

COUNTY

National monument named in North Coast SC County

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REGISTER-PAJARONIAN STAFF REPORT

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY

— President Barack Obama expanded the California Coastal National Monument by adding the Cotoni-Coast Dairies property, north of Santa Cruz, on Thursday.

"The national monument designation is a smart, effective way to ensure the Cotoni-Coast Dairies land is protected in perpetuity and gets the resources and attention it deserves," said Sara Barth, executive director of Sempervirens Fund. "This designation is now a reality thanks to the strong and diverse support that came from the local communities and political champions like former Senator Barbara Boxer, Representative Anna Eshoo, California Secretary of Natural Resources John Laird, former Secretary of the Interior Bruce Babbitt, and the President, all of whom understand the importance of land conservation and the preservation of cultural resources."

The Cotoni-Coast Dairies addition to the California

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Coastal National Monument consists of 5,800 acres of federally owned land in Santa Cruz County, south of Davenport, and encompasses numerous watersheds, critical wildlife habitat, vistas and cultural resources. Cotoni-Coast Dairies is part of a statewide campaign to designate six land-based additions that can serve as gateways to the existing California Coastal National Monument (Cotoni-Coast Dairies, Piedras Blancas, Lost Coast Headlands, Trinidad Head, Orange County Rocks, and Lighthouse Ranch).

"This is the 'stuff' of a dream come true. After years of hard work by so many, this majestic property will be protected in perpetuity," Eshoo said. "I salute our region's environmental leaders and conservationists, the dedicated work of thousands of local citizens, local elected officials, conservation advocates, and tribal leaders who have worked so hard to secure this designation. And I thank President Obama for his extraordinary leadership of environmental conservation. Today's proclamation ensures that this jewel will forever remain a part of California's coastal crown, allowing future generations to learn from its history and enjoy its beauty."

Sempervirens Fund has conserved lands in the Santa Cruz Mountains for 117 years. The organization has a long history of establishing protected public lands such as Big Basin, Castle Rock and Butano State Parks.

"This is a historic day for Cotoni and Amah Mutsun descendants," said Amah Mutsun



Contributed

The Cotoni-Coast Dairies property, north of Santa Cruz, has been named a California Coastal National Monument.

Tribal Band Chairman Valentín Lopez. "Our Cotoni ancestors lived on these lands for thousands of years as they raised their families and stewarded the lands so they provided for all living things. The National Monument designation will protect and conserve the beauty and spirituality of this land for all future generations. We thank those who supported this effort."

Currently, four registered ancestral Native American archaeological sites have been documented on the property, and many more may still be identified through formal archaeological surveys.

"We are celebrating this day, but understand this is just the beginning. We look forward to continued engagement to ensure Cotoni-Coast Dairies is properly stewarded," Barth said. "Monument status will ensure this landscape is well-managed and restored,

and that a now-closed area will eventually be opened to the public so they can enjoy this special place responsibly and sustainably."

"We are fortunate to live in an area of our country with such a spectacular beauty and precious wildlife," said Laura Kasa, who was community engagement director of Sempervirens Fund in 2015 when the project was kicked off. "We are also fortunate to live in Santa Cruz County where there are people who realize this."

Kasa added that much of the land is not yet accessible to the public.

"Once they are finished with the management plan, they will aim for making it public accessible," Kasa said.

Residents and others interested in the future of the national monument can stay abreast of developments by joining the Sempervirens Fund email list at sempervirens.org/ccdnm.