



**Public and Private Coastal Conservation and Recreation Leaders Team Up to
Add Red Hill Ranch to State Parks
March 5, 2003**

Red Hill Ranch, 910 scenic acres containing 40 acres of old growth redwood, is in the final stages of being added to Sonoma Coast State Beach, thanks to the unprecedented collaboration of six public and private nonprofit conservation organizations.

A final step to ready the land before it is transferred to California State Parks occurs Sun., March 9, when a crew of 25 LandPaths volunteers will link Red Hill Ranch with adjoining Sonoma Coast State Beach Park by building a short trail connection. The future trail will link Red Hill Ranch to the popular Pomo Canyon Trail while guiding hikers off sensitive areas.

Working for more than three years to convert the once privately held property to state park land, the key conservation partners include: the Sonoma County Agricultural and Open Space District, which provided \$1.37 million toward the land purchase; the California State Coastal Conservancy, which provided \$1 million for the purchase; the Sonoma Land Trust, which structured the deal, managed the acquisition process, acted as interim owner and secured funding for property clean-up; LandPaths, which facilitated public use of the property since its purchase and works with local State Parks staff to develop and build trail links with volunteer crews; the Stewards of Slavianka, which is prepared to take over the volunteer stewardship functions when the land becomes part of the Russian River District of State Parks; and California State Parks, now ready to own and manage the land for the public working with the other partners in the planning and transfer process.

Sonoma County Supervisor Mike Reilly, whose district includes the Sonoma Coast, and who chairs the Coastal Commission said, "The Open Space District's participation with this magnificent acquisition illustrates its commitment to preserving land that meets the public's desire to hike and experience Sonoma County's wild landscapes."

Located across Highway 1 from Wright's Beach between Jenner and Bodega Bay, and contiguous to Pomo State Campground, Red Hill Ranch has long been popular with coastal enthusiasts because of its spectacular vistas and pristine landscape.



Bill Kortum, long time Board Member of the Sonoma Land Trust, said, “This is a grand complement to the public land that is on the coastal bench. Stunningly beautiful coastal uplands, instead of being threatened by development, are being made available for public access and enjoyment.”

“Those who know our Sonoma Coast State Beach know that it is 16 miles of some of the most spectacular coastal scenery in the world,” said Ruth Coleman, Acting Director of California State Parks. “We eagerly accept this extraordinary addition to our park and we applaud all those who came together to reach this unprecedented milestone.”

“The Sonoma Land Trust’s purchase of this property secured its protection, and the transfer to State Parks will allow the public to enjoy its spectacular views and beautiful scenery,” said Sam Schuchat, executive officer of the Coastal Conservancy. “The property’s planned trails and existing ranch roads will lead hikers through a variety of North Coast environments, from coastal hills to the State parklands along Willow Creek and the Russian River.”

Red Hill Ranch was purchased in 2000 from the Sequeira family. Its transfer to State Parks is expected to occur within the next few months.