



### NEWS - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **Pismo Preserve Opportunity Announced as Kickoff to 15,000-acre Conservation Vision**

In celebration of its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary, The Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County has unveiled a 5-year vision that includes ambitious land protection goals aimed at doubling the pace of local land conservation by 2018.

Over the next five years The Land Conservancy aims to permanently protect an additional 15,000 acres which includes a mix of projects focused on:

- Creating new outdoor recreation trails;
- Protecting watersheds in North County;
- Preserving farmland in Los Osos Valley;
- Establishing a conservation park & trail system in South County;
- Safeguarding scenic & productive North Coast ranches; and
- Extending the Bob Jones Trail at the Octagon Barn Center.

Dubbed the *Heart & Soil Campaign* because of its focus on preserving the unique character of San Luis Obispo County through the permanent protection of local lands, this 5-year community outreach effort will help meet the need for conservation in balance with growing development pressure. The Land Conservancy's campaign challenges the community to contribute \$5 million over the next five years in order to leverage an additional \$25 million in funds they plan to bring in from outside San Luis Obispo County.

To kick off their Heart & Soil Campaign, The Land Conservancy announced that they are working to purchase a 900-acre private ranch high above Pismo Beach in an effort to create the world-class **Pismo Preserve**. This proposed preserve would be open to the public as early as Summer 2015 for outdoor recreation opportunities including hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, bird watching and exploring the flora and fauna of the area.

Availability of open space encourages active lifestyles and can help address the health crisis facing the United States. For example, the Center for Disease Control & Prevention found that if every person spent 20 minutes walking or hiking each day, the nation's obesity epidemic could be eliminated. "By providing easy access to outdoor recreation experiences, The Land Conservancy supports healthy active lifestyles which helps combat our nation's health crisis." – Kaila Dettman, Land Conservancy Executive Director

"If we are successful, this project will provide a major boost to the local economy by attracting tourists and new home buyers. And of course the protection of scenic beauty, wildlife, and clean water is essential for maintaining a high quality of life." – Kaila Dettman

To successfully create the proposed Pismo Preserve, The Land Conservancy must raise \$11.7 million by July 2014. Nearly \$10 million has been requested from State agencies and regional funding sources but the remaining \$2 million gap leaves the project's future in the hands of the community.

The Land Conservancy is seeking public donations and asking volunteers to share project information on personal social media sites, such as Facebook and Twitter.

“We truly have a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity right now to purchase this property and create an outstanding park for residents and visitors alike. We are confident that our community will join us in safeguarding the Pismo Preserve for the benefit of generations to come.” – Kaila Dettman

More information is available at the Land Conservancy’s website [www.LCSLO.org](http://www.LCSLO.org). A video tour of the proposed Pismo Preserve can be found at <http://youtu.be/-Gbg-f70wKE>

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**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.

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