



## **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **LandPaths receives a nearly \$2.5 million grant from the California Department of Fish and Wildlife to purchase Myers property adjacent to Ocean Song Preserve in West Sonoma County.**

*The grant will enable the historic reunification and protection of nearly 800 acres of coastal ranchlands in West Sonoma County and create a walking/hiking connection from the Sonoma Coast to Ocean Song Preserve eight miles away.*

SANTA ROSA, CA.—March 25, 2020—The California Department of Fish and Wildlife (CDFW) announced this week that LandPaths has been selected for a nearly \$2.5 million grant for ecosystem restoration and protection projects, which is funded under the state’s Proposition 1 and Proposition 68 grant programs.

LandPaths was the sole Sonoma County nonprofit chosen to receive funding. The nearly \$2.5 million grant from CDFW will enable the purchase of the 373-acre Myers property directly adjacent to Ocean Song preserve on Coleman Valley Road in the Salmon Creek watershed.

“In the midst of our shared Covid-19 challenges, we were stunned by this significant investment by the State of California into protecting Sonoma County land,” said Craig Anderson, Executive Director at LandPaths. “Now, the goal of connecting that land all the way to the coast, which is a stunning eight miles away by trail, is within reach. The CDFW’s grant towards permanently protecting the Myers Property (and including it into the greater vision of a reconnected Ocean Song nature preserve) emphasized to us that this project is as important to the state as it is regionally. When we emerge from our places of shelter and isolation, whether to stand on Ocean

Song's scenic ridge to view the entirety of the North Bay, or by gaining the ridge after a pilgrimage on foot from Shell Beach, this will be good medicine that all of us can use."

The announcement arrives on the heels of LandPaths' October 2019 acquisition and permanent protection of Ocean Song, a 421-acre property situated in the coastal hills of western Sonoma County. The Myers portion connects directly to Willow Creek State Park which connects to Sonoma Coast State Park. The purchase of this rare gem will create an uninterrupted linkage between Ocean Song and the Sonoma Coast, ensuring the protection, stewardship, and enjoyment of the land for generations.

"This is totally amazing," said Greg Sarris, Tribal Chairman of the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria. "It is so important for the people of Sonoma County, and for my people, the Federated Indians of Graton Rancheria who have many historic sites on the property."

"Ocean Song is a rare wow!" said LandPaths' Programs Director Lee Hackeling. "With its stunning views and intimate gardens, complimented by vibrant insect, bird, and animal life, this is a place where you get the true, visceral feeling of the land being alive."

The combined nearly 800-acres of historic coastal ranch lands teems with native grasslands, pristine creeks and ponds, canyons, oak woodlands, redwoods, cultivated pollinator-friendly gardens, and farmland. The acreage is part of the Coast Range to Marin Coast Wildlife Linkage identified by the Critical Linkages project.

"What an incredible place to share with the community, especially youth," added Hackeling. "Keeping the coastal grasslands intact also protects their functioning as a carbon sink, incredibly important in the current climate emergency."

"This land acquisition is a big win for the public," says Congressman Jared Huffman. "I can't imagine another place in my congressional district where Point Reyes and the Farallon Islands, wild coastal forest, and high coastal grasslands are captured in one view. This property conveys the tremendous natural beauty and resources along the north coast, and is arguably some of the most beautiful scenery on earth. Thanks to the vision, energy and commitment of LandPaths, children now and in future generations will be able to walk from the Kortum Trail above the Sonoma Coast Beach eight miles by trail to Ocean Song. We are very lucky indeed."

For additional information or to set up a tour of Ocean Song and the Myers addition, contact Leilani Clark at [leilani@landpaths.org](mailto:leilani@landpaths.org) or 707. 332.4736 (cell).

**About LandPaths**

Established in 1996, LandPaths is a nonprofit organization with the mission of fostering a love of the land in Sonoma County. Diverse by design, Landpaths achieves our mission through three initiatives: rooting youth in nature, branching out conservation for everyone, and growing community with nature. We inspire people to experience the beauty of Sonoma County, understand the value of local open spaces, and participate in stewarding the land.

[www.landpaths.org](http://www.landpaths.org)