



NEWS

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Contact: Tim Ahern, 415-710-9095
Tim.ahern@tpl.org

HUGH HEFNER IS FINAL DONOR AS LAND AROUND HOLLYWOOD SIGN IS SAVED

LOS ANGELES – The Trust for Public Land (TPL) today announced it has raised enough money to buy and protect the 138 acres behind the world-famous Hollywood Sign, as Playboy magazine founder Hugh Hefner stepped forward to close the gap with a \$900,000 donation toward the \$12.5 million needed.

“Today, we have the Hollywood ending we hoped for and now Cahuenga Peak will be forever protected by adding it to Griffith Park,” said Will Rogers, TPL President. “We want to thank the thousands of donors worldwide who so generously helped us, and we owe a particular thanks to Hugh Hefner, who stepped forward at the end to close the final gap.”

Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger, an early supporter of the effort, said, “Of all the iconic landmarks in the world, the Hollywood Sign is truly one of the most recognizable symbols of the California dream and land of opportunity. It called to me when I left Austria and made my way to the U.S., with a few dollars in my pocket and the dream of becoming an actor. I am proud we were able to come together and create a public-private partnership to protect this historic symbol that will continue to welcome dreamers, artists and Austrian bodybuilders for generations to come.”

“This is a great day for all of us,” said Los Angeles Council Member Tom LaBonge. “I have climbed Mt. Hollywood every morning for over 30 years and look forward to hiking Cahuenga Peak with anyone who wants to join me. This would not have happened without The Trust for Public Land, the Hollywood Sign Trust and the Hollywood Chamber of Commerce. And a very special thanks to a man who, like me, loves nature, loves people and provided great strength to bring us to this point, Gov. Arnold Schwarzenegger.”

Hefner’s gift capped a year-long effort, which began with \$1 million gifts each from The Tiffany & Co. Foundation and Aileen Getty. At the original April 14 deadline, TPL still had \$1.5 million to raise. TPL received a fundraising extension to April 30, and The Tiffany Foundation and Ms. Getty stepped forward again with a \$500,000 matching grant, which TPL would receive if the remaining \$1 million was raised. Hefner’s gift closed that final gap and enabled TPL to realize the Tiffany and Getty challenge funds.

“My childhood dreams and fantasies came from the movies, and the images created in Hollywood had a major influence on my life and Playboy,” said Playboy founder Hugh M. Hefner. “As I’ve said before, the Hollywood sign is Hollywood’s Eiffel Tower and I am pleased to help preserve such an important cultural landmark.”

Chris Baumgart, Chair of the Hollywood Sign Trust, said, “The Sign you see today exists because Hugh Hefner raised the money in 1978 to re-build it. Now, 32 years later, the Sign’s number 1 fan has come forward again with the closing gift to ‘Save the Peak’ and thus the view of Mt. Lee and the Hollywood Sign. It is a view that is recognized around the world as the icon of the entertainment industry and the postcard of the Southern California lifestyle. The Hollywood Sign Trust and admirers from around the world thank Tom LaBonge for believing and not giving up, and Hugh Hefner for carrying our efforts across the finish line.”

“I thank Hugh Hefner and Aileen Getty for their critical contributions, along with everyone whose generous spirit moved them to join the campaign to save one of America’s most famous urban spaces,” said Michael J. Kowalski, chairman and CEO of Tiffany & Co. “The threat to its existence underscores the need for partnerships like ours with TPL who can work together to protect our cultural assets for future generations.”

Ms. Getty, a long-time Hollywood resident, said, "I'm proud to support TPL's efforts in conserving this magical place. With all of the needs facing our urban communities today, this successful effort reminds us that we also need beauty, green spaces, trails and parkland to prepare our communities for a healthy, more livable future."

Joseph T. Edmiston, Executive Director of the Santa Monica Mountains Conservancy, said, "The protection of this land is something which will provide an enormous benefit to people in Los Angeles, both now and for generations to come. And it wouldn't have happened without Gov. Schwarzenegger's leadership, and with help from TPL. This project has shown a welcome spotlight on the need to protect open lands in Los Angeles."

John Donnelly, Executive Director of the Wildlife Conservation Board, said, "The permanent protection of Cahuenga Peak is a significant addition to Griffith park that will greatly enhance recreation opportunities for visitors and residents of Los Angeles and enhance wildlife corridors throughout the region."

Hollywood leaders donated \$3.2 million, including major donations from The Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences, CBS Corporation, The Entertainment Industry Foundation, Kathleen Kennedy and Frank Marshall, the Lucasfilm Foundation, NBC Universal, Sony Pictures Entertainment, Steven Spielberg, Twentieth Century Fox, Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc. and Time Warner Inc., and The Walt Disney Company Foundation. Other Hollywood contributors include Creative Artists Agency, Tom Hanks and Rita Wilson, and Norman Lear.

There was a groundswell of support for the project in Los Angeles, with local residents holding rallies, bake sales, and fund-raising concerts on the Sunset Strip. On Facebook, more than 27,000 supporters have signed up. Viral videos have chronicled the partnership’s efforts.

In April, 2009, TPL signed an option to buy the 138 acres behind, and to the left, of the sign’s “H”, stretching west to Cahuenga Peak. The land was originally bought in 1940 by industrialist Howard Hughes who intended to build a home for his girlfriend, actress Ginger Rogers. But the relationship ended and after Hughes died, his estate sold the property in 2002 to a group of Chicago investors. They put the property on the market two years ago for \$22 million. It is zoned to build four luxury homes.

TPL is a national, nonprofit land conservation organization that conserves land for people to enjoy as parks, gardens, historic sites, rural lands, and other natural places. Since 1972, TPL has completed 4,500 projects in 47 states, protecting 2.8 million acres. Visit www.tpl.org

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