

Contrary to that report, the Sunny Cove Association maintained, the pipe would have significant effects on the environment. They cited such things as beach erosion, noise, visual aesthetics and maintenance costs.

The clamor over the pipe subsided briefly when the county Planning Commission in August 1985 ordered that an environmental impact report be prepared in response to residents' complaints, but the findings of that recently released report are almost certain to stir things up again.

Like the geologists' study, the report says that "no significant impact" would result from the county's proposed \$90,000 modification of the pipe. The county plans to move the pipe about 40 feet landward, off the beach itself and out of Coastal Commission jurisdiction.

Sunny Cove's neighbors simply do not believe the pipe would have no significant impact on the environment. They contend that the county's proposal is a short-term solution to the area's drainage problem, a problem that has been compounded over the years by what they say has been thoughtless development on what was once natural swamp-land.

"It's a typical Live Oak solution: Just do whatever's expedient," said Jan Beautz, member of the Live Oak Community

Association.

Though privately owned, Sunny Cove Beach is used by many local residents, she said. In the past, the Live Oak association has sided with the Sunny Cove group in viewing the pipe as an unwelcome intruder onto one of the last unspoiled recreational areas in Live Oak.

Placing a drainage pipe on the beach, Beautz said, is indicative of the attitude that anything goes in Live Oak. Where a long-term, more complex solution is needed to the area's drainage problem, the financially strapped county has settled for "the simplest, cheapest alternative," she said.

Geoffroy and his cousin, Jim Geoffroy, members of the family that has owned the beach for the past 50 years,

said they were never told such a pipe was even being considered. And unless the county agrees to pay them for the right to drain storm water across their beach, they said, they intend to take the matter to court.

"You can't drain water across private land without some sort of easement," Jim Geoffroy said.

The Geoffroys say the value of the beach is between \$250,000 and \$300,000, largely because of a building site located at the back of the property. A permit to build there was denied by the Coastal Commission about four years ago, but since then, boundaries have changed and that land is now in the jurisdiction of the county.

"The issue there would become, 'Is it or isn't it a building site?'" said attorney Tim Morgan, whom the family has retained to argue that question in court if need be.

Said Don Geoffroy, "Part of the pipe is on county land and part of it is on ours."

Even though the county's plan would move the pipe off the beach, he said, water would still drain across it.

Morgan said, "Really, all it does is mean that it would discharge further back."

But storm water has always drained across Sunny Cove Beach, said Kim Vester, a senior civil engineer in the county Public Works department. The proposed solution, he said, is an attempt to recreate what once occurred naturally.

"Under pre-development conditions," he said, "there was a natural runoff from a portion of the (natural) basin that drained across their property."

Beach erosion would be diminished by the pipe, the environmental impact report states. The speed of the water would be slowed by two nine-inch-wide slots discharging runoff to the sea, as well as boulders placed in front of the pipe.

The pipe's visual intrusion would be softened by burying the exposed end in a hollow concrete block six feet wide, six feet long and four feet high, which would be covered with small rocks.

The project also includes insertion of a silt and grease trap to prevent street contaminants from spilling into the ocean. A bicycle parking lot and a bench would be placed at the end of Johan's Beach Drive, which leads to the beach, to encourage use and act as a barrier for vehicles.

Four alternatives, ranging in cost from \$400,000 to \$600,000, to the pipe are also discussed in the impact report. They include two variations of a plan to discharge water to the west, into Bonita Lagoon rather than onto Sunny Cove; a third plan would drain water to the east, into Corcoran Lagoon; the other would drain runoff into the ocean from the cliffs near Sunny Cove, rather than from the beach itself. A fifth alternative consists of maintaining the status quo.

Flaws are pointed out in each of the alternatives which make them less appealing than the current plan, but Sunny Cove residents say the choice of a solution hinges largely on money.

Vester called the alternatives "expensive diversions" that are not as good as the \$90,000 solution. He predicted, however, a long battle to prove that, particularly with the Geoffroys.

"I project they're going to fight it all the way," he said, "and they may even go to court."

Residents have until Sept. 26 to review the environmental impact report and file any objections with the county.