

Kiln redwoods

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over people here. ... It's just a very, very sad day."

Supervising Park Ranger Norm Levy said the weight of some of the trees was cracking the structure. Once the trees have been removed, he said, the roots likely will wither away.

Levy said the largest cracks in the kilns have occurred just in the past seven years, and he believes that removing the weight will significantly enhance the life of the structure.

That's a good thing, because the City Council has not allocated money to restore or maintain the kilns. The \$35,000 budget approved by the council pays for hiring Liebenberg Tree Service to take out the redwoods, as well as putting up a wooden fence and a sign explaining the kilns' history.

On hand for Monday's work was amateur historian Bob Piwarzyk, who has studied the county's lime industry for 20 years.

Piwarzyk said he believes the kilns may have been built by Jordan and Davis, pioneer industrialists who came to California soon after it became a state in 1850.

The pair purchased land at Rancho Rincon, said Piwarzyk, who believes the kilns were built soon after. That would make them slightly older than the kilns at the base of UC Santa Cruz, which some believe were first fired in 1851.

There are 14 sites in Santa

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— *Bob Piwarzyk, amateur historian*

Cruz County where lime kilns still exist, including several in Fall Creek Park where members of the Coast Redwood Docent Guild put up historic signs to educate the public.

"I've often felt that the county never did represent what happened here historically in an adequate way," Piwarzyk said.

He said he hopes there eventually will be a docent program at Pogonip, where visitors and school children can see the kilns and learn about that part of the county's history.

In the mid- to late 1800s, Santa Cruz County was the lime capital of the United States. In 1880, for instance, out of the 250,000 barrels of lime produced in California, 115,000 of them came from Santa Cruz County.

But the kilns proved costly to the area's old-growth redwood stands. Seventy cords of redwood were burned each time a load of limestone was fired to extract the barrels of lime used to make mortar and concrete. The Pogonip kilns were abandoned once the old-growth redwoods in the area were all gone.

One of the unique aspects of the Pogonip kilns, Piwarzyk said, is that the older one on the left has three arches (where the redwood fuel was loaded), while the one on the right has four.

Piwarzyk theorized that designers learned from the original one that a four-arch kiln was more effective in burning the limestone.

Piwarzyk and other members of Lime Light, an informal group of local lime-kiln history buffs, hope that additional research will uncover the nugget of information necessary to properly date the Pogonip kilns.

The city is documenting the tree-removal process for a videotape that also will include the council meeting, Mayor Mike Rotkin's performance of his "Sticks and Stones" song about the debate, as well as interviews with opponents of the plan to take out the redwoods.

Sherrod said he hopes the film will be shown to school children, as well as on community-access television. He also wants to offer the tape to other cities facing similar dilemmas.