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JOHN MUIR LAND TRUST ANNOUNCES CARR RANCH IS SAVED
604 ACRES PROTECTED IN PARTNERSHIP WITH EAST BAY MUNICIPAL UTILITY DISTRICT (EBMUD)

MARTINEZ, CA — John Muir Land Trust (JMLT) announces Carr Ranch is saved. The 604-acre cattle ranch will be permanently protected in partnership with East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD). Adjacent to the Town of Moraga, the property will be preserved as watershed land, essential wildlife habitat and open space for public enjoyment. An outpouring of donations from individuals, foundations, agencies and corporations reached the $7 million project goal needed to acquire the private property from the Carr family, who have owned the land for over a century. Contributing $4.5 million toward the purchase, East Bay Municipal Utility District (EBMUD) will hold title to the property, and JMLT will provide public access and recreation.

John Muir Land Trust and EBMUD have signed a Conservation Agreement to protect the property in perpetuity. Under this agreement EBMUD's role is to preserve the watershed on the property, protect wildlife habitat, maintain open spaces and natural scenery, and preserve historical ranching heritage. JMLT will manage permanent public access to Carr Ranch for light recreation such as hiking, wildlife viewing, dog walking and equestrian activities.

The undeveloped Carr Ranch property provides habitat for endangered reptiles and amphibians — and for large animals such as deer, American badger, golden eagle, and mountain lion. Its creeks and streams drain into the Upper San Leandro Reservoir, and from there into the homes of tens of thousands of East Bay families. Carr Ranch exemplifies the best of Contra Costa landscapes, an area known for some of the most beautiful scenery in the region. Terrain varies from hillsides and ridge tops to meadows and bottomlands; and the vegetation from coastal live oak and riparian woodlands to coastal scrub and annual grasses.

"We couldn't have hoped for an outcome that better serves the public's need for permanent protection and access to this spectacular natural landscape," said Linus Eukel, Executive Director of John Muir Land Trust. Carr Ranch is an essential addition to the large protected area created by the Las Trampas Regional Wilderness and nearby watershed lands owned by EBMUD that drain into the Upper San Leandro Reservoir. Continued Eukel, "Carr Ranch offers spectacular views and clean drinking water that will benefit East Bay families for generations to come. And of course, permanently preserving critical wildlife habitat means that current residents — including threatened and endangered species — will benefit as well."

EBMUD manages 50,000 acres of habitat in the East Bay and Sierra foothills. "EBMUD's commitment to protect the environment for future generations is at the core of our mission statement," said Richard Sykes, Director of Natural Resources for EBMUD. "Nothing we do is more important than protecting the public's access to drinking water — a limited and precious resource in California. Carr Ranch is a vital addition to the watershed lands we own and manage."

In recent decades, land conservation is often achieved through effective partnerships of individuals, foundations and organizations, both public and private. "EBMUD is the perfect partner," said Eukel. "No organization in Northern California could be more entrusted with the permanent stewardship of this watershed property than EBMUD. No one has more experience or a stronger mandate to preserve and protect the natural character of the refuge lands it owns."

Said Sykes, "Permanent preservation of Carr Ranch would not have happened without John Muir Land Trust. But for JMLT, this land would eventually have been lost to development."

Thousands of individuals and organizations contributed to the Campaign to Save Carr Ranch. In particular, residents of Lamorinda — the towns of Lafayette, Moraga, and Orinda — mailed in donations of all sizes. Generous contributions were made by the Town of Moraga, Moraga Park Foundation, Orinda Park and Recreation Foundation, Morrison & Foerster, and The San Francisco Foundation. Many residents of San Ramon Valley joined in, protecting the land in the hills above them. Well-known pets & wildlife columnist Joan Morris of the Bay Area News Group led a call to action that raised $100,000 from her readers throughout the East Bay. Contributions came from residents of Alameda County, including the nearby Oakland Hills and many among the tens of thousands of families who receive drinking water from the Upper San Leandro Reservoir.

"Of the countless people to thank, we have to start with the Carr Family," said Eukel. "Their desire to see the land conserved shows the depth of their commitment to the community. By honoring the wishes passed down through the family, they are protecting the legacy of our region's ranching heritage. We are so honored to be their partner."

Plans for opening public access will be forthcoming. Given the three miles of existing ranch roads, it is anticipated that few additional trails will be needed. Those seeking to view the property from the vantage of existing EBMUD trails will find useful information at jmlt.org.

"This is a day of celebration for all Californians. Carr Ranch is one of those rare properties that checks every box on the conservation priority list," said Eukel.

About John Muir Land Trust

John Muir Land Trust (JMLT) protects and cares for open space, ranches, farms, parkland and shoreline in Contra Costa County. In a generation, John Muir Land Trust has become one of the leading forces for conservation in northern California. With 3,100 acres protected, many beautiful places in the East Bay are permanently preserved for recreation, wildlife habitat and spectacular scenic views. JMLT believes that the vitality of our open spaces is essential to the health of our earth, air, water, native plants and animals — and all of us. jmlt.org

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