

Strawberry Rock considered for permanent protection

Group raising money to purchase land

By Natalya Estrada

nestrada@times-standard.com

@natedoge4412 on Twitter

The Strawberry Rock trail near Trinidad is under consideration for permanent protection according to the Trinidad Coastal Land Trust.

The trail, although very popular, is on private property owned by local lumber company Green Diamond, and people who regularly hike it are technically trespassing.

The Trinidad Coastal Land Trust signed an option agreement with Green Diamond Resource Company in December to establish an deal that gives the land trust time to raise funds and eventually purchase the land through a public trail conservation easement.

The easement encompasses 38 acres and will include a public access easement over Strawberry Rock, a trail from the public road east of U.S. Highway 101 to Strawberry Rock, and a stand of mature young-growth timber adjacent to the trail.

Trinidad Coastal Land Trust executive director Ben Morehead said the redwood forest trail to Strawberry Rock needs permanent protection and without acquiring a conservation easement, the trail could be blocked and prevent public access under future landowners.

“Strawberry Rock has been a property of interest for decades. On a sunny weekend, it seems just as popular as the Trinidad Head trail. People love going out there,

hiking through the redwoods. The ocean view is amazing.” Morehead said, but noted that no grant funding had been secured yet.

“We’re fundraising from scratch starting today,” he said Saturday. “It’s going to be a year or more before we can purchase the property. The agreement we just finalized with Green Diamond gives us three years to complete this project. During that time Green Diamond cannot sell the parcel or do forest harvesting activities.”

Although a final appraisal still needs to be completed, Morehead said, the deal is expected to be less than \$1 million.

Green Diamond senior vice president Neal Ewald said in a statement the company signed the agreement after hearing support from by local residents.

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CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Hikers climb the west face of Strawberry Rock in this 2015 file photo. The Trinidad Coastal Land Trust signed an agreement with Green Diamond Resource Company to establish a deal that gives the land trust time to raise funds and eventually purchase Strawberry Rock as a public trail conservation easement.