

# Porter Cooley wins land trust award

Posted: Monday, Oct 1st, 2007  
BY: DAVID CARKHUFF

DAVENPORT – Surrounded by friends and family members Sunday, Diane Porter Cooley received the first Conservationist of the Year Award given by the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County.

Based on the awards presentation, Porter Cooley has no plans to slow down, either.

In 2001, Porter Cooley and her husband, Don Cooley, donated a conservation easement on 684 acres of their Circle P Ranch near Watsonville to the land trust. She is credited with persuading family members to sell land in the Aptos hills to the Marks family, which eventually donated 9,000 acres to help form Forest of Nisene Marks State Park. She also pressed her family to preserve land near Elkhorn Slough and now sits on the Elkhorn Slough Foundation Board.



David Carkhuff/ Register-Pajaronian Diane Porter Cooley thanks the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County Sunday as she accepts the group's first Conservationist of the Year Award at the land trust's annual picnic at Swanton Pacific Ranch north of Santa Cruz.

"Save it for the seventh generation," Porter Cooley said, quoting a Native American saying, after accepting the award.

She referred to her children and grandchildren.

"It's their heritage that I'm passing along to them, with your help," she told about 350 people at the land trust's annual picnic at Swanton Pacific Ranch.

More conservation efforts lie in store, Terry Corwin, executive director of the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County, confirmed in an interview after the awards ceremony.

"This year she and Don are interested in either selling or donating conservation easements on 360 acres of farmland, those are the row crops in the Pajaro Valley," Corwin said. "They happen to just fit like a little puzzle, like a jigsaw puzzle, with the properties we're protecting."

The land trust feels momentum toward protecting farmland from development.

"We start to see a critical mass where we start to believe we will succeed in this vision, this effort to protect the Pajaro Valley," Corwin said.

Last fall, the land trust announced its first major protection of Pajaro Valley farmland in years, the agreed purchase of conservation easements – a voluntary agreement between a landowner and a conservation organization to preserve land against development. With \$4.5 million from state and federal agencies, the land trust plans to protect more than 500 acres of prime farmland owned by the Borina Foundation.

"We're still working on that deal, it's very complex, so we expect to finish it in the next year or so," Corwin announced Sunday. "In the next year, we fully expect to complete projects that will result in the protection of 1,000 acres of Pajaro Valley farmland, over 500 acres of forestland and 200 acres of critical and threatened habitat."

Porter Cooley said she relished the chance to preserve a piece of "heaven."

"From the time that I was a little kid riding a horse and branding cows and rambling around in the redwoods, or later on sailing down in Santa Monica and Long Beach, wherever I've been, the thing that speaks to me the most doesn't speak with a voice, it speaks within your being when you have the privilege of being in a place that you love," she said.

When she lived in Southern California, Porter Cooley was president of the Southern California branch of the Nature Conservancy and active in acquiring land for protection in the Santa Monica Mountains. She was a founding board member of the Community Foundation of Santa Cruz County and has served on the land trust board.

The award, issued this year for the first time, is intended to recognize partnerships between landowners and conservation groups.

.....  
(Published in 10/1/07)

Print Close Window

SUCCESSION • FREEMAN • PALMD • CERRITOS • FRENCH • CASTROVILLE • LA SEGA BEACH • APTOS • HOVAL GRES • ELKHORN • MASS LANDING

# Real Estate MARKET PLACE

## Your #1 Source for Real Estate

HOMES • LOTS • RANCHES • APARTMENTS • COMMERCIAL PROPERTIES

### TV Listings Click Here

CRAPS  
1000'S COMPLETE  
PRIME RICE BUNDT  
Starting at \$11.99  
DOUBLE PRIME  
ANGUS BURGERS