# NEWS

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**For Immediate Release**

## MARINA CENTER TO ESTABLISH 10+ ACRE COASTAL WETLANDS PRESERVE AT CLARK SLOUGH

EUREKA, Calif., July 12, 2006 – Security National Properties announced today that it will restore more than 10 acres of the former Balloon Track to establish a coastal wetlands preserve as part of its plan for Marina Center.

Covering nearly a third of the total Balloon Track acreage, the environmental preserve will include restoration of a major portion of the historic Clark Slough wetlands. The initiative will add to Eureka's public access open space and will restore the area to a natural condition it has not known for 100 years or more.

"As we've become more familiar with the condition of the Balloon Track, our awareness has increased concerning the level of ecological damage and abuse this parcel of land has endured," said Brian Morrissey, Security National Properties senior vice president. "We've also listened to the city council and the community and understand the value of restoring and preserving open space and in particular, coastal wetlands habitat.

"We're taking the environmental component of the Marina Center to an entirely new level with this significant expansion of wetlands habitat restoration. It's absolutely the right thing to do," Mr. Morrissey continued.

The 38.5-acre Balloon Track property, formerly a Union Pacific Railroad switching, maintenance and freight yard, is presently a brownfield according to EPA definition. Funded entirely by Marina Center, the restoration project will return nearly one-third of the property to natural Pacific coastal wetlands habitat.

The effort will remove exotic, non-native vegetation (and a significant amount of trash and debris) currently dominating the wetlands and adjacent Clark Slough channel and replace it with a diverse habitat of coastal marsh vegetation. Restoring the area to historic topographic elevations and replacing non-native vegetation, mostly *Phragmites australis*, or "common reed," with native marsh vegetation will promote the return of a wide range of water birds to the site.

Public access to Marina Center's Clark Slough wetlands habitat (currently prohibited by law) will include a perimeter walkway or boardwalk with a kiosk and interpretive signage at vantage points along the path pointing out opportunities to see wildlife or examples of native plants. This pedestrian trail will connect with a pedestrian/bike trail along the existing railroad right of way, which will in turn connect Marina Center with downtown Eureka.

"This project provides a rare opportunity to restore and preserve a significant portion of one of the historic tributaries to Humboldt Bay and Pacific Coast wetlands habitat," said Terry Huffman, wetlands scientist and president of the Huffman-Broadway Group.

Protective environmental buffers will also be a key component of the Clark Slough preservation initiative. These open spaces, which will surround the Clark Slough wetlands, will also be planted with native trees and plants and provide protective screening to native wildlife on the site.

For more information on Marina Center, see www.MarinaCenter.org or email info@MarinaCenter.org.

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