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**LAND TRUST SEEKS CONSERVATION EASMENT FOR PERMANENT PROTECTION OF
STRAWBERRY ROCK AND TRAIL IN TRINIDAD**

*An Agreement to Pursue Funding for permanent protection and public access of the iconic rock
and trail on private forest needs public funding support*

Trinidad, California (January 20, 2017) -- The Strawberry Rock Trail near Trinidad is in consideration for permanent protection. The Trinidad Coastal Land Trust signed an option agreement in December with Green Diamond Resource Company. The forested area surrounding the existing trail and rock are included in an option contract that will give the land trust time to raise funding to purchase a public trail conservation easement. The trail will include a 24-acre redwood forest grove and the awe-inspiring Strawberry Rock, an inland sea stack outcropping that raises from atop the surrounding redwood forest canopy. The view is extraordinary and the trail very popular, even though one is currently trespassing on private property. Green Diamond has agreed to sell a conservation easement, which would keep the property in private ownership but permanently grants certain public benefit rights such as trail access, protection of the surrounding trees and the rock itself.

Green Diamond senior vice president Neal Ewald said, "We made this agreement because of the support we received from local residents for the project. This is a great opportunity to again work with the Trinidad Coastal Land Trust to secure the conservation easement. We worked with them in the past to support the development of the Moonstone section of the CA Coastal Trail and look forward to a successful outcome for Strawberry Rock and the associated access trail." In 2015, Green Diamond sold a key conservation property to the Trinidad Coastal Land Trust. This 'Little River' Parcel is a future home to the California Coastal Trail, directly connecting the Hammond Trail at Clam Beach to Scenic Drive above Moonstone Beach. The project needs agency grants, engineering and permitting for a bridge to cross the Little River.

The Strawberry Rock trail will be a permanent easement of 38 acres including

- a public access easement over Green Diamond property for the trail from the public road east of US 101 to Strawberry Rock, including a buffer along the trail (12 acres)
- Strawberry Rock and a buffer around the rock (2 acres)
- A stand of mature young-growth timber that is adjacent to the trail and is currently included in an approved timber harvesting plan (24 acres)

Trinidad Coastal Land Trust executive director Ben Morehead said that “this redwood forest trail to Strawberry Rock needs permanent protection. Without the acquisition of a conservation easement, under a future landowner the trail could be blocked to prevent public access, the rock could be quarried, the redwood grove cut and the land could be developed. The landowners are willing to work with us now and we need to take advantage of that and really increase our 2017 fundraising campaign, to protect these special places we as the public need to connect with nature.”

Implementation of the proposed conservation easement is contingent upon obtaining agency program grants and foundation funding. Preliminary conversations with potential funders has yielded favorable responses thus far. We have had discussions with representatives of both the Trinidad Rancheria and the Yurok Tribe who are also supportive of permanent protection for Strawberry Rock and its cultural significance to the Yurok people. Green Diamond affirms that there are no current plans to operate the approved timber harvesting plan that is adjacent to the proposed trail to Strawberry Rock. Green Diamond states that they are committed to working with the Trinidad Coastal Land Trust and the local community to for a successful conclusion.

The trail is quite a popular weekend destination, but be warned that unpermitted guests are trespassing and there are no direction signs or trail safety improvements.

(note: photo courtesy of Green Diamond)

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For additional images, google search ‘Strawberry Rock Humboldt’

To learn more about the Trinidad Coastal Land Trust, visit www.trinidadcoastallandtrust.org