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**242-Acre Purchase Completes Tapestry of
Connected Open Space in Santa Cruz Mountains**
Opportunities for Firebreak Management, Sweeping Views, and New Trail Connections

SAN JOSE, Calif. (June 27, 2019) - Undeveloped and largely untouched, a 242-acre purchase made by the Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority (Authority) in partnership with the Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST) completes another pivotal piece of the Santa Cruz Mountains preservation puzzle, opening new possibilities for growing an interconnected trail network.

The Martinez properties consist of a crucial 160-acre parcel and a separate 82 acres of adjoining parcels. This important acquisition advances a comprehensive vision for a tapestry of connected recreational trails and critical wildlife movement corridors between three protected preserves by linking the Authority's Rancho Cañada del Oro Open Space Preserve to its Mount Chual Preserve while expanding existing east-west connections to Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District's (Midpen) Sierra Azul Open Space Preserve.

"This is an opportunity to safeguard and expand a network of open space lands for hiking, outdoor recreation, and connecting people to nature, while also protecting critical wildlife corridors and natural resources," said Andrea Mackenzie, General Manager of the Authority. "The protection of our region's remaining open space is more vital than ever for both natural and human communities in the face of climate change."

POST continues to be one of the Authority's key partners, contributing \$250,000 to the \$500,000 purchase price. POST previously partnered with the Authority on two other acquisitions adjacent to the Martinez properties: the 158-acre Punch Bowl property in November 2018 and 326-acre Barrett Canyon property in January 2019.

"We are thrilled to acquire this important landscape with the Authority, so close to our recent acquisition of Barrett Canyon and the Punch Bowl," said Walter T. Moore, President of POST. "This large, uninterrupted area of land is important for wildlife linkages and regional trails."

This key acquisition increases opportunities for future regional trail networks by linking over 31,000 acres of protected open space. The newly protected lands also allow for important connectivity of wildlife movement between the Santa Cruz Mountains and the Diablo range – while providing spectacular, sweeping views of south San Jose, Mt. Umunhum, and the surrounding valley.



“This land is the missing piece to allow for much larger regional trail connections across preserves,” said Derek Neumann, the Authority’s Field Operations Manager, adding that future trails could eventually extend from Rancho Cañada del Oro to Lexington Reservoir, or even beyond. “It’s a piece of the puzzle that opens up opportunities to explore ideas for backcountry camping and new hiking trails.”

“The preservation of this property helps realize the community’s vision of wildlife connectivity and a contiguous greenbelt of open space lands in the Santa Cruz Mountains,” said Midpen General Manager Ana Maria Ruiz. “The protection of these lands not only supports Midpen’s mission of protecting our watersheds and wildlife corridors, but it also opens up exciting opportunities to expand and connect regional trail systems.”

The larger 160-acre parcel includes chaparral and mixed evergreen forest that remains undisturbed except for an unpaved firebreak road that was heavily used in efforts to limit the spread of the Loma Fire in 2016. The permanent protection of these lands enhances the ability of the Authority to maintain this regionally significant life-and property-saving firebreak. “One of the most important assets about this property is the protection it offers for nearby residents and residences,” Neumann said, noting the existing and prominent fuel break that has already been proven crucial in emergencies. “Recent wildfires have been burning hotter and faster, moving from open spaces to urban areas quickly. This fuel break will help manage future catastrophic wildfires from spreading to nearby urban communities.”

Preservation of the property also safeguards the headwaters of Barrett Creek and portions of the Llagas Creek headwaters, which helps secure clean water for local communities.

Timothy Pupach, representing family members in the sale of this property once purchased as a family retreat, said both he and the owners are glad local entities are working to protect undeveloped land amidst the sprawl of urban development. "The owners are delighted that this property will be in the Open Space Authority's hands and that it will forever be protected and kept as open space for nature and wildlife."

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About the Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority

The Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority conserves the natural environment, supports agriculture, and connects people to nature, by protecting open spaces, natural areas, and working farms and ranches for future generations. Since 1993, the Authority has protected 25,000 acres of open space, preserving the region’s scenic beauty, protecting water resources and other natural capital, and providing outdoor recreation opportunities for Santa Clara Valley residents. Visit openspaceauthority.org for more information.

About the Peninsula Open Space Trust

POST protects open space on the Peninsula and in the South Bay for the benefit of all. As a private nonprofit land trust, POST has been responsible for saving more than 77,000 acres since 1977. POST works with private landowners and public agencies to create a network of protected



lands so that present and future generations may benefit from the careful balance of rural and urban landscapes that makes our region extraordinary. Visit openspacetrust.org for more information.