



Peninsula Open Space Trust

POST LAND ACCOMPLISHMENTS

South Santa Clara County

Rancho San Vicente

966 acres, San Jose, 2009

Located at the southern tip of Almaden Valley, Rancho San Vicente lies at the foot of the Santa Cruz Mountains just 12 miles southwest of downtown San Jose. Its rolling grasslands and rugged hillsides are resplendent with ancient oaks, rocky outcroppings of rare serpentine soils and, in springtime, blankets of colorful native wildflowers.

Up to 900 densely packed houses, an 18-hole golf course and, most recently, 16 large homes on 40-acre lots were envisioned for this land. Acquisition by POST removed the significant development threat to the land and helped preserve its scenic beauty, natural resources and outstanding potential for outdoor recreation. This acquisition expands the web of lands within the Santa Cruz Mountains protected by POST and its public agency partners. The property is a key link for recreation trails and wildlife corridors, with the potential to connect 31,867 surrounding acres of already protected parkland. In November 2009, POST transferred the land to Santa Clara County Parks.

POST's protection of Rancho San Vicente preserves:

- 506 acres of rare and valuable serpentine soils
- Critical habitat for the threatened Bay checkerspot butterfly and endangered California red-legged frog
- Habitat for deer, coyotes, San Joaquin kit fox, bobcats and mountain lions
- A canal that provides a vital source of drinking water to Santa Clara County

Blair Ranch

865 acres, Morgan Hill, 2008

In a successful cooperative effort, POST transferred the right to purchase the 865-acre Blair Ranch in Morgan Hill to the Santa Clara County Open Space Authority. The Open Space Authority closed escrow in March 2008 and incorporated the ranch into adjacent Rancho Cañada del Oro Open Space Preserve. The new addition expands trail and wildlife corridors, which might one day extend from Lexington Reservoir to Mt. Madonna. Blair Ranch lies in close proximity to Sierra Azul Open Space Preserve, Calero Reservoir, Uvas Reservoir, Uvas Canyon and Almaden Quicksilver county parks. In addition to plants and animals typical of nearby county open spaces, Blair Ranch has serpentine outcroppings and deposits of rare poppy jasper rock.

Rancho Cañada del Oro

2,428 acres, San Jose, 1999 – 2003

Rancho Cañada del Oro on the outskirts of San Jose features meadows, rolling foothills and canyons surrounded by oak-covered ridges. Its hilltops command sweeping views of the Diablo Range to the northeast and Mt. Umunhum to the west.

Perennial Llagas Creek, which feeds into Chesbro Reservoir and Monterey Bay, runs through the property. Remnants of walnut orchards hint at the region's agricultural history. The property provides habitat for the federally threatened Bay checkerspot butterfly and California red-legged frog.

POST acquired Rancho Cañada del Oro in 1999 thanks to a good relationship with the conservation-minded sellers. In 2003, POST transferred the land to Santa Clara County and the Santa Clara County Open Space Authority. A year later, the county parks department added 943 acres of the property to Calero County Park in San Jose, opening public trails soon after.

San Mateo Coast

Wavecrest

206 acres, Half Moon Bay, 2008 – ongoing

Forming a natural southern gateway to the City of Half Moon Bay, this parcel of oceanfront property has been the focus of development plans since the days of the doomed Ocean Shore Railway. The land has everything—open meadows, winding trails, sweeping views, dramatic bluffs, thriving wildlife, a dog park and popular baseball fields. Sequoia Audubon has identified Wavecrest as the most important habitat for wintering raptors in San Mateo County. POST is now engaged with the City of Half Moon Bay in a planning effort to determine the best mix of uses for the property. Among other considerations, the property is ideally situated to provide a key link in the California Coastal Trail.

Toto Ranch

952 acres, San Gregorio, 2008 – ongoing

In a bargain sale concluded at year's end, POST purchased this scenic ranch for \$3 million. POST had previously purchased a conservation easement over the ranch, and the easement has now been transferred to the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County. Looking north from high points on Toto Ranch, one can see a panorama of rugged coastal bluffs, with the bold profile of Montara Mountain in the background. The rolling slopes of Toto Ranch have a major influence on the vitality of the Tunitas Creek watershed and all its associated plants and animals. Looking east you can see the wooded slopes of Purisima Creek and El Corte de Madera open space preserves, while the pastoral beauty of the San Gregorio Valley fans out to the south. Preservation keeps this large-scale habitat from being carved into a handful of luxury estates.

Mindego Hill

1,047 acres, La Honda, 2007 – 2008

This distinct natural and historic landmark just west of Skyline Boulevard near La Honda offers top-of-the-world views, rich wildlife habitat and excellent trail connections to

adjacent Russian Ridge Open Space Preserve and Rapley Ranch. Surrounded by nearly 33,000 acres of public open space, Mindego Hill has been on our conservation wish list for 30 years. The property's strategic location only half an hour from the heart of Silicon Valley makes it ideal as a public recreation resource.

POST's purchase of Mindego Hill was made with the intention of transferring the ranch to the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (MROSD), which bought the land from POST in July 2008. MROSD is developing a long-range use plan for the property.

Sale of Mindego Hill to POST fulfilled the wishes of long-time owners of the property, the late Admiral Arnold True and his wife, Corinne, who hoped their heirs would keep the ranch intact. Protection as public open space prevents development of up to 27 density credits or a private estate on the land.

Rancho Corral de Tierra

4,262 acres, 2001 – ongoing

When POST acquired Rancho Corral de Tierra, it was one of the largest remaining unprotected, undeveloped properties on the Peninsula. Located 10 miles south of San Francisco, this former Spanish land grant surrounds the towns of Montara and Moss Beach and is dominated by Montara Mountain. In January 2008, Congress approved \$1,960,000 in federal Land and Water Conservation Funds for use in making the transfer of Rancho Corral de Tierra to the National Park Service as part of the Golden Gate National Recreation Area (GGNRA). In March 2009, another \$4 million in appropriations was approved.

The rugged green slopes of Rancho Corral de Tierra offer:

- A stunning visual backdrop just east of Highway 1
- Fertile agricultural lowlands
- Four important watersheds
- Rare coastal terrace prairie and maritime chaparral terrain;
- Habitat for endangered species, including the San Bruno elfin butterfly, San Francisco garter snake and California red-legged frog

- Plants found nowhere else in the world, including Montara manzanita and Hickman's cinquefoil, a native yellow wildflower
- 10 miles of existing trails

Once additional funding is approved and the property is officially transferred, this land will serve as the southern gateway to the GGNRA—the country's largest urban national park.

Driscoll Ranch

3,681 acres, 2001 – 2006

Driscoll Ranch rises dramatically behind the community of La Honda, offering passersby beautiful vistas of rural life from Highway 84. With its rolling hills, grassy ridges, redwood forests, oak woodlands and winding creeks, Driscoll Ranch is the largest working ranch in San Mateo County.

POST acquired Driscoll Ranch in 2001, with the support of the California Coastal Conservancy and private donors. In December 2006, MROSD purchased the land from POST for permanent protection. Bordering MROSD's La Honda Creek Open Space Preserve, the property is the single largest purchase in MROSD history.

By preserving this substantial parcel, POST:

- Maintains scenic vistas visible from a 6-mile stretch of Highway 84
- Eliminates any potential threat of development
- Protects abundant wildlife habitat and diverse vegetation
- Safeguards valuable watershed, including 13 miles of creeks
- Maintains historic agricultural and grazing use of the property
- Increases recreational trail connections with other existing open lands
- Protects native grassland remnants through a strategic conservation grazing plan

Whaler's Cove at Pigeon Point

3 acres, 2000 – 2005

Whaler's Cove is a small curl of land that, thanks to POST donors, is now part of Pigeon Point Light Station State Historic Park. Visible from the cove, the state park is renowned for its coastal views and the 1872 Pigeon Point lighthouse, one of the tallest in America. POST purchased Whaler's Cove to halt bluff-top construction of a nine-unit motel that would have destroyed the area's scenic beauty. Although one of POST's smallest acquisitions, it is one of the most important, because it:

- Restores a famous, one-of-a-kind coastal vista
- Reinstates public access to Whaler's Cove Beach
- Prevents installation of the motel's proposed water treatment facility, which could have harmed coastal waters and fragile intertidal ecosystems
- Restores the native landscape of indigenous plants
- Protects the cove's striking 35-foot sandstone bluffs
- Links 10 miles of protected coastline from Pigeon Point to Año Nuevo State Reserve
- Provides a key segment of the future California Coastal Trail.

In 2005, POST transferred Whaler's Cove to California State Parks, which maintains the lighthouse and an adjacent youth hostel. The Council Circle, a recognition area to honor special donors to POST's *Saving the Endangered Coast* campaign, graces the bluff overlooking the cove.

Cloverdale Coastal Ranches

7,360 acres protected and 5,777 acres currently owned, 1996 – ongoing

Cloverdale Coastal Ranches, near Pescadero, is a huge network of breathtaking rangeland representing all manner of terrain found on the coast. It is the biggest complex of properties POST has protected so far, containing more than 2,500 acres of meadow and grasslands, 700 acres of mixed redwoods and firs, 500 acres of agricultural land and 14 miles of creeks and riparian habitat. The land is home to the federally endangered San Francisco garter snake, the threatened California red-legged frog and Coho salmon.

In 2000 POST transferred 905 acres of Cloverdale to expand Butano State Park. The following year, POST acquired 1,719-acre Bolsa Point Ranches as an addition to Cloverdale Coastal Ranches. This prime real estate was slated for development into 52 luxury estates until POST acquired it.

Most of Bolsa Point Ranches is now part of Cloverdale, while the remainder of the land, including a gently sloping beaches and a few dozen acres of farmland adjacent to Pigeon Point Light Station State Historic Park, were transferred to California State Parks in the spring of 2005. And over 500 acres of prime farm ground was sold to a local farming family in 2007 with POST retaining a protective conservation easement on the property. POST is now implementing a comprehensive conservation and management plan on its portion of the property.

POST's protection of Cloverdale has served to:

- Preserve historic landscapes on both sides of Highway 1
- Create 54 square miles of contiguous open space
- Link 10.5 miles of unspoiled beachfront
- Protect 1.5 miles of beaches, tidepools and potential future coastal trail areas
- Keep fertile soils in production by local farmers
- Eradicate non-native plant species
- Rehabilitate lands scarred by erosion gullies
- Safeguard coastal terrace prairie, one of the richest wildlife habitats on earth

Santa Cruz County

Little Basin

535 acres, Boulder Creek, 2007 – ongoing

Working in partnership with Sempervirens Fund, POST bought the former Hewlett-Packard Company recreation site in 2007. The two organizations hope to transfer the land to California State Parks for incorporation into adjacent Big Basin Redwoods State Park.

The property has a stand of virgin coast redwoods as well as stands of younger redwoods and areas of mixed forest. The property is an important watershed for endangered steelhead trout. Thanks to HP and the volunteer labor of a generation of employees, Little Basin has an impressive array of amenities—trails, a picnic area, outdoor amphitheater, pond for catch-and-release fishing, tent sites and rustic cabins, playgrounds and a recreation hall.

San Francisco Baylands

Bair Island

1,623 acres, Redwood City, 1997 – 2000. Wetland restoration continues.

Located off Highway 101 at the end of Whipple Avenue in Redwood City, Bair Island is critical salt marsh habitat and one of the most important restorable wetlands in San Francisco Bay.

Surrounded by dense urban development, Bair Island's tidal marshes and sloughs are home to an amazing array of wildlife, including 200 species of birds, fish and mammals, five of which are endangered or threatened: the California clapper rail, California least tern, American peregrine falcon, California brown pelican and salt marsh harvest mouse.

Despite several proposals to fill and develop Bair Island for residential use, POST was able to acquire these critical wetlands for \$15 million. Bair Island has been transferred to the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service and the California Department of Fish and Game, and is now managed as part of the Don Edwards San Francisco Bay National Wildlife Refuge. In December 2008, when the freeze on California bond funds threatened to halt the effort to restore Bair Island to tidal action, POST provided a loan to complete the work. Bay water now irrigates the cluster of small channels within the island, a natural flow that had been interrupted by man-made levees for 100 years.

Skyline Ridge

Windy Hill

1,132 acres, Portola Valley, 1981 and 1988

Our signature acquisition, Windy Hill was acquired as a gift in 1981. Windy Hill's distinctive, open, grassy hills form a silhouette on the skyline behind the town of Portola Valley. It is a landmark visible to more than a million people daily. POST sold the initial 537-acre gift parcel for half its fair-market value to MROSD to create Windy Hill Open Space Preserve.

In 1988, POST helped investigate funding sources for MROSD's purchase of 415-acre Spring Ridge as an addition to the preserve. POST also raised funds to build an 8-mile loop trail and short view trail at the top of the preserve. The purchase of the 208-acre Corte Madera property allowed POST to add the final important in-holding to the preserve.