

PRESS RELEASE
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Coyote Valley Conservation Lands Network Grows with Historic Ranch Purchase

SAN JOSE, CA - On August 9th, the Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority (the Authority), in partnership with the Peninsula Open Space Trust ([POST](#)), finalized the \$5 million purchase of the historic Tilton Ranch Complex. The 60-acre parcel, which includes residential and operational buildings at the heart of the ranch, completes the protection of this historic and environmentally important property. Other supporting partners include [Santa Clara County Parks and Recreation Department](#) and [Santa Clara Valley Habitat Agency](#). The partners acquired and protected 1,861 acres of Tilton Ranch in October 2020.

This purchase follows a recent acquisition by the Authority, supported by POST, of 20 acres of agricultural land near the existing Coyote Valley Open Space Preserve, which increases protected natural and working lands to more than 7,800 acres in and around Coyote Valley. The Tilton Ranch Complex was built in 1917 by Gilroy rancher Howard Tilton as a cattle business and was later passed down for five generations through the family. “The Tilton Ranch stayed in the same ranching family for 103 years,” said **Andrea Mackenzie**, general manager of the Open Space Authority. “There were competing offers for this beautiful ranch complex, and we are immensely grateful that the owners were supportive of permanently protecting the Tilton Ranch legacy.”

The Ranch Complex will continue to support agricultural operations and connect the public to the land through recreational access and agricultural and environmental education on the surrounding lands. “I am so pleased with the outcome of this collaboration and what the purchase of this property means for the future of Coyote Valley,” said Mike Wasserman, President of the Santa Clara County Board of Supervisors. There will also be opportunities to learn about the culture and history of the area. The ranch sits on ancestral lands of numerous Indigenous peoples, including the [Miwokma Ohlone Tribe](#) and the [Amah Mutsun Tribal Band](#), who stewarded the land for millennia and still reside in the region.

The Tilton Ranch property has long been a conservation priority for the Authority and its partners. The [2020](#) purchase of the larger Tilton Ranch was funded by the partner organizations and supported by grants from the [California Wildlife Conservation Board](#) and [U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service](#), the [Metropolitan Transportation Commission](#) and the [Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation](#).

Once transferred to the Authority, the larger Tilton Ranch will significantly expand the Authority's 348-acre Coyote Valley Open Space Preserve to approximately 3,000 acres.

"Having the Tilton Ranch Complex in public ownership is paramount to sustainably managing the larger Tilton Ranch and the growing network of surrounding conserved lands," said **Mackenzie**.

The Ranch Complex property features 51 acres of prime farmland soil and provides the infrastructure needed to continue managing cattle.

"Grazing is part of our vibrant local agricultural economy and it is an important tool for managing invasive plants and wildland fires on the greater Tilton Ranch and throughout Coyote Valley," said **Mackenzie**.

Tilton Ranch is part of the larger Coyote Valley landscape that connects over one million acres of wildlife habitat between the Diablo Range and Santa Cruz Mountains. The Coyote Valley landscape features wetlands, creeks, riparian corridors, oak woodlands and grasslands, working farms and ranches, as well as parks, open space and recreational trails. The landscape is home to a variety of threatened and endangered native species, iconic California animals like coyotes, deer, bobcats, badgers, mountain lions, and a myriad of important pollinators, reptiles, amphibians, and native and migratory birds.

"In an era of climate change and land fragmentation, Coyote Valley's connected, protected lands will help strengthen climate resilience that benefits both people and wildlife," said **Walter Moore**, President of POST, which contributed \$1.2 million to the purchase of the Tilton Ranch Complex. "With California's prolonged droughts and more frequent wildfires and extreme weather events, protecting and restoring Coyote Valley's natural benefits is a long-term investment for the health and sustainability of our region."

As the Authority launches the Coyote Valley Conservation Areas Master Plan in fall 2021, people of all ages, identities, and backgrounds will have the opportunity to help shape the future of this incredible last chance landscape. The upcoming master planning process will bring communities together to work to combat climate change while envisioning a greener, brighter future for Coyote Valley.

As part of this effort, the Santa Clara Valley Open Space Authority will launch a three-part educational webinar series, *Discovering Coyote Valley*, on September 16 to tell the story of this special landscape. For further details on the webinars and how to get involved in the development of the Coyote Valley Conservation Areas Master Plan, visit bit.ly/coyotevalleywebinar

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Photos and map available [here](#).

About 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 over 28,000 acres of open space, natural and working areas, watersheds, and wildlife habitat – providing ecologically friendly outdoor recreation and preserving the natural beauty and environmental health of the Santa Clara Valley. Visit openspaceauthority.org for more information.

About 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 80,000 acres since its founding in 1977. POST works with private landowners and public agencies to connect people and nature. Visit openspacetrust.org for more information.