

# Oceanic 'think tank' heads to Coastal Commission

Long Marine Lab

8-3-99

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## UC seeks approval for a key part of Long Marine Lab expansion

SANTA CRUZ — Plans are nearing final approval for an ocean research and policy "think tank" that will replace eight dilapidating trailers that have been the core of UC Santa Cruz's Long Marine Laboratory for two decades.

UC officials will ask the state Coastal Commission next week to give its blessing to the Center for Ocean Health. Among other things, it would house a five-year project financed by the Packard Foundation that

would focus on long-term ecological processes and change along the California and Oregon coast.

The building would be another large step in the expansion of the Long Marine Laboratory campus and related facilities on the coastal terrace at the extreme western edge of Santa Cruz.

It would join the nearly finished Long Marine Lab Marine Discovery Center and the

National Marine Fisheries Services' research laboratory, also under construction.

But Coastal Commission planners have warned university officials that they shouldn't consider a similar scale development on the adjacent Terrace Point, 55 acres of oceanfront land that the university purchased in December. The university is believed to be planning housing and other development on the property but has not yet

announced its intentions.

Coastal Commission planners recommend that large areas of Terrace Point be kept in open space.

Underwritten with a grant from the David and Lucile Packard Foundation, the approximately \$7 million ocean health center would be a centerpiece of the university's desire to have a highly respected center to bring scientists and state and national poli-

cy makers together, according to university plans.

The center would be a 23,000-square-foot, 36-foot high barn-like structure with administrative and laboratory space. There would be a separate 2,300 square foot shop and a 31-space parking lot.

The intent is to replace aging trailers and sheds with labs and offices to accommodate emerging programs in marine-mammal study, coastal biology and ongoing seawater

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experiments and research.

While not part of the project to be considered by the Coastal Commission, the university has conceptual plans to almost double the size of the Ocean Health building eventually.

Coastal Commission planners have recommended approval of the center on the condition that the university protect the Younger Lagoon Reserve and nearby wetlands and provide public access to beaches.

All but the top of the building would

be hidden from view of Highway 1 by an earthen berm, planners said. The building would consolidate trailers, equipment storage and other haphazard facilities and ad hoc parking.

Aesthetically, the site will generally be improved, said planners, but the building would be taller than the Marine Discovery Center and would approximately double the existing gross square footage of research facilities at Long Marine Lab.

The effect, especially if the Ocean Health building is later enlarged,

would be a "densely developed corner" of the overall Terrace Point site, according to the Coastal Commission report.

If that pattern of development continues on the Terrace Point parcel, it would "substantially transform the visual character of the Westside Lands, particularly its open coastal bluff setting and natural resource areas," planners warned.

The Coastal Commission hearing will be held beginning at 9 a.m. Wednesday, Aug. 11 in Los Angeles