



Agenda Item B.1
PRESENTATION
Meeting Date: October 6, 2021

TO: Chair and Members of the Parks and Recreation Commission

FROM: Jaime A. Valdez, Interim Neighborhood Services

CONTACT: George Thomson, Parks and Open Space Manager

SUBJECT: Parks and Open Space Manager Report

RECOMMENDATION:

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

DISCUSSION:

The Public Works Department's Parks and Open Space Division is responsible for maintenance of the City's developed parks, open spaces, and other undeveloped City land. The Division is also responsible for advancing several open space capital projects focused on plant and wildlife habitat restoration, trail improvements, and stewardship of the City's roughly 500-acres of parklands. As we move into the fall months, our in-house and contracted maintenance staff are increasingly focused on pre-storm preparations, completing tree trimming prior to the nesting bird season, detecting, and repairing irrigation leaks, and addressing abandoned encampments on public, City-owned properties. Several capital improvement projects at the Ellwood Mesa Monarch Butterfly Grove are also gathering momentum and require focused effort on community engagement, permitting, and finalizing construction and maintenance bids for labor to complete on-the-ground work. More detail is provided in the following summaries and accompanying presentation.

UPCOMING TREE MAINTENANCE AT FOUR PARKS AND OPEN SPACE

The city has over 15,000 trees in its inventory of public street, parks, facility, and open space trees. The urban forest provides many benefits to the City, including diverse wildlife habitat, improved aesthetics and air quality, as well as amelioration of heat island effects. However, as trees die or unplanned saplings become established, tree maintenance work becomes an increasingly important sector of work undertaken by the Parks and Open Space Division. The Division recently solicited bids to complete dead tree removals and trimming of live trees for wildfire prevention at four parks and open spaces—Evergreen Park, Brandon Open Space, La Goleta Open Space, and San Jose

Creek Open Space at Berkeley Avenue. In addition, trimming of trees along the eastern and southern boundary of Stow Grove is moving forward. Competitive bids were received and work will be scheduled in late-October once noticing, Land Use Permits, and pre-work biological surveys are completed.

ENCAMPMENTS AND ILLEGAL DUMPING CLEAN UP

City staff continue to work collaboratively with our community partners to relocate encampment residents into supportive housing. Once encampment residents are relocated, a team of contractors, City staff, and law enforcement work together to ensure the area is cleaned, personal property of value is inventoried and stored for later retrieval, and wildlife habitat protected. During the summer months, over 4,500 pound of trash was removed from eight abandoned encampments at the Ellwood Mesa and Ellwood Beach. Various other illegal dumping incidents were also addressed in public right of ways and parks, with the most frequent incidents occurring in Old Town Goleta, and the Mathilda Road and Ellwood Beach Drive areas.

Community members are encouraged to report encampments to George Thomson, Parks and Open Space Manager at gthomson@cityofgoleta.org or 805-961-7576. If reporting an illegal campfire, a personal safety issue, or other emergency, residents are directed to call 911.

ELLWOOD MESA MONARCH GROVE

The final habitat enhancement plan for the monarch butterfly winter aggregation site at Ellwood North is being submitted to the California Coastal Commission for approval of the Coastal Development Permit (CDP) associated with the project. Initial work, focused on dead tree removals and flammable downed branches, is slated to begin in the coming months. Replanting of eucalyptus, native trees, native understory shrubs, and a diverse selection of native wildflowers, grasses, and forbs is also planned.

A public outreach event was conducted at two locations at Ellwood Mesa on the morning of August 21, 2021 to provide information about the upcoming work at Ellwood North and ensure neighbors and visitors have an avenue to voice concerns, learn about future volunteer opportunities, and establish an ongoing dialogue with the project staff. Over 100 people stopped by the information booths to review the project plans, discuss the history of the bluffs, trails, wildfire, encampments, the monarch butterfly population, and the City's efforts to improve habitat. Additional outreach events are planned once the final CDP is issued and a start date for work is set.

COASTAL CLEAN UP DAY 2021

Over 1,287 volunteers showed up for Coastal Cleanup Day on Saturday, September 18th at 28 sites throughout Santa Barbara County. Volunteers removed over 5,211 pounds of trash and over 892 pounds of recyclables from public beaches and recreation areas. Altogether, 42 estimated miles at sites ranging from Rincon Beach Park to Guadalupe Dunes were cleaned.

Coastal Cleanup Day is part of a much larger international event. With 50% of the cleanup sites reporting, the statewide count stands at 21,000 volunteers and climbing. Volunteers across the state picked up 153,281 pounds of trash and an additional 9,256 pounds of recyclable materials, for a total of 162,538 pounds.

Statewide, Coastal Cleanup Day is presented by the California Coastal Commission. In Santa Barbara County, the event is organized by Explore Ecology and the County of Santa Barbara Resource Recovery and Waste Management, with support from Project Clean Water, and the Cities of Santa Barbara, Goleta, and Solvang and the help of many non-profits, businesses, and generous individuals. Locally, City staff led cleanup efforts at Haskell's Beach and the local business Okeanos Swimwear took the lead on the Ellwood Beach efforts. Photos from the event can viewed at the Explore Ecology website: <https://exploreecology.org/thank-you-santa-barbara/>.

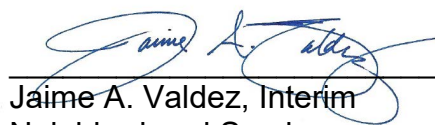
LAKE LOS CARNEROS

City staff installed a temporary aeration system at Lake Los Carneros to increase the amount of dissolved oxygen in the lake waters, thereby abating water quality issues and associated smells created by warmer temperatures and an excess of nutrients. Artificial aeration and is planned to continue until we receive sufficient freshwater inputs from winter rains. Simultaneously, City staff are exploring longer term solutions to improve water quality at the lake. One option being explored is a solar-powered aerator that could be semi-permanently deployed year-round. Costing, permitting, and other factors need to be determined before the system is purchased.

City staff are also scoping the community outreach process planned for Spring 2022 to begin the Lake Los Carneros Management Plan update. Key to these efforts will be identifying the existing infrastructure needs, key habitat enhancement goals, and aligning current outreach and public engagement techniques with staff workload and consultant support.

The footbridge at Lake Los Carneros remains closed due to structural decay and public safety risk. In lieu of the over water route the footbridge provided; City staff are collaborating with the Santa Barbara Trails Council to design an overland route along the northern portion of the lake to allow for a loop route popular with visitors to the area. Trail mapping, an informational kiosk, and associated permits are being developed.

Approved By:



Jaime A. Valdez, Interim
Neighborhood Services

ATTACHMENT:

1. Parks and Open Space Manager's Report Presentation

ATTACHMENT 1

Parks and Open Space Manager's Report Presentation



Parks and Open Space Manager's Report

OCTOBER 6, 2021

PARKS & RECREATION COMMISSION

**PRESENTED BY: GEORGE THOMSON, PARKS AND OPEN SPACE MANAGER
PUBLIC WORKS DEPARTMENT**

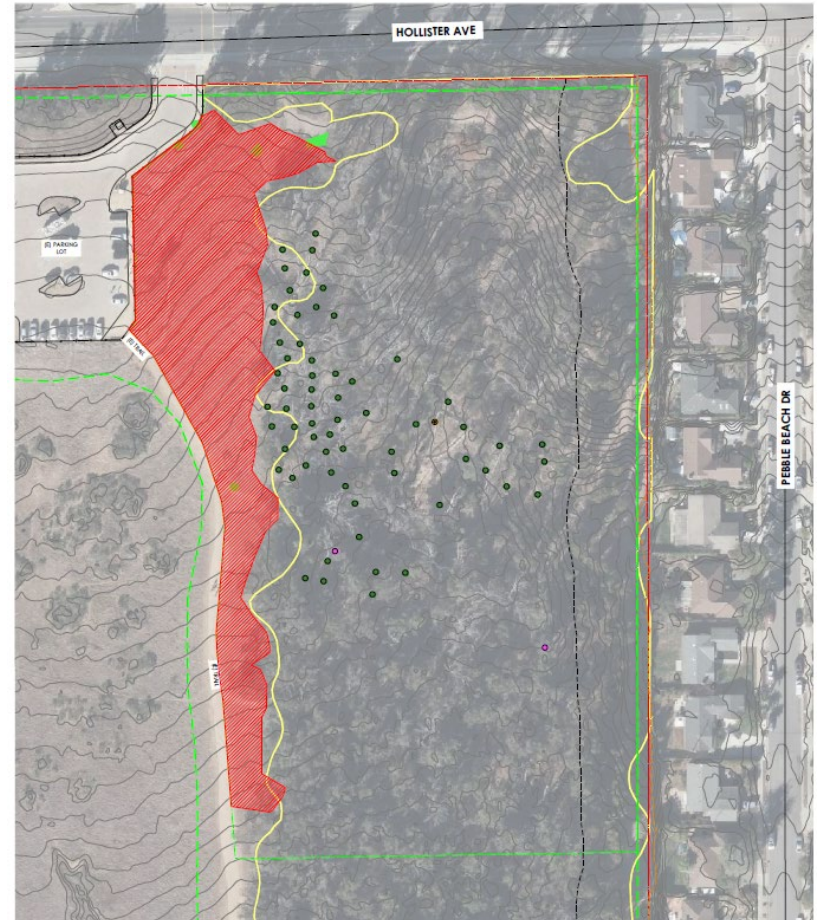
TREE MAINTENANCE AT VARIOUS PARKS AND OPEN SPACES



Encampment Clean Up



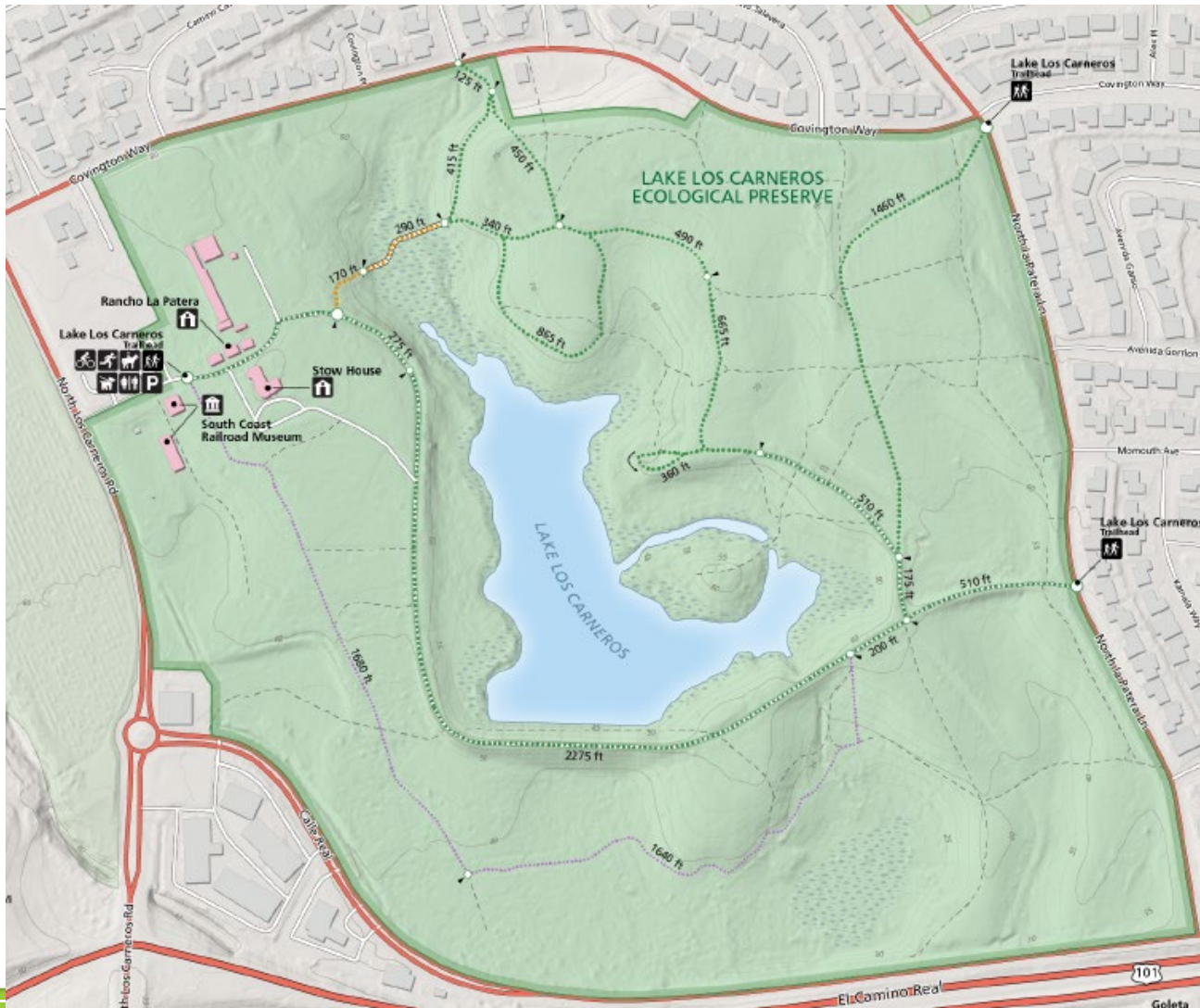
Ellwood North Monarch Butterfly Grove



Coastal Clean Up Day 2021



Lake Los Carneros



Lake Los Carneros

