Arborist answers call of boosters to save oak

By Costa Times

...IN ELLEN -- A centuries-old oak tree that provided shade and inspiration to writer and adventurer Jack London when he lived in Sonoma County will be allowed to stand for a little longer after lab tests showed it is healthier than California park officials originally thought.

ecaying oak was scheduled to be taken down as a safety precaution last month because it is suspected with a fungal disease. Officials at Jack London State Historic Park in Glen Ellen worried that a branch could fall off and injure a visitor or damage the cottage where London lived and wrote from 1905 until his death in 1916.

The end was so close that park rangers hosted several events this year to honor the tree, including a Native American blessing ceremony, a dramatic storytelling and having children harvest its acorns for replanting elsewhere.

But park boosters sought a reprieve, turning to a UC Berkeley expert in forest pathology who concluded that "Jack's Oak" had another two to 10 years before it would have to be removed at the tree was beyond long after lab tests showed it is healthier than California park officials originally thought.

We couldn't be more thrilled," said Jack London Park Partners executive director Tjiska Van Wyk, whose group manages the 39-acre property that includes the cottage as well as the oak that was destroyed by fire in 1913. "In the season of joy, we consider this a great gift.

To protect the public and the cottage, the park has instituted new parking restrictions near the tree that was destroyed by fire in 1913. "In the season of joy, we consider this a great gift."

"We're not out of the woods. We're in a gray area where the risk needs to be monitored," said Garbelotto, the Berkeley adjunct associate professor who conducted the most recent tests.

The 50-foot-tall, 350- to 400-year-old tree sits on what's known as Jack London's Beauty Ranch, the property "The Call of the Wild" author bought in 1905 to be close to nature. London worked at the oak from the window by his desk in the cottage and drew inspiration from it that surfaced in his later work, California State Parks senior state archaeologist E. Breck Parkman said.

But park boosters sought a reprieve, turning to a UC Berkeley expert in forest pathology who concluded that "Jack's Oak" had another two to 10 years before it would have to be removed at the tree was beyond long after lab tests showed it is healthier than California park officials originally thought.

We couldn't be more thrilled," said Jack London Park Partners executive director Tjiska Van Wyk, whose group manages the 39-acre property that includes the cottage as well as the oak that was destroyed by fire in 1913. "In the season of joy, we consider this a great gift.

To protect the public and the cottage, the park has instituted new parking restrictions near the tree that was destroyed by fire in 1913. "In the season of joy, we consider this a great gift."

"We're not out of the woods. We're in a gray area where the risk needs to be monitored," said Garbelotto, the Berkeley adjunct associate professor who conducted the most recent tests.

The 50-foot-tall, 350- to 400-year-old tree sits on what's known as Jack London's Beauty Ranch, the property "The Call of the Wild" author bought in 1905 to be close to nature. London worked at the oak from the window by his desk in the cottage and drew inspiration from it that surfaced in his later work, California State Parks senior state archaeologist E. Breck Parkman said.
Carolina Panthers coach Ron Rivera earns 'Riverboat Ron' nickname

49ers notebook: Kicker Phil Dawson calls rival

Kawakami: 49ers destined to face Seattle Seahawks for NFC title
(http://www.mercurynews.com/tim-kawakami/ci_24892326/kawakami-49ers-better-team-than-carolina?source=most_viewed)

» More most-popular sports stories (/popular#pop-sports)
Watch the wind knock over a building in North Carolina

Golden Globes 2014: Follow the show live

Lindsay Lohan banned from Britney Spears' shows

Tonight's TV picks: 'True Detective' pairs Woody Harrelson, Matthew McConaughey

'Orphan Black': Maslany braces for more clone wars

The cat who survived 3 wintry

Seattle Seahawks attempt to block Californians from buying...

Roadshow: Bicyclists fight back over licensing fee

Why this California millionaire wants a higher minimum wage

Photo: Sis Kendall Jenner photobombs Kim Kardashian's selfie

David Cassidy arrested in LA