

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE!

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Major Donation Kicks-Off Froom Ranch Campaign

Once again the City of San Luis Obispo's *Natural Resources Protection Program* has teamed up with *The Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County* to create **Froom Ranch Open Space**; a 310 acre property that offers new recreational opportunities and wildlife viewing among dense chaparral, oak woodlands and open grasslands. Adjacent to the existing Irish Hills Reserve, the successful conservation of Froom Ranch will expand the Reserve to over 1,000 acres and allow for a series of new recreation trails and linkages.

Froom Ranch Open Space will significantly enhance the existing 6,000 acre greenbelt of conserved lands around the City of San Luis Obispo. Not only does open space make San Luis Obispo more healthy and livable, but it also attracts important tourist dollars and protects our critical resources and municipal infrastructure. Neil Havlik, the City's Natural Resources Manager, has secured over 90% of the funding required to purchase Froom Ranch from local Measure Y funds, the Land & Water Conservation Fund (federal) and The Nature Conservancy, a global private foundation.

As the direct beneficiaries of this open space project, the local community is asked to contribute \$50,000 to complete the deal. However, a generous and forward thinking couple, **Donald & Mary Smith**, has already covered a fifth of the bill by donating an astounding \$10,000 towards the protection of Froom Ranch. **The Smiths**, who live in San Luis Obispo, have long fought to improve and expand the conservation lands in San Luis Obispo County. Their recent gift is a tangible reminder of the 37 years the Smiths have spent educating, advocating and engaging our local community in protecting local lands.

Since moving here in 1973, Donald & Mary Smith have supported conservation by helping elect environmentally-friendly City & County representatives and by speaking out at nearly a thousand public hearings. *"I think I've attended more meetings than most of the City and County staff members,"* jokes Smith. With his hearing and eyesight deteriorating, today Smith regrets not being able to stay active in local politics. Instead, Smith says *"Mary and I chose to do what we could by contributing a little to The Land Conservancy and the City Greenbelt."* In total, The Smiths donated \$20,000 with half going to the City's Froom Ranch Open Space purchase and the other half to The Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County. *"We are doing this for future generations, not for ourselves. We want to set an example and make sure there is something left for them to see,"* affirms Don Smith with a big smile of satisfaction.



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Residents of San Luis Obispo County have repeatedly proven their commitment to open space and natural resource protection. But the stunning vistas of the county which we all enjoy today may not be there tomorrow if conservation projects are not supported. The City of San Luis Obispo, The Land Conservancy and Don & Mary Smith call upon members of the community to help set aside Froom Ranch for the benefit of people and wildlife.

Tax-deductible donations should be sent to:

- The Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County
547 Marsh Street, San Luis Obispo, CA 93401
- Make checks payable to “LCSLO – Froom Ranch”
- Donate online at www.LCSLO.org; designate “Froom Ranch”

The Land Conservancy of San Luis Obispo County is a community-based, nonprofit land trust working to protect and restore local lands with scenic, cultural and historic values. Their efforts help protect drinking water sources, prevent poorly planned development, restore wildlife habitat and promote family farmlands and ranches in this region. Since its formation in 1984, The Land Conservancy has worked with community partners to permanently protect over 10,000 acres of land in San Luis Obispo County. For more information visit www.LCSLO.org or call (805) 544-9096.

Froom Ranch Open Space acquisition project is a joint partnership led by the City of San Luis Obispo Natural Resources Protection Program in collaboration with The Land Conservancy of SLO County.

- Total Project Funding Costs = \$660,500
- Project-restricted Grants/Funds Secured = \$611,500
 - City of San Luis Obispo Measure Y Fund (local)
 - Land Conservancy & Water Conservation Fund (federal)
 - The Nature Conservancy (private, global foundation)
- Don & Mary Smith Donation = \$10,000

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