

Local

✓ Ben Lomond Dam Park plan approved

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SANTA CRUZ — The Ben Lomond Dam Park plan was approved by the Parks and Recreation Commission last week.

Under the proposed plan, improvements will be made to the little riverside park, which includes a picnic and barbecue area, a children's play area, a sports court, and a small amphitheater.

Centerpiece of the park will con-

tinue to be the sandy beach and the swimming hole created each year by putting a rubber dam in the San Lorenzo River just upstream of the downtown Ben Lomond bridge across Highway 9.

The park will be made accessible for people with disabilities, including a chairlift into the river.

Other changes will reduce the slope to minimize erosion.

Access to the park has been a sore point for townspeople.

After a man fell off the rubber dam some years back and was left paralyzed, a fence was installed to keep people away from the dam unless a lifeguard was present. To pay for the lifeguard, a fee is now charged for the park.

Although some residents are unhappy about the fence and the park fees, saying they keep people from using the park freely, the county parks department has insisted that the liability problem is

too great to leave the park open all the time.

A partial solution proposed by the plan is a fence that can be partially removed during the months of the year when the dam is not in the river.

Next hurdle for the plan is approval by the Board of Supervisors, who will discuss it at 9:30 a.m. Nov. 5 in the Board Chambers, County Government Center, 701 Ocean Street.