

California Coastal Commission nixes Pebble Beach accord

By Mark Leslie

The California Coastal Commission on Oct. 10 rejected a settlement agreement that would have ended a months-long debate over public access to Pebble Beach Golf Links.

The California Coastal Commission staff, County of Monterey and The Pebble Beach Co. had reached the accord they felt would put to rest litigation and disagreements over Coastal Act jurisdiction and allow a new reservation policy to be implemented.

Now, the ball is back in the court

of Pebble Beach Co. and the County of Monterey, said Peter Douglas, executive director of the Coastal Commission.

Tom Oliver, president of The Pebble Beach Co., responded to the rejection: "Clearly we are very disappointed by the commission's decision... We firmly believe the Pebble Beach reservations plan is fair and equitable to all parties and would benefit both the public and Monterey County as a whole.

"The agreement, which had the support of the Monterey County Board of Supervisors and the

Coastal Commission staff, would have allowed for increased, **guaranteed** public access to the Pebble Beach Golf Links."

Oliver added, "Misinformation and innuendo seem to have clouded what should have been a relatively simple matter."

Other options now have to be considered, he said.

Saying he had "given up trying to figure what the commission will do with our staff recommendations," Douglas added, "They had asked me to shape a settlement agreement the staff would be happy with... The

commission does overturn our recommendations, but that's the exception, not the rule."

He said the commission will meet again the second week of November, but further staff recommendations on Pebble Beach probably will not be completed until the December meeting or later.

Douglas said he recommends that The Pebble Beach Co. first go through the County Planning Amendment process, then appear before the commission. He suggested that in April, but the company decided against it, he said.

Under that procedure, a new plan would be presented at public hearings and evaluated against California's Coastal Act policy, Douglas said.

"If everybody cooperates and everything goes right... commission action could be in three to five months (after the process again begins)," he said.

Months of debate and court action have followed since the first announcement from the new Pebble Beach Co. owner, Ben Hogan Property Cos., that it would be selling memberships. According to Pebble Beach spokesmen, this was grossly misinterpreted as meaning the public would no longer be able to play the course.

Indeed, the plan would have increased public use, they say. Others agree.

"This defines in concrete the public's right to play and hike along the Pacific coastline. The settlement we've reached is a good one because it prevents them from incrementally restricting access to the coast without seeking Coastal Commission approvals," said Coastal Commission attorney Diane Landry.

The rejected reservation policy included a new category of hotel guests — "members" of the new Pebble Beach National Club. It also provided a guarantee of public availability to the course. Memberships were expected to be sold for \$150,000 apiece — half within the United States and half abroad.

Two morning hours would have been reserved for hotel guests who are PBNC members. Times not reserved in this block on the day prior to play would be reserved by any category of player, whether hotel guests, Del Monte Forest property owners, residents, or "outside" players on a first-come, first-served basis.

RISE won't oppose pre-notification

An article in the September issue on a New York state attorney general's report concerning ground water contamination by golf courses on Long Island incorrectly stated that the trade group Responsible Industry for a Sound Environment (RISE) backed a Professional Lawn Care Association of America call for pre-notification or posting of pesticide applications by homeowners.

"If professional applicators feel that regulation is needed for their industry, RISE will not oppose their effort at this time, but does not support homeowner posting or notification," RISE Executive Director Allen James said.

Wrong architect

In a recent advertisement by Seed Research of Oregon, Inc., David Fleming was incorrectly listed as the golf course architect for Mt. Woodson Country Club. Landmark Land Co. was the architectural firm and Fleming the project manager.

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