

Boundaries, County

Big Land Swap To Solve County Boundary Dispute

By JIM CHOATE

Mercury Staff Writer

More than a century of boundary problems are about to be alleviated through an enormous land swap between Santa Clara and Santa Cruz Counties.

Santa Cruz County gets the lion's share of the deal, pulling in 2,184 acres with Santa Clara County grabbing 777 acres.

This is the deal heading for Santa Clara County supervisors, clearing up ages of fire, police and assessment problems.

But Santa Clara County

gets a bonus, pulling in the total area of its coveted Mt. Madonna Park.

Of the 2,500-acre park, 557 acres are now in Santa Cruz County where a tax assessment is imposed.

This means Santa Clara County can save more than \$10,500 in property taxes in the park deal.

County Public Works Director James T. Pott reported 557 acres of Mt. Madonna Park in Santa Cruz County is assessed at \$111,400. This is up from \$55,700 in 1965-66.

"Taxes over this period

have increased from \$4,510 to \$10,500," he said.

The recommended new boundary, Pott said, would also "locate the proposed Pescadero Reservoir and Dam sites (a Santa Cruz County facility) within the County of Santa Clara," a Joint Bondary Committee report to supervisors of both counties said.

The boundary still generally follows the summit of the Santa Cruz Mountains with some variations.

The recommended new boundary crosses the area's roads only seven times, the committee said.

"It crosses Skyline Boulevard at the easterly side of the intersection with Black Road and at the westerly side of State Highway 17 to place the northwesterly half of the state-maintained road in the County of Santa Clara and the southeasterly half in the County of Santa Cruz," the report explained.

"After crossing State Highway 17 the recommended boundary also crosses Summit Road adjacent to its intersection with the Old Santa Cruz - Los Gatos highway,

and crosses Loma Prieta Avenue at the southeastern end of the public road at its juncture with a fire control road.

"It also crosses Mt. Madonna Road at the southeastern end of Summit Road and crosses State Highway 152 (Hecker Pass Highway).

"Thus long continuous stretches of this road can be placed clearly within either county instead of repeatedly and very frequently crossing from one county to the other at places difficult for officials and the public to ascertain," the committee said.

The joint boundary committee was made up of Edward Steffani, Walter Doyle and Pearl Ertell of Santa Clara County and George Washington, Carl Crouse and Douglas Foster of Santa Cruz County.

On Sept. 23, 1969, supervisors of the two neighboring counties agreed to set up the committee for a "thorough" study.

Eighty years earlier, on March 5, 1889, Santa Cruz County supervisors declared Moody Road (Summit Road) as a public highway but for

reasons unknown failed to mention anything about establishing the road as a county boundary.

"At that point the matter of the boundary lay quiet for more than 60 years until 1950 when the problems of jurisdiction became so great for assessment purposes, that assessors of both counties met to discuss the problem of assessments.

"It was mutually agreed that for taxation purposes the Summit Road and Sky-

line Boulevard or in some instances the county in which the parcel had the greatest acreage determined the county in which it would be assessed," the report noted.

But the problem dates back to 1850 when the two counties were formed as part of California's original 27 counties.

The legal description then read vaguely "along the summit of the Santa Cruz Mountains," sparking many painful years of trying to find just where that line was supposed to be.

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ARE TAXPAYERS FOOTING THE BILL?

County Probes Parking Garage Funds

By BOB LIGON

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