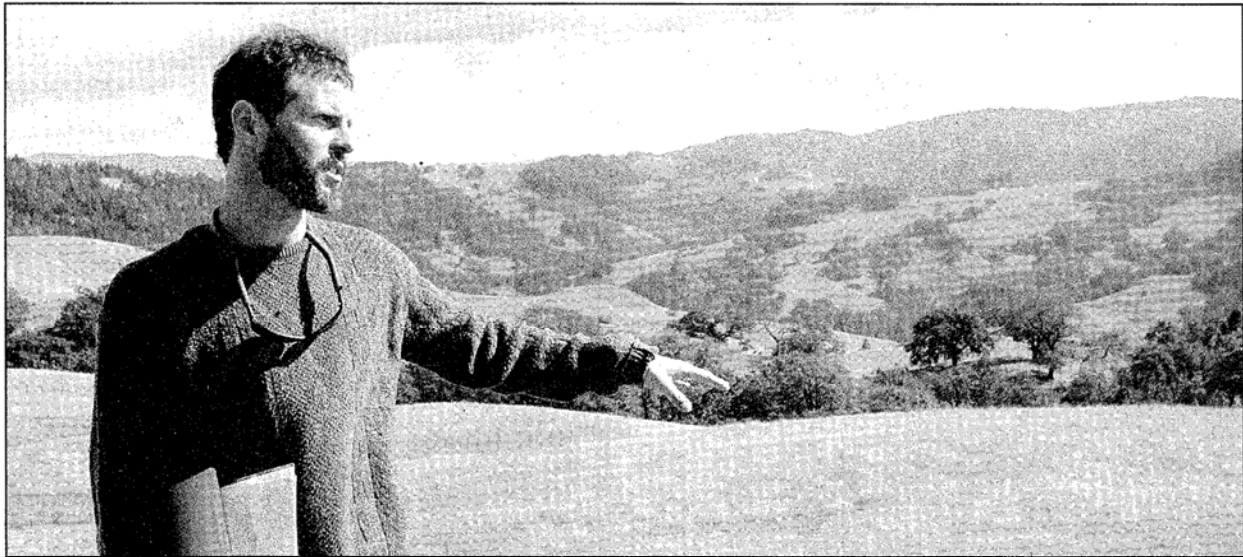




'A piece of old California'



SHAUN WALKER/THE TIMES-STANDARD

North Coast Regional Land Trust project manager Shane Greene leads a tour of the 4,700-acre Iaquia Ranch outside Kneeland, which is now protected from subdivision, overgrazing, and clear-cuts.

Deal protects Iaquia Ranch from breakup

John Driscoll
THE TIMES-STANDARD

Twenty-five years ago, Francis Carrington drove along a winding road through grasslands graced with stretching oaks, and looked out over hills thick with fir trees.

"I saw it and I fell in love with it," Carrington said.

The Fultons, a longtime Humboldt County ranching family, owned the sprawling ranch. About seven years ago, Betty Fulton was ready to sell the place, and Carrington hadn't forgotten it.

Today he raises about 200 head of black Angus cows, and occasionally harvests timber to compli-

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FRANCIS CARRINGTON

ment the ranch's income. Carrington just signed a deal that will protect the 4,700-acre Iaquia Ranch outside Kneeland from being broken up into ranchettes, and ensure the place will never be clear-cut or overgrazed.

It's a conservation easement, through which Carrington was paid \$3.5 million from the state Wildlife Conservation Board, the U.S. Forest Service Forest Legacy Program and the California Department of Forestry. Carrington donated an additional \$635,000 to the effort.

That is about a fifth of what Carrington believes he could get if he subdivided the property.

"There's no way anyone could have bought the place for what I received," Carrington said.

While he didn't want the ranch to be broken up, he also wanted to make sure it would remain a working ranch. The deal brokered by the North Coast Regional Land Trust

is part of an effort, called Six Rivers to the Sea, to preserve working ranches in the region.

In some ways, this is still old California, as one person said in a group of conservationists and county officials touring the ranch Thursday. At one fork in the road, the tour encountered a small herd of cattle urged along by a mounted cowboy, a rifle slipped into a sheath between his leg and the saddle.

Carrington has some flexibility written into the easement. But he can't cut trees in streamside areas (the North Fork of Yager Creek runs through the property), he can't

■ See RANCH/A6

RANCH

FROM A1

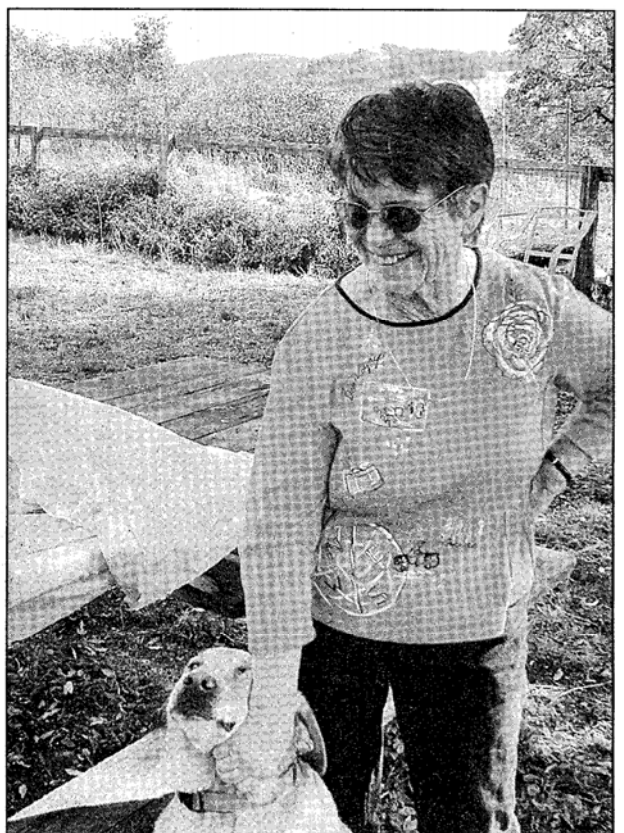
clear-cut timber and cattle grazing must ensure the soil stays healthy and doesn't seriously erode. He won't be able to cut more than 25 percent of his standing timber in any given decade.

"The forest will become bigger and older over decades," said land trust project manager Shane Greene.

Commercial mining and most building will also be prohibited.

It's not much of a change from the way the land has been managed for a long time. But the 44 patent parcels that could have been sold off piecemeal never can be, even if a new owner buys the place. The land trust will monitor the property to ensure the terms of the easement are followed.

The 1,280-acre Price Creek Ranch outside Rio Dell also recently became part of the Six Rivers to the Sea Program. The ranch is right next to the Howe Creek Ranch, a 3,660-acre property conserved through the same program.



SHAUN WALKER/THE TIMES-STANDARD

Carole Carrington's family just signed a deal with the North Coast Regional Land Trust to protect their 4,700-acre ranch near Kneeland.

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