

CAMBRIA FOREST COMMITTEE: TO CONSERVE AND MANAGE THE NATIVE FOREST OF CAMBRIA

October 14, 2015. 6:30 PM

Cambria Rabobank, 1070 Main Street

A quorum was present: Directors Crosby and Laura Swartz, Alan Peters, Ralph Covell, Connie Gannon, Christine Heinrichs. Others in attendance: Mike Walgren, State Parks, Mel and Patricia Dorin, Galen Rathbun, Nancy Anderson, Vari MacNeil, Amanda Rice, Kathe Tanner, Jim Webb, Tony Church, Jim Gowdy and wife

Ask the Experts Question and Answer: Vari MacNeil raised a question about Blue Stain fungus. A neighbor had Paul Williams of Orkin out to examine her tree, which she reported has Blue Stain fungus. Vari said the tree appears healthy. Alan Peters said that Blue Stain fungus cannot be diagnosed from the exterior. He will research it and report at the next meeting.

Connie Gannon said two apparently healthy trees on Dovedale are tagged by the county for removal. Alan Peters of Cal Fire did not tag them. The group discussed the replanting requirements and ratio again. Christine Heinrichs will post current regulations to the web site and notify County Planner Airlin Singewald for comment.

Minutes of Previous Meeting were approved with one change, the date of the Cambria Community Council grant application is October 13, not 31.

Treasurer's Report: Laura Swartz: \$1,051.60, check cleared for sign posting materials. No other outstanding checks. Grant money left: \$195. Laura donated a gift card to Mike Coleman, who helped install the sign. Amanda Rice noted that web site hosting now costs \$25 a month and provision needs to be made to pay for it.

SubCommittee Reports

Pine Forest Interpretative Sign Installation: The interpretive sign is now in place, in time for the Scarecrow Festival.

Grant Application Cambria Community Council: Laura applied for \$1,200 for brochures for new residents, post cards, newspaper ads to inform the community, support the web site, improve the CFC's posting on the Historical Society kiosk.

Website Updates and Additions: Christine Heinrichs has posted the Forest Management Plan's implementation plan. Crosby asked for a donation form and volunteer sign-up form to be added. She and Amanda Rice will confer to accomplish that.

Forest Management

Cambria Forest Health Project Grant Application (Greenhouse Gas): The grant for \$498,000

was awarded to the county Fire Safe Council. The grant includes hiring a Forest Manager who will divide the forest into treatment units and apply treatments to them. CEQA planning is required. This is the initial step of the Forest Management Plan. The grant provides for a sawmill on Covell Ranch to create usable lumber from as many of the 20,000 dead trees there as possible. The companion GHG grant application for \$1.2 million has not been decided. The Western States grant application for \$300,000 has been forwarded to the next level, which usually confers approval but that has not been formally granted yet.

Ralph Covell reported that Cal Poly's evaluation of his ranch indicated that Monterey Pine regrowth is healthy. Mike Walgren of State Parks said that they may thin rather than replant to grow a healthy forest. State Parks has a summary plan spelling out their strategy.

Laura Swartz asked how the Forest Manager will be selected. Alan Peters said that Cal Poly will be included in the group, that a CEQA document will define the scope of work and what the activities will be. "This grant will be looking at things from a neutral perspective of the fire hazard," he said.

Funds should be available in January.

County Blanket Tree Removal and RePlanting Letter: Has not gone out as of meeting date.

Emergency Permit for CCSD Tree Removal. Regular Permit: Alan Peters and Cal Fire have done all first inspections and followed up with many second inspections, marking 32 trees. He has a Smart Phone app recording the location of all the trees and can export the data to the Forest Committee and The Cambrian, as requested by Kathe Tanner. Alan Peters has set up three one-acre plots on Fiscalini Ranch to test three different disposal methods for effectiveness. Mike Walgren of State Parks reports that they burn piles of slash and will experiment in Morro Bay on a non-native area to determine how well that can work, without causing excessive tree mortality. Peters will track the plots into the future for recovery.

County Tree Replacement Policy: The North Coast Area Plan, Chapter 7: Planning Area Standards, Cambria Urban Area Standards, B. Combining Designations, p. 7-21 through 25 clearly states that Monterey Pines shall be replaced at a 4:1 ratio and oaks at a 6:1 ratio. This applies to live trees that are removed by permit for construction. The county specified in its Emergency Tree Removal letter that dead trees shall be replaced 1:1. Details will be posted to the CFC web site.

Report From Fire Safe Focus Group: The Focus Group continues to work with the school for evacuations, the disabled and elderly who may need help to evacuate, pet management during fires.

New Business

Discuss Endorsement of Fire Safe Focus Group Letter to District Supervisor: Shirley Bianchi, chair, sent a letter to County Supervisor Bruce Gibson requesting that Title 23 of the Coastal Zone Land Use Ordinance be revised to remove Tree Removal from the definition of

Development to facilitate tree removal. Greenspace disagrees that tree removal requires a change in the CZLUO, that emergency provisions allow supervisors to act. Greenspace will send a separate letter encouraging the supervisors to consider drafting an emergency exemption for these large tracts of land that will never come into development.

Alan Peters said the CZLUO prohibits removing more than six trees from a single property and has made tree removal on the Covell Ranch impossible. Crosby said that hazardous trees can be removed without a permit. Amanda said the definition of 'development' needs to be changed to allow tree removal. Connie said that the CZLUO's emergency language allows the county to act, but Peters said that the county BoS saw the possibility of a lawsuit and refused to act.

Recommendations to NCAC on New Permit Applications: No trees involved in the Taylor, West or Vadnais permit applications.

Unfinished Business

Forest Management District Ballot Measure: Amanda Rice reported that the San Luis Obispo Local Agency Formation Commission is unlikely to approve creation of an independent Forest Management District because they have spent so much time and energy this year on the Paso Robles Water District.

Connie Gannon of Greenspace discussed Greenspace's recommendations for formation of a Forest Management District. The CFC could be the lead organization, reconstituted with a full complement of original members and some additional participants, such as the Native Plant Society and Senator Monning's office. The grant will hire a full-time manager, a significant position. The CFC should develop a coherent statement of what the district should be and what it should do. A committed corps of volunteers will be needed to carry out the plan's recommendations.

A Forest Management District could also be formed in partnership with The SLO Land Conservancy, the Salinas-Las Tablas Resource Conservation District, or with organizations currently engaged in managing the other Monterey Pine forests in California.

Continuing funding is needed to support sustained forest management. Some strategies for tax money are possible: the county could impose a sales tax to be directed to a Forest Management District; tax money coming to Cambria for other uses might be designated. CFC needs a presence at the Chamber of Commerce and the Tourism Board, the current recipients of the county's Bed Tax, to improve communication. Ralph Covell will be the CFC representative at the Fire Safe Focus Group. Amanda Rice will meet with Shirley Bianchi to discuss the Focus Group.

Covell raised the issue of meeting times. The Chamber holds a mixer on the second Wednesday at 5:30, just prior to the CFC meeting. Several other groups meet on Wednesdays. Send meeting dates and times to Amanda to compile. Other organizations to be invited to CFC meetings include the Farm Bureau, Native Plant Society, Monterey Bay National Marine Sanctuary, State Fish & Wildlife, Coastal Conservancy, San Simeon Chamber and Tourism Board. Amanda will talk to MBNMS, Eric at Coastal Conservancy.

New Business: Laura raised the possibility of doing a fund raiser.

Adjournment at 9:28 pm