



COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ

PLANNING DEPARTMENT

701 OCEAN STREET - 4TH FLOOR, SANTA CRUZ, CA 95060
(831) 454-2580 FAX: (831) 454-2131

February 10, 2020

Planning Commission
County of Santa Cruz
701 Ocean Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Agenda Date: February 26, 2020

Agenda Item: 6

Subject: Appeal of the Zoning Administrator approval of application 181556: Proposal to allow a use where individuals spread the ashes of loved ones around selected trees within a forested area, construct a non-habitable accessory structure and parking areas for 15 vehicles for Better Place Forests at APN 106-201-16.

Members of the Commission:

The purpose of this letter is to update your Commission on information staff has received since this application was continued from the January 22, 2020 hearing.

- (1) Staff was contacted by Rich Sampson, Division Chief and Forester II, at Cal Fire, Department of Forestry (CDF) to discuss state requirements to operate the proposed memorial forest business. At the original hearing, staff proposed two additional conditions intended to ensure that the proposed business did not compromise or preclude timber harvesting on the subject parcel. Requiring a Non-Industrial Timber Management Plan (NTMP) and a Less than 3-Acre Conversion Exception were the vehicles to implement the recommended conditions. However, since then, Mr. Sampson has stated an NTMP is not required and further, because the spreading of ashes is not considered to be a conversion of timberland, a "Less than 3-Acre Conversion Exception" is also not required other than for the parking lot, driveway, and the non-habitable structure area. As a result of this new information, staff is now recommending that the conditions be eliminated. Mr. Sampson has proposed that the following condition be added, "The applicant shall submit a Forest Management Plan, to be reviewed and approved by Cal Fire, and that Cal Fire shall conduct regular monitoring of the site to ensure compliance with the Forest Management Plan."

Rich Sampson would like to speak with your Commission about the proposed use relative to Cal Fire's requirements, but he is unavailable for the February 26, 2020 hearing. Given this, we understand that the applicant, Better Place Forests, intends to request a second continuance to the March 11, 2020 hearing in order to allow Mr. Sampson to attend the hearing.

- (2) We received additional information from the applicant relating to the appellant's concern that the proposed use should be considered as a cemetery. Better Place Forests currently operates a 20-acre site located in Point Arena, California. After that site's approval, a member of the public filed a complaint with the Cemetery and Funeral Bureau alleging that


Better Place Forests' operations constituted an unlicensed cemetery. The Cemetery and Funeral Bureau determined that the proposed use was compliant with the laws and regulations governing Cremated Remains Disposers and the scattering of cremated remains; therefore, Better Place Forests was not required to obtain a cemetery license (Exhibit 2A). The applicant has submitted the Bureau's determination for your Commission's consideration.

- (3) Additional letters received include one from Brendan Miele, President of The Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau, who provided a follow-up letter rebutting the claim made by Better Place Forests that an excerpt of a *Fast Company* article that the Farm Bureau provided in their original letter was misquoted (Exhibit 2B). Nick Kent, Registered Professional Forester submitted a letter on behalf of Redwood Empire opposing the project (Exhibit 2C). The applicant, Better Place Forests submitted 2 letters, one requesting a continuance (Exhibit 2D), and another with additional information regarding their proposed use with letters of support (Exhibit 2E).

Sincerely,



Elizabeth Cramblet
Project Planner
Development Review

Reviewed By: 

Annette Olson
Principal Planner
Development Review

Exhibits:

- 2A. Letter from the Cemetery and Funeral Bureau, dated October 22, 2018
- 2B. Letter from the Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau, dated January 21, 2020
- 2C. Letter from Redwood Empire, dated February 12, 2020
- 2D. Letter from Better Place Forests requesting a continuance, dated February 13, 2020
- 2E. Letter from Better Place Forests with enclosures, dated February 13, 2020



October 22, 2018

Better Place Forests
Attention: Alexander A.S. Gibson
25284 Ten Mile Rd
Point Arena, CA 95468

RE: Complaint Number I 2018-85 – Better Place Forests

Dear Mr. Gibson:

The Cemetery and Funeral Bureau (Bureau) has concluded its investigation into the complaint filed against Better Place Forests as an unlicensed cemetery. Upon review of the complaint and applicable documentation collected, there is insufficient evidence to support a violation of the Bureau's laws, rules, or regulations governing the operation of a cemetery in the State of California. We are closing our file on this matter with no further action.

Your business operation and website appear to be compliant with the laws and regulations governing Cremated Remains Disposers and the scattering of cremated remains. It is the Bureau's understanding that you will be scattering cremated remains only, in accordance with Health and Safety Code (HSC) section 7116 and that there will be no burial of cremated remains, which would require you to obtain a Certificate of Authority (cemetery license).

HSC section 7116 states in pertinent part:

(a) Cremated remains may be scattered in areas where no local prohibition exists, provided that the cremated remains are not distinguishable to the public, are not in a container, and that the person who has control over disposition of the cremated remains has obtained written permission of the property owner or governing agency to scatter on the property. A state or local agency may adopt an ordinance, regulation, or policy, as appropriate, authorizing, consistent with this section, or specifically prohibiting, the scattering of cremated human remains on lands under the agency's jurisdiction. The scattering of the cremated remains of more than one person in one location pursuant to this section shall not create a cemetery pursuant to Section 7003 or any other provision of law.

Your cooperation with Field Representatives Glenn Miller and Scott Lang during the investigation is appreciated. Should you decide in the future to operate Better Place Forests as a private cemetery, you must first meet all requirements for licensure and obtain a Certificate of Authority (cemetery license) from the Bureau. You may not advertise as a cemetery nor make any sales of cemetery property until and unless you are licensed with the Bureau. You may contact the Bureau's Licensing Unit at the letterhead address for information about licensing requirements.

If you have any questions or need further information at this time, please contact the Bureau at the letterhead address.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S. Patterson". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first letter "S" being large and prominent.

Sandra Patterson
Field Operations Supervisor
Cemetery and Funeral Bureau

cc: Glenn Miller, Field Representative
Scott Lang, Field Representative



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(831) 724-1356 • (831) 724-5821
sccfb@sbcglobal.net
www.sccfb.com



January 21, 2020

Renee Shepherd, Chair
Santa Cruz County Planning Commission
701 Ocean St. Suite 400
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

RE: Response to Jamie Knowlton's January 13th letter alleging Farm Bureau Misquote. Application # 181556 Better Place Forests (APN 106-291-16).

Dear Chairperson Shepherd and members of the Commission,

Santa Cruz County Farm Bureau remains opposed to the Application submitted by Better Place Forests Conservation Lands LLC (Applicant), and feels compelled to provide clarification regarding an alleged misquote made in the Farm Bureau's letter dated January 9th 2020.

Mr. Knowlton stated the following;

First, The Farm Bureau's Letter quoted our landscape architect David Fletcher in an article in the publication *Fast Company*, published in June 2019. The subject of this article was not our project in Santa Cruz, but our project in Point Arena, Mendocino County. His quote was also incorrectly copied/referenced in the Farm Bureau letter. While the Farm Bureau's Letter quoted him saying 'They're taking 80 acres out of the logging industry forever', the correct quote states (emphasis added) 'They're taking 20 acres of land out of the logging industry forever', in clear reference to our 20-acre project in Point Arena. A printout of this article (see 3rd to last paragraph) is provided in Attachment B and linked below for reference.² His quote was also incorrect in that Better Place Forests did not actually remove the Point Arena property from the logging industry forever, as that property is not zoned TPZ. It is also important to note that David Fletcher is an independent contractor and not an employee of Better Place Forests. Anything Mr. Fletcher is quoted as saying is his opinion, and he does not speak directly for BPF, our operations or our company values.

With the following description of enclosures to the letter;

- Attachment B is a copy of the *Fast Company* article incorrectly referenced by the Farm Bureau of Santa Cruz County.

This article was located and referenced prior to our letter submission, from links on the Applicant's website. When we were advised of the comments made in Mr. Knowlton's letter, the same link was checked. The article had been modified, with the change to "20 acres" in the pertinent paragraph, as submitted by Mr. Knowlton. Fortunately, we were able to locate the article in another location, with the "80 acre" quote intact. Please see attached article, with highlighted paragraphs beginning on page 8.

We submit that our letter provided a proper and accurate quote of the article as published.

Sincerely,


Brendan Miele, President

Enclosed: Fast Company Article, June 2019.

EXHIBIT 2B

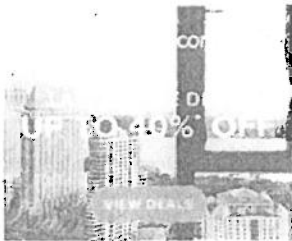
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TECHNOLOGY

This Startup Is Building A New Kind Of Cemetery, And It Already Has Thousands Of Customers

Source: Fast Company, Katharine Schwab

Photo: Courtesy of Better Place Forests

Better Place Forests sells the rights to scatter your ashes under a redwood.

TRANSPORTATION



THE
CEO OF
THE

**ELECTRIC-CAR STARTUP
BYTON SAYS THE
COMPANY'S M-BYTE SUV
WILL HAVE MORE
ADVANCED TECH THAN A
TESLA**



E-BIKES
ARE
WILDLY

**POPULAR IN THE BAY
AREA. CAN THEY REALLY
REPLACE CARS?**



THE
CEO OF
THE

**ELECTRIC-CAR STARTUP
BYTON SAYS THE
COMPANY'S M-BYTE SUV
WILL HAVE MORE
ADVANCED TECH THAN A
TESLA**



3D-

**PRINTED STEAKS ARE
STARTING TO ACTUALLY
LOOK LIKE MEAT**



MEET
THE
PEOPLE
CODING

OUR WORLD



CIGNA
WILL
NOW

**LET YOU GO TO THE
DOCTOR ON YOUR
PHONE**



THE

**COUPLES WHO SLEEP
'TOGETHER' OVER
VIDEOCHAT**

Prices start at \$2,900, but can soar to \$36,000.

Sandy Gibson hates cemeteries.

The serial entrepreneur, who lost both his parents at a young age, had been making regular trips to visit his family grave, which was located at the edge of a cemetery next to a busy road. His family had chosen a beautiful polished granite tombstone, which had seemed like a good idea at the time. But that means that every time he pays homage to his parents, Gibson sees the reflection of cars rushing down the street on the slick surface of the gravestone. "I knew it didn't feel like the right place for them," he says.

Gibson knew he couldn't be alone. The end-of-life experience for a family is a dreadful one. Not only have they lost someone they love, but cemeteries are expensive (and are running out of space). A 2017 study from the Bureau of Labor Statistics reveals the cost of dying—\$7,360 on average for funeral services and burial—has risen 227% since 1986 (compared to 123% for all goods). Today's \$14 billion death industry is catering to an increasing secular country: A 2017 survey by the National Funeral Directors Association found that only 39.5% of respondents



UBER
JUST
QUETLY

**BOUGHT 600 ACRES OF
LAND TO BUILD A NEW
TEST TRACK FOR SELF-
DRIVING CARS IN
PITTSBURGH**



WANT A
TAX
CREDIT
FOR

**BUYING AN ELECTRIC
VEHICLE? MOVE FAST**



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HAILING SERVICE
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SACRAMENTO GRID
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MONTH**

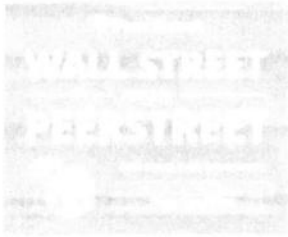
REAL ESTATE



**HOMETAP RAISES \$100M
TO EXPAND NATIONALLY,
INVEST IN RESIDENTIAL
REAL ESTATE**



AT \$49



PHILANTHROPY



**EXPENSIFY'S
CORPORATE CARD TO
FUNNEL FEES TO GOOD
CAUSES**



A

**JAPANESE FASHION
BILLIONAIRE JUST
PLEGGED TO GIVE AWAY
\$9 MILLION ON TWITTER
FOR A 'SOCIAL
EXPERIMENT'**



**THE
GOSPEL
OF
WEALTH**

**ACCORDING TO MARC
BENIOFF**

**FACEBOOK CO-FOUNDER
AND CRITIC CHRIS**

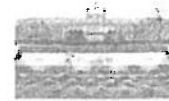
are being buried in ceremonies with a religious component, and more than half of respondents are interested in green burial options. Cremation is on the rise.

What do you do if you don't want to bury your loved one in a cemetery, you don't have a religious community to turn to for support, and cremation doesn't feel like a special enough way to mark their passing? Some have turned to human composting, while others request to be buried inside a biodegradable pod. The still living are turning to "death doulas" to make the process of dying more positive.

And now, thanks to Gibson, you can buy the rights to sprinkle your ashes underneath a redwood tree.

Gibson and co-founders Brad Milne and Jamie Knowlton have raised more than \$12 million to design a new kind of cemetery: a forest. This month, they launched their first 20-acre forest, located in Mendocino, California. Instead of spending thousands on a funeral plot, families can spend thousands for the exclusive ash-spreading rights to one of the thousands of trees on the property (private trees start at \$2,900, and the rights to put ashes underneath an old

**MILLION, THIS WILL BE
SAN FRANCISCO'S MOST
EXPENSIVE PENTHOUSE**



FANNIE,

**FREDDIE TO BOOST
LOAN LIMITS; BAY AREA
MAX GOES TO \$765,600**



**WHERE
TECH IS**

**HELPING PEOPLE
BECOME BETTER
NEIGHBORS**



**OPPORTUNITY ZONES
DRAW NEW INVESTMENT
TO NEGLECTED
SACRAMENTO
PROPERTIES**

FINANCE



**HOW
NATE
BERKUS**

**HAS KEPT HIS
CREATIVITY FLOWING
FOR 25 YEARS**

EXPENSIFY'S

**HUGHES**

**SPEARHEADS A \$10
MILLION 'ANTI-
MONOPOLY' FUND**

**THIS**

**SCHOOL'S SCIENCE
PROJECT IS 3D-
PRINTING PROSTHETIC
HANDS FOR PEOPLE IN
NEED**

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redwood tree can cost up to \$36,000). The trees are guaranteed to be permanently protected, because the duo's venture-backed startup, Better Place Forests, purchases the land and then donates the development rights to a permanent land trust. The process by which the company is doing this, in which the company owns the land and a land trust owns the easement, or the right to develop it, is very well-established and has been used to create national parks in Hawaii and Colorado (though a future change of ownership makes it unclear if family members would always be able to visit).

But beyond just offering people the knowledge that they will end up in a beautiful place (and that they'll contribute to land conservation while doing it), Better Place Forests wants to serve the same role that cemeteries have for centuries: It's a place for individuals and families to hold a funeral service and to return so they can mourn those they've lost. "Typically ashes come in a plastic bag. It's not a beautiful experience," Gibson says. "So we try to make the whole experience better for the family."

That experience starts with the visitor



**CORPORATE CARD TO
FUNNEL FEES TO GOOD
CAUSES**



**PRIVATE EQUITY'S
TALENT CHALLENGE:
KEEPING IT OUT OF THE
FAMILY**



**QUIBI
SCORES
\$400M
FOR ITS**

**QUICK-HIT VIDEO
MOONSHOT**



**UBER
MAKES
MAJOR**

**CHANGES TO
CALIFORNIA RIDES AS
BIG-WORK LAW TAKES
EFFECT**

center. At the Mendocino property, called Point Arena, the building sits low on the landscape, with a large opening at its center that acts like a portal to invite people into the forest. As people pass through the opening, they emerge onto a deck that overlooks the forest and what will soon be a memorial made of concrete benches arranged in a circular manner, to evoke the rings of a tree. The ocean is visible in the distance.

"It doesn't function exactly like a visitor's center in a state park—it's more of a sacred experience," says Mark Hogan, the principal at design firm Openscope who designed the visitor's center. His firm deliberately used redwood and weathered steel so that the building would blend into the forest. "It's all very in keeping with the surroundings so you feel like it's been there forever already when you first visit."

Most of Better Place Forests' thousands of clients so far have been people who want their families to spread their ashes under a tree, which they've already picked out (and paid for) themselves. According to Gibson, some people choose trees near the visitor center with the idea that their

NEWS



**MARTIN
LUTHER
KING
DAY**

**2020: MLK QUOTES,
INSPIRATION TO HONOR
LATE CIVIL RIGHTS
LEADER**



**HOW
THE**

**GOVERNMENT CAME TO
DECIDE THE COLOR OF
YOUR FOOD**



**LAB
SAYS
ITS**

**MARIJUANA BREATH
ANALYZER WILL HIT THE
MARKET IN 2020**

families will come visit them there. Others want a tree that's deeper in the forest or that sits on a ridge overlooking the Pacific. It's a way for people to choose their final resting place in a beautiful natural setting, rather than in a squeezed cemetery.

This attention to redesigning the entire experience around death and burial, which begins with choosing the tree, extends to the way that Better Place Forests arranges what the company calls "spreading ceremonies." Behind the scenes, the Better Place Forests team prepares the ashes by mixing them with local soil and natural supplements to break down the ashes into nutrients for the tree more quickly. The ceremony itself includes the spreading of ashes, some poetry reading, and the marking of the tree using a round bronze emblem made of adapted survey markers used by the federal government that's engraved with the person's name (and the company's logo).

Better Place Forests currently owns seven properties located around the western United States and is in the process of transforming each one into a memorial forest. The company hires botanists who catalog the forest,



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RENT CONTROL AND GIG
WORK: 20 NEW LAWS
THAT WILL RESHAPE
CALIFORNIA**



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WORLD'S FIRST ALL-
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AIRPLANE TAKES FLIGHT**

clearing out invasive species and assessing the well-being of each tree to ensure that the company is only selling healthy trees. If your tree is to die, Better Place Forests will plant another one of the same species in its place. A team of landscape architects and designers will build a visitor's center on each property using natural clearings, so that as few trees as possible are harmed.

In Mendocino, professional trail builders who usually work in national parks spent an entire month carving trails into the forest to make it as accessible as possible (Better Place Forests provides transportation within the forest for those in wheelchairs and is ADA-compliant). In that forest, which was formerly logged and has regrown, many of these trails use the bones of old skip roads that loggers used to haul the giant redwoods out of the forest.

"Within the forest we were really guided by the nature of the landscape itself," says David Fletcher, the lead landscape architect at San Francisco-based Fletcher Studio who is overseeing design for all of Better Place Forests' properties.

His team custom-designed every

human-made element of the forest, including a subtle wayfinding system and simple concrete benches that are arranged in natural clearings. But for visitors, walking around this new age cemetery is supposed to feel just like a nature walk. "It's exactly like hiking, but we think there's the emotion that you're walking through this sacred forest," Fletcher says.

As people hike through the memorial trees, they eventually end up walking up a small hill where the designers created a pergola, a tunnel-like trellis covered in vines that opens out on a view of the sea. "It's meant to be a complete journey, where you're dealing with collective memory, individual memory, and then you come up on this knoll where you see the ocean, you see the infinite," he says.

Right now, people can purchase trees at Point Arena and in a forest in Santa Cruz, California, which is about an hour from San Jose. Point Arena is the only property that's officially open: The company started doing spreading ceremonies last fall, and recently opened the forest's visitor center.

Beyond providing a more beautiful funeral experience, Better Place Forests is also a conservation effort

Along with donating the development rights to land trusts that can guarantee they won't be developed, Better Place Forests plants more trees for every tree that its customers claim. For those who buy older, more expensive trees, the startup will plant hundreds of trees in a forest that was recently swallowed by the fires that have wrecked California in the last few years. "They're taking 80 acres of land out of the logging industry forever," Fletcher says. "It's never going to be developed as a housing project. That's the power of this."

Still, some customers may shy away from the idea that venture capitalists are trying to make money off their final resting place. Others may feel nervous about whether Better Place Forests can truly guarantee that these memorial trees will never be bulldozed. There's some assurance in the fact that even if the company does sell the forest, future owners will have to abide by the same development rules. However, that doesn't mean that another owner would still provide family members access to their loved one's tree, though the company says that there are stipulations to ensure the property remains open space and the company has created a

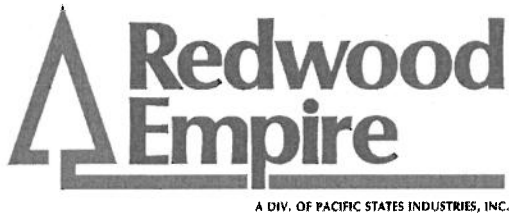
conservation endowment to fund maintenance.

In any case, the startup has clearly tapped into a desire for a greener, more personal kind of funeral: Thousands of families have already reserved trees. In a time when conservation is becoming increasingly urgent, it's rather poetic to protect a tree with your remains, secure in the knowledge that more are being planted in your honor.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Katharine Schwab is an associate editor based in New York who covers technology, design, and culture.

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February 12, 2020

Renee Shepherd, Chair, Santa Cruz County Planning Commission
701 Ocean Street, Suite 400
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

Re: Oppose Application #181556 Better Place Forests (APN-291-16), Compatibility with Timber Production Zoning

Dear Chairperson Shepard and Commissioners,

We are opposed to the use of this property as proposed by this project due to the fact that the land is zoned Timber Production and the proposed use will make timber production impossible in the future on this property. The project proponent should either rezone the property or relocate their business model to another piece of land where the zoning allows this use. There are a number of logistical considerations that have not been addressed regarding timber harvesting that make this proposal unrealistic.

The proponents have provided no actual detailed logistical plan on the timberlands. They have only stated that 25% of the trees will be retained as memorial trees where ashes will be spread by their clients. Since the proponent sells taller (larger) trees for higher prices it must be assumed that the the largest trees will be retained and these trees will be scattered all across the property. The proponent has suggested that a portion of the property could be reserved for memorial trees where no commercial timber harvesting will occur to avoid a conflict with their spreading clients with the remainder being a working forest. They have not submitted the size or scope of a memorial tree set-aside so we do not know how large an area would be taken out of timber production, and this is unacceptable as the entire property that is zoned TPZ is required to be available for growing and harvesting trees.

Timber harvesting is inherently in conflict with the proposed spreading as it requires falling large trees and skidding them with heavy tractors over a skid trail system that can be up to 1,000 feet to a landing. If a client purchases the rights to spread ashes mixed with soil at its base of a specific tagged memorial tree, they are most likely assuming the ashes will not be disturbed. Especially when they are paying \$11,600.00 to \$16,000.00 for the right to do so. The email correspondence to prospective clients from the company, the contract terms provided, and website do not mention active timber management that could occur and that could disrupt the soil near the memorial tree that has been purchased for spreading rights. A video on their website shows clients on their Point Arena property walking to prospective trees on trails that are actually skid trails that had previously been used for skidding logs on that site. The proponents are now claiming that active timber

management will occur on their lands and be a compatible use. But in fact an email correspondence to a prospective client states their forests will be preserved and never managed for commercial timber production *"the forest we own and operate can never be re-logged or redeveloped, so every customer plays an important part in land conservation efforts... Everyone who chooses a tree in Better Place Forest helps to not only protect the forest, but also to replant dozens of trees in their name effective immediately."*

If this statement is not the case for this property then the proponents should state this, and it should be a condition of their permit that spreading clients are aware that periodic disturbance for timber management will occur which potentially could disturb the ashes. Without this assurance and transparent acknowledgement, future owners of the property will not be able to harvest timber due to the conflict with the spreading clients.

The Planning Staff most recently proposed that the proponents acquire a less than three acre conversion to start their operation, which is a legal option. The Staff also suggests requiring a Non-industrial Timber Management Plan (NTMP) be submitted and approved for the project. Although these seem like reasonable conditions they do not guarantee that the property will ever be actively managed in the future by this owner or be available for timber production for future owners. Additional questions about this project must be answered to ensure the property remains available for timber management:

1. Why is the project exempt from CEQA since impacts from visitation have not been addressed including a traffic study? Are walking trails delineated through the forest? Will visitors access Memorial Trees on ATVs? Will access on dirt trails be allowed during the winter period when soils are wet and erosion could occur? Will there be erosion from trails if they have not been designed with erosion control features. This is a common problem with many trails on local parklands with erosion of soil that affects water quality. An erosion control plan should be required that is prepared by a Licensed Forester, Engineer, or Erosion Control Specialist and reviewed and approved by the County.
2. Water Quality is a serious issue and there is a potential that human ash mixed in the top few inches of soil could end up in the creeks and affect downstream water users, especially if this soil is disturbed and moved by tractors skidding logs on skid trails. No setbacks from watercourses are described in the permit.
3. A community shaded fuelbreak was constructed last year along the Buzzard Lagoon Road by CAL FIRE and included State Park lands and private timberlands. The fuelbreak is a significant benefit to the local area for reducing losses of forested lands due to wildfires. Is construction and maintenance of this functioning fuelbreak along the County road on this property compatible with this project? Will there be memorial trees within 150 feet of the County Road where this project took place that would be disturbed by future maintenance of the fuelbreak including mastication or tree cutting?
4. The proposed project is not thoroughly described in the Staff Report. There is no mention of how many trees on the 84 acre property will be set aside permanently for cremation spreading, where those trees area, what types of trails or roads will be created, and where logging roads, skid trails and landings will

be located. Timber management requires periodic cutting of large trees to allow an economical harvest. In an area with selective logging more than 50% of the ground can be affected by either falling, skidding, or dragging the logs to the skid trail. Once felled a logger bucks them into 20 to 40 foot logs. The bucked logs will be laying all across the site after falling. The logger then limbs the logs and skids the log to a landing where they may require additional trimming or bucking. Logging requires big equipment that travels on steep ground to access the trees and when the logs are pulled toward the skid trail by the grapples on the machine or are winched up to the machine they are swung around with some impacts to topsoil, understory plants and some standing trees. At the conclusion of the logging operation, a bulldozer is used to dig waterbars across skid trails to disperse overland flows from rainstorms and reduce erosion. Slash is then lopped down to 30 inches and hand crews walk over nearly the entire area doing this lopping work. The site is temporarily affected and soils, forest cover and understory plants appear quite different after a logging operation. Although the proponents suggest using lighter touch logging methods, these methods are not detailed in their plan. The suggestion that shovel logging where trees are pulled out by large loaders is lighter touch is not accurate. Shovel logging still requires large equipment up to ten feet wide and weighing up to 40 tons to either pull or swing logs out to a landing. With all this disturbance how will selective logging not impact spreading sites at memorial trees?

These and other questions regarding compatibility with timber production must be answered prior to approving this use. The requirement to submit a NTMP is not adequate as it does not guarantee that future owners of the lands can harvest timber on the entire site as it does not address the potential conflict with clients who have spread their ashes. If this permit is granted on TPZ lands other companies will be expected to follow this business model, as it is quite lucrative, which will further erode timber production acres within the County. A very bad precedent will be set. The amount invested in this project by the proponent should not have a bearing on whether this project should be granted. The proponent should be required to obtain a permit to convert the property to another use and rezone it out of TPZ.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Nick Kent', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Nick Kent, Registered Professional Forester #2418

BETTER PLACE FORESTS

February 13, 2020

Melanie Shaffer Freitas, Chair
Santa Cruz County Planning Commission
c/o Elizabeth Cramblet, Planner
County of Santa Cruz Planning Department
701 Ocean Street, 4th Floor
Santa Cruz, Ca 95060

Re: Request for an Additional Continuance on Application No. 181556;
Applicant: Better Place Forests
Owner: BPF Santa Cruz Conservation Lands LLC

Dear Chairperson Freitas and Members of the Commission,

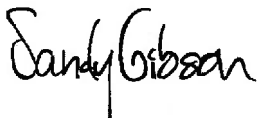
I write on behalf of BPF Santa Cruz Conservation Lands LLC ("Better Place Forests" or "BPF") in anticipation of the February 26, 2020 Planning Commission hearing. Since discussing the Appeal of the Zoning Administrator Approval of Application No. 181556 at the January 22, 2020 hearing, BPF has further discussed the project with County of Santa Cruz Planning Department staff and Cal Fire Division Chief Rich Sampson. Based on these discussions BPF seeks to request a continuance to a later hearing date to allow Rich Sampson's attendance at the hearing.

Request for an Additional Continuance so Cal Fire May Attend

One of the conditions presented at the January 22, 2020 hearing required the submission of a Nonindustrial Timber Management Plan ("NTMP"), and associated review and approval by the California Department of Forestry prior to conducting scattering of cremains in TP zoned areas. From conversations with Cal Fire Division Chief for the San Mateo - Santa Cruz Unit Rich Sampson, Chief Sampson requested that he be present to address any Planning Commissioner questions directly regarding any proposed condition that involves Cal Fire permits or approval. Unfortunately Chief Sampson is unavailable to attend the February 26 meeting. Therefore, Better Place Forests requests a continuance to the next available hearing to allow for his attendance and input on this matter. Cal Fire has an important ongoing role in forest management oversight and we think the inclusion of their voice is a sensible and reasonable request.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,



Sandy Gibson
Co-Founder and CEO
Better Place Forests

BETTER PLACE FORESTS

February 13, 2020

Melanie Shaffer Freitas, Chair
Santa Cruz County Planning Commission
c/o Elizabeth Cramblet, Planner
County of Santa Cruz Planning Department
701 Ocean Street, 4th Floor
Santa Cruz, Ca 95060

Re: Appeal of Zoning Administrator Approval of Application No. 181556;
Applicant: Better Place Forests
Owner: BPF Santa Cruz Conservation Lands LLC

Dear Chairperson Freitas and Members of the Commission,

I write on behalf of BPF Santa Cruz Conservation Lands LLC ("Better Place Forests" or "BPF") in anticipation of the February 26, 2020 Planning Commission hearing. Since discussing the Appeal of the Zoning Administrator Approval of Application No. 181556 at the January 22, 2020 hearing, BPF has further discussed the project with County of Santa Cruz Planning Department staff and Cal Fire Division Chief Rich Sampson. Based on these discussions and the comments and questions voiced at the January 22, 2020 Planning Commission hearing, BPF would like to take the opportunity to directly address some of the questions, statements and misunderstandings of our business in the sections below. We will address each major point directly.

Compatibility with Organized Camps Definition

BPF's proposed use is consistent with Santa Cruz County's definition of "Organized camps and facilities for outdoor recreational, educational, religious activities" (SCCC §13.10.372). As it relates to the organized camp requirements, Section 13.10.700 of the SCCC defines the Organized Camp category in the following way:

SCCC Section 13.10.700-C provides the following definition of an Organized Camp:

"Camp, organized" means a site having facilities for the purpose of conducting a supervised program which provides educational, spiritual, social, or recreational elements.

Furthermore, the purpose of Organized Camps are defined as:

13.10.692 Organized camps and conference centers.

(A) Purposes. The purposes of the special use regulations for organized camps and conference centers are as follows:

(1) To foster the commercial use of the scenic and recreational values in the County, while the County benefits from the preservation of scenic elements, revenue from the visitors of the camps, and assistance in fire protection.

(2) To maximize preservation of the environment and the amenities of a site by allowing flexible development procedures while controlling density, access, and impacts on neighboring properties.

BPF states and staff findings support that our proposed use fits directly into these classifications. Our use is a supervised program that provides educational, spiritual, social and recreational elements to visitors. Our use will foster both the scenic and recreational values in the County, preserve the environment, assist in fire protection, and limit development density, access and impacts on neighboring properties. To this end, we obtained a Rural Density Matrix Determination from the County as an Organized Camp, which indicates a maximum allowable number of day-use visitors of 10,950 per year and is a condition of approval in the Zoning Administrator's approval of the project.

Revised Forest Management Plan: Working Forests and Restoration Zones

A few questions at the January 22 hearing focused on Better Place Forest's intended forest management plan for the property. While Better Place Forests has not yet finalized its Forest Management Plan for the property, as it is not required in the application process, we would like to share further information on our proposed management plan, zones for prescriptive management and spreading of cremains. Better Place Forests proposes the following zones of management of the 76 acres zoned TP on the property. Further information on management practices is displayed in Enclosure A - Timber Management Map.

- **Working Forest Area with Group A Commercial Species Enhancement:** Two areas of the project site totaling 45.5 acres (approximately 60% of the TP acreage) will be managed to emphasize sustainable forest management and harvest. Due to past timber harvesting practices, portions of these areas have a high percentage of hardwoods requiring active management to promote Group A Commercial Species to enhance timberland productivity for future harvests. No memorial tree dedications or cremain spreadings will occur in this area. We would anticipate performing timber harvest on this area approximately every 15 years.
- **Restoration and Memorial Area:** One contiguous 30 acre area of the project site (approximately 40% of the TP acreage) will be managed to allow limited timber harvesting primarily for the restoration and enhancement of native ecosystem values. This area will be the only portion of the forest where memorial tree dedications and associated cremain spreadings will be allowed.

Further information regarding the proposed management will be included in Better Place Forests' Forest Management Plan. Better Place Forests supports an additional condition of approval requiring the submission of a Forest Management Plan ("FMP") for the property that has been prepared by a registered professional forester to Cal Fire within one (1) year of approval of the commercial development permit.

Compatibility with TP Zoning and Future Harvest

As discussed in the Timber Compatibility Analysis submitted with our application and accepted in the County's findings in the staff report, nothing in BPF's business practices prevents the future harvest of timber on the property. The scattering of ashes does not create a cemetery as stated by the California Cemetery and Funeral Bureau's letter reviewing the exact same business in BPF's active property in Mendocino County (Enclosure C). In the Rules and Regulations of BPF's Sales Agreement, customers are informed that BPF engages in active forest management, and if an area or trees "inhibit forest management

or jeopardize forest health”, then, “The Company reserves the right to enter upon and use of Tree Dedication and Spreading areas, along with such machinery and materials as may be reasonably necessary, in order to perform such work,” to maintain forest health.

Support Letters

Enclosure B contains a wide range of letters supporting Better Place Forests as a company and/or the upholding of the Zoning Administrator Approval of Application No. 181556. The enclosure contains the following groups of support letters:

- Letters of support from prospective customers who are Santa Cruz County residents
- Letters of support from prospective customers outside of Santa Cruz County
- Letters of support from Better Place Forests Santa Cruz Forest Steward employees
- Letters of support from customers of the Better Place Forests Point Arena forest
- Letters of support from neighbors of the Better Place Forests Point Arena forest

These letters demonstrate the beautiful and profound connection that a natural final resting place will provide residents of Santa Cruz County and demonstrate the positive impact the Better Place Forests' Point Arena property has had on both its customers and neighbors. Letters from our Forest Stewards, who are Santa Cruz County residents, also demonstrate the meaningful positive impact we have on the local economy in generating high quality long term jobs that are compatible with sustainable forestry.

Proposed Additional Conditions of Approval

To further demonstrate our commitment to the project and the importance of maintaining working lands in Santa Cruz County, and to address any concerns that we plan to remove the site from timber production or management, Better Place Forests suggests the following four additional Conditions of Approval.

Proposed Condition of Approval 1:

The applicant/property owner shall submit a Forest Management Plan (“FMP”) for the property prepared by a Registered Professional Forester to Cal Fire within one (1) year of approval of the commercial development permit.

Rationale:

- Cal Fire District Chief Rich Sampson indicated that he did not believe the County should create a precedent that specifies a specific type of harvest plan that must be submitted or approved (e.g. THP or NTMP), but he indicated there is precedent for requiring the submission of a Forest Management Plan for a commercial development permit within TP zoning. This FMP would cover BPF's plans for ongoing timber management, restoration, and periodic selective harvest on the property. This FMP would be subject to review and approval by a Cal Fire Registered Professional Forester prior to commencing scattering of cremains.

Proposed Condition of Approval 2:

The applicant/property owner will reserve 60% of the total TP Zoned area as Working Forest Area without memorial dedications as demonstrated in Enclosure A - Timber Management Map. In addition to managing the Restoration and Memorial Area which will entail harvesting of selected timber, timber stocking across the TP Zoned area will be maintained at a level in excess of the minimum stocking standards per the Forest Practice Rules.

Rationale:

- As depicted in Enclosure A - Timber Management Map, Better Place Forests does not seek to perform memorial dedications across the entirety of the site, nor at every tree within the restoration/dedication area. To address concerns shared in the January 22 Planning Commission hearing, Better Place Forests is open to limiting the total area available for memorial tree dedications and cremains scatterings.

Proposed Condition of Approval 3:

The applicant/property owner will maintain existing seasonal roads, skid trails, and landings on site as infrastructure for future timber harvest.

Rationale:

- Better Place Forests seeks to preserve all timber infrastructure to be used for ongoing restoration forestry and commercial harvest, and will also seek to establish additional skid trails and landings to facilitate the harvest across the entire site.

Proposed Condition of Approval 4:

The applicant/property owner will add an addendum to their customer sales contract used at the Buzzard Lagoon property stating:

"This property is located in an area designated by Santa Cruz County as a Timber Production Zone. Commercial forestry activity may be performed both on this property and neighboring properties. Any person who chooses a memorial in this forest recognizes the ongoing requirement of active forest management practices. Visitors to the property occasionally may experience increased traffic, noise, dust, change in the viewshed and/or other activities related to the growing and harvesting of timber or other uses permitted within the Timber Production Zone. Customers accept that BPF's property will be closed periodically for the performance of active forest management activities. During the time of active forest management, no visitors will be allowed on the property and memorial markers may be removed temporarily to facilitate forest management activities."

Rationale:

- The appellant stated concerns that customer memorials would restrict logging from the forest. This condition is added to ensure that all customers accept forestry activity is a required practice both within the Working Forest Area and Restoration and Memorial Area of the forest, as well as on neighboring properties.

Conclusion

For the reasons discussed above and in the attachments, we request the Planning Commission accepts Better Place Forests' request for a continuance to allow Cal Fire Division Chief Rich Sampson's attendance at the hearing and considers the above information when judging the compatibility of our proposed use.

Enclosures

- Enclosure A is a Timber Management Map prepared by RFP Justin Coffman with NCRM
- Enclosure B is a package of support letters for Better Place Forests
- Enclosure C is a copy of the October 2018 letter from the California Funeral Bureau confirming our activities do not constitute a cemetery in California

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sandy Gibson". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sandy Gibson
Co-Founder and CEO
Better Place Forests

CC: Justin Cofman, NCRM Inc. (by email only)
John Swift (by email only)

Zoning and Acreage Information:

Total Parcel Acres: 84

TP Acres: 76 SU Acres: 8

Timber Management Infrastructure (to remain in place and functional)

==== Existing Seasonal Road

— Existing Skid Trail

○ Existing Landing

Note: New roads, trails and landings may be proposed in the future

Consistent with the Timber Compatibility Analysis dated Oct. 12, 2018 and subsequent Addendum dated Dec. 11, 2019:

Goals for timber management within the Better Place Forests parcel would be to selectively harvest trees in small groups or individually to establish and maintain a multi-aged, balanced stand structure, promote growth on leave trees, and encourage natural regeneration. These goals could be realized by utilizing a stand sanitizing harvest where dead/dying and/or trees with mechanical damage from previous harvests would be removed leaving the best phenotype as potential seed trees; managing areas with a disproportionately high percentage of hardwoods to promote Group A, as defined in the Forest Practice Rules, Commercial Species to enhance timberland productivity; variable density thinning from below to promote the acceleration of late seral (old growth) forest conditions and fire resiliency; or other stand treatments that align with the goals of the landowners. Timber stocking across the TP zoned area will be maintained at a level in excess of the minimum stocking standards per the Forest Practice Rules.

Operations to be conducted in accordance with Health and Safety Code sections 7116, 7050.5(b) and 7052. The Cemetery and Funeral Bureau has determined that the proposed use does not constitute a cemetery.

Better Place Forests Co. Santa Cruz County APN: 106-291-16

Timber Production Zone (TP)

Special Use Zone (SU)

30 Acre Restoration and Memorial Area

45.5 Acre Working Forest Area with

Group A Commercial Species Enhancement

Structure and Parking

Shaded Fuel Break

Sections 10 & 11

T10S R01E

MDB&M

Portions of the
LOMA PRIETA
USGS 7.5' Quadrangle

40' Contour Interval

Feb. 13, 2020

0 75 150 300 450 Feet

Plotted Scale: 1:5,000

Pond

Buzzard Lagoon Road

Existing Trail

Perennial Watercourse

Intermittent Watercourse

To whom it may concern:

My name is Vicki Cassman and I am a Santa Cruz resident. I have stage 4 cancer and my mom is going to be 98 years old in 2 months. Death is imminent. There is no avoiding it. What we can avoid is a lot of the pain and struggle we leave behind after death. When my father passed away the worry in the family was "Well, where do we put his ashes?" "What is legal?" After having lived through that experience, I know it's not a struggle I want to leave behind. I don't want the burden of planning where my ashes can, and should go to fall on someone else. I want it to be my decision, and that's exactly what Better Place Forests was.

I've always gravitated towards nature and beauty, and the thought of a traditional burial never appealed to me. I don't want to take up space in a cemetery. I want to do something that is environmentally friendly, and I want to be in a place of significance. For me, this place is Santa Cruz. My two best friends, residents of Santa Cruz, have taken me into their home, supporting me through my cancer treatments. After all they have done and continue to do for me, I can't bear to leave them with a burden.

There's really not a lot I can control in life right now. But this is something I can, and something I'm proud to say I did, before dying. The power of pre-planning has been such a relief, and I can rest slightly easier knowing I'll be in the beautiful Santa Cruz Mountains with my Mom.

Thanks,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Vicki Cassman", with a long, sweeping horizontal line extending to the right.

Vicki Cassman
February 12, 2020

2/12/20

To whom it may concern,

My name is Cheryl Trowbridge and I have been a Santa Cruz County resident for over 40 years. My husband, Roy, has lived here for over 50 years, and runs a highly regarded family business. We raised our children here, we are active in our church and in our community, and we will always consider this place home.

I first heard about Better Place Forests on Facebook. We liked the idea that it was a start-up, and that it offered a natural setting alternative to cemeteries. We're proud to offer our support to this endeavor, which we believe is bringing so much good into this world.

The more we learned about Better Place Forests, the more we knew it was the right option for us. Our story is very similar to that of the CEO. Our own parents are buried in traditional cemeteries, and my husband and I rarely, if ever, go to visit them. What are supposed to be sacred and peaceful places instead feel overrun, generic, and loud. They look like a sea of tombstones bordering busy roads.

The opposite could not be more true with the forest setting in the Santa Cruz mountains. The land owned by Better Place Forests is simply stunning. Karly toured us and she was fantastic. She is knowledgeable and enthusiastic, and it was clear she loves her job. She shared lots of information about how Better Place Forests was founded (which is when we learned about our similarities to the CEO's story), and was patient with us as we re-visited our top three favorite trees, ultimately helping us find the one that felt just right for us.

Once we chose our tree, we felt a huge sense of relief. We no longer have to worry about this decision, nor leave it to burden our children. We've seen instances of loss when wishes were not made clear, and the kids didn't agree on what the parents might have wanted. We didn't want that experience for our family. Now that our kids are grown and have moved away, we want our wishes to be very clear. And we want a final resting place in Santa Cruz that they will want to come back to.... to remember us, and to remember their roots. In the most literal and figurative sense of the word, Better Place Forests offers those roots. And for that, we are grateful.

Warmly,

Cheryl + Roy Trowbridge

Cheryl & Roy Trowbridge

EXHIBIT 2E

Doc ID: a0b986b3de0d8d13270307263d857f6e93d4558b

2/12/2020

To whom it may concern,

My name is Kathy Pfeifer and I want to express my support for Better Place Forests.

I grew up in the area, and spent many hours as a child hiking around the Santa Cruz Mountains and enjoying the beauty of the redwoods. After years of living away from California, I am happy to have called Capitola home for the past 15 years.

Choosing a final resting place is a very personal decision, and my husband and I wanted our choice to reflect what we value. I have a deep personal connection to the redwoods: I enjoy hiking in the forest, and I get a lot of sustenance from that.

My husband and I found out about Better Place Forests through an article in the newspaper. We booked our forest tour and found our tree. It's a redwood tree surrounded by small saplings, and we saw something beautiful in that metaphor.

Better Place Forests means so much to us because it gives us a new way to connect and convene with nature. I support Better Place Forests and the value it brings to families like mine in the Santa Cruz region.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'K. Pfeifer', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Kathy Pfeifer

2/12/2020

To whom it may concern,

My name is Fran Stancavage and I am writing to express my support for Better Place Forests.

I have lived in Santa Cruz since 1982, and feel deeply connected to the place I've called home for 38 years.

When it comes to end of life plans, I always knew that I wanted to be cremated, but I didn't know what I wanted to do with my remains. When I saw a piece of mail from Better Place Forests, I realized there is a unique way to conserve the Santa Cruz forests that I love.

When I found my tree, I was not just thinking about myself, but of my niece. My niece lives in the Los Angeles area, and is the only family I have left. I didn't want to leave the burden of making end of life arrangements on her, so I thought Better Place Forests was a great opportunity for me to take care of plans for myself. I also liked that I could extend a place at my tree to my niece, so she has the option of joining me in the forest one day.

So many people have ashes of someone they love sitting in a closet. I have first-hand experience with the ashes of family members who made no plan. I want to do what they would've wanted but there just isn't a clear plan. It was important to me to make sure that didn't happen to me, and I found it empowering to make my own decisions about what I want my resting place to look like.

The forest is a place of beauty and calm for me. Knowing that Better Place Forests not only protects its forests, but also supports charitable reforestation gives me peace of mind.

In short, it's empowered me to choose a resting place that reflects what I value, and for that reason they have my support.

Sincerely,

Fran Stancavage

Fran Stancavage

EXHIBIT 2E

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To whom it may concern,

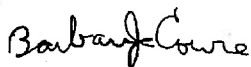
My name is Barbara Cowie and I am a proud resident of Boulder Creek. I taught in the San Lorenzo Valley Unified School District from 1981 to 2017 and have owned my home in Boulder Creek since 1986. What makes the larger Santa Cruz area feel like home is the strong relationship I had with my parents, and their great affinity for this area. Whenever out of town guests would come and visit us growing up, my mom would take them to Henry Cowell State Park or Big Basin State Park, to see the Redwoods. She absolutely loved the mountains, whether out for a hike or a simple picnic.

My mother passed away 2 years ago, and I didn't know what to do with her ashes. We spread my dad's ashes at sea, but I knew that wasn't what she would have wanted. Better Place Forests caught my eye when I got a piece of direct mail. Interested, I went online to do research and learn more. What immediately stood out to me was that it was local. This is the place my family has called home for generations; the place my mom would share with our closest friends and family who visited. It only felt right that this would be the place they'd get to come back to remember her. Together with my siblings, we are financing a tree for my mom in the Santa Cruz forest, and we are so happy knowing she'll be close by, easy to visit, and in a place she loved.

I also look forward to joining her at her tree one day. I'm definitely at the point in my life where I need to start thinking about what I am going to do with my remains, but up until now, I just figured I would have someone scatter my ashes "around". No designated place. No designated plan. I'm glad to know that I've now found a place that reflects who I am. Being local to this area, the forest in Santa Cruz truly appeals to me because I've spent so many years of my life teaching and living here. I value the opportunity to have my ashes spread here as well.

Lastly, I'd just like to comment on the environmental mission of Better Place Forests. They are committed to protecting this piece of land forever. Protecting my home. And they also work to reforest fire affected areas. This is critical in a time when we've already seen so much loss. I am glad that through the loss I've experienced in my life, I can actually help rebuild something new, and something beautiful.

All my best,



Barbara Cowie

Feb 12, 2020

EXHIBIT 2E

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February 12, 2020

Hello all,

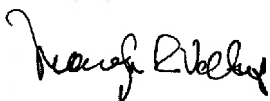
My name is Marilyn Veltrop. I've been a Santa Cruz county resident for the last 26 years. My husband Bill Veltrop has lived here for 35 years, and our son Tad also resides in the area. This is the place we call home, and I can't imagine calling anywhere else home, even after we pass.

We first heard about Better Place Forests from a friend. They visited the forest before we did, and immediately thought of us. Upon their recommendation, we looked up Better Place Forests online and began to pursue this as our choice for a final resting place. It simply *felt right*. We'd been sitting on the question of what to do with our ashes and where we wanted our remains to be for quite some time, and this was the solution that really resonated with us.

The decision came naturally. From the online tour to the in-person forest visit, the staff was very friendly and generous with their time. Once in the forest, our guide, Steve, shared his knowledge about the trees and the environment, and was wonderfully patient. Being in the forest was such a positive experience for me and my family, and we left feeling relieved, knowing the question of what to do with our remains would no longer be a concern. Our son was happy to know he'd have this place to come back to and visit us.

I'm so glad we were made aware of Better Place Forests through our network of friends—a testament to the growing community and strong number of advocates in the Santa Cruz region. It is evident these people care deeply about their work, this place, the environment, and the impact they can have on people's lives like our own.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Marilyn Veltrop". The script is cursive and fluid, with the first name being more prominent.

Marilyn Veltrop

EXHIBIT 2E

2/12/20

To whom it may concern,

My name is Kathleen O'Hara, and I am writing to express my support for Better Place Forests, a company that has supported me during the difficult decision of choosing a final resting place.

When thinking about a final resting place, I had a picture in my mind about what I wanted. Better Place Forests was right for me because of it's peaceful, remote location.

If you have ever gone through the process of choosing a resting place for yourself or someone you love, you know what a difficult and personal decision it is. You want to honor a life well-lived. Better Place Forests is a great option, and I'm glad that I found it. I think it should be among the options that people can choose from, so they too can find a peaceful place.

Sincerely,

Kathleen O'Hara

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Kathleen O'Hara', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

EXHIBIT 2E

Doc ID: 3e8ca05aeed311083188fe0127d50baa7bd5c881

February 11, 2020

Hello all,

My name is Angel Jones, and I'm writing to share the story of my family. My mother was diagnosed with cancer and she passed away in late 2018. 6 months after she passed, my sister and I visited the Better Place Forests Santa Cruz location to pick a tree for my mom.

This letter is really difficult for me to write, because my sister and I were both so close to our mom. But I feel it's important to share my story, because I'm just really thankful that God brought Better Place Forests into our lives.

Before my mom passed away, we lived together in the Santa Cruz Mountains. I've lived in the area my entire life, and my mom and I shared as much love for each other, as we do the area. Even before she was diagnosed with cancer, she used to tell us that when she passed away she wanted her ashes to be spread among the trees and hills of the region. This was her home, and I'm absolutely certain she didn't want to be anywhere else.

After my mom passed, my sister and I took it upon ourselves to find a final resting place for her that would honor her wishes. This commitment to what she wanted, and how she wanted to be remembered, is what led us to Better Place Forests.

I can sum up our visit to the Santa Cruz Forest in one word: magical. I remember Alicia touring us around the forest, walking by a pond and learning about the different tree species. When it was time to pick a tree, the decision was easy. In my mom's final days, she would spend a lot of time sitting in a chair in the living room. My sister and I would always catch her leaning over, and have to tell her to sit up, because we were afraid she was going to tweak her neck. When we were in the forest, we immediately knew which tree was right for her. It was a Redwood that was leaning, just like her.

It has been really hard to accept that my mom is gone, but it brings peace to my heart knowing my mom is exactly where she always wanted to be. Better Place Forests has afforded my sister and I great emotional relief, and I'm comforted knowing that one day, I will get to join her too.

Thank you for your time,

Angel

2/12/20

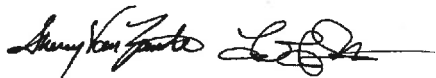
To whom it may concern,

We are Sherry and Loyd Van Zante, and we're customers of Better Place Forests. We live in Watsonville.

When we joined the Better Place Forests customer family, their team asked for feedback about our overall experience. We rated it a "10/10" and gave the following feedback: "I think you are a class act, and every contact person has been organized and kind."

Better Place Forests has supported our family every step along the way, and we are now voicing our support for them. Being able to stay in Santa Cruz County, our home, for our final resting place means the world to us, and we are glad that Better Place Forests made that possible.

Sincerely,

Handwritten signatures of Sherry and Loyd Van Zante in black ink.

Sherry and Loyd Van Zante

Better Place Forest

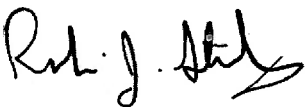
Over the 29 years we've been together, we've had family members and friends come and go. So often the going is in a flurry no matter how much we've prepared. The turmoil left behind muddies the letting go.

It's always an emotional time with way too many details to handle and little or no time to grieve and say goodbye.

The details and decisions about burial or cremation get mixed up with money, location final wishes and remembrance. As we prepare for yet another season of our lives we've begun thinking longer term. Thinking about our lasting legacy our impact on our environment and our place in the world.

One of the main motivations for our choosing Better Place Forest for our final resting place is to intentionally allow for this time of transition and turmoil and create a lasting legacy where we are leaving a lighter and higher footprint on our environment and a place to return and connect that feeds the spirit of connection, emotional healing and family peace. We are choosing connection with our natural world rather than separation and a place of peace and communion for our human and animal companionship. We are also choosing to protect our forest space.

In Connection,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Rob. J. Stiles" or similar, written in a cursive style.

Char and Robin

February 12, 2020

Hello all,

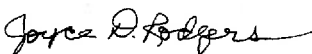
My name is Joyce Rodgers and I live with my husband in Soquel. We call Soquel home along with our daughter Aurore and beautiful granddaughter Elena (who is now 8 years old). This last detail is important, because Elena is a big part of our story, especially when it comes to Better Place Forests.

I first read about Better Place Forests in a local newspaper. The idea immediately resonated with me because my husband, who is 10 years older than I am, has always expressed interest in being cremated and having his ashes scattered around the Sierras. While a nice idea, I've always wanted something a little closer to home. That way, if he leaves this earth before me, I know I have a place to go and commune with him. It seemed to me as if having our ashes scattered at the base of a tree in the Santa Cruz Mountains could meet both of our wishes. Plus, I really liked the way the article described the process. Ashes are mixed with nutrients which are good for the soil, and not harmful.

When we decided to go visit the forest, we brought our granddaughter Elena with us. My husband and I are very open people, and don't like hiding anything. We believe it is good to include children in conversations surrounding death, because it happens to everyone. It is all part of the circle of life. Plus, Elena was instrumental in helping us pick our tree. As we were walking around the forest we asked her to imagine bringing a book, sitting under a tree, and reading while spending time with us. She welcomed the process, expressing different features of trees she liked, and which ones she would want to come visit.

Knowing Elena, our daughter, son, and other family members will come and visit makes us feel good. When the weather warms up, we plan to visit and have a picnic at our tree. It's happy moments like this that help people realize death doesn't have to be a subject to avoid, or something to be afraid of. Better Place Forests helped us teach that to our granddaughter. I know she'll always remember the day she came to the forest with us to pick out our tree, and that means everything to me.

Thank you for reading my story,



Joyce Rodgers
02/12/2020

EXHIBIT 2E

Doc ID: bba722d45353c99f56fd946f8e2522f565bc2a90

2/12/20

Dear all,

My name is Susan Whiting and I've been a member of the Santa Cruz community since 2012. I'm proud to call this place home, along with my husband and 3 sons. These mountains, and the surrounding Redwoods, truly are my happy place.

There are a lot of things that make me proud to call Santa Cruz home, and one of the most recent additions to that list is Better Place Forests. I have happily elected to have my ashes spread underneath a Redwood tree in the Santa Cruz Mountains, made possible by this company. Before they came into my life this concept of end-of-life planning had been on my mind, but I hadn't gotten around to it. It became more urgent for a variety of reasons. One, I had cancer for 3 years which really put things into perspective. And two, I recently witnessed a family have to go through an intense decision making process after one of my friends passed. Seeing that experience, I knew I didn't want that for my family. I wanted things to be settled. I wanted the process to be as smooth as possible for my kids. And most importantly I wanted them to be able to visit me in a happy environment.

When I learned about Better Place Forests, I brought the idea to my family because I wanted them to be on board too. I want to be able to go to the forest with my sons and have them know that this truly is a family tree and they are welcome to create more and more rings around it. When I asked one of my son's what he thought, he said he much preferred the image of walking through a forest than a traditional cemetery. It's more natural. It's more beautiful. And I feel good knowing my ashes will go to nourish the earth, rather than overcrowd another cemetery.

I'm truly grateful for the team of warm, polite, and caring people that have brought this vision to life and into my life.

Warm regards,

Susan Whiting

Susan Whiting

February 12, 2020

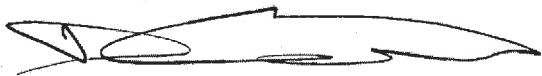
Dear Better Place Forests,

Sending a note to thank you for your program. As we prepared for our final resting place we researched the Neptune Society and others because we did not want a "traditional" funeral and burial. We really do feel it's an unnecessary tradition, not to mention taking up land and resources.

When I ran across BPF it immediately felt right. We have always loved redwoods, the forest, and the Pacific Ocean. Having the chance to "rest" in the forest by our personally selected tree near the ocean in Monterey Bay is perfect, peaceful, and a blessing. And the added bonus of knowing we helped plant 100's more trees makes us smile every time we think about it.

We found your overall program well thought out, respectful, comfortable. When we finished our visit, we found ourselves so relaxed by the experience it was a burden lifted. Thank you so much for what you do.

God bless,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be a stylized representation of the names Darrell and Andi Grant.

Darrell and Andi Grant
Oak Hills (Prunedale), California

EXHIBIT 2E

My name is Karly Maurer and I am a resident of Santa Cruz County at 400 Tola Ranch Road in Soquel, CA 95073. I have lived at this residence for the last six months and previous to that I lived in Live Oak for six months.

My fiance and I moved from Santa Rosa, CA to Santa Cruz for my current position as a Forest Steward at Better Place Forests. My partner is a chef at a wedding venue in Santa Cruz and we love the lives we have established here. In as little as a year, we have made some very valuable friendships with those who live and work in Santa Cruz, and truly, it's the first place that has felt like home.

Working for Better Place Forests is proving to be the most rewarding job I have ever had. I get to walk with people around the forest who are pre-planning for their end of life, grieving loved ones, or who are terminally ill. One might think it a morbid or somber kind of job, but actually, it is quite joyous and profound. It is humbling to witness someone connect with the land and their tree knowing that this is the place where they will return to the earth. After touring the forest, I often hear people say things like, 'this wasn't so hard,' 'this was actually fun;' but mostly, people express tremendous gratitude for having Better Place Forests as an option in their end of life choices.

Lastly, Better Place Forests is comprised of good people who are of sound mind and with a moral compass. They are compassionate, motivated, kind, and devoted to ensuring the best experience for those coming to visit the forest. I am so grateful to be employed by Better Place Forests and to have the opportunity to connect with other people in such a meaningful way.

All my best,

Karly Maurer
Forest Steward
Better Place Forests - Santa Cruz

2/12/20

Hello,

My name is Jacob Diamond and I'm taking time to write to you today to express my gratitude and support for Better Place Forests. As a California native, I spent a lot of time camping in Memorial County Park and Portola State Park -- and have always had a deep affinity for the Santa Cruz mountains and the redwoods.

I first heard about Better Place Forests on Facebook, and was immediately intrigued. I knew I wanted my husband and son to scatter my ashes in a forest one day, but I had never considered the logistics much beyond that.

When I learned that I would be able to choose my own tree in a Better Place Forest, I was sold. I've never liked the idea of being stuck in the ground or buried, especially after passing. I like the idea of being able to return to nature, and Better Place Forests affords me this opportunity at a tree I get to call my own. Also this idea of being with nature is important not only for me, and my peace of mind, but also for my family. When I told my husband and son of my wishes, they were comforted knowing they would always have a natural and beautiful place to come and remember me.

Aside from the location, one of my favorite things about Better Place Forests is the staff. Picking your forever tree is no easy task, and Karly was so patient. We walked around the forest for three full hours as I got a sense of the different trees and which ones spoke to me. Planning for end-of-life can be daunting, but I am genuinely grateful for the experience I've had with Better Place Forests. I hope future individuals and their families are afforded the same opportunity, to be guided by the staff and Forest Stewards who truly care for the work they are doing and the lives they are impacting. Thank you so much for your time.

Best,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JD' or 'Jacob Diamond', written in a cursive style.

Jacob Diamond

What BPF in Santa Cruz Means to Me

My name is Tad Davies, a Better Place Forests steward working in Santa Cruz, and a longtime resident. I'd like to explain why this job means the world to me, and why it matters to so many people I interact with in our community.

I've lived in the Santa Cruz Mountains since March of 2001, and it would be impossible to overstate how lucky I feel to call this land and community home. I love this town—its people, its nature, and, critically ... most critically, its uncanny knack for surfing the leading edge of paradigm-shifting social and cultural trends. And to that point, I care deeply.

Santa Cruz is so much more than just an incredibly beautiful place to live. It has a uniquely indomitable sense of self, a rare pride worn on the shirts, hats, and bumpers of the locals, a pride earned by knowing ourselves, and somehow, maybe by the grace and magic of the bay, Santa Cruz always seems to intuit the way the wind is blowing.

Three years ago tomorrow, I lost my dear father Paul Davies. Two of the last three months of his life he spent in a senior care facility because he broke his back falling in the bathroom. When visiting him those last few months, I brought my guitar to the facility and played for him pretty much all day. My guitar playing, and the none-too-glorious timbre of my refrain, attracted the residents to my father's door where they would stand with their walkers or sit in their wheelchairs, eager for anything other than the 24-hour news cycle. Soon they asked me to play in the dining hall and the physical therapy room—it was great.

After my father passed I promised myself I would continue that practice by finding a senior care facility in Santa Cruz where I could volunteer to play music. For over two-years, I've been playing guitar and singing every Thursday night for local elders at Sunshine Villa Senior Care facility up on Beach Hill. And I swear I get more out of it than they do. This began for me, a series of realizations around how I'd like to develop my relationship with mortality, so that I could support others in conversation and service around this common threshold, and ultimately learn for myself, how I can face my own journey from life unto death with as much peace, dignity, and grace as possible.

So it was with this aim in mind, that when I heard about Better Place Forests, I applied for the position of Forest Steward in the newly developing Santa Cruz forest, with an inner certainty that this job was right for me, and I for it.

My experience as a Better Place Forests steward has since been all, and more, than I hoped it would be. I have been able to share my love of the fauna and flora of the Santa Cruz Mountains. I have embarked upon a thorough education on the ins-and-outs, history, and evolution of the end-of-life industry in the United States and abroad. I have become aware of the substantial environmental impacts, and the implications of how we develop new paradigms in this arena, and witnessed how culture, tradition, and ceremony can mingle to buoy us through the rough emotional seas incumbent to death, love, and loss. But, most importantly, I've had the privilege of holding space and conversation with the hundreds of customers who have journeyed to the forest to seek a more beautiful resolution to their story.

I have heard it so many times: "I just don't connect with the idea of being put in the ground at a cemetery, or on a shelf in a columbarium, and when I saw what you guys are offering, I knew it was what I was looking for." Better Place Forests has hosted all kinds of people, from myriad backgrounds, facing a variety of considerations. Some are recently grieving. Some are facing an imminent death, their own or a loved one's. Others are pre-planning well in advance, and some have been holding the ashes of a loved one for many years and desire a satisfying resolution which has heretofore eluded them.

It really is a special thing to host people in this intrinsically intimate context. My job is to meet them where they are at in their process. To intuit and ask how I can be of service to them in this often tender and contemplative time. That is not to say that the majority of visitors are in a fragile or grieving state. People have so many different ways of facing

this subject, but what most of them have in common, is the notion that being gently placed in the earth of a vital ecosystem, nestled within the steady rhythm of its cycles, under the song of birds and rustling foliage, feels like a good, environmentally responsible end.

Of course, not all of the people who come visit our forest are sure that this is the right option for them. And it is certainly not my job to convince them of that. I am there to answer any and all of their questions, and show them around the forest. What has been incredible for me to observe, is how the forest works its own magic upon the demeanor and perspective of its visitors.

It can be a very powerful thing to walk a forest, observing the different trees and contours of the land, with the intention of choosing a particular spot, and a particular tree, where one day the very minerals of our body, or the body of a parent, or a spouse, or child, will be memorialized and literally consumed by the tree of their choice. To witness the moment when that sinks in is personally transformative, and hardly less than sacred, no matter what one believes. The never ending cycle of life is tangible under these conditions, and I have seen people weep for the realization.

And in this way we are empowered. We are empowered to write a beautiful end to our story, and the stories of our loved ones. By this, some relief and peace is achieved. This is not just what I have witnessed, it is what I, and the other Forest Stewards I work with have been told over and over again by the families who come to the forest.

This is a good thing we are doing. This is something people need. In fact, this is something that the world needs on a large scale. 80% of Americans are choosing cremation, while one-out-of-five families are holding ashes that they don't know what to do with. Often these ashes are tucked away in a closet and only reckoned with upon a move. And I can tell you, from the voice of our customers, through me, to you, that this is not a healthy way to contend with grief.

It is time to establish a broadly available new option, a new tradition that does not assault the land, but nurtures it. And to do so in a way that helps us heal. To face our common, ubiquitously shared experience of death with ceremony and grace. And that is what Better Place Forests means to us, and the thousands of families who have already said yes, this is right for us.

Like I said earlier, one of the many reasons I love this community, is that Santa Cruz has an uncanny knack for surfing the leading edge of social innovation. And I think the reason for that is, by the grace of our connection to the land and ocean, we are soulful livers. We do what feels right to do, and we move our efforts and tastes in harmony with what is needed in each new moment, and each new era. And what Better Place Forests is doing, is exactly that.

Thank you.

My name is Karly Maurer and I am a resident of Santa Cruz County at 400 Tola Ranch Road in Soquel, CA 95073. I have lived at this residence for the last six months and previous to that I lived in Live Oak for six months.

My fiancé and I moved from Santa Rosa, CA to Santa Cruz for my current position as a Forest Steward at Better Place Forests. My partner is a chef at a wedding venue in Santa Cruz and we love the lives we have established here. In as little as a year, we have made some very valuable friendships with those who live and work in Santa Cruz, and truly, it's the first place that has felt like home.

Working for Better Place Forests is proving to be the most rewarding job I have ever had. I get to walk with people around the forest who are pre-planning for their end of life, grieving loved ones, or who are terminally ill. One might think it a morbid or somber kind of job, but actually, it is quite joyous and profound. It is humbling to witness someone connect with the land and their tree knowing that this is the place where they will return to the earth. After touring the forest, I often hear people say things like, 'this wasn't so hard,' 'this was actually fun,' but mostly, people express tremendous gratitude for having Better Place Forests as an option in their end of life choices.

Lastly, Better Place Forests is comprised of good people who are of sound mind and with a moral compass. They are compassionate, motivated, kind, and devoted to ensuring the best experience for those coming to visit the forest. I am so grateful to be employed by Better Place Forests and to have the opportunity to connect with other people in such a meaningful way.

All my best,

Karly Maurer
Forest Steward
Better Place Forests - Santa Cruz

Date: 02.12.2020

To Whom it May Concern:

My name is Joe Sehee and I am the founder of the Green Burial Council; an independent, nonprofit organisation dedicated to making deathcare more 'meaningful, simple and sustainable.' The GBC has been furthering this mission through public education, standard-setting and advocacy.

Because of my work in this field over the past two decades, I have had the unique opportunity to evaluate numerous ideas seeking to play a part in what has become a legitimate environmental, social and consumer movement. Of all the concepts I've come across aiming to transform the resource/energy-intensive *American way of death*, none may hold more promise than what is being evolved by the folks at Better Place Forests.

In 2005, at the national convening of the Land Trust Alliance, I coined the term *conservation burial*. My original vision was that new thinking about end-of-life rituals/interment might one day become a vehicle for facilitating ecological restoration and conservation on a landscape level. While that day has yet to come, projects like the one being proposed in Santa Cruz make me hopeful that it may not be too far off. Preserving small swaths of land might reasonably be regarded as *microconservation*, but in this instance, Better Place Forests is doing much more.

By incorporating multiple uses on this proposed site, the company will be making it economically viable to help restore and permanently steward a natural area, in addition to accommodating sustainable forestry. More significantly, Better Place Forests will be encouraging people of almost every walk of life to consider not only their last act, but the legacy they wish to leave behind. And it is my belief that environmental legacy planning will soon emerge as one of our most powerful forms of climate action.

If future generations have any chance of survival in the long term – perhaps even mid-term – projects like the one you are considering must be fully supported. I hope you feel the same.

Regards,

Joe Sehee
Founder, Green Burial Council
Senior Fellow, Environmental Leadership Program



EXHIBIT 2E

Doc ID: 9186fab568286f1c45ed75dfd52428f4ad83a325

To those interested in Better Place Forests,

My wife and I wish to share our thoughts and reasons for choosing to inter our remains at the Better Place Forests location in Point Arena, CA. In doing so we hope to further an understanding in something that we feel to be an important offering for like-minded individuals.

Bill:

Being in nature has always been a sacred experience for me. Forest, mountains, desert or shoreline are all places of peace for me and have been for my entire life. I never seriously entertained being interred in a conventional cemetery—I expected to have my ashes scattered in the ocean as I did with my parents.

However, I have made the choice to have my ashes scattered under a tree in the Better Place Forest in Point Arena for several reasons. Foremost for me, it was 'in nature' and a protected environment. I liked that we could choose the specific tree where we'd be scattered and that it would be marked. It brought great peace of mind to us both knowing that we'd end up in the same spot and that it would be our spot and ours solely. As we live not far from Point Arena, when we pass we will still be close to 'home'. It was a warm feeling but hardly a surprise when the tree that we chose presented itself, and that decision was an easy one.

Finally, I am deeply appreciative of this company's stewardship of the environment and that our purchase of rights to our resting place furthers the growth of forests elsewhere. Our death is thereby begetting life and supporting this planet in a most direct way.

Jo:

While I have always revered nature I hadn't considered being scattered there until just recently. Choosing a final resting place was difficult: I wanted my parents and I to be buried near each other, but I especially wanted to be near my husband. I considered being scattered in the ocean but felt conflicted doing so with my parents' remains: they had not specified their burial wishes but I believed that they desired a more conventional interment with a memorial marker.

We moved recently to the Mendocino coast where I daily experience the profound beauty of the forest and ocean, as well as the alarming impacts of climate change. The more I've learned about the life cycle of forests, the more awe-inspiring and—for me—sacred, I've found it to be. Interestingly, just as I resolved to be scattered under a tree, my husband found an ad for Better Place Forests, so we went immediately to visit the Point Arena location. The staff we have spoken with at every step have been wonderful—sincere, sensitive, committed. The forest is beautiful—wild and private yet accessible. Scattering our ashes under a tree with a small, modest marker satisfies my desire to return to nature while bearing witness to our earthly existences. So that I can always be close to my parents we have purchased scattering rights for them at another tree nearby.

Finally, as my husband said, key to my decision is the company's commitment to stewardship of the environment. Memorializing my life and those of my loved ones would mean little in a lifeless world.

We hope that our story helps others to understand our appreciation and support of Better Place Forests' mission.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Bill and Jo Nieser". The ink is dark and the signature is fluid, with the first names being more prominent than the last name.

Bill and Jo Nieser

To whom it may concern,

My name is Jake Simon and I am the Head Arborist for Better Place Forests. I live on Penasquitas Dr in Aptos and I have lived and worked in Santa Cruz county for 4 years.

I have a B.S in Forestry from NAU and am a ISA Certified Arborist. I have been working in the tree industry for the last decade. Prior to coming on with BPF I was a General Foreman for Davey Tree managing crews performing utility vegetation management under contract with PG&E. Prior to that I was a Consulting Utility Forester in the same field.

For BPF, I am responsible for the active management of all of our forestry work. The specifics of that work varies depending on forest type and geographic region but the overarching goal is to return forests to an old growth state while reducing the risk of fire.

In the Santa Cruz forest, that has meant an intensive combination of fuels reduction, thinning and invasive species removal. We're committed to responsible forestry management and practices to decrease fire risk to the area so one of the first (and ongoing) projects we initiated was one of thinning and brush removal. This involves the cutting of hundreds of overtopped and suppressed redwoods, tan oaks and madrones. This is all done to ensure the health of the forest and the safety of the community.

We're also committed to providing jobs for the local Santa Cruz community. While we have made significant progress, there is still much more work to be done. To assist in these goals, we have hired a large amount of local labor. Approximately 75 Santa Cruz tree professionals have been on site contributing to the effort.

While BPF does protect trees in certain areas, these must be easily accessible to customers of often limited mobility. There would still be many trees potentially available for commercial harvesting in the future.

As someone who has been in the forestry field for the last 15 years, I would respectfully disagree with the premise that BPF does not actively manage timber in their forests. Our forest management is scientifically validated and is going to contribute significantly to our community's economy and fire safety.

Best regards,
Jake Simon
Head Arborist
ISA Certified WE-10675A

2/12/20

To Whom It May Concern,

My name is Spencer Rice and I am 67 years old and currently residing in Ann Arbor, Michigan. On Jan 29, 2019 my Bride, Sheila, passed away after a lengthy battle with cancer. In researching how to properly honor her and her wishes for an environmentally friendly burial we (myself, my daughter and her husband) came across Better Place Forests. After she passed away the three of us took a 'scouting' trip to the Point Arena Forest site and we became 1000% convinced that we had found the right place for her new home. The staff at Better Place Forest were professional and courteous while concurrently being emphatic, respectful and very knowledgeable on the details. In short we nearly instantly felt 'at home' and part of the family.

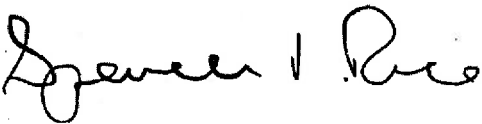
So I am writing this to you as a very enthusiastic supporter and customer of the Better Place Forest Family. They helped us every step of the way as we planned the ceremony to honor Sheila's life and more importantly celebrate her 'New Beginning' in the forest. In all of her actions in our life's journey together, Sheila demonstrated to me and everyone she met that she was a "Free Spirit". The Better Place Forest concept allows her to really be a "Free Spirit" in her new home and as I told her, before she passed away, that when I finally join her at the tree we will continue to 'reach for the stars'. The ceremony we had at the Point Arena forest accomplished all that we requested and more. When we were done with the services the team from Better Place expertly and quietly melted into the background so the three of us could have some private moments with Sheila at her new home.

I have made three trips back to the Point Arena forest to sit with Sheila at her tree and let my mind unwind. The team has continued to be very helpful with my visits while at the same time being respectful of my time to be with My Bride. My respect for their talents and for them as individuals has done nothing but grow.

I enthusiastically support this company and their excellent staff in their growth. Their idea and expertise provides a supreme level of comfort and compassion to families in the most stressful time a family can have. It also provides an avenue for the ultimate 'pay it forward' as the spreading of the ashes at a tree helps the tree grow, which in turn helps the forest thrive, which in turn helps our planet stay healthy.

Please feel free to contact me on my mobile at 678-548-8913 should you need any further information.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Spencer V. Rice". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name being the most prominent.

Spencer V. Rice

EXHIBIT 2E

Alicia Heber
621 Riverview Drive
Capitola, CA
95010

My name is Alicia Heber and I'm a Santa Cruz County resident. My husband works for the City of Santa Cruz, our kids are in the Soquel School District and I am employed by Better Place Forests as the Managing Steward.

As a forest steward, I get to work in one of the most rewarding and meaningful roles I could imagine for myself. It is an honor and a privilege to get to know our customers. I share intimate moments with our guests as we discuss life, love, loss and the beauty of our coastal redwood forest.

For many, these redwoods help them connect to memories from their childhood and those they love. Our customers are not only selecting their final resting place, they also have the opportunity to be micro-philanthropists. For each tree that is chosen by our customers, Better Place Forests plants between 25 -1600 trees in partnership with the non-profit, One Tree Planted, in fire and drought affected areas of California. Many customers have spoken to this benefit and love the idea that even in death, they can have a positive ripple effect throughout our state.

The real magic is how I see people connect with the trees. In our society, it is easy for one to lose their sense of connection to the natural world. No matter what walk of life, religion or background, the beauty of mother nature is universal. When I've walked under the trees with our customers, it's common to see them connect with their own sense of God. For many when they find their tree, they experience a spiritual moment. One where they are overwhelmed with gratitude and feel connected to nature and those they have loved. It's an incredibly peaceful, healing and even joyous moment.

Better Place Forests deeply cares for the land and the people who choose a more beautiful way to be remembered. The Santa Cruz community will greatly benefit from this environmentally sound approach that helps more people come to love and appreciate the Santa Cruz mountains and provide economic opportunity for me, my family and my team to thrive within the Santa Cruz community.

Best regards,

Alicia Heber
Managing Forest Steward - Santa Cruz
Better Place Forests



Alicia L. Danforth, PhD
Licensed Clinical Psychologist
CA Lic. PSY27822

February 12, 2020

To whom it may concern,

My name is Alicia Danforth. I 'm a customer of Better Place Forests, and I'm writing to you to express my support for this company.

When I joined the Better Place Forests customer family, their team asked for feedback about my overall experience. I gave it a 10 out of 10 - a number that speaks for itself. My experience with Better Place Forests has been positive at each step in the process, and I have encouraged family members to consider this option, as well,

Better Place Forests has provided detailed information and excellent customer support to guide me comfortably through their process. As resident of the Santa Cruz Mountains, I want to express my support for them: they offer a service that has brought me considerable peace of mind, and they have provided me with an option that works well with my values and budget.

Sincerely,

Alicia Danforth

16575-B Los Gatos-Almaden Road, Los Gatos, CA
(408) 634-9080
alicia@aliciadanforth.com

EXHIBIT 2E

2/12/20

To whom it may concern,

I'm Catherine Cepuder. I'm writing in support of Better Place Forests, a company that has supported me in choosing a final resting place.

Reflecting on my experience of visiting Better Place Forests, I wrote to them saying when my partner and I turned down their driveway: "we realized then we had come upon something pretty special."

I chose Better Place Forests knowing that I wanted to return to the earth naturally, which is a deeply personal choice. I wanted an environmentally conscious resting place.

As a resident of Santa Cruz county, being a part of Better Place Forests Santa Cruz is a new, unique way for me to continue to be a part of my community.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Catherine Cepuder". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Catherine" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Cepuder".

Catherine Cepuder

EXHIBIT 2E

To Whom It May Concern:

My name is Ross Snow, and I'm a customer of Better Place Forests. I'd like to speak in support of Better Place Forests and their mission. A little bit about me: I've always considered myself close to my family, and a longtime Bay Area resident. I currently have ties to San Francisco and family in Santa Cruz.

I chose to work with Better Place Forests for a few reasons. First, the forest steward team that helped me was incredibly kind, personable and thoughtful. I looked at their forests in Point Arena and Santa Cruz, and both times, everyone was accommodating. Not to mention that it's a much more affordable option than a traditional burial would have been. Second, I wanted to stay close to my family even at the end of life, and I wanted my resting place to speak to who I am as a person. Knowing how much I love my family, I knew that I wanted to be close to my twin sister, who has since passed away from cancer and has always loved living in the Santa Cruz mountains. She loved the idea of my being with a tree.

Finally, as someone who has always had a passion for spiritual science and nature, it brings me reassurance to know I will be with my Bay Laurel tree — with the earth, and nurturing it. It's not only a symbol of love to be close to my family, but the fact that I will be helping conservation efforts makes me feel at peace with the legacy I'm leaving.

Better Place Forests has supported me and I'm happy to support them, too. Thank you for hearing my story and for honoring my sister's memory.

Sincerely,
Ross Snow

2/12/20

To whom it may concern,

My name is Lyn Reed, and writing to you as a customer of Better Place Forests. I want to express my support, and tell you a little bit about my experience with this company.

Obviously the concept behind Better Place Forests is a new one, and I find it inspiring. When it comes to choosing a final resting place, it is both a personal decision, as well as one that affects the whole family. I'm glad that Better Place Forests exists and allows me to give the gift of a beautiful forest to the next generation.

Better Place Forests has supported my family throughout this process. As a resident of Santa Cruz county, I want to express my support for them: they offer a service and setting that is a breath of fresh air. We are VERY happy to be part of this new and much needed alternative - to both preserve a local forest and have a place where our children and grandchildren can come feel the presence of their ancestors, and maybe even join us when their time comes!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lyn Reed". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Lyn" and last name "Reed" clearly distinguishable.

Lyn Reed

EXHIBIT 2E

Doc ID: ff9216177ff8d9008db3cf312e46cafe7f5edc49

August 1, 2019

Hi Terri & Team,

From the start, my experience with Jamie and the crew at Better Place Forests has been nothing but positive. They've gone out of their way to keep we rural neighbors informed of their plans and progress, sensitive to and responsive to our concerns regarding parking and traffic of both construction crews and service attendees, jumped right into our road maintenance association meetings (a feat not for the faint of heart) and did more than their part for the fund. BPF has donated toward some of our community fund-raising activities such as our local 5K Waves and Whales run for local education partners.

Regards,

Hal

Hal Ferguson
Off-Brush Road
Point Arena, Ca 95468

February 12, 2020

Allison Arieff
2 Roanoke Street
San Francisco, CA 94131

To whom it may concern:

I am pleased to write a letter of support for the Better Place Forests. It's a new alternative to a traditional cemetery: a forest. They are providing not just a more beautiful end-of-life experience but a conservation effort – and for both I applaud them.

Better Place Forests maintains a precious natural resource while also providing a far more humane (and less costly) alternative to conventional cemeteries. Better Place connects us back to the natural world and treats that world with the utmost reverence and care. I regret this was not an option available to me when I lost my mother – too young – at 60.

On top of that, Better Place Forests is committed to creating environments of architectural excellence. Elegant and sustainable buildings have a light touch on the land, providing just the minimal amount of shelter and the maximum amount of beauty to the forest entry. World-class architects and designs including Openscope, Fletcher Studio, and Matsys bring a wealth of experience in sustainable practice and experiential design.

Better Place Forests is, without a doubt, providing an invaluable service to people. The loss of a loved one is no longer reduced to a checklist. The process afforded the dignity and respect it deserves. This twining of loss and rebirth gives me hope; it is a wonderful way of approaching and dealing with loss that I think can be transformational for so many. Their presence is wholly positive for Santa Cruz and I do hope you'll support this worthwhile project.

Best regards,

Allison Arieff
Contributing columnist, *The New York Times*
Founding editor and former editor in chief, *Dwell*
Former Editor, *Sunset*

CEMETERY AND FUNERAL BUREAU

1625 N. Market Blvd., Suite S-208, Sacramento, CA 95834

P 916.574.7870 F 916.928.7988 • www.cfb.ca.gov



October 22, 2018

Better Place Forests
Attention: Alexander A.S. Gibson
25284 Ten Mile Rd
Point Arena, CA 95468

RE: Complaint Number I 2018-85 – Better Place Forests

Dear Mr. Gibson:

The Cemetery and Funeral Bureau (Bureau) has concluded its investigation into the complaint filed against Better Place Forests as an unlicensed cemetery. Upon review of the complaint and applicable documentation collected, there is insufficient evidence to support a violation of the Bureau's laws, rules, or regulations governing the operation of a cemetery in the State of California. We are closing our file on this matter with no further action.

Your business operation and website appear to be compliant with the laws and regulations governing Cremated Remains Disposers and the scattering of cremated remains. It is the Bureau's understanding that you will be scattering cremated remains only, in accordance with Health and Safety Code (HSC) section 7116 and that there will be no burial of cremated remains, which would require you to obtain a Certificate of Authority (cemetery license).

HSC section 7116 states in pertinent part:

- (a) Cremated remains may be scattered in areas where no local prohibition exists, provided that the cremated remains are not distinguishable to the public, are not in a container, and that the person who has control over disposition of the cremated remains has obtained written permission of the property owner or governing agency to scatter on the property. A state or local agency may adopt an ordinance, regulation, or policy, as appropriate, authorizing, consistent with this section, or specifically prohibiting, the scattering of cremated human remains on lands under the agency's jurisdiction. The scattering of the cremated remains of more than one person in one location pursuant to this section shall not create a cemetery pursuant to Section 7003 or any other provision of law.

Your cooperation with Field Representatives Glenn Miller and Scott Lang during the investigation is appreciated. Should you decide in the future to operate Better Place Forests as a private cemetery, you must first meet all requirements for licensure and obtain a Certificate of Authority (cemetery license) from the Bureau. You may not advertise as a cemetery nor make any sales of cemetery property until and unless you are licensed with the Bureau. You may contact the Bureau's Licensing Unit at the letterhead address for information about licensing requirements.

EXHIBIT 2E

If you have any questions or need further information at this time, please contact the Bureau at the letterhead address.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "S. Patterson".

Sandra Patterson
Field Operations Supervisor
Cemetery and Funeral Bureau

cc: Glenn Miller, Field Representative
Scott Lang, Field Representative