

County finds \$500,000 for Wingspread site

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Santa Cruz County, more or less under orders from State Sen. Henry Mello, has anted up a maximum of \$500,000 to go towards purchase of the Wingspread site.

That cash would come from potential local private donations and county park dedication fees, said County Administrative Officer George Newell yesterday.

The county's cash would go to establish a neighborhood park on some part of the 66-acre bluffside meadow next to New Brighton State Beach, if the purchase is made, he said.

Newell said the amount of acreage the county would acquire would depend on the total purchase price of the property, which is still being negotiated.

The county's share of the property would be proportionate to its contribution, he said.

A state appraisal has placed the market value of the site at about \$4 million — what the state already has set aside for the purchase from 1980 park bond money.

Developer Ryland Kelley, however, who owns the rights to the property, has put a far higher price on the property, Mello said earlier. Mello indicated, without firmly stating it, that that price was in the \$8 million to \$10 million range.

Mello is trying to get the

state to come up with the rest of the purchase price, whatever it may be. He is also trying to get a contribution from the state Coastal Conservancy, on whose board he serves.

The state and Kelley, a heavy contributor to Democratic campaigns, are trying to arrive at a price agreement this month.

Some urgency has entered the campaign to buy Porter Sesnon for a park, because the state bond money, "rolled over" from one year to the next for so long, may not be rolled over again. A June deadline for the purchase looms.

Mello has said that if necessary, he will try to get the cash rolled over once more, but to do so, he will have to demonstrate to other legislators that a sincere effort is being made by the people of Santa Cruz County to contribute toward the purchase.

The bond money has been reserved for six years for Porter Sesnon, while other counties have hankered after it, Mello said earlier.