



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Date: March 16, 2011

Contacts: POST: Nina Nowak (650) 854-7696, x306

MROSD: Leigh Ann Gessner (650) 691-1200, x566

Santa Clara County Parks: Tamara Clark-Shear (408) 355-2215

POST, MROSD and Santa Clara County Partner to Protect Land and Provide Public Access in Stevens Canyon near Cupertino

(San Francisco Peninsula, Calif.) – In a move that will link thousands of acres of protected open space in the hills overlooking Cupertino, on March 11 Peninsula Open Space Trust (POST) completed the purchase of a 54-acre piece of land in Stevens Canyon for \$1.5 million from private sellers. The purchase makes possible the future extension of a popular hiking trail on nearby Santa Clara County parkland, serves as a critical link for migrating wildlife and provides watershed protection within Stevens Canyon.

The property joins the larger regional network of open space thanks to a fruitful partnership between POST, Santa Clara County and the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District (MROSD), which is due to take ownership of the 54 acres from POST within the next few weeks. POST, a private nonprofit land trust, will sell the land to MROSD, a public agency, for \$1.5 million.

“There’s much work to be done to create a viable greenbelt of rural lands in our area, and ongoing partnerships between land trusts like POST and public agencies is essential to meet this need,” said POST President Audrey Rust. “A greenbelt of protected land close to our cities and suburbs will ensure we have clean air and clean water, vital wildlife habitat and recreation opportunities that support public health and enjoyment. This project brings us one step closer to those goals and also helps the county leverage its limited financial resources.”

"This property creates connectivity," said Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District General Manager Steve Abbors. "It connects existing public open space and parkland in Stevens Canyon for the benefit of watersheds and wildlife, while also providing the opportunity for regional trail connections."

With impressive views of forested hillsides along Stevens Canyon, the property is adjacent to MROSD's Monte Bello and Saratoga Gap open space preserves. The land will expand the connection between the two preserves and is identified as a corridor for the extension of the Stevens Creek Tony Look Trail between nearby Stevens Creek County Park and Upper Stevens Creek County Park. The trail is named for Claude A. "Tony" Look, the late County Parks commissioner and executive director and board member of Sempervirens Fund who helped revive that organization in the late 1960s and worked to expand land protection in the Santa Cruz Mountains until his death in 2006.

Santa Clara County will contribute \$750,000 to MROSD toward the agency's eventual purchase of this land. The county will also hold a conservation easement over the property that ensures future public access, achieving the vision of many residents in acquiring land for parks and open space that will provide future trail linkages. The county previously partnered with MROSD to acquire other critical properties, the Keyani and Hall acquisitions, which encompass 193 acres along this trail route. The county's support of these purchases was made possible through the voter-approved Park Charter, renewed in 2006 to fund county park acquisition, capital development, operations and maintenance through the year 2021.

"This is the kind of project that requires sustained vision and persistence," said Santa Clara County Supervisor Liz Kniss, whose district includes the newly protected property. "The purpose of this effort is, over time, to provide public access to this stunning canyon and provide the public with views of preserves and access to parks."

* * *

Created by voters in 1972, the Midpeninsula Regional Open Space District has successfully protected and managed more than 59,000 acres of open space. The public enjoys the District's diverse and beautiful preserves 365 days a year. The District is an independent, non-enterprise, California special district whose mission is to acquire and preserve a regional greenbelt of open space land in perpetuity, protect and restore the natural environment, and provide opportunities for ecologically sensitive public enjoyment and education. www.openspace.org.