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### **Conservation Groups Help Acquire 79 Acres of Key Open Space, Wildlife Habitat in North Livermore**

LIVERMORE, *Calif.*— The Center for Biological Diversity and the Alameda Creek Alliance have contributed to the public acquisition of open space in North Livermore that's home to rare wildlife and alkaline soil plant species. The East Bay Regional Park District this week approved the purchase of a 79-acre private parcel known as "Eddie's Flat" adjacent to the western edge of Brushy Peak Regional Preserve. This expands an important wildlife corridor, protects populations of several rare plants that grow on high-salinity soils, and may assist with regional trail connections.

"Putting these 79 acres into the public's hands will help ensure they continue to provide important habitat for wildlife, including some plants that live in only a few places," said Jeff Miller, director of the Alameda Creek Alliance.

The Park District completed the purchase of Eddie's Flat with \$50,000 from a mitigation fund created by the conservation groups, the result of a 2010 lawsuit settlement with Alameda County over the Staples Ranch development in Pleasanton, which affected habitat for a rare alkaline soil plant known as San Joaquin spearscale. The Park District acquired Eddie's Flat for \$550,000—with contributions of \$250,000 each from an Alameda County Altamont Landfill mitigation fund and a City of Livermore Dougherty Valley mitigation fund, and \$50,000 from the Staples Ranch mitigation fund. The Park District put up \$70,000 in additional costs.

The conservation groups have secured an additional \$700,000 in mitigation funding from the Staples Ranch project for the Park District to purchase and protect more alkaline soil habitat in Alameda County.

"We're happy to be part of this effort to expand Brushy Peak Preserve and secure this important wildlife corridor," said Adam Keats with the Center for Biological Diversity.

High-salinity soils and alkali sink vegetation on the property may support imperiled animal and plant species, including longhorn fairy shrimp, palmate-bracted bird's-beak, Livermore tar plant and San Joaquin spearscale. An intermittent, seasonal tributary of Altamont Creek in the northwest corner of the property may contain vernal pool fairy shrimp. A eucalyptus grove along the property's northeast boundary has potential nesting habitat for raptors including golden eagles.

The property is also located in an area inhabited by imperiled species such as California red-legged frogs, California tiger salamanders, San Joaquin kit foxes, burrowing owls, tricolored blackbirds and horned larks.

The purchase is expected to be completed by May. The property will be placed into land bank status and will open to the public after an amendment to the Brushy Peak Regional Preserve land-use plan is approved and necessary improvements are made.

The Park District has identified Eddie's Flat as important for protecting and expanding wildlife corridors in the North Livermore area. The property is contiguous to preserved open space of the Livermore Area Recreation and Park District's Brushy Peak Open Space, Contra Costa Water District's Los Vaqueros Reservoir watershed lands, and the East Bay Regional Park District's Brushy Peak Regional Preserve, Vasco Caves Regional Preserve, and the recently acquired Vasco Hills and Byron Vernal Pools properties, a 28,000-acre combined wildlife corridor. The acquisition allows for future restoration of a portion of Altamont Creek and provides potential opportunities for trail connections from Brushy Peak Regional Preserve to Vasco Road.

The city of Pleasanton approved the Staples Ranch development in 2009, on property owned by Alameda County near I-580 and El Charro Road in Pleasanton. The Staples Ranch project bulldozed habitat that supported San Joaquin spearscale, for residential and commercial development and to extend Stoneridge Drive across Arroyo Mocho. The Center for Biological Diversity, Alameda Creek Alliance and neighbors challenged the project in court, and a settlement agreement provided funding to protect alkaline soil habitat and restore 85,000 square feet of riparian habitat along Arroyo Mocho, west of Staples Ranch.

*The [Center for Biological Diversity](#) is national, nonprofit conservation organization with more than 675,000 members and online activists dedicated to the protection of endangered species and wild places.*

*The [Alameda Creek Alliance](#) is a community watershed group with over 2,000 members, dedicated to protecting and restoring the natural ecosystems of the Alameda Creek watershed.*