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Six Rivers to the Sea conservation easement finalized

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Owners of the Chalk Mountain Ranch in Bridgeville granted a forest conservation easement on a 3,200-acre working ranch to Cal Fire earlier this month.

The easement will have no effect on property taxes. It will ensure the property remains a single large parcel and conserves the economic potential of forestry, grazing and natural resource-based recreation on the property, according to a Cal Fire press release. It also creates a stream-side forest preserve on major perennial streams throughout the ranch.

The Northcoast Regional Land Trust was involved with developing the proj-

ect and will be monitoring the easement. The California Wildlife Conservation Board provided the real estate research and expertise for Cal Fire.

The Barnwell family, owners of the property, helped create the Six Rivers to the Sea project in 2002, and the Chalk Mountain Ranch tract is another in a string of perpetual conservation agreements designed to keep productive resource property on tax rolls and working in private ownership in Humboldt County, according to the press release.

The Barnwells donated a significant portion of the value, and the sale was funded by the Federal Forest Legacy Program.

Les Barnwell said in a statement, "My

grandpa, my father and I have given our heart and soul to Chalk Mountain Ranch. This conservation easement will help ensure our legacy will go on forever."

Since 2002, 14,450 acres of private ranchlands have been similarly protected in the Six Rivers to the Sea project in Humboldt County, with landowners contributing about one-quarter of the easement's value.

State Program Coordinator Jeff Calvert of the California Forest Legacy Program said in a statement, "Due to the hard work and dedication of the Barnwell family, their lands will continue to provide food, fiber and habitat for all the generations to come."