



## Woodsmen's axes put away after neighbors complain

Public protest has halted — for an indefinite period — a tree clearance project along the east banks of Schwan Lake in the Twin Lakes area.

State park area manager Harold D. Bradshaw thought he saw an opportunity recently to solve one of his major headaches at Schwan Lake at a minimum of expense.

Thrust IV — a private developer building apartments on East Cliff Drive near 12th Avenue — came to the State Department of Parks and Recreation with an offer to thin out some of the eucalyptus trees growing on the east bank of the lake, on state property between the development and the lake shore.

After several lengthy discussions among the state staff, a decision was made to accept the offer.

But instead of solving a major problem for the state, the tree-clearance operation has stirred up a hornet's nest of protest in the Twin Lakes area — protests that forced a halt last week to the clearance work.

Now, says Bradford, he doesn't know when — if ever — the work

will be resumed.

"Thrust IV offered to pay the cost of thinning the trees in that area, if we would mark them," Bradford said.

"This area has been giving us problems. Transients have moved into the area, building cooking fires and living there.

"And since it is so heavily overgrown, we can't patrol it and the public is unable to use it," he said.

"The company also offered to build a trail through the area.

"If we can get enough people to go into the area, it will solve the transient problem and will probably relieve the state of its liability because of the fire problem.

"The way it is now, the problem will be solved someday when a fire burns out that area, and also takes out several homes and a couple of apartment houses."

The work started on Sept. 11 and was halted before the end of the week when the parks office at Schwan Lake was deluged with angry calls from residents.

Most of the callers, Bradshaw said, seem to live on the opposite side of the lake and were unhappy

about their view being spoiled.

"Because of the emotional situation," Bradshaw commented, "we decided to cut it off."

The goal of the woodcutters were the stump-spouted eucalyptus trees that have been growing throughout the area.

Several decades ago, the trees were cut down, but the stumps were left untreated.

As a result, new trees have sprung from those remains — sometimes six or seven new trees per stump.

"These are basically unhealthy trees," Bradshaw explained. "When they mature, the stumps begin to decay, leaving a weakened base."

The seedling eucalyptus trees, the oaks and the acacias have not been touched, he said.

In one area, the underbrush — largely poison oak — was trampled under when the cut-down trees were hauled out.

There, the state plans to reseed the area, planting new trees and ground cover — possibly Monterey Pine and redwood.

The hiking trail through the area will still be built, he says, probably this winter using labor

from the California Youth Authority conservation camps.

Bradshaw, who took over the Pajaro Coast Area on July 4th, seems puzzled about the reaction of residents to the tree-cutting efforts, and their unconcern with the damage occurring daily to Schwan Lake itself.

For the lake is in the midst of an ecological cycle that will see its destruction as a viable habitat within a very few years.

A tremendous amount of plant nutrients — nitrates and phosphates — are being deposited in the lake each year and the point is being rapidly reached where the lake will "bloom" into a mass of algae and plant life — robbing it of the oxygen it needs to sustain animal life.

Part of the problem sits on top of the water — the hundreds of ducks and other water fowl that make their home here.

Visitors throw hundreds of pounds of bread and other food into the lake for them. "This all winds up staying in the lake as nitrates and phosphates," Bradshaw said.

The rest comes from the homes

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The gap in the trees across the lake is where the cutting started.

## Teacher salary kettle still boiling in Soquel

The Soquel School board has apparently put together a new salary package for their dissident teachers — but the elected officials are refusing to make the details of the offer public.

The district has been deadlocked with the teachers over the amount of a raise to be given the 79 certificated employees in the district this year. Until Tuesday night, the district had offered a six per cent increase to the teachers.

But the Certificated Employees Council has stood firm on demands for a 9.15 per cent increase.

The trustees met for nearly three hours Tuesday night behind closed doors — conferring with District Supt. Richard Van Deren, Business Services Director John Bell and Administrative Assistant Mrs. Jean Hamby.

Outside, more than 30 teachers waited for some announcement

from the board.

After the conference ended, board president Bob Hougardy said the district had reconsidered all available information from the state, county, and local sources and would be making an offer to the CEC late yesterday afternoon.

Asked to make the details public at the meeting, board members refused. They said that a joint statement — agreed on by the district and the teachers — could be made available following the negotiating sessions.

The district has been relying upon an opinion from Dep. County Counsel Gordon Robert that it is legal to exclude the public from the negotiating sessions.

Roberts said there is nothing in state law precluding board members and their representatives — so long as they don't constitute a quorum — meeting

with teacher representatives behind the closed doors.

The information presented inside those meetings is not a matter of public record, Roberts said.

The teachers have scheduled a meeting among themselves following yesterday afternoon's negotiating session, to discuss the district's offer and a possible reply.

In the past, the teachers have lowered their demands by the same amount that the district raises their bid.

Some teachers have indicated that an offer in the range of 7 per cent would be acceptable this year.

The teachers maintain that the district owes them a larger than normal raise this year since the district refused to give them a raise several years ago — but promised to make it up when the financial picture improved.

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A pretty setting—but the life of the lake is threatened.