

Elfland logging will begin today

By JOHN ROBINSON
Sentinel staff writer

SANTA CRUZ — Logging on the edge of the UC Santa Cruz area popularly referred to as "Elfland" will begin today, university officials confirmed Sunday.

Activists vowed to stop the cutting of any trees in the area, a series of meadows and ridges across from the Student Health Center and adjacent to the proposed building site of College Nine and Ten.

Both sides are bracing for a confrontation. Activist groups met over the weekend to plan strategy and undergo civil disobedience training, while the university put local

police agencies on notice and made plans to secure the area.

"We have no way to ascertain what sort of protest there might be, but we will have a police presence on campus," said UCSC spokesman Jim Burns. "We want to make sure the activities are as safe as possible. We don't want anyone to get hurt."

The planned cutting comes two days after Christmas break began at UCSC, and about two weeks after the university was given permission by the state to log the area.

Activists said they will try to obtain a court order today against the timber harvest and in the meantime will try to shut the

logging down using any means possible.

"We will be protecting as many trees as possible and try to postpone the whole logging operation," said Edda Ehrke, spokeswoman for the Coalition to Move College Nine and Ten. "We want to prevent that area from being disturbed in any way and being constructed on."

Elfland is seen as sort of a mystical fairyland by students who have adorned it since the '60s with totems, altars and structures of branches built in the circular groves of redwood trees common to the area.

Some activists also claim Elfland to be a vortex of spiritual energy. The area is also

used for "pagan" rituals.

The timber harvest plan call for the cutting of about 250 trees, but campus officials said only about 150 trees on the site of College Nine will be cut at this time. College Nine is set along the border of Elfland and none of the trees are technically in Elfland, according to officials.

"We certainly understand it's an important area to many people," said Stephanie Hauk, a spokeswoman for Chancellor Karl Pister. "We have never planned to touch Elfland."

Activists, however, say the borders of El-

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Elfland support



Bill Lovejoy/Sentinel file

Logging for College Nine will border Elfland, university officials say.

Elfland

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fland are not solely limited to the Elfland gulch and that constructing buildings only a few dozen yards away in sight of Elfland structures will destroy the special nature of the area.

"The whole area is very significant environmentally and there are many important issues involved," Ehrke said. "If any part of that area is harmed and ruined it will mean less resistance to more building in the area. We are not against (campus) growth, but this site is completely inappropriate."

The university was given permission to log the area earlier this month after a harvest appeal filed by the county failed. The state Board of Forestry refused to hear the appeal after it was found the county failed to attend a required timber review hearing.

Activists said they are angered at the speed with which the university is moving

forward, making it more difficult for them to both mount a protest and initiate legal action.

"It makes it easier to accomplish and that's the whole point," Hauk said. "It's very important the safety of the students and the staff be top priority, and the time when the students are not on campus is the best time to do the work. ... We have not been served with any papers or told we have anything other than we have a valid timber harvest plan, and we will move forward as planned."

Ehrke said 35 people attended a workshop on civil disobedience Saturday, and that other meeting were being held into the night Sunday.

As for strategy, Ehrke said the protesters will use "the tactics of surprise."

"I expect them to try to start logging in the morning and we will be there," Ehrke said. "I hope we can hold them off."