

Pollution closes Soquel creek

The Santa Cruz County Health Department has posted warnings along Soquel Creek at Capitola Beach that it is unsafe for swimming and water sports of all kinds.

The warnings were placed as a result of tests showing a sudden increase in the bacteria count of the water. Cause of the sharp rise is unknown, although seepage from septic tanks is believed to be a part of the problem.

Capitola's Begonia Festival has abandoned its water parade this year because of the pollution problem.

Dr. Richard H. Svihus, county health officer, said that the most recent tests had shown a rise in bacterial count from the recommended safe limit of 200 to 4,000 per 100 milliliters of water.

The county health department has developed a program for control of contamination of inland waters.

First, teams of Neighborhood Youth Corps workers will explore the banks of the Soquel Creek for sources of contamination. They will be looking for sources of actual or potential contamination such as pipes extending into or near the creek, seepage on the ground, refuse, and suspicious odors. Orders for correction or abatement of violations will be issued.

They will start at the mouth of Soquel Creek and work upstream and will also explore

the major tributaries feeding into the creek.

Second, explorations will continue into settling a safe bacterial limit for fresh water swimming and into authorizing the county health department

to control swimming when the safe limit is exceeded.

Third, efforts will be made to encourage the development of sewage systems wherever possible as the real solution to the problem of contamination.