

# CAMBRIA FOREST COMMITTEE

TO CONSERVE AND MANAGE THE NATIVE FOREST OF CAMBRIA

## MEETING MINUTES

October 9, 2019

TIME: 6:30 PM

LOCATION: Mechanics Bank, 1070 Main Street, Cambria

1.0 A **Quorum** was established by attendance of Crosby and Laura Swartz, Paul Nugent, JoEllen Butler, Andrea Wogsland, and Christine Heinrichs. CCSD liaison board vice president Harry Farmer attended.

2.0 Public and Director **Comments**: Two events are coming up:

Thursday October 24, 5 pm, Unitarian Universalist Community of Cambria, 786 Arlington Street. Local California Department of Fish and Wildlife game wardens Jason Chance and Richard Roodzant will talk on wildlife feeding.

Sunday October 27, 3 pm, Mechanics Bank: Biologist Joe Burnett, sponsored by Greenspace, will speak on Condors. Six juveniles will be released in San Simeon in the coming weeks.

3.0 **Minutes of September Meeting** were approved as written.

4.0 **Treasurer's Report**: Laura Swartz reported the account balance of \$942.60, with no outstanding checks and no remaining grant money. The invoice for Directors & Officers insurance annual renewal, \$516, arrived, due by Oct. 17. Directors usually donate \$100, but it's not required.

### 5.0 **Sub-Committee Reports**

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

Crosby and Christine continue to work to have the Forest Committee included in regular permit application notifications.

#### 5.2 **Forest Management**

The **Fuel Reduction Project** along Highway 1 and on Fiscalini Ranch has trimmed all vegetation under the Monterey Pines and limbed the trees to clear the understory. JoEllen Butler, FFRP executive director, said that the project sought to balance preserving and protecting ranch with community safety.

Invasives were removed in accordance with the Fiscalini Ranch Management Plan. James Allen of Santa Cruz will assess the work and provide a written report that will be available to the public.

The work conforms to that done on Test Plot Four on Fiscalini Ranch. After removal of the understory, new trees sprouted.

Additional homeless encampments were removed as they were discovered. One was 100 feet long and included several rooms.

Greenspace executive director Andrea Wogsland said that Cal Fire is testing the boundaries of conservation easements in recent projects. Big Sur Land Trust has written Specific Project Descriptions to monitor fuel reduction projects for compliance. She followed up by sending that document to Forest Committee directors attending the meeting.

“We have a unique forest that requires additional care,” she said.

Laura Swartz said that conservation easements need to be defended. Crosby Swartz said that the Minor Use Permit authorizing the work includes six biological monitoring conditions. He said the work has focused on the trees rather than the forest, which includes unique understory plants that create the forest ecosystem.

Documents related to the projects are difficult to locate. Public awareness has been limited.

Paul Nugent, who also serves on the Resources & Infrastructure Committee, said the grant funding, through the county Fire Safe Council, was welcome. Ms. Wogsland said that the Cambria Fire Safe Focus Group, which is accepted as a community organization by regional and state agencies, is not representing the range of public opinion.

Christine Heinrichs said that a Forest Manager would be a central figure to oversee such projects and provide information to the public. The Implementation Plan suggests routes to fund a Forest Manager position.

Mr. Nugent said that keeping insurance rates low is another consideration. Director Farmer said that real estate brokers have told him property sales are complicated by difficulty getting fire insurance in Cambria.

Crosby has taken photos of the work, to monitor the areas as they regrow over time. The Cambria Fire Department has two other fuel reduction grant applications in process, one for the ravine next to Tin City.

Crosby will draft a letter, using the Big Sur Trust document as a model, for comment on future fuel reduction projects.

6.0 The **Fire Safe Focus Group** meeting is rescheduled to Oct 23 at the Fire Station. William Hollingsworth will chair the meeting in chairman Dave Pierson's absence. He will be on vacation.

7.0 **No New Business**

8.0 **Unfinished Business**

8.1 **Forest Impact Mitigation Measure:** Crosby will draft a letter requesting attention to the impact of the Emergency Water Supply project on the forest. The Environmental Impact Report said that it will have No Impact, but the subject has not been evaluated. The Forest Committee will prepare a letter.

8.2 **Greenspace / Forest Committee Letter:** The Forest Committee will revise the Dead Tree Removal statement to address specifics of the Fuel Reduction project.

9.0 **Public and Director Comments**

Laura Swartz reported that the Forest Committee sign near Black Cat Bistro is delaminating. She is repairing it, no cost to the committee. The signs require occasional maintenance.

10.0 **Future Agenda Items**

Ms. Wogsland suggested public education activities to increase public awareness of what constitutes a healthy forest. Speakers and materials could cite benefits such as carbon sequestration. Greater appreciation of the forest will support better forest care.

11.0 The meeting was adjourned at 8:30 pm.

**Next Meeting November 13, 2019**