



**Statement Regarding Hammond's Meadow Weed Maintenance  
November 28, 2016**

**Work We're Doing Now**

We are currently working on reducing the amount of weeds on the site. These weeds are native to Europe and/or the Mediterranean region, but are not native to California. They often grow to as much as four or five feet tall. Although the weeds are green during the rainy season, they quickly die in the summer. These dead, brown and dried weeds not only are an eyesore, they are a serious fire hazard. The Montecito Fire Department has sent two letters asking that the weeds be controlled because of the fire hazard they present.

These weeds have taken over most of Hammond's Meadow, and have replaced native plants that used to grow there. Because the native plants have disappeared, so have most of the native insects and birds that used to inhabit the meadow. We are treating the weeds with a product that is made from orange peels. Certified organic farms also use this product because it is effective and organic. We are careful to avoid the small number of native plants on the meadow. We post notices on the edges of the meadow that tell the public when we will be spraying. We do this 3 days before we spray and we leave it up for 2 days afterward, consistent with County Integrated Pest Management policy. Once we have reduced the amount of weeds on the meadow, there will be room for native plants that provide food and shelter for native birds and insects.

We are not allowed to pull up weeds by hand because it would disturb the soil. Therefore, we are required to find alternative approaches to controlling the weeds. Weed whacking has proven to be somewhat ineffective, since the weeds re-sprout and ultimately produce seeds which perpetuates the problem. Organic weed killer works to eliminate the weeds when they first emerge after rainfall. Over time, this will reduce the amount of weed seed in the soil, which will make restoration of the native plants possible. This is a tried and true technique referred to as "grow and kill."

**Our Vision for the Future**

We envision transformation of the meadow to a meadow of native grasses and flowers, with scattered native shrubs that provide habitat for native California bees, butterflies and other beneficial insects, as well as nesting and foraging habitat for native birds. This will increase the habitat values of the meadow, and decrease the fire hazard, and increase the beauty of the place throughout the year.

**Gophers**

Gophers are numerous at the site. Gophers are a natural part of our ecosystem, so there is no need or desire to completely eliminate them from the meadow. The suggestion that plants should be planted in gopher holes is manifestly misguided. Any gardener will tell you that planting a plant in a gopher hole will not work. Clearly installing a plant in a gopher hole will result in the plant being eaten.

**Erosion**

The meadow is relatively flat and stable, so erosion from the main part of the meadow is not a huge concern. What is a concern is erosion from the steep bluff between the meadow and the beach. We addressed that last year by placing organic netting on the slope. In the future we hope to establish plants on the bluff that will slow down erosion. Prior to CIR beginning our work at the meadow, the bluff experienced serious erosion problems. So contrary to the assertion that we are creating a possible erosion problem, we have actually taken steps to reduce the erosion.