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SIERRA FOOTHILL CONSERVANCY'S MISSION

The grasslands, foothills, and forests between Yosemite and Kings Canyon National Parks provide land for farms and ranches, a home for native plants and wildlife, and a source of clean water.

The Sierra Foothill Conservancy honors our natural and cultural heritage by protecting these resources and ensuring that present and future generations will continue to experience and enjoy the land in this region.

SFC ANNOUNCES 571 ACRES OF NEWLY PROTECTED LANDS THROUGH THE INDIAN GULCH RANCH CONSERVATION EASEMENT!

CATHEYS VALLEY, CALIFORNIA - Sierra Foothill Conservancy (SFC) is proud to announce its latest acquisition - the 571-acre Indian Gulch Ranch Conservation Easement! Located in Mariposa County, this property boasts an array of conservation values, including working rangeland, annual grassland, blue oak woodland, riparian corridors, historic resources, wildlife and habitat resources, open space, and scenic views – all of which are now forever protected. **This newest acquisition brings SFC's total acres conserved to 66,398!**

Landowner, Jen Taylor, purchased the property in 2022 with the goal of reviving this important working landscape by implementing her long-term goals of conserving the property, installing additional infrastructure onsite to increase operational efficiency and sustainability, and perhaps, one day, purchasing additional rangeland for expansion purposes.

"I really appreciate working with SFC because they are keeping large swaths of land open, tying them to other conserved lands, and keeping those lands in production (ag)" says landowner Jennifer Taylor (Doctor of Veterinary Medicine)

In April 2023, SFC was awarded competitive grant funding by the California Department of Conservation's California Farmland Conservancy Program (CFCP), which provides grants for



the voluntary acquisition of conservation easements on agricultural land. CFCP is funded by the California Clean Water, Clean Air, Safe Neighborhood Parks, and Coastal Protection Act of 2002 (Proposition 40); and, California Drought, Water, Parks, Climate, Coastal Protection, and Outdoor Access for All Act of 2018 (Proposition 68).

The Indian Gulch Ranch Conservation Easement will ensure the property is forever conserved in its natural, scenic, agricultural, and open space condition by preventing the conversion of rangeland and keeping this working cattle ranch intact. Protecting the property's conservation values also enhances greenbelts between the City of Merced, Catheys Valley, Hornitos, and Planada, promoting compact infill development in more strategic areas for community growth. Consistent with local land use planning efforts, the conservation easement restricts development and land-use conversion while simultaneously supporting climate adaptation and agricultural land resilience.

Jen is an inspiring example of women ranchers who play an important role in local land conservation. In addition to her ranch operation, Jen is the primary large animal vet for the surrounding ranching community. Her practice is a vital aspect of the web of support required for the health and sustainability of the local ranching economy. The Indian Gulch Conservation Easement is another important link in SFC's landscape-level strategy to forever protect the 50,000-acre Merced River and vernal pool grasslands conservation corridor, an effort to establish an expansive swath of protected lands that stretch from the eastern Merced vernal pool grasslands to the Wild and Scenic Merced River/Lake McClure Public Recreation Area. This corridor not only provides plentiful space for the survival and adaptation of wildlife species over time, but it also safeguards the integrity of working ranches that benefit the region's agricultural economy.

Special thanks to our funder, the California Department of Conservation and our partnering Landowner for their role in protecting this important property forever. SFC and our members celebrate this commitment to conservation!

ABOUT

SFC's Vision: From the snow-capped Sierra to the Central Valley floor, expansive landscapes, important habitats, and clean water resources are conserved and managed to ensure continuing public benefits. SFC supports a thriving land-based economy while promoting a conservation ethic that spans generations. Sierra Foothill Conservancy serves eastern Fresno, Madera, Merced and Mariposa Counties in California's central Sierra Nevada. To learn more about SFC's work and how to get involved, including how to become a member or conserve your land, visit <https://sierrafoothill.org/>.

PHOTOS

All photos taken by SFC staff.
(on following page)





Top Left: Calves amid a vibrant grassland and blue oak woodland backdrop.

Top Right: The property boasts diverse healthy habitat types, including rolling annual grasslands and blue oak woodlands. Varied topography and landscape features provide cattle and wildlife, alike, high quality habitat and grazing resources.

Bottom Left: Scenic vistas from atop the property's high peaks include SFC's recent Waltz-Turner Ranch Conservation Easement.

Bottom Right: Historic rock walls for corralling livestock are evidence of past land use.