

Wall of 'Lincoln Logs' protects Aptos residence

APTOS — The most elaborate Lincoln-Log construction you'd ever want to see is now going up in Aptos, protecting a private home from the potentially devastating storm waters of an adjacent creek.

The erosion control method is called "timber cribbing," according to contractor Jack Schultz of Schultz Construction of Santa Cruz. While sometimes used in northern Washington, it is believed to be the first such project locally.

Essentially, large redwood logs are notched and set together in sections like the Lincoln Log toy. Piled about seven feet high, the unusual wall is being placed along a 120-foot-long curve of Trout Gulch Creek.

The creek flows into the base of a slope near the home of Dr. Phil Yulen and his wife, Viola. The ground — like earth throughout the county — is saturated and the potential for erosion or a landslide is great.

Conventional alternatives include rip-rap protection where large boulders are placed in the creek or so-called gabions where smaller rocks are used within wire cages.

Schultz said the timber cribbing is not only about half the cost and can be completed much faster, but is the "logical" alternative considering the home's redwood setting.

"In a way, we're mimicking nature's way of forming a stream bed," he said. "Logs fall down naturally. Our method just blends in nature and is more aesthetically pleasing."

Rocks would not have fit in with the area, added Schultz. In fact, workers would have had to haul them in from another area. By going to timber cribbing, workers were even able to make use of some existing redwood trees on the property.

The cribbing is strengthened by 18-inch-long steel pins that are driven into the individual logs. Also, "dead men," which are notched logs placed in the sections at right angles, add to the reinforcement.

Schultz believes the cribbing will gain popularity once the public becomes aware of it. He sees no reasons why other area contractors will not follow the alternative.

In the meantime, however, the Yulen's have one of the most unique erosion control walls around.



ABOVE — Workmen place top log along curve of Trout Gulch Creek.

LEFT — Jack Schultz (left) and son William prepare a log for placement.

ABOVE RIGHT — Final touches are done by ax by Jack Schultz.

Sentinel photos
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