



NEWS - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**Pismo Preserve Awarded \$4 Million from State Coastal Conservancy:
Local Land Conservancy Nears Halfway Point of Total Fundraising Goal**

The California State Coastal Conservancy (SCC) awards generous grants to fund projects proposed by public agencies and nonprofit organizations. From creating coastal access trails to restoring coastal zones, the Coastal Conservancy is a frontrunner in contributing financial support to a variety of projects.

Today, the seven-member SCC Board voted to unanimously award \$4 million to The Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County to fund the creation of Pismo Preserve.

The Land Conservancy's proposed Pismo Preserve would transform a 900-acre private ranch above Pismo Beach into a public open space for outdoor recreation opportunities including hiking, mountain biking, horseback riding, and bird watching.

"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 the everyone and, on behalf of the State Coastal Conservancy Board, we could not be more pleased to be a part of making it happen."

Since The Land Conservancy's inception, the SCC has been an integral partner for the organization. The countywide land trust was founded in part through a partnership with the SCC that created an innovative Transfer of Development Credit program in Cambria in the late 1980's which continues to advance local conservation today. Over the last 30 years, The Land Conservancy and SCC have collaborated on over half of the organization's suite of land conservation projects that benefit people and wildlife in San Luis Obispo County.

To successfully create Pismo Preserve, The Land Conservancy must raise \$12 million by July 2014. Since it went public with the project in January, The Land Conservancy has raised \$5.6 million with a pending request for \$4 million from the Wildlife Conservation Board and the remaining \$2.4 million expected to come from local government, agencies, and community contributions. The sellers are also contributing \$1.6 million towards the effort through a bargain sale.

"The community has really come together to support this project. We have had private donations ranging from \$2 to \$100,000. We had a unanimous vote of support from our County Supervisors

who pledged \$1.1 million, and now we have secured \$4 million from our partners at the State Coastal Conservancy. We are thrilled to share today's news with our community supporters," said Kaila Dettman, Executive Director of The Land Conservancy. "However, there is much work left to do. Our staff remains focused on rallying local residents, businesses, and visitors to personally contribute and to advocate during public meetings."

With world-class outdoor recreation opportunities for locals and tourists, preservation of sweeping scenic vistas, protection of drinking water and runoff onto beaches, an alternative land-use to balance the adjacent proposed developments in Price Canyon, and as a destination for active lifestyles - the proposed Pismo Preserve project has received no opposition.

As a regional public park, Pismo Preserve will provide many benefits to residents and visitors throughout the county. But the project will most significantly impact the 5-Cities Area which is the most densely populated region in San Luis Obispo County but has no significant upland trails for hiking, horseback riding, or mountain biking. Further, the two communities adjacent to Pismo Beach - Grover Beach and Oceano - are classified as disadvantaged communities (those having median household incomes at or under 80% of the California Median Household Income of \$61,400 according to the 2008-2012 census) that will directly benefit from the recreation, health, and environmental benefits provided by the permanent protection of this open space. As a free amenity for the public, the Pismo Preserve is likely to improve the overall quality of life for all San Luis Obispo County residents.

More information is available at The Land Conservancy's website with a video tour of the proposed Pismo Preserve www.LCSLO.org/pismopreserve.

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 30th 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 or call (805) 544-9096.

The California State Coastal Conservancy, established in 1976, is a state agency that uses entrepreneurial techniques to purchase, protect, restore, and enhance coastal resources, and to provide access to the shore. We work in partnership with local governments, other public agencies, nonprofit organizations, and private landowners. More info at www.scc.ca.gov.

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