



Klamath River Fund

Supporting the Health and Healing of the Klamath River Basin

Yurok fisher Tasheena Natt
© Yurok Tribe

HAF+WRCF launched the new Klamath River Fund this summer, a first-of-its-kind fund established to explicitly support the health and restoration of Klamath Basin ecosystems and the communities that depend on them. Recently, the largest dam removal and river restoration project in U.S. history concluded on the Klamath. The fund will support local communities as they take full advantage of the opportunities afforded by dam removal.

“Dam removal makes Klamath communities uniquely positioned to show the world how to restore threatened ecosystems, heal the wounds of a colonial past, and empower rural people to chart their own future,” said Bryna Lipper, Chief Innovation Officer of HAF+WRCF. “We invite additional funders to join us in this important work.”

The fund is launching with \$10 million in seed funding from The William and Flora Hewlett Foundation, with additional support from The James Irvine Foundation, the Roundhouse Foundation, Meyer Memorial Trust, and other anonymous funders. This growing funding partnership, rooted in a local community foundation, will support Tribal and rural communities in leading and shaping their basin’s future.

“We are thrilled to support the launch of the Klamath River Fund. It is a new model for how philanthropy can be a partner in the longer-term work of healing nature and communities,” said Andrea Keller Helsel, program officer for environment at the William and Flora Hewlett Foundation. “Dam removal was only the first step; now we will see the transformations that are possible when Tribal and rural communities are resourced

to come together and co-create a new vision for the region.”

The 257-mile-long Klamath River was once the third-largest salmon-producing river on the U.S. West Coast and an important food source for Tribes across the basin. Over the years, dams, diversions, poor forest management, and mining have challenged the resiliency of the basin’s diverse ecosystems. Several runs of anadromous fish have been lost, and others are on the brink of extinction.

More recently, drought and wildfires have led regulatory agencies to curtail water diversions and restrict commercial, tribal, and recreational fishing. This has impacted Tribal, recreational, and commercial fisheries and the communities and economies they support. As an example, for the second consecutive year, the Pacific Fishery Management Council recommended canceling the 2023-2024 California salmon season due to plummeting Chinook populations—affecting Tribes, recreational fishermen, and commercial fishing businesses. The Klamath River Fund aims to address these challenges.

The removal of the dams marks the largest river restoration project in U.S. history. The project advances fisheries and water quality restoration, creates new economic opportunities, and begins the process of restorative justice for the Tribes and Indigenous people who have lived along the river since time immemorial. Dam removal has already spurred investment in restoring key tributaries, upper Klamath basin wetlands, fish habitat, natural fire regimes, and more. However, additional actions are needed to fully restore the Klamath River Basin.

See **Klamath River**, *back page*



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Charlie Jordan, Chair
 Christina Huff, Treasurer
 Raquel Ortega, Secretary
 Abby Abinanti
 David Finigan
 Keith Flamer
 Mary Keehn
 Dina Moore
 Alan Nidiffer
 Alex Ozaki-McNeil
 Marylyn Paik-Nicely
 Dennis Rael

Chief Operating Officer

Sara Dronkers

Chief Innovation Officer

Bryna Lipper

Vice Presidents

Sarah Millsap
 Pimm Tripp-Allen
 Gina Zottola

Directors

Haley Clark
 Laurel Dalsted
 Amy Jester
 James Kloor
 Meredith Knowles
 Keytra Meyer
 Jarad Petroske
 Lelia Roberts
 Craig Woods

Dear Friends,

The HAF+WRCF Board of Directors is excited to announce important changes in the organization’s leadership serving our region:

Our Chief Executive Officer Bryna Lipper has been accepted to a distinguished Ph.D. program at Carnegie Mellon University with a focus on climate change and social justice in rural and Indigenous communities. Her research will involve this region’s environmental and political history and pose future scenarios for climate justice. As such, Bryna has stepped out of day-to-day management and assumed the role of Chief Innovation Officer where she will collaborate at national and state levels to further partnerships, research, and public policy related to philanthropy supporting our Pacific Redwood Region.

Sara Dronkers is acting in the role of Chief Operating Officer. Sara, with over 20 years of work experience at HAF+WRCF, has been involved in all functions of the Foundation’s remarkable growth and performance, from grantmaking to finance to donor development. Sara begins to oversee executive management in a time of the Foundation’s history where grant-making to the community is at record high levels, including a projected \$12 million in the upcoming 2024/25 fiscal year. Sara had previously served as Chief of Staff of the Foundation since 2020.

This growth is further grounded in the official appointment of Paula (Pimm) Tripp-Allen as Vice President of Programs, Community Partnerships, and Tribal Relations at the Foundation. Pimm will lead the organization’s grant-making efforts, program and affiliates, and regional initiatives. Pimm, of Yurok and Karuk ancestry, will also continue leading Native American and Tribal Nation relations, and the Foundation’s activities furthering justice in Native communities. Long affiliated with the Foundation, Pimm began more than two decades ago on staff for the Native Cultures Fund, then served on the Board of Directors for many years. Immediately prior to serving as Vice President, she served as Senior Advisor to the CEO for the past 2 years.

In addition to its strong vote of support for this leadership structure for the Foundation’s evolution, the Board of Directors voted unanimously to extend the terms of its Board Officers—including Chair Charlie Jordan, Vice Chair David Finigan, and Secretary Raquel Ortega—and its Committee Chair positions for up to a year for continuity to the staff and clarity to our community.

Signed,

Charlie Jordan – Chair

David Finigan – Vice Chair

Raquel Ortega – Secretary

And the entire Board of Directors of Humboldt Area Foundation and Wild Rivers Community Foundation



Sara Dronkers, COO



Bryna Lipper, CIO



Mike Steelman and Olivia Obidah of the Harambee Cultural Center.

Empowering Arcata's Youth Support for Harambee Cultural Center Focuses on Next Generation

"The center feels like such a gift."

— Olivia Obidah, Harambee Cultural Center Sistamentor

In July 2024, HAF+WRCF supported the Humboldt County Black Music and Arts Association (HCBMAA) with a \$30,000 grant to support the general operations of the Harambee Cultural Center (HCC).

The HCC is a youth-centered space in Northtown Arcata that opened in February. The HCBMAA and HCC provide a variety of supports and resources for transitional-age youth of all cultural backgrounds, low-income families, learners living with mental health disabilities, bilingual learners, 2Spirit/LGBTQIA+, and runaway and homeless youth.

HCC's leaders hope to make a positive impact on those facing the intersections of adverse structural conditions, including marginalization, racism, health inequities, and economic insecurity, which can contribute to addiction and mental health challenges. The space has wellness spaces, diverse cultural books, resources for job skills development, nutritious food, a kitchen, a restorative healing circle, and more. The HCC hopes to create opportunities for youth to find a stronger sense of belonging and well-being where they can feel seen and valued.

The HCC is not just a space, but a vibrant hub for cultural events and workshops. It serves as a meeting place for local Black, Indigenous, Multiracial and People of Color grassroots groups and nonprofit organizations. These events and workshops are designed to inspire and motivate students to explore new interests,

fostering a sense of belonging and community.

"The center feels like such a gift. The center is providing space for all ideas. There's food, there are snacks for the kids, and I'm really excited about the youth council," says Olivia Obidah, HCC Sistamentor.

The center also embraces the cultural practice of Ubuntu, which means 'you belong, are accepted, and needed in the community.' This philosophy is at the heart of the center's peer-leadership model, which draws inspiration, development, and leadership from its youth for many of its projects and activities.

Teens are welcome to join the center's Youth Council, which meets monthly on the first and third Saturdays from 7 to 8:30 p.m. Contact harambeeculturalcenter@gmail.com to learn more.

HCBMAA also offers a unique youth support system with nutrition, activity, and cultural awareness. The one-on-one mentoring, facilitated by the brothamentor and sistamentor, ensures that BIPOC youth in K-12 receive the tailored support they need to thrive and connect culturally. This service is available by appointment only, so each session is focused and effective during the school session.

For more information, contact the youth coordinator, Lorenza, at info@hcblackmusicnarts.org

Redwood Coast Energy

HAF+WRCF supports education, outreach in renewable energy field

Redwood Coast Energy Authority (RCEA) has received a \$7,200 strategy grant from HAF+WRCF to encourage local students to enter the renewable energy field via tours of a solar energy microgrid operation at the California Redwood Coast-Humboldt County Airport.

“The grant will help further our goal of growing emerging professionals who lack the opportunity to study renewable energy, their impacts on surrounding ecosystems, and potential for integrated management strategies such as multi-use agricultural and renewable energy industries.” said RCEA Program Specialist Marianne Bithell.

“Hands-on activities and site visits encourage students to enter the clean energy sector, and we have a good relationship with Cal Poly Humboldt at our facility,” Bithell said.

“Hands-on activities and site visits encourage students to enter the clean energy sector.”
— Marianne Bithell,
RCEA Program Specialist

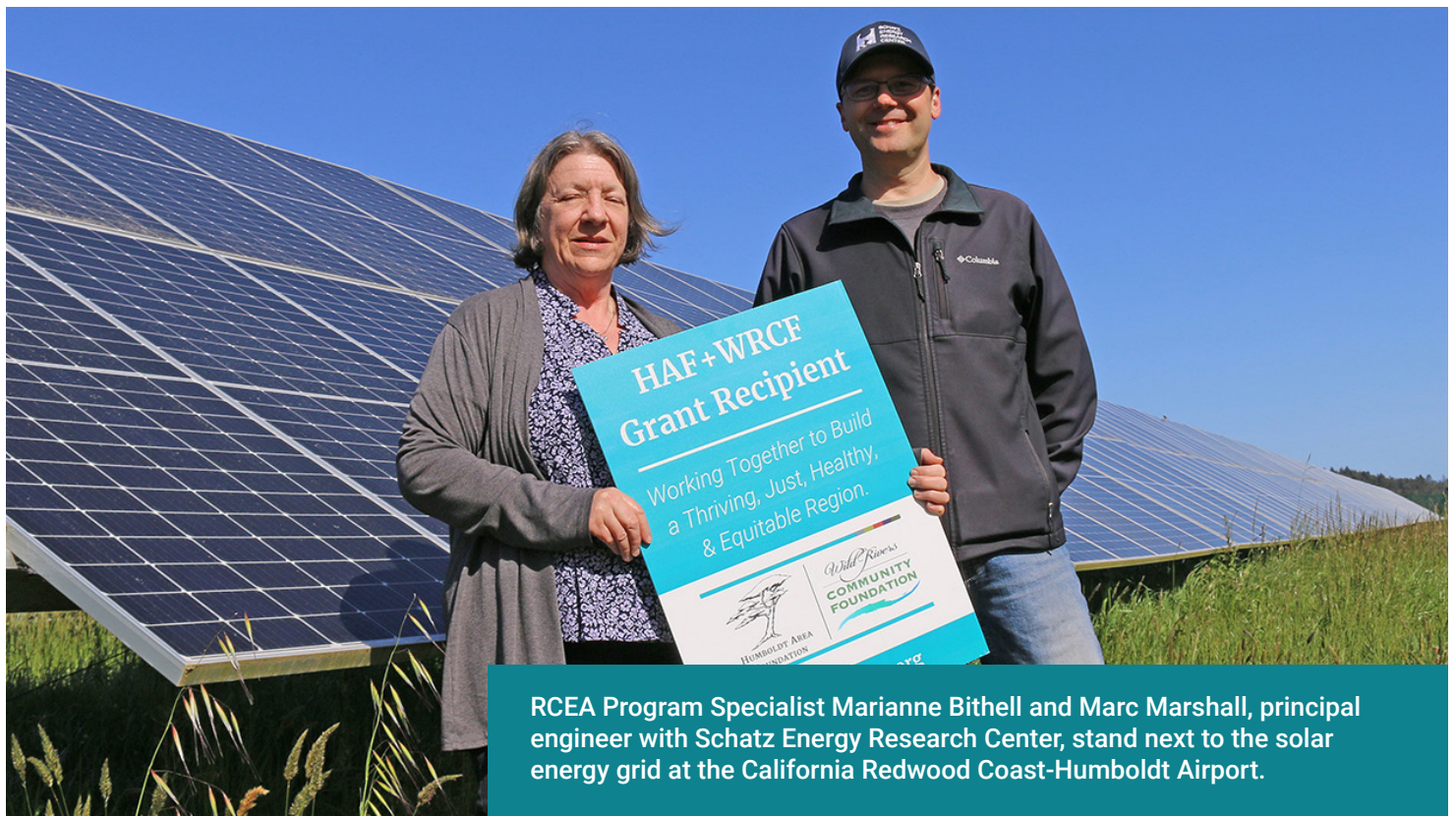
The Redwood Coast Airport Microgrid is California’s first 100 percent renewable energy, front-of-the meter, multi-customer microgrid. Energy generated by the grid is sold into the California energy market and directly supplies the airport and U.S. Coast Guard facilities with electricity. RCEA is responsible for maintaining the equipment and grounds.

One of RCEA’s goals, Bithell said, is to develop an agrivoltaic project to assist with operations and maintenance for the life of the microgrid. There is a great opportunity for this site to become a local educational resource for emerging dual land use concepts. Another future opportunity may be a research

project to help restore three acres of land to an original prairie ecosystem. The HAF+WRCF grant will fund several student tours and allow the Cal Poly Humboldt Rangeland project to happen this year, she said.

“This grant will help support small scale, hyper-localized energy generation and storage in support of crucial air transportation and the United States Coast Guard,” said Program Officer Rachel Montgomery. “This grant will also support research, educational and workforce development opportunities for local university and community college students and researchers in the fields of solar energy engineering, agriculture and prairie restoration within a model that offers unique co-benefits for multiple sectors.”

Learn more about the microgrid at redwoodenergy.org/rcam.



RCEA Program Specialist Marianne Bithell and Marc Marshall, principal engineer with Schatz Energy Research Center, stand next to the solar energy grid at the California Redwood Coast-Humboldt Airport.



Student Emily Vionnet, left, receives a scholarship from Rotarian Bunny Wilder. (Submitted photo)

Record number of scholarships awarded

Generous contributions from community donors this year has helped HAF+WRCF award a record-breaking 535 scholarships totaling over \$900,000 to students in Del Norte, Humboldt, Trinity and Curry counties.

“HAF+WRCF is dedicated to empowering future generations through education, one scholarship at a time,” said Sydney Morrone, the foundation’s Grants and Scholarships Manager. “Our commitment to financially investing in students supports them in their journey to higher education completion, fostering financial stability and success.”

The scholarships, both one-time and multi-year, support graduating high school seniors, current undergraduate, graduate, and vocational students seeking support for their post-secondary education. Morrone said the funding for the scholarship program comes from Foundational funds primarily from local schools, businesses, clubs, organizations and individuals. Scholarship funds reflect new and established donors, and many of the funds are more than 30 years old, while others are as new as a few months.

The largest scholarship in HAF+WRCF’s portfolio is the Carol Lee Memorial Scholarship, which supports one new student each year with \$26,000 over four years. The Leslie Christopherson Memorial Scholarship supports two new students each year with \$18,000 over four years.

For the 2023-24 academic year, the Foundation received 6,300 applications from 1,139 applicants. The average scholarship was \$1,861, with 37 percent of the recipients identifying as non-white. By comparison, the number of applicants was 1,070 in 2023, and 920 in 2022. Learn more about our scholarship program at ScholarshipFinder.org.



Grants support region’s summer youth programs

Summer programs and projects serving approximately 10,414 youth across Humboldt, Del Norte and Curry counties have received grants ranging from \$500 to \$2,000 through The Summer Youth Partnership grant program.

The collaborative program was supported this year by HAF+WRCF, the Mel & Grace McLean Foundation, The Patricia D. & William B. Smullin Foundation, Providence’s Community Health Investment, and the Community Assistance League Community Health Fund.

A total of \$57,363 in grants were distributed to 41 organizations and projects that provide youth in the region with quality educational and outdoor activities, artistic and recreational programs, and scholarships to ensure all youth in the region can participate in healthy, engaging summer activities. (See full list of grantees at hafoundation.org/news).

Speaking at a recent reception for grant recipients, Gina Zottola, Vice President of Advancement and Philanthropic Innovation, said, “My heart is full because of all your hard work, and our foundation is here to support you and celebrate your efforts to create wonderful opportunities for our youth.”

Meredith Knowles, HAF+WRCF’s Director of Grantmaking, said the collaborative grant program enables organizations to provide youth with essential opportunities and resources, helping them to develop skills, build confidence and thrive among their peers. We’re eager to see how this year’s recipients will inspire and elevate the next generation, creating lasting impacts on their community and beyond.”



363 Indianola Rd. Bayside, CA 95524
hafoundation.org
info@hafoundation.org
(707) 442-2993
@humboldtareafoundation

Klamath River: Resoration and resiliency

Continued from front page

"We appreciate the opportunity to contribute to a fund that will create jobs and economic mobility in the Klamath River Basin," said Don Howard, president and CEO of The James Irvine Foundation. "We're particularly grateful to deepen our support for Tribal- and community-driven restoration and revitalization priorities that create climate and economic resiliency in the region."

The fund will support grantmaking to bolster community healing, Tribal self-determination, science and restoration, storytelling, climate resilience, regenerative agriculture, environmental stewardship, and more.

In addition, HAF+WRCF has announced that a minimum of 60 percent of granted funds will be directed toward Tribes and/or Indigenous-led and -serving organizations in the basin.

"It's important to recognize that the people on the ground, the rural and Indigenous community members of the Klamath Basin, are the ones best suited to make decisions about the future of their region," said Erin Borla, executive director of Roundhouse Foundation. "With the establishment of this fund, philanthropists from near and far can partner with locally-based organizations to expand their capacity and elevate their voices."

"Dam removal along the Klamath River will require years of restoration to repair the land to its historic and natural beauty. To be part of this collaborative effort, alongside Tribes and other funders, is something we're incredibly excited about," added Stone Hudson, program officer for Meyer Memorial Trust.

To learn more about the fund, including how to apply for grants or make a contribution, visit hafoundation.org/klamath.



Thriving, Healthy, Just & Equitable

That's the vision Humboldt Area Foundation and Wild Rivers Community Foundation has for our region. This vision is implemented through a four decades long goal of increasing racial equality, thriving youth and families, healthy ecosystems and environments, and a just economy.

HAF+WRCF serve the residents of Humboldt, Del Norte and Trinity counties in California and Curry County in Oregon, including the region's 18 Tribal Nations and historically indigenous territories. Learn more at hafoundation.org.