

SV sets sights on Geyer Road

Committee names old quarry as best option for high school

By KAREN CLARK
Sentinel staff writer

SCOTTS VALLEY — The old quarry site at the end of Geyer Road is the front-runner in the race to find a home for the city's first high school by the end of September.

Members of the high school site-selection committee have recommended the abandoned Geyer Road quarry as the most feasible location from among six that have been studied in-depth.

The committee suggested a Glenwood Drive site be considered as backup.

The report will be presented to members of the Scotts Valley Unified School District board of trustees at 7:30 p.m. Monday in City Hall.

Officials are on a strict timeline to buy land and begin construction — the district must have a high school in place by the fall of 1998.

There are 35 usable acres in the lower quarry area, which starts where Geyer Road ends. The property runs close to Mount Hermon Road, where a new access road would be created to improve traffic flow.

Bean Creek runs through the property, which is primarily owned by Pacific Mineral Technologies of Mill Valley. Relatively flat and sandy, the property has been labeled a "feasible, workable

site" by the committee.

One factor favoring Geyer over Glenwood is price. The committee said the cost of land at the Glenwood site, the target of extensive development plans by a private company, would be significantly higher than the quarry land.

A preliminary appraisal of the sites has been completed, but that information will not be made public during negotiations.

The district did not budget money in the \$22.7 million bond measure passed in November to buy land. At the time, the district thought it had an agreement with Kaiser to swap land for sand, but that proved not to be true.

Trustee Mike Smith said the plan to build multipurpose rooms at Vine Hill and Brook Knoll schools, as well as the Brook Knoll modernization project, may be put on hold to find the money to buy a high school site.

Smith said he liked the Geyer quarry site for two reasons:

- Existing infrastructure (sewer, water, etc.) from the city is close, which cuts down on the cost of extending it to the high school.

- Scotts Valley hopes to be able to trade and share classes with San Lorenzo Valley High School, so a site on Mount Hermon Road will come in

handy.

"The Geyer Road quarry site was selected because it appeared the most feasible overall with respect to architectural and engineering considerations," said the committee in its report. "Preliminary indications are that this site, like the others, may raise certain environmental issues to be evaluated in the environmental review process."

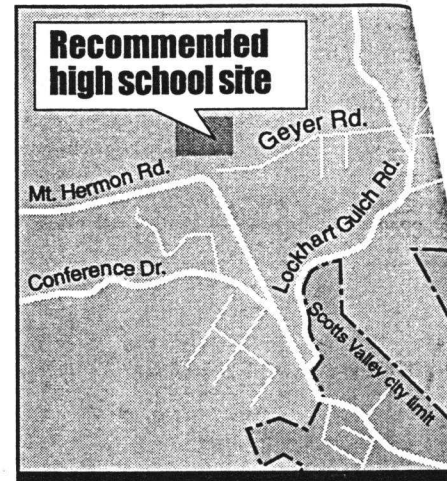
These issues include whether the quarry is home to endangered plants or animals.

Another key issue to be addressed is that the Geyer site is not within city limits, and none of the parcels being considered touch the city's boundaries. "Cities typically do not annex 'county islands,'" so the council would have to consider annexing all the land between the site and the city limits.

Annexation is important because Scotts Valley Police Chief Steve Walpole has said his officers would not service a high school outside city limits. That would leave the school under the jurisdiction of the Santa Cruz County Sheriff's Office.

Although seriously considered, the Polo Ranch property was ruled out because of cost and steep terrain.

Three other sites were early casualties of the committee's discussions:



Sentinel map

- The Kaiser quarry property was dropped because steep terrain left only 20 usable acres, which is too small for a high school.

- The Valley Gardens Golf Course site was set aside because it had only 27 usable acres. There also were traffic-circulation problems and dense residential areas nearby.

- The Graham Hill Road site didn't make the cut because of water and annexation issues.