

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

Meeting Minutes

January 13, 2016, 6:30 PM

Rabobank, Cambria, CA

Call to Order and Establish a Quorum: Attending: Directors Crosby and Laura Swartz, JoEllen Butler, Alan Peters, Vari MacNeil, Connie Gannon, executive director of Greenspace, Christine Heinrichs. Tony Church, Mike Lyon, Alan and Bambi Fields, San Simeon CSD. Kathe Tanner of The Cambrian

Crosby Swartz presented a letter from Amanda Rice, CSD director who has participated both as a CFC director and as a member of the public. She wrote that the CSD board has decided not to have a presence at the CFC and that she will not attend any further CFC meetings. Ms. Rice's participation has been valuable and she will be missed.

**Ask the Experts Q&A:** Tony Church asked about the Cal Fire invasive weed project. Alan Peters reported that two Cal Fire crews of three members each have cleared about 3.5 acres of an 8-acre parcel. They are removing french broom, pampas grass and other invasives on Cal Trans property. Cal Trans will restore the terraces, which were engineered for drainage, at some future time.

**November and December minutes** were approved with corrections. So moved by JoEllen Butler, seconded by Laura Swartz.

**Treasurer's report:** Laura Swartz reconciled the books at the end of the year, to a total including cash remaining on the grant of \$1,051.60. She paid \$14 for PO Box 82. Three donations totalling \$850 were received, bringing the balance to 1819.60.

### **Sub-Committee Reports**

#### **Education/Planting/Mitigation/Operations**

**Website Hosting Change:** Web passwords and other technical details remain to be resolved with Amanda Rice to accomplish the migration to Digital West. When that is done, Volunteer and Donation pages will be added.

**Living in a Forest Brochure:** Vari MacNeil sent a draft brochure to directors. Connie Gannon and Galen Rathbun had comments, which will be incorporated into it and a final draft reviewed in February.

**Photos for Historical Society Kiosk:** Laura has been invited by Consuelo Machado to update the CFC's display in the Historical Society's kiosk. It's a locked cabinet, so photos are safe and protected. Laura plans to create a collage of photos old and new for the display.

**Guest Speakers:** Suggestions for speakers included Wayne Attoe, for a history of the Build-Out Reduction Plan; Dan Turner on the Greenhouse Gas and Fuel Reduction grants; Mel Barker of State Parks; Rick Hawley on successful tree planting.

#### **Forest Management**

**Cambria Forest Health / Greenhouse Gas Project Implementation:** Alan Peters reported that environmental review for the Greenhouse Gas Grant of \$498,000 has begun, but legal requirements, subject to the governor's Emergency Proclamation, are unclear. Enthusiasm for a sawmill to turn Monterey Pine into lumber is waning, due to the deterioration of the wood and its instability for uses such as furniture. The goal is to sequester carbon, a requirement of the grant, by reusing as much of the wood as possible. Dan Turner of the Fire Safe Council is pursuing a prototype portable biomass unit developed by a Berkeley firm that can generate 150 kwh, 24/7, from wood chips. The cargo-container sized unit uses a chemical process called pyrolysis to separate carbon from hydrogen and generate power. It would be located at the CCSD wastewater treatment plant. Because it does not burn wood, the process is carbon-neutral, an important point for the grant, which is aimed at greenhouse gas reduction.

**Western States Forestry Grant Status:** A decision has not been made but Cambria remains the top candidate for this grant. Combined with the GHG grant, a lot of dead trees could be removed from Cambria's forest. Chipping programs, for which grants are running out in March, could also be continued under the grants. The grants could also be used as matching funds for potential federal grants, under the President's Disaster Declaration for Butte and Calaveras Counties. The federal funding does not have the complicated carbon credit calculations required of the GHG grants. Alan Peters will apply as Cal Fire.

**Other grants:** Connie Gannon reported that she was contacted by ReLeaf about other grant opportunities for urban forests relating to educational projects, restoration projects and invasive weeds.

**Transfer Development Credits Program:** Crosby Swartz reported that the TDC program remains viable if an NGO can take over ownership and maintenance of the retired lots, since the CSD now refuses to accept them. Connie Gannon will meet with the executive director of The Land Conservancy to discuss whether Greenspace could be that organization. The Coastal Conservancy might be able to help fund it. "It would be nice to have the conservation done by people who are enthusiastic about conservation," Laura Swartz said.

**Report From Fire Safe Focus Group:** Alan Peters reported on the Cal Fire invasive weed removal project along Highway 1. Phase 1 provides for removal of invasive french broom, pampas grass and dead wood. They are cutting it but not removing roots. JoEllen Butler volunteered FFRP's Weed Wrenches. Alan will arrange to have a crew pick them up to improve removal. The Focus Group discussed general emergency preparedness and will send Bruce Fosdike as the Cambria representative to the county Fire Safe Council. The Coastal Commission responded to the Focus Group's letter requested a change in the Coastal Plan's language regarding tree removal. That would require the legislature to change the Coastal Act, but the commission offered to "streamline the coastal development permitting process when a development activity requires a CDP." Full text of the letter will be posted to the CFC web site when it is functioning.

**New Business**

Alan Peters reported that next year Cal Fire will enforce a 100' weed abatement zone around all structures, an increase from the current 30'.

The meeting was adjourned at 8:20 pm.