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Subject: Pebble Beach Company's "Del Monte Forest Preservation and Development Plan" (Applications PLN010254 and PLN010341)

I reside in the Del Monte Park area of Pacific Grove near some of the areas proposed for development and for preservation. I have also served on the Open Space Advisory Committee (O.S.A.C.) for over 25 years as a naturalist advisor, so I have firsthand knowledge of the Forest. O.S.A.C provides input on open space management and was instrumental in creation of the DMF LUP. O.S.A.C does not, however, take positions for or against developments on private land. I am therefore writing this memo as a private citizen and not as a member of any organization.

I have looked through the draft EIR for the project and would like to offer a few comments.

First, I am pleased that the Project does involve preservation of many parcels of important habitat, especially Area PQR (233 acres) which is the most significant undeveloped area in the Forest outside the already preserved Huckleberry Hill. Changing this large area from Low Density Residential to Open Space is a very positive part of this Application, and is the main reason I voted in favor of Measure A.

Other Areas Benefitted:

Area B--This is an area of relatively pristine Monterey pine and coast live oak forest with associated understory plants missing from most open space in Pacific Grove. It is a very desirable site for passive recreation and is used by many people, as are the adjacent Navajo open space and Pacific Grove's Rip Van Winkle Park. I am happy to see that the proposed employee housing will occupy only the lower southwest corner which is currently not used much by hikers, and that the remainder will be Forest Preserve to remain undisturbed. Also, placing the Driving Range on nearby land between Congress and Majella which is presently zoned for housing is a good use for that land, especially if a buffer of forest is allowed to continue to grow along both edges so that the overall views from the roads are not vastly changed.

Area D--This is a small but very nice forest of pine and oak and huckleberry which I will be glad to see preserved, as it makes a good buffer between Del Monte Park and the new Equestrian Center.

Equestrian Center--This area occupies the sites of old sand mines. While reforestation has been attempted, it is far from being natural habitat. Aside from planted pines and cypress, most of the vegetation consists of invasive weedy species, including French broom (genista),

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acacias, some blue gum eucalyptus and numerous herbaceous weeds. Some native shrubs had been planted, but few have survived. Erosion has been a problem, especially in the upper pit. Although this area is zoned presently as Open Space as a mitigation for the Spanish Bay developments, it has little value as habitat. Trading this open space for the much larger and more pristine forest in areas B and PQR is a net benefit.

I am also glad for the residents of Del Monte Park that the stables will occupy the upper pit, far from any homes, and that the lower pit will be mainly for recreational equestrian use. Apparently it will not be visually much different than it is now. Once this area is maintained, control of French Broom should be easier. Note: a small unnatural "wetland" occurs near the lower end of the lower pit. This could be fenced off and allowed to remain as it is.

One concern about the Equestrian Center will be increased use of the SFB Morse Reserve by horseback riders, with damage to vegetation, trails and creeks, and possibly the introduction and spread of more weedy species in the natural areas. In recent years the Pebble Beach Company and the Del Monte Forest Foundation have made good progress controlling some of these invasive plants, especially French broom and pampas grass. These areas must continue to be maintained to eliminate invasive species.

Endangered Species--Significant populations of Yadon's piparia occur within the proposed golf course site. Mitigations outlined on Page ES-14 will probably be sufficient to reduce impacts to an insignificant level. When populations of these plants are known and are protected with fencing, signs etc. it should be possible for them to exist in areas next to, but not within, a golf course. I have personally conducted surveys for Yadon's piparia on Naval Postgraduate School property, and counted over 2,000 in areas very near and adjacent to their golf course. Some of the populations there have been fenced for their protection, others have not been fenced.

The Pacific Grove municipal golf course is also devising plans to protect and restore sand dune habitat within the golf course, including protecting and restoring two small state and federally endangered species, Tidestrom's lupine and Menzies' wallflower. Plans are currently under review by the California Dept. of Fish and Game.

Monterey Pine--The EIR elaborates on the limited range of this species and potential threats to its wellbeing. Pebble Beach Company has an ongoing program of propagating and planting genetically native Monterey pines, including some pitch canker-resistant clones. Pine propagation and planting by the Company is expected to continue.

In conclusion, I support the project as designed, with the condition that a long term commitment is made by the Pebble Beach Company to continue to protect endangered species and prevent native habitats from being overrun with invasive non-native species.

Signed: Bruce Cowan

Date: 02 / 20 / 04