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NEWS RELEASE

For immediate release 8-6-14

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Land Trust Protects More Sandhills Land; Scotts Valley Preserve Will Be 204 Acres

In its ongoing campaign to protect the threatened Sandhills, the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County yesterday purchased 15 acres near Mount Hermon Road and Lockhart Gulch Road in Scotts Valley, forever preventing development that would threaten the rare plants and animals that live there. These 15 acres will be added to the Land Trust's adjacent 189-acre Morgan Sandhills property.

The Sandhills make up an ancient seabed. Sand dollars, seashells, and fossils of extinct sea mammals can be found there. Biologist Peter Raven likened the Sandhills to the Galapagos because of their biological diversity.

The Santa Cruz Sandhills are home to seven species of plants and animals found nowhere else on earth, including the Mt. Hermon June Beetle, Zayante band-winged grasshopper, Santa Cruz kangaroo rat, Ben Lomond spineflower, Santa Cruz wallflower, Silverleaf manzanita and Ben Lomond buckwheat.

"It is a rare habitat, threatened by development that needs protecting today," said Land Trust Executive Director Terry Corwin.

In its 25-Year Conservation Blueprint, completed in 2011, the Land Trust identified the Sandhills as a priority conservation area due to its rarity. Corwin said the group plans to protect additional Sandhills land through easement or acquisition.

Funding came from a variety of sources, including \$239,600 from the State Wildlife Conservation Board, and \$150,400 from the US Fish and Wildlife Service, Endangered Species Act, Recovery Land Acquisition Grant Program. Corwin said the Land Trust contributed \$14,000 from an Opportunity Fund, which was raised as part of its campaign to protect 10,000 acres, completed in January 2013.

Additional funding for the project also came through the Living Landscape Initiative Challenge Grant Program of Resources Legacy Fund, which is funded by the Gordon and Betty Moore Foundation.

About the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County

Formed in 1978 by local residents concerned about protecting the lands that make Santa Cruz County special, the Land Trust has protected more than 13,000 acres by working with willing landowners and conservation partners. The trust protects both working lands, like farms and timberland, and natural lands with high conservation value – thus protecting water supplies, wildlife habitats, and open space.

About Wildlife Conservation Board

The Wildlife Conservation Board (WCB) was created by legislation in 1947 to administer a capital outlay program for wildlife conservation and related public recreation. Originally created within the California Department of Natural Resources, and later placed with the Department of Fish and Game, WCB is a separate and independent Board with authority and funding to carry out an acquisition and development program for wildlife conservation (California Fish and Game Code 1300, et seq.). WCB consists of the President of the Fish and Game Commission, the Director of the Department of Fish and Game and the Director of the Department of Finance. Legislation that created WCB also established a Legislative Advisory Committee consisting of three members of the Senate and three members of the Assembly, which meet with WCB, providing legislative oversight.

The primary responsibilities of WCB are to select, authorize and allocate funds for the purchase of land and waters suitable for recreation purposes and the preservation, protection and restoration of wildlife habitat. WCB approves and funds projects that set aside lands within the State for such purposes, through acquisition or other means, to meet these objectives. WCB can also authorize the construction of facilities for recreational purposes on property in which it has a proprietary interest.

WCB's three main functions are land acquisition, habitat restoration and development of wildlife oriented public access facilities, which are carried out through its [PROGRAMS](#).

About Living Landscape Initiative

The Living Landscape Initiative is a collaborative effort among five land conservation organizations in and around Silicon Valley. Land Trust of Santa Cruz County, The Nature Conservancy, Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST), Save the Redwoods League and Sempervirens Fund are all working together to protect the unique natural benefits and striking beauty that nourish the area's social and economic vitality. By creating a sustainable living landscape, the Initiative seeks to enhance our lives by promoting clean air and water, local farming and working lands, biodiversity and habitat protection for wildlife, and public enjoyment of natural lands. To learn more, visit www.livinglandscapeinitiative.org.