



DRAFT FOR REVIEW

City of Goleta Tree and Landscape Study November 15, 2017

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This study will be incorporated into the Citywide Historic Context Statement.

Goleta - Trees

Background/Introduction

This component of the Historic Context Statement comprises sites (trees in City rights-of-way, parks, schools, and open spaces) that were either developed prior to 1969 or otherwise held historic value. As part of our study, we drove the entire City and where access was available, walked these sites and photographed the trees. Historic Resources Group provided a map of the City of Goleta showing properties and neighborhoods coded by decade of development through 1969, and potential landscape features or sites of interest in the City. This study concentrated on these sites as well as those found during our travels through the City.

The purpose of this study is to document the presence of historic and heritage-quality tree species throughout the City, and encourage the preservation of those trees that have thus far resisted development around them. The objective of this report is to enhance the City's urban forest management efforts and provide awareness to this rich diversity of specimen trees.

Climate Overview

Goleta's climate and weather patterns are unsurpassed for an almost year-round growing season. The mild climate comprises high temperatures normally within ten degrees of 70° year-round; low temperatures rarely fall below 40°¹. Precipitation is negligible with an average (1941-2017) of 0.04 inches².

Sudden hot winds, locally referred to as "sundowners," can result in temperatures well over 100°, and are caused by high-pressure systems drawing dry air from the inland side of the Santa Ynez Mountains. Such winds can suddenly desiccate (dehydrate) plant material, especially plants that are unprotected from the strong winds and not recharged soon after by some form of application of water (rainfall or irrigation).

Historic drought conditions have beset the community's trees, most notably the planted and naturalized eucalyptus trees in the Ellwood Grove. A number of native California coast redwood trees, literal sentries in the Kellogg Park Residential District, are also not at peak performance. California native oaks and sycamores are prominent in Goleta's parks and historic spaces; the obvious success of these trees and those from similar climates (Mediterranean and Australian trees – jacaranda, *Brachychiton*, paperbark) attests to the

¹ Wikipedia, accessed April 1, 2017

² Weather Underground (www.wunderground.com), accessed April 1, 2017

sophistication of Goleta's preservation strategies and plant palette. The latter exhibit excellent health and appear to have withstood the many years of severe drought.

Street Tree Plantings

Public rights-of-way trees are typically planted in "parkways," the strip of land located between the sidewalk and curb. Parkways in Goleta can vary in width between 2 and about 10 feet, with the wider parkways supporting larger trees (e.g., American sweetgum). Goleta's street tree plantings were presumably launched as subdivisions were completed. Found throughout the world, street tree plantings are particularly appealing to homebuyers and those who gravitate toward an aesthetic only trees can provide. They provide way-finding, sense of place, shade, and habitat. Street layouts, particularly in the northeast section of town, are more rural in character and do not have a curb/gutter and sidewalk system; therefore there are no parkways. In these situations, public easements and parkways are rare – hence no regular form of street tree plantings.

Parkway plantings in Goleta give us a glimpse into the history of the City's urban forest and trees popular at the time of subdivision development.

Among the tree species in vogue at that time were American sweetgum (*Liquidambar styraciflua*), Indian laurel fig (*Ficus microcarpa*), Brazilian pepper (*Schinus terebinthifolius*), shamel ash (*Fraxinus uhdei*), and paper bark (*Melaleuca quinquenervia*). Different neighborhoods have their own unique patterns and associations of different species. The northeast residential neighborhoods east of Fairview are characterized by American sweetgum and shamel ash, while many of the north/south streets in the southwest residential area are planted primarily with queen palms and a lovely collection of blooming evergreen pears, and the El Encanto Heights Residential District contains a majority of shamel ash. Many of the streets in these neighborhoods have suffered attrition and the presence of a uniform planting is lacking.

Two notable street tree plantings are:

Lake Los Carneros North Residential District

Some of the most striking street tree plantings are in the Lake Los Carneros North Residential District. We attribute this to a predominance of one species (paperbark) and few vacant planting sites, with the trees exhibiting excellent health and high-quality maintenance. Camino Talavera had some of the oldest and noteworthy specimens we saw. These two species – paper bark and bottlebrush – are undoubtedly well suited to Goleta's environment. These

Australian species, along with lacebark (*Brachychiton discolor*), are abundant in the City's parks.

Orange Street

This planting – creating an allée – of queen palms (*Syagrus romanzoffianum*) is southern California at its most recognizable. Note the consistency and lack of empty planting sites. This is likely one of the oldest intact street tree plantings in the City.

Neighborhood Characteristics and Themes

Some of the original species (e.g., American sweetgum and shamel ash) have outgrown their planting sites and aggressive root systems have damaged hardscape and other infrastructure. Recognizing this, Goleta's urban foresters have interplanted with newly introduced, sometimes smaller species, such as Australian willow (*Geijera parviflora*). This is only effective when most or all of the vacant planting sites contain trees, there are no more than two species per block, and homeowners are dissuaded from planting other species in the parkways in front of their homes. Public education and outreach is clearly essential to maintaining consistency and uniformity.

The preponderance of one species throughout an entire neighborhood is referred to as a monoculture. The disadvantages of monocultural plantings are many-fold, the primary drawback being that a disease or pest epidemic could destroy an entire neighborhood.

In the last 25 years, designing streetscapes with an eye toward species, size class, and age diversity has become standard. Urban Forestry best management practices encourage, for example, limiting any genus to 10% of the total tree population (recommendations vary) to reduce the risk of damage from an epidemic of pests or disease. Although retaining uniformity in species per block or number of blocks is still an appropriate approach – and definitely more aesthetically pleasing – some cities are interplanting with different species. This is most effective in downtown areas, where large trees provide shade and presence, and smaller trees offer a more intimate scale and pleasant walking and shopping experience.

Goleta's Urban Forest Management Plan discourages this type of monoculture planting. Besides monocultural planting, streets can comprise mature mixed plantings, various ages/mixed plantings, or various ages/monoculture.

Individual Trees

Goleta has two (of 207) officially designated “California Big Trees” (a database maintained by the Urban Forest Ecosystems Institute at Cal Poly San Luis Obispo): a California sycamore (the “Sister Witness Tree”) and an Australian willow located at the Goleta Valley Community Center.

<http://californiabigtrees.calpoly.edu/>

By virtue of its status as a California native tree, the sycamore is also one of 769 national champions as set forth by American Forests. www.americanforests.org/

Parks and Open Space

Winchester Open Space I (p. 10)

This space is characterized by a grove of red gum (eucalyptus) and pine trees.

Winchester Open Space II (p. 11)

Characterized by mature paperbark, lacebark, and different species of eucalyptus.

Evergreen Park and Open Space (p. 12)

This well-maintained park contains a Frisbee-golf course, baseball and soccer fields. There are large multi-stemmed red gum (eucalyptus), stone pine, and coast live oak.

Bella Vista Park (p. 14)

This park contains many exotic species; the groves of Canary Island pines and olive trees are notable.

Lake Los Carneros Park (p. 18)

This public park, adjacent to the entrance to the Stow House, contains a windrow of red gum (eucalyptus), star pine, coral trees, lacebark (*Brachychiton*), sycamores, and coast live oak.

Stow Grove Park (p. 32)

Of particular note are the hedgerow of Victorian box in the parking lot, lacebark (*Brachychiton*), coast live oak, eucalyptus, coral tree, and California sycamore. Most of the coast redwoods are declining.

Stow Canyon Open Space (p. 39)

Coast live oaks, California sycamores, lacebark.

Berkeley Park and Kellogg Elementary School (p. 42)

Good examples of native California sycamore and coast live oak at the park, and a wonderful London plane tree specimen at the school.

The Ellwood Main Monarch Aggregation Site (Goleta Butterfly Grove) (p. 58)

This area is named after Ellwood Cooper, who settled in Goleta with his family in 1870. Cooper grew olives, walnuts, grapes, almonds, oranges, lemons, and Japanese persimmons on his large ranch. This created a very favorable setting for the yearly visitation of monarch butterflies to the region.³

Blue gums (*Eucalyptus globulus*) are considered the preferred trees for overwintering monarch butterflies. The past few years have seen the decline of many of the trees as a result of drought stress and associated pest infestation.

San Jose Creek Open Space (p. 60)

Lovely examples of mature coast live oak and California sycamore.

Old San Marcos Creek (p. 63)

Many mature exotic trees thrive in this space located between Kellogg Way and Pine Avenue, south of the Goleta Boys and Girls Club.

Other Notable Sites

6230 Stow Canyon Road (p. 40)

There are lovely examples of avocado, deodar cedar, and California sycamore at this residence – all likely date to the 1920s.

Barnsdall-Rio Grande Gas Station (p. 59)

There are lovely examples of old specimens of narrow-leaved paperbark (*Melaleuca linariifolia*) at this property.

Bishop Ranch (p. 15)

Although we were not granted access to Bishop Ranch, the large, skyline, heritage-quality trees are visible from Glen Annie Road. We feature a photograph of an English walnut tree, a remnant of the walnut groves that all succumbed to root rot and were replaced by citrus and avocado groves.

³ <http://www.goletabutterflygrove.com/>

Goleta Valley Community Center (Goleta Union High School) – p. 55

This facility is rich with mature plantings of jacaranda, melaleuca, deodar cedar, and the “California Big Tree” Australian willow.

Individual Tree Plantings and Street Tree Plantings (p. 65)

Please refer to these pages for captioned photographs.

Kellogg Ranch (p. 52)

There are many examples of heritage-quality coast live oak and coast redwood in this residential complex.

Lake Los Carneros Residential District (p. 16)

There are lovely examples of paperbark (*Melaleuca quinquenervia*) and Brazilian pepper (*Schinus terebinthifolius*) as street trees in this district. Both of these species perform well in Goleta.

Sister Witness Tree (p. 50)

On the northeastern edge of Old Town Goleta is the largest California sycamore tree ever measured anywhere on the planet. It is referred to locally as the Sister Witness tree, although there is no DNA evidence to support the connection. Located behind fencing on city-owned but not-yet-public property that is being planned for a new Old Town park, the tree is officially recognized as a National Champion Tree through American Forests. The tree is 94 feet tall with a trunk circumference of 52.2 feet and a canopy of 95.5 feet.⁴

Sexton House (p. 43)

The Sexton House in Goleta, California is a two-story Italianate style house that was built in 1880. It was designed by architect Peter J. Barber.

The original owner, Joseph Sexton, was a horticulturist who planted trees and shrubs on the property that, in 1991, partially screened the house from Hollister Avenue. Pacifica Suites Hotel was developed on the property as a hotel with 87 suites.⁵

⁴ Santa Barbara Independent, October 2, 2012

⁵ Wikipedia, accessed August 30, 2017

There is an exceptional collection of mature trees, including Queensland kauri, star pine, flame tree, Mexican blue palm, dragon tree, Canary Island date palm, Guadalupe palm, and Chilean wine palm.

Stow House (p. 20)

Excerpted from Goleta History:⁶

The founder of Rancho La Patera, William Whitney Stow, was legal counsel for the Southern Pacific Railroad and an influential political figure at the state level. Among his most notable achievements was the creation of Golden Gate Park in San Francisco.

This approximate 1,100-acre property comprises rich soils, and in the late 1890s supported lemon, almond, and walnut groves. Sherman Stow, William's son, a founding member of the Johnston Fruit Company, and his wife Ida had six children and began their life on one of California's most lovely historic ranches.

Later, during the tenure of Sherman's son, Edgar Stow (1915-1949) the ranch was expanded. Edgar played a leading role in helping to expand the area's citrus industry, as well as developing a disease resistant variety of lemon that subsequently was cultivated statewide.

The ranch stayed in the Stow (and later Van Horne) family until the 1960s. A portion of the property, La Patera Rancho, still operates as one of Goleta Valley's most productive ranches.

The collection of specimen, heritage-quality trees include titoki, lagunaria, star pine, eucalyptus, bunya-bunya, Moreton Bay chestnut, Victorian box, and an extraordinarily large eugenia (brush cherry).

California sycamore (*Platanus racemosa*) located in the patio of the Butler Event Center (p. 51)

"The Witness Tree, a 250-year old California sycamore located in the patio of the Butler Event Center on Hollister Avenue, was designated as a Historical Landmark prior to the City incorporating. The Witness Tree is actually a substitute: the original Witness Tree was cut down in the 1800s to build Hollister Avenue."

Source: State of the Goleta Urban Forest Report - Draft November 17, 2009

⁶ <http://www.goletahistory.org>

Orchard Plantings (p. 82)

The region is historically rich in agriculture and once supported English walnut, lemon, olive, and avocado trees. The walnuts succumbed to root rot and only individual remnants can be found. Citrus and avocados are widely planted.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Goleta's Urban Forest Management Plan sets forth a five-year policy framework for how trees within public areas will be managed.

The City has specific ordinances governing the protection of native trees in environmentally sensitive habitat areas (ESHA). The City's ordinances also provide legal support to City staff in dealing with public trees. The Plan hopes to establish the framework for policies that will be later incorporated into ordinances and regulations, and will also help provide staff direction administering the Plan.⁷

Individual trees may be considered important community resources because of unique or noteworthy characteristics or values. Such trees have been described in ordinances as *heritage*, *historic*, *landmark*, *legacy*, *special interest*, *significant*, or *specimen trees* or other terms (e.g., heritage oak, exceptional specimen tree). In some ordinances, trees are simply labeled protected trees (i.e., trees afforded protection by the ordinance). Regardless of the term used, the concept is the same: trees with certain characteristics are singled out for special consideration in the ordinance.⁸

The Plan contains a provision for nominating Heritage Trees. A tree may qualify as a Heritage Tree if it has a documented history that reflects Goleta's cultural heritage. Cultural heritage would include an association with or contribution to a historic structure, site, or street, or a connection to a person of historical note or some historic event. If adopted, a Heritage Tree would not be removed unless it is dead, dying, or in a dangerous/hazardous condition.⁹

Special status can also be recognized for tree size (trunk diameter, height, maximum canopy spread), tree species (the drooping melaleuca at the Goleta Valley Community Center is a rarely seen species in

⁷ City of Goleta Urban Forest Management Plan

⁸ <http://phytosphere.com/>

⁹ City of Goleta Urban Forest Management Plan

California), age, ecological value, or location.

Trees at the Stow House are watered by the Historical Society with City-supplied water. As with all other publicly owned trees, the City Arborist recommends care and the City conducts all maintenance activities.

The City can establish a process for conservation of trees in open spaces when creating or revising their ordinances. This kind of protection is usually instituted when land use intensifies, changes, or a discretionary permit is requested. Forest protection ordinances are available if the City wishes to establish such protection of these resources. The trees along the old San Marcos Creek (located between Kellogg Way and Pine Avenue, south of the Goleta Boys and Girls Club) would be ideal candidates for an open space conservation plan or ordinance.

The City of Goleta has an unparalleled collection of historic trees of every nature: landmark, heritage, legacy, specimen, and special interest. We applaud the community for developing a management plan that sets forth current industry standards for the management of public trees. With such other valuable tree resources in parks and open spaces, the opportunities for conservation and preservation are limitless.

Winchester Open Space I



Winchester Open Space II
83 Warwick Place, Goleta

Eucalyptus, paperbark



Eucalyptus, lacebark tree



Evergreen Park and Open Space (1995)
7524 Padova Drive, Goleta



Red river gum



Coast live oak

Coast live oaks; eucalyptus



Bella Vista Park
(Placer Drive and Mirano Drive)

Canary Island pines



Olive trees



Bishop Ranch
96 Glen Annie Road, Goleta
(no access)



Right: Remnant of walnut grove – all succumbed to root rot and were replaced by citrus and avocado groves.



Lake Los Carneros Residential District

Lovely examples of paperbark (*Melaleuca quinquenervia*) and Brazilian pepper (*Schinus terebinthifolius*)

paperbark



paperbark





paperbark



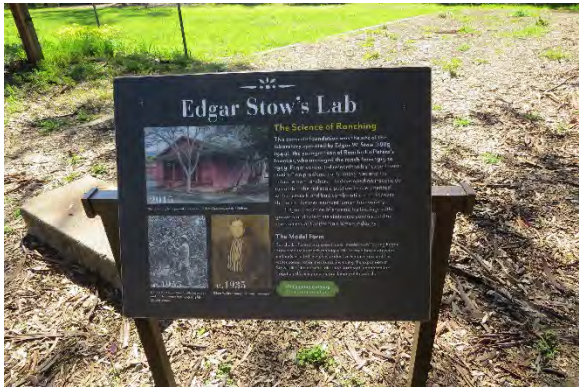
Brazilian pepper

paperbark

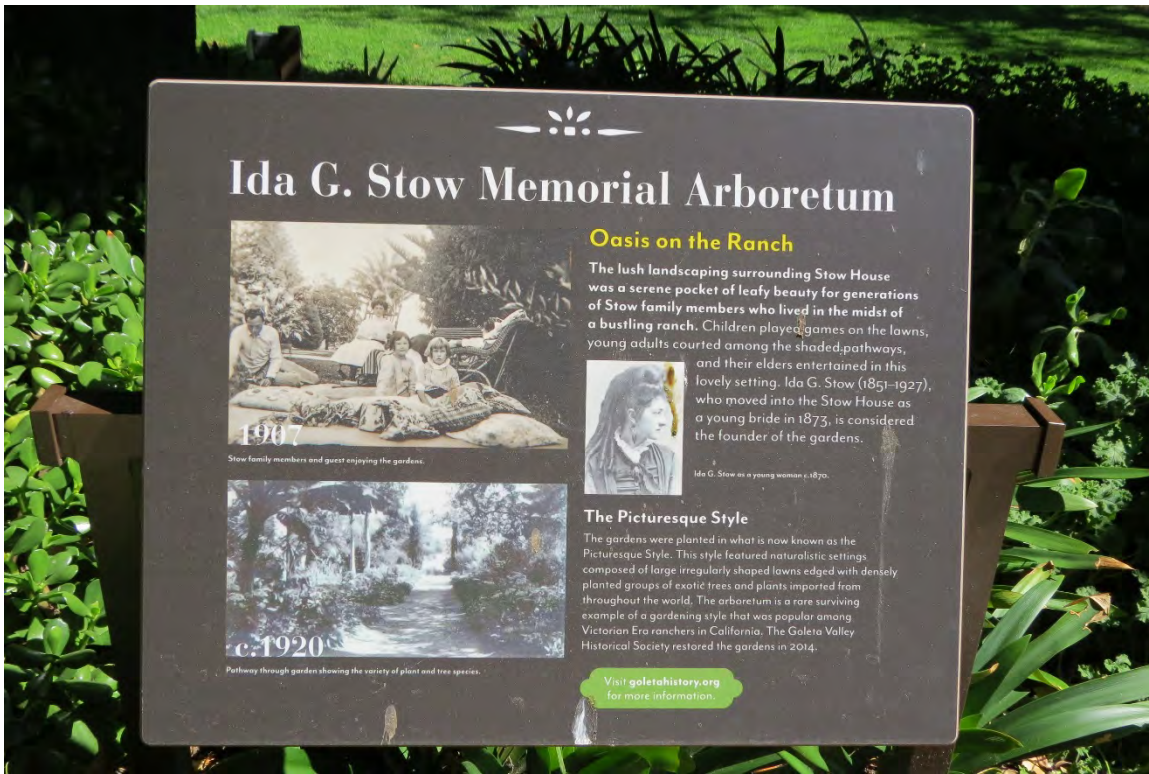
Lake Los Carneros Park
Examples of eucalyptus, star pine

Goleta Depot





Stow House - 1886
304 North Los Carneros Road, Goleta







eucalyptus



coast live oaks



coast live oaks



eucalyptus



facing back to the Stow House from the open space



Brush cherry – (*Syzygium australe*) – likely depicted in a 1890-1910 photograph
Nominated by Ken Knight in 2016. It measures 71 feet high, with a trunk circumference of 187 inches and a crown spread of 62 feet for a total of 274 points.
<http://californiabigtrees.calpoly.edu/tree-detail/syzygium-australe/424>



Titoki (*Alectryon excelsus*)
Australian tree – very rare in the United States



Left: Cow Itch or Primrose Tree (*Lagunaria pattersonii*) – likely planted 1913-1920
Right: Star Pine (*Araucaria heterophylla*) Probably circa 1880



Foreground: Chilean wine palm (*Jubea chilensis*) – late 19th or early 20th century
Right: Bunya-Bunya tree (*Araucaria bidwillii*) – 19th century



Monterey cypress (*Cupressus macrocarpa*) – Likely depicted in a circa 1890-1910 photograph



Red gum (*Eucalyptus camaldulensis*)



Left: Queen palm (*Syagrus romanzoffianum*) – early 20th century
Right: Coast redwood (*Sequoia sempervirens*) – Circa 1913-1920

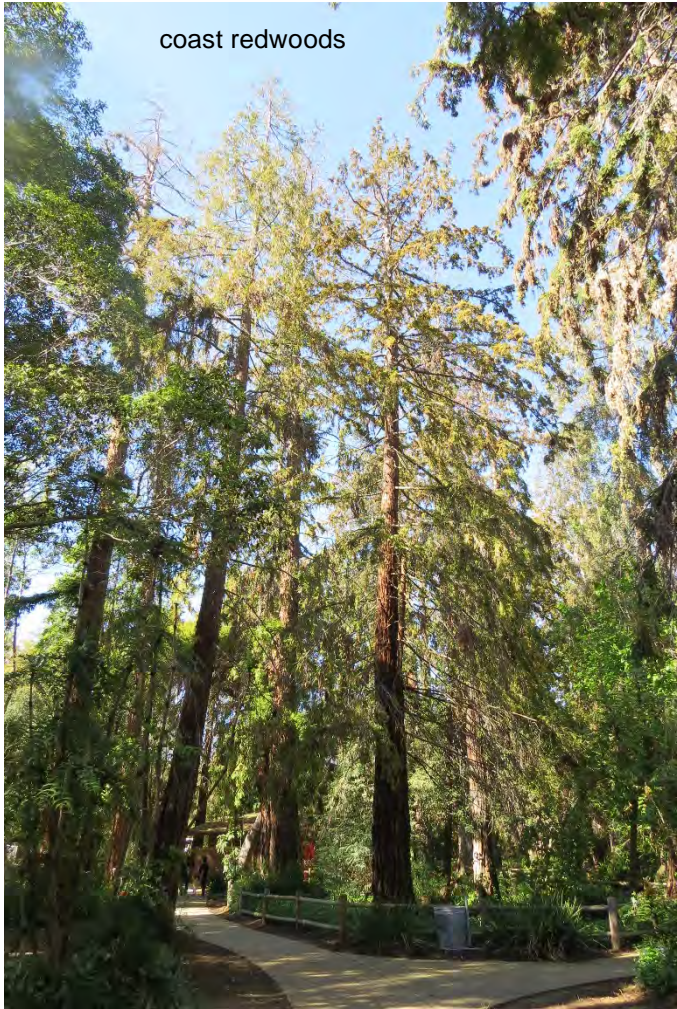


Stow Grove Park
580 North La Patera Lane, Goleta





coast redwoods, Victorian box



coast redwoods



California sycamore



California sycamore

coast redwoods



lacebark trees



coast live oak



coast live oak





coast redwoods, coast live oak



eucalyptus, lacebark



coral trees



coral tree, lacebark

Stow Canyon Open Space
Muirfield Drive and Valdez Avenue

coast live oaks, California sycamore, lacebark



coast live oaks, California sycamore, lacebark

