to maintaining our pre-existing seed farm in Petrolia, staff installed a new 1/3-acre seed farm in front of the nursery. In its first year of production, the farm produced more than 50 lbs. of flower and bunchgrass seed.

## Invasive Plant Control

The goal of this program is to prevent non-native, invasive plants from infesting large areas of critical habitat. This year we treated 8 invasive species at 17 priority locations. We also continued monitoring previous treatment areas in the King Range and on the Lost Coast, and worked with local community groups to target and prioritize invasive plants. Staff contracted with several private landowners to treat Scotch broom and Japanese knotweed in the Mattole Valley.



Making firewood for the elderly on Chambers Rd. Photo by Ali Freedlund

Cost-share funds are available for oak woodland enhancement. Contact Lisa Hintz: Lisa@mattole.

For more info about forest management and/or fuels reduction, contact Ali Freedlund: Ali@mattole.org



Willow baffles and willow/wood structures, summer 2020. Photo by Hugh McGee

## Fuels Reduction and Fire Planning

The MRC works with the Lower Mattole Fire Safe Council (LMFSC) and landowners to prioritize projects that reduce fuels around homes, roads and ridgelines. We aim to connect watershed residents with resources for improving fire safety and provide services for fuels reduction, including a chipper with crew. In 2020, the Fire and Fuels crew continued year-round work on fuels reduction projects. Deemed essential during Covid-19 restrictions, our crew did a great job pivoting to implement new workplace protocols to keep everyone safe while continuing this essential work.

Our stalwart crew has been working all year on a 250-acre ridgeline fuel break from Wilder Ridge to Gilham Butte on the Redwoods to the Sea Corridor. This multi-partner project is sponsored through CalFire and Save the Redwoods League. So far the crew has treated over 120 acres and prepped a large area for a prescribed burn.

In between long days on the fuel break, the crew treated over 3 acres of dense trees and shrubs along Chambers Road in Petrolia. In addition, hazardous overhanging branches were removed at three locations in Petrolia for safer ingress and egress for first responders and neighborhood residents. We distributed firewood created in the process to over 20 elderly local residents. Big thanks to PG&E and Humboldt County for the support.

In addition, our office team completed the Mattole Fire Atlas update for Petrolia, Honeydew, and Ettersburg. The Mattole Fire Atlas is a valuable resource for first responders noting roads, structures, and water tanks in the watershed. For the first time ever, this year's Fire Atlas is loaded onto a portable tablet with GPS tracking ability, for use during emergencies.

## Riparian Ecosystem Restoration

The Riparian Ecosystem Restoration program seeks to improve the quality of streamside habitat. This year, we installed 5000 ft. of willow baffles and 200 whole trees at Mattole Estuary floodplain enhancement sites. Crews also planted more than 6000 wetland plugs and 4000 riparian trees on the Middle Slough project (South of the Mattole Estuary) and 2000 plants on the Salt River Ecosystem Restoration Project.



The planting crew at Salt River in Ferndale, fall 2019. Photo by Amy Kumler.

## Education and Outreach

### Mattole Field Institute

Remember when we could go hiking without social distancing?! On the absolute windiest day in February, the Mattole Field Institute led a hike to the burgeoning elephant seal colony at the Punta Gorda lighthouse. Major thanks to HSU Professor P. Dawn Goley and graduate student Emma Levy, who provided an incredible amount of biological information about these fascinating creatures we are lucky to live next to.

### Nick's Interns

The Nick's Interns Program supports high school and college-aged participants to gain experience with a variety of restoration practices, with the cooperation of several local environmental agencies. Nick's Interns was much smaller than usual this year due to the pandemic. We are happy to report that one long time Nick's Intern completed leadership training with the Bureau of Land Management, and will be leading crews next season.

### Step Up

Step Up supports young adults to navigate complex challenges by providing them with the tools they need to succeed in school, work and life. This year our Step Up coordinators helped over 10 young adults with job placement, meeting educational goals, and navigating the complexities of a pandemic.

### Mattole Youth Environmental Stewards

Last spring, we were awarded a Whale Tail Grant through the CA Coastal Commission to provide environmental education to local schools. This project has been adapted to accommodate distance learning by using videos lessons and take-home activities.

Thank you to our funders, donors, volunteers, and neighbors for your continued support!



Crew burning fuels removed from the Redwoods to the Sea fuel break. Credit: Eleonore J. Anderson

## Communities and Challenging Times

As the year comes to a close and we find ourselves still reeling in the effects of a global pandemic, we're reflecting on how much we've missed this year. We had to cancel educational field trips for students, internships for young adults, our Mattole Field Institute courses for HSU students, and more volunteer days than we can count.

We miss our community and look forward to the future. We hope to plant, hike, learn, laugh, and sweat with you all very soon.

We have also been amazed by the perspective and connection this year has brought. We are grateful for our local partners in the Mattole River and Range Partnerships and the King Range Alliance; The Mattole Salmon Group, Sanctuary Forest Inc., and Friends of the Lost Coast.

We were awed and humbled to see the Bear River Band hold the first Salmon Ceremony at the mouth of the Mattole since 1903.

We are continually impressed by our partners, neighbors, and the collective movement to build an abundant and inclusive watershed for all.

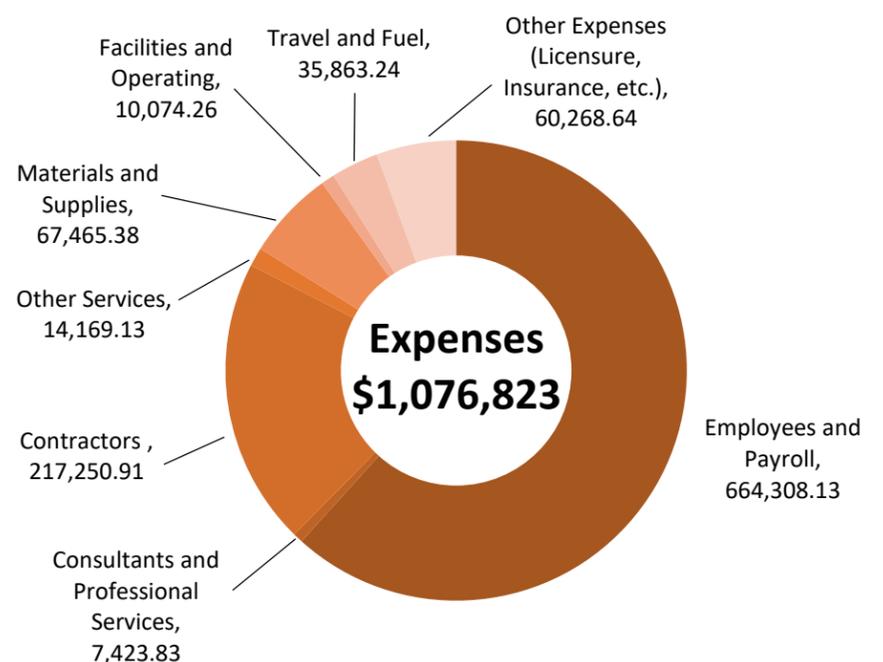
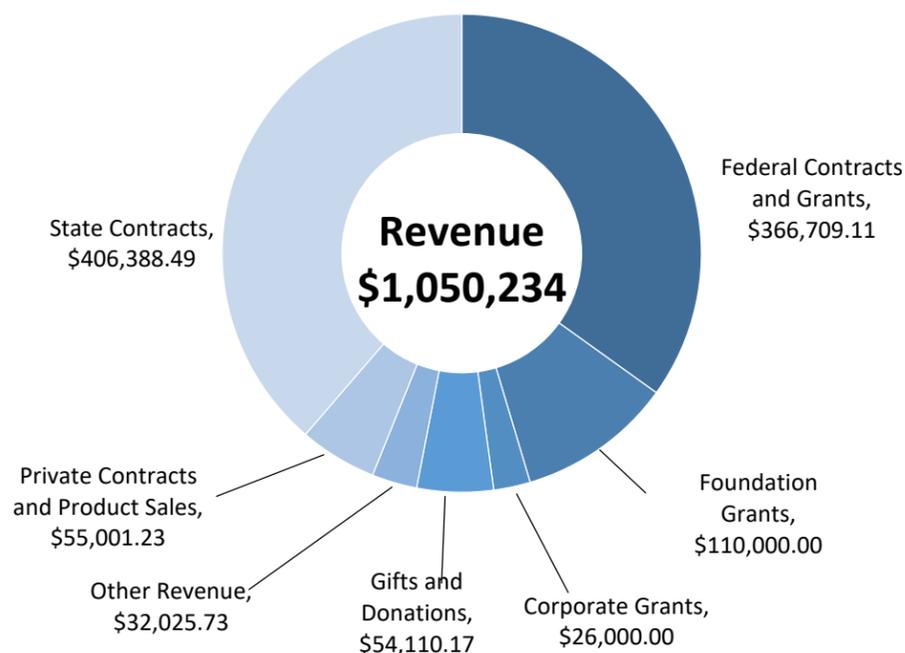
As we reflect back on the year to see so many positives in the midst of such intense struggle, we are proud to witness resiliency, perseverance, and humility at work. Sending well and warm wishes this winter, from our family to yours.

## Fiscal Year 2020 Financials

MRC's fiscal year spans from July 1, 2019 through June 30, 2020.

<b>Total Employment</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>Earnings Range:</b>
<b>Full time regular staff</b>	<b>6</b>	>\$50,000 - 2 employees
<b>Part time regular staff</b>	<b>10</b>	\$20,000 - \$50,000 - 6 employees
<b>Seasonal staff</b>	<b>29</b>	\$10,000 - \$20,000 - 9 employees
<b>Interns/StepUp</b>	<b>17</b>	\$1000 - \$10000 - 29 employees
		<\$1000 - 16 employees

Monitoring for revegetation success. Photo by Veronica Yates



**MATTOLE**  
RESTORATION COUNCIL

**Annual Meeting**  
**January 30, 3-6pm on Zoom**  
Everyone is welcome, MRC members are encouraged to attend.  
Please register on our website: [www.mattole.org](http://www.mattole.org)

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