



PACIFIC GROVE MUSEUM OF NATURAL HISTORY

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Date: 16 July 1999
To: Mayor Sandra Koffman
From: Steve Bailey 
Re: Pt. Pinos Lighthouse vegetation management

Thank you for your interest in the native vegetation restoration at the Pt. Pinos Lighthouse. As a follow-up to our brief discussion earlier this week, this is a summary of what I have done and what needs to be done soon. Of course, ultimately we need to act on the plan developed by the "Crespi Pond Committee" a couple of years ago.

While the Crespi Pond Committee was still extant, we obtained permission to spray Roundup throughout the Lighthouse compound in order to kill the Hottentot Fig Iceplant, which had covered most of the ground within the fence. This spraying was done. But in the absence of any further action over the next year and a half, the iceplant was coming back in strength, although many native plants also repopulated the area. Last fall I began spraying the iceplant with Roundup. During this year's spring and summer, this has developed into my personal campaign to eradicate the iceplant and several other invasive [dare I say "noxious"?] weeds. To date I guesstimate that I have spent about 70 hours on weed control in the Lighthouse compound.

The iceplant required repeat treatments, largely because I had to wait until the sprayed iceplant died before I could see what I had missed. Also, many seedlings sprang up and I discovered many other iceplants poking out from within the native bushes. The latter required very careful spraying to kill only the iceplant, not the native bushes (e.g. Mock-heather and Yellow Bush Lupine).

At the start of summer I suddenly realized that several patches of thistles (mostly Bull Thistle and Milk Thistle) threatened to take over the land. The largest patch of Bull Thistle was an impenetrable thicket up to shoulder height and about the size of the Museum grounds! The Milk Thistle was blooming and the Bull Thistle was soon to follow. Immediate action was essential to keep them from producing and broadcasting their innumerable tiny seeds. That same day, Bruce Cowan and I cut and pulled much of

the Milk Thistle, carefully cutting off all the blooming heads and removing them in plastic garbage bags.

Next I twice sprayed all the thistles with Roundup. I also eliminated patches of Poison Hemlock by cutting and spraying. After a few hand mop-up sessions, I think I need to do one more round of Roundup spraying (about one morning) and that should finish the job until the winter rains come.

My personal vendetta against the invasive weeds has virtually eliminated the iceplant, all three species of thistles, the Poison Hemlock, and a few other lesser weeds. I also got Mike Leach to put his crew to eliminating the Poison Hemlock on the Golf Course because it was threatening to seed right into the Lighthouse compound.

Of course, this is not the end of the story. Weeds will always come back if nothing further is done. But even as things stand, next year should not require nearly as much work as this year, because of what I have accomplished this year. However, the City's Museum Director should probably not budget 50-75 hours each year to weed control; action on the revegetation plan would be preferable. Moreover, working alone it was impossible for me to tackle the other problem weeds at the Lighthouse, specifically the non-native annual grasses, especially Ripgut Grass.

Until the City is ready to act on the revegetation plan, what is needed is the following:

1. I will do one more morning of Roundup spraying, with occasional monitoring to watch for problems before they become serious.
2. A grass-selective herbicide should be sprayed on the entire property to kill all of the annual grasses while they are growing. I assume that this needs to be done during a spell of dry weather in the winter rainy season, but Frank Ono, Vern Yadon, or Bruce Cowan can tell us the optimum time.
3. Next spring I can do some additional control of the same weeds that I have been eradicating this year. I know the Lighthouse compound and its weeds very well now, and I can probably do a better job than all but the real botanists.

These three steps, repeated annually, could suffice to fully return the property to native vegetation, but they cannot achieve the ultimate goal of providing a safe ground for growing the endangered dune plants such as the local Pt. Pinos form of the

Menzies' Wallflower. For this, two further steps are required:

A: Exclude the deer. This means fixing the big hole under the south side fence and enhancing parts or all of the fence to keep the deer from jumping over it.

B: Planting the endangered plants, under proper permit, of course.

The creation of a safe area for growing the endangered dune plants will be a key step in satisfying the federal government's requirements for transferring the land of the Pt. Pinos Reservation, including the Golf Course's Back Nine, to the City.

Again, thank you for your interest in this project and ones like it that preserve and restore our unique City's natural heritage.