

DeLaveaga Deal In Bag

By Don Righetti

Santa Cruz has won a seven-year struggle to pave the way for development of DeLaveaga park into a major recreation area.

City Manager Dave Koester has received a lease signed by General Glen Ames, military adjutant general for the State of California, giving the city title to 130 acres of National Guard property in the center of the park.

In return, the Guard will receive a like amount of property in a wilderness area at the edge of the park.

Koester reported there is a strong possibility the land swap will be made permanent.

The Guard will retain access rights to its armory within the 130-acre plot.

The major development cleared by the land trade is that of an 18-hole municipal golf course. Koester said means for proceeding with the establishment of the course would be discussed at the next city council meeting.

But the trade also paves the way for the general development of the 565-acre park. A master plan for development completed in 1960 calls for riding trails, hiking trails, sports and picnic areas.

The state has held its property at the park since 1902 when the land was deeded by the city and county to the military for an annual encampment.

The move was an attempt to stimulate local business.

The city and county had gained equal title to the area four years earlier by a court order that divided the estate of Spanish land baron Vincente DeLaveaga.

The master plan of 1960 made it clear that the Guard's 130 acres in the center of the park stood squarely in the way of general development.

It also brought out the fact, according to City Parks and Recreation Director Carl Bengston, that development was impossible under the dual ownership of the city and county.

The county already had turned over the administration of the park to the city, but the city was unable to proceed with development unless it actually owned the land.

The city asked the county to give up its half interest in the park, but the county at first refused because it wanted to use a portion of the property for a new juvenile hall.

Meantime, the state had backed away from the city's land swap proposal until the local ownership squabble was resolved.

Approximately a year ago, the county ultimately deeded its interest in the park to the city, and the city's negotiations with the state were resumed in earnest.

They ended this week when Koester received the signed lease.