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Trump's logging push targets Los Padres forest

By CHRIS COUNTS

WHILE IT'S uncertain if any local trees will be cut down as a result, a move by the Trump administration to dramatically increase timber production nationwide has some worried about Los Padres National Forest, which stretches from Big Sur to Los Angeles.

A map issued March 28 by the administration shows vast acres of land in Big Sur that could be opened for logging, most of it on the eastern side of the Santa Lucia mountains.

According to Los Padres Forest Watch, the threat to the trees is real. "The move opens nearly all of Los Padres National Forest to the widespread removal of trees, chaparral and other native vegetation, with minimal public oversight and environmental review," the Santa Barbara-based group said.

Millions of acres

U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Brooke Rollins issued a memo April 3 detailing the challenges facing forests on federal land — and why timber production needs to be ramped up. She said 67 million acres of forest face a high or very high wildfire risk, while 78 million acres are experiencing declining health — in part due to insect and disease infestation — which only increases the risk of

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Despite calm winter, Highway 1 stays closed



PHOTO/CALTRANS

At Rocky Creek in Big Sur, Caltrans is accelerating work on a viaduct that became necessary after a slip-out last March undermined Highway 1. See page 12A.

Eighth time's the charm for Pastor's newest building

Project on Dolores near Seventh OK'd

By MARY SCHLEY

SIX YEARS after he put forth his initial plan to build apartments and retail space on property he purchased on Dolores south of Seventh, Patrice Pastor received approval Wednesday night of the latest version of his proposed JB Pastor Building.

Designed by architect Jun Sillano, the complex's set of two-story buildings totaling 12,971 square feet would contain eight upstairs apartments and approximately 5,100 square feet of ground-floor retail space. They would have Mission-style clay tile roofs, decorative ceramic tile, metal-clad wood doors and windows, stucco walls with "random exterior stone," and redwood headers, beams and rafter tails.

The second floor steps back from the property line, and the complex is designed to top out below the 30-foot height limit, while other buildings on that block on both sides of the street — including the historic former bank building on the corner — exceed it. It also comes in well below the 16,200-square-foot limit on floor area.

A new 852-square-foot basement and space at the rear will include a dozen parking spaces, five of them created by installing lifts. Because the project requires a minimum of 17 spaces, Pastor will compensate the city's in-lieu parking program, which accumulates funds for public parking projects, for the balance.

In his extensive staff report, senior planner Evan Kort detailed every aspect of the project, noted the changes made in response to the commission's most recent feedback last July, and recommended approval of the design, an associated lot merger and other required permits.

Long road

Since he purchased a building to the south of the former bank, now the Seventh & Dolores Steakhouse, in October 2018 for \$2.4 million and then bought the two lots north of it, including the bank's community room, in June 2020 for \$4 million, Pastor has been pursuing development plans.

His efforts were repeatedly thwarted by the historic resources board, which deemed the community room historic after he purchased it — a fight he lost on appeal to the city council — and he was again dealt a blow by the council when it ordered him to preserve in place a cement-and-pebble wall that the HRB had decided he could relocate.

The project has also seen pushback from neighbor Kristi Reimers, whose family owns the Stonehouse Terrace complex directly east of Pastor's property.

During the two-and-a-half-hour hearing April 9, some

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Owner will rebuild Carl's Jr. destroyed by fire

By KELLY NIX

THE CARL'S Jr. in Monterey that burned down last week will be rebuilt, said city officials, who have already met with the owners to discuss the plans.

A fire at the restaurant on Central Avenue near the Monterey Bay Aquarium started the morning of April 3 and destroyed the building, despite a large firefighter response. Monterey city manager Hans Uslar said city officials met

with the business owner Tuesday to start the rebuilding process.

"They want to rebuild a Carl's Jr. in the same place and, as we understand, replace it with the same type of building," Uslar explained. "That would speed up the permitting process, as they can go directly to the building department to apply for a permit using the existing plans."

The owner of the fast-food eatery at the corner of David and Central avenues is listed as DMF Restaurants LLC, based in Riverside.

Insurance will investigate

Monterey Fire Division Chief Justin Cooper told The Pine Cone this week that while investigators believe the blaze began in the attic, they did not determine the cause. Officials would have performed a thorough investigation if someone had been injured or killed in the fire, which caused most of the building to collapse. Because no one was harmed, the business owner's insurance carrier will be responsible for determining how it started.

"The owner's insurance company will come out and bring an adjuster to see if they can determine a cause," Cooper explained. "It appears that there is no malicious intent and no suspected arson."

Cooper said that employees were in the restaurant preparing to open when they heard a "pop or bang" in the attic area.

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PHOTO/KELLY NIX

Monterey officials said this Carl's Jr., destroyed by a fire last week, will once again be a fast-food restaurant.

He transformed Peninsula's luxury real estate market — and did so much more

Bill Mitchell dies at 83

By MARY SCHLEY

IF YOU never met Bill Mitchell, by all accounts, you should wish you had.

Mitchell, who died March 26, was a man who was decorated for his service as an Air Force pilot in Vietnam, went on to fly commercially for three decades, established what would become the Monterey Peninsula's foremost luxury real estate firm, gave generously of his time and resources — and amidst all of that, managed to squeeze every bit of fun out of life.

"He's one of the finest gentlemen that I've ever done business with," Monterey County Bank founder Charles Chrietberg said. "He was a man of his word and always did what he said he was going to do."

"It's rare to meet anyone with his level of success and competence who is also so humble and giving," said Pine Cone publisher Paul Miller. "Bill Mitchell was unique."

"I feel lucky to have known and worked with him and

benefited from his insights," commented Kurt Schake, executive director of the Veterans Transition Center, one of the nonprofits Mitchell devotedly supported.

"One of the things I always really admired about Bill was how much he cared for and supported the community," said Chuck Toensketter, a friend for more than 40 years.

"He built a legacy, and it's one I know our family will forever cherish," said Dan Lynch, Mitchell's son-in-law and CEO and managing director of Carmel Realty. "We talk about our commitment to live up to his legacy for generations to come."

Born to fly

Mitchell's devotion to service emerged early in life. Born in Piedmont on Feb. 15, 1942, he joined the first four-year class at the U.S. Air Force Academy straight out of high school and graduated in 1963. He went on to serve six years as a decorated commander and instructor, including five years of combat duty flying P-38s and cargo planes — often carrying wounded soldiers — in Vietnam.

It was during military leave in Hawaii that Mitchell met Vicki — a San Francisco native who was taking summer courses at the University of Hawaii — on a blind date.

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PHOTO/PINE CONE FILE

Bill and Vicki Mitchell in 2000. Together, they reshaped the Monterey Peninsula's real estate industry — and touched many lives.