

NEWS - FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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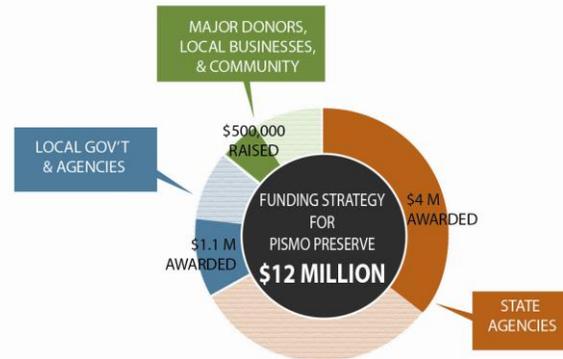
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Pismo Preserve Closes in on Final \$2.4M

The Land Conservancy’s proposed Pismo Preserve, which aims to transform a 900-acre private ranch above Pismo Beach into a public open space for world-class outdoor recreation, is seeking the final \$2.4 million required to close its \$12 million funding gap.

The biggest boost to the project came on May 29th when California State Coastal Conservancy (SCC) awarded \$4 million to The Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County to fund the creation of Pismo Preserve.

“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.”



To successfully create Pismo Preserve, The Land Conservancy must raise \$12 million by August 2014. The sellers are contributing nearly \$1.2 million in land value through a bargain sale of the property. The \$12 million project cost covers the bargain sale property acquisition, infrastructure improvements, and a maintenance endowment. All are requirements of opening the site for community use.

Since it went public with the project in January, The Land Conservancy has secured \$5.6 million with an additional \$4 million request pending from the Wildlife Conservation Board. The remaining \$2.4 million is expected to come from local government, agencies, and community contributions. Recent awards from adjacent cities indicate strong local government support. The City of Grover Beach pledged a \$5,000 contribution at its June 2nd Council meeting and the City of Arroyo Grande approved a \$40,000 contribution toward the project on June 10th.

The Land Conservancy negotiated an escrow extension to accommodate the Wildlife Conservation Board which will take up the item at its August 28 Board meeting in Sacramento. The \$2.4 million funding gap must be secured before the end of August to complete the deal.

“The community has really come together to support this project,” said *Kaila Dettman, Executive Director of The Land Conservancy*. “We have had private donations totaling nearly \$500,000; 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. But there is much work left to do. Our staff remains focused on rallying local residents, businesses, and visitors to donate 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 and remains a beloved project in the region.

Local business owners, especially the hoteliers, are among the community’s most ardent financial supporters of the effort to create Pismo Preserve. The ownership group of Pismo Beach Hotel and Harry’s Pismo Beach recently donated \$25,000 which is the largest business contribution the Pismo Preserve effort has received to date. Other business donors include Kon Tikki Inn (\$20,000), SeaCrest Hotel (\$5,000), and Best Western Casa Grande Inn (\$5,000).

As a regional public park, Pismo Preserve will provide many benefits to residents and visitors throughout the county. 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, 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) and they 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.

PISMO PRESERVE FUNDING BREAKDOWN

\$12 million – Total Needed

\$8 million Goal - State Agencies

\$4 million –California State Coastal Conservancy COMPLETED

\$4 million – Wildlife Conservation Board PENDING

\$2.3 million Goal - Local & Regional Government

\$1.145 million – SLO County Parks, City of AG, City of Grover Beach COMPLETED

\$1.155 million – City of Pismo, SLO; Regional Water Quality Control Board

\$1.7 million Goal – Private Donors, Businesses, Foundations

\$0.5 million –COMPLETED

\$1.2 million – Major donors, foundations, local businesses, and community contributors

\$2.4 million – Current Gap

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. -END-