

Yosemite Park expansion stalls in Congress

By Paul Rogers, San Jose Mercury News

Time is running out on a deal to secure the largest expansion of Yosemite National Park since 1939, and one man appears to be standing in the way: local congressman Tom McClintock.

Declaring his distrust in the National Park Service, the tea party Republican from Granite Bay is at odds with local Republican state legislators and the Mariposa County Board of Supervisors over efforts to add a scenic parcel of land on Yosemite's western boundary now owned by a Bay Area conservation group. The deal is even becoming a campaign issue in this rugged part of California as McClintock fights for reelection against a fellow Republican.

If a deal isn't reached by the end of the year, the small nonprofit group that owns the land says it will have to sell. And the land is zoned for construction of up to 19 homes.

In 2004, the trust bought the land – a scenic landscape near El Portal that is thick with incense cedar, white fir and sugar pine trees, with breathtaking views – from a family that had owned it since 1925.

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