

Media Release

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Subject:	Newly Discovered Population of the Lime Ridge Navarretia in the Black Diamond Mines Regional Preserve

Contact:

Abigail Fateman
Interim Executive Director
East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservancy
30 Muir Road
Martinez, CA 94553
Phone: (925) 674-7820
www.cocohcp.org



Photo Credit: Scott J. Hein

A new, and now largest known, population of the Lime Ridge navarretia (*Navarretia gowenii*) has been discovered in the Black Diamond Mines Regional Preserve on a property recently acquired by the East Bay Regional Park District (EBRPD) in partnership with the East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservancy (Conservancy).

"The discovery of the Lime Ridge navarretia in lands near Black Diamond Mines Regional Preserve reminds us that we must be thoughtful as we balance conservation and development," said Contra Costa County Supervisor and East Contra Costa County and Habitat Conservancy Chair Mary Nejedly Piepho. "We need to think long term and consider what we leave behind for future generations. The work to establish and maintain the East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservancy is one way we are doing that."

The Lime Ridge navarretia had formerly only been known at two locations in Contra Costa County; both in the Lime Ridge Open Space in Walnut Creek, California. David Gowen, a botanist associated with the California Native Plant Society, originally discovered the previously undescribed species in 1998 and later identified the population as its own species in 2008. (For information on the initial discovery see: http://www.savemountdiablo.org/downloads/Media_New%20Species%20on%20Lime%20Ridge.pdf) David Gowen confirmed this recently discovered population in the Black Diamond Mines Regional Preserve.

Heath Bartosh, a principal with Nomad Ecology, working for the Conservancy was conducting a baseline botanical survey on the site when he and colleague Brian Peterson discovered the population. "This is a very significant find given that there are so few populations of this species" Bartosh says. "This gives us the opportunity to learn more about a plant whose habitat requirements we are just beginning to understand." The Lime Ridge navarretia is listed as 1B.1, rare, threatened, or endangered in California and elsewhere by the California Native Plant Society.

The East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservancy and the East Bay Regional Park District have partnered to acquire over 10,000 acres of land. Bob Nisbet, Assistant General Manager with the East

Bay Regional Park District's Land Division commented: "The lands that have recently been conserved in the region are spectacular. They connect parkland just south of the City of Pittsburg to Mount Diablo State Park. These properties provide critical habitat for wildlife as well as recreation opportunities."

"The discovery of this plant population reminds us that there are benefits to our conservation efforts that we don't anticipate. We work to preserve the species and habitats that we know are threatened. It is a bonus to learn that we have protected other rare species along the way," noted Abigail Fateman, Interim Executive Director of the East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservancy. The Conservancy and East Bay Regional Park District are working together to identify appropriate conservation and management efforts to protect the population.

Background information on the East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservancy:

Beginning in 2002, Contra Costa County joined the cities of Brentwood, Clayton, Oakley and Pittsburg to develop the East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservation Plan / Natural Community Conservation Plan (HCP) that gives local cities and agencies control over endangered species permitting in their jurisdiction. Under the plan, landowners and developers fulfill their obligations under the Endangered Species Act by paying a fee or providing their own conservation measures designed to protect listed species and their habitat. In exchange, landowners can proceed with otherwise lawful activities related to land use or economic development. The County's Department of Conservation and Development staffs the East Contra Costa County Habitat Conservancy and leads the implementation of the HCP.

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