

Endangered Species

# Salamander Drive Lacks Key Ingredient



Santa Cruz Sally, the now-famous long-toed salamander who lives and breeds only in the La Selva-Aptos area of

Santa Cruz County, is shown in photo above taken by Nate Cohen of Berkeley. The rare amphibian is black with bright gold spots, and lives to an age

of eight years. Conservationists are trying to save its only two known breeding grounds.

By WALLACE WOOD  
Sentinel Staff Writer

Santa Cruz Sally — the famous long-toed salamander — was back in a bit of hot water cooked up by some short-tempered humans Wednesday.

Lack of a key ingredient, money, caused a breakdown in negotiations to save one of the only two known homes of the rare little amphibians. Another meeting is set for next week.

Conservationists failed to get together on any definite offers to buy or lease the 26 acres near La Selva Beach that a scientist says is the salamander homestead. Nature Conservancy was expected to make an offer, but failed to show up for the meeting.

Federal and state officials said their agencies move too slowly to make any immediate offers, and must depend on a private group like Nature Conservancy to make a quick move.

Without a money offer, there is nothing to discuss, replied Dennis Kehoe, attorney for the five property owners.

Before Kehoe's arrival, one of the owners, Bob Bischoff, had expressed a willingness to cooperate with the conservationists in their efforts.

The property has been posted against trespassers and curious salamander-seekers, and the sheriff's office is enforcing it, Bischoff said. Landowners also have allowed scientists to use the property to study the creature.

Conservationists helped defeat a proposal for a mobile home park on the property last week. Supervisors turned down the zoning for the park, and asked for negotiations to save the salamanders.

Wednesday's meeting was set up in hopes that Nature Conservancy or another agency could make a definite offer.

Kehoe, in cool tones, suggested the conservationists get together by themselves and come up with a money offer. He dismissed the meeting by saying the group had neither the money nor authority to act.

This angered Alan Holbert of Cabrillo College's biology department. "I'm very disappointed we couldn't get together as human beings. If you insist on putting this on a legal level it will go just that way. But see it as a very bad move on the part of the legal profession," Holbert said.

"I think it's a bad move on your part," Kehoe said.

ing up to talk at all.

"I hope you will deal when the time comes," Lavender said to the owners. This led to an impasse on salamander situation for the time being on the La Selva Beach property, though it was plain that some landowners were willing to talk despite Kehoe's statement.

But new hope for the million-plus year old amphibian was offered by salamander expert Stephen Ruth of the UC-Berkeley zoology department.

Ruth said the State Division of Highways is "ready and anxious" to help save the only other known homeland of the creature at Valencia lagoon near Rob Roy junction of Highway 1.

Ruth said construction of the Rob Roy interchange at Freedom Boulevard wiped out a traditional salamander breeding pond. A substitute pond installed by highway crew has not been used for breeding by the salamander.

The tiny pond is too small, Ruth said. "It is like offering a bag of flour to feed a city." He suggested a program to reflood most of the original Valencia Lagoon this winter.

But even here there are problems. The state is planning to sell a chunk of land next to the freeway interchange next week.

Salamanders or not, the county planning department is upset over the sale because it is a possible service station site. The area is zoned residential, but almost is sure to come in for rezoning after the sale.

Ruth said he wasn't sure whether development of the parcel would foul up the plan to redo the lagoon or not.

And Mrs. Dolores Miller, who owns much of the lagoon land, said "I would like to help save the little fellow, really." But,

she added, she hasn't been able to work up much enthusiasm for the salamander, "perhaps because I don't understand him."

Another meeting is set for 3:30 p.m. next week, meeting chairman Don Chamberlin of the county planning staff said. Salamander supporters hoped Nature Conservancy would be present, and that the state Highway Department would be asked to cancel the auction sale of the Rob Roy property until some action is taken.

Ruth spent some time explaining the salamander's living habits on the La Selva Property. He said he is fairly certain that a breeding pond and willow grove in a canyon must be pro-

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## Zoning Administrator Okays University Terrace Plan

By BRUCE McPHERSON  
Sentinel Staff Writer

The general development plan for a 225-unit planned community development at University Terrace was approved Wednesday afternoon by the Santa Cruz city zoning administrator.

However, from the city planning commission's discussion of the area Wednesday night, it appears that the project will be subject to appeal as it was previously.

A 241-unit planned community proposal for the southern section of University Terrace was turned down last month by the city council, principally because street widths were not in "substantial conformity" with the general development plan for the area that was approved in 1964.

That plan showed the streets to be 36 feet wide on a 48-foot right-of-way, and the plan submitted showed the streets 26 feet wide.

The new proposal shows the streets to be 36 feet wide.

Planning Director Neal Walton, who acts as the zoning administrator, said he issued the permit following a conference with the city planning

The commission had been continuing an agenda item to "review the general development plan" of the University Terrace area for more than a month, until a decision was made on first proposal on the area.

The commission was considering reopening the public hearing on that matter Wednesday night, but Commissioner Harry Coolidge said that would be useless since the permit had been issued.

He felt the commission had to wait to see if there is an appeal on that permit. Some residents of the area assured the commission that an appeal would be forthcoming. It has to be filed within five days.

## County Sues Against Aptos

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"90 per cent sure" of the areas  
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by next March, when the  
breeding season is well un-  
derway.

"I think it's a bad move on your part," Kehoe shot back.  
Cooler heads quieted the argu-  
ment, which came toward the  
end of the three-hour session.  
Richard Lavender of the federal  
Bureau of Sport Fisheries and  
Wildlife quickly stepped in to  
praise the landowners for show-

