

# Beach Blight Remains for Two Years

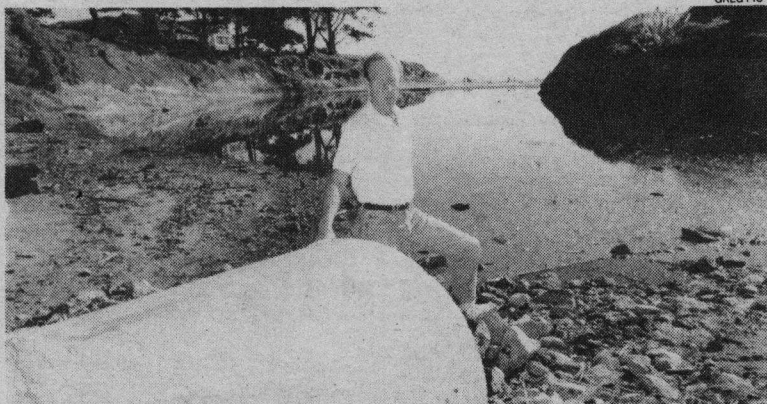
THE owner of Sunny Cove Beach has threatened to sue the county over the installation of a big cement drainpipe that he says is ugly, will erode the popular Live Oak beach and decrease his property's value.

Real estate developer Don Geoffroy, whose family has owned the beach for over half a century, says the county orchestrated a "boondoggle" two years ago when its planning and public works department placed the 32-inch-diameter pipe (which juts out some eight feet over the beach), and are now attempting to get around its admitted error with an additional drainage project.

"It's been very frustrating trying to deal with the planning department," Geoffroy said. "The appeal process within the county has been a whitewash. My only recourse now is either to go to court or appeal with the Coastal Commission."

(On Tuesday, county supervisors moved the item to Feb. 24 after an emotional two-hour public hearing attended by dozens of Live Oak residents opposed to the pipe.)

A private service organization called the Volunteers of America constructed the storm drain to accommodate a senior housing project at 17th Avenue and East Cliff Drive. That controversial drainage system,



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vehemently opposed by Live Oak residents, was approved by the public works department.

That decision came back to haunt the county, however, when it was later discovered that Sunny Cove Beach fell under the jurisdiction of the California Coastal Commission — not the county.

Since the county failed to obtain the necessary permit from the Coastal Commission, that meant the system was installed illegally. In February 1985, the pipe was plugged by order of the Coastal Commission.

In response, the county devised an alternative storm drain system for the neighborhood. Under the new plan, expected to cost well over \$100,000

(\$90,000 for materials alone), most storm water would be diverted to Bonita Lagoon, a nearby pond located on county land.

Part of the first Sunny Cove pipe would remain, but would handle a reduced water flow. In addition, the exposed part of the pipe would be destroyed, to be replaced by a less offensive opening at another spot on the beach.

An environmental impact report states that the new project "will not result in significant adverse environmental effects." But those assurances have done nothing to assuage Geoffroy and his family.

Geoffroy's appeal — being handled

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### Drainpipe

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by attorney Tim Morgan — claims the report failed to acknowledge drainage conditions which existed before the Volunteers of America installed the first pipe as a frame of reference for its "no project" alternative. Instead, the report takes "no project" to mean leaving conditions as they exist now.

"We feel the new plan takes care of the original problem and the environmental impact report addresses all the environmental concerns," said county planner Pete Parkinson, who has been handling the case since the alternative plan was proposed.

"As far as Geoffroy's appeal is concerned, it is based on technical issues related to the (environmental impact report), not the proposed system." •

— Kevin Hanson