



**Saturday, January 23, 2010
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Doyle Drive Replacement Team and Environmentalists
Protect Rare Native Plant**

Franciscan manzanita moved to safety; project continues on schedule

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SAN FRANCISCO, CA – A rare native California plant, thought to have ceased growing in the wild since 1947, got a new lease on life today after it was carefully relocated to an undisclosed area in the Presidio of San Francisco, a national park. Since its rediscovery in October, Caltrans and the Doyle Drive Replacement Project team have been working with the Presidio Trust, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, National Park Service, California Department of Fish and Game, scientists, and environmental groups to protect the Franciscan manzanita, a flowering shrub that was found directly in the path of the \$1.045 billion Presidio Parkway seismic replacement project.

Because of the project's location within a national park, the project team is especially committed to preserving plant species native to the area. In fact, prior to project site preparation activities, native seeds and plants were collected to propagate 45,000 new plants of more than 50 species to be used for future restoration projects. Thanks to Caltrans' rapid response, interagency coordination and cooperation with local botanists, the Franciscan manzanita is now safely relocated to a new home for the long term. The Doyle Drive Replacement Project will continue to move forward on schedule, bringing critical seismic and traffic safety improvements to this key connector between San Francisco and the Golden Gate Bridge.

"From the start, the Doyle Drive Replacement Project design, site preparation and construction plan were carefully developed to respect and preserve trees and plant species in the project area," said David Yam, Caltrans landscape architect. "The manzanita relocation effort would not have been successful without the expertise of local botanists, horticulturalists and Bay Area arboretum curators to help guide state and federal agencies in making informed decisions."



A Careful Relocation Process

Relocating the Franciscan manzanita was no small task, with the plant and root ball mass weighing approximately 25,000 pounds. The plant was supported by a series of 3½-inch diameter steel pipes inserted under the plant and braced by I-beams. The plant was moved by international tree transplant specialists, Environmental Design and Professional Tree Care of Berkeley. The relocation site was painstakingly selected to provide the right type of soil for the plant, and carefully prepared ahead of time for the transplant.

To determine if any viable seeds are buried in the soil surrounding the plant, 4-6 inches of the topsoil around the plant was removed and stored. Scientists at San Francisco State University and the Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy will investigate best seed germination techniques and will then germinate the seeds based on that research.



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Cuttings are being propagated by botanical gardens at Regional Parks-Tilden, University of California at Berkeley and Santa Cruz, San Francisco's Strybing Arboretum and at the Presidio Nursery for future succession of the mother plant. The location of the plant within the Presidio will not be revealed to the general public in order to protect the plant. A comprehensive conservation plan for the Franciscan manzanita has been developed to provide for the management of the mother plant and succession of the species in the future.

"I am pleased by the responsiveness of the Trust, Caltrans and the Doyle Drive team," said Betty Young, program director of Park Nurseries, who oversees the native plant and seed propagation program. "It is obvious that they understand the importance of this rediscovery."

About The Doyle Drive Replacement Project

The replacement of Doyle Drive with the Presidio Parkway is a collaborative effort led by the California Department of Transportation and the San Francisco County Transportation Authority.

Doyle Drive is the portion of Route 101 located within the Presidio of San Francisco that winds 1.5 miles along the northern edge of San Francisco and connects the San Francisco peninsula to the Golden Gate Bridge and the North Bay. Each weekday, nearly 100,000 vehicles travel between Marin and San Francisco over the Golden Gate Bridge along Doyle Drive.

Doyle Drive is structurally and seismically deficient and must be replaced. The roadway is facing the same problem that threatens other crucial components of the nation's infrastructure - the ravages of time and continual use. Originally built in 1936, Doyle Drive has reached the end of its useful life. The new Presidio Parkway replacement is based on a world-class design that will improve the seismic, structural and traffic safety of the roadway. It also will be far more sensitive to community needs and to the national park setting, reducing impacts on biological, cultural, historical and natural resources and on the surrounding neighborhoods.



Highlights of the new design include:

- A parkway with two short tunnels, a wide landscaped median, traffic calming transition to city streets, and the addition of shoulders to accommodate disabled vehicles and for emergency use
- A spectacular regional gateway that respects the natural contours of the surrounding area and complements the unique environment of San Francisco and the Presidio, a national park
- New direct access to the Presidio and enhanced views
- A more centralized location for transit connections
- Enhanced pedestrian connections within the Presidio to the Main Post, Crissy Marsh, the National Cemetery and historic batteries
- Reduced light and noise intrusion at Crissy Field.

For more information, visit www.presidioparkway.org.

Find the Doyle Drive Replacement Project on Twitter or subscribe to the project's RSS feed.

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