



S O N O M A C O U N T Y

**AGRICULTURAL PRESERVATION
AND OPEN SPACE DISTRICT**

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Contact:

Peggy Flynn
Community Relations Manager
Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District
707.565.7347 office
707.293.4592 cell

District Partnership Protects Vital Coastal Rangeland

Board approves 248-acre conservation easement and preservation agreement

SANTA ROSA, Calif.—In an action to protect irreplaceable rangeland and preserve the coastal scenic views, the Sonoma County Board of Supervisors, acting as the District's Board of Directors, approved a conservation easement between the District and the Quinlan-Noonan family, who have owned the property since 1862.

The ranch is located south of the town of Bodega Bay, in western Sonoma County, where similar properties are being subdivided and sold for rural residential estate development. The conservation easement ensures that the property and operation will remain intact, and it preserves the property's highly-productive grasslands and pasture soils for grazing and agricultural use.

"We are protecting and preserving the long-term viability of agricultural production in our county," said Efren Carrillo, Fifth District Supervisor. "The preservation of our farms conserves the natural and historic resource and open space values for future generations while benefitting our local economy."

The \$1,680,000 agreement continues the agricultural uses on the property, which is located in the vicinity of other District-held agricultural conservation easements, including Colliss, Rigler, and Gilardi ranches and the Bianchi Dairy. To date, the District has protected approximately 10,000 acres of dairy and livestock ranches in that area.

"This ranch has been in our family for nearly 150 years," said Sam Noonan, managing owner of the family partnership. "With this partnership, we can ensure that the ranch will continue as a cattle operation and will not be developed now or in the future."

In total, the District has protected approximately 33,000 acres for agricultural use—nearly half of all the land protected by the District since its creation by Sonoma County voters in 1990.

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An agricultural conservation easement is a voluntary, legal agreement between the landowner and District that restricts the land to agricultural and open space uses. By voluntarily limiting their ability to develop the land, landowners permanently protect its open space and agricultural values. Once the District holds an easement, it takes on the responsibility of monitoring the easement annually to confirm that the landowner is complying with the terms of the agreement.

“We have identified 130,000 acres of coastal rangeland for protection, and we have just taken another important step in achieving that goal,” said Bill Keene, Interim General Manager of the District. “We are grateful for landowners, like the Quinlan-Noonan family, who recognize the wildlife habitat and open space values of their land in addition to its agricultural production.”

About the Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District

The Sonoma County Agricultural Preservation and Open Space District permanently protects the diverse agricultural, natural resource and scenic open space lands of Sonoma County for future generations. Since 1990, the District has protected approximately 76,000 acres. Agricultural and open space lands have been protected through a 1/4-cent sales tax approved by voters in 1990 and reauthorized in 2006. For more information, please visit www.sonomaopenspace.org

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