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Butterflies

9-22-88 GT

GREG PIO



The new "butterfly boardwalk" at Natural Bridges Beach State Park makes the monarchs more accessible.

New Boardwalk Built for Butterfly Buffs

AS OF Sept. 19, most everyone will be able to view one of Santa Cruz's more popular natural wonders: the monarch butterflies that rest at Natural Bridges Beach State Park.

Before then, the rugged nature of the trail leading down to the resting area made it impossible for handicapped persons to embark upon it, and senior citizens sometimes found the walk too precarious to finish.

Now, the construction of a redwood "handicap boardwalk" has been completed that will make the area accessible to all.

"Now people in wheelchairs, mothers with strollers and older people with canes will be able to see the butterflies that they haven't been able to do before," said Mike Filitti, a

state parks carpenter on the project.

Before the boardwalk was built, there was an alternative path that walkers with special circumstances could take, although it wasn't that much easier. Now that trail will be closed and the flora may return.

Filitti said the walkway will provide more than access to the butterflies, as hopefully now parkgoers will not be as tempted to blaze their own trails as often as before.

"This is a natural preserve, so now the environment can grow underneath and around the walkway (without human disturbance)," Filitti said.

"It's inevitable that people will wander off the trail. You can put signs up all over the world and still people won't obey them."

But even before construction was

done, Filitti observed that the walkway will prove beneficial to more than handicapped and older persons. A skateboarder who noticed the construction asked Filitti when it would be finished and then suggested to him that the place would need 24-hour guard to keep him and others of his ilk away.

And although the trail has been closed since construction began in April, the boardwalk already shows skid marks from adventurous bicyclists.

Filitti said there are "speculative" plans to build another walkway through the "nature trail" to make that more accessible, but that that probably won't happen for quite some time. •

— Rose Dean