

# Redwoods League to buy UC land

By JOHN BESSA  
Sentinel staff writer

BOULDER CREEK — More than 400 acres of forest and meadow near Boulder Creek will be sold to a preservation group today with the anticipated approval of the University of California Board of Regents.

Save-The-Redwoods League, which held the lowest cash offer in open bidding last April, will get the redwood-studded land off Kings Creek Road for \$2.4 million, said Michael Houlemard, UCSC director of

community planning and development.

"We think it's a good deal," said Bob Jaspersen, general counsel for Save-The-Redwoods League. "We're pleased that it was not sold to a lumber company," he said.

The UC Committee on Finance approved the sale Thursday. The regents routinely approve recommendations without discussion, Houlemard said.

A Fortuna timber company was set to buy the 410-acre Miller property in May, but UC President Jack

Peltason rejected all bids on the land after a barrage of objections from the public and legislators.

Eel River Sawmills held the high offer of \$2.38 million when the three bids were opened in April. Save-The-Redwoods League's offer was \$2.1 million.

UC officials put the land on the auction block after offering the property for sale to public or preservation agencies and getting no takers in 18 months.

The Save-The-Redwoods League, based in San Francisco, plans to give the land to either a state or county

park, Jaspersen said. They're not in the business of maintaining the open space they acquire.

"We'll just be caretakers," he said.

In the past, the league has added parcels to existing parks but has never donated a large, free-standing parcel like the Miller property before, Jaspersen said.

Before the site was offered for bids, county Supervisor Fred Keeley asked the university to add a condition that 17 acres of old-growth trees on the land go

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untouched.

Neighbors were still concerned, saying dozens of trees outside of the conservation easement were ancient and shouldn't be logged.

According to neighbor John Holm, some trees are 200 feet tall, 35 feet around, and some 1,500 years old.

Eel River Vice President Dennis Scott said his company lost about \$15,000 to 20,000 in its efforts to buy the property. Roger and Michele Burch, also sawmill owners, offered the second-highest bid.

Former owners Adolph and Mary Miller gave the university the land in 1942 as a recreation and education site. It was used as a campground for several years, but growing maintenance costs and dwindling UC funds recently spurred UC officials to sell the land.

UCSC Chancellor Karl Pister is committed to using proceeds from the sale to establish a scholarship fund for, among other subjects, environmental studies, Houlemard said.

