
Comments on George Washington Park Forest Management Plan DRAFT Review - Agenda Item 11A

From Luke Coletti <ljcoletti@icloud.com>

Date Tue 8/4/2026 7:41 AM

To City Council Members <citycouncil@cityofpacificgrove.org>; City Clerk <cityclerk@cityofpacificgrove.org>

Cc George Fuerst <gfuerst@cityofpacificgrove.org>; John Kenney <JKenney@cityofpacificgrove.org>; BNRC <bnrc@cityofpacificgrove.org>

[**NOTICE:** This message originated outside of the City of Pacific Grove email system -- **DO NOT CLICK** on links or open **attachments** unless you are sure the content is safe.]

Mayor and Councilmembers -

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments regarding the Draft George Washington Park Forest Management Plan.

While serving on City Council, I advocated for and advanced funding of the [George Washington Park Biological Resources Report](#) because I believed the City needed a comprehensive scientific assessment of the park's ecological resources. Having made that investment, I appreciate that the revised Draft Forest Management Plan draws extensively upon the findings of the Biological Resources Report. As the Plan moves toward adoption, I encourage the Council to ensure that this important scientific assessment continues to guide the City's long-term management of George Washington Park.

The December 2024 Biological Resources Report prepared by Denise Duffy & Associates identified several important ecological challenges, including limited Monterey pine regeneration, changes in forest structure and composition, invasive species encroachment, and declining habitat conditions for sensitive species. The Draft Forest Management Plan appropriately recognizes many of these concerns and establishes a useful framework for ongoing management.

I respectfully encourage the Council to strengthen the Plan in five areas.

First, the Plan should establish measurable ecological performance objectives. Monitoring should evaluate whether management activities are improving Monterey pine regeneration, reducing invasive species cover, increasing native understory diversity, and maintaining suitable habitat conditions for sensitive wildlife species. While the revised Plan identifies a number of monitoring activities, it should also establish measurable ecological outcomes so that the success of management actions can be objectively evaluated over time.

Second, the adaptive management program should recognize the 2024 Biological Resources Report as the City's baseline ecological assessment. Periodic follow-up assessments using comparable methodologies—such as vegetation mapping, forest structure assessments, and focused wildlife

surveys where appropriate—would allow future conditions to be measured against a consistent scientific baseline and provide a stronger foundation for adaptive management decisions.

Third, because the Biological Resources Report identified increasing coast live oak density and changes in forest structure as important ecological trends, the monitoring program should include periodic evaluation of overall forest composition and structure, including the relative abundance of Monterey pine and coast live oak, canopy age distribution, mid-canopy development, and natural regeneration. These landscape-scale indicators are essential to understanding whether management actions are maintaining the long-term ecological integrity and resilience of the Monterey pine forest.

Fourth, the Plan should continue to recognize that George Washington Park serves important nursery, roosting, nesting, and overwintering functions for multiple wildlife species. Protection of these habitat functions should remain a central consideration as restoration, fuel reduction, and habitat management activities are implemented throughout the park.

Finally, since the adoption of the 1999 Master Plan, electric bicycles and other motorized recreational devices have become increasingly common. The Forest Management Plan should acknowledge these emerging pressures and evaluate appropriate management strategies to minimize soil compaction, unauthorized trail creation, disturbance of habitat restoration areas, and impacts to sensitive biological resources. Addressing these issues proactively will help protect the ecological values the Plan seeks to restore while accommodating appropriate public use of the park.

Thank you for your continued efforts to protect and restore George Washington Park. I appreciate the considerable work that has gone into both the Biological Resources Report and the Draft Forest Management Plan. I also appreciate the excellent work done by the BNRC. I offer these comments in the interest of strengthening the long-term ecological stewardship of this unique Monterey pine forest.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

Luke Coletti
Mayoral Candidate