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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Peninsula Open Space Trust Partners with San Mateo County Parks To Open Cowell-Purisima Trail Seven Days a Week

***Delayed by pandemic, full-time trail opening is enabled by long-term agreement
approved in March 2020***

PALO ALTO, Calif. (Feb 25, 2020) – One year after the San Mateo County Board of Supervisors voted to approve a ten-year management agreement between [San Mateo County Parks](#), California Coastal Conservancy and the [Peninsula Open Space Trust](#) (POST), the popular [Cowell-Purisima Trail](#) is now open seven days a week.

Per that agreement, the 3.6-mile coastal trail, which POST purchased and permanently protected from commercial development over the past three decades, is now managed and maintained by San Mateo County Parks. As part of the [California Coastal trail](#), Cowell-Purisima Trail winds along the ocean bluffs just south of Half Moon Bay and [Cowell Ranch State Beach](#). With its unique placement between the Pacific Ocean and Purisima Farms and North Cowell Ranch, the trail offers users an up-close look at both the area's active agricultural heritage and its renowned coastal vistas.

For the last six years, the Cowell-Purisima Trail has been accessible only on weekends and holidays due to the absence of an agency with the resources to manage it on a daily basis. Safety measures due to the coronavirus pandemic have occasionally required its closure during the past year. The trail is now open seven days a week from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., with periodic brief closures due to farm operations and trail maintenance. Trail use is subject to typical San Mateo County Parks regulations, and complete access details are available at <https://parks.smcgov.org/cowell-purisima-trail>.

“San Mateo County Parks is pleased to open the Cowell-Purisima Trail to visitors seven days a week at a time when it is so clearly needed,” stated **Nicholas Calderon**, director of San Mateo County Parks. “This past year has demonstrated that safe and consistent access to outdoor spaces and experiences in nature are essential both for our physical and mental well-being. Through our partnership with POST, San Mateo County will provide what visitors seek most: access to some of the most beautiful bluffs and views in California and a stroll along a trail rich with history.”

“Enabling public access to this stunning coastal landscape is a key part of what drove POST to protect this land more than 30 years ago,” said **Daniel Olstein**, POST’s director of land stewardship. “We appreciate that with everything going on today, our partner San Mateo County Parks is able to take this on to ensure that the public has safe, environmentally responsible access to this unique coastline.”

History of the Property

All of San Mateo County constitutes part of the ancestral lands of numerous Indigenous peoples who stewarded the land and coastline for millennia. Their descendants, today collectively identified as Ohlone, still reside in the region. The Cowell-Purisima trail follows the ocean bluffs across land that once was part of Cowell Ranch. Henry Cowell established the ranch in the 19th century, and the trail – which crosses Purisima Creek – is partly named for him. To protect the beachfront land from commercial development, POST acquired it from Cowell’s heirs in 1988. POST made most of the land available to local farming families for continued agricultural use and donated the remaining lands to the State of California for dedicated public access. POST partnered with the [California State Coastal Conservancy](#), landowners, farmers and others to build the trail, which opened in 2009.

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About Peninsula Open Space Trust

POST protects open space on the Peninsula and in the South Bay for the benefit of all. As a private nonprofit land trust, POST has been responsible for saving more than 80,000 acres since its founding in 1977. POST works with private landowners and public agencies to create a network of protected lands so that present and future generations may benefit from the careful balance of rural and urban landscapes that makes our region extraordinary. Visit openspacetrust.org for more information.

About the San Mateo County Parks

San Mateo County Parks manages parks, preserves, trails and historic sites to preserve public lands and provide opportunities for education and recreation. The Department’s 24 sites are located throughout the County and encompasses more than 16,000 acres that represent the region’s wondrously diverse natural settings. Learn more about San Mateo County Parks at parks.smcgov.org. For directions to the Cowell-Purisima Trail, visit <https://parks.smcgov.org/locations/visiting-cowell-purisima-trail>.

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SEE MAP GRAPHIC NEXT PAGE

— For high-resolution images or maps, email cschoof@smcparks.org or click [here](#) —



- Cowell-Purisima Trail
- Cowell Ranch Beach Trail
- Protected Land
- ⌋ Bridge