NEWS RELEASE

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Park Agencies and Non-Profits Join Together
In Shared Vision of Next Great Parks and Conservation Landscape
“Lobos-Corona Parklands Project” seeks to enhance land stewardship, people’s connection to the land

Carmel, Calif. — The Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District, California State Parks, Monterey District, Big Sur Land Trust and Point Lobos Foundation announced today their formal agreement to work together as part of an integrated multi-agency effort for the benefit of the public and the preservation of parklands and open space in the region between Carmel and Garrapata State Park. The four entities signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to advance their joint working relationship identified with the working title Lobos-Corona Parklands Project. The group envisions the area to be among the next great parks and conservation landscapes in California, akin to the Golden Gate National Recreation area near San Francisco. The overarching aim of the effort is to significantly enhance public recreation, outdoor education and stewardship opportunities.

“It does not take much effort to recognize that humans, typically rather than nature, have created boundaries that detrimentally fragment our magnificent landscape. Our multi-jurisdictional collaborative effort understands this, thus we are working together to provide a seamless experience for the public while integrating our land and natural resource management practices,” said Rafael Payan, General Manager for the Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District. “This will serve as a model, reinforcing the fact that the public does not so much care about who is managing what, rather that we manage their lands responsibly while providing high quality experiences.”

Years of planning, land acquisition and parks preparation, as well as millions in public and private dollars have been invested in the Lobos-Corona Parklands Project area. The project area encompasses nearly 10,000 acres and includes Palo Corona Regional Park, the former Whisler Wilson Ranch, and High Meadows Open Space (Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District); Point Lobos State Natural Reserve, the former A.M. Allan Ranch, Carmel River State Beach, Hatton Canyon and Garrapata State Park (California State Parks); and the Coast Ranch and South Bank Trail (Big Sur Land Trust). These lands host some of California’s most spectacular coastal areas and vistas, abundant wildlife, diverse habitats and profound historical and cultural resources.

“For more than 20 years the Land Trust and our partners been working to conserve these exceptional lands with the ultimate goal of providing healthy parks for people and nature,” said Bill Leahy, Executive Director of the Big Sur Land Trust. “We are excited to join with our partners to build on this extraordinary legacy of land conservation and create safe pathways for people to more fully experience these magnificent parklands that are so vital to the health of our communities. This work mirrors our own journey as an organization, from one focused on land acquisition to one with a broader mission of inspiring love and stewardship of the land.”

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The two park agencies and two private conservation groups are collaborating to build upon and leverage the work that has been done in recent years to put the pieces in place that will help integrate these properties into a larger parklands landscape. For example, the Big Sur Land Trust’s South Bank Trail, completed in 2011, serves as a wheel-chair accessible eastern entrance to the Park District’s Palo Corona Regional Park. The former Whisler Wilson Ranch was acquired by the Land Trust in 2010 to help knit together Regional Park District lands and state parklands at the former A.M. Allan Ranch and Point Lobos State Natural Reserve. Improved visitor serving trails have been completed at Point Lobos with the assistance of the Point Lobos Foundation. The Regional Park District, with assistance from the Land Trust, constructed new and improved trails at the front of Palo Corona Regional Park in 2011 that, along with signage funded by the Land Trust, greatly enhance the park visitor experience. The Land Trust has secured state and federal funding and is currently working with Monterey County and other agency partners to plan and permit a large-scale floodplain restoration project on the lower Carmel River that, once completed, will result in significant environmental, flood reduction and public access benefits. And there is more to come.

“California State Parks is excited about this new partnership. This is the way we should be managing contiguous parklands that provide a seamless experience and combined stewardship for the people of California,” said Mat Fuzie, Monterey District Superintendent for California State Parks.

While the four entities have a history of working together, formalizing their relationship with an MOU is an important touchstone, communicating their commitment to purposeful, proactive collaboration and cooperation for the benefit of the public and preservation of the Lobos-Corona Parklands. The groups have been meeting regularly since 2013, and have developed a shared long term vision that will guide their work together. They are collaborating on an online, interactive map that will be used for planning purposes and to ensure that individual projects on the landscape are well aligned. And over the next 6-12 months the groups intend to implement additional projects to help connect people with the land and ultimately increase the region’s prominence as a world-class visitor destination.

"These public lands have been largely unexplored or even closed to the public while Point Lobos is setting record attendance. This working group can offer so many new and different experiences for the public by opening some of these parklands—from secluded redwood groves to incredible views—it’s a very exciting project," said Augie Louis, President of the Point Lobos Foundation.

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The mission of the Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District mission is to preserve, conserve and restore the Central Coast's magnificent landscapes. These include critical habitat found in redwood and Monterey Pine forests, native grasslands, coastal dunes, and along our riparian and wildlife corridors. Our responsibilities also include the protection of prominent view-sheds and our cultural legacy ranging from prehistoric and historic sites, to contemporary ranches and farmland. Our objective is to avail natural open space to the public for the purposes of recreation, environmental education and scientific research. The District strives to develop and sustain positive, productive and collaborative relationships with the region's incorporated and unincorporated communities, their respective residents and visitors, and our governmental and non-governmental counterparts in the Salinas Valley and Monterey Peninsula. Together, we shall leave a landscape that is enjoyed and cherished by current and future generations. For more information visit [www.mprpd.org](http://www.mprpd.org)

Celebrating its 35th Anniversary, the mission of [Big Sur Land Trust](http://www.bigsurlandtrust.org) is to inspire love of the land and conservation of our treasured landscapes. In collaboration with partners and the community, the Land Trust has protected more than 38,000 acres of land since its inception. The Land Trust is committed to

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pursuing land and water conservation work that strengthens our communities and inspires a stewardship ethic so that Monterey County can maintain its unique and special place in the world. The goal and commitment of the Land Trust is to pursue resource conservation that supports the well-being of land and people and sustains our region’s unique quality of life for us all. For more information visit www.bigsurlandtrust.org

The mission of California State Parks is to provide for the health, inspiration, and education of the people of California by helping to preserve the state’s extraordinary biological diversity, protecting its most valued natural and cultural resources, and creating opportunities for high-quality outdoor recreation. The Monterey District consists of 33 park units with coastal parks from Limekiln SP north to Zmudowski SB including Big Sur parks. The popular Point Lobos State Natural Reserve and the nearby former A.M. Allan Ranch have a shared history. Hatton Canyon and Garrapata SP are great places to hike. Carmel River SB offers great views of the mouth of the Carmel River including the lagoon. Asilomar State Beach and Conference Grounds and Monterey State Historic Park protect significant historic buildings. Our inland parks include our largest in the district, Henry W. Coe State Park, San Juan Bautista State Historic Park, and Fremont Peak with a spectacular 360-degree daytime view and a nighttime visual feast for stargazers. For more information visit www.parks.ca.gov

Long considered the “crown jewel” of the California State Park system, Point Lobos State Natural Reserve is a magnet for nature lovers the world around. From its breathtaking beauty to its fascinating wildlife to its friendly and knowledgeable volunteers, Point Lobos is a place where one can escape to the serenity of nature at its best. While California State Parks is striving to find creative ways to sustain our parks, Point Lobos is flourishing due to the support of the Point Lobos Foundation. The Foundation is the sole source of funding for Point Lobos’ model volunteer program, protects the Reserve’s environmental health and plans for the future, ensures a great visitor experience and makes infrastructure improvements, and funds important education programs allowing schoolchildren and people with disabilities to experience nature. For more information visit www.pointlobos.org
MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING
LOBOS-CORONA PARKLANDS PROJECT

This Memorandum of Understanding ("MOU") is made and entered into as of the latest date signed ("Effective Date") by the following parties:

- STATE OF CALIFORNIA, DEPARTMENT OF PARKS AND RECREATION, MONTEREY DISTRICT, a public entity ("State Parks"); and
- MONTEREY PENINSULA REGIONAL PARK DISTRICT, a public entity ("MPRPD"); and
- BIG SUR LAND TRUST, a California nonprofit public benefit corporation, ("BSLT"); and
- POINT LOBOS FOUNDATION, a California nonprofit public benefit corporation ("PLF"), and cooperating association

Sometimes referred to herein individually as a "Party" and collectively as "Parties", for the purpose of memorializing the intent of each to work together with the other parties to undertake a coordinated effort for the benefit of the public and the preservation of the landscape in respect to the management lands described herein (working title, "Lobos-Corona Parklands Project" or "LCPP").

This MOU is based on the following representations and statement of purpose:

RECITALS

A. State Parks, MPRPD and BSLT each own and operate real property, and resources thereon, in the County of Monterey, which are identified and depicted in the Map attached as Exhibit A and incorporated by reference (individually referred to as shown on said Map and collectively referred to as "LCPP lands"). PLF does not own any LCPP lands but assists State Parks as a Contracted Cooperating Association, by separate agreement, and is invested in matters concerning Point Lobos State Natural Reserve which is a part of the LCPP lands.

B. The Parties have met periodically since early 2013 to visualize and discuss the development of a joint working relationship between and among them ("LCPP Group") to coordinate the development, management, promotion, sustainability, preservation and stewardship of LCPP lands and their natural and cultural resources and have adopted a mutually supported Vision document ("Vision") attached as Exhibit B and incorporated herein.

C. The intent and purpose of the Vision and this MOU is consistent with the mission and authorities of each Party.

D. The Parties all agree to participate in the LCPP Group and this MOU on the terms and conditions set forth herein.

1. VISION AND PURPOSE

1.1. This MOU memorializes each Party's intent to participate in the LCPP Group. Each Party agrees to work together as part of an integrated multi-agency effort and to actively coordinate, communicate, cooperate and collaborate across our respective jurisdictional boundaries.

LCPP MOU FINAL 4.1.14 -- Page 1
1.2. This MOU’s purpose is to facilitate the realization of LCPP objectives and the goals more fully articulated in the LCPP Vision.

2. SCOPE

2.1. Each Party operates under specific local, state, and federal laws and regulations, as well as its respective organizational rules, regulations, policies and practices. Nothing in this MOU supersedes, negates, nullifies or alters those authorities, or the Parties’ respective mandate(s), obligations (s) or right (s). This MOU does not convey to any Party any authority or right to approve or prohibit uses on LCPP lands of or by any other Party.

2.2. This MOU does not obligate any party to transfer, expend or allocate any funds or services or properties. Specific work projects, activities or events that involve funding or the transfer of funds, services or property among the various Parties will require the execution of separate agreements.

2.3. This MOU is intended to pertain to all LCPP lands. The inclusion of any additional land to be covered by this MOU will require the unanimous consent of all Parties.

2.4. This MOU highlights the mutual desire and intent to coordinate LCPP lands and resources but does not assign specific responsibilities with respect thereto.

3. AGREEMENT

The Parties, and each of them, agree to the following:

3.1. Voluntary Equal Participants; Consensus. Each Party is a voluntary and equal participant in the LCPP Group under this MOU. All action under this MOU shall be undertaken by unanimous consent.

3.2. Brian O’Neill’s 21 Partnership Success Factors. The Parties intend to conduct the business of the LCPP Group in accordance with the principles embodied in Brian O’Neill’s 21 Partnership Success Factors attached as Exhibit C, to the extent applicable to the LCPP Group.

3.3. Organizational Constraints. Parties will work to carry out this MOU within the constraints of their respective organization’s authorities, policies and missions, workloads, staffing limitations and funding limitations.

3.4. Term; Termination; Withdrawal. This MOU shall have a term of three (3) years beginning on the Effective Date, and thereafter shall automatically renew for additional three (3) year terms unless a Party objects to such automatic renewal by written notice within sixty (60) days prior to the expiration of the first or any subsequent 3-year term. Any Party may withdraw from this MOU by delivering written notice at least sixty (60) days prior to the proposed withdrawal date. Upon the withdrawal of any party the remaining parties will convene to either modify or terminate this MOU.

3.5. Additional Lands; Additional Parties. This MOU may be amended with the unanimous consent of the Parties to include additional lands and/or additional entities as Parties.
3.6. **Cooperate and Collaborate.** The Parties agree to:

a) Collaborate and cooperate willingly and openly, exploring opportunities to work together, to leverage their respective expertise, experience, skills and resources for the benefit of the LCPP and to assist each other when mutually agreed with specific activities relating to LCPP lands.

b) Work cooperatively to present consistent LCPP messaging to the public and coordinate media inquiry responses.

3.7. **Communicate.** The Parties agree to:

a) Maintain open, constructive, cooperative and timely communications regarding LCPP related projects, needs and information pertinent to LCPP lands and the LCPP Group.

3.8. **Be an Active Participant.** The Parties agree to:

a) Commit to and maintain an active and supportive role in the LCPP Group.

b) Attend and actively participate in LCPP Group Director's meetings, regular planning meetings and subcommittee meetings and perform agreed upon work deemed necessary by the LCPP Group.

c) Work together to develop and execute an annual plan that supports the MOU and Vision to include, without limitation, mutually agreed upon priorities (e.g., integrated planning efforts, projects, programs, events), an action item list, roles and responsibilities and a timeline for implementation. The Parties will regularly review the plan to assess progress and make adjustments as deemed necessary by the LCPP Group.

3.9. **Miscellaneous**

a) **Annual MOU Review and Amendment.** The Parties will annually review the MOU, assess their progress and the state of the LCPP Group, and update or amend the document as needed. Amendments to this MOU shall be agreed to in writing and by the unanimous consent of all Parties.

b) **No Legal Partnership.** This MOU is not intended to and does not create a legal partnership, joint venture, employment relationship, or agency relationship between or among the Parties.

c) **Confidential Information.** In the course of implementing these cooperative efforts, the Parties may come into contact with certain confidential information of another Party. Each Party will notify the other Party (ies) when information provided is confidential information. No Party will disclose, without prior written consent of the affected Party, any such identified confidential information to any person, agency, organization, or party, for any reason or purpose whatsoever, except as may be required by law or pursuant to court order.
d) **Non-Binding.** This MOU is not legally binding. The sole ramification for non-performance under this MOU shall be termination of the MOU with no damage or penalty.

e) **Signatories.** Each person signing this MOU represents and warrants that he or she is duly authorized to sign and deliver this MOU.

f) **Counterparts.** This MOU may be executed in two (2) or more counterparts, each of which shall be deemed an original and all of which together shall constitute one instrument.

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<td>Name: MAT FURSE</td>
<td>Name: RAFAEL PAYAN, PhD</td>
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EXHIBITS

Exhibit A – LOBOS-CORONA PARKLANDS PROJECT MAP

Exhibit B – VISION DOCUMENT

Exhibit C – BRIAN O’NEILL’S 21 PARTNERSHIP SUCCESS FACTORS
EXHIBIT B

VISION DOCUMENT
LOBOS-CORONA PARKLANDS PROJECT
(Working Title)

A project of California State Parks (Monterey District), Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District, Big Sur Land Trust and Point Lobos Foundation

Overview
We envision the Lobos-Corona Parklands (LCP) as the next great parks and conservation landscape in California, equal in significance to the Golden Gate National Recreation Area near San Francisco. The Lobos-Corona system of parklands, trails and outdoor spaces encompasses thousands of acres of state and local public lands between Carmel and Big Sur, and is contiguous to one of the nation’s most significant marine environments. The innovative LCP Project advances this extraordinary legacy of land conservation and investment in parks and open space. The Lobos-Corona Parklands play a vital role in sustaining the health of our communities and thrive as a beloved public resource, enjoying broad community support.

Note: The Lobos-Corona Parklands Project currently includes South Bank Trail and Coast Ranch (Big Sur Land Trust); Palo Corona Regional Park, the former Whisler Wilson Ranch and High Meadows Open Space (Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District); Hatton Canyon, Carmel River State Beach, Point Lobos State Natural Reserve, the former A.M. Allan Ranch and Garrapata State Park (California State Parks).

Collaborative Framework
Working as collaborators, the Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District, California State Parks, Point Lobos Foundation and Big Sur Land Trust coordinate the integrated planning, management and monitoring of the Lobos-Corona Parklands in a way that benefits the public trust, leverages each other’s strengths, best serves the community and the land and is sustainable over the long term. Our goals are to conserve unique California Central Coast wild lands and open space, and in doing so enhance how people of all backgrounds and abilities experience, enjoy and ultimately learn from the unique outdoor experiences they provide. Wherever appropriate, we promote and coordinate habitat and wildlife monitoring, conservation and management, trail networks, facilities development, public access and safety, visitor information, interpretation, outdoor and cultural education and recreation. Visitors to the LCP come away with a renewed love and respect for the land, and leave inspired to help ensure that future generations have the same opportunity to explore and discover our natural heritage.

Collaboration allows us to accomplish together what we cannot accomplish independently. While we respect and are mindful of each organization’s mission, role, responsibilities and authority over the individual lands within the LCP region, we freely share information and meet regularly to discuss issues of mutual interest and concern. A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) guides our strategy and decisions, and advances our vision of collaboration in service to the public. Over time, our initiative will likely expand to engage other entities (e.g., local jurisdictions including cities, other nonprofits, governmental agencies, and business organizations) in various ways – through new alliances, partnerships and as additional signatories to the MOU or other agreements.
Planning and Monitoring
Our site and resource assessment, planning and monitoring activities are collaborative and integrated. Actions are site-specific, yet reflect the influence each collaborator has on the regional landscape. Our comprehensive approach to land and resource-based assessment, planning and monitoring includes, but is not limited to, identifying and monitoring:

- Critical habitat, including riparian and wildlife corridors
- Cultural and historic sites
- Working landscapes
- Viewshed protection
- Habitat restoration, and
- Recreational opportunities.

Accordingly, this approach will influence, and at times guide, the development of individual operating plans among the collaborators.

Caretaking of the Land, Access and Recreation
Our role as stewards of the land is paramount. Lobos-Corona Parklands Project collaborators jointly implement the very best in land management practices, ensuring that the lands, waters and native plant and wildlife communities within the LCP region remain healthy. To help the public enjoy and reconnect with the landscapes within the LCP, we work to put in place trails and facilities that connect these parklands for public use, and create a seamless experience of exploration and discovery. People with differing abilities and interests (including those using wheelchairs, walkers, hikers, horseback riders and bike riders) as well as from different backgrounds, communities and heritages experience and enjoy these lands. As collaborators, we work to address needs for safety, adequate parking and associated improvements in access. We make information readily available to help guide visitors across these lands, providing a clear explanation of why these parklands are so special, how they relate to one another, and how visitors can best support them.

Interpretation and Education
We provide learning experiences on the land that inspire a spirit of stewardship in all people, especially youth. We especially focus on motivating young people and families to learn, enjoy and care about the outdoors. Our well-coordinated youth programs offer a range of experiences across the landscape, and we use the latest technology and social media to broaden our reach. Lobos-Corona Parklands also have a rich cultural history, so we collect and share stories of our evolving relationship with the landscape. We work to eliminate barriers that keep historically underserved audiences from accessing and enjoying these parklands. We envision youth and family camps will offer more immersive experiences and provide for in-service, in-field training and education. As appropriate, interpretation is supported by carefully planned and developed new facilities and the repurposing of existing structures. The community is encouraged to provide ideas for educational programming. As may be appropriate, education programs relate to state educational standards and are consistent with individual agency protocols and compliance goals.

Volunteers
Volunteers can and do play an invaluable role as citizen stewards, scientists, docents, educators and advocates. By leading hikes, touring school groups, building and maintaining trails, restoring habitats, giving educational talks, gathering field data, and other activities, volunteers enrich the public’s appreciation of the landscape. We expand our volunteer programs as needed and work to enhance the volunteer
experience. We provide opportunities for cross pollination and volunteer enrichment among our programs. In short, we envision the Lobos-Corona Parklands as a great place to be a volunteer.

**Community Engagement**

We intend for the Lobos-Corona Parklands to become a premier visitor experience and destination, with a compelling story, appropriate facilities and a strong identity that attracts, builds and broadens community support. While public agency actions are in process, we provide opportunities for the public to experience LCP lands presently not open or readily accessible to the public through jointly conducted events and pilot programs. We establish an advisory body of community leaders who act as ambassadors, advocates, community liaisons, and sounding boards that can help reach out to and engage their respective communities, organizations, businesses and agencies to champion the LCP concept and help secure and leverage needed support.

**Financial Investment and Fundraising**

Funding for parks and open space stewardship is decreasing even as ongoing stewardship of land, infrastructure and facilities and nature education requires ever-increasing resources, both human and financial. By working together as a team, we will leverage greater support, forge new alliances with funders and strengthen the financial health of all collaborators. We will do this while respecting the individual funding needs of each of the participating organizations and the differences in how each organization is supported. Our collaboration can and should provide for a sustainable funding model supported by both public and private sources. To help make this a reality, we engage the hospitality and business communities as supporters. The LCP is a valuable community resource that has the potential to generate significant economic benefits for the region and its residents while simultaneously advancing the conservation of one of the continent’s most magnificent landscapes.

**Required Actions by Public Agencies**

We work to advance the completion of California State Parks’ General Plan and Monterey Peninsula Regional Park District’s Master Plan within the next two to four years. We also actively contribute to the development of each other’s plans and ensure they align with each other where needed. The public has a long-standing interest in and expectation that public parklands within the Lobos-Corona Parklands region be open for public enjoyment as appropriate. We work in a unified way to leverage cooperation from agencies and community organizations to implement projects on the ground – including transportation and transit-related improvements – that are critical to facilitating greater public safety and access into the LCP and that will result in a smaller carbon footprint.