

# Watsonville site is home of world's tarweed supply

If you're having trouble spotting one of Santa Cruz County's rare long-toed salamanders, you'll probably have as much problem with another shy species of the plant world — the Santa Cruz tarweed.

For currently the tarweed is known only to exist in one area of the state, and perhaps the world, which happens to be the site for a new recreational facility near Watsonville.

A county committee which studies the impact of developments on the environment, has discovered the endangered tarweed species on a 12-acre site at the fairgrounds planned to become a \$268,000 "aquatics park," primarily for south county residents.

Wayne Savage, a biologist at San Jose State University, has told county planning department staff the tarweed at the park site is the only known specimen in the county.

The only other known extant population is in Contra Costa County, according to Savage, but this has not been verified for two years.

He added, however, there may have been plants in some farmland adjacent to the park site which has been disced over. Spring will tell whether or not the disced over plants will pop up again, Savage said.

In light of this information, the Environmental Review Committee voted yesterday to permit the development of the park on the condition measures are taken to protect the annual-growing plant.

A fence will be built around its habitat, the committee decided. Also, a member of the Native Plant Society is to stand by during development of the park to ensure the tarweed's safety.

During the discussion, it was revealed a request by county planners that the site be monitored for possible archeological finds before any excavation take place, had been ignored by the state.

The county's archeological advisor, Rob Edwards, seemed irritated about this, since he said state officials had promised to inform county planners before any work would be done.

"If it's any consolation, Rob," a parks department staff member told him, "they missed the plant by 20 feet."

In other matters the environmental review committee:

—Discussed the recontouring of sand dunes as part of a developer's plan for 24 townhouses at Pajaro Dunes just south of Beach Road. Under the plan of Hare, Brewer and Kelley for Gatehouse Condominiums, the dunes along the beach will be elevated to block the view of residents from beachgoers. The committee indicated it had no objection to the recontouring of the dunes for the plan, which has already been approved by planning commissioners.

—Reviewed the county's use of herbicides by the public works department, as had been requested by county supervisors. The committee members said they had no objections to the program.

—Had no objections to the granting of a permit for Guy Leroy Ward to build a house in a salamander habitat on Loma Prieta Drive near Vista del Mar Drive, Rio Del Mar, as long as the salamander protection ordinance was followed.