

# Expert bugged by proposed listing

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**SCOTTS VALLEY** — Three insects that live in the sandy soils of the Santa Cruz mountains soon could be listed on the federal endangered species list.

But a former Mount Hermon resident who's had a half-century fascination with two of the bugs said they are being used as pawns to bar development.

Preservationists behind the listing of the Mount Hermon June beetle, the Zayante band-winged grasshopper and the Santa Cruz rain beetle say the creatures need to be protected. A 1991 proposal that would put the three on the federal endangered species list will go to a public hearing soon.

Those opposed include local quarry operators, and entomologist William Hazeltine, who has studied the two beetles since the 1940s and claims the proposed listing is motivated by political, not biological, reasons.

"I don't think (the beetles) are in any danger of extinction," said Hazeltine. He asked the Scotts Valley City Council last Monday to fight the proposed listing.

Hazeltine, 67, thinks those pushing for protection are claiming the sandy soil as the beetle's sole home to block development.

"I'm not going to hold still and let people play around in the area of my expertise without standing up and asking for equal time," Hazeltine said.

Using endangered bugs to preserve the land was indeed the plan, said Stephen McCabe, conservation chairman for the Santa Cruz chapter of California Native Plant Society. McCabe petitioned federal officials to put the Mount Hermon June beetle on the endangered list.

# Insects for endangered list

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"My goal is to protect the habitat in the Ben Lomond sand hills," he said. "The best route at present is to try to get individual species listed and by doing that get protection for the habitat."

In the May 10 Federal Register, which lists endangered species proposals, U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service officials point to urban development, agriculture, sand mining and recreational use as threats to the creature's habitat.

In 1986, there were more than 250 acres of the ponderosa pine sand parkland that is unique to Ben Lomond and Bonny Doon. By 1992, there were fewer than 100, according to the service. Nearly half of what is left is privately owned.

Hazeltine counters that proponents of protection haven't looked outside of the sand parkland, and that the bugs can adapt to a variety of terrain and food. He says he has found both the June and the rain beetles far from where the endangered species' proposal states they start to disappear.

"Just because you don't find them doesn't mean they're not there," he said. "It takes an awful lot of not finding to say it's not there."

The Mount Hermon June beetle is about an inch long, with a black head and a striped body. Its behavior and characteristics differ from other June beetles across the country, Hazeltine said. The males fly only at night in June and July, he said. The females are clumsy and don't like to fly, Hazeltine said. He's found males in residential and quarry areas in Scotts Valley, Ben Lomond, and along Graham Hill Road.

The rain beetles are about the same size as the June beetle, live for a dozen years (mostly as larvae), and are reddish-brown or black in color.

Female rain beetles don't fly; the males fly only before light in the rain during the fall, Hazeltine said. He has found them as far north as Waddell Creek, in redwoods near UC Santa Cruz and in Aromas.

Less is known about the Zayante band-winged grasshopper, Hazeltine said. They have light bands on their wings and blue-gray legs. The grasshoppers make a buzzing sound when they fly.

The Federal Register states that the grasshopper is found only in ponderosa pine sand parklands near Felton. Hazeltine said the grasshopper was found in 1928 in

Alma, a former rail stop now at the bottom of Lexington Reservoir.

Submissions for the endangered species list are reviewed by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service before they're printed in the Federal Register, said Judy Hohman, deputy field supervisor for the agency, which administers the Endangered Species Act.

People are invited to comment on proposals, she said, which gives the agency a chance to collect more data on a species' health.

"We're after scientific information — not feelings," she said.

If evidence shows the insects are in good shape, they won't be put on the list, Hohman said.

McCabe and Hazeltine disagree on where the creatures are found and in what quantities.

Hazeltine, who now lives in Oroville, said he has nothing to gain by opposing the listing, but did add that he worked as a consultant for Santa Cruz Aggregates, operators of the Quail Hollow Quarry, in the past.

"If I had a vested interest in this I'd be all for it," he said. "Let's make them endangered because you couldn't do a project without bringing in a consultant."

The California Association of Aggregate Producers paid for out of pocket expenses for him to speak at the Scotts Valley City Council meeting, he said.

A public hearing is planned this summer, Hohman said.

Violations of the Endangered Species Act carry up to \$100,000 in fines for an individual violator to \$250,000 for a corporation. Harassing, killing or disturbing protected

creature's habitat is a federal crime.

Comments on the proposal to list the three insects can be mailed to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service field supervisor, 2140 Eastman Avenue, suite 100, Ventura, Calif. 93003.

One comment will be coming from the Scotts Valley City Council, which sided with Hazeltine Monday night and pledged its opposition to the listing.