

# County Creates Conservation Commission

County Supervisors Tuesday placed themselves on the vanguard of the rush to preserve the livability of Santa Cruz County.

The threat of freeway construction, population booms and coastal land development has resulted in a keen awareness of the natural beauty of the county and a militant resolve on the part of many of its inhabitants to preserve it. A number of new construction oriented groups have sprung up. The county got on the bandwagon at its Tuesday meeting with a proposal to create a conservation commission.

The proposal was brought to the board by Chairman Henry Mello and Supervisor Russ McCallie. In a letter to the board they said, "A 'Conservation Commission' formed for Santa

Cruz would be of great value at this time while we are struggling with trying to save the environmental quality of our county."

The commission, which would be staffed by a conservation expert, would attempt to "strike a balance" between progress and preservation.

McCallie and Mello said the body could review land use proposals to determine whether a proposed development would be creating irreparable damage to the environment.

Another of its responsibilities would be to study and recommend eligibility for funds under the federal open space land acquisition program.

Creation of the commission is at least several months away. Supervisors said it would be examined at the next budget

session for possible funding of an action program.

Supervisor Dan Forbus called the plan "an excellent idea," but he feared it amounted to adding "another layer of administrative government." He cautioned the conservation commission should do its job without infringing on the purview of other governmental bodies.

Mello agreed. He said the commission should be purely conservation oriented and should confine itself to that area.

McCallie, although a co-author of the commission proposal, said the board, in forming the new body, should be aware of the cost and proliferation of government agencies.

Lance King, Soquel High School student and a member of the County Youth Commis-

sion, said youth is intensely interested in conservation and that a young person ought to be appointed to the new body.

Supervisors agreed and said a member of the County Parks and Recreation Commission also should be appointed.

The board voted to send the proposal to the county administrator, who will confer with other officials in establishing guidelines for formation of the commission.

The proposal also will be forwarded to the Environmental Conference Committee headed by Supervisor Ralph Sanson for discussion and comment.

Copies of the proposal will be forwarded to State Senator Donald Grunsky, R-Watsonville, and Assemblyman Frank Murphy, R-Santa Cruz.