FORESTNEWS

Del Monte Forest Property Owners
a non-profit California Corporation
July - September 2024

Strip Mining in Pebble?

- by Charles Osborne, Author of *Boss, The story of SFB Morse, founder of Pebble Beach*

Hidden behind a grove of trees just off Seventeen Mile Drive for almost a century stood the Lake Majella Sand Plant and mining operations. This was a classic strip mine operation.

There were huge dunes of pure white sand nearby stretching out over much of the northwestern shore of the peninsula. This sand proved to be extremely valuable, and in the depression saved Pebble Beach from ruin.

The plant was constructed in the 1890s by the old Pacific Improvement Company (PIC), a Southern Pacific subsidiary, to supply sand for the Railroad.

Lake Majella Sand Plant

The PIC put in a railroad spur to haul the sand away through Pacific Grove then into the Monterey Depot. The last train to leave the Majella Plant (called Del Monte Sand) was in the 1950s, and thanks to my grandfather Sam Morse, as a happy 8-year-old I got to ride in the engine with the engineer all the way to Monterey. Sand mining activity stopped in the early 1970's as the dunes had essentially been depleted.

When Sam Morse took over the PIC in 1915 the sand plant was generating about $7,000 a year in revenue. The major customer was The Pacific Glass Company, a small glass company in San Francisco that made bottles. Morse said in his memoirs: "As I recall the bottles were of green quality, strong enough, but they had no particular merit in the competitive field. They were, however, the cheapest available in the area. I had a talk with the manager, or president, of Pacific Glass Company. He was a pleasant old boy, but by 10 o'clock in the morning his breath was strong enough of whiskey to hang your hat on."

Morse became fascinated by the sand business and felt that there was a lot of opportunity beyond the current market. He just needed the right people to make it happen.

His first hire was a man named Ed Hurlbutt. Morse says of him "He was an extremely fine man, a tough old miner, one of the Alaskan pioneers, who believed in protecting the rights of the individual and using a frontier model six-shooter if it was necessary to do so." His next hire was a Swedish engineer who convinced Morse that if the sand was refined they would have much larger markets to sell to.

Photos this page courtesy Lagorio Archives, Pebble Beach Company

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Stormy Weather - by Katherine Spitz, Pebble Beach, Architect, AIA Emeritus, LEED AP

Full disclosure: I am a tree hugger. The beauty and fortitude of trees inspire me and give me hope. But the violence with which the pines and cypresses fell during the fierce winter storms recently was beyond frightening. It inspired me to learn more about the dynamics that cause trees to fall, in the hope that knowledge will demystify the events and help us all be better stewards of our beautiful Del Monte Forest.

Let's start with some math. During the extreme weather in 2023 and 2024, more than 250 trees fell on the roads and open space, not including private properties, houses, or the rest of the forest. Clearing the damage from one day alone, February 4, required the Pebble Beach Forestry crew to work 800 unexpected hours, plus 4-5 weeks of Pebble Beach tree crews, plus 2 weeks of an outside chipping crew, plus 2 weeks of an outside tree crew, plus, I kid you not, Calfire's crew for over a week. That pales compared to the multiple storms of last winter, between December 2022 and March 2023.Thank you Pebble Beach Company!

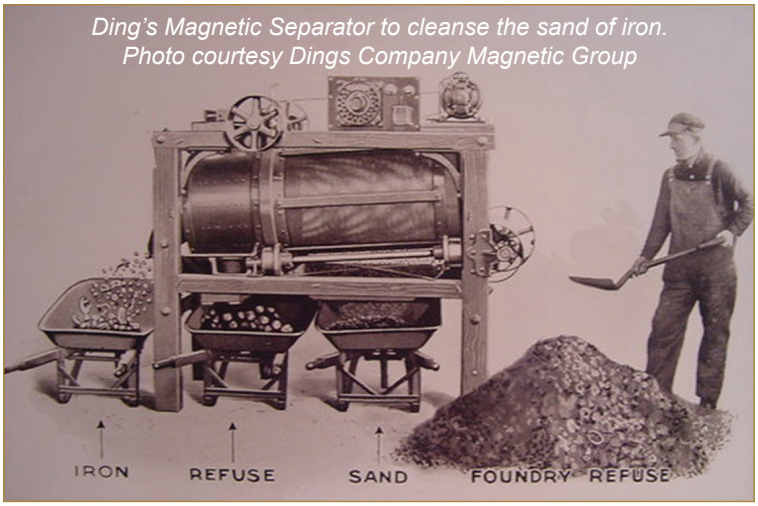
The power of those winds was awesome. It is even more impressive because trees have amazing strategies to counter the effects of wind. It's not easy to knock a tree down. For example, conifers develop large "buttress" roots on the lee side of the tree to brace against the force of the wind. On the windward side of the tree, thinner roots develop, which help hold the tree in place. As they mature, the trees develop more cells on the lee side of the wind to stiffen the trunks against strong winds. Trees develop wood that works in compression and tension, just like the structure in a building.

Trees adapt to the weather gradually, but what happens when the wind direction suddenly changes? Not good. The new normal entails warmer oceans bringing southern storms up to Central California, with high winds and rain. Trees adapted to north winds, but these came from the south, and were cyclonic as they hit the ground. The trees simply had no protection against the south winds. Add the rain, which fell for so long and with such intensity that the soil became soup.

There is a lot more to say about why some trees stay upright and some fall. We'll save that for future articles. For now, suffice it to know the Del Monte Forest is changing. Most of the pines in the forest are near the end of their lives, unlike the Cypresses and the oaks. The storms are culling them. Downed trees provide habitat for creatures of all sorts. Upturned root balls provide pockets in the soil where water can percolate. The forest will continue to sequester carbon. Some trees will continue to fall, due to gravity. The voids will allow sunlight to encourage more flowers. New young pines, oaks, and cypresses are already sprouting. They will adapt to the winds they experience. The forest will be renewed. Hope is renewed!

They started to experiment with different methods of refining the sand, including a shaking table like gold miners use and heating the sand and pouring it over glass baffles which would cause the iron and mica to fall off and stick to cardboard underneath it.

Then they discovered 'Ding's Magnetic Separator' which worked so well they bought a whole battery of machines. The sand would roll over a magnetic drum, and the iron would stick to it. The cleansed sand would fall off into a chute. Then the drum would be scraped clean of the iron which would fall into another chute. The quality of the sand was excellent and Ed Hurlbutt brought on a number of new customers including Owens-Illinois Company.



Ding's Magnetic Separator to cleanse the sand of iron. Photo courtesy Dings Company Magnetic Group

The sand business grew from a single (inebriated) customer to sales well over $1,000,000 with multiple product lines. Morse bought mineral rights in Idaho and Washington and set up plants there. In a few years the sand business had become an important part of the company. Sand was used for fine glass making, roofing products, construction and 30 other end products. This became a very important business in the 1930s.

During the depression Morse had to make some serious decisions to keep his resort and real estate businesses from failing. He sold the water company (now owned by Cal-Am), and other economies. He also wanted to give the impression that everything was just fine. To that end he took over maintenance of Cypress Point as membership there had dwindled to 14, and in a daring move he borrowed $1 million to buy Rancho Aguajito from the Jacks sisters. In all this time the sand business was the only real cash generating operation.

In retrospect, it is difficult to picture an ardent conservationist like Morse running a strip mine, yet it saved him from losing the whole property. This marks the difference between a Conservationist and an Environmentalist. Morse saw the greater good of protecting the rest of Pebble Beach, while a pure environmentalist would never have touched the dunes, even if it meant going bankrupt.

After WWII in the late 1940s his son-in-law, Richard Osborne (my father) came to work for the company. He had gone to Cornell Hotel School and started in Pebble Beach by managing the Country Club, then he became controller, vice president and finally president by 1960. He too was enamored with the sand mining business.

When it became obvious that the sand was running out in the 60's Osborne orchestrated an acquisition of an Illinois sand company, Wedron Silica, and sand continued to play a key role in company operations.

After the sand was gone another use was found for that area. It is called Spanish Bay Resort and golf course.

Many of us who grew up here loved to play on the huge sand dunes in that area of the forest. My sisters would slalom down the dunes on their horses, and my buddies and I would make sleds out of cardboard. Others actually used skis to come down the slopes. Of course it was staked "No Trespassing" as it was dangerous due to the destabilization of the dunes caused by the mining operations. That made it even more exciting.

PEBBLE BEACH COMPANY
2024 SCHEDULED
ROAD MAINTENANCE
&
DRAINAGE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

The following repaving projects are scheduled in 2024:

Broncho Road

Stevenson Drive: Old 17 Mile Dr to Whalers Wy

Old 17 Mile Drive: Sloat Rd to 17 Mile Dr

Coral Drive: Stevenson Dr to Old 17 Mile Dr

The Old Drive: Stevenson Dr to Old 17 Mile Dr

Portola Road: 17 Mile Dr to Porque Ln

Cayuse Road: Stevenson Dr to The Old Dr

2024 scheduled drainage improvements:

Stevenson Drive/Herders Road
3079 Hermitage Road Easement
17 Mile Drive/Madre Lane
1053 Broncho Road
Colton Road/Hairpin
Old Driving Range/Utility Box
Lopez Road/Sloat Road
Ronda Road/Cortez Road
Coyote Road/Hopi Road
3153 Hacienda Drive
Viscaino Road/Palmero Way drain replacement
Peter Hay Hill drain and asphalt improvement
981 Pioneer Road drain replacement

...along with miscellaneous berm and pipe replacements/installations as roads are paved. In all, the Company will repave 224,524 square feet of roadway and complete 13 drainage improvement projects.

* The Forest has approximately 75 miles of roads.
* Pebble Beach Company (PBC) uses a state-of-the-art road survey computer database to prioritize roads in need of maintenance.
* For 2024, PBC has committed to spend $900,000 on road maintenance projects and $700,000 on drainage improvement projects.
* In addition to its annual contractor costs, PBC employs four full-time road maintenance employees. PBC's crew handles more routine road maintenance such as patching, filling potholes, clearing drain lines, etc.
* Pebble Beach Community Services District (PBCSD) continues to provide additional funding to repave/repair roads that are damaged as a result of its sewer and water line replacement projects, or undergrounding utility lines projects.
* Contact PBC Roads Department, Micah Hawbaker, Ecology/Forestry/Roads Manager, or Shawn Casey, VP Resource Management, with maintenance questions or to report conditions, at 625-8414.

Genista, Other Non-native Plants and Fire Danger

Known also by the names soft broom; canary broom; and Montepellier broom, Genista monspessulana (French broom) is a perennial shrub (family Fabaceae) native to countries surrounding the Mediterranean, in the Azores, and introduced to the San Francisco Bay area as a landscape ornamental plant in the mid-1800s along with Scotch and Spanish broom. It has spread from San Francisco to primarily the central coast from Monterey County north to Mendocino County.

An upright, evergreen shrub that commonly grows to 10 ft. tall, it has round stems that are covered with silvery, silky hair, and small leaves that are arranged in groups of three. Yellow flowers are pea-like and clustered in groups of 4-10. The 10-inch-long pods are covered with hairs.

French broom is an invasive, non-native plant that displaces native plant species and makes reforestation difficult because it shades out tree seedlings. It can dominate a plant community, forming a dense monoculture. French broom foliage and seeds are toxic and can cause paralysis in some livestock.

Spreading through prodigious seed production, a medium sized shrub can produce over 8,000 seeds a year. The pods open explosively, flinging the seeds up to 4 meters. The seeds can then be further dispersed by ants, birds, and animals, in river water, rain wash, mud, and on machinery. It establishes a dense, long-lived seed bank, making it difficult to eradicate. The seeds are known to survive for up to 60 years in soil. It may re-sprout from the root crown if cut or grazed.

The leguminous plant is common in disturbed places such as river banks, road cuts, and forest clear cuts. It can colonize open canopy forest. It can compete on low-fertility soils because of the nitrogen-fixing bacteria within its root nodules. Infestations degrade wildlife habitat by displacing native forage species and changing the micro climate at the soil level.

Of high concern is that it burns readily and carries fire to the tree canopy layer, increasing both the frequency and intensity of fires. French broom is prolific in Pebble Beach, encouraged by Home Depot, Walmart, and CVS selling certain types of the plants as yard enhancement – potentially increasing fire risk to homes! Although sellers claim varieties sold are “sterile,” they can cross with invasive species and exacerbate spreading.

The Pebble Beach Fire Department will be focusing on broom removal in this coming year’s fire fuel reduction work plan, along with acacia and other flammable non-native species.

Please respect forest ecosystems and the efforts of the Pebble Beach Fire Department: Do not consider non-native plants, especially French broom and acacia, in your landscaping and consider removing those you have. There is a Fire-safe Garden near the fire department building at Forest Lake and Lopez Roads if you are interested in alternatives to flammable plants in your yard. There is also a Weed Warrior group headed by local Katie Spitz, that gathers together to remove non-native plants throughout Pebble Beach for three hours a weekend morning or two a month. Contact office@dmfpo.org if you are interested in helping out.

The Art and Science of the Monterey Cypress Tree

- by Cynthia Wagner Weick, PhD

When Tasmanian born painter Francis McComas (1874–1938) turned to cubism in the early 1920s, he lost favor in the conservative San Francisco art community and moved to Pebble Beach. He continued his successful career mostly through private commissions, and also honed his golfing skills. His ashes are buried near Cypress Point.

Among McComas' subjects were Monterey cypress trees that graced the coast. The clouds, the trees themselves and the foreground all show a cubist influenced geometric substructure.

McComas was one of many artists who were captivated by the twisted Monterey cypress tree in the late 1800s and early to mid-1900s. Others included the Hudson River School artist Raymond Dabb Yelland, tonalists Arthur Mathews and his wife Lucia Mathews, impressionist Evelyn McCormick, modernist Chiura Obata and abstract photographer Edward Weston. Their artworks are not only visually engaging: they remind us never to take our iconic tree for granted.

Native Monterey cypresses are distinct in genetic make-up from human planted horticultural trees. Native trees that once grew all along what is now the California coast are among the rarest species in the country. Only roughly 3,000 to 4,000 live native trees remain, mainly in Crocker Grove at Pebble Beach and Allan Memorial Grove in Point Lobos State Natural Reserve.

These botanical treasures face a host of challenges, some of which have been recognized for decades, but have not been researched and communicated in scientific literature. Native Monterey pines often out-compete Monterey cypresses, turning pure cypress forests into mixed forests. Seed dispersal is facilitated somewhat

Francis McComas, "Cypress, Monterey," n.d., oil on canvas, 41 x 60 in.
Monterey Museum of Art, gift of Jane and Justin Dart.
Photo: Courtesy of the Monterey Museum of Art

by fire, and it is not clear that adequate seeds are reaching the ground. Those that do disperse face competition for water and sunlight from invasive species on the forest floor, most notably *Ehrharta* grass. Potential insect and disease infestation threaten the tree. All of these issues are likely to be influenced by long term changes in our climate. Paleobotanists associate increases in sea levels and temperature over the last several thousand years with the slow retreat of native Monterey cypress trees to the two small groves in our area. If a catastrophic event destroyed these trees, would a representative sample of viable seed remain such that the groves could be reconstituted in some manner?

In 1933 the renowned botanist W.L. Jepson observed native Monterey cypress in our area and concluded that "all thought, all contemplation, all study are here in a sufficient way eminently worth the mind's attention." Scientific research will help us understand the Monterey cypress species more deeply such that its conservation is as comprehensive and effective as is possible.

On September 22, 2024 at 2:00 pm the Del Monte Forest Conservancy will host a talk by Cynthia on "The Botany, Artistic Influence and Conservation of the Monterey Cypress Tree."

A Shore Thing - by Gina Gianfala, a resident of Pebble Beach and a Bay Net volunteer

There is a hidden forest nearby that only a lucky few visit. This forest is not made of plants, it consists of algae. A particular alga sparks my interest… KELP! You may have noticed kelp on the beaches after a severe storm. How does kelp look in its natural environment and why is it important?

Rhinopias, Wikimedia Commons

Kelp are large brown algae that live in cold, nutrient-rich waters, close to the shore, much like a forest on land. Kelp can be found in several locations worldwide; the majority grow along the western shoreline of North America.

Two types of kelp are found on our shoreline: Nereocystis, commonly called bull kelp, and Macrocystis or giant kelp.

Bull kelp is an annual kelp that grows in deep water in lengths up to 130 feet. Its stalk tough and whip like, terminates in a single large floating bladder and a long leafy outgrowth. It is only found on our shores from Alaska to Southern California. During storms, bull kelp is uprooted and lands on beaches.

Giant kelp is the largest known species, reaching up to 215 feet. It reproduces only at temperatures below 68 °F. The body has a stem like stipe and long branching stalks with blades that float by means of gas bladders. In ideal conditions, giant kelp can grow up to 18 inches per day!

Photo by Jerry Loomis

Jerry Loomis

Karen Balch Wagner

Both types of kelp attach themselves to rocks on the ocean floor via a holdfast, a root-like structure that anchors kelp to the bottom.

Kelp is an important food and habitat for coastal organisms, like fish, invertebrates, and marine mammals. Some spend their whole lives in kelp forests, living, breeding, and dying there. Others use them only as a nursery. Most of us have enjoyed seeing a sea otter resting while wrapped in kelp. This ensures that it will not drift out to sea.

For humans, kelp produces algin, a complex carbohydrate useful in industry. It is harvested for use as a binding agent in many products from toothpaste to cereal and ice cream.

The climate benefits of kelp forests are numerous. They protect coastal areas from storms and sequester greenhouse gases. It is estimated that they absorb over 4.5 million tons of carbon dioxide each year, highlighting kelp's potential as a "blue carbon" sponge.

In the last few years, rising ocean temperatures and severe storms have destroyed many miles of kelp forests around the world. Likewise, in California kelp has been damaged by pollution and an overabundance of grazers. The dramatic increase in sea urchin population, an avid consumer of kelp, can be attributed to the recent decline in sea stars on the West Coast.

To gain a personal appreciation and to see this amazing underwater world, take the opportunity to visit the Monterey Bay Aquarium.

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Expired medications and sharps can be disposed of during business hours inside the Pebble Beach Fire Department Fire Prevention Office located at the opposite end of the building from the fire bays at Forest Lake and Lopez Roads. Sharps must be in an approved sharps disposal container to avoid collectors being punctured. Medications/sharps will also be collected for disposal at the Household Hazardous Waste Event on September 14th.

iTNMontereyCounty
Presents

Age Well Drive Smart

CHP Older Driver Program

Driving is Freedom

Join the CHP for the Keys to Driving Safer and Driving Longer.

OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

This is a **FREE** Workshop
to help older drivers continue to drive safely.

Completion of this workshop may result in savings on your auto insurance

Pebble Beach Community Services District Office
3101 Forest Lake Drive, Pebble Beach, CA 93953
Reserve Your Place via email: office@dmfpo.org
Sunday, August 25th ~ 1:30 to 3:30 pm
**Participants will receive a certificate of completion that may be accepted by their auto insurance and result in a discounted premium.*

iTNMontereyCounty™
Dignified transportation for seniors

MST
MONTEREY-SALINAS TRANSIT

Free Household Hazardous Waste & Electronics Collection Event!

Saturday, September 14, 9 am to 2 pm

PBCSD office parking lot
3101 Forest Lake Road, Pebble Beach
(intersection of Forest Lake and Lopez Roads)

To ensure safety:
Place *your hazardous waste in a cardboard box inside your trunk.*
Group *similar products together and label anything not in its original container.*
Remain *in your vehicle at all times and District staff will unload the items for you!*

Pebble Beach Community Services District