

Ecologues

SC County Environment—Can It Be Saved?

Santa Cruz County residents have a nice place to live. Many of them, apparently, are interested in keeping it that way.

Some 300 of them tuned out Tuesday night for a special county board of supervisors meeting on environmental problems. They filled Cabrillo College's Forum Building auditorium, stood along the walls and wound up sitting on the floor.

The meeting was held to tell the public what the county is doing about environment pro-

tection, delineate the problems it is encountering and to hear from the public what it thinks ought to be done.

The gathering stretched toward midnight as the audience first listened to summaries of county environmental efforts by a parade of officials, then sounded off to county supervisors on what the people think government should be doing to preserve the environment.

County Planning Director Burt Muhly led the official

speakers by explaining how the 1961 county general plan and the area general plans relate to environmental preservation.

Muhly explained how the county expects to absorb its estimated 1985 population of 200,000 persons and noted the supervisors have indicated an intention to form a conservation commission. The commission would evaluate all private development and public projects on their effects on the environment.

"Pollution of our streams is serious at present and is getting worse," said Environmental Health Officer Ray Talley as he reported on the area of water pollution.

But a tightening up of ordinances governing septic tank use, as well as other local governmental efforts" will result in a gradual improvement in quality of our stream waters," Talley continued.

He noted that Monterey Bay currently is polluted and the

pollution will get worse before it gets better. However, if the Association of Monterey Bay Area Governments is successful in financing its Waste Water Management Plan, and local agencies are willing to finance their participation in it, "pollution of the bay will cease entirely within a few years..."

Ed Munson, executive director of the Monterey-Santa Cruz County Air Pollution Control District, reported that "considerable progress has been made

in eliminating or controlling many of the major sources of air pollution..."

He noted the board already has taken a number of actions in cutting down fouling of the air by area industries. Now, he pointed out, the board has set its sights on backyard and agricultural burning.

Donald D. Chamberlain, manager of the county's transportation study, said his group is coming to the conclusion there may be a measurable limit of

air pollution from automobiles which the county can tolerate.

Thus, the study committee is thinking of placing limits to the number of automobiles which may operate in the county at a given time.

In the matter of limiting freeway encroachment on the environment, Chamberlain said there are no easy answers, but he hoped "that for the very first time we can take a serious look at the total transportation

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