

From: [Board Of Supervisors](#)
To: [Jesseka Rodriguez](#)
Subject: Fwd: Moran Lake Monarch Habitat Updates
Date: Friday, May 9, 2025 2:26:03 PM
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

From: paige gordon <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Friday, May 2, 2025 8:49 AM
To: Robert Tidmore <Robert.Tidmore@santacruzcountyca.gov>
Cc: Rebecca Hurley <Rebecca.Hurley@santacruzcountyca.gov>; Carolyn Burke <Carolyn.Burke@santacruzcountyca.gov>; Beatriz Barranco <Beatriz.Barranco@santacruzcountyca.gov>; First District <First.District@santacruzcountyca.gov>; Tiffany Martinez <Tiffany.Martinez@santacruzcountyca.gov>; Manu Koenig <Manu.Koenig@santacruzcountyca.gov>; Justin Cummings <Justin.Cummings@santacruzcountyca.gov>; Board Of Supervisors <boardofsupervisors@santacruzcountyca.gov>; Jesse Williams <Jesse.Williams@santacruzcountyca.gov>
Subject: Re: Moran Lake Monarch Habitat Updates

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Dear Robert,

I am writing to formally raise significant safety concerns regarding Lewis Tree Service, particularly given their upcoming proposed tree work around Moran Lake. Last Winter and Spring, I have personally witnessed multiple serious safety violations by Lewis Tree employees, incidents which pose real questions about their fitness to carry out further work for the County Parks department.

Specifically, I would like to highlight the following incidents:

- **February 14, 2024:** I alerted the Parks Department about Lewis Tree employees conducting tree removal in an unsafe manner. While Parks responded and assured me their supervisor indicated protocols were followed, the supervisor did not physically

come to inspect the site or processes.

- **February 15, 2024:** Lewis Tree continued to improperly fell trees. They improperly fell a tree from its base without appropriate segmenting. The tree fell across East Cliff Drive, downed a telephone pole, and dangerously involved live electrical wires. Shockingly, Lewis workers then proceeded to cut the downed tree branches despite the wires remaining live. Neighbors had to call 911. I urgently alerted the Parks Department and personally moved my car to block the walking path for public safety until Parks employees arrived.
- **February 17, 2024:** I again informed Parks about unsafe and sloppy work practices, providing clear video evidence (attached) of a large branch improperly left dangling, causing another tree to become destabilized, creating a hazardous situation near my property.
- **April 3, 2024:** I reported Lewis employees using their excavator dangerously, relying solely on hydraulic mechanisms to lift a tree base while exiting the cab with the machinery still active—a major OSHA violation.(attached)

These repeated incidents highlight an ongoing pattern of safety negligence by Lewis Tree Service. Frankly, I am growing weary of continually foreshadowing potential catastrophes and highlighting safety risks, only to see minimal or no corrective actions taken.

Given these alarming and consistent safety violations, I have serious concerns and questions about the decision to award Lewis Tree the upcoming contract for the Moran Lake tree trimming. I firmly believe the Board of Supervisors should thoroughly examine and address these documented safety issues before approving any further contracts to Lewis Tree Service:

1. How was Lewis Tree Service selected for this contract, especially in light of their documented safety lapses?
2. Has Lewis Tree Service provided assurances or evidence to County Parks that they have addressed and corrected their safety procedures since these incidents?
3. Is the Board of Supervisors fully informed about these repeated safety breaches by Lewis Tree Service before approving any further contracts?
4. Are there specific county codes or guidelines concerning awarding contracts to companies with a documented history of safety violations?

I've been requesting clarity on the process by which Lewis Tree continues to secure these contracts with Parks for approximately four years without receiving satisfactory answers. Given the gravity of these incidents, it is crucial that transparency, accountability, and public safety be prioritized.

I urge County Parks and the Board of Supervisors to thoroughly reassess the selection of Lewis Tree Service for this work and ensure comprehensive safety measures are unequivocally in place before any further work is conducted.

Thank you for your immediate attention to this urgent matter.

Respectfully,

Paige Gordon



Santa Cruz Ca 95062

On Thu, May 1, 2025 at 5:13 PM Robert Tidmore <Robert.Tidmore@santacruzcountyca.gov> wrote:

Dear Moran Lake County Park Neighbors, Interested Residents, and Stakeholders,

We are excited to share several updates on management of the monarch butterfly habitat around Moran Lake County Park below. As many of you know, County Parks, in partnership with the Santa Cruz County Sanitation District, is updating the 2010 Moran Lake Monarch Butterfly Habitat Management Plan (MBMHP) to reflect the latest science and guidance on overwintering monarch habitat. The plan will be used to guide management activities in the park. A community meeting to review a draft of the updated MBHMP was held in July 2024 and public comments were taken on the plan through the end of August. Many of the comments requested that the MBHMP include a greater focus on tree management to protect public safety and prevent tree failures, and a better understanding of the relationship between tree height and monarch habitat protection.

In response to community feedback, the team completed a wind study in April 2025. The goal of the wind study was to identify tree management strategies that could reduce the risk of tree failure while protecting monarch habitat. The wind study analyzed how the existing tree canopy surrounding the Lode Street Facility and Moran Lake County Park protects the Monarch overwintering habitat from wind impacts, and how those conditions would change under various tree management scenarios. The wind study found that the tree canopy surrounding Moran Lake (areas A1, A2, B, and C in the graphic below) could be removed or reduced in height without impacting overwintering habitat, and that trees within the critical windbreak along Placer Street (area H in the graphic below) could be reduced to an 80-foot-height without impacting overwintering habitat. The consultant team is working on an additional analysis to determine whether selective trees in the critical windbreak could be removed to allow for replanting of a better-suited species and a phased replacement of the blue gum eucalyptus in this area over the long-term.

[Link: Draft Wind Study - Moran Lake Monarch Butterfly Habitat and Tree Management Assessment April 2025](#)

Figure 5 Monarch Butterfly Roost and Windbreak Areas



A community meeting to present the findings of the wind study will be held at 5:30pm on Tuesday, June 24, 2025 at the Live Oak Community Center, 979 17th Avenue, Santa Cruz. After the community meeting, and based on community input, the project team will incorporate the wind study into the updated MBHMP in Summer 2025.

Based on the wind study data, County Parks is planning to conduct trimming of all the trees along the north and west banks of Moran Lake (North and South Lakeside, areas B and C) to reduce their overall height by roughly one-third as well as removal of the remaining trees on the 40 Moran Way Parcel (area A1) starting May 15, 2025. This work is expected to improve public safety and reduce the risk of tree failure while protecting the long-term viability of monarch habitat. A contract with Lewis Tree Service to conduct the work will be taken to the Board of Supervisors for approval on May 6, 2025. The upcoming tree work is science-based and is part of our ongoing efforts to manage monarch habitat at Moran Lake and increase climate resilience of this neighborhood treasure. Any trees removed will be replaced with native tree species that support local biodiversity and monarch habitat. Replacement tree planting will happen in Fall 2025.

after the onset of winter rains.

The County is working with a finite budget for tree management and is proposing to prioritize trimming of the trees in the North and South Lakeside areas (areas B and C) and removal of the remaining trees on the 40 Moran Way parcel (area A1) because trees in those areas are closest to recent failures in February 2024 or have been recommended for trimming or removal by the County's consulting arborist. The critical windbreak along Placer Street (area H) is not included in this summer's tree management work because many of the trees in this area were trimmed by the Sanitation District in Summer 2024. Additional tree management work is planned for next summer and is expected to include the Placer Street edge. The southeast groves (area A2) are not included in this summer's tree management work because many of the trees are on private property.

County Parks' proposed long-term plan for Moran Lake County Park is to eventually phase-out the non-native blue gum eucalyptus trees that surround Moran Lake and replace them with more suitable native tree species that support native biodiversity, enhance riparian habitat in addition to monarch habitat, are resilient to climate change, and do not grow as tall as the blue gum eucalyptus. The eucalyptus grove surrounding the Sanitation District where the monarchs overwinter is much more sensitive to disruption and will not be modified. To support the proposed long-term transition away from eucalyptus, County Parks hosted a volunteer tree planting day on December 7, 2024. Approximately 30 volunteers helped to plant 64 native trees (53 Monterey Cypress and 11 White Alders). The trees were planted along the north and southeast banks of Moran Lake, in areas identified for tree planting in the Monarch Habitat Management Plan. Additional native trees will be planted this fall and in future years.

The July 2024 draft update of the Moran Lake Monarch Butterfly Habitat Management Plan can be viewed or downloaded below:

- [*Draft 2024 Moran Lake Monarch Butterfly Habitat Management Plan \(no appendices\)*](#)
- [*Draft 2024 Moran Lake Monarch Butterfly Habitat Management Plan with appendices*](#)

We hope to see you at our upcoming community meeting on Tuesday, June 24th!

Rob Tidmore (he/him)

Principal Planner

Santa Cruz County Parks

979 17th Avenue, Santa Cruz

831.454.7947 / parks.santacruzcountyca.gov

The Parks Office is open Monday – Friday from 9am–4pm except [holidays](#).