

For Immediate Release
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THE HEARST RANCH CONSERVATION PLAN: CALIFORNIA VISION...CALIFORNIA VALUES

*State Receives Public Input on Proposed State Purchase of Interests in
82,000-acre San Luis Obispo County Coastal Access;
Conservationists, environmentalists, agricultural interests, and the
local community weigh in during public meeting*

A public information meeting was held today on the proposed state purchase of interests in the historic Heart Ranch property, an 82,000-acre ranch in San Luis Obispo County that has been characterized as the Crown Jewel of the Central Coast.

During today's meeting, the proposed sale was discussed by a number of interested parties including conservationists, environmentalists, agriculturalists, local community leaders and elected officials. For years, the State of California, conservation groups, interested parties and the Hearst Corporation have been working together to craft a proposal that allows public access while ensuring preservation of the historic landscape.

"Our vision for the Hearst Ranch preservation proposal is to provide benefit to all Californians by protecting the beauty of California's coastline for generations to come," said Mike Chrisman, California Secretary for Resources. "Our goal today is to hear from interested parties so we have the opportunity to do the very best job for the people of Californian in preserving and providing access to this incredible stretch of coastline."

Stephen Hearst, who has been closely involved in developing the public-private partnership said: "We are pleased to be working with the State of California and moving forward with the state's public process for the conservation plan which will preserve the natural resources and working landscape of the coastal property surrounding the historic Hearst San Simeon State Historical Monument."

As drafted, the proposal has broad and strong support among environmentalist, community leaders and elected officials. Senator Bruce McPherson recently said of the plan that this "opportunity to save a parcel of this size from development and add it to the coast's legacy of open space comes around once in a lifetime."

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Former Sierra Club Chief and Hearst Conservation Now leader, Gary Felsman, stated, "The conservation of the Hearst Ranch essential to those living on the Central Coast. This project shows that by working together we can create a balance between the desires of the public, the landowner and the State Agencies. It protects the wildlife and habitat of the ranch, provides public access to coast, and maintains the legacy of a working ranch for over 100 years. There are many other opportunities for working relationships out there between the public, private sector and government agencies when it comes to conservation, agriculture and the general public. This project can help open the door to these opportunities helping to preserve the quality of life on the Central Coast."

The proposed purchase would be paid for by Proposition 40 and 50 monies, which Californians earmarked for preservation of unique natural assets for future generations. At a time of heightened fiscal sensitivity it is important to note that this proposal does not involve the use State General Fund money. Supporters of the plan have noted that the \$95 million price proposed for the property appears to be a good deal for the state as the ranch has been independently appraised at \$230 million.

Thursday's meeting was an informational meeting to bring people from around the State together to learn about the project. This review of this proposal begins an open process with disclosure of information to the public through this website, www.resources.ca.gov, the public meeting in Cayucos, San Luis Obispo County on July 15, 2004, and in public hearings at the Wildlife Conservation Board on August 12, 2004 in Sacramento and the State Coastal Conservancy on September 15, 2004 in Sonoma County.

Proposed transaction documents, maps, and meeting schedules may be found on The Resources Agency website at http://www.resources.ca.gov/hearst_ranch.html

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