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Article Last Updated: Wednesday, March 23, 2005 - 9:22:14 AM PST

Ridegwood Ranch conservation easement obtained

Move conserves redwoods and portion of Walker Creek

Special for The Willits News

The Mendocino Land Trust has purchased a 33-acre conservation easement on the historic Ridgewood Ranch south of Willits.

The easement permanently conserves stands of 800-year-old redwoods, mature second-growth redwoods, and a portion of Walker Creek, an important steelhead fishery.

It is the first of several conservation easements proposed on the 5,000-acre ranchhome of the legendary racehorse Seabiscuit. The anticipated conservation easements will preclude development or subdivision on 90 percent of the ranch, which will continue to be privately owned and managed as a working ranch.

"We are delighted to have conserved the ranch's redwood groves, and we could not have achieved this milestone without the support of the Save-the-Redwoods League, Inland Mendocino Land Trust, and a generous donation of value by the landowner, the Golden Rule Church Association," said Mendocino Land Trust Executive Director James Bernard.

The Save-the-Redwoods League provided \$300,000 the bulk of the purchase price for acquisition of the conservation easement on the redwoods.

"We were very pleased to provide funding to the Mendocino Land Trust to protect these redwood groves," said Save-the-Redwoods League Executive Director Kate Anderton. "More than 95 percent of the world's ancient redwoods have been lost, and very few of those left are in Mendocino County,"

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OP-ED

Letters to the Editor
with Ed Burton

"The league decided to be the first organization to provide conservation funding to the Ridgewood Ranch Conservation Project to protect this unusual stand of old-growth redwoods," Anderton said. "We hope it will provide the impetus to secure fun-ding to protect the ranch's other amazing natural and historical resources."

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"Members of the Golden Rule Church Association have been looking forward to this day for almost four years," noted church representative Tracy Livingston. "We agreed to sell the conservation easement at considerably less than its value, because we believe that conserving the redwoods and this ranch is the right thing to do."

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Total purchase price of the redwoods, working agricultural lands, oak woodlands, and working forestland conservation easements on approximately 4,500 acres of land, including five miles of steelhead creeks, 2,500 acres of oak woodlands and 3.5 miles of frontage on Highway 101, is \$6 million.

To date, the Mendocino Land Trust has received commitments for \$4.3 million and is actively seeking the remaining funds, including necessary privately contributed funding.

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