



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Neal Coonerty Receives "Top Dog" Endorsement From Friends of Lighthouse Field

Community of Pet Owners Backs Neal Coonerty's Bid For Santa Cruz County Supervisor

SANTA CRUZ, Calif., May 17, 2006 – Friends of Lighthouse Field (FOLF), a grassroots Santa Cruz community of pet owning-families, announced its "Top Dog" endorsement of Neal Coonerty for Third District Santa Cruz County Supervisor. FOLF's backing of Coonerty's candidacy is the first in a series of endorsements for representatives who support Lighthouse Field State Beach as a model for family/pet-friendly parks and greenbelts. FOLF was encouraged by the pro-dog response from Jonathan Boutelle, Neal Coonerty and Christopher Krohn who completed FOLF's candidate questionnaire and interview.

FOLF's decision to support Coonerty was based on his proactive and well thought-out support of our "quality of life" positions including:

- His support of shared use in Santa Cruz parks and greenbelts especially including off-leash recreation
- A commitment to working toward keeping Lighthouse Field and Its Beach open for off-leash recreation and an interest in developing more off-leash areas in Santa Cruz County
- His successful experience working within Santa Cruz City and County on related issues

FOLF will encourage Santa Cruz voters to support Coonerty because of his commitment to support and maintain "quality of life" in Santa Cruz including off-leash recreation opportunities for pet owners in Lighthouse Field, Its Beach and elsewhere.

"FOLF would like to thank candidates Boutelle, Coonerty and Krohn for taking the time to address the pet-owning community and for responding to the FOLF questionnaire," said Betsy Firebaugh, chairperson of Friends of Lighthouse Field.

"We are delighted to report that across the board the supervisor candidates support off-leash recreation in Lighthouse Field and Its Beach, and we believe the candidates backing family/pet-friendly use and enjoyment of parks and greenbelts represents the vast majority of Santa Cruz voters. We are endorsing Coonerty's candidacy because of his experience and his views which are most aligned with the goals of FOLF."

Lighthouse Field State Beach (Park) has been under the management of the City of Santa Cruz for 28 years by virtue of a joint State, City and County agreement. The State of California Department of Parks and Recreation has submitted a letter of notification that the agreement is due to expire on November 15, 2007. This move will not only change the management of Lighthouse Field and Its Beach from the City of Santa Cruz to the State of California, but will directly impact the safety and relative absence of illegal activities at Lighthouse Field and Its Beach.

"This issue is about supporting a community of people and their need for recreation with their canine companions," said Mike Tilson of FOLF. "People regularly share their stories with me and emphasize the importance that Lighthouse Field has for them in terms of their health, family recreation time together, personal work-play life balance, appreciation for the beauty of this area and their expanded community of friends."

About Friends of Lighthouse Field

Friends of Lighthouse Field was formed in 2002 to support preservation of the beauty and recreation opportunities for humans and dogs off-leash at Lighthouse Field and Its Beach. For more information, visit www.folf.org.

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