



# ELLWOOD MESA TRAIL CLOSURE INFORMATION

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Due to the large number of dead and dying trees, trails within the forest are temporarily closed for unsafe conditions including the potential for trees to fall without warning. Trails providing beach access outside the forest remain open.

**Why are there so many dead or dying trees?** There are four factors that have significantly contributed to the trees' decline — age, drought, temperature and pest infestation. As the trees on Ellwood Mesa have become stressed by extended drought, record high temperatures, and their age (reaching their life expectancy of 100 years), they have become more vulnerable to insects like the tortoise beetle and the eucalyptus longhorned borer.

**Is it safe for me to walk on the trails on Ellwood Mesa?** The bluff trails located away from the eucalyptus groves are safe and will remain open to the public. A map of closed trails will be posted on the City's website. Once they are safe for the public, they will be reopened. What areas will be closed? The City will prioritize removal of dead trees closest to public trails. The trails will be closed until tree removal and trimming can be completed and those areas are deemed safe by the City arborist and the City's insurance provider.

**When will trees be trimmed and cut down?** The tree trimming and removal will begin after the bird nesting season has ended, and will conclude by September 30 to not interfere with butterfly migration season. The priority will be given to the areas with the highest public traffic. All tree work will be overseen by biological monitors and other regulatory agency representatives to insure compliance with state and federal regulations.

**What will happen to the removed trees?** Trees will be removed from the Ellwood Mesa to reduce the threat of pest infestation to the remaining healthy trees. The wood from these trees may be used as firewood or be chipped.

**Will the butterfly grove be open for field trips this season?** This is still unknown. Access will likely be limited depending on progress of tree removal. Once tree removal is complete and butterfly overwintering areas are stable and deemed safe for the public, the plan is to reopen them to the public. Updates will be posted at <http://tinyurl.com/goletaellwoodmesa> and [www.GoletaButterflyGrove.com](http://www.GoletaButterflyGrove.com).

**What is the process for restoration?** The removal of the eucalyptus trees provides an opportunity for the community to provide input on the plan for restoration of the Ellwood Mesa. The existing eucalyptus forest, is non-native, lacks diversity, and is considered a monoculture that has crowded out other species. During the restoration planning process, the public will have the opportunity to give extensive input. The City will also be coordinating with the Coastal Commission and Fish and Wildlife.

Additional information, the presentation by the scientists to the City Council and more FAQs are posted on the City's website at <http://tinyurl.com/goletaellwoodmesa>. You can also sign up for email/text notifications there.



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