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State Parks, Army Corps have yet to agree on access

Test wells in at two sites, but third ancient channel under State Parks land
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Contractors for the Army Corps of Engineers are surveying and mapping the land and sea at and near Shamel Park's shoreline. The studies are part of geotechnical testing to determine if ancient, subterranean channels there could supply enough seawater for Cambria's planned desalination plant. However, time is running out to gather more information about three ancient stream channels identified in a 2008 study.

In May, the California Coastal Commission granted a Coastal Consistency Determination for the test regime, but also required that work on land owned by county and State Parks near the mouth of Santa Rosa Creek must be done by Oct. 31.

Commission representative Tom Luster said Oct. 14, "I got a call yesterday from the Corps asking about various options, but no request yet for any particular changes."

Meanwhile, Corps and State Parks spokesmen issued carefully worded statements to The Cambrian Tuesday, Oct. 19, confirming that negotiations between the agencies are ongoing, but not saying much more than that. Two test wells were drilled in two days in September on county land near the park, but State Parks has so far declined to allow access to Army Corps contractors.

According to Corps spokesman Jay Field, "We continue to work with the state to secure a right of entry." He also said the agency plans to end the survey work by Oct. 31.

Roy Stearns, speaking for State Parks, said, "We remain in discussions with the Corps of Engineers on what can occur on parks property; there is no decision yet at this point."

Parks Director Ruth Coleman said Oct. 12 that parks officials remain convinced that, even though the geotech work is being done by a federal agency, work on parks land still must meet state regulations, including the California Environmental Quality Act. That would include defining the work to be done, any impacts it might cause and what the Corps will do to avoid, mitigate or correct such damage.

Read more: <http://www.sanluisobispo.com/2010/10/21/1336249/state-parks-army-corps-have-yet.html#ixzz14cAntOv8>