

Jennifer Blackman

From: Emma Pelton <emma.pelton@xerces.org>
Sent: Thursday, August 17, 2023 1:19 PM
To: Jennifer Blackman
Cc: Mia Monroe; Matt Richmond (richmond@wra-ca.com); Jack Siedman; Kevin McElroy
Subject: Re: [EXTERNAL] Thoughts on Butterfly Habitat in Zone 5 (2915)

Hi Jennifer and all,

I very much appreciated listening in to last night's meeting. I put together a few thoughts (below) which I also shared with David Ainley via email. Thank you for considering my comments at your meeting and for the board's thoughtfulness on this topic. While I don't agree with the board's decision, I respect the process and hope that this can be the beginning of a compromise.

From my perspective there can still be a path forward to address the community safety concerns and protect & improve monarch overwintering habitat at the Mesa Road BPUD property. Xerces, Mia Monroe, as well as State Parks, private landowners, other monarch consultants (like Stu Weiss of Creekside Science), and many others are actively engaging in this balance at other sites along the coast, so there is power in finding common ground and learning from other sites and communities. What happened to the couple in the car is horrible and making sure that future risk of that is minimized is of course of utmost importance. Safety trimming and hazard tree removal along roads, pedestrian paths, and powerlines are common sense and seems actionable in the short-term. Medium term there could be finding ways to reduce fire risk such as understory fuels management, selective thinning, closing/rerouting paths, burying powerlines, selective irrigation, integrating native plant components are all ideas we're thinking of and trying to various degrees. At the heart of it, any one grove may *appear* expendable, but that's the sort of thinking that has gotten us where we are today: more and more groves are cut and they are not being replaced. Partially this is because we don't yet understand how to truly mitigate: we don't have examples of someone planting new tree groves and monarchs showing up.

Thus, I think the ESHA hurdles ahead are very real for the total grove removal plan so it behooves everyone to work together to think of win-win options in order for time, money, and patience not to be squandered. We've seen other communities gridlocked about what to do in cases like these and in the meantime groves decline further to both the detriment of community safety and monarch habitat. I hope a different story can be written in Bolinas and I heard a lot of voices last night that seemed to want to move forward with action while continuing to try and collaborate.

As for the Bolinas "complex" noted during last night's meeting, its is a concept that a monarch overwintering habitat mapping working group I co-lead with the USFWS has been incorporating into our mapping concepts, but it's also a little bit of a sticky-wicket as the studies of monarch movement aren't quite definitive to say exactly how far grove number dynamics can be connected. Some studies have shown monarchs flying many miles. Here's a snapshot from our interactive map of habitat in Bolinas. I agree that thinking more holistically about how to improve monarch habitat overall in the Bolinas peninsula makes a lot of biological sense. I do not know if that argument will hold enough sway with the Marin County LCP or the California Coastal Commission for total grove removal of actively used monarch overwintering habitat in the coastal zone on public lands though...



I'm heading out on vacation, but look forward to continuing the conversation in the coming weeks and months. I greatly appreciate the active conversation on this topic and range of perspectives. It's a healthy discussion of what to do in a real conundrum of our time when climate change, non-native trees, and a native, declining, at-risk species interfaces with human communities. I also believe there are workable solutions.

Best,
Emma

On Tue, Aug 15, 2023 at 11:01 AM Emma Pelton <emma.pelton@xerces.org> wrote:
Attached. Thank you!

On Mon, Aug 14, 2023 at 6:21 PM Jennifer Blackman <jblackman@bcpud.org> wrote:

Hi Emma:

I don't have a word version of David's comments, only the pdf I sent you. An idea occurred to me, and that is to transcribe your comments into a word document you can then edit for accuracy – see attached. Please note that there are several places where your note on the pdf is cut off such that I could not see the entire note.

If you are comfortable doing so, please review/correct the attached word document and I will then provide it to the Board as a supplement to the pdf (explaining that your notes have been separately transcribed for ease of reference).

Many thanks,