



Date: July 26, 2007 for August 1st Agenda
From: Patrick M. McCormick, Executive Officer
To: Commissioners
Subject: Cooley Farmlands

Summary: The Land Trust of Santa Cruz County is preparing to apply for a state grant that would allow the trust to purchase agricultural conservation easements on several hundred acres of farmland on both sides of the river in the Pajaro Valley. The Trust has requested a letter of support from LAFCO.

Recommendation: Authorize a letter of support.

The Land Trust of Santa Cruz County (<http://www.landtrustsantacruz.org/>) is a non-profit corporation formed in 1978 to protect agricultural lands, forests, and natural lands with high conservation values. The Land Trust has requested LAFCO's support for a State grant to fund an agricultural easement on several hundred acres of prime farmlands in the Pajaro Valley. A map of the Cooley Farmlands is attached. The easement would be a voluntary acquisition from the long-time property owners, Donald and Diane Cooley. The State grant would fund a permanent agricultural easement on the properties.

In May 2006, LAFCO supported a state grant application for agricultural easements on several hundred acres owned by the Borina Foundation. The Land Trust was successful in obtaining that grant.

The Cooley Farmlands are prime, productive agricultural lands located outside the areas planned for urban development in the current Watsonville, Santa Cruz County, and Monterey County General Plans. Agricultural easements would promote the continued intensive farming of the properties while helping to limit long-term urban sprawl.

Attachments

cc: Donald and Diane Cooley
Terry Corwin, Executive Director, Land Trust of Santa Cruz County