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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Nevada County Land Trust Announces the Second William Nickerl Award for Conservation Leadership Given to John Deveaux Olmsted

Grass Valley, CALIF - June 8, 2008 - Nevada County Land Trust (NCLT) announced Saturday, June 6 at the local National Trails Day celebration, that John Deveaux Olmsted is the recipient of the second William Nickerl Award for Conservation Leadership in Western Nevada County.

John Olmsted is a noted naturalist, educator and volunteer conservationist. His life has been dedicated to the land ethics and land preservation traditions of John Muir. He views himself as a John Muir disciple and he has worked tirelessly to preserve wild areas, open space, trails, parks, and rural landscapes.

The Land Trust award is given to individuals who demonstrate the six traits personified in its namesake, William (Bill) Nickerl. Specifically:

- A long time commitment to the cause of land conservation
- Dedication to Nevada County Land Trust mission to enrich the community connection with our land
- Fostering or inventing a new effort which has demonstrated measurable success
- Never gave up in the face of a challenge
- Inspires others
- Located in Western Nevada County

John exemplifies community-based volunteerism to conserve important landscapes as his life work. He found a way for everyone who wanted to help conserve land, to do so no matter their personal resources or circumstances. Whether it was getting kids to collect pennies, or collecting aluminum cans for recycling or talking to the state legislature about funding parks, John never backs down. Even when as little as 5 people were gathered together he found a way pass the hat for funds for land conservation. He helped people believe that they have the power to make a difference.

"That's what this award is all about," said Marty Coleman-Hunt, executive director for Nevada County Land Trust. "It is given to people who inspire us all to believe we can make a difference in land conservation. John was an early founder of Nevada County Land Trust. His Sequoia Challenge was the umbrella organization that fostered the birth of the new organization in the early 90s."

In 1969 John rediscovered many rock-lined ditches and wood flumes previously known as the Excelsior Canal, overlooking the South Yuba River in Nevada Count, which became the origin of the Independence Trail -- the nation's first wheelchair accessible wilderness trail. In addition he helped create the 2,250 acre South Yuba State Park.

John founded the California Institute of Man in Nature in 1968 and Sequoia Challenge in 1974 with the purpose of restoring a living thread of landscapes from the "Coast to Sierra" across Northern California, approximately along the 39th parallel of north latitude (which follows Ca State Route 20) also known as the Mendocino-Tahoe Biodiversity Transect. His emphasis is on preserving wild areas, open space, trails, parks, rural landscapes, watersheds, historical and cultural sites. He talks about the "pearl necklace" of protected land – where the pearls are the parks and the string is the trail system connecting them. Other projects he spearheaded were the Jughandle State Park in Mendocino, the Yuba Powerhouse, Malakoff Diggins, and a new focus on the Cache Creek Headwaters.

John has begun to reform the Muir-Olmstead Institute after languishing in recent years. This institute is dedicated to the land ethics and land preservation traditions of both John Muir (1838-1914) and two ancestors of John, the Frederick Law Olmsted (1822-1903, 1870-1957). Frederick Law Olmsted Sr. 'is recognized as the founder of American landscape architecture and the nation's foremost park designer' who helped design parks and grounds at Yosemite, Central Park, Stanford University, US Capitol Mall and portions of the California State Park System.

Educated as a plant ecologist at Claremont University, he worked as a docent of the Oakland Museum, is the author of *Adventures On And Off Interstate 80*, taught at the Strybing Arboretum in Golden Gate Park, and speaks frequently in public on various conservation topics.

Nevada County Land Trust is a 501c3, for the public benefit organization. Nevada County Land Trust exists to create a balance between nature and the needs of the people who make a life and a livelihood here. Our mission is to enrich the deep community connection with our land - today, tomorrow and forever. For more information, see our website, <http://www.nevadacountylandtrust.org> or contact Marty Coleman-Hunt, Executive Director at marty@nevadacountylandtrust.org or 530-272-5994.

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