



---

## PRESS RELEASE

---

NEWS - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 16, 2014

Contact: Kaila Dettman, *Executive Director* (805) 544-9096

---

### **PISMO PRESERVE IS OFFICIALLY CONSERVED The Next Phase is Underway**

**S**an Luis Obispo, CA – The Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County has officially closed escrow and taken ownership of the Pismo Preserve as of 10:00 am this Tuesday, September 16, 2014.

In addition to raising an unprecedented \$12.3 million in just over six months to purchase the property and make initial site improvements, The Land Conservancy has finalized all the paperwork and legal agreements required to permanently conserve the property for community benefit.

Eight million of the conservation funding was provided by the State Coastal Conservancy and the Wildlife Conservation Board, \$3 million came from local and regional government agencies, and the remaining \$1.3 million was donated by the community. This broad-reaching financial support exemplifies the many diverse yet interconnected ways that land conservation benefits a community.

“The purchase of the 900-acre Pismo Preserve in San Luis Obispo County is the kind of project the Coastal Conservancy loves to support,” said Sam Schuchat, Executive Officer of the California State Coastal Conservancy. “A spectacular slice of the California coast in close proximity to urban populations, including disadvantaged communities in need of more parks. A massive groundswell of local support that results in over \$3.5 million in local funding. And a local land trust partner with a proven track record of owning and operating parkland with its own funding. It’s a win-win for everyone.”

The Land Conservancy staff and board are celebrating this hallmark victory for local open space and are planning a celebration in the coming weeks to commemorate the success of Pismo Preserve with donors and community members.

But Land Conservancy leaders also recognize that there is much more work to be done. “Legally purchasing the property is just the tip of the iceberg,” said Kaila Dettman, Executive Director of The Land Conservancy. “Our job now is to ensure that the site has the necessary amenities, like parking and trail signage, to make it an enjoyable and safe place for people to visit.”

The Land Conservancy is currently working with the Wallace Group to design, engineer, and permit two staging areas/parking lots, restroom facilities, picnic areas, and ADA-compliant site features. Over the next nine months, the organization hopes to gain approval from the County of San Luis Obispo and the Coastal Commission for its proposed site improvements. During this time, The Land Conservancy also plans to engage the community in a series of stakeholder workshops to make sure that people can voice their concerns and opinions before the Preserve is open to the public.

Already underway are rough designs for a multi-use trail system that would add nearly a dozen miles of new trails and linkages to the existing ten miles of ranch roads currently on the Pismo Preserve. Much of the trail work will be completed by local volunteers including leadership from local equestrian groups and the Central Coast Concerned Mountain Bikers (CCCMB) – all of which have extensive hands-on experience with trail building and maintenance. CCCMB and The Land Conservancy are hosting a trail building school on Saturday, November 22<sup>nd</sup> from 9am-4pm at Pismo Preserve. They aim to train a local volunteer workforce with sustainable trail building techniques to help ensure that Pismo Preserve and other area trails are effectively maintained. It also provides a meaningful way for supporters to get onto the Pismo Preserve before it officially opens.

The Land Conservancy anticipates construction of the parking lots and staging areas to begin by summer 2015. If permitting and construction can be completed under this ambitious time frame, the Pismo Preserve would be open for dawn-to-dusk community use this time next year. There is currently no public access allowed on the property because certain amenities must be constructed to support public use before opening, but community members can gain exclusive access by volunteering or attending a stakeholder workshop. For invitations and updates, sign up for The Land Conservancy's e-newsletter at [www.lcslo.org/newsletter](http://www.lcslo.org/newsletter).

---

**The Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County** is a local nonprofit land trust working to protect and restore local landscapes for the benefit of people and wildlife. The land trust's efforts help protect drinking water sources, prevent poorly planned development, restore wildlife habitat and promote family farmlands and ranches in our region. Now in its 30<sup>th</sup> year, The Land Conservancy has led collaborative efforts to permanently protect over 14,500 acres of land in San Luis Obispo County. Details at [www.LCSLO.org](http://www.LCSLO.org) or call (805) 544-9096.

-END-