

DAVENPORT

Officials detail plans for Cemex Redwoods

Residents express concerns on management of property

Davenport

By JASON HOPPIN

jhoppin@santacruzsentinel.com

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DAVENPORT — Conservation officials on Thursday outlined some of their ideas for inviting the public onto a massive expanse of North Coast known as the Cemex Redwoods.

During a meeting Tuesday night at Davenport's Pacific Elementary School, locals were left wondering at what the future holds for the property, which won't be open to the public for two years. The property was praised for preserving habitat and water resources, climate change adaptability, timber resources, recreational potential and more.

"The Cemex Redwoods property really knocks it out of the park on a lot of these attributes," said Bryan Largay, conservation director of the Land



ON THE NET:

To fill out a survey on future use of the Cemex Redwoods, visit www.LandTrustSantaCruz.org.

SEE CEMEX ON A4

CEMEX

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Trust of Santa Cruz County.

Residents asked about timelines, timber operations and transients, and how people would access the park. They were encouraged by a newly debuted online survey about the future and park, and promised the local concerns would play a bigger roll in shaping access to the park than people elsewhere in the county.

Noel Bock, chair of the Davenport/North Coast Association, said locals are concerned about management of the property, which is expected to draw new visitors to the area but could raise public safety and other issues.

"We're surrounded by public acreage," Bock said.

"How do you plan to pre-

vent people from leaving the Cemex property and exploring private property?" another resident asked.

One issue is how people access the park, which is located beyond the town of Davenport. Largay said there are only three realistic possibilities: the southern boundary near Warrenella Road, off Bonny Doon Road and along Empire Grade.

At 8,500 acres, the Cemex property is the largest privately-owned parcel in Santa Cruz County, and one of the largest in California. With state funding for new parks all but dried up, it could be generations before another piece of property this large becomes newly available for public use.

The \$30 million purchase was facilitated by several conservation groups, but includes a place to continue logging parts of the property. That, coupled with its expected potential as a new

recreational destination for a county that loves the outdoors, has made the planning around public access to the property of high interest, especially in Davenport.

Already, Davenport residents have seen issues arise, from unauthorized entry into the park to people sleeping in cars on the property's periphery.

The Land Trust of Santa Cruz County is leading the effort to shape how the land will be publicly utilized, and it has already ruled out motorsports, car camping, open fires and hunting and fishing. Other than that, the group has said it expects a range of uses on the property, including hike-in camping, horses, mountain bikes and, yes, even dog-walking.

"We don't see, necessarily, a need to reproduce a state park here," Largay said, saying he didn't foresee the property becoming a new Big Basin or Wilder Ranch.

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"We're not looking at nature centers or big, fancy facilities."

The property was formerly owned by Mexico City-based Cemex Corp. which announced in 2010 it would idle its Davenport plant and put the redwoods up for sale. Several groups, including the Land Trust, Peninsula Open Space Trust, Sempervirens Fund and Save the Redwoods League, joined forces to acquire the property, which includes old-growth redwoods and key sources of drinking water for the town of Davenport.

Cemex still owns the plant itself, but Sempervirens Fund has been weighing the possibility of acquiring it for redeveloping, potentially using it as a gateway for its broader park vision for the Santa Cruz Mountains.

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