

CAMBRIA FOREST COMMITTEE

TO CONSERVE AND MANAGE THE NATIVE FOREST OF CAMBRIA

Meeting Minutes

August 14, 2019, 6:30 PM
Cambria Rabobank, 1070 Main Street

A **Quorum** was established by the attendance of Crosby and Laura Swartz, Paul Nugent, Julie Jorgenson, JoEllen Butler, executive director of Friends of Fiscalini Ranch Preserve, Andrea Wogsland, executive director of Greenspace, and Christine Heinrichs. Harry Farmer, Cambria CSD liaison, and John Weigold, Cambria CSD general manager also attended.

A short business meeting was held after guest speaker Kirsten Sheehy gave her presentation “Cape Ivy Flies for Biocontrol of Invasive Ivy.” About 20 people attended.

Public and Director Comments: Beautify Cambria Association sent a letter thanking the Forest Committee for its support for Dark Skies Initiative. BCA thank you letter.

Minutes of July Meeting were approved as written.

Treasurer's Report: Laura Swartz reported that the balance is unchanged, \$1,042.60. She wrote a check to the speaker for \$100 honorarium.

Sub-Committee Reports

Education/Planting/Mitigation/Operations:

Greenspace executive director Andrea Wogsland reported that Greenspace had sent a letter of comment on the Program Environmental Impact Report for the proposed California Vegetation Treatment Program. That EIR is scheduled for approval by the end of the year for use on projects in 2020. Cambria’s Monterey Pines require special consideration, compared to the forests of the Sierra, the main focus of the plan. Cambria’s Forest Management Plan provides specific advice.

Andrea attended the State Board of Forestry and Fire Protection and County Fire Safe Council tour of fuel reduction sites along Cambria Pines Road and Highway 1. Fuel reduction projects are focused on restoration areas, fuel breaks and the Wildland Urban Interface, where the forest is intermixed with houses. A new grant cycle is coming up.

Forest Management

Fuel Reduction Guidelines in Fern Canyon Preserve:

Crosby has been in discussions with Fire Chief William Hollingsworth. The chief understands that weed whacking is not appropriate in Fern Canyon. The lots under protection are in good shape. Workers are not doing unnecessary damage to those lots. Mike Rice is the contractor who will be doing weed abatement on lots that have not yet cut their weeds.

“I’m satisfied they are doing the right thing there,” Crosby said. “It’s not a one-size-fits-all solution.”

Report from Fire Safe Focus Group:

Cal Fire SLU Unit Forester Alan Peters discussed the fire center at Camp SLO, used to stage the fuel reduction and management projects and carry out those plans. Fire Safe Council has a new chipper. A new app for smart phone, Pulse Point, can dispatch information in real time. Fire Chief Hollingsworth will present it to the community.

Unfinished Business

Forest Impact Mitigation Measure:

Crosby will draft a letter adding details to the comment letter he sent to the Coastal Commission regarding the adverse effects of the impact of growth on the forest. He will ask the Commission to suggest mitigation for those effects.

Greenspace/Forest Committee Letter:

The legalities of the Forest Practice Act have stalled this effort to align the Cambria Forest Management Plan and the FPA. The Cambria Forest Management Plan is written in more understandable language. Organizations such as the Chaparral Institute, which has staff to analyze the documents, has found Cal Fire practices in some cases counterproductive.

Andrea offered to contact Cal Poly to offer the project to a student as a Senior Project.

Public and Director Comments

CSD General Manager Weigold reported on the continuing efforts to clear up **homeless encampments** on Fiscalini Ranch. Some are extensive and remote, making them difficult to clear. Discussion of whether SLO County should assist Cambria financially to clear them up. Fire danger in the forest makes it a public safety concern.

CSD Facilities Manager Carlos Mendoza patrols the ranch three times a week to reduce re-establishment of camps. Weigold said costs are between \$25,000 and \$30,000 thus far.

Cambria lacks services for the homeless. The nearest location for services is SLO.

Forest Committee director **Ralph Covell** is reported to be very ill. The Forest Committee may reach out to his daughter.

Greenspace’s Native Plant Garden will hold its Open House Saturday August 17, 1-4 pm. Public invited.

Meeting adjourned at 8:14.

Next Meeting September 11, 2019