

# County takes control over coastal permits

SANTA CRUZ — County government has taken over the authority to issue permits to those wanting to develop land in the coastal zone.

Last week, the state Coastal Commission handed over its permit-granting authority to the county after making a determination that the county's implementation of its Local Coastal Program had met all the appropriate conditions, according to coastal planner Bill Allayaud.

From here on out, a person wanting to develop land in the coastal zone will simply go to the county Planning Department for a permit, Allayaud said. In the past, a developer had to receive approval from the state Commission before developing land in the coastal zone.

However, there are a few exceptions where a person still will have to seek approval from the state commission, Allayaud said.

If a person wants to perform some type of development activity below the mean high tide line or in wetlands, approval must be given by state commissioners, according to Allayaud.

There also are cases where an applicant can appeal the county's decision on his development request to the commission, Allayaud said.

If the permit is for development within 100 feet of streams or bodies of water, or if the development is between the sea and the first through public road, then the county's action is appealable, according to Allayaud.

In general, the areas of the county in the coastal zone are from the bay to Highway 1 in south county, a 1,000-yard area from the bay in mid-county, and from the coast to the top of the ridge that defines the watershed in the north county.

Even though coastal permit authority now is held by the county, the local office of the Coastal Commission at the County Center will remain open.

This central coast district office also serves Monterey and San Mateo counties and currently is working with Monterey County, the city of Santa Cruz and several other cities on their local coastal programs.

It was the state legislature in 1976 that decided the responsibility over coastal areas should lie in the hands of local jurisdictions.

Legislators then passed the Coastal Act of 1976. It changed the policies in the Coastal Act of 1972 which gave virtually all permit authority to the state Commission.

The Coastal Act of 1976 made protection of the coastal areas a partnership between the state commission and local jurisdictions. It gave cities and counties the responsibility to develop their own coastal plans within the guidelines of the Coastal Act of 1976.

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