

CAMBRIA FOREST COMMITTEE

TO CONSERVE AND MANAGE THE NATIVE FOREST OF CAMBRIA

Meeting Minutes

November 13, 2019, 6:30 PM

Mechanics Bank, 1070 Main Street, Cambria

Call to Order and a Quorum was established by attendance of Crosby and Laura Swartz, Paul Nugent, Julie Jorgenson, Andrea Wogsland, JoEllen Butler, and Christine Heinrichs. Cambria Community Services District board liaison Harry Farmer, Cambrians Linda Poppenheimer and Jeff Walters also attended.

Public and Director Comments: Christine reported that Sarah Bisbing, assistant professor, Forest Ecosystem Science at University of Nevada – Reno, who has studied Cambria's Monterey Pine forest, is planning to visit to view the fuel reduction done by Cal Fire. She has not set a date.

Mr. Farmer suggested the NSPR series California Burning, <https://www.mynspr.org/programs/california-burning-solutions-californias-wildfire-problem#stream/0>, on the forest fire situation. He suggested having a Native American speaker who could address Native American use of fire. Crosby said that Fire Safe Focus Group discussed doing controlled burns. They await rain to complete pile burns of vegetation.

JoEllen invited all to join FFRP to plant trees during the Thanksgiving weekend, November 30. They have 350 trees to plant, mulch and water. Families are encouraged to participate. 9 am – noon, Huntington Road park entrance.

Minutes of the October Meeting were approved with some revisions.

Treasurer's Report: Laura Swartz reported that the balance in the account is \$526.60, but the \$100 check to Kirsten Sheehy, the Galling Fly speaker, was not cashed. Christine will follow up with her.

Sales of Invasive Weed Guides could recover the costs of printing them and raise awareness of the problem. Julie will approach Cambria Nursery and the Garden Shed to assess their interest. Linda will bring one to the Native Plant Society next week.

The holidays are coming and Invasive Weed Guides make a good stocking stuffer.

Sub-Committee Reports

Education/Planting/Mitigation/Operations

Crosby and Christine continue to work to get the Cambria Forest Committee added to the **County Permit Review** distribution list. Hilary Brown is the contact at the county planning department. Andrea reported that permit application DRC 2019-00214 for a 3100sq ft house, two garages, and a shop on a six-acre parcel at Cambria Pines Road and Buckley proposes to remove 70 trees.

The county has jurisdiction over **AirBNB** rentals. Julie said that momentum is swinging away from them. Visitors may not be aware of Cambria's fire danger, could light up a grill out on the deck. Other problems include noisy parties and making pornographic movies. Conversion of long-term rentals to AirBNBs reduces available housing. Real estate brokers advertise using properties as AirBNBs as an asset to property value.

Forest Management:

In response to the extent of brush removal in the **Fuel Reduction Project**, the Forest Committee will develop guidelines for native plant protection. The confusion surrounding the Fuel Reduction Project indicates that the community and Fire Safe Council and Cal Fire need to find agreement on what trimming and removal are desirable. Crosby will work up a draft.

Report from Fire Safe Focus Group:

Crosby, Laura, JoEllen and Paul attended. They discussed the Fuel Reduction project and developing guidelines, above. Cal Fire uses Timber Harvest Plans instead of CEQA, but also needs to comply with the Local Coastal Plan. Monterey Pine isn't a good fit for Timber Harvest because it has no economic value.

The confusion over the Fuel Reduction project indicated that better communication with the community is needed for future projects. The Forest Committee will stay in contact with Turner to be available for public meetings and information.

The Nature Conservancy's conservation easement on the Covell Ranch was brought up as an example. The public lost access, the Nature Conservancy has not

communicated well with local residents, and although fire prevention was one of the goals, the area is not particularly threatened by fire.

JoEllen said that James Allen is writing his report on the Fuel Reduction Project. It will be available to the public and the Forest Committee.

Jeff Walters said that the removal of understory hurts the forest by interfering with underground plant communication and water use. Crosby said that Cal Fire describes the understory fuel reduction as trimming, not removal, because the roots are still there and the plants will grow back. Whether invasives will grow back faster remains to be seen. JoEllen said that the workers are not using glyphosate to kill plants.

Andrea is connecting with the **Forest Management Task Force Working Group**. Forest management projects involve multiple treatments paid for by multiple funding agencies with overlapping interests.

Fire Safe Council business manager Dan Turner suggested the **Urban and Community Forest grant**, application due November 27, might be suitable for Greenspace and the Forest Committee.

Paul reported that the AM radio communication system was discussed, and evacuation traffic congestion on Highway 1.

Fire Safe Focus Group will meet monthly in 2020.

Holiday Meeting Schedule:

The Forest Committee will have a regular meeting December 11. Crosby will present a draft of suggested guidelines for fuel reduction projects.

Unfinished Business

Forest Impact Mitigation Measure:

Crosby continues to work on the need for mitigation for the Emergency Water Supply project. Mitigation for the impact on the forest was overlooked and has not been addressed.

Greenspace / Forest Committee Letter: This will be addressed with the Forest Impact Mitigation letter and the Fuel Reduction Guidelines.

Meeting adjourned at 8:20 pm.

Next Meeting December 11, 2019