

✓ Graham Hill Showgrounds

Sentinel

# Graham Hill showgrounds plans get revised

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SANTA CRUZ — A residential development proposed for the Graham Hill showgrounds has grown from 51 to 60 homes and the developer now plans to build a sewage treatment plant to prevent pollution of the nearby San Lorenzo River.

Those changes are detailed in the latest environmental impact report on the development released last week.

The report, prepared by Environmental Science Associates of San Francisco, was paid for by the developer, the S.H. Cowell Founda-

tion, which owns the 170-acre property adjacent to Henry Cowell Redwoods State Park and Paradise Park.

For four years, the San Francisco-based philanthropic organization has been trying to develop home sites on the site, which has been used mostly as a horse recreation area since the 1940s.

Gary Reece, Cowell's local representative, said the foundation wants to get out of the land management business to concentrate on philanthropic activities.

The foundation initially proposed 51 homes, each with individual septic systems. That raised concerns among Santa Cruz city

water officials and residents downstream on the San Lorenzo River, which provides much of the city's water supply.

Reece predicted the sewage treatment plant would alleviate concerns about river pollution.

Another worry was that the development would endanger rare plants and wildlife at the site.

By setting aside additional land in the southwestern part of the parcel, the developer should preserve much of this life, said county planner Kim Tschantz.

Altogether, the foundation has set aside 117 acres for open space, 20 acres for an equestrian park and

a ½-acre for a future fire station site.

The new plans also include measures to prevent drainage problems and erosion — for example, reducing the number of drainage pipes, he said.

To accommodate additional sites, the lots will be 15,000 square feet or more, smaller than the one acre proposed earlier.

Tschantz said the public will have the chance to comment on the report in the next 45 days. After consideration of those comments, a final environmental report should be released this fall.

The proposal requires approval by both the county Planning Commission and the county Board of

Supervisors.

At Paradise Park, a small community that neighbors the showgrounds, residents are resigned to development of the property.

James Gloeckler, president of the Paradise Park Masonic Club Board of Directors, said, "We're 100 percent on their (the developer's) side. We're satisfied with everything they're attempting to do."