

*water pollution*

# El Creek Lagoon Pollution Danger Cited

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## Santa Cruz Sentinel

Tuesday, April 15, 1969

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"There is definitely sewage in the wading area," Talley said. "I hate to make a recommendation to close the lagoon for recreational purposes, but that seems like the thing that should be done, based on our findings."

That the county will close off the wading area seems doubtful, however, because there are no state or federal standards for coliform count (a measurement used in determining water pollution). Talley added that officials in the San Joaquin delta region have arbitrarily set a "reasonable level" of coliform count at 200 fecal coliforms per 100 milliliters.

Talley said the county has posted "danger signs" in beach areas such as Davenport, but

added it was able to do so only because there is a water safety standard for ocean waters.

Talley said diseases such as infectious hepatitis, typhoid fever and other "non-specific ailments" would result from persons swimming in polluted waters.

Talley's recommendation for closing the lagoon was received with grumblings from a vast majority of the 100-plus persons in the audience.

Audience members said no diseases have been reported since the lagoon has been dammed to provide swimming for youngsters for more than 25 years. They added the tests were taken in the late summer months when "contamination is probably at its worst" since so

many youngsters use the facility.

Councilman Ron Graves asked if the cause of the high coliform count might be the result of breakage of sewage lines in the creek area.

Talley answered that the main cause of the pollution threat to the lagoon was "simply because of the increase of people in the area. There is also a large number of septic tanks in the area" that are often linked with water pollution. He added that "a phase out program of septic tanks in the area" would be advisable and said his department is ready to present a "more stringent regulation on the use of septic tanks in the county to the board of supervisors next month.

Mrs. Kathy Sherwood accused the council and county of "ignoring —the problem. You are studying the symptoms, not the causes."

City attorney John Marlo warned that the city "could be directly liable if a citizen should receive a disease from bathing in the lagoon, "since it is aware of possible danger there. "Such a claim would have to be substantiated with medical records," Marlo added.

Suggestions such as "flushing out the lagoon" every day, making it deeper and chlorinating the body of water, also were heard.

Councilmen agreed unanimously to have city manager Ryder Ray check with the county and a soil control laboratory about carrying out more tests in the area.

"We don't know enough about the matter to condemn the lagoon now," Mayor John Lappin said. "We will have to find out the sources before we act."

The lagoon is normally dammed the first part of the summer, depending on the water flow.