



SHMUEL THALER/SENTINEL

A large group turned out for the Live Oak Summer History Walk in Schwan Lake Park on Tuesday.

Tour offers peek into Twin Lakes' uncertain future

Official gives insight into what lies ahead for state beach during Tuesday's Summer Walk

By KIMBERLY WHITE

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LIVE OAK — A large group strolled along a dirt path dusted with oak leaves into the heart of Schwan Lake Park on Tuesday, the branches of the ancient trees on either side reaching like ribbons into the early evening sky.

The tour headed out onto Seventh Avenue from behind the Simpkins Family Swim Center, which Live Oak historian Norman Poitevin explained was once a quarry used by Graniterock to create the cement jacks now sitting at the Santa



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Cormorants flock to Schwan Lake in the late afternoon as participants in Tuesday's Live Oak Summer History Walk make their way through the park.

SEE TOUR ON B3

TOUR

Continued from B1

Cruz Small Craft Harbor.

Tuesday's walk was the third in the Summer Walk series launched in 2007 by Poitevin. During previous tours, residents strolled through the Twin Lakes neighborhood and Old Holy Cross Cemetery, listening as he told colorful tales about pioneering residents who left their indelible marks on the community.

But unlike previous tours, Poitevin was only one of several speakers.

Stopping at the edge of one of the fingers of Schwan Lagoon, the group listened attentively as Bonny Hawley, director of Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks, talked about the shaky future of the 91-acre Twin Lakes State Beach, which was founded in 1962 and includes

Seabright Beach and Schwan Lake. Because the park does not generate revenue, it's among the 70 state parks listed for closure under a state budget-cutting plan.

State officials say Twin Lakes State Beach would still be open for beachgoers but would not be staffed by parks personnel, but Hawley pointed out that because federal money was used to create the park, it must remain open to the public.

It's the only park slated for closure that's considered an "urban park," she

said, and Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks is working with State Parks to come up with a plan that ensures life-guards remain on the beach, that the public restrooms are maintained and that trash is removed.

"These parks have never closed before, so we don't know how to do it," added State Parks ecologist Chris Spohrer, who also joined the tour. Meanwhile, he said, "we're trying to do what planning we can for the cuts that are coming."

During one of the stops, he described some of the work done to clear the unruly underbrush, meant to improve the views and safety for the estimated 1 million walkers, joggers and others who use the paths each year.

"I don't know why all the people collecting unemployment checks right now, why (the state) doesn't put them to work — make them earn

their money," Scotts Valley resident Joanne Cordano later questioned.

Also speaking during the tour was Supervisor Neal Coonerty, who informed the group that a long-time plan to improve ocean access at the park is now under way.

The \$4.5 million plan to improve Seventh Avenue to the harbor, allowing for better parking and improved pedestrian access, will soon be submitted to the county Planning Department and state Coastal Commission.

Last year, Friends of Santa Cruz State Parks raised \$60,000 through a Save Our Lifeguards Beach Bash fundraiser. The campaign was designed to raise funds to support 45 seasonal lifeguards whose salaries were cut.

"I wish we had a hard-core plan, but until we know (the details), it's hard to step up," Hawley said.

IF YOU GO

SUMMER WALK

WHEN: 6:15-7:30 p.m. Sept. 13

WHERE: Corcoran Lagoon and KSCO, meeting location TBA

INFORMATION: Norman Poitevin, 475-5560