

23 May 2022

Scott Branch  
Chair, DRB  
Attn: Mary Chang, Secretary

Dear Chairman Branch and members of the board:

As President of Friends of the Ellwood Coast, member of Monarchs Unlimited and a longtime resident and activist involved in acquiring Ellwood Mesa as passive open space, I have questions and comments regarding item D.1, advisory review of the Ellwood Mesa Monarch Butterfly Grove Enhancement Project.

“Enhancing habitat” is the stated goal of this project. My comments are to be seen through that lens; all access and educational infrastructure must not impinge on ESHA and endangered phenomena or species, which the overwintering of monarch butterflies represents.

1. SB Shores Entrance vs Existing Parking Lot

Turning SB Shores access to the Mesa into a competing one for “regional” visitors brings up the traffic that should only park at the existing lot down Hollister across from the school. Public vehicular access (motorcycles, bicycles, etc) are undesirable uses over a creek and into a sensitive hilly grove.

In the past there have been tour buses idling away on neighborhood street termini while out of town visitors are in the butterfly areas.

2. Creek crossings

As I understand “ADA compliance”, you would expect wheelchairs to cross those boardwalks; but then what? Are you seriously planning to grade the grove’s natural trails with steep inclines? And how far—onto the Mesa?

Are you coordinating with the existing Districts that overlay the area? Flood control, Goleta West Sanitary District are two that have significant infrastructure here.

3. Winter access to the overwintering site/OWS

Winter is the most vulnerable time in the grove, and on the Mesa. In wet weather, crowds and wheeled access will erode trails and riparian areas (no, people do NOT stay on marked trails.) In drought, fire and dust. Infrastructure that brings damage to an all-too-critical resource must only be installed in conjunction with guaranteed funds and personnel to monitor and enforce rules of use.

“IF YOU BUILD IT, THEY WILL COME” are terrifying words to scientists and locals. They are true.

I ask that in your capacity to review the gates, walkways, crossings and signage, you advise the City to consult with overlay districts, Urban Creeks Council, Althouse Meade, and neighborhood associations be consulted before plans are finalized.

Sincerely  
Christina Lange  
805-284-3492

Dear Design Review Board Members,

I read about your Item #D1 in your May 24, 2022 Design Review Board Meeting Agenda. Here are my comments:

I read about the descriptions of the planned pedestrian bridges across Devereaux Creek for access to the Butterfly grove. The described bridges are supposed to provide access to the Ellwood Bluffs and the Butterfly Grove during the rainy season. I believe that these bridges will not achieve the desired results due to a number of factors.

First, when the creek is running, it is very wide, and the bridge will have to reach from the pathway accessed from the end of Coronado all the way to the bottom of each hill. This is necessary because of the normally high water level and also because of deep mud and sand. Secondly, in the case of the Bluff access at the bottom of Coronado, the trail up the hill to the Grove viewing area during the rainy season is exceptionally muddy, and slippery. Since the trail is steep the muddiness and slipperiness becomes dangerous. Thirdly, the trails are damaged when they are wet and muddy and then walked on or ridden on.

If the desire to create pedestrian bridges is to promote accessibility for ADA compliance, then the whole trail system must be re-designed. Don't provide a pedestrian bridge at the bottom of Coronado as the trail up to the grove is too steep for mobility-challenged people.

Provide the best access from the Santa Barbara Shores road. Resurface the road and redesign the gate at Santa Barbara Shores and provide a nice flat access from the high point of that road to the butterfly grove.

One more item of interest: Thanks for maintaining the trails in their natural state. Currently the dirt surfaces are well trodden and hard.

I had nightmares of graveled trails! Gravel is much harder to walk on than just plain dirt.

Thank you for listening

Susan Rudnicki

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