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VAQUEROS ON THE RANCHO EVENT HIGHLIGHTS RANCHING HERITAGE AT CASTRO ADOBE STATE HISTORIC PARK

The ticketed event on Saturday, May 6, supports the opening of the park

APRIL 10, 2017—SANTA CRUZ, CA—Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks (Friends) today announced it will host Vaqueros on the Rancho, a ticketed event at the Castro Adobe State Historic Park, to share the tradition and skill of vaquero horsemen while raising funds to support the full opening of Castro Adobe State Historic Park in the Pajaro Valley.

The special event will be 1-4 p.m. Saturday, May 6, at Castro Adobe State Historic Park, 184 Old Adobe Road. Tickets are \$25.

At Vaqueros on the Rancho two traditional vaquero-style horsemen will share aspects of early vaqueros along with how and why the culture is maintained today during a demonstration at 2 p.m. Jeffery Mundell and Victor "Buddy" Montes will show their horses and gear along with the art of using a 60-70 foot rawhide riata for "big loops." Attendees will have the opportunity to learn how the traditional vaquero's knowledge of land comes into play today with grassland conservation programs.

Vaqueros on the Rancho also will include light refreshments, tours of the Castro Adobe as well as artisan and craftsmen wares on display and for sale, including: spurs, bits, silver and leather items and braided rawhide.

Friends is leading a multi-year restoration effort to preserve and interpret the Castro Adobe as the region's next State Historic Park and the first non-beach State Park in south Santa Cruz County. All proceeds from Vaqueros on the Rancho will be dedicated to this effort.

"The history, horsemanship, equipment, knowledge of land use and lifestyle of vaqueros are revered traditions with deep ties to the Castro Adobe," said Bonny Hawley, executive director of Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks. "We are excited to share more of the history of this property, which we are working tirelessly with California State Parks to restore, while raising money to support the new park."

From the first Spanish expedition into Alta California in 1769, the vaquero played a significant role in California's heritage. Vaqueros, or horse-mounted livestock herders, of the Americas came from Spanish Mexico to California, and their "culture" developed into a fine art through the Mission and Rancho eras, and continued into the early 1900s.

At the Rancho San Andrés Castro Adobe, herds of cattle and livestock grazed the land under the mounted vaquero's watchful eye. The vaqueros were skilled in the use of the rawhide riata for

cattle sorting, roping, branding and slaughter, as well as roping grizzly bears. The rider and the horse worked in partnership with the slightest of "cues" hardly noticeable. True horsemen were held in highest regard for their patience, knowledge and skills regarding horses, cattle and the land.

Tickets (\$25 each) are available on Eventbrite (<https://vaquerosontherancho.eventbrite.com>) or by calling 831-429-1840. Advance ticket sales only. Additional donations are gratefully accepted. All donations and ticket sales will be matched 1:1 toward the opening of the park, up to \$317,920 by the James & Carol Toney Fund.

Western dress is encouraged. Parking is extremely limited; please carpool. The event is co-sponsored by Vaquero Heritage Times Journal (<http://www.vaqueroheritagetimes.com/>)

About the Vaqueros

Jeffrey Mundell

Ranch Manager, Rancho Cienega del Gabilan, part of an original Mexican land grant of 1834, remains an 11,000 acre working cattle ranch in the Gabilan hills of San Juan Bautista.

California born and raised, Jeffrey became intrigued with California bridle horses at age 12 watching and listening to old-style vaqueros start young colts. He remembers first seeing Spanish spade bits, riatas, silver on saddles, headstalls and spurs those vaqueros used, and felt privileged to meet and work with horsemen following old bridle horse traditions. In 2003, he moved his family to Oregon where they began a cattle operation and lived the buckaroo lifestyle which came from the early California vaquero. In 2014, they returned to California to manage the Rancho Cienega del Gabilan, respecting vaquero traditions in horsemanship and stockmanship on this historic cattle ranch.

Victor "Buddy" Montes

Raised on California's historic Tejon Ranch in Kern County, one of four Mexican land grants acquired in 1874 to form Rancho El Tejon which totaled over 300,000 acres. He is a 5th generation Native vaquero and a member of the Tejon Indian Tribe. Buddy continues his family vaquero traditions which began on El Tejon prior to 1874. He is manager [cowboss] of Booth Ranches based in the San Joaquin Valley.

During his early years on the Tejon, Buddy began at the bottom and over time earned respect of the *viejos* [old wise vaqueros] who slowly shared their knowledge of making bridle horses – the purpose and techniques for using *jaquimas* [hackamores], spade bits and rawhide riatas. In the 1980s, he worked the great open range ranches of Nevada, some covered as many as four million acres. Returning to California, he worked on the Onyx Ranch and the San Emigdio prior to accepting the manager position at Booth Ranches, where both he and his wife manage the cattle operations retaining the old traditional vaquero style in horsemanship and handling cattle.

About Castro Adobe State Historic Park

Located in Larkin Valley, near Watsonville, the two-story Castro Adobe, built between 1848-49, is one of the finest examples of a rancho hacienda in the Monterey Bay area. The property includes the restored *cocina* (kitchen) and the Potter-Church Garden, a unique outdoor space

originally created by then-owners Elizabeth and David Potter (1968-72) in consultation with noted landscape architect Thomas Church.

Friends is leading a multi-year restoration effort to preserve and interpret the new State Historic Park in partnership with California State Parks. Work is currently being done to complete seismic stabilization, finalize the preservation of the historic adobe and establish a visitor center. It is Santa Cruz County's second state historic park and the first non-beach state park in the Pajaro Valley. To follow progress on the restoration effort, visit www.thatsmypark.org/castro-blog. The Castro Adobe, located at 184 Old Adobe Road, is open on a limited basis for special events, such as Open House Days. Admission is free; donations are gratefully accepted.

About Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks

Established in 1976, Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks is an entrepreneurial nonprofit sustaining the legacy of our state parks and beaches. Through an innovative partnership with California State Parks, and by leveraging local community support, Friends provides funding for educational programs, visitor services and capital projects. Friends is passionately dedicated to the preservation of our spectacular natural environment and rich cultural history. Friends also operates six ParkStores, offering nature- and history-themed merchandise for sale to benefit local parks and beaches. ParkStore locations include Natural Bridges, New Brighton, Santa Cruz Mission, Seacliff, Wilder Ranch and Online. Learn more at ThatsMyPark.org or via Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, YouTube and Pinterest.

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