

Spineflower protection plan OK'd

By DENISE FRANKLIN

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SCOTTS VALLEY — When golfers cry 'fore' at the proposed Glenwood Golf Course, they will be helping protect the rare Scotts Valley spineflower, according to city plans.

The City Council Wednesday night unanimously approved Mayor Joe Miller's suggestion that 25 cents of each greens fee goes to the city for spineflower protection.

The money also will be used to educate the public about sensitive plant species, including the Scotts Valley spineflower which is found only in the Scotts Valley area.

The flower is considered rare, but has not yet been named an endangered species.

The plan would go into effect if the 18-hole course and 277-home development were approved by the council.

J.H. Tromp Meesters, president of the corporation that hopes to develop the 271 acres on either side of Glenwood Drive, agreed with Miller's plan.

The council also unanimously agreed that approximately eight acres should be set aside as permanent open space for the spineflower.

"It's workable," commented project manager Alan Butler.

But Steve McCabe of the California Native Plant Society was disappointed. He had wanted 100 acres preserved.

"The areas that are set aside are so narrow that the long-term prognosis for survival is very small," McCabe said.

The council's actions were taken to meet the requirements of an out-of-court settlement reached with the Resource Defense Fund.

This local environmental group

sued the city a year ago, claiming environmental impact reports didn't contain measures to adequately protect the spineflower and other rare plants.

Celia Scott, Resource Defense Fund attorney, asked the council to delay any action Wednesday night to give the group time to review city documents it received that evening.

If the Resource Defense Fund isn't satisfied with the council's actions to protect the rare plants, it has 20 days to bring the matter back to court.

The eight acres of preserve includes unincorporated land. The council recommended the county set aside this land as open space.

Councilmembers also unanimously approved the specific plan for the development and a program designed to make sure rare plants and a rare moth are protected.