

SC refusal on water won't stop RV park

Wilder Ranch plan

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SANTA CRUZ — Plans to build a large recreational vehicle campground on the edge of Wilder Ranch State Park won't be scuttled even if city officials refuse to provide water to the site, developers said Tuesday.

"The preference is to have city water since we already have the hookup," said Mannie Shaffer, of Graniterock Co., which has proposed converting a sand quarry into a 260-space RV park. "But stop the project? No."

Instead, campers could use water from a well at the quarry, he said.

That well produces more than enough water, but because of water-quality tests and electricity required, it would be a more expensive option, Shaffer explained.

City Councilman Mike Rotkin said last week the city wouldn't provide water for the campground in hopes of blocking the plans, which would create the largest RV campground in the state park system.

Because the RV campground would become state park property, the city has no jurisdiction over the proposal. The state Coastal Commission has the final say.

The proposal calls for Graniterock to convert the quarry to a campground, run it and take the profits for 35 years before turning the land over to the state park system.

Rotkin maintained that selling the water would violate a 1987 agreement between the city and county that prohibits selling water to support increased growth on the county's North Coast. The agreement was made when the city Water Department installed a new pipeline along Highway 1 to serve North Coast customers.

The agreement says the city "may" sell water for Wilder Ranch State Park, but is not required to do so, according to Rotkin. Given that option, there's no way the City Council will sell water, Rotkin said.

"The scale of what they're talking about there is precisely what the county was concerned about," he said.

The campground would be the size of a small village, much too intense a development and out of character with the rest of the coast, Rotkin said.

His environmental concerns almost certainly will be shared by a majority of the council, including Celia Scott and Mayor Katherine Beiers, when Rotkin raises the issue June 13.

The well already in the quarry pumps water at 175 gallons per minute but with electricity and quality testing, "it will cost us another \$60,000 to \$75,000," said Shaffer.

He still hopes to use city water despite Rotkin's opposition.