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Monterey County  
Planning and Building  
Inspection Administration

November 4, 2004

NOV 8 - 2004

Monterey County Planning & Building Inspection  
P.O. Box 1208  
Salinas, CA 93902

**RECEIVED**

Subject: Sawmill Borrow Site

Response to notice on Hearing for Pebble Beach Draft EIR  
Permit (PC-5202)

Part of the final decision of project acceptance by the County, according to your letter, is to determine whether proposed uses of the Sawmill Borrow site (Equestrian Center) are consistent with provisions of the recorded scenic easement.

I was unable to find adequate discussion of this in the new DEIR. However, as background, the upper and lower pits of old sand mines were to be zoned as Scenic Easement and restored to native habitat as conditions of the approval of the Spanish Bay development. Monterey pines, Bishop pines, Monterey cypress, Gowen cypress and native shrubs were planted, but few native plants aside from the trees survived because of the poor quality of the subsoil. Instead the whole thing filled up with invasive French broom, acacias, pampas grass, some eucalyptus, and numerous weeds--some of which are now being controlled with some degree of success. Planted Monterey cypress are being removed so as not to hybridize with the endangered native Gowen cypress. Even so, the habitat values of these eroded old sand mining pits are far from ideal and will never approach the diversity of surrounding native habitats.

For historical reference, in the 1980's the degraded lower pit was selected as a site for a sewage treatment plant by the Pebble Beach Community Services District. This was practically adjacent to the Del Monte Park neighborhood of Pacific Grove. After a long political battle--with the help of then County Supervisor Sam Karas--the site was zoned Scenic Easement so the sewer plant could never be built there.

I live in Del Monte Park. While most of my neighbors don't want it, I feel that an Equestrian Center would have much less negative impact on our neighborhood than a sewage treatment plant. The tradeoff for having this Equestrian Center would be the large acreages of significant and pristine Monterey pine forest habitat in other parts of the Del Monte forest presently zoned for housing that would be redesignated as Open Space. I think this tradeoff would be a positive one.

Sincerely,

*Bruce Cowan*  
Bruce Cowan