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Big Basin Logging Area Not Near Heart Of Park

Outdoor lovers and campers need not fear falling logs will spoil their picnic lunches at Big Basin state park despite the sale of the adjoining Locatelli property to a lumbering firm.

A story printed this morning in a San Francisco newspaper indicated the land, sale of which was reported last October in The Sentinel, was in the heart of the recreation area of the 10,000-acre park.

The land, purchased by Big Creek Timber company for an undisclosed amount, does separate some of the northwest section of the park, but in no way affects the large recreation area in the basin known to more than 500,000 outdoor enthusiasts annually.

The state has had numerous opportunities to purchase the land, but was unwilling to meet the price asked by owner Ernest Locatelli. Just before the sale, the land again was offered to the state division of beaches and parks, but the agency did not see fit to resume negotiations.

It is known the state is interested in purchasing the large land holdings of the Theodore Hoover estate which would unite the three sectors of the park and at the same time extend to the Oceanshore highway and the state beach area at Ano Nuevo. The Hoover estate abuts the land sold to the timber firm.

Big Creek expects to log the 520 acres of land, located where Golden falls, Salmon falls and Silver falls drop into the east fork of Waddell creek.

Bud McCrary, a partner in the timber company, said his firm would log the groves "very selectively." He said some temporary arrangements would be made to allow campers and nature-lovers to use the state trails on his property.

He also said after the logs are all out he will develop the area as a private recreation area.

John H. Knight, deputy chief of the division, said the land was "inaccessible" to most of the campers who visit the area annually. Local residents claim the number of hikers and campers who visit the disputed area are no more than several hundred annually.

Knight expressed no surprise over the move to log the area, and said his division had no objection. "We hope some day to consolidate the state lands in Big Basin, but second growth trees are just as satisfactory for recreation purposes as virgin stands."

State Senator Donald Grunsky (R-Watsonville) said he saw no cause for alarm in the situation, and that his office was aware of all developments. "But we shall reappraise the matter to double check against any chance of error," he told The Sentinel this morning.

Locatelli offered the area sold to the timber firm to the state along with other land adjoining portions of the park for a total of \$680,000. The state offer was \$450,000.

"I believe the state should have the entire area," Locatelli said today. Locatelli said he believed the area would provide a perfect dam site which would give future campers in the Hoover estate property a water supply.

Assemblyman Glenn Coolidge (R-Felton) said he also was aware of the situation, but pointed out that as much as he hates to see the redwoods go, the state could not afford the property.

"We already have nine state parks and beaches in Santa Cruz county, and it is an imposition on the county taxpayers to remove more property from the taxrolls," he said.

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