

Groups announce permanent conservation of 879 acres in Eel River watershed



The Trout Creek property. Photo courtesy of the Mendocino Land Trust.

NORTH COAST, Calif. – The Mendocino Land Trust and the Potter Valley Tribe, in partnership with Pacific Gas & Electric Co. and the Pacific Forest and Watershed Lands Stewardship Council, announced that they have permanently conserved 879 acres of land in the Eel River watershed, just northeast of the town of Potter Valley.

In accordance with the terms and conditions stipulated by the California Public Utilities Commission in PG&E's 2003 bankruptcy settlement agreement, these lands have been donated to the Potter Valley Tribe and a conservation easement over those lands has been conveyed to Mendocino Land Trust, in order to protect and enhance the beneficial public values of the site, in perpetuity.

Together, the Potter Valley Tribe and Mendocino Land Trust will protect the conservation values present on these properties, including fish and wildlife habitat, open space, public view-shed, forest ecosystems, historic and cultural values and public access.

This land constitutes a significant portion of Potter Valley Tribe's aboriginal territory. As the historic inhabitants, stewards and now owners of these parcels, the tribe looks forward to enhancing existing resources, opening certain areas up for ceremonial and cultural activities, enhancing fishery resources, expanding environmental education programs, and participating in future recreational development opportunities.

The Potter Valley Tribe has been working towards this outcome for over a decade.

“On July 24, after nearly twelve years of diligent effort, the Potter Valley Tribe will receive a donation of over 800 acres from PG&E,” said Salvador Rosales, chairman of the Potter Valley Tribe. “The return of the land from PG&E to the Potter Valley Tribe was not an easy process, but will result in the beneficial public values of the land being protected in perpetuity. We are grateful for the Stewardship Council’s effort to restore ancestral land to the Tribe and the CPUC for approving this very important transaction.”

Mendocino Land Trust has been a leader in land conservation, stewardship and habitat restoration in Mendocino County for more than 40 years. Well known for its extensive network of coastal beaches and public access trails, Mendocino Land Trust also engages in conservation projects countywide. Since 1976, Mendocino Land Trust has worked with willing landowners to protect more than 14,000 acres of forests, wildlife habitat and agricultural lands in Mendocino County.

“Mendocino Land Trust is proud to have been selected by the Stewardship Council to hold these conservation easements for the Potter Valley Tribe. It has been a lengthy process but we feel that we have built a great working relationship with all involved and are happy to see this process to its conclusion. The benefits of watershed conservation and restoration extend to everyone in the county and beyond,” said Ann Cole, executive director of Mendocino Land Trust.



The Alder Creek property. Photo courtesy of the Mendocino Land Trust.