

# CAMBRIA FOREST COMMITTEE

TO CONSERVE AND MANAGE THE NATIVE FOREST OF CAMBRIA

## Meeting Minutes

December 12, 2018, 6:30 PM

Cambria Rabobank, 1070 Main Street

Meeting was called to Order with a **Quorum** of Crosby and Laura Swartz, Julie Jorgenson, Paul Nugent, JoEllen Butler, Nancy Anderson and Christine Heinrichs. Also in attendance were Laurel Stewart; Tony Church, Peter Frey, Mike Walsh representing the Fire Safe Focus Group, Alan Peters of Cal Fire, Dan Turner, business manager of the county Fire Safe Council, Donn Howell, CCSD director, and Harry Farmer, CCSD representative.

## Public and Director Comments

Tony Church said that the Cambria Fire Department has serviced only five fire hydrants this month, a disappointing lack of progress. Fire hydrants that are newly painted indicate that they have been serviced.

**Minutes of September and November Meetings** were approved unanimously with one addition to September, Nancy Anderson as representative of Greenspace.

## Treasurer's Report:

Laura Swartz reported the account showed \$805.38 last month. Two checks were written, one to Amanda Rice to reimburse her \$35.34 for the domain name, and \$20 to Crosby to reimburse for state filing, leaving \$750.04. Directors are encouraged to donate to the Forest Committee to defray the cost of our Directors and Officers liability insurance premium.

## Sub-Committee Reports

### Education/Planting/Mitigation/Operations

Distribution of Invasive Weed Guide: The concerned Leimert residents who got involved over the pile burning may be interested in acquiring the Guide. Mike Walsh has a list of names and contact information from the Cambria Fire Safe Focus Group.

Website Domain Name Renewal: Paul Nugent will investigate to get the domain name renewal billed to The Cambria Forest Committee.

### Forest Management

**Fuel Reduction in Protected Forest Areas:** the guidelines will be rolled into the CCSD Fuel Reduction Program, for lots not near a structure.

**Dead Tree Removal Practices Letter:** Alan Peters commented that some points were not fully accurate; Two additional grants provide a total of \$2.5 million for fuel reduction and boundaries can be extended as a result, with three different performance periods. Over 700 acres will be treated, from Highway 46 to Hearst Ranch. Millable trees will be stacked on the ground, and others chipped, masticated, or burned. As

much wood as possible will be turned into lumber, to sequester the carbon. Peters will contact private land owners to get their permission and cooperation.

An additional definition of diseased trees should cover more pests and pathogens, such as western gall rust and dwarf mistletoe. Another definition for Infested tree could be added.

Treatment for French broom includes retreatment with selective herbicides in a two-year cycle for ten years, until it is eliminated. The range is being reduced. He disputed the claim that French broom had gotten worse after the fuel break was masticated. Harry suggested pulling in the spring, after rain has softened the ground.

All methods of invasive plant removal will be considered, including controlled burn and goats. The goal of a healthy forest will be pursued with restocking, using seed form UC Davis' collection and Rick Hawley's Greenspace stock. Peters wants to work with Greenspace to plan for seedlings to be available. Grant money is available for seeds and seedlings. Seed scattering will also be used.

Dan Turner said that the project requires that a Registered Forester supervise the project, which will comply with the Forest Practice Act, the equivalent of CEQA. "The project is not to log the forest," he said. "It's strictly forest health and public safety."

Laurel Stewart suggested planting understory shrubs, such as toyon, coffeeberry, sticky monkey flower, poison oak. French broom and a thick layer of pine needles prevents native shrubs from revegetating the forest. Fire is the most effective at killing the seeds and allowing native plants to grow. JoEllen Butler reported that FFRP has planted thousands of pine trees on the Ranch. Volunteers pull weeds there. The Forest Committee may be able to encourage residents not to plant invasives and to organize volunteer groups to pull weeds.

"I hope we can keep the pine forest propagating itself," Peters said. "It's converting to oak woodlands. We're trying to keep it in pine forest."

### **Report on Pile Burning, Cambria Pines Road**

Dan Turner met with concerned local residents regarding the burn piles. Cambria Pines Road was chosen for treatment because they determined that it is an evacuation route that was not survivable in the event of fire unless it was cleared. Rain and cooperative winds allowed the piles to be burned without incident. Laura had a photo of singed trees, which Peters said would almost certainly survive. "It's an aesthetic issue, not a tree health issue," he said. "If a tree dies, we can fix that. Put the blame on french broom."

Peters said crews are also falling hazardous trees, first around the perimeter and then in the interior. Wood is left in places available to the public for firewood.

### **New Business**

#### **Discuss CCSD Fire Dept Defensible Space Program:**

This issue is on the CCSD's Agenda, to consider whether the Cambria Fire Department should take over defensible space inspections and enforcement that are now Cal Fire's responsibility. Crosby will speak on the subject at the CCSD meeting.

This item led to discussion of other subjects. Fire insurance availability and costs are affected by community conditions as well as individual fire risk. New construction materials and methods are more fire-resistant. Existing houses can be made more fire-resistant by

retrofitting to prevent embers from entering, replacing wood shakes, siding and roofs with fire-resistant materials. Fiscalini Ranch's access road can be opened and assist in evacuation.

Proposed new residential construction raises the issue of evacuation, as most of the lots on the Water Wait list are on Lodge Hill, which has only two evacuation routes, and they intersect.

Dan Turner reported that Cal Poly is creating a traffic model of how residents might evacuate from Lodge Hill.

Cutting weeds twice a year could reduce infestation if the weeds were cut before they set seeds.

**Agenda Items and speakers:** Rick Hawley will be the speaker for the next meeting, January 9, 2019.

**Meeting adjourned 8:50 pm.**