



NEWS RELEASE

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MARIN COUNTY
PARKS
PRESERVATION • RECREATION



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MARIN COUNTY PARKS AND LOCAL CONSERVATION ORGANIZATIONS PRESERVE VITAL ACCESS TO GARY GIACOMINI OPEN SPACE FOREVER

SAN RAFAEL, CA – Marin County Parks (Parks) announced today that it has successfully received the \$100,000 in pledges and donations necessary to preserve 22 acres of undeveloped forest and chaparral habitat along the Manzanita Fire Road in Forest Knolls, in the San Geronimo Valley. The fund raising partnership included Parks, MOST (Marin Open Space Trust), the San Geronimo Valley Land Trust, and the San Geronimo Valley Planning Group. “Working together, our partnership raised the necessary funds in less than three months,” said Bill Long, Chair of MOST. These donations, along with the California State Coastal Conservancy grant of \$450,000 and Parks contribution of \$100,000, will complete the \$650,000 purchase of the Manzanita Fire Road parcel. Parks will work with the landowner to complete the purchase in the coming weeks. Parks also hopes to raise an additional \$10,000 for site cleanup and habitat protection. “The speed at which this partnership worked to raise the necessary funding for this acquisition is truly remarkable,” said Steve Kinsey, President of the Board of Supervisors. “Even in tough economic times, Marin County Parks and its non-profit partners collaborated to succeed in saving these critical lands.”

The 22-acre parcel is the largest acquisition by Parks in almost a decade. “I’m thrilled about this acquisition because not only will it enhance protection of important salmon habitat, it shows that the citizens of Marin are willing to dig into their pockets for projects that are important to them,” said Marin County Parks Director, Linda Dahl.

The Manzanita Fire Road parcel has been the subject of multiple development proposals dating back to the early 20th century. Including the Skye Ranch subdivision in the 1980’s, a proposed gated community of elegant homes above San Geronimo Valley. In 1995, the Open Space District purchased much of the Skye Ranch property for \$2.1 million, creating the 1,478-acre Gary Giacomini Open Space Preserve. However, the developer retained several areas for future development, including the Manzanita Fire Road parcel, which has the potential for the construction of up to three homes. The parcel was then bought and sold by several people who wanted to develop it, including a recent owner who proposed constructing a new trail bypassing the fire road.

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PARTNERSHIP PRESERVES VITAL ACCESS TO GARY GIACOMINI PRESERVE

The property supports rare plants, including Mt. Tamalpais and Bolinas manzanita, and provides nesting areas for the northern spotted owl. "The acquisition of this property will forever safeguard a key access point to the Gary Giacomini Preserve, used by many people in the community, including hikers, bikers and equestrians alike," said Jean Berensmeier, Chair of San Geronimo Valley Planning Group. After the successful acquisition of the Manzanita Fire Road parcel, Parks plans to remove debris from the site and improve the condition of the road to reduce sedimentation into San Geronimo Creek and protect coho salmon habitat.

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