

Twin Lakes

Schwan Lake Nature Park

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A state-county joint powers agreement to let the county operate the Schwan Lake portion of Twin Lakes State Beach as a wildlife habitat and nature interpretation center was authorized this morning by the state parks and recreation commission.

The commission action came on recommendation of William Penn Mott Jr., state director of parks and recreation, at an all-day meeting in progress at Santa Cruz Main Library.

A formal agreement between state and county will be drawn up and submitted to the commission for final approval.

Branciforte District Supervisor Dan Forbus hailed the action, saying: "I am delighted. This is the first big step in our county's new parks program."

According to Keith Kelly, the county's parks and recreation director, the county is buying some 15 acres now owned by Granite Rock Corp. adjacent to the state's Schwan Lake holdings. These will be integrated into the Schwan Lake complex to provide equestrian and hiking trails as well as observation posts and a nature interpretation building.

Ray Oliva, chairman of the county parks and recreation commission, said the county considers Schwan Lake the last natural lagoon area in the county, and he went on to say "there is truly an incredible amount of wildlife there."

A major effort will be made to protect not only the lake itself but the shore areas, Oliva said.

Forbus said the county is ready to go into escrow to get the Granite Rock property. He said the county supervisors had approved the Schwan Lake project in concept last January.

In recommending the joint powers agreement, Mott said the property is not considered to be a significant state holding but that the state is not willing to relinquish a title to the area until there is a chance to see how the county can handle the planned program.

The agreement would be on a 20-year basis, Mott indicated.

"I have met with the supervisors and their attitude is good," he said in his recommendation. "Kelly is an excellent administrator and I am sure the county program will be a success."

The state will hold onto a service area for ultimate conversion into a parking lot for 200 cars, Mott noted.