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Open Space & Forests

Essential Investments in Open Space and Forests

With California voters' strong support for ballot measures to fund conservation, our state has invested wisely in protecting our land, water and parks. These essential investments have strengthened California's economy by enhancing our environment, attracting tourists and creating jobs.

By investing in open space and forests, we are fighting climate change and ensuring urban sprawl doesn't overtake critical wildlife habitats. Our investments protect open space where California families and visitors can lead healthier lives by enjoying, exploring and exercising in the outdoors.

Although we have made great improvements, there is still much to be

done. The future of all of California — from its wide diversity of plants and animals to the wide diversity of people who live here — depends on these essential investments in the land, water and parks that make the Golden State the unique and promising place we all cherish. Among the many noteworthy investments in open space and forests are:

GARCIA RIVER FOREST & WATERSHED

The purchase and restoration of the 23,780-acre Garcia River Forest in Mendocino County is helping fight climate change by removing dangerous greenhouse gases from the atmosphere. With funding from Proposition 50 and other sources, the forest now has the capacity to store more than 77,000 tons of carbon emissions annually. That is equal to taking more than 14,000 cars off the road every year.

PALO CORONA RANCH

The 2004 purchase of Palo Corona Ranch in Monterey County marked the largest land conservation project in the county's history. More than 4,300 acres of the 10,000-acre ranch were transformed into the Palo Corona Regional Park, a seven-mile spread of land that includes 13 watersheds, vast ecosystems, wildlife and more than 500 species of plants. With \$32 million from Proposition 40, the purchase of this land maintained an abundance of California's treasured wildlife and ecosystems.



Garcia River Forest & Watershed (Mendocino County)
Photo: The Conservation Fund



Palo Corona Peak (Monterey County)
Photo: Big Sur Land Trust



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SANTA ROSA PLATEAU ECOLOGICAL RESERVE

The Santa Rosa Plateau Ecological Reserve is a 2,000-foot-high sanctuary in California's Santa Ana Mountains that is home to a wide range of wildlife, plant species and a slice of California history. The 8,300-acre reserve protects unique ecosystems, including Engelmann oak woodlands, riparian wetlands, coastal sage scrub, chaparral, bunchgrass prairie and vernal pools. Of the more than 120 sensitive species of plants and animals in the Inland Empire, 59 can be found on the Santa Rosa Plateau. Once threatened by over-development, the reserve now sustains scores of native and endangered species. Native wildflowers — some of which are nationally endangered — draw thousands of spring visitors. The reserve is also home to the oldest standing structures in Riverside County — bunkhouses for cowboys dating back to 1846. Funding from Proposition 40 has helped keep this special place around for generations to come.

UPPER LAS VIRGENES CANYON OPEN SPACE PRESERVE (FORMERLY AHMANSON RANCH)

The land is part of a critical ecological linkage and wildlife corridor between the Santa Monica Mountains and the ranges to the north — protecting habitats and endangered species. Made possible by Propositions 40 and 50, Ahmanson Ranch was a major achievement for Los Angeles County communities seeking to preserve open space for people and wildlife.

BIG RIVER/SALMON CREEK FORESTLANDS

When timber companies sell their Northern California forests, the land often is converted into residential and other uses, causing a permanent loss of important wildlife habitats. The acquisition of the Big River and Salmon Creek Forestlands in Mendocino County ensured 16,000 acres of Redwood and Douglas fir forests are permanently protected from development and conversion to non-forest uses. With a \$7.27 million grant from Proposition 40, this acquisition is restoring and enhancing water quality and salmonid habitats, improving the forest, increasing natural diversity and providing public access to the forest.

CATHTON PROPERTY

With only five percent of the Coachella Valley's sand dunes still intact in the Inland Empire, the 9,000-acre Cathton Property is helping preserve what's left of one of California's unique habitats. The site is a critical open space connecting Joshua Tree National Park with the Coachella Valley Preserve. Using funds from Proposition 40, state and local agencies were able to work together to purchase more than 1,300 acres of the property.



Santa Rosa Plateau Ecological Reserve (Riverside County)
Photo: California Travel & Tourism Commission & Anthony Arendt



Upper Las Virgenes Canyon Open Space Preserve (Los Angeles County)
Photo: Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy



Big River/Salmon Creek Forestlands (Mendocino County)
Photo: Matt Gerhart

CONSERVING CALIFORNIA

A public education program about our essential investments in land, water and parks presented by Audubon California, California Council of Land Trusts, Ocean Conservancy, The Nature Conservancy and WiLDcoast.

For more information, please visit our website:
www.conservingcalifornia.org

