

Porter-Sesnon plan unveiled

By KEITH MURAOKA

Sentinel staff writer

2-13-90

SANTA CRUZ — A coalition of community groups and individuals has not given up on the public purchase of the 66-acre Porter-Sesnon property in Aptos.

The New Brighton Beach Action Coalition, formed in 1988 to push for the preservation of Porter-Sesnon as a public use, unveiled an alternate use at a press conference Monday. They're calling for state purchase of the coastal bluff property next to New Brighton State Beach, with development into an "environmental discovery center."

Hampering their preferred use is the fact that Palo Alto developer Ryland Kelley two weeks ago unveiled his latest development proposal for the parcel, called Meadowpark, which features a 197-room lodge and conference facility.

Kelley has made no indication as to whether his 99-year lease on the parcel is for sale. What's more, the New Brighton Beach Action Coalition has made no attempt to contact Kelly on their proposed plan.

Meadowpark project manager Tim Welch said Monday that he had not seen the plan, and could not comment.

Coalition Chairwoman Pat Manning conceded that "The biggest hurdle will be the actual acquisition of (Kelley's) lease."

However, Manning also said she is "optimistic" over their plan.

"I think it should be easier now that we have a (proposed) use that is more than just state park land," she said. "Also, maybe at some point, Mr. Kelley will realize people in this community don't want development there."

Manning cited continued support from not only the public, but also the county Board of Supervisors, Capitola City Council, State Assemblyman Sam Farr and State Sen. Henry Mello for public acquisition.

The coalition's proposed "environmental discovery center" would encourage learning through discovery, said coalition member Pat Crocker. It would primarily involve an orientation center, with several learning stations where ecology, geology, botany, history and astronomy could be taught. Most of the parcel would be left in its natural state.