

# Drainage basin may become skateboard arena in dry season

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water just sat there—the pumps hadn't turned on. A PG&E work crew found that a fuse in the special three-phase transformer feeding the pump motors had blown. The trouble was fixed and the pond became a hole again—waiting for the next storm.

Although engineers now know that the project will work as planned, there is doubt about its future.

To get a loan, the flood control district directors switched their hats and became the county's five supervisors. The supervisors required Zone V of the flood control district (Capitola, Live Oak, Soquel) to turn over a percentage of the 10-cents-a-square-foot drainage fees it collects in the area until the loan is paid off.

At the same time, it told county parks director Keith Kelly to start working on plans to build a community park in the basin.

Ironically, the company that contributed the most towards paying off the loan—Sutter Hill—will also do the most in destroying the usefulness of the drainage system.

When it was designed, engineers in the county public works department sized it to handle the run-off from a mythical "10-year storm." Calculations were based on the rain water that would flow off the concrete and blacktop areas into the channel and eventually past the basin and into Moran Lake.

But as the amount of blacktop

increases, the storm runoff increases. And Sutter Hill—with its 300,000-square-foot mall, 75,000-square-foot Mervyn's department store, and large parking lots—will contribute substantially to the flow.

County public works director Don Porath and assistant director Gene Delucchi make no bones about it—Sunday's storm was probably very close to the mythical 10-year storm. The basin was filled in a very short period of time. The storm had lasted longer or if the rain had been heavy, residents in the Blue

and Gold trailer park would have taken to the boats again.

And when Sutter Hill paves the parking lots next year, it will be even worse.

A park department spokesman said this week that the department is seriously considering a plan to turn the drainage basin over to a private firm which wants to build a skateboard track in the depression.

"Right now, construction of a community park is halted because a private enterprise skateboard project is being considered," said Craig Rogers.

The county has been approached by NHS, Inc., a mid-county skateboard manufacturing firm, with the lease proposal. "It's still preliminary but we consider it a valid thought," Rogers said. "So we were holding all construction until we get information on the validity of the skateboard proposal."

Rogers said the county wants information on how the firm would solve the parking problem in the area and "we need to make sure that it is a compatible use with surrounding community."

"Some neighbors are now dis-

pleased with the proposal," Rogers acknowledged. "If they remain displeased, it won't go any further. NHS doesn't want a bad project."

The idea of a private operation is the area has some advantages, Rogers said. "There are several things—the noise and vandal

factors would be at a minimum. Private enterprise would have a supervisor there at all times. We don't have supervisors in our parks yet.

"Under no conditions would we be liable. In addition, we would be getting a lease payment. That would be used to build other

parks.

"Another thing, in the proposed community parks, we were planning on putting in—or at least considering—a small skateboard oval catering to beginners. We realized the need and POSCS is always looking for new, inovative ideas."