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California Polytechnic State University

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New Book Offers 'Field Guide' to Public Trails, Wildlife, History, Use of Cal Poly's 10,000-Acre Land Holdings

SAN LUIS OBISPO - Part photo essay, part day-hike trail map, part history, part archaeology, "Cal Poly Land: A Field Guide" is now available in San Luis Obispo.

The \$29.95 book is the latest creation of the three-year-old Cal Poly Land Project. "It's a textbook for two (Cal Poly) classes, so we wanted to keep it affordable for the students," explained field guide editor and Cal Poly English Professor Steven Marx. "But it's also a coffee table book, and a field guide."

The book features photos by nationally renowned photographer Sky Bergman, a Cal Poly photography professor, as well as chapters by a number of other professors. Cal Poly Art and Design Professor Mary LaPorte is the book's designer.

"The book itself was two years in the writing and production," said Marx. "But it started as an idea I had. Ever since I first came here 15 years ago, I've been in love with the land here at Cal Poly: its beauty, its history and the variety of activities that are carried out on that land."

Researching the book, its creators discovered that with its 10,000 acres of land, Cal Poly is the second-largest land-holding university in California, and one of the largest land-holding universities in the nation.

"In this state, it's second only to UC Berkeley," said Marx. "Berkeley owns more land, but much less of it is used for educational purposes. Most of Berkeley's land is in preserves, while all of the land that belongs to Cal Poly has instructional and research uses, in addition to being environmentally protected."

The university's contiguous campus area represents roughly one-third of its 10,000 acres, and its Swanton Pacific Ranch near Santa Cruz another third. The remaining third, referred to as the university's "Western ranches," lies on both sides of Highway 1 west of the Cuesta College campus and El Chorro Regional Park.

"Cal Poly Land: A Field Guide" contains chapters outlining the history, archaeology, geology, flora, fauna, and public hiking trails available on university lands. Several chapters include hiking maps with directions and photos of significant landmarks, geology, or historical sites along the trails.

The guide also contains reflections from faculty members and students inspired by the university lands, as well as a discussion on environmental stewardship of the land and the ethics involved in dealing with land. Nearly every page has full-color photos.

"It's relevant to not just Cal Poly, but the entire Central Coast. These are public lands, and it really is a map of access we offer to some beautiful places to walk, to bike, to ride horses even," said Marx.

"Cal Poly Land: A Field Guide," is now available at Cal Poly Downtown, the university store at Higuera and Morro streets in San Luis Obispo, Cal Poly Books in the Foothill Plaza shopping center on Foothill Boulevard in San Luis Obispo, and at El Corral Bookstore on campus. It's also available online at the El Corral Web site:
<http://www.elcorralbookstore.com/genbook.asp>.

The Cal Poly Foundation, a nonprofit organization associated with the university, published the book and is financing the initial press run of 3,000 copies. The Foundation will host a party celebrating the book's publication from 4 to 5 p.m. Feb. 18 at El Corral Bookstore and another at Cal Poly Books in the Foothill shopping center from 4 to 5 p.m. Feb. 21. Both events are open to the public, with refreshments served and "Field Guide" authors and contributors on hand to sign books and talk with guests.

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(Note to Editors: Cal Poly's Public Affairs Office has several color, print-quality photos taken by Professor Bergman available for your use and would be happy to e-mail them to you. Contact Teresa Hendrix at (805) 756-7266 or thendrix@calpoly.edu to request photos.)

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