



# Sonoma County

JENNER HEADLANDS AND SONOMA COAST STATE PARK AT THE RUSSIAN RIVER

*Sonoma County has a well-deserved reputation for being a great place for people to live and do business. It's a good place for animals and plants, too—the second-most biologically diverse county in California. The County's residents deserve credit for this, having demonstrated time and again their commitment to protecting the natural lands and farmland that surrounds their communities and accounts for much of the County's distinct character.*

**POPULATION:** >490,000  
**SIZE:** 1,008,544 acres (land only)  
**PROTECTED LANDS:** 181,229 acres  
**CONSERVANCY PROJECTS:** >120  
**CONSERVANCY FUNDING:** >\$70 million

Tourism brings hundreds of millions of dollars annually to Sonoma County. People come to visit the world-renowned wineries, to enjoy magnificent beaches, hike and bike through wilderness landscapes, kayak and canoe on many waterways, and marvel at majestic coast redwoods. Residents too flock to these natural areas, which add immensely to the region's quality of life.

The Coastal Conservancy will continue its more than 30 years of work with the people of Sonoma County to:

- Restore and improve the health of rivers, streams, marshes, and wild lands
- Provide outdoor recreational opportunities for a growing and diverse population
- Keep farmland and timber lands in production
- Meet the challenges posed by a changing climate.

# Land Protection & Restoration

The Conservancy has teamed up with the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation & Open Space District, Sonoma Land Trust, and many other government and nonprofit organizations to protect and restore vast areas of natural lands, farm and timber lands, and recreational areas throughout the County.

**Along and near San Pablo Bay**, the Conservancy has supported the purchase of almost 7,000 acres of wetlands, farmland, and parkland on either side of Highway 37 and is actively involved in the restoration of thousands of additional acres.

- At the mouth of the Petaluma River, an innovative use of mud dredged from the Port of Oakland resulted in the restoration of the 322-acre **Sonoma Baylands**, a historic tidal marsh. The site is now home to a wide variety of resident and migratory birds, fish, and other wildlife.
- Just inland of Highway 37, the 1,769-acre **Tolay Lake Regional Park** offers a spectrum of outdoor recreational and environmental educational opportunities. Its purchase protected unique archeological resources and has enabled extensive restoration of wildlife habitat that is directly connected to thousands of acres of other protected lands.
- At **Sears Point**, more than 2,000 acres are being restored to wetlands and uplands habitats and similar restorations have been completed or are underway on **Hudeman Slough** and in the **Napa-Sonoma Marsh**.
- Hundreds of acres of **farmland** near the Sonoma Baylands have been protected from development and remain in agricultural production.

In **coastal Sonoma County**, the Conservancy has helped to open expansive parklands and protect vast areas of natural and resource lands.

- The highly scenic, 5,630-acre **Jenner Headlands** property just north of the Russian River contains a variety of near-pristine wildlife habitats and offers excellent opportunities for regional trails.
- Purchase of the 19,650-acre **Preservation Ranch** near Annapolis prevented its subdivision, allowing the protection of critical fish and wildlife habitat and enabling future sustainable production of timber.
- Significant additions to **Sonoma Coast State Park**—one of California's most visited State Parks—were accomplished through the acquisitions of the Black Ranch, Red Hill, and Willow Creek properties.

In **central Sonoma County**, the Conservancy has helped to protect and open spectacular natural areas within easy reach of urban areas.

- The purchase of 283 acres of natural land on the summit of **Sonoma Mountain** linked hundreds of acres of other protected lands. The property will soon be open to the public, offering views from the Pacific Ocean to the Sierra Nevada.
- A 960-acre portion of scenic **Saddle Mountain**, only 10 minutes from downtown Santa Rosa, contains valuable fish and wildlife habitat and offers excellent opportunities for outdoor recreation.
- An oak-covered hillside on the 152-acre **Montini property** serves as a scenic backdrop to the City of Sonoma's downtown plaza and will soon be open to hikers, offering spectacular views of San Francisco and San Pablo bays.



TOLAY LAKE RANCH



YOUNG RESEARCHERS AT RANCHO MARK WEST



PRINCE MEMORIAL GREENWAY, SANTA ROSA



Matt Genhart

WILLOW CREEK AND THE RUSSIAN RIVER, SONOMA COAST STATE PARK



SONOMA BAYLANDS AND SEARS POINT



JOE RODOTA TRAIL



STRAW PLANTING AT SOUTH SALMON CREEK DUNES



HUDEMAN SLOUGH

## Parks & Trails

The Conservancy has worked for decades to open the County's spectacular beaches, forests, and creekside lands to the public.

- Along the coast, the Conservancy had a lead role in opening beaches and establishing part of the **California Coastal Trail** at **Sea Ranch** and is working with the County to build a section of the trail through the town of **Bodega Bay**.
- On the **Russian River**, the Conservancy helped establish **Steelhead Beach River Park** and **Cloverdale River Park**.
- In central Sonoma County, the Conservancy has supported improvements for visitors to **Hood Mountain Regional Park**, the **Rancho Mark West Nature Center**, and Santa Rosa's **Prince Memorial Greenway**. The Conservancy has also helped build the **West County** and **Joe Rodota** trails between Forestville and Santa Rosa and sections of the **Bay Area Ridge Trail** on and near **Sonoma Mountain** and other areas.
- Along San Pablo Bay, the Conservancy is filling significant gaps in the **San Francisco Bay Trail** at **Sears Point** and the **Sonoma Baylands**.

## River & Creek Restoration

Along Sonoma County's many waterways, the Conservancy has long worked to improve migration routes for salmon and steelhead trout, manage floodwaters, and restore the environment of watershed lands.

- Along the **Russian River**, the Conservancy has helped to improve fish passage at the **Mumford Dam**, plan for restoration of an abandoned **gravel quarry** near Windsor, establish a **Fish Friendly Farming** program, and eradicate invasive **giant reed**. The Conservancy has also conducted extensive work to improve fish passage in three of the river's tributaries, **Austin**, **Dutch Bill**, and **Green Valley** creeks.
- The Conservancy has joined with landowners to restore gullies and creeks and improve water quality in the **Estero Americano** and to add to and improve the Sonoma Land Trust's Estero Americano Nature Preserve.
- The Conservancy has worked for many years to help restore the **Laguna de Santa Rosa** and enable people to enjoy the Laguna by building trails and establishing the Laguna Environmental Center.
- The Conservancy has a long history of work for the protection and restoration of lands along the **Petaluma River** that have resulted in large areas of restored marshes, protected farmland, improved water quality, and public trails.

*"It has been a wonderful opportunity and pleasure to work with Sonoma's conservationists to protect the beauty and natural resources of our home county. I have also learned to deeply appreciate the work of the Coastal Conservancy as an essential partner in these efforts. Its commitment, investment, and collaborative spirit have truly made a difference."*

Theodore L. Eliot Jr.  
Landowner, lifelong birder, former U.S. Ambassador to Afghanistan



POND IN HOOD MOUNTAIN REGIONAL PARK

The Coastal Conservancy is a State agency, established in 1976, that protects and improves natural lands and waterways, helps people get to and enjoy coastal areas, and sustains local economies along California's coast. The Conservancy works along the entire length of the coast, within the watersheds of rivers and streams that extend inland from the coast, and throughout the nine-county San Francisco Bay Area. The Conservancy is non-regulatory and achieves its goals by joining forces with local communities, nonprofit organizations, other government agencies, businesses, and private landowners.

#### CONSERVANCY PROJECTS :

- Protect, restore, and improve natural areas and wildlife habitat
- Help people get to and enjoy the outdoors by building hiking and biking trails, acquiring and improving parks and beaches, and creating campgrounds and hostels
- Keep our waterways clean and healthy for people and wildlife
- Help communities revitalize their waterfronts
- Support floodwater management and integrate flood-control projects into the life of a community
- Conserve commercial fisheries, working farmland, and forests.

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