



Agenda Item A.1
CONSENT CALENDAR
Meeting Date: October 15, 2025

TO: Chair and Members of the Public Tree Advisory Commission

FROM: Luz "Nina" Buelna, Public Works Director

CONTACT: George Thomson, Parks and Open Space Manager

SUBJECT: Parks and Open Space Division Report

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive and file a report regarding recent activities and initiatives in the Parks and Open Space Division.

DISCUSSION:

Habitat Stewardship and Wildfire Risk Reduction at Ellwood Mesa

The community is invited to plant trees and native plants, and provide important plant care, including installing irrigation, clearing planting sites, spreading mulch, and monitoring tree health at the Goleta Butterfly Grove during multiple volunteer days through December 6, 2025. These events are a fun way to help monarch butterflies, meet new people, and learn about the ecology of the Butterfly Grove. Within the past year, over 500 new trees have been planted at the Butterfly Grove to support monarch butterfly habitat and riparian restoration. More details and sign-ups are available here: <https://bucketbrigade.volunteerhub.com/vv2/lp/ellwoodmesa>

Santa Barbara County Fire crews are continuing to reduce the risk of wildfire at Ellwood Mesa by removing dead trees throughout the grove, thinning non-native invasive trees (primarily *Fraxinus uhdei*), and trimming overgrown shrubs near private properties. The work is funded by a \$1.7M CalFire grant that the City received. A team of biologists and certified arborists are coordinating protection of nesting birds and other sensitive wildlife, as well as providing direction for proper tree pruning and removals. Upcoming work and more information about the project is available at this site: <https://www.cityofgoleta.org/play/parks-recreation-open-spaces/ellwood-mesa-and-monarch-butterfly-habitat/ellwood-now-work-in-progress>

Large Oak Trees Lost at Rancho La Patera and Stow House

Over the past several years, three large coast live oaks (*Quercus agrifolia*) have died at the Rancho La Patera and Stow House grounds. The first one appeared to have died as a result of drought stress incurred during California's drought from 2011 to 2018. The two other lost oaks were catastrophic trunk failures, with the more recent one occurring on Sunday, September 21, 2025. All three trees were estimated to be over 200 years old. The two more recent failed trees had codominant stems with significant decay. One of the trees was replaced with a young coast live oak planted by Mayor Perotte to celebrate [Arbor Week 2024](#). City staff will be planting two additional oaks sourced from the Goleta Valley.

Tree Maintenance Projects

Several tree maintenance projects are underway or will be starting soon in City parks and open spaces:

- Winchester 1 Open Space – Crown reductions and dead branch removals on numerous river red gums (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*) to reduce the risk of catastrophic failure and impacts to adjacent residences.
- Jonny D. Wallis Neighborhood Park – Seasonal pruning of western redbuds (*Cercis occidentalis*) and olives (*Olea europaea*) to improve aesthetics, remove diseased trunks, and promote better structure. Staff are waiting for the redbuds to drop their leaves before pruning commences.

Approved By:



Luz "Nina" Buelna
Public Works Director