



**NEWS FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**The Land Conservancy announces timeline and budget for construction of public amenities for Pismo Preserve; the organization plans to implement a phased opening.**

The Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County has updated the forecasted timeline and budget for construction of park facilities for the full opening of Pismo Preserve, officials announced today.

The Land Conservancy originally planned for a fall 2016 opening but during the design and environmental clearance process unanticipated requirements were revealed, thus raising the cost of the project and increasing the time required to complete it. In addition, offers for in-kind services to help with the construction have not yet come to fruition.

The Land Conservancy now estimates a late 2018 completion date for full build out of park amenities including parking, restrooms, and an ADA-accessible trail. The project is expected to cost an estimated \$4.8 million to complete; significantly more than was expected at the start of the design process. This is in addition to the \$12 million already raised for completing the purchase of the property in 2014. Funding sources are expected to include state and local government grants, family foundations, and in-kind services from contractors and suppliers.

During the last two years The Land Conservancy's planning team, agency reviewers and staff have worked together to re-design the plans for the parking lots, restrooms, and other infrastructure in response to City, Cal Fire and County code requirements that ensure the public's safety, and to accommodate fragile cultural resources that were found on site.

While the plans were being refined, great progress was achieved on other fronts. The Minor Use Permit and Coastal Development Permit were approved; over 230 volunteers finished a phenomenal network of 11 miles of new trails; and a brand new volunteer docent program was created this spring, setting the foundation for docent-led hikes and mountain bike rides. Many exciting milestones have been reached, but the Preserve is not yet ready for full and open public use.

"The Preserve is a very special property, and it's important that we treat it carefully, both from an environmental and historical perspective," says Kaila Dettman, The Land Conservancy's Executive Director. "While The Land Conservancy would love to open the Preserve tomorrow, we have an obligation to all stakeholders to do this right, and we will not proceed with a project that does not meet the needs of the community, the needs of the land, and the requirements of environmental law. Most importantly, we must construct amenities that protect the safety of our visitors. There are no shortcuts to creating and operating a park that is safe, sustainable, and sensational for all."

Since the full opening will take longer than expected, The Land Conservancy is working with agency partners to open the property for public use in phases. Pre-scheduled docent led tours, hikes, and equestrian and mountain bike rides will be open to the general public by the end of 2016. The Land Conservancy will then host occasional “open days” starting as soon as spring 2017 where visitors can register, sign in at the entrance, explore the Preserve without a docent, and sign out when leaving. Until then, the Preserve is only open to visitors on docent-led hikes, equestrian rides, and mountain bike rides.

“We recognize that our community is anxious to explore and experience the property. In an effort to give people opportunities to enjoy the Preserve during the construction phase, we are working with our agency partners to allow structured access while we push forward to construct the park amenities,” Dettman said.

The following must be completed before the Pismo Preserve can be fully open to the public:

- For safe ingress and egress, and per Pismo Beach city code, The Land Conservancy must construct a sidewalk and retaining wall that facilitates safe pedestrian and bicyclist access from the 101 freeway interchange along Mattie Road to the entrance at the Preserve.
- Implementation of a management plan to protect fragile cultural resources.
- The installation of two parking lots to avoid impacts to local neighborhoods, prevent erosion, and expedite the movement of first responders in the event of injuries, fire or other emergencies.
- Construction of a one-mile ADA-accessible trail so that people of all physical abilities can enjoy the Preserve.
- Construction of water-efficient restrooms with sufficient capacity to accommodate the expected number of visitors on a daily basis.
- Installation of directional signage and maps for visitor safety and emergency response.

Docent-led tours and hikes would not be possible without the extraordinary work of the volunteers who completed the new trails. “Our volunteers have been phenomenal,” Dettman said. “The trails are first-class, and really reflect our volunteers’ passion and commitment for this land. They have been extraordinarily generous with their time and their hard work.”

For now, docent-led hikes and mountain bike rides are offered once to twice per week for Land Conservancy members. Anyone can join and any donation makes a person a member for one year. Memberships are tax deductible.

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**The Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County** is a community-supported local nonprofit land trust working to protect and restore local landscapes for the benefit of

people and wildlife. The land trust helps to protect drinking water sources, prevent poorly planned development, restore wildlife habitat and promote family farmlands and ranches in our region. The Land Conservancy leads collaborative efforts which has resulted in the permanent protection over 18,400 acres of land in San Luis Obispo County.

To make a tax deductible charitable donation to support the Pismo Preserve individuals and businesses can make an online donation on The Conservancy's website at [www.LCSLO.org](http://www.LCSLO.org) or call Kaila Dettman, Executive Director, at 805-544-9096.