

Greenbelt

Supporters closing in on greenbelt completion

By KAREN CLARK
Sentinel staff writer

SANTA CRUZ — A group of greenbelt supporters kicked off its latest effort to raise money to buy the 246-acre Bombay property Friday by accepting two \$1,000 checks from local residents.

The Bombay parcel on the city's western edge is the final link in the circle of greenbelt that Santa Cruz has been buying to thwart urban sprawl and maintain open space.

"I like to think of this as just buckling up the greenbelt," said Mayor Celia Scott. "I'm convinced we're going to do this this time."

The fund drive must raise \$3.9 million by November to buy the Westside parcel, or face the risk

the City Council will approve a proposal to build 25 houses on a portion of the land.

That development proposal is winding its way through the planning process, although the property owner has made it clear he will sell the land for open space if the asking price can be raised in time.

The council is taking this two-track approach because the majority believes development law is on the side of the property owner. The majority of the council, however, supports the effort to buy the entire parcel for open space.

In fact, the council allocated \$1 million from the sale of the Pelton Avenue parcel to help the fund drive get started. Members also are

exploring the possibility of putting a bond measure on the November ballot to help fund the purchase.

Advocates hope to get another \$1.3 million from various state sources, in addition to \$1 million in grants from foundations interested in preserving open space.

That leaves about \$500,000 to be raised from community businesses and residents. So far, that portion

of the fund drive has netted nearly \$30,000.

Friday's City Hall press conference included the presentation of a \$1,000 check from Westside residents Bill Jacobs and Kathy Duncan. Businessman Maynard Manson and his wife, Carol, also donated \$1,000.

The Bombay property contains a mixture of habitats, including ev-

ergreen forests and large grassland meadows that contain rare flowering plants.

Although the Bombay Corp. has valued the land at between \$3.8 million and \$3.9 million, the city hopes an independent appraisal may set a lower value on the land.

If that's true, a lower negotiated price may be possible.

For more information about contributing to the fund drive, or volunteering to help raise money, call the Open Space Alliance at 426-2286.