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CONTACT:

Bryan Largay
Land Trust Conservation Director
831-429-6116
bryan.largay@landtrustsantacruz.org

Taylor Bateman
Acting Community Development Coordinator, City of Scotts Valley
831-440-5633tbateman@scottsvalley.org

Trails Coming to Glenwood Preserve

The first trails on Scotts Valley's Glenwood Preserve could be built this spring, with more to follow after public meetings. The trails are a collaborative effort between the City of Scotts Valley and the Land Trust of Santa Cruz County.

Scotts Valley City Council approved a Long-Term Management Plan for the Glenwood Open Space Preserve Wednesday evening, after a multiple year planning process. The plan identifies about five miles of trails. The first two miles could be built this winter and spring. The management plan also outlines strategies to protect the federally-endangered Ohlone Tiger Beetle and numerous rare plants, by continuing to manage the property with cattle grazing.

The preserve was originally slated for the development of over 200 houses and a golf course, but community opposition resulted in a scaled back project of 49 homes and the creation of the Glenwood Open Space area. The 170-acre preserve boasts grasslands, oak woodlands, redwood forest and wetlands.

Glenwood Preserve is located between Scotts Valley High School, Canham Road, Tabor Road, Vine Hill Elementary School and Siltanen Park. The Preserve is divided

617 Water Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95060
831-429-6116
Fax 831-429-1166
info@landtrustsantacruz.org
www.landtrustsantacruz.org

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into parts by Glenwood Drive with the West Preserve, adjacent to the High School, and the East Preserve, adjacent to Siltanen Park. The majority of the property is owned by the City, while the Land Trust owns a conservation easement over the property that prohibits additional development. The Land Trust manages the property.

With the completion of the Long-Term Management Plan, the City and the Land Trust can start the planning process for future trails. Due to the fact that the West Preserve has few constraints, it is anticipated that public access can be enhanced there first. Recently, the City and the Land Trust have started trail planning for the West Preserve and will be collaborating with community members, the Scotts Valley High School, and Salvation Army Camp Redwood Glen (the neighbor to the west). A collaborative effort is envisioned where community volunteers build the trails with design, supervision and training by Mountain Bikers of Santa Cruz, the local leader in sustainable trail design and construction, who will be working under contract with the Land Trust.

“This winter we’ll be building 2-3 miles of trail on the West Preserve,” said Land Trust Conservation Director Bryan Largay, “Visitors will be able to hike, and enjoy spectacular views and wildflower displays.” Recreation on the East Preserve will require more planning because of nearby homes and ongoing cattle grazing.

The Long-Term Management Plan lays out management and monitoring strategies to preserve the endangered and sensitive species and habitats that occur on the property, including the Ohlone tiger beetle, Scotts Valley spineflower, and wetlands and riparian areas. The plan authorizes public access that is consistent with protecting these species, and was developed in coordination with the US Fish and Wildlife Service. The details of future trails, access points and parking areas will be determined in a future community engagement process.

The Land Trust has a fundraising campaign underway dedicated to trails and it is anticipated that there will be some funding available for trails in the West Preserve.