

#44
5/6/2025

Attachment 1 to Michael Guth comments of Moran Lake Existing Condition Report, dated September 2022, and the Moran Lake Monarch Butterfly Habitat Plan Update, draft dated March 2023

Extensive tree canopy still in place - 1990





Approximate areas of tree planting on December 7, 2024.

Example of one of the inexcusably delayed, required, mitigation replantings:

CALIFORNIA COASTAL COMMISSION

CENTRAL COAST DISTRICT OFFICE
725 FRONT STREET, SUITE 300
SANTA CRUZ, CA 95060
(831) 427-4863

Th10b



RECORD PACKET COPY

Filed: 4/3/2001
Hearing opened: 5/7/2001
49th day: 5/22/2001
Staff: D. Carl
Staff report prepared: 6/28/2001
Hearing date: 7/12/2001
Hearing item number: Th10b

**APPEAL STAFF REPORT
SUBSTANTIAL ISSUE DETERMINATION**

Appeal number A-3-SCO-01-034, Rogers Subdivision and SFDs
Applicants Peter and James Rogers
Appellant Charles Paulden
Local government Santa Cruz County
Local decision Approved with conditions (March 14, 2001)
Project location Inland side of East Cliff Drive (between East Cliff Drive and Moran Way adjacent to Moran Lake) in the Pleasure Point region of the unincorporated Live Oak area of Santa Cruz County (APN 028-302-02).

40 trees:

The site is located near an important Monarch butterfly habitat (the habitat is located roughly ¼ mile inland from the site), but the trees on the subject site are not part of this habitat; rather, the trees here act as a secondary windbreak for the primary windbreak for the inland habitat area (i.e., twice removed from the actual habitat area). Although the Applicant would remove 5 trees on site to allow for the development, the 5 trees are the farthest away from the habitat area, the remainder of on-site trees would be placed under permanent conservation easement, and the County has required that 40 trees be planted inland nearer to the habitat to enhance the actual habitat area (an 8:1 mitigation ratio). The Commission's senior biologist has visited the site and concurs with the County biologist and the Applicant's consulting biologist that the tree removal proposed would not degrade the inland habitat area, and that the replacement trees required will enhance habitat values from what currently exists. The partial coastal view of the tree canopy of the site from the beach and ocean will not be significantly altered and the continued use of the public recreational trail adjacent will not be compromised. Water quality BMPs (pervious pavers, retention of existing understory, drop inlet filters, etc.) should ensure that runoff from the site does not adversely impact recreational and habitat resources of the Sanctuary and Moran Lake.

Clarification:

Note that on this point the County's conditions were unclear in that the condition text required conformance with the consulting biologist's mitigation plan, but the condition text described replanting with 20 trees while the mitigation plan describes 40 (County Condition 4.C, see pages D-16 through D-31 of exhibit D for the County conditions. See exhibit I for the subject monarch butterfly reports). Commission staff has since discussed this issue with both the Applicant and the County to clarify the intent of the conditions and how they would be implemented. Both the County and the Applicant indicate that 40 mitigation trees was their understanding of the requirement. As such, the requirement for consistency with the mitigation plan (describing the 40 tree mitigation) shall govern in this case (personal communications between Coastal Planner Dan Carl and the Applicant, and between Dan Carl and County Planner Melissa Allen on June 26, 2001).

Michael A. Guth

Document history for East Cliff Drive parcel acquisition, for windbreak for Monarch Habitat:

Jan Beautz
Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors

Mike Guth
2-2905 East Cliff Drive
Santa Cruz, CA 95062

12/28/00

Re: Parks / Open Space Designation for Parcel APN 028-302-04

Dear Ms. Beautz,

This letter is to formally request that you support beginning the process of designating the above mentioned parcel as appropriate for conservation as open space. I understand that this process can not begin unless the Board of Supervisors allows it to proceed forward. With this designation, I plan to seek out private funds for the parcel's acquisition for the county. I urge you to seek this approval from the Board, and believe that this is justified based on the following considerations.

Moran Lake and Corcoran Lagoon characterize the local area in their combination of open water and trees. Just as West Cliff has its Lighthouse Field, these two areas define the local area as unique in its combination of reasonable development and preservation of undeveloped area. The large eucalyptus that surround Moran Lake provide a community landmark that can be seen easily from Main Beach or from boats on the ocean. In a sense they define Pleasure Point in this way. They also act as a gateway to the neighborhood for drivers along East Cliff. The local micro-climate is very favorably affected by these trees, as they act as windbreak to protect the neighborhoods from the strong ocean breezes. Moran Lake is also habitat to a large over-wintering population of Monarch butterflies, which benefit from the windbreak provided by these trees along the ocean.

Michael A. Guth

For protection of the Monarch butterfly habitat:



County of Santa Cruz

PLANNING DEPARTMENT

701 OCEAN STREET, 4TH FLOOR, SANTA CRUZ, CA 95060
(831) 454-2580 FAX: (831) 454-2131 TDD: (831) 454-2123

ALVIN D. JAMES, DIRECTOR

March 13, 2001

AGENDA: March 28, 2001

Planning Commission
County of Santa Cruz
701 Ocean Street
Santa Cruz, California 95060

SUBJECT: PUBLIC HEARING TO CONSIDER AMENDMENTS TO THE GENERAL PLAN/LOCAL COASTAL PROGRAM LAND USE AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN TO DESIGNATE APN 28-302-04 AS A FUTURE LOCAL PARK SITE

Commissioners

On February 6, 2001, the Board of Supervisors considered a report by the Planning Department regarding the process and timeline for designating the property referenced above as a future park site. This report was prompted by Supervisor Beautz in response to neighborhood concerns related to the need to protect the remaining Monarch butterfly wintering habitat in the Moran Lake area of Live Oak (Exhibit G). The Board, following review of the report, directed Planning staff to process the amendment so that it could be included in the first round of LCP amendments for 2001 (Exhibit F).

Site Description

The site, located on the west side of East Cliff Drive, at the corner of Lake Avenue/Moran Way, is a level piece of land with numerous Eucalyptus trees scattered throughout the 33,018 square feet of the parcel (Exhibit E). The property was listed as a park site in the 1978 Live Oak General Plan, the 1980 General Plan and in the 1983 Local Coastal Program. It was deleted from the

Michael A. Guth

Funding:

Implementation Plan

for the

Live Oak/Soquel Project Area

2005-2009

Redevelopment Agency of the County of Santa Cruz

Adopted: December 14, 2004

Resolution No. 404-2004

Amendment Adopted: January 10, 2006

Resolution No.12- 2006

Amendment Adopted: November 20, 2007

Resolution No. 334-2007

SANTA CRUZ COUNTY REDEVELOPMENT AGENCY

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

facilities address the long-standing shortage of public recreation and cultural facilities in the Project Area, and meet the growing needs of the area's expanding population and community groups. This ongoing program provides for acquisition and development of a variety of new and expanded public recreational and cultural facility opportunities. Specific projects in the next five years may include, but are not limited to, Chanticleer Avenue Park (development), Felt Street Park (development), Soquel Community Center and Tee Street Park, also known as the Farm (development), Floral Park (renovation), Moran Way (acquisition), 7th Avenue and Brommer Street (acquisition), Rodriguez Park site (acquisition), Maciel park site (acquisition), the "Road House" at 2-3905 East Cliff Drive (possible acquisition), Moran Lake Park improvements and habitat enhancement, the East Cliff Drive pedestrian and bicycle path in Pleasure Point, beach access, lateral access and parking improvements at Twin Lakes Beach, and parking lot expansion and hillside slide replacement at Anna Jean Cummings Park, and renovations at the Simpkins Family Swim Center.

3/26/2011 Emergency tree removal of a tree at East Cliff Drive parcel after adjacent tree had fallen – unusual wind event with over 2 hours of 50mph sustained winds; all of these large trees are now gone

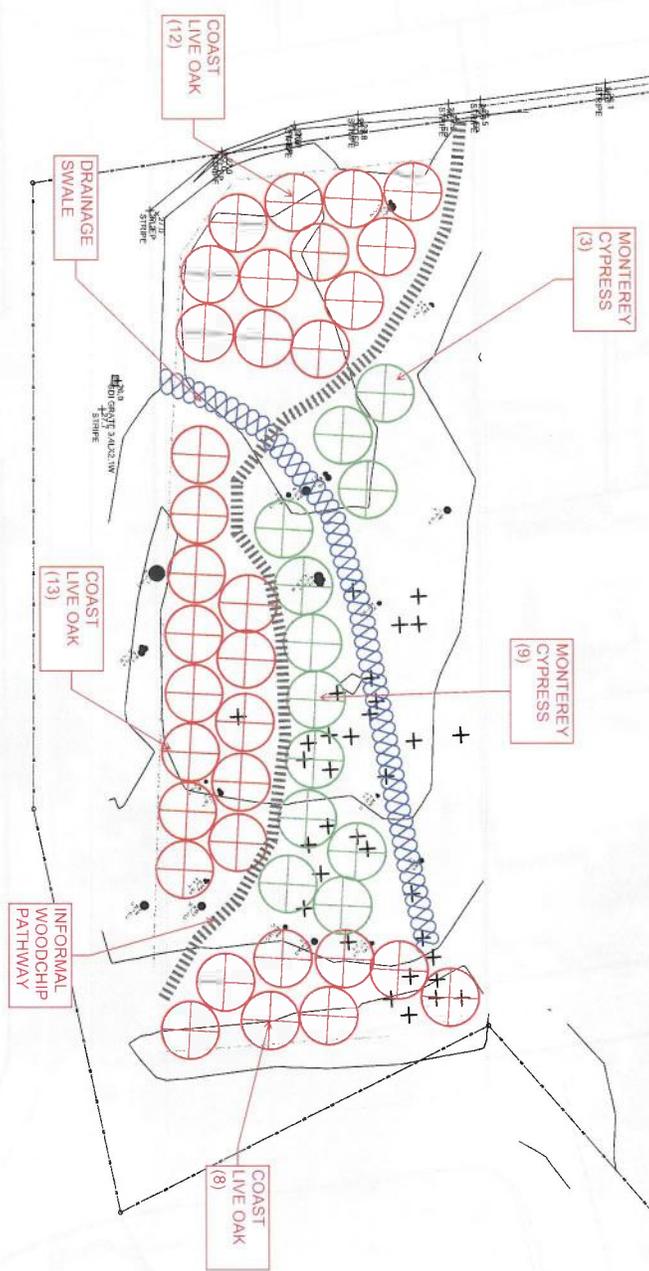


Subsequently, 7 trees were removed. Parks held onsite meeting with Director Betsey Lindbergh, Supervisor John Leopold, Parks tree person Gretchen Isliff (sp ?); **with posted notice stating that 3:1 replacement onsite for these trees were to be planted; never planted.**

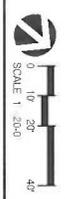
Parks has since at least twice more removed trees here; and as they are in the mapped habitat such actions are required to have biotic assessment, referral to Environmental Coordinator for approval and mitigation, posted notice of determination, which is subject to appeal. This required process was not followed.

16.32 Sensitive Habitat Protection; 16.32.040, tree removal is a "development activity" under that code as it is "the disturbance of any rare, endangered, or locally unique plant or animal or its habitat." It is in a mapped habitat. Biotic assessment is required under County Code 16.32.070. A submittal is required, prepared per the requirements of 16.32.080. Then, if approved, conditions of approval shall be determined by the Environmental Coordinator (under 16.32.090(A)), and "All development shall mitigate significant environmental impacts", (under 16.32.090(B)). Which should be onsite 3:1 replacement planting - it would be hard to justify deviation from standard mitigation practice.

DRAFT



DRAFT LAYOUT - PLAN WILL BE UPDATED BASED UPON FIELD CONDITIONS, AND VERIFYING FINAL ALIGNMENT AND LOCATION OF DRAINAGE SWALE NOT FOR CONSTRUCTION



SHEET NUMBER: 1 <small>OF 1 SHEETS</small>	SHEET TITLE: 40 MORAN WAY	SCALE: 1"=10'-0"	DATE: 4-25-2025 CHECKED: RT DRAWN: MP	MORAN LAKE COUNTY PARK TREE DATA 22775 E CLIFF DR, SANTA CRUZ SANTA CRUZ COUNTY, CALIFORNIA APN: 02848101, 02828132, 02829149, 28445101	COUNTY OF SANTA CRUZ PARKS, OPEN SPACE & CULTURAL SERVICES 979 SEVENTEENTH AVENUE SANTA CRUZ, CALIFORNIA 95062 TEL. 831-454-7901 FAX 831-454-7940 JEFF GAFFNEY DIRECTOR		COUNTY SEAL	REVISIONS:
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SANTA CRUZ COUNTY GROUP

of the Ventana Chapter

P.O. Box 604, Santa Cruz, CA 95061

EMAIL: sierraclubsantacruz@gmail.com

WEB: www.sierraclub.org/ventana/santa-cruz

Supervisor Manu Koenig
Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors
701 Ocean Street
Santa Cruz, CA 95060

October 22, 2024

RE: Parcel at 40 Moran Way

Dear Supervisor Koenig,

As you may be aware, Sierra Club sent a comment letter to Santa Cruz County Parks Department on August 11, 2024 regarding the updated Moran Lake Butterfly Habitat Management Plan Update. We were generally supportive of the Plan, and appreciate your efforts to encourage County Parks to re-open the original Draft Update last fall. We would like to follow up with you concerning the adjacent county-owned parcel (APN 028-302-04, acquired in 2008 and rezoned to PR-PP in 2011) at 40 Moran Way, bordering East Cliff Drive. After a recent visit, it's clear that there has been substantial unplanned loss of trees. We urge you to work with County Parks to retain the remaining trees on the 40 Moran Way lot. , We do understand that the parcel's drainage, particularly in the center where water ponds and the soil has been heavily compacted by machinery, is inadequate.

The Sierra Club's view is that the remaining eucalyptus trees on the 40 Moran Way parcel have significant value as Monarch butterfly habitat, as a neighborhood greenspace, and as a windbreak, and we strongly urge the County to retain the remaining trees. We also strongly urge that the County replant the parcel with trees to further expand its utility as a Monarch habitat and for wind protection. The updated Management Plan, per communication from John Dayton, notes that the Southeast Grove is currently "too open to wind and sun to support roosting monarchs in the fall". Our perspective is that the county should invest in the future stability of its Monarch butterfly populations by replanting trees in these areas rather than diminishing the amount of tree cover. 2023 saw a remarkable return in Monarchs, rising to a count of 13,000 across the county after a historic low of 2,000 in 2020. This is a positive development, worth safeguarding with careful habitat restoration and preservation. The Sierra Club would like to discuss solutions for the restoration of Moran Lake with you, and with the County Parks Department.

Of particular note at 40 Moran Way are the three largest trees bordering the perimeter, looking east along East Cliff Drive, marked #3013, #3014 and #3054, which are sited at a higher elevation, are less impacted by drainage concerns, and have been observed to host some of the overwintering Monarch population. These trees have been designated as healthy in the Initial Conditions Report appendix to the Management Plan update. This parcel was acquired by the county to provide wind protection, as noted in the 2024 Moran Lake Monarch Butterfly Habitat Management Plan Update (4.4.3). The eucalyptus on 40 Moran Way have been topped after recent tree falls; this significantly reduces the risk of future falls, while allowing preservation of the

remaining trees. Again, we strongly urge that these remaining trees be retained as other work proceeds on this lot.

Moran Lake County Park and the surrounding neighborhood hosts a significant portion (approximately 3%) of the West Coast's overwintering Monarch population; and although the area's eucalyptus trees are not native, they provide valuable wind shelters, roosts, and nectar for the butterflies. Removing them without successive replacement plantings of trees, native or otherwise, reduces the capacity of the Moran Lake area to provide habitat for this overwintering population. Nectar garden shrubs or annuals alone are not sufficient, even if they provide food, as the butterflies need height for both safety and sheltering. In the fall of 2023 I had a brief discussion with Rob Tidmore from Parks, Mike Guth, and John Dayton at the upper roost area regarding the timing and species of replacement plantings such as Monterey Cypress, with work beginning in fall of 2024.

The current drainage problems at 40 Moran Way appear to have been caused by the removal of downed trees, water ponding and soil disturbance, and the related past storage of heavy equipment on site causing compaction, creating low spots. Our three site visits in September did not show any drainage onto the 40 Moran Way property from adjacent roads, and we did not observe any plants such as curly dock or rushes which may indicate long standing drainage issues. Lateral drainage may have been affected by roadway changes undertaken by Public Works. It is worthy of note that County Parks originally, 16 years ago, blamed their delay in planting the first 21 mitigation trees on this corner on the lot being too dry to sustain new plantings!

The county acquired the parcel at 40 Moran Way 16 years ago in order to provide a windbreak for the neighborhood and offer further shelter for Monarch overwintering, but management of the site has not been appropriate for these goals, particularly in regard to the arborist's report of seven years ago advising that the trees be bound and topped, which was not done. We believe that in light of the value of the remaining trees to the habitat, and to the region as a visual resource, and in light of the trees lining the first road along the coast, that these trees should not be removed reflexively. We would like to hear directly from the County or the County's consultant regarding any proposed removal of the remaining trees, and strongly suggest a site examination by an independent arborist. Again, the tree map of this parcel designates the afore-mentioned trees as healthy.

We look forward to continuing this discussion with you, and with the County Parks Department.

Sincerely,

Kristen Sandel
Sierra Club Santa Cruz Group

cc:
Robert Tidmore, Santa Cruz County Parks