

The Land Conservancy OF SAN LUIS OBISPO COUNTY

P.O. Box 12206 • SLO, CA 93406 • (805) 544-9096 • FAX (805) 544-5122
VISIT US ONLINE AT: WWW.LCSLO.ORG

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
November 16, 2011

Contact: **Wende David, Development Director**
805-544-9096 WendeD@LCSLO.org

Big Gains in Voluntary Land Conservation Despite Recession

Land Trusts Conserve 10 Million U.S. Acres,
Outpace Major Government Land Acquisition Program

San Luis Obispo, CA – The first census of land trusts in five years found 10 million new acres conserved nationwide since 2005, including a total of 2,303,442 acres conserved in California. The National Land Trust Census, released by the Land Trust Alliance, shows that voluntarily protected land increased 27 percent between 2005 and 2010. California ranks first in the nation in acres conserved, and first in the Pacific (CA, HI, NV). The census is online at www.lta.org/census.

A total of 47 million acres—an area over twice the size of all the national parks in the contiguous United States—are now protected by land trusts. A greater percentage of the new acreage comes through local land trusts like The Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County.

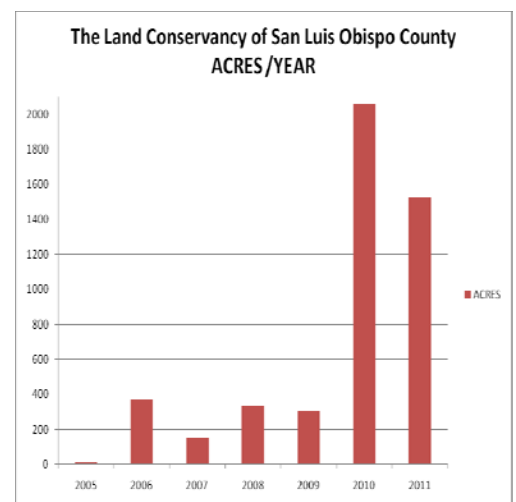
In California, land trusts statewide showed a 34% increase in acres conserved since 2005. Over the same time period, The Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County conserved more than 4,700 acres bringing its total amount of protected lands to 13,800 acres.

“Land is an essential component to our quality of life and economic vitality,” said Bob Hill, Executive Director of The Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County.

“Investing in The Land Conservancy, your local land trust, ensures clean water, local food and places to play – now and for generations to come.”

The census found that, on average, a land trust with a strategic conservation plan guiding its land or easement acquisition conserves twice as many acres as a land trust without such a plan. The Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County uses a strategic conservation plan to direct its land protection efforts and to identify resources required to achieve these goals.

The pace of local land conservation is primarily a function of capacity. To conserve more land in San Luis Obispo County, The Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County created the *Conservation Impact Fund* to increase resources and ensure sufficient staffing support for its land conservation department. Established in 2008 by a generous private donor, the *Conservation Impact Fund* has enabled The Land Conservancy to double the pace of conservation.



The Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County
PO Box 12206, San Luis Obispo, CA 93406 ~ (805) 544-9096
Fax (805) 544-5122 ~ www.lcslo.org

Major milestones achieved by The Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County include:

- Permanent protection and ongoing stewardship of 13,800 acres of land for farming, ranching, recreation and wildlife
- Winning a record grant in 2011 from the Wildlife Conservation Board to conserve 1,337 acres at Nick Family Ranch, a six-generation organic grass-fed beef cattle operation
- Collaborating on a unique partnership with The City of San Luis Obispo and Camp San Luis Obispo to protect over 1,300 acres in the San Luis Obispo Greenbelt
- Saving the Octagon Barn from collapse and envisioning it as a community center
- Planting more than 70,000 native trees and shrubs in San Luis Obispo County
- Engaging tens of thousands of volunteers in hands-on local conservation

Other findings of the new National Land Trust Census include:

- There are now 197 land trusts operating in California, including 103 staffed groups and 44 all-volunteer groups.
- California increased their full- and part-time staff and contractors 89% in five years, for a total of 986 paid positions in 2010.
- Land trusts in California drew upon the work of 13,734 active volunteers (an increase of 94% since 2005) and the contributions of 178,512 members and financial supporters.

The Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County improves the quality of life for people and wildlife in SLO County. We are a local nonprofit land trust working to protect and restore local lands. Since our formation in 1984, we have led collaborative efforts to permanently protect over 13,000 acres of land in San Luis Obispo County. More information at www.LCSLO.org.

The Land Trust Alliance is a national conservation organization that works to save the places people love. We increase the pace of conservation, so more land and natural resources get protected. We enhance the quality of conservation, so the most important lands get protected using the best practices in the business. And we ensure the permanence of conservation by creating the laws and resources needed to defend protected land over time. The Land Trust Alliance is based in Washington, D.C.