

**From:** [Carolyn Grenier](#)  
**To:** [Liana Campos](#)  
**Cc:** [City Clerk Group](#)  
**Subject:** Fwd: Reduction of Fire Risk - The Bluffs Community  
**Date:** Monday, June 14, 2021 9:53:34 AM  
**Attachments:** [Michelle Greene 2021-05 v2.docx](#)  
[CWPP Vegetation Abatement Map.pptx](#)  
[CWPP Communities identified in plan.pptx](#)  
[Bluffs.pdf](#)

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Good morning again. Thanks for your confirmation. Would it be possible to also give this information to board members so they are aware as to why we want the permit request for clearing the land surrounding The Bluffs community removed from the overall Monarch Butterfly Habitat Management Plan. We believe that we need to proceed with the recommended clearing steps given us by SBCFire last year as quickly as possible.

Thank you!

Carolyn Grenier  
805-845-8582

Sent from my iPad

Begin forwarded message:

**From:** Carolyn Grenier <carolyn.grenier1@gmail.com>  
**Date:** May 24, 2021 at 9:08:21 PM PDT  
**To:** [mgreene@cityofgoleta.org](mailto:mgreene@cityofgoleta.org)  
**Cc:** chuck davis <[chuckdavis4944@gmail.com](mailto:chuckdavis4944@gmail.com)>, Dennis Van Epps <[devanepps@cox.net](mailto:devanepps@cox.net)>, Jason Sweet <[Jason.Sweet@sbcfire.com](mailto:Jason.Sweet@sbcfire.com)>, George Thomson <[gthomson@cityofgoleta.org](mailto:gthomson@cityofgoleta.org)>, Kurtis Shenefiel <[KjShenefiel@gocompass.com](mailto:KjShenefiel@gocompass.com)>  
**Subject: Reduction of Fire Risk - The Bluffs Community**

Good evening Michelle,

I am writing to you as a concerned Goleta resident who lives at The Bluffs community. We believe we have a potential fire risk that has already been identified by Jason Sweet, Captain Vegetation Management of SBC Fire, almost a year ago. I am attaching the following documents to help provide you with the background and history of Vegetation Abatement to reduce the risk of fire on the City of Goleta property surrounding our community. The following documents are attached for your review:

1. Letter to you that summarizes the history and correspondence regarding the most current Vegetation Abatement recommendation from SBC Fire.
2. A detailed map of the CWPP Vegetation Abatement Map
3. CWPP Communities identified in the plan and their risk priority
4. Latest map of vegetation abatement recommendation provided by SBC Fire based on latest risk evaluation (completed July 2020)

I look forward to your guidance based on the specific items documented in my letter to you.

Thank you!

Carolyn Grenier  
(650) 888.6271 (cell)  
(805) 845.8582 (home)

**Carolyn Grenier**

291 Elderberry Drive  
Goleta, CA 93117  
805-845-8582

May 24, 2021

Michelle Greene, City Manager  
City of Goleta  
130 Cremona Drive, Unit B  
Goleta, CA 93117

Dear Michelle,

I am writing you as a very concerned member of The Bluffs Community that resides near the western boarder of the City of Goleta. As I am sure you are aware, the community was approved and developed as part of a land swap with the City of Goleta back in 2004. The community lies right in the middle of the Ellwood Mesa Preserve and there are large parcels of land, owned by the City of Goleta, that abut the walls of our community. There are 62 homes in The Bluffs and all are inhabited with families and pets on an ongoing basis.

I have lived at The Bluffs since 2012 and have been actively involved in walking the perimeter of our community with other homeowners, members of the fire department and members of the City of Goleta Public works department on an annual basis since then. These walk-thru's are meant to evaluate potential fire risk and the maintenance that needs to be done by the City of Goleta to protect our homes. These have always resulted in specific action items that are recommended by SBC Fire. Initially it was usually the mowing of the perimeter of the community to make sure that the tall grasses growing around the community would not act as a "fire starter" that could spread to homes or the Eucalyptus trees.

In 2017 and again in 2019, Fred Tan, Captain of Vegetation Abatement for SBC Fire, actually got personally involved and made a strong recommendation to the City of Goleta to get the area mowed and cleared out of deadwood. While the mowing was done, much of the deadwood from tree limbs and Eucalyptus trees that had fallen near our community were never cleared out. We were told that that clearing would be part of the Monarch Butterfly Habitat Management Plan. When you review the CWPP Vegetation Abatement map for our area (attached), only the land around the Western trail is ever really mowed or partially cleared.

In July 2020, I again contacted SBC Fire and Public Works for the City of Goleta. This time, Captain Jason Sweet, Vegetation Management for SBC Fire and George Thomson, City of Goleta Parks and Open Space Manager, walked the perimeter of our neighborhood to evaluate potential fire risk and maintenance requirements with other members of our community. There has been a significant encroachment of Coyote Brush around the walls of our community, especially on the Southern and Eastern sides which are never cleared by the City of Goleta. Following that walkthrough, we received the following email from Jason Sweet, SBC Fire.

On August 20, 2020 both George and I received this email from Captain Jason Sweet, SBC Fire:

*Hello Carolyn and George,  
We recently had a fire department meeting regarding The Bluffs community and the defensible space that surrounds the property which is a part of Goleta City. After that discussion, some of the results were that we (the County Fire Department) suggest doing a 30' vegetation thinning/reduction surrounding The Bluffs property. We are also aware that there was a letter written in the past that says that clearing wasn't and/or wouldn't be required however that letter was from 2005 when both the vegetation surrounding the property was different and our perception of fire behavior in relation to wildland urban interface was also different. In support of the work that needs to be done, County Fire would be able to have our crews do the initial thinning/cutting/chipping however prior to the work, necessary approval through Coastal Commission would have to be done through City Of Goleta or The Bluffs Community. We're confident that getting the work approved could be done without obtaining a land use permit based upon manual thinning/cutting and NOT altering vegetation by mechanical removal of roots or alteration to vegetation type. Additionally, the annual maintenance would have to be completed by City of Goleta. We can set up a time to do a conference call or zoom meeting to discuss any questions or be of further assistance.  
Thank you*

**Jason Sweet**

Captain – Vegetation Management  
VMP 30 Pre Fire Engineer  
Santa Barbara County Fire Department  
805-896-6350 Cell  
805-681-4061 Office

In subsequent discussions about his email and timing with Jason, he voiced concerns that some of the areas, especially on the southern side of the property, were so overgrown with Coyote Brush that there was no area for the fire department to "stage their crews" to protect our community should there be a fire. The brush had grown so much that it was now directly against the walls of our community and reaches 6-8 feet high in areas. Also, much of it has dead limbs and branches that are so dry you can break them with your bare hands. Jason also provided a revised map (attached with this email) to show the corrective action that the fire department crews were prepared to take.

Since that date, both Jason and I have been under the impression that George Thomson and the Public Works department were preparing the necessary documents to gain approval for a "Land Use Permit", even though Jason and SBC Fire did not believe such documents were needed based on the work to be done. We were under the impression that the request would be made to City Council in January. It was then rescheduled to a February meeting. With continued probes to George about progress in getting this done we received this email from him on March 25, 2021.

*Hi Carolyn,*

*My apologies for the delay in responding. We've been working on extending our grant funding from the state for implementation of the butterfly grove management plan. We thought it was wrapped up in January, but the state required several additional steps to secure the funds through 2025. A portion of this funding will be used to address fire safety and vegetation management in the area. However, there are still many steps in front of us before the*

vegetation clearing the Bluffs HOA is proposing can be permitted and on-the-ground work can occur. **Please note that the California Coastal Commission will also need to approve this work via a Coastal Development Permit (CDP) or a CDP waiver-de-minimis.** Either way, obtaining the permits required from the Coastal Commission requires a significant work effort, especially since the work proposed by the HOA includes vegetation clearing in mapped Environmentally Sensitive Habitat Areas and creek buffer areas. Our upcoming item before City Council is not a request for a permit to be issued to clear vegetation around the Bluffs. Sorry if that wasn't clear in our prior communications. We are requesting City Council award a contract for a technical consultant to begin the necessary biological surveys, mapping, and other required technical work that will then form the permit application we need to submit to the Coastal Commission. A Land Use Permit from the City will also be required, but again, we need to complete the necessary technical surveys required for a complete permit application. Please also note the vegetation clearing proposed around the Bluffs HOA is not a standalone project that we are proposing separate from the other work the City needs to complete at the monarch grove. It will be presented as part of the larger efforts to include defensible space work proposed around the butterfly grove and the Santa Barbara Shores neighborhood. We will need to host several community meetings to make sure the neighborhood and other stakeholders can provide input on the plan. And please note that there are several other issues we are addressing in the grove aside from fire safety. Our discussions have focused on fuel management, but the City is also addressing habitat and trail improvements, Devereux Creek enhancements, and other items specific to the monarchs.

I hope this overview provides more perspective on the issues we're dealing with. From what you've shared previously, I understand the Bluffs development (Comstock Homes previously) was only permitted to have vegetation clearing along a 30-ft buffer on the western portion, and primarily in Lot 69. Since the HOA now wants to expand vegetation thinning and/or clearing to a 30-ft perimeter around the entire development, it may be quicker for the HOA to submit a standalone CDP application to the Coastal Commission. In short, the City is dealing with a multitude of issues related to the monarchs, the main eucalyptus grove, and SB Shores, and it may be quicker for the HOA to move forward with its own permit application. Has this been discussed by the HOA? If that is not something the HOA wants to support and fund, then we will need to have this project move forward as part of the City's larger efforts associated with the monarch butterfly habitat management plan. That said, I'm happy to discuss any alternatives that the HOA may suggest to move this item forward independently of the monarch plan.

Thanks,  
George

### **My response back to George Thomson on 4-9-2021**

*Good morning George,*

*Thank you for your detailed response. I am now even more confused and concerned about the actions being taken and the fact that the vegetation abatement risk around The Bluffs community has now been lumped into the approval of the Monarch Butterfly Habitat Management Plan. There has been virtually no action taken to implement anything with this plan since it was granted, in May 2019, and now we stand the risk of having more years go by before any action is taken to mitigate the fire risk caused by the vegetation now growing directly against the walls of our community. We do believe it poses a fire risk and as such a risk to public safety for the members of our community.*

*From our perspective, the work that needs to be done around our community, was evaluated and recommended by Jason Sweet of SBC Fire (August 2020). His recommendation was to have his*

*crews help mitigate the potential fire risk to our community and to be able to give the fire department staging areas from which to protect our homes. They agreed to do the work and it was agreed that you, as Manager for the City, would file for the land use permits required (City of Goleta and Coastal Commission) for them to be able to start the process. I do not understand how this has suddenly gotten attached to the much larger, very slow moving, and enormous effort that has been the ongoing Monarch Butterfly Habitat Management Plan.*

*I want to be clear that the work that is proposed around our community is NOT work proposed by the HOA. The work is not on HOA land but on land clearly defined in our Conditions of Approval (by both the City of Goleta and the Coastal Commission) as City property. As such, I do not believe that the HOA should be requesting Land Use permits nor approvals from either the City of Goleta or the Coastal Commission for vegetation clearing work recommended by SBC Fire on City of Goleta property.*

*This recommendation came from the fire department as it reviewed the ongoing growth and ever changing condition of the natural preserve around our community. In the walk-through with Jason Sweet and you in 2020 it was clear that the fire department felt that there was enough risk with the growth (that was now directly against our community walls) that they were willing to have their crews complete the work in that area. They then recommended that the City would need to maintain those areas as they had been cleared going forward. I am attaching the email from Jason Sweet to this communication so that we are all clear of their recommendation and timing. (This is the email already imbedded above in this document.)*

*Furthermore, the CWPP document also clearly defines the priority of the need to thin, prune and mow areas around residences within the Ellwood Preserve. You have told me that our community is covered by this document and the map clearly shows the areas that should be maintained. These are not new areas requested by the HOA, but rather they were documented by the team preparing the CWPP and confirmed by SBC Fire as areas of risk. While I understand you are new to this role, the frustration of our community is that we continuously require the involvement of SBC Fire to get this work done with any sort of consistency. As a matter of fact, the only area that tends to get any attention at all is the mowing of Lot 69. And, even here, we had to get Captain Fred Tan of SBC fire involved in both 2017 and 2019 to get this area mowed. Jason Sweet, Captain Vegetation Management, has confirmed the increased risk of fire to our community, in areas covered by the CWPP, but never touched or maintained by the City to protect our community from fire risk. We do believe that this poses a high risk to the 62 homes and the families living within them.*

*Please let me know how we can separate this into its own request for a land use permit and approval by the Coastal Commission. We request that this work be expedited, outside of the work being planned for The Monarch Butterfly Habitat Management Plan, especially since the SBC Fire work crews have already agreed to complete this work for you. I am hoping that this can be separated out and discussed at the next City Council Meeting that reviews this plan, now scheduled for April 20th, 2021.*

*We look forward to your response and to helping to get this safety concern addressed for our community. We appreciate all of your continued efforts in the management of the Ellwood preserve that we all live in and enjoy on a daily basis.*

*Carolyn*

*Carolyn Grenier  
[Carolyn.grenier1@gmail.com](mailto:Carolyn.grenier1@gmail.com)  
805-845-8582*

As of today, May 24<sup>th</sup>, I have not heard back from George Thomson regarding this email nor the status of SBC Fire's request for approval to mitigate potential fire risk to our community by cutting, thinning, and removing the dead components of vegetation surrounding The Bluffs. We are not sure if this work will continue to be embedded in the approval process for the Monarch Butterfly Habitat Management Plan or separated out on its own value. This is obviously of high concern to us since it has been almost a year since the request was made to the City of Goleta and we have once again entered into the "High Fire Season" for this area without this work being completed.

I feel like this community of 62 homes and the families residing in them are continuously having to fight for clearing work to be done on the City owned property surrounding us. This situation and the way it has required us to manage it annually is not sustainable. At this point, we really would like the following to happen:

1. The City of Goleta to obtain the required approvals or permits to allow the fire department to complete the recommended clearing around our community.
2. There is an ongoing plan established to maintain the 30' swath around The Bluffs community walls in the manner recommended by the SBC Fire Department. This plan should not require residents from The Bluffs Community to initiate this process on an annual basis OR get the SBC Fire department involved in order for it to happen.

I am writing to you, Michelle, out of sheer frustration with this process and an overarching concern of the fire risk currently existing for our community. I am at a loss as to how to proceed to get the two items listed above accomplished without further delay. We are a group of caring Goleta residents who do a lot to maintain the value of the properties, abide by the trail and dark sky ordinances imposed on us via our conditions of approval, and contribute in excess of \$1.2M in tax revenue to the City of Goleta and County of Santa Barbara. I am hoping that you can help us to better navigate a path to getting resolution to this issue going forward.

I am happy to discuss further details with you in person, if you wish. Thank you for any guidance you are able to provide to us. If this should be handled directly by the City Council or another group we are happy to take that forward as well.

Looking forward to your reply,

Carolyn

Carolyn Grenier

Carolyn.grenier1@gmail.com



Community Wildfire Protection Plan Zones:

- Primary Defense Zone (A, 0-30 Feet)
- Fuel Reduction Zone (B, 30-100 Feet)
- Fuel Reduction Zone (C, 100-150 Feet)

Monarch Butterfly Aggregation Sites

- Butterfly Aggregation Area and 300-Foot Buffer Managed per CWPP Table 14
- Monarch Butterfly Habitat Management Plan (MBHMP) Coverage Area
- Elwood Mesa Sperring Preserve Open Space



Imagery Date: 201807  
 Map Updated October 03, 2018 12:40 (MCE/AM)

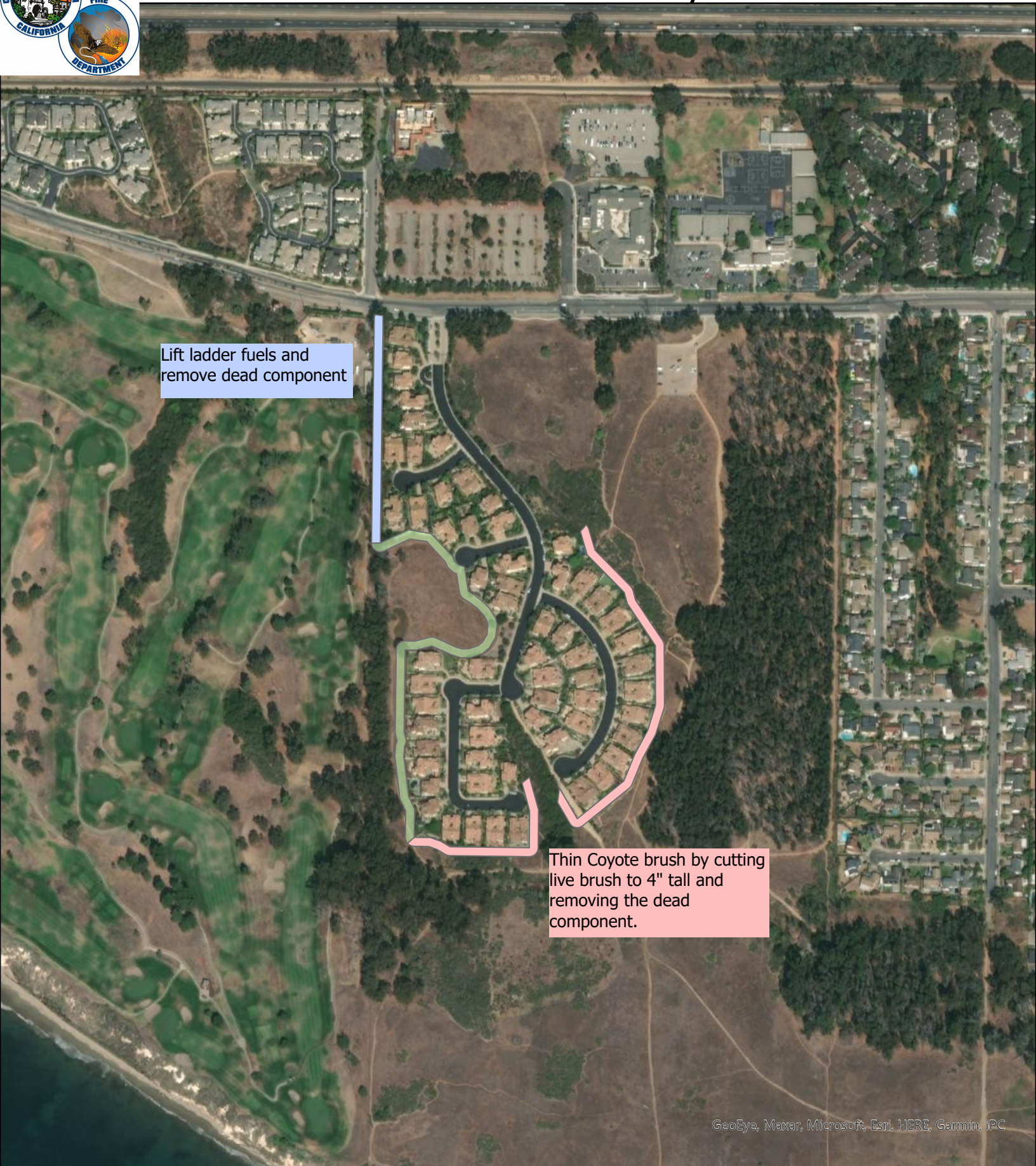


**Table 11 Summary of VMUs w/Open Spaces, Values at Risk, Proposed Activities, & Treatment Priorities**

GP/CP Fig. 3-2 Map #s	VMU: Open Space/Park	Values At Risk	Proposed Activities: (Further treatment details in Tables 14 & 15)	Treatment Priority
	<b>Ellwood Mesa:</b>			
31	Campus Glen	Residences, monarch butterfly ESHA, recreation trails	Fuels reduction adjacent to residences; thin, prune, mow	High
33	Santa Barbara Shores (a)	Residences	Fuels reduction adj. to residences; prune, mow, thin-optional	High
33	Santa Barbara Shores (b)	Residences	Fuels reduction adj. to residences; prune, mow, thin-optional	High
34	Ellwood Mesa Open Space (Santa Barbara Shores Park)	Residences, powerlines, monarch butterfly ESHA, recreation trails	Fuels reduction adjacent to residences; thin, prune, mow; mow along edge of grove - non-developed portions	High
30	Ellwood Mesa Open Space (Sperling Preserve)	Residences, monarch butterfly ESHA, recreation trails	Fuels reduction adjacent to residences; thin, prune, mow; mow along edge of grove - non-developed portions	High
	<b>Coronado:</b>	(owned/operated by nonprofit private entities)		
32	Coronado Preserve	Residences, monarch butterfly ESHA, recreation trails	Fuels reduction adjacent to residences; thin, prune, mow	High
	<b>Los Carneros:</b>			
12	Lake Los Carneros Preserve	Residences - Interior & outside, offices, multiple ESHA types, heritage structures, Stow House, recreation trails, lake, picnic area	Continue current fuel reduction work; expand treatment work around interior structures; thin, prune, mow outside edges of preserve – emphasis: La Patera Lane vicinity	High
	<b>Developed Inland:</b>			
19	Andamar	Lawn, play equipment, picnic area, homes in vicinity	Continue current fuel reduction work: mowing	Low
27	Armstrong	Lawn, park play equipment, picnic area, homes in	Continue current fuel maintenance program	Low



# The Bluffs Community






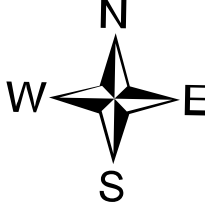
Lift ladder fuels and remove dead component

Thin Coyote brush by cutting live brush to 4" tall and removing the dead component.

GeoEye, Maxar, Microsoft, Esri, HERE, Garmin, iPC

## Bluffs 30 ft Clearance Treatments

-  Lift/ Remove Dead
-  Mow
-  Thin



**From:** Julie Solomon <[julie.solomon@compass.com](mailto:julie.solomon@compass.com)>  
**Sent:** Monday, June 14, 2021 1:30 PM  
**To:** City Clerk Group <[cityclerkgroup@cityofgoleta.org](mailto:cityclerkgroup@cityofgoleta.org)>  
**Cc:** Carolyn Grenier <[carolyn.grenier1@gmail.com](mailto:carolyn.grenier1@gmail.com)>  
**Subject:** City Council Meeting 6/15/21 - Fire Abatement Discussion

City Manager Michelle Greene and Honorable Members of the Goleta City Council:

I am writing you regarding the lack of fire abatement clearing around The Bluffs community by the City of Goleta. In July 2020 members of our community walked the perimeter with Jason Sweet, SBC Fire, and George Thomson, Manager Parks and Open Spaces, City of Goleta. The fire department recommended immediate trimming and cutting back of vegetation to eliminate fire risk. Even better, they volunteered their fire prevention crews to do the work.

To date, the City of Goleta has taken no action to either approve a permit to allow the Fire Dept. to clear the area or to for the city to take responsibility to do so itself. The city has lumped this effort into the Monarch Butterfly Habitat Management Plan which seems like an odd and ineffective way to address fire safety for 62 homes.

The community asks that the City Council takes the following action to abate the fire risk to our homes:

1. Grant approval for the clearing of The Bluffs ASAP and do not burden it with the approval process of the entire Monarch Butterfly Habitat Management Plan
2. Understand there is NO Cost To The City for this work to be done. SBC Fire documented the work to be done in August 2020 and requested that the required permit be issued, if needed, so their crews could start the work in our community ASAP.
3. The safety of 62 homes and their residents are at risk if this work is not completed. The City of Goleta is not in compliance with the recommended clearances made by SBC Fire Chief Mark Hartwig in his recent video to community members. This is City of Goleta Land Surrounding The Bluffs community.

Fires are already occurring. We respectfully request that the City Council grant immediate authorization to the Fire Department to clear the subject area to diminish the threat of fire at NO cost to the city.

Sincerely,  
Julie Solomon,  
Bluffs resident

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Sent from mobile device. Please pardon brevity, grammar and spelling offenses ; )

**From:** leonard grabowski <[lsgrabowski@cox.net](mailto:lsgrabowski@cox.net)>  
**Sent:** Tuesday, June 15, 2021 6:56 AM  
**To:** City Clerk Group <[cityclerkgroup@cityofgoleta.org](mailto:cityclerkgroup@cityofgoleta.org)>  
**Cc:** Carolyn Grenier <[carolyn.grenier1@gmail.com](mailto:carolyn.grenier1@gmail.com)>  
**Subject:** Fire Prevention @ the Bluffs Monarch Butterfly Preservation

Council members, two major issues 1) Nothing effective has been done to mitigate the extreme fire danger posed by debris from the preserve alongside the Bluffs. The outcome from this inactivity is self-evident should there be a fire. Carolyn Grenier President of the Homeowners Association at the Bluffs has outlined in detail the path which has been deemed necessary by the SBC Fire Chief and others. The liability in lawsuits, property and lives lost the City is assuming by not doing anything is frightening. This should have HIGH priority. 2) Monarch Butterflies are on the brink of extinction and so designated by our government. Goleta has a so-called Butterfly Preserve and a huge amount of money from the State over 3 million dollars to develop and implement a plan. Reams of documents complicated by multiple agencies and a complex all inclusive plan has been established and the outcome has been nothing as yet. The Covid excuse has been used and other hurdles to impede progress. The council must prioritize the needs all of which are important but the Butterfly is at the top of the list it simply will not be present in you do not take quick action and phase the listed issues in addressing preservation as number one get started. Leonard Grabowski MD Bluffs Resident & Monarch Advocate