

PRESS RELEASE



For Immediate Release

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PROGRESS FOR THE MARIPOSA CREEK PARKWAY

MARIPOSA, CA – The Mariposa County Board of Supervisors gave its final approval on Tuesday to acquire the last major piece of land needed to build the northern extension of the Mariposa Creek Parkway. The 187-acre property, located between the Mariposa County Jail and Fournier Road in Mariposa, provides direct access to Mariposa Creek and is anticipated to also be used for fuel breaks, economic development, and other recreational opportunities. Two additional properties between 8th Street and Joe Howard were acquired last week, in partnership with Sierra Foothill Conservancy, creating a contiguous stretch from 8th Street to the jail.

Supervisor Miles Menetrey of District 5 shared his appreciation: "We are thrilled about these acquisitions and the progress we've made on this important project for Mariposa. This is about the future of our community. Building a stronger local economy, expanding recreation opportunities, and making our town more fire safe are at the heart of the Mariposa Creek Parkway. I want to thank our staff and partners for all of their hard work to realize this vision for Mariposa."

The concept of the Mariposa Creek Parkway—a trail extending the length of the town from the Mariposa County Fairgrounds to the area near the Mariposa County jail—was first approved in 1988. In 1992, an integrated parkway system was incorporated into the Mariposa Town Plan and the first construction, the Phase I bridge, was completed. By 2000, completion of Phase II extended the Parkway to its current length of 0.4 miles from Highway 140 to 8th Street along Mariposa Creek.

While enthusiasm for the project has remained high, recent years have seen a burst of activity. The Parkway is mentioned as a priority project in the 2015 Town of Mariposa Transportation Center Feasibility Study, the 2017 Mariposa County Economic Vitality Strategy, and the 2018 Mariposa County Strategic Plan. Grant funds were received in 2018 to complete the Mariposa Creek Parkway Master Plan, which also inspired the first Creek Week event in 2019 as part of the process for receiving public input.

In 2019, Mariposa County entered into an innovative partnership with Sierra Foothill Conservancy to acquire the remaining parcels needed to complete the Parkway. Grants were secured in 2019 to acquire more than 168 acres between the 8th Street terminus of the Mariposa Creek Parkway and Joe Howard Street. These properties, collectively valued at over \$750,000, received final approval last week with a net cost to the County of only \$20,900. Today's acquisition of the final 187 acres to complete the northern extension of the Mariposa Creek Parkway leverages funds from a legal settlement with Merced Irrigation District to ensure this long-desired community amenity will be built. The purchase price for this final link in the chain was \$699,000.

"It is remarkable the progress we have made in such a short period of time. In less than two years we have positioned the community to triple the size of the existing Parkway. It has been a pleasure to work

with the dedicated staff and Board of Supervisors on this visionary project” said Bridget Fithian, Executive Director of Sierra Foothill Conservancy.

Over time, the vision for the Mariposa Creek Parkway has been refined and expanded. There are opportunities to explore connections and new trails—perhaps a climb to the top of the ridge to view the landscape from above, or connections through the Field of Dreams to the Stockton Creek Preserve. The 2017 Detwiler Fire highlighted the need for fuel breaks to protect the Town of Mariposa. Developable portions of the acquired land also present opportunities to sell portions to private developers for housing, shops, attractions, and other economic development activities.

Fithian reflected on this significant moment: “This is a legacy project for the community of Mariposa. We are proud to be part of the team making this vision a reality that will provide space for all ages to enjoy our beautiful outdoors, while also supporting the local economy and making Mariposa more fire resilient. The Mariposa Creek Parkway is a gift to the current and future residents of our community.”