

Ramirez, Angelica

Public Comment

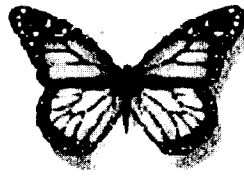
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**From:** Cynthia Brock <cjbrockca@cs.com>  
**Sent:** Monday, August 31, 2020 3:55 PM  
**To:** sbcob  
**Cc:** ana@lomcsb.com  
**Subject:** Caltrans Gaviota Culvert Project (Agenda Item #3)  
**Attachments:** FOTEM letter to Board (8-28-20).pdf

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# Friends of the Ellwood Monarchs



August 28, 2020

Board of Supervisors  
Santa Barbara County  
105 East Anapamu Street  
Santa Barbara, CA 93101

RE: Caltrans Gaviota Culvert Project (Agenda Item #3)

Dear Chair Hart and Supervisors:

Friends of the Ellwood Monarchs (FOTEM) is a community group formed in response to various threats to the environmentally sensitive monarch butterfly habitat in Goleta's Ellwood Mesa Open Space. The western monarch population has reached historic and critically low levels, with counts for the past two years showing population numbers ***below the projected threshold for collapse of the western monarch migration***. (<https://xerces.org/press/western-monarch-butterfly-population-still-at-critical-level>). So while our focus is generally on the Ellwood area, we recognize that recovery of the western monarch population depends on protection of all aggregation sites throughout the region.

The Gaviota Culvert Project's off-site mitigation proposal in Refugio Creek is located immediately south of the center of the El Rancho Refugio monarch aggregation site, identified in Meade et al, *Monarch Butterfly Overwintering Sites, Santa Barbara, California*. (2018 Althouse and Meade, Inc.) as Site #111. This aggregation site occurs on stands of Western sycamore and willow along Refugio Creek, and while damage has occurred over the years, Dr. Meade's report confirms that the site is still used and the trees "are capable of supporting overwintering monarchs while their canopies are intact, through December."

Impacts to this monarch habitat from Caltrans' project must be evaluated and effective and enforceable mitigation measures must be developed and applied to ensure the aggregation is not damaged and that no work occurs during the season when monarchs may be present.

Respectfully Submitted,



Cynthia Brock  
Convener, Friends of the Ellwood Monarchs  
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