

McCue, Thom 883-7528

From: Morgan, Karen [Karen_Morgan@ctb.com]
Sent: Monday, March 22, 2004 5:03 PM
To: mccuet@co.monterey.ca.us
Subject: PB draft EIR...2nd try

3/22/2004
#75

March 22, 2004

Thom McCue, Senior Planner
Monterey County Planning and Building Inspection Department 2620 First Avenue Marina, CA 93933

Dear Mr. McCue:

As a native Californian and a 25-year resident of the Monterey Peninsula, I have witnessed the loss of many areas of natural habitat to development. Few of these natural areas rival the biological uniqueness of the native Monterey Pine ecosystem in the Del Monte Forest of Pebble Beach. The development of the largest contiguous stand of these pines at Spanish Bay was distressing for many residents, myself included, but we were reassured that this would be the last project of this size in the Forest.

Four years ago, the Pebble Beach Company was able to pass Measure A by convincing County residents that the approval of their new development plan would save the remaining Monterey Pine Forest. The proposed removal of more than 15,000 pines and 1,700 live oaks hardly seemed like saving the Forest from my perspective, but the fate of the ecosystem appeared to be sealed with voter approval.

Today I have an additional perspective on the Pebble Beach Company's plan, because of my association with the Pebble Beach Equestrian Center. My daughter began taking riding lessons at the Center when she was seven years old. Over the years we witnessed dozens of children her age from surrounding communities taking part in the equestrian activities there. When she was in high school we bought a horse together, and we have been boarding him at the Center and enjoying the riding trails for the past two and a half years.

While the Pebble Beach Company's plan for a new, redesigned Equestrian Center seemed alluring, it was disappointing to imagine the relocation of such a historic community resource. What was even more distressing was learning about the mitigations for the new Center, which would make it unreasonable, if not impossible to operate a facility for horses. These mitigations include the exclusive use of weed-free hay, which is difficult if not impossible to find, in addition to being exorbitantly expensive. Transporting manure to an "approved" facility implies the need for bureaucratic monitoring, which has not been necessary in the current facility, since manure is regularly removed and odor has not been a problem for neighborhood residents. Not allowing riding on the trails until three days after every rain is unfeasible, as is picking up manure on trails. Riders have been using and maintaining these trails with minimal impact to the forest since 1925.

If the Equestrian Center must be relocated, the Pebble Beach Company's commitments should include making allowances for a facility that can operate as safely and reasonably as it has for the last 80 years.

Thank you,

Karen Morgan
1265 Surf Avenue
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cc: Lou Calcagno, Chair, Board of Supervisors