

ends.

In Watsonville

figures, "I think we could
directors.

His figures showed that last

First The Salamander, Now The SC Tarweed

On the heels of the Santa Cruz long-toed salamander comes a new endangered species, this time a form of weed found in the Watsonville area which scientists say serves no useful purpose.

According to the Associated Press, discovery of a patch of *Holocarpa Macradenia*, better known as Santa Cruz tarweed, is threatening development of nine acres of prime real estate. The Watsonville Planning Department identified the area as property behind the Star-Lite Drive-In on Hammer Drive in the northwest section of the south county city.

A routine check by the city's environmental impact inspectors turned up a patch of the summer-blooming weed, which resembles a thistle and can be identified by its hairy upper leaves. The plant was once thought to be extinct, according to the AP.

Except for an isolated patch at Pinole beside San Francisco Bay, the weed is believed to grow only in Santa Cruz County, and is on a list of rare and endangered species compiled by the U.S. Interior Department and the California Native Plant Society. The tarweed was spotted earlier this summer when inspectors paid a routine visit to the site where developers hope to erect 81 condominium units. According to Sierra Club spokesman Dave Bockman, "This is only the fifth known site in the world and all are very small."

Bockman urged the Watsonville City Council to fence in the tarweed patch as a means of

protecting the weed, which is difficult to transplant or reseed. The Watsonville City Council referred a permit for the project back to the planning commission after the city attorney said its earlier approval

was illegal because the environmental impact report was not reviewed.

Another plot of tarweed is believed to be north of Santa Cruz in a vacant lot, according to the AP.

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