



Agenda Item C.1
PRESENTATION
Meeting Date: July 18, 2017

TO: Mayor and Councilmembers

FROM: Michelle Greene, City Manager

CONTACT: Anne Wells, Advance Planning Manager

SUBJECT: Ellwood Mesa Monarch Butterfly Habitat Conditions Survey Results

RECOMMENDATION:

Receive a presentation on the results of the Ellwood Mesa monarch butterfly habitat conditions survey by Dan Meade, Ph.D. in Entomology, and Cory Meyer, Certified Arborist, Althouse & Meade, Inc.

BACKGROUND:

Each fall, monarch butterflies (*Danaus plexippus*) in the western United States migrate to the coast of California from various locations throughout western North America. The eucalyptus groves at the City's Ellwood Mesa Open Space / Sperling Preserve (Ellwood Mesa) are called the Ellwood Complex. These groves support overwintering monarchs on an annual basis.


Recent changes in the monarch butterfly population and distribution patterns, including the local population, prompted staff and our consultant team to conduct new technical studies on the status of the monarch butterfly habitat in Ellwood. On February 7, 2017, staff and consultant provided the City Council and public with an update of monarch butterfly distribution and population trends, regional and local habitat condition trends, habitat condition changes at the Ellwood Complex, and monarch population stability threats and pressures. At the February meeting, Council requested that further studies of health of the eucalyptus groves that support the monarch butterfly overwintering population be conducted and that the results of the studies be conveyed to Council and the public.

The purpose of this presentation is to provide a status report on the results of the habitat conditions survey, consistent with Council's February 7 direction. The habitat conditions survey resulted in the identification of several hundred dead eucalyptus trees on Ellwood Mesa, including trees along and well within the immediate areas of hiking and walking paths routinely used by the public. Dead and dying trees pose a safety risk in the Open Space area and steps to address these public safety risks will be included in the presentation. The presentation will also outline possible approaches to address

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the long-term management of the habitat, restoration possibilities, and a public outreach plan.

Legal Review By:



Michael Jenkins
Interim City Attorney

Approved By:



Michelle Greene
City Manager