

8/20/03 – Santa Cruz Tarplant Recovery Workshop

Report on Fairway Drive Santa Cruz Tarplant Population – APN 040-431-05

1) Historic Population Numbers:

1989 – 5,000 (Randall Morgan) – actively grazed by horses

1993 – 1,500 (R. Morgan) – four years without grazing

1996/97 – 0 (R. Morgan) - 7 to 8 years without grazing

2000 - 200 (anonymous expert) – no management evident

2) Prescribed Management Actions:

Population historically occurred at an elevation of 400 feet on the flat section of the eastern ridge within an 18.83 acre Biotic Preservation Easement (APN 040-431-05) granted to the County of Santa Cruz in 1998 by the owners as Condition of Approval (Permit # 92-0811) for a nonstandard parcel subdivision. Included in this easement was a well written Biotic Management Plan (BMP) by Suzanne Schettler dated 1995/96 which was largely based on an earlier Biotic Report by R. Morgan dated September, 1993. This well written BMP states that based on 1993 and earlier surveys “ The tarplant - *Holocarpha macradenia* - and popcorn flower- *Plagiobothrys diffusus* - occur on the eastern ridge within one of the more intact stands of native coastal terrace prairie habitat remaining in the county.” Management actions recommended grazing as the best tool for controlling invasives and providing the favorable disturbance and compaction needed by tarplant. Mowing was less effective but periodic prescribed burns could increase effectiveness. Grazing was to be done between September and March and closely monitored for over-grazing. Mowing was to be done no later than the end of April. Highest priority was given to French broom removal including yearly follow up. Annual monitoring reports by a professional were to be sent to the county.

3) Actions to assure health:

There is no record of this BMP ever being carried out by the owners nor has the county responded to the apparent lack of any management to the Biotic Preservation Easement granted them. I have been contacting Santa Cruz county since early spring 2003 regarding this lack of compliance with a CEQA approved mitigation measure as well as their own Condition of Approval. The issue has gone to County code compliance and they have enough proof of a violation based solely on the lack of yearly monitoring reports for the last five years to issue a red tag during a proposed site visit slated for August 19, 2003.

Update on August 26: The head of the Home Owners Association (HOA) – the entity responsible for managing the site – has said he will do a 2003 survey but asked for 60 to 90 days to complete. This halted the red tag process. Based on a recommendation by R. Morgan, local botanist, and the fact that no monitoring has occurred for the last five years and as a member of the California Native Plant Society (CNPS) I have recommended that the county require that the HOA undertake a monitoring survey for tarplant ASAP. By October or November a count would be nearly worthless.

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