

Press Release
January 19, 2011

Shasta Land Trust proudly announces the completion of a conservation easement on the 5,081 acre Rickert Brothers Ranch in Shasta County. The completed conservation easement represents the conclusion of over three years of coordinated efforts by the owners of the Rickert Brothers Ranch, and partner organizations Shasta Land Trust and The Trust for Public Land. This conservation easement limits further development on the ranch, protecting the many natural resources on the property for generations to come and ensuring that it remains open space that is available for ranching purposes.

With this latest conservation easement acquisition, Shasta Land Trust has successfully conserved over 20,000 acres of important properties in our region. Founded in Redding in 1998, Shasta Land Trust has achieved important lasting conservation in this area by working with willing landowners who are motivated to conserve their property. Shasta Land Trust celebrates the completion of the important conservation easement for the Rickert Brothers Ranch, and the milestone of permanently conserving over 20,000 acres of privately-owned land in this county.

Located near the communities of Bella Vista and Palo Cedro, the Rickert Brothers Ranch has been owned by the Rickert family since around 1950. This large cattle ranch will remain in private ownership and will continue to be used for productive ranching uses under the terms of the conservation easement.

The Rickert Brothers Ranch includes hundreds of acres of vernal pools, over eight miles of creeks, including Little Cow Creek, French Creek, and Swede Creek, and vast expanses of blue oak woodlands. It also features examples of traditional Shasta County ranchsteads, with stretches of irrigated pasture and historic farm buildings visible from Highway 299.

The Rickert Brothers Ranch will remain in private ownership and will not have open public access as a result of this conservation easement, but some limited visitation will be conducted by Shasta Land Trust in the future.

The Trust for Public Land (TPL) provided project management, legal services and partial funding to this project. TPL is a national nonprofit land conservation organization that conserves land for people to enjoy as parks, gardens, and natural areas, ensuring livable communities for generations to come. Since its founding in 1972, TPL has helped protect more than 2.5 million acres of land in 47 states, including many projects in Shasta County in partnership with Shasta Land Trust. The Trust for Public Land depends on the support and generosity of individuals, foundations, and businesses to achieve its land for people mission.

The conservation easement on the Rickert Brothers Ranch joins other similar Shasta Land Trust easements that together protect over 18,000 acres of rangeland and wildlife habitat in the Cow Creek watershed in central Shasta County, helping support the local ranching economy and ensuring the diverse natural resources of the region continue to thrive for years to come.

The conservation easement was purchased from the owners of the Rickert Brothers Ranch with funds provided by the State of California Sierra Nevada Conservancy, the US Bureau of Reclamation's Central Valley Project Conservation Program and the Central Valley Project Improvement Act Habitat Restoration Program, the State of California Department of

Transportation's Environmental Enhancement Mitigation Program, and The Trust for Public Land.

The conservation easement for the Rickert Brothers Ranch limits residential development on the property to the continued use of the existing residences and buildings, and the possible addition of two additional homesites, but prohibits any additional residential development on the 5,000 acre property. Continued grazing is permitted, as is the ability to maintain the necessary ranching and agricultural infrastructure. The property will remain in private ownership and may be sold or passed down to heirs, but will remain under the restrictions of the conservation easement forever. The ranch will continue to support the local ranching economy, provide important wildlife habitat, help provide clean water to the Cow Creek watershed and the Sacramento River, and offer scenic views of its natural expanses for many generations to come.

Support for Shasta Land Trust comes largely from individuals in the community, through membership donations and donations related to the organization's *Wildways* fundraisers held throughout the year. The 2011 *Wildways* series of events gets started with the annual Kickoff Party on February 26th, 2011 in Redding. The event will feature live music and a silent auction, with all proceeds supporting Shasta Land Trust in their mission to conserve important properties in our region like the Rickert Brothers Ranch.

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