2005 ANNUAL REPORT OF MAINTENANCE AND CONDITIONS OF DEL MONTE FOREST OPEN SPACE PROPERTIES

This fifth 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 Fire Roads 1 and 2 and on both the Crawford (Purple) Trail and the northerly Morse Reserve (Green, Red, Yellow, Brown & Blue) Trail. In written comments to Monterey County on the DMF Plan DEIR regarding use of the Upper Pit Area as an Equestrian Center , OSAC supported prohibiting equestrian use of these trails where they adjoin creeksides and using available fire roads instead of those segments. Pedestrian use appears to be the most common with mountain bike and equestrian use also noted, but not with significant adverse impacts at current, relatively modest levels. Normal amounts of tree mortality and failures occurred over the course of the year, with temporary trail closures due to fallen dead and/or live trees on four occasions. Encouragingly, a few volunteer native Monterey pines were noted growing in the calamagrostis bottom north of the Crawford Trail above Congress Road, although they appear to be even sparser than the few mature pines that have died in recent years in that area.

Regular inspections for control of non-native plants noted controlled but persistent amounts of several species of acacias plus pampas grass, genista and gorse at previously known infestation sites, especially at spots on both the Crawford Trail and Fire Road 1. Invasives were also treated by hand in creekside areas. Even more sand deposition occurred in this wet winter and spring at the Crawford Trail creek crossing, which is clearly a variable, flat-wide meander with no consistent channel or flow pattern. As noted last year, this has occurred before and is considered normal and not a problem since the trail is unimproved as it crosses this depositional flat. Seasonal surveys done this year for Yadon's piperia on the adjoining Huckleberry Hill Natural Area found many more plants than previous surveys, suggesting that the Morse Reserve may have significantly more plants than originally thought. Piperia specimens were noted again this year in the Reserve but no official surveys were done. Although lack of sufficient funding prevented a US Fish and Wildlife researcher from conducting studies on the Reserve this year, a University of Florida orchid specialist, Dr. Jyotsna Sharma applied for and received permission from the Del Monte Forest Foundation to visit and conduct appropriate research on *Piperia yadoni* on the Reserve and other DMFF properties.

Recommendations

Continue annual maintenance program of timely exotic plant control and trail work. Continue to monitor natural regeneration of Monterey pines in areas of recent pine to see that long-term replacement is occurring at adequate levels. Continue to maintain and enhance drainage on the FDP 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. PG&E cut 7 dead pines in the Grove this year that threatened power lines along both Portola Road and 17 Mile Drive. A large old cypress died and was left standing. Storms in early January blew down 11 trees – 9 pines and two fairly small cypresses – nearly in the middle of the Grove. Storms also broke off limbs from a number of live trees. Restoration work to control invasive plants and re-establish adequate tree cover in the hard hit area near Portola and Madre prevented spread of veldt, kikuyu, and velvet grass outside this area but has had limited success in reducing non-native cover. Restoration of this area of high tree mortality and invasive understory plants is clearly a long term project that will require great persistence and investment. However, planted trees and native pacific reed grass starts as well as volunteer native tree seedlings are doing well. In fact, a few were growing so well that it became apparent that several Gowen cypress seedlings had been planted along with the Monterey cypresses due to a nursery error and must be removed as they are not native to this site and might possibly result in some quite unnatural cross-pollinating!

Regular monitoring of the Grove continues to find abundant pine regeneration in some areas and some natural cypress regeneration in the most open areas adjacent mature cypresses. Growth and establishment of sapling to small pole size cypress trees is occurring but at least seedling regeneration is not nearly as abundant as that of Monterey pines. Again this year there were no incidents of vehicle damage in the Grove occurred over the last year, a pleasant change from some years ago and hopefully a sign that existing fencing is doing its job.

Recommendations

Increase intensity and frequency of non-native plant control efforts in the hard hit area while continuing the infestation containment strategy. Assess response of native plants to non-native control measures. Remove or treat in place excessive accumulations of blowdown trees and debris where they present a hazard. Monitor cypress regeneration and establishment and map areas needing supplemental stocking and the potential to transplant volunteer seedlings growing in unfavorable locations.

PESCADERO CANYON AND CARMEL WAY

The site is in basic compliance with its OSAC maintenance standards. Issues of tree mortality and tree hazard continue to be a primary focus of maintenance activities on these properties.

Debris from a storm felled pine was cleaned up where it crossed onto a neighboring property without causing damage to developed facilities in the lower canyon. DMFF approved requested removal by PG&E of five hazardous pines (3 were dead) in the lower canyon but approved only light hazard reduction pruning rather than removal for two others. Four dead and dying trees near the channel in the lower canyon were reviewed but do not appear to be a direct threat to improvements and are being monitored. Early January storms blew down 2 trees onto residences above Ford Meadow, but close inspection determined that they were located on an undeveloped portion of an adjoining residential parcel. However, two leaning and potentially unstable large pines just onto the open space parcel were removed under a waiver after a certified arborist verified the hazard to the damaged structures. Prior hazard reduction pruning of these two trees appears to have been helpful in preventing damage during last winter's severe conditions. Another neighbor on San Juan Road called with concerns about a large tree at the edge of the open space parcel but on-site inspection with an experienced arborist satisfied him that no feasible treatments to reduce hazard while retaining tree health were available. Local native pine seedlings were planted in three selected locations in the canyon to supplement natural regeneration.

Historic access for open space maintenance and fuels treatments from San Juan and Portola Roads in Carmel Woods was recently confirmed under agreement between the Del Monte Forest Foundation and the Pebble Beach Community Services District and greatly facilitated treatment of a genista infestation not far from several residential parcels. Seasonally appropriate control treatments for genista and other invasive plants were made on more than six occasions. Cape ivy has been eradicated in a couple treatment areas but has persisted even when knocked back by treatments in other areas. As noted in last year's report, veldt grass understory dominance is so widespread in many parts of the canyon that real control, much less eradication, is considered impractical by consulting botanists. Vinca and acacia treatments were also made.

The DMFF forester attended a meeting of the Carmel Woods Homeowners Association at the invitation of Fire Marshall Dennis Carreiro of PBCSD and CDF. Competing missions of open space conservation and fire hazard reduction for upslope residents were explained in the context of Fire Defense Plan provisions for review and treatment of selected areas. 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. As previously noted, the ongoing 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 in identified areas. Identify understocked areas that should be planted with local native pines. 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, including upgraded restroom facilities at the Bird Rock parking area, and non-native plant control operations by the Company were noted. In addition, extensive eradication of invasives and replanting with natives on adjoining Monterey Peninsula County Club is expected to help limit invasive spread in these areas. Pebble Beach Company and MPCC are cooperating in invasive control efforts along 17 Mile Drive between Point Joe and Bird Rock. Coastal Commission staff is in contact with Pebble Beach Company regarding appropriate easement language to assure long term care of this area without direct involvement of DMFF. Full inspections were not made pending resolution of this issue.

Recommendations

Continue current practices of maintaining visitor serving facilities and regular control of exotic species.

INDIAN VILLAGE

Indian Village is in basic compliance with its maintenance standards. Ongoing trends of tree mortality from the combined effects of pitch canker and bark beetles as well as storm uprootings and breakage continue to reduce the number mature trees west of the picnic shelter. Dead trees fell across trails in three locations over the year and were cleared to reopen the trail. The trail was closed during the wet and windy winter months to prevent damage to sensitive resources and to limit exposure to undue hazard. Access was restricted to the main road and shelter area. PG&E removed 8 dead and hazardous trees over the course of the year to protect power lines. Naturally regenerated pines of up to 20’ in height are growing well in some of the high mortality areas west of the picnic shelter and combined with growth of pine sapling from on-site stock tested for pitch canker resistance suggest that the western forest front just inside the dunes will be reestablished over time.

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 following guidance of botanist Vern Yadon. Potentillas propagated from on-site stock were planted around the existing site and most have not only survived but grown well. Flowering was extensive and prolonged for both the natural and planted specimens due to the prolonged rainy season.

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 was treated to limit expansion into native *Calamagrostis* areas. Invasives were also treated along the wet area behind the shelter that carries runoff from the upslope Spyglass Hill area.

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 and/or public safety. Expand testing of pitch canker resistance in established young trees and propagate to expand tree cover. 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, creating combined open space of more than 45 acres. Both DMFF parcels are in compliance with their OSAC maintenance standards. FDP fire clearance requirements were met by clearing fallen trees that had blocked roads 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. 10 dead pines that posed a hazard to recreational use of Road 10 were cut to reduce hazard, retaining snags were feasible consistent with safety. As noted last year, extensive recreational use of unauthorized trails is routine and extensive and is creating adverse impacts on the understory in some areas.

Recommendations

Monitor and mitigate naturally occurring tree hazards consistent with conservation and maintenance of a natural area. Continue to monitor the area and consider signage to prevent and correct over-use and abuse. Control genista and other invasive infestations on an ongoing basis. Monitor bank stability and downcutting in the northern watercourse. Assess naturally occurring younger pines for pitch canker resistance and take cuttings for propagation if appropriate.

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 and viewing. Surfing use received extensive press coverage during the year but there was no media coverage of the damage to sensitive coastal resources that has been a by-product of surfing use. No natural cypress regeneration appears to be occurring on the parcel. However, native cypresses that have been planted in recent years have become well established and surviving occasional foliage dieback that appears to be primarily the result of excessive salt spray exposure during major winter storms.

Recommendations

Continue regular monitoring of the site for public safety and natural resource protection. Post signs at east edge of parcel to discourage foot traffic onto sensitive bluff and plant habitats on both this and the adjoining parcel. Control iceplant regrowth. Plant several native cypress seedlings in the western portion of the parcel where tree mortality has occurred.

SFB MORSE MEMORIAL LOT

The parcel of native cypress habitat is compliance with the general standards set forth in the OSAC management plan. Invasive plants, principally grasses such as kikuyu and veldt grass dominate the understory of this low lying parcel, portions of which have standing water when soils are saturated. 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. Perimeter fire hazard control measures, principally mowing of cured grasses along the west and northern boundaries, were implemented as has become routine. Non-native plant control treatments, principally of genista with some vinca and kikuyu grass, were made selectively where indicated and will be repeated annually at modest levels. Local native pine seedlings were planted to augment natural regeneration in the western portion of the parcel as previously recommended. As previously noted, seedling and sapling pines have become established in the center and eastern portion of the parcel over the last several years.

Recommendations

Continue routine annual maintenance operations as outlined above. Monitor new plantings and natural regeneration of oaks and pines in the western portion of the parcel.

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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June Duran Stock, Chairman
Open Space Advisory Committee

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Shawn Casey, Director
Del Monte Forest Foundation

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Stephen Staub, Forest Manager
Del Monte Forest Foundation

DATE: 12/20/05