

## **2004 ANNUAL REPORT OF MAINTENANCE AND CONDITIONS OF DEL MONTE FOREST OPEN SPACE PROPERTIES**

This fourth annual report of maintenance and conditions for Del Monte Forest Open Space Properties summarizes significant maintenance activities over the last year and offers observations, comments and recommendations. The 2001 report prepared by Mary Howden, Chairman of OSAC at that time, provided a succinct discussion of the historical background of OSAC's development of Maintenance Standards for each individual open space property contained in the Local Coastal Program Land Use Plan. The Del Monte Forest Foundation (DMFF) administers ongoing maintenance operations in order to comply with the Maintenance Standards for each of its open space properties.

This report summarizes significant maintenance activities over the last year and offers the following observations, comments and recommendations:

### **SFB MORSE BOTANIC RESERVE**

The site remains in compliance with its maintenance standards. Trail conditions have been maintained and drainage structures remain in place on both Fire Roads and the Green and Crawford trails. Mountain bike use on both trails was also noted. Normal amounts of tree mortality and failures occurred over the course of the year. Tree mortality in the calamagrostis flat by the Crawford Trail just above Congress Road was noted as the few mature pines in that area have now all died with little pine regeneration apparent in that understory. Fallen dead trees blocked the two major trails and on three occasions were cut to restore access. Annual inspections for control of non-native plants noted decreased but persistent amounts of acacia, pampas grass, genista and gorse at previously known infestation sites. All invasive species and sites were treated again in June and August. English holly, which had been noted in previous years but not treated, was controlled this year because it can be spread over a wide area after fruits are eaten by birds. Deposition at the Crawford Trail channel crossing has created a flat-wide meander with no apparent channel or flow pattern. This has occurred before and is considered normal and not a problem since the trail is unimproved as it crosses this depositional flat. Surveys done this year for Yadon's piperia on nearby Pebble Beach Company lands suggest there may be significantly more plants than originally thought. Piperia specimens were noted again this year in the Reserve but no official surveys were done.

### **Recommendations**

Continue annual maintenance program of timely exotic plant control and trail work. Consider supplemental pine planting in mentioned calamagrostis flat above Congress if volunteer regeneration is inadequate. Continue to improve drainage on the FDIP fire roads.

### **CROCKER CYPRESS GROVE**

The site is in basic compliance with the standards in the Management Plan. Mortality of mature pine trees continues to occur throughout the Grove due to the combination of pitch canker and bark beetles and also due to blowdown. One uprooted pine is leaning on a mature cypress in the

interior portion of the Grove and will be cut so that it no longer destabilizes the large cypress. Limbs on blowdown trees or broken off in storms that present significant fuel accumulations are being lopped or cut and removed. Although most pines and cypresses planted in the last three years are doing well, four planted cypresses have died and additional planting will be done in January of 2005 to further restore trees in the open areas of greatest tree mortality near Portola and Madre. Non-native plants, especially veldt grass (*Ehrharta erecta*), continue to be a constant maintenance requirement in this area. Working with C 12 Restoration, we have been moderately effective in treating the outer limits of infested areas in order to restrict future spread and are working back into the more heavily infested areas. Control treatments have been made every two to three months over the course of the year. Inspection of the Grove continued to find abundant pine regeneration in some areas and a little natural cypress regeneration in the most open areas adjacent mature cypresses. No incidents of vehicle damage to the Grove occurred over the last year, suggesting that existing fencing is working effectively

### Recommendations

Remove the partially uprooted pine near the western edge that is pushing on a mature cypress. Continue frequent non-native plant control and understory restoration programs in conjunction with added tree planting of local native stock in the most open areas to speed recovery of the tree overstory. Assess response of native plants to non-native control measures.

### **PESCADERO CANYON AND CARMEL WAY**

The site is in basic compliance with its OSAC maintenance standards. As is to be expected in a native Monterey pine forest covering roughly 70 acres, some new tree failures (both live and dead trees) occurred during over the course of the year, primarily during winter storms. A very large pine next to the Carmel Way crossing of Pescadero Creek finally died from bark beetle attack after being weakened by a number of successive years of pitch canker infections in its crown. Pebble Beach Company is about to remove the tree to eliminate the hazard of limbs dropping onto the road. Accumulations of broken limbs from live and fallen trees were lopped by hand crews to minimize fuel hazard on the steeper slopes of the lower canyon and simply removed near one residence. Such treatment of fuel “jackpots” has been done almost annually as they have occurred over the last 10 years. Historic access for open space maintenance and fuels treatments from San Juan and Portola Roads in Carmel Woods was confirmed by the Board of Supervisors of Monterey County through the cooperative efforts of Del Monte Forest Foundation and the Pebble Beach Community Services District.

Major genista control treatments were made in portions of the lower canyon, especially near and adjacent to the creek itself, near the common garden Monterey pine research plot below Ford Meadow, and north of residences on San Juan Road near its intersection with San Marcos Road. Smaller genista control treatments were made on a weeding basis in many other parts of the property including near 17 Mile Drive over most of its length. Cape ivy treatments were made at infestation sites predominantly in the lower portion of the canyon. Veldt grass continues to displace native understory plants in many parts of the canyon and is so widespread that real control, much less eradication, is considered impractical by consulting botanists. The non-local Monterey pines planted in the common garden research plot are due to be removed within the

next year. Vinca was treated in that area as well. Acacia was removed from sites by the creek at the bottom of the canyon.

Potential tree hazard concerns of upslope neighbors were reviewed and addressed in two locations. There is annual mortality of individual trees with loss of mature trees especially noticeable in parts of the lower canyon. Natural regeneration continues to occur but may need to be augmented in selected areas. Dumping of landscape waste and tree debris from upslope residential properties into the open space is adversely affecting understory plants and creating fuels problems in some locations. Unauthorized trails in the lower canyon were little used and sensitive areas near creeks are being monitored to minimize erosion. The process of channel entrenchment, downcutting and associated bank instability continues due to accelerated runoff from upslope development.

### Recommendations

Continue fuels reduction operations and non-native plant control treatments. Selectively plant local native pines in understocked areas. Contact upslope neighbors to discourage landscape dumping and encourage cooperative efforts in fuels reduction and invasive plant control. Investigate additional channel stabilization options and opportunities.

## **COASTAL STRIP – DEDICATED SECTIONS FROM SPANISH BAY TO PESCADERO POINT**

The Coastal Strip appears to be in basic compliance with the standards set forth in the OSAC Management Plan. The Pebble Beach Company continues to maintain the required public access facilities and some non-native plant control operations by the Company were noted. After contacts with representatives of DMFF and the Pebble Beach Company, Coastal Commission staff is reviewing a possible approach to resolving inconsistencies between Offers to Dedicate and appropriate easement language. Full inspections were not made pending resolution of this issue.

### Recommendations

Regular control of exotic species should be continued. Native plant restoration work is continuing on adjoining Monterey Peninsula Country Club areas between Point Joe and Bird Rock in conjunction with their golf course rehabilitation project and has drastically reduced iceplant occupation of adjoining areas.

## **INDIAN VILLAGE**

Indian Village is in basic compliance with its maintenance standards. Tree mortality from winter storm breakage and uprooting and the combined effects of pitch canker and bark beetles has dramatically reduced the number mature trees west of the picnic shelter. Dead trees fell across trails in five locations over the year and were cleared to reopen the trail. Sixteen hazardous trees, all of them already dead or dying, were removed near high use areas. Seven of the 16 were removed specifically to protect power lines, which had been broken during an early season storm

by a falling tree. Blown-over trees and debris were cleaned up near the picnic shelter and other selected areas to reduce fuels and enhance recreational values. Naturally regenerated pines of up to 20' in height are growing well in some of the high mortality areas west of the picnic shelter have been augmented by another planting of pine seedlings tested for pitch canker resistance from on-site stock. Additional cones were collected once again to provide new seed for both Asilomar and DMFF.

Monitoring and maintenance of the Indian Village population of Hickman's potentilla (*Potentilla hickmanii*) again occurred regularly over the growing season with good results. Control of non-native grasses and other invasive plants in the immediate area of the potentillas was done in consultation with botanist Vern Yadon. Potentillas propagated from on-site stock were planted around the existing site and most have not only survived but grown well, including extensive flowering.

Control measures for non-native plants, principally thistles, velvet grass, kikuyu grass, and *Festuca arundinacea* have been implemented regularly. *Festuca arundinacea* appears to be particularly aggressive and expanding into native *Calamagrostis* areas in spite of control work.

#### Recommendations

Continue to monitor and control wetness and non-native vegetation at and near the Potentilla population. Continue reforestation work in the western portion of the parcel, monitoring progress of planted, potentially resistant seedlings and removing dead and dying material that threatens existing or future regeneration. Continue regular and consistent non-native plant control program in all affected areas.

#### NAVAJO PARCELS

These two parcels adjoin the Lynn "Rip" Van Winkle Park of Pacific Grove and are both in compliance with their OSAC maintenance standards. FDIP fire clearance requirements were met with the help of Pebble Beach by clearing fallen trees that had blocked roads, minor pruning, and limited mowing. Genista control work occurred in a number of recurring but not heavily infested areas as well as the heavily infested area near the laundry parcel to the north. Continuing tree mortality was noted, especially near the western edge of the parcel at the beginning of Fire Road 10. Cone collection and seed extraction was done in cooperation with Asilomar State Park to provide appropriate growing stock for these conditions and for testing for resistance to pitch canker. Extensive recreational use of unauthorized trails is routine and apparently highly valued by nearby residents and is creating adverse impacts on the understory in some areas.

#### Recommendations

OSAC maintenance standards listed in the LUP for Navajo apply to both parcels. Continue to monitor the area to prevent and correct over-use and abuse. Monitor and mitigate naturally occurring tree hazards consistent with conservation and maintenance of a natural area. Control genista and other invasive infestations on an ongoing basis. Monitor bank stability and

downcutting in the northern watercourse. Augment natural regeneration with planted local native stock.

### **PESCADERO POINT**

Pescadero Point is in basic compliance with its OSAC maintenance standards. Recent parking, drainage, and native plant restoration projects continue to function well considering the level of visitor use the site receives. Damage to sensitive cliff areas appears to be occurring from unauthorized use for surfing access.

#### **Recommendations**

Continue regular monitoring of the site for public safety and natural resource protection. Control iceplant regrowth.

### **SFB MORSE MEMORIAL LOT**

The parcel of native cypress habitat is compliance with the general standards set forth in the OSAC management plan. Routine perimeter maintenance issues were addressed.

#### **Recommendations**

Continue regular annual maintenance operations.

### **HERMANN PROPERTY**

The parcel is compliance with the general standards set forth in the OSAC management plan. Routine perimeter fire hazard control measures were implemented along the west and northern boundaries. Non-native plant control treatments were made selectively where indicated and will be repeated annually at modest levels.

#### **Recommendations**

Continue regular annual maintenance operations. A little additional planting of oaks and pines in the western portion of the parcel is still advisable as some small seedlings and sapling have not survived there. Seedling and sapling pines have become established in the center and eastern portion of the parcel over the last several years.

### **HUCKLEBERRY HILL NATURAL RESERVE**

The Huckleberry Hill parcel is in basic compliance with its OSAC maintenance standards. As previously recommended, extensive work was done with Coastal Commission review to remove new Monterey cypress trees in the revegetation area of the Upper Pit growing next to the native stands of Gowen cypress. Additional work was done to control drainage and erosion problems in that area and an extensive program to control non-native plants at this location was implemented with good results. Replanting with Monterey pine, Bishop pine and Gowen cypress has and will

be done in suitable areas to replace trees being removed. Completion of Monterey cypress removals to prevent unnatural pollination of native Gowen cypress here is being phased over two to three years to minimize impacts.

Routine measures to control non-native plant infestations were made elsewhere in the Reserve, including the 10+ acre section east and north of Highway 68 noted last year. In that area, extensive disturbance from old quarrying has led to dense infestations of pampas grass and genista that got initial treatments this year. Fallen pines occasionally blocked fire roads and trails but have been cleared. In the balance of the Reserve, regular control efforts appear to have decreased overall presence of non-native plants. These infestations are persistent, however, and require annual control measures, especially within the Highway 68 corridor.

### Recommendations

Complete removal of Monterey cypress in the Upper Pit area as planned. Add several rolling dips waterbar outlets to entrenched sections of fire roads to minimize erosion and disperse drainage. Continue to control non-native plants at appropriate times and locations over the year to prevent spread and increase occupancy by existing natives.

## **COURTLANDT HILL PRESERVE**

The parcel is in basic compliance with the natural open space management standards. Trespass damage, though not as extensive as last year, occurred again this year to sensitive, near-ocean resources in spite of improved signage and fencing. has been upgraded by donation of the Hill family to prevent future occurrences. Routine perimeter fire clearance was done along 17 Mile Drive and the northerly residence boundary. Initial iceplant control measures were reviewed. Cypress recruitment is most extensive near existing trees at the edge of the terrace in the southwest corner of the parcel.

### Recommendations

Continue monitoring of the parcel and limit access to resource study and maintenance activities only. Evaluate desirability of planting a few additional cypress tree seedlings in select areas. Continue to control iceplant infestation to maintain habitat conditions suitable for native plants.

## **SCENIC EASEMENTS**

Easement monitoring is ongoing as are contacts with individual easement holders. In most cases, some control measures for non-native plants have been recommended. Monterey County approved work and required a scenic easement to protect Monterey cypress habitat on the property without informing DMFF. County staff was contacted and indicates that it will redraw the easement to name DMFF to provide for more consistent oversight.

A protected tree from one easement fell onto and significantly damaged the resident's home, but without personal injury. Improper encroachment and potential use within a Monterey cypress habitat easement was observed in its initial phase and stopped. The new owner was helpful and

promptly removed the encroachment and restored the site. Trees fell in several other easements as is to be expected, in one case damaging a fence.

Recommendations

Continue annual inspections of existing scenic easements by the Forest Manager. Continue efforts to have the Pebble Beach Company Architectural Review Board and/or the County of Monterey provide automatic notification to the DMFF of any pending construction on property that has, or should have, a scenic easement according to the terms of the LUP.

This Annual Report of the Maintenance and Conditions of Del Monte Forest Open Space Properties is hereby respectfully submitted.

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DATE: \_\_\_\_\_ 12/21/04 \_\_\_\_\_