



# Public Information

County of Ventura • Resource Management Agency • Planning Division

*Donating your unused land to a local conservation organization can help protect Ventura County's natural heritage.*

## *Have you considered donating or selling a portion of your land to a conservation agency?*

If you own a qualified parcel of land, the County of Ventura (with funding from the Santa Clara River Trustee Council) has just made it easier for you to donate or sell a portion of your property to a qualified conservation organization.

Ventura County recently approved changes to its Subdivision and Zoning Ordinances and Land Conservation Act Guidelines. The newly created Parcel Map Waiver/Conservation Subdivision process makes it simpler to donate or sell your land to a conservation organization. These changes apply to non-coastal land in the unincorporated areas of Ventura County.

Dividing off a portion of your land for donation or sale offers several advantages:

- 🌿 You may receive a tax break for donated land.
- 🌿 If a conservation group is willing to buy it, you'll receive cash for the portion of your land that's unusable for building or agriculture.
- 🌿 A donation or sale may reduce your maintenance costs, property taxes, estate taxes and/or insurance costs for the donated portion.
- 🌿 You'll help protect valuable habitat and open space that is part of the unique quality of life in Ventura County.

# What's New?

## Exemption from Minimum Lot Size Requirements

Zoning regulations require a minimum lot size for parcels. In the past, a property owner couldn't donate or sell a portion of a parcel unless it met the minimum size required for its zoning classification.

Now, a property owner and any qualifying conservation organization can subdivide an existing legal lot into two parcels, or make a lot line adjustment between two existing legal lots, even if one or both of the new parcels will be less than the required minimum lot size.

## Easier Subdivision Process

In the past, property owners who wanted to sell part of a parcel to a private conservation agency would have to process a subdivision map.

The new Conservation Subdivision process is faster and less expensive because it allows the subdivision to occur through a Parcel Map Waiver.

# Does My Land Qualify?

**To qualify for this exemption, the affected parcels must be legal lots outside of the Coastal Zone and the two parts of the divided parcel (known as the "Conservation Parcel" and the "Non-Conservation Parcel") must meet these requirements:**

### Conservation Parcel — the land being acquired by the conservation organization:

- Must have significant biological resources, such as wetland habitats; coastal habitats; migration corridors for fish or wildlife; locally important species/communities or habitats of endangered, threatened, or rare species; or it must be capable of being restored to this status.
- Must be acquired and maintained as permanent, natural open space by a qualified conservation organization.

### Non-Conservation Parcel — the land being kept by the owner:

- Must be of a size and shape suitable for the uses permitted by its zoning classification, and contain a buildable site.
- Must be at least 10 acres if the property is designated Agricultural in the General Plan.

**If these requirements are met, the Non-Conservation parcel will retain all of the development rights of its zoning classification.**



# How Do I get Started?

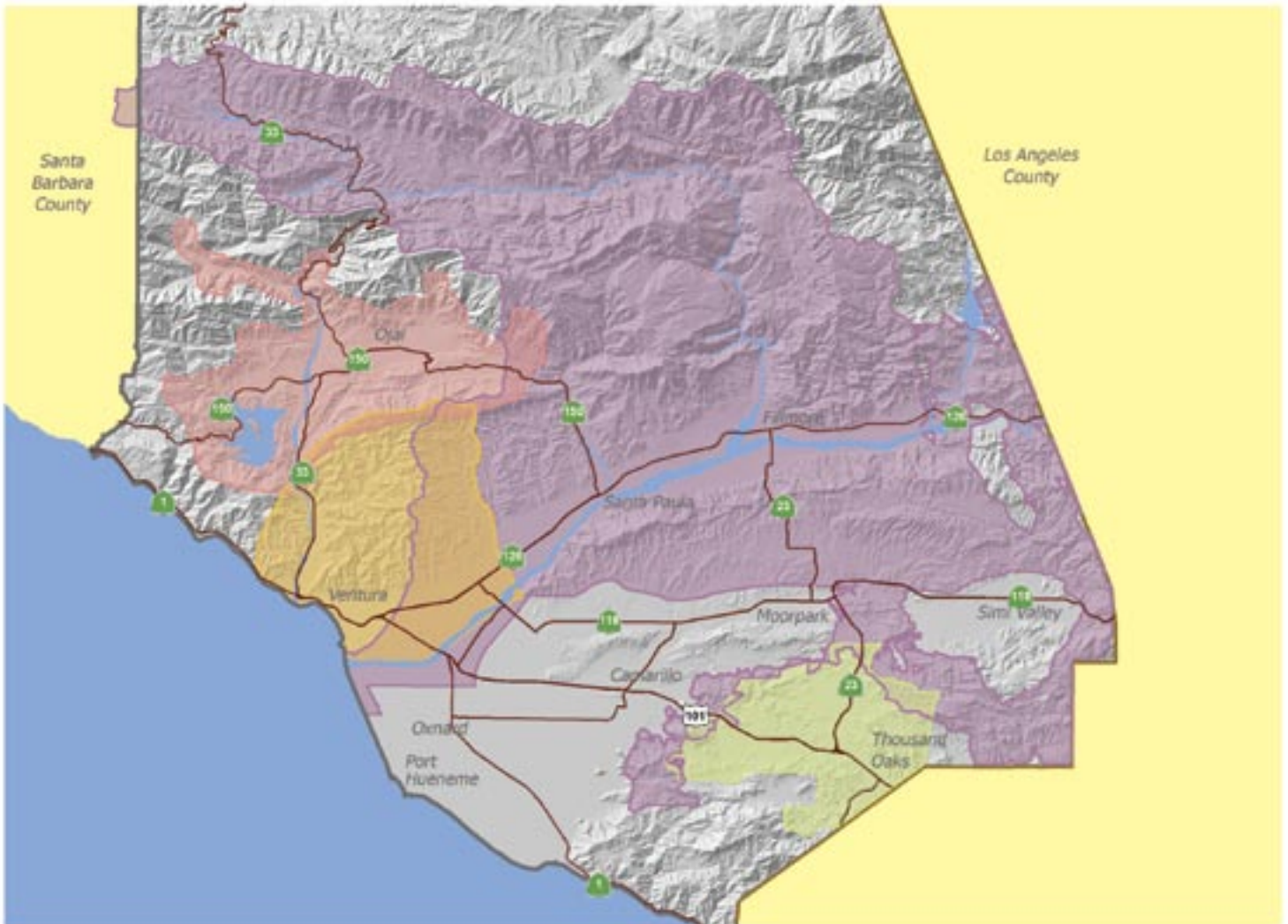
Contact one or more of the conservation organizations listed on the next page and gauge their interest.

If an organization would like to acquire your land, they will help guide you through the Conservation Subdivision process, which will begin with a pre-submittal meeting with the County Planning Division.

- ✓ For more information, contact Katie Matchett at the Ventura County Planning Division 805-650-4047 email: [Katie.Matchett@ventura.org](mailto:Katie.Matchett@ventura.org) [www.ventura.org/rma/planning](http://www.ventura.org/rma/planning)
- ✓ Check on the zoning and minimum lot size requirements for your property on the Ventura County Planning Division website: [www.ventura.org/rma/planning](http://www.ventura.org/rma/planning) Click on "What's My Zoning?"

## Areas of Interest


This map shows specific areas of interest for four of the conservation organizations listed on the next page. Note that three of the seven organizations are interested in land anywhere in the County.



 Conejo Open Space Conservation Agency

 Ojai Valley Land Conservancy

 The Nature Conservancy

 The Ventura Hillside Conservancy

*The organizations listed below are interested in acquiring land for conservation in Ventura County. Check the Planning Division website to see if any new organizations have been added to the list.*

### **CALIFORNIA COASTAL CONSERVANCY**



The California Coastal Conservancy is a state agency that also acquires property for conservation; their area of interest includes all of Ventura County. While they generally work through one of the local conservation organizations, you may also contact them directly.

CONTACT: Peter Brand  
Phone: (510) 286-4162  
Email: brand@scc.ca.gov  
URL: [www.coastalconservancy.ca.gov](http://www.coastalconservancy.ca.gov)

### **CONEJO OPEN SPACE CONSERVATION AGENCY**



Conejo Open Space Conservation Agency is interested in preserving open space in the Conejo Valley area.

CONTACT: Kristin Foord  
Phone: (805) 449-2505  
E-mail: COSCA@toaks.org  
URL: <http://www.conejo-openspace.org>

### **MOUNTAINS RECREATION & CONSERVATION AUTHORITY**



Mountains Recreation & Conservation Authority is interested in acquiring any land that does not have pollution, environmental hazards, or brushing requirements.

CONTACT: Paul Edelman  
Phone: (310) 589-3200 ext. 128  
Email: paul.edelman@mrca.ca.gov  
URL: [www.mrca.ca.gov](http://www.mrca.ca.gov)

### **OJAI VALLEY LAND CONSERVANCY**



Ojai Valley Land Conservancy acquires and protects undeveloped properties of special natural beauty and those that possess significant wildlife habitat, scenic vistas, and other high resource values within the Ojai Valley.

CONTACT: Fred Fox  
Phone: (805) 646-7930  
Email: fred@ovlc.org  
URL: <http://www.ovlc.org>

### **THE NATURE CONSERVANCY**



The Nature Conservancy is interested in land bordering the Santa Clara River or its tributaries as well as land with important wildlife movement value as mapped on the previous page.

CONTACT: Sandi Matsumoto  
Phone: (805) 642-0345 x502  
Email: smatsumoto@tnc.org  
URL: [www.tnccalifornia.org](http://www.tnccalifornia.org)

### **TRUST FOR PUBLIC LAND**



Trust for Public Land is particularly interested in land along the Ventura River, however, TPL is also interested in working with landowners and other partners elsewhere in the County.

CONTACT: Marc Landgraf  
Phone: 415-495-5660 x389  
Email: marc.landgraf@tpl.org  
URL: [www.tpl.org](http://www.tpl.org)

### **VENTURA HILLSIDES CONSERVANCY**



The Ventura Hillside Conservancy works to encourage preservation and restoration of the landmark Two Trees and surrounding hillsides.

CONTACT: Barbara Harison  
Phone: (805) 643-0828  
Email: info@venturahillsides.org  
URL: [www.venturahillsides.org](http://www.venturahillsides.org)

# Frequently Asked Questions

## 1. What are the advantages of the Parcel Map Waiver/Conservation Subdivision process?

There are two primary advantages. First, a qualifying parcel can be subdivided to create two new parcels, neither of which is required to meet the minimum lot size. The same rule applies to a lot line adjustment between two existing parcels. Second, the Parcel Map Waiver process is faster and easier than the standard Subdivision Map process.

Details of the Parcel Map Waiver/Conservation Subdivision are described in Section 8202-3 (f) of the County's Subdivision Ordinance, available on the Web. Go to [http://ventura.org/planning/ordinances\\_regs/ords\\_regs.htm](http://ventura.org/planning/ordinances_regs/ords_regs.htm) and click on the Subdivision Ordinance. Section 8202-3 is on page 10 of the Ordinance.

## 2. What requirements do I have to meet?

- Your parcel must be a legal lot free of any violations with any County agency.
- Your parcel cannot be located in the Coastal Zone.
- A Conservation Subdivision cannot be completed unless a qualifying Conservation Organization acquires the Conservation Parcel. You must have written confirmation from the Conservation Organization verifying that they will accept the Conservation Parcel. To qualify, the Conservation Organization must meet the requirements described in Section 8202-3 (f) (1) (B), available on the web at [http://ventura.org/planning/ordinances\\_regs/ords\\_regs.htm](http://ventura.org/planning/ordinances_regs/ords_regs.htm).
- The Conservation Parcel must have significant biological resources or the capacity to be restored to a condition supporting such resources. Biological resources include but are not limited to: habitats of endangered, threatened, or rare species; wetland habitats; migration corridors for fish or wildlife; and/or locally important species/communities. The Conservation Parcel does not have to show a buildable site.
- Your remaining property, the Non-Conservation Parcel, must "be of a size and shape suitable for the uses permitted by its zoning." If your

property is designated Agricultural in the General Plan, the Non-Conservation Parcel must be at least 10 acres in area. Further, the Non-Conservation Parcel must show a buildable site as required by the California Subdivision Map Act.

- If your property is in a Land Conservation Act (Williamson Act) contract, you will need to go through a Rescission/Re-entry process. See Question 9 below for more detail.

## 3. What can I develop on the property I keep?

If your remaining property, the Non-Conservation Parcel, meets the requirements summarized in Question 2, your property would then be a legal lot entitled to all of the development rights allowed by its zoning classification. See the complete requirements described in the Section 8202-3 (f) (1) (C) of the Subdivision Ordinance, available at [http://ventura.org/rma/planning/ordinances\\_regs/ords\\_regs.htm](http://ventura.org/rma/planning/ordinances_regs/ords_regs.htm).

## 4. How do I start?

- a. Check with a qualifying Conservation Organization to confirm that they are interested in the property and that you are in general agreement about the area to be turned over to them and the area you wish to keep. Prior to submitting your application, you will need to get the written confirmation of their interest. It's important for you and the representatives of the Conservation Organization to talk through the process together and coordinate a joint approach to the permit process with a clear goal in mind.
- b. Draft a complete project description. The description should include:
  - The location and size of the property(s) involved. You will need the Assessor Parcel Number (APN) and the zoning classification of the property(s) involved. (See Questions 7 and 8 below to learn how to look up APN and zoning information).
  - A list of all those who have an ownership interest.
  - An approximate description of, or map depicting, the existing and proposed new property lines and any existing structures.

# Frequently Asked Questions *cont.*

- A description of any construction and/or uses you plan to carry out in connection with the project.
- c. Schedule a pre-submittal meeting with the Planning Division. Call Debbie Morrisset at 805-654-3635 (Debbie.Morrisset@ventura.org) or Debby Millais at 805-654-5037 (Deborah.Millais@ventura.org) to make an appointment. Staff will review your project description, provide information on the process and give you the necessary application packet.

## **5. How much will it cost?**

The cost will depend on the individual circumstances of your property. During the pre-submittal meeting, you can discuss the application fees and other potential costs. You can also identify the issues your project will need to address and any studies or surveys that may be required. If significant issues are identified or unusual circumstances arise, you may be required to apply for a written pre-submittal analysis. There is a \$400 deposit for this written pre-submittal analysis, and the deposit fee for the Parcel Map Waiver/Conservation Subdivision is \$500. Be advised that final fees can be more than the deposit amount, depending upon the project's complexity.

## **6. How long will it take?**

This will depend on the nature of your individual project. The pre-submittal meeting or analysis mentioned above will give you a good idea of how long it will take to complete the approval process for your project. An approval process takes at least six months from start to finish, and probably longer.

## **7. How do I get the Assessor Parcel Number (APN) for my property?**

Your property's APN is listed on your property tax bill. You can also look up your APN on the County Assessor's website. Go to <http://prop-tax.countyofventura.org/> and enter your street address, omitting the street type (Rd. St., Ave., etc.), then click the Search button. If your correct address appears in the search results, click on the correct

address to go to a new page displaying its APN and other information. If there is more than one parcel at the same address, this page will display a line for each parcel. You will have to click on each line separately to get all of the APNs.

## **8. How do I find out the zoning classification and minimum lot size for my property?**

You can look up your property's zoning using the "What's My Zoning?" function on the Ventura County website. You'll need your Assessor Parcel Number (see Question 7 above). Go to <http://ventura.org/planning/> and click on the "What's My Zoning?" box in the upper right hand corner. Enter your APN and click the submit button. The page will display the zoning and minimum lot size requirement applicable to your property. For example, if the zoning is OS-160 ac., the zoning is Open Space and the minimum lot size is 160 acres. Zoning information is displayed only if your parcel is located in unincorporated Ventura County.

## **9. What if my property is in a Land Conservation Act contract?**

If a Land Conservation Act contract is in effect on the property, in many cases you can keep your portion of the property in an agricultural LCA contract and the Conservation Organization can put its share in either an Open Space-Wildlife Habitat contract or an Agricultural contract. You will have to file for a Rescission/Re-entry to accomplish this. In this process the existing contract on the property is rescinded and immediately your new portion will re-enter an Agricultural contract and the Conservation Parcel will enter an Open Space-Wildlife Habitat contract. There is a \$1,000 application deposit to initiate adjustments to your contract, and there may be further costs depending on the individual circumstances. Smaller lots do have some restrictions, so talk to the Planning Division LCA planner about your particular project.

***Funded by a grant from Santa Clara River  
Trustee Council/ARCO Oil Spill Settlement  
Printed on recycled paper.***