

What's in a name?

Supervisor Coonerty wants to call the proposed national monument Coast Dairies

North Coast

By Samantha Clark

sclark@santacruzsentinel.com
@samanthabclark on Twitter

DAVENPORT » Coast Dairies, the oceanfront property near Davenport that could become a national monument, is a 5,843-acre expanse with a long list of bucolic features, including rolling hills, sensitive streams, scenic trails, unique wildlife and stands of redwood.

But redwood forest only makes up about 500 acres, about 8 percent, of the property, leaving some scratching their heads as to why Santa Cruz Redwoods National Monument is the proposed name for the land and why its name would even change.

Many North Coast residents have said that a name referencing California's iconic trees doesn't fit, prompting Santa Cruz County Supervisor Ryan Coonerty to suggest calling it something different but familiar: Coast Dairies National Monument.

"This land has had this name for a couple generations, and if there's going to be a new name, we just want to make sure that there's a public process around it," Coonerty said.

For most of the 20th century, descendants of two Swiss families ran Coast Dairies as a farm and ranch.

Dairies

FROM PAGE 1

Sempervirens Fund, a land preservation nonprofit based in Los Altos that is spearheading the designation campaign, originally picked the name Santa Cruz Redwoods. The group, which takes its own name from the Latin word for coast redwood, has preserved 33,000 acres of redwood land locally since its founding in 1900.

"The Santa Cruz Redwoods name speaks to the property's regional significance. It was never meant to detract from all of the land's other important ecological, historic and cultural features, of which there are many," said Shelley Ratay, executive director of Sempervirens Fund. "The property's history as a dairy is absolutely an important story to tell, and we're more than happy to give voice to that as we continue campaigning."

On Tuesday, the Board of Supervisors is set to vote on a proclamation supporting the Coast Dairies National Monument. Designation will raise the land's profile and bring special conservation status that can help attract more money to manage

the property. The Bureau of Land Management controls the land but lacks the funds to maintain it.

Though Ratay appreciates Coonerty bringing forward a resolution to support the monument designation, she said redwoods are a strong symbol for the region.

"Campaigning with a name that resonates with a really broad audience is important," she said.

Supporters hope that more cash will help with hiring rangers, building trails and opening up the protected land even more to hikers, mountain bikers and horse riders.

However, some neighbors in Davenport and Bonny Doon are concerned about trash, traffic and strains on local public safety resources. They say the push for President Obama to designate Coast Dairies as a national monument is moving too quickly, and knock the name Santa Cruz Redwoods as a marketing ploy.

"Everybody loves redwoods, and everyone wants to protect redwoods. It was really done for propaganda purposes," said Ted Benhari, chair of the Rural Bonny Doon Association. "The name Santa Cruz Redwoods was picked by the backers

of the national monument, Sempervirens Fund, without any public input and doesn't really describe the property accurately."

Members of the Davenport/North Coast Association reached out to Coonerty and Rep. Anna Eshoo (D-Palo Alto), who introduced a bill for the property's designation, asking them to keep the Coast Dairies name.

"The Santa Cruz Redwoods I think is sort of a misnomer," said Noel Bock, chair of the group. "It's better to celebrate the local history rather than the 8 percent of the redwoods in that specific area. I think the locals appreciate Ryan Coonerty going to bat for them."

The name change is just one of a handful of conditions Coonerty is proposing for Board of Supervisors' support. He wants to see full public participation, the development of a plan to coordinate public safety services and for the management plan to be finalized within three years of designation.

"Calling it Santa Cruz Redwoods was not our biggest problem," Benhari said. "We don't oppose to it becoming a national monument. It just needs more study to figure out all the impacts and possible mitigations."