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JOHN LAIRD
ASSEMBLYMEMBER, TWENTY-SEVENTH DISTRICT



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June 3, 2008

Douglas Bosco, Chair
California Coastal Conservancy
13th Floor, 1330 Broadway
Oakland, CA 94612

Dear Mr. Bosco:

I am writing in support of the Coastal Conservancy authorizing the allocation of \$1,500,000 to the Wildlife Conservation Board for the acquisition of the Willow Canyon Property in Santa Cruz County. This item (#14) is scheduled to be heard at the Coastal Conservancy meeting on June 5, 2008.

As you may know, the Willow Canyon property is a 63-acre site in the community of Rio Del Mar, just south of Highway 1, near the community of Aptos. This acquisition is important because of the habitat benefits it will provide for threatened and endangered species, including the Santa Cruz long-toed salamander and the California red-legged frog. Both the California Department of Fish and Game and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service deem this site a priority because of the property's location near critical breeding ponds for both of these species.

This project already has financial support from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's Section 6 Habitat Conservation Plan Land Acquisition Grants Program, the state's Environmental Enhancement and Mitigation Program, and the Wildlife Conservation Board. Funding from the Coastal Conservancy will close the gap of funding needed to forever protect this site and its important habitat values.

Thank you in advance for your consideration of a Coastal Conservancy grant for this important conservation endeavor. I greatly appreciate your dedication to protecting the important wildlife habitat resources in the coastal areas of California.

Sincerely,

JOHN LAIRD, Assemblymember
27th District

JL:ae





United States Department of the Interior



FISH AND WILDLIFE SERVICE
Ventura Fish and Wildlife Office
2493 Portola Road, Suite B
Ventura, California 93003

IN REPLY REFER TO:
2008-B-0076

May 22, 2008

Douglas Bosco, Chairman
State Coastal Conservancy
1330 Broadway, 13th Floor
Oakland, California 94612

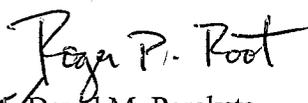
Subject: Support for the Proposal to Acquire the Willow Canyon Property, Santa Cruz County, California

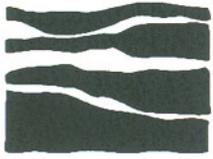
The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (Service) strongly supports protection of the 63-acre Willow Canyon property, comprised of two parcels in the Rio Del Mar area of Santa Cruz County (Assessor's Parcel Numbers: 044-261-54 and 044-261-57). The Willow Canyon Property provides essential upland habitat for the Federal and State listed endangered Santa Cruz long-toed salamander (*Ambystoma macrodactylum croceum*). The Santa Cruz long-toed salamander is one of the rarest amphibians in the world with very few known populations and a narrow geographic range that is limited to only a small area in Santa Cruz and Monterey Counties. Protection of the Willow Canyon Property would specifically support recovery efforts for the Santa Cruz long-toed salamander within the limited area of suitable habitats remaining in Santa Cruz County.

The undeveloped Willow Canyon property currently supports and enhances the benefits provided to the Santa Cruz long-toed salamander by the Seascape Uplands Preserve, which was established by the Seascape Habitat Conservation Plan in the late 1990's. Permanently protecting the Willow Canyon property will significantly increase the size of a contiguous permanently protected area of Santa Cruz long-toed salamander habitat and enhance the long-term resource benefits to this species in the Rio Del Mar area. If secured, the Willow Canyon property would add to an important established network of protected habitats that include the Service's refuge properties in the region. The project also provides added benefits to at least one other listed species (the federally threatened California red-legged frog (*Rana aurora draytonii*) that occur just south of the property) and many other species of native wildlife and plants on the central California coast.

We respectfully request your consideration to fully fund the Trust for Public Land's proposal to permanently protect the Willow Canyon Property and aid in the recovery of the highly imperiled Santa Cruz long-toed salamander. If you have question on this matter, please contact Mary Root or Jacob Martin of my staff at (805) 644-1766.

Sincerely,


for David M. Pereksta
Assistant Field Supervisor



LAND TRUST

OF SANTA CRUZ
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Executive Director

Terry Corwin

May 27, 2008

Douglas Bosco, Chairman
State Coastal Conservancy
1330 Broadway, 13th Floor
Oakland, CA 94612

RE: Support for Willow Canyon Acquisition, Santa Cruz County

Dear Chairman Bosco:

I am writing to express my strong support for the protection of the 64-acre Willow Canyon property in the Rio Del Mar area of Santa Cruz County.

The Land Trust of Santa Cruz County is dedicated to the protection of wildlife habitats, water supply, and open space in Santa Cruz County. The acquisition of Willow Canyon for conservation purposes would help support the Land Trust's goals in an area where open space has been vanishing rapidly due to residential development. The threat of development on the Willow Canyon property is very high.

Willow Canyon would add to an established network of open space and wildlife habitat lands in the County, and contribute to the availability of passive recreational opportunities for the local community of Rio Del Mar and all residents of Santa Cruz County. I urge you to approve funding for the permanent protection of Willow Canyon. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Terry Corwin
Executive Director
Land Trust of Santa Cruz County