



TO: Chair and Members of the Parks and Recreation Commission
FROM: JoAnne Plummer, Neighborhood Services 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:

Goleta Butterfly Grove at Ellwood Mesa

Over 400 new trees and nearly 1,000 native plants have been installed at the Butterfly Grove by community volunteers, City of Goleta and UC Santa Barbara staff, and students. Saturday morning volunteer events during the fall and early winter yielded several hundred people coming out to learn about monarch butterflies and habitat restoration while actively planting trees. More volunteer events will be hosted throughout 2025 and interested community members can stay up to date on all the various activities at Ellwood Mesa by visiting this site:

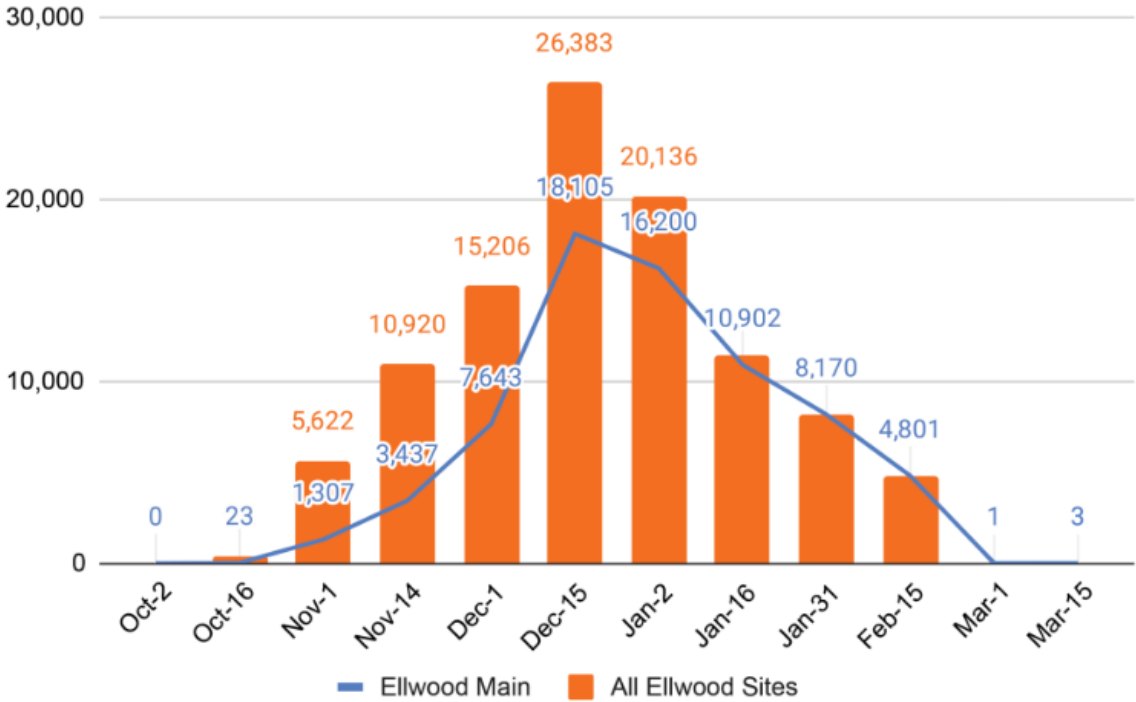
<https://www.cityofgoleta.org/play/parks-recreation-open-spaces/ellwood-mesa-and-monarch-butterfly-habitat/ellwood-now-work-in-progress>

Bi-weekly counts of monarch butterflies at Ellwood yielded the second-lowest total in recent history with only 34 butterflies observed in the grove. The lowest year in recent history was 2020 with only ten (10) individual butterflies observed. Reports from other monarch butterfly sites across coastal California indicate this is a very poor year for monarch butterflies. Counts from across the western population are available here: <https://westernmonarchcount.org/>

For reference, the 2023-2024 season butterfly population counts are included below. Over 26,000 butterflies were counted at Ellwood during this time, which was also reflective of good population numbers across the state. Based on historic trends, it is very unlikely that monarch butterflies will arrive in great numbers at Ellwood in the coming

months. The population typically peaks in December, and then the numbers decline through February and March.

Monarchs in Ellwood 2023-2024 Overwintering Season
Biweekly Population Count, Ellwood Main and All Ellwood Sites



Staff Recruitments

The Parks and Open Space Division recently welcomed Ernesto Guzman to the park’s maintenance team. Mr. Guzman most recently worked for the Santa Barbara Museum of Art where he was responsible for a variety of skilled maintenance tasks, including plumbing, painting, and light construction. The parks maintenance team fulfills a variety of critical roles for the City, including assisting with daily park maintenance, playground safety, urban forest management, and a variety of project-related tasks, including helping with restoration efforts at the Ellwood Butterfly Grove.

Approved By:

JoAnne Plummer,
Neighborhood Services Director