

What Price Conservation In SC County?

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Environmentally speaking, the chickens are coming home to roost.

Saturday's meeting on the California coastline at Cabrillo College will raise questions on preserving the coast from destructive development.

It should also raise another central question about conservation: can we afford it?

Conservationists foresee atomic reactors heating up the ocean waters and threatening radioactive pollution, factories throwing their waste into the sea, and leaky ocean-going oil

rigs blackening the ocean's surface.

Speakers at Saturday's hearing may talk of beehive subdivisions crawling over the face of sand dunes until they blot the view of the ocean from the highways that serve them. Or they may talk of garbage dumps pushing their way into the water, later to be covered over with dirt to create new "land" for subdivisions.

All these things represent real threats, and most of them already have taken place. A visit to San Francisco Bay, which now has a state protective com-

mission, will show what can happen.

But who will ask what it costs to prevent the loss of California's shoreline?

If the state legislature had passed a coastline protection bill this year, it would have cost \$10 million in assessed valuation in Santa Cruz County alone, according to County Assessor John Seidlinger.

This means the other landowners in the county would have to pay the taxes those coastal lands would have paid. It would be a tax loss to the county of close to \$1 million.

Conservation already cuts deeply into the tax take of cities, school districts, special districts, and the county. That's because the state already owns 23,722 acres in state parks which it pays no taxes on. If it adds 2,316 acres of Rancho del Oso to Big Basin State Park, almost 10 per cent of the county's 280,960 acres will be in public ownership. The "public" pays no taxes.

In short, conservation costs money. Can we afford it?

State parks cost the citizens of the county about \$290,000 in lost tax money last year. Not (Continued on Page 2)

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all state parks, just the beachlands.

The state owns 10.6 miles of beaches out of about 38 miles of coastline. That's 27.8 per cent, or a little less than a third of all ocean frontage.

Hijacking Bus Is Tough Task

LOS ANGELES (AP) — It's harder to hijack a bus than a plane. For one thing, you have to know where you're going.

Police said a man wielding an empty wine bottle climbed aboard a Rapid Transit District bus Thursday, refused to pay his fare and announced

Some are among the most popular in the state park system. Seacliff Beach State Park is perennially jammed, with long waiting lists. There is also New Brighton, Natural Bridges, Manresa, Sunset, and Twin Lakes.

Some two million of the three million persons who visited the state parks in this county in 1965 went to those beaches. Those are the last figures available, and are sure to be higher now, in 1970.

While those day beach visitors bought some gasoline for their cars, some food, and possibly some items from local merchants, they also caused expensive problems. They helped clog the highways, dirty the

beaches, and pollute the bay waters, right along with the permanent residents.

Some visitors, like some permanent citizens, stole and robbed, sold and bought drugs, killed others and themselves.

In short, they cost the county money for police protection, highway funds, and even for welfare aid.

Whether these visitors paid local citizens for their trouble is not the point; the point is that conservation is desirable, but problematical.

The question of public ethics in taking away the right of property owners to develop their properties into beehive subdivisions or factories must also be

dealt with. The legality of zoning controls is well established, where local government restricts the right of persons to annoy their neighbors. Whether this right extends to forbidding all development is a question which might wind up in the courts.

Under the state control bills which didn't pass this year, local governments would have lost varying degrees of zoning control themselves. Whether this is good or bad depends on the point of view.

Some of the coastline bills are almost certain to be revived for the next session of the legislature.

Such groups as the National Student Council on Pollution and the Environment, sponsors of Saturday's meeting at Cabrillo College, will be expected to ask for federal action to save the coastline as well.

But it is clear that the rescue of the coast is not going to come cheaply, and its cost will have to be weighed.

(See related news page 19.)

Whirlpool